

Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion

Volume 18

2022

Article 8

A ‘Sanctified’ Language: A Sociolinguistic Study of the Perception of Latin and its Role in the Mass for American Catholics

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The authors wish to thank Priya Johnson, Greg Lensing, and the peer-reviewers for insightful comments during the development of this paper.

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Abstract

The perception of Latin as the “best” language has a long history in the West and in the United States. Many Americans view Latin as more logical and more grammatical than English. Other Americans view the study and use of Latin as elitist. When religious convictions are added to linguistic views of Latin, attitudes towards Latin take on a spiritual, and thus more spirited, edge. The present study examines sociolinguistic views about Latin’s status in the religious context of the Catholic Mass. Through a large-scale online survey, the authors examine how Latin as a language and its use in the Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) are viewed by Catholics. Both quantitative and qualitative data reveal that a positive sociolinguistic view of Latin plays a role in some American Catholics’ affinity for the TLM. Proponents of the TLM support this form of the Mass primarily for religious reasons, but positive views of the Latin language undergird their support. American Catholics who prefer Mass in the vernacular often do so because they view Latin as an impediment to comprehension and participation in the Mass. In addition, they view the use of Latin as elitist and divisive, particular in the current religious climate. The data show a sharp religious divide between “conservative” and “progressive” American Catholics about the question of the use of Latin in Catholic Masses, which present a dilemma for religious leaders in establishing language policy for Masses.

Latin holds a place of honor in the minds of many Westerners. As Bauer (1998, p.136) notes, “Latin was the language of the powerful and learned in Western Europe for a thousand years.” Pope John XXIII, commenting on the non-religious qualities of Latin, says that Latin is “noble, majestic, and non-vernacular” (1962). Indeed, the notion of Latin as the “best” or preeminent of all languages runs deep in the linguistic psyche of many Westerners, including Americans. While it is true that few Americans have studied Latin – of the decreasing number of American undergraduates who study a second language, less than 2% take Latin (Looney & Lusin, 2019, p. 49) – nonetheless, this language holds special sway over sociolinguistic musings. Due in large part to the continued use of Latin in scientific classifications and legal proceedings, Americans still view Latin as a supremely “model” language. In addition, educators tout its study as extremely effective at enhancing logical reasoning, improving grammatical acumen, and deciphering etymologies of many English words.² Latin is often praised for its “logical” grammar in comparison to English’s supposed myriad grammatical defects. “Latin is often taken by *non-linguists* as the ‘standard’ against which all other languages are measured” (Bauer, 1998, p. 79, emphasis added). Even Princeton University’s recent controversial removal of Latin from its classics curriculum due to accusations of a Latin requirement being elitist and racist (NPR Report, 2021) does not diminish Latin’s special stature among the pantheon of languages in the minds of Americans.

Given the scientific and legal associations with Latin, and the educational praise of the language – not to mention countless movies which depict erudite albeit somewhat melancholy scholars using Latin (Sellers, 2012) – it is little wonder that Latin is viewed with such esteem by Americans. Even the Super Bowl, perhaps the most American of all events, uses Latin to denote the number of the Super Bowl to give the event an august aura. One of the author’s experiences with teaching university linguistics courses is most likely not unique in that every section will inevitably have a student who voices the following opinion: “So, like, Latin was the first language, and it’s the best language. Right?”

The present study, however, does not explore exclusively general attitudes toward Latin, though that does provide crucial contextualization. Rather, this study analyses sociolinguistic attitudes toward Latin in a religious context, namely the Catholic Mass in the United States and how this ideology influences religious devotion as well as official language policy. Perhaps unique to the language planning situation is that a sovereign state (the Vatican) is deciding language policy for religious followers in numerous countries. The notion of some languages being better suited for religious rites (or even some languages being more sacred) is not unique to Catholicism (Bennett, 2018; Liddicoat, 2012). Central to Islamic religious services are recitations from the *Qur’an*, and there is a long-standing debate concerning the language choice of these recitations. Many Islamic religious leaders and scholars maintain that Classical Arabic is the only language that should be used when reading the *Qur’an* because translation to another language is

² See Holliday (2012) for a succinct review of studies that both support and question Latin’s academic utility for students.

impossible (Siddiek, 2012). Buddhist monks chant in Pali because it is a holy language, and it is the “currency of eternal truth” according to Buddhist leaders (Bennett, 2018, p. 79). Similarly, many Jewish leaders note Classical Hebrew is the language for reading the *Torah* and religious ceremonies in synagogues. Posner (2014) notes Hebrew is a “holy tongue,” and it was God’s choice for revelations. As Bennett (2018) notes, “sacred languages are still vital to different branches of Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism” (p. vii).

There is an important distinction regarding conceptualization of these languages. Some religions maintain their language is sacred because the language itself carried divine revelation. As Fishman (2006) says, certain languages have been transformed because they performed a “holy vessel” function (p. 253). Liddicoat (2012) calls such language “sacral” because they are imbued with divine attributes. These languages include Classical Arabic and Classical Hebrew. On the other hand, some languages have been *sanctified*, not because they carried a divine revelation but because they have been used to explain divine concepts. And they have been used in religious ceremonies for a very long time. These languages become restricted to special circumstances. Thereby, they become distinguished and sanctified. Church Slavonic and Latin are examples of sanctified languages. Though, as we will see, Latin for some Catholics has moved beyond a sanctified language and has become sacred (or “sacral” in Liddicoat’s terminology).

When a religious dimension is added to people’s view of a language – be it a sacred language (Classical Arabic) or a sanctified language (Church Slavonic, Latin) – the sociolinguistic attitude toward the language takes on a decidedly spiritual fervor. Liddicoat (1993) notes that all religious liturgies began in the vernacular.³ Through historical and linguistic processes, the language of liturgies becomes fixed and ultimately divorced from the later-emerging vernaculars. The liturgical language often remains unchanged, and it is adhered to precisely because this language is subsequently viewed as preserving the stability, sacredness, and mystery of the divine and the “otherness” of the liturgy for the faithful. Therein lies a key tension: the religious passion to preserve the mysteriousness of the divine and the religious dogma through an immutable and sacred language can conflict with the need to have an intelligible language that can instruct the faithful (Liddicoat, 2012). As Bennett (2018) notes, efforts at a divine communion conflict with earthly communication. This tension is seen clearly in the contemporary “liturgical wars” over the language policy regarding the use of Latin versus a vernacular during Catholic Mass, particularly in the United States. It is the friction between proponents of Latin and proponents of local vernaculars that is the basis of this study. We explore the sociolinguistic attitudes among a sample of American Catholics toward the use of Latin at Mass, and, given the religious context, the results reveal both a deeply-held religious conviction for Latin and an equally passionate belief in the efficacy and value of the vernacular language in Mass, particularly in terms of building religious community among the faithful and

³ Bennett (2018) disputes the notion that all sacred languages begin as vernacular and cites Church Slavonic as an example. However, Liddicoat’s main point is accurate, especially in the case of Latin and Catholicism.

evangelizing non-believers. This divide leaves Church leaders in a quandary regarding establishing language policy for Mass.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Catholic Mass is the primary liturgical service of Catholicism. It consists of two parts: the Liturgy of the Word (biblical readings and homilies concerning those readings) and the Liturgy of the Eucharist (communion). Many non-Catholics may assume that Latin is still the primary or even exclusive language of the Mass. However, the Catholic Church changed from an exclusive use of Latin in Mass to an almost exclusive use of the vernacular soon after the Second Vatican Council, a meeting of the church leaders which lasted from 1962-1965. Among the many issues discussed during this council was the use of vernacular languages. Liddicoat (1993) notes the Catholic Church throughout its history has at times both promoted and condemned the use of the vernacular during Mass. There has long existed a desire within the Catholic Church to both preserve tradition (including doctrinal integrity) and give proper worship to God, which some Catholics opine requires Latin because of its sacred nature, immutable form, and “majestic” character. For other Catholics, the need to evangelize the people necessitates the use of a local vernacular so that people understand the Mass. In other words, religious convictions regarding language policy can conflict with pragmatic communicative needs. Below is a brief history that is necessary to understand the context of our study. It is this historical and theological tradition that both sides use to support their respective linguistic position in this religious debate.

Catholics believe that Jesus instituted the Mass (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2003). For Catholics, the Mass is not simply a “remembering” of what Jesus did at the last supper. Rather, Catholic teaching holds that each Mass makes Jesus present through scripture readings and most especially through the Eucharist. Jesus’ presence comes about through the Mass with the faithful participating, but it is the *words* of the priest that ultimately brings about the divine Eucharistic presence. Thus, many Catholics view the question of language choice during Mass as a critical issue.

Tradition holds that Jesus spoke Aramaic, even though Hebrew was the classical liturgical language for the Jewish faithful during the time of Jesus. After Jesus’ death and as Christianity spread, the liturgical tradition (and language policy) would have been a vernacular one (Liddicoat, 1993; Liddicoat, 2012). Greek was an influential language in the life of the early Christian community. However, by the 3rd century, Greek’s importance waned as the center for Catholicism became Rome. The Christianization of Europe began in earnest when Latin was the prestige language in Europe, and eventually Latin became the sole liturgical language. Nonetheless, there remained a strong tradition among Christians of attempting to convert people using local vernaculars.

As it began to evolve into the various Romance dialects (and eventually languages), Latin remained the liturgical language for the Catholic Mass. As Ferguson (1959) notes, the Latin vernacular dialects entered a period of diglossia, with Latin being the High language (p. 337). As the issue of intelligibility became more pressing through the centuries (and intelligibility remains a key issue today,

as the data below will show), the Catholic Church made concessions. The Council of Tours in 813 permitted some use of Romance vernaculars (*linguam latinam rusticam*) during homilies, but this concession specifically excluded Germanic languages (Liddicoat, 1993, p. 128).

Starting in the ninth century, the Mass increasingly became something the priest did and the faithful watched. The notion of the centrality of the priest and exclusive use of Latin became ensconced at the Council of Trent (1545 – 1563) (Marx, 2013). For the leaders at this church council, intelligibility at the Mass was not a primary concern. More important was a strong response to the Protestant reformers who were promoting the vernacular and other theological positions that were considered heretical (Reno, 2021). Faced with Protestant assaults both on theology and tradition, the leaders of the Council of Trent doubled down on the exclusive use of Latin because it offered, in their view, much needed unity and, more importantly, the preservation of a Catholic dogma free from Protestant errors. Translations were deemed unreliable due to possible introduction of dogmatic errors. In addition, Latin was needed to preserve the mystical communion with the divine due to its lack of intelligibility for the majority of the faithful. While there were some leaders at Trent who voiced support for the vernacular use during Mass, most leaders favored Latin. In fact, the documents from the Council of Trent note that those favoring vernacular were ultimately anathematized

If anyone saith, that the rite of the Roman Church, according to which a part of the canon and the words of consecration are pronounced in a low tone, is to be condemned; or, *that the mass ought to be celebrated in the vulgar tongue only*; or, that water ought not to be mixed with the wine that is to be offered in the chalice, for that it is contrary to the institution of Christ; let him be anathema. (*General Council of Trent*, 1562, emphasis added)

After Trent, the use of the Latin language and specific priestly rubrics (instructions for physical actions during Mass written in red for the priest to follow) became very much entrenched for the next 400 years. The issue of intelligibility would be discussed on occasion during the next four centuries, but Latin was seen as the language to preserve doctrinal integrity, give unity to a universal church, and foster a sense of the divine. To use Bennett's (2018) terminology, Latin became a *sanctified* language by the sheer repetition of being used in sacred spaces and sacred time. In addition, Latin became a "marker and maker of group identity" (Bennett, 2018, p. 66). Latin marked Catholics as Catholics and the "vulgar tongue" marked Protestants as Protestants. The form of the Mass promoted at Trent⁴ (and its language choice) gave rise to the term *Tridentine Mass*⁵, a term derived from Trent.

⁴ It was a few years after Trent that the Catholic Church formally adopted the rubrics promoted by Trent. This was promulgated in *Missale Romanum* in 1570.

⁵ We will use the term Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) instead of the Tridentine Mass. Most Catholics are more familiar with the term TLM, which uses Latin as well as many traditional liturgical rubrics. In our survey we decided to use the Latin language and the TLM because these terms are more common than Tridentine Mass (which is also termed the Extraordinary Form.)

The faithful’s increasing inability to understand Latin was viewed (and is still viewed by many Catholics) as a religious benefit in that it preserved the mysteriousness of communing with the divine.

With the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), “fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations” (Paul VI 1963, II, 14) by the laity became a central pastoral concern, and the issue of intelligibility was once again a topic of discussion. In short, the Second Vatican Council (referred to hereafter as “Vatican II”) allowed for increased use of vernacular languages during Mass to increase active participation by the laity rather than having them listening to a Mass in a language that they could not understand. Thus, after 1963, Latin began to recede precipitously at Catholic Masses, to the joy of some Catholics and to the chagrin of others (Bullivant, 2019; Cuneo, 1997). By the 1980s, it would have been difficult to find a Catholic Mass that used any Latin in the U.S. And to find a TLM would have been virtually impossible. The *Novus Ordo* (or “new Mass”) became the standard Mass, and it used vernacular languages.⁶

CURRENT SOCIAL/RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

Fishman (2006) comments that sacred and sanctified languages “do not come and go the way quotidian vernaculars do. They wax and wane and have a seemingly phoenix-like capacity to arise again out of their own ashes” (p. 258). His words have proven prophetic with Latin in the Catholic Church in the last fifteen years. After Latin was seemingly cast off by the early 1970s, it has re-emerged, particularly in the last ten years. Catholic Church documents such as *Ecclesia Dei* (Pope John Paul II, 1988) and specifically *Summorum Pontificum* (2006) gave greater freedom to bishops and priests to re-establish some limited use of Latin at Mass and even to have the Traditional Latin Mass.⁷

It is interesting to note that praise for and criticism of sacred and sanctified languages often surface during troubled times (e.g., the Protestant “threat” during the 16th century) (Bennett, 2018). In recent times, the Catholic Church has suffered from numerous sex scandals, financial scandals, and rising numbers of members disaffiliating with the Catholic Church. Bullivant (2019) notes that some Catholics attribute these troubles to a “watering down” of the central tenets of Catholicism by Church leaders, including their discontinuance of Latin and the TLM. Federico (2021) discusses the conservative dislike for “liberal” leadership in the contemporary Church, and this would include a dislike for the “new” Mass.

⁶ The term *Novus Ordo* is the most common term for the “new” post-Vatican II Mass that uses the vernacular and updated rubrics. It was first promoted in 1969, a few years after the end of Vatican II.

⁷ While our study focuses on the use of Latin, it should be noted that for many Catholics, the TLM is not just about using the Latin language. It also involves more specific rubrics performed by the priest. These include the priest’s facing the altar with his back to the people (*ad orientem* “to the east”) and other specific rituals. Although our study focuses mainly on the language question, it became apparent that those in favor of TLM tend to view rubrics and Latin intimately bound as will be seen in the data.

Vatican II allowed more use of the vernacular during Masses. Yet, Vatican II also reaffirmed that Latin was the language of the Catholic Church. There has been criticism in recent years that the allowance for the vernacular has been abused. A growing number of traditional (conservative) American Catholics, especially since the early 2000s, have been advocating for use of Latin at least for parts of the Mass or the “full” TLM because they claim Vatican II never intended to dismiss Latin and the TLM rubrics entirely. They believe that due to over reliance on the vernacular (out of pastoral concern) some Catholics (including clergy) erroneously assumed that the Catholic Church was jettisoning Latin forever (Birch, 2007; Dougherty, 2021; Woods, 2008). Nonetheless, Vatican II did extend the use of the vernacular during Mass. Eventually, the TLM and Latin were severely restricted by canonical law and became nonexistent for American Catholics. Latin, despite some small but vocal objections, was essentially expunged from the Mass in the U.S. during the 1970s.

From the early 1970s until recent years, Catholics did not have an option to attend the TLM, nor were there even parts of the Mass in Latin in most parts of the world. Priests were no longer trained how to say the TLM and, in fact, many priests no longer studied Latin. Mass was a vernacular ritual, and almost no American Catholic born after 1965 had even seen a TLM nor heard Latin during Mass.

However, two events revived Latin and the TLM. First, the Catholic Church has suffered from numerous scandals in recent years. Some Catholics attributed scandals to the “mistakes” at Vatican II or a poor implementation of Vatican II. Second, there has been a growing longing for TLM among some American Catholics. Ironically, this “nostalgic” desire has been strongest among younger American Catholics, who have not grown up with Latin. Catholics in this group view Latin in the same way that the leaders did at the Council of Trent:

- Latin guards against error.
- Latin separates Catholics from Protestants.
- Latin is a sanctified or even sacred language that promotes piety during Mass.
- Latin is a “better” language.

In addition, Catholics favoring the TLM generally view the rubrics during Mass as more reverent. Third, in 2007, Pope Benedict XVI issued the aforementioned *Motu Proprio*⁸ entitled *Summorum Pontificum* which allowed for more wide-spread use of the TLM. For American Catholics who favored the TLM, this document was welcome news, and it reinforced their view of Latin. Many among this group have been very vocal in their condemnation of Masses in the vernacular (Marx, 2013). They maintain that the TLM (or at least having some parts of the Mass in Latin) supports their religious devotion because Latin is a sanctified language. In fact, many in this group often note that exorcists (priests who perform rituals to cast out demons) report that Latin is more effective than a vernacular language during an exorcism because Satan hates Latin. This view of Latin as especially effective in

⁸ A *Motu Proprio* is an official and legal document from a pope.

exorcisms is often repeated by participants in our survey. When groups view a language as sanctified and having the ability to cast out demons, then such a view is firmly held.

On the other side of this increasingly contentious linguistic debate are American Catholics who support a vernacular language because it allows communication and unity among the faithful. They view adherence to the TLM and Latin in general as overly dogmatic, elitist (even pharisaic) and against the Christian ideal of unity and inclusivity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the last ten years, the debate about the role of Latin and the TLM in the life of the Catholic Church has become particularly heated. The debate is religious in nature, but language attitudes play an undeniable role. Both “sides” champion their language choice based in part on sociolinguistic attitudes that are bolstered by religious conviction. There is a crusading-like mentality among both sides as they adhere to their views of what the proper language is for Mass. And to be clear, Mass for Catholics is an indispensable vehicle for the salvation of souls. Thus, language questions regarding Mass become far from tangential. And these linguistic convictions within this religious context led us to study the sociolinguistic attitudes toward Latin among American Catholics in the context of the Catholic Mass.

With this context, our principal research questions were the following:

- (1) Do Catholics who support the TLM do so because of their views on the Latin language, or do they support the TLM because this Mass includes traditional rubrics (i.e. rituals)? In other words, how much does support for the TLM hinge specifically on a positive and even religious view of the Latin language itself?
- (2) Do Catholics who support the *Novus Ordo* do so because of the use of the vernacular language? Or do they support it for other reasons?

METHODOLOGY

We investigated the sociolinguistic attitudes concerning Latin at Catholic Masses using a large-scale anonymous online survey methodology. Initially, a pilot survey was distributed to ten colleagues at a university in the southeastern part of the U.S. In addition, the pilot survey was distributed to ten Catholic leaders in parishes. Respondents completed the survey and were given an opportunity to comment on the survey itself. We amended and finalized the survey (see Appendix I) based on this feedback.

The finalized survey was distributed through an online link that was sent by email solicitations to Catholic parishes, theology teachers at Catholic institutions (high school and university), online Catholic bulletin boards in the U.S., and the authors’ Catholic colleagues in the United States. (IRB Approval: Exempt - Initial - IRB-FY21-288 The Use of the Latin Language at Catholic Masses, Kennesaw

State University IRB Committee. Participants gave informed consent at beginning of survey).

We sent emails to Catholics who have different roles in the church (Table 1) and in different parts of the U.S. (Table 2). This was done to have a diverse pool of respondents. In addition, we used a “referral methodology” (see below) to increase the number of respondents. A total of 554 emails were sent.

Table 1

Emails to Participants by Roles

	Count
Priests/ Deacons	124
Lay Persons	66
Church Staff (Educators, Music Leaders)	38
High School Religious Teachers	201
Professors of Theology (Cath. Universities)	110
Emails sent to general church offices	15
Total	554

Table 2

Emails by Regions

	Count
West Coast (AZ, CA, OR, WA)	112
Midwest (IL, IN, MN, NE, OH, WI.)	168
Southeast (AL, AR, FL, LA, GA, OK, TX)	222
East and Northeast (DC, NH, NY, VA)	52
Total	554

We elected to use a referral methodology in the hopes of increasing participation. In the email solicitation to potential respondents, we asked participants to complete the survey and then forward the survey link to anyone who they thought might be interested in participating. We employed this “snowball” methodology to increase participation. Issues of religion can be personal, and people may be reluctant to share their views. A total of 3,727 (2,909 from the United States) surveys were completed. While we were encouraged by the overall number of respondents, the distribution of respondent demographics was not aligned with the demographic distribution of American Catholics (e.g., 84% of the full sample identified as “White” while 68% of American Catholics identify as “White” (Pew Research Center, 2014)). From the original sample of 3,727 respondents, we extracted a subsample of 925 respondents, where the proportional distribution of race and gender was more closely aligned with the proportional distribution of American Catholics (see Limitations section).

We were interested in the following questions. For those participants whom we label as “pro-Latin Mass” (PLM participants), was the support for the TLM due to the language itself, the “conservative” (i.e. pre-Vatican II) rubrics, or a combination? Alternatively, for those participants whom we label as “pro-vernacular Mass” (PVM participants), did their support for the *Novus Ordo* stem from the use of the vernacular language, post-Vatican II rubrics, or a combination? We included a third category – “moderate support for Latin Mass” (MSLM) – for those respondents who expressed support for both.

We included questions in the survey about the Latin language *and* the TLM. This is an important distinction for our analysis. The TLM obviously uses Latin and rubrics dating from the Council of Trent, but there have been new editions of this Mass through the centuries; however, the use of Latin and more “conservative” rubrics have remained constant. In this survey, we use the term “TLM” because we thought this term would be the most accessible to potential participants as noted in footnote number four. What we term a *Novus Ordo* Mass is one in which the Mass is in the vernacular and follows the reforms initiated by Vatican II and formalized in 1969 by Pope Paul VI. A *Novus Ordo* Mass may include a few Latin prayers/responses, but most of the Mass is in the vernacular and uses post-Vatican II rubrics.⁹

Again, our research goal was to examine perception of the Latin language in the religious context of the Mass. We divided respondents into three groups – PVM, MSLM, or PLM - based on the response to a question concerning Latin and the TLM (Wakita et al., 2012; Weijters et al., 2010). If respondents selected one of the two statements below, they were labeled “PVM”:

- I. *Latin should not be used at Catholic Masses.*
- II. *Latin should not be used during Mass in the vernacular. However, dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.*

There was one open-ended question for the PVM respondents:

- Could you explain more about why you prefer Mass in the vernacular?

If respondents selected the statement below, they were labeled as “MSLM”:

- III. *A few Latin prayers could be included during Mass in the vernacular at the discretion of the priest or pastor. And dioceses*

⁹ It should be noted that sometimes the *Novus Ordo* is said in Latin with Latin being the “vernacular” as is the case with some Masses at the Vatican. In other words, it could be a *Novus Ordo* Mass that just happens to use Latin as the vernacular. But this is rare and typically restricted to the Vatican where Latin is a lingua franca.

should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.

If respondents selected one of the three statements below, they were labeled as “PLM”:

*IV. A few Latin prayers **should be** required during all Masses in the vernacular. And dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.*

*V. A few Latin prayers **should be** required during all Masses in the vernacular. And to the extent possible, dioceses should require every parish to offer at least one Traditional Latin Mass option on Sunday.*

*VI. The vernacular Mass **should be** universally abolished and replaced with the Traditional Latin Mass.*

There were two open-ended questions for the MSLM and PLM respondents:

- Please share specific elements which draw you to support Latin and/or the Traditional Latin Mass.
- Do you think adopting some of the rubrics of the Traditional Latin Mass (examples: more periods of silence, priest facing the altar with his back to the congregation, kneeling to receive Communion, etc.) without the Latin language would improve the Mass as a religious experience? Please explain your answer.

These open-ended questions were analyzed and coded using NVIVO. Miles and Huberman (1994) and Saldaña (2013) note codes consist of words and phrases that capture the “essence” of similar comments. As we read the qualitative data themes emerged and these were given codes for each of the three open-ended questions. The coded themes in the qualitative data confirmed the quantitative data, but the themes also contributed to a deeper understanding of participants’ conceptualization of Latin. (See *Appendix I* and *II* for the complete survey language.)

RESULTS

Tables 3-9 show demographic information of the final sample of respondents. Respondents were distributed across age ranges, with slightly more respondents in the 25-44 range (*Table 3*). Respondents were distributed across racial categories (*Table 4*) and the gender distribution of respondents was almost equal (*Table 5*). Most respondents identified as “Lay Catholic” (*Table 6*) and reported that they attend Catholic Mass weekly (*Table 7*). Respondents reported high levels of education, with over 70% holding a college degree (*Table 8*). Language ability was well-distributed with almost half of respondents reporting to have some facility in a second language, while just over a third reported being monolingual (*Table 9*).

Table 3*Age Ranges of U.S. Respondents*

	Count	Percent
18 - 24	93	10.05%
25 - 34	207	22.38%
35 - 44	200	21.62%
45 - 54	144	15.57%
55 - 64	149	16.11%
65 - 74	92	9.95%
75 - 84	36	3.89%
85 or older	4	0.43%
Total	925	100.00%

Table 4*Ethnicity of U.S. Respondents*

	Count	Percent
Black or African American	25	2.70%
Hispanic or Latino	232	25.08%
White	628	67.89%
Other	40	4.32%
Total	925	100.00%

Table 5*Gender Identification of U.S. Respondents*

	Count	Percent
Female	416	44.97%
Male	498	53.84%
Not Reported	2	0.22%
Prefer not to say	9	0.97%
Grand Total	925	100.00%

Table 6*Self-Reported Religious Status of U.S. Respondents*

	Count	Percent
I am a Catholic deacon	6	0.65%
I am a Catholic lay person	818	88.43%
I am a Catholic priest	62	6.70%
I am a Catholic religious (sister/nun/brother)	9	0.97%
I am a non-Catholic lay person	16	1.73%
Not Reported	14	1.51%
Total	925	100.00%

Table 7*Mass Attendance of U.S. Respondents*

	Count	Percent
Never	1	0.11%
On Rare Occasion	18	1.95%
Several Times A Year	23	2.49%
Monthly	10	1.08%
Weekly	485	52.43%
Two or Three Times Per Week	221	23.89%
Daily	153	16.54%
Not Reported	14	1.51%
Total	925	100.00%

Table 8*Education Level of U.S. Respondents*

	Count	Percent
Less than a high school diploma	6	1%
High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)	33	4%
Some college, no degree	102	11%
Associate's degree (e.g. AA, AS)	45	5%
Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)	327	35%
Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)	274	30%
Doctorate or professional degree (e.g. MD, PhD)	126	14%
Not Reported	12	1%
Total	925	100%

Table 9*Language Status of U.S. Respondents*

	Count	Percent
I am bilingual or multilingual	247	26.70%
I am monolingual	273	29.51%
In addition to my native language, I have some ability in one or more other languages	393	42.49%
Not Reported	12	1.30%
Total	925	100.00%

As a first step to ascertain respondent's sociolinguistic attitude toward Latin and the TLM, we asked the extent to which they support the use of Latin in Mass. Based upon the answer to this question, we categorized respondents as PVM, MSLM or PLM. These results are provided in *Tables 10* and *11*, respectively.

Table 10*Support of TLM or Vernacular Mass*

Option	Count	Percent
<i>I. Latin should not be used at Catholic Masses.</i>	26	2.81%
<i>II. Latin should not be used during Mass in the vernacular. However, dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.</i>	41	4.43%
<i>III. A few Latin prayers could be included during Mass in the vernacular at the discretion of the priest or pastor. And dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.</i>	176	19.03%
<i>IV. A few Latin prayers should be required during all Masses in the vernacular. And dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.</i>	101	10.92%
<i>V. A few Latin prayers should be required during all Masses in the vernacular. And to the extent possible, dioceses should require every parish to offer at least one Traditional Latin Mass option on Sunday.</i>	273	29.51%
<i>VI. The vernacular Mass should be universally abolished and replaced with the Traditional Latin Mass.</i>	285	30.81%
Not Reported	23	2.49%
Total	925	100.00%

Table 11*Pro-Latin Mass Respondents vs. Pro-Vernacular Mass Respondents*

Option	Count	Percent
PVM (selected Options I - II)	67	7.24%
MSLM (selected Option III)	176	19.03%
PLM (selected Options IV - VI)	659	71.24%
Not Reported	23	2.49%
Total	925	100.00%

These data show that over 70% of respondents indicated that Latin should be required in Mass. In fact, over 30% of respondents selected abolishing the *Novus Ordo* and returning to the TLM exclusively. However, using a “referral system” runs the risk of having participants referring the survey to like-minded individuals. These numbers are undoubtedly skewed. However, our intention was less aligned with generating an inferential, probabilistic sample and more aligned with investigating sociolinguistic attitudes towards Latin and the vernacular at Mass (see Limitations section).

After categorizing respondents as PVM, MSLM, or PVM, we turn our attention to our research questions.

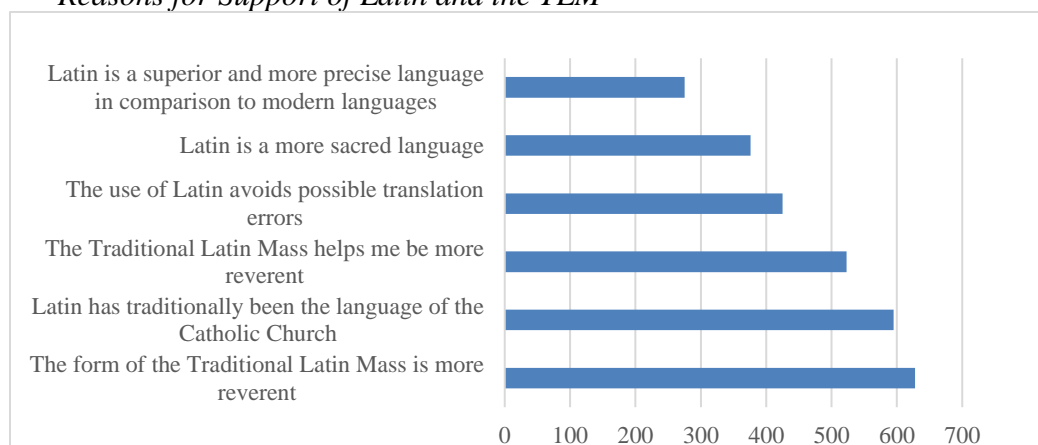
Research Question 1: Do Catholics who support the TLM do so because of their views on the Latin language, or do they support the TLM because this Mass

includes traditional rubrics (i.e. rituals)? In other words, how much does support for the TLM hinge on a positive and even religious view of the Latin language itself?

Our research goal was not to gauge the level of support for the TLM among American Catholics. Rather, our aim was to analyze how sociolinguistic ideology informs support for Latin and the TLM. *Figure 1* shows the main reasons for supporting Latin and the TLM selected by PLM respondents. Survey participants could select more than one reason on the survey.

Figure 1

Reasons for Support of Latin and the TLM



Based on these data, support for the TLM stems predominantly from *non-linguistic factors* (traditions, rubrics, and reverence). The options that were more language centered (avoiding translation errors, sacredness of the language, and Latin as a superior/more precise language) were selected less frequently than non-language factors. Perhaps even more revelatory is how many times the non-linguistic (tradition/ritual/reverence) options were selected exclusively by participants in comparison to how many times the linguistic options (translation, sacred language, superior language) were chosen exclusively (only that option was selected) (*Table 12*).

Table 12

PLM Respondents who chose ritual reason or linguistic reason exclusively

	Count	Percent of PLM Respondents (n= 659)
Exclusively Linguistic/Language Option	8	0.01%
Exclusively Non-Linguistic/Ritual Option	246	37.33%

This result is in line with Bennett’s (2018) argument that Latin is not viewed primarily as a sacred language by American Catholics in the same way that Classical Arabic and Classical Hebrew are viewed by American Muslims and

American Jews, respectively. Support for Latin stems primarily from religious motivating factors: Latin within the TLM engenders more spirituality and reverence. Nonetheless, language ideology contributes to this spiritual yearning for divine communion among the PLM respondents precisely because the language is considered non-secular. Woods (2008) notes early in his book that support for the TLM has never been based “merely on language” (p. 2), but much of his defense of the TLM in the rest of his book is built precisely on Latin’s features, including it being a unifying and even “sacred” language (p. 68). Our qualitative data echo this type of support for TLM: PLM respondents consider the TLM more reverent, and Latin is *part and parcel* of this reverence. In other words, it is not the rubrics alone in the TLM that attract followers. The Latin language is viewed as inseparable and indispensable from the spiritual graces of the TLM.

We analyzed written comments from PLM respondents. The thematic codes that emerged were the following in order of significance:

- Reverence
- Language
- Tradition
- Only True Mass
- Aesthetics
- Priests

Overwhelmingly, participants noted it is the reverence which drew them to TLM over the *Novus Ordo* Mass. Comments such as these were typical in response to why respondents support the TLM:

- “...the reverence, the awe, the other-worldliness and uplifting much draw one to the Traditional Latin Mass”
- “It draws both priest and faithful into a deeper relationship with the Most Holy Trinity. It sanctifies those who participate in it.”
- “The Mass is meant to carry with it a sense of the Holy. Where more ‘traditional’ elements are used, even in the vernacular (e.g., incense, chants, bells, etc.), it can reinforce that Mass is not “just another” part of this world but is instead something to be approached with reverence and awe.”

Yet, language is also a strong thematic code in the qualitative data. Indeed, some respondents could not separate Latin from reverence. Comments such as these were typical for respondents who noted language was part of the attraction to the TLM:

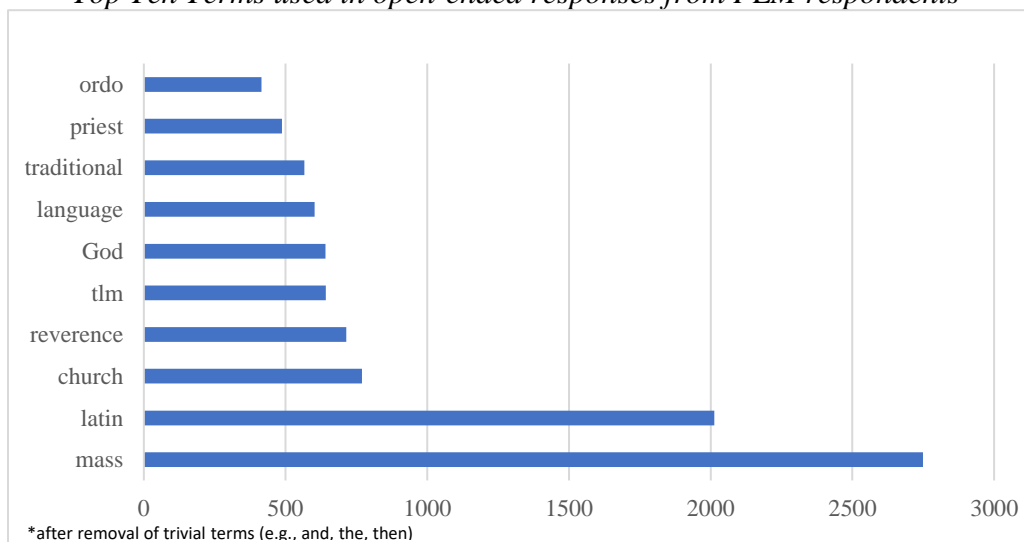
- “Latin...language of saints & Angels.”
- “Latin is the traditional language of the church and allows for no translation errors.”
- “The Latin language has a beautiful and musical quality to it.”

- “Even exorcists have written that the Rite of Exorcism was much more efficacious when said in Latin versus the revised English!! The devil hates Latin.”
- “The priest is much more of an intercessor as he celebrates the Mass because he is speaking in a language that most of us no longer understand.”
- “Latin is the base and root for most words and languages.”
- “The Latin is so precise there is no misunderstanding of meaning.”
- “Latin is a sacred language because it is one of the three on the cross. When a demon hears Latin, he is forced to remember the instrument of our salvation because they see language as a whole.”
- “We cannot truly understand the greatness of the Lord therefore we should not worship the Lord in pedestrian, everyday vernacular.”

These comments demonstrate that Latin, while not the dominant reason, is clearly a vital component for participants who favor the TLM. It was the second most coded theme in the data. The terms *mass*, *reverence*, *tradition*, and *language* are intimately connected in the open-ended answers for support for the TLM (Figure 2).

Figure 2

**Top Ten Terms used in open-ended responses from PLM respondents*



A follow-up open-ended question for the PLM respondents asked if the *Novus Ordo Mass* could be improved if the rubrics of the TLM were used but without incorporating the Latin language. Participants responded overwhelmingly that the TLM rubrics would improve the *Novus Ordo Mass*. But responses to this question again show many participants link Latin with the “superior” religious experience of the TLM.

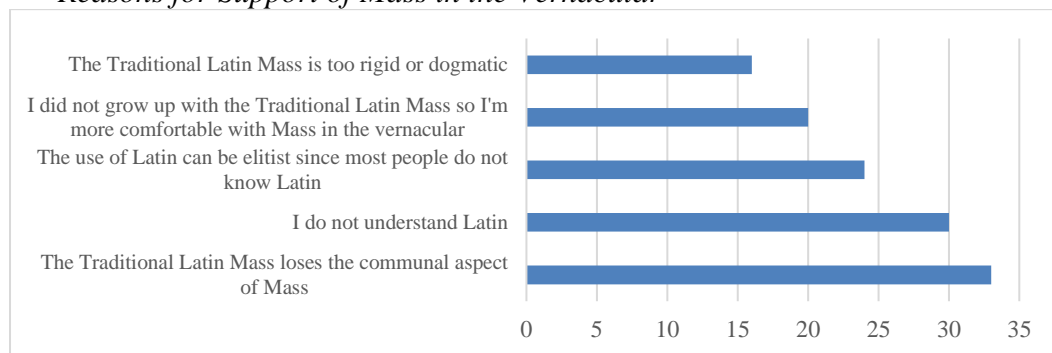
- “Really need Latin to blanket the rubrics with the sense of the Sacred. It’s beautiful to the ear.”
- “Restoration of the TLM as a whole is what is needed, Latin is an essential and integral part.”

Second Research Question: Do Catholics who support the *Novus Ordo* do so because of the use of the vernacular language? Or do they support it for other reasons?

Figure 3 notes that the main reasons for support for the *Novus Ordo* include communal aspect, communication, and avoiding elitism. This is consistent with Bennett’s thesis (2018) that groups who reject “sacred” languages do so to preserve communication over communion with the divine. Put another way, the supporters of the *Novus Ordo* think the divine element resides more in communion and intelligibility instead of solemn reverence and sanctified language at Mass. The PVM respondents reject the claim that a sacred language “heightens the mystery and allure of Mass.”

Figure 3

Reasons for Support of Mass in the Vernacular



As a follow up, PVM respondents were asked the following: *Could you explain more about why you prefer Mass in the vernacular?* These open-ended responses were coded. There were 193 comments. The thematic codes that emerged were the following in order of prominence.

- Intelligibility
- Anti-Latin
- Participation
- Antipathy toward PLM community
- Exodus

The major point of tension between the PLM and PVM respondents is over the question of language in the Mass. The PLM respondents consider the lack of intelligibility as a point of pride and theological appropriateness as it heightens the religious experience. The PVM respondents consider the lack of intelligibility the principal factor weighing against the TLM. The lack of intelligibility hinders their religious experience. Below are representative comments.

- “I want to know what is being said and what I am saying in response.]I would not go to a Mass in any language that I do not speak and understand unless I am in a foreign country.”
- “People can get much more out of mass when they can understand the readings, songs, and prayers.”
- “I am perfectly comfortable with Mass being celebrated in Latin by, and with those who understand and speak Latin. I include the homily. It the celebrant can preach in Latin and the congregation understand I'm ok with a Latin Mass.”
- “It is the language in which I pray. My imagination has been formed in and through this language and it is how I think. Often words or phrases from the Mass will resonate in my daily life when I hear or read things and I'm made mindful of the Eucharist.”

In the qualitative data, there is much antipathy toward the Latin language and particularly toward PLM supporters.

- “When I hear Latin being used in today’s mass, it reminds me of how strict the church was in my younger days. I think mass should be a loving and happy experience!”
- “I want to progress in my faith not regress to a language that further divides us in the church as Latin does or would if we return to its use.”
- “The presumption that Latin has the capacity to express and communicate the subtleties of belief and expression in a way English cannot is like saying no great opera can be written in English because it's just not possible to enjoy the music and words together.”
- “The domestic Church used the languages of the people. Jesus never even communicated in Latin, so it also has no such implied authority.”
- “In Latin, it's more of an observation of a performance and parishioners are an audience.”
- “The Mass is not some Harry Potter hocus pocus where you have to say the right magic words or Jesus won't come down into the eucharist.”
- “I resent the elitist position some Catholics hold that somehow the Latin Mass is superior.”
- “The parishioners I have encountered who regularly attend Latin mass carry a holier than thou attitude.”
- “It’s not a performance or something that should only be accessible to an elite minority.”

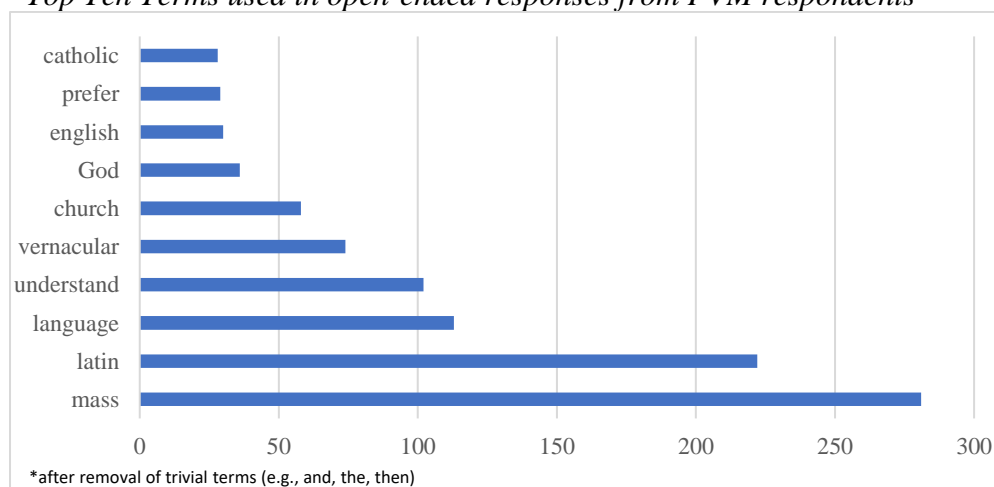
Another theme in the data from PVM respondents was that of *exodus* of young Catholics due to language policy. They feared that the return of exclusive use of the TLM or even expanded use the Latin language in the *Novus Ordo* would

increase the number of disaffiliated Catholics, particularly among the young Catholics. Ironically, the PLM respondents noted that they believe the expanded use of the TLM or at least more Latin in *Novus Ordo* would ensure a return of the Catholics who had already left due to “watered down” Masses in the wake of Vatican II.

Figure 4 includes the top 10 terms based on the responses from the PVM respondents. *Understanding, language, and vernacular* are prominent in the corpus of comments.

Figure 4

**Top Ten Terms used in open-ended responses from PVM respondents*



The demographic data below shows support for Latin and the TLM decreases with the age of the participant. *Table 13* and *Figure 5* illustrate this. What is notable is that many older participants in the qualitative data noted that they had “lived through” the TLM and welcomed the language change to the *Novus Ordo* because their experience with the TLM was not positive.

Table 13

Support for Latin and TLM by Age Range

	PLM	PVM	MSLM	Not Reported
18 - 24	80.65%	3.23%	15.05%	1.08%
25 - 34	72.46%	4.35%	21.26%	1.93%
35 - 44	69.00%	6.00%	24.00%	1.00%
45 - 54	70.83%	6.94%	18.06%	4.17%
55 - 64	73.15%	8.05%	14.77%	4.03%
65 - 74	63.04%	16.30%	19.57%	1.09%
75 - 84	69.44%	13.89%	11.11%	5.56%
85 or older	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%
Total	659	67	176	23

Figure 5

Support for TLM by Age Range

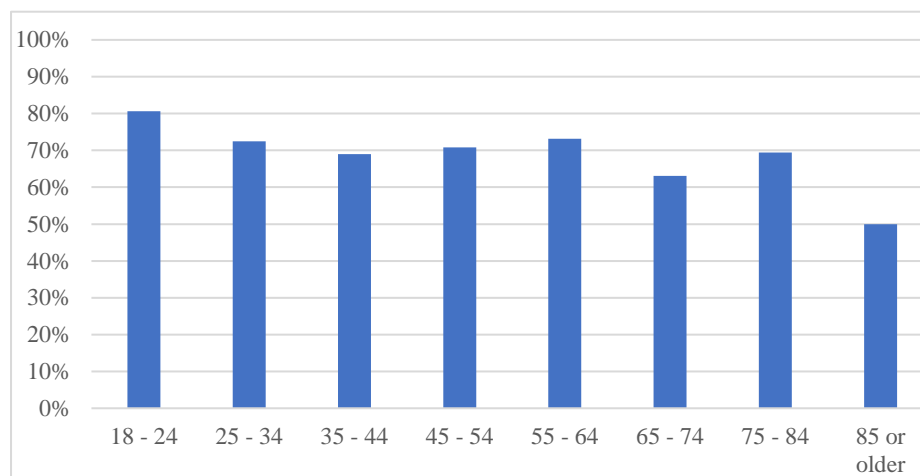
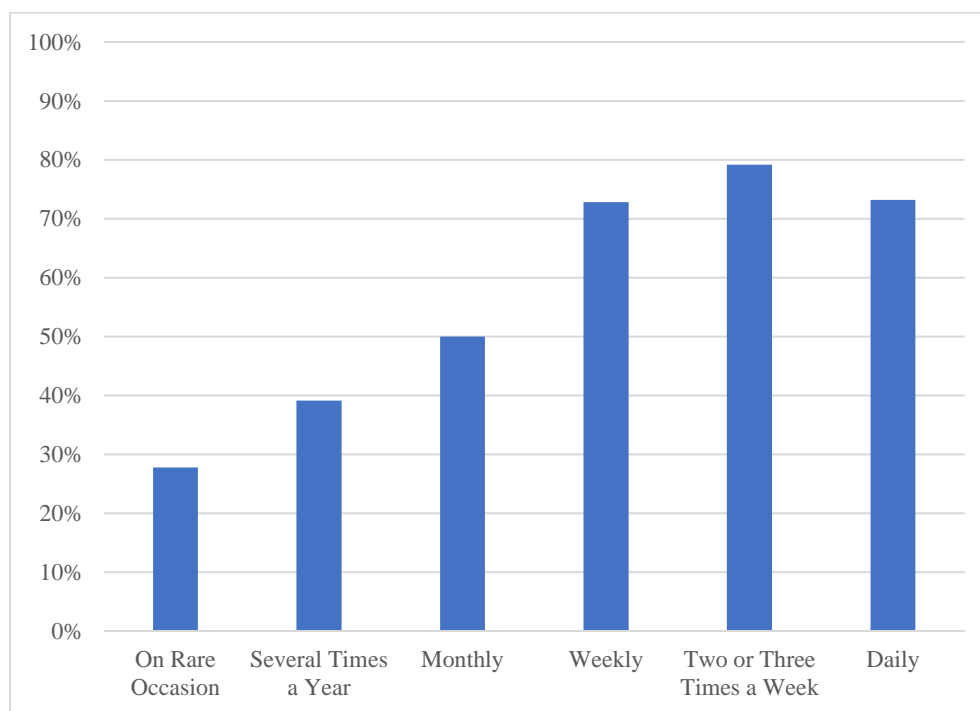


Figure 6 notes that support for Latin and TLM generally increases as frequency of Mass attendance increases.

Figure 6

Support for TLM by Frequency of Mass Attendance



DISCUSSION

In many ways, the results in this study confirm anecdotal evidence of a stark division between progressive and conservative American Catholics, particularly over questions regarding the most appropriate language for Mass. Below we note

several points based on our data.

First, both PLM and PVM respondents cite *universality* as major reason why they support Latin or the vernacular, respectively. PLM respondents claim Latin binds Catholics together since no one speaks it natively, and it is immutable. It gives no one special status. Thus, it gives Catholics a common language throughout the world. Beyond the universality, PLM respondents overwhelmingly cite Latin as part (though not entirely) of what promotes reverence at the TLM. And PLM respondents believe the use or non-use of the TLM affect more than just reverence at Mass. PLM respondents and other PLM writers claim with the decrease in Latin and traditional rubrics, the Mass and even general morality have declined. As Cuneo (1997) notes, many conservative Catholics believe there was a “watering down” (a phrase that appeared numerous times in the data) of Catholicism. He puts it like this: “Many who belong to this underground movement (i.e. ultra conservative Catholics)...think Latin and incense...gave way to Bob Dylan and blue jeans” (Cuneo, 1997, p. 4). Kloster (2019) conducted a survey with TLM attendees and claims those that attend such a Mass are far more likely to adhere to Catholic teaching on abortion, contraception, and gay marriage.

For their part, PVM respondents note that imposing Latin on the faithful by Church leaders is divisive because it is, in their view, elitist and Eurocentric. Far from binding Catholics together, PVM participants believe Latin divides the Catholic Church, at least at Mass. Privileging Latin gives European Catholics and Indo-European language speakers an advantage. Mass should be open to all vernaculars according to PVM participants because vernacular use increases participation, which ultimately increases communion with the divine. As Amar (2019) says, “I take issue with conflating Latin with Catholicism writ large” (para. 1). This sums up many of the PVM respondents’ attitudes. They do not think that Latin is the cultural nor linguistic heritage for all or even most Catholics.

Second, both “sides” claim the language choice by the “other side” hurts the religious experience for the faithful. The PLM respondents claim the Protestant critique of Latin has been absorbed by most Catholics. Several researchers (Bennet, 2018; Cuneo, 1997; Marx, 2013) have noted that a “conspiracy” element exists with some PLM supporters. Undoubtedly, this group would strongly resist such a label. However, comments do show a tendency toward a siege mentality. In fact, many of the writers noted above (and this is confirmed in our data) that there is a conspiracy element particularly in with regard to Vatican II. They think certain “forces” within or without the Catholic Church led to Vatican II and that this ecumenical council was illegitimate. And the proof often offered is the increase in use of the vernacular and the suppression of Latin. Language often figures prominently in political debates and in conspiracy theories.

Third, both sides claim the Mass preferred by the other side is too full of “theatrics.” Both sides claim the priest is “performing” in the Mass. The PLM respondents note the priests in the *Novus Ordo* have a tendency to ad-lib since they know the vernacular language, potentially leading to abuses and decreasing reverence. The Latin language curtails such adlibbing and forces the priest and the congregation to focus on the divine. On the other side, the PVM respondents claim that Latin forces the congregation out of active participation in the Mass and the focus becomes on the priest and his linguistic and phonological talent for Latin.

LIMITATIONS

We acknowledge that the results from our study will not support statistical inferences about the general American Catholic population because a “snowball” methodology is not probabilistic and may generate skewed or biased results (Sharma, 2017). Although our subsample allowed for a proportionately representative sample of the target population, this revised “quota sampling” approach is only a marginal improvement in representation and is still subject to bias (Bornstein et al., 2013; Franco et al., 2017). Respondents may refer the survey link to respondents who have similar characteristics or beliefs (Etikan et al., 2016). Because our research goals were aligned with uncovering how the role of sociolinguistic attitudes towards the Latin language affects support for the TLM or for the *Novus Ordo* Mass, rather than a broader generalization of survey results onto the population of American Catholics, the benefits to using this survey methodology outweighed the potential issues related to respondent bias.

PLM respondents may have indeed referred the survey at a higher rate and encouraged like-minded individuals to complete it. The number of 71% favoring the TLM is unquestionably skewed, but our focus was on language attitudes. Other studies indicate that while support for Latin and the TLM is growing, it still represents a small percentage of American Catholics (Marx, 2013; Rocca, 2021). To complicate matters and as Marx (2013) notes, few disinterested studies have attempted to ascertain true numbers of PLM supporters. Most studies that purport to have accurate numbers are biased. Studies are often conducted by “both sides” of the Latin debate to support a certain theological or pastoral position. In addition, the authors of this study were contacted numerous times by PLM supporters who thanked us for “promoting” the TLM. It would seem that this survey alone gave them hope that we would be using this study to support and promote Latin. This was never our intention.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Recent developments are likely to keep this language debate alive. On July 16, 2021 (as we were completing our survey), Pope Francis published a Muto Propio entitled *Traditionis Custodes*. In this document, Francis severely limited Latin at Mass. The reactions from the TLM proponents were swift. They accused Francis of hurting the spirituality of the Mass and even of not being a duly-elected pope. Francis and the Vatican note that the division caused by some proponents of the TLM spurred this action of restricting the use of the TLM and Latin in general.

More research is needed to understand the role of Latin in the sociolinguistic views of American Catholics, but for now it is clear that the question of language looms large and the controversy is not likely to dissipate soon. Church officials are left to struggle with a language policy plan that is acceptable to very disparate views within the Catholic Church and in different parts of the world as evidence by our data from American Catholics. But perhaps this study will provide some insight from applied linguistics that may “reach relevant stake-holders and policy-decision centres” (Erdocia, 2021, p. 18) as they seek to outline a policy.

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APPENDIX I
SURVEY FOR THOSE SUPPORTING EXCLUSIVE USE OR
SUBSTANTIAL USE OF LATIN AT MASS

1) What is your age?

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 75 - 84
- 85 or older

2) What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

3) How would you describe yourself? Please select all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

4) In which country do you currently reside?

(Next question was skipped unless U.S. was answered.)

5) In which state do you currently reside?

drop down menu of fifty states

6) What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- Less than a high school diploma
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)
- Some college, no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, Med)
- Doctorate or professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, PhD)

7) Which statement best describes your language ability?

- I am monolingual.
- In addition to my native language, I have some ability in one or more other languages.
- I am bilingual or multilingual.

(Next question was skipped if monolingual was answered.)

8) In addition to English, select the language that you can use with some degree of proficiency. You may select more than one.

- Arabic
- Cantonese
- French
- German
- Haitian Creole
- Italian
- Korean
- Latin
- Mandarin
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese
- Other _____

9) Which statement best applies to you?

- I am a Catholic lay person.
- I am a Catholic deacon.
- I am a Catholic religious (sister, nun, brother).
- I am a Catholic priest.
- I am a non-Catholic lay person.
- I am a non-Catholic minister.

10) Attendance How often do you attend a Catholic Mass?

- daily
- two or three times a week
- weekly
- monthly
- several times a year
- on rare occasions
- never

11) Which of the following statements regarding the use of the Latin language at Catholic Masses would you agree with most? (In the statements below, vernacular signifies the language of the local people.)

- I. Latin should not be used at Catholic Masses.
- II. Latin should not be used during Mass in the vernacular. However, dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.
- III. A few Latin prayers could be included during Mass in the vernacular at the discretion of the priest or pastor. And dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.

- IV. A few Latin prayers should be required during all Masses in the vernacular. And dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.
- V. A few Latin prayers should be required during all Masses in the vernacular. And to the extent possible, dioceses should require every parish to offer at least one Traditional Latin Mass option on Sunday.
- VI. The vernacular Mass should be universally abolished and replaced with the Traditional Latin Mass.

(Participants who selected III – VI, were asked the following.)

12) Which of these are reasons for your support of the use of Latin in a vernacular language Mass or your support for the Traditional Latin Mass? You may select more than one answer.

- The Traditional Latin Mass helps me be more reverent.
- Latin is a more sacred language.
- Latin has traditionally been the language of the Catholic Church.
- The form of the Traditional Latin Mass (Examples: more periods of silence, priest facing the altar with his back to the congregation, kneeling to receive Communion) is more reverent.
- Latin is a superior and more precise language in comparison to modern languages.
- The use of Latin avoids possible translation errors .
- I support the option of the Traditional Latin Mass for Catholics who would like it, but I would rarely if ever attend.
- If you have other reasons, please specify below.
 - _____

13) Please share specific elements which draw you to support Latin and/or the Traditional Latin Mass.

14) Do you think adopting some of the rubrics of the Traditional Latin Mass (examples: more periods of silence, priest facing the altar with his back to the congregation, kneeling to receive Communion, etc.) without the Latin language would improve the Mass as a religious experience? Please explain your answer.

APPENDIX II
SURVEY FOR THOSE SUPPORTING VERNACULAR LANGUAGE AT MASS

1) – 10) were the same as above

11) Which of the following statements regarding the use of the Latin language at Catholic Masses would you agree with most? (In the statements below, vernacular signifies the language of the local people.)

- I. Latin should not be used at Catholic Masses.
- II. Latin should not be used during Mass in the vernacular. However, dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.
- III. A few Latin prayers could be included during Mass in the vernacular at the discretion of the priest or pastor. And dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.
- IV. A few Latin prayers should be required during all Masses in the vernacular. And dioceses should permit the Traditional Latin Mass in a select number of parishes.
- V. A few Latin prayers should be required during all Masses in the vernacular. And to the extent possible, dioceses should require every parish to offer at least one Traditional Latin Mass option on Sunday.
- VI. The vernacular Mass should be universally abolished and replaced with the Traditional Latin Mass.

(Participants who selected I or II, were asked the following.)

12) Which of these are reasons for your support of the use of the vernacular (the language of the local people) at Mass? You may select more than one answer.

- I do not understand Latin.
- The Traditional Latin Mass is too rigid or dogmatic.
- The use of Latin can be elitist since most people do not know Latin.
- The Traditional Latin Mass loses the communal aspect of Mass.
- I did not grow up with the Traditional Latin Mass, so I'm more comfortable with Mass in the vernacular.

13) Could you explain more about why you prefer Mass in the vernacular?
