

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN LEARNING ENGLISH: A SURVEY IN UPH TEACHERS COLLEGE

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Abstract: This paper attempts to explore the role of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity in Christian faith, in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms taking place in an English Department of a private Teachers College. A great deal of emphasis has been given on the importance of biblical Christian worldview, yet the role of the Holy Spirit in both students and English lecturers' teaching and learning are lacking empirical research in the field of Christian education. Therefore, a survey was conducted in April 2018, and 106 students majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT) participated. The survey focused on their experience and perception of the role of the Holy Spirit in their learning English that covers the areas of cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The survey result shows the students perceive the role of the Holy Spirit is not only in making them understand the material but also in helping them to apply it. Moreover, they become more reflective and are reminded to speak and do what is proper/correct.

Keywords: English language learning, Holy Spirit, students' perception, survey research

INTRODUCTION

It is widely believed that the nature and practice of Christian education should go beyond than just devotions, retreats, and the display of Christian symbols such as Bible verses, the cross, and paintings on the walls of Christian schools. Christian education aims at producing responsive, responsible, and reflective disciples of Christ who have a solid biblical Christian worldview. According to Knight (2006), in the lives of the students, the restoration process takes place by the Holy Spirit. Issler (2005) added that unless today's believers engage the empowering resource of the Holy Spirit – who is the divine agent of sanctification, it is impossible to be formed in the image of Christ. Therefore, the goal of Holy Spirit's work on the process of education is to sanctify born again Christians to be more like Christ in all sense as Bavinck (2008, p. 230) says "Christ is our holiness in the same sense in which he is our righteousness." This statement is not a work of one Agent only but both in which Christians co-operate, it is a gift of Holy Spirit and simultaneously a task of believers (Bavinck, 2008). On this understanding framework, Pazmino (2007) states that Christian educators are called to be responsive to the teaching of the Holy Spirit and to recognize that the Spirit guides persons "into all truth" (John 16:13). It is a joint work. When the renewing power of the Holy Spirit works on believers, He makes them work by obedience. Consequently, in the practice of education, the work of the Holy Spirit could be recognized by the student perception as they give their response to God's work in the classroom.

Having said all of this theological foundation, Christian educators maintain that the presence and work of the Holy Spirit are indispensable for active education ministry. Although the

locus of sanctification is in the heart, the inner life of believers, Berkhof (1938, p. 533) highlights that “this cannot be changed without changing the whole organism of man.” The renewing of God’s Spirit effects all aspects deeper than feeling and understanding. Moreover, Scripture testifies on this process the Spirit of God works spiritually although He employs means (Berkhof, 1938). It is a spiritual work, in a sense, it is a divine operation in the human soul, and using principal means, which is the Word of God, the truth. Bavinck(2008) sharply states that “the Word of God” comes to us not only through Scripture but also from its absorption into the consciousness of a society of people. In a wider definition, “it is not merely a sound but also power and the accomplishment of God's will” (Bavinck, 2008, p. 441). God's will or in some sense God's truth in Scripture and nature, which are one, is the means of Holy Spirit to help Christians achieving their lives’ goal, Christlike. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit is also the active agent in equipping and filling Christian teachers to enable them to teach, deliver God’s one truth. Teaching is a spiritual gift that enables Christ' body, the church, to mature and to minister effectively. The Holy Spirit also works in the lives of teachers to encourage faithful stewardship of the gift of teaching itself. Regarding the role of the Holy Spirit, Lebar (1995) adds that inside the teachers, the following indicators take place in their lives

1. The Holy Spirit seeks to become their life, deeper than thought or feeling.
2. The Spirit works through the written Word to exalt the living Christ of the cross.
3. They must practice active submission to the Holy Spirit, and be passive toward the strivings of the self-life.
4. They must keep the person of Christ central rather than the work
5. It is the peculiar ministry of the Holy Spirit to make the outer Word an inner experience.
6. Although they make thorough lesson preparation in the Spirit ahead of time, they should also be ready for the Spirit’s leading during the lesson.”

Wulanata published in Polyglot did previous research about the role, and the work of the Holy Spirit on pre-service teachers lives scientific journal Vol 14, No 1 in 2018. Stated there that the Holy Spirit enabled pre-service teachers in the practicum to integrate biblical worldview in their teachings and how they were helped to realize their calling as Christian teachers who are personally growing to be more Christlike every day. The Holy Spirit also revived them, giving them strength. The researchers were interested in following up this previous research and focused more on the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Including human language, generative linguists and cognitive psychologist were interested in knowing what underlying factors-innate, psychological, social, or environmental circumstances-cause a particular behavior in the human being (Brown, 2014). Therefore, one of the perspectives on second language acquisition brings to light in students' innateness in acquiring a second language such as English. With that in mind and considering the areas stated by Pazmino that the work of the Holy Spirit in students’ lives involves the cognitive, affective, intentional, and behavioral aspects, three main research questions were developed

1. During the students study here in the English Language Education (ELE) classes, what are the roles of the Holy Spirit that they acknowledge in the cognitive aspect: Their knowing, comprehending, applying, analyzing?
2. During their study here in the ELE classes, what are the roles of the Holy Spirit that they acknowledge in the affective aspect: Their receiving, responding, valuing, character?

3. During their study here in the ELE classes, what are the roles of the Holy Spirit that they acknowledged in the behavioral aspect: Their words, attitudes, work?

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey is used to collect data from the students, recording their views on the role of the Holy Spirit. Survey research methodology is employed in order to know the students' great belief or perception regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in their learning, especially in their cognitive, practical, and behavioral area. An openly ended questionnaire was constructed and validated by a native before carried out. The questionnaire items were then inserted in a google doc form, and a link was created.

The population of this research is the students in the English Language Education (ELE) as follow.

Table 1. The Population

ELE Students Cohort	Targeted Population	Participated Population
Cohort 2017	39	37
Cohort 2016	28	24
Cohort 2015	22	22
Cohort 2014	23	23
Total	112	106

Eventually, only data from 106 students are used in this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After data reduction, themes emerge and can be categorized into common themes which mean there is the same answer mentioned several times. The display from the students' answers can be seen in the tables below

Table 2. Data Display from Students Questionnaire

Population	Aspects	Common Theme	Unique Theme
23 students 2014 batch	Cognitive	1. Makes them understand.	1. "Ignites clarity on the use of English language, especially in utilizing precise diction to make a certain reflection." 2. "In the discourse analysis class, when I encountered with a
		2. Upgrades their knowledge.	

			certain literature discourse, Holy Spirit helps me to recognize non-biblical value.”
	Affective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the ELT students reflective. 2. Makes them value things and other people. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Ignites a holy-discontent spirit to teach English more during the practicum.” 2. “Softens heart in order to respond.”
al	Behavior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reminds and enables them to respect and to control words and attitudes. 2. Gives willingness and strength. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Makes me not to be so arrogant.”

Populat ion	Aspects	Common Theme	Unique Theme
22 students 2015 batch	Cognitive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helps them to comprehend the material. 2. Gives wisdom. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Makes me never give upon my study until this moment.” 2. “Makes me acquire critical thinking.”
	Affective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Makes them mature. 2. Makes them responsive and reflective. 3. Reminds me of my responsibility. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Makes me more confident in class.” 2. “Makes me always thankful.”
	Behavior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gives a warning. 2. Reminds them to be 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Makes me speak more loudly and fluent.” 2. “Helps me to

	more careful in their words.	construct words into sentences that can bring healing and strengthen other people around me.”
	3. Makes them more responsible.	

Population	Aspects	Common Theme	Unique Theme
24 students 2016 batch	Cognitive	1. Makes them understand the material.	1. “Gives me the spirit to study every day and opens my mind so I can think critically.”
		2. Helps them to apply.	2. “Gives me a spirit of excellence.”
	Affective	1. Shapes them to be more like Christ.	1. “Makes me strong to do.”
		2. Helps them to respond things properly.	2. “Makes me have humility to learn.”
	Behavioral	1. Reminds them to use proper words	1. “Makes me show love to others and helping others.”
		2. Tells them which attitude is good and bad	2. “Reminds me to do the best in everything.”

Population	Aspects	Common Theme	Unique Theme
37 students	Cognitive	1. Helps them to understand the material.	1. “Helps me to think more critically.”
		2. Helps them to apply the knowledge they got.	2. “Helps me to help other.”
			3. “Always reminds

2017 batch			me to bring God presence in every learning process, so I could grasp more knowledge.”
	Affective	1. Enables them to respond to everything well. 2. Makes them be a morereflective. 3. Helps them to listen carefully.	1. “Gives me care-able feeling to others.” 2. “Makes me respect the lecturer.”
	Behavioral	1. Reminds them to do and say what is right. 2. Helps them doing them work well.	1. “Enables me to join conversation and be active in class.” 2. “Makes me have integrity.” 3. “Makes me have self control.”

The common theme appears in each batch is that the Holy Spirit enables them to understand the material that they learned. This finding is in linewith what the Bible says in John 14 verse 26 “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” Contextually, this verse refers to Spirit’s principal tasks, which is “to remind the disciples of Jesus’ teaching and thus, in the new situation after the resurrection, to help them grasp its significance and thus to teach them what it means” (Carson, 1991, p. 505). Similarly, Beasley-Murray comments that the task of this promised Spirit is to “*teach* you everything and *remind* you of everything” (Beasley-Murray, 2002, p. 261) definitely with regards to Jesus’ teaching. However, it could be extended to a wider sense just as the “word of God” has its wider-understanding. Thus, the role of the Holy Spirit as the Person who teaches Christ disciples about everything can also happen in the students' daily lives, including in the college classrooms. It is obvious from the participants' answers that not only the Holy Spirit made them understand, but also the Holy Spirit gave them the wisdom to apply what they have learned. Moreover, three participants testified that the Holy Spirit enabled them to think critically. In Paul’s letter for the Corinthians, it is stated that the Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Dominant answer in the active area is that the Holy Spirit made them reflective individuals. This statement is under the values aimed in the Teachers College, that is the 3R: Responsive,

Reflective, and Responsible. The spirit of God within the believers convicts them of their sin and help them to believe and obey (Bloesch, 2000). The process of conviction of sin, which changes into obedience is always through the step of reflection. It means when the students stated they were reflective, and the Spirit empowered them to have a paradigm-shift, seeing themselves from God's truth and try to walk His truth. This finding supports the previous research result done by Wulanata that the Holy Spirit helped the pre-service teachers during their practicum in Makedonia School, Ngabang. The Holy Spirit helped them to realize their calling as Christian teachers in their daily lives. Participants also mentioned that they had confidence and strength. There is one participant testified that the Holy Spirit made him/her humble in learning. This is in reality in the Bible that the only Spirit made Christians not to live in the flesh for they will put to death anger, jealousy, self-centeredness. The Holy Spirit also made them be more of Christ-like, having humility. Something clear Jesus had.

In the behavioral aspect, the common theme appears is that the Holy Spirit reminded them to speak and act what is righteous and proper. This confirms previous research that the Holy Spirit helped students to practice biblical values in their daily lives around the school. It is indeed true that role was mentioned in the Gospel of John, in John 16:13a "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.."

CONCLUSIONS

There are three conclusions drawn from this survey research as the students perceived the role of the Holy Spirit as

1. The Holy Spirit not only makes the students understand the material but also helps them to apply it.
2. The Holy Spirit makes them reflective.
3. The Holy Spirit reminds them to speak and do what is right/proper.

Those research results and its discussion can be used in Theology classes, especially in Systematic Theology 5 which is talking about the Holy Spirit. A further in-depth interview can be done to the participants to dig more profound their experiences and interviewing students from the international teachers' college is also possible to compare the experiences between Indonesian students and international students regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in their learning. Another recommendation for future researchers is to survey the English lecturers for investigating the role of the Holy Spirit in their teaching preparation, instruction, and evaluation.

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