

**A Grammar of God:
Translation, Grammar and Memory
in the *Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala* (1610)**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the translationality of missionary linguistics through an examination of the *Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala* [Art and rules of the Tagalog language], or *Arte*, and its role in the transcultural commemoration of Christianity as a colonial religion in the early modern Philippines. Published in Castilian by the Dominican friar Francisco Blancas de San José at the outset of the Spanish colonial period in this Southeast Asian archipelago, the *Arte* served as the primary model for many subsequent grammars of Tagalog, the basis of the modern-day Philippine national language called Filipino. These grammars were used primarily by Catholic missionaries to study indigenous languages for the purposes of proselytization and colonial administration. It is argued that beyond the *Arte*'s contributions to a linguistic analysis of Tagalog, it should also be read as a grammar of God because its prescriptivist tendencies in formulating grammatical rules provided modes with which the colonial conceptualizations of divinity were to be articulated in the indigenous tongue. Historical, textual and thematic analyses of civil and ecclesiastical records have been used in this dissertation to reconstruct the sociocultural and epistemological contexts of missionary linguistics, as well as to develop a corpus-based method for translating parts of the text into English. Translation has been considered in both the theoretical and practical sections as a process inherent in missionary grammatization that commemorated the problematic equivalences of the colonial encounter. It is through this process that Tagalog was endowed not only with the structures and appearance based on the grammatical categories of Latin, but also with historicizing themes constituting a hybridized pastoral discourse on colonial Christianity.

KEYWORDS: history of translation; missionary linguistics; Tagalog; Hispanic Philippines; grammatization; cultural memory

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