

This study explores the process of proselyting as methodically accomplished, learned, continually developed in particular situations, and reflected by American Mormon missionaries in the Czech Republic. The analysis is guided by four research questions: 1) How do missionaries “do” proselyting such that it is recognizable to them for what it is? 2) What interactional work constitutes this process, and how is this work done through the interplay of the organization of sequence, preference, topic and category? 3) How do the participants in these proselyting situations make relevant the given setting, in this case characterized by the contact between Czech (local) and American (foreign) languages and cultures? 4) How do the individual missionaries and their church “behave toward language”, i.e. how do they manage language and cultural competence and their manifestations through and for the purpose of engaging in proselyting interactions? Recorded and transcribed first-contact public proselyting situations are used as the primary data in this study, supported to a lesser degree by participant observation, field notes, so-called interaction and follow-up interviews, and document analysis. Ethnomethodology, or the study of members’ methods for producing and recognizing features of talk, activities, or settings, is the main theoretical approach. Conversation Analysis, Membership Categorization Analysis, and Language Management Theory are used as the primary analytical tools.