

Missionary Linguistics in the Philippines (1571-1700): A State of the Art

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Introduction

The linguistic work carried out by Spanish missionaries in the Philippines began with the expansion of the Spanish Monarchy in Asia.² The expedition of Legazpi, which included four Augustinian friars, after several years of wandering through the Visayas, eventually settled in

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² The only exception comes from the remarkable curiosity of the traveler Antonio Pigafetta, who around 1520 compiled in his *Relazione del Primo Viaggio attorno al Mondo* a list of 160 words from the Cebuano Bisaya language (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1999, pp. 249–257). See, on this subject, José Ramón Carriazo Ruiz: “Los vocabularios incluidos en la «Relación» de Antonio Pigafetta: etnolingüística e historia del léxico español,” in M. Vinatea Recoba & J. Zuleta Carrandi (eds.): *Quinto centenario de la circunnavegación (1522–2022)*, Instituto de Estudios Auriseculares (IDEA), 2025, pp. 39–52.

Manila after its conquest in 1571. In the subsequent years, the Spanish expanded across the archipelago with the help of the friars, due to the scarcity of civilian settlers from Spain or New Spain.

After the Augustinians, the Franciscans arrived in 1578, the Jesuits in 1581, and the Dominicans in 1587—although the first Archbishop of the Philippines, who arrived in 1582, Fr. Domingo de Salazar, was Dominican; later, in 1606, the Augustinian Recollects joined. These religious orders divided the archipelago among themselves and founded provinces where they exclusively carried out their evangelizing activities. However, in many cases, certain parishes located in border regions were passed from one order to another throughout the centuries, especially due to the shortage of missionaries. Thus, the Augustinians settled in Ilocos, Pampanga, Panay, and Cebu; the Franciscans in the entire south of Luzon, from Laguna to Bicol, and the coastal region now called Aurora; the Jesuits in Leyte, Samar, Bohol, and northern Mindanao until their expulsion in 1768—although they returned in the mid-19th century; the Dominicans settled in Zambales, Pangasinan, and all the area now belonging to several provinces of the Cagayan Valley, from Nueva Vizcaya to northern Luzon. The Augustinian Recollects settled in conflictive frontier regions such as Mindoro, Palawan, and Mindanao. To carry out their missionary activities, the different orders specialized in the production of grammars, vocabularies, texts, and translations of the languages spoken in the territories where they had their missions. The Philippines was then—and remains—an archipelago with a vast linguistic diversity. However, each religious order had parishes in Manila and its surroundings, so Tagalog was the language that all the friars, to a greater or lesser extent, studied.

Early Linguistic Productions

The earliest known linguistic work on a Philippine language is the *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua tagala* (1581), written by the Augustinian Fr. Juan de Quiñones. Erroneously listed as printed by the Mexican bibliographer José Mariano Beristain, it was likely known in manuscript copies, as there was no printing press in the Philippines until 1604.³ Although several bibliographers and chroniclers mention Fr. Quiñones' expertise in the Tagalog language, the work was never published, and today we only know of it through these vague references.⁴

³ Jorge Mojarro: "Los primeros libros impresos en Filipinas" (1593-1607), *Hispania Sacra*, vol. LXXII (145), 2020, pp. 231–240.

⁴ Wenceslao E. Retana: *Orígenes de la imprenta filipina*. Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suárez, 1991, pp. 27–31. Many bibliographic catalogues state that the first *Arte de la*

Another missionary attributed with a grammar and vocabulary of the Tagalog language is the Franciscan Fr. Juan de Plasencia, a missionary who founded several missions in the province of Laguna and wrote a well-known *Relación de las leyes y costumbres de los indios tagalos* (Account of the Laws and Customs of the Tagalog Indians). Although his linguistic works have not survived, he is credited with the authorship of the first draft of the *Doctrina Christiana* in Tagalog,⁵ which was printed in 1593 using a woodcut printing press.⁶

The earliest linguistic work that has survived to this day is, curiously, a grammar of the Zambal language, spoken in the coastal province of Zambales: *Arte de la lengua sambala y española* (1601).⁷ This is an anonymous manuscript preserved in the Archive of the Augustinian Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus of the Philippines (APAF) in Valladolid. It has original features: it consists of seven chapters that seem to come from different sources, brought together to form a unified whole. The explanation of sounds does not appear at the beginning of the work, as is typical; instead, it includes an extensive discussion on adverbs, and there is no clear distinction between vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, although it remains within the tradition of Philippine missionary grammars, it does not cite any other contemporary or earlier author.⁸ Despite being quite a rudimentary grammar in some respects, it is highly indicative of the working methods and linguistic ideas of the first missionary friars in the Philippines.

lengua tagala was written by Fr. Agustín de Albuquerque, as they follow the information provided by Vicente Barrantes in the appendix on linguistics included in *El Teatro Tagalo* (Madrid, 1889). Barrantes must have taken this information from Augustinian biographers. However, Fr. Gregorio de Santiago Vela refutes this with documentation: it was Albuquerque who commissioned Fr. Quiñones to write the grammar. See Gregorio de Santiago Vela: *Ensayo de una biblioteca ibero-americana de la Orden de San Agustín*. Madrid: Imprenta del Asilo de Huérfanos del S. C. de Jesús, 1913, vol. I, p. 85.

⁵ Retana, *Orígenes*, p. 29.

⁶ Although several facsimile editions have been published, the only one with a critical introduction is Edwin Wolff 2nd: *Doctrina Christiana: The First Book Printed in the Philippines*. Philadelphia: Library of Congress, 1947.

⁷ Although it must have been the dominant language in the province, today it is in clear decline and has only around 70,000 speakers left. The Augustinian friar Agustín María de Castro found the manuscript in Bolinao, in southern Pangasinan, around 1780. That entire area had been a mission territory of the unreformed Augustinians until 1607, when they were replaced by the Dominicans.

⁸ Emilio Ridruejo: “The first grammar of a Philippine language? The anonymous *Arte de la Lengua Sambala y Española* [Grammar of the Sambal and Spanish languages] (1601),” in L. Reid, E. Ridruejo y T. Stolz (eds.): *Philippine and Chamorro Linguistics before the Advent of Structuralism*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011, pp. 11-32.

Early Sinology

During the early years, the interest in learning Tagalog was only rivaled by the preference for mastering Mandarin and Hokkien. Even before the establishment of the Spanish in the Philippines, there was a community of Chinese merchants in Manila, known as *sangleys*, who lived in their own district called *parian* and spoke Fujianese — or Hokkien — as they came from southern China. Interacting with this community and evangelizing them was a primary goal of the early friars of the mendicant orders and the Jesuits, as they believed that their acceptance could facilitate the long-sought dream of opening missions in China — a task in which the Jesuits had already advanced with the establishment of Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci in Zhaoqing (1583). After a brief initial period under the Augustinians, the evangelization of the *sangleys* passed to the jurisdiction of the Dominicans, several of whom managed to master the language, such as Fr. Juan Cobo, Fr. Miguel de Benavides, and Fr. Domingo de Nieva.⁹ The first of them was the author of the *Shih-Lu*, a Sinicized and Confucian translation of Fr. Luis de Granada's *Introducción al símbolo de la fe* (1586), printed with woodblocks in March 1593.¹⁰ Around 1592-93, the first Christian doctrine in Chinese was printed, also with woodblocks, a collective work of the Dominican friars, possibly the first book ever printed in the Philippines.¹¹ The evangelizing efforts of the Dominicans still produced two books in Chinese in the first decade of the 17th century: a catechism titled *Memorial de la vida christiana* (1606) by Fr. Domingo de Nieva,¹² and *Símbolo de la Fe* (1607) by Fr. Tomás Mayor, a work that shares many conceptual similarities with Fr. Juan Cobo's *Shih-Lu*.¹³ Despite this promising crop of titles, the Dominicans abandoned the printing of

⁹ Father Cobo is credited with a Chinese grammar, while Nieva is attributed with the authorship of both a grammar and a dictionary; these works must have circulated in manuscript form, and unfortunately no copies have survived. See Otto Zwartjes: *Missionary Grammars and Dictionaries of Chinese. The Contribution of Seventeenth Century Spanish Dominicans*. Leiden: Brill, 2024, p. 3.

¹⁰ Juan Cobo: *Shih-Lu. Apología de la verdadera religión*. Trilingual edition by F. Villaruel and J. M. González. Manila: UST Press, 1986. Fray Juan Cobo was also the author of the first translation of a work in Chinese into a Western language: *Espejo claro de rico corazón* (1592), which is preserved today in the National Library of Spain. There are at least three modern editions of this work.

¹¹ Jesús Gayo y Aragón (ed.): *Doctrina Christiana: primer libro impreso en Filipinas*. Manila: Imp. de la Real y Pontificia Universidad de Santo Tomás, 1951.

¹² 李毓中, 陳宗仁, Henning Klöter, José Luis Caño Ortigosa, Regalado T. José, 石文誠, 吳昕泉 (eds.): *Memorial de la vida christiana en lengua China*. Taipei: NTHU Press, 2022.

¹³ Fabio Yuchung Lee (李毓中), Tsung-jen Chen (陳宗仁), José Luis Caño Ortigosa, Wen-cheng Shih (石文誠), Regalado T. José, Louis Ianchun Ng (吳昕泉) (eds.): *Símbolo de la fe, en lengua y letra China*. Taipei: NTHU Press, 2022.

books in Chinese. The small number of conversions achieved among the sangleys and China's resistance to the entry of the mendicant orders led the Dominicans to prioritize their evangelizing efforts, at least until well into the 17th century, among the indigenous peoples of the Philippines.

However, certain milestones must be noted within the linguistic historiography produced in Manila during the 17th century, particularly with regard to the Sinitic languages. Fr. Pedro Chirino, the first Jesuit chronicler in the Philippines, was the author of the first Fujianese dictionary, a language spoken by the sangleys: *Dictionarium Sino Hispanicum* (1604).¹⁴ The pioneering grammar of this language is *Arte de la lengua chio chiu* (1620), probably by the Dominican Fr. Melchor Manzano de Haro.¹⁵ The first attempt at a grammar of Mandarin Chinese, *Arte de la lengua mandarina* (1640), was the work of Fr. Francisco Díaz, also a Dominican. Although composed in Manila, it is the result of the years its author spent as a missionary in China.¹⁶ Also worthy of mention is the voluminous *Dictionario Hispanico Sinicum*, an anonymous work — most likely a collective effort — from the first half of the 17th century,¹⁷ a trilingual dictionary in Spanish, Mandarin, and Fujianese.¹⁸ Klöter mentions up to fourteen works, including grammars and vocabularies, produced in Manila before the 18th century; some of them are lost, but others are being recovered today in modern facsimile editions within the Hokkien Spanish Historical Document Series.¹⁹

The Study of Japanese

Chinese and Fujianese were not the only non-indigenous languages of the Philippines studied by the missionaries. Another country that the friars of the religious orders aspired to enter was Japan, where the Jesuits had established

¹⁴ Fabio Yuchung Lee, Tsung-jen Chen, José Luis Caño Ortigosa, Wen-cheng Shih, Regalado T. José, Louis Ianchun Ng (eds.): *Dictionario Sino Hispanicum*. Taipei: NTHU Press, 2022.

¹⁵ Henning Klöter: *The Language of the Sangleys*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011.

¹⁶ Zwartjes, *Missionary Grammars*, 38-128.

¹⁷ Fabio Yuchung Lee, Tsung-jen Chen, Regalado Trota José, José Luis Caño Ortigosa (ed.): *Dictionario Hispanico Sinicum*, 4 vols., Taipei: NTHU Press, 2018.

¹⁸ Henning Klöter: "Ay sinco lenguas algo diferentes: China's local vernaculars in early missionary sources," en O. Zwartjes, G. James y E. Ridruejo (eds.): *Missionary Linguistics III / Lingüística Misionera III*. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2005, p. 197.

¹⁹ Website: <https://thup.site.nthu.edu.tw/p/412-1210-2093.php?Lang=en> under the tab Hokkien Spanish Historical Document Series (accessed July 2025). Research on the early sinological works of the friars has been flourishing in recent years. See the recent issue of *Historiographia Linguistica*, vol. 51 (2024), especially the studies by Hans-Jörg Döhla: "The *Bocabulario de la Lengua Sangleya por las Letraz de el A.B.C.* (Manila, ca. 1617)" (pp. 206–251), and Danielle Quagiotto: "The *Arte Sangleya* in the archives of the University of Santo Tomás in Manila" (pp. 252–272).

themselves in 1549, following the first visit of Saint Francis Xavier. The Franciscans founded their first missions there in 1593, and the Dominicans in 1602. In linguistic terms, at least two works on the Japanese language are known to have been produced by missionaries in the Philippines. The first of these is the *Vocabulario de Iapon...* (Manila, 1630), a voluminous dictionary —more than 1200 pages— published by the Dominican press under the leadership of Tagalog printers Tomás Pinpín and Jacinto Magarulau. As stated in the title, it is a Spanish translation of an original Portuguese work. The translator was the Dominican Fr. Jacinto Esquivel, a missionary with an aptitude for linguistic study who also wrote a grammar of a language spoken by the indigenous people of northern Formosa, though its whereabouts are unknown.²⁰ The original work it was based on is *Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam, com a declaração em Portugues* (Nagasaki, 1603), and its additional supplement, published in 1604. This Manila print is the first Japanese-Spanish dictionary in history.²¹

In 1632, three linguistic works dedicated to the Japanese language, although prepared and published in Manila, were printed by the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome using Latin as the metalanguage — though we know that some of them were originally written in Spanish:²² *Ars grammaticæ Iaponicæ lingvæ*, *Dictionarium sive thesauri linguae Japonicæ compendium*, and *Niffon no cotōbani yō confesion*; a grammar, a dictionary, and a confession manual.²³ All of these were the work of the Dominican Fr. Diego Collado, a missionary who spent three years in Japan and tried to gain favor in Rome to establish the Congregation of Saint Paul, a separate Dominican entity from the Province of Santo Rosario of the Philippines to administer Japan apostolically. This initiative did not succeed,

²⁰ Retana, *Orígenes*, 115; Natalia Rojo Mejuto: *Las voces japonesas en la historia de la lexicografía española*, Universidade da Coruña, 2021 (doct. diss.); Patricia May Bantug Jurilla: “Vocabulario de Iapon, a Seventeenth-Century Japanese-Spanish Dictionary Printed in Manila: From Material Object to Cultural Artifact,” *Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, December 2023, pp. 401–428.

²¹ Regarding this pioneering work, see François Lachaud: “Found in Translation: Lives and Afterlives of the *Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam* (1603–1604),” pp. 95–132; Rui Manuel Loureiro: “A Contextualising Look at the ‘Declaração em Portugues’ of the *Vocabulario da Lingoa do Iapam* (Nagasaki, 1603–1604),” pp. 77–94; both in Michella Busotti y François Lachaud (eds.): *Mastering Languages, Taming the World*. Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 2023.

²² Sven Osterkamp: “Notes on the Manuscript Precursors of Collado’s *Ars grammaticæ Iaponicæ lingvæ* in the British Library (Sloane Ms. 3459) and Especially Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (Borg. lat. 771),” *Bochum Yearbook for East Asian Studies* 36, 2012, pp. 199–212.

²³ There is a relatively abundant bibliography on these works. A good overview can be found in Jan Odstrčilík: “Between Languages, Genres, and Cultures: Diego Collado’s Linguistic Works,” *Medieval Worlds*, 11, 2010, pp. 117–151.

and he was punished by his order brothers, who sent him to mission in a parish in Cagayan.²⁴ The confession manual also used romanized Japanese, a writing system in which the Dominican Fr. Juan Rueda de los Ángeles had published several works a decade earlier.²⁵ Due to the bloody persecutions and numerous martyrdoms suffered by the missionaries in Japan, especially between 1618 and 1640, the orders stopped sending friars, and interest in the Japanese language waned.²⁶

First Printed Works

The first linguistic work printed in the Philippines was *Arte de la Lengua Tagala* — published in Bataan in 1610 by the Filipino Tomás Pinpin — by the Dominican Fr. Francisco Blancas de San José, who had also been the architect of the first printing press in the Philippines in 1604. This work is fundamental not only because of its relative success — it was reprinted in 1752 and 1832 — but also because it was frequently cited and praised by other authors of Philippine linguistic works. It laid the foundation for the study of the Tagalog language, and its influence would permeate all subsequent approaches to the language, at least up to Pedro Serrano Laktaw.²⁷ Father Blancas, a deep expert in Tagalog, in which he had published other works,²⁸ declares in the preliminary paratexts

²⁴ Antonio Doñas: “«Negotio gravissimo del Giappone»: Diego Collado OP y las *Considerationi intorno alle resolutioni fatte dalla Congregazione di Spagna circ’ il Giappone* de Francesco Ingoli (1628),” *Archivo Dominicano*, LIV, 2023, pp. 89-115.

²⁵ We are referring to the following bibliographic rarities: *Virgen S. Mariano tattoqi Rosario noxuguioito...* (Binondo, 1622); *Virgen S. Mariano tattoqi Rosario iardin tote fanazoni...* (Binondo, 1623); *Lvzonni voite aru fito svcaxono...* (Binondo, 1623); *Vareraga voaruji Iesv Christo S. Brigida, S. Isabel, S. Mitildesni tçuguetamo...* (Binondo, 1623). The visual aspect of the first book (1622) has been studied by Regalado Trota José: “The Scenes of the Life of Christ in the Virgen S. Mariano of 1623: The earliest extant Philippine estampitas?,” *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. LVIII, No. 175 (January-April, 2023) pp. 151-186.

²⁶ An exception to this is *Arte de la lengua japonica* (1738), by Fr. Melchor Oyanguen de Santa Inés, OFM.

²⁷ Despite its importance, there is no modern critical edition of this work in Spanish. We must refer to the facsimile edition published by AECI (Madrid, 1997), with an introductory study by Antonio Quilis. The most detailed study of this work, although from a postcolonial perspective, remains Marlon James Sales’s doctoral thesis: *A Grammar of God: Translation, Grammar and Memory in the Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala (1610)*, Melbourne: Monash University, 2014, which includes an English translation with extensive notes. See also, by the same author, “La intertextualidad como recurso en la lingüística misionera: El prefacio del Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala (1610) de fray Francisco Blancas de San José,” *Humanities Diliman*, 12(2), 2015, pp. 29–55, and Arwin Vibar: “The 1610 *Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala* Revisited: An Advanced Grammar for Spanish Missionaries of the Seventeenth Century,” *Synergeia*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2014, pp. 1–22.

²⁸ For example, the *Libro de las Quatro Postrimerias* (1604) or the *Memorial de la Vida Christiana* (1607). He also left a large number of unpublished sermons in Tagalog, collected in

certain ideas common among other linguistic friars, such as the belief that divine grace consists in the gift of tongues — a gift that the twelve apostles already possessed²⁹ — or the appreciation of all languages as creations of God. Blancas also notes dialectal differences or varieties within the Tagalog language —namely, Comentan Silanga and Manila —, a distinction that Fr. Pedro de Buenaventura would follow in his *Vocabulario*. In the preface, he claims to have relied on the work “of the first Fathers,”³⁰ which was a common practice among missionaries in the Philippines: linguistic works were always the product of accumulated knowledge through manuscripts that passed from hand to hand, were copied, and to which the findings of friars skilled in the languages were added. The *Arte*, following Nebrija’s *Introductiones Latinae* and the Latin grammatical tradition,³¹ is divided into two parts: the first part, in six lessons, addresses categories such as the noun, pronoun, verb, prepositions, the verb sum, and what Blancas refers to as “interrogative nouns;” followed by the second part with rules divided into twenty chapters, where particles (V-XVII and XVIII) are studied, but also ligatures and reduplications, common features in the Austronesian languages of the Philippines. Despite its undoubted interest, studies on this foundational work remain partial, and there is a lack of a critically annotated edition that synthesizes and advances the findings made so far.

Fr. Blancas de San José is also attributed with an *arte* for teaching Tagalogs to speak Spanish, perhaps due to confusion with the work of the Tagalog printer Tomás Pinpín, a native of Bataan, who published a grammar of the Spanish language for Tagalog speakers titled *Librong pagaaralan nang mga Tagalog nang uicang Castilla* (1610).³² Although this original work was not authored by a missionary, its creation and printing were undoubtedly due to the intervention of Fr. Blancas de San José, with whom Tomás Pinpín closely collaborated during the Dominican’s missionary years in Abucay. This is an exceptional work for several reasons: first, it is the only known case of an indigenous person, with little formal education, creating a grammar of the colonizer’s language; second, the peculiar structure of the book, the omission of terms related to linguistics, and the way the

Sermones. Edited by José Mario C. Francisco. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994.

²⁹ Miguel Ángel Esparza Torres: “Francisco Blancas de San José y el desarrollo del concepto de don de lenguas en la lingüística misionera,” en VV.AA. (eds.): *La historiografía lingüística como paradigma de investigación*. Madrid: Visor Libros, 2016, pp. 329-346.

³⁰ Francisco Blancas de San José: *Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala*. Bataán: Tomás Pinpín, 1610, p. 3.

³¹ Miguel Ángel Esparza Torres: “Nebrija viaja en el galeón de Manila,” *BAFLE. Boletín de la Academia Filipina de la Lengua Española*, 2, 2024, pp. 19-20.

³² Also printed in Bataan by Diego Talagay, no copies of the first edition have survived, although some copies of the second edition are known to exist, which includes a facsimile of the original title page.

lessons are developed differ from the methods employed by the educated friars in their artes. Therefore, it is a codification of the Spanish language from a distinctly indigenous perspective, with Tagalog serving as the metalanguage. Although some, adopting an ideological perspective, have seen in this work an early attempt to rebel against the intruder,³³ there is nothing in the work to suggest this. In fact, in the preface, Pinpín mocks the Tagalogs who imitate the Spanish in dress but are unable to speak Spanish. He also encourages his fellow countrymen to learn Spanish diligently and with effort, so as to avoid angering the Spanish:

The reason I strive that we all come to possess the Spanish language is so that our souls may benefit from the mercies of the Lord God. And wherever we may be, if we are in the company of the Spaniards in battles, if there is no priest who knows how to speak Tagalog, it will not be possible for us to confess, even if we wanted to, unless we knew their language.³⁴

Aside from the brief excerpts translated into Spanish in the works of Artigas and Cuerva, this work, despite its exceptionality, has unfortunately not been translated into any Western language, nor has it been studied from a linguistic perspective or edited in Tagalog with the philological criteria that deserves to this day.

The First Doctrines in Philippine Languages

Following the chronological order, the next two works are the first ever printed in the Bisaya language: *Doctrina cristiana breve* (Manila, 1610) and *Instrucciones de los misterios de nuestra sancta fe* (Manila, 1611). These were translations carried out by the Jesuit Fr. Cristóbal Jiménez — missionary in Leyte and Bohol — from the originals of Fr. Robert Bellarmine: *Doctrina Christiana Breve* (1598) and *Christianæ doctrinæ explicatio* (1603).³⁵ This Jesuit is also credited with an *arte* of the Bisaya language, which has not survived. In any case, the doctrine of Cardinal Belarmino gained great popularity in Christendom and was translated into numerous languages, including Philippine languages, during the first half of the 17th century.

³³ Damon Woods: *Tomas Pinpin and Tagalog survival in early Spanish Philippines*. Manila: UST Publishing House, 2011.

³⁴ A Spanish translation of the prologue in Manuel Artigas y Cuerva: *La Primera Imprenta en Filipinas*. Manila: Tipo-Litografía Germania, 1910, pp. 141-147, footnote. A modern transcription, without annotations, in Tomas Pinpin: *Librong pagaaralan nang maga Tagalog nang uicang Castilla*. Ed. by Damon Woods. Manila: UST Publishing House, 2011.

³⁵ The existence of the 1610 Bisayan doctrine was known (Retana, *Orígenes*, 87-88), although it was believed no copy had survived. Regarding *Instrucción*, it is not mentioned by any bibliographer.

In addition to the aforementioned translations by Fr. Jiménez, we find the following:

Year	Title	Autor	Lengua	Imprenta
1621	<i>Libro a naisurátan ámin ti bagás ti Doctrina Cristiana...</i>	Francisco López, OSA	Ilocano	Convento de San Pablo ³⁶
1621	<i>Catecismo y doctrina christiana en lengua pampangana</i>	Francisco Coronel, OSA	Kapampangan	Convento de Macabebe ³⁷
1628	<i>Explicación de la doctrina cristiana en lengua tagala</i>	Alonso de Santa Ana, OFM	Tagalog	Colegio de Santo Tomás ³⁸
1630	<i>Doctrina cristiana en la lengua de los indios de Tanchui en la Islas Hermosa</i>	Jacinto Esquivel, OP	Tanchui	Ms.
1637?	<i>Catecismo de Doctrina Cristiana en lengua bisaya</i>	Alonso de Mentrída, OSA	Hiligaynon	Compañía de Jesús
1637	<i>Doctrina cristiana del Cardenal Belarmino</i>	Juan de Santa María, OFM	Tagalo	Ms.
1647	<i>Doctrina cristiana del Cardenal Belarmino</i>	Andrés de San Agustín	Bicolano	Manila

Although other doctrinal works were published, or are known to have been published, and written in the 17th century, the previous list only shows translations of the *Doctrina Breve* by Cardinal Belarmino.³⁹ In all cases, it is unknown whether the translations were made from the original Latin or from one of the many Spanish editions. In any case, these doctrines were often the first printed examples of each

³⁶ 2nd edition, 1688. See the 3rd edition, with the critical study by Fr. Cipriano Marcilla: Francisco Lopez: *Libro a naisuratan amin ti bagás ti Doctrina Cristiana...* Malabón: Tipo-Lit. del Asilo de Huérfanos de PP. Agustinos, 1895. See Jorge Mojarro: “La lingüística misionera y las polémicas identitarias: la obra del P. Marcilla,” *Archivo Agustiniiano* 219, 2017, pp. 129-142.

³⁷ 2nd edition, 1698; reprinted several times.

³⁸ 2nd edition, 1637; reprinted several times.

³⁹ We have based this, with slight corrections, on Regalado Trota José: *Impreso. Philippine Imprints, 1593-1811*. Makati: Ayala Foundation, 1993.

Philippine language and contributed to the establishment and standardization of their respective writings. However, to this day, there is almost no linguistic study of these doctrines, which are generally accessible in 19th-century reprints. Of particular interest is the translation into Ilocano, for which the native Filipino syllabary, known as *baybayin*, was used.⁴⁰



Cover of Fr. Francisco Lopez's translation of Fr. Robert Bellarmine's *Doctrina Christiana* into Ilocano: *Libro a naisuratán amin ti bagás...* (Manila, Convento de San Pablo, 1620), from the copy held at the Lopez Memorial Museum and Library, Pasig.

⁴⁰ Benigno Albarrán González: "La primera traducción de la *Doctrina Christiana* del Cardenal Bellarmine al ilocano (Filipinas)," *Livius. Revista de estudios de traducción* 4, 1993, pp. 15-24.

Dictionaries

Among the linguistic works carried out by the missionaries, dictionaries have received the most attention from scholars in the past two decades.⁴¹ Undoubtedly, many lexicographical compilations must have been created throughout the 17th century for Tagalog, but only three copies/examples have survived:

1. Fr. Pedro de San Buenaventura, OFM: *Vocabulario de lengua tagala, el romance puesto primero* (Pila: Thomas Pinpín and Domingo Loag, 1613).⁴²

This monumental work is a true repository of the pre-Hispanic culture of the archipelago and an indispensable tool, as a starting point, for tracing the history of the Tagalog language.⁴³ Like Fr. Blancas's *Arte*, it distinguishes between three variants: that of the capital, the coast, and the mountains. The first part, Spanish-Tagalog, is seven times longer than the second part, Tagalog-Spanish. The author states in the preface that the creation of the dictionary took him fourteen years of study.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Fernández Rodríguez, Rebeca: "El interés de los vocabularios hispano-filipinos para la investigación traductológica," in A. Bueno García (ed.): *La traducción monacal: la labor de los Agustinos desde el Humanismo hasta la época contemporánea*, Soria: Diputación Provincial de Soria, 2005, pp. 1-10; Emma Martinell Gifre: "Los vocabularios españoles en América, en Oriente y en el Pacífico, siglos XVI-XVII," in Martinell Gifre, Emma y Erlendsdóttir, E. (eds.): *La conciencia lingüística europea. Nuevas aportaciones de impresiones de viajeros*. Barcelona, PPU, 2005, pp. 195-210; Joaquín García-Medall: "Fraseología del insulto e ironía en los primeros vocabularios del tagalo y del bisaya (siglo XVII)," in García-Medall, Joaquín (ed.): *Fraseología e Ironía. Descripción y contraste*. Lugo: Axac, 2006, pp. 49-70. The most important works are still the monograph by Joaquín García-Medall: *Vocabularios Hispano-Asiáticos. Traducción y contacto intercultural*. Soria: Vertere. Monográficos de la revista Hermeneus, 2009, and the overview by Rebeca Fernández Rodríguez: "Lexicography in the Philippines: 1600-1800," *Historiographia Linguistica* 41 (1), 2014, pp. 1-32.

⁴² There is a modern facsimile edition with an introduction by Fr. Cayetano Sánchez (Valencia: Librerías París-Valencia, 1995).

⁴³ William Henry Scott: "Sixteenth-Century Tagalog technology from Vocabulario de la lengua tagala of Pedro de San Buenaventura, O.F.M.," *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2000, pp. 84-103; Marta Ortega Pérez: "El léxico relativo a la flora filipina documentado en el *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala* (1613) de Pedro de san Buenaventura," en M^{ra} Á. Moreno Moreno (ed.): *Homo Botanicus. Lengua, cultura y símbolos del mundo vegetal*. Berlín: Peter Lang, 2023, pp. 137-154

⁴⁴ John U. Wolff: "The *Vocabulario de Lengua Tagala* of Fr. Pedro de Buenaventura (1613)," in L. Reid, E. Ridruejo, & Thomas Stolz (Eds.), *Philippine and Chamorro Linguistics before the Advent of Structuralism*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011, pp. 33-48

2. Fr. Francisco de San Antonio, OFM: *Vocabulario tagalo* (1620?).

This is a Tagalog-Spanish dictionary compiled in the province of Laguna. It survives in two manuscripts: one in the Archive of the University of Santo Tomás containing 6,749 terms, and the other in the National Library of France with 5,058 terms. According to the editor of the modern edition, who merges the words from both manuscripts into a single text, there is textual evidence that Fr. Francisco de San Antonio must have had access to the printed *Vocabulario* in Pila. The editor also notes that the *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala* (1745), compiled by the Jesuits Juan de Noceda and Pedro Sánlucar, also draws on this work.⁴⁵

3. Fr. Domingo de los Santos, OFM: *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala* (Tayabas: [Franciscan Press], 1703).⁴⁶

Although it was printed in the 18th century, this work was compiled during the last years of the previous century — the date of 1688 is cited — as its author died in 1695. With a bidirectional structure, the author acknowledges in the preface his debt to the Franciscan lexicographers who preceded him. These three works demonstrate that throughout the 17th century there existed a Franciscan lexicographical tradition in which each author drew upon the contributions of earlier works and updated them, both in methodological terms and with regard to the lexicon itself. A comprehensive comparative study of these three works is much needed.⁴⁷

Among the other foundational lexicographical works developed throughout the 17th century is the *Vocabulario de la lengua bicol* by the Franciscan Fr. Marcos de Lisboa, who lived in the Philippines until 1618. His monumental work, which includes only the Bikolano–Spanish section, must have been useful to several generations of Franciscan missionaries in the southern province of Bikol, until it was finally printed for the first time in 1754.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Francisco de San Antonio, OFM: *Vocabulario tagalo*. Ed. by Anton Poostma. Quezon City: Pulong – Ateneo de Manila, 2000.

⁴⁶ The first edition is extremely rare; copies are only found at King’s College (London) and the National Library of Mexico. Almost all those who cite it do so through the second edition, printed in Sampaloc in 1794. The only in-depth study of this work is by Marta Ortega Pérez: “La labor lexicográfica bilingüe de fray Domingo de los Santos: Vocabulario de la lengua tagala,” *RILEX. Revista sobre investigaciones léxicas*, 1/1, 2018, pp. 29–53.

⁴⁷ Marta Ortega Pérez: “Las ideas lingüísticas en la lexicografía hispano-tagala durante la época colonial,” en Laura Mariottini y Monica Palmerini (eds.): *Estudios de lingüística hispánica. Teorías, datos, contextos y aplicaciones*. Madrid: Dykinson, 2022, pp. 1717-1738.

⁴⁸ There is a modern edition in which the Spanish part has been translated into English: Marcos de Lisboa: *Vocabulario de la lengua bicol*. Translated by E. C. Soriano and L. A. Hilado de Caldera. Naga: Ateneo de Naga University Press, 2024. Unfortunately, the critical study that should accompany such an important work is absent, and instead, there are praises and acknowledgments



Cover and first page of the 2nd edition of *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala* (Sampaloc, 1794), by Fr. Domingo de los Santos, OFM. Copy from the British Library, London.



from the translators. Additionally, the translation is not based on the first edition of 1754, but on the second edition of 1865, as this was the copy acquired by a wealthy Bicolano, who is mentioned at the end of the book. Of some use is the very brief user guide signed by the linguist Jeremiah Cordial.

Another major lexicographical work is the *Bocabulario de la lengua bisaia, hiligueyna, y haraia de la isla de Panai y Sugbú y para las demás islas*, published in Manila in 1637 by Alonso de Méntrida, O.S.A. (1559–1637). Its chief peculiarity is that it is a dictionary of Hiligaynon, spoken on the island of Panay, which simultaneously includes words from the Karay-a language—also spoken in Panay—and from Cebuano. Although all three belong to the Austronesian subgroup of Bisayan languages, only the first two are mutually intelligible to some extent. It is the best-studied Filipino dictionary thanks to the extensive work of Joaquín García-Medall,⁴⁹ who has also produced a modern edition.⁵⁰

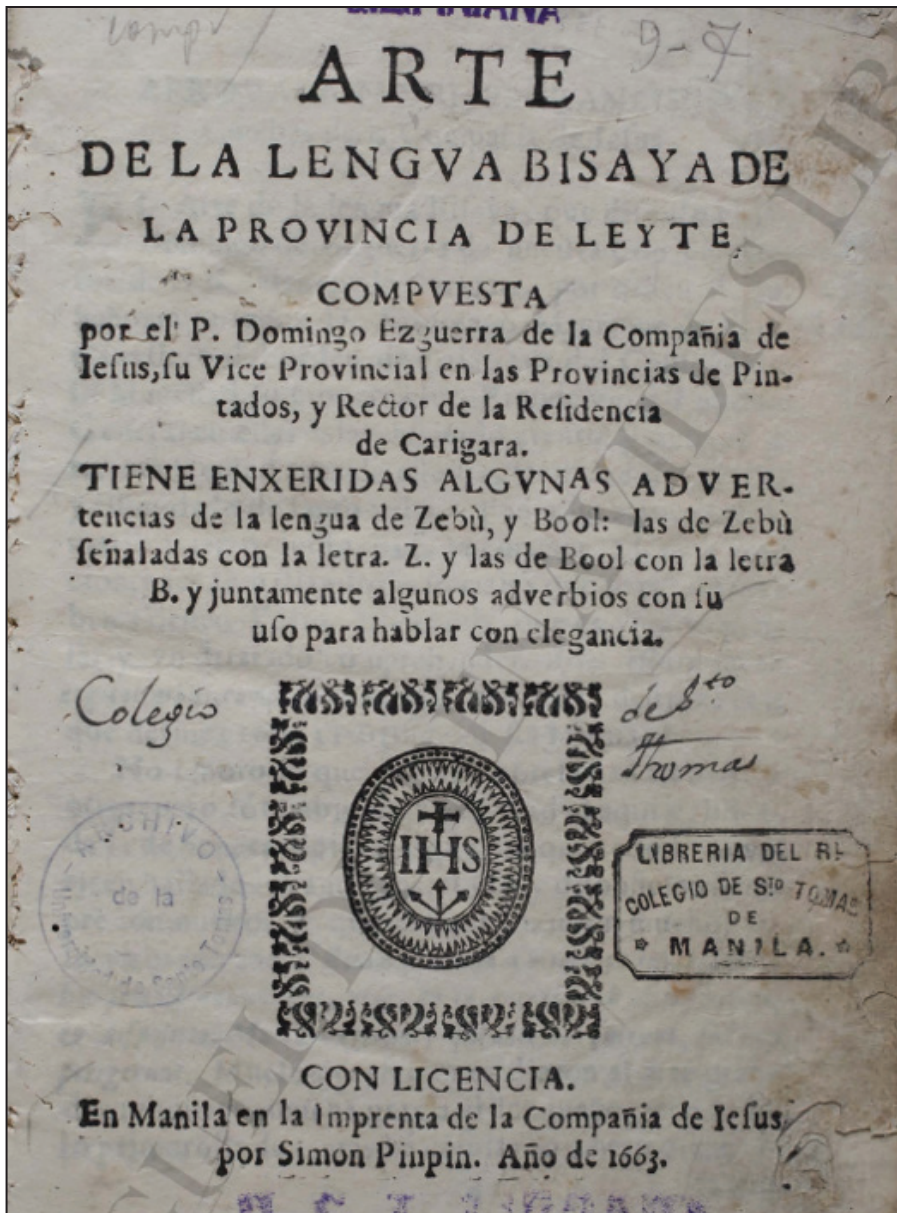
Artes

Following the foundational work of Fr. Blancas de San José, efforts to systematize and make Tagalog and other Philippine languages accessible to new missionaries proliferated, although only some of these works were ever printed. For example, the Augustinian Andrés Verdugo is credited with an *Arte de la Lengua Tagala*, which was supposedly printed by the Jesuits in 1649 — it is cited, for instance, by Fr. Domingo de los Santos — but it has not survived, and we are not even certain it was ever printed.

The grammar that did make it to print, but in Mexico, was the *Arte de la lengua tagala, sacada de diversos artes* (1679), by the Franciscan Fr. Agustín de la Magdalena. The Dominican Fr. Alonso Sandín confesses in the preliminary remarks that before reading it he considered its publication unnecessary, “being persuaded that the books already written on this language were sufficient for the adequate instruction of Evangelical Ministers” — which suggests that many manuscripts circulated in addition to the known works. Nonetheless, he judged its publication appropriate because it was a very concise compendium of all the rules, practical, useful, and easy to use. Unlike other artes, it is structured in many brief chapters and fills barely 70 leaves in octavo (only about 12 cm in height).

⁴⁹ “Notas de lexicografía hispano-filipina: El *Bocabulario de lengua bisaya, hiligueyna y haraya de la isla de Panay y Sugbu y para las demas islas*, de fray Alonso Méntrida, OSA (ca. 1637),” en en Zwartjes O., y Hovdhaugen E. (eds.): *Missionary Linguistics/Lingüística Misionera*, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004, pp. 201-232.

⁵⁰ Alonso de Méntrida: *Vocabulario de la lengua bisaya, hiligueina y haraya de la isla de Panay y Sugbú y para las demás islas: 1637*. Valladolid: Instituto Interuniversitario de Estudios de Iberoamérica y Portugal, 2004. We do not include here the *Vocabulario bisaya* by Fr. Mateo Sánchez, printed in 1711, since, although its author lived in the first half of the 17th century, it was later updated and revised by subsequent Jesuits.



First edition of *Arte de la lengua bisaya de la provincia de Leyte* (Manila: Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesús, 1663), by Fr. Domingo Ezguerra. Only known copy, held at the Heritage Library, UST.

At least the following seven grammars of Philippine languages were created throughout the 17th century:

1. *Arte y reglas de la lengua pampanga* (1621) by Fr. Francisco Coronel.
There is no consensus among scholars as to whether it was actually

printed in Macabebe in 1617. What survives is a manuscript dated 1621, now kept in the Archive of the Augustinians in Valladolid.⁵¹

2. *Arte de la lengua iloca* (1628) by Fr. Francisco López, OSA. A highly important work not only for its thorough description of the language but also for the interesting linguistic ideas presented in both the dedication and the preface.⁵²
3. *Arte de la lengua bisaya hiliguayna de la isla de Panay* (before 1637) by Fr. Alonso de Métrida. Known through the editions of 1818 and 1894—the latter with additions by Fr. José Aparicio.⁵³
4. *Práctica breve de la lengua bisaya, y reglas para sabella hablar* (1637) by Fr. Martín Claver. A curious fourteen-chapter compendium oriented toward oral practice, included as an appendix to Métrida's previously mentioned vocabulary.
5. *Arte de la lengua bisaya de la provincia de Leyte* (1663) by Fr. Domingo Ezguerra. A unique surviving copy is held in the library of the University of Santo Tomás. A second edition was printed in 1747, and a facsimile was made in 1949. It distinguishes among the Cebuano spoken in Leyte, Cebu, and Bohol. Although commonly cited in bibliographic repertoires, it has not been studied.
6. *Arte de la lengua de Pangasinán* (1690) by Fr. Andrés López.⁵⁴
7. *Arte de la lengua pampanga* (1694), anonymous. Manuscript preserved in the Archive of the Augustinians in Valladolid.⁵⁵

⁵¹ It has been recovered: Fr. Francisco Coronel's *Arte y Reglas. Kapampangan Grammar and Rules, circa 1621*. Transcribed, translated, and annotated by Fr. Edilberto V. Santos. Angeles City: Holy Angel University, 2005. It contains a brief preface with historical information by Fr. Policarpo Hernández. The transcription is literal and does not include any notes.

⁵² Facsimile edition: Francisco López: *Arte de la lengua iloca*. Edition and critical introduction by J. García-Medall. Madrid: AECID, 2009.

⁵³ Annotated edition with a critical introduction by Joaquín Sueiro Justel, in Alonso de Métrida: *Arte de la lengua bisaya hiliguayna de isla de Panay*. Madrid: Iberoamericana – Vervuert, 2014, based on the two 19th-century editions.

⁵⁴ There is a modern edition by Joaquín Sueiro Justel and Ma. Dolores Riveiro Lema with a dense introductory study. This edition departs from the printed versión, but it is complemented through comparative análisis with manuscript versions: Andrés López: *Arte de la lengua de Pangasinan (1690)*. Madrid: Iberoamericana – Vervuert, 2014.

⁵⁵ It has been studied by Emilio Ridruejo: “Una gramática desconocida de la lengua pampanga fechada en 1694,” in A. Pérez Roldán et al. (eds.): *Caminos actuales de la historiografía lingüística*. Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2006, pp. 1343–1360.

8. *Arte y vocabulario de lengua pampanga* (1699) by Fr. Álvaro de Benavente. Manuscript produced in Bacoor just before the author's departure for China.⁵⁶

Conclusions

The Spanish missionaries established in the Philippines carried out extensive work to learn the major local languages and to facilitate their use among their fellow missionaries for evangelization purposes. The works mentioned in this article likely do not fully capture all the activity that took place, and it is certain that, with the growing development of missionary linguistics as a discipline, new manuscripts and printed works will continue to be discovered. Likewise, the bibliography on missionary linguistics in the Philippines has grown remarkably over the past two decades.

In Spain, interest first appeared through the articles of Professor Benigno Albarrán González during the 1990s, when obtaining materials was comparatively difficult. Later, professors Emilio Ridruejo, Miguel Ángel Esparza Torres, Joaquín García-Medall, Joaquín Sueiro Justel, and Rebeca Fernández Rodríguez formed a truly productive group that has achieved undeniable advances. Among the younger researchers following this path are Víctor Felipe Acevedo López and Marta Ortega Pérez, whose interests vary (see Bibliography).

In the Philippines, unfortunately, only two professors have shown interest in this discipline: Marlon James Sales and Arwin Vibar, both at the University of the Philippines–Diliman. Jorge Mojarro has taught the course Missionary Linguistics three times at the University of Santo Tomas since 2016. However, it would be desirable for young Filipino linguists to take an interest in linguistic historiography and to immerse themselves in the linguistic works of the missionaries, despite the barrier posed by the metalanguage: Spanish.

Although a considerable number of articles have already been published, missionary linguistics in the Philippines seems to be taking shape more firmly through the production of monographs and, above all, through critical editions such as those in the *Lingüística Misionera* series by the Iberoamericana-Vervuert publishing house. The editions produced in the Philippines, although deserving of

⁵⁶ Transcribed and translated to English by Fr. Edilberto V. Santos in Fray Álvaro de Benavente, OSA: *Arte de lengua pampanga. Kapampangan grammar circa 1699*. Angeles City: Holy Angel University Press, 2007.

benevolent judgment, do not stem from a linguistic interest but rather represent symbolic recoveries of a cultural legacy that helps define their identity; hence the lack of philological rigor and the absence of associated research work.**PS**

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List of modern editions of works of Missionary Linguistics⁵⁷

AUTHOR	TITLE	EDITOR / TRANSL.	YEAR	PUBLISHING HOUSE
Benavente, Álvaro de, OSA	<i>Arte de Lengua Pampanga. Kapampangan Grammar 1699</i>	Fr. Edilberto V. Santos	2007	Holy Angel University Press
Bergaño, Diego, OSA	<i>Vocabulario de Pampango y Diccionario de Romance en Pampango</i>	Fr. Venancio Q. Samson	2007	Holy Angel University Press

⁵⁷ Excluding the simple facsimile editions issued of the 1593 *Doctrina Christiana* issued by National Historical Commission and UST Heritage Library. It includes also a few works of missionary linguistics first published after 1700.

Blancas de San José, Francisco, OP	<i>Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala</i>	Antonio Quilis	1992	AECI
Encina, Francisco, OSA	<i>Arte de la lengua zebuana</i>	Anna Maria M. Yglopaz	2017	Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino
Coronel, Francisco, OSA	<i>Arte y Reglas. Kapampangan Grammar and Rules, circa 1621</i>	Fr. Edilberto V. Santos	2005	Holy Angel University Press
Lisboa, Marcos de, OFM	<i>Vocabulario de la Lengua Bicol</i>	E. Caldera Soriano y L. A. Hidalgo de Caldera	2024	Ateneo de Naga University Press
López, Andrés, OP	<i>Arte de la lengua de Pangasinán</i>	J. Sueiro Justel y Ma.D. Riveiro Lema	2014	Iberoamericana-Vervuert
Méntrida, Alonso de, OSA	<i>Vocabulario de la lengua bisaya, hiligueina y haraya de la isla de Panay y Sugbú y para las demás islas</i>	J. García-Medall	2004	Instituto Interuniversitario de Estudios de Iberoamérica y Portugal
Noceda, Juan de, & Sanlúcar, Pedro de, SJ	<i>Vocabulario de la lengua tagala</i>	V. S. Almario, Elvin R. Ebreo, A. M. M. Yglopaz	2013	Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino
Oyanguren, Melchior de, OFM	<i>Tagalysmo elucidado, y reducido (en lo possible) a la latinidad</i>	Otto Zwartjes	2010	AECI

Méntrida, Alonso de, OSA	<i>Arte de la lengua bisaya hiligayna de la isla de Panay</i>	J. Suiero Justel	2014	Iberoamericana- Vervuert
San Antonio, Francisco de, OFM	<i>Vocabulario tagalog</i>	Antoon Postma	2000	Ateneo de Manila University Press
San Buenaventura, Pedro de, OFM	<i>Vocabulario de lengua tagala...</i>	Fr. Cayetano Sánchez Fuertes	1994	París-Valencia
Totánés, Sebastián de, OFM	<i>Arte de la lengua tagala</i>	J. Sueiro Justel & Ma. Dolores Riveiro Lema	2014	Iberoamericana- Vervuert



