Southernizing Sociolinguistics

Colonialism, Racism, and Patriarchy in Language in the Global South

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6 Christian-lects and Islam-lects
On religious inventions of languages

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Introduction

This chapter discusses the relation between religion and language with a focus on how the social and historical construction of language is shaped by religious considerations. We intend to analyze and problematize the role played by languages in both Christianity and Islam. We point out that the discussion in this chapter is part of a broader project that recognizes the multiple dimensions of the topic that also includes different Christian and Islamic traditions (Abdelhay et al. 2014; Abdelhay et al. 2020; Severo and Makoni 2015; Severo 2016; Severo 2020). This chapter is also in line with discussions carried out on Colonial Linguistics (Abdelhay et al. 2020; Heller and McElhinny 2017; Severo and Makoni 2015; Deumert 2010; Hanks 2010; Makoni and Pennycook 2006; Makoni and Meinhof 2004; Irvine 1993; Errington 2008; Cohn 1996; Phillipson 1992; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Fabian 1986). By analyzing how religions contributed to the shaping of language ideologies, our argument aims at contributing to Heller and McElhinny's (2017, 29) statement that "Language and religion are thus the two key sites on which understandings of difference are elaborated, before the rise of biological accounts of racial difference in evolutionary thought." Despite the complexities that characterize both religions, we consider that the theological role played by language in Christianity and Islam have remained relatively ideologically stable.

By foregrounding the two religious perspectives on language, we intend to identify how concepts and practices in Christianity and Islam have helped to shape languages in specific ways. We understand Christian-lects (Severo 2020; Severo 2016; Severo and Makoni 2015) and Islam-lects as a set of epistemic frameworks, discourses, and practices regarding language use for religious purposes, which include the invention of languages (Abdelhay et al. 2020; Makoni and Pennycook 2006). We propose the concepts of Christian-lects and Islam-lects as frameworks that allow us to discuss the notion of language from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Christianity and Islam are not in stark contrast; rather, we recognize both religions have historically contributed to the construction

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of concepts of language that still reverberate in contemporary religious and non-religious practices.

We argue in favor of an approach that considers an intertwining of theology, linguistics, and power relations. In this chapter we problematize the concept of language inscribed in the role played by religious translation, the concepts of "sacred languages," the role of catechisms, the importance of writing texts, the relation between language and truth, and the idea of evangelization. For example, although Christianity and Islam are monotheistic religions, "Unlike Christianity, Islam has not readily embraced translation as a means of propagating its doctrine" (Delisle and Woodsworth 1998, 172). Indeed, evangelization and doctrine propagation are key notions that illustrate how both religions shaped language in different ways. Also, although our chapter does not focus only on the colonial context, we highlight the role played by missionary linguistics in contexts of Christian evangelization (Heller and McElhinny 2017; Hanks 2010; Durston 2007; Todorov 1999; Fabian 1986), following the assumption that "missionary translation in this broader sense was a key instrument of colonialism" (Durston 2007,1).

This chapter is divided into two main sections: first we discuss the Christian concept of language based both on the general role played by translation in the history of Christianity and on the specific use of catechisms in missionary colonial practices. After this, we present the Islamic perspective of language, considering three main questions: how does the Qur'an conceptualize "language" and "linguistic diversity"? How was the grammatical construction of Arabic shaped by Islam? How was the link between Islam and Arabic used to culturally re-translate key western metalanguages? Finally, we draw on the contribution of such an approach to the expansion of our critical understanding of how concepts of languages have been historically constructed and legitimated.

Christian-lects: on the concept of language and the role of translation

In general terms, the practice of translating texts was part of the educational and spiritual training of priests and missionaries (Arnaut and Ruckstadter 2002; Agnolin 2006) over the history of Christianity. This practice was related to the conviction that "Christ is Word translated [...] as Christian faith is about translation; it is about conversion." (Walls 1999, 25). It was priests and missionaries who largely contributed to the processes of translating religious texts into Indigenous languages.

In Ethiopia, the Christian tradition of translating texts dates back to the 4th century and "since that time, monks and scholars have been at work on intellectual arguments, theological and political commentaries, and translations" (Mudimbe 1998, 176). In the Eastern colonial context, between 1583 and 1700, around 450 European works were translated into Chinese, 120 of which were about science and geography and 330 about Christianity (Po-Chia Hsia 2009). In Latin America, language

invention by Christian missionaries included the grammatization of 33 languages in the 16th century, of 96 languages in the 17th century and of 158 languages in the 18th century (Auroux 1992; Severo and Makoni 2014). These examples hint at Christianity has arguably become indelibly bound up with linguistics, modernity, and literacy: The grammars designed for the local languages were invaluable tools in educating local peoples, with these grammars and education having profound reciprocal effects (Pennycook and Makoni 2005, 138).

The epistemological orientation of Christianity is a product of the historical intertwining of Greco-Latin tradition and the Jewish revelation. In this line of thought, the ideas of truth, predestination and knowledge are central to the Christian faith (Mudimbe 1998). Since Latin was considered a language of truth, knowledge and scholarship, translation played a crucial and challenging role in the theological and missionary work of spreading the truth. In this context, Latin worked as a discursive and linguistic framework for what counted as "truth language": "As a Truth-language, metonymically bound up with the transcendent message it conveyed (Anderson 1991), Latin legitimized these descriptive projects both as means and ends for propagating faith" (Errington 2001: 22). The Christian interest in languages was necessarily accompanied by a translation process, which reinforced the theological acceptability of expressing the religious message in all languages, unlike Judaism and Islam. There was also a strong ideological connection between translation practices and the missionary idea of conversion: "linguistic classification and translation were metonyms of an embracing process of 'conversion'" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 221). Translation and Christian evangelization walked hand in hand in the colonial era. In this chapter, we also follow Pennycook and Makoni's argument (2005, 137) that "language use, and understandings of language use, have been—and still are—profoundly affected by missionary projects."

Translation also inscribed specific power relations that contributed to the processes of language *reducción* and objectification: "Working with the relevant materials on and in Maya, I have become convinced that analysis and translation were actually forms of *reducción* in the strong sense of systematically re-forming their object" (Hanks 2010, 4). We argue that language *reducción* – through the invention of a grammatized language – operated as a form of conversion and, therefore, of spiritual *reducción*, reinforced by the idea that verbal language and thought are intrinsically related in the ideas of an "inner verb" and a metaphysical language universal. Language *reducción* also contributed to the process of colonial language invention (Makoni and Pennycook 2006) through the production of dictionaries and grammars and the translation of religious texts. We argue that these processes were framed by the ideologies of equivalence (Liu 2000) and cross-language commensuration (Hanks 2010) which also underlay the asymmetrical relationship between the sacred Christian languages (Hebrew, Greek and Latin) and

the vernaculars. By commensuration we consider "the general process of bringing the two languages into alignment, so that meaning can move from one to the other" (Hanks 2010, 160). An example is the translation of the commandments of the Church into Indigenous languages, such as the sixth one – "You shall not commit adultery." By assuming that commensuration between these two discursive worlds were possible, the priests would use several linguistic strategies to grasp specific information from the Indigenous people, such as the following question asked by the priests in the Tupi language in the context of confession in colonial Brazil: "*Eremopyaýba, ou erericô aýb nde remiricô imoâ cunhám recê?* [Have you saddened [literally: made the liver bad] or treated your wife badly because of another woman]?" (Barros et al. 2009, 170).

Despite the asymmetrical and one-way relationship between the Christian languages and the Indigenous languages, hybrid Christian experiences emerged in colonial contexts (African, Latin-American and Indigenous contexts) and this illustrates how Christianity was nativized. The high prestige embodied in the sacred languages also affected the colonial imaginary about languages, as revealed by expressions used by missionaries to define non-European languages in colonial Brazil: languages of the land (*línguas da terra*), 'brazilic' language (*língua brasílica*), language of the sea (*língua do mar*), general language (*língua geral*), slang, among others (Severo 2020).

Theological discussions concerning concepts of translation underpinned the process of Bible translation. For example, the idea that not everything can be translated and so it is necessary to make an effort to maintain the faithfulness of the transcript – running the risk of misunderstanding posed by the paraphrase – characterized St. Jerome's translation practices of the Bible (Steiner 1975; Furlan 2005).

Saint Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, which was called Vulgate and was considered official in 1546 by the Council of Trent. In terms of translation procedures, Jerome left a series of comments and writings on the translation of the Bible, recognizing that the linearity of religious texts should be preserved as a signal of respect to the original meaning: "the very order of the words in the Bible is a mystery, and the meaning of Scripture is not to be falsified by linguistic liberties of a translator" (Copeland 1991, 53). In this context, there were two concepts of translation with theological implications: "*Ad verbum* translation required both word-for-word and syntactic correspondence with the original text, while *ad sensum* translation focused more on reproducing its general meaning" (Durston 2007, 228). Although St Jerome preferred the *ad sensum* translation, he recognized the importance of *ad verbum* translation to keep the sacredness of the Scripture. Notice that Jerome's translation work was recognized as sacred when he was canonized in the 8th century, reinforcing the ideological view that Catholic translators would be considered as saints due to their close relationship with the original divine word. Thus, Catholicism reinforced the idea of translation as a sacred virtue,

mainly after the Council of Trent and as a response to the spread of Protestantism. This is why the evangelical identities of missionaries were strongly influenced by their capacity to evangelize in local languages (Severo 2020; Gilmour 2007).

This discussion on translation definitely matters if we want to account for the role played by Christian language ideologies in shaping our understanding of language. Missionary Linguistics contributed to the propagation of a Christianized Greek-Latin framework of language, by considering the relationship between universality, truth, and logos. In this context, the process of translation would imply an effort to search for the linguistic universals existing below the surface of the so-called vernaculars: it is an approach that "touches closely on the mystical intuition of a lost primal or paradigmatic speech" (Steiner 1975, 73). Although it is not our purpose in this chapter to draw on more recent accounts of the (im)possibility of translation in translation theory/scholarship, this discussion may contribute to the building of a broader account of how Christianity and translation were tied together.

Other examples of Christian-lects include the work of evangelization in colonial contexts.[1] The idea of evangelization is strongly inscribed in colonial Christianity, and this can be exemplified by Papal Bull *Inscrutabili Divinae* (Pope Gregory XV 1622) that founded the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples – also known as Propaganda Fide. This became responsible for missionary practices for the purpose of Catholic Evangelization. The Propaganda Fide aimed at regaining "the faithful in all those parts of the world where Protestantism had been established, and to bring the light of the true faith to heathen" (Guilday 1921, 480).

For the purpose of evangelization, Catholics engaged in an intense process of translation of catechisms into the so-called vernacular languages, which included Indigenous languages in Latin America (Meliá and Nagel 1995). Another example is the Jesuits' translation to Chinese of excerpts from *Summa theologica*, in addition to several narratives about the lives of the saints (Po-Chia Hsia 2009; Brockey 2014). The translation practice adopted by Jesuits in China led to accusations by some orthodox religious groups of mixing idolatry and religion through a system of "linguistic and cultural accommodation," culminating in the Chinese Rites controversy (Po-Chia Hsia 2009). This idea of adaptation was a strong religious strategy used by Jesuits, meaning that "the Church could meet the 'pagans' by adapting external symbolic resources, for example language, vestments, and rituals in the liturgy. The key word of this mission method was 'adaptation,' also called 'accommodation' and 'indigenization'" (Wijsen 2016, 191). Unlike the adaptation model, a predominantly ideological model of incarnation characterized African Christianity, in the sense of revealing Christ's incarnation in Africa. In this case, the underlying framework was not that of imposing, but of discovering and translating the incarnated truth to Africans. We argue that adaptation and incarnation models reveal two different approaches to language, based on

adjustments or discovery. In both cases, the missionary would play the important role of translator, whether through language adaptations, or otherwise, through revealing a hidden truth.

The catechisms helped to shape a local representation of language centered on writing, based on the phoneme-grapheme model, in which speech was reduced to an alphabetic system. In addition, a word-oriented semantic representation of language was systematized in the catechisms, which generally contained a small dictionary that exposed information about the translation of Christian terms to the Indigenous symbolic universe. For example, the catechism prepared by Antônio de Araújo in colonial Brazil featured a glossary of kinship names, marriage requirements, and examination of conscience. Such a glossary privileged words and expressions that belonged to a Euro Christian worldview, mainly the ones related to the idea of sin, such as monogamy, incest, and desire, following the ideology of kinship (Heller and McElhinny 2017).

Notice that the Jesuit practice of translation does not require mastering of pronunciation of local languages. Rather, what matters is the possibility of accessing the semantics of the Catholic text. According to the Portuguese Jesuit Antonio Vieira, who dedicated his whole life to the conversion of Indigenous people in Brazil, "the taste of a prayer is not located in what is pronounced, but in the meaning of what is pronounced; such taste is not related to the sounds of words, but to what is understood beneath them: *sub lingua tua*"[2] (Vieira, Sermon on the Rosary 1686). This is an example of how missionary Catholicism focused on the semantic dimension, the logos, to the detriment of pronunciation, which was more directly linked to the body. This binary vision also included the privilege accorded to written language over oral language: "the written language became a *sine qua non* of Christianity and civilization" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 223). We argue that this ideological dissociation between body (sound) and soul (meaning) was reproduced in missionary language policies.

The evangelization-oriented meaning making project used a religious discursive template to shape what counted as local/vernacular/Indigenous languages in the colonial era (Makoni and Pennycook 2006). This religious template was based not only on Greek-Latin grammatical and semantic frameworks (Heller and McIlhenny 2017; Makoni and Pennycook 2006), but on concepts of truth, universality, and sacredness, which means that the missionary project aimed at the "remaking of Indian life, from heart, soul, and mind to self-image, bodily practices, lived space, and everyday conduct, including speech" (Hanks 2010, 7).

In this section, we have explored two language practices that contributed to the reinforcement and propagation of Christian concepts of language. On the one hand, there was the role of translation, which was historically underpinned by discussion on the relations between universalism and diversity, meaning and sound, logos and body, grammar and rhetoric, truth, and interpretation. Such binaries helped to shape a certain concept

of language. On the other hand, missionary language policies in colonial Jesuit context produced a vast body of translation of evangelizing manuals, such as catechisms, which inscribed in local languages – such as Indigenous languages in Brazil – discourses on what counted as self and self-examination. The binary concept of sin-obedience was intrinsically related to a Christian kinship concept that helped to shape local relationships in new specific ways. Finally, we argue that Christian-lects contributed to the shaping of modern concepts of language based on the following elements:

a. Discussions on concepts of translation would bring together ideas of universality, diversity, truth, and loyalty.
b. The local languages would have been reduced to writing in the image of the missionary's sacred language.
c. The grammar/syntax of the local language would have been forced into the mold of the sacred language.
d. There was an intense process of invention of new words, assigning new meanings to old words.
e. There was superiority of the written word over the spoken, and of semantics/meaning over phonology/pronunciation, reinfocring a binary concept of language.

Islam and the grammatical invention of Arabic

In this section we will briefly attend to three questions: how does Qur'an conceptualize "language" and "linguistic diversity"? How was the grammatical construction of Arabic shaped by Islam? How was the link between Islam and Arabic used to culturally re-translate key western metalanguages? Our key observation here is that the conceptualization of an autonomous, bounded, "pure" code is an effect of a cultural ideology even in the absence of the term "language" in the classical canons ("language" as understood in modern linguistic theory). Another argument is that the process of "data collection" itself is part and parcel of the reproduction of the ideology of "linguistic purity."

To set the stage, we should note that the commonly used term in contemporary Arabic institutional thinking for a linguistics which is rooted in the Arabic tradition is "Arabic grammar" (*alnahw alar'abi*) (Carter 1981 used "Arab linguistics"). Arabic linguistics focuses on the application of western linguistic theories to the study of the Arabic language in all its structural forms (standard and its "-lects") (Suleiman 1999). To address the first question, the Qur'an does not contain the word "language" and uses instead the term *lisan* (lit. tongue).[3] The following verses are a notable example:

> *Wa maaa arsalnaa mir Rasoolin illaa bilisaani qawmihee liyubaiyina lahum faiudillul laahu mai yashaaa'u wa yahde mai yashaaa'; wa Huwal 'Azeezul Hakeem.*(Quran 14: 4)

> We never sent a messenger who did not speak the tongue of his people, that he may explain to them distinctly. God leads whoso-ever He wills astray and shows whoever He wills the way: He is all-mighty and all-wise.[4]
>
> *Wa laqad na'lamu annahum yaqooloona innamaa yu'allimuhoo bashar; lisaanul lazee yulhidoona ilaihi a'ja miyyunw wa haaza lisaanun 'Arabiyyum mubeen.* (Qur'an 16: 103)[5]
>
> And certainly, we know that they say: Only a human teaches him. The tongue of him whom they reproach is barbarous, and this is clear Arabic tongue.

So, the Qur'an uses the term *lisan* to refer to a collectively shared lan-guage (akin to Saussure's "langue").[6] And since the sacred text refers in some contexts to "tongues" in the plural, we should briefly inspect the stance of the Qur'an on the question of linguistic diversity. One widely cited verse on the issue is the following verse:

> *Wa min aayaatihee khalqus samaawaati wal aardi wakhtilaafu alsinatikum wa alwaanikum; inna fee zaalika la aayaatil lil'aalimeen.* (Qur'an 30: 22)
>
> And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth and the variety of your tongues and hues. Surely in that are signs for all living beings.[7]

The Qur'an recognizes linguistic and cultural diversity not just as the default condition of human life but most importantly as a sign of God's divine existence. In other words, the imposition of any monolingual or monocultural frames of management is against the will of God. Thus, Arabicization policies which are vigorously pursued 'in the name of God' by postcolonial governments as homogenizing mechanisms of nation-restructuring are essentially political projects.

To get to the second question concerning the way Arabic is formally shaped by Islam, we should note that the trajectory which led to the formation of "Arabic grammar" as it is known today is much more complex and there is no space to review it here in detail. According to Versteegh (1984), the early Arabic grammarians were confronted with two problems: the existence of a variety of readings of the sacred text (the Qur'an), and the "linguistic errors" made by the new converts to Islam who could hardly speak the language of their new religion and of the political authority. During the expansion of Islam in the early two centuries (in the 7th and 8th centuries AD), after its founding by Prophet Mohammed (PUH) in Mecca, linguistic contacts with other civilizations resulted in the emergence of different forms of linguistic variation within Arabic itself. This variation from the "standards" was seen by some Muslim scholars and grammarians as a threat to the Qur'an itself, since its recitation is a highly regulated practice. Thus, the calls for some lin-guistic standardization emerged at the time. This should not imply that

before the emergence of Islam Arabic was a monolithic code. Arabic existed in varieties, and this has always been the case, and some tribes were recognized by the dialect they spoke, and it is generally agreed that the Qur'an discourse accommodated this dialectal variation (for a discussion of pre-Islamic Arabic see Versteegh 1984).

The reliable evidence for early grammatical activity dates to the eighth century AD in work that was to be later considered the foundational text of Arabic grammar. That is, Sibawayhi's (1988) Kitab (the Book) brought Arabic grammar into existence through the very linguistic analytic process itself. Sibawayhi's grammar is largely descriptive in outlook, focusing on the way people spoke at the time. However, by the early years of the ninth century AD, the descriptive system of the Kitab had been completely altered "into a pedagogically oriented prescriptive system" (Carter 1985: 267). That is, in the ninth century, the pedagogical focus converted grammar into a science concerned with the way people ought to speak. By the eleventh century AD, Arabic grammar emerged as a scientific formation embodying a methodology (largely borrowed from Greek logic) and content derived from Sibawayhi's tradition. Around the second half of the eleventh century, a doctrine arose called the "inimitability of the Qur'an," and by this time the standard form of the language was stabilized, and any further inventiveness was severely constrained (Carter, 1985). The fact that the holy book of Islam (the Qur'an) is revealed in Arabic is used as a basis of belief that Arabic is superior to other languages:

> It is impossible to exaggerate the role of Islam in the development of the Arabic language and in shaping the attitudes toward it. Addressing the poetically minded Arabs, God tells them that He revealed the Qur'an in Arabic to challenge them to produce one that can match it in excellence. In Islamic theology and Arabic rhetoric, this challenge was embodied into the principle of .... the inimitability of the Qur'an, which is an article of faith for the Arab and non-Arab Muslims.
>
> (Suleiman 2006: 173–174)

The strictly controlled sources of data, assumptions, and analytic apparatus which the Arabic grammarians developed to elicit syntactic patterns and regularities resulted in a "purified language" with serious sociopolitical connotations particularly when they were institutionalized as pedagogical canons. For example, the first and best known Arabic grammarian, Sibawayhi (1988), imposed a temporal and spatial boundary on the sources of linguistic data for linguistic analysis. Only the "speech" of some strictly local tribes could count as "data." Even the "speech" of the tribe of Prophet Mohammed situated in Mecca (which contains Kaaba, the holiest spot in Islam) was invalidated as "data" because Mecca at the time was "a trading centre," and thus for the Arabic grammarians its speech

did not meet the condition of "linguistic purity." So, the very process of "data collection" was predicated on the boundary-setting ideology of "linguistic purity." The point here is that we have a feature of a monolingual ideology in the absence of the term "language" as understood in modern linguistic theory.

Today, what makes this ideology of "linguistic purity" stick as the representation of "true Arabic" is its socially organized correlation with the Qur'an. The rationality here is that to interpret the Qur'an you need to know the linguistic canons of standard Arabic, otherwise your "voice" is "disrecognized." And it is this politics of voice which made citationality of these canons (particularly the corpus of classic dictionaries up to a temporal point) a matter of discursive power.

It should not be understood that the use of the doctrine of "linguistic purity" by the early Arabic grammarians was racially motivated. Some of the key leading Arabic grammarians were non-Arab Muslims, and they were the ones who formulated the grammatical foundation for this standard ideology of Arabic. Some modern Islamic political parties in the Arab world exploit the cultural and political complex of Arabic, Islam, and national identity to rationalize their ideological arguments (e.g., see Suleiman and Abdelhay 2020; Abdelhay et al. 2020). The conceptualization of Arabic as a "sacred language" is a hegemonic articulation in both folk and professional linguistic ideologies (for a discussion see Haeri 2003). So, what we have here is a version of a monolingual ideology which emerged in different conditions using a different apparatus which does not contain the term "language" (as it is used in the western literature today). The linguistic ideology of monolingualism can be played out through different metalanguages even through what we consider to be liberating tools of analysis if not retranslated or reworked for purposes other than the ones for which they are designed.

To conclude with a concrete example of how the Islam-Arabic link could lead scholars to reconceptualize the way some western metalanguages are used, we take the notion of "mother tongue" as an example. We should note that the term for talking about an Arabic "dialect" by Arabic grammarians or exegetes was "language." That is, Arabic grammarians used the term "languages" to refer to "Arabic dialects," while the term "dialect" itself was not widespread at the time. To the best of our knowledge, there is only one trace of the term "dialect" in the first Arabic dictionary by Al-Khalil al-Farahidi (1988), and one of its senses is "mother tongue" which is a very rare sense because when the Arabic grammarians wanted to talk about "mother tongue" they referred to the medium of acquisition of the linguistic resource. The term "mother tongue" itself did not exist in the repertoire of early Arabic grammarians although, as we mentioned, the concept was there. Modern Arabic linguistics borrowed the conceptual term "mother tongue" (*lughat al-um*) from western linguistics and implemented it in a very crude way as a metalanguage of description without taking into consideration the folk-linguistic ideological

particularities of the people themselves (Abdelhay and Suleiman forthcoming; on the distinction between the concept of "mother tongue" and "native language" in the context of the Arab world see Suleiman 2013).

Thus, according to western psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic theories "Standard Arabic" is a "foreign language" because it is learned at school and wired differently in the brain (e.g., Froud and Khamis-Dakwar 2018). Research focusing on folk linguistic ideologies which links Islam with Arabic (thus with identity) found that a significant number of Arabic-speaking students rejected the metalinguistic attribution of "foreign language" to "standard Arabic" even though they admitted that they learned it at school (Abdelhay and Suleiman forthcoming). This is a case where the standard is ideologically imagined as "a mother tongue." This is a point which the western construct of "mother tongue" failed to capture. So, the binary "language-dialect" as conceptualized in western linguistic literature is by no means universal. Crudely, even though "standard Arabic" is learned through formal regimes of socialization, it is not viewed as a "foreign language." It is worth noting that the phrase "the Arabic language" itself is a recent social construction; it does not exist in the writings of early Arabic grammarians.

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been argued that Christianity and Islam have historically helped to shape not only languages, but also the role played by them in defining ideas such as purity, sacredness, truth, and conversion. Based on the concepts of Christian-lects and Islam-lects, we have discussed the relation between language and religious practices, as well as the role played by translation, evangelization, and grammar construction in the religious invention of languages.

In relation to Christianity, we consider Christian multilingualism as a product of several translation practices and concepts that emerged from an evangelization-oriented project directed toward the so-called local people in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. This religious framework integrated a Greek-Latin grammatical and semantic template with ideological concepts of truth, universality-diversity, and sacredness. In this vein, Christian multilingualism has to do with how certain religious discursive genres – such as catechisms – have been translated to local languages. Translation was ideologically constructed as a sacred virtue in missionary Christianity, which helped also to shape evangelical identities of missionaries in relation to their capacity to evangelize.

Language policies are not only about languages, but about practices and worldviews. We argue that Christian-lects work not only by inventing representations of languages – through the translation of European scripts and epistemologies to a Christian version – but by *adapting* to local culture specific modes of communication and interaction, or by

decoding/discovering an (allegedly) internal discursive truth. The long history of Christianity embracing several different forms of cultural, religious, or political opposition is worth mentioning. Such strong capacity has been pointed out by Carl Schmitt (1996, 4–7) in relation to the idea of *complexio oppositorum*:

> For the whole of the parliamentary and democratic nineteenth century, one most often heard the charge that Catholic politics is nothing more than a limitless opportunism. Its elasticity is really astounding; it unites with opposing movements and groups [...] I believe this temper would have become infinitely deeper if one had grasped completely the extent to which the Catholic Church is a complex of opposites, a *complexio oppositorum*. There appears to be no antithesis it does not embrace.

In terms of Islam, we have explored the way Qur'an has conceptualized "language" and "linguistic diversity," arguing that Islam has helped to shape the grammatical construction of Arabic. For example, the Qur'an does not contain the word "language" and uses the term *lisan* to refer to a collectively shared language. Also, the strictly controlled sources of data which the Arabic grammarians developed to elicit syntactic patterns resulted in a "purified language" with implications for pedagogical canons. We assume that the link between Islam and Arabic was used to culturally re-translate key western metalanguages, such as the term "mother tongue" that did not exist in the repertoire of early Arabic grammarians. In Islam what connects the ideology of "linguistic purity" to an idea of "true Arabic" is its socially organized correlation with the Qur'an.

Finally, it was not the purpose of this chapter to exhaust the discussion on how Christianity and Islam have historically contributed to shape/invent language practices and concepts of language. We recognize that each religious orientation has to be historically and politically contextualized, which means that they carry their own singularities and motivations. We believe a comparative perspective may contribute to highlight the way religious practices and ideologies have both contributed to the reinforcement of modern views of language and to their subversion.

Notes

1 Examples that illustrate the connection between Christian evangelization and political domination in the colonial era include the following bulls: *Dum Diversas* (1452, Pope Nicholas V) that gave Portugal the right to conquer and subjugate Saracens and pagans; *Romanus Pontifex* (1455, Pope Nicholas V) that gave the Portuguese crown power to control all lands south of Cape Bojador in Africa; and the *Inscrutabili Divinae* (1622, Pope Gregory XV) that established the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.

2 "o sabor da oração não está no que se pronuncia com a língua, senão no sentido e significação do que se pronuncia; não está no que soam as palavras, senão no que se entende debaixo delas: *sub lingua tua.*"
3 It also uses the term klam in the sense of material linguistic articulation.
4 Available at https://qurano.com/en/14-ibrahim/verse-4/, accessed 7 August 2020.
5 Available at https://qurano.com/en/16-an-nahl/verse-103/, accessed 8 August 2020.
6 The term lisan outside the Qur'anic text does not have this technical meaning. The term "language" as it is used today in Arabic is a recent invention, i.e., the term exists but it was used to refer to variation or "dialects": geographically associated with Arabic tribes. This observation should not imply that the Arabs do not have the notion of "standard" in language, or the notion of the "standard was there but they did not have a term for it." This metaphysical explanation should be excluded.
7 Available at https://qurano.com/en/30-ar-rum/verse-22 accessed 7 August 2020.

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