LANGUAGES AND CULTURE IN HISTORY

Edited by Dan Savatovsky, Mariangela Albano, Thị Kiều Ly Phạm, and Valérie Spaëth

Language Learning and Teaching in Missionary and Colonial Contexts

L'apprentissage et l'enseignement des langues en contextes missionnaire et colonial

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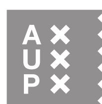

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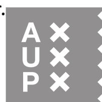

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In Memoriam
Maria Lucia Aliffi

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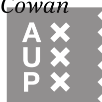

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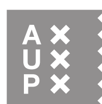

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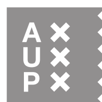

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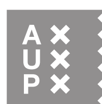

Introduction: Language teaching and grammatization in the colonial empires[1]

Dan Savatovsky

"Siempre fue la lengua compañera del Imperio."
—Antonio de Nebrija, *Prólogo a la Gramática sobre la lengua castellana*, 1492

Abstract: The aim of this introduction is to define the main concepts used throughout the chapters of the book, notably those of *colonial*, *decolonial*, and *postcolonial linguistics*. It also measures the scope of the disciplinary field of missionary linguistics. It compares the various modes of grammatization of the world's languages that have been implemented since the fifteenth century, emphasizing the forms and conditions of their teaching or learning in missionary and colonial contexts.
Résumé : Dans cette introduction, on s'efforce de définir les principales notions mobilisées dans les différents chapitres de l'ouvrage, notamment celles de *linguistique coloniale, décoloniale* et *postcoloniale*. On mesure aussi la portée du champ disciplinaire de la linguistique missionnaire ; on compare les divers modes de grammatisation des langues du monde mises en œuvre depuis le quinzième siècle, en mettant l'accent sur les formes et les conditions de leur enseignement ou de leur apprentissage en contexte missionnaire et colonial.

Keywords: Colonial linguistics. Missionary linguistics. Language teaching in colonial context. Grammatization of the worlds' languages in colonial context.
Mots-clés : Linguistique coloniale. Linguistique missionnaire. Enseignement des langues en contexte colonial. Grammatisation des langues en contexte colonial.

1 [*Enseignement des langues et grammatisation dans les empires coloniaux*]. This introduction and chapters 2, 6, 7, and 15 have been translated into English by Amanda Murphy, associate professor of English and translation studies at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris).

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The scope of this book is both broad and limited. It is broad because it gathers research dedicated to the linguistic aspects of missionary, colonial, and even neo- or decolonial enterprises, considering all continents and applying an extended diachronic perspective. And it is also limited: we have asked the authors to focus on educational policies, language teaching and learning, and the didactics used—subjects that, in their time period and context, were either drawn into the heart of missionary and colonial blueprints or remained on the margins.

The *terminus a quo* indicated in the call for papers for the volume,[2] the end of the Roman Empire, was quite (probably *too*) ambitious. As Fernand Braudel notes, "beyond the borders [of the Rhine and the Danube], European civilization reverberated late after the fall of the Roman Empire. [...] The medieval West colonized, in the finest sense of the term, the world near to it, installing its churches and its missionaries."[3] We therefore would have accepted, if we had received them, proposals relating to the colonial dimension of the early Middle Ages ("in the finest sense of the term" or not) specific to Europe, to the knowledge on languages associated with this form of colonization, to its dissemination, and to the teaching of this knowledge beyond the limits of the Greek space and the Roman Empire. We might have received proposals relating to, for example, the educational model of Irish monks (seventh and eighth centuries) or to the missionary and educational work of Cyril and Methodius and their disciples in the Slavic world (ninth century)—a world in which some of the vernacular languages were provided with an alphabet (Glagolitic) and early religious texts (psalters, gospels, epistles). But we did not.

The terms *missionary linguistics* and *colonial linguistics* (to be distinguished from *linguistic colonization*; see below) designate all of the significant, in terms of size or interest, empirical findings obtained since the Age of Exploration at the end of the Middle Ages and beginning of the modern era. These findings were gained thanks to the description of many non-European languages (almost all non-Indo-European from a typological point of view) and to standardization or codification that involved providing writing systems for languages that did not have them. This "linguistics" is contemporary to the colonial era, strictly speaking. It is thus primarily the work of the missionaries of Catholic orders and Protestant societies.

2 The original project was initiated by Mariangela Albano and Thị Kiều Ly Phạm.

3 Braudel, *Grammaire des civilisations*, 393–94. This and all other translations not referenced are our own.

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It can also belong to our historiographical retrospective horizon,[4] after decolonization. In the former, we mostly find transcription, translation, and grammatization[5] practices (typically, the production of dictionaries and grammar books). In the latter, we also look at descriptions of language use, situations of diglossia, contact between languages, language policies, etc.; these often replaced the former. In short, we are examining a cluster of knowledge relating to linguistic auxiliary sciences, as they would have been called at the end of the nineteenth century: sociolinguistics (or sociology of language), ethnolinguistics (or linguistic anthropology), language planning, and discursive analysis.[6] Our retrospective approach also focuses on the pedagogical side of missionary and colonial linguistics, for—as Otto Zwartjes reminds us in his contribution—"the impressive pre-modern corpus of linguistic and pedagogical texts [can now be] studied in light of the historiography of foreign language documentation, teaching, and learning, a relatively new discipline."

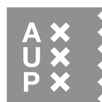
The grammatization of languages and linguistic colonization

As research fields directly tied to the creation of transcontinental empires, both missionary and colonial linguistics and the language didactics associated with them cannot be isolated within the organization of disciplines:

4 On the notion of *retrospective horizon*, see Auroux, "Histoire des sciences et entropie des systèmes scientifiques."

5 The term *gramaticalização* used in this way can be found in some dated works written in Portuguese (Brazil), such as those by Da Silveira Bueno (*A Formação histórica da língua portuguêsa*, ch. 14). In French the neologism *grammatisation* was introduced at the expense of *grammaticalisation* ("grammaticalization" or "grammaticization") in order to avoid potential confusion with the process of transformation of an expression or word into a grammatical marker. The earliest use of *grammatisation* in French can be found in Renée Balibar (*L'institution du français*, 178)—for whom people are grammatized, in other words, they are taught grammar within a school setting—then by Sylvain Auroux, for whom languages are grammatized (*La révolution technologique de la grammatisation*). Auroux's work is therefore what brought the expression, as we are using it here, into popular use. According to this meaning, which has become standard, *grammatiser une langue* (grammatizing a language) consists in equipping it with a writing system (the invention of the oldest ones constitutes the first "technological revolution" with language as its object) and then with dictionaries and grammar books (grammatization, strictly speaking).

6 This shift in the paradigms of colonial and decolonial linguistics (from formal or descriptive knowledge about languages to sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology) constitutes the main theme of the collective work coordinated by Deumert, Storch, and Shepherd: *Colonial and Decolonial Linguistics*.



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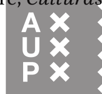
both are (or should be considered)[7] part of a larger ensemble known as *colonial sciences*, a label under which we find disciplines such as history, human geography, ethnography, and political economics as well as the demography of colonized countries.[8] On an even larger scale, missionary and colonial linguistics and didactics can be assigned to the field of *imperial cultures*,[9] if—alongside and sometimes even contrary to scientific knowledge per se—we intend to use this term to designate the representations (including folk linguistics or *Laienlinguistik*), ideologies, or myths in which colonialism found expression.

On the conceptual level, two distinct yet interwoven processes come into play. They should be defined relative to each other: 1) the *grammatization of languages*, for the purpose of knowledge and communication or with the goal of evangelizing, or often both simultaneously; 2) *linguistic colonization*, conceived of by the authors who introduced (or who have used) the concept as a process of subordination/domination, transfer, and/or substitution of languages. During this process, the languages of the colonizer and of the colonized are not always in isolation, facing one another. Indeed, among the different languages in contact, we find local vehicular ones (Swahili in Central and East Africa, for example, along with Kikongo, Lingala, and Luba in Belgian Congo), lingua francas created or chosen for the purpose of koineization (such as Indonesian), or pidgins (such as *petit nègre*, formalized as *français tirailleur*, a language entirely invented in French West Africa); these are languages that Joseph Errington in this volume proposes to call "imperial" rather than "colonial," insofar as they are not those of the homeland. This was the case for Bamanankan (Bambara) as well, a vehicular language designated in the manuals for colonial troops operating in French West Africa as a language that could also be used, in simplified and basic form, among the *tirailleurs sénégalais* (Senegalese riflemen), regardless of the ethnic or linguistic group to which they belonged (see Cécile Van Den Avenne in this volume).

7 Actually, the place occupied by knowledge or *doxa* on languages within colonial cultures is not so frequently treated in the works dedicated to the field. For instance, the editors and the contributors of *Tensions of Empire*, which is now a classic, "examine the colonial contexts in which the disciplines of geography, anthropology, history, and literature developed" (Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony," Preface, 4). No reference to linguistics here: language is only considered from a literary point of view.

8 See Zwartjes in this volume. Also consult Singaravélou, *L'École française d'Extrême-Orient* and *Professer l'Empire*.

9 Sibeud, *Une science impériale pour l'Afrique*; Sibeud, "Cultures coloniales et impériales"; Hall, *Cultures of Empire*; Salvatore, *Culturas imperiales*.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This is also the case for Standard Arabic in South Sudan, a situation of transfer examined by Andrea Facchin in his contribution. In this example, a high culture language, used in a recently decolonized country—the Sudan being formerly "Anglo-Egyptian"—as a high variety, distinct from the so-called "dialectal" variants of Arabic used in the Nile valley, then became an instrument for a second homegrown colonization. This process was a deleterious renewal of the first one: the colonization of the country's non-Arabic-speaking populations, the speakers of one of the 133 vernacular languages of the southern part of the country[10] (without accounting for creole languages). This was a hybrid experience stemming from a linguistic and educational policy of "Arabization" (*taʿrīb*) developed starting in the 1950s by the centralized power of a newly independent Sudan, a language policy that was part of a national unification project[11] that ran counter to the aims of the former British colonizer (*divide and conquer*). The experience was hybrid, or perhaps atypical: unlike other teaching practices of Arabic as a foreign language, which (during that same period, when the field was establishing itself as an autonomous discipline) responded almost entirely to the ad hoc needs of students in an academic setting, the massive Sudanese experiment was also intended to "cure" the Arabic language of the interferences (*tadāḫul luġawī*) of local Sudanese languages, such as Bari, Beja, Fur, or Shilluk.

Of all these situations, those involving languages "invented" by the colonizer deserve particular attention. We are familiar with the Jesuit projects of reduction,[12] discussed by Diego Poli, according to which different linguistic communities were brought together within a single territory, an autonomous territory rather than a colony per se belonging to the Spanish or Portuguese Crown. These were projects that in Brazil would result in the elaboration of a koine distinct from the language of the prince (*língua do Principe*), a constructed language based on Tupi, known as *língua geral*.[13] The chapters written here by Diego Poli and Tarek Abouelgamal both deal with situations in which, within the missionary or colonial context, "a language is learned while making it up" (Poli) or "a language is created by describing it" (Abouelgamal), phenomena that are ultimately the same. The case of

10 Which belong, for the most part, to the Nilo-Saharan family.

11 Which we know ultimately failed, with the independence of South Sudan in 2011 after a long civil war.

12 *Redução* in Brazil, *reducción* in Paraguay.

13 *Lingua brasilica* in Latin, *ie'engatu* (the correct language) in Tupi. Its equivalent in Ibero-America under Spanish tutelage is *lengua general* (i.e., mainly Nahuatl in New Spain—for which a chair was created at the Real y Pontifica Universidad de México in 1570—and Quechua in Peru, taught at the Universidad San Marcos in Lima from 1579 to 1770).

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Indonesia, analyzed by Errington, also comes to mind. His contribution presents a case that does not involve this *imaginary linguistics*,[14] out of which artificial languages that have failed to establish themselves often emerge. This project was in fact successful once the Indonesian nationalists, having faced the complex plurilingualism of the archipelago they had liberated from Dutch tutelage, accepted, began to promote, and continued teaching as a national language the system created by the former colonizer. The Indonesian language, inherited from the colonial period, is indeed neither Dutch nor the language with the most native speakers (Javanese), nor any of the other numerous local languages. Rather, it is a "neutral" lingua franca whose closest antecedent was a variety of Malay taught in schools in the Dutch East Indies that became the language of anticolonial resistance in the wake of the Second World War. Errington can therefore compare the didactics of Indonesian, that "forged" language, with that of English (that is, the globalized lingua franca).

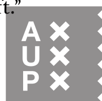
But the production of artificial languages does not only result from linguistic and educational policies put forth in the context of imperial colonization. It can also result from what we sometimes call "interior colonization" (a phenomenon we will revisit shortly). As such, καθαρεύουσα (*Katharevousa*) was advocated and then promoted and taught in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The language was imagined to be part of the Atticist tradition,[15] a Greek language supposedly purified of its foreign borrowings and whose grammar is archaic and nothing but a linguistic artifact modeled after the Attic dialect of antiquity. *Katharevousa* was particularly emphasized under the dictatorship "of the colonels" (1967–74), before colloquial (Demotic) Greek was definitively instituted as standard koine in 1975.

And what is true of languages is also true of writing systems. The aforementioned policy of Arabization put forth in South Sudan also included a scriptural aspect: in the context of teaching Arabic as a foreign language, the instructors were committed to transcribing the different languages with which they were in contact or, rather, to employ an expression that Facchin borrows from Daniele Baglioni and Olga Tribulato, to subjecting them to *transcritturazione*.[16] As Thị Kiều Ly Phạm and Mariangela Albano show, the Romanized writing system of Vietnamese, which is today called

14 See Auroux, Chevalier, Jacques-Chaquin, and Marchello-Nizia, *La linguistique fantastique*.

15 See the chapter written by L. Pantéloglou in this volume.

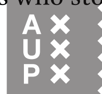
16 A term that he prefers to use over *transcription* or *transliteration*—he considers them to be polysemic—to designate the transfer to a language of a writing system originally conceived for another language. See Baglioni and Tribulato, *Contatti di lingue*, 19. Facchin suggests translating *transcritturazione* as "script shift."



(*chữ*) *quốc ngữ* (national language [writing]), was created for internal use (for their own learning) by Jesuit missionaries—mostly Portuguese and Italians—at the beginning of the seventeenth century and used just as esoterically by the French priests of the Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris (Paris Foreign Missions Society) from the middle of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century. The system was introduced into teaching starting in 1861, as soon as French colonization began in Cochinchina and then in Tonkin, and ultimately was widely disseminated throughout Vietnamese society. It was then promoted as a writing system to be used in the Court of Huế and replaced sinograms among educated people and in administrative and judicial acts, following the abolition of competitive recruitment of mandarins in 1919. But it is significant that the Vietnamese patriots claimed this writing system inherited from the Jesuits and the colonists and used it for their own purposes to encourage literacy and educate the population, until 1945 when *quốc ngữ* was declared the official writing system of the nation.

In addition to these two examples of Vietnam and the Sudan, several of the contributors to this volume consider the varying status of graphic tools and their uses in education; the role of these tools depends on whether they are used for languages with an ancient written tradition, languages for which different competing scriptural systems are available, or languages that have recently emerged from orality.

If the grammatization of an endogenous language does not necessarily prevent its replacement by that of the colonizer or by the other languages he instrumentalizes for the purpose of domination, equipping it with a writing system (or with another writing system), grammar books, and/or dictionaries or integrating it into a process of koineization (which does modify—sometimes radically—its existence, its status, and the conditions of its use) also protects it in most cases. Conversely, the effects of linguistic colonization, as we have sought to define it above, do not always contravene these effects of missionary/colonial linguistics. The main goal of missionary linguistics was to allow the grammarians and lexicographers who had undertaken it—most of whom were autodidacts, at least at first—to learn the languages they were describing to complete their evangelizing mission, while the primary objective of linguistic colonization was to allow the representatives of imperial powers or their colonizing organs (which still included Christian missions most of the time) to disseminate their own language (or another language of their choice) among colonized peoples, mainly through schooling. But, as we can see in the examples of Indonesia and Vietnam, intellectuals who stood up to colonialism in their country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sometimes did end up adopting the language and/or the writing introduced or imposed by the colonizer in order to turn them against him and transform them into instruments of emancipation.[17]

In many other cases, while missionary/colonial linguistics contributed to the protection of languages by stabilizing and standardizing them, linguistic colonization, as an integral part of imperial projects, also conversely led to the precarity of these languages' status or even to their disappearance. This was caused by the enslavement or extermination of the peoples who spoke them, weakening or erasing the cultures they depended on, eliminating the "prominent and educated natives who were regarded as potential inciters of rebellion against [colonial] rule,"[18] and encouraging what Achille Mbembe, quoted here by Siebetcheu, calls the "autophagia" of peoples consenting to the dispossession of their language.

With respect to the study of colonial linguistics, we are faced with a domain that was established fairly long ago and whose contours appear to be clearly defined at first sight, but whose meaning and scope have in fact considerably evolved since the expression was used almost fifty years ago in works first published in French.[19] According to Louis-Jean Calvet, one of the pioneers of this research, it was a matter of

> showing how, ultimately, the study of languages has always proposed a certain vision of linguistic communities and their effects, and how this vision has been utilized to justify the colonial enterprise […]. Linguistics has been for a long time a way of denying the languages of other peoples,

17 The francophone Algerian writer Kateb Yacine regarded the French language as "war booty" (interview on the French radio program *Un certain regard*, Paris, 1971). In 1962 the poet Léopold Sédar Senghor—then president of Senegal—considered French a "wonderful tool found in the rubble of the colonial regime" (Senghor, "Le français langue de culture," 844). Salman Rushdie justifies the choice of English as a literary language by the fact that colonization has de facto globalized the languages of colonial powers ("An Indian Writer in England," passim).

18 As Raymond Siebetcheu writes in his contribution regarding Italian colonialism.

19 The expression only really began to be used around 2000 or 2010 in works written in English, in particular with the publication of the volume by Errington, *Colonial Linguistics*, but the 1970s is when one began, generally speaking, to critically assess colonial language policies, also in the English-speaking world. See, for example, Spencer, "Colonial Language Policies and their Legacies" and "West Africa and the English Language," or Seboek, *Current Trends in Linguistics*, vol. 7, *Linguistics in Sub-Saharian Africa*. Among the earliest occurrences of the expression in the German language was in 2011 with the Berlin publisher De Gruyter's creation of a collection combining "colonial" and "postcolonial" linguistics in the title: *Koloniale und Postkoloniale Linguistik* (KPL). The works published in this series, mostly of a historiographical type, relate above all to formerly *colonized* countries and not to formerly *colonizing* countries. They therefore have little to do with the so-called "postcolonial studies," which we will discuss below.

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> this negation, alongside other forms of negation, constituting the ideological basis of our “superiority,” of the superiority of the Christian West over the “exotic” peoples that we would happily subjugate.[20]

The object of study for this field was not historically defined by Calvet, as we can see, since it was to be examined both *ex post* (colonial linguistics being “utilized *to justify*…”) and *ex ante* (“the peoples … that we *would* subjugate”), and the field can be situated in a perspective of political retrospection specific to France, since, for Calvet, it was also a matter of studying “the final stage of French imperialism: *Francophonie*.”[21] In this sense, it has more to do with what we have referred to above as *linguistic colonization* and *linguistic colonialism* than with *colonial linguistics*.

In considering Van Den Avenne’s publications, twenty years later, we can see that the field’s accusatory nature has lost some of its political or polemical strength, to the benefit of its epistemic aspects:

> [Colonial linguistics brings together] textual linguistic descriptions of extra-European languages produced in colonial situations by European describers (for the most part, though in some cases, we find “natives” participating in the colonial enterprise). They have in common the fact that they offer relatively unified written representations of “exotic” languages, placing them within frameworks of analysis that make them more familiar to Europeans, as well as the fact that they turn these languages into knowledge-producing objects.[22]

This perspective is less directly focused on *French* colonization or neocolonialism than Calvet’s work; as in Errington’s work,[23] it focuses on a more strictly defined archive: textual descriptions share in common that they are written representations of extra-European languages, be they grammar books and dictionaries (as we know, already significant for missionary linguistics) or other types of texts that demonstrate—often in quite romanticized ways[24]—and thus format the languages of colonized cultures (newspapers and travel journals, literary works, correspondence, lists of words, glossaries, etc.).

20 Calvet, *Linguistique et colonialisme*, back cover blurb.

21 Ibidem.

22 Van Den Avenne, *Linguistiques et colonialismes*, “Présentation,” 2.

23 Errington, *Colonial Linguistics*, in particular.

24 See Chrétien, “Découverte d’une culture africaine et fantasmes d’un missionnaire.”

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> [Colonial linguistics, understood in this way, produced] lasting social effects up to the postcolonial period, sketching out the languages and the peoples perceived, and then perceiving themselves, as different, in promoting a neutral vehicular language, that was then reappropriated (as in the case of Swahili in the Belgian Congo, thoroughly described in the works of Johannes Fabian), and introducing hierarchies between languages that generated lasting diglossic situations.[25]

The binary division indicated above (missionary vs. colonial) thus remains on the whole a general framework of analysis into which many cases do not fit and which is inadequate regarding the descriptions of many indigenous languages, such as the type of description that began at the end of the nineteenth century within linguistic anthropology—a field launched by ethnologists and linguists such as John Wesley Powell, Franz Boas (whose *Handbook of American Indian Languages* dates back to 1911), Leonard Bloomfield, Edward Sapir, Bronisław Malinowski, or Émile Benveniste.[26] Nuance is therefore needed here, just as it is when considering the concurrent opposition, often too pronounced, between first and second colonization (in the sense of Eric Hobsbawm; see below).

Missionary teaching vs. (or *and*) colonial teaching

Regarding the pedagogical component of missionary linguistics, the education programs that we look at in this volume must be understood according to the symmetry or reciprocity that characterizes them. On the one hand, missionaries learned indigenous languages to catechize the populations they intended to convert and to provide religious instruction in these same languages in the context of growing maritime empires. Yet the principal means devised for learning them, during the Renaissance era and the classical age, entailed first describing them according to the model that has been called *extended Latin grammar*,[27] which Alejandro Díaz Villalba summarizes here. This meant that the *Artes* (treatises on grammar) published at the time and conceived of in keeping with this model are based on adaptation strategies that are commensurable among

25 Van Den Avenne, *Linguistiques et colonialismes*, 4. See in particular Fabian, *Language on the Road.*

26 We will come back to this later in the section dedicated to linguistic fieldwork.

27 Auroux, *Histoire des idées linguistiques*, vol. 1, 19.

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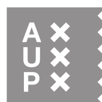
one another: strategies so salient that the grammarian struggles to find the parts of speech or the morphosyntactic properties in the language that are familiar to him or, conversely, in an equally contrastive approach, points at "missing letters" and "unknown sounds" in the language studied. These strategies were maintained long after the initial period of missionary linguistics, that of the extended Latin grammar. As Errington notes in his contribution, however diverse the languages described and the language facts identified, the texts of colonial linguistics are strikingly similar. As a practical matter, linguists worked in zones of colonial contact on the premise that the languages they were describing could be compared with and presented in the image of others more familiar to them.

We can then wonder what the "degree of commensurability" (to borrow Díaz Villalba's expression) might be, the conditions of comparability between texts dealing with radically different languages that are typologically unrelated and that are produced in disparate historical contexts. In 1547 the Franciscan Olmos indicated that the Latin model does not account for some forms of Nahuatl: "We shall present the conjugation, not according to the grammar, but as the language requires, because some expressions that exist in our language or in Latin are not used [in Nahuatl]."[28] It even happened that some of the *Artes* were not expected to rely on such a model, as Zwartjes explains, as in the case of Rincón's *Arte mexicano* (1595); but Rincón does, in fact, partly rely on it. Or, in other cases, they do not directly refer to it but require the translation of Latin categories into the vernacular language of the grammarian (designed as *romance* in the *Artes* written in Spanish or *lingoagem* for those in Portuguese),[29] which serves as a bridge allowing for the passage toward the autochthon language(s) being described.

Furthermore, some of the languages described, particularly those that were already equipped with a writing system, sometimes possessed a certain dignity in the eyes of missionaries, equivalent to that of their native language, especially if it was the language of an empire and a thriving civilization (China) or of a regional power (Japan, Tonkin, or Cochinchina), *a fortiori* if they had produced ancient and refined literature, as in the case of classical Chinese literature. In situations like this, missionary exogrammatization frequently came with an *accomodatio* made for the beliefs and cultural or

28 "Se pondrá la conjugacíon, no como en la gramática, sino como la lengua lo pide y demanda, porque algunas maneras de decir que nosotros tenemos en nuestra lengua o en la latina, esta no la tiene" (Olmos, *Arte de la lengua mexicana*, 150). The text was transcribed in modernized spelling by Heréndira Téllez Nieto in her critical edition (2022).

29 Díaz Villalba, in this volume.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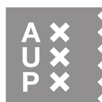
religious practices of the mission land, made easier since it was a matter of converting Asian countries from the top down, first addressing the intellectual, social, and political elites.[30] As such, Poli shows how Matteo Ricci examined Confucianism and noted the absence of concern for transcendence—which he proposed to respond to by developing a worship of the Heaven[31]—and explores the ways in which he established conceptual equivalences between Confucianism and Epicureanism, and later Stoicism, or between Buddhism and Pythagoreanism, assumed to share the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. In this way, Ricci sought to render moral, philosophical, and religious references from the Chinese world "commensurable" with his own, just as extended Latin grammar assumed the commensuration of the languages at hand. Reciprocally, he believed that mobilizing the arts of memory, the rhetorical techniques inherited from Greco-Latin antiquity, could be used by educated Chinese learners in their own study and understanding of sinograms, as Maria Lucia Aliffi and Mariangela Albano reveal.

At the same time, the onset of school enrollment within missions, intended above all to train local clergy before approaching greater numbers, had allowed for some speakers of autochthonous languages to learn the vernacular idioms of Europe. These were idioms that, at the beginning of the period studied in this volume, had not yet completely attained the status of full-blown language (a status accorded at the time only to Latin) in the minds of the clerics, who wrote (and thought?) primarily in Latin, or in the minds of the speakers of these very idioms. The study of these idioms had only just begun its "technological transfer" from Latin, and the movements of exogrammatization and endogrammatization (the publication of the first Romance language grammar books) took place at approximately the same time (Díaz Villalba). A great deal later than the beginning of the exogrammatization process, missionary linguistics associated the acculturation of colonized peoples to reading/writing (namely literacy) with one of the main initial modes of grammatization—that is, the act of equipping a language with an alphabetic writing system, whether or not it previously

30 "The spiritual aid which is given to important and public persons ought to be regarded as more important, since it is a more universal good. This is true whether these persons are laymen such as princes, lords, magistrates, or administrators of justice, or whether they are clerics such as prelates. This holds true also of spiritual aid given to persons who are distinguished for learning and authority [...]." (*The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, part VII, ch. 3 [*Missions*...], § 622, 292).

31 This goal was all the more strategic because, in the traditional Chinese religion, the Emperor, Son of Heaven (天子, *tiānzǐ*), was deemed to hold his power from a mandate conferred by Heaven.



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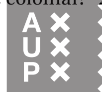
possessed another type of script or even two other types (like sinograms and the "demotic" system *chữ nôm*, two systems that scholars and educated Vietnamese continued to use until the beginning of the twentieth century). In some situations, this equipping is known as *Romanization* when it concerns a so-called Latin alphabet made up of signs borrowed from the national writing of its Western European inventors; one example would be the alphabets of Portuguese and Italian, which Jesuit missionaries used to transcribe Vietnamese at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Other signs are then added to the alphabet to represent the phonological specificities of the languages whose writing has been Romanized, as in the case of the diacritical marks that encode the tones of Vietnamese or Chinese. As for literacy, it cannot be dissociated from the inculcation of cultural patterns transmitted through reading books. The significance of these patterns, in particular those studied by Spaëth and Siebetcheu in their contributions dedicated to French West Africa and Italian colonies in East Africa, respectively, serves to remind us that colonial propaganda, before even integrating a discourse aimed at the residents of mainland France and Italy,[32] was disseminated among the pupils of colonized countries and their communities. This propaganda thereby served the pedagogical ideals of teachers by promoting a glorified vision of assimilation or cultural integration and, at the same time, spread a devalued image of traditional cultures.

The teaching of colonial languages (beginning with Spanish and Portuguese) to Christianized populations, which was initially a mere side effect or collateral of what had been called the "spiritual conquest" or "conquest of the souls," ended up becoming one of the explicit goals of the conquest, but a goal that would remain subordinate to pastoral tasks for a long time.[33] The "missionary" and educational enterprises of other religions, such as Buddhism or Islam, gave way to linguistic reflection; it is not, however, taken into account here, since it was not part of a colonization policy like the kind designed and implemented by Europe. This linguistic reflection incidentally took on a completely different shape. As Nicholas Ostler points out:

> We are still looking for an explanation of why the Christian missionaries of the 16th century suddenly took to language analysis, a practice they

32 For a comparison with the colonial propaganda disseminated by British schoolbooks, see Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*.

33 Whose results have remained very limited: it is estimated that, in 1950, barely about ten percent of the population in colonized Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa was converted. See Guedj and De Suremain, "Un Prométhée colonial?" 286.



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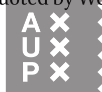
> kept up ever after. For all other missions, after all, it had been enough to acquire functional bilingualism in the natural way, and then (perhaps) to provide written translations. […]
> The importance for us is that all the Christian missionaries were not only literate: they also all had had the experience of learning a foreign language (Latin) from a book.[34]

In European colonial linguistics, unlike the first sort of missionary linguistics, teaching/learning is hence usually marked by significant asymmetry; it operated almost exclusively in one direction, the objective being the dissemination or imposition of the colonizer's language via writing, the sole language to which the capacity to "civilize" is attributed, a topic to which we will return. The teachers, be they Catholic or secular, working within this framework did not learn the local languages (or at least not systematically) and, when they learned and were able to speak them, did not always or usually deem it necessary to describe their forms or usages.[35] The task of writing textbooks and creating dictionaries was thus left increasingly to self-taught grammarians (e.g., colonial administrators, military officers) or professional linguists. The case of Protestant teachers is different, as we will see, but even in their case the long-term effectiveness of the local language skills is limited. Their results are disparate depending on the period or the colonial sphere. As such, in the British colonies of Africa in the late 1950s, only a little more than half of them could master one, and only in a very basic way in most cases.[36]

The devolution of language description to professional linguists took place progressively. Again taking the example of Vietnam, we can highlight three distinct moments in time: 1) the period of missionary linguistics strictly speaking: the Italo-Portuguese Jesuit period (ca. 1615–60) followed by the French period with the Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris (ca. 1660–1860); 2) when the French military and colonial administrators produced a great number of manuals and grammar books as more or less knowledgeable amateurs during the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century; 3) the period of linguists who initially worked within the colonial system but acted as professionals with respect to the description of endogenous languages. The publication of

34 Ostler, "The Social Roots of Missionary Linguistics," 42 and 43.
35 See the case of Tunisia under French protectorate studied by Nishivama in "Les civilisés ont-ils besoin d'apprendre la langue des indigènes?"
36 According to a 1957 survey quoted by Welmers in "Christian Missions and Language Policy."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two studies dedicated to the "Pronunciation of Cochinchinese" (1910–11) and the "Annamite language" (1912) by Maurice Grammont, a phonetician and a comparatist, and Lê Quang Trinh, can be considered the starting point of this third period.

Colonization(s) and globalization

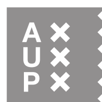
The expression "Eurocentric model" found in the call for papers for this volume might have been misleading in that it gave the impression of the existence of a unique or uniform apparatus; it would undoubtedly have been better to speak of several models that sometimes succeed one another and sometimes overlap. It is true that the Europeans taking part in the conquest of other continents starting in the fifteenth century (or even earlier during the Crusades, toward the Orient or even toward the southern margins of Europe)[37] had the same objective, which was initially strategic and mercantile, to impose themselves throughout the world. But the "Westernization of the world,"[38] meaning all the main and secondary effects of such a goal, be they of a religious or a more general transcultural nature, took on different forms depending on the given time period and the geographical areas.

However this variety of forms does not necessarily prohibit a comprehensive perspective in research that considers what all periods and imperial constructions have in common. In some studies, the notions of proto-globalization or globalization are superimposed onto colonization, allowing, through a retrospective method, for a full understanding of the continuous process of homogenization on the planetary scale, a process deployed over at least five centuries both on an immaterial level and on a material and political level. Accordingly, in identifying the first great generalized colonial expansion from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century as the first stage of globalization, Serge Gruzinski[39] situates it—beyond Westernization per se—within a longer timeframe that corresponds to the universal history of the mixing of cultures. This is a "connected" history of

37 The date 1492, marking the "discovery" of America and taken as a starting point for a form of modernity associated with the premises for colonization, must also be understood as a point marking the end of a much older enterprise, especially on the Iberian Peninsula: "the imperial idea [...] is nourished by the ancient origins of the Spanish crusade" (Braudel, *Grammaire des civilisations*, 455).

38 See Latouche, *L'Occidentalisation du monde*.

39 *Les quatre parties du monde.*



the transfer of beliefs and practices that is still in effect today[40] and that, as such, denaturalizes the perspective that we usually take on it.

Even though Hobsbawm distinguishes this first moment in time from a “second colonization,” specific to the second half of the nineteenth century and to the twentieth century,[41] the elements of continuity between these two moments predominate. The rivalry primarily between the powers of Britain, France, and Germany can be appreciated by considering their common imperialist goals and ideologies, held together by long-term strong political and economic motivations. According to an accepted story (now challenged),[42] the Berlin Conference led in 1884 and 1885 to the partial cutting up of the African continent between competing European nations as well as between concessionary companies and individuals, like Leopold II, the Belgian king who was given the Congo as personal property. Less than the drawing of borders (articles 34 and 35 of the *General Act* of the Conference), which remained virtual and mostly imprecise (except for the coastal regions) with the cartography of Africa being still quite incomplete at the time, the Berlin Conference planned for the divvying up of zones of economic influence in a context of competition between free trade and monopolistic practices. But it also provided for certain common rules that were to preside over the organization of the colonies on judicial, administrative, and religious levels.[43] Economics and politics were thus scaled up and sped up accordingly. To take this second colonization into account, history therefore had to go beyond national borders and instead embrace a *global* geo-historical approach here as well:

> Two major regions of the world were, for practical purposes, entirely divided up: Africa and the Pacific. No independent states were left at all in the Pacific, now totally distributed among the British, French, Germans, Dutch, USA, and—still on a modest scale—Japan. By 1914, except for Ethiopia, the insignificant West African republic of Liberia, and that

40 For the sociolinguistic and discursive aspects of the current globalization process, see Coupland, *The Handbook of Language and Globalization.* Also consult Blommaert, *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization.*

41 *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914.*

42 The scope and consequences of the Berlin Conference have been revisited in several recent works. While the conference is no longer considered a foundational event of the second colonization in some of this scholarship, the story told by the likes of Hobsbawm and other historians, which depicts the 1875–1914 period as the time when the world was divided between great European powers, is not discredited.

43 The *General Act* (art. 6) obliged the colonial powers to support the work of the missions.

> part of Morocco which still resisted complete conquest, Africa belonged entirely to the British, French, German, Portuguese, and, marginally, Spanish empires […].
> Between 1876 and 1915 about one quarter of the globe's land surface was distributed or redistributed as colonies among a half-dozen states. Britain increased its territories by some 4 million square miles, France by some 3.5 million, Germany acquired more than 1 million, Belgium and Italy just under 1 million each. The USA acquired some 100,000, mainly from Spain, Japan something like the same amount from China, Russia, and Korea.[44]

In this context, all forms of nationalism were exacerbated in proportion to the progress of the globalization of the earth, through which territories and populations were divided, subordinated, and administered. While colonial systems did indeed differ, they all stemmed from the same racialized and racist ideological mold that legitimized and organized them, all the while pitting them against one another:

> Even where ideology insisted on at least potential equality, it was dissolved into domination. France believed in transforming its subjects into Frenchmen, notional descendants […] of 'nos ancêtres les Gaulois' (our ancestors the Gauls), unlike the British, convinced of the essential and permanent non-Englishness of Bengalis and Yoruba. Yet the very existence of these strata of native *évolués* underlined the lack of 'evolution' of the great majority.[45]

Colonization *à la française* and colonization *à l'anglaise* are often contrasted.[46] We have, on the one hand, direct, "top-down" administration, which was costly in terms of the political apparatus needed and the manpower required and was set up progressively: it was necessary to train and introduce public servants with local personnel to assist, in the best scenario. On the

44 Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*, 57–58 and 59.

45 Ibidem, 71.

46 For an overview of the British imperial "project," see Darwin, *The Empire Project.* Since the end of the nineteenth century and before (or regardless of) the significant growth of the postcolonial studies starting in the 1990s, British historiography has produced several summary works about the genesis and development of the Empire, in particular Sir John Seeley's famous book, *The Expansion of England* (among the oldest ones) or, more recently, Bernard Porter's *The Lion's Share* (followed by *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* on the ideological, cultural, and educational aspects of imperialism), Bayly's *Imperial Meridian*, and Cain and Hokins's *British Imperialism*, which focuses mainly on economic aspects. For the Portuguese imperial project and its representations, see Ramada Curto, *Cultura imperial e projetos coloniais*.

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other hand, indirect rule, tested and adopted in Nigeria at the beginning of the twentieth century,[47] which relied on tribal leaders and local hierarchies, allowed for significant economic means and granted some degree of freedom to local populations.[48] While direct administration is in principle based on the rapid acculturation of local populations, indirect administration, also in principle, guards against any kind of assimilation. In reality, all this varies in complexity and order of the process in the area in question. The traces left by these two systems can sometimes be attributed to "the ruses of history." Indirect rule, where it has been successful over time, indeed tended to dissolve traditional systems (languages, social structures, education, etc.), while the direct system tended to preserve and transform them in some cases.

Geography and the periodization of missionary/colonial linguistics or education

The geographical, cultural, and/or linguistic areas studied in this volume are diverse and varied, as are the types of colonial or paracolonial systems ("informal empires") established in these areas:[49] Sub-Saharan Africa (mainly South Sudan, the Horn of Africa, West Africa), the Middle East (Egypt and Lebanon), Latin America, East Asia (Indonesia, Vietnam, China, in particular), as well as some European countries—we'll see why—such as Spain, Italy, and Greece. In addition to Latin (which remained a "grammatizing" metalanguage during the Renaissance and part of the European classical era) and the national languages of most colonial metropoles (Castilian, Portuguese, French, British or American English, Dutch, German, and Italian) or of other European countries (Greek, Hungarian, etc.), the languages and dialects of the cultures studied or mentioned in this volume are also quite numerous (more than one hundred) and varied, whether considered in their situation of contact with other languages and whether in a context of full colonization, partial colonization, or mere attempts to colonize. They include most native American languages (those of the Algic, Kariri, Macro-jê, Mayan, Mixe, Oto-Manguean, Quechuan, Tupi-Guarani,

47 See Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*. See also Stumpf, *La politique linguistique au Cameroun, de 1884 à 1960*.

48 The case of postcolonial India studied by Arjun Appadurai (*Modernity at Large*) constitutes a significant example of this trend.

49 Excluding most of the colonies of settlement, such as Australia, New Zealand, or Canada, regarding British Empire, for instance.

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