NEW-EVANGELIZATION DISCOURSE IN ELF IMMIGRATION ENCOUNTERS: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract – This paper investigates how the 'New Evangelization' process in the Roman Catholic Church is enacted through ELF by the Italian clergy offering spiritual and practical assistance to non-western immigrants newly-arrived in Italy. A case study explores how religious discourse reflects the two contact groups' different typological-syntactic, semantic and sociopragmatic features transferred to their respective ELF usage, as well as their different knowledge systems and community values associated with the religious experience. It is argued that misunderstanding occurs when the clergy's culture-bound patterns of Possible-World Semantics, characterizing the counterfactual logic of their religious/metaphysical discourse in ELF, fail to account for the divergent ways by which non-western immigrants make religious sense of their existence. The conversational analysis shows how the New-Evangelization discourse requires from immigrants the activation of the two 'bimodal' cooperative maxims of 'suspension of disbelief', epistemically inducing them to believe that possible-world representations can be true, and 'experiential pliability', deontically compelling immigrants to adapt their actual-world experience to such counterfactual constructions, even though for the cultures of some African countries which immigrants come from religion is intrinsically connected with the referential domain of the actual world. Recognizing divergent ways of expressing the religious experience in different cultures may help 'new evangelizers' find alternative, 'hybrid' ways of conveying the Word of God through ELF, thus fostering true ecumenical communication.

Keywords: ELF (English as a Lingua Franca); immigration encounters; religious discourse; metaphysical discourse; New Evangelization; Possible-World Semantics.

1. Research focus and context

This paper investigates the causes of misunderstanding in ELF communication when this is not simply produced by the structures of the participants' typologically-different native languages unconsciously transferred into ELF (Guido 2008, 2012), but mainly by their different socio-cultural schemata (Carrell 1983) in contact and in need of an accommodation, which does not always take place. More specifically, the focus is on the religious schemata that inform the 'New Evangelization' (NE) programme recently launched by the Roman Catholic Church (Wuerl 2013), having as its objective "the proclamation of the Gospel in the contemporary world" characterized by mass migration and globalization (Pope Benedict XVI 2012; Synod of Bishops 2012). The issue explored in this paper regards precisely the circumstances in which the NE discourse is enacted through ELF in unequal encounters during which the Italian clergy offer practical assistance to non-western immigrants, often on condition that they accept their Evangelization message. This is illustrated in the case study under analysis which deals with an Italian Catholic priest interacting with a West-African female immigrant newly-arrived in Italy, and it is set in the wider cultural context of recent moves in the Roman Catholic Church towards becoming more responsive to the challenges posed by contemporary social issues, such as divorce, abortion, homosexuality, religious fundamentalism and mass-migration – this latter issue being the central topic of the Synod

for the *New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*[1] convened by Pope Benedict XVI on October 7-28, 2012, and also being the subject of the present paper.

The expression 'New Evangelization' was initially formulated by Pope John Paul II[2] who was resolute in building for himself a reputation as the ambassador of NE in the world, by spreading the 'Word of God' through a multiplicity of languages on countless occasions. Nonetheless, his speaking a multiplicity of languages was often simply functional to a mere one-way 'transmission' of the Evangelical message, as this was substantially meant to pass unaltered, rather than becoming a stimulus for an interpretative 'appropriation' of such a message enacted by receivers from different religious cultures. In fact, an 'appropriation' intended as 'cultural authentication' (Widdowson 1994) can be achieved only by fostering a two-way communication in cross-cultural contexts where language needs to be a 'lingua franca' adapted to different linguacultural uses, schematic associations and culture-bound values. And yet, the notion of a one-way 'transmission' of the religious message seems to be in contrast precisely with the NE objective of "*inculturation* of faith" aimed "to have the Gospel take flesh in each people's culture" (Synod of Bishops 2012), which seemingly involves a process of 'appropriation' meant as an actual 'embodiment' of the Word of God that receivers from different non-western countries and cultures are encouraged to bring about in order to 'authenticate' the NE message by making it their own according to their cultural schemata. However, this apparent dialogic opening of the NE message to people of different cultures, which may be seen as implied by the term 'transmission' in the Bishops' document, is immediately disambiguated as soon as it appears clear that the NE purpose is merely to value only "what is positive in every culture" since the ultimate NE aim is indeed "purifying [cultures] from elements that are contrary to the full realization of the person according to the design of God revealed in Christ" (Synod of Bishops 2012). In this way, non-western receivers would only be allowed to activate a mere 'acculturation' process of uncritical acceptance of the NE message (Schumann 1978).

Such communication limits imposed on the conveyance of the NE message justifies the reactions of a number of bishops who, at the Synod, represented non-western dioceses across the five continents[3], and who warned precisely against such an 'acculturation' process covertly required by the NE programme. Cardinal Pengo, from Africa, for instance, argued, "globalization introduces rapidly undigested foreign values, making it hard for Christians on the continent to be truly Africans. Their Christian faith is thus rendered also very much alien" – and Archbishop Reter, from Latin America, pointed out, "the pastoral of the Church cannot ignore the historical context in which its members live. It lives in very concrete social, cultural contexts" – which was also supported by Cardinal Gracias from Asia, who claimed, "The effects of globalization are seen overall affecting our value systems. Traditional Asian values, much cherished traditions, and cultures are being impacted and eroded".

More recently, this challenge of conveying the Word of God through a 'new language' meant as a 'lingua franca' for global communication (MacGabhann 2008) has been passed onto Pope Francis who, however, usually avoids using English, rather

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[1] Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20120619_instrumentum-xiii_en.html

[2] Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte_en.html

[3] Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02_inglese/b05_02.html

preferring for this purpose Italian – which cannot, however, be considered a proper international 'lingua franca' since the Pope has to rely every time on consecutive translation into Standard English, which may reduce the innovative straightforwardness characterizing his communication style.

2. Research assumptions and hypothesis

The limits of such a one-way 'NE transmission' process can be often observed in the Italian Catholic clergy's attempts to achieve the "*inculturation* of the Divine Word" by bringing it to "migrant people from far-off-lands"[4]. In fact, misunderstandings in such cross-cultural interactions occur not necessarily because of the transfer from the different syntactic, semantic and pragmatic L1-structures into the ELF variations that the clergy and migrants respectively use, but because the clergy are usually unaware that the 'western' Catholic discourse informing the NE process is inherently 'metaphysical' (Guido 2005), namely, organized on culture-bound structures of possible-world semantics that characterizes its counterfactual logic (cf. Stalnaker 1987, 2001) – which often significantly diverges from the ways by which non-western immigrants differently make 'religious' sense of their existence. Indeed, the NE discourse may be considered as an instance of the Modal Metaphysics genre (Laurence, MacDonald 1998) insofar as its ultimate aim is to induce its receivers (non-western immigrants, in the case in point) into an exploration of alternative semantic possibilities that lie beneath conventional meanings in everyday situations, in order to encourage them to extrapolate beyond reality and transcend any established notion of time, space, and social contexts. Yet, such a counterfactual-logic procedure may entirely diverge from the mental processes that non-western immigrants activate while they interpret their own religious experience. African immigrants (to refer to the group one of the two participants in the case study discussed in this paper belongs to) profess religions (the Christian religion included) that inherently make indexical reference to the real and shared native communicative contexts which determine the expression of meanings, cultural values and ways of thinking associated with particular social groups. The NE discourse, instead, is not simply indexical and referential, rooted in everyday socio-political reality, but it is essentially iconic and representational since it is about imaginary, metaphysical contexts devised according to a Modal Logic which shapes possible, not real worlds. Such possible worlds, thus, are conveyed by the Catholic clergy through ELF in situations of intercultural communication with non-western immigrants – who, in their turn, receive and interpret them according to their different socio-cultural schemata as well as their own ELF linguacultural variations. Hence, the contention in this study is that only by acknowledging divergent ways of expressing the religious experience in different cultures and through different ELF variations can 'new evangelizers' find alternative, 'hybrid' ways of conveying the Word of God through ELF by making it accessible and acceptable to non-western migrants – and, thus, fostering true ecumenical communication. In this sense, Pope Francis may be considered a pioneer since his approach to the NE discourse is in line with a view of 'inculturation' as 'appropriation' of the NE message, as evident in his apostolic trip to Korea (13-18 August 2014) to attend the 6th Asian Youth Day, when he stopped reading his official 'metaphysical speech' in English to start using his spontaneous ELF variation in order to prevent the audience's sense of estrangement

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[4] Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20110921_world-migrants-day_en.html

towards a religious discourse of a typically 'counterfactual' type, to convey, instead, his NE message in his own ELF – as illustrated in the extract of his speech reported below,[5] containing a number of phonetic transcriptions of his ELF pronunciation (reported within square brackets):

> *(Pope Francis reads his speech)* [...] He enter your heart *[herθ]* on the day of your *[iur]* Baptism, He gave you His spirit *[sprait]*, His spirit of the day *[dai]* of your *[iur]* confirmation, and he *[streθ] (?)* hands you constantly *[kon'stantli]* by his presence in the Eucharistic, so that you can be his witnesses before the world. Are you ready to say 'yes'? *(He raises his head and looks smiling at the Audience of young people)* Are you ready? *(Audience: "Yes!" – The Pope stops reading and goes on talking directly to the Audience)* Thank you! Are you tired? *(Audience: "No!")* Sure? *(Audience: "Yes!")* aaa our *[a]* beloveds *[belafs]* friend of mine, excuse *[askuθ]* to me *[dʒ'estiti] (?) (He gestures with his arms and hands)*. You must can't to speech the your *[dʒur]* paper with paper *(He raises his paper showing it to the Audience – Audience's applause)*. You must *(Audience's applause)* you must speech, address the your *[dʒur]* paper spontaneous, by heart *[herθ] (He indicates his heart – Audience's applause)*. But, but I have a great difficult, I have a poor English *(Audience: "No!")* Yes, yes! *(Audience: "No!")* But, if you desire, I can to say other things spontaneous, are you tired? *(Audience: "No!")* May I go on? *(Audience: "Yes!")* But I do it in Italian.

Pope Francis uses English adjectives as adverbs, nouns as verbs, he ignores Standard-English syntax, and yet his speech is an example of how so-called 'poor English' can work successfully as a 'lingua franca' to communicate the NE message in a simple and straightforward way.

But Pope Francis is an exception – in fact, such a fully sympathetic communication very seldom occurs in situations of NE interaction, as illustrated by the case study under analysis in which a Possible-Worlds Semantic Model typical of Modal Logic (Stalnaker 1994) is applied to the analysis of the NE discourse in an interaction, marked by a cross-cultural communication failure occurring despite the fact that the two participants use typologically-different ELF variations without causing any serious linguistic misunderstanding.

The hypothesis underlying this case study, therefore, is that misunderstanding in the NE discourse may be determined not simply by the two contact groups' different typological-syntactic, semantic, and sociopragmatic features transferred to their respective ELF usage (Guido 2008, 2012; Seidlhofer 2011), but also by schematic associations triggered by the participants' different knowledge systems and community values related to the religious experience and expressed through ELF. The implication is that, to make sense of the NE discourse, immigrants are required by the Catholic clergy to activate in their minds two specific cooperative maxims, here defined as *suspension of disbelief*, epistemically inducing them to believe that the clergy's possible-world representations in their NE discourse are true, together with *experiential pliability*, deontically compelling immigrants to adapt their actual-world experience to such counterfactual constructions – even though, as said above, for most African immigrants (the group one of the case-study subjects belongs to) religion is inherently connected with the referential domain of the actual, socio-political world. Failure in the non-western immigrants' application of these two maxims in interacting with the Italian clergy is thought to be the main cause of misunderstanding.

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[5] Retrieved from: http://youtu.be/FjQUirErPvo?t=1h15m42s (from 1:15:40 to 1:18 minutes).

3. The Model: theoretical grounds and objectives

The Model of Possible-Worlds Semantics in Modal Logic (cf. Allen 1989; Stalnaker 1992, 1996), through which the clergy's NE discourse in ELF is analyzed in this study, focuses on two modality levels that characterize the western metaphysical discourse (according to which mental projections of possible worlds exist only within an imaginary dimension, not in reality), which are:

1. a *representational level of epistemic and doxastic modalities* concerning the expression of the speaker's beliefs and accounting for:

(a) the *indexical, referential dimension of the actual world*, which is the starting point of the NE discourse, determining shared truth-conditions (i.e., the conventional sense of a concept – or 'primary intension' – given by what the concept refers to in reality – Lau 1995);

(b) the *iconic, representational dimension of the possible world*, which allows the NE discourse to extrapolate beyond reality so as to produce mental projections of imaginary contexts where truth-conditions are determined by the semantic value that a counterfactual concept acquires within the possible world (Lewis 1973; Zalta 1997) – (hence, the referent for a concept – or 'secondary intension' – diverges from its conventional sense in the actual world – Lau 1995);

2. a *referential level of deontic modality* regarding a 'return to reality' that in the NE discourse is achieved by displacing the counterfactual and even impossible concepts into an actual communicative context within which the clergy try to convey their intentionality and accessibility conditions to the non-western immigrants whose interpretations, however, may diverge from the clergy's expected interpretation of their NE message (cf. Pietrovski 1993). The consequences of such interpretative divergences are even more significant in consideration of the peculiarly 'unequal' nature of such encounters where the clergy in charge of the interactions often offer non-western immigrants assistance and services on condition that the immigrants convert to the Catholic faith – as this is the ultimate aim of their 'evangelization' mission.

In such transcultural asymmetric situations of interaction where different socio-cultural identities may not be mutually recognized, a number of schema divergences need to be explored by accounting for:

(a) on the one hand, the Italian clergy's 'western' NE discourse, which is inherently grounded on epistemic representations of mystical concepts linguistically rendered according to metaphysical categories of possible-world semantics which are non-logical, abstract and difficult to conceptualize – and yet they are employed as strategies of deontic argumentation aimed at inducing in non-western immigrants the unconditioned acceptance of such counterfactual logic;

(b) on the other hand, the non-western immigrants' religious discourses which instead are often grounded on a deontic argumentation meant to prompt actions aimed at the achievement of better social/personal conditions. Only afterwards can such discourses allow forms of epistemic, metaphysical representations which, though counterfactual, are always brought to bear on real-world social and personal life.

Precisely because such divergences are culture-bound, they are here assumed to be perceived from each participant's perspective as cognitively and linguistically inaccessible, conceptually unavailable (Widdowson 1991), and often socio-culturally unacceptable. The result of such a mutual misconstruction between the 'western' clergy and the 'non-western' immigrants is communication failure, as immigrants frequently find 'western' religious concepts totally alien to their native schemata.

In the case study to be investigated in the next section, two specific deviation levels between 'western' and 'non-western' religious discourse through ELF shall be explored: *(1)* counterfactual syllogism vs. factual reports and *(2)* transitive vs. ergative representations of metaphysical events.

4. The case study

4.1. Method

In the case study reported in this paper, a Conversation Analysis (Moerman 1988) was carried out on the protocol transcription (Ericcson, Simon 1984) of ethnographic data collected during the ELF exchange, which is part of a larger corpus of recorded conversations taking place in immigration contexts, subsequently transcribed and annotated in order to identify marked syntactic and pragmatic features characterizing ELF variations by each group in contact.[6] More specifically, in the field of the NE discourse, the aim was to investigate how the western clergy in charge of the exchanges and non-western migrants interact through ELF and make sense of the situations in which they find themselves. In such unequal encounters, one of the crucial issues is that whereas the Italian clergy make use of their ELF variations within their own socio-cultural contexts, the immigrants, instead, use their own non-western (mostly African) variants of English outside their geographical and experiential contexts. In doing so, the immigrants actually transfer into ELF their native linguacultural features which the clergy often misinterpret, principally because they tend to view such African variants of English (once they become ELF variations in cross-cultural interactions) as 'displaced' and 'transidiomatic' language usages (Silverstein 1998) since their meanings are automatically disconnected from their native contexts of use to be recontextualized within non-native and estranged communicative situations. The result is that each participant in the interaction engages indexically with his/her own socio-cultural reality in order to disambiguate the other participant's discourse, thus producing a type of "schema-biased presupposition" (Guido 2008, p. 64) which fulfils neither truth conditions (since the reported metaphysical facts in the NE discourse are not real), nor felicity – or appropriateness – conditions (since there is no linguacultural knowledge or religious assumption shared by both participants in the encounter). Such an incongruity may result in missing the original illocutionary force of each other's narrative. Hence the need for the clergy in charge of such interactions to recover the 'situatedness' (Gumperz 1982) of the immigrants' displaced ELF narrative in order to learn how to recognize the original socio-cultural and pragmalinguistic dimensions giving sense to the referential domains of their discourse.

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[6] To this purpose, the following conversation transcript symbols (Edwards 1997) were adopted: [ ] → overlapping speech; underlining → emphasis; ° ° → quieter speech; (.) → micropause; (..) → pause; :: → elongation of prior sound; .hhh → breathing in; hhh → breathing out; > < → speed-up talk; = → latching.

The case study analyzed in this paper exemplifies such a miscommunication. It regards an interaction between two participants: an Italian Catholic Priest (P) and a Liberian (possibly 'Animist') woman (W) whose young daughter has died during the sea crossing to reach Italy. Both use their respective ELF variations. P speaks the 'expanding-circle' (Kachru 1986) Italian-ELF variation, typical of countries (like Italy) where English is used as a foreign language for international communication – as such, it makes exonormative reference to the native 'inner-circle' (Kachru 1986) Standard-English code. W, instead, comes from a nation where English is a second language used for institutional/interethnic communication[7] – hence, it is an 'outer-circle' (Kachru 1986) ELF variation that makes endonormative reference to sanctioned non-native grammar codes informed by typologically different L1-structures transferred into W's ELF uses. A case in point is represented, on the one hand, by W's native Ergative constructions of events (in which an animated agent in Grammatical-Subject position is substituted by its Logical Object according to the OV(S) typology – Langacker 1991, p. 336), which was identified as a feature of W's possible L1 – namely, Igbo (Agbo 2009; Carrell 1970; Nwachukwu 1976) (a feature also emerging from the corpus of Igbo speakers' oral immigration reports in Nigerian Pidgin English – partly published in Guido 2008). On the other hand, there is P's own native Accusative SVO structures, with the animate Agent in Subject position – a typological feature of W's Ergative structures transferred into her ELF variation, which prompts P to perceive W's ELF as a 'defective' inner-circle variation. And yet, despite these typological divergences in the two ELF variations in contact, misunderstanding in this exchange was principally induced by diverging schematic associations related to the participants' different religious experiences, as evident in the following transcript:

P: can I do something for you (.) daughter?
W: (.) my daughter .hhh (.) dead hhh (..) >you can no do nothing<
P: how? when?
W: .hhh in the boat (.)°for come here° (..).hhh the sea keep her
P: (..) >where's your husband?<
W: (.)°killed° (.) >he wanted to vote and they kill him< (..) I got no job (.) I'm here for better life >for me and my child< (..)°but° .hhh
P: (..)°don't be sad° (..)°have faith in God° (..) you kno::w? (.) it's quite (.) unbelievable (.) that God wanted that his Son (.) >I mean Jesus< (.) he should die (.) and then he res- (.) returned to the life (.) >with the resurrection< (..) and (.) it's sure that also your dau::ghter should return to the life (..) °have faith in the Holy Spirit >that's with your daughter now°
W: (..)°what° (..) °spirit° (.)°the ghost?°
P: the Holy Spirit (.) yes (..) yes (.) you can say also the Holy Ghost (.) yes (..) >you know?< (..) it's ma::rvellous that God (.) °I mean° (.) his spirit entered inside the body of his Son (.) °Jesus° (.) and it's ma::rvellous that the Holy (.) Ghost bring the Son inside every person to (.) >to give the hope< (.) >of life eternal< (..) >you know?< this is the mystery of the Trinity (.) the Father (.) the Son (.) and the Holy Ghost (..) >they are three [and one God<
W: when I sleep] (.) the ghost of my daughter (.) >come inside my body< (.) °and I speak with her voice° (..) she must come out the sea (..)°but (..) I can no move (.) >to go down in the sea [for take her<°
P: but (..)] >as I said you< (.) it's sure (.) >it's sure< that Jesus must surely come (.) in the day of the resurrection (.) and take your daughter >out the sea< (..) °have faith (.) courage° (..) believe in God and I'll see what I can do for (.) to make you to stay here.
W: .hhh my hands (.) hold my daughter (.) hhh one side (.) and the boat (.) the wood hold her the other side (..) my hands are weak (.) more weak (..) she sleep (..) the side of the boat go

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down (.) and (.) °give my daughter for the sea° (..) >hhh and the sea swallow my daughter<
°slow slow°

P: .hhh o hhh

W: .hhh I can no do nothing °to hold her° (.) hhh >my hands can no move< (..) °my <u>mouth</u> can
no speak° (.) >and the sea swallow my daughter<

P: [but

W: now] now (.) she must want a better <u>life</u> (.) we make the journey for <u>better</u> life (.) she want
come <u>out</u> (.) >come out the sea< (.) and <u>cry</u> (.) [>cry cry<

P: °no no no] no° (..) <u>listen</u> (.) it it only look that God have <u>forgot</u> your daughter (.) but <u>for sure</u>
(.) <u>for sure</u> >must be the saviour of the baby< (..) he look (..) °malvagious° (..) a:: (.) <u>bad</u> for
you (.) but (.) but he's <u>immensely</u> good (.) he must have a <u>big</u> big <u>heart</u>

W: .hhh <u>my</u> heart is <u>big</u> (..) big (.) and <u>break</u> (.) and don't beat (.) no

4.2. Analysis

The conversation analysis of P's cues in this exchange shows how, at the *representational level*, P uses propositional attitude utterances representing 'belief reports' signalled by epistemic verbs and adverbs as modal operators (Schiffer 1996; Stalnaker 1987) – and expressed by:

(1) an indexical mode of presentation to be referred to a possible world under which the Subject believes that the proposition is true (Lau 1995). In the following statement (a), this is ambiguously expressed through the use of the modal verb "must", to be interpreted either as an epistemic logical deduction, or as a deontic obligation fulfilled by the Agent (God):

(a)   he [God] look malvagious, bad for you, but, but he's immensely good, he must have a big big
heart

(2) a *that*-clause whose semantic value corresponds to the intension of the embedded sentence:

(b)   it it only look *that* God have forgot your daughter, but for sure, for sure must be the saviour of
the baby

(c)   it's quite unbelievable *that* God wanted that his Son, I mean Jesus, he should die and then he
res- returned to the life with the resurrection

(d)   it's sure *that* also your daughter should return to the life

(e)   it's marvellous *that* God, I mean, his spirit entered inside the body of his Son, Jesus

(f)   it's marvellous *that* the Holy Ghost bring the Son inside every person to to give the hope of
life eternal

(g)   it's sure, it's sure *that* Jesus must surely come in the day of the resurrection and take your
daughter out the sea

Belief reports (b)-(g) are agentless and indirect as they are introduced by an impersonal clause with "it" as Subject placeholder. In these cases, the propositional attitudes are expressed by the epistemic verb "look" (meaning 'seem') in (b), as well as by the adverbs "sure" in (d) and (g), and the adjectives "marvellous" in (e) and (f), and "quite unbelievable" in (c), all of them introducing the *that*-clauses – but they are also present within the *that*-clauses, as in (b) ("for sure") and (g) ("surely") – hence, there is no direct affirmation of belief within the main clause. W, therefore, is expected to understand and, consequently, share P's belief by activating in her mind a process of semantic presupposition (Levinson 1983, pp. 199-204). The 'suspension of disbelief' and the 'experiential pliability' processes that W is required to activate in her mind in order to accept P's metaphysical message are however hindered by the non-logical complexity of the clauses which require from W a

cognitive effort to process them. The concepts expressed by the propositional attitudes in P's clauses are in fact assumed to coincide with the secondary intensions of the corresponding embedded clauses. These embedded clauses, in their turn, have truth-conditions that are equivalent to the truth conditions of the embedded clauses in the corresponding semantic presuppositions. In processing such clauses, W has to deduce the semantic presupposition either by an interpretative process of *entailment*, involving the deontic concept of *necessity* as 'moral obligation', or by a process of *compatibility*, involving the epistemic concept of *possibility* as 'logical deduction' in: "he [Jesus] *should* die" (c); "your daughter *should* return to the life" (d); "he [God] *must* have a big big heart" (a); "for sure [God] *must* be the saviour of the baby" (b). In both deontic/epistemic interpretations, however, W needs to account also for the primary intensions underlying embedded sentences. This means that she has to make reference also to the indexical dimension of the real world if she wants to determine the truth-conditions and the modal status of the *that*-clauses in the iconic possible world represented within P's metaphysical NE discourse.

And yet, with reference to the metaphysical concept of God, such an indexical/iconic interplay between real and possible worlds seems useless as the implied indexical belief relies neither on primary nor on secondary intensions for its belief attribution (Lau 1995; Pietrovski 1993). This being so because the truth-conditions of the concept of God can be inferred only from the representational context within which it is framed, but they appear to be inconsistent with the actual-world dimension (mainly for the lack of a concrete indexical referent for the Agents "God", as well as "Jesus", and "Holy Spirit"), since they can be considered veritable solely in a possible-world dimension of representation. Within such a counterfactual world, *de re* modal claims stating that something is *necessarily* (as a moral obligation) or *possibly* (as a logical deduction) something else – by means of the modals "should be" and "must be" – can be asserted without being prefixed by expressions of 'angle', containing or implying the 'according to' operator (Divers 1999). Divers defines such modal claims as 'extensional', which indicates that they define their truth-value at the possible-world level independently from the truth-values at the actual-world level. This means that modal-logic processes, such as entailment (claiming that a thing is 'necessarily' as it is) and compatibility (claiming that a thing is 'possibly' as it is), are essential in the activation of a possible-world context. In this case, entailment creates a representational context within which, for instance, the semantic presupposition underlying statement (h), inconceivable in the actual world, becomes conceivable as a logical deduction within P's possible world:

(h)   this is the mystery of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, they are three and
        one God

Furthermore, at the *referential level* of bimodality, it can be observed that P organizes his metaphysical discourse on two pragmatic dimensions:

a. an *overt illocutionary dimension* through which he intends to convey information about his beliefs, and
b. a *covert perlocutionary dimension* through which he introduces his religious beliefs to W and expects her to accept them.

In this perspective, P's discourse may be said to simultaneously account for the two speech roles that Halliday (1994, p. 68) defines respectively as *proposition* (statement of information about beliefs, knowledge, etc.) and *proposal* (offers or commands) in relation to the Interpersonal Metafunction of language underlying communication. As a 'proposition', P's discourse expresses a stance that is both *epistemic* and *doxastic* as he overtly makes his

illocutionary point by means of constative utterances that convey his religious/metaphysical beliefs through the projection of the non-logical image of the anthropomorphic figure of God, representing both the Psychological Subject (the Theme) and the Logical Subject (the Agent) (Halliday 1994, p. 31), though it does not always coincide with the Grammatical Subjects of the clauses. In this way, God loses its Thematic position as the Psychological Subject of the clause to be dislocated into a *that*-clause introduced by "it" as Subject-placeholder – thus downgrading such a metaphysical concept to the level of a detached 'fact' in a Rhematic position. Yet, the 'facts' represented in such clauses are only purely possible-worlds projections of beliefs, to be rather classified as wholly imagined 'chances', 'possibilities', or even 'impossibilities' (Halliday 1994, p. 267) rendered linguistically as 'projections' in the embedded form of *that*-clauses through a declarative mood (Halliday 1994, p. 115). In P's discourse, the abstract and counterfactual concept of God is adapted to the conventional image-schema of a powerful male human being who performs the semantic role of Actor in material processes where the Transitivity system does not represent any truth-functional semantic pattern applicable to a real-world context. This 'counterfactual logic' (cf. Lewis 1973) aims to fulfil P's pragmatic function of allowing W to access his non-consistent thought-development. Yet, accessibility to the semantic structure of such a complex metaphysical discourse does not automatically facilitate W's cognitive process aimed at the achievement of an experiential proximity to the non-logical processes represented within it. Indeed, the pronoun "it" employed as a Subject placeholder may convey precisely the opposite sensation – namely, P's intention to keep an experiential distance from the 'metaphysical fact' he is representing in his NE discourse by projecting it impersonally in a separate, embedded clause to create an 'objective modulation'. In this way, P seems to covertly disclaim responsibility for his semantic abstraction (Halliday 1994, p. 269).

In sum, at the level of the 'clause as a message', projections of 'possible-world facts' through impersonal *that*-clauses can be seen as:

a. *epistemic and doxastic propositions*, whose overt illocutionary point is to present objectively a metaphysical view of a 'possible fact' (i.e., an epistemic 'noun of modality' concerning hypothetical chances, possibilities as logical deductions, or impossibilities – Halliday 1994, p. 267). This may not imply P's personal involvement in the message he conveys, thus emphasizing his assertion of a 'universal truth' that cannot be doubted;

b. a *deontic proposal*, whose covert perlocutionary point is to induce W into concluding that what P asserts is not just about a 'possible fact', but it is rather a 'need' as a moral obligation (i.e., a deontic 'noun of modulation' representing a category of 'facts' that requires the commitment of belief in on the part of the speaker and the receiver – Halliday 1994, p. 268).

As a result, this double-message coming from the language of P's discourse can produce an ambiguous and disconcerting distance-proximity effect on W. On the one hand, she is overtly elicited to consider P's discourse as a mere exposition of abstract ideas and, on the other, she is covertly induced to feel committed to P's stance, which introduces the dimension of 'proposal'. On this level, P's stance is deontic, as he covertly makes his perlocutionary point by means of utterances whose pragmatic function is performative, as they are employed to bring W to share his metaphysical stance. This objective is pursued through an argumentation typical of the discourse of persuasion (Billig 1996) which contains circumstantial elements of 'angle' (Halliday, 1994, p. 158) that are, unexpectedly, impersonal, as they do not specify whose perspective they report. This is achieved by P's use of the "it" as Subject placeholder

meant as a disclaimer for the assertions reported in the *that*-clauses where P seems to keep his distance from his own metaphysical contention, probably to reassure W that his discourse is objective, detached and, thus, unchallenging. Consequently, W may experience a sense of displacement at perceiving that her interpretative freedom is limited by P's use of non-logical semantic constraints which may divert her cognitive operations of information processing. This is illustrated by the Transitivity system underlying P's discourse built on a false, paraconsistent 'hypothetical syllogism' based on both 'contraposition' and 'vacuous truth' – which are typical features of Possible-Worlds Semantics (Lewis 1973) – specifically in the conveyance of the mystical notion of the "Trinity" which, in P's discourse, is built on clauses that can be ranked into two main counterfactual types, here defined as:

1. *Clauses of illogical compatibility*, semantically constructed as a mental projection of opposing polarities and, at the same time, epistemically modalized within a conditional logic accounting for epistemically-modalized polarities (e.g., in (c), a positive-polarity mood adjunct "quite" followed by a negative-polarity prefix *-un* in "unbelievable"). Furthermore, they are structured impersonally, with the pronoun "it" as Grammatical Subject in the Thematic position, and the Logical Subject as the Rheme (see instances (b)-(g)).
2. *Clauses of illogical contingency*, semantically constructed as hypotactic expansions 'by concession' and, at the same time, interconnected by means of relational processes of an 'intensive', attributive type equating two wholly contradictory concepts (i.e., in (h), God as triune – namely, as one and triune at the same time).

Furthermore, in P's metaphysical discourse, logical-semantic relations do not follow 'normal' cognitive routes, as for example in (a) and (b):

(a) he [God] look malvagious, bad for you, but, but he's immensely good, he must have a big big heart
(b) it it look only that God have forgot your daughter, but for sure, for sure must be the saviour of the baby

In these utterances representing relational processes of an intensive type, the intension is signalled by a high degree of attribution, which is conveyed by the positive-polarity adverbial phrase "for sure" in (b), which ascribes the attribute 'saviour' to its Carrier – namely, the personified entity of "God". Moreover, the sense of 'heartlessness' conveyed by "bad" (and "malvagious", a calque transferred from P's Italian L1) in (a), is immediately denied by the obligation-adjunct of modality represented by the adverb "immensely" – that is ascribed to the opposite adjective "good" and strengthened first by the reduplication of the adjective "big" metaphorically attributed to God's benevolent "heart", and then by "must", a modal verb that stresses the contradiction in a representation of "God" as an Agent whose processes are believed to have a high epistemic value of certainty, but also the deontic value of a moral obligation. And again, in (b), God's sense of hard-hearted 'forgetfulness' is denied by the simultaneous deontic-obligation/epistemic-deduction verb/adjunct "must" and the reduplicated "for sure", personifying God as an active Agent of high-certainty actions. Hence, in (a) and (b), the image of God is characterized by the opposite notions of 'wickedness' and 'goodness', which make the processing of the 'moral quality' of this Entity quite challenging.

Obviously, this is an analysis carried out on P's ELF uses which may not have been produced to consciously carry the implications identified in his NE discourse. Precisely as P transfers his L1-Italian clausal structures to ELF (e.g., the noun+adjective sequence in "life eternal"; the calque in "malvagious"; the preposition-drop in "as I said you", "out the sea", "it

only look that" – with "look" meaning 'seem' – and the preposition-addition in "make you to stay"), in the same way he may have used modal verbs and expressions without being consciously aware of their ambiguous epistemic and deontic implications. And yet, both "must" and "should", rendered into the Italian verb 'potere' respectively in its Indicative and Conditional Moods, may indeed express the same deontic/epistemic ambiguity in referring either to a 'modal obligation' or to a 'logical deduction', and so P may likewise have meant to be ambiguous.

So far, analysis has regarded the possible plan of propositional attitudes and illocutionary points intended by P. But, what are the possible perlocutionary effects that P's metaphysical discourse may induce in W?

P opens the exchange by addressing W as "daughter", which is a typical term of address used by the clergy to refer to a female Christian believer – which, in this case, may be interpreted as P's covert attempt to induce W to conform to his own religious schemata. But this term actually triggers in W's mind the traumatic memory of her dead daughter, as she replies "my daughter, dead, you can no do nothing". Also subsequently, P's reference to the Holy Spirit/Ghost triggers a dispreferred effect in W's mind as she activates her own Animist 'ghost-possession' schema, with the factual representation of the metaphysical event of embodying her daughter's spirit as an obligation to recover her (signalled by the use of the deontic "must" – "she *must* come out the sea") by defying an Ergative personification of the inanimate Medium of the sea which is 'holding her prisoner' ("the sea keep her"). As hypothesized, the syntactic-typological divergences between the two ELF variations in contact (i.e., Italian ELF and Liberian ELF) do not seem to cause significant misunderstandings. But W's native Ergative structures transferred to her ELF variation, and her use of the deontic modals "must" and "can" contribute to determine the illocutionary point W intends to make. On the one hand, the modal "must" emphasizes either W's daughter's deontic claim for a "better life" ("she *must* want a better life") even if she is dead, or, rather, W's epistemic logical conclusion (based on her own desire – as W states at the beginning of the exchange, "I'm here for better life for me and my child"), since her daughter's ghost 'possessing' W "want come out, come out the sea". On the other hand, however, W's painful sense of powerlessness is reiterated throughout the exchange through her use of the deontic modal "can" in association with the negative specifier "no" to stress first P's 'lack of ability' to solve her problem ("my daughter, dead, you can no do nothing"), and then her feeling totally, even physically, helpless at not having being able to save her child, first on the boat, during her journey to Italy, when W was too weak to be able to keep her daughter from falling into the sea, and later, when she was unable "to go down in the sea to keep her". In particular, W's emotionally-charged description of her inability to prevent her daughter's death is made more excruciating by her L1→ELF transfer of ergative structures, which place the "boat", the boat "wood", the boat "side" and the "sea" in animate-Subject position in a shocking struggle to snatch W's sleeping daughter from W's "hands" that "are weak, more weak" to hold the child. Even W's metonymic representation of herself as just "hands" that "can no move" and "mouth" that "can no speak" is symptomatic of her split personality inducing her to distance herself from her own failure to save her child, by shifting the responsibility on the parts of her body that are paralyzed by extreme weariness against her own will – to conclude with a reference to her own "heart" (triggered by P's allusion to "God's big heart"), swollen with pain to its breaking point ("my heart is big, big, and break, and don't beat, no"). Indeed, W's representation of this distressing past event in the present tense and simple aspect may be interpreted not just as an ELF syntactic deviation from the English standard code, but as suggestive of the deep relevance of such an event to W's present trauma to the point

of triggering her disquieting ghost-possession schema.

And still P persists in his NE mission by inviting W to "believe in God", apparently as a condition for his help "and I'll see what I can do for you for, to make you to stay here".

5. Conclusions

The conversation analysis presented in this paper has enquired into the New-Evangelization discourse, recently developing within the Roman Catholic Church, by which the clergy try to make the religious message accessible and acceptable to people professing different creeds. In particular, the paper has explored the contexts within which the Catholic clergy offer assistance to newly-arrived immigrants from non-western countries. The case study analyzed in this paper has specifically focused on an exchange between an Italian Catholic Priest (P) trying to make his religious belief acceptable to a female Liberian immigrant (W) who, instead, resorts to her Animist faith informing the ghost-possession schema that she activates in her mind in an attempt to overcome her past trauma of witnessing her young daughter dying in the sea during their journey to Italy. The outcome of this exchange is communication failure, which is not so much generated by typologically-marked syntactic divergences between the two ELF variations in contact (i.e., P's Italian ELF and W's Liberian ELF), but it is rather produced by two socio-cultural religious schemata in conflict conveyed through ELF. Indeed, P's NE message is an instance of metaphysical discourse requiring from non-western immigrants (like W) a readiness to transcend the everyday experience of reality by displacing it into the modal logic of different possible worlds. Such counterfactual worlds are suggested by the semantic structure of the NE metaphysical discourse which sets its own 'rules of inference' that do not correspond to the conventional ones of the real world. W, thus, is expected to 'suspend her disbelief' and activate in her mind a 'conceptual pliability' in order to make sense of the semantic patterns of P's metaphysical discourse, by projecting them on to the possible-world dimension of an alternative, paraconsistent logic that would make them meaningful. Also P, however, in his turn, perceives W's Animist schemata (reflected in her ghost-possession experience, as well as in the Ergative representations of inanimate objects as animate entities in subject position) as non-coherent according to his actual-world experiential logic.

This kind of schema conflict can be frequently identified in the corpus of NE exchanges in immigration contexts under construction (from which the present case study was selected). For instance, in an exchange between an Italian Catholic nun (N) and a Libyan Muslim man (M), who fled from Libya after civil war culminating with the capture and killing of the dictator Gadhafi, misunderstanding again is not so much due to the two ELF variations in contact, but rather, and crucially, to the conflicting schemata represented by the 'imaging' of sacred entities that is characteristic of the Christian religion as opposed to typical Muslim 'aniconism,' which hinder meaning negotiation – as evident in the following extract from this exchange:

N: good <u>mo::rning</u> (..) you sleep well tonight?
M: .hhh <u>no::</u> sleep (..) I want stay here (.) this a good place (..) you can speak with them for <u>me</u>?
N: (.) yes (.) I can do
M: >I think think< they are <u>assassin</u> there (.) °in Libya° (..) my <u>friend</u> are all <u>killed</u> (..) they killed <u>women</u> (.) and <u>children</u> (.) [old people
N: hhh no no] (..) you must think in a different way (.) you must not hate them (.) okay? they can be all your <u>brothers</u> (.) °I mean° (.)your <u>friends</u> (.) not <u>only</u> your enemies (.) <u>oka::y</u>?
M: no (.) they're no my brother

N: (..) <u>listen</u> (.) God made men like his image (.) God is <u>good</u> and <u>all</u> men must be <u>good</u> (.)
<u>remember</u> (..) *[she draws from her bag some small holy pictures, picks one portraying*
Michelangelo's painting of God creating Adam and hands it to M] <u>look</u> this image (..) <u>look</u> (.)
God make Man like <u>him</u> *[she selects another small holy picture portraying Jesus showing his*
heart crowned with thorns, and hands it to M] look <u>this</u> (.) <u>Jesus</u> suffer and give his <u>heart</u> to
save all men= [take them

M: =no no] <u>no</u> (.) <u>Allah</u> (.) God (.) must have <u>no</u> picture (.) Prophet Jesus must have <u>no</u> picture
(..) this <u>sin</u> (.) you <u>understand</u>? (..) this [<u>sin</u>

N: <u>yes</u> yes] >I understand< (.) it's (..) just (.) <u>picture</u> (.) °I know° (..) but (.) is not <u>sin</u>

M: the <u>Prophet</u> say is <u>si::n</u> (..) because a (.) a man can say (.) ah (.) Prophet <u>Jesus</u> have a <u>face</u>
like <u>my</u> face so (.) so (.) so I'm <u>better</u> of other people (..) you <u>understand</u>? (..) it's <u>sin</u>

N: *[giggling]* <u>oka::y</u> (.) <u>excuse</u> me *[she makes for the door]*

M: hey hey (.) you can speak for me?

N: (.) tell (.) tell to them your problem (.) okay?

In this exchange, both N and M try to impose on each other their religious stances by means of the deontic modal "must". The assumption is that precisely this high-value modal of obligation may be the cause of communication failure since neither N nor M intend to accept each other's religious stances dogmatically imposed by the use of "must". In N's stance, God's anthropomorphic features are compatible with his creating 'a brotherhood of human beings' characterized by an illogical schematic distance between two concepts: "friends" and "enemies". M is thus expected to believe in a false syllogism: if the semantic sense of the term 'friend' can only be 'friend' in the actual world, in a possible world 'friend' can instead refer to 'enemy'. M refuses to accept such a view and, in turn, tries to impose his own Muslim schema that forbids human beings from representing Deity with human features (as a way of preventing anyone from finding any resemblance with their own physical features). On the other hand, however, the use of the deontic modal "must" can also be simply casual, due to an L1→ELF transfer process, rather than to a deliberate choice operated by the two participants in the interaction.

Hence, in conclusion, the outcome of the conversation analysis carried out in this paper suggests that to achieve a true ecumenical communication, the clergy in charge of such interactions should first recover the 'situatedness' (Gumperz 1982) of the immigrants' displaced ELF by recognizing the original socio-cultural and pragmalinguistic dimensions determining sense and reference in their religious experience. Then, the clergy should also develop accommodation strategies of ELF reformulation and hybridization to make culture-bound religious discourses conceptually accessible and socially acceptable to all the participants in cross-cultural NE interactions.

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