

Bertrand Russell the visionary: Sixty years ahead of time

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Abstract

Bertrand Arthur William, 3rd Earl Russell was one of the founders of Analytical philosophy of Europe. He was born in the year 1872 and lived for 98 years as he died in the year 1970. Albeit of Russell's primary identity with Analytical movement he is also known as an academician, political activist, educationist, social reformer, free-thinker and a pacifist. He wrote for the first time at his age of 18 and since then he continued expression of his views on diverse domains of knowledge for the next almost 80 years.

He became one of the most inspiring philosophers of the twentieth century. Russell wrote on various subject domains including philosophy, religion, politics and mathematics.

Dewey decimal classification (DDC), developed by Melvil Dewey, is a knowledge organization tool that provides a system for organize knowledge represented in any form.

This paper analyses the knowledge domains of Bertrand Russell and the impact of Bertrand Russell's philosophy to the universe of knowledge.

The results of the analysis of the domains of Russell's intellect revealed that he was at least sixty years ahead of his time.

Keywords: Western Philosophy, Bertrand Russell, Dewey Decimal Classification, Knowledge Domain

1. Introduction

Bertrand Russell has been considered as one of the greatest philosophers of twentieth century. He was active in enriching the mankind with his intellectual contributions for more than eighty years. He was born in the year 1872 and lived

for 98 years as he died in the year 1970. According to A. C. Grayling (1949-), Russell is one of the best-known philosophers of twentieth century (Grayling 1). Avrum Stroll (1921-2013) stated about Russell that, Russell independently developed the field of mathematical logic in the late nineteenth century (Stroll 10). Robert E. Egner (1924-) in his edited book express his thought on Russell that he is the most controversial figures of the twentieth century, he is widely renowned for his proactive writings. He is recognized as one of the founders of Analytical Philosophy and he made significant contributions to areas as far-ranging as education, politics, history, religion and science (Egner 12). Russell's first intellectual output could be traced in the year 1890 and since then he continued his process of philosophizing the natural phenomena of this universe. The philosophy of Bertrand Russell has been contributed through research articles, books, pamphlets, newspaper articles, letter to the editors, lectures etc. A need for accumulating Bertrand Russell's philosophy was felt because of its existence across different media and form of presentation. The present research is an inventory of Bertrand Russell's philosophy expressed in written communication across different kinds of documents. This study analyzes the novelty in knowledge domains of the great philosopher Bertrand Russell and identifies its subsequent inclusion into the universe of knowledge.

1.1 Research questions

The present research has been carried out to answer the following research questions:

A. How dynamic was Bertrand Russell ?

To answer this question the diversity in subject domains in the published literature of Bertrand Russell has to be identified.

B. How far the Bertrand Russell's philosophy is significant?

Sustainability of Bertrand Russell's knowledge domain may be studied to answer this question.

C. How visionary was Bertrand Russell ?

To answer this question, Bertrand Russell's philosophy has to be analyzed to trace its presence in course of time.

1.2 Objectives

The present study has been carried out to satisfy the following objectives:

- A. To explore the knowledge domains of Bertrand Russell.
- B. To identify the significance of Bertrand Russell's philosophy in the universe of knowledge.
- C. To trace the gap between initiation of a sphere of knowledge by Bertrand Russell and its subsequent inclusion into the universe of knowledge.

1.3 Scope

- a) The present study carried out through the analysis of bibliographic information of the Bertrand Russell's published literature. The published literature includes books, pamphlets, research articles, review articles, newspaper articles, lectures and interviews.
- b) Printed communication in the form of personal letters has not been included in this present study.
- c) Collection of bibliographic information has been carried out from Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University, Routledge database, OCLC database and EBSCO database.
- d) Printed communication of Bertrand Russell during the year 1890 to 1970 has been selected for present study.
- e) Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) has been consulted as knowledge device for organization of knowledge domains of Bertrand Russell.
- f) Starting from DDC 1st edition, published in the year of 1876 till the latest edition of DDC, i.e., 23rd edition published in 2011 has been consulted.

2. Survey of related literature

Anthony Clifford Grayling in his book "Russell: a very short introduction" discuss the life and works of Bertrand Russell. He introduces both Russell's contributions to logic and other domains of philosophy, and his wide ranging views on education politics, war and sexual morality. He also discuss in his book on the influences of Bertrand Russell on the contemporary philosophy and philosophers. (Grayling 28).

Avrum Stroll in his book presented a synoptic picture of the main developments in logic, philosophy of language, epistemology and Metaphysics in the past twentieth century. He analyses the doctrines such as Logical atomism, Logical positivism, Philosophy of language, Phenomenalism, continental philosophy and eliminative materialism and the development of mathematical logic. (Stroll 1).

Robert E. Egner discussed in his book "Bertrand Russell's best" about the writings of Bertrand Russell on the different knowledge domains such as, Psychology, Religion, Sex and Marriage, education, Politics and Ethics. He suggested that these works offer forward-thinking perspectives on a changing western society progressively shaped, most significantly, by two world wars, the decline of British imperialism and an evolving moral landscape. (Egner 12).

Woodhouse evaluates the growth of Russell's educational thought and revealed that Russell's concept is inexact in comparison with the concept of Whitehead and Dewey. (Woodhouse 12)

Philosophical Library published a lexicon on "The wisdom of Bertrand Russell". In this lexicon, the fundamental principles of Russell from objectivity to ontological argument to logical certainty is discussed with the comments of Russell

on the different knowledge domains such as war, evil and the purpose and goal of humankind. (Philosophical Library 1).

P. Chatterjee and S. Mallik in their article tries to analyse the philosophy of Bertrand Russell on the use of information, critically or rationally, which may be considered as the stepping stone towards the establishment of the concept of Information Literacy. This paper concludes that Russell's critical thinking, in his writings, provided to trace the root of the concept of Information Literacy. (Chatterjee and Mallik 112).

P. Chatterjee and S. Mallik in their article analyses the contents of the writings of Bertrand Russell to explore his views on occurrences of pandemics in human civilization and his prediction about future occurrences of pandemics along with their reasons. (Chatterjee and Mallik 11).

Bradford discuss about the historical growth of Dewey's "Decimal Classification and Relative Index," It was designed, i.e. the classification of books and the records of human work and thought. (Bradford 429).

Sweeney discussed in his article the development of the 19th edition Dewey Decimal classification scheme published in 1979. In this paper a substantial body of literature on the Dewey Decimal Classification and the most recent portion is covered. (Sweeney 192).

Weigand express his views on historical growth and development of Dewey Decimal Classification scheme in his paper "The "Amherst Method": The Origins of the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme". He discuss the growth of DDC from 1st edition to 23rd edition by grounding an account of Melvil Dewey's thinking and historical understanding of the contextual forces influencing Dewey's decisions on the classification structure. (Weigand 175).

3. Methodology

Earl (Bertrand Arthur William) Russell, the Nobel Laureate, of the year 1950, is one of the greatest thinkers of twentieth century. He was born in the year of 1872 (18th May) in Trelleck, United Kingdom. During of his lifespan of almost ninety-eight years (1872-1970), Bertrand Russell actively published scholarly literature during the year (1896-1970). His publication includes books, pamphlets, articles, review articles etc.

The present study selected the Nobel Laureate Bertrand Russell for analyzing his knowledge domain and the significance of his sphere of knowledge to the universe of knowledge.

3.1 Selection of database

Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University, Routledge Database, OCLC Worldcat and EBSCO Database are selected for retrieving the published literature and knowledge domains.

A. Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University

Bertrand Russell Archives was established in the year 1968 at the McMaster University library at Canada. This database published thirty-four volumes edited work "The collected papers of Bertrand Russell". This project was started in the year of 1969 under the team of William Ready (University Librarian McMaster University), Dr. Kenneth Blackwall, Dr. John G. Slater (Professor of Philosophy, University of Toronto) and Nicholas Griffin (Professor of Philosophy, McMaster University). This archive also includes Russell's correspondence, manuscripts, tapes, films, photographs, medals and writing desk.

B. Routledge Database

Routledge founded by George Routledge in the year 1836, a British publisher company within the domains of humanities and social sciences. Routledge publish scholarly content in the domains of the humanities, social sciences, behavioural sciences, science, technology and medicine sectors.

C. OCLC Worldcat

OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) Worldcat is the world's largest network of library services. It is the world's largest bibliographic database of information about library collections.

D. EBSCO database

EBSCO is the provider of research databases, e-journals, magazine subscriptions, e-books and discovery service. Started in the year 1944 as a division of EBSCO Industries, Inc... EBSCOhost provides multidisciplinary and subject-specific databases.

3.2 Selection of knowledge device

Dewey Decimal Classification system or DDC has been consulted as knowledge device to analyze the domains of Bertrand Russell's philosophy. DDC is a general knowledge organizing tool which is updated regularly. It is the most widely used library classification system in the world. DDC was developed by Melvil Dewey in 1873 and first published in 1876. DDC is published and maintained by OCLC. It is the only knowledge device used in knowledge classification in libraries around the world which is continuously revised to keep pace with knowledge.

3.3 Analysis of data

The analysis of data has been carried out through simple counting method.

4. Analysis of data and representation of results

The result of the analysis of bibliographic information on Bertrand Russell's philosophy has been represented in the following sections.

4.1 Details of communications by Bertrand Russell

4.1.1 Totality of communications

The present study identified a totality of 2438 number of published communications by Bertrand Russell.

4.1.2 Time span

Analysis of the communications of Bertrand Russell revealed that in the year 1890 Russell's work was first ever published. Thereafter Bertrand Russell's contributions continued for about 80 years i.e., till the year 1970.

4.1.3 Diversity in communications

Bertrand Russell has expressed his views through different mode of communications namely – books, articles in periodicals, articles in magazines, articles in newspapers, letters to the editors, pamphlets, reviews and interviews.

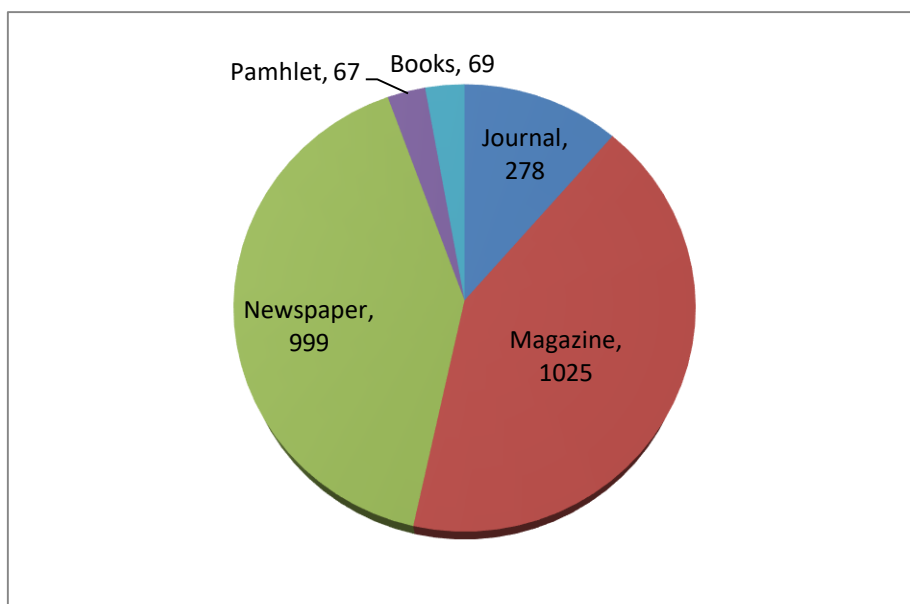


Fig 1: Totality of Bertrand Russell's publication

Fig 1 show that total number of 2438 published communication through different mode of communication namely - books, pamphlets, journal articles, newspaper articles, letters to the editor, lectures and interviews published in newspaper article or magazines by Bertrand Russell during 1890 to 1970.

4.2 Distribution of Bertrand Russell's publications

The present study analyses every mode of communication of Russell's views. A frequency analysis on the sources of communications was further carried out as shown in **Fig 2**.

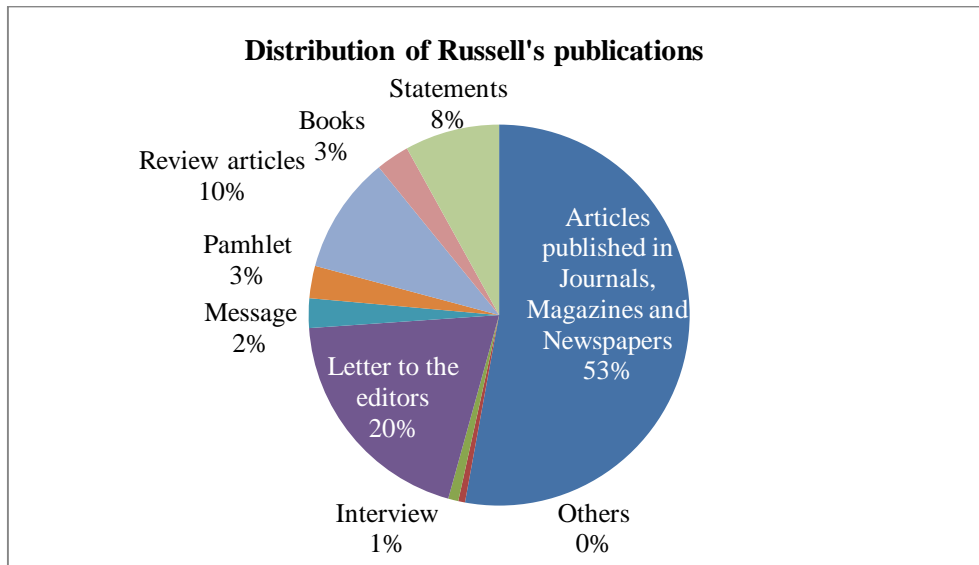


Fig 2: Distribution of Bertrand Russell's publication

Fig 2 revealed that about 20% of the Russell's printed communication was letters to the editors followed by publication as articles in magazine which is 23%. Publication in daily or weekly newspapers accounts for 23%. This has been found that 7% of his works Russell published as journal articles and 10% are review articles published in journals, magazine or newspaper. About 3% of his works published as books and an equal amount of his works were published in pamphlets. Remaining 1% of the Russell's intellectual output was published as interviews in the newspaper or magazine.

4.3 Knowledge domain of Bertrand Russell

The present study explores 47 number of knowledge domain where Bertrand Russell's intellect dealt with. The domain names were collected from the first 100 divisions of DDC 23rd edition as shown in **Table 1**:

Sl. No	DDC Class No	Domain Name	Number of Documents Written by Russell
1	100	Philosophy	17
2	110	Metaphysics	16
3	120	Epistemology, causation, humankind	38
4	130	Parapsychology & occultism	1
5	140	Philosophical schools of thought	133
6	150	Psychology	51
7	160	Philosophical logic	24
8	170	Ethics	219
9	180	Ancient, medieval & eastern	4

		philosophy	
10	190	Modern Western philosophy	38
11	200	Religion	24
12	210	Philosophy & theory of religion	24
13	220	The Bible	1
14	230	Christianity	1
15	240	Christian practice & observance	3
16	260	Christian organization, social work & worship	4
17	270	History of Christianity	1
18	280	Christian denominations	2
19	290	Other religions	1
20	300	Social sciences, sociology & anthropology	123
21	320	Political science	718
22	330	Economics	57
23	340	Law	30
24	350	Public administration & military science	61
25	360	Social problems & social services	127
26	370	Education	98
27	380	Commerce, communications & transportation	12
28	390	Customs, etiquette & folklore	9
29	500	Science	11
30	510	Mathematics	53
31	520	Astronomy	1
32	530	Physics	21
33	640	Home & family management	8
34	740	Drawing, decorative & minor arts	1
35	790	Sports, games & entertainment	4
36	800	Literature, rhetoric & criticism	23
37	820	English & Old English literatures	5
38	840	French & related literatures	1
39	890	Other Literatures	1
40	900	History	26
41	910	Geography & Travel	97
42	920	Biography & genealogy	173

43	950	History of Asia	111
44	960	History of Afrika	10
45	970	History of North America	15
46	980	History of South America	2
47	990	History of other areas	3
Total documents 2438			

Table 1: Knowledge domains of Bertrand Russell’s publications

4.4 Domain wise distribution of Bertrand Russell’s intellect

The results of the analysis of knowledge domains of Bertrand Russell’s intellect revealed the broad subjects domains as shown in **Fig 3**.

- A.** Philosophy (includes Metaphysics, Ontology and Epistemology),
- B.** Logic (includes Mathematical and Symbolic),
- C.** Philosophy and foundation of Mathematics,
- D.** Analytical Philosophy and Linguistic Philosophy,
- E.** Ethics,
- F.** Religion,
- G.** Politics (includes political ideologies and political situation),
- H.** Education,
- I.** War and war crimes,
- J.** Peace and Disarmament and
- K.** History

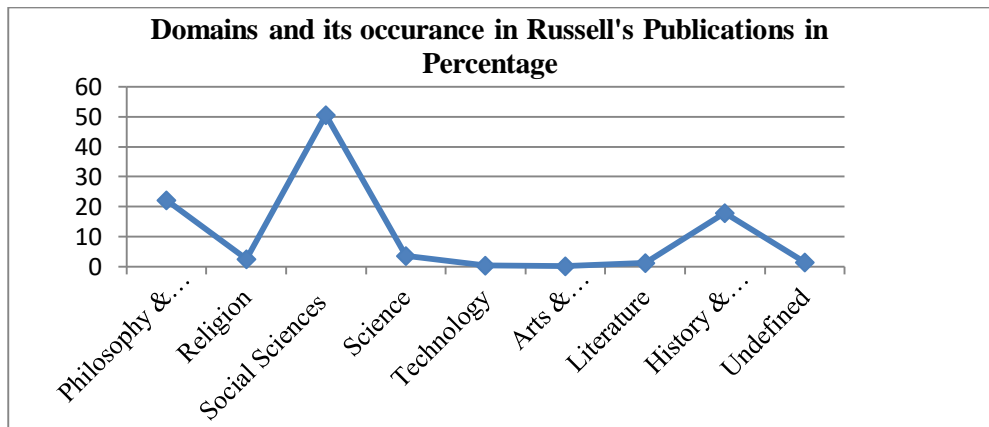


Figure 3: Domains of Bertrand Russell’s intellect

4.5 Impact of Bertrand Russell intellect

An analogical study of Knowledge domain of Bertrand Russell has been carried out in this contemporary universe of knowledge through different editions of Dewey decimal classification. For this, inclusion of Bertrand Russell's terminology into editions of DDC's has been shown chronologically, and the results are furnished following sections.

Sl No	Knowledge Domains of Bertrand Russell	Domains appears in Bertrand Russell's writings	Year of Inclusion of Bertrand Russell's terminology into editions of DDC	Class Number	DDC Page Number
1	Philosophy of Bertrand Russell	1872-1970	DDC 15 th Ed 1951	192	34p.
2	Mathematical Logic	1901/1903	DDC 18 th Ed 1971	511.3	620p.
3	Linguistics Philosophy	1910	DDC 19 th Ed 1979	149.94	64p.
4	Logical Atomism	1914	DDC 19 th Ed 1979	146.5	63p.
5	Logical Positivism (Logical Empiricism)	1945	DDC 19 th Ed 1979	146.42	63p.
6	Analytic Philosophy (Analytical Movement)	1914	DDC 20 th Ed 1989	146.4	89p.

Table 2: Impact of Bertrand Russell's intellect.

5. Discussion

Bertrand Russell as a modern British philosopher was first introduced in the 15th edition of DDC in the year 1951. DDC recognize Russell as a philosopher and his philosophic viewpoint.

Russell's greatest early work in the field of mathematical logic was his most lasting contribution to philosophy. Russell's contribution on mathematical logic are - "The logic of relations" published in the journal *Rivista di matematica* in the year 1901, "Principle of mathematics" in the year 1903 and with A. N. Whitehead published three volume book *Principia Mathematica* during 1901-1913. DDC acknowledge the **Mathematic Logic** domain and in 18th edition it separate from philosophical

logic (DDC class No 164). A new class number 511.3 was set up for incorporation of the mathematical logic domain.

Bertrand Russell published journal article, in the journal *The Monist* and *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* in 1918. In this article Russell set forth his idea of Empiricism. The term **Logical Atomism** appears in the 19th edition of DDC in 1979. The class number of Logical Atomism is 146.5

Russell used to write letters to the editors more frequently than any other means of communication.

This has been found that the amount of articles by Russell in newspapers is almost same to the amount of articles published in magazines.

The domain of Philosophy has dominated by Analytic philosophy or analytic movement since the early twentieth century. Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore started the analytical movement in the late nineteenth century by rejecting idealism and traditional philosophical concept.

Logical Atomism, Logical Positivism or Logical Empiricism and Linguistic philosophy are the part of Analytic philosophy or Analytical movement. DDC incorporates in its 19th edition both Logical Empiricism and Linguistic philosophy as class number for Logical Empiricism is 146.42 and for Linguistic philosophy is 149.94. This has been shown that the DDC 19th edition incorporates most of the domains of Bertrand Russell's intellectual output.

6. Conclusion

An analogical study has been carried out to explore the universe of Bertrand Russell's wisdom through the editions of DDC. This study analyses Bertrand Russell's wisdom through the division and subdivisions of the universe of knowledge as depicted in DDC since its 1st edition up to 23rd edition. This paper finds six terminology of Bertrand Russell's philosophy included in the various editions of DDC from 15th edition to 20th edition. So it can be said that the terminologies Russell have introduced while developing his philosophy nearly sixty years before the incorporation of those terminologies in different editions of the DDC.

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