

The missionary linguistic works in the Province of New Andalusia. A comparative study of three *artes* from the 17th century*

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The contribution offered here aims to provide a first contrastive study of three linguistic works written by the Spanish missionaries in the Province of New Andalusia (today, North-Eastern Venezuela territory) in the 17th century in order to highlight their differences and coincidences, with illustrative examples. The missionary linguistic sources to be compared are: Arte y vocabulario de la lengua de los indios Chaimas, cumanagotos, cores, parias y otros diversos de la Provincia de Cumaná o Nueva Andalucía by Francisco de Tauste (1680), Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota by Manuel Yangües (1683) and Reglas para la inteligencia de la lengua de los indios by Matías Ruiz Blanco (1690). This paper attempts to explore the recognition of dialectal varieties, the grammatical standardization efforts and the categorization criteria followed by the Spanish missionaries in the codification of the Cariban¹ languages.

1 Introduction

The linguistic work of the missionaries is being re-evaluated as a “whole” (Zwartjes 2000:7) and has received more academic attention than ever in recent decades. The research area of missionary linguistics, which tends to centre on linguistic production, has led to the formation of a new section in the historiography of linguistics.

In recent studies, scholars have concentrated on the *artes* or colonial grammars and the dictionaries of the indigenous languages composed by

* I am deeply grateful to dr. Otto Zwartjes of the department of Romance linguistics of the University of Amsterdam and to Rebeca Fernández Rodríguez of the Department of Letters, Arts and Communication of the University Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro for their review of the text and their valuable comments and suggestions for improvement. I sincerely acknowledge the professional assistance of dr. Astrid Alexander-Bakkerus of the Department of Romance linguistics and Liesbeth Zack, assistant professor in Arabic language and linguistics at the University of Amsterdam. Any remaining mistakes are, of course, my own.

¹ Definition of Cariban glottonym in Section 2.1.

missionaries in Mexico (Hernández 2001), the Philippines (García-Medall 2007; Sueiro Justel 2005), and the Andes (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2008).

At this point, although missionary works are valued and treated with scientific independence as an individual field of research, the missionary sources in the Province of New Andalusia (present-day North Eastern Venezuela territory) are less studied and deserve more attention. The linguistic data recorded by the Spanish missionaries and their pioneering work of learning and describing the Cariban indigenous languages, remain until nowadays one of the most valuable sources for the reconstruction and understanding of their grammatical system.

The linguistic-comparative method has hardly been applied to Cariban missionary sources until now. Previous research on missionary works written by Franciscans, Capuchins and Jesuits in the Province of New Andalusia during the 16th and 17th centuries highlighted mainly the testimonial and documentary value of these linguistic works (Fundación Polar 1997; Schmitt 2006).

Preceding linguistic studies focused on the Spanish missionaries' works in the area from a historical and ethnographic point of view and recompiled the linguistic information of the indigenous languages predominantly from a monographic perspective (Rojas 1899; Navarro 1955; Carrocera 1981; Arellano 1986; Bastín 2010; Sánchez Méndez 2012).

This paper attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the Spanish missionaries' studies in the field of the Cariban language family by presenting a preliminary comparative analysis – which will be deepened in a prospective PhD dissertation – of the linguistic categorisation criteria applied in order to apprehend and classify the grammatical aspects of these indigenous languages.

For this purpose, three significant grammars have been chosen from the available sources: *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua de los indios Chaimas, cumanagotos, cores, parias y otros diversos de la Provincia de Cumaná o Nueva Andalucía* by Francisco de Tauste (1680), *Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota* by Manuel Yangües (1683), and *Reglas para la inteligencia de la lengua de los indios* (1690) by Matías Ruiz Blanco.

Given this aim, subsequent to this overall introduction, the historical data and linguistic sources are introduced in Section 2. Section 3 presents briefly the biographical data of the three authors of the *artes*. Section 4 explores the structural analysis of the texts based on the distribution of the linguistic contents, followed by the classification of the grammatical main parts of speech (noun, pronoun and verb).

2 Historical and linguistic premises

After the discovery of the New World, the territorial and spiritual conquest process did not come easy for the first European missionaries. Once they arrived at the Americas in the 16th century, they discovered a vast diversity of languages and cultures. There was an obvious cultural and linguistic gap between the two “worlds” that needed to be bridged by these missionaries in order to begin the evangelization mission and to facilitate the Christianisation activities.

The present-day North-Eastern territory of Venezuela was “officially” discovered by Columbus during his third trip in 1498. Nevertheless, it was not until 1514 that the Spaniards arrived to the banks of the Orinoco river, where in 1516, the first missionaries began to establish their congregation centres (De Civrieux 2006).

Featured religious orders who worked for evangelization in the vast territory covering modern Venezuela were: the Franciscans (located in Santa Cruz de Caracas, Trujillo, Barquisimeto, Maracaibo) whose congregation centre was in Píritu, the Jesuits (known as an extension of the mission of Llanos de Casanare in Colombia) whose congregation centre was in New Granada, and the congregation of the Capuchins which, although one of the latest orders to arrive (1657), was the largest and most active (they covered the plains of Cumana, the banks of the Orinoco river, the Meta river and Lake Maracaibo) (Rojas 1899).

The Province of New Andalusia or Province of Cumaná included the territory of the present-day Venezuelan states Sucre, Anzoátegui and Monagas. Its most important cities were Cumaná and New Barcelona (see Figure 1). Spanish missionaries encountered in this area a vast diversity of “exotic”² Amerindian languages – compiled today under the name of Cariban family and composed of approximately 25 languages – among these indigenous tribes.

² Zwartjes (2011:1) defines the word ‘exotic’ as “[...] not more than a convenient shorthand for non-Indo-European languages and is not meant to imply Eurocentric value judgements of any sort.”

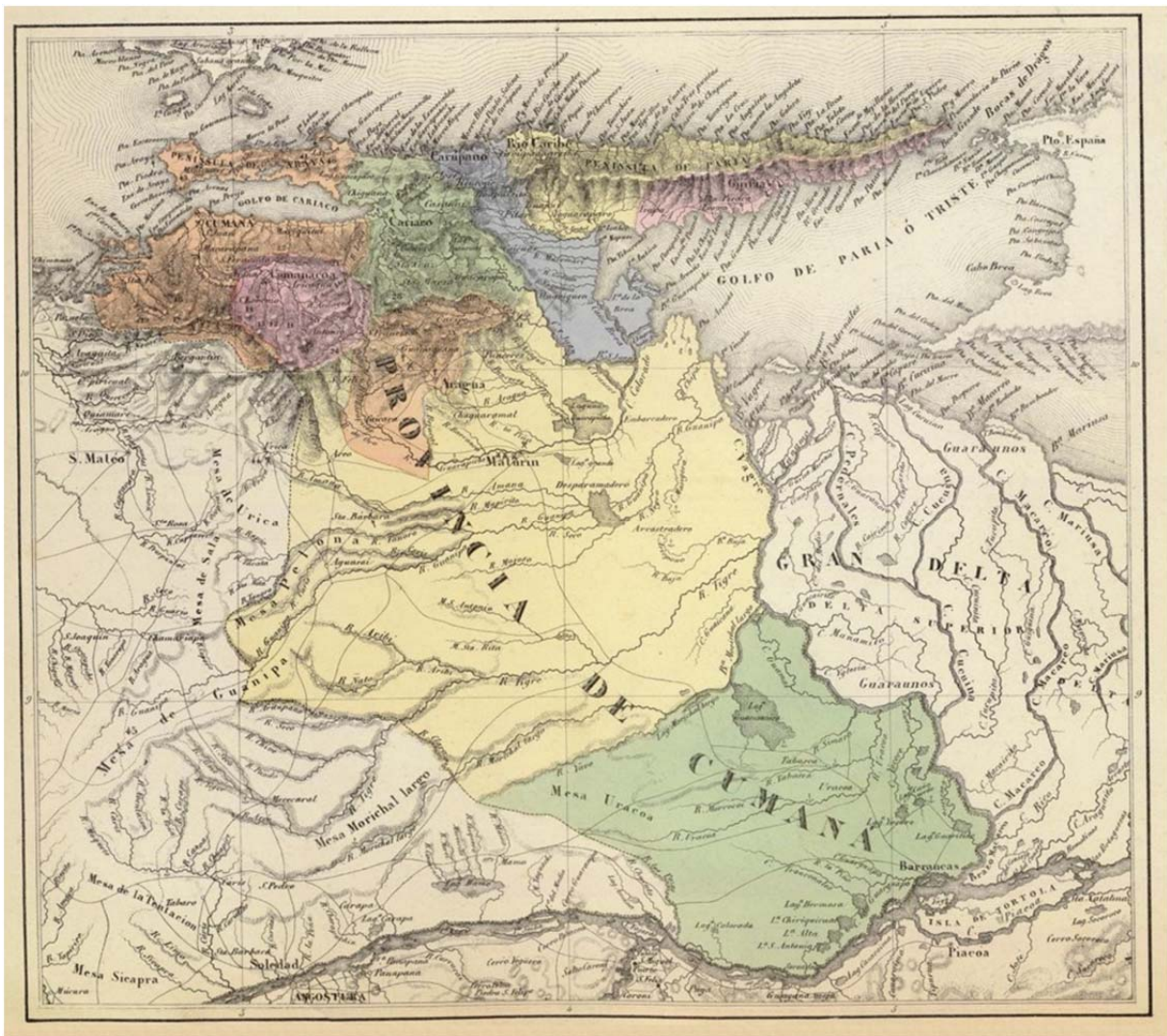


Figure 1: Agustin Codazzi's map in *Atlas Físico y Político de la República de Venezuela*, París: Lithographie de Thierry Frères, 1840, p. 15.

This diverse indigenous linguistic universe and its idiosyncrasies had been thoroughly depicted through history by notable chroniclers, who based their analysis on the relationship between these exotic languages and the indigenous anthropological cosmovision as it was described in the first manuscripts. Antonio Caulín (1719–1802) reports systematically the linguistic varieties in the area in his *Historia corográfica natural y evangélica de la Nueva Andalucía provincias de Cumaná, Guayana y vertientes del Orinoco* (1779), while Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) reports in his study *Viaje a las regiones equinociales del Nuevo Continente* (1807, 1:44–45) that the most widely spoken languages in the Provinces of Cumaná and Barcelona were Chaima and Cumanagot.

2.1 *Cariban language family*

From the valuable information left to us through the historical and linguistic missionary works, it can be observed that *several* languages were spoken by the indigenous people living in the Province of Cumaná. The majority of the indigenous people involved in the Franciscan missions of Píritu communicated with each other in the Cumanagoto language. The Capuchins of Guayana mention the Pariagoto language, and the Aragonese Capuchins discuss the Chaima and Palenque languages (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Map based on the typological map of South America's indigenous languages by Antonio Tovar (1961: 6).

The number of languages gathered under the name of Cariban stock fluctuates from 20 to 50 (including several other missing and endangered ones), depending on the opinions of different researchers about which varieties are dialects and which are independent languages. In recent studies, scholars have analyzed the genetic relations of Cariban languages and classified them under different glottonyms - Caraib or Karib, Cariña, Carif, Caribe - which need to be disambiguated, since these dissimilarities might lead to a taxonomic confusion.

Previous historical-comparative linguistic research (Méira 2002:1) indicates that the beginning of the classification of Cariban languages originated more than two hundred years ago, when the affiliation between a number of Cariban languages was first noticed by Filippo Salvatore Gilij (1721–1789).³ Gilij (1782: III, 167–169, 175) established that the languages spoken on the banks of the Orinoco river, belonging to nine *lenguas matrices* 'mother languages', were: Caribe, Sáliva, Maipure, Otomaca & Taparita (Otomaco), Guama & Quaquéro (Guamo), Guajibo, Yaruro, Guaraúno (Warao) and Aruáco. In Gilij's classification, the Caribe language family comprises several languages, among which the ones spoken in the Province of New Andalusia or Province of Barcelona: Tamanaco, Pariacoto, Cumanacoto, Palenque, Cariña, and Galibi.

According to Loukotka (1968:215, Table 7), the Cumanagot and Chaima language belong to the Tamanaco language family comprised under the Cariban language family. Kaufman (2007:74) listed the Cumanagot and Chaima languages under the Proto-Cariban central branch. For other scholars (Mosonyi and Gonzáles 2004), the Chaima and the Cumanagot languages count as dialects of a single language which they call *caribe costeño* 'coastal Carib'. This study follows the classification presented by Adelaar (2004:31–33, Table 1.5), apud Loukotka, who recorded the Cariban language family relevant to the Andes under the "Northeastern Division" (D) no. 89.

At this point, it is obvious that the pioneering linguistic work led by the Spanish missionaries in the field of Cariban languages during the 16th and 17th centuries has not been sufficiently harnessed in the academic spheres and, subsequently, it can be highlighted that their contribution to the historiography of linguistics and language description deserves to be recognized.

At no time did the intensive Christianization labour of the missionaries distance them from their cultural activities; quite the contrary, their evangelist vocation and the heterogeneous reality of the indigenous Venezuelan linguistic universe were a great source of motivation for these missionaries to study and learn the diverse indigenous languages in the Province of New Andalusia. This philological awareness certified them to translate the main prayers and the principles of Christian life into the native languages, and legitimated them to

³ In his 18 years on the banks of the Orinoco river, friar Gilij left a priceless testimony embodied in the four volumes of his *Ensayo de Historia Americana o sea Historia Natural, Civil y Sacra de los Reinos y Provincias españolas de Tierra Firme en la América Meridional*, whose original Italian version was published between 1780 and 1784, a work, with an encyclopaedic vision and a modern methodology in many respects. Gilij bequeathed with this work the most diverse and most unusual details of the Venezuelan history, anthropology and geography of that time.

create appealing vocabularies and grammatical works with a clear pedagogical purpose.

2.2 *Grammaticalization and linguistic standardization efforts*

In order to trespass the linguistic frontiers, the missionaries created and developed numerous grammatical, lexicographical and linguistic works that facilitated the evangelization because of the access to indigenous languages and helped to reveal its idiosyncrasies. Jesuits, Franciscans and Capuchins missionaries needed to begin their Christianisation activities in the Province of New Andalusia or Province of Cumaná by:

- a) describing the Cariban indigenous languages;
- b) establishing the basis of their phonological system;
- c) translating sermons and catechisms, for which they first had to
- d) alphabetise or give a written form to oral languages, in order to
- e) create *artes* or grammars and eventually, vocabularies.

Thus, the Spanish missionaries commenced a great tradition in the history of Hispanic-American linguistics. As is the case with several Amerindian languages, the grammatical and lexicographical work of the Spanish missionaries contributed to the preservation and dissemination of these languages in Venezuela.

Caulín describes how in the Province of Píritu the Cumanagot language was selected as a *lingua franca* for teaching practices:

As we learn from the experience in the apostolic missions and the doctrines of Píritu, where, although we have several nations in thirty-four establishments, which comprise about twelve thousand people, most of them communicate to each other in the Cumanagot language, since it belongs to the oldest nation and the most extensive reduction of all, and has spread its general language to other nations, which were successively added by the missionaries who converted them from infidelity to the civil and Christian life; [...] (Caulín 1779:81)

Esparza Torres (2003:69) classifies the missionaries as “frontier linguists”, in the sense that their work closely adheres to their moral obligations, since they are not focused on “languages in themselves as the goal of their work, but, rather, on preaching”.

The contrastive methodology used by the missionaries in the adaptation of new religious concepts to the indigenous culture was based on the constant comparison carried out at all linguistic levels between their reference languages (Latin, Spanish, Hebrew, and Greek) and the idiosyncrasies of these “exotic”

languages in the incessant process of describing and understanding their specific features.

In order to standardize this vast linguistic information, the grammars of the missionaries grammars or *artes* comprised language varieties, phonology, morphology and syntax following the Greco-Latin categorization criteria at its outmost. It is evident that describing these agglutinative languages according to the Indo-European categorization system was not the most suitable method of searching for an adequate way to establish the structure of indigenous languages. Most of the missionaries were aware of the inadequacy of the Greco-Latin system and its blank areas.

In Zwartjes' (2011:14–15) words, despite the fact that the Greco-Latin model remains always visible, the missionaries attempted to describe the structure of the language of the 'other':

The degree to which Latin was used in theoretical-descriptive language categorisations varies considerably in the missionaries' works. Some works seem more original than others; some solutions can be considered as more creative than others. A brief grammatical compendium will often contain less theory and will offer some limited paradigms of the equivalents of the Latin declensions and conjugations.

Viewed as an epistemic project, the role attributed to Greco-Latin categorisation in missionary linguistics has inspired distrust and raised controversies among current historiographers. In this regard, Swiggers (1997:117) establishes five strategic options, in which he considers "direct transfer" to be the most servile option while "abandoning the Latin model" is the most original strategy.

Missionary linguistics in the Province of New Andalusia or Province of Cumaná, whether original or servile, led to the production of extraordinary works based on grammatical categorisations taken from earlier concepts. Today, nobody rejects modern servile linguistic theories, even when they use Greek-Roman categories like noun and verb.

2.3 Primary linguistic sources

Nearly 40% of the known texts from the Cariban language family, dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries, are grammars and vocabularies. Such a quantity of texts of this type reflects the profound interest shown by the Spanish missionaries in studying, learning, teaching and understanding the indigenous languages. The primary sources that have been preserved and partially reedited are:

- * *Arte y tesoro de la lengua cumanagota* by Matías Ruiz Blanco (1688?);
- * *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua de los indios Chaimas, cumanagotos, cores, parias y otros diversos de la Provincia de Cumaná o Nueva Andalucía* by Francisco de Tauste (1680);
- * *Confessionario en lengua cumanagota, y de otras naciones de Indios de la Provincia de Cumaná, con unas advertencias previas al confessionario para los confesores* by Diego de Tapia (1723);
- * *Conversión en Píritu de Indios Cumanagotos Y Palenques, Con la Práctica Que Se Observa en la Enseñanza de Los Naturales en Lengua Cumanagota* by Matías Ruiz Blanco (1690);
- * *Gramática de la lengua Caribe* by Fernando Jiménez (17th century);
- * *Manual de catecúmenos en lengua cumanagota* by Matías Ruiz Blanco (1683);
- * *Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota, general de las varias naciones que habitan la provincia de Cumaná* by Manuel Yangües (1683);
- * *Resumen para hablar y entender la lengua caribe, y como es lengua universal da facilidad para comprender las demás lenguas de diversas naciones que tenemos en nuestras misiones de Orinoco* by an anonymus author (17th century);
- * *Rezo cotidiano en lengua cumanagota* by Diego de Tapia (1690);
- * *Vocabulario de español de caribe* by Martín de Tarradell (1787).

Previously mentioned studies call attention to the strategies used by the missionaries to adapt to a new anthropological reality and the decisions they made regarding the linguistic methodology adopted to classify the Cariban languages and to translate the new Christian terminology into these indigenous languages.

3 Brief biographical data

3.1 *Francisco de Tauste (1626?–1685)*

Along with the friars Lorenzo Magallón (?-1676), Lorenzo de Belmonte (17th century), Agustín de Frias (1625-1698), José de Carabantes (1628–1694), and Miguel de Torres (17th century), Tauste was one of the six members of the first group of Aragonese Capuchins authorized by Phillip IV to take the leading steps in the Mission of Cumaná where he had to draw on all the resources of his tenacity to continue working for the evangelization in Venezuela.

Tauste was born in one of the five villages of Aragón gathered under the name Las Cinco Villas in the Province of Zaragoza (cc. 1626) and was baptized

Miguel Torralba de Rada. He was a rigorous apprentice of the friars Carabantes and Frías. When he joined the Capuchin congregation around 1645, he changed his name, as was the custom at the time, and took the name of his native town, Tauste. He received the full ecclesiastical recognition in 1658. Immediately after that, he crossed the Atlantic accompanied by friar Lorenzo Magallón and reached the coast of Cumana on January 18th, 1658 (Arellano 1987:255–259).

He began his missionary activities in Cumanacoa, from where he moved to the new indigenous settlements in Santa Maria de los Angeles. He was preparing the way for the establishment of further indigenous *reductions*⁴, when his activities were suspended due to political instructions, and he had to return to Spain immediately (Royal Decree of 2 October 1660). Later on, he came back to Cumaná and initiated the challenging task of founding new reductions. The first one of a long list was the mission in San Francisco of Chacaraguar, established on 22 May 1664, whose inhabitants were Chaima indigenous people. Friar Tauste's evangelization activities ended suddenly when he became the victim of Cumaná indigenous people who poisoned him, and he died in 1685.

According to friar Zaragoza, he had a talent for languages, and he was one of the missionaries who were the most distinguished in this respect. It is worth to be noted that Francisco de Tauste could speak the Cumanagot and Chaima languages fluently, since he had spent not less than 22 years studying, learning and composing his most significant work: *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua de los indios Chaimas, cumanagotos, cores, parias y otros diversos de la Provincia de Cumaná o Nueva Andalucía* (1680), which provided an invaluable service to the Capuchin missionaries (Carrocera 1981:70).

3.2 Manuel de Yangües (1630–1673?)

Yangües had departed from Cádiz on 21 December 1660 and he arrived to Venezuela in the second mission of the observant missionaries in Píritu, Venezuela, on 17 February 1661. Originally from the Province of Castilia, friar Yangües was a preacher and master of the novices at the convent of San Francisco in Madrid, and he was still very young when he reached the Píritu missions. Yangües wrote *Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota general de las varias naciones, que habitan la provincia de Cumaná en las indias occidentales*, published in 1683 together with a Spanish–Cumanagot dictionary, written by Matías Ruiz Blanco (1643–1705/1708?).

⁴ Friar José del Rey (Fundación Polar 1988: II, 950) defines *reduction* as: “[...] reduction means the process comprised between the initial period of the indigenous people uptake in their habitat and their installation, adaptation, and acceptance within the structures and laws shaped by the missional establishment. The process required the work of many years; generally, according to the missionaries, it could reach three generations [...]”.

According to Ruiz Blanco (1690:3), Yangües was the first to translate the *Christian Doctrine* into the Cumanagot language. He lived among the missionaries for 13 years and he died very young in Caracas in 1673. The mortal remains of this missionary were buried in the chapel of the sanctuary of Soledad (Barbeito Carneiro 2012).

3.3 *Matías Ruiz Blanco (1643–1705/1708?)*

Ruiz Blanco was born in the village of Estepa in the region of Andalusia in 1643, as he states in his work *Conversión de Píritu* (p.139) published in 1690. He must have devoted himself from his early youth to the religious practices, since in 1666 he was already recognized as a teacher of Theology in the convent of his order in the Province of Seville. In 1672 he joined the fourteen missionaries sent to evangelize and to convert the Amerindian people of New Andalucía, Cumana, the banks of the Orinoco river and other parts of Eastern Venezuela in the third Franciscan expedition to America.

In the Province of Píritu, he worked on converting Characuares tribes, and founded the Mission San Juan Evangelista. Shortly afterwards, he went to the territory occupied by the Topocuares and established another mission, called San Lorenzo de Aguaricar. In 1683 (as indicated in his works), he was made synodical examiner of the diocese of Puerto Rico and provincial commissioner of the San Francisco Order. He died around 1705 after having composed important works related to the history and the languages of the Province of Cumaná: *Manual para catequizar y administrar los santos sacramentos a los indios que habitan en las provincias de la Nueva Andalucía* (1683), *Arte y tesoro de la lengua cumanagota* (1688), *Conversión de Píritu* (1690).

4 **A comparative study of three *artes* of the Province of New Andalusia (17th century)**

The missionary Cariban sources selected for this comparative analysis are representative for the linguistic efforts carried out by the Spanish missionaries in the Province of New Andalusia:

- * *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua de los indios Chaimas, cumanagotos, cores, parias y otros diversos de la Provincia de Cumaná o Nueva Andalucía* by Francisco de Tauste (1680),
- * *Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota* by Manuel Yangües (1683),
- * *Reglas para la inteligencia de la lengua de los indios* by Matías Ruiz Blanco (1690).

The main instruments of language acquisition (Zwartjes 2014:3) that were used for learning the indigenous languages and for catechesis emerged from the great difficulty of representing the new religious and symbolic meanings, and facilitated the development of *artes* and vocabularies of natural languages.

These grammars and dictionaries, seen as teaching tools, had a clear didactic purpose and, consequently, were directed to a specific recipient. The beneficiaries of these works were whether missionaries, or indigenous people. Yangües' grammar opens with a dedication to the reader, which reveals unequivocally that the text was specially designed for missionaries:

[...] I give you, pious Reader, in this book, my wishes to offer alleviation from the great difficulties that you are surely experiencing on discovering this new language; since this is the only means for you to achieve your vocation, I doubt not that this Grammar will provide motivation to help you persevere with the language [...] (Yangües 1683:5; translation mine)

From the point of view of the methodology applied in the field of education, the missionaries encouraged a simultaneous evangelization in two languages (Spanish-Cumanagot) and created important bilingual materials both for trainers and apprentices. Therefore, Ruiz Blanco clearly reflects the imperative need of the missionaries to learn the native languages in the preface of his study *Conversión de Píritu*:

Newcomers becoming accustomed to speaking with the indigenous people through an interpreter will find they are facing a major obstacle. [...] As a result, these Friars will take a long time to learn, or never learn [...] Finally, matters that require secrecy will not be revealed by the natives to a Friar who does not understand them or who does not speak their language [...] (Ruiz Blanco 1690:9; translation mine)

4.1 Grammatical models and textual syncretism

Tauste, Yangües and Ruiz Blanco wrote their grammars and dictionaries in the late 17th century when there had already been a widely consolidated tradition of describing Amerindian languages. There is no doubt that these missionaries made use of previous linguistic works from the Province of New Andalusia and the Iberian Peninsula.

It cannot be denied that Tauste found inspiration for his *arte* in the first Chaima grammar written by Carabantes⁵ in Latin or in José de Nájera's (1621–1684)⁶ work. *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (1492) by Elio Antonio de Nebrija (1441–1522) is constantly quoted in Yangües' grammar: "It is the verb which is conjugated in modes, times, according to grammarians such as Antonio de Nebrija, lib.I, fol.54, and it is ended in several conjugations [...]." (Yangües 1683:15). Nebrija's grammatical (and lexicographical) works together with Manuel Álvares' (1526–1583) Latin grammar printed in Lisbon in 1572, among other outstanding linguistic studies, served as a linguistic categorization model in America in the 17th century and were often used by the missionaries as a guide to classify and describe the indigenous languages they encountered in the New World.

In fact, it is obvious that the missionaries' works in the Province of New Andalusia have a syncretic character, yet they were created in the same historical framework and shared similar linguistic sources that propitiated the confluence of their philological ideas and determined a comparable distribution of their linguistic contents.

*Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota general de las varias naciones, que habitan la provincia de Cumaná en las indias occidentales*⁷ by Yangües, including a Spanish-Cumanagoto dictionary by Ruiz Blanco, were both published in 1683 in Burgos by Juan Viar and re-edited by Platzman (together with Tauste's *arte*) in a later edition: *Algunas obras raras* in Leipzig, 1888. This study contains the principles and rules of the Cumanagot language together with *counsels* and the second part of this work contains a vocabulary, whose author is Ruiz Blanco, recognized as a prominent historian and linguist in oriental Venezuela.

Seen from a contrastive point of view, Yangües' grammar appears to be the basis on which Ruiz Blanco wrote *Reglas para la inteligencia de la lengua de los indios* which constitutes the second part of his later work, *Conversion de Piritu*, published in Madrid in 1690. In fact, there are controversies regarding the authorship of this work, which can be considered to be a re-creation of Yangües's grammar, as indicated in its subtitle: "Brought to light again, now corrected and reduced to clarity and brevity, along with a dictionary composed by the Friar Matías Ruiz Blanco in Burgos, 1 vol. 1683".

⁵ *Ars addicendi atque docendi idiomata* and *Lexicon, seu vocabularium verborum, adverbiorum* were created for the use of missionaries and published in Madrid in 1678.

⁶ Friar José de Nájera came to Cumaná in 1661 from Arda (Africa) where he had previously led a different mission in 1659. His knowledge of the Chaima language allowed him to do an excellent evangelizing labor in the Province of Cumaná.

⁷ *Principles and rules of the general Cumanagot language of the various peoples who inhabit the Province of Cumaná, in the West Indies.*

Despite the disagreements raised concerning the authorship of these works, it is important to highlight that these missionaries drew from the same linguistic sources and sustained the legacy of the study and dissemination of indigenous languages in the Province of Cumaná. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the meritorious work achieved by each one of them through hard, long years of patience and experience. Tauste himself acknowledges: “Twenty three years of progress and care I have spent to get it into print; but the toil and efforts that this has cost me, are more than letters; receive them Heaven, since this alone is enough for me, and less I do not seek.” (Tauste 1680:1; translation mine).

Each one of the three grammars presented in this contribution, represents a particular linguistic undertaking with the indigenous languages fully integrated in the complex American evangelization process, meant to convert people who, as described by Tauste (1680:2; translation mine), “[...] have no awareness of the rational or intellectual (thought), they disregard grace, they absolutely don’t know what person is.”

4.2 *Linguistic varieties*

The diverse linguistic universe evoked by the Spanish missionaries in their works gives testimony of the diatopic varieties and the social and religious linguistic variations that they identified and recorded in the Province of Cumaná.

Judging by the title and by the clear explanation that Tauste gives in his prologue, this Capuchin missionary clearly recognises the different dialects of these native languages. Tauste explains the language described in his work as follows:

[...] more typical, and inherent, is the one spoken by the Chaima, Cor, Cumanagoto, Quaca, Paria and Varrigon Indians, among others. While it is true that each of these Peoples have their own style and pronounce the words differently, whether adding a syllable to or removing one from the common noun or verb, this does not prevent one from clearly understanding the concepts, like, e.g. here in Spain with Castilian, Aragonese, Valencian and Galician; but in reality it is very difficult to learn [...]. (Tauste 1680:4; translation mine)

Tauste evidently recognizes a shared linguistic family of these indigenous languages and the diatopic variations of its system, since he names the Cumanagot language as the universal language (*lingua franca*) and the others as variations on this general language.

Ruiz Blanco also includes in his prologue a reminder to the reader in which he warns that the difficulty of learning the indigenous language in the area is increased by their diversity and coexistence:

And this difficulty, which is the smallest, is increased by another one, which is that these people is a mixed crowd of several nations, as it has been already reported, which have lived together and have spoken their languages; thus, it is not a single language, but many, or rather, an aggregate of languages that they speak; and although it is true that one and all understand each other in every word they pronounce, each one speaks and responds in terms of his own language. (Ruiz Blanco 1683:2)

Among several reflections on the nature of Cariban languages, these missionaries oppose the ethnocentric idea of a unique and abstract entity called “language” (Spanish, Chaima, Cumanagoto, or Cor, etc), an idea that ultimately identifies numerous linguistic phenomena. The coexistence between Castilian and the indigenous languages helped Spanish missionaries to analyse and characterize these diverse linguistic varieties in their social, political and ideological dimensions, a topic which deserves its own attention and might be developed in a future contribution.

4.3 *Distribution of the linguistic contents*

4.3.1 *Internal structure*

A preliminary structural comparison of the linguistic sources selected for this analysis illustrates that the accuracy of the categorization and language description applied by the Spanish missionaries varies slightly from one author to another.

As can be observed in Table 1 below, the missionary works include grammatical description with instructive examples, vocabulary lists, and catechetic texts. The internal structure configuration of these works indicates once more that they had a clear didactical purpose and were used as pedagogical instruments for evangelization.

Tauste’s linguistic study is divided into five (not very well defined) chapters and comprises over 150 pages, including a brief section at the end of the compendium, in which the friar dedicates 17 pages to the Christian doctrine and universal catechism.

Table 1: Structural analysis (OFM = *Ordo fratrum minorum*, OFM Ca. = Capuchin *Ordo fratrum minorum*)

Sources	Tauste (1680)	Yangües (1683)	Ruiz Blanco (1690)
Grammar/treatises	5 / 150 pages	7 / 70 pages	7 / 46 pages
Vocabulary entries	ca. 5000	ca. 5000	ca. 6000
Catechetic texts	17 pages	---	---
	OFM Ca.	OFM	OFM

Theoretically, Tauste's grammatical work is a sort of vocabulary which loosely follows the alphabetical order. His vocabulary is not limited to reporting isolated words; he sometimes presents words in contexts that appear to be very specific and frequently used words and, quite often, he offers adverbials and phraseological units too. According to Sánchez Méndez (2012:133), it may be surprising to discover that in the letter A, for instance, appear alongside *afuera* ('out'), *alegre* ('cheerful'), *agrio* ('sour'), etc., locutions and expressions ordered by the preposition *a*: *a donde* ('where'), *al salir el sol* ('at sunrise'), words beginning with *h*: *hallado* ('found'), a sequence with an adjective or noun postponed in the noun phrase: *costa alta* ('high coast'), *nuestro abuelo* ('our grandfather'), etc.

Much like many other vocabularies of the time, this text is organized by arranging the page into two columns. Each column has an entry in Spanish, followed by its corresponding translation into the Chaima language. After concluding the lexical study, the *arte* contains a section dedicated to verbs (*Tratado sobre los verbos*, p.61) and finally one dedicated to questions and answers relating to the Christian doctrine (*Catecismo universal de los misterios de nuestra Santa Fé*, p.173).

On the other hand, *Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota* by Yangües comprises a systematic grammar (p. 1–70) with Spanish explanations and Cumanagot examples, followed by a 'Diccionario de la lengua de los Indios cumanagotos, y palenques compuesto por Ruiz Blanco' (p. 71–220), which lists approximately 5000 entries in Spanish alphabetical order alongside Cumanagot equivalents.

Yangües' text is divided into *Seven Treatises*, which deal with different grammatical categories of the indigenous languages and presents theoretical information about their variation, with very eloquent examples. As previously indicated, it is interesting to discuss Yangües' grammar together with *Reglas para la inteligencia de la lengua de los Indios de Píritu* by Ruiz Blanco published in *Conversión de Píritu* (1690) since they are practically identical in structure and content. Ruiz Blanco goes through Yangües' study and re-writes it

in a “reduced and lightened version”, in constant search for improving the pedagogical instruments meant to overcome the linguistic barriers raised during the tedious evangelization process.

4.3.2 *Categorization criteria*

The three grammars presented in this study embody interesting linguistic data, which despite being based on the Indo-European language categorization, as was obviously the case with all of the studies of that time, offers an accurate overview of the native language at different linguistic levels:

These are the most common styles, of which we will give evidence and practical endeavour, in terms, as well as in verbs; and shortly, we will start with the alphabet of names, and subsequently will follow the pronouns with their derivatives, and numerals names, with a few sentences; and right after the verb *ser* and *estar*, which is unique, with some classes; and afterwards we will go into verbs putting one header with all the tenses used by these people, [...] we will combine them all and we will know how to form and remove voices or other tenses, and we will give examples and sentences of all kind. (Tauste 1680:44; translation mine)

Table 2 below offers a general overview of the linguistic subfields taken into consideration by the missionaries in order to structure and analyse the linguistic paradigms of the Cariban languages: linguistic varieties, phonology, morphology and syntax. It can be observed that not all the grammars gather phonological information (only Tauste’s work does) and that none of the *artes* provides syntactic information. However, the three works based their arguments mainly on morphological explanations following the Latin categorization model.

Table 2: Linguistic subfields

Sources	Tauste (1680)	Yangües (1683)	Ruiz Blanco (1690)
Dialects	+	+	+
Phonology	+	–	–
Morphology	+	+	+
Syntax	–	–	–
	OFM Ca.	OFM	OFM

4.3.3 Phonetic outlines

Tauste highlights that the Cariban languages are mainly agglutinative and tend to syncopate, linguistic phenomena that makes comprehension difficult, even after long hard years of practice and coexistence with native speakers. Of the three grammars examined here, only Tauste provides a brief phonetic description which is announced in the introduction, where he stresses the fact that there are three consonants missing in the Chaima alphabet: *f*, *l*, *r* (geminated).

In fact, it is obvious that Tauste deals with a conceptual confusion common at that time, between alphabet and phonology, since he describes a “bad pronunciation” as a lack of these three letters: “In this language there is a total lack in the regular use of three letters *f*, *l*, *r* geminated; and so as to pronouncing Francisco in Castilian, they say Prancisco; and to say Perro, they say Pero, and so on” (Tauste 1680:2; translation mine).

The Capuchin missionary also clarifies that the Chaima language tended to syncopate words or to apocopate final sounds. Tauste explains that in order to say “Caracas”, the Indians tended to say “Caraca”, which is evidence of the reminiscence of phonological phenomena still present nowadays in Venezuelan – as well in Andalusian and many other South American languages: a pronunciation tending to aspire or to nasalize the postnuclear consonant /s/ in final position (Navarro 1995:15).

Tauste illustrates that indigenous people used to randomly add extra syllables at the end of the word during their speech. Therefore, in order to say *me voy* (‘I go’) > *utaz*, they would say *utaz mapue*, extending randomly the words with unnecessary syllables or dictions which do not add any linguistic information.

The variations of “name”, or “voice” usually can be observed in the final cadences too, as Tauste himself explains: “To say Caracas they say Caraca; and to explain that they go to Caracas they will say Caracapon; coming from there, Caracapueyon; it is there or passes by, Caracapo; those of there, Caracapuyoncon” (Tauste 1680:2; translation mine).

4.3.4 Latin paradigms

The missionary *artes* and vocabularies were created with a clear teaching purpose and the grammatical comments and observations were linked to Latin-based paradigms, such as declensions and conjugations of nouns and verbs. Although these missionary works have weaknesses and naïve points related to the linguistic description and grammatical encoding, the Spanish missionaries succeeded to understand and explain the parts of speech with deep awareness and knowledge of the indigenous linguistic systems.

4.3.4.1. Substantives

Following the Latin rules, the First treatise of Yangües' work is dedicated to the substantives and their declensions. Yangües informs us that the Cumanagot language distinguishes the noun cases according to the particles added at the end of the words, e.g. the substantive *casa* ('house'):⁸

		SINGULAR	PLURAL
(1)	NOM	<i>pata</i> (or <i>patar</i>)	<i>patacom</i> (or <i>patarcom</i>)
	GEN	<i>pata</i> (or <i>patar</i>)	<i>patacom</i> (or <i>patarcom</i>)
	DAT	<i>pata uyá</i> (or <i>patar uya</i>)	<i>patàcomùya</i>
	ACC	<i>pata</i> (or <i>patar</i>)	<i>patacom</i>
	VOC	<i>pata</i> (or <i>patar</i>)	<i>patacom</i>
	ABL	<i>patapoy</i> (or <i>patarpoy</i>)	<i>patacom, poy</i>

Ruiz Blanco's categorization in *Reglas para la inteligencia de la lengua de los Indios de Píritu* follows exactly the same model, although he changes the examples, as illustrated in Figure 3.

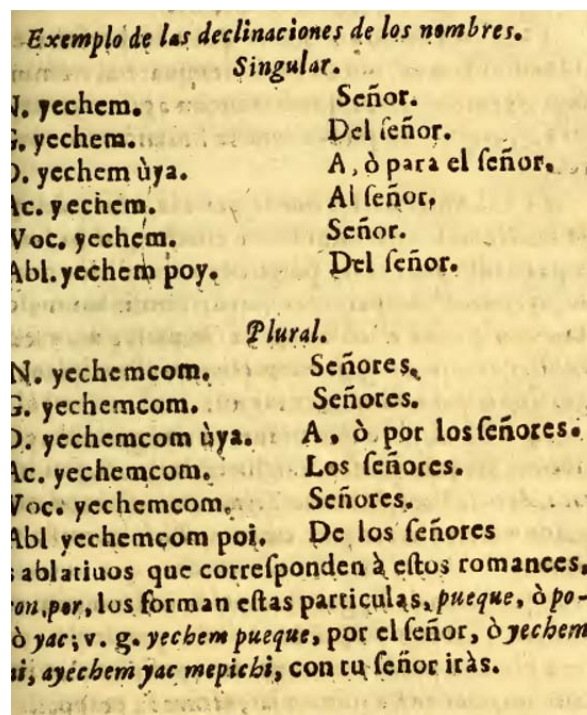


Figure 3: Excerpt from *Reglas para la inteligencia de la lengua de los Indios de Píritu* (1690) by Matías Ruiz Blanco, p.7.

⁸ Abbreviations used in (1) and in the examples below: ACC = accusative; ABL = ablative; DAT = dative; EU = euphonic element; GEN = genitive; NOM = nominative; NEG = negation; NMLZ = nominalizer; SG = singular; VOC = vocative; 1 = first person.

Tauste also studies the function of substantives, pronouns, verbs and the affixation which is used in these languages in order to establish grammatical relationships. The declension of nouns is hardly known:

[...] there are only one or two cases in which they differentiate. [...] Asking an Indian where Saints go to, he says to Heaven, and Heaven explained as nominative, is said Capo. And to tell the Heaven, he says Capiaca; and as of Heaven, Capiay; and in Heaven, Capiac, and through Heaven, Capiaca; from Heaven, Capiaon; Heaven in the plural, Capiaoncon.” (Tauste:1680:5; translation mine)

Furthermore, Tauste briefly explains that Cumanagot has no grammatical gender: “The nouns or proper adjectives, or appellations, have no particular gender, [...] they are the same, and one can only distinguish gender, by the sex particles [male/female] that are attached [to nouns], without changing more than the voice of the person” Tauste (1680:43; translation mine).

4.3.4.2. Pronouns

Tauste’s grammar dedicates only a few paragraphs to the pronouns. His annotations mention the fact that the Chaima language distinguishes between an exclusive ‘we’ (you and me and no one else) and an inclusive ‘we’ (you, me and others). Nevertheless, Tauste offers numerous examples for this type of pronouns which he defines as relatives and absolute.

Table 3: Reconstruction of the pronominal system based on Tauste’s grammar

Singular	Non - collective	Spanish	English	Cumanagot
1 st person	(1)	yo	I	vche
2 nd person	(2)	tu	you	amuere
3 rd person	(3)	aquel	he/she	muec /muequere
Plural	Collective	Spanish	English	Cumanagot
1 st person	(1+2)	nosotros, excluyendo otros	we + you	amna
1 st person	(1+2+3)	nosotros todos sin exclusión	we	cuchecon
2 nd person	(2)	vosotros	you	amiamorcom
3 rd person	(3)	aquellos	they	muquiam, muquiamo

In recent studies, Meira (2002:257) offered a reconstruction of the proto-Cariban pronominal system and argued that “[...] [the] Cariban system has pronouns for:

first person (1), second person (2), first person dual inclusive (1+2), first person exclusive (1+3),³ and third person (3). In terms of number, Cariban languages oppose ‘collective’ (i.e. focus on a group) vs. ‘non-collective’ (i.e. focus on less than a group, but not necessarily a single individual)” (Meira 2002:257).

Yangües’ Second treatise discusses the pronouns and their varieties that can be identified in the Cumanagot language, especially in the accusative:

[...] The large variation with which [indigenous people] express the pronouns (especially in the accusative) in this language does, despite the explanation we are offering, become the darkest and most difficult [task] of all in this art [...]. We will follow, thus, the treatment of the pronouns according to the divisions contained in Antonio’s *arte*. (Yangües:1683:4; translation mine)

Therefore, Yangües and Ruiz Blanco distinguish between the following pronouns: primitives, demonstratives and derivatives (animate and inanimate third person forms). The primitive pronouns recorded are:

- (2) a. SINGULAR
 - my thing, animate > *yekim*
 - my thing, inanimate > *mukir*
 - your thing > *ayekim, amukir*
 - his thing > *chekim, tekim, ymukir*
 - our thing > *amnayekim, amnamukir*
 - their thing > *mukiamo, yekim, mukiamo, mukir*
- b. PLURAL (indicated by the particle *com*)
 - my animals > *yekincom*
 - my things > *mukircom*

4.3.4.3. Verbs

The Third treatise of Yangües’ grammar describes thoroughly the treatment of the verbs and offers a quick overview of the modes and tenses, as described in Nebrija’s grammar (*libro I, fol.54*): “For the active verbs, as the Latin invented, there are four conjugations in the infinitive as stated in Antonio’s *Art*; in this language we can follow the same style” (Yangües 1683:15; translation mine).

Therefore, in the Cumanagot language friar Yanguës identified *five conjugations*:

- (3) a. Verbs of the first conjugation have their infinitive ending in *-ar*:
chacar ('to dig')
ycar ('to remove')
- b. Verbs of the second conjugation have their infinitive ending in *-er*:
chener ('to look')
- c. Verbs of the third conjugation have their infinitive ending in *-ir*:
bueniquir ('to sleep')
chamiquir ('to smell')
- d. Verbs of the fourth conjugation have their infinitive ending in *-or*:
chopor ('to find')
icamor ('to empty')
- e. Verbs of the fifth conjugation have their infinitive ending in *-ur*:
chayur ('to roast')

With the purpose of simplifying the grammatical notions, Yangües illustrates the full conjugation of the verbs with plenty of examples, beginning with the 1st till the 5th class of verbs, in the active or passive voice, and the indicative, present, future and perfect tenses. The present tense of the indicative mode of *chapchamar* 'to step' of the 1st conjugation is:

- (4) *hvapcha-mache* ('I step')
mapcha-mache ('you step')
mada-pchaman ('he steps')
amnamana-pchaman ('we step')
mapcha-mateche ('you step')
madapcha-mateu ('they step')

4.3.4.4. Ser and Estar

The missionaries had a special interest in the treatment of the idiosyncratic features of these indigenous languages, which they often compared and described with other languages they were familiar with, such as Spanish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, etc.

Tauste (1680:52) underlines the verbs which require special attention, such as the Castilian verbs *ser* and *estar*, both meaning 'to be', and translated into Chaima as *guaz* ('I am'):

- (5) *Guaz / nuaz, guani?*
 'Am I?'

Speaking of this verb *Guaz* and its compounds, I warn you that it is the most essential word of this language, and the most practical, and so you should study it well, and penetrate its meanings, because with few voices or verbs in other languages you can [not] phrase and speak with [such an] elegance, as with *Guaz*. (Tauste 1680:52; translation mine)

Yangües and Ruiz Blanco also mention that the substantive verbs *ser/estar* ('to be') and *tener* ('to have') have their correlatives in a polysemic verb translated as *huaze* or *huace*: "In this language the substantive verb is *Huaze* or *Huache*, which means *ser*, *estar* (to be), and *tener* (to have), as it will be seen later with its conjugations" (Yangües 1683:15). Subsequently, Yangües offers the complete list of forms of the indicative (present, perfect, past perfect, future), imperative, subjunctive (present, perfect, past perfect), infinitive, and the negative modes. The present tense of the indicative mode of the verb *huaze* has the following forms:

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (6) | <i>huache</i> | ('I am, I have') |
| | <i>mache</i> | ('you are, you have') |
| | <i>mana</i> (or <i>nache</i>) | ('he/she is, he/she has') |
| | <i>amna mana</i> (or <i>nache</i>) | ('we are, we have') |
| | <i>mahteche</i> | ('you are, you have') |
| | <i>mahteu</i> | ('they are, they have') |

The verb *guaz*, as described by Tauste, Yangües and Ruiz Blanco, is polysemic and is commonly used with the meaning of the Castilian verbs *soy* ('I am'), *estoy* ('I am'), *hago* ('I do'), *quiero* ('I want'), or *tengo* ('I have'):

- (7)
- a. *tum guaz*
father have.1SG
'I have a father.'
 - b. *y-um-upra guaz*
NEG-father-NEG have.1SG
'I do not have a father.'
 - c. *timich-uere guaz*
bleed-NMLZ be.1SG
'I am bleeding.'
 - d. *y-imichuc-upra guaz*
NEG-blood-NEG be.1SG
'I am not bleeding.'

- e. *wanapur-pwek guaz*
field-ACC make.1SG
'I am making a field.'
- f. *wanapur-pwek-epra guaz*
field-ACC-NEG make.1SG
'I am not making a field.'
- g. *erepape guaz*
food want.1SG
'I want food.'
- h. *erepape-n-epra guaz*
food-EU-NEG want.1SG
'I do not want food.'

The counterpart of the presence of a polysemic verb is the total absence of an elementary verb, such as *poder* ('to be able to'). This absence generated serious misunderstandings in the communication process and confusions in daily life activities:

Also these people lack in their language the indispensable word *poder* (to be able to), and normally their answers seem rude when I ask them to do something, because they say they do not want to or if they want instead of the verb *poder*, and so they dissimulate and they do not say clearly what they want, [...] (Tauste 1680:52; translation mine).

5 Conclusion

The Spanish missionaries' contribution to the study of the Cariban languages has not received much attention by scholars until now, partly because most of them have not been preserved or reedited, and partly because of their empirical methodology. It is essential, therefore, to deepen the historical and political context in which these linguistic works have been produced in order to recreate the premises of their pioneering work and their essential role in the development of the historiography of linguistics.

More or less accurate in their Latin based grammatical codification, the missionary grammars and vocabularies compared in this contribution represent a fundamental source of linguistic knowledge and inspiration for the study of the Cariban languages. The missionaries' pioneering linguistic works in the Province of New Andalusia during the 17th century give evidence about the need to create an integrated frame-work in order to develop their study more

systematically and to highlight their significance for the Cariban family linguistic reconstruction.

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