

## Communication Challenges in the China Seas: A Survey of Early Modern 'Manila Linguists'

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### Introduction

Regular negotiations between Spanish, Chinese and Japanese natives in the last third of the sixteenth and the first third of the seventeenth century make Manila a promising starting point to shed light on the obscure field of early modern communication.<sup>1</sup> As the temporary centre of trans-Pacific and direct Sino-Japanese private trade, Manila witnessed numerous episodes of intercultural communication in which global players had to find ways to negotiate beyond their familiar cultures and languages.<sup>2</sup> The aim of this article is firstly to analyse the development of a hybrid form of communication during the early period of global exchange based on the Manila galleon trade. Secondly, it will discuss the role of 'Manila linguists' during a period of specific cross-cultural operations in the China Seas. The main emphasis here focuses on intermediaries or go-betweens during the initial stage of political communication and foreign affairs at the height of the Age of Commerce, with a specific focus on the Philippines, which, being a Spanish territorial colony differed largely from other European enterprises in the East.

By intercultural communication a "situation where at least one of the people in the communicational process does not speak the language of the interaction as her/his mother tongue" is understood.<sup>3</sup> With a focus on Manila-centred intercultural communication, it will be of particular interest to establish as to what extent Spanish, as the first language of the ruling authorities, was used as a lingua franca.<sup>4</sup> While such aspects were usually relegated to a minor footnote in world history, providing answers to the question how loyalty and trust were built opens up scope for various considerations on information and communication systems in early modern cross-cultural settings. The establishment of Manila led to the formation of triangular relations between the Spanish, the Chinese and the Japanese that in turn became the backbone of proto-global trade in

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1 For further theoretical consideration see Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, *The Portuguese in the East. A Cultural History of a Maritime Trading Empire* (London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008).

2 Similar issues have been tackled for Portuguese Jesuits in sixteenth century Japan. See J. F. Moran, *The Language Barrier and the Early Jesuits in Japan* (Stirling: Scottish Centre for Japanese Studies, University of Stirling, 1992).

3 Allan Murray and Ranjid Sohndhi, "Socio-political influences on cross-cultural encounters", *Analyzing Intercultural Communication: [Based on Proceedings of a Conference On "Analyzing Intercultural Communication" Held in Essen, Federal Republic of Germany, Dec. 2-3, 1983]* edited by Karlfried Knapp, vol. 1, Studies in Anthropological Linguistics (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1987), 21.

4 Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

the China Seas.<sup>5</sup> Interaction included official, direct state-to-state exchange as well as private and contraband trade. In particular, Spanish geopolitical aspirations determined diplomatic dealings with China and Japan. For the same reason, the focus of this study lies on Hispano-Sino<sup>6</sup>-Japanese exchange, whilst largely omitting communication with the indigenous people of the Philippines.<sup>7</sup>

This study simultaneously proceeds at two levels of analysis: the systematic, which focuses on communication patterns between the three main language groups, and the regional, from the viewpoint of Manila's policymakers. To begin with, basic issues such as which language was used and what specifically led to communication problems will be tackled. To extensively map out the impact of language in connected histories rather than simply contrast the competing narratives of misunderstanding versus cultural empathy and appropriation, relevant primary sources on foreign relations have to be consulted. Above any other written source, bilateral correspondence allows studying connected histories of intercultural diplomacy.<sup>8</sup> Since data is difficult to locate, a systematic qualitative analysis and sketchy comparisons will help to establish a suitable empirical framework.

### Relevant languages within the Manila system

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the discovery of rich silver mines in México and Perú enabled Spanish hegemonic advances in Europe, their conquest of the Philippines and attempts to dominate the Pacific. Although long distance trade in maritime Asia by then had flourished over the centuries without European influence, it certainly gained new impetus after the arrival of the Iberians in Malacca, Macao 澳門, Manila and Nagasaki 長崎.<sup>9</sup> From a politico-economic point of view, the Spaniards were only one among many influential actors within the South East Asian land- and seascape. After the foundation of Manila as a permanent trading base for exchange in American<sup>10</sup> silver and Chinese silk in 1571, the Spanish-ruled multi-ethnic port city started to link upcoming international markets.<sup>11</sup> Cross-cultural encounters in Manila were characterised

5 See François Gipouloux, *La Méditerranée Asiatique. Villes portuaires et Réseaux Marchands en Chine au Japon et en Asie du Sud-Est, XVIe-XXIe siècle* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2009).

6 Chinese as language refers here to various forms including Mandarin, Minnanese and Hokkien dialects.

7 The Philippines are a linguistically diverse region. Larger language groups include Tagalog, Cebuano and Malay. Vincente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism. Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society* (London and Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

8 Prominent examples include diplomatic exchange between Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the governor general of the Philippines (1592-94), embassies to Manila sent by Tokugawa Ieyasu after 1601, and Philip II's unsuccessful attempts to send two letters to Ming Emperor Wanli 1580/1.

9 Linda Grove, Mark Selden, Takeshi Hamashita, eds., *China, East Asia and the Global Economy. Regional and Historical Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

10 Marina Alfonso Mola, Carlos Martínez Shaw, "La Era de la Plata Española en Extremo Oriente," paper presented at *Filipinas en el Imperio Español (1565-1820)*. Valladolid, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 17 al 21 October 2011.

11 See also Pierre Chaunu, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Ibériques: XVIe, XVIIe, XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960). He based his analysis on *almojarifazgo* data). For China and Japan in an emerging

by multidimensional early modern connections based on negotiations, triangular circulations and bi- or multilateral communication involving different parties of the pre-modern states, Ming 明 China, Azuchi-Momoyama 安土桃山/Tokugawa 徳川 Japan and the Spanish Overseas Empire. Contacts were not only confined to Manila and the overseas port in Cavite, but involved port cities in China and Japan, such as Quanzhou 泉州 or Hirado 平戸, where local level operations determined many successful interactions.<sup>12</sup> Intercultural encounters created a fluid environment that in turn encouraged the emergence of the Manila system.<sup>13</sup> The term ‘system’ here stresses reciprocal forces and long-lasting structures that overlap with ideas on connected histories. The hybrid outcomes of the state-controlled exchange in silver and silk and continuous tensions caused by smuggling and corruption linked to other systems or networks including the Japanese *shuinzen* 朱印船 system (1604–35; Tokugawa *bakufu*'s 徳川幕府 licensed foreign trade system in Southeast Asia), the Atlantic system and the Chinese tributary trade system 朝貢 (based on *kanbe* 勘合 certificates distributed by the imperial court) all indirectly influenced economic developments in Manila.

Furthermore, the specific environment of early modern connections was moreover characterised by a dualism between the church and the colonial government. Since spreading Christianity in Asia was one of the strongest imperialist tendencies often linked to the spirits of the crusade and occidental fights against Islam. Although missionaries were regarded as reliable ‘Spanish’<sup>14</sup> colonisers, the close ties between civil and Church authorities were rather a necessary evil than a friendly collaboration.

Today, Spanish (or Castilian) is the second largest language in terms of number of native speakers. The foundations for transforming Castilian into an imperial, national and eventually universal language were laid at the end of the fifteenth century. Roughly one hundred years after serious language and grammar studies started to flourish in Europe and the papacy had directed attention to contemporary languages, Latin gradually lost its supremacy.<sup>15</sup> A process that was most certainly related to increased contacts with Asia

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global world around 1600 see Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000-1700* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); For the diplomatic background I refer to Ronald Toby's seminal work, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

12 I have demonstrated some of these points in an article published in the *Journal of World History*. See Birgit M. Tremml, “The Global and the Local: Problematic Dynamics of the Triangular Trade in Early Modern Manila”, *Journal of World History* 23, no. 3 (2012), 555-86.

13 I am aware that the term ‘system’ is already taken and commonly used to describe unequal relationships between core and periphery, as promoted by sociologists in the 1960s; my conceptualisation is based on Fernand Braudel's world economy definitions as well as on John Darwin's *After Tamerlane. The Global History of Empire* (London: Lane, 2007); S.A.M. Adshead (*China in World History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 206) used the term ‘Manila system’ a long time ago in an attempt to integrate concepts of empire, government and statehood.

14 I use quotation marks here because Catholic friars were a rather heterogeneous mix of different European nationalities acting in the name of the Spanish king.

15 Donald Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe. Vol. 2: A Century of Wonder, Book 3: The Scholarly Disciplines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 503. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, first serious language studies emerged in Italian, Spanish and German. Moreover the study of Hebrew and

and the Americas. As for Iberian languages, Antonio Nebrija's (1441–1522) study of 1492 and his idea that language had to be organised and certain standards had to be adopted was revolutionary.<sup>16</sup> Numerous historians have quoted Antonio de Nebrija's political philosophy on the importance of language for establishing and maintaining power.<sup>17</sup> In the prologue of the first Castilian grammar guide, Nebrija stressed language choice as critical in establishing power and referred to the role of Latin in the Roman Empire: "I have found one conclusion to be very true, that language always accompanies empire, both have always commenced, flourished and grown together."<sup>18</sup> World historians have thus stressed the close links between conquest and communication, or, in other words, language and empire. Some scholars even claim that the Europeans conquered the Amerindians through their superior ability to understand 'the Other'.<sup>19</sup> In the Spanish Empire such processes were complicated by the linguistic diversities of the Americas and the Asian Pacific.

A major turning point for grammatical and etymological standardisation at the beginning of the sixteenth century was not only that newly incorporated American and Caribbean territories were immediately administered in Castilian but also that communication between the metropolis (mostly Madrid and Seville) and the overseas colonies was carried out in Castilian.<sup>20</sup> During the seventeenth century, the language became more deeply rooted across the American continent and spread over large parts of both the colonial and indigenous societies thanks to the missionary work of Catholic friars. However, Castilian did not naturally develop as the main language in standard communication in the Asian territories, where it hardly reached the people outside the small Spanish and *mestizo* communities. Against that background, linguist challenges of the early modern Spanish global empire are illustrated by the Spanish (non-) dominion of commercial exchange in the early modern Manila trade. This is all the more striking when the frequently mentioned role of Castilian as the *lingua franca* in the economic macro-

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Arabic was promoted by humanists who proclaimed the equality of languages and linguistic diversity. For the Asian context and the relationship between power and the written word see Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007).

16 Lach, *Scholarly Disciplines* (1994), 504.

17 Zhenja La Rosa, "Language and Empire. The Vision of Nebrija" *The Loyola University Student Historical Journal* 27 (1996-7): 24-42; See also Robert Lee Nichols, "Struggling with Language. Indigenous Movements for Linguistic Security and the Politics of Local Community." *Ethnicities* 6, no. 1 (2006): 27-51. [http://peer.ccsd.cnrs.fr/docs/00/57/18/53/PDF/PEER\\_stage2\\_10.1177%252F1468796806061078.pdf](http://peer.ccsd.cnrs.fr/docs/00/57/18/53/PDF/PEER_stage2_10.1177%252F1468796806061078.pdf). Accessed April 11, 2013.

18 Cf. Henry Kamen, *Spain's Road to Empire: The Making of a World Power* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), 3.

19 Prominent examples include Christopher A. Bayly, *Empire and Information. Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996). In the case of the Spanish conquest of the Americas and the Philippines, the question whether local struggle against Spanish dominion affected linguistic aspects has been discussed by Daniel I. Wasserman-Soler, "Language and Communication in the Spanish Conquest of America." *History Compass* 8, no. 6 (2010): 491-502.

20 In 1611 Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco published the first etymological dictionary in Spain. Sebastián de Horozco Covarrubias. *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española. Edición Integral e Ilustrada de Ignacio Arellano y Rafael Zafra* (Madrid/Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2006).

zone is considered.<sup>21</sup> Yet, next to the archipelago's very diversified linguistic framework, new proselytising methods had gained momentum by the time the Spanish had started to colonise the area in 1565, and local vernaculars had replaced both Latin and Spanish. Promoting the idea “that God could be worshipped equally well in all languages” missionaries in Asia quickly acquired the ability to master the languages of their converts.<sup>22</sup>

In light of any linguistic effort, it should not be forgotten that at the end of the sixteenth century, Europeans had hardly any access to reliable teachers or materials before leaving for Asia but instead had “to acquire their language skills through native informants and teachers” before they could prepare rudimentary dictionaries, and grammar aids on the spot.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, both Catholic missionaries and overseas Chinese 華僑 merchants, as the two prominent linguist groups in Manila, originally only possessed a practical command of foreign languages.

Next to Malay, a certain Chinese vernacular doubtlessly existed as *lingua franca* for commercial communication in the China Seas prior to the arrival of the Europeans.<sup>24</sup> Chinese dialects spread with an increasing number of sojourning merchants from southern China during the Ming period (1368–1644). They spoke mostly Hokkien 福建語 (also known as Minnanese 閩南語) and Cantonese 廣東語. Hence these dialects became the working languages in certain ports and on certain ships.<sup>25</sup> Classical Chinese, on the other hand, served both as the written *lingua franca* and as diplomatic language with neighbouring countries, which also used Chinese characters, namely Japan, the Ryūkyū 琉球 Kingdom and Vietnam. Standard Chinese 汉语 today also known as Peking dialect, Mandarin or Putonghua 普通話, served as the *lingua franca* between speakers of different dialects.<sup>26</sup> As a matter of trivia, the term Mandarin (*la lengua mandarina*) was coined by Europeans in the sixteenth century as a direct translation from *guanhua* 官話 (official talk) or court language.<sup>27</sup>

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21 Paul van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), 15: He speaks of “Tollhouse keepers, linguists” that had “long been servicing the Portuguese and Spanish trade in Canton, Macau, and Manila.”

22 Lach, *Scholarly Disciplines* (1994), 532.

23 Lach, *Scholarly Disciplines* (1994), 530.

24 Peter D. Shapinsky, “Polyvocal Portolans: Nautical Charts and Hybrid Maritime Cultures in Early Modern East Asia” *Early Modern Japan: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 14, (2006), 4-26.

25 Lucille Chia, “Chinese Books and Printing in the Early Spanish Philippines”, in *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities and Networks in Southeast Asia*, edited by Wen-Chin Chang Eric Tagliacozzo, 259-83 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

26 As discussed by Japanese historian Tanaka Takeo in the context of pre-modern foreign relations. He coined the term *kanji bunkaken* 漢字文化圏 in this regard. Tanaka, Takeo 田中健夫, *Zenkindai no kokusai kōryū to gaikō monjo* 前近代の国際交流と外交文書 (Tōkyō 東京: Yoshikawa kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 1996).

27 <http://online.sfsu.edu/wenchao/scholarly/mandarin.pdf>. Accessed January 6, 2013. In Japan this type of official Chinese is also known as 公用語, official terminology. See Masashi Haneda 羽田正 and Tsuyoshi Kojima 小島毅 (eds.), *Higashi Ajia kaiiki ni kogidasu 1. Umi kara mita rekishi* 東アジア海域に漕ぎだす 1 海から見た歴史 (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2013), 221.

In South East Asia Malay was the most universal language on the seascape all the way to the Indian Ocean.<sup>28</sup> Early Iberians in Asia – Fernão de Magalhães (1480-1521) and Miguel López de Legazpi (1502–1572) among them – employed Malay interpreters. Manila itself hosted a bilingual Malay-Tagalog community at the time of the Spanish arrival.<sup>29</sup> Portuguese, albeit ironically being considered impure by native speakers, partially replaced Malay during the sixteenth century and should maintain its status as lingua franca in maritime Eurasian trade far into the eighteenth century. The success of the Lusitanian language in Asia encouraged contemporary scholars to regard Portuguese as an international language; thus it can consequently be considered far more successful than Castilian in the period of the present research.<sup>30</sup>

In Japan, missionaries had produced “[m]anuscript aids to language study”<sup>31</sup> in as early as the 1550s, starting only a few years after the arrival of the first Jesuits there. Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606), examining visitor of the Society of Jesus in East Asia, insisted that the Jesuits should make every effort to command Japanese properly by devoting at least 18 months to their study of Japanese. Regardless of his own ignorance of the language, he argued that the inability to do so “is impolite and invites ridicule, just as if we were to speak Latin backwards and with many mistakes.”<sup>32</sup> Even before the establishment of the Jesuit printing press in Japan in the 1590s, Valignano’s reforms introduced an organised approach to language studies. So much that it could be applied in lessons on Japanese grammar and lexis for Portuguese Jesuits at the college in Funai in the 1580s. Another dictionary was produced at the Arima 有馬 school in 1585 and language books appeared over the following years. In 1595 the press put out the trilingual *Dictionarium Latino-Lusitanicum ac Iaponicum* that prepared the way for the first Japanese dictionary ever to be published, the *Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam* of 1604. This dictionary was followed by João Rodrigues’ (1561–1633) celebrated *Arte da Lingoa de Iapam*, published in Nagasaki in 1608.<sup>33</sup>

Roughly at the same time as language studies began to flourish in Japan, similar steps were taken in Manila too. Needless to say that since the Spanish colonial society faced various pressing language issues Chinese and Japanese studies could not be prioritized. This partly explains the controversy between “Spanish” Franciscans and “Portuguese”

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28 This was still true when the English East India Company established itself more firmly in South Asia. Company merchants frequently lamented about the limits of that concept. See Obgorn, *Indian Ink*, xix-xx; William Adams mentioned a Malay translator of Japanese origin in his accounts on early seventeenth century-Japan. William Adams, *Memorials of the Empire of Japan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: The Kingdom of Japonia. Letters of William Adams from 1611 to 1617*. Edited by Thomas Rundall. 2 vols (London: Hakluyt Society, 1850), Part II, Letters IV, 51.

29 William Henry Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1984), 42.

30 Compare to Lach, *Scholarly Disciplines* (1994), 505.

31 Arimichi Ebisawa 海老澤有道, “The Meeting of Cultures”, in *The Southern Barbarians. The First Europeans in Japan*, edited by Michael Cooper, S.J. (Tōkyō: Kodansha, 1971), 127. Brother Duarte da Silva had produced a simple grammar and dictionary in the 1550’s. Following his example Juan Fernandez also compiled a grammar and a dictionary in 1564.

32 Cf. Ebisawa, “Meeting of Cultures” (1971), 127.

33 This paragraph is largely based on Ebisawa, “Meeting of Cultures” (1971), 128-129.

Jesuits in Japan at the end of the sixteenth century. While members of the Society of Jesus have regularly been praised for their humanist spirit and excellent mastering of Japanese, mendicant friars have been accused of mediocrity and ignorance.<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, native languages of the Philippine archipelago were studied systematically after 1580. In order to avoid confusion Philip II (1527–1598) decreed that both grammar rules and catechisms published on the islands required the approval of the bishop and the *audiencia*, the high court of appeal.<sup>35</sup> In 1593, a revised version of the catechism written by the Franciscan friar Juan de Plasencia (unknown-1590), who was one of the first to write about Tagalog, was published as a *Doctrina Christiana* in Castilian and Tagalog<sup>36</sup> by the wood-block method. A *Doctrina* in Chinese and Castilian followed shortly afterwards. While the establishment of a printing press in Manila facilitated language studies and encouraged Ibero-Fujinaese cooperations it also strengthened the Church's influence on language matters. Soon, the different Catholic orders found themselves in fierce competition over ecclesiastic publications in a range of languages<sup>37</sup>, while other linguist studies were less important to them.

### Multilingual Communication Patterns of the 'Manila System'

On the following pages, the Manila system serves as model for the macro-analysis of the complex entanglements based on the intertwined and often competitive character of local and central initiatives from Spain, Japan and China. Focusing on cultural, ideological, economic and linguistic links between diplomacy and trade shall help to overcome one-sided narratives and concepts of ethnocentric history. A popular discourse distinguishes the behaviour of the Chinese and the Spanish in the macro-region, in the sense that the Chinese were peacefully negotiating and bringing presents whilst the Europeans were conquering and stealing. In reality Manila-related processes were not as simple. The administration of the multi-linguistic trading outpost for instance, called for efficient language proficiency and not just rudimentary language skills. At the same time, diplomatic correspondence with neighbouring nations, as the most sophisticated form of intercultural communication included elements of unequal exchange. When Henry Kamen stated that language “was not limited to vocabulary and grammar” but also included cultural, religious and habitual aspects he referred exactly to that reality of early modern communication patterns.

Manila also teaches us the fascinating story of how easily the different cultural groups switched their roles if the opportunity presented itself or if necessity required it. That said, a few words on the specific character of the Spanish rule must follow. The

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34 Treatises by the Franciscan friars Martín de Ascención, Juan Pobre and Marcelo de Ribadeneira, as well as by the Jesuit Alessandro Valignano, all active in the Japan mission in the 1590s, reflect these polemics. Reproduced in José Luis Alvarez-Taladriz, *Relaciones e Informaciones. San Martín de la Ascension y Fray Marcelo de Ribadeneira* (Osaka: Eikodo, 1973).

35 See John. L. Phelan, “Philippine Linguistics and Spanish Missionaries, 1565-1700”, *Mid-America* 37, no. 3 (1955), 154-159.

36 The first Tagalog-Spanish dictionary was published in 1613 by San Buenaventura.

37 Lach, *Scholarly Disciplines* (1994), 500.

imposition of Spanish rule in the Philippines in the 1560s was possible by using a *divide et impera* policy that had already been sufficiently tested with the indigenous population in the Americas. Spanish traditional colonial policies included the establishment of permanent bases with political, military, economic, religious and cultural centres. After unsuccessful attempts in Cebú, Miguel López de Legazpi, the official conqueror of the archipelago, sailed to Luzón and established the colonial headquarters in Manila, encouraged by the port's strategic position, its productive hinterland, and existing integration to foreign trade.<sup>38</sup> The Spaniards outwitted the Muslim ruler of Manila and began to suppress the independent *barangay* (pre-colonial administrative principalities), by persuading or pressuring indigenous people to accept Spanish authority.<sup>39</sup>

A crucial difference with other European trading outposts in South East Asia was that the Spanish aimed at establishing a territorial colony with Spanish households along with a civil society. Being first and foremost a 'project' of the Spanish king and his officials, it is not at all striking that no Spanish trading company developed in the East and that the Manila Galleon trade officially remained a crown monopoly.<sup>40</sup> Spanish (nominal) colonial rule, however, was characterised by a very fragile power structure: Early centralising efforts failed due to the disunity of the population and ethno-linguistic differences that could not be smoothed out with the persistent use of the Castilian language. Since the Roman Catholic faith remains the most visible Spanish heritage in the Philippines historians used to speak of a mission outpost instead of a colony."<sup>41</sup>

Within the overstretched Spanish Empire the Philippines were only of secondary interest to Madrid or Mexico. Since neither of them offered Manila sufficient financial and military support, Chinese and Japanese came to fill in all sorts of gaps. By the year 1600, hundreds of merchants from Fujian 福建 and Kyūshū 九州 did not only supply the Spanish colony but also settled in large numbers around the walled Spanish city. Their number commonly fluctuated along with economic prospects. In peak years Chinese settlers could amount to 30,000 and Japanese to 3,000.<sup>42</sup> Restrictions and prohibitions regarding transactions with East Asian merchants regularly issued by the

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38 John Villiers, "Portuguese Malacca and Spanish Manila. Two Concepts of Empire", in *Portuguese Asia. Aspects in History and Economic History Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, edited by Roderich Ptak (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1987), 44.

39 Villiers, "Portuguese Malacca" (1987), 45.

40 William L. Schurz's seminal work still offers the best available summary in English. *The Manila Galleon* (Manila Historical Conservation Society, 1985). First published in 1939.

41 Edward G. Bourne, *Discovery, Conquest and History of the Philippines* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1907).

42 Iwao Seiichi 岩生成一, *Nanyō nihonmachi no seisui 南洋日本町の盛衰* (Taipei: Taibei Teikoku Daigaku, 1937); Cf. Maria Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo, *Filipinas. La Gran Desconocida (1565-1898)* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2001). The numbers we find are rough estimations since early modern observers tended to exaggerate for various political reasons. According to a letter of governor general Santiago de Vera to the king of the year 1589, 4,000 Chinese lived permanently in and around Manila. Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI) Filipinas 18A, r. 7, n. 46, "Carta de Vera sobre situación en Manila", 1589-07-13. In the same letter, Santiago de Vera points out the need for Chinese-speaking Catholic missionaries.

Spanish Crown<sup>43</sup>, not only prove that vibrant commercial exchange always existed but also suggests a high degree of smuggling and contraband trade.

### Early Modern Linguists

Communication and information networks were absolutely necessary for any trade negotiation and any geopolitical activity. It is commonly accepted that mercantile communication worked with a lingua franca. While maritime merchants quickly developed an informal working vocabulary, finding a common language for mutual comprehension was a more complicated venture in formal communication. Especially with regard to official acts of communication that involved parties or speakers from different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds sufficient information for evaluating individual efforts or an overall picture is lacking. In the realm of state level-communication between official authorities a high degree of improvisation must have determined the fate of early cross-cultural dealings. Widely spread stereotypes, prejudices and other biases caused suspicion, while insufficient knowledge of geographical, political, historical or ideological nature naturally created tension. Insufficient communication skills, however, were often a mixed blessing for one or both negotiating parties. Last but not least, depending on a third party while lacking linguistic and logistic means for verifying new information, made negotiations awkward for all parties involved.

In an attempt to picture early modern reality, factors such as whether the dominating force in international relations was the actual inability of the interlocutors, or if reluctance in making compromises or rather external threats led actors to act differently from their expected roles are all relevant questions which have to be addressed. On many occasions it was the vagueness of the language in particular and political rhetoric that created confusion.<sup>44</sup> In addition to that, negotiating parties often actively produced misunderstanding by giving false accounts or by deliberately misinterpreting information. While in the course of the seventeenth century the situation improved, for instance with creating institutions for professional interpreters in Nagasaki or Canton<sup>45</sup>, the linguist culture of the Manila system remained its rudimentary and improvisational character.

That said, the concept of an early modern linguist in late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries' triangular communication should be reflected upon. Consequently, a linguist here is defined as a person (A) that is capable of translating, interpreting or drafting documents into a foreign language for diplomatic, administrative or commercial purposes on behalf of a second party (B) that is not able to communicate (sufficiently) in that foreign language with a third party (C). To avoid becoming too

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43 Cédulas Reales. Dirigidas a Estas Yslas Filipinas Copiadas Fielmente de las Originales o Autenticos que se Guardan en el Archivo Real de la Real Audiencia de Manila, 1700, no. 30 (1587).

44 Adam Clulow describes the phenomenon in the first two chapters of *The Company and the Shogun. The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

45 Paul van Dyke put special emphasis on the intercultural and multi-linguistic framework of the Canton system (1700-1842). Van Dyke's Canton system is characterised by difference. His meticulous study places a special focus on the power on knowledge and information, as well as the use of language as political tool. See van Dyke, *Canton Trade* (2005).

abstract, a more concrete example is needed: A Manila-based Overseas Chinese resident 華僑 (A) translates a letter sent from the Viceroy of Fujian (C) for the Spanish governor (B), as was the case of the first linguist in table 1.

Pinpointing linguists' accomplishments in a multi-lateral environment of the Manila system, Haneda Masashi's 羽田正 suggestion of studying port city linguists based on the categories applied by Matsui Yōko 松井洋子 in 2007 is indeed very relevant for this article.<sup>46</sup> Recent research has shown that a severely supervised politico-economic setting as well as stricter rules for foreign communication in the post-1639 era encouraged the development of specialists of Chinese, Dutch and Iberian languages<sup>47</sup> in Nagasaki. The Japanese historian Matsui analysed Nagasaki *tsūji* 通詞 or 通事 (interpreter) according to (1) the foreigners' circumstances in the port city, (2) the interpreter's situation, (3) the interpreter's income, (4) the hierarchy between the interpreters, (5) the number of interpreters and (6) their duties. In Manila a far smaller group of amateur linguists engaged in interpreting or translating Chinese and Japanese documents and they were hardly ever officially instructed to do so. Given that authorised interpreters were the product of later centuries, it is hardly surprising that Manila linguists were not professionals but translated or interpreted *ad hoc*. The absence of official institutions that exclusively employed or educated foreign language professionals in the Philippines is a crucial difference to seventeenth-century Nagasaki and Canton, where linguists and *jurebassos* (sometimes *jurabaca*)<sup>48</sup> became the prototypes of interpreters. Another distinguishing feature of Manila is that unlike in Nagasaki and Canton, no exclusive regulations for foreign language studies existed. Consequently, we should categorise Manila linguists as follows: (a) language proficiency and usage (maternal, negotiating party's, or third party's language), (b) residential status (as being a resident of Manila or not), (c) religion, (d) deliberate/coercion/duty, (e) payment or other compensation, and (f) regularity of assignments respectively availability of the linguist.

## The Linguists

Despite my choice of the technical term 'Manila-linguist' for the sake of simplicity, individual linguists could have rather loose ties to Manila, for example as temporary visiting merchants from Macao, Zhangzhou 漳州 or Satsuma 薩摩 or Spanish and Portuguese missionaries stopping there on their way to Southern China or Japan. The key characteristic of a Manila linguist was *his*<sup>49</sup> involvement in Manila related foreign

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46 Masashi Haneda 羽田正, "Canton, Nagasaki and the Port Cities of the Indian Ocean: A Comparison", *Asian Port Cities 1600–1800. Local and Foreign Cultural Interactions* edited by Masashi Haneda (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), 19–22.

47 Marius Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 88.

48 See Samuli Kailaniemi, "Jurebassos and Linguists: The East India Company and Early Modern English Words for 'Interpreter'", in *Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis (HEL-LEX 2)*, edited by Alpo Honkapohja *et al.* (Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 2009), 60–73.

49 I have not found a single case of a female interpreter or intermediary for this period.

correspondence or communication in a wider context that included documents drafted in Manila or on events related to trade and diplomacy relevant for the Spanish Philippines. Similar to a Nagasaki, linguist assignments included interpretations, translations and the drafting of letters in foreign languages, collecting and providing information, as well as mediating in negotiations between two different cultural groups, and supervising foreigners in Manila.<sup>50</sup>

On the local level in Manila, where necessity controlled demand, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Philippine natives or Malay-speakers were qualified alike to fulfil linguistic tasks, regardless of color, class or religious beliefs.<sup>51</sup> In a time when language studies had just emerged, no ethnic group was prejudiced. Anyone with either good communication skills or language knowledge was qualified. Differences among linguists existed only with regard to the fields and regularity of their employment.

What remains difficult, however, is to judge the linguist's individual situation. In case he was a resident of Manila he would live according to his 'nationality' and profession either within the city walls, in a respectively Chinese, Japanese or native suburban quarter or in church-related settlements. Given that it was an unstable, unpredictable business of arbitrary semi-professionals and laymen it did not stimulate the development of a fixed number of interpreters. During the first decades, when diplomatic correspondence played a minor role, the number of native Chinese who worked as linguists was dominant. Antonio de Morga (1559-1633) thus urged in the year 1598 that "[t]he great number of Sangley<sup>52</sup> interpreters must be decreased. These serve for no other purpose than to commit innumerable acts of bribery, corruption, and fraud with the Chinese."<sup>53</sup> Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Catholic friars together with their devoted Japanese or Chinese disciples gradually evolved as a leading linguist group. Several episodes indicate recurring obstacles for non-Christian Chinese linguists. To give just one example: A local Chinese 'judge' complained about offensive actions of missionaries from the Philippines, who, after entering China did not respect the Mandarins. The same

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50 The Chinese were mainly protected by the Dominicans, whereas the Japanese were supervised by the Franciscans. This approach correlated with the general missionary method of dividing spheres of influence between different Catholic orders based on the language used for proselytizing. See J. L. Phelan, "Philippine Linguistics and Spanish Missionaries, 1565-1700" *Mid-America* XXXVII (1955), 154-159.

51 During the early decades of the Manila trade, the situation did not differ much from the circumstances described for the Persian Gulf in the eighteenth century. See Haneda Masashi 羽田正, "Bandare Abba-su [Bandar Abbas] no higashi indo gaisha shōkan to tsūyaku バングレ・アツバースの東インド会社商館と通訳", *Minato machi ni ikiru 港町に生きる*, edited by Haneda Masashi (Tōkyō: Aoki Shoten, 2006), 95-123.

52 A pejorative term used by the Spaniards for members of Fujianese merchant communities that probably originated from a mispronunciation of *chang lai* (those who come frequently) or *shang lai* (those who come to trade). See Manuel Ollé, *La Empresa de China. De la Armada Invencible al Galeón de Manila* (Barcelona: Acantilado, 2002), 244; 263.

53 Emma Helen Blair, James Alexander Robertson, Edward Gaylord Bourne, eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898. Explorations by Early Navigators, Descriptions of the Islands and Their Peoples, Their History and Records of the Catholic Missions, as Related in Contemporaneous Books and Manuscripts, Showing the Political, Economic, Commercial and Religious*. (55 vols. Hereafter abbreviated BR) (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1905), 10, 82.

‘judge’ is reported as having been a former captive or slave of a Spaniard who was only released under the condition that he would take Spanish missionaries to China, and serve as their interpreter.<sup>54</sup> Hence the incident suggests that non-Spanish linguists were probably often subject to the coercion of the ruling elite.

Table 1 provides a sketchy overview of linguists of the Manila system during the peak decades of triangular trade. In many cases we have to suffice with fragmentary information regarding the linguist’s background and life. Nonetheless loose fragments contribute to a more comprehensive whole.

**Table 1 Overview of Manila Linguists ca. 1575–1630**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Origin<sup>55</sup></b>	<b>Function</b>
Sinsay	Chinese	Merchant translator of Governor General Lavezaris’s letter to the governor of Fujian in 1575. <sup>56</sup>
Alfaro	Chinese	Christian or Muslim intermediary who served Martín de Rada on his first mission to Fujian in 1575. <sup>57</sup>
Dionisio Fernandez	Japanese	Christian convert and interpreter for the Japanese captain Joan Gayo, who came to Manila from Hirado in the late 1580s. As ‘intérprete ladino’ Dionisio became involved in a joint Filipino-Japanese conspiracy against Spanish rule led by Don Augustín de Legazpi (1587/8) that resulted in the collaborators’ executions including the interpreter. <sup>58</sup>
Alonso of Bengal	Bengali	Interpreter for trade transactions between Fujianese and Spanish merchants in Manila in the early 1580s. There he reportedly communicated the introduction of an import tax on Chinese commerce to the Fujianese traders. <sup>59</sup>
Harada Magoshichirō	Japanese	In 1592 he took Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s letters to the governor in Manila. <sup>60</sup> Also known by his Christian name Gaspar. He did not know any Spanish.

54 Report of the year 1578. Cf. Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza, *History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China (1588)*. Vol. 1 (London: Hakluyt, 1853), 268.

55 Although I use ‘Chinese’ as simplified national category, the majority of these people came from Fujian.

56 AGI Filipinas 34, n. 12, “Copia de Carta de Lavezaris al rey de China”, 1575.

57 According to an account by Martín de Rada in 1575; cf. Charles R. Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century. Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da Cruz and Martín de Rada, D.E.S.A. (1550-75)* (Bangkok: Orchid Press 1953 (2004)), 247.

58 AGI Filipinas 18, r. 4, n. 86, “Carta del gobernador de Filipinas al virrey de México”, 1589-05-20. Ibid. n. 89, “Carta de la audiencia de Filipinas al rey”, 1589-06-13; Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 348; BR 7: 95-11.

59 Charles R. Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon. Annals of Macao and the Old Japan Trade, 1555–1640* (Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1963), 39: “[he] had only a smattering of Chinese, but was the best Ronquillo could provide.”

60 Different sources give different names for Kiemon's substitute. In Japanese sources Harada

Juan Cobo	Spanish	Dominican friar and first official Spanish envoy to Hideyoshi in 1592. <sup>61</sup> Despite engaging in language studies in Manila his understanding was poor.
Luis	Japanese	Servant of the Spanish-Peruvian merchant Juan de Solis. Served as interpreter during Juan Cobo's embassy to Japan 1592. <sup>62</sup>
Antonio López	Chinese	Christian convert who accompanied Cobo's embassy to Japan and reported the events to the Spanish officials in 1592 after Cobo's sudden death. Antonio commanded Spanish and could read Japanese. <sup>63</sup>
Harada Kiemon	Japanese	South China Sea trader, who understood some Spanish; Hideoshi's ambassador to Manila in 1592. <sup>64</sup>
Antonio Melo	Chinese	Christian convert who mediated in commercial negotiations during Kiemon's visit to Manila 1592. <sup>65</sup>
Pedro Garcés	Japanese	Interpreter and/or pilot of Harada Kiemon's embassy to Luzón in 1592. <sup>66</sup>
Pablo Japonés	Japanese	Interpreter and/or pilot of Harada Kiemon's embassy to Luzón in 1592, who had acted as ad hoc interpreter for the Spanish authorities in previous years. <sup>67</sup>
Alonso Sauyo	Chinese	As governor of the 'sangleyes' in the 1590s he regularly consulted with the Spanish governors about affairs involving Chinese and Japanese. <sup>68</sup>
Pedro Baptista	Spanish	Franciscan friar who became the second official Spanish envoy to Hideyoshi in 1593 and one of the 1597 martyrs of Nagasaki. <sup>69</sup> Some of his

Magoshichirō is most common. In other sources, such as the 1592 letter to Spain, he is referred to as Harada Kiemon's vassal and nephew Gaspar. See also AGI Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107, "Testimonio sobre embajador de Japón, Faranda y Juan Cobo", 1593-06-01.

61 Cobo's work also included a translation of the Confucian anthology *Mingxin baojian* 明心寶鑑 into Castilian. The book was written in classical Chinese and we may assume that he wrote it together with an educated Fujianese merchant. See Chia, "Chinese Books", 262. Manuel Ollé called Juan Cobo a pioneer of cultural exchange for his translation efforts. See Ollé, Manuel, "La Formación de Parián de Manila. La Construcción de un Equilibrio Inestable".

<http://www.ugr.es/~feiap/ceiap1/ceiap/capitulos/capitulo02.pdf>. Accessed March 27, 2013.

62 BR 9: 45.

63 BR 9: 31-56.

64 AGI Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107, "Testimonio sobre embajador de Japón, Faranda y Juan Cobo", 1593-06-01.

65 BR 9: 53.

66 Chirino, Pedro, S.J. *Relación de las Islas Filipinas. The Philippines in 1600. Translated by Ramón Echevarria* (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1969), 50.

67 Ibid.

68 BR 10: 213; Juan Gil, *Los Chinos en Manila. Siglos XVI y XVII* (Lisboa: Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau, I. P., 2011), 481.

69 Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (hereafter ARSI), Jap/Sin 32.

		contemporaries believed he had a good command of Japanese. <sup>70</sup>
Goncalo García	Indian	One of the Catholic friars employed as linguists in Manila at the end of the sixteenth century. <sup>71</sup> Gonzalo García, a mestizo Franciscan lay brother from Portuguese India, who after having spent eight years in Japan, serving Jesuit padres as interpreter, accompanied Pedro Baptista to Japan in 1593. Contemporary sources describe his Japanese as as good as native. He negotiated directly with Hideyoshi. <sup>72</sup>
Constantino Juarez, Miguel Yaat	both Bornean	Translators of letters sent by the king of Borneo from 'Burney' tongue to Spanish in 1599. <sup>73</sup>
Francesco Almerici	Italian	Jesuit who studied Tagalog and Fujianese dialects in Manila. He became one of the mediators for natives and Chinese residents and probably was the co-author of the bilingual <i>Doctrina Christiana</i> , published in the year of his death in 1601. <sup>74</sup>
Tioguen	Chinese	A merchant who mediated for Spanish and Fujianese authorities following the 1603 Chinese uprising in Manila. <sup>75</sup>
Jerónimo de Jesús y Castro	Portuguese	Franciscan friar and former merchant who spent several years in Japan between 1594 and 1601. Tokugawa Ieyasu invited him to Kyōto 京都 in 1598. Thereafter they conversed freely on various occasions. <sup>76</sup>

70 Martín de Ascensión claimed that even with his fifty years, Bautista modestly talked to Japanese children asking them for the correct pronunciation and real meaning of words. Bautista certainly only learnt Japanese after arriving in Japan where he spent four years establishing a Franciscan mission in Kyoto, Osaka and Nagasaki. In a letter to his fellow brothers in Manila he advised them to achieve a high command of Japanese ("de aprender muy de veras la lengua japona para poder ser más provecho a fieles y infieles"). Cf. Alvarez-Taladriz, *Relaciones*, 13.

71 "Dezimos nosotros los religiosos que aquí firmamos nuestros nombres que es verdad que el dicho embajador firmo aquí este papel y petición y yo frai Goncalo Garcia digo que todo lo que en el se contiene me dixo mandase escribir para V. S. en la lengua española e yo como interprete lo hize escribir a uno de los religiosos que aquí firmamos." AGI Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107, 1593-04-27.

72 Marcelo de Ribadeineira, *Historia de las Islas del Archipiélago Filipino y Reinos de la Gran China, Tartaria, Cochinchina, Malaca, Siam, Cambodge y Japón*. Edición, Prólogo y Notas por el P. Juan R. de Legísima, O.F.M. (Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1947), 582-586.

73 BR 10: 120-122.

74 <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-almerici>. Accessed August 20, 2013.

75 BR 14: 119-139; BR 10: 44.

76 Alvarez-Taladriz, *Relaciones*, 176-179; Emilio Sola, "Relación de Pedro Burgillos sobre el Japón del inicio de los Tokugawa" Archivo de la Frontera. Accessed March 27, 2014.

João Rodriguez	Portuguese	Tcuzzu. Jesuit who served as translator and interpreter in Japan for Hideyoshi and the early Tokugawa. <sup>77</sup>
Juan Bautista Román	Chinese	Governor of the Chinese in Manila, linguist and intercultural mediator around 1603. <sup>78</sup>
Nishi Luis	Japanese	Vassal of the daimyō of Ōmura. After being baptised in Japan in 1607 he moved to the Philippines where he learnt Spanish. In 1612, he received a shuinjō 朱印状 (trading licence) for Manila and moved back to Sakai 堺 in 1614 from where he continued to travel to Luzón. <sup>79</sup>
Miguel Onte	Chinese	A Christian convert and intimate of the Spanish colonial government. He worked as interpreter for the audiencia in legal disputes between Chinese and Castilian culprits in the 1610s. <sup>80</sup>
Zheng Zhilong 鄭芝龍	Chinese	Pirate and later ally of the Southern Ming, who began his career as linguist and mediator in the China Seas; in the 1620s he served the Dutch on Taiwan as interpreter. <sup>81</sup>
Honda Masazumi 本多正純	Japanese	Senior advisor of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) in foreign affairs with Luzón, for instance in 1609. <sup>82</sup> He did not speak any Spanish.
Juan de la Cruz, Juan Sansón	both Chinese-Filipino	Mestizo offsprings who acted as interpreters for the Fujianese merchants arriving in Manila. <sup>83</sup>
Joan de Santo Domingo	Spanish	Mediator and interpreter for the Chinese residents of the new Parián (Chinese quarter) after 1606. <sup>84</sup>

77 Boxer, *Great Ship*, 70. Rodriguez was exiled to Macao in 1612 after having fallen in disgrace with the bakufu.

78 Cf. Manuel Ollé, *La Empresa de China. De la Armada Invencible al Galeón de Manila* (Barcelona: Acantilado, 2002), 151: Juan Bautista Román suggested in a letter written in Macao in June 1584 adequate presents for the Chinese Emperor. The “ambassador” seemed well aware of the tremendous importance of adequate presents.

79 Yōko Nagazumi 永積洋子, *Shuinsen 朱印船* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001), 119; Akira Hayashi 林復齋, et al., *Tsūkō Ichiran 通航一覽* (Osaka: Seibundō, 1967), fol. 179/571.

80 AGI Escribanía 403B.

81 Tonio Andrade, *Lost Colony. The Untold Story of China's Great Victory over the West* (Princeton and Oxford 2011), 30–31.

82 Murakami Naojirō 村上直次郎, ed. *Ikoku Nikki Shō 異国日記抄*. Ikoku Ōfuku Shokanshū 異国往復書翰集 (Tōkyō: Yushodo, 1966), 17.

83 AGI Filipinas 33, n. 2, d. 111.

84 AGI Escribanía 403B.

Luis Sotelo	Spanish	Franciscan friar (1574–1624) who served as interpreter during Rodrigo de Vivero's stay in Japan (1609) as well as for Sebastián Vizcaíno's embassy to Japan (1611/12). After negotiating with Date Masamune 伊達政宗 in 1613 <sup>85</sup> , he accompanied the Japanese ambassador Hasekura Tsunenaga 支倉常長 (1571–1622) to Europe.
Alonso Muñoz	Spanish	Franciscan friar who translated the diplomatic correspondence between Philip III/Duke of Lerma and Tokugawa Ieyasu/Hidetada, 1610-13. <sup>86</sup>
Juan de Medina	Spanish	Augustinian friar who studied Chinese for the administration and evangelisation of the Chinese community in Manila in the 1620s. <sup>87</sup>
Nicolas Martin	Japanese	A jurebasso who spoke Castilian; interpreter for the daimyō of Hirado and representatives of the EIC and other Europeans in the 1620s. <sup>88</sup>

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the representative actors introduced in table 1. First, a close connection existed between official envoys and linguists. While some foreign envoys possessed sufficient language skills to communicate without interpreters the majority relied on low-ranking linguists. In general, an ‘ambassador’s high social status makes evaluating his fluency more complex. Ambassadorial choices were frequently improvised, as qualified people were often not available. In the year 1608,

85 AGI MP-Escritura\_Cifra 31, “Carta original del Universal Señor del Japón, Hidetada Tokugawa (Minamoto Hidetada), al duque de Lerma, en la que autoriza a los navíos españoles procedentes de Nueva España a tocar puertos japoneses, dejando los detalles del asunto a los padres franciscanos Fray Alonso Muñoz y Fray Luis Sotelo, que llevan cinco armaduras japonesas de regalo”, 1610-05-94.

86 AGI Filipinas 4, n. 8, “Consulta sobre carta y regalos para el Rey de Japón”, 1613-05-10. Sebastian de Vizcaíno led an official delegation from Mexico to the courts of Tokugawa Ieyasu and Tokugawa Hidetada and spearheaded an expedition that looked for the mythological island of gold and silver (Islas de Plata y Oro) east of Japan.

87 Juan de Medina, *Historia de los Sucesos de la Orden de N. Gran P. S. Agustín de Estas Islas Filipinas, desde que se descubrieron y no poblaron por Los Españoles, Con Las Noticias Momorables* (1630), 83: “Yo, siendo Prior de este convento dos veces, aprendí alguna lengua China para poderles administrar; porque administrarles en Español, o en idioma de la tierra, es como si a los españoles administrasen en Griego.”

88 Edward Maunde Thompson, ed., *The Diary of Richard Cocks. Cape Merchant in the English Factory in Japan, 1615-1622 with Correspondence* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1883), 334. See also *ibid.*, 193: A daimyo “had prepared a jurebasso which spoake Spanish. The reason he tould me was, for that he dowbted our other jurebassos did not well understand what he had formerly said, in respeckt we had not resolved hym in all this tyme whether we determened to keepe Capt. Speck this yeare to goe for Edo with others of our nation which knew the order of Japon and were knowne to themperour and his Councill, but to the contrary lett the Spaniardes and the Portingales goe before us, whoe were our enemies, as all the merchants of Nangasaque and Miaco were the like, soe that we had no frend soe sure in Japon to trust unto as he was; and, yf we would not beleeve his councel, we might doe as we list, for the falt was not in hym.”

Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 even sent the Kentish William Adams as envoy to Manila.<sup>89</sup> During the period of this study, official envoys in the China Seas show a very mixed background: the Spanish sent friars, the Chinese high officials and the Japanese ‘cosmopolitan’ domestic merchants, or ‘borrowed’ European friars.<sup>90</sup> When Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 chose the regular Luzón merchant Harada Kiyemon 原田喜右衛門 for his first diplomatic mission to Luzón, the latter suddenly fell ill and had to be replaced by a lower ranking relative called Harada Magoshichirō 原田孫七郎. Magoshichirō stood before governor Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas (1519-1593) in May 1592 with Hideyoshi’s letter demanding the delivery of tribute. We are told that since Magoshichirō’s language skills were deficient and since no reliable interpreter could be found the Spaniards could not quite understand what the letter from the the ‘King of Japan’ actually meant.<sup>91</sup> Due to contradictory translations the Spaniards remained doubtful about the authenticity and the author of the letters.<sup>92</sup> Eventually, the Dominican Juan Cobo (1546-1592) was chosen to solve the issue by leading a diplomatic mission to Japan in summer 1592. Upon their arrival in Japan the visitors from Manila were taken to the universal ruler over Japan, who resided in his military headquarters in Nagoya 名護屋 in Hizen 肥前/Kyūshū 九州. During the audience with Hideyoshi the Spanish ambassador Cobo reportedly enjoyed unparalleled honours and eventually was consigned with assisting Harada Kiyemon's second embassy to Manila.<sup>93</sup> Several contemporary Spanish sources describe Cobo as an ambitious man, quick at picking up Mandarin and Chinese characters<sup>94</sup>, who struggled with Japanese.<sup>95</sup> During his encounters with the

89 Emilio Sola, *Extremo Oriente. Historia de un Desencuentro. España y Japón, 1580-1614* (Alcalá: Fugaz Ediciones, 1999), 100.

90 A prominent example is Jéronimo de Jesús. Yūko Shimizu discussed the mediating role of missionaries in negotiations between Manila and Japan. Shimizu Yūko 清水有子, *Kinsei Nihon to Ruson. 'Sakoku' Keiseishi Saikō* 近世日本とルソン 「鎖国」 形成史再考 (Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 2012), 142-143.

91 AGI Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 12, “Carta de G.P. das Mariñas enviando cartas de Japón,” 1592-06-11. This first official letter from Japan included further peculiarities from a sixteenth-century Spanish point of view: To start with, there was a large amount of letters from different members of ruling elites of unfamiliar titles and apparently high-ranking positions, that should emphasise the importance of the matter. The letters included a letter of the ‘king’, his treasurer, his general and one of the ‘rey’ of Firando [Hirado]. Another reason that made the Spaniards speculate about Japan’s greatness was the fineness of the paper that the Spaniards even compared with a papal bulla.

92 BR 9: 23-49.

93 After his audience with Toyotomi Hideyoshi he was even invited to a Japanese tea ceremony. See BR 9: 36.

94 ARSI Phil 14, f.1.

95 Diego Aduarte, *Historia de la Provincia del Sancto Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Philippinas, Iapon, y China. Por el Reverendissimo Don Fray Diego Aduarte ... Añadida por el Muy Reverendo Padre Fray Domingo Gonçalez*, tome I (Manila: En el Colegio de Sâcto Thomas, 1640), 234: “sin que en esto hubiesse mas dificultad de mandarlo, que ya se sabia que el Padre Fr. Iuan sin repliea ninguna avia de poner luego el ombro al trabajo, aunque fuesse tan grande como el apreder esta lengua China, que a los mas avetrados ingenios se les ha hecho siempre (y es) dificultossissima. Pero ayudele el Señor, como ayuda siempre a los obedientes, y aprendiola con ventajas de manera que extensivamente ninguno supo tanta lengua China, como el, aunque en la pronunciacion le hizieron otros ventajas pero suplia el

Japanese authorities, Cobo enjoyed the service of the Christian Chinese, Antonio López, a leading merchant of the Fujianese community in Manila. Antonio López possessed valuable knowledge in making rudimentary translation of documents written in Chinese characters 漢字 but did not speak Japanese fluently. Hence for day-to-day communication in Japan, Cobo relied on the interpreting of the Japanese servant Luis, who worked for the Spanish-Peruvian merchant Juan Solís.<sup>96</sup>

Despite the huge number of Fujianese settlers in Manila, the Spaniards surprisingly faced similar challenges in their official correspondence with China. In 1605, following the exchange of letters regarding the events around the Chinese rebellion and consequent mutiny of 1603/4, the Spanish governor lamented that the style of the translation he sent to Spain was unpolished, because those who translated it were not very skillful in both languages.<sup>97</sup>

Second, it is noteworthy that at several occasions more than one interpreter was employed. Although this may also suggest a certain hierarchy between the interpreters existed, entrusting various interpreters or translators with the same piece of work first and foremost implies a high degree of mistrust rather than a gap in the linguists' competences. Creating trust in those days was a matter of improvisation, as several episodes show. For instance, to help the Spaniards to identify Harada as ambassador, the latter wore specific vesture.<sup>98</sup> Another measure was returning embassies. Then usually the ambassadors of both negotiating parties were present during the audiences. In another diplomatic encounter in 1604, the Spaniard Pedro de Burguillos took letters personally back to Luzón, because the Japanese merchants who would have left early for Manila did not seem trustworthy enough.<sup>99</sup> Building trust was also omnipresent in cross-cultural trade relations.<sup>100</sup> Trading certificates were the most obvious examples in this regard:

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esta falta, (que lo es, y no pequeña en esta lengua) con la abundancia que tenia de palabras, con que se explicava muy bien, y le entendian. Acudio a este ministerio con tantas veras, y favorecia tanto a los Chinos, que le nombraron por su protector, y era como su abogado en sus causas con que los tenia muy aficionadas assi, y lo oyian con gusto [...].”

96 Pablo Pastells, ed. *Labor Evangélica. Ministerios Apostolicos de los Obreros de la Compañía de Iesus, Fundación, y Progresos de su Provincia en las Islas Filipinas. Historiados por el Padre Francisco Colín* (Barcelona: Impr. y litografía de Heinrich y compañía, 1900-02), tomo 3, 276.

97 BR 14: 70-71.

98 Since his communication skills did not seem reliable enough Harada had to demonstrate his peaceful intentions by the cloth he was wearing at the audience (vestido blanco y morado). See AGI Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107, “Testimonio sobre embajador de Japón, Faranda y Juan Cobo,” 1593-06-01: “El portador de esta es Faranda Quiemo Xapon (...) lleva por senal una veranderilla colorada en la popa fecha en aixi puerto de Xapon.”

99 Sola, *Desencuentro*, 95.

100 For the Spaniards in Manila the trust issue had even further dimensions. They had to justify all their decisions to the king in Spain. Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107, “Testimonio sobre embajador de Japón, Faranda y Juan Cobo,” 1593-06-01: “Todo lo qual como arriba e dicho e pedido a V. S/a en nombre del emperador mi Señor y por quanto V. S/a a dudano acerca de mi autoridad por no mostrar letras de el emperador mis traislados el padre Fray Juan Cobos con autoridad plenissima para que yo capitulase con V. S/a todo lo que para las paces y amistad era necessario me prefriero y obligo que e negado que sea a la pressencia de mi emperador ynviar le las capitulaciones firmadas de su propia mano y porque es verdad lo firme de mi nombre.”

Japanese vermilion seal licences, Chinese tallies 勘合, Castilian *boletas*, or Portuguese *cartazus* are all signs that similar foreign trade strategies were at work. Still, none of these measures were substantial enough to entirely allay suspicion. In light of accusations to hide information or prevaricate, Tokugawa Ieyasu, for example, suspected that the Catholic friars would lie about the prospects of trade with New Spain.<sup>101</sup> Hence, early modern intercultural envoys might have shown characteristics similar to those of the stereotypical dishonest diplomats who lied for the sake of their country in other regions and periods.

Third, the scarcity of skilled translators posed dilemmas regarding written communication. On the one hand, official translations frequently contained grammatical, orthographical or syntactical errors.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, examples of well-written documents indicate major linguist accomplishments. Next to Chinese and Japanese dictionaries or translations of religious texts<sup>103</sup>, Chinese-style Japanese (漢文 Kanbun) letters with a high degree of rhetoric were drafted in Manila for official correspondence with the Tokugawa around 1612.<sup>104</sup> Regrettably we neither know the names of the authors of these ‘Manila-kanbun’ texts, nor do we know who prepared approximate translations of Spanish documents in Japan. All we know is that none of the *bakufu* officials or Zen monks involved in the process of fabricating clean copies for the *shōgun* were neither familiar with the Latin alphabet nor with any European language.

Fourth, the table obviously does not provide data on the interpreters’ income. In fact, it is not entirely clear whether they received any financial compensation for their services. The issue of proper payment is closely linked to the question of the motivation behind interpreting and mediating work. While missionaries’ and merchants’ efforts for translations are comprehensible, the existence of ‘*sangley*’ interpreters poses several unsolved problems. Why were they willing to work for the Spanish or Japanese? Was it for fear of coercion or did they gain special privileges or even certain political power by providing their services?

Fifth, it shows the diversity of Manila linguists. From a slightly different angle we should take Japanese embassies to Mexico and Europe into account. In the case of the prominent early modern Japanese ambassador to Spain and Rome, Hasekura Tsunegaga 支倉常長 (1571-1622), a certain Francisco Martínez Montaña was ordered by the Mexican viceroy to accompany Hasekura. Martínez Montaña was able to understand the Japanese language thanks to living alongside Japanese in his time as a soldier in the Philippines.<sup>105</sup> During official duties in Europe the Japanese ambassador relied on the help of his travelling companion Luis Sotelo. In Japan native *jurebassos* fluent in Iberian

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101 Sola, *Desencuentro*, 94.

102 Aduarte, *Historia* (1640), 234.

103 For a well-preserved example of an early publication in Chinese see P. van der Loon, “The Manila Incunabula and Early Hokkien Studies”; *Asia Major: A British Journal of Far Eastern Studies*, London XII, no. 1 (1966).

104 Murakami, *Ioku Nikki* (1966), 104.

105 Cf. Berthold Riese, *Mexiko und das Pazifische Asien in der Frühen Kolonialzeit* (Bern u.a.: Peter Lang, 2012), 146, where we find a reference to the Japanese collection of historical sources known as *Dai Nippon Shiryō* 12, 1909, 214-7.

languages became particularly important after the 1620s. Their capacities exceeded mere interpreting or drafting of material and increasingly involved political functions.<sup>106</sup> In 1647 the residents of Macao advised the Portuguese ambassador to Japan, Goncalo de Siqueira de Souza, to let himself be guided in all matters by the *jurebassos* since they were knowledgeable and powerful in all areas of foreign affairs.<sup>107</sup> Although Japanese contemporary accounts draw a doubtful picture of their language skills,<sup>108</sup> the history of *jurebassos* nonetheless provides answers to the question of the use of Spanish in the China Seas: The English East India merchant Richard Cocks (1566–1624) mentioned for instance that a certain Hernando Ximenes was active in Bantam und Manila in 1622.<sup>109</sup> The example of the Spanish-speaking *jurebasso* is a further indication of the common use of Spanish as the commercial lingua franca.

Last but not least it should be mentioned that in the seventeenth century, members of the Sino-Filipino *mestizo* community became sought after as linguists. Both their bilingual education and their familiarity with different cultural contexts made them far more suitable candidates than missionaries or merchants.

### Concluding Remarks

To briefly recap, during the period we have been looking at communication inside the multicultural setting of Manila kept its random nature: neither regular patterns developed, nor did any institutionalisation of linguist work occurred. This is all the more surprising when we think of the concurrent flourishing information networks and increasing efforts in language learning, all accelerated by the printing press, missionary zeal and constant geopolitical interest of colonial officials. On a political level, the ruling Spaniards indirectly desired to implement Castilian as the language of administration for all residents regardless of their ethnic background. Yet, such efforts were costly and required control. Control, in turn, asked for a certain number of trustworthy people who were mostly not at hand. Every attempt to picture the general situation, however, will fail in doing justice to the personal success of many individuals whose language skills and intercultural understanding shaped the nature of foreign relations in the China Seas.

Earlier in this article I mentioned the role of Castilian (or Spanish) as the lingua franca in the economic macro-zone. Although accounts from Japan-based Northern European traders on the Spanish-speaking *jurebassos* speak in favour of its supra-regional importance, solid evidence is meagre. When evaluating the relevance of the Spanish language in early modern Asia we have to differentiate between pidgin Castilian used for securing trade deals and more complex communication patterns, such as treaty making

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106 Charles R. Boxer, *A Portuguese Embassy to Japan (1644-1647). Translated from an Unpublished Portuguese Ms., and Other Contemporary Sources, with Commentary and Appendices; the Embassy of Captain Goncalo de Siqueira de Souza to Japan in 1644-7* (Washington D.C.: University Publications of America, 1979), 11.

107 Boxer, *Portuguese Embassy*, 17. See Philipp Franz von Siebold, *Nippon: Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan* (Tōkyō: Kodansha, 1975), 19.

108 Matsukata Fuyuko 松方冬子, Tsūyaku to "yotsu no kuchi" 通訳と『四つの口』 in *Nihon no taigaikankei 6. Kinseiteki sekai no seijuku* 日本の対外関係6. 近世的世界の成熟, edited by Arano Yasunori, Ishii Masatoshi, Murai Shōsuke (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 2010), 235-50.

109 Thompson, *Diary of Richard Cocks* (1883), 334.

and diplomatic correspondence. No matter how persistently Spanish vocabulary was used by foreign merchants in Manila and elsewhere in Asia, it had only a limited effect on more sophisticated linguistic developments in the region.