



SAURAJ

Spicer Adventist University Research Articles Journal



Volume 1, Issue 2, 2022

The views and opinions stated in these articles are exclusively those of the writers, and do not necessarily represent Spicer Adventist University's position. The accuracy of all data and quotations is solely the responsibility of the authors.

Spicer Adventist University

SAURAJ

Spicer Adventist University Research Articles Journal

Vol. 1, Issue. 2, October 2022

ISSN: 2583-4568

Editor:

Dr. Esther Talang-Rao, PhD

Associate Editor:

Dr. Santosh Kumar, DMiss

Managing Editor:

Abhisek Ezras Lakra

Assistant Editors:

Dr. Koberson Langhu, PhD

Dr. John Williams, PhD

Dr. Carol Linda Kingston, PhD

Ranjith Kingston Gladstone

Dr. Standly, PhD

Editors (International)

Dr. David Vanlalnghaka Sailo, PhD

Publisher:

Simon Yesu, PhD

Registrar,

Spicer Adventist University, Pune

Published at:

Spicer Adventist University,

Aundh Road, Ganeshkhind,

Pune – 411007, India.

Cover Design:

Jeryl Johnson

Table of Contents

Editorial	I
Problems Faced in English by the Second Language Speakers	1
Dr Esther Rao	
Improving Students' English Spelling Ability Through Activity-Based Teaching- Learning for Standard VII.....	14
Julia Robby Chakkalathy & Dr Ashwini J. Mahamuni	
Gandhi and Truth	25
Dr Boxter Kharbteng	
A Brief Analysis of the Historicity of Jesus' Resurrection.....	39
Lalnuntluanga Ralte & Dr Santosh Kumar	
Book Review: A Place for Us.....	48
Dr Ramchanso Shimray	

Editorial

I am happy to present the 2nd Issue of SAURAJ which contains some thought-provoking Research Papers and Articles including a Book Review.

The Research Article “Problem Faced in English by the Second Language Speakers” tackles the current issues faced by second language speakers of English. It attempts to bring awareness to readers of different levels – students and teachers to try to improve speaking acceptable Indian English and to be understood internationally.

The Research Article on the topic “Improving Students’ English Spelling Ability Through Activity-Based Teaching-Learning for Standard VII” is an Action Research, written by two authors. They conducted activities with the help of School Teachers and used test scores for analyzing the data; and then compared them with two situations- pre-test and post-test conditions of an experiment. The study showed significant improvement in spelling using activity-based teaching-learning. The following article is a thought-provoking one on “Gandhi and Truth: Analysis, Assessment, and Reflection”.

The article “A Brief Analysis of The Historicity of Jesus’ Resurrection” attempts to briefly analyse the quest, and most importantly provide legitimate evidence for the death and resurrection of Jesus. The historicity of the gospel account is analysed by two authors through the methodology employed by both the secular and religious scholars; which in turn makes the study unbiased. They finally conclude that the account of the gospel is historical.

Finally, we have the Book Review “A Place for Us” written by Fatima Farheen Mirza. It is a bittersweet story about the Indian-American Muslim, an immigrant family which goes through a lot of struggles, disappointments, and betrayals. The family has to go through culture shock because of the different traditional culture and the modern life in the Bay area California, America.

One of the ways we can escape boredom and entertain ourselves is by reading which is also a good exercise for the brain. In the review ‘A Place for Us’ we find characters and events taking place in the story. While reading we will connect and remember the names of the people in the story and that will improve our memory.

Furthermore, reading improves writing skills, a practice reader will learn different writing styles. Research articles provide us with a lot of fun and facts which otherwise we would not have known. When we read a variety of topics, we learn more and therefore widen our general knowledge and we can communicate and share our feelings and beliefs with others. Reading enhances us with infinite benefits.

Inviting avid readers and writers for higher education to expand their horizons through reading and writing for their well-being and literacy.

Happy reading

Dr. E. Talang-Rao

Chief Editor

Problems Faced in English by the Second Language Speakers

Esther Talang-Rao

Professor, Division of Arts and Social Sciences, Spicer Adventist University

Abstract

This research article examines the second language speakers and their problem areas. Learning and speaking a new language after the age of five or passed the adolescence age can be a big issue for most L2 speakers. The reason is that by this time, they have already mastered their L1 in form, syntax, and phonology. In this study the L2 speakers in general are of different levels; such as, students, teachers, and professors (young and old; males and females). However, the speakers commit mistakes in English more or less the same. The writer has classified their mistakes in three categories; namely: vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In using words some L2 speakers commit malapropism. For example, there is a mixed up of words having similar sounds such as, 'suffocated' and 'sophisticated'; 'immaculate' and 'emasculate'. These words surfacely look and sound similar but they are very different semantically. In grammar, some languages have some similarities while others have very different rules. When we talk in English some of the rules that are in English are either absent or different in other languages or native tongue of the speakers; therefore, because of these differences, mistakes make roads when an L2 speaker speaks in English. Similarly in pronunciation if the sound is present in the native tongue of the speakers, they pronounce it correctly, they are already familiar with that sound. On the other hand, there are some unfamiliar sounds in English which do not exist in the native tongue of the speakers. It is important to note here that the writer is talking about the 44 distinctive sounds of the English language and not letters. Other factors are, English is a stressed language, whereas, many languages have no stress. For instance, we Indians give equal stress to all syllables in a word. We also pronounce a good percentage of time according to how we spell the words; whereas, in English the consonants and vowels can have more than one sound. L2 speakers have issues using the right words and structure in English but there seems to be a more complicated issue in pronunciation. It is hoped that this article will help the L2 speakers and (English) teachers to be aware of these limitations and focus on ways of remedying them. The purpose of this article is to help the second language speakers to improve their speaking skills and to solve their difficulties that crop up in everyday conversation in the use of English language particularly in pronunciation.

Keywords: Second language speakers, problems, mistakes, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation

**Email address:* estherra@sau.edu.in

Introduction

English as a second language (ESL) means English comes into use by speakers of different native languages. Though at times, for some speakers the term ESL can be a misnomer because they have learned a few or several languages before they pick up the English language. Some speakers, particularly those who are in the rural areas, started learning and speaking English when they enter the educational programme, that is when they go to the English Medium School.

By the time they go to the English Medium School, they have become quite fluent with their first language (L1) or their own native tongue. When they start learning English, they first learn isolation words and a little later, about two to three months grammar and syntax; depending on how much exposure they have to English. At this point, there is complication because in English, for instance, there are singular and plural nouns; whereas, in the L1 of some learners and speakers the way how nouns are made plural is different. In English a noun can simply become a plural by adding an -s; such as, bird is singular (Sg) and birds is plural (Pl).

But in some other languages the noun 'bird' will always be 'bird' whether it is used as a Sg or Pl. When it is necessary to make it plural, there is an element that comes before the noun. For instance, in Khasi language the noun *sim* meaning 'bird' will always be *sim*; but if it is a plural, the element *ki* comes before *sim*; therefore, *ki sim* (two or more birds). Perhaps for this reason why some second language speakers of English say, "one birds" and "seven bird."

Similarly, second language learners/speakers (of various degrees, especially those with less education or less exposure to English) make many mistakes with vocabulary, grammar/syntax, and pronunciation as we shall see in the data which the author has observed and collected.

One of the reasons for the second language speakers to not be able to speak acceptable English is age. When speakers start learning English after the age of twelve it becomes difficult for them to speak fluently in English. When they come across L2 before the age of five or six, they can achieve fluency almost like the L1 speakers of English. When they learn English after the age of seven, they are likely to commit mistakes and errors, enough 'to set them apart' from those who speak English as their first language. But after the childhood age, twelve or thirteen, it can become very difficult to acquire fluency like the L1 speakers (Hyltenstam, & Abrahamsson, 2003). Of course, the less educated ones encounter more problems but to a certain degree even the educated, those who have done MA, MPhil., and Ph. D. can easily be identified that they are second language speakers. The background and the L1 follow them and in some cases very prominent especially when it comes to pronunciation.

Review of Literature

Ama (2019) opines that learning English is not easy for the second language learners. Learning English can be harder in countries where it is used as a second [or third] language. For example, Ghana, Zambia, and other countries in Africa face many problems since English is not their native tongue. Following are the challenges the second language learners and speakers encounter:

1. Unqualified teachers-This is one of the most important points, but it is also one of the most neglected problems. In an area where the speakers are second

language users of English, whatever the teachers say is accepted whether right or wrong. For this reason, there is a lot of confusion among the students because different teachers tell them different things, different teachers pronounce words differently. For example, 'cup' is pronounced in different sounds by various teachers. Some use the vowels /a/ or /o/ instead of /ʌ/. Teachers themselves pronounce the word wrong since /ʌ/ is absent in many languages, for instance African languages. Therefore, when it comes to pronunciation even teachers encounter problems.

2. Limited learning environment- By limited learning environment, Ama (2019) is referring "to the weather, the availability of furniture in the classrooms, or the location of the school" (para. 4). Learning from outside of the classroom is also a great challenge. Students are not able to hear acceptable English in their surroundings. Consequently, it is difficult for them to learn English correctly. When it comes to study materials, students may have books, but they need the guidance from their teacher. For instance, when they see the word 'ewe', how are they to pronounce it right? A lot of terms students can learn from "movies" but they learn without having deep understanding. Moreover, films and movies do contain slangs or dialects.
 3. Students do not take their study seriously- Ama finds out that students do not seem to realise that the English they use at home and in the streets are not the same from the language they use when they write their examination. Students do not follow the rules they learn in school.
 4. Another reason is that students take English subjects light- they do not spend time studying much as they do in other subjects. After the English class they just leave their books until the next class. They hardly study pronunciation, practicing essay writing, and take the time to learn new vocabulary. And in class they hardly ask for help from their teacher. Some say that it is not their language, therefore, that attitude affects their learning ability.
- Other problems are the overuse of mother tongue in the classroom, students are very dependent on their teachers, stronger and smarter students outnumber the weaker students and they are left behind by teachers and students.

Korneev (2020) explains that one of the 'hardest' languages to learn is English and there are many reasons to this: the 'baffling spelling', pronunciation, and "peculiar grammar structure" and a lot more reasons as to why second language learners cannot speak smoothly and correctly. He has pointed out five common problems:

1. Learning the language without a goal- If the goal is just to speak English with people who speak it, then it is a less important goal but if the goal is something to do with the "opportunity in life" then it will be more motivating to learn the language.
2. Bored with traditional teaching methods- Many times language learners both young and old are asked to learn in a strict and traditional way [that is to read and memorise] of learning the language. He opines that learning a language is to get into a topic of learning to find enjoyment; such as, "film" and "video games". He himself learned English by playing video games. That is the subject he finds interest in.

3. Feeling of embarrassment- When a second language learner starts using or speaking a new language it is very natural to feel shy especially practicing speaking English in front of those who are already very good and fluent in speaking English. He suggests that in order “to conquer this fear of embarrassment, it’s important to practice as much as possible” (para. 5). Learners can practice speaking out loud alone at any time and place whenever and wherever they feel at ease.
4. Not enough time- Dedicative time to learning a new language is another problem faced by some language learners. Setting aside sometime to learn and practice every day could be very helpful.
5. Lack of interaction with native speakers- Many speakers of English language interact with people who are also second language learners of English. Therefore, it can be very challenging for them.

Saraswathi (2006) opines that learning a second language is a very complicated activity/process. Second language learners may not have acquired the language in the same process of learning as there are many different ways of learning a new language. For instance, many learners must have learned English through the course books used in schools; however, there are others who learn English as their second language without books, without methods, without grammar rules, without punishment, and without tears.

Today linguists and researchers realize there are reasons to be happy when speakers commit mistakes for two purposes: the learners are actively participating in the learning process and these mistakes (and errors) can be utilized in designing syllabuses. This realisation is useful in the part of the learners as well as teachers. The teachers can emphasise, explain, and create activities to help learners improve on their grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Some of the errors committed by the second language learners of Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, and Canada is due to the strong root of the L1. For instance, in these languages mentioned, the sentences have no copula; an example of this is – “He Prime Minister of India” (Saraswathi, 2006, p. 39). When learners write this sentence, teachers will probably make a correction that the acceptable sentence is to add a copula: He is the Prime Minister of India (pp. 39, 62).

Similarly, Verma, & Krishnaswamy (2009, p. 348) have analysed the problems faced by the second language learners as follows: The ‘pull’ of the mother tongue is very strong; the internal analogy and overgeneralization, hence the mix up of nouns, verbs, and articles- such as, childrens, bringed, and a sugar from words such as boys, promised, and a tin. Other problems are to pronounce according to spelling, bad teaching (as also stated by Ama), non-standard variety picking up from the streets, attitudes towards the second language, policy of the government, failure to understand the nature of the second language, poor adequacy of vocabulary, and many other factors.

Methodology

The data was collected in a span of a little over two years from seminars, zoom meetings, webinars, and listening to small social groups in person meetings and conversations which eventually makes this study to be a qualitative research article.

The instrument used is observation; but mainly non-participant. Hence, it is not a pencil/pen and paper responses of the informants. The total number of speakers included in the study are forty-six: sixteen college students, eighteen teachers (a subset of these teachers are both teachers and research scholars), and twelve professors.

The author was always ready with a pen and a writing pad to pen down whenever she heard the speakers committing mistakes in their speeches and presentations; and also marked down the speaker's identity for the sake of analysis. Recording was not needed since most of these speeches and presentations are available in YouTube as well. Therefore, the data was organized and analyzed in three categories: vocabulary, syntax/grammar, and pronunciation (V, S/G, P). The list of the exact mistakes the speaker commits in each category (V, S/G, P) was listed and put inside the quotation marks followed by (wherever necessary) the acceptable answer and explanation.

Data Analysis and Findings

The data revealed the following problems the second language speakers encounter when they speak in English. The author has identified eleven words which are used wrongly, forty-one grammatical mistakes, and fifty-seven wrong pronunciations.

Vocabulary

The kinds of words that are used by the second language speakers observed in this research article are those which we can call 'wrong words' and also 'malapropisms. The speakers commit these mistakes perhaps because they do not know the exact word; therefore, they just use a word that sounds similar to the right word. The data have shown their problem as listed below:

1. "interested" for interesting- "very interested lesson"
2. "interesting" for interested- "she is interesting to work as your secretary".
3. "good afternoon" for good morning, when the time was still morning or before twelve noon.
4. 'Attaching, attached, attachment; enclosing, enclosed, and sending' were used inappropriately.
5. "slash" is used instead of sash- "All of you should wear your slash".
6. "plate" for plaque- "Keats plate stone" when referring to Keats' Tomb Stone
7. "errors" for eras- "different errors in literature"
8. "humiliation" for humility
9. "scuber driving" for scuba diving
10. "thrash can" for trash can
11. "smash potato" for mashed potato

Grammar

Grammar involves a number of items. In this study the following grammatical items are observed which are an issue to the L2 speakers: article, question, preposition, subject-verb agreement, tense, number, degree, and tag.

Article is one of the problems the second language speakers encounter; particularly the article 'the'. Listed below are the example observed the speakers committed when they use article.

1. "Something is wrong if the Satan is silent in your life".
2. "Turn to the book of the Genesis".
3. "He told the Naman..."

In sentence 1 the article 'the' is used before the proper noun by a Ph D holder. And sentences 2 and 3 by a teacher and research scholar. The misused of the article 'a' and 'an' did not occur in the data collected for the study. Therefore, as explain by Hornby (1983) the article 'the' has many functions and it is not easy to use. Many L2 speakers of English do not know when and how to use the article 'the'. For instance, many do not know the difference between 1. I am going to the hospital and 2. I am going to hospital. In 1 it means to see something or visit someone; in 2 it means I need medical help (Hornby, 1983, p. 127). In sentences above; 1, 2, and 3 the article is not at all needed.

Question is yet another problem of mostly L2 speakers. "The normal order for sentences differs from language to language, though there are always exceptions. In English, the word order is usually: subject, verb, object (SOV)" (Winkler, 2021, pp. 14-15). Similarly, we follow a certain order for nouns and verbs when we ask questions.

1. "Ma'am, you are still in college?"
This kind of mistake comes under the characteristics of Indian English, where the sentence is changed into a question just by changing the tone towards the end of the statement.
2. "Anyone knows?"
If this is to be a question, it should be- Anyone know? Because when we speak, often times we do not use all the words as it is done in writing. When this question is used in writing no words are left out. Therefore, it will be -Does anyone know? The grammar should be acceptable whether full or incomplete sentence.
3. Do you know who is he?
Of course, here it also depends on the tone; but the better question is- Do you know who he is?

Prepositions are also not easy to use and not easy to teach or to explain either. Therefore, it becomes even harder for the L2 speakers to choose the acceptable preposition. Of course, for some prepositions we can explain and give examples. Sometimes, we can use more than one preposition in the same slot. For this reason, many times we check from the dictionary to be sure which preposition goes with which word. In the following sentences prepositions are used or not used/absent as observed in the study:

1. "Share to your friend.
2. Family is not happy each other.
3. Do you want to dedicate *to yourself to the task?
4. When you look somebody...
5. I came *to home.
6. I want to go washroom".

In sentence 1, it would be better and smoother to use the preposition 'with' in place of 'to'. In 2, 4, and 6; the insertion of 'with', 'at' and 'to' respectively is necessary. In 3 and 5 the insertion of 'to' as indicated with an asterisk is not needed.

Subject verb agreement is another problem the L2 learners and speakers face. Though it is taught at the early learning level, as early as when the learners are in class five but there is still a mixed up of what verb to use with the subject. Here are a few examples which occurred in the data:

1. "Sarah and Eva was sleeping.
2. The police is...
3. My lips is unclean".

The word 'police' is a plural (pl); therefore, the pl verb 'are' should be used. However, if the noun is a singular (sg); such as, a police officer or a policeman, then the sg verb can be used. But 'police' is pl, hence it takes a pl be verb 'are'.

Regarding tense, the data revealed that some second language speakers have problem with perfect tense, past tense, and repetition of past tense as observed in the following sentences:

1. "Thirty long years I had wait.
2. I was suppose to leave.
3. I didn't went."

There are two important tenses in English, present and past. Consequently, we have present participle and past participle. In the first sentence "... wait" is supposed to be a past perfect. "The tense used to refer to '**past in past**' is the **past perfect (had + V-en)**". In the English language "the past perfect tense is formed by using **had** followed by a verb in its past participle form" (Verma, & Nagarajan, 2006, p. 29).

In 2 and 3 the speaker is confused with the present and past tenses. It should be 'was supposed' because that was the intention and expectation; and 3 is a common mistake of some L2 speakers particularly those speakers with the rural educational background. Grammatically, 'didn't' is a contraction of did not. The verb 'did' is a past tense; therefore, it cannot be followed by another past tense. The verb that follows should be the present tense-I didn't go.

Singular and plural nouns seem to be of a great issue for the L2 speakers as to when to have or not to have an -s ending to a noun. For instance, where it is supposed to be a sg such as 'a miracle' an -s is added; whereas, 'two sisters' is without the pl -s. To say 'king of king' is meaningless when the -s is not present in the second word- king. The problem here is of countable, uncountable nouns, and their meaning. The data revealed that utterances such as "many juice" and "Psalms" are used by the L2 speakers. The use of pl form 'Psalms' when the speaker refers to only one chapter.

Following are the exact utterances observed from the speeches/conversations of the L2 speakers:

1. "There will be a miracles.
2. There are two sister.
3. Teenage childrens drive high speed.
4. May this two book be like mana for our growth.
5. King of king and Lord of lord
6. Does anybody has books?

7. So many juice, no?
8. Psalms 150
9. He lost one of his leg."

Syntactically and semantically, at times it is difficult to understand what the L2 speakers are trying to convey. The following utterances were found in the data:

1. "You could able to achieve
2. He can able to come
3. She was die in a week
4. Following people were slept due to covid- 19.
5. As a father I wanted to faint.
6. Her helper take bath for her."

Semantically, such sentences are not clear; for instance, when one of the speakers said, "As a father I wanted to faint." Did he really want to faint? Or he felt as if he was going to faint when his son was diagnosed with cancer. Also, sentence 6 though syntactically acceptable but semantically it hardly makes any sense.

Comparative and superlative degrees are a problem with some L2 speakers. The following are the examples which the data have revealed:

1. "The most happiest woman
2. The most strongest
3. He is more wiser.
4. Life is becoming sweet and sweet.
5. He's working hard and hard."

Question tag is one of those topics in grammar that most of us Indians (both educated and not so educated) are not using it right. Perhaps this is why some established authors, for instance, Yardi (1994) has quoted George and Corbulth who suggest that "we need not teach and should not have to teach all the question tags ...the universal 'Is it?' and 'Isn't it?' are better left as they are" (p. 148). A few of these question tags occurred in the data as listed below:

1. "He is a tiger guide, isn't it?
2. He gave an excellent presentation, isn't it?
3. You will share your notes with others, isn't it?"

Pronunciation

Pronunciation seems to be very difficult for most of the second language learners and speakers. L2 learners and speakers have many problems while learning English, in examining the data which has been classified under vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation; the speakers in this study have more problems in pronunciation than in vocabulary and grammar. The problems in pronunciation revealed in the data are as follows:

1. "...two different errors in literature"
The speaker was unable to pronounce or perhaps confused between errors /'erəs/ and eras /'ɪərəs/.
2. Interference pronounced as "interfrence"

The principal stress is on the third syllable /ɪntə'fɪərəns/ however, some L2 speakers leave out the syllable completely.

3. Isle pronounced as “isel” instead of /aɪl/
4. Drunkard as “drunka:d”
The speaker is dragging the second syllable long and strong; whereas, it should be shorter and weaker than the first syllable.
5. Leopard /'lepəd/ has two syllables, but the data revealed that some L2 speakers pronounced it as “le.o.pard” three syllables and given importance to all three equally.
6. Tortoise /'tɔ:təs/ is pronounced as “tortois”
The /r/ sound which is supposed to be silent is very prominent.
7. Heir /eə/ is pronounced as “hair”
The /h/ sound is supposed to be silent; the letter ‘r’ is not pronounced when ‘heir’ is used in isolation.
8. Sword /sɔ:d/ is pronounced as /swɜ:d/
Many L2 speakers pronounce with the /w/ sound and also commit a mistake for the vowel sound as well.
9. Born is pronounced as “burn”
This is the same vowel mistake as number 8.
10. World is pronounced as “wall”
This is also the same vowel mistake as number 8, where the L2 speaker is not able to distinguish the central vowel /ɜ:/ from the back vowel /ɔ:/.
11. Food as “foot”;
This is not only unintelligible to native English speakers, but to many Indians as well. Here is an example, “She did not have ‘foot’ to eat”. The speaker is not able to understand the difference between the long /u:/ and the short /ʊ/ sounds.
12. Martyr /'ma:tə/ is pronounced as “marteer”
13. Live /lɪv/ as “leave”
14. Speak /spi:k/ as “spick”

In 13 and 14 the L2 speaker is confused or not able to hear the two different sounds between the long /i:/ and the short /ɪ/ sounds.

15. Raise /reɪz/ is pronounced as “rise” such as “I want to rise a question”.
16. Praise /preɪz/ and prayers /preəz/ is another mixed up of vowels sounds for some L2 speakers; such as “Let’s uphold them in our praise”.
17. Slap is pronounced as “slep” for instance, “John got angry and slep on her face”.
18. Young /jʌŋ/ is pronounced as “eng”
Concerning the word ‘young’ some speakers are not able to differentiate between a consonant /j/ and a vowel /e/; perhaps it is due to the influence of the mother tongue.
19. Apostle /ə'pɒsəl/ as “apostle”
Some L2 speakers tend to pronounce the letter ‘t’; whereas in some words, it is supposed to be silent.
20. Prejudice /'preʒudɪs/ pronounced as “prejudais”
21. Example /ɪg'zɑ:mpəl/ as “exsample”

In 20 there is a mixed up of a pure vowel /ɪ/ and a diphthong /aɪ/; and in 21 the problem of the letters 's' and 'z'.

22. Special /'speʃəl/ is pronounced as "spesial"
23. Concern /kəns'ɜ:n/ is pronounced as "conse:n"
24. Word /wɜ:d/ as "we:d"
25. Deserve /dɪ'zɜ:v/ as "dese:f"
26. Worse /wɜ:s/ as "we:s"

Words from 23 to 26 clearly revealed that the speaker has a problem pronouncing the strong, central vowel sound /ɜ:/ . For instance, the speaker said, "the sickness was going we:s and we:s".

27. Cherubim was pronounced as "cherubeams". Here there is a mixed up between the two vowels: short /ɪ/ and the long /i:/.
28. Against /ə'genst/ is a two-syllable word. The speaker pronounced the second syllable with a long sound as in 'gain'; whereas, it is supposed to be short though it is a strong and prominent syllable.
29. Said /sed/ as "se:ɪd"
30. Says /ses/ as "se:ɪs"
31. Bag /bæg/ as "be:g"
32. Shall /ʃæl/ as "she:l"
33. Chaos /'keɪs/ as "khawas"
34. Bible /'baɪbəl/ as "bibul"
35. Thirty /'θɜ:tɪ/ as "tharty"
36. Firm /fɜ:m/ as "fa:m"
37. Earth /ɜ:θ/ as "a:d"
38. Hurt /hɜ:t/ as "ha:d"
39. Learn /lɜ:n/ as "la:n"

The words thirty, firm, earth, hurt, and learn have the same pure, central vowel /ɜ:/ . However, some of the L2 speakers of English use the back vowel /a:/ instead of the central vowel.

40. Bereaved /bɪ'ri:vɪd/ has two syllables but it was pronounced as "brief" one syllable and a different word altogether.
41. Honour /'ɒnə/ was pronounced with the initial sound of the letter 'h' whereas it is supposed to be silent; but some L2 speakers commit the error of pronouncing it quite prominently.
42. Card /ka:d/ as "cord"
43. Realm /reɪlm/ as */rɪəlm/
44. Livelihood /'laɪlɪhʊd/ as */lɪvɪhʊd/
45. Power was pronounced as "bower", there is a mixed up of /p/ and /b/ sounds.
46. Instead /ɪn'sted/ as instid, in English a word with more than one syllable, will have one which is more prominent than all the others.
47. Read /red/ as */ri:d/, an L2 speaker pronounced the past tense of 'read' as /ri:d/.
48. Ear /ɪə/ as "air"
49. Pleasure /pleʒə/ was pronounced as "plejar"
50. Shall /ʃæl/ as "sal"

51. Shields as “seals”, there is a strong L1 interference that the second language speaker was not able to differentiate between the consonants /ʃ/ and /s/.
52. Law /lɔ:/ as “low”
53. Warn /wɔ:n/ was pronounced as “wern”
54. Fill /fɪl/ as “feel”, these words have different vowels: ‘fill’ is pronounced with a short vowel but ‘feel’ should be with a long vowel /i:/ sound.
55. Grew /gru:/ the past tense of grow was missed pronounced sounding as “griw”.
56. Further /'fʊ:ðə/ as “further”
57. Bless as “blas”

Someone has shared this anecdote in one of the meetings:

Speaker 1: “Oh, you are still studying?”

Speaker 2: “No, yesterday I pass away”.

Speaker 1: “Ok, may God blas you!”

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study the L2 speakers are of different levels: students, teachers, and professors. The data has revealed that the mistakes and errors committed in English are from all levels of the L2 speakers. For instance, words like ‘sword, interference, martyr...’ were pronounced wrongly even by L2 speakers who have received a high degree-Ph D.

As we have seen in the review of literature Ama (2019) has pointed out that teachers themselves (in general) commit mistakes while speaking and teaching, especially in pronunciation. Moreover, English is picked up from other teachers and other sources such as friends, pictures, and from the street. Therefore, learning and speaking English for the L2 (or L3) can be very difficult; especially, for those who have had their earlier education in the rural regions.

Speakers who start learning and speaking English when they passed adolescence can become very hard for them to be fluent in speaking, get the right words to express, the acceptable grammar, and the acceptable pronunciation. It is observed that second language speakers of all levels have some challenges in speaking English. Therefore, whenever the second language/ English is weak their mother tongue takes over.

Second language speakers of English do face issues with using the right word or expression at times; in a similar way, some L2 speakers have problems in using grammatical, acceptable structures. But with sufficient period of time, they can learn. On the other hand, pronunciation seems to be much harder than vocabulary and grammar. However, this is not really surprising; even established writers, “one example is Joseph Conrad, who wrote novels in English that became classics of literature, but whose English retained the strong Polish accent of his L1” (Yule, 2008, pp. 163-164).

The question is can we cure ourselves from bad pronunciation? The answer could be ‘yes’! perhaps we can, if we know the “elementary principles of phonetics and the organs of speech” (Jones, 2008, p. 13). Korneev (2020) who is the CEO and co-founder of EWA advises that today learners have the advantage by using the internet, learners can find someone who is a fluent speaker of English and practice learning and speaking in English. In fact, today it has become easier to cure our incorrect pronunciation; we can refer to Google in our handset, it only takes a few clicks and for those who need explanation, Jones (2008) advises that there are many helpful books

and they can also join an elocution class which is one of the best methods to improve pronunciation.

What is important to note is we do not have to pronounce like the British or the American speakers or try to copy their accent; for if we do, many of us will sound funny and artificial and it might become harder for the listener to digest. What we need to remember is we can come out of our local peculiarities by eliminating the MT or our regional dialect and (for us who are Indians can) speak the acceptable, Indian, educated English also known as the standard Indian English.

As the saying goes, “It takes a thief to catch a thief”. In other words, it is easier for a thief to catch a thief. Similarly, we can use or include the mistakes and errors of the L2 speakers in a syllabus and if needed in a remedial class to help and correct those who face challenges, to help them realize their problems and strive for better English and to understand the nature of the English language.

Abbreviations and symbols

EWA	an app for learning English
CEO	chief executive officer
ESL	English as a second language
IPA	international phonetic alphabet
L1	mother tongue
L2	second language
Para.	paragraph
Pl	plural
RP	British Received Pronunciation
Sg	singular
V	verb
-en	participle ending form
*	the word/phrase is probably not acceptable
/ /	the transcribed acceptable pronunciation
'	main stress/accent placed before the prominent syllable
[]	words which are not in the original writing but words of the present author

References

- Ama, J. A. (2019). *Challenges Encountered by Learners of English as a Second Language*. Retrieved from <https://owlcation.com> on Dec. 18, 2021.
- Hornby, A. S. (1983). *Guide to Patterns and Usage in English*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hyltenstam, K., & Abrahamsson, N. (2003). *Age of Onset and Ultimate Attainment in Near-Native Speakers of Swedish as a Second Language*. Retrieved from researchgate.net/publication/303813117_Age_of_onset_and_ultimate_attainment_in_near-native_speakers_of_swedish_as_a_second_language on Jan. 25, 2022.
- Jones, F. (2008). *How to Speak Fluently: A Handbook of Every Pronunciation*. 2nd eds. New Delhi: Indiana Publishing House.
- Korneev, M. (Dec. 28, 2020). “The 5 Most Common Challenges ESL Learners Face (and how to solve them).” Retrieved from news.elearninginside.com on Dec. 17, 2021.

- O'Connor, J.D. (1980). *Better English Pronunciation*. 6th edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Saraswathi, V. (2006). *English Language Teaching: Principles and Practice*. Rep. Hyderabad: Orient Longman Pvt. Ltd.
- Talang-Rao, E. (2021). "The Issues of Spelling and Pronunciation" *Langlit*. Vol. 8, issue 1. Retrieved from www.langlit.org on June 15, 2022.
- Verma, S. K., & Nagarajan, H. (2006). *An Interactive Grammar of Modern English*. Rep. New Delhi: Frank Bros. & Co. Ltd.
- Verma, S. K., & Krishnaswamy, N. (2009). *Modern Linguistics: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Winkler, E. G. (2021). *Understanding Language*. 2nd edn. New Delhi: Bloomsbury, Pvt. Ltd.
- Yardi, V. V. (1994). *Teaching English in India Today*. 3rd edn. Aurangabad: Parimal Prakashan.
- Yule, G. (2008). *The Study of Language*. 3rd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Author Biography



Dr. Esther Talang-Rao is a Professor in the Department of English, at Spicer Adventist University, Pune, India. She completed her M.Phil. from the University of Pune and her Ph.D. from Deccan College. She has published articles in International Journals. Her specializations are on English Language and Literature Teaching (ELLT) and Sociolinguistics. She had attended many Seminars, Conferences and Workshops; she has also attended 48 Webinars, national and international and has presented papers at the state level and international level.

Improving Students' English Spelling Ability Through Activity-Based Teaching-Learning for Standard VII: An Action Research

Julia Robby Chakkalathy, Ashwini Jagannath Mahamuni*

Spicer Adventist University

Abstract

This paper's problem is improving the spelling ability of Standard VII students of a selected Higher Secondary School in Pune. The primary reasons behind the low ability of spelling highlighted by teachers of the English language are 1. Irregularities in classes/guidance/practice during covid-19 related periods, 2. Lack of interest in practicing spelling due to online and limited classes, and 3. Lack of motivation to work on spelling at home. Studies on improving spelling include Language games, storytelling, activity-based learning, specialized guidance, and so forth. The research methodology consists of identifying an issue with spelling ability, planning activities to improve spelling, implementing/action, and checking the effectiveness of the activities by reflecting on the results. The researcher conducted activities with the help of school teachers. The researcher used activities like word breaks, word journals, personal dictionaries, and dictation with test scores to interpret results. For analyzing data, the researcher used test scores and compared them with two situations, pre-test and post-test conditions of an experiment. Activities implemented were found beneficial to increase interest in getting essential skills in English like spelling and confirmed by the results. Similarly, this study showed significant improvement in spelling using activity-based teaching-learning.

Keywords: Activity-based, Teaching-Learning, English spelling, Improving Spelling

Introduction

Though English is a secondary language, it is necessary to learn English at the secondary stage. English plays a crucial role in our educational system and national life (Salsibilla, 2021). There are various issues in developing essential skills in English, such as reading, writing, speaking, developing vocabulary, comprehension, and spelling ability. Spelling is a vital literacy skill and a critical language component that can significantly affect L2 students'

*Email: ashwini.mahamuni05@gmail.com

future education and occupational status (Nahari and Alfadda, 2016). As English is not students' mother tongue or their first language, practicing English spellings must be taught using various techniques that encourage them to learn the language. Language skills need sufficient practice and motivation. Incorporating activities will boost students' confidence, and they will not feel that learning English is difficult but instead have fun. In contrast, they learn and apply the language in their daily life. Due to this, the researcher decided to use activity-based teaching-learning to improve English spelling. The use of activities would be an advantage for the students.

This study takes up the concept of activity-based learning as follows:

“Activity-based learning (ABL), as defined by Prince (2004), is a learning method in which students are engaged in the learning processes. Activity-based learning is indulging students in activities by stimulating their senses, such as sight, smell, vision, or feeling, and getting them involved in the subject.

There are several benefits of Activity Based Learning, such as: 1. Activity-based teaching-learning focuses on a student-centered approach by developing self-learning skills among the learners. 2. Activity-based learning is acquiring schematic concepts through activities involving the task or concept to be learned. 3. It provides a framework for the traditional concept of 'learning by doing.' 4. Activity-based learning environment prepares learners to be autonomous, critical thinkers and knowledge constructors (Ghufran, 2019).

The research is focused on the above advantages over the traditional methodologies to improve spelling ability. Several activities were investigated, including memorizing and visualizing spelling (Nahari and Alfadda, 2016), testing with feedback in improving adult spelling ability (Pan et al., 2015), breaking words up into parts, morning messages, personal dictionaries, word banks, word sorts, and word walls (Chase-Lockwood, R., & Masino, M. 2002). These were only chosen for use in this study.

Word breaks, word journals, personal dictionaries, and dictation are examples of these activities. The researcher also provided some worksheets and instructions to the students to practice spelling, along with the specified activities mentioned above. Some of the techniques using digital devices like computer, such as GraphoLearn technology (GL) (Juhani et al., 2021), is also useful in improving spelling ability but considering constraints of the learning environment, the researcher found easy way basic strategies like classroom activities are more beneficial.

Rationale of the Study

Spelling is the most critical aspect of writing in the English language. The ability to spell does not develop naturally; it needs to be taught explicitly, like reading and writing. Online classes, lack of good practice in developing spelling ability, and post-pandemic effects are the reasons for poor English spelling skills among Std. VII students of the selected Higher Secondary School in Pune. Since the Std. VII Students need to become more fluent in English; therefore, they are unfamiliar with lag in developing the necessary spellings of words included in the English language textbook. Hence, the researcher felt a need to practice some of the critical spelling of the words from the English language textbook, including its practice in written and oral form, as frequently as possible to familiarize them with English.

Objectives of the Study

The researcher focused following objectives to target improvement in English language spelling skills for Std. VII students.

1. Conduct activities to improve spelling in English, such as word bank journals, interactive word breaks, personalized dictionaries, etc.
2. Find out the effectiveness of Activity-based Teaching-Learning to improve the students' spelling skills in English.

Research Questions

The study followed the findings and answers to basic questions aimed at reaching conclusions, which are as follows.

1. What is the level of the spelling skills of the Std. VII students before and after conducting activities like breaking words, word journals, personal dictionary, and dictation?
2. Is there any significant difference between the student's performance in improving spelling skills before and after using breaking words, word journals, personal dictionaries, and dictation?

Research Methodology

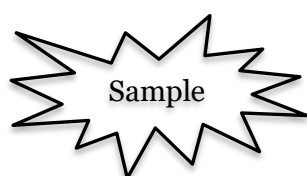
The research methodology is predefined to give information about the sample selected for the study, and the method used to collect data, the method of analyzing and interpreting data, etc. The researcher used the Quasi-Experimental Design to conduct this study. This study is action research undertaken to focus on and solve fundamental issues in classroom settings. It can be defined as:

Action research is a form of investigation designed for teachers to attempt to solve problems and improve professional classroom practices. It involves systematic observations and data collection, which the practitioner-researcher can use in reflection, decision-making, and developing more effective classroom strategies (Parsons and Brown, 2002).

This action research has some constraints over the actual study, such as – this is situation-based research (limited to the spelling ability and its improvement), small scale sample (30 students, that too from one class and one division), limited period (three-week duration).

Sample for this study

The sample used in this study was selected deliberately with a focus on the students who need help spelling English words correctly. The researcher selected students from Std. VII, Division – A of the selected Higher Secondary School in Pune. The total enrollment in the classroom was 50, out of which the researcher randomly selected 30 students for the test.



Purposive sampling—30 students of Std VII

Research Design

The researcher followed a simple study procedure: Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. The researcher spent three weeks on the study, which included testing the status of the selected students' spelling skills and then implementing activities like word breaks, work journals, personal dictionaries, and dictation. The post-test followed the intervention and analyzed the improvement of the students. This research design relied on collecting and analyzing numerical data and statistics.

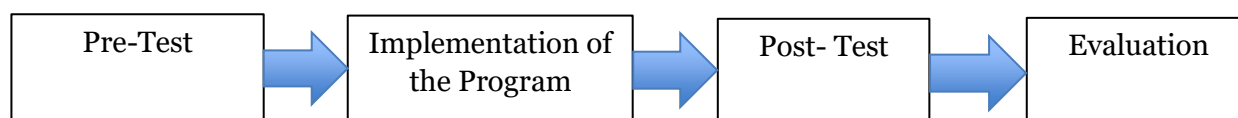


Fig 1: Research Design followed for this study

Procedure of Data Collection

The pre-test was conducted for the selected class to check the basic spelling skills, which helped to choose the participants for this study. The intervention program followed this process, which included activities-based teaching and learning. The classroom teacher helped collect data and assisted in conducting activities with the researcher in this study. Post-test was conducted to check the activities' effectiveness regarding improving spelling ability. The details of the activities undertaken to improve spelling ability are given in Table 1 below.

Activity	Details of the activity	Outcome of the activity
Word break	Students can break the given word into parts and try to memorize it through practice.	Understand difficult spelling. It helps to practice spelling through small portions.
Word journal	Maintain a journal where students can keep a record of words.	Record and practice essential words from the textbook. Add and retain the vocabulary.
Personal dictionary	Students create their personalized dictionary consisting of the words they have encountered and find difficulty understanding.	Understand the meaning and remember the spelling of the word and can use it in their daily conversation.
Dictation	Students were asked to write a story or paragraph the researcher would dictate.	Test the spelling and listening skills of the students and how attentive they were during the activity.

Table 1: Activities-based learning – program considered for a three-week duration

The above activities were implemented, and data were collected to check the results. This research was conducted during the academic session of 2021-2022. classes were engaged by considering their English language periods.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

Analysis of the data collected from the tests is done using essential statistical tools/calculations. The scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test were used to compare the effectiveness of the activities used to improve English language spelling ability. Scores were tabulated to get the frequency distribution and then calculated to get the Mean and Standard Deviation. The Mean of the scores gave an idea about the central tendency of the scores, which shows a specific pattern. Standard deviation helped to understand the deviation pattern of the scores from the mean. The researcher needed both mean and standard deviation to interpret the results. The scores were then used to draw the pie chart and bar graph for easy comparison and representation of the scores at a glance. The presentation of scores in the form of a pie chart concerning the pre-test and post-test is as follows: Figure 2 and Figure 3.

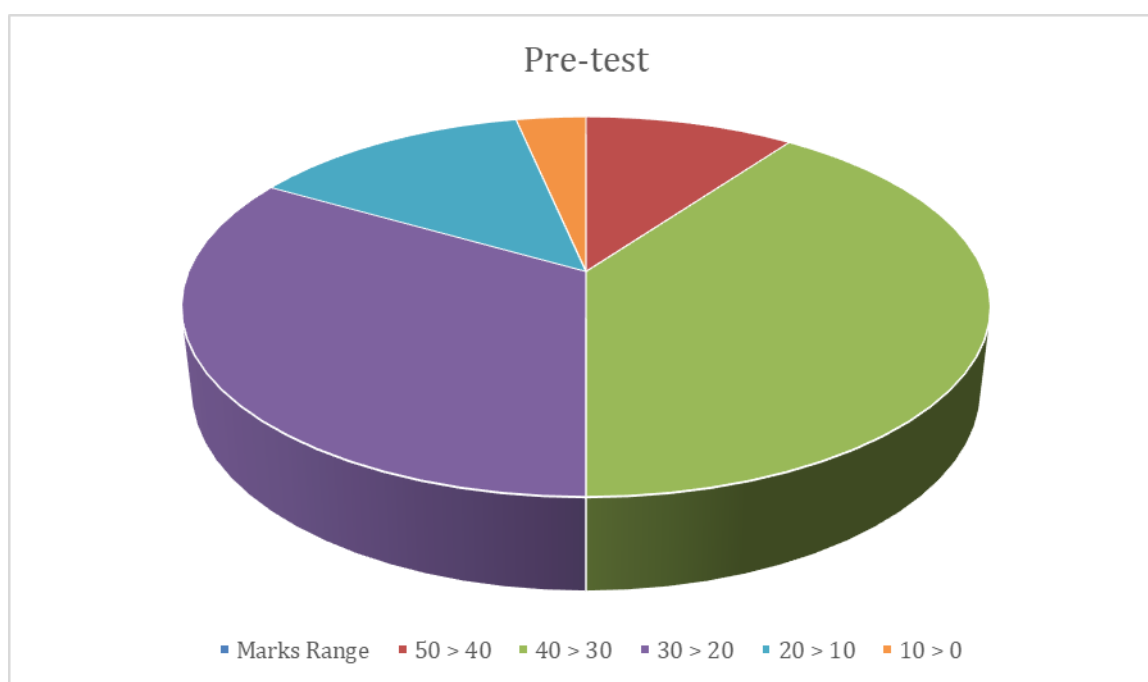


Figure 2: Pie chart showing the Pre-test range of Scores obtained from the study.

Pie charts are used to get the status of the students regarding spelling ability. This status check is done for both pre-test and post-test conditions.

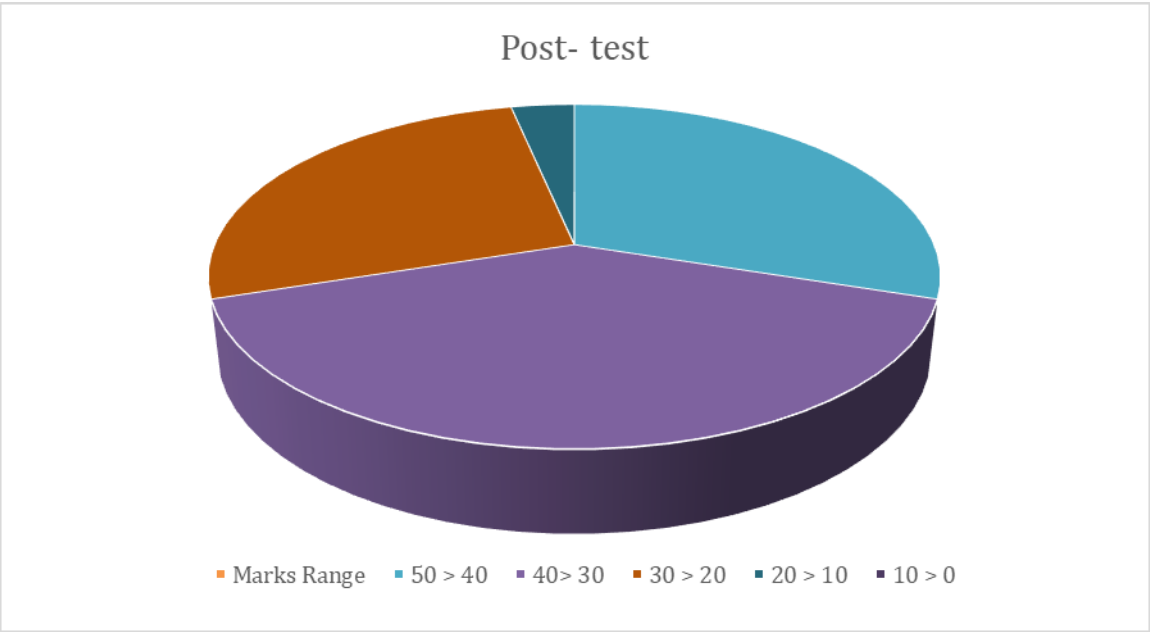


Figure 3: Pie chart showing the Post-test range of Scores obtained from the study.

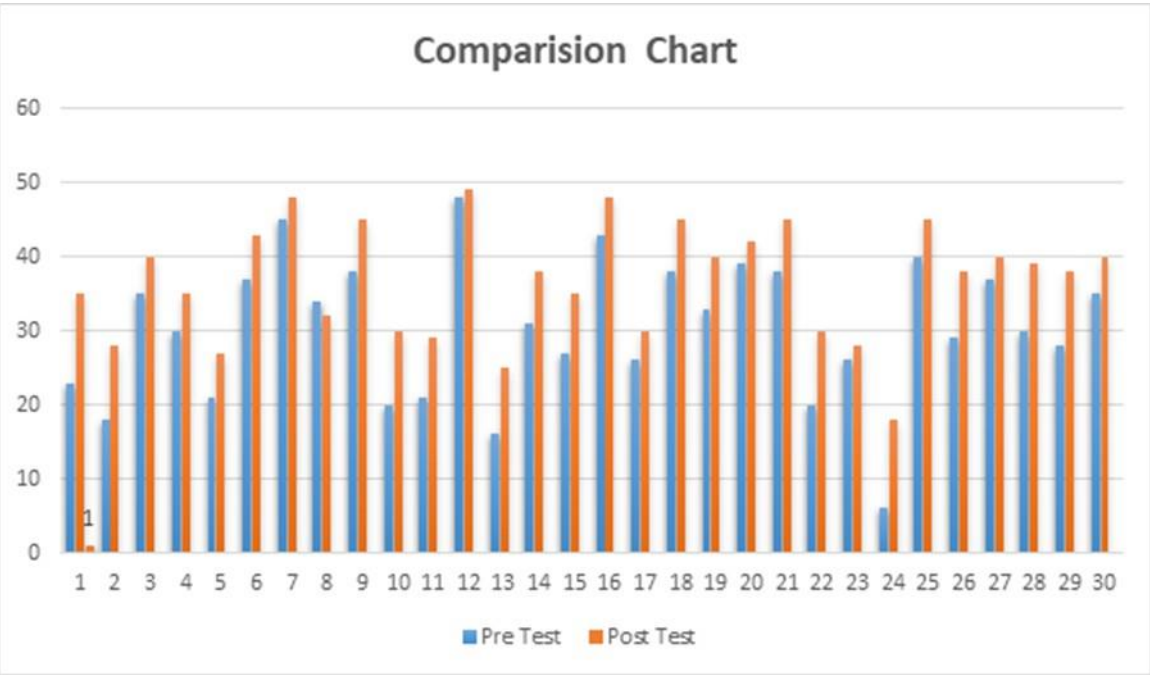


Figure 4: Comparison chart showing Pre-test and Post-test scores together

The presentation of scores in the form of a bar graph to compare the result pre-test against the post-test is shown in Figure 3. this bar graph indicates the significant difference between the pre-test conditions and treatment/activity provided for improving spelling ability.

Figure No. 4: Comparison chart showing Pre-test and Post-test scores together

Tests	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre-Test	30.4	9.5289034
Post-Test	36.83	7.790725403

Table 2. Pre-test and Post-test Data analysis

Table 2 represents the Mean and Standard deviation scores obtained through this study. The primary difference between mean scores of the pre-test and post-test shows improvement in spelling ability.

Pre-Test Findings

The answer to the first question raised at the start is given by pre-test findings where the status of students' spelling ability is checked. The question and its finding are as follows: 1. What is the level of the Spelling Skills of Standard VII before and after conducting Activities like Breaking Words, Word Journals, Personal Dictionary, and Dictation?"

- The pre-test helped the researcher understand the students' Spelling Skills/abilities; with the help of the pie chart, we can determine the percentage of students that need help with spelling and those who are good at spelling ability. 13.8% of the students scored 40 and above during the pre-test. 44.8% of the students scored between 30-40, 31% between 20-30, and the remaining 10.3% scored below 20 (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).

With the help of the pre-test, the researcher was able to understand the students' skills and was able to concentrate and help the students to increase their Spelling Skills.

Post-Test Finding

The answer to the second question raised at the start is given by post-test findings, where the effectiveness of activity-based learning is checked. The question and its finding are as follows: 2. Is there any significant difference between the student's performance in improving Spelling Skills before and after using Breaking Words, Word Journals, Personal Dictionary, and Dictation?"

- After conducting activity-based teaching-learning, the researcher could significantly improve the students' Spelling Skills. The students understood and followed the activities. After activity-based learning, there is confidence built in students to get spellings correctly and practice them and hence were able to see improvement in themselves. This has motivated them to continue learning in specified ways (Fig. 4 & Table. 2).

Discussion

NEP 2020 highlighted, "Student-focused teaching & learning method is going to be enforced rather than current teacher-focused teaching model" (Kumar, 2021). And it is critical to reframe educational settings to innovate ways of teaching to the needs of

students. Teachers can identify students' learning styles, and the demand for the content can be applied differently. This can address the issue posed in this study regarding English language spelling ability. Developing English spelling skills is an intricate process for children with or at risk of Specific Learning Disabilities and requires targeted interventions (Fragkauli et al., 2021). Several studies support the activity-based teaching-learning process over the traditional method of teaching.

Ericksen (1978) believes that "Effective learning in the classroom depends on the teacher's ability to maintain the interest that brings students to the course in the first place." Hence, selecting the method to improve spelling ability, i.e., 'Activity-based learning' for this study, is more effective than any other way. This study tried its best to choose a combination of activities according to the need of the students, such as word breaks, work journals, personal dictionaries, and dictation. And the results were found effective as well. Many activities help improve language skills.

The advantages of activity-based learning are highlighted by many different authors as follows: 1. Activity-based teaching stimulates a high degree of interest in the learners and gets the message delivered. 2. Churchill (2003) propagates that activity-based learning aids students and learners to construct mental models that allow for higher-order performance, such as applied problem-solving and transfer of information and skills. Further, it is appropriate for improving the learners' performance. 3. Use of activities that supplement the study material. It also helps the teachers to explain the subject matter easily (Noreen R. 2019). 4. Gallagher and Stepien (1996), Lieux (2001), and Zumbach et al. (2004) also emphasized the effectiveness of activity-based teaching. 5. Explicit and systematic instruction effectively improves spelling (Pittman, R. T., Joshi, R. M., & Carreker, S. (2014). 6. Some studies focused on gaming as an effective way to develop skills in specific subjects. The use of games provides a unique opportunity for the student to self-assess their progress in learning professional vocabulary and for a teacher to informally assess the student's progress without causing stress and anxiety (Kavaliauskiene, 2000; Lestariningsih, 2008). 7. On a similar note, research was conducted by Butyniec-Thomas, J., & Woloshyn, V. E. (1997) where they used (a) explicit instruction in the use of word building, syllabic segmentation, and imagery as spelling strategies and (b) information about each strategy for improving spelling ability. 8. An Article from a Blog – Oxford Royale states 19 practical ways to improve spelling in English in which some methods are matching with the methods which researcher has used for the study, these are Break in into syllables, writing spelling several times (dictation) through maintaining journals, etc. 9. Anwar Fizza (2019) worked on the effectiveness of Activity Based Learning with the Students Motivation and Achievement.

From the above discussion, it is evident that activities engage students in meaningful tasks and motivate them to learn things playfully. Activities create a spirit and invite a competitive mood to grace the performance. The secondary school stage of education demands an activity-based learning style, which is in line with NEP 2020 suggestions. NEP 2020 promotes Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable, and Engaging learning (Saxena, A. 2020). However, NEP 2020 also focuses on student-led peer learning and community tutoring, which is not considered in this study. This study found that Activity-Based Teaching Learning is effective and used to improve English spelling.

Conclusion

The results of this study supported the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the student's performance in improving their spelling ability before and after the implementation of Activity-based learning consisting of breaking words, word journals,

personal dictionary, and dictation.

It was also concluded that students taught through activity-based teaching have more substantial retention power. This study followed a Quasi-Experimental Design which shows significant results on a smaller scale (number of selected students 30) to understand that the activity-based teaching-learning process is effective in improving basic English spelling skills.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the school should provide a room for activities in language learning, at least for creating interest in the subject and developing basic language skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing (consumption and production skills). There should be a language laboratory where students who are weak in any of the mentioned skills will spend more time and learn.

It is also recommended that developing language skills should be considered a significant communication tool/ medium in the early years of a student's life. Practicing, maintaining a diary, and using games (online and offline) can be effective in developing spelling skills in students is an essential part of their schooling.

References

- Allred, R. A. (1984). Spelling trends, content, and methods. National Education Association Publication.
- Anwar, F. (2019). Activity-based teaching, student motivation, and academic achievement. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 6(1), 154–170. Retrieved on July 19, 2022. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1216784.pdf>. <https://doi.org/10.22555/joeed.v6i1.1782>
- Ashbaugh, A. (2016). Multi-sensory techniques in spelling instruction: An action research study for students with dyslexia ([Doctoral Dissertation]. Otterbein University).
- Butyniec-Thomas, J., & Woloshyn, V. E. (1997). The effects of explicit-strategy and whole-language instruction on students' spelling ability. *Journal of Experimental Education (experimental ed)*, 65(4), 293–302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1997.10806605>
- Center for Educational Research and Development. (2002). The silken knot: Standards for English for schools in Bhutan. Department of Education.
- Chase-Lockwood, R., & Masino, M. (2002). Improving Student Spelling Skills Through the Use of Effective Teaching Strategies. Retrieved January 07, 2023. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED465190>
- Churchill, D. (2003). Effective design principles for activity-based learning: The crucial role of “learning objects” in science and engineering education. Paper Presented at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic, 2.
- Corder, P. (1981). Error analysis and interlanguage. Oxford University Press.
- Dadzie, G., & Bosiwah, L. (2015). Spelling errors among junior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. *Journal of Language. Linguistics in Literature*, 1(3), 46–54.
- Daffern, T., & Mackenzie, N. M. (2020). A case study on the challenges of learning and teaching English spelling: Insights from eight Australian students and their teachers. *Literacy*, 54(3), 99–110. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12215>

- Darus, S., & Subramaniam, K. (2009). Error analysis of written English essays of secondary school students in Malaysia: A case study. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(3), 483–495.
- Ericksen, S. C. (1978). The lecture. Memo to the faculty, 60. Ann Arbor: Center for Research on Teaching and Learning. University of Michigan.
- Fragkouli, K., Antoniou, F., Mouzaki, A., Ralli, A. M., Kokkali, V., & Alexoudi, K. (2021). Evaluation of a spelling intervention program for third graders at risk for learning disabilities. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 1–20.
- Gallagher, S. A., & Stepien, W. J. (1996). Content acquisition in problem-based learning: Depth versus breadth in American studies. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 19(3), 257–275. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016235329601900302>
- Gilstrap, R. (1962). The development of independent spelling skills in the intermediate grades. *Elementary English*, 39(5), 481–485. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41385321>
- Ghufran, M. H. (2019). Activity-based learning science. Retrieved July 19, 2022. <https://nbtindia.gov.in/writereaddata/freebooks/pdf/Activity%20Based%20Learning%20Science.pdf>. National Book Trust.
- Juhani Lyytinen, H., Semrud-Clikeman, M., Li, H., Pugh, K., & Richardson, U. (2021). Supporting acquisition of spelling skills in different orthographies using an empirically Validated digital learning environment. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 566220. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.566220>
- Kumar, A. (2021), 36. Retrieved on January 07, 2023, from <http://digitalcommons.usf.edu/m3publishing/vol3/iss2021/36/>. New education policy (NEP), 2020: A roadmap for India 2.0. University of South Florida M3 Center Publishing, 3.
- Muriungi, P. K., Mukuthuria, M., & Gatavi, M. (2011). Education and language: Errors in English language and their remedies. *Journal of Language and Linguistics Studies*, 7(2), 87–116.
- Nahari, A. A., & Alfadda, H. A. (2016). From memorizing to visualizing: The effect of using visualization strategies to improve students' spelling skills. *English Language Teaching*, 9(6), 1–18. Retrieved January 07, 2023. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1101232>. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n6p1>
- Noreen, R., & Rana, A. M. K. (2019). Activity-Based Teaching versus Traditional Method of Teaching in Mathematics at Elementary Level. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 41(2), 145–159.
- Oxford, R. (Pittman. (2014). Improving the spelling ability among speakers of African American English through explicit instruction. *Literacy Research and Instruction*. R.T., Joshi, R.M., & Carreker, S, 53(2), 107–133.
- Pan, S. C., Rubin, B. R., & Rickard, T. C. (2015). Does testing with feedback improve adult spelling skills relative to copying and reading? *Journal of Experimental Psychology. Applied*, 21(4), 356–369. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000062>
- Parsons, & Brown. (2002). Action research definition. <https://ecu.au.libguides.com/research-methodologies-creative-arts-humanities/action-research>
- Prince, M. (2004). Does active learning work? A review of the Research. Retrieved July 19, 2022. https://www.engr.ncsu.edu/wpcontent/uploads/drive/1smSpn4AiHSh8z7a0MHDBwhb_JhcoLQmI/2004-Prince_AL.pdf. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 93(3), 223–231. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2168-9830.2004.tb00809.x>

- Rahayu, J. S. (2009). Spelling bee game in teaching narrative text. Unpublished Bachelor's thesis). Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung.
- Rohmawati, A. (2015). Spelling bee in teaching vocabulary. *Journal of English and Education*, 3(2), 1–15. Retrieved July 17, 2022. http://aresearch.upi.edu/operatorupload/s_c0351_054556_.http://chapter1.pdferic.ed.gov/?id=ED465190
- Saxena, A. The glimpse of NEP 2020. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2, 1.
- Salsibilla, S. K. (2021). Importance of English for daily life. Retrieved on Jan 07, 2023. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355820061_IMPORTANCE_OF_ENGLISH_FOR_DAILY_LIFE/citation/download

Author Biography



Julia Robby Chakkalathy is presently working as a Teacher at Eden International School, Maharashtra. She had served for four years as an accountant at Spicer Adventist University. She has completed her Bachelor of Education at Spicer Adventist University, Pune.



Dr. Ashwini Jagannath Mahamuni is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Education Department at Spicer Adventist University, Pune. She has Nine plus years of experience teaching a “Bachelor of Education” course at various institutions. She has worked as a Guest Faculty for “The School of Film and Television” at MIT ADT University, Pune. She pursued her Education through Shivaji University, Kolhapur, and received Ph.D. in Education with special reference to the Interdisciplinary nature of Studies. Her areas of specialization include Constructivism in Education, Multiculturalism, Multiple Intelligences, Metacognition, Evaluation, Life skills, and Teacher Education.

Gandhi and Truth: Analysis, Assessment, and Reflection

Boxter Kharbteng

India has given birth to many great sons and daughters, but the greatest of them all is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948). Gandhi was not only India's greatest son, but he was also the father of free India, and one of the most outstanding personalities of the twentieth century. Among the tributes that poured in after Gandhi's assassination, Albert Einstein's stands out as a unique description of Gandhi: "Generations to come will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth" (Jack, 1987, p. 565).

Generally, we know Gandhi as the one who led India to freedom from 350 years of British colonial rule. But to think of Gandhi only as a freedom fighter and father of our nation is to look only at one side of the coin. We must turn to the other side in order to get a full-orbed understanding and appreciation of the stature and greatness of Gandhi. And this is summed up in one word, "Mahatma"— "the great soul." The title is essentially a spiritual one, and deservedly so. Gandhi delved deep into the spiritual realm and felt compelled to work for India's social, economic, and political freedom. Though he accomplished the political mission bloodlessly and nonviolently, a year later (1948), Gandhi fell a victim to the bullet of his own countryman and fellow Hindu. What an irony that the one who had been called the "apostle of nonviolence" would himself become a victim of ultimate violence!

Gandhi and Truth

One of the major concepts that Gandhi repeatedly and passionately emphasized and taught is truth. Truth for Gandhi was like oxygen for his lungs. He just couldn't live without it. He said that he worshiped "Truth" and none other and that he was ready to give up his life for the sake of Truth. This article explores Gandhi's understanding of truth. However, his exposition of this subject is less than straightforward and simple. The subtitles that follow are indicative of this deep, multifaceted, and, hopefully, instructive exposé of his thought on this subject as well as his relationship to truth and Truth (his own preference of writing the word). The subtitles are my own choice, and so is their order. An inclusive summary of the various sections follows, showing how they relate to one another. This is followed by a critical assessment of and reflection on Gandhi's view of truth from the Christian perspective. The article concludes by considering the contemporary relevance of Gandhi's devotion to and embrace of truth.

Analysis of Gandhi's Concept of Truth

"Truth" is a familiar term in Hinduism. According to Chatterjee, the whole of the Hindu tradition is characterized by a "relentless pursuit after truth." (Chatterjee (1983, pp. 60-61). Being a devoutly practicing and informed Hindu, Gandhi was at home with this term.¹ So, how did Gandhi understand truth?

Relative Truth

Gandhi looked at truth in two ways: absolute truth ("Truth") and relative truth ("truth"). Accordingly, he had one explanation for relative "truth" and another, for Absolute Truth—which he claimed he worshipped. Says Gandhi:

[God's manifestations] are innumerable. But I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found Him. I am seeking after Him. I am prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest. Even if the sacrifice demanded my very life. But as long as I have not realized this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 66).

Gandhi elucidated his understanding of relative truth as that "which you believe to be true at this moment, and that is your God. If a man worships this relative truth, he is sure to obtain the Absolute Truth, i.e., God, in course of time." (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 72). In Gandhi's eyes, the main reason for having to live with a relative understanding and perception of truth is due to the inherent imperfections of human nature on account of its physical dimension. This imperfection leads to different and contradictory interpretations of beliefs (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 61). Within this context, Gandhi admitted his progress had only resulted in having "faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God." (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 66; see also Gandhi, 1927/1982, p. 453). Even in his sunset years, Gandhi still considered himself a "humble seeker" of Truth, waiting for the time when his seeker status would come to an end when he would experience "a full vision of Truth" and thus becoming "one with God, for Truth is God." (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 67). Gandhi further held that in order to get to see Truth, to "[see] God face-to-face, I count no sacrifice too great" (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 75; Gandhi's views on truth, n.d. *Young India*, 3-12-1925). "I am devoted to none, but Truth and I owe no discipline to anybody but Truth. Truth is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you. For this quest, I would be willing to die." (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 72). Unfortunately, Gandhi was pessimistic about the realization of Truth while in flesh and blood.

It is impossible for us to realize perfect Truth so long as we are imprisoned in this mortal frame. We can only visualize it in our imagination. We cannot, through the instrumentality of this ephemeral body, see face to face Truth which is eternal. That is why in the last resort one must depend on faith. (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 75).

¹Gandhi prized Hinduism above all other religions. However, he held that real religion transcends Hinduism and all religions (See Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 56).

Gandhi also defined relative truth as “what the voice within tells you.” But this relativity of hearing is also due to the difference in “evolution of the human mind” with different people, resulting in different and contradictory voices (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 71).

Absolute Truth (*Satya*)

In order to appreciate Gandhi’s understanding of Absolute Truth (*satya*), we begin with the etymological consideration of *satya*. *Satya* is Sanskrit for truth and is derived from *sat*, “which literally means ‘that which exists.’” Moreover, *sat* has its roots in another Sanskrit word, *asti*, meaning “to be”—or “is”. In its noun form, *Satya* means “being” or “essence.” (Bondurant, 1965, p. vi). But since Gandhi shared the Hindu pantheistic worldview that “God alone is, and nothing else exists” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 70), he accordingly saw all aspects of life as being “part of the united whole,” and that this totality of life is none other than God. Accordingly, Gandhi held that *Satya* should be associated with God because only God is a “being”; He alone Is. All other things, humans included, “have no separate reality of their own.” (McLaughlin, 1974, p. 33; also, Minz, 1970, p. 2). Gandhi expressed this as follows: “Truth is not a mere attribute of God, but He is That. He is nothing if He is not That.” (Bondurant, 1965, p. 19).

Location of Truth

To Gandhi, Truth and God are interchangeable or “convertible terms.” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 69). Accordingly, where God is, there Truth is. So when Gandhi talked about “the realization of God within,” also called “self-realization” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 58), he obviously located Truth within the person—and not objectively out there as in the case of the Ten Commandments and Scriptures. “God is... in everyone.” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, pp. 71, 58-59). “God resides in our hearts,” he added. “If we could completely obliterate the consciousness of our physical body, we would see him face-to-face.” Since truth resides in every human heart, one “has to search for it there, and be guided by truth as one sees it.” This is relative truth, of course. But Gandhi also said: “God is in His creation,” there is, therefore, no other way to find God except through service to humanity, through one’s country (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, pp. 65, 71, 63). “[God] is in every atom about us, around us, and within us.” He is neither in heaven nor on earth, but “in everyone.” (Gandhi’s views on truth, n.d. *Harijan*, 14-11-1936; 25-5-1935).

Function of Truth

Gandhi looked at Truth as the ultimate harmonizer between humans and their Maker. He regarded it as the “highest wisdom” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 73) and the ultimate basis of all religions when he said, “It is my unshakable belief that there is no religion other than truth.” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 72). Truth permeates the world and unites all lives in their essentials with the essence of Reality and of Nature (Iyer, 1973, p. 156). Truth is the necessary basis of all life, and so is “the same whether we say that the universe is a function of Truth or a function of Law. As such, Truth is identical with *dharma* (moral law or cosmic order), and *rta* (cosmic equilibrium). (Iyer, 1973, p. 176).

The function of truth can also be perceived from the way Gandhi used certain function-loaded words when he referred to the truth as “that Great Power.” In this connection, he

remarked: “I may be a despicable person, but when Truth speaks through me, I am invincible.” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, pp. 80; 74). But Gandhi also referred to God as “an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything” — the Power that “transcends the senses and defies all proof.” Gandhi called God the “Living Power, the informing Power, the Spirit that is changeless” and “holds everything else together and creates, dissolves, re-creates. God is Life, Truth, and Light. He is Love. He is the Supreme Good.” (Gandhi’s views on truth, n.d.).

[Truth] should be the sole justification of our existence, the supreme value in ethics, politics, and religion, the ultimate source of authority, the *raison de’tre* of all existence...; and the philosopher’s Stone, the sole talisman available to mortal man. It is *paramarthasayta* (the highest of human ends), transcending and endowing value to *artha* (or material welfare), *kama* (or human affection and happiness), *dharma* (or the moral law and cosmic order) and also to *moksha* (or eventual emancipation) ... It is the source of eternal and universal values like truth, righteousness, and justice... and is logically prior to all the other human excellences. (Iyer, 1973, pp. 150-151).

Truth is the law of our being, and man “without a particle of it would be dead,” for one is alive only to the extent that one is truthful. And it is this that makes him different from the brute and causes him to evolve into a human and moral being. Without truth, it is impossible to observe the principles of the rule of life (Iyer, 1973, pp. 151; 156-157). To act according to truth is, therefore, to fulfill ourselves; to do otherwise— to act untruthfully is to disrupt ourselves. “The thing to do then is to identify ourselves with truth, do the true thing always, and a true result will follow.” (Jones, 1948, p. 86). Gandhi also believed that political and economic independence and moral and social wellness can be attained only by truth and nonviolence (Jesudasan, 1984, p. 63).

The Nature of Truth

Truth can also be identified with underlying eternal principles and as one that is causal of all phenomena. Yet Gandhi did not see truth as an abstract quality—in the fashion of ‘first principles’. Perhaps in order to gain a better understanding of the nature of truth in Gandhi, we need to return to his remark that Truth and God are interchangeable. This being the case, Gandhi’s understanding of the nature of God should therefore be regarded as his understanding of the nature of Truth, and vice versa.

Who is God?

Gandhi said that “God is not a person... God is a force. He is the essence of life. He is pure and undefiled consciousness. He is eternal.” God is a force like electricity—and is useful only to those who know its laws. Not only is God not a person, but He is also formless (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, pp.65; 76). God is fearlessness, Truth and Love, ethics and morality, and conscience. “He is even the atheist of the atheists. For in his boundless love, God permits the atheist to live.”² God is omnipresent and omniscient. He is also “a personal God to those who

²When Gandhi said that God is “the atheist of atheists,” I gather it to mean that God permits the atheist to live because God alone exhaustively understands why, from the atheist’s perspective, he comes to the conclusion that there is

need His personal presence.” (Gandhi’s views on truth, n.d. *Young India*, 5-3-1925, “Speech at the Guildhouse, London,” 23-9-1931). Gandhi called God “My God and my Maker,” One to whom he is ultimately answerable. “He is long-suffering, and always forgiving, but He is also terrible.” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 77).

God is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us “unfettered” to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and, under cover of free will, leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense. (Gandhi’s views on truth, n.d. *Harijan*, 25-5-1935).

God has many forms, yet “we consider Him to be formless”; He has “as many names as there are creatures,” yet He is nameless; He speaks to humans through many tongues, yet He is speechless (Gandhi’s views on truth, n.d. *Harijan*, 25-5-1935). “God is His whole creation, the whole Existence.” (Gandhi, 1961, p. 10). To the above, Gandhi also spoke of Truth’s eternalness and its encapsulation within itself that of knowledge (*chit*) and bliss (*ananda*). “God is, therefore, Sat-Chit-Ananda, and who combines in Himself Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss.” (Gandhi, 1961, p. 10).

Truth as God (“Truth is God”)

Gandhi loved to identify truth with God. “God is Truth,” he would often say. In one particular document that contains excerpts of his writings, Gandhi used the phrase “God is Truth” six times (Gandhi’s views on truth, n.d.). Again, he said, “There are innumerable manifestations of God, but I worship God as Truth only.” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 66). “Truth is Ramanarayana, Ishwara, Khuda, Allah, God.” (Banyapadhyaya, 1969, p. 20). “God’s names are a legion. Truth is the crown of them all. He is because Truth is.” (Iyer, 1973, p. 163; Gandhi, 1869-/1969, pp. 65-66).

Search for Truth is search for God. Truth is God. God is, because Truth is. We embark upon the search, because we believe that there is Truth and that it can be found by diligent search and meticulous observance of the well-known and well-tried rules of search. There is no record in history of the failure of such search. Even the atheists who have pretended to disbelieve in God have believed in Truth. The trick they have performed is that of giving God another, not a new, name. His names are legion. *Truth is the crown of them all* . [emphasis added] (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, pp. 9-11).

Gandhi went one step further — and a significant step. He made a transition from “God is Truth” to “Truth is God.” This transition was a conscious and deliberate one when he said: “... two years ago I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, viz., that God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to this conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth, which began nearly fifty years ago.” (Gandhi’s views on truth, n.d. “Speech at the meeting in Lausanne, 8-12-1931). Gandhi explained why for him, “Truth is God” is better than “God is Truth” or “God is Love.”

no God. This unique and comprehensive knowledge of God about the atheist leads to His respect for the atheist’s position and to a consequent divine justification of the atheist.

The nearest approach to Truth was through love. But I also found that love has many meanings in the English language [including passion].... I found too that love in the sense of *ahimsa* had only a limited number of votaries in the world. But I never found a double meaning in connection with truth and not even atheists had demurred to the necessity or power of truth. But, in their passion for discovering truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the very existence of God — from their own point of view, rightly. And it was because of this reasoning that I saw that, rather than say that God is Truth, I should say that Truth is God. (Gandhi's views on truth, n.d. "Speech at the meeting in Lausanne, 8-12-1931).

Truth as Force (*Satyagraha*)

When it comes to *Satyagraha*, Stanley's observation is noteworthy. In his estimate, *Satyagraha* is the quintessence of Gandhism. It is Gandhi's greatest contribution to the world. "If we do not get this, we have missed the meaning of his life and death." Equally significant is that Gandhi recognized Jesus Christ as the "prince of *Satyagraha*", and His death as the supreme manifestation of *Ahimsa*, which is also a manifestation of God himself. (Jones, 1948, p. 82; 85; 192).

The Sanskrit term, *Satyagraha*, is a composite of *sat*, which is the root word for truth, and *agraha*, for "polite resistance," or "holding firmly." Gandhi disagreed with those who translated *Satyagraha* as "passive resistance" because he felt that his movement was anything but passive. Accordingly, he preferred the translation "soul force" or "truth force", and a *Satyagrahi* is a warrior of truth and love (Gandhi, 1927/1982, p. 291; Kytile, 1969, p. 90). *Satyagraha* is, therefore, "the force of truth and love," and this soul force originates in Truth. A *Satyagrahi* is fearless of the enemy and punishment, disappointment or defeat, and "*Satyagraha* is a priceless and matchless weapon." (Chadha, 1998, pp. 113; 129; 192). It is a nonviolent struggle against falsehood. (Fox, 1989, p. 277). It is "the Force which is born of Truth and Love or non-violence." Gandhi further stated:

[*Satyagraha*] postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person. It is based on self-help, self-sacrifice and faith in God. *It is a fight on behalf of truth consisting chiefly in self-purification and self-reliance. Satyagraha* seeks to secure reform or redress grievances by taking suffering upon oneself rather than inflicting it upon the other. (Minz, 1970, p. 7).

A *Satyagrahi* will offer *Satyagraha* even unto death, and he or she does so nonviolently because he or pledges to nonviolence in thought, word, and deed. Moreover, *Satyagraha*, by nature, is peaceful, and only those capable of being peaceful under all circumstances can participate in the *Satyagraha* movement by offering civil resistance peacefully (Chadha, 1998, pp. 235; 241).

Truth and Service for Humanity

Truth not only makes a person worthy of a moral being, it also binds him indissolubly to his fellow human beings and brings them together as comrades. The world, therefore, is not "merely a spectacle"; it is "a field of battle . . . which those who care for the truth must play

their part whether as victors or martyrs” (Iyer, 1973, pp. 154-155). A man who wishes to see Truth face to face cannot afford to keep himself out of any field of life. This includes loving the meanest of creatures as oneself, including one’s neighborhood (*swadeshi*) (Minz, 1970, p. 5). For Gandhi, to regard a human being as inferior or untouchable is to deny the Truth. He once said: “I know that God is found often in the lowliest of his creatures than in the high and mighty. I am struggling to reach the status of these. I cannot do so without their service. Hence my passion for the service of the suppressed.” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, pp. 63; 75; Gandhi, 1927/1982, p. 453). On another occasion, he declared: “I recognize no God except God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. They do not recognize his presence, I do, and I worship the God that is Truth, or a Truth which is God through the service of these millions.” (Jesudasan, 1984, p. 91).

Another form of service for truth’s sake is active participation in politics. Gandhi claimed that his devotion to truth has drawn him to politics (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, pp. 56; 58). He also held that politics is a search for the truth at individual and collective levels (Chatterjee, 1983, p. 71). “Truth is the end and freedom, political power, and independence, are a part of it. Only in truth and freedom could God be worshiped. And only a free people could worship a true God.” (Jesudasan, 1984, p. 96).

The Path to Truth: *Ahimsa*

As far as Gandhi was concerned, there is but only one destination to which man should be heading, and that destination is the realization of Truth within. He also held that the most effective means of reaching this destination is *ahimsa* or nonviolence or love (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 79; Gandhi, 1927/1982, p. 504; Jesudasan, 1984, p. 95; Bondurant, 1965, pp. 16-19). “But this much I can say with assurance, as a result of all my experiments, that a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of *Ahimsa*.” (Gandhi, 1927/1982, p. 453). Gandhi was so certain of *ahimsa* as the perfect path to the realization of the truth that he said:

If every page of these chapters does not proclaim to the reader that the only means for the realization of Truth is *Ahimsa*, I shall deem all my labor in writing these chapters to have been in vain. And, even though my efforts in this behalf may prove fruitless, let the readers know that the vehicle, not the great principle, is at fault. After all, however sincere my strivings after *Ahimsa* may have been, they have still been imperfect and inadequate. (Gandhi, 1927/1982, pp. 452-453).

[It is] the positive state of love, of doing good even to the evildoer. It is resisting [him] by love and suffering. *Ahimsa* is the complete absence of ill will against all that lives. It is goodwill toward all lives: it is pure love. It is the opposite of anger, and pride; it is forgiveness, a quality of the brave and fearlessness, not of the cowardly and fearful. (Minz, 1970, p. 4).

But what is the extent of *Ahimsa*? Gandhi’s final words in his autobiography give us his answer: “In bidding farewell to the readers, for the time being at any rate, I ask them to join with me in prayer to the God of Truth that He may grant me the boon of *Ahimsa* in mind, word and deed.” (Gandhi, 1927/1982, p. 454). This being the case, the principle of *Ahimsa* is then

violated in the presence of an evil thought, undue haste, lying, or hatred, or wishing ill to anyone, including the enemy (Jesudasan, 1984, pp. 38; 95).

Furthermore, since Gandhi held that means and ends are also “convertible terms,” there is no practical difference between Ahimsa and Truth. They are like the “smooth metallic disk. Who can say which is the obverse and which is the reverse?” (Gandhi, 1869-/1969, p. 81). Nevertheless, Ahimsa is still maintained as the “royal” road, and Truth as the end (Jones, 1948, pp. 86-87; Jesudasan, 1984, p. 95).

Summary

The above sections portray Gandhi’s understanding of truth in its various dimensions. The portrayal begins with his identification of truth as being both relative and absolute. Relative truth is only a partial and fragmentary aspect of Absolute Truth. Relative truth participates in the quality of trueness of absolute truth, but the bodily mode of human existence severely limits its vision and the difference in the speed of evolution of individual minds. Accordingly, “what is true” is bound to be different, and sometimes contradictory to one another, and hence relative. Despite this, however, Gandhi taught that a person must implement in his life what he believed to be true as if he was carrying out God’s mandate for him. This intuitive as well as rational sense of what is true is also supplemented by the “voice within”, that is, the voice of conscience.

Then there is also the other form of truth, which Gandhi called Absolute Truth or Truth with a capital T. This is truth in its ultimate form; it is truth as is in itself —probably akin to Kant’s “noumenon,” and relative truth to that of “phenomenon.” Absolute Truth no longer exists as perceptual, rational, or vocal as is in the case of relative truth. It is not even personal; nor does it have a name, for it is nameless; or a form, for it is formless. It is, nevertheless, real. In fact, it is the only reality that there is. Truth is the sum total of what is. ‘Is-ness’ is its essential nature. To put it more precisely, Truth is not simply about the essence or being, but, to borrow Paul Tillich’s terminology, the “ground of being” and hence, of “being” itself. Having embraced pantheism, Gandhi would say, “God alone is and nothing else exists.” There is no other reality than God; reality is one; and all aspects of life are “part of the united whole called God but which he preferred to call Truth, and longed to be united with it even at the cost of his life. Gandhi called this union “realization” or “self-realization.”

The other dimensions of this truth are in terms of its location, function, nature, force (or *satyagraha*), service, and *Ahimsa*. We begin with the location of truth — where is it? Is it in the heavens, on the earth, or under the earth? While admitting to Truth’s omnipresence, Gandhi’s identification of the location of this truth is chiefly in two places: within the human heart, and in humankind, especially the lowly, deprived, and oppressed ones. Finding this truth is therefore done not by looking upward or outward, but by looking inward, in one’s own heart, as well as through service for humanity. In fact, Gandhi saw service as the best way to find Truth. This only shows that Truth for Gandhi is far from verbal and propositional. The next dimension of this truth has to do with its function. As far as Gandhi was concerned, Truth is the basis of everything. It is the “oxygen”, the actualizer and harmonizer of the universe. It permeates and unites all life so that it is the cosmic order and equilibrium, life, light, and love.

What about truth’s nature? Since Gandhi identified God with truth (“Truth is God” — rather than “God is Truth”), his description of God can also be taken to be his description of Truth.

As pointed out, in His essential being, God is not a “person” and so is not personal. But though God is non-personal, it does not mean He is abstract, remote, and inaccessible. Truth is “He” and yet is formless—One which even atheists are unaware of because they gave Him a different name. Actually, Gandhi went as far as even identifying God as the author of evil, though He is “untouched by it.” (Gandhi’s views on truth, *Young India*, 11-10-1928). Ultimately, Truth is identified with the “ground of being” and with being itself.

The other aspect of truth that had become, in Jones words, the quintessence of Gandhi’s mission, is truth force or *Satyagraha*. This refers to the dynamic energy of truth, to its ability to obtain a particular objective or desire. Specifically, *Satyagraha* refers to the manner in which one goes about reaching this goal, which is characterized by nonviolence in thought, word, and deed. But to get to that level, it is necessary that a *Satyagrahi* be first and foremost pure in heart, and ready to suffer pain and affliction in oneself without doing that to those that are in authority in giving you what you are asking for in the name of truth and justice.

One of the main emphases of Gandhi’s relationship to truth is that of service—particularly his service for the marginalized, the voiceless, and the underdogs. How Gandhi connected truth with service to make a lifeline from God to the service of the “dumb millions” is the high note of the Gandhian concept of Truth.

The above analytical presentation ends with the relationship between truth and *Ahimsa* — with the latter being the means for reaching the truth. As far as Gandhi was concerned, *Ahimsa* “is *the only means for the realization of truth*.” [emphasis added] (Gandhi, 1927/1982, p. 452). *Ahimsa* stands for nonviolence that embraces nonviolence in thought, speech, and action, which he called the “triple purity” (Gandhi, 1927/1982, p. 453) to be manifested to one and all, including those who are on the opposing side, including the enemy. Gandhi’s conviction was that though there may be many roads to the realization of Truth or God, as far as he was concerned, *Ahimsa* is the “royal road” to Truth.

Assessment and Reflection

Space limits our assessment of every aspect of Gandhi’s exposition of truth. Let me, therefore, begin this assessment with Gandhi’s concept of Absolute Truth. Because of the pantheistic worldview that identifies the universe as an extension and manifestation of God, the distinction between good and evil becomes indistinguishable at the formal level, but real at the material and practical levels. As a pantheist, Gandhi said that God could also be the author of evil as He is good. And yet, at the same time, he also said that we must shun evil and even give up our life in the fight against it. How could our moral sense of right and wrong, our moral outrage, and all the laws concerning morality be completely dissolved at the level of ultimate truth or reality? What encouragement is there for living a moral life when in the end, it is found out that there is no distinction between good and evil? If God created evil, as Gandhi maintained He did, how is God expected to punish those who commit evil? Will not God ultimately be held responsible for evil? The teaching about eschatological judgment and accountability always assumes two different parties, two different principles, and two different realities, with one of them having to submit to the other to be judged and destroyed, giving rise to a scenario where sin and sinners are disposed of, the ultimate triumph of righteousness over evil, and of God over Satan.

Furthermore, if reality is one, and if the only reality that there is, is God, then who was Gandhi praying to and worshipping? In worship, there is the worshiper (man) and the One being worshiped (God): two distinct realities — with the exception that the reality of the worshiper is derived from and dependent upon God, whose reality is “original, unborrowed, underived.” But pantheism does not allow for this plurality of reality. There seems to be a gap between what Gandhi actually believed and what he practiced. Without a doubt, Gandhi believed in pantheism, but there is equally no doubt that Gandhi believed in a single-hearted, pure devotion and worship of God. We were told that the dying words of Gandhi were—“*Hey Ram.*” This is to state that Gandhi did not draw a consistent line from pantheism to his own experience at the level of worship. As a worshiper, he came across as an uncompromising and steadfast theist; but at the level of his pantheism, his prayers and worship are in need of explanation and justification.

Gandhi’s identifying God with Truth was highly significant and effective for his mission. Perhaps the reason for its effectiveness lies in the fact that truth is one that is universally recognized and emphasized —atheists included. It is one of the cardinal values of humankind. Descriptions of God by whatever glorious words are meaningful only for those who believe in God. But the description of God as truth in the sense of it having the status, power, and authority akin to that of God’s, would not be a problem to any. Moreover, Gandhi’s fight for political freedom from British rule was also a fight for justice and fairness. Using truth as the tool in this fight would certainly strike a chord with the conscience of colonialists and rulers. In this respect, Gandhi’s choice of “truth as God” was a stroke of genius, and his launching of *Satyagraha* (truth force) was a practical application of this profound insight.

Gandhi’s reduction of God to Truth also served as a common rallying point for all communities. It afforded him the much-needed and sought for platform to reach Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians, Sikhs, Jains, etc. Gandhi liked to see the entire nation fight for freedom as children of one. Be that as it may, the idea of identifying God with truth is not without a problem when considered from the Christian perspective. In short, this reductionistic view of God (“Truth is God”) is unacceptable because it is unbiblical and even anti-biblical. For instance, one wonders why, with all its emphasis on a loving God, the Bible never states that “love is God”? It only says that “God is love.” In the same vein, the Bible also states that “God is truth,” which is indicative of God’s identification of Himself with truth not as His alter ego, but as being its source, and hence truth bears the divine impress, without itself being God, perhaps similar to a son bearing his father’s features and DNA without himself being the same as his father. The expression, “God is Truth,” should also be juxtaposed with “God is righteousness,” “God is light,” “God is love,” and so on. But the formula “Truth is God” restricts God to truth, which is biblically untenable. The Bible’s presentation of God does not allow us to choose which aspect or dimension of Him we can extract or select for our devotion and worship. It is God as a divine Person that is being worshipped, not His attributes.

Commenting on 1 John 4:8 (“God is love”), one author has this to say: The passage “does not teach that all love is God, nor that God and love are interchangeable things.” (White, 2007). “God is love” means that “love” is God’s attribute, without barring the other attributes. This attribute tends to get more emphasis in the Bible on account of man’s sin and its consequences. In the same way, when the Bible says, “God is light,” it does so without thereby reducing God to light. God is more than these attributes, but not without them, nor only one of them. God’s

character also includes righteousness, mercy, wisdom, justice, and many more. As White (2007) points out:

The Bible also says that “God is light” (1 John 1:5), but there is no suggestion that “God” and “light” are identical or interchangeable. In fact, to change “God is light” into “Light is God” transforms Christianity into a paganistic worship of the material world similar to the ancient Egyptians, who worshipped the sun and the moon, and so on. “God is light” means “God is full of light. (White, 2007)

The point that needs to be emphasized is that none of these attributes should be used the way Gandhi did with the truth. In so doing, we distort the biblical portrayal of God and end up with a picture of God that is much, much less than what has been revealed in the Bible. The Bible’s portrayal of God is manifestly along personal terms. While Gandhi admittedly used certain of descriptions of God that are pronouncedly personal, in the end, he shied from admitting that God is a person, though He could be such for those who need the personal aspect of God.

Truth’s intimate and direct relationship to service was Gandhi’s other major emphasis. He made it quite plain that his worshiping of Truth as God led him to the service for the “dumb millions” and to his involvement in politics. The connection Gandhi made between truth and service is intriguing. How his worship of the Truth God led him to service the “dumb millions” is one that challenges my comprehension. I am uncertain about this connection, even from the pantheistic point of view, and neither have I heard of similar services rendered by others “in the name of the Truth-God.” What I am certain of, however, is that service for humanity has not been brought about *only* by worshiping Truth as God. Gandhi’s case would be almost an exception. We see this from the history of Christian involvement in service to humanity. The tens of thousands of charitable institutions and organizations of all sorts and sizes of services that Christians operate worldwide — from ancient times to the present — have not been operated on the basis of truth deified. For example, Mother Teresa was the most well-known servant of the humanity of the twentieth century. What was it that led her to such selfless service to the abandoned, diseased, shelterless, and hungry? It was her love of and devotion to Jesus Christ, and her desire to follow His will and heart. Works of charity of all sorts — big and small, known and less-known, are being carried out by Christians for a reason similar or identical to Mother Teresa’s. It was and is because of their deep connection to and love of Jesus Christ, his words and teachings.”³

Conclusion

The conclusion will take up the relevance of Gandhi in relation to his understanding of truth and of implementing it in his mission and life. Gandhi’s wholehearted devotion to truth, which includes strict moral uprightness and transparency in dealing with oneself as well as with others, is a desperate need of our times. Ours is a society ridden with greed, graft, and corruption at all levels of life. Evils and crimes of all sorts are everywhere. The collapse of just-

³Probably one of the most compelling declarations of Jesus Christ when it comes to helping the desperate are those recorded in Matthew 25:37-40, where He identifies Himself with the oppressed, victims of disease, injustice, and poverty. Service rendered to them is service rendered to him.

built buildings and bridges and banks, months of delays in attending to much-needed works, unfinished projects, deception by companies big and small, fake medicines, drug cartels, and human trafficking— to name only a few—are directly traceable to greed and corruption. It has become clear that it is not the lack of money that is our problem but the lack of character of truthfulness. If we ignore Gandhi's emphasis on truth as the light that should guide us in both private and public life, we do that at our peril. And in doing so, we are only making our society worse. In some societies, corruption has become the "other norm." One just can't seem to be able to get anything done without paying a bribe. Think of the progress we would have made in all spheres of life had we been practitioners of truth and integrity. All would have had a taste of heaven while on earth.

It is significant to note that one source lists as many as fifteen "major causes" for the fall of the mighty Roman Empire. The decline in morals is second on the list, immediately followed by political corruption. The decline in ethics and values is somewhere right after the middle of the list (Causes for the fall, n.d.). Gandhi himself drew up his own list of what he called "the seven social sins" or "the seven blunders of the world." They are:

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Science without humanity
- Knowledge without character
- Politics without principle
- Commerce without morality
- Worship without sacrifice. (Seven social sins, n.d.)

An unbridled desire for material things goes hand-in-hand with monetary greed and corruption. Gandhi's emphasis on *Ahimsa* is another *sine qua non*. Besides greed and corruption, violence is endangering human societies everywhere. The spiraling increase in violence against women and children, the aged, and violence caused by racism, religious bigotry, and sectarianism are common knowledge. It is time that schools, colleges, and universities be given the opportunity to once again hear Gandhi's voice on *Ahimsa* by offering a short-term course on it. *Ahimsa* is "the gospel of the hour" that needs to be heard. I know I am dreaming when I say, "Gandhi must come back to save India from violence." But a good dream is better than a bad dream!

What can India do to curb violence and build a creative society of love, truth, and non-violence? The apostle of nonviolence wished India to make it her "special calling" to be a "missionary of nonviolence" to the whole world (Jesudasan, 1984, p. 38). As things are, it looks like India has forgotten the real Gandhi by the increasing violence against women and children, those with a religion or worldview that is different from one's own, and so on. It's up to his fellow countrymen and women to bring him back to our living memory and life so we can once again hear him speak truth and *ahimsa* to us and to the rest of the world. We know this significance for the one whom Gandhi ranked as the "Prince of Satyagraha," Jesus Christ declared: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32 (New Living Translation).

References

- Banyapadhyaya, J. (1969). Social thought and political thought of Gandhi. Allied Publishers.
- Bok, S. (1993). Foreword. In Gandhi an autobiography: The story of my experiments with truth. Beacon Press.
- Bondurant, J. V. (1965). Conquest of violence: The Gandhian philosophy of conflict (rev. ed). University of California Press.
- Causes for the fall of the Roman empire. (n.d.). <http://www.tribunesandtriumphs.org/roman-empire/causes-for-the-fall-of-the-roman-empire.htm>
- Chadha, Y. (1998). Rediscovering Gandhi. Arrow Books.
- Chatterjee, M. C. (1983). Gandhi's religious thought. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Fox, R. J. (1989). Gandhian utopia: Experiments with culture. Beacon Press.
- Gandhi, M. K. (1869–/1969). In K. Kripalini (Comp.) and Y. New (Ed.). All men are brothers: The life and thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as told in his own words (2nd ed). Columbia University Press.
- Gandhi, M. K. (1927/82). An autobiography or the story of my experiments with truth M. Desai (Trans.). Penguin.
- Gandhi, M. K. (1961). In search of the Supreme, 2. Navajivan Publishing.
- Gandhi's views on truth: Truth is God. (n.d.). Retrieved August 6, 2014. http://www.gandhi-manibhavan.org/gandhiphilosophy/philosophy_truth_truthisgod.htm
- Hick, J. (Ed.). (1970). Truth and dialogue: The relationship between world religions. Sheldon Press.
- Iyer, R. N. (1973). The moral and political thought of Mahatma Gandhi. Oxford University Press.
- Jack, H. A. (1987). Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand (mahatma). In Collier's Encyclopedia, 10. Macmillan Educational.
- Jesudasan, I. (1984). A Gandhian theology of liberation. Orbis Books.
- John. (2007). Holy Bible, New Living Translation. House (2nd ed). Tyndale, 8, 32.
- Jones, E. S. (1948). Mahatma Gandhi: An interpretation. New York, NY. Cokesbury Press.
- Kytle, C. (1969). Gandhi, soldier of nonviolence: His effect on India and the world today. Grosset & Dunlap.
- Matthew. (2007). Holy bible, new living translation (2nd ed), 25 (pp. 37–40). Tyndale House.
- McLaughlin, E. T. (1974). Ruskin and Gandhi. Bucknell University Press.
- Minz, N. (1970). Mahatma Gandhi and Hindu Christian-dialogue. Christian Literature Society.
- Mother Teresa (ND). from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_Teresa_Satyagraha. En.wiki. Retrieved August 15, 2014. Retrieved August 13, 2014. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyagraha>. In.
- Seven social sins. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved August 27, 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Social_Sins
- White, J. (2007). God is love: Love is God? http://www.makestraightpaths.com/god_is_love.htm

Author Biography



Boxter Kharbteng holds two bachelor's degrees (B.L.A.; B.Th.) from then Spicer Memorial College (Pune), in addition to M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Andrews University, Michigan, USA. Prior to his retirement in 2016, he had served in various capacities, such as the editor of *Our Times*, head of Spicer's Theology department, Vice President for Academic Administration of the same institution; acting dean of the School of Theology and Religion, and a ranked professor of Theology, Ethics, and Philosophy of the University of the Southern Caribbean, Trinidad, West Indies. His writings have appeared in both academic and non-academic publications within as well as outside of India.

A Brief Analysis of The Historicity of Jesus' Resurrection

Lalnuntluanga Ralte^a, Santosh Kumar^{b*}

^a Mizo Conference of Seventh-day Adventist

^b Assistant Professor, Division of Religious Studies, Spicer Adventist University

Abstract

The resurrection of Jesus has been a debatable subject since the beginning of the 1st century AD; in as much as it is simple and easy to believe in the resurrection of Christ for Christians, it is not quite so in the world today, where skepticism and agnosticism dominate the culture. In the last two centuries, with various revolutions emerging, due to the prevalence of naturalistic view in the literature world, and theology, in particular, several leading scholars started a quest to re-study the historicity of Jesus' resurrection and subsequently considered the four accounts of the four gospels to be merely a myth. This article attempts to briefly analyze the quest and, most importantly, provide legitimate evidence for the death and resurrection of Jesus. In this article, the gospels' account is considered ancient literature since our main priority is to know whether it is historical. Therefore, the historicity of the gospel account is analyzed through the methodology employed by both the secular and religious scholars, which in turn makes the study not biased. The analysis concludes and reclaims that the account of the gospel is historical.

Keywords: Resurrection, Christians, Theology, History, Jesus Christ, Early Christianity.

Introduction

The resurrection of Jesus is a pivotal truth in Christian beliefs (Hasel 2011, 1). This belief, however, has been controversial since the beginning of Jesus' resurrection. The empty tomb is not considered to be supernaturally possible. Thus, they "attributed to grave robbery" (Matt 28:11-15), and the "idea of resurrection" was considered foolishness (Acts 26:24) (Evans, 2004, p. 3). Generally, every Christian will admit that Jesus' resurrection is the pillar of Christian faith and belief. Apostle Paul noticed the vital importance of this principle, saying, "if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. . . if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, you are still in sins" (1 Cor 15:14-17). The resurrection of Jesus Christ was proof of His divinity, according to Paul (Rom 1:4), and it is an assurance for humanity of the resurrection in the future (1 Cor 15: 20).

*Email: mizoapologetics@gmail.com

For this reason, several works of literature deal with Christ's resurrection (Licona, 2008; Licona, 2010; Wright, 2012; Licona & Habermas, 2004; Vincent, 2013; Craig, 2000). Gary Habermas (2005) states that the historical Jesus is the most exciting subject in North America (p.135). He mentions further that since 1975, there have been more than 1400 scholarly publications on the death and resurrection of Jesus (p.153). Marcus Borg also stated that the renaissance occurred in North America concerning Jesus' studies (Borg, 1988, pp. 280-92). On the other hand, several pieces of literature written against Jesus' resurrection are also available. For instance, Michael Martin authored *The Case Against Christianity* to argue against the evidence of the reliability of Jesus' resurrection (Martin, 1991, pp. 76-77). He assumed that the gospel account of the resurrection story was inconsistent (81). Other theories, such as "Hallucination Theories," was popularized, similarly against the evidence of Jesus' resurrection (Ludemann, 1995; 2004). Habermas also reviewed the hallucination theory popularized by David Strauss (Habermas, 2001, pp. 26-27).

John Dominic Crossan did not believe in the literalness of the resurrection (Crossan, 1991, p. 571). Borg possessed the same idea as Crossan that the resurrection is the "entry into another kind or mode of existence, one beyond death, space and time" (Borg, 1995, pp. 6-16). It is also believed that the historical Jesus differs from the Jesus of the gospel accounts (McKnight, 1995, pp. 51-72). Albert Schweitzer, a Lutheran theologian, produced a book that dealt with a survey on the controversy on the historicity of Jesus in 1906, which was translated into English in 1910 by William Montgomery and compiled the origin of the quest of his days (Schweitzer, 1910). In 1953, the new quest began with Ernst Kasemann, who lectured on "The Problem of Historical Jesus" at the University of Marburg; however, in the early 1970s, the quest had gone unrecognized (Kasemann, 1964; Witherington, 1997). The quest was renewed again in the 1980s, becoming the third one, according to N. T. Wright (Anderson, 2007, p. 127). Out of the investigations comes several conclusions, one of which could be Christ and gospel narrative as a myth (Strauss, 2009). Thus, the controversy of the historical Jesus demands one to re-analyze the possible rationale for the resurrection of Jesus.

Though every orthodox Christian believes Jesus' resurrection is a historical event, historical criticism has relegated the subject of Jesus' resurrection to a myth. As a result, it rejects the four Gospels' miracles or supernatural acts (Drews 2021, Digital Edition). Because this criticism has impacted the cornerstone of Christian belief, it is critical to comprehend the criterion for the veracity of Jesus' resurrection. Therefore, the purpose of the article is to analyze the event of the resurrection of Jesus from inside and outside the Bible, attempting to overview the argument several scholars have proposed to bring historical reliability according to the methodology employed by both religious and secular scholars.

The significance of this article could be the brief review of the argument in the history of the quest on the Historical Jesus, Christ Myth theory, and the general apologetical responses. Though the study can be vastly extendable in surveying each view and argument of the scholars, from the first quest to the third quest on the original Jesus and Christ Myth theory, this article will only focus on resurrections about the investigations of historical Jesus.

The study required a well-defined methodology to be consistent in historical analysis. Historians use the word "Historiography," which means the method employed by historians to gain knowledge of past events (Shaw, 2010, p. 4). The research discipline

of history is different from that of science because the data and findings cannot be repeated (Licona, 2008, p. 16). Reliable documents and newspapers can verify this historical event, and so on. An accurate history analysis also depends on the factors that influence the historian, such as culture, gender, nationality, values, and religious convictions (Shaw, 2010, p. 16). As a result, one can be biased with the conclusion. To prevent bias-ness, we will be employing a minimal facts approach. With this approach, the Bible will not be considered inspired, infallible, and trustworthy material; instead, it will be treated merely as another ancient literature. Since atheists, agnostics, and skeptics at least agreed that some part of the bible is historical data, the data that is only accepted as historical by the expertise would merely be employed as material (Licona and Habermas, 45). To avoid any possible biased view, the historical data to be studied would be accepted as objective data if only these several theological streams agree: skeptics, Christian conservatives and liberals, and agnostic.

Scholars of different worldviews and theological spectrums can only make the same conclusion on defining the authenticity of the past event through these criteria: “early testimony, eyewitness testimony, multiple and independent sources, enemy attestation, embarrassing testimony, and consensus” (Shaw 2010, 8). McCullagh (1984) provided extremely relevant criteria for resurrection to establish the best possible explanation of the historical conclusion (19). Therefore, we will also employ these criteria for the analysis.

Several articles, books, and dissertations have been written on the resurrection of Christ, its historical evidence, and arguments. Some prominent figures for this modern time will be N.T. Wright, Mike Licona, John Dominic Crossan, Gary Habermas, etc. Regarding the resurrection of Jesus, the historical analyzing methodology is one of the most important criteria. There are several criteria to follow so that the presupposition will be independent of the study.

Historical Assessment of Jesus’ Quests and Christ Myth Theory concerning the Resurrection of Christ

The study of the life and person of Jesus Christ has been a subject of interest for the church all through the centuries; however, the last two centuries have been a remarkable search for historical Jesus from inside and outside of the church. Contemporary scholars divided Jesus’ research into four distinct periods such as the first quest, or the old quest, from 1778 to 1906; the interim period, or the no quest, from 1906 to 1953; the new quest (second quest), from 1953 to the 1980s; and the third quest, from 1980s to present day (Tatum, 1982, p. 71; Bigalke Jr, 2007, pp. 19-31). The meaning of questing or searching can be defined as a “philosophical-motivated historical-critical construct,” concluding that Jesus of the Gospel is not similar to Jesus in history. According to the dominant conclusion of the quests, if one has to understand Jesus with a standard of “accepted historiography replete in the idea of historical criticism,” then Jesus in the gospel must not be identified fully as Jesus in history (Hagner, 2001, p. 83).

The first quest attempts to find Jesus of history compatible with modernism to shun supernaturalism (Farnell, 2012, p. 15). The “no quest” or the second quest has the same intention as the first quest with the addition of methodologies such as form criticism, redaction criticism, the criterion of authenticity, the criterion of dissimilarity, and so on. The third quest has a significant uniqueness though having employed the same methodology of historical criticism (Farnell, 21). The unique quality is the search for Jesus in the context of first-century or second-century Jewish

literature (22). However, Farnell observes that all three quests had the same ideological basis for the method of historical criticism in their search (21). The conclusions of the quests would result in doubt about the gospels and early Christianity. Keck (1994) observes this ideology being stranded since the first quest, stating,

Essential for all three Quests is the view that Matthew and Luke used both Mark and Q, and that between Jesus and all written sources stands oral traditions which shaped and expanded the Jesus materials so that recovering the Jesus of history entails differentiating what the texts report from what Jesus said and did (p. 785-86).

Most of the scholars who participated in the quest are liberal scholars who would assert that the gospel writers invented the life of Jesus, such as miracles and resurrection, to persuade the readers that Jesus is God's son. They regarded the gospel narratives were folklore and fables (Gromacki, 2002, p. 63). Some even go extreme in concluding that Jesus is merely a myth or a fairy tale that was made up (Drews, 1998; Voorst, 2000; Eddy & Boyd, 2007; Beilby & Eddy, 2009; Price, 2011; Casey, 2014). As a result, the veracity of Jesus' resurrection must be reconsidered.

The historicity of Jesus' Resurrection

As discussed earlier, there are historical facts concerning Jesus and His life on which experts from diverse backgrounds and worldviews can concur. We will provide these facts with an explanation of why it was accepted as a historical fact. We categorized the evidence into four parts: the evidence on Jesus' death, the evidence on Jesus' burial, the evidence on the empty tomb, and the evidence from the experience of early Christianity.

The Evidence of Jesus' Death

The death of Jesus Christ serves as a prerequisite for the resurrection. There is no resurrection without His death. As a result, evidence for the veracity of Jesus' death must be established. The death of Christ is the most agreeable event among all the data analyzed. Several pieces of literature from Christians and non-Christians about the death of Christ. Scholars discovered that there are earlier creedal passages that pre-date the New Testament. Several non-biblical pieces of literature describe the death of Jesus. One must know that crucifixion is a punishment whereby the chances of survival are minimal (Hengel, 1977). According to Alexander Metherell, a medical expert, crucifixion is an "agonizingly slow death due to asphyxiation." Due to this, there is only one account whereby the victim survives crucifixion. Josephus mentioned that Titus Caesar released three victims from the cross; however, two still died despite the best medical treatment they received.

Another fact is that, if necessary, the executioners must execute the crucified victim. It was reported that Jesus was pierced in His side (John 19: 34). One can also find that stabbing the victim of the cross was a customary practice of the executioner soldiers. This act is to ensure that the victims are dead. In the case of Jesus, the soldier should have been given another strike if Jesus was not dead. Moreover, most scholars believed in the death of Jesus by adopting the idea of David Strauss, a prominent scholar of the German Liberalism movement. He has a famous critique of

the swoon theory or apparent death theory, which made the evidence of Jesus' death agreed upon by scholars of different backgrounds and worldviews.

The Evidence of Jesus' Burial

Knowing the place of Jesus' burial is appropriate, which can contribute to evidence of the resurrection. However, one has to understand that Jesus' burial is not obligatory for the resurrection to occur because if one knows the certainty of Jesus' death, the resurrection is already possible. First, there are several biblical and non-biblical attestations to Jesus' burial. Second, the embarrassing narrative seen in the burial of Christ was another piece of evidence. It is embarrassing that the Jewish Sanhedrin chief, Joseph of Arimathea, buried Jesus rather than the disciples. Thus, put weighty evidence on the factuality of the burial story. Third, the tradition of the Jews demands that any corpse be buried before sunset (Deut 21: 23). Josephus mentioned that the Jewish revered a burial regardless of the person; they would even bury a dead stranger because of their traditional demand (Keener, 2009, p. 326). The tradition also likely supports the burial of Jesus.

Fourth, a skeptic like Ehrman asserted that the burial story could be a legend because the creed of 1 Corinthians 15: 3-7 does not describe Joseph and the women like another passion narrative (Craig & Ehrman, 2006, p. 21). However, the creed 1 Corinthians 15: 3-7 is an outline or summary of a passion narrative in a simplified form so that one can easily remember it. Moreover, one interesting fact is that the burial story has no other competing stories. It should have another competing story if it were a legendary story.

The Evidence on the Empty Tomb

One has to know that the empty tomb does not explicitly explain the occurrence of resurrection; however, it strengthens the possibility of physical resurrection. First, one can find multiple attestations from earlier ancient literature. Second, the tomb's location in Jerusalem made the claims of the disciples true because everyone could attest to it by checking the tomb at a near distance. Third, the Jewish authorities claimed that the body was stolen, which made the reality of an empty tomb (Matt 28: 11-15). Fourth, the notion of resurrection is always physical in pagan and Jewish understanding, implying the empty tomb. Fifth, the tomb of Jesus was not honored as a shrine which implies that Jesus' body did not remain because if it remained in the tomb, it would have been venerated as a shrine. Thus, for all these reasons, even critical scholars consider the empty tomb historically reliable.

The Evidence from the Experience of Early Christianity

There are various sources that support the disciples' claims for their risen savior. Astonishingly, the Christian movement, as compared to other movements, did not die out even when its leader died. The disciples were willing to die for their belief instead. For instance, James, the brother of Jesus, was known to be skeptical all his life about the messiahship of Jesus. However, James was ironically converted to Christianity because he believed in resurrection and was eventually martyred for his faith. Another person who needs to be separately identified from James was Paul because he was not merely skeptical but a church persecutor. He was skeptical about the Christians and their risen savior, leading him to persecute them. However, his transformation makes much sense regarding the resurrection of Jesus. This

embarrassing testimony of Paul confirms that the resurrection of Jesus must be historically accurate.

Conclusion

Since the quest for the historical Jesus arose from a naturalist worldview, it is apparent that the pioneer of the search was somehow prejudiced in examining ancient literature because they were more likely inclined to discredit the authenticity of the NT and gospel in particular. After all, it includes many supernatural actions, including miracles and resurrection. However, when Albert Schweitzer summarized several contributions to the quest for a century, he ensured that all the claims were untrue. In the subsequent 21st century, the second and third quests produced numerous methodologies to analyze historical data; of all these methodologies, there are methodologies whereby all scholars of several backgrounds would agree upon exploring the historical information. This study used procedures that are acknowledged by practically every scholar, even critical and agnostic ones. However, when the ancient literature is examined using these approaches, it is highly likely that the resurrection of Jesus is historically accurate. As a Christian, one can have faith in Jesus. However, the study's findings indicate that if it is difficult to generate faith to believe in Jesus and his resurrection, one should be aware that the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus occurred historically, according to the finest methodological medium employed by scholars. As a result, if Jesus died and physically rose from the dead, one must have faith in response to historical evidence.

References

- Anderson, P. N., Just, F., & Thatcher, T. eds., *John, Jesus, and History Volume 1: Critical Appraisals of Critical Views*. Leiden, NL: Brill.
- Beilby, J. K. & Eddy, P. R. (2009). *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- Bigalke Jr., R. J. (2007). "The Historical Jesus Quests," *Journal of Dispensational Theology*. Vol. 11, No. 32:19–31.
- Borg, M. J. (1988). "A Renaissance in Jesus Studies," *Theology Today*. Vol. 45, Issue.3, 280–92.
- Borg, M. J. (1995). "The Historian, The Christian, and Jesus," *Theology Today*. Vol. 52, Issue. 1, 6–16.
- Brown, C. (1992). "Historical Quest of Jesus," In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. (Eds.), Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Casey, M. (2014). *Jesus: Evidence and argument or mythicist myths?* London, UK: Bloomsbury T & T Clark.
- Copan, P., Craig, W. L., Lüdemann Gerd, & Tacelli, R. K. (2000). *Jesus' resurrection: Fact or figment? A debate between William Lane Craig & Gerd Lüdemann*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Craig, W. L., & Ehrman, B. (2006). *Is There Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus?* www.smu.edu. Retrieved October 10, 2022, from <https://www.physics.smu.edu/~pseudo/ScienceReligion/Ehrman-v-Craig.html>

- Cranfield, C. E. B. (1998). "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ," In *On Romans and Other New Testament Essays*. Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark.
- Csertháti, M. (2000). *Methods and Models in the Third Quest of Historical Jesus*. (Master Thesis). Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom.
- Drews, A. (1998). *The Christ Myth, Westminster College-Oxford Classics in the Study of Religion*. Amherst, N.Y: Prometheus Books.
- Eddy, P. R. & Boyd, G. A. (2007). *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Ehrman, B. D. (2004). *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. 3rd ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Evans, Craig A. (2004). "Introduction to Volume III: Jesus' Mission, Death, and Resurrection," in *The Historical Jesus: Critical Concept in Religious Studies*. Ed. Craig A. Evans, vol. 3. Abington: UK: Routledge.
- Farnell, F. D. (2012). "Three Searches for the 'Historical Jesus' but No Biblical Christ: The Rise of the Searches (Part 1)." *The Master's Seminary Journal*. Vol. 23, No. 1: 7–42.
- Geisler, N. L. (1989). "The Significance of Christ's Physical Resurrection," *Bibliotheca Sacra*. (April-June, 89): 148–70.
- Gromacki, G. R. (2002). "The Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ." *The Journal of Ministry and Theology*. Vol. 6, No. 1, 63–87.
- Gundry, R. H. (1999). "The Essential Physicality of Jesus' Resurrection According to the New Testament." In J. B. Green & M. Turner (Eds.). *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the historical Jesus and New Testament Christology* (pp. 204–219). essay, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Habermas, G. R. (2001). "Explaining Away the Resurrection: The Recent Revival of Hallucination Theories," *Christian Research Journal*. Vol. 23, no. 4, 26–27.
- Habermas, G. R. & Flew, A. G. N. (2005). *Resurrected: An Atheist and Theist Dialogue*, ed. John F. Ankerberg. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005.
- Habermas, G. R. (2005). "Resurrection Research From 1975 to the Present: What Are the Critical Scholars Saying," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*. Vol. 3, no. 2, 135–53.
- Hagner, D. A. (2001). "An Analysis of Recent 'Historical Jesus' Studies," In *Religious Diversity in the Graeco-Roman World*. (Eds) Dan Cohn Sherbok and John M. Court. Sheffield, UK: T & T Clark.
- Harrington, D. J. (1990). *Interpreting the New Testament: A Practical Guide, New Testament Message*. Vol. 1. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.
- Hasel, Gerhard F. (1996). "The Resurrection: Myth or Reality?," *Perspective Digest*. Vol. 1: No. 1:39-48.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd/vol1/iss1/9>
- Hengel, M. (1989). *Crucifixion in the ancient world and the folly of the message of the Cross*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Josephus, F. (1957). *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus*. trans. William Whiston. Philadelphia, PA: J.C. Winston Co.
- Keck, L. E. (1994). "The second coming of the liberal Jesus?" *Religion Online*. Retrieved June 10, 2022, from <https://www.religion-online.org/article/the-second-coming-of-the-liberal-jesus/>

- Licona, G. R., & Habermas, G. R. (2004). *The Case of the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.
- Licona, M. R. (2008). *The Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus: Historiographical in the Light of Recent Debates* (Ph.D. Diss.). University of Pretoria, South Africa.
- Ludemann, Gerd. (1995). *What Really Happen to Jesus: A Historical Approach to the Resurrection*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Ludemann, Gerd. (2004). *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Historical Inquiry*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Maier, P. L. (1991). *In the Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter, and the Early Church*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins.
- Martin, M. (1991). *The Case Against Christianity*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University.
- McCullagh, C. B. (1984). *Justifying Historical Descriptions*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- McKnight, S. (1995). "Who Is Jesus? An Introduction to Jesus Studies," In *Jesus Under Fire*. (Eds.), Michael J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Porter, S. E. (2004). *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research: Previous Discussion and New Proposals*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Price, R. M. (2011). *The Christ-Myth Theory and Its Problems*. Cranford, NJ: American Atheist Press.
- Schweitzer, A. (1910). *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: The Quest of the Historical Jesus a Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*. William Montgomery. London, UK: Adam and Charles Black.
- Schweizer, E. (1979). "Resurrection - fact or illusion?" *Horizons in Biblical Theology*. Vol. 1, No. 1: 137–159. <https://doi.org/10.1163/187122079x00067>
- Dunn, J. D. G. & McKnight, S. (2005). *The Historical Jesus in Recent Research*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Shaw, B. C. F. (2010). *Jesus' Resurrection: A Historical Investigation*. MA Thesis, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA.
- Stein, R. H. (1997). "Was the Tomb Really Empty?" *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society*. Vol 20, No. 1: 23–29.
- Strauss, D. F., Eliot, G., & Pfleiderer, O. (2021). *The life of Jesus critically examined* (4th ed.). Project Gutenberg.
- Tatum, W. B. (1982). *In Quest of Jesus: A Guidebook*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press.
- Voorst, R. E. V. (2000) *Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence, Studying the Historical Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Witherington, B. (1997). *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Author Biography



Lalnuntluanga Ralte L. T. Ralte is presently working as an evangelist under the Mizo Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Mizoram. He was a chaplain at McHenry Higher Secondary School and a digital evangelist on Adventist World Radio. He completed his MA in Religion at Spicer Adventist University.

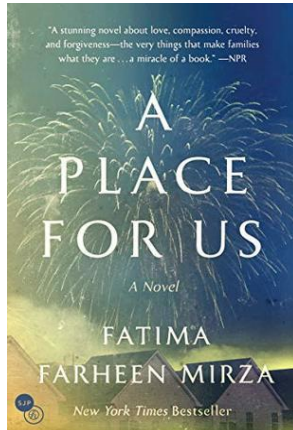


Santosh Kumar is an assistant professor and the director of Research and Innovation at Spicer Adventist University, India. He is pursuing his doctorate in Intercultural Studies at Andrews University, USA. His area of interest includes Christian missions, intercultural discipleship, Mission leadership, and world religion in the South Asian context.

Book Review

Ramchanso Awungshi Shimray

Mirza, Fatima Farheen (2018). *A Place for Us*. New York, NY: Hogarth. ISBN: 9781781090701. Print version \$ 10.99



One of the latest works of diaspora fiction in the field of Indian Writing in English is *A Place for Us*, published in 2018, by Hogarth publishing house, and authored by Fatima Farheen Mirza, an Indian descendant in California. This debut novel narrates the lives of an Indian-American Muslim family of five members in California. The elder sisters, Hadia and Huda, the younger brother, Amar, and the parents, Layla and Rafiq, constitute the diaspora family. The narrative opens up with the gathering of the family in their Californian hometown to celebrate the wedding of their eldest daughter, Hadia. The climax of the story lies in the anticipation of Amar's presence after his estrangement of three years from his family. He had lost faith in the family. The narration goes back in time.

A Place for Us highlights second-generation immigrants who struggle to maintain a balance between the American culture and the home culture their parent(s) originate from. The third-person narrator views through the eyes of not just one but significant respective characters, Amar's perspective of his secret love affair with Amira and grudges against his father, Hadia's romance with the eldest Ali, and Layla's betrothal and marriage to Rafiq while leaving her boyfriend, Raj, the ice-cream seller. The novel highlights the new transition of faith and lifestyle from an Indian Muslim to an American or western version. The children are affected by the rays of Indian Muslim light from their parents during their childhood till date, and thus the transition of experience in American life is not smooth and easy. Amar experienced the clash proportionately more than his sisters, Huda and Hadia. They have been more successful in carving out their American identity while also remembering the lessons their parents taught them, first-generation immigrants. It is later disclosed that Rafiq, the father of the protagonist, is a second-generation immigrant and not a first. However, his imposition is as strong and influential as that of a first-generation immigrant.

The success of the narrative lies in the juxtaposition of the protagonist and Hadia, the eldest daughter of the Muslim family. On the one hand, Amar, the protagonist, the only male child, who seems to be the favorite of the parents, which we could see by their attention to him, seems to have let his family down while carving out his wishes and identity. One significant circumstance of the parents' favoritism points is the watch, the family heirloom, which was passed on to his father by his grandfather. Rafiq declares that this watch will soon belong to Amar and not the daughter in spite of the fact that Amar is not as responsible as Hadia or even Huda. Another situation is the secret love affair which he thinks is a way of upholding his family tradition (he does not build such relationships with American girls or girls from outside his Muslim community but with Amira because he thinks this is only right) becomes one of the major crises for the estrangement of Amar from his family. It would not be wrong to say that because he is the parents' main focus, they also want him to be

more adherent to their guidance because he is the heir or the successor to the family tradition and identity. Hadia, on other hand, is made responsible like Layla, her mother. She becomes the mother in terms of responsibilities during her mother's absence. Rafiq tells Hadia, 'It's your job as the big sister to take care of them. You are like their mother when Mumma is not here (29; part 2, ch. 1).' In terms of tradition and family identity, Hadia seemed insignificant, but as far as her individual identity and behavior are concerned, she is still expected to behave like a Muslim girl. For instance, on Hadia's birthday, Baba answers Hadia's question of if she should wear a hijab already now that is nine years of age. 'I think that you should. It would be good if you did. And it is wajib on you now, you know. It would be a sin not to. But it is your decision (82; part 2, ch. 3).' As is expected of his daughters, Amar is expected to be the heir to whatever remains of the family.

However, the journey of the juxtaposition is quite intriguing. Amar and Hadia are juxtaposed in terms of identity and independence. Amar, who seemed so independent, becomes the one who is monitored, while Hadia receives freedom from the shackles of patriarchal custom and tradition. She had worked so hard to be as valuable as any son that she even got the watch that was supposed to be inherited by Amar, the only begotten son. She married the man of her choosing, and pursued the career she most desired, she was the one who got the ancestral watch instead of Amar. Amar, on the other hand, feels handled and within the shackles of his family. Amar learns that the reason for the breakage of his relationship with Amira ended because of his mother. This devastated him greatly from doing so fine to angry frustrated Amar at the reunion at the wedding after such a long period of estrangement. Here is what Amar had to say, 'Maybe who I am hurts you, Mumma, but I have no choice over that. But you have intentionally hurt me (272; part 3, ch. 2).' He continues his cry, 'I did exactly what Hadia is being celebrated for. No, I did what I thought was so important to you—I chose someone from the community. And I loved her, Mumma. I loved her (269; part 3, ch. 3).' In spite of his efforts to please his family, his decisions and actions are disapproved altogether from all angles.

Coming back to the inheritance of Baba's watch, a family heirloom, according to the Muslim tradition, he, not Hadia nor Huda, is their main progeny or successor. As the only male child in the family, he will inherit the family heirloom, the watch which had been passed on to Baba by Dada, generation after generation (130; part 2, ch. 5). But we see that he was not the inheritor of the watch. It was given to Hadia, Amar's sister, for her good work, behaviour, and responsibility. Rafiq bequeathed the watch, a symbol of a family heirloom, to Hadia, his daughter. Hadia was surprised as well to receive such an honour, Hadia's first question in surprise was 'Are you sure?' and 'But, Baba, isn't the watch for a man (130; part 2, ch. 5)?' The tradition will hardly matter in this case anymore. Never had this been the case in the family history for the watch to be given to a girl. What Amar deserves as the man in the family is denied. His identity as a progeny in the family is tarnished. Amar is no different from Huda or other girls in the family then, or he is not seen as a boy or man in the family.

The very ultimate moment of Hadia's freedom is her choice of husband. She is a woman and is expected to be a package for her husband in marriage. Layla's marriage was arranged. She did not possess the power to choose Raj, the ice cream seller over Rafiq. But Hadia is educated and employed in a hospital. She is endowed with financial stability from which she derives her executive power of marriage of her choice. Unlike her mother, Hadia freed herself from the fetters of the family and the culture of arranged marriage. At the time of her wedding, she is on the stage with Tariq, but she complies with Mumma's wishes to not make the matrimony obvious. Her mother had requested her, 'You chose your husband. He is not Shia. Please do us

the kindness of not making it appear so obviously a love marriage (230; part 3, ch 1).’ To Layla, this is such dishonour or shame, and therefore, she advises Hadia not to flaunt that the marriage was a love marriage, a marriage that had disgraced the family. At least Hadia was to pretend that she abided by the traditional codes and behaviour when she was already so independent. She was marrying who she wanted, a man out of the family or the community tradition.

Due to her successful overcoming of the crises in her identity formation, she seems to exceed Amar, the protagonist. There are instances in the family which change over time when she matures and takes things into her capable hands as a wise and heroic character which is never expected of her in a set-up such as hers. For instance, Hadia resolves an issue of Amar with five hundred dollars due when even Baba could not resolve it (192; part 2, ch. 8). This gives the impression that Hadia is powerful and wise even above her father. She serves as the saviour figure in the distraught moment between the father and son, or, say, in the family. She even advises her father on how to manage his subject. She tells Baba that he cannot get angry with Amar like he used to, and that time has changed. She attains the position of a father under which all the family members fall. Not the father nor the mother or Huda or Amar could resolve the family tension. The divide or chaos was becoming wider without the presence of Hadia. Before she left her home, the family was somewhat under coordination. But after she left for her medical study, without her at home, this so-called kingdom of Baba is in peril. Hadia, not only does the work of a woman by taking care of the household chores and babysitting, but also the administrative duties of diplomacy, management, advisor, and control, so that Baba’s kingdom does not collapse. Within so many social constructs, expectations, and condescension toward women, she outlived to be a hero. Although Amar is the protagonist of the novel, the narrative could always translate Hadia as the true protagonist. She fulfilled her household chores and duties as an ideal eldest daughter- she could even assume the role of her mother, she achieved her dream career, her medical profession, and also was able to unite her family as a fatherly figure when the rest failed- this we see at her wedding. The long-separated brother comes home to the reunion and forgiveness with Baba and the family. Only through her, the climax of the narrative is attained. Thus, with all these factors, she is undoubtedly the hero.

In the end, the novel is successful in delivering the cultural phenomena of immigration, cultural shock or transition, hybridity, alienation, identity issue, nostalgia, and certainly, feminism. The uses of historical events such as the infamous 9/11 and the actual setting of California, with the cultural set-up of the Indian immigrants there, provide for a sense of truth and realism in the reading. Interestingly, it is understood that the novel has taken a lot of biographical elements in the narrative as she had mentioned in her interview with the PBS books in November 2018. The use of the flashback technique and the point of view seem to disseminate the narrative focus from continuous unified attention thus leaving the readers in a maze but they, at the same time, intricately deliver the wider spectrum, perspective, relevant and complete experience to the readers. This novel, surely, is an amazing read in the genre of Indian diaspora literature in English. As a debut novel, Fatima has intricately designed the plot and the narrative, and the outcome is commendable.

Dr Ramchanso Awungshi Shimray
Assistant Professor, *Spicer Adventist University*
ORCID [0000-0002-4957-0501](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4957-0501)