Spanish-Guarani diglossia in colonial Paraguay: a language undertaking

Rodríguez Gutiérrez, Y.V.; Webber, B.

Yliana Rodríguez

Spanish-Guarani diglossia in colonial Paraguay: A language undertaking

Abstract: The colonial relationship during which the Guarani were reduced by the Jesuits – a religious venture that touched the deepest foundations of the Amerindian culture – led to a situation of diglossia. By reducing the Guarani language to writing, grammars, catechisms and sermons, the Jesuits orchestrated a standardization which would also serve them as a tool of manipulation. Guarani was not marginalized, let alone replaced by Spanish; Guarani was absorbed, and therefore altered. The preservation of the native language by the missionaries appears to have facilitated the religious conversion. The present chapter studies the diglossic relationship in which Guarani suffers a reorientation of some lexical semantic fields; focusing on the domain of religious language.

Keywords: colonialism, missionary linguistics, Guarani, Jesuits, language contact

1 Societal bilingualism and its consequences

In colonial Paraguay, both the colonial and republican power ranged from a policy of linguistic Europeanization of the Indians to the Indigenization of the officials directly engaged in the administration or evangelization of the Indigenous peoples. During the monarchy of Charles V, the strategic objective of the Spanish Crown was the rapid Hispanization of Indigenous elites and through them, the linguistic assimilation of Indigenous peoples. In practice, only the first stage of this program was attempted, without much success. Missionaries and other church officials, together with language conversion agents, preferred to preserve – especially in rural areas – the linguistic isolation of innocent peoples (Lienhard 1989). This preservation of the native language seems to have facilitated the religious conversion, since evangelizing the Indians in Spanish would have probably been less successful. In fact, once they had mastered the Indian's words, the Jesuits managed to effectively confront the shamans

Yliana Rodriguez, University of the Republic of Uruguay, Center for Foreign Languages, Montevideo, Uruguay. E-Mail: ylianarodriguez@gmail.com

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110623710-008

(Ganson 2003). Therefore, it turned out more convenient for the missionaries to study the Prehispanic language.

1.1 The establishment of reductions

To protect the Guarani from colonists, authorities and *bandeirantes*[1], the Jesuits kept them in *reductions*, i.e. settlements for Indigenous people, where they would be evangelized and governed more efficiently.[2] More than 140.000 evangelized Indians lived in an area of 100.000 square meters (Merello 2015). These reductions were a closed system, with a very particular social, political and religious organization. The inauguration of the Jesuit reductions was set when the first provincial father – Diego de Torres – was invited by Hernando Arias de Saavedra to tackle the conversion of the many Indians present in the territory he governed. The missionaries were the only non-indigenous element of the reductions, and managed to make the Indians self-sufficient based on agriculture and livestock; in most cases with their own judicial and military systems (Santos 1992).

The reduction of the Guarani peoples of the province of Paraguay was a religious enterprise that would leave a serious imprint on their societies, affecting the most intimate fibers of their culture. Ruiz de Montoya, who was a missionary for twenty-five years in Paraguay, explains what his Order considered as reductions:

> Llamamos reducciones a los pueblos de indios, que viviendo a su antigua usanza en montes, sierras y valles, en escondidos arroyos, en tres, cuatro o seis casas solas, separados a legua, dos, tres y más, unos de otros, los redujo la diligencia de los Padres a poblaciones grandes y a vida política y humana, a beneficiar algodón con que se vistan. (Montoya 1989: 58)

1.2 Spanish-Guarani diglossia

In the linguistic domain, the colonial relationship derived into a diglossic situation, i.e. a form of social bilingualism, in which two linguistic systems with a functional distribution co-exist in a speech community, one with more prestige than the other one. In fact, one of the most profound colonial transformations that Guarani suffered was being ideologically situated in a relationship of de-

1 17th century Portuguese settlers in Brazil who raided the reductions in search for goods of all types and captive Indians that they would later sell as slaves.

2 This system was introduced by the Franciscans (Curbelo 2014).

pendency towards Spanish (Meliá 1986). Despite this unbalanced relationship, the Amerindian language posed great resistance to being colonized.

In the present work, I use the term diglossia as Fishman does, i.e. extending Ferguson's (1959) original concept and rather strict definition of diglossia in 1967. Fishman understands that a diglossic speech community is not only characterized by the use of two language varieties but may also be characterized by more than two languages. Diglossia describes many sociolinguistic situations, from stylistic differences within one language or the use of separate dialects (Ferguson's distinction) to the use of different languages. The latter is the sense used in this chapter.

Diglossia phenomena are truly complex. There are many factors that interfere with its development. As Lienhard (1989) rightly points out, the geopolitical situation and its variations, the system of government, social and cultural policies (e.g. the prohibition or the formalization of native languages) and the interests of different sectors (abandonment or revitalization of indigenous languages by migrants) contribute to modify the forms, content and socio-cultural impact of diglossia. However, in the reductions, the modified Guarani would become the official language: the only one spoken and written (Curbelo 2013). Within the reductions there was never a mass of Spanish speakers, aboriginals always outnumbered Europeans. The status of primary language which Guarani had for the Jesuit missionary system allowed it to spread and consolidate its use in the region, from the dominant Western culture which appropriated it according to their interests (Curbelo & Bracco 2008).

The apparent or real linguistic complicity between church officials and the South American Indians provoked serious concerns in the upper echelons of colonial power. When faced with events like the Andean insurrection led by Tupac Amaru, the Spanish Crown insisted – once more – on the need for an immediate Hispanicization to better control the Indians. Nevertheless, during colonial times, no serious attempts were made in this respect (Lienhard 1989). The only efforts took place in urban centers, by making Spanish the official language for all bureaucratic activities as well as the language in which administration documents were registered.

The aboriginal language was the only system of communication through which links with the marginal sectors were established. Meanwhile, the upper echelons communicated in Spanish. Guarani was typically used by the lower sectors, while Spanish was the language of the state apparatus and the ruling classes. Concerning the emergence of this diglossic relationship, we must keep in mind that it was the result of a violent conquest, so the antagonism between the two systems was very strong.

1.3 Adopted elements

When two cultures with different languages meet, they frequently borrow terms from each other. These borrowed words are loanwords, i.e. words that were transferred from a donor language to a recipient language. One of the first definitions was provided by Haugen, who defined a loanword as "the attempted reproduction in one language of patterns previously found in another" (Haugen 1950: 212). All parts of a language – lexicon, morphology, and syntax – can, in theory, absorb adopted elements, however, only the lexicon provides a sufficient body of data with specific historical content; unfortunately, the potentialities of using borrowed elements as a guide to the historical interactions between societies have for the most part been given limited appreciation, even though they seem to be the most useful kind of linguistic evidence of all (Ehret 1976). The closer and the more intimate the contacts between peoples, the greater the inter-influence of one group upon the other (Kiddle 1952).

Given the close contact that Guarani had with Spanish, it is not surprising to find individual borrowed concepts as well as large semantic categories where loanwords are likely to appear. Missionizing was prominent in the acculturation of the aboriginals, particularly since they made notably successful attempts to use the native languages to win converts to Christianity; in fact, the frequency of loan translation is a result of this technique of persuasion (Kiddle 1952).

Lawrence Kiddle (1952) states that the exchanges of borrowings made between the groups can involve all aspects of the two cultures, whether they be material or non-material, such as customs, religious rites, and superstitions. He believes, just like Ehret, that by studying this phenomenon, we can understand not only the origin of common objects and practices but also the cultural processes by which traits have been diffused. He alleges that the foreign word used in a recipient language enables us to appreciate the development of specific cultures. He considers the case of Spanish particularly interesting, as it offers great possibilities for the study of linguistic and cultural diffusion in the period since the discovery of the New World. Other authors have also pointed out the relevance of the case of Spanish in South America. Stolz & Stolz state that

> the study of Hispanicization phenomena is of utmost importance. This is so not because there is something special about Spanish or any of the indigenous languages influenced by Spanish, but rather because of the almost global extension of the Spanish-speaking areas past and present. The wide areal distribution of Spanish as a contact language offers a next to unique, laboratory-like opportunity to observe perhaps hundreds of near parallel cases of contact between Spanish and an indigenous language. The genetic, typological and areal background of these native languages is far from being homogeneous. The only constant element is the donor language Spanish. A large-scale investigation into Hispani-

> cization world-wide could thus become a major testing ground not only for universalist hypotheses but also for more individualized concepts of language contact processes. (Stolz & Stolz 2001 in Elizaincín Eichenberger 2002)

2 The conquest of Guarani

The missionaries' work was the humanist and spiritual counterpart of the military conquest and political domination (Abou 1995). Although the Spanish Crown applied a colonial language policy, there were a series of elements that did not cooperate with such undertaking. According to Meliá (1986), these factors were the weak Spanish emigration to Paraguay, the few tools available to introduce the European language, and the fact that Paraguay remained demographically Indigenous. With respect to the colonial transformation of Guarani, he points to its most salient features:

a. The Guarani language loses semantemes linked to their religion; some words ended up acquiring Christian meanings. Analogous cases can be found in other semantic fields, e.g. politics and other social values.
b. Hispanisms are incorporated, and numerous neologisms are created. At the same time, Spanish became impregnated with Guarani loanwords.
c. While Spanish cannot replace Guarani, it transforms it internally; not only by hispancizing its lexicon but also its grammatical categories. By the end of the 18th century, Creole Guarani was a new linguistic reality regarding the indigenous Guarani at the moment of contact.[3]
d. The Guarani language remained the colloquial language of the Indians and mestizos, whose chances to learn Spanish were minimal.

By reducing Guarani to writing, grammars, dictionaries, catechisms and sermons, the Jesuits implemented a standardization that would also serve as an instrument of manipulation. Guarani would suffer changes in virtually all its fronts, and The Society of Jesus would be responsible for many of them. Nonetheless, the Franciscans were the first to face the challenge of evangelizing the Indigenous peoples of the area that we now call Paraguay.

3 Today this creole has evolved to the dialect known as *Jopara*.

2.1 José Luis Bolaños and the first Guarani catechism

The Order of Friars Minor, better known as Franciscans, set foot in the province of Paraguay in 1542. The first to arrive were Fray Bernardo de Armenta and Alonso Lebrón, who founded a chapel in the surrounding area of Asunción, where they tried to indoctrinate the Indians, despite not speaking their language; in 1575 Fray Alonso de San Buenaventura and Fray Luis Bolaños would establish in Paraguay (Durán 1991). By the time these Franciscans arrived in Asunción, the Indians were rebelling all over the province of Paraguay, and they were becoming more and more hostile to the Spaniards. Therefore, the Franciscans decided to not only preach to the Indians but also reduce them into towns, i.e. *reducciones*.

The first stage of this challenging enterprise was hard. According to Félix de Azara (1809), when the Spaniards understood some Guarani they made their best effort to give them an idea of Christianity; they did their best but they could not achieve much. The Indians still associated the *pa'i* or priest with the Spanish oppressor who enslaved them (Durán 1991). Fray Luis Bolaños became interested in Guarani, and together with the help of some natives, colleagues and a soldier (Mitre[4]), he started studying the locals' language. According to Father Diego de Torres Bollo (1610, in Pastells 1949), when it comes to the teaching of the Indians' language, we owe the most to Bolaños, since he was the first to reduce it to art and vocabulary by translating into it the doctrine, the confessionary and the sermons.

It is worth remembering that the fact that Paraguay was an impoverished region made it uninteresting to the Crown. The cartas Annuas of those times state that the clergy did not want to go there. However, by translating the gospel into Guarani, and reducing Indians to towns, Bolaños managed to skip the biggest obstacles of their evangelization, i.e. their language and their dispersion (Durán 1991), making them more functional for the Spanish Crown's interests.

In the Synod of 1603 – one of the most important events of the colonial time – the evangelization of the Indians was lengthily discussed, and it was decided that the teaching of the doctrine would take place in Guarani. In that very Synod, Bolaños' Catechism was approved and named *official, compulsory and unique*. The catechism was composed of the sentences that he would have the Indians recite out. Both Franciscans and Jesuits would have the Indians study this Catechism by heart. Priests were ordered to teach and preach in Guarani, since it was the clearest and most widespread of all languages in the provinces

4 Notes available in Mitre museum's library, Buenos Aires.

(Mateos 1603). What is more, the priests were required i) to know enough Guarani as to administer the sacraments, and ii) to know Father Bolaños' catechism and doctrine by heart in order to pronounce it every Sunday as well as in celebrations, and to teach it to the Indians (Mateos 1603: 341).

Fray Luis Bolaños was probably the first missionary the Indians heard speak in their language. His method allowed for the preaching and teaching of the doctrine in Guarani, which the Jesuits would later tackle with great impetus.

2.2 Guarani becomes a colonization tool

After the Franciscans, in 1610 came the Jesuits, who considered the Guarani language a copious and elegant language that could rightly compete with those of fame (Montoya 1639), i.e. Latin and Greek. Several testimonies highlight Guarani as *a language* and recognize it in all its linguistic dimension clarifying that it has nothing to envy European languages. A French missionary, Father Ignacio Chomé (in Meliá 1976), wrote in a letter that after learning Guarani, he remained astounded by its majesty and power of expression. He explained that each word is an exact definition of the thing in question, providing a definite and clear idea.[5] The Jesuit Felipe Salvador Gilij, in his book *Saggio di Storia Americana* (1782, in Meliá 1992: 24) also assures its magnificence by stating: "non sia dunque maraviglia, che questa lingua parlasi con piacere in tanti regni di America, e che tante Indiche nazioni, abbandonate quasi le loro lingue, preferiscono ad essa el parlare de' Guaranesi".

With regards to education, some Indians were granted the possibility of having access to primary schooling, particularly the children of high ranking officials and caciques. Indian teachers were in charge of those schools, where students learned how to count, read and write (Santos 1992). The latter began with Guarani and would later be done in Spanish, following the Crown's request. Schooling was meant to prepare those who would later occupy important ranks in the community, e.g. secretaries, mayors; but the masses refused to learn Spanish (Meliá 1986). The Jesuits never obliged them to study the European language; as they did not have much interest in the Indians learning it.

5 The text reads as follows: "Puedo asegurar, que después de haber alcanzado cierta facilidad en la lengua guaraní, he quedado admirado al comprobar en ella tanta majestad y fuerza de expresión. Cada palabra constituye una definición exacta de la cosa de que se trata, y da de ella una idea precisa y clara" (cited in Meliá 1976: 10).

In the Guarani language, the missionaries saw a privileged place where a more primitive notion of the divine had survived; and precisely because of this relationship with the divine, they respected it (Meliá 1986). Proof of this are the dictionaries, grammars, catechisms, confessionals, sermons and poetry assembled by missionaries throughout their entire stay in the Paraguayan province. Nevertheless, by doing this, they were also contributing to the domination by the Spanish Crown.

Another major issue for the Jesuits was the linguistic unity of Guarani. The Amerindian language was used in an extensive territory; this was the reason why the Spaniards immediately took it as a general language for the colonization and the mission (Meliá 1992). Missionaries, together with the discoverers, immediately perceived the general language character of Guarani, noticing that it proved to be a perfect tool for evangelization, not only because of its geographical expansion but also because its dialects were not far from each other.

3 The reduction and evangelization of Guarani

The many languages spoken in the province of Paraguay received a strong attention by the missionaries, who wrote – and in some cases published – grammars, vocabularies, doctrines, sermons and songs of the Amerindian languages (Santos 1992). These materials were used by new missionaries, who had to learn the natives' language, and by the priests themselves as a tool for their preaching and catechesis.

Any linguistic system has a phonological, syntactic, morphological and lexical sphere. In the case of Guarani, the missionaries reduced each of them. Fray Luis de Bolaños provided Guarani with a graphic system, resulting in a clear representation of the sounds of Guarani. This enterprise was improved a few years later by Jesuit Antonio Ruiz de Montoya. With this endeavor, the missionaries took Guarani from the category of unlettered language to that of language with a written code. By reducing a language to writing, the language and the community that speaks it are endowed with both blessings and punishments. This language now becomes a tool that allows exerting greater control over the society to evangelize; the Christian doctrine needed this. On the other hand, the passage from orality to writing is also a passage to literature. Literature that continues to this day.

It is still unknown how many printings existed in the missions. However, it appears to be the case that there was only one press which was transported among the many reductions, depending on their needs or maybe to familiarize

the Indians with this skill (Plá 1975). According to Josefina Plá (1975), the press would have been built in situ, but there is no consensus on the material used. Some authors suggest it was made of hardwood, others copper, and some even propose brass, tin and lead. Despite the existence of the printings, handwritten copies were continued to be made, a task at which – according to a number of sources – the Indians were extremely skilled.

While having an alphabet is the kick-off to provide the Guarani language with a higher status, the existence of a grammar was prevailing. A grammatical reduction was also necessary if there were serious intentions to teach the language. The Jesuits needed instruments to help the missionary rookie in Paraguay acquire the grammatical schemes necessary to understand the Indians and be understood by them. Following the traditions of the time, the first grammars of Guarani were done taking as a model those of Latin and Greek; trying to make it fit the model of the eight parts of speech (i.e. noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, preposition, and interjection). Not surprisingly, by relying on a Latin grammar, the Jesuits could not account for all the peculiarities of the Amerindian language (Meliá 1986). As the missionaries aspired to know the Indigenous language, they modified it, especially towards the Western models (Pulcinelli Orlandi 1993).

Contrary to what one expects when it comes to lexicography, Guarani lexicon was reduced by missionaries who were oblivious to the true being of that language. The reduction at the lexical level was selective as to which terms to incorporate. In fact, the words that could serve the needs of religion were prioritized. But we should not fail to recognize the lexicographical work of Ruiz de Montoya, in his *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní* and Paulo Restivo in the *Vocabulario de la lengua guaraní*. Montoya, in particular, left an invaluable synchronic analysis of the language. Despite their limitations, these works provide us with access to semantic values of Guarani that otherwise would have perished. Missionaries provided Guarani with its very first descriptions. Another example is Isaurralde's work, published in Madrid in 1759. José Insaurralde – another notable Jesuit scholar of the Amerindian language – published two opulent volumes under the title *Ara poru aguíyey haba* (Good use of time), written entirely in Guarani.

The Jesuits modified many Guarani concepts, mainly in the religious realm, e.g. the good and the bad; to this, we should add the modifications on space (e.g. private and public spaces, areas of worship) and political structures (e.g. the figures of the King and the Pope) (Curbelo 2013). Besides, both the soldiers and the missionaries of those colonial times were unaware that the Indians owned a different signifying system, as it was different they did not understand

it; this led to a lack of dialogue which would later become the literary and grammatical reduction of Guarani (Myrland 1992).

3.1 The literary reduction

The ethnological literature on the Guarani is deeply marked by the colonial relationship, still not overcome (Meliá 1992). Therefore, the researcher has the task of overcoming the Guarani of history to reach the history of Guarani. It is not an easy job to hear the voice of the Guarani peoples through the Jesuit voices, but with the right methodological approach, it should be possible to approximate the feeling of the reduced Guarani Indian. We must not forget that these sources are virtually all researchers have, to approximate the reality of the Guarani. In other words:

> Com tudo isso, as fontes jesuíticas devidamente desideologizadas e lidas desde a clave hêrmeneutica do «reducionismo» que as caracteriza, seguem sendo, sem dúvida, o mais sério e amplo registro etnográfico sobre os Guarani «históricos». (Meliá et al. 1987)

The main literary work in Guarani, apart from the aforementioned grammars and vocabularies was translation, in particular, religious translation. We must bear in mind that in many Indigenous languages no literature existed, except for the Bible. The Indians did not write down any ritual chant, nor any prayers of their own, nor any myth or legend, even though they had them. The literary reduction could not overcome the colonial domination scheme in which it had been born (Meliá 1986). Over time, written Guarani would gain ground, though very slowly.

In the post-Jesuit period, after the expulsion of the Order in 1768, the Guarani-Jesuitical peoples began to produce their own literature (Chamorro et al. 2011). They wrote letters and above all, for decades, kept their own style, not only in handwriting and spelling but also in social and political thought. One of the most qualified Indigenous reduced representatives was Nicolas Yapuguay, Indian Cacique and musician.

3.2 The borrowing of religious lexicon

The Guarani spoken in the reductions suffered a semantic shift in certain areas of its lexicon, creating neologisms and borrowing Hispanisms – especially in the domain of religious language (Meliá 1986). Religious contexts can be especially revealing for the study of linguistic form and actions since they have the

potential of involving people's most extreme and self-conscious manipulations of language (Keane 2007).

The missionaries were trained to be able to communicate and transcribe the foreign languages, paying particular attention to translating the fundamentals of the religious doctrine (Florines Pena 2013). The primary objective was to transmit the strongest ideas of the Christian dogma, i.e. the existence of only one God, the mystery of the Holy Trinity and of the Son of God who came back from death, all this with the ultimate intention of transforming the subjects' ideologies, remarks Florines Pena (2013). To that, he adds that it was never the intention to acquire the Amerindian language fully but to be able to generate simple grammatical structures to fulfill their objective. For instance, the name of Jesus Christ was not translated, but the word *Tupa* is borrowed to convey the idea of God.

Clastres (1993) provides a thorough exposition on the first chronicles about the Guarani religious beliefs and how the missionaries unanimously stated that those of the other side did not have superstitions. According to the Europeans, not only they did not know that there existed a true god – which did not surprise them – but they also did not have false beliefs. This caused amazement in the missionaries, but at the same time, they rejoiced in the fact that their work was simplified as they did not have to fight established beliefs.

There are much more accounts of the Tupi than the Guarani. On the former, Jéan de Léry (in Clastres 1993) points that the Indians do not adore any celestial or terrestrial god, and therefore as they do not have a formula nor an assigned place to meet, they do not pray, neither in public nor privately. Following Léry, religious beliefs were so foreign to them, that when they heard them exposing their theology, the Aboriginals remained in awe. This could be taken as proof that nothing of their own culture could be associated to such discourse. The Franciscan Claude d'Abbeville (in Clastres 1993) was also amazed by the fact that these peoples did not believe in any form of god, they did not perform sacrifices, they did not have priests, altars, temples and ignored what a prayer was.

What we know about the Tupi, should allow us to compensate – to a certain extent – what we do not know about the Guarani. Nevertheless, despite the homogeneity of the Tupi-Guarani culture, we cannot always extend to the latter what we know about the former.

The chronicles insisted on describing the Tupi-Guarani Indian world as non-religious, making them better prepared to receive theirs. Nonetheless, the Tupi-Guarani Indians did have a religion, though there are a plethora of differences with that of the Europeans. In fact, the missionaries borrowed many lemmata from the Aboriginal religion.

The Jesuit Pedro Lozano (in Clastres 1993) pointed out that the Guarani had a certain knowledge of God, and that they had even been able to understand that it was one, as they had given it the name *Tupa*, which means superior excellence. To that, he added that they attributed him the power of thunder and lightning – which scared them a lot – although they never tried to calm it through sacrifices or adoration practices. The missionaries assimilated the Guarani word *Tupa* to that of the Christian god, and *Aña* and *Giropari* to the demon. The Indians find the latter responsible for all misfortunes, be it a war expedition, the failure of a crop or a personal misfortune. Almost identical representations of the Christian devil. On the other hand, the case of *Tupa* needs a more attentive study. The assimilation of *Tupa* with the meaning of the Christian god was a missionary invention. It is evident that they needed a term to express the idea of God, and that their first preoccupation was to find it in the Indian's native language. Notwithstanding, even if some chronicles are right when they award Tupa the meaning of a divine thing, by making it an equivalent of God, they are endowing it with a sense that it did not have. In fact, the Indians believed that the creator of the sky, the earth and the animals on it – though not the sea nor the clouds – is *Monan*. Tupa has no role in the process of creation. Tupa is associated with the great cataclysms. If Monan is the creator, Tupa is the destroyer. But it should be borne in mind that the Tupi-Guarani did not worship any deity. This example proves Kiddle right, in that "when a foreign cultural element is introduced, a native name of a related element may become the name of the borrowed item" (Kiddle 1952: 180). But that is not an isolated example.

The religious practice of the Tupi-Guarani always involved the search of the Land Without Evil, which is intimately related to the idea that the Earth as we know it will be destroyed again, and Tupa as the architect of these destructions, was the true master of their destiny. Therefore, the missionaries were not wrong about the relevance of Tupa; but it is the image of the destroyer that governs the Guarani religion, and not that of the creator. They were mistaken in its significance, as nothing can be more distant in this Indigenous sign from the Christian idea of a creator god. Once again, a reduction was taking place, as the missionaries understood religion concerning the man-god dichotomy. No worship meant no god, and no god meant no religion. By forcing this godly discourse, through the imposition of an alien logic, they were reducing religion to its least significant expression.

When writing about the nature of God, Yves d'Évreux (1864) transcribes the notable arguments of an Indian who appears as an expert in theological debates: Tupa cannot be a man, if he has created everything; if he were a man, he would have been born from another man; Tupa is invisible, etc.

4 Conclusions

Most of what we know about the historical stages of Guarani is owed to the linguistic activities of missionaries. They were the ones to put Guarani into writing, they described its grammar and lexicon, and worked on its standardization to better manipulate them. Colonial missionary work was part of the political colonial rule. In spite of that, many missionaries' work went against the objectives of the official administration. For instance, the desire to translate new concepts into Guarani was not characteristic of the cultural changes enforced by the government representatives (Kiddle 1952).

Beliefs are mediated by the linguistic forms and practices through which they are remembered and transmitted (Keane 2007). The reductions provided a socio-political framework to an ambitious language undertaking; whose relevance could be equated with that of religious conversion or economic development. There is no doubt that speaking the language of the natives enabled the Jesuits to deploy the cultural and religious transformation of their mission. While Spanish penetrated Guarani in several linguistic levels, it fails to do so with complete success. The Spaniards were not able to implement formal instruments and significant social foundations for teaching their language, but they did manage to reserve for it specific semantic fields, which Guarani would never develop (Meliá 1986).

Guarani was not marginalized nor replaced by Spanish; Guarani was absorbed – and therefore altered – by another culture. The missionaries made Guarani their tongue, giving it not only a graphic representation system but keeping it alive. With writing and grammar, the Guarani language was undoubtedly strengthened, but the reduction in its semantics and discourse was made at the expense of irreparable and definitive cultural losses; the Guarani failed to grasp the meaning of important words of their ancient and traditional culture, or saw their significance substantially transformed (Meliá & Nagel 1995). As Bloomfield rightly pointed out: "cultural loans show us what one nation has taught another" (Bloomfield 1933: 458).

The religious conversion was social and cultural. With the evangelization of what we now call Paraguay, the Guarani Indian was deculturized. The fears expressed by Guarani shamans in 1614, at the start of the Jesuit reductions, have

become prophetic: "those Indians told us we were spies [...] and that in the books we brought death" (Letters Annuas[6] II, Meliá 1986).

References

Abou, Sélim. 1995. Identité ethnique et identité culturelle. In *L'identité culturelle,* 29–46. Paris: Pluriel.

Azara, Félix de. 1809. *Voyages dans l'Amérique Méridionale*. Paris: Dentu. Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/voyagesdanslam02azar.

Bloomfield, Leonard. 1933. *Language*. New York: Holt.

Chamorro, Graciela, Thiago Cavalcante & Carlos Barros. 2011. *Fromteiras e identidades. Encontros e desencontros entre povos indígenas e missôes religiosas*. São Bernardo do Campo: Nhanduti Editora.

Clastres, Hélène. 1993. *La tierra sin mal. El profetismo tupí-guaraní*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol.

Curbelo, Carmen. 2013. Avañe'ẽ, la "lengua de los hombres". La relación del guaraní con el territorio uruguayo. In Luis Ernesto Behares & Juan Manuel Fustes (eds.), *Aportes sobre la diversidad lingüística del Uruguay*, 95–107. Montevideo: Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación.

Curbelo, Carmen. 2014. Presencia indígena misionera. En Museo de Arte Precolombino e indígena, *Uruguay en guaraní: presencia misionera en Uruguay*. Montevideo: Mapi.

Curbelo, Carmen & Roberto Bracco. 2008. La construcción del espacio misionero y la toponimia en territorio uruguayo. In María Teresa Carrara (ed.), *Cambio cultural en Arqueología Histórica, Actas del Tercer Congreso Nacional de Arqueología Histórica*, 407–413. Rosario: Universidad Nacional de Rosario.

Durán, M. 1991. El catecismo Guaraní de Fray Luis Bolaños y sus disposiciones del sínodo de Asunción de 1603. *Indoafroamérica: cinco siglos de historia franciscana*. Montevideo: CEFRADOHIS.

Ehret, Christopher. 1976. Linguistic evidence and its correlation with archaeology. *World Archaeology* 8(1). 5–18.

Elizaincín Eichenberger, Adolfo Esteban. 2002. Romania Nova: lugar de contacto del español con otras lenguas/culturas. Spanish in Society Conference. Primer Simposio de Lingüística Hispánica del Reino Unido. Guidford, England: Surrey University.

Évreux, Yves de. 1864. *Voyage dans le Nord du Brésil, fait durant les années 1613 et 1614*. Leipzig: Franck.

Ferguson, Charles A. 1959. Diglossia. *Word* 15. 325–340.

Fishman, Joshua. 1967. Bilingualism with and without diglossia; diglossia with and without bilingualism. *Journal of Social Issues* 23. 29–38.

6 The Letters Annuas of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay comprise vital historical sources for the reconstruction of the work carried out by the Company of Jesus in the territories of the River Plate.

Florines Pena, Andrés. 2013. Las lenguas de los pueblos originarios. In Luis Ernesto Behares & Juan Manuel Fustes (eds.), *Aportes sobre la diversidad lingüística del Uruguay*, 95–107. Montevideo: Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación.

Ganson, Barbara. 2003. *The Guaraní under Spanish rule in the Río de la Plata*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Haugen, Einar. 1950. The analysis of linguistic borrowing. *Language* 26. 210–231.

Keane, Webb. 2007. Language and religion. In Alessandro Duranti (ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology,* 431–448. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Kiddle, Lawrence B. 1952. Spanish loan words in American Indian languages. *Hispania* 35(2). 179–184.

Lienhard, Martin. 1989. *La voz y su huella*. México: Ediciones Casa Juan Pablos.

Mateos, Francisco. 1603. El primer concilio del Río de la Plata en Asunción. *Misionaria Hispánica* 16(78). 257–359.

Meliá, Bartolomeu. 1976. *Guaranies y jesuitas. Ruinas de una civilización distinta*. Asunción: Ediciones Loyola.

Meliá, Bartolomeu. 1986. *El guaraní conquistado y reducido. Ensayos de etnohistoria. Ensayos de etnohistoria*. Asunción: Biblioteca Paraguaya ed Antropología.

Meliá, Bartolomeu. 1992. *La lengua guaraní del Paraguay. Historia, sociedad y literatura*. Madrid: Editorial Mapfre.

Meliá, Bartolomeu & Liane Maria Nagel. 1995. *Guaraníes y jesuitas en tiempo de Misiones*. Asunción: CEPAG.

Meliá, Bartolomeu, Marcos V. de A. Saul & Valmir F. Muraro. 1987. *O Guarani: uma bibliografia etnológica*. Santo Ângelo: Fundação Missioneira de Ensino Superior.

Merello, Enrique. 2015. *El gregoriano perdido de los guaraníes. Ejecución y copiado del canto gregoriano en la "República Jesuítica" del Paraguay*. Asunción: Editorial Arte Nuevo.

Montoya, Antonio Ruiz de. 1639. *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní.* Madrid: Iuan Sanchez.

Montoya, Antonio Ruiz de. 1989. *Conquista Espiritual hecha por los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús en las provincias del Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay y Tape*. Rosario: Equipo difusor de Estudios de Historia Iberoamericana.

Myrland, N. 1992. El cristianismo guaraní en los siglos xvi, xvii y xviii. *Boeltín de Historia y Geografía* 9, 97–103.

Plá, Josefina. 1975. *El barroco hispano guaraní*. Asunción: Editorial del Centenario.

Pastells, Pablo. 1949. *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Provincia del Paraguay*. Madrid: CSIC.

Pulcinelli Orlandi, Ení. 1993. La danza de las gramáticas. La relación entre el tupí y el portugués de Brasil. *Iztapalapa* 29. 54–74.

Santos, Ángel. 1992. *Los jesuitas en América*. Madrid: Mapfre.