






Discoveries, missions and interlinguistic meetings of the Portuguese language in the East

Carlos ASSUNÇÃO^{1,a} , Gonçalo FERNANDES^{1,b} , Susana FONTES^{1,c} ,
Sónia COELHO^{1,d} , Maria Luísa SOARES^{1,e} 

¹ Centro de estudos em Letras / Center for Studies in Letters (CEL), Universidade de Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Vila Real, Portugal

✉ ^acassunca@utad.pt

✉ ^bgf@utad.pt

✉ ^csfontes@utad.pt

✉ ^dccoelho@utad.pt

✉ ^elsoares@utad.pt

Received: 15/10/2021; Accepted: 14/02/2022

Abstract

The main goal of this research is to highlight the relevance of the Portuguese language as a lingua franca and a metalanguage for the description of non-European languages, namely Japanese, in the Portuguese colonization context and missionary activities in the East. In order to achieve this purpose, we present three topics: the first is related to the moment when Portuguese became the vehicular language for the first translations of several Amerindian, African, and Asian languages, unknown by Europeans, until the age of expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; in a second topic, we approach the Jesuit epistolography concerning Japan in order to understand the process of acquiring and describing this language; the third is a brief analysis of the *Art of the Japanese Language* by João Rodrigues, evidencing some innovative aspects.

Keywords: Missionary linguistics; Portuguese language; Japanese language; East.

Resumen

El objetivo principal de este trabajo es resaltar la relevancia de la lengua portuguesa como lengua franca y metalenguaje de descripción de otras lenguas non-europeas, en particular el Japonés, en el contexto de la colonización portuguesa y la evangelización de las personas en el Oriente. Para lograr este objetivo, presentamos tres temas para su desarrollo: un tema está relacionado con el momento en que el portugués se convirtió en el idioma vehicular de las primeras traducciones de varias lenguas amerindias, africanas y asiáticas, desconocidas para los europeos hasta la época de expansión en los siglos XVI y XVII; en un segundo tema, nos acercamos a la epistolografía jesuita sobre Japón para comprender el proceso de adquisición y descripción de este idioma; el tercer tema es un breve análisis del *Arte de la Lengua Japonesa* de João Rodrigues, evidenciando algunos aspectos innovadores.

Palabras clave: Lingüística misionera; lengua Portuguesa; lengua Japonesa; Oriente.



1. INTRODUCTION

The Portuguese language in the modern period has been studied from the perspective of the companion language of the Empire. Many of this production has been studied by prominent researchers, mostly in the two past decades, such as, v.g., Matos (1968), Buescu (1983), Suzuki (1987), Baxter (1996), Maruyama (1996, 2004), Pfänder & Ferreira (2006), Fonseca (2006), Jayasuriya (2008), Clements (2009), Ames (2009), Zwartjes (2011), Fangze (2011), Cardoso (2014, 2016), Assunção (2016), Fernandes & Assunção (2018), Muru (2018), Nakaema (2021). The approach, rooted in the famous sentence *la lengua, compañera del Imperio*, was introduced by the *Gramática de la Lengua Castellana* by Antonio de Nebrija, published in 1492. In Portugal, Fernão de Oliveira, in the first grammar of the Portuguese language, follows the same tone:

E desta feyção nos obrigarão a que ainda agora trabalhemos em aprender e apurar o seu esquecendo nos do nosso não façamos assy mas tornemos sobre nos agora que he tempo e somos senhores porque milhor he que ensinemos a Guine ca que sejamos ensinados de Roma: ainda que ella agora teuera toda sua valia e preço. E não desconfiemos da nossa lingua porque os homens fazem a lingua e não a lingoa os homens. (Oliveira 2015: 6)

[And that way they will make us learn their language and forget ours; let us not do it that way but let us teach better here in Guinea than to be taught from Rome: even now it has its value and price. Let us not mistrust our language because men create the language / and not the other way around.]

The maxim of Nebrija continued to be appropriated in Portugal by João de Barros. Grammarian and chronicler, João de Barros gave a preview of the language and its permanence in Africa and the East in *Décadas da Ásia*. He wrote, prophetically:

As armas e padrões portugueses, postos em África e na Ásia, e em tantas mil ilhas fora da repartição das três partes da Terra, materiais são e pode-os o tempo gastar; pêro não gastará doutrina, costumes, linguagem que os Portugueses nestas terras deixarem. (Barros 1988: 405)

[The Portuguese weapons and standards, brought into Africa and Asia, and on so many islands outside the division of the three parts of the Earth, and the materials, may disappear with time; but it will not weaken the doctrine, customs, language that the Portuguese leave in these lands.]

Also, in the *Gramática da Língua Portuguesa* [Grammar of the Portuguese Language] published by Barros in 1540 — a work that incorporates *Diálogo em Louvor da nossa Língua* (Dialogue in Praise of our Language) — the PL (*Língua Portuguesa* - Portuguese Language) is celebrated as an instrument of political cohesion for the empire with the task of spreading Christianity throughout the world. The saying a *língua, companheira do império* (language, companion of the Empire) has since been accepted as key to understanding both linguistic theory and the practices that deal with the Portuguese language at the beginning of modernity. The widespread influence of this historiographical approach triggered two essential phenomena: 1) Portuguese became the vehicular language for the first translations of several Amerindian, African, and Asian languages unknown to Europeans until the age of expansion; 2) Portuguese has become a lingua franca used by communities of multilingual European and non-European merchants, travelers, and missionaries in Asian coasts, well beyond the spatiality and temporality of the Portuguese imperial presence. The impact of these phenomena is evidenced by the production of hundreds of reports and descriptions, including lists of words, dictionaries, and grammars, compiled mainly by missionaries, in particular the Jesuits, and occasionally by sea captains, merchants, and travelers (Curto 1998: 418–419). Surprisingly, these sources remain scattered and scarcely studied, although their

relevance has already led to pioneering work carried out by some linguists. Zwartjes (2011: 261) says that "(...) pre-modern missionary sources have in the past been largely neglected. Scholars have often confined themselves to pointing out the shortcomings of the Latin-based model and the inappropriateness of imposing Eurocentric concepts onto other languages." These sources use Portuguese as a vehicular language to describe and translate languages of all these peoples of the Portuguese Empire, from Brazil to the African and Asian territories, at the beginning of modernity.

2. HISTORIOGRAPHIC AND EPISTOLOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

This civilizing enterprise, at its beginning, was overseen by the Portuguese Crown. Cláudio Pinheiro mentions that in the first conquests of North Africa there were highly trained professionals, with "cartógrafos, navegadores, pilotos, além de 17 especialistas em línguas – quatro africanos peritos em idiomas da costa ocidental africana, três portugueses falantes de línguas Banto e árabe, e outros dez degredados, usados como intérpretes." (Pinheiro 2008: 29-30) [...cartographers, navigators, pilots, as well as 17 language specialists for the communication: four African language experts from the West African coast, three Portuguese speakers of Bantu and Arabic languages, and ten other exiled, used as interpreters.] Later, Vasco da Gama's armada to India assumed, in addition to all nautical and war material, that "houve ainda o investimento pesado que se fez em técnicas de comunicação, sem as quais, toda a ação expansionista e a montagem de um aparato colonialista não seriam possíveis." (Pinheiro 2008: 30) [a heavy investment in communication techniques, without which all expansionist action and the assembly of a colonialist state would not have been possible.] The issue of communication with the local population was vital "para a exploração, o comércio e, mais tarde, as atividades de missão que acompanharam o processo de expansão imperial dos Estados modernos europeus" (Pinheiro 2008: 30) [for exploration, trade, and, later, the mission activities that accompanied the process of imperial expansion of modern European states.]

However, the Portuguese Crown soon declined much of its responsibility in this civilizing enterprise. This intercultural phenomenon was only possible through the missionaries. The importance of missions in the dissemination/learning of languages and in the creation of interlinguistic texts is mainly due to the need for dissemination of the Christian faith, or, as Zwartjes (2011: 4) mentions, "their main purpose was to communicate with the local people and to teach them the Christian faith." Their dictionaries and glossaries attest the efforts of missionaries in the interpretation of native languages and retain memories and gestures of those intercultural encounters.

From the efforts of learning languages and their teaching to novices, the first grammars were born, and the literacy or transcription of their writing in the Latin alphabet. Some of these languages were known only through orality. The arrival of typography, first to Goa (1556) and then to Macau (1584-1588) and Japan (1591), stimulated the publication and proliferation of teaching manuals, booklets, dictionaries, catechisms, grammars, dictionaries, letters, etc. The arrival of typography to these people was not the initiative of the Portuguese royal power: it was driven by the dynamic generated by missions in the dissemination of the Christian faith (Fonseca 2006: 87-97).

And it was in this way that the Portuguese discoveries in the East provided a true meeting of civilizations and cultures, helped by the Portuguese language. As Silva says,

Como se sabe, houve duas condições fundamentais para que esse encontro se pudesse realizar: primeiro foi que as terras e nações, onde as várias culturas floresciam, se conhecessem e isso fizeram os navegantes descobridores desde a África meridional, à Índia, ao Vietnã, à China, ao Japão, às Molucas. Mas depois, para que houvesse diálogo frutuoso e perene, começou outro empreendimento menos espectacular mas também difícil e complementar: o estudo e aprofundamento científico e literário das diversas ou diversíssimas línguas desses povos. Sem o conhecimento das línguas desses povos não se podia dialogar. Constituiu um aspecto indeclinável, no qual os portugueses se evidenciaram como verdadeiros pioneiros. (Silva 2000: 79)

[As is well-known, there were two fundamental conditions for this meeting to be held: first was that the lands and nations, where the various cultures flourished, knew each other and this made the discoverers from South Africa, India, Vietnam, China, Japan, the Moluccas. But then, in the event of fruitful and perennial dialogue, another less spectacular but also difficult and complementary undertaking began: the study and scientific and literary deepening of the various or diverse languages of these people. Without the knowledge of the languages of these people, one could not dialogue. It was an inevitable aspect, in which the Portuguese were shown as true pioneers.]

This was one of the most relevant aspects of the work of missionaries, especially the Jesuit missionaries, but also those of other religious orders: that of learning the languages of the people found by the Portuguese and teaching Portuguese to these new people. This achievement is the greatest internationalization ever of the Portuguese language (PL).

To illustrate all this intercultural meeting in which the PL served as a metalanguage for the description of many of the languages of the East; PL was as well the lingua franca in the East by seeing the impressive set of dictionaries, vocabularies, and glossaries elaborated based on the texts of David Lopes and Luís de Matos, Barbosa Machado, Inocêncio Silva, Simão Cardoso, Cunha Rivara, Céu Fonseca, Toru Maruyama, Verdelho, and Zwartjes (Assunção 2016: 75-87).

The learning of Japanese assumes a privileged place in the strategies of evangelization by allowing an effective dialogue with the people to be conquered. The desire to attract an ever-growing population led missionaries to create schools for the education of children while transmitting the rudiments of the Christian doctrine.

According to Laborinho (2005: 79),

A aprendizagem da língua japonesa, na perspectiva das suas múltiplas utilizações (a comunicação, o ensino, a tradução), conduz a uma atenta observação do sistema complexo que ela constitui, além de que a visão de fora (estrangeiros provenientes de uma diferente família linguística) permitirá uma abordagem contrastiva que terá poucas hipóteses de se repetir.

É assim que encontramos muitas observações sobre as diferenças entre escrita e fala no japonês, ou as distintas formas de falar de homens e mulheres, ainda que escrevam da mesma maneira, ou o modo como o japonês falado na capital e nos palácios divergia do seu uso nas províncias onde vivia a generalidade da população. A compreensão destes fenómenos enforma as obras linguísticas elaboradas pelos missionários, a que se junta a reflexão sobre as dificuldades de transcrever o material linguístico de um alfabeto para outro, isto é, de um sistema de escrita ideográfica para um sistema alfabético.

[Learning Japanese, from the perspective of its multiple uses (communication, teaching, translation), leads to careful observation of its complex system, and the outside view (foreigners from a different linguistic family) allows a contrasting approach that will have little chance of repeating itself.

This is how we find many observations of the differences between the oral and written aspects of the Japanese language; the different ways of speaking among men and women, although they wrote in the same way; or the way Japanese is spoken in the capital and in the palaces, that diverged from its use in the provinces, where the generality of the population lived. The understanding of these phenomena forms the linguistic works elaborated by the missionaries, which is added to reflection on the difficulties of transcribing the linguistic material from one alphabet to another – that is, from an ideographic writing system to an alphabetic system.]

The letters sent to Portugal and Spain, especially by Jesuit missionaries, are very important historical documents to understand the knowledge that missionaries had of the languages found in the East, among other important events. In fact, in the prologue to the edition of the *Letters* that came out in 1562, Father Manuel Álvares, on the value of publishing some of these letters in the press, states that:

De entre estas cartas, a zona mais privilegiada pela imprensa era o Japão e, por esta razão, passaram a ser conhecidas como cartas do Japão, com tiragens muito significativas para a época. As edições de 1570 tiveram uma tiragem de mil exemplares cada, número que nos pode levar a pensar que as tiragens nem sempre seriam tão pequenas quanto poderíamos supor. (Garcia 1997: 13)

[Among these letters, the area most privileged by the press was Japan and, for this reason, they came to be known as letters from Japan, with significant printings for the time. The editions of 1570 had a circulation of a thousand copies each, a number that may lead us to think that the printings would not always be as small as we might assume.]

Among these letters, there is a set that presents information about the Japanese language. Father Baltasar Gago describes the origin of Japanese letters:

Neste tempo não tinham letras: este princípio avera dous mil e duzentos annos. Dahi a muito tempo vierão as letras da China, que com dificuldade se aprendem, e o primeiro livro veo da China. Daqui tomarão huns caracteres e maneira de letra, com que se entendem muito mais facilmente que com as letras da China (Cartas 1993: I, fl. 100).

[During that period, they did not have letters: we would have to wait around two thousand two hundred years. Then, the Chinese letters, being very hard to learn, appeared, as well as the first book, which was also Chinese. From that moment on, the Chinese started using some characters and handwriting with which they understood each other much easier than with the former letters.]

Father Lourenço Mexia, in 1584, offers a detailed description of the Japanese language:

A lingua he a mais grave, e copiosa que creio ha, porque em muitas cousas excede a grega, e latina, tem infinidade de vocabulos, e modos pera declarar a mesma cousa, e tem tanto que fazer em se aprender, que não somente os nossos que ha mais de vinte annos que la andão, mas os naturaes aprendem cousas novas. Tem outra cousa (que creio que se não acha em nenhuma lingua) que se aprende a Reithorica e boa criação cõ ella. Não pode ninguem saber Japão que não saiba logo como ha de falar aos grandes, e aos pequenos, altos e baixos e o decoro que se ha de guardar com todos, e tem particulares verbos e nomes e modos de falar pera huns, e outros. Ja os nossos têm feito arte da Gramática e Calepino, ou Vocabulário, e começarão o Nisolio, ou tesouro. A lingoagem da escritura he mui diferente da pratica e assi huma, como a outra he mui varia, e abundante e cõ ser tão abundante em poucas palavras cõprendem muito. A letra he cousa infinita, nem se acha pessoa que a saiba toda, porque tem duas maneiras de A b c, e cada hum de mais de corenta letras, e cada letra tem muitas figuras: e alem disto tem letra de figuras como os Chins, que he cousa que nunca se acaba de aprender. E afora estas figuras tem outras proprias pera as mesmas cousas. Tem no escrever muito engenho, e artificio porque o que se não pode explicar na lingua se declara na letra. (Cartas 1993: II, fl. 123r)

[This language is the greatest and most abundant I believe to exist because, in many aspects, it exceeds the Greek and Latin ones for it has a never-ending number of words and ways to refer the same things; plus, it implies such huge effort in learning that not only our brothers who have been living there for over twenty years, but even the native speakers are continuously learning new things. Moreover, this language has one other characteristic (which I find unique and exclusive and cannot be found in any other) which is that one can learn rhetoric and politeness through its structures. There is no soul who knows how to speak Japanese and does not immediately know how to address themselves both to the rich and the poor, and to high society and low society. Furthermore, the speakers are also aware of the decorum to be used with every one of those members of the society, since this is accomplished thanks to the fact that there are specific verbs, nouns, and ways of speaking for each of those social classes. Bearing such things in mind, our people (the priests) have been working on the art of grammar and vocabulary (or Calepino) and have also started arranging the Nisolio (or thesaurus). The language used in writing is very different from the

one used in everyday speech; however, the first and the second are so rich and abundant that a few words can express a great number of meanings. As to alphabet letters, they are never-ending and one cannot find any single native speaker who knows them all because for every letter – a, b, c – there are over forty versions, and each letter has a lot of symbols or figures. For instance, the symbols referring to the Chins are infinite. And moreover, the variety of symbols, one can be speaking about the same things and choose different symbols that are synonyms. This way of writing must be ingenious and artful because what cannot be explained through the semantics of language must be shown by means of alphabetical letters.]

Language learning was of particular importance in achieving the desired objective, the conversion of Japanese people. In this regard, Luís Dalmeida said in November 1559: "We are all well, praise the Lord, and we practice learning the language to help these Christians" ([Cartas 1993: I, fl.62r](#)).

Brother João Fernandez de Bungo corroborates this intention:

Tambem ensina as letras de Japão aos filhos dos Christãos, porque antes as aprendião nos mosteiros dos seus Bonzos, onde depois de aprenderem ficavão filhos do demonio, polos muitos maos costumes e vicios que os Bôzoz ensinão aos moços que tem em seus mosteiros: e por impedir este mal ordenou o padre que todos os filhos dos christãos viessem aqui a casa aprender suas mesmas letras, pera que juntamente com ellas bebessem a Doutrina Christã. ([Cartas 1993: I, fl. 77](#))

[He also teaches Japanese lettering to the children of these Christians, because they used to first learn them in the bonzes' monasteries, which turned these young men into children of the devil due to the bad moral behavior, customs, and habits that the bonzes taught the novices they raised in their monasteries: and so to prevent such evil, he ordered the priest that all children of the Christians would come there to learn the already mentioned lettering and through it they would receive the Christian faith.]

There are reports of priests who were completely fluent in Japanese:

Antre os irmãos que vieram a Japão, da lingoa nenhum chegou ao irmão João Frz, nem me parece que o haverá por muitos que venhão. Mas este mancebo que anda comigo tem tanta graça no que diz, que rouba os corações daqueles com quem fala: tera agora vinte e dous anos, tem muita parte da sagrada escritura na memória. ([Cartas 1993, I: fl. 84](#))

[Among the brothers who came to Japan, no one has (or will) excelled Brother John Frz. Nevertheless, this young man who accompanies me has such grace in what he says that he steals the hearts of those he speaks to: he must now be twenty-two years old and bears in his memory a great amount of the Holy Scripture.]

O irmão João Fernandez, porque sabe bem a língua de Japão se occupa em ensinar aos baptizados. ([Cartas 1993: I, fl. 101](#))

[Brother João Fernandez, as he knows the Japanese language so well, has been spending his time teaching the baptized ones.]

Also, some grammar compendiums and vocabulary books appear in the *Letters*. Father Luís Fróis, in a letter of 3 October 1564, refers:

Por em Japão até agora não aver arte conforme a ordem que tem a latina por onde se padecia detrimento no aprender da lingoa, determinou o irmão João Fernandez (por então ter algum vagar, e desposição pera se ocupar nisso) de a fazer com suas conjugações, praeteritos, sintaxi e mais regras necessárias cõ dous vocabulos por ordem do alfabeto hum que começa em Portugues, e outro na mesma lingoa. Gastou em compor isto seis ou sete meses, até que pela bondade de Deos lhe deu fim, não perdendo nada de suas pregações e exercícios costumados, que foi huma das mais necessárias cousas que cá se avião mister, pera com a língua se poder fazer fruto nas almas. ([Cartas 1993: I, fl. 146v-147](#))

[Because in Japan, so far, there seems to have been no art like the Latin one, which has led us to have great difficulty learning Japanese, Brother João Fernandez has decided (having always been free and willing to do so) to learn the art of this language as follows: he has taken the conjugations, verb tenses, syntax and

further linguistic rules and has analyzed them in bilingual terms of comparison. In other words, the grammar rules have been applied to the Portuguese word / Japanese correspondent word pair. It took him six or seven months to do it until the moment God's will put an end to it. Having achieved such purpose, our brother did not forget his religious mission since he maintained his preaching and usual tasks, which were the things these people were in most need of so the language would have its fruits in these people's souls.]

In addition to mentioning this problem in the *Letters*, Father Luís Fróis, in the work *History of Japan*, again alluded to texts of a linguistic nature for the study of the Japanese language. In this regard, he refers to a Japanese doctor, converted in 1560: being an "illustrious speaker of the Japanese language [...] his research was the foundation to study and create Art in Japanese language and its very copious vocabulary." (Fróis [1563] 1976-1984: I, 172-173)

Luís Fróis himself, in collaboration with João Fernandes, also began in 1563:

(...) huma traça da primeira arte que se fez em Japão, ordenando suas conjugações e sintaxis, e hum pedaço de vocabulario, mas como ainda era novo na terra e tinha tão pouca noticia da lingua, não foi mais que huma previa despozissão, que depois podesse dar luz à Arte e vocabulario, que se fez dahi a perto de vinte anos. (Fróis [1563] 1976-84: I, 356/357)

[... a draft of the first art documents ever made in Japan, by organizing all the conjugations, and syntax, and a short list of vocabulary. However, because I had recently arrived in that land and had little information about the language, that draft was no more than a primary raw material that could eventually give birth to Art and vocabulary, which were to be achieved only about twenty years later.]

Father Gaspar Coelho, in his annual letter of 1582, refers to books of the same genre but does not specify his authorship: "The Art of Japanese has been improved this year, and we hold lists of vocabulary and some treatises in Japanese." (Cartas 1993: II, fl. 28)

According to Barbosa Machado, of all the authors mentioned in the letters, there is only an indication of books in Japanese by three authors: Father Balthazar Gago, Duarte da Silva, and Gaspar Vilela. Father Balthazar Gago declared to have written "in Japanese the treatise which clearly shows the great difference that there is between the law of Christ and that of Japan" (Machado 1965-1967: 444); Father Duarte da Silva mentioned the "Art of the Japanese language. Ms." and the vocabulary of the Japanese language, while Father Gaspar Vilela referred the "controversies against all the sects of Japan" (Machado 1965-1967: 444).

3. THE JAPANESE BOOKS

Among the best-known works of this interculturality, three stand out: *Dictionarium latinum-lusitanum ac Iaponicum ex Ambrosii Calepini, Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam* with the declaration in Portuguese, and *Arte da Lingoa de Japam*.

If the dictionary and vocabulary are major works of Eurasian lexicography, the best-known of all works published in Japan by Portuguese missionaries is the *Arte da lingoa de Iapam* by Father João Rodrigues, which was published in Nagasaki between 1604 and 1608, of which a brief version was published in Macau in the year 1620. Rodrigues' grammar is a remarkable work that remains a valuable instrument of reference for Japanese scholars today, with a great abundance of quotes and examples. This is a monumental work that has not yet been surpassed.

João Rodrigues still has the merit of clarifying many problems about the Japanese language, being the only source to know the pronunciation of Japanese words at that time, due

to ignoring the phonetic correspondence of Chinese characters that Japanese uses and that have since evolved and whose pronunciation has been changed (Doi 1976).

In volume I of this work, João Rodrigues deals with nouns, pronouns, and verbs. In the chapter on verbs, Rodrigues presents a work that can be considered unprecedented, not only at that time but also in the modern grammars of the Japanese language. The fact that Rodrigues defined the various tenses of a verb, applying to them the complicated system of conjugation of Portuguese verbs, deserves great admiration from the Japanese reader. An essentially anti-grammatical language, Japanese is now spoken, written, and read by about 130 million people, with no one, with rare exceptions, being able to structure a grammar as did Father João Rodrigues almost four centuries ago, as Doi (1976) mentions in the introduction of the facsimile edition.

In the context of conjugations, from the personal infinitive to the present imperative, Rodrigues attributes to the Japanese language the appropriate use of each conjugated verb, distinguishing them only by means of suffixes. Doi draws the reader's attention to the variations in meaning resulting from the classification, sometimes in the present of the indicative, sometimes in the imperfect future of the conjunctive, or even in the conditional, in which the grammatical deficiency imposes on the spoken language a differentiation of sound, therefore distinct from the written language.

In the second part of his *Art*, João Rodrigues indicates the mistakes that are usually made by foreigners in translation into Japanese and warns the reader of the need to translate the meaning of the sentence instead of producing a word-to-word version. It also includes a treatise on Japanese poetry, divided into Chinese poetry translated into Japanese and pure Japanese poetry, which is undoubtedly the first Japanese poetry explained in a Western language.

In the chapter on the practical application of the rules, the explanations offered by João Rodrigues are even more detailed. Here, several etymological problems are raised, referencing the history of Japan's relations with China and Mongolia. This chapter refers to the Chinese characters integrated into the Japanese language, perfected with the invention of *kana* characters.

Regarding auxiliary particles, whose variety and abundance are perhaps unique in the history of human civilization, Rodrigues reveals a deep knowledge, with examples based on the literary archives that were scarce at that time.

The author also dedicates a long chapter to the proper names of emperors, feudal lords, and high dignitaries of the shogunate and to localities related to Western activities in Japan. He also cites the designations of the imperial era, comparing them with the years of the Christian calendar. This exhaustive work has the value of acting as an introduction to the geography and history of Japan.

In the third part, Rodrigues goes beyond the objectives of grammar and discusses about style, using more than twelve pages with rules and etiquette on writing letters. He also adds a brief but detailed treatise on weights, measures, and number systems, as well as a table of conversions.

Na parte final, envereda pela História e apresenta uma longa lista dos imperadores japoneses, expando ainda a origem do budismo, confucionismo e taoísmo na China e sugerindo que os chineses seriam descendentes das tribos de Israel, teoria que desenvolverá na sua História. Nesta longa exposição, nomeia ainda os lendários deuses e deusas que aparecem nas antigas crônicas japonesas como Nihongi e Kojiki e, por fim, inclui uma cronologia comparativa, com início em Adão e termo no nascimento de Cristo. (Laborinho 2005: 81)

[In the final part, he goes through history and presents a long list of Japanese emperors, also exposing the origin of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism in China and suggesting that the Chinese would be descendants of the tribes of Israel, a theory that will develop in its history. In this long exhibition, he also names the legendary gods and goddesses that appear in ancient Japanese chronicles such as Nihongi and Kojiki and, finally, includes a comparative chronology, beginning with Adam and ending with the birth of Christ.]

In linguistic and communication terms, we cannot fail to mention Rodrigues' treatment of "particles" in his *Arte*, which, in our view, represents an innovation in comparison to the European tradition. In fact, as we verified previously (Fernandes & Assunção 2018), Rodrigues discontinues the traditional Latin grammar terminology, introducing, for example, honorific and humble or humiliating particles (Fernandes & Assunção 2018: 193). He does not classify these particles amongst the designations of prefixes and suffixes, but they were added to the nouns or verbs radicals or roots. For him, the most frequent Japanese "prefixes" were *nite-*, *ni-*, *de-*, and *goza-*:

(...) em quanto particula se pospoem às rayzes de todas as particulas que se ajuntão a os verbos, assi honorativas, como humiliativas, como tambem às que significão fazer, sem alterar nada sua significação. Vt, *Naravaresoro*, *Yumi mōxisoro*, *Ague mairaxesoro*, *Cacaxeraresoro* [...] As particulas com que propriamente se compoem quanto verbo são quatro conuem a saber. *Nite*, *Ni*, *De*, *Goza*, *Vt Nitesoro*, *Nisoro*, *Desoro*, *Gozasoro*. (Rodrigues 1604-1608: 52v)

[As for particles, they add the radicals of all particles, which they connect to verbs. This is the case for honorific as well as humiliating particles, which means to do without changing its meaning, as in *naravaresoro*, *yumi mōxisoro*, *ague mairaxesoro*, *cacaxeraresoro*. [...] Among particles, which properly compose the verbs, there are four which we ought to know: *nite*, *ni*, *de*, and *goza*, as in *nitesoro*, *nisoro*, *desoro*, *gozasoro*.]

Rodrigues also examines the most usual address forms used by Japanese people in writing styles, such as in religious texts (*naiden*) and in secular texts (*gueden*). He, e.g., states that *-sama* was the most common particle for the nouns:

Sama, id est, *Yōna*, id est, *semelhante*, assim como, modo, et cetera. Esta particula antigamente nam tinha grao de honra, mas agora he a mais comum, e vsada de quantas ha, e soamente se pospoem a pessoas, e nam a outras cousas, ut *Vyesama*, id est, *Vyeno Yōna*, id est, *O Senhor da Tença*. *Yacatasama*, *Tono sama*, *Padre Sama*, et cetera.

Podemos dizer que no vso em que agora anda tem sentido, de *Senhor*, *Senhoria*, *Alteza*, *Merce*, *Reuerencia*, et cetera, conforme a pessoa a que se pospõem. (Rodrigues 1604-1608: 159v)

[*Sama*, i.e., *Yōna*, i.e., *identical*, as well as *manner*, etc. This particle formerly did not have a grade of honor. Now it is the most common and the most used, and it is only used for people and not things, as in *Vyesama*, *Vyeno Yōna*, *Yacatasama*, *Tono sama*, *Padre Sama*, etc. We can say that in the use that is now common, it means *Lord*, *Lordship*, *Your Highness*, *Mercy*, *Reverence*, etc., according to the person to whose name it is joined.]

Rodrigues believed that the most common address forms or honorable degree particles were *-dono*, *-tono*, *-cō*, and *-quiō*, which were used only by the nobles who resided at Kyoto king's palace:

Dono, *Tono*.

He hũa voz que parece significar como entre nos, *senhor*, ou *fidalgo*, e se pospoem aos nomes proprios de pessoas, quando se nomeam, assi nas cartas, como no falar ordinario mormente em presença, ou diante de seus criados, e pessoas de obrigaçam. (Rodrigues 1604-1608: 160r)

[*Dono, Tono*. They are words that mean a *lord* or *gentleman*, and they were added to the first names when they nominated people in letters in ordinary speech, especially in the presence of, or in front of their servants and workers.]

Cõ, Quoĩ id est *Quimi*.

Estas duas vozes significam propriamente *Senhor, Dominus*. *Cõ*, se somente aos nomes de pessoas nobres commummente nas cartas [...]

Quiõ, serue somente entre Cugues. (Rodrigues 1604-1608: 160r)

[*Cõ, Quiõ*, i.e., *Quimi*. These two words mean Sir, Dominus. *Cõ* postpones to noble people's names, especially in the letters [...]

Quiõ serves only amongst the Cugues.]

However, the main address form, used only to speak to the king, was *yei*-:

Yei, id est, *Chocu*. Estas particulas seruem soomente pera el rey, e significam o mesmo rey. id est. *Võ*, e se antepoem aos nomes do *Coye*. *Vt*, *Yeiran*, id est, *Vio el Rey*, *Yeican*, id est, *Guiocan*, *Lolucu El Rey*, *Yeirio*, id est, *Yeixin*, id est, *Micocoro*, o coraçam del Rey [...]. (Rodrigues 1604-1608: 160v)

[*Yei*, i.e., *Chocu*. These particles serve only for the king and mean the king himself, i.e., *Võ*, and they are placed before the names of the *Coye*, as in *Yeiran* and *Vio*, the King, *Yeican*, *Guiocan*, and *Lolucu*, the King, *Yeirio*, *Yeixin*, and *Micocoro*, the king's heart.]

João Rodrigues also had already described, e.g., the (postponed) particle *-vye*, which was used only with women's names, meaning the "highest lady":

Vye. Esta particula significa superior supremo, et cetera. Como quando dizemos *Vye*, id est, *Vye sama* [...] He vsada por particula de honra falando de molheres, e se pospoem aos nomes das pessoas que honra. *Vt*, *Fauavye*, A Senhora mãy. *Vovye*, a senhora da casa, ou mulher do *Tono*. (Rodrigues 1604-1608: 159v)

[*Vye*: This particle means supreme superior, etc., as when we say *Vye*, *Vye sama* [...] It is used as an honorific particle for speaking of women, and they add it to people's names, which they honor, as in *Fauavye*, *Mother Lady*, *Vovye*, *the Lady of the House*, and *Tono's wife*.]

Similarly, *-goien*, corresponding to the masculine *-sama*, was used only among women, exhibiting veneration to their noble family:

Goien, *Go*. A primeira particula destas duas serue soomente pera molheres, e as honra a modo de, *Sama*. por respeito das pessoas nobres a quem pertencem as taes molheres. *Vt* *Fauagoien*, *Foioquegoienm* *Toquinagoien*. (Rodrigues 1604-1608: 160 v)

[*Goien*, *Go*. The first particle of these two is used only for women and to honor them, in the manner of *Sama* and out of respect for noble people who own such women, as in *Fauagoien*, *Foioquegoienm* *Toquinagoien*.]

As we had the opportunity to demonstrate, in specific research on the first grammatical encoding of Japanese Politeness, "Rodrigues describes female particles used only by the lower to higher status women and not the reverse, as Ide does, and he does not know how the seventeenth-century younger generation spoke, as Clarke describes for the contemporary era." (Fernandes & Assunção 2018: 196) Indeed, Rodrigues and Clarke analyze different linguistic phenomena in female language, but it is noteworthy that an early seventeenth-century Jesuit missionary was also concerned with it and how to use the correct address form — or particle in his terminology — when addressing women (Fernandes & Assunção 2018: 196).

4. CONCLUSION

After an introductory note where we present a non-exhaustive bibliographical review on the paper's subject, we have listed in the second chapter a wide range of data on the Portuguese language and the participation Portuguese had in the description of the languages of Asia, from a historiographical perspective. We also have highlighted the efforts done by the crown and its inability to continue this enterprise, with the religious orders and, in particular, the Jesuits taking the reins of the most extraordinary civilizational encounter provided by the Portuguese language.

Through some Jesuit epistolography, we have seen the herculean work carried out by missionaries, especially the Jesuits but also other religious orders, to learn the languages of the people found by the Portuguese and teach Portuguese to these new people, as well as describing the Japanese language. We finished the work with some linguistic reflection on the extraordinary grammar by João Rodrigues, who exerted a considerable influence on the Japanese language that would have been even greater had it not been for the prohibition of Christianity and the extinction of typography in 1614. His work was the first, and for a long time the only, attempt at scientific study of the Japanese language, and was the main source of the first Euro-Japanese grammatical works published in the mid-nineteenth century. The work shows an innovative aspect by including particles in the parts of speech due to the influence of contemporary philological studies in Japan. Even today, grammarians call particles to the words that do not integrate into any of the word classes. Rodrigues had already seen the pragmatic-conversational value in some particles, depending on their "good use", the "right", "correct", "proper speaking," and their "misuse", "informal and improper" (Rodrigues 1620: 59v). These particles, in addition to this pragmatic value, are units of different paradigmatic status, which combine syntactically with nouns and verbs, or by adding, by way of fixed particles, or as independent elements, and can then assume the values of adverbs, conjunctions and nouns. In either case, it is possible to perform simple determinants or relationship elements.

In effect, Rodrigues was one of the most original grammarians and deserves to be classified as the father of Japanese linguistics studies, as Boxer (1950: 363) called him. He was also one of the five best Jesuit grammarians of the whole colonial period, as stated by Zwartjes (2011: 141). Rodrigues, as we established previously (Fernandes & Assunção 2018: 200), "presented many linguistic innovations and created a new metalanguage derived from his knowledge of Japanese society, mainly from Kyoto, and classical Japanese literature, paying special attention to how social relationships between the interlocutors worked in oral and written speech."

Acknowledgments

This research project was funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), through the Center for Studies in Letters (CEL), reference no. UIDP/00707/2020, Portugal. A preliminary version of this paper was published in Portuguese (Assunção & Fernandes 2017) and it incorporates outputs from another concerning explicitly the first grammatical descriptions of Japanese Politeness (Fernandes & Assunção 2018). We would like to gratefully acknowledge the editorial board and the two anonymous referees whose stimulating comments and recommendations we have tried to implement in the final version of this paper.

References

- AMES, Glen Joseph (2009): *Em nome de Deus: the journal of the first voyage of Vasco da Gama to India, 1497-1499*. Boston: Brill Academic Publishers.
- ASSUNÇÃO, Carlos (2016): “Primeiros ecos da lusofonia no oriente: dos descobrimentos à produção metalinguística”. In: Neusa Barbosa Bastos (ed.): *Língua Portuguesa e Lusofonia*. São Paulo: EDUC IP-PUC_SP, 75-87.
- ASSUNÇÃO, Carlos & Gonçalo FERNANDES (2017): “Contributos da Língua Portuguesa para as Descrições das Línguas do Oriente”. In: Isabelle de Oliveira (ed.): *Pontes entre Lusofonia e Francofonia: A aliança da «latinoesfera»*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 61-79.
- BARROS, João DE (1988) [1552]: *Ásia. Dos feitos que os portugueses fizeram no descobrimento e conquista dos mares e terras do Oriente*. Vols. III. Facsimile edition. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional.
- BAXTER, Alan Norman (1996): “Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific and Western Pacific Rim”. In: Stephen A. Wurm, Peter Mühlhäusler & Darrell T. Tryon (eds.): *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication In the Pacific, Asia and the Americas*, vol. 2.1. Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 299-338.
- BOXER, Charles Ralph (1950): “Padre João Rodriguez Tçuzu S.J. and his Japanese Grammars of 1604 and 1620”. *Boletim de Filologia* 11, 338-363.
- BUESCU, Maria Leonor Carvalhão (1983): *O estudo das línguas exóticas no século XVI*. Lisboa: Instituto de Cultura e Língua Portuguesa.
- CARDOSO, Hugo Canelas (2014): “Factoring sociolinguistic variation into the history of Indo-Portuguese”. *Revista de Crioulos de Base Lexical Portuguesa e Espanhola* 5, 87-114.
- CARDOSO, Hugo Canelas (2016): “O português em contacto na Ásia e no Pacífico”. In: Ana Maria Martins & Ernestina Carrilho (eds.): *Manual de linguística portuguesa*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 68-97.
- Cartas dos Jesuítas do Oriente e do Brasil 1549-1551*. (1993): Facsimile edition. Lisboa: Biblioteca Nacional.
- Cartas que os Padres e Irmaos da Companhia de Jesus, que andão nos Reynos de Japão escreuerão aos da mesma Companhia da India, & Europa desde anno de 1549 até o de 1580*, I e II. Évora: Manoel de Lyra (1997) [1598]: Facsimile edition and presentation by José Manuel Garcia, 2 vol. Maia: Castoliva.
- CLARK, Hugh (2009): “Language”. In: Yoshio Sugimoto (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 56-75.
- CLEMENTS, Joseph Clancy (2009): *The linguistic legacy of Spanish and Portuguese: Colonial expansion and language change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CURTO, Diogo Ramada (1998): “A língua e o império”. In: Francisco Bethencourt & Kirti Chaudhuri (eds.): *História da expansão portuguesa*. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 414-433.

- DOI, Tadao (1976): *Notas explicativas ao livro facsimilado Arte da Lingoa de Japam de João Rodrigues*. Tokyo: Benseisha.
- FANGZE, Chen (2011): "Portuguese missionaries' contribution to Japanese linguistics: on João Rodrigues and the linguistic outline in the first Japanese grammar *Arte da Lingoa de Iapam*". *Revista de Cultura* 39: 121-132.
- FERNANDES, Gonçalo & Carlos ASSUNÇÃO (2018): "First Grammatical Encoding of Japanese Politeness (17th century) / A Primeira Codificação Gramatical da Cortesia do Japonês (Século XVII)". *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi. Ciências Humanas* 13(1). 187-203. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1981.81222018000100011>.
- FONSECA, Maria do Céu (2006): *Historiografia linguística portuguesa e Missionária: preposições e posições no séc. XVII*. Lisboa: Colibri.
- FRÓIS, Luís (1976-84) [1563]: *História de Japam. Critical edition by José Wicki*. Lisboa: Biblioteca Nacional.
- JAYASURIYA, Shihan de Silva (2008): *The Portuguese in the East. A Cultural History of a Maritime Trading Empire*. London / New York: Tauris.
- LABORINHO, Ana Paula (2005): "Da descoberta dos povos encontro das línguas: o português como lingua intermediária a Oriente". In: *Humanismo Latino nas Culturas do Extremo Oriente*. Macau: Fondazione Cassamarca, 71-91.
- LOPES, David (1969) [1936]: *Expansão da língua portuguesa no Oriente nos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII*. Revised edition, prefaced and annotated by Luís de Matos. Porto: Portucalense Editora.
- MACHADO, Diogo Barbosa (1965-1967) [1741-1759]: *Bibliotheca lusitana*. Coimbra: Atlântida Editora.
- MARUYAMA, Toru (1996): "Selective bibliography concerning the Jesuit Mission Press in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries". *Nanzan Kokubun Ronshu* 20, 1-118.
- MARUYAMA, Toru, 2004. "Linguistic Studies by Portuguese Jesuits in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Japan". In: Otto Zwartjes and Even Hovdhaugen (eds), *Missionary Linguistics/ Lingüística misionera: Selected papers from the First International Conference on Missionary Linguistics, Oslo, 13-16 March 2003* (=Studies in the History of the Language Sciences, 106). Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 141-160.
- MATOS, Luís DE (1968): "O português - língua franca no Oriente". In: *Colóquios sobre as províncias do Oriente*. Vol. 2. (=Estudos de Ciências Políticas e Sociais, 81). Lisboa: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, Centro de Estudos Políticos e Sociais, 11-23.
- MATOS, Manuel Cadafaz de (1987): "Humanismo e evangelização no Oriente no século XVI". *Revista ICALP*, 7-8, 41-72.
- MURU, Cristina (2018): "Early Descriptors and Descriptions of South Asian Languages from the 16th Century Onwards." *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics* 17(8), 1-29.

- NAKAEMA, Olivia Yumi (2021): "Politeness in João Rodrigues's grammars of Japanese A terminological analysis." In Otto Zwartjes & Paolo De Troia (eds.): *Missionary Linguistics VI: Missionary Linguistics in Asia. Selected papers from the Tenth International Conference on Missionary Linguistics, Rome, 21-24 March 2018* (= Studies in the History of the Language Sciences, 130): Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 155-174.
- OLIVEIRA, Fernão DE (2015) [1536]: *Grammatica da lingoagem portuguesa*. Disponível em: http://ctlf.enslyon.fr/t_fiche.asp?num=1328&fic=3301_pt_Oliveira_T01&aut=Oliveira%20Fernão%20.
- PFÄNDER, Stefan & Alessandra Castilho Ferreira DA COSTA (2006): "Linguistic Variations in Everyday Life: The Portuguese Language in the Protestant Mission of Eighteenth Century South East India". In: A. Gross, Y. V. Kumaradoss & H. Liebau (eds.): *Halle and the Beginning of Protestant Christianity in India. Vol. III: Communication between India and Europe*. Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 1155-1162.
- PINHEIRO, Cláudio (2008): "Língua e conquista: formação de intérpretes e políticas imperiais portuguesas de comunicação em Ásia nos alvares da modernidade". In: Ivana Stolze LIMA & Laura DO CARMO (eds.), *História social da língua nacional*. Rio de Janeiro: Edições Casa de Rui Barbosa, 29-65.
- RODRIGUES, João (1620). *Arte Breve. Da Lingoa Iapoa tirada da arte grande da mesma lingoa, pera os que começam a aprender os primeiros principios della*. Amacao: Collegio da Madre de Deos da Companhia de Iesv.
- SILVA, Lúcio Craveiro DA (2000): *Ser Português: Ensaio de cultura portuguesa*. Braga: Universidade do Minho, Centro de Estudos Humanísticos
- SUZUKI, Takao (1987): "Padre João Rodriguez: suas Artes e a linguagem de tratamento da língua japonesa". *Estudos Japoneses* 7, 113-127.
- ZWARTJES, Otto (2011): *Portuguese Missionary Grammars in Asia, Africa and Brazil, 1550-1800*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.