# CAMBRIDGE
## UNIVERSITY PRESS

Chapter 7 attempts to combine emphasis on hierarchy and surface struc-
ture and relate them to the previous chapters, making the organization of the
volume intelligible. It is a linguistic credo, followed by a philosophical-
religious credo in chapter 8. Longacre rightly states: "Views of language
cannot and do not kick around in a philosophical vacuum nor do views of
language free from philosophical bias exist" and it is greatly to his credit to
make his own standpoint explicit. No short statement of convictions about
matters such as the inferences to draw from the complexity of language,
human rationality, and alternative world hypotheses can hope to be convinc-
ing to others not disposed to be convinced. One concluding suggestion,
however, will be pregnant with suggestion for many trends in the study of
discourse, metaphor, and poetics: "Language is not simply symbol but
PARABLE. ... While all, even "literal" propositional statements involve
elements of analogy, I have suggested above that such analogy characterizes
language as a whole, not just religious language, and that analogy is not a
synonym for inaccuracy" (327, 328). Anthropology can be said to have its
own need for a view of language adequate to Christianity, even if not for the
sake of Christianity. (D. H.)

WILLIAM J. SAMARIN (ed.), *Language in religious practice*. Rowley, Mass.:
Newbury House, 1976.

As Kenneth Burke (1961) has very aptly observed, religion is fundamentally a
rhetorical enterprise, so it is not at all surprising that language, as a principal
instrument of persuasion, should figure prominently in considerations of how
religion works. Compared with theology and philosophy, linguistics and
anthropology are relative newcomers to the field, but the investigation of
religious language has had an important place in both disciplines, reaching
such high points as the work of the nineteenth century philologists and
comparative mythologists like Max Müller, and Malinowski's seminal study,
*Coral gardens and their magic* (1935).

From the perspective of contemporary sociolinguistics, religious language
represents an especially attractive sphere of inquiry on a number of grounds:
first, perhaps, because it serves a limited and clear range of functions and
occurs in bounded, often public, contents of performance; second, because it
frequently involves the manipulation of formal features and generic pattern-
ing by which it is foregrounded and esthetically marked; and third, because it
tends to be more persistently stable and traditional than other registers or
varieties. Indeed, these are the major organizing foci of *Language in religious
practice:* performance, form, tradition.

*Language in religious practice* is part of the Newbury House Series in
Sociolinguistics, under the general editorship of Roger Shuy. The collection
had its origin in a session on Sociolinguistics and Religion, organized by

William Samarin for the 23rd Georgetown Round Table (1972), devoted to Sociolinguistics: Current Trends and Prospects (see Samarin 1973). To a nucleus of papers presented at this session, Samarin has added several further papers and contributed a general introduction plus brief introductions to three major sections of the book. Samarin's introduction sets out a general sociolinguistic perspective on religious language, principally in terms of the religious ends served by language, the linguistic means employed in their pursuit, and the social process (highlighting sociolinguistic competence and metalinguistics) by which they are attained. The ten articles that follow all deal to a greater or lesser degree with substantive cases, drawing their data from three of the world religious traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism) and four folk or tribal religions (Trobriand, Chamula, Zuñi, and Igbo).

The collection is clearly presented as preliminary and exploratory, an attempt to bring together under the broad rubric of sociolinguistics a variety of approaches to religious language. To a significant degree, the unifying vision is Samarin's own; I suspect that not all of the contributors would identify what they do as sociolinguistics. In effect, then, the collection is a step toward what might eventually emerge as a still more fully integrated line of inquiry within sociolinguistics, much as Gumperz and Hymes' 1964 *Ethnography of communication* collection brought together a diversity of convergent contributions toward what subsequently became a more focused ethnography of speaking. The comparison is made the more apt, perhaps, by Samarin's suggestion that "we aim for a kind of ethnography of religious language" (5). Four of the contributions to the volume (Gossen, Shelton, Tedlock, Christian) are ethnographic in approach, while the remainder are weighted more in the direction of other disciplinary or subdisciplinary orientations and methods, ranging from linguistics (Crystal) to biblical studies (Long), none of them inconsistent with the ethnography of religious language, but none of them sharing the basic ethnographic frame of reference.

As one might expect of a preliminary and exploratory work of this kind, *Language in religious practice* suffers from a certain unevenness of coverage. The work is good in drawing attention to the need for the formal description of religious varieties and registers, as in the papers by Crystal on British Catholics, Tedlock on Zuñi and Christian on Telugu. Also well represented are analyses of the generic patterning of religious forms, as in Gossen's account of the relationships among the four Chamula genres of "ancient words," or Ferguson's innovative study of the collect through time and across languages. There is good balance between historical and synchronic description, world religions and folk/tribal religions, relatively simple and highly diverse speech communities.

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On the other hand, functional problems receive relatively short shrift in the collection, with only Shelton's account of Igbo prayer addressed centrally to functional considerations. Most glaring in its absence is any systematic account of religious language as situated within broader ritual contexts, with adequate attention to the other situational factors. Nor does the collection have much to say directly about the users of religious language, in terms of roles, competence, or other relevant factors. Samarin does attend to these matters in his introduction, so one must assume that he simply couldn't round up articles on them for the body of the book.

On balance, *Language in religious practice* is a productive book. Several of its articles were widely cited before the book appeared in print and are likely to continue to stimulate further research. A number of the contributors have continued their investigations into religious language, and this collection may usefully serve as an introduction to the larger body of their work. The range of methods, foci and scope addressed by the contributors can only have an enriching effect on the field. Samarin has done us a service in bringing them together.

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(Received 27 February 1979)

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