

STUDENTS' COMPREHENSION OF THE ALMEIDA VERSION AND A MODERN VERSION OF THE BIBLE IN PORTUGUESE (A BIBLIA NA LINGUAGEM DE HOJE) IN SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BRAZIL—A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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**Problem.** This study was concerned with students' comprehension of the Almeida Version of the Bible in Portuguese as compared with their comprehension of a modern version.

The purpose was to determine through testing whether there is a significant difference in students' comprehension of the Almeida Version of the Bible in Portuguese and a corresponding modern version, measured through the Cloze Procedure technique.

**Method.** Sixteen Bible texts of different literary styles were selected by a panel of biblical-literature experts of the Brazilian Bible Society. The texts were randomly assigned to one of the sixteen forms of the Cloze test.

The Cloze tests were randomly assigned to 1,504 eighth-grade students and 1,504 eleventh-grade students chosen at random from twenty-eight public schools randomly selected in the Greater São Paulo area. The tests were administered by the investigator during April, May, and June 1978.

The data were analyzed initially by means of a three-way analysis of variance. Each individual text was then further analyzed by means of a two-way analysis of variance.

**Findings.** To fulfill the purpose of the study, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between mean scores obtained by the students on the Almeida Version and the modern version of the Bible texts? From data analysis of the sixteen individual texts it was shown that thirteen of them, corresponding to 81.3 percent of the Bible texts under study, yielded significantly higher scores on the modern version than on the Almeida Version.

2. Is there any significant difference between mean scores obtained by eighth-grade students and eleventh-grade students? The scores obtained by eleventh-grade students on the modern and the Almeida Version were significantly higher than the scores of eighth-grade students in thirteen of the sixteen texts, corresponding to 81.3 percent of the Bible texts under study.

3. Is there any significant difference between scores obtained by the students on the sixteen Bible texts? The analysis of the data indicated the existence of a significant difference between scores obtained by the students on the sixteen Bible texts.

The readability level of each text was determined through the criterion "nineteen out of fifty" set for this study. According to this criterion, 62.5 percent of the texts in the modern version were shown to be readable for eighth-grade students and 81.3 percent for eleventh-grade students. In the Almeida Version only 12.5 percent of the texts were readable for eighth-grade students and 31.3 percent for eleventh-grade students.

**Conclusions.** The conclusions may be stated as follows:

1. Students' comprehension of the modern version is significantly higher than their comprehension of the Almeida Version of the Bible in Portuguese.

2. Comprehension of eleventh-grade students of the modern version and the Almeida Version of the Bible in Portuguese is significantly higher than that of eighth-grade students.

3. Some passages of the Bible in both the modern version and the Almeida Version are more comprehensible than others in the same version.

4. The number of texts in the modern version of the Bible in Portuguese which are readable for public school students is much higher than the number of texts readable for the same students in the Almeida Version.

A series of recommendations on the use of Bible versions in Portuguese for religious educators, preachers, and evangelists, as well as to the Brazilian Bible Society, resulted from the findings of this study.