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Analysing religious discourse is a collection of twenty-one articles adopting a social constructivist, functionally oriented perspective to theorise and empirically study language used in, or evoking, religious contexts, its sociocognitive effects, and their implications for contemporary social identities and relationships (Fairclough 1989; Benwell & Stokoe 2006).

The very notion of religion is complex (Stephen Pihlaja, chapter 1, referring to Harrison 2006) and treating it as object of critical discourse analysis is ethically and metatheoretically challenging; indeed, it is questionable if 'many of the basic assumptions we have about language and interaction—including identity, agency, authorship, genre, and register'—can unproblematically be maintained when religious discourse is at stake (Shawn Warner, chapter 2, p. 16, referring to Keane 2004). For example, not all scholars would agree that it is even possible to treat religious scriptures like any other genre, believing, like Shackle (2005:32), in the 'ultimate untranslatability of the holy' (Philip Wilson, chapter 7, p. 112). As an aspect of social identity, religious orientation, like other categories of (dis)alignment, may be differently construed and fore- or backgrounded in discourse, including representations by scholars, whose 'own religious positioning' (Beattie 2005:65, cited in chapter 16 by Helen Ringrow, p. 281) presents a source of bias.

And yet, if we conceptualise religious discourse as complex systems emerging through 'repeated interaction of individuals over time' (chapter 1, p. 3, referring to Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008), and if we acknowledge the inevitability of an element of subjectivity in text interpretation (Fairclough 2003:15), language used in religious contexts can be fruitfully studied to explore the meanings of religion and belief construed and (re)negotiated in contemporary discourse.

To begin with contributions engaging with religious texts and the question of their translatability, Philip Wilson in chapter 7 shows how the entire toolkit of translation studies (Venuti 2012) is required to create translations that faithfully represent the original's meaning while also successfully transposing the source text's 'language games' (Wittgenstein 1953/2009) to the discourse context functionally

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shaping the target language. As Alain Wolf in chapter 12 argues, religions are far from incommensurable (as claimed, e.g., by Hallett 2011:1): by adopting a hybrid approach towards translation (Bhabha 2011), it becomes possible to dialogically co-construct religious contexts that invite and include the voices of others (Bakhtin 1981).

What unites, rather than divides, different religions' ideas and practices is that they are structured through metaphors. Peter Richardson in chapter 17 lays the conceptual foundations for rigorous study of figurative language in religious texts, introducing key notions from cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson 1999) and applying Biernacka's (2013) metaphor identification procedure to find evidence of opposing positions in a conversation between a Christian and a Muslim. To better explicate the link between conceptual metaphors and actual meaning-making in interaction, Aletta G. Dorst in chapter 14 advocates corpus-based studies of attested language use. The importance of differentiating between the linguistic and the conceptual is highlighted by Karolien Vermeulen's (chapter 18) debunking of the 'city-as-woman' metaphor in favour of a language-based reading of Hebrew bible stories. Wei-lun Lu & Svitlana Shurma's study in chapter 13 theorises Taiwanese eulogistic idioms as pragmemes (Mey 2001:221) to explain how specific linguistic formulae serve important structuring and thought-guiding functions in mourning rituals. Deemed to 'orchestrat[e] speech' (McNeill 1992:11), metaphors expressed through gestures are examined by Sarah Turner (chapter 5).

The question of the functions and relevance of religion for contemporary identities and relationships looms large in a technologically mediated, accelerated, and superdiverse sociopolitical context (Creese & Blackledge 2011). This is exemplified by Ringrow's intersectional (Crenshaw 1989) approach to online self-representation of religious mothers, Warner's study of the conversational negotiation of sexual agency (Ahearn 2001) at Christian book club talk, and Pihlaja's computer-mediated discourse study (Herring 2004), which explores how religious influencers design their narratives in orientation towards physically distant audiences, navigating the tension between religion and lived experience on- and offline. Narrative theory (Bamberg 2009) is also applied in Zayneb E. S. Al-Bundawi's study (chapter 4) of personal narratives by diasporic Muslim women. Vally Lytra's contribution in chapter 3, then, sheds ethnographic light (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983; Hymes 1996) on the relation between religion and lived experience, focussing on the Tamil Hindu/Saiva religious community.

Language used in religious rituals does not merely serve as vehicle for communication, but liturgical languages, endowed with significant symbolic power (Bourdieu 1986/2011), continue to fulfil important functions for spatially dispersed and linguistically hybrid religious communities, as Andrey Rosowsky's (chapter 10) sociological study of the interplay between liturgical language, majority standard, and minority varieties at a UK mosque school show. In the context of English language education, Xin Gao & Juliet Thondhlana (chapter 11) find that English

language teachers perceive their religious backgrounds as spiritual capital (Middle-brooks & Noghiu 2007).

The political can draw on religion and vice versa. This is demonstrated by Kate Power's (chapter 8) study, which reconstructs the strategic use of topoi (Wodak 2001) in episcopal election campaign materials, and Pihlaja's (chapter 6) analysis of religious rhetorical tools serving as warrants in anti-immigration discourse, which supports Ringrow's note that, 'if th[e] "religious" label is employed, we should question why it has been chosen over alternatives' (279).

To explain the construal of emotional communities (Rosenwein 2006) in religious texts, Francesco de Toni in chapter 15 suggests integrating appraisal theory with cognitive linguistic approaches (Bednarek 2009). The Catholic church's positive stance towards the environment (Conradie, Bergmann, Deane-Drummond, & Edwards 2014) is attested by Mariana Roccia's (chapter 19) ecolinguistic (Fill & Penz 2018) study of papal documents, linking, like all articles in this volume, situated linguistic choices in religious contexts to broader societal issues.

To conclude, *Analysing religious discourse* comprehensively introduces and accessibly exemplifies the systematic application of a broad spectrum of state-of-the-art approaches to discourse analysis. By challenging tried-and-tested paradigms of pragmatic enquiry and creating bridges to a wide range of other disciplines, the volume can be recommended to more advanced discourse analysts and scholars from other fields who wish to engage in critical dialogue with language-based approaches to the study of religion. As a book about religion, *Analysing religious discourse* is a rich resource for anyone curious about various perspectives on the role of faith and spirituality for the present-day human condition.

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