Dutch grammar in Japanese words: reception and representation of European theory of grammar in the manuscripts of Shizuki Tadao (1760 – 1806)

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Hoe toch zou men eene goede beschrijving van een Rijk kunnen geven, zonder dezelfs taal te verstaan?

"How could one give a good description of an empire, without understanding its language?"

Hendrik Doeff, *Herinneringen uit Japan* (1833, page 2)

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of the research and state of art

The goal of the present research is to study the works on Dutch grammar attributed to Shizuki Tadao 志筑忠雄 (1760 – 1806). This goal is multifaceted. As I will argue in 1.6, Shizuki was most likely the first Japanese scholar who engaged with the study of the theory of grammar. As a first issue, I would like to specify the difference between "grammar" and "theory of grammar". One can learn a language, its rules, and the exceptions to those rules without ever taking a grammar class. This is generally how one first learns one's own mother tongue. At a certain age, some start attending school, where the study of one's own native language is one of the subjects. A school is generally the first context in which one learns about concepts such as "nouns", "verbs", "conjugations" and the "passive voice". Nonetheless, native speakers can use them "perfectly", they can arrange and inflect words with relative ease without the need of ever having to take a grammar class. This is the distinction between "grammar" and the "theory of grammar". With "grammar" I refer to the loose and nuanced rules governing the morphosyntax of a specific linguistic code. With "theory of grammar" I refer to the array of "philosophical" tools utilized to rationalize and formalize such grammatical phenomena into the scholarly subject of grammar. In whatever way a philosopher of language, or a modern linguist, theorizes the rules of the plural in English, a native speaker will know that the plural of "dog" is "dogs". The misconception of these two different ideas often leads to the ironic situation in which a learner of a specific language can explain the details of how to call each verbal class or conjugation to a native speaker of that language, only to hear, as a response: "I don't know, I'm not good at grammar".

The distinction between "grammar" and "theory of grammar" is particularly relevant for the history of the study of Dutch in Japan. The Dutch had already been in Japan for 160 years when Shizuki was born. His ancestors had been communicating with the Dutch for most of that time and this certainly implies some degree of understanding of the grammar of their language. However, as far as we know, no research on the theory of grammar, as mediated by the Dutch, has ever been carried out before Shizuki. Shizuki really was the first Japanese who wrote manuscripts wherein he tried to interpret the complex and often inconsistent Greek-Latin-based tradition of grammatical theory, mediated by Early Modern Dutch sources, without any previous exposure to it.

My research question, thus, arose from acknowledging this issue. How could a Japanese scholar of the Edo Period make sense of those theories on the "nine parts of speech" and all the things related to them, with only having access to a few books written in that same language he was trying to study? What puzzled me is the fact that, apparently, Shizuki not only understood these theories, but he also wanted to translate them into Japanese in order to spread them across his disciples and colleagues. How could one man in "isolated" Japan manage to do that? I assumed that he had to rely on philosophical and cultural elements of his own surroundings. Regardless, one can hardly claim that a concept akin to the European "grammar"

was present in Japan, at the time. Shizuki must therefore have "grammaticalized" concepts that were originally used in different fields of knowledge with different nuances in meaning. How that happened is exactly what I aim to investigate in the present study.

The study of this topic allows for the broadening of the academic knowledge on numerous subjects. Within the very specific field of studies concerned with Shizuki's biography and bibliography, the present research will be able to provide further notions regarding the works of the scholar. Not enough is known regarding his life and the chronology of the compilation of his works on language; this information could be reached by analyzing the details of what Shizuki argued within the manuscripts. There have been a few publications in this area. In 2006, with the 200th anniversary of Shizuki's death, a few scholars have gathered in Nagasaki to hold a symposium and give lectures commemorating the great scholar. These lectures have been collected in 2007 in a Japanese-language book (AIKAWA et al, 2007) which has been subsequently translated into English (REMMELINK et al, 2008). Since each chapter of these two books contains information on diverse aspects of Shizuki's life and works, I will cite them quite often. When it comes to the specific topic of Shizuki's works on language, besides the two abovementioned books, there are four important additional sources. The first and forth volumes of the large series by SUGIMOTO (1976, 1981) contain much information regarding what is known about Shizuki's life and the details of the different copies of his manuscripts on language. However, the philological issues concerning these manuscripts are here only briefly touched upon, and these works are moreover, at times, slightly out of date. More recently, there have been two scholars who have analyzed Shizuki's works, namely ŌSHIMA (2018, 2019) and DE GROOT (2005) with his PhD dissertation and his article presented at the abovementioned symposium in Nagasaki (DE GROOT 2007, 2008). Even though I will rely strongly on these two scholars, particularly in my Chapter II, many questions regarding Shizuki's life and works still remain unclear. Adding to this, the two often disagree.

Shizuki's story is the story of the Dutch studies in Japan, so-called *rangaku* 蘭学. On this topic, many books have been published in the last decades. For example, the book of KATAGIRI (1985) represents an early example of historical research on the Japanese interpreters of Dutch, also providing attempts at identifying the sources they used in order to learn the language. The book has been revised in recent years (KATAGIRI 2016). The same author also published important research in the history of the ceremonial attendance of the Dutch in Edo (KATAGIRI 2008) and of the relationship between the VOC agents and the prostitutes or concubines of Nagasaki (KATAGIRI 2018). The content of the series of SUGIMOTO has also been reworked and republished in the last decades, producing further publications, such as SUGIMOTO (1991) and SUGIMOTO (2013). These are not the only publications on this topic, of course; for example, SAITŌ (1985) also represents early research on the works on Dutch produced by the Japanese.

The presence of the Dutch in Japan did not only lead to the study of their language. The long relationship between the two countries entailed a plethora of interactions and historical events. One of the most well-known studies is probably GOODMAN

(2000). Another scholar who also researched this subject is MATSUKATA (2010, 2015). There are furthermore three publications edited by HARA (2016, 2017, 2018), collecting lectures of the group of researchers on *rangaku* of Okayama (岡山蘭学の群像). These last ones are all in Japanese. In European languages, I have found interesting and detailed historical notions in IANNELLO (2012) and CORRADINI (2005), both written in Italian. More recently, the history of the Dutch (language) in Japan has been covered by JOBY (2021) whom I will also often cite, though I will sometimes be redirected to the original sources, because of the significant use of secondary literature in JOBY (2021). Additionally, one can also refer to the big atlas, published by BLUSSÉ, REMMELINK & SMITS (2000).

The works of Shizuki are not only relevant within the restricted field of *rangaku*. Shizuki drew notions from many other Japanese scholars of his time, and, for this reason, my research will also discuss the history of the study of language in Japan, more generally. As I will argue in Chapter VI, there are a few publications in this field, mostly in Japanese which, however, never fully address all the issues I needed in order to understand Shizuki's words. The first modern work in this sense is probably SHIGEMATSU (1959) who is mostly concerned with research on the Japanese language, rather than linguistics in Japan, in general. The same can be said about FURUTA & TSUKISHIMA (1972) and, partially, about MABUCHI & IZUMO (2021), originally published in 1999 and TOKIEDA (2017), originally published in 1940. Additionally, I have consulted a few works in this field that only focused on specific topics of investigations, such as MATSUO (1943) and SHIMADA (1979) who analyzed the history of so-called auxiliary verbs and their relationship with verbal transitivity and intransitivity. All these books are written in Japanese. For an English language publication in this sense, one might want to consult DOI (1976), although this is fairly limited in its scope. For the specifics of Confucian studies, I refer to TUCKER (1998, 2006), AIHARA (2019), BOOT (2013), all of them in English covering the figure of Ogyū Sorai and his predecessors in the field of Neo-Confucianism.

Shizuki Tadao studied the European tradition of the theory of grammar as mediated through Dutch sources. A clear definition of what "Dutch theory of grammar" means can hardly be provided. Were one to define it as "the collection of all grammars and grammatical notions ever written on Dutch", then they would also accidentally include sources written in foreign languages that Shizuki likely had no possibility of reading. Restricting the definition to "any grammar of Dutch written in Dutch" is also rather unpractical, considering that grammatical investigations on vernacular languages were often mediated by Latin, and written grammars of a specific non-classical language written in that same language are, historically speaking, a rather new phenomenon, when it comes to early modern Europe. One could try, thus, to broaden the definition to "all grammars of Dutch written in either Dutch or any other foreign language that was commonly known by Dutch speakers". This new definition is also limited by the fact that, for centuries, grammatical books mostly concerned Latin and Greek, and in addition other European languages developed their own traditions of grammar that some Dutchmen probably had access to. This would disregard all the influences in the context of the theory of grammar that Dutch authors of the time might have received from literature written in diverse

languages. Think of the influence from the English tradition on Willem Séwel (1654 – 1720) and from the French one on Pieter Marin (1667/8 – 1718) and François Halma (1653 – 1722), for example. Another option would be to include all the grammatical works that early modern Dutch authors could have possibly read, regardless of the language those works were describing or were written into. This definition does not take into consideration a fundamental component of the spreading of knowledge: indirect influence. For a Dutchman in the 18th century, not all the books that were ever written on language were available, specifically the original research on language carried out by the ancient Greeks. However, I would dare anyone to claim that Greek grammarians had no influence whatsoever on the Dutch authors of the 1700s. This is because the knowledge of the ancient Greek authors had been absorbed by the authors who lived after them, and those after them as well, creating a connecting thread of ideas being absorbed and reworked through millennia. Consequently, it can be claimed that when one says "Dutch grammatical theory", one refers to all sources on language that have ever been known within the European territories since the invention of writing, that might have appeared somewhere in the millennium-long thread connecting all grammatical investigations up and until the Netherlands of the 18th century. Clearly, this definition is so broad than no one can ever employ it in any productive way. Thus, one needs to accept the fact that an easy and concise definition cannot be postulated. However, what one can do is assume each of the relevant author's theory to represent their own interpretation of what a "Dutch theory of grammar" is. Certainly, claiming that Séwel's definition of what a verb is had nothing to do with Aristotle's postulation of *rhema*, is fundamentally wrong, yet knowing that it is, helps very little in the context of the research question of the present work. In fact, the Japanese, when studying Dutch grammar, only had those specific books as representation of this millennium-long phenomenon. What the Japanese were studying was, thus, the reception(s) of this phenomenon by some Dutch-speaking authors, living in the Low Countries of the 17th and 18th centuries. Although not possessing the context of the history of grammar in Europe, the Japanese had to make sense of it only basing their knowledge on those sources and their representations of such history. Even though the Japanese could ignore such tradition, I cannot afford the same. In Chapter IV, I will analyze the contents of Séwel's grammar, as well as the sources of Halma and Marin, as to understand the grammatical theory that can be deduced by reading them. However, since they did not happen in a vacuum, but within the process of reception and adaptation of the classical Greek-Latin studies, one cannot be ignorant, in this regard. One cannot analyze the definitions these three authors provided for the parts of speech if one does not know what had been done until then, on that topic. To make a concrete example, one cannot understand Séwel's definition of what neuter verbs are, or compare it to that of Halma and Marin, if one does not know how these terms had been used before them. Not knowing this will simply make the research on the Japanese reception of these source impossible. If one needs to quantify and qualify the extent to which Shizuki adopted and adapted the grammatical theory he read from those Dutch books, one first needs to know what was really contained in those books and, thus, how they functioned within the history of "Dutch theory on grammar". For this reason, Chapter III is meant to provide a contextualization of the socio-historical elements necessary to understand

the theories found in Séwel, Halma and Marin. I will start form the very beginning, naming some of the most relevant individuals of the so-called Greek-Latin tradition (3.1), and I will then discuss the period I am mostly interested in, namely the 1600s and 1700s (3.3). The chapter has no ambition of representing the history of grammar in Europe in its entirety, nor does it aim at representing the entirety of the history of grammar in the Dutch-speaking world. For this purpose, those who might be interested in learning more about the topic can refer to the main bibliography that I have used to compile the present chapter, namely: ROBINS (1951; 1967); LUHRMAN (1984); RUIJSENDAAL (1991); VAN STERKENBURG (1984), among others.

When analyzing the situation in post-medieval Low Countries, DIBBETS (1995) is the undisputed main source, concerning the *trivium*-period (3.2). When it comes to the period of interest for the present research, namely the end of the 17th century, and the beginning of the 18th century (3.3), the state of the art is organized a bit differently. For decades, the most relevant sources had been KNOL (1977) and DE TOLLENAERE (1977), both complaining about the scarcity of secondary literature covering this period. In the late 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, new research has been conducted about this period (e.g., RUIJSENDAAL 1991, DE BONTH & DIBBETS 1995, DIBBETS 2003). Many researchers produced monographs on specific grammarians of this period, see for example RUTTEN (2006) for Van Hoogstraten, SCHAARS & TE WILT (1989) for Nylöe's biography and bibliography, SCHAARS (1988) and DIBBETS (1992) for Moonen. For Verwer there is VAN DE BILT (2009), while Ten Kate's life and works have been thoroughly investigated by VAN DER WAL (2000; 2002; 2009) and NOORDEGRAAF & VAN DER WAL (2001) and, ultimately, for Huydecoper, I referred to DE BONTH (1998) and VAN DE BILT (2009). In 3.4, I will focus on the biographies of Séwel, Halma and Marin. Although information about them can be found in many of the sources listed above, a specific mention should be made of HULL (1933) who presented a complete biography of Séwel, concentrating on his role as a Quaker, while Marin and Halma are covered by VAN DEN GRAFT (1965), LOONEN (1997) and VAN EEGHEN (1965).

1.2 Methodology

In order to analyze Shizuki's theories, I first need to interpret the words written in his manuscripts. Most manuscripts have been preserved in a few copies, each differing often only slightly. For this reason, I firstly needed to provide a philological analysis of these works. Unfortunately, there is little philological research on these sources except SUGIMOTO (1976) and ŌSHIMA (2018, 2019). Therefore, I have found myself in need of further information that I could not find anywhere else. Consequently, Chapter II comprises my attempt at summarizing and expanding on the philological research on Shizuki's manuscripts, building in addition on DE GROOT (2005, 2007, 2008). Unfortunately, I had to set limits here. [1] For example, I did not get the chance to consult each existing copy of each

[1] This is the unfortunate consequence of the historical moment in which the present research has been carried out, where I was not allowed to enter Japan for most of the time, forcing me to limit the scope of the research to what realistically feasible via internet.

manuscript attributed to Shizuki. As also argued by ŌSHIMA (2019), this type of research is very much necessary and still requires to be fulfilled. Chapter II makes the research by SUGIMOTO (1976) and ŌSHIMA (2018, 2019) accessible to the non-Japanese speaking readers and, in addition, I provide philological details resulting from my own research, which can account for further issues in the composition of Shizuki's manuscripts and their sources. Eventually, Chapter II covers all the philological issues I needed to solve for the sake of the present research.

While I am studying Shizuki's theories on Dutch grammatical theory, what I am ultimately interested in is Shizuki's rendition of what I will call the Greek-Latin grammatical tradition. What one means with this term is not at all unequivocally clear, yet I am sure everyone has some sort of idea of what such tradition entails, probably thinking of concepts such as nouns, verbs, or the subjunctive mood. Since the concept of the Greek-Latin tradition is so central in the present research, I will discuss it in Chapters III and IV.

As I have already discussed in 1.1, Shizuki was not exposed to the entirety of the history of the Greek-Latin tradition of grammatical theory. Shizuki became acquainted with it through the mediation of certain 17th and 18th century Dutch sources. Some of these sources he mentions himself, and some others I have identified in Chapter II. The theoretical contents of the Dutch sources I have deemed most influential in Shizuki's theories are discussed in Chapter IV. Shizuki covered the major morphosyntactic issues in his works. In the present study, I concentrate on the two main topics of morphology (mostly concerning word classes) and the morphosyntax of verbs. These are topics Shizuki covers frequently and in much detail, and in various manuscripts.

As one could expect, Shizuki did not only use and cite Dutch books as sources, but he also used a few Japanese works. When I started the research, I had overestimated the contents of secondary literature. This is not an evaluation regarding its quality, rather its quantity. I came to realize that there are very few studies about the Japanese sources on language that Shizuki used. These sources represent the theoretical and philosophical tools Shizuki used to navigate in the unknown field of Dutch grammatical theory. Without knowing the content of these sources, it would have been impossible to interpret Shizuki's words. This compelled me to analyze in detail the contents of two Japanese works on language coming from two very distinct schools, so distinct that they not only adopted a different theoretical framework, but they also adopted two different writing systems and they analyzed two different languages altogether. Although the language used by Shizuki in his works is not extremely different from modern Japanese, the sources on language that he consulted covered either literary Chinese or literary classical Japanese. The complex evolution of the study of languages in Japan, that only incidentally ends up getting close to European grammatical studies, will be investigated in Chapter V. In Chapter VI, I will analyze the contents of the Japanese sources that Shizuki directly cites. Afterwards, I will be able to analyze the content of Shizuki's manuscripts. In Chapter VII, I will concentrate on the morphological classes of words and in Chapter VIII, I will investigate Shizuki's rendition of the theory of the rules governing the morphosyntax of verbs.

1.3 Presentation of the theoretical framework

Before presenting the theoretical framework, which will be discussed through sections 1.3.1 to 1.3.4, a few preliminary words are necessary to contextualize my approach. On the one hand, I did not find one specific source or school of theory that could neatly suit my necessities. In some sense, some might argue, that much of what I will claim is broadly in agreement with several already existing approaches, for example Reception Theory.[2] On the other hand, I still believe my approach not to agree, in its totality, with any one theoretical framework. For example, I do not ascribe to Reception Theory completely, as I still believe in the importance of postulating and considering an "original form" of an idea which is, to a large extent, independent from the reader, as I will discuss in 1.3.2. In doing this, thus, I am not only considering how the works spread and were received by their readers, but I can also address how specific wordings and ideas came about and contextualize them within the continuum of the cultural discourse they belong to. While there certainly is some truth in the Italian proverb *tradurre è tradire* – a play on the similar-sounding verbs *tradurre* "to translate" and *tradire* "to betray" – the corruption (or betrayal) only occurs after an idea has formed, has been put into words and thus reinterpreted by the audience. It is not only this form taken by the idea that I am interested in studying.

In fact, in order to study Shizuki's works I need to also postulate a more proactive role of the translator and also assume specific attitudes, goals and processes performed by the translator in varying degrees of consciousness. My deductions, in this sense, appear to near the assumptions of what is known as Skopos theory. The translator is understood as actively engaging in the process of translation with a specific goal in mind, that I assume is to render a set of notions accessible to a different target audience, in the case of Shizuki. In addition, Skopos theory also explicitly defines the phenomena that cooperate in the creation of what I will call Broader Context. Skopos theorists call them "refractions" – as they use the metaphor of light being refracted through a prism – of which they find a total of five (REIß & VERMEER 2014, 23-24). However, I do not particularly agree with their choice in the definition of culture as

> "whatever one has to know, master or feel in order to be able to judge whether a particular form of behaviour shown by members of a community in their various roles conforms to general expectations or not".[3]

This definition is not particularly functional to me as it implicitly focuses too much on the external evaluation of an individual's behavior, and as it leaves little space to internal inconsistencies of cultural systems, individual behaviors and of the group one identifies as a community.

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[2] See, for example, ISER (2006).

[3] REIß & VERMEER (2014, 24) take this definition from GÖHRING, H. (1978) *Interkulturelle Kommunikation: Die Überwindung der Trennung von Fremdsprachen- und Landeskundeunterricht durch einen integrierten Fremdverhaltensunterricht*' in W. Kühlwein and A. Raasch (eds) Kongreßberichte der 8. Jahrestagung der GAL, Stuttgart: Hochschulverlag, 9-14.

An approach that, to some extent, tried to challenge this more rigid consideration of culture is that of the postmodernist movement. In fact, when it comes to the Early Modern period across the world, an academic approach that is very common today is that which is known as "postcolonialism". Within postcolonial studies, a renowned theoretical framework is that provided by "orientalism". Both these approaches fall within the broader Critical Theory school of thought. With early modern Netherlands being a worldwide colonial power and Japan being an East Asian country, one might assume this framework to be particularly useful in understanding the events that I cover. Nevertheless, I still think these approaches do not come to a fulfilling help when it concerns the history of Dutch studies in Japan. A common tenant across these approaches is the idea that two peoples interact in an uneven relation of power. In particular, it is believed that the Western populations often viewed the "Oriental" ones and their cultures in function of their own superiority. SAID (1978) posed that, specifically in the history of colonialism, the cultural identity of the colonized Asian people was construed by the Westerners and/or on the basis of their own prejudices. Although this might be a useful tool to understand specific historical encounters between humans, I do not believe that these theories function as well in the context of Dutch studies in Japan. In short, I will not make use of the tools provided by Critical Theory as I do not think they are particularly fitting in the context of my research.

In sum, since I have not been able to find a complete set of tools in these theoretical approaches that could help me in my analysis, I came up with my own theoretical tools. In the following sub-sections, I will discuss a few theoretical issues and present additional instruments that I believe are more functional when it comes to the analysis of Shizuki's manuscript on language. Because of the specificity of some of the topics I refer to, I have decided to develop my own theoretical framework which, in principle, is not directly dependent from any one specific source or school of thought. Nonetheless, I too have my own Broader Context – as I will call it – in which I have been living, from which I cannot prescind.

1.3.1 The danger that ought (not) to be ignored

> This is why I do not yet see whether what I am trying to think of as the nature of language is also adequate for the nature of the Eastasian language; whether in the end – which would also be the beginning – a nature of Language can reach the thinking experience, a nature which would offer the assurance that European-Western saying and Eastasian saying will enter into dialogue such that in it there sings something that wells up from a single source.
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> Martin Heidegger[4] in *A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer*

[4] Throughout the paragraph, all English translation of Martin Heidegger's *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (1959) come from Peter D. Hertz's *On the Way to Language*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1982. The original German text is form Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt au Main, 1985. English text from HEIDDEGER (1982, 9). Original German text of the present quote (HEIDDEGER 1985, 89): "Der Ausblick für das Denken, das dem Wesen der

In the 1959 collection of brief works titled *On the Way to Language* (*Unterwegs zur Sprache*), the famous German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976) re-imagines a dialogue he had with Japanese scholar of German literature Tezuka Tomio 手塚富雄 (1903 – 1983) in 1954, discussing the concept of *iki* 粋, as postulated by the Japanese philosopher Kuki Shūzō 九鬼周造 (1888 – 1941). Whereas all three of them could speak German, Heidegger was the only one who could not speak any Japanese. This placed an insurmountable hurdle in front of Heidegger's path of truly comprehending the meaning of this Japanese philosophical concept, that can only be understood by means of appeals to Japanese ideas and concepts. Heidegger could not solve the fundamental doubt of whether his thoughts on language could also apply to what he calls "East-Asian languages".

Though I am not espousing Heidegger's ideas, nor will I claim to be a connoisseur of his philosophy, I believe this quote to be helpful in illustrating an important theoretical point I would like to raise. The vocabulary of grammar, in all traditions, makes profuse use of philosophical concepts – think of the *nōjo* 能所 dichotomy (see 8.4.1) – or reference to the natural world, such as the grammatical genders (which the Japanese often connected back to philosophical concepts, see 7.2.1). While one cannot postulate internal human nature to be the cause of different philosophical postulations across cultures, the Broader Context in which each individual finds his or herself does. For example, in the Dutch translation of *Ontleedkundige Tafelen*,[5] the first anatomical book that reached Japan and that was translated into this language, the shape of the human heart is compared to a *kegel*, the skittle of a popular Germanic game, similar to modern bowling. At the time, a *kegel* often had the shape of a cone, roughly resembling that of a human heart. If one pictures the individuals who first pioneered modern anatomy in Northern Europe dissecting the first heart out of a human chest, one can understand the instantaneous connection between such a cultural-specific item and the purpose of this comparison: all the readers of the book could easily imagine the shape of a heart by virtue of the fact that all of them, supposedly, had had experience with a *kegel*. When Sugita Genpaku 杉田玄白 (1733 – 1817) and Maeno Ryōtaku 前野良沢 (1723 – 1803) decided to translate this very book, compiling the famous *Kaitai shinsho* 解体新書 ('New Book on Anatomy'), they eventually reached the section where the human heart was described. After what I assume was lengthy research on what a *kegel* was, the two had to choose how to adapt that into Japanese. Ultimately,

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Sprache zu entsprechen sich abmüht, bleibt in seiner ganzen Weite noch verhüllt. Darum sehe ich noch nicht, ob, was ich als Wesen der Sprache zu denken versuche, auch dem Wesen der ostasiatischen Sprache genügt, ob am Ende gar, was zugleich der Anfang wäre, ein Wesen der Sprache zur denkenden Erfahrung gelangen kann, das die Gewähr schenkte, daß europäischabendländisches und ostasiatisches Sagen auf eine Weise ins Gespräch kämen, in der Solches singt, das einer einzigen Quelle entströmt".

[5] The book was originally published in German by Johann Adam Kulmus (1689 – 1745) with the title *Anatomische Tabellen*. The Dutch translation was provided by Gerardus Dicten (1696 – 1770) in 1734. The quote in question is found on page 143 of the Dutch edition: "Shape: The shape is, from the top, round, going towards the bottom it makes a cuspidal point, in the manner of a reversed skittle" (*Gedaante: het is van boven rond van gedaante, en nederwaarts gaande maakt het, spits toelopende, een punt, op de wyze van een omgekeerde kegel*).

they decided to maintain the exotic cultural reference, explaining that a *kēgeru* ケーゲル – their *katakana* adaptation of the Dutch *kegel* – was a Dutch toy, whose shape resembled a not-yet-blossomed lotus flower, turned upside-down.[6] A clear example of a foreign cultural reference explained by means of an autochthonous cultural reference to the surrounding natural world. I believe this concrete example explains what I mean with Broader Context much better than any philosophically loaded paraphrase ever could. This Broader Context, a mixture of the surrounding nature and culture, is often invoked when rationalizing abstract linguistic concepts; an example is grammatical gender, which is often rather arbitrarily connected to biological sex, and which is utilized to conceptualize a grammatical dichotomy.

Those dealing with the study of language cannot ignore the same fundamental issue Heidegger found himself pondering about. Such fundamental issue is the undefeatable uncertainty regarding the ability of rendering in either language, what one could simplify in the labels of "Dutch ideas" and "Japanese ideas". If complete universalism is not to be presupposed for the abovementioned reasons, then this implies that "Dutch ideas" and "Japanese ideas" diverge too much from each other for them to be explained, in any precise manner, in the other language. On the contrary, if one presupposes that, regardless of the broader context in which humans are found, their nature is fundamentally the same, then humans would only be able to come up with ideas that lead toward the same original primordial image, in a similar fashion to Carl Jung's (1875 – 1961) archetypes of the collective consciousness (*kollektives Unbewusstes*),[7] thus negating the uniqueness of cultures.

Notwithstanding, the present work is compiled in English, a different language from both Dutch and Japanese and not my native language, either. Here too lies the same danger evidenced by both Heidegger and Tezuka, in their dialogue:

> J: I would be the last to venture it, else I should not have come to Germany. But I have a constant sense of danger which Count Kuki, too, could obviously not overcome.
>
> I: What danger are you thinking of?
>
> J: That we will let ourselves be led astray by the wealth of concepts which the spirit of the European languages has in store, and will look down upon what claims our existence, as on something that is vague and amorphous.[8]

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[6] The quote is found in section 15, on folio 7v of volume 3 (ヤ 3 1060 4, in Waseda University's collection). It reads: "Shape: round at the top, pointy at the bottom. It looks like a *kēgeru*. This is the name of a Dutch toy, whose shape resembles that of an upside-down lotus flower that is not yet opened." (其形。上圓下尖。如圭僊縷　和蘭人翫器之名。其形如未開立蓮倒懸; I had to remove *kanbun kundoku* annotations from the original quote to allow it to fit in a footnote).

[7] As he postulated in *Über die Archetypen des kollektiven Unbewussten*, from *Von den Wurzeln des Bewusstseins*, Zurich, Rascher, 1954.

[8] Original German text: "J: Ich bin der Letzte, der es wagte, sonst wäre ich nicht nach Deutschland gekommen. Aber ich spüre immerfort die Gefahr, der offensichtlich auch Graf Kuki nicht Herr geworden ist. F: Welche Gefahr meinen Sie? J: Daß wir uns durch den

The fundamental danger of discussing what "Dutch ideas" and "Japanese ideas" are supposed to be in one language or the other is to ultimately force the "foreign" concept to adapt into the non-native target language with the consequence of only obtaining something that is made "vague and amorphous" by the rhetorical and philosophical appeals to the target language's culture and ideas. As further quoted from Heidegger's dialogue with Tezuka:

> Because I now see still more clearly the danger that the language of our dialogue might constantly destroy the possibility of saying that of which we are speaking.[9]

The two ultimately conclude that the only way for the non-Japanese-speaking Heidegger to inquire Tezuka regarding the Japanese idea of *iki* is to ignore said "danger" (*Gefahr*) of only corrupting the original concept, being forced to carry out the conversation in German.

While writing about the Japanese investigation of the Dutch language, I also need to keep in mind that, most of the time, I am doing the same: I am consciously ignoring the fact that that danger exists and cannot be overcome in any way. For that reason, it does not really matter what language the present work is written in, since the destruction of the "original idea" has already been carried out by the Japanese scholars; themselves interpreters of "foreign ideas" into Japanese. However, it can be asserted that, unlike Heidegger and Tezuka, I will not ignore the existence of said "danger" but I will, in turn, indulge in it by investigating how the Japanese scholars of Dutch tried to overcome such danger – or, at least, deal with it – in a cultural and linguistic context that was much less influenced by the "foreign" rhetorical tools of Europe, as compared to post-*sakoku* Meiji Japan.

In order to do this, I need to understand the manner in which ideas propagate, and I will theorize a model in the following section that will allow me to more directly visualize the process, not ignoring the postulated "danger", yet posing it – to some extent – as the subject of my research.

1.3.2 The process of transmission of ideas

In order to solve the fundamental issue of discussing how ideas are spread and received across individuals, I need to postulate the process by which ideas propagate and get molded and adapted. Heidegger's "danger", discussed in the previous section, is indeed a very concrete hurdle that, if it remains unaddressed, makes the whole purpose of a research such as the present collapse on its foundations. While

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Reichtum des Begrifflichen, den der europäische Sprachgeist bereit hält, verleiten lassen, das, was unser Dasein in den Anspruch nimmt, zu etwas Unbestimmtem und Verfließendem herabzusetzen" (HEIDDEGER 1985, 84-85). English translation from HEIDDEGER (1982, 3).

[9] Original German text: "Weil ich jetzt noch deutlicher die Gefahr sehe, daß die Sprache unseres Gespräches fortgesetzt die Möglichkeit zerstört, das zu sagen, was wir besprechen" (HEIDDEGER 1985, 98). English translation from HEIDDEGER (1982, 15).

Heidegger does indeed have a point in stating that one cannot thoroughly comprehend a concept that is native to another cultural and linguistic context, expressed in a foreign language and, thus, by means of different cultural tools, I believe there is a way to bypass this, not directly addressing the "original idea", yet deducing it by analyzing the concrete forms that such abstract idea takes in its transmission by one mediator to their audience. In fact, I already took distance from a monolithic and communal definition of "culture", believing that each individual requires to be understood as an original interpreter of malleable shared traditions. In understanding the process by which an idea gets passed over from one individual – the Creator of such idea – to another individual – who interprets it – one needs to first presuppose the impossibility of the Interpreter to actually access the original "thought" idea. I need to clarify the terminology I am going to use in the following lines. An idea, a concept, is thought by an individual: the Creator; in other words, the **Creator** is the one who creates an "original idea". Such original idea only exists as a thought, that is why I refer to it also as the **Thought Idea**. It being a thought implies that, in order for it to propagate, it requires to be reified by means of a certain language, be it spoken, written, non-verbal, etc. The Creator needs to transform his thoughts into a linguistic code giving birth to a new form of the original Thought Idea that I will call **Produced Idea**. The process of linguistically codifying a Thought Idea into a Produced Idea can only occur by means of limited instruments, mostly including the cultural and linguistic tools one is afforded (as argued in 1.3.1), but also, for example, technological limitations (e.g., before Sugita Genpaku, the Japanese in the 18th century could only see detailed drawings of the human interior body, because photography had not been invented yet), depending on which medium one chooses to express their ideas with. Once the Creator codified the Produced Idea in any linguistic medium, the audience, takes the role of the **Interpreter**. An Interpret will never have access to the original Thought Idea, because that is abstract and remains within the cerebral activities of the Creator. What the Interpreter does have access to is only the Produced Idea, that differs to a varying extent from the original Thought Idea and cannot represent it faithfully. While interpreting the Produced Idea, the Interpreter is bound to reshape it via their own individual process of understanding it which is, yet again, fundamentally limited by the contingent factors illustrated above (the Broader Context I just mentioned). Thus, after reaching the Produced Idea, the Interpreter will come up with their own interpretation of it, that differs both from the original Thought Idea, as well as the Produced Idea. I shall call this new form taken by the idea as **Processed Idea**. I have drawn this process in Table 1.

If one applied the scheme in Table 1 to the way knowledge was passed down from the original Dutch sources to the Japanese scholar, then the Creator of the idea would be the Dutch author, while the Interpreter would correspond to the Japanese scholar studying such Dutch book. Consequently, the content of the Dutch books is what I have called Produced Idea, that is the consequence of the Dutch author (the Creator) linguistically codifying his Thought Idea into written words. As such, one will never be able to gain access to the underlying Thought Idea behind the Dutch book but can only unfaithfully deduce it by reading the Produced Idea. The reader, who consciously takes the role of Interpreter – in the present case being the Japanese

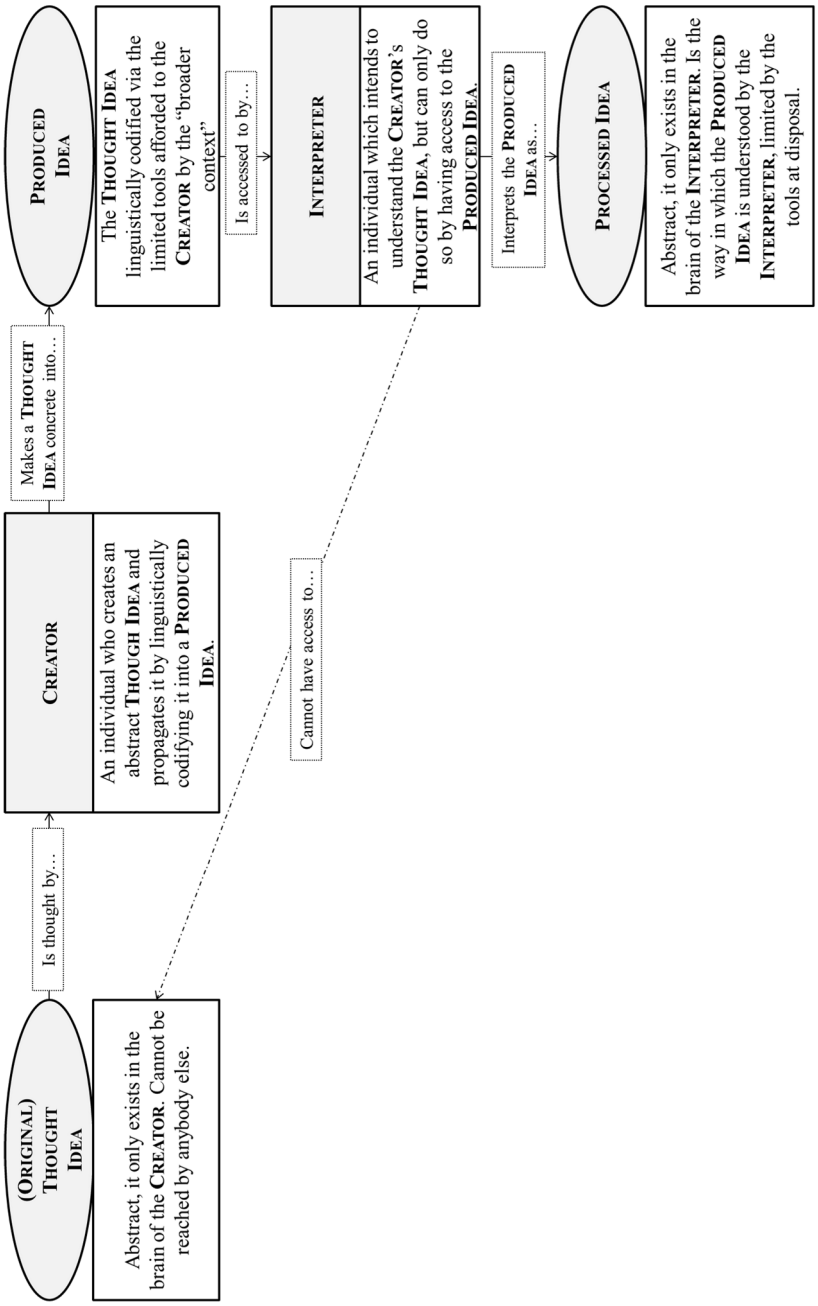

Table 1 First half of the process of transmission of ideas.

scholar – is left with "only" an educated guess with regard to what the Creator originally meant. The reader, thus, can only interpret the Produced Idea by means of their own limited cultural and linguistic tools (the Broader Context) and re-imagine what was read into a new Thought Idea, that I have called Processed Idea.

Luckily, many Japanese scholars had the willingness to put their Processed Ideas into written words. This corresponds to the content of Shizuki's manuscripts, in my case. The assumption is that, after having interpreted the (Dutch) Produced Idea, the Japanese scholars wanted to spread it to their own audience, in this case by means of written Japanese. At this phase, the Japanese scholar (formerly in the role of the Interpreter) takes the role of **Mediator**. The Mediator is the person who, after reading somebody else's Produced Idea, decides to re-write it for a different audience. In my case study, this also entails a translation toward another distinct language, but this does not always have to be the case. The act of mediation initiated by the Japanese scholar simply means to put one's own abstract Processed Idea into a language (written Japanese, in my case) for others to be able to gain access to it. What is thusly created I call it a **Mediated Idea**. I have added these new steps to Table 2.

What has hitherto been presented is nothing more than a simplification of the process by which ideas spread. Of course, ideas do not exist in a vacuum, wherein some intellectual simply comes up with a completely new and original idea totally independent of the past postulations they came into contact with. These are included in what I have called Broader Context. This schematization of the process, nonetheless, is useful in order to visualize, in practice, what the present research is going to investigate. As Heidegger and Tezuka rightfully point out, there is no way in which the German philosopher could ultimately ever understand what Count Kuki means when he referred to the Japanese philosophical term *iki*, if the conversation were to be carried out in German. I would add that the cultural and linguistic background differences between the three philosophers were not the only issues hindering the thorough comprehension of such concept. In fact, the thoughts, and ideas the human brain is capable of creating outnumber immensely what each human language can express. However, one does always need a language – be it verbal or otherwise – in order to communicate such ideas to other individuals. Consequently, if one applies Heidegger's example to the table above, Count Kuki, being the Creator, can only represent his original Thought Idea of the concept of *iki*, via the German language, through the rendition of an unfaithful Produced Idea that Heidegger only understands in the form of his Processed Idea, appealing to his (North-)European and individual background. In *On the Way to Language*, thus, Heidegger correctly acknowledges the impossibility for him to fully grasp Count Kuki's Thought Idea of *iki*, since it cannot exist, in that very form, outside of his brain. There is no reason for him not to be content with being able to at least have the opportunity to "process" Count Kuki's Produced Idea of *iki*, even in its German translation.

Similarly, I have to concede that it is impossible for any researcher to reach the true essence of what I have called the Thought Idea and the Processed Idea, both of which are only abstract. What I can do, nonetheless, is investigate both the Produced

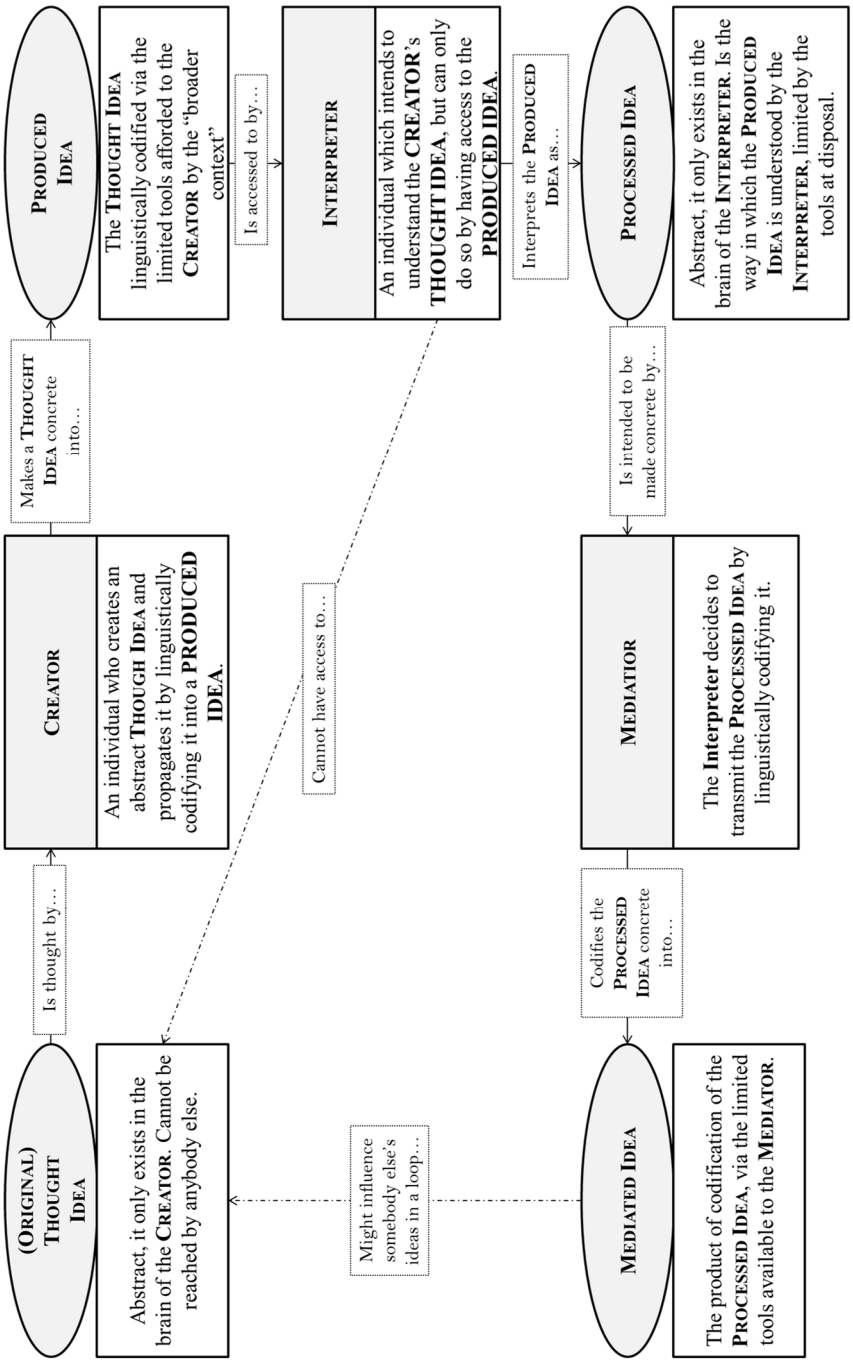

Table 2 Complete process of transmission of ideas.

Idea and the Mediated Idea that the Dutch and the Japanese authors have put into words and subsequently compare them with each other. Only then will I be able to approach the vicinities of what Shizuki's Processed Idea might have looked like. This is, broadly, what I am going to do in the following chapters. The reader should, thus, keep this in mind and understand that any broad claim with regard to the original Thought Idea and the Processed Idea can only be put forth after indirect research analyzing their unfaithful renderings via the author's own limited linguistic tools. However, the process by which I will carry out this research is still fundamentally empirical in nature, as I will base my interpretation of the data on the principles of falsifiability and reproducibility. I also consider the present paragraph an answer to the first issue raised by ŌSHIMA (2019) concerning the analysis of Shizuki's manuscripts, as I will illustrate in 2.3.

1.3.3 In defense of "mistakes"

The easiest way to explain to someone the difference between linguistics and prescriptive grammar is to say that the latter tries to describe the correct use of language, advising users of a specific linguistic system not to indulge in specific irregular and formally disapproved choices of words and morphosyntax. A real linguist – one might add – is not going to tell you that one specific word or sentence you have just used is not correct, thus making you revise your speech, on the contrary, he or she would accept it as an interesting variation worthy of scientific analysis. Although, in general terms, this is true, such type of phrasings often lead to the misconception that, in linguistics, anything goes, and anything is considered an acceptable variation by virtue of its own existence. This is most obviously not the case. In linguistics, one does make use of concepts such as "agrammatical" to refer to specific phrasings that would be recognized as improper use of language by virtually all speakers of said linguistic code.

According to what just claimed with regard to the process of origination and propagation of an idea (1.4), the only thing that research on the Dutch studies of Japan can directly analyze, is what I have called the Mediated Idea. The Mediated Idea is the form in which the Interpreted Idea manifests, after the Interpreter decided to put their understanding of an original Thought Idea into words. Thus, if one were to identify mistakes in the Mediated Idea, that would imply that something has gone awry in the process of interpretation and/or mediation. However, I do not believe this to be the correct approach to my field of studies.

I believe there are only two types of mistakes: "mistakes" and "non-mistakes". Both types certainly cause disruption and misunderstanding, but they nonetheless need to be treated very differently. What I just called "non-mistakes" are those types of disruptions that manifest in those instances in which one would expect some type of correspondence between the original Though Idea and the Mediated Idea but is unable to find it. In these instances, one could be tempted, by their own biases and preconceptions, to dismiss such non-correspondence as a "mistake" or a "misinterpretation" of the original source. This happens more easily whenever the original Thought Idea is conceived of as a hard and well substantiated truth, that requires no questioning. This, however, is not based on the Thought Idea, or the

Produced Idea, either. One's labeling of something as a mistake is based on one's own Processed Idea, instead.

I have experienced this hardship often within the research on the history of Dutch studies in Japan, specifically when it comes to the manuscripts on the Dutch language. Regardless of the undeniably high quality of most research, too often have I witnessed the projection of the researcher's own preconceived notions of what grammar "should be" onto the Japanese works on Dutch they were analyzing. As I will discuss in depth in the present work, Japanese scholars, such as Shizuki Tadao, have come up with their own categories to illustrate Dutch grammar and morphosyntax. Their objective was, presumably, to provide reference material that could aid a Japanese scholar in the translation of Dutch books into Japanese. Often, however, the analysis of these texts has been carried out from the standpoint of individuals living after the standardization process of most national languages, thus taking for granted certain grammatical and philosophical nuances that are not monolithic. This is the reason why, despite the insightful work he presented, DE GROOT is seen repeatedly claiming that Shizuki used the term *joshi* 助詞 to refer to all those categories that the Japanese scholar could not directly provide a translation to, or find an appropriate category for, in the Japanese language.[10] This is most evidently not the case. Although it is true that Shizuki has used this category quite loosely, at times, as I will argue in both Chapters VII and VIII, he did not use this term as a simple all-encompassing container, useful to compensate for the fact that he could not distinguish all the other categories, implying he did not understand the "real" grammatical theory of Dutch as the Europeans unequivocally had written in their books. As I will illustrate in Chapter V, most of the contents of the Dutch sources used by Shizuki were very much lacking exactly in the topics Shizuki himself was mostly interested in. Regardless, Shizuki's theories were often extremely refined, and distinct, in theory and methodology, from the Dutch sources. Consistently with my theoretical frame, disregarding this is very perilous. This could lead the researcher to ignore the possibility that the reason why one has not found the expected correspondence between the contents of the "original" source and the "mediated" source, is not that the "mediator" might have purposefully re-worked what he read, by imposing their own biases and preconceptions. On the contrary, I would argue, the Japanese scholars of Dutch have always been seen through the binary lenses of "correct" or "incorrect". Fortunately, these two categories cannot always be superimposed so easily upon all contexts. In such instances the researcher would make the methodological error of under-interpreting what the scholar they are studying is trying to convey, and this should be avoided.

[10] He claims that, for example, in his PhD thesis (DE GROOT 2005), on page 147-149 and I believe this is also somewhat implied in his article (DE GROOT 2008), on page 127. A similar approach is implied, I think, in phrasings such as "Shizuki struggled to render the Dutch equivalent of 'adverb in Japanese" which can be found in JOBY (2021, 358). JOBY (2021) is not to be blamed for this wording, since he cited it directly form secondary literature which, in turn, refers to other sources, in support of this very claim. The claim appears to be an innocuous miswording that got cited across secondary literature, but it still evidences an implicit bias that considers the correctness of Shizuki's theories in function of their faithfulness in representing the Greek-Latin tradition.

A specific type of "non-mistakes" I have identified within *rangaku* is the tendency to presume some kind of ignorance on the side of the Japanese scholars with regard to the Dutch language. If one assumes that anything that deviates from (modern) Dutch normative grammars must be a mistake, then one is going to see mistakes even where there are none. This type of over-use of the term "mistake" has led, in my view, many academics to find misspellings in almost every Dutch sentence written by a Japanese person in the Edo period. Since many Japanese wrote in – sometimes sloppy – cursive, a badly written letter is often just a badly written letter. Of course, a letter < L >, instead of an < R > is noticeable, even when non-capitalized, and is also consistent with what is known about Japanese phonology. On the contrary, I would argue, a badly written < a > does not have to be an < o > and – unless proven differently – it does not have any phonological justifications in the context of the Japanese language, thus it should be considered a badly written < a > and transcribed accordingly. Furthermore, and I include myself in this claim, by insisting on its deviant graphic rendition, one might just end up seeming like one is trying to demonstrate one's knowledge of Dutch, and this serves no scientific purpose. All these hypercorrective behaviors I have proactively tried not to engage with.

The second type of mistakes consists of "real" mistakes. As I said above, not all instances of non-correspondence between the "original" source and the "mediated" source are to be considered subjective variations. Sometimes one can definitely assert that something is a mistake made by the author or the copyist when, for example, one is talking about uses of grammatical structures that are not attested anywhere else in the literature (see 8.5.6, for example). These instances I hold to very high scientific importance since they are to be understood as "cracks" in the ideology of the Mediator, that allow to see beyond the hard crust of formal theory. Whenever a Japanese scholar makes an objective and overt mistake, the modern researcher has the duty to investigate the reason why that is so, and why the Mediator ended up thinking that that was a viable rendition of Dutch grammar, for example. This goes back to what I have just said: if the modern researcher assumes the Japanese scholar of Dutch to be ignorant toward the formalized use of the Dutch language, they experience a wrongly worded sentence as just a confirmation of their own bias, thus they are going to dismiss it as a "mistake" from which little is to be attained. This leads to disappointing missed opportunities, even within research of the highest value. Nowhere in the secondary literature does any researcher provide a detailed analysis of a "wrong" sentence. Even in SAITŌ (1985), for example, who does present much of the contents of Shizuki's *Rangaku seizenfu*, one does not find any single reference to those sentences that contain mistakes, such as *omdat hij hier zou gewoond geweest zijn*. As will be argued extensively in 8.5.6, it is precisely from such mistakes that one can really get to understand the way in which the scholar conceived of the original Thought Idea. It is thanks to these mistakes that one can really go beyond the appearance of the Mediated Idea and get a glance at the abstract Interpreted Idea that would otherwise remain unreachable.

For these reasons, I completely disavow the claim that works such as *Joshi-kō* and *Rangaku seizenfu* present a less polished and realistic representation of Dutch grammar only because they do not describe it as faithfully to what Dutch

grammarians claimed.[11] On top of that, as I will have proven by the end of the present research, the sole idea of the existence of one correct manner to describe any language's categories of speech and morphosyntax is but a myth.

In conclusion, the assumption that one can easily identify "mistakes" in the works the Japanese made, is fundamentally faulty and should be avoided. The idea that there existed one Dutch grammar and one interpretation thereof is a dangerous fallacy, and this goes well beyond the talk of dialectal varieties. The present research, instead, is based on the belief that all mistakes should not be overlooked but must be appreciated as evidence of the superimposition of the Japanese scholars' biases and preconceptions upon the theory of Dutch grammar. Just like consistently writing an < R > instead of an < L > demonstrates confusion between the two phonemes in the Japanese phonological system, I assume that an ungrammatically constructed sentence can reveal much about what the author really believes.

1.4 Historical context, the beginnings of the Dutch-Japanese relations

The traditional historiography of Japan considers 1603 to be the beginning of the Edo period, with the official establishment of the long-lasting Tokugawa shogunate (*bakufu* 幕府) by the first shogun (*shōgun* 将軍) Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543 – 1616). While the most impactful policies known as *sakoku-rei* 鎖国令 have only been issued in 1639, to understand the reasons for these policies, one cannot disregard the events of the 16th century, that led the shogunate to these decisions. After all, as the famous Japanese historian Naitō Konan 内藤湖南 (1866 – 1934, pseudonym of Naitō Torajirō 内藤虎次郎) wrote in 1921: "Roughly, if one intends to conduct research on the history of Japan, in order to understand present-day Japan, one does not need to do research on the ancient period at all. If one knows its history since the Ōnin War,[12] that is already a lot. All that happens before cannot but be experienced in the same way as the history of a foreign country. However, all that happens since the Ōnin War onwards is a history that really touches us as deep as our very flesh and bones. If one actually knows this, one can say that this is sufficient for a history of Japan".[13]

Since I do not believe one needs to go as far back in time as the 15th century, in order to understand the historical context of the Dutch studies of Shizuki, I have decided to start this short story in the year 1534, when the first Portuguese ship arrived in Japan, in the island of Tanegashima 種子島, south Kyūshū 九州 (KATAGIRI 2016, 18). The Portuguese presence has certainly enhanced the

[11] I assume this to be implied in claims such as in DE GROOT (2008, 132-133).

[12] The Ōnin War (*Ōnin no ran* 応仁の乱) was a civil war that lasted since 1467 to 1477.

[13] Original quote: "大体今日の日本を知る為に日本の歴史を研究するには、古代の歴史を研究する必要は殆どありませぬ、応仁の乱以後の歴史を知って居ったらそれで沢山です。それ以前の事は外国の歴史と同じ位にしか感ぜられませぬ、応仁の乱以後は我々の真の身体骨肉に直接触れた歴史であって、これを本当に知っておれば、それで日本歴史は十分だと言っていいのであります。". I have cited it from TAJIRI (2012, 4-5), my English translation.

commerce of Japan, particularly when their *naus da prata* 'silver-ships' functioned as middlemen when Japan's relations with China started deteriorating. However, tradesmanship was not the only reason that motivated the Portuguese to maintain the relations with Japan. After the foundation of the diocese of Macao, owned by Portugal, by pope Gregory VIII in 1576, the goal of Catholic conversion of the Portuguese missionaries in East Asia got more intensely pursued. Regardless, the process of conversion of the Japanese had already been started in 1549, by the missionary Francis Xavier (1506 – 1552), with much success (IANNELLO 2012, 19-20). It is thanks to this mutual interest that the Portuguese started to study the Japanese language, and some Japanese started to learn Portuguese. The missionaries wanted to learn Japanese in order to convert the locals, while the Japanese interpreters learned the language of the trading partners mostly for the sake of commerce (KATAGIRI 2016, 19).

A first disruption in the partnership between the Japanese and the Portuguese was brought by the accidental arrival of the Dutch trading ship *De Liefde* ('Love'), on the coast of Bungō 豊後, a province in North-Eastern Kyūshū, on March 19 of the year 1600. The captain was Jacob Quaeckerneck (1543? – 1606), and the ship was the only survivor of a destructive storm that sank four of the five ships of the fleet. On board of *De Liefde*, among the few survivors, there was the Englishman William Adams (1564 – 1620), known in Japan as *Miura Anjin* 三浦按針 'the pilot of Miura', who worked hard to gain the trust of the Japanese government and who is credited as the person who allowed for the opening of Japan to the trade with the Dutch (IANNELLO 2012, 29; KATAGIRI 2016, 20). The Dutch ship *De Liefde*, however, did not belong to the VOC, since the company would only be founded officially in 1602. There were, however, already since the last decades of the 16th century a few smaller and underregulated companies, that are now called *voorcompagnieën* 'pre-companies', that already operated in Asia since the year 1594 (GAASTRA 1982, 9-21; IANNELLO 2012, 29-30). The trade with the Dutch was formally institutionalized in 1609, with the establishment of the Dutch trading post (*Oranda shōkan* オランダ商館) in the city of Hirado 平戸 (KATAGIRI 2016, 20).

In the year 1603, Japan's political situation had changed drastically, with the foundation of the Tokugawa shogunate, that moved the capital to Edo 江戸 (nowadays Tokyo) and *de facto* seized the power from the emperor and claimed it for the Tokugawa dynasty. This is generally called Edo period, from the capital of its government, or the Tokugawa 徳川 period, from the family name of the ruling dynasty or, at times, it is also called feudal Japan, because of the social system enforced by the central government. The shogunate saw the Christian missionaries as a possible threat to its newly established power and started persecuting the *kirishitan* 切支丹 ("Christians") as early as 1614 (IANNELLO 2012, 36-37). The shogunate probably feared that if too many Japanese converted to Christianity, this would have led to the rise of a new opposition that could have threatened the stability of the state. In fact, in 1630, the third shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604 – 1651) imposed a "ban on books" (*kinsho* 禁書) concerning Western ideas (IANNELLO 2012, 43). The ban, often known as the Kan'ei edict (from the Kan'ei 寛永 era, that spanned since 1624 to 1644), mostly concerned books that the shogunate

believed to contain Christian propaganda. This included books in Chinese, often translations of European material, and mostly excluded books that only incidentally mentioned Christianity and European culture (GOODMAN 2000, 34-35), as I will further discuss below. The situation escalated in December of 1637, when a violent rebellion erupted in the city of Shimabara (*Shimabara no ran* 島原の乱), where a few Christian converts protested against the local government. The rebellion was sedated by the intervention of the central government, aided by Dutch forces (KATAGIRI 2016, 20). The reaction of the shogunate to this event was very severe, enacting a series of policies aimed at restricting the circulation of Christianity and any foreign ideas, banning Christians from entering Japan, and prohibiting the Japanese to leave the country (IANNELLO 2012, 67-72; KATAGIRI 2016, 21). The persecution of Japanese Christians was further pursued with the institution of the Office of Investigation of Christians (*kirishitan shūmon aratame yaku* 切支丹宗門改役), a bureau whose goal was to identify and, eventually, force any Christian convert to repudiated Christianity (CORRADINI 2005, 117). The aversion of the shogunate toward anything that could have had even the vaguest connection to the Christian faith reached, in this period, such high levels of suspiciousness that it is reported that when in 1640 the agents of the VOC erected a new building in their station bearing a plaque with the year according to the Gregorian calendar, the Japanese government ordered the demolition of the whole structure (GOODMAN 2000, 15).

Perhaps because of their assistance in the sedation of the Shimabara rebellion, the Dutch managed to maintain their relationship with Japan, although their presence was also very much regulated. In 1641, the Dutch trading post was moved from Hirado to Nagasaki, specifically on the small artificial island of Dejima 出島.[14] The VOC agents were forced to remain on the island, unless they received explicit permit from the local government. The island was rented, meaning that the Dutch had to pay the Japanese government for using it, for receiving water, and each agent had to even arrange the furniture for his lodging himself (GOODMAN 2000, 19; IANNELLO 2012, 25). The Japanese themselves could not enter the island, except for a few individuals, mostly interpreters and concubines, the latter also being the only ones allowed to stay the night (IANNELLO 2012, 84).[15]

[14] It is probable that the name of this island was pronounced as Deshima, by the locals, at that time. In the Dutch documents compiled from the 17th to the 19th century, the spelling *Decima* was not rare, echoing the pronunciation as Deshima. Still today, in Dutch-language literature, the island is called Deshima. However, in most other languages, the modern standard Dejima can be found more often. The name literally means "Protruding Island", as it somewhat used to elongate from the main city of Nagasaki. Nowadays, the land formerly occupied by the Dutch has been incorporated by the expansion of the city, and part of it has been retrieved by the institutions and transformed into a museum recreating the older Dutch-inhabited Dejima.

[15] KATAGIRI (2018) points out a few interesting matters concerning the role of the concubines (*yūjo* 遊女) in the use of the Dutch language, even identifying love-letters written in Japanese by the concubines destined to some Dutch men, presenting Dutch words annotated onto their Japanese counterpart. This suggests that the interpreters also read out Japanese letters, while orally translating them into Dutch, for the receiving agent. Further research in this field is necessary.

It is believed that, for the whole time that the Dutch trading post was in Hirado, the Japanese and the Dutch communicated in Portuguese. Since the Portuguese had reached Japan many decades before, there were already some Japanese who had learned their language. Furthermore, because of the importance of Portuguese in the world of commerce at the time, it was not rare for a Dutch ship to have at least one person who could function as interpreter of that language (KATAGIRI 2012, 21; MATSUKATA 2010, 4; SUGIMOTO 1981, 2). With the ban of the Portuguese, their language started to decrease in importance for Japan, and many interpreters decided to study Dutch, instead. The post of interpreter, called *tsūji* 通詞, was hereditary (KATAGIRI 2016, 87). The first structured institution of interpreters of Dutch appeared in 1656, and slowly grew until it became a proper guild. Although its structure varied, the posts of the interpreters have always been strictly hierarchically organized. At the top there were the *ōtsūji* 大通詞, who were followed by the *kotsūji* 小通詞. The first formal grade in the hierarchy was to become a *keikotsūji* 稽古通詞 'apprentice interpreter', although there were other less central posts (KATAGIRI 2016, 143-149).

The local government of Nagasaki was also strictly structured. The shogunate expressly created the posts for two *bugyō* 奉行 in Nagasaki, to keep the city and the foreigners under direct control of the central government. The *bugyō* were state representatives. They had a role of high responsibility since they were directly accountable for anything that happened under their jurisdiction; and of high authority since they had executive power, being at the top of the bureaucratic hierarchy. Below them were the *machidoshiyori* 町年寄, whom the Dutch called *stadbuurgermeester* 'city mayor'. Below them, there were the *otona* 乙名, called *wijkmeester* 'district governor' by the Dutch, who also had a relevant role in the relations with the Dutch. It was the duty of the *otona* to check the fairness of commerce; they also had to approve the acceptance of a new Dutch ship in the bay of Nagasaki and they possessed the keys to the gate called *suimon* 水門, which was the only access by sea to the island (KATAGIRI 2016, 7; IANNELLO 2012, 81).

The Dutch trading post also had internal hierarchies. The head of the post had the title of *opperhoofd*, though it was often called *oranda kapitan* 'Dutch captain' (or a variation thereof), both terms likely coming from two Portuguese words, namely: *Holanda* 'Holland' and *capitão* 'captain'. His subordinates were called *onderkoopmannen*, and he was often accompanied by a *schrijver* 'scribe'. Another figure of importance among the crew was the *oppermeester* or *opperchirugijn* the ship's doctor, who was accompanied by his own assistants, the *ondermeesters*. There were other functions, like a *pakhuismeester* 'warehouse master' and a *boekhouder* 'bookkeeper'. Additionally, there was a variable number of assistants, including servants from the colonies, for an average of about twenty Dutchmen on the whole island at the same time (GOODMAN 2000, 20-24).

In order to strengthen the authority of the central government, the second shogun Tokugawa Hidetada 徳川秀忠 (1579 – 1632) implemented the practice of *sankin kōtai* 参勤交代 'alternate presence'. According to this rule, all the *daimyō* 大名, the

local lords, were required to travel periodically[16] all the way to Edo, in order to pay homage to the shogun. This meant, specifically for the lords ruling over the farthest territories, to invest a lot of wealth and time in month-long travels, that kept them far from their areas of influence, preventing any seditious alliances. For this purpose, the Dutch *opperhoofd* was also granted the title of *daimyō* 大名 and was also requested to partake in the *sankin kōtai* (IANNELLO 2012, 25; 101-104). The *hofreis* 'court journey' – as the Dutch called it – or *Edo sanpu* 江戸参府 – as it is called in Japanese – was a long trip across Japan, that was the only real moment in which the *opperhoofd* and a few other agents had the possibility of seeing Japan beyond Nagasaki. They brought with them gifts for the shogun and valuables they could sell to the locals on the way (KATAGIRI 2016, 33-37; KATAGIRI 2008, 2-3; 25). Part of the ceremony with the shogun entailed the reading of the trade agreement (*gojōmoku* 御条目), whereby the VOC vowed to respect the rules of the shogun in order to maintain the privileged position. The *opperhoofd* Hendrik Doeff (1777 – 1835) also reports that the agreement was read at the arrival of a new ship, by the *bugyō* of Nagasaki. Doeff also copied what he claimed to be the entirety of its text, in its Dutch version, as can be read below:[17]

Het is, van oude tijden af, aan de *Hollanders* toegestaan om in *Japan* te komen; zoo zij dit willen blijven doen, zullen zij zich wachten, de Christelijke Godsdienst in *Japan* te verbreiden. Zoo zij eenige aanslagen of ondernemingen van vreemden tegen *Japan* mogten vernemen, zullen zij daarvan aan den Governeur van *Nagasaki* kennis geven. De op *Japan* af- en aanvarende Chineesche jonken zullen zij op zee niet aandoen, maar vrij laten varen. De *Liqueërs*[18] zullen zij, als onderdanen van *Japan*, insgelijks vrij laten varen.

It has been allowed to the Dutch since ancient times to come in Japan; and should they want to keep doing it, they must refrain from spreading the Christian religion in Japan. Should they come to know of any onslaught or alliance of foreigners against Japan, they must give notice to the governor of Nagasaki [i.e., the *bugyō*]. They must not interfere with the Chinese junks coming in and departing from Japan, they must let them sail freely. Similarly, they must let the Ryukyuans sail freely, as Japan's subjects.

Another provision was included in the agreement between the VOC and the Japanese government: every time a new Dutch ship arrived, they were also demanded to share any information regarding the historical events occurring in the world. In fact, because of the limited contacts with other countries that the shogun had ensured through to the *sakoku* policies, Japan was mostly cut off from the rest of

[16] Initially each year, until 1764, when it started being once in two years and, ultimately, once in four years since 1790 to 1850 when it was canceled (JANSEN 1984, 544).

[17] Original text from DOEFF (1833, 144), my English translation. MEYLAN (1830, 39-40) presents a slightly longer version, though the content is rather similar.

[18] The word *Liqueërs* is probably an adaptation of the Japanese *Ryūkyū* 琉球, the name given to civilization living in the southmost archipelago currently part of Japan. This interpretation is reinforced by the term provided by MEYLAN (1830, 40) where a better correspondence between the Japanese term and Dutch spelling can be seen: *Likiöenen*, where < oe > corresponds to /u/.

the world. They remedied this by enacting this policy, that would demand the compilation of what are known as *fūsetsu gaki* 風説書 or, simply, *nieuws* 'news' as the Dutch called them. These documents were compiled in a formal manner, according to stringent bureaucratic steps and allowed the shogunate to stay up to date with the events of the world. The first such document was requested by Iemitsu to the *opperhoofd* Jan van Elserack in 1641 (MATSUKATA 2010).

The policies restricting the freedom of movement of the Japanese and the importation of people, goods and ideas enacted by the shogun were not called *sakoku* by the government itself. The term *sakoku* was coined by Shizuki Tadao in 1801, when he published his work *Sakoku-ron* 鎖国論 'Theory of the Chained Country' (BOOT 2008b). This work is a rather faithful translation of the Dutch version of *History of Japan* by Engelbert Kaempfer (1651 – 1716), where the author writes that "the current empire is locked up from all commerce and relations with foreign nations" (*het gantsche Ryk opgesloten is van allen Handel en gemeenschap met vreemde Natien*, on page 3). More recently, historians have been trying to counter the idea that Japan was completely isolated from the rest of the world on the basis of the so-called *yottsu no kuchi* 四つの口 'the four openings', corresponding to four cities through which the Japanese could still maintain contacts with a few foreign populations. In contrast with the modern national borders of Japan, the Japanese of the Tokugawa era still had contacts with the Kingdom of the Ryūkyū, via the city of Satsuma (*Satsuma-guchi* 薩摩口) and with the Ainu, via the city of Matsumae (*Matsumae-guchi* 松前口). Furthermore, the Japanese could also reach the Joseon dynasty of Korea, through the city of Tsushima (*Tsushima-guchi* 対馬口). The last opening, of course, is the city of Nagasaki (*Nagasaki-guchi* 長崎口), where the Chinese and the Dutch were allowed to conduct their commerce (MATSUKATA 2012, 4-9).

The commerce with the Dutch started to shrink as early as the 1710s, when the number of VOC ships that reached Japan decreased massively (MATSUKATA 2012, 12). By the end of the 18th century, specifically after the war with England broke out in 1780, the VOC suffered immensely (GAASTRA 1982, 148). Nonetheless, the partnership with the Dutch remained lively well after the arrival of the American ships of Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry (1794 – 1858) in 1854, so much so that some argue that the first exchanges with many Western countries, such as the United States, Russia and Denmark, were conducted in Dutch.[19]

Perhaps counterintuitively, it is only in the second half of the 18th century that one can witness an increase in the interest of Dutch books in Japan. Eventually, the agents of the VOC realized that their books were highly valued by the Japanese and probably started trading them on purpose. This is claimed by BOOT (2013), who also summarizes what is known regarding the actual importation of foreign books –

[19] This is claimed, for example, by JOBY (2021, 414-417), based on HALL (1992), *Japan through American eyes: the journal of Francis Hall, Kanagawa and Yokohama, 1859–1866*, Fred G. Notehelfer, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (p. 27-70); and on DE RUYVER (2016) *The First Treaty Between Belgium and Japan (1866)*, in W. F. VANDE WALLE (2016), *Japan & Belgium: An Itinerary of Mutual Inspiration*, Tielt: Lannoo, pp. 23-29; 50-73.

mostly Chinese and Dutch – during the Edo period. As already mentioned, the ban on foreign books that was part of the so-called *sakoku* policy mostly impacted texts in Chinese containing direct mentions to Christianity. The fact that Dutch books were not as strictly inspected might have multiple explanations, but it is not unrealistic to believe that the enforcement of such restriction was caused by a lack of bureaucratic institutions that could read Dutch proficiently. Whenever a foreign ship reached Nagasaki, all of its cargo had to be meticulously inspected and catalogued, and this included books. In order to assess the danger of the contents of the imported documents, the *bakufu* founded a Zen temple, in 1630, called Shuntokuji 春徳寺. There was no such an institution appointed with the inspection of Dutch books. BOOT (2013) also adds that until the end of the 18th century, all Dutch books were imported as gifts, either requested by the Japanese government, or for private collectors. Because of the fragmented nature of the book market, it is likely that many of the foreign books imported in Japan during most of the Edo period have remained unrecorded.

1.5 The beginning of Dutch studies in Japan

The details of the first attempts of the Japanese to learn the knowledge imported by the Dutch are lost in history. Because of the common use of Portuguese in the first half of the 17th century, it is unlikely that any structured learning of Dutch was ever achieved and, consequently, that the Japanese translated any Dutch books on European science at the time. The first Japanese to learn Dutch were most certainly the interpreters at Hirado. Initially, they were not governmental employees. They were instead employed directly by the Dutch. It is only with the moving of the Dutch trading post from Hirado to Dejima that a few individuals were officially hired by the government to assist in the moving. A few interpreters also moved with their families to Nagasaki, specializing in interpreting the Dutch language, some even abandoning the Portuguese or the Chinese language they had been learning and working with. It is in the year 1643 that the first official appointment as interpreters was given to the Shizuki family (GOODMAN 2000, 33).

For most of the 17th century, it is safe to say that the only Japanese who learned any Dutch were the interpreters of Nagasaki, who had no structured knowledge of the language and probably only learned it by memorizing spoken phrases and annotating useful expressions in *katakana*. Some entries in the *dagregisters*[20] also show that already in 1671, a few young Japanese, mostly sons of the interpreters between the age of 10 to 12, were sent to Dejima to learn Dutch on a daily basis. The same source also shows that Dutch books on European science were already circulating among the Japanese, before the 1670s (GOODMAN 2000, 34-35).

[20] The *dagregisters* were the personal journals of the Dutch agents. Extensive study of these sources has been carried out in the thirteen-volume series published by the Institute for the History of European Expansion and curated by Leonard Blussé, Cynthia Viallé, Paul Van der Velde and Ton Vermeulen titled *The Deshima Dagregisters: their original tables of contents*, Leiden, (1980 – 2010).

There are questions concerning the actual level of spoken Dutch that the interpreters of Nagasaki reached. Many entries in the *dagregister*, as well as citations from the memoirs compiled by the Dutch suggest their level was very shallow (GOODMAN 2000, 36). I have been able to confirm that the generally negative evaluation of the linguistic skills of the interpreters by the Dutch was very common even in later years. For example, Hendrik Doeff wrote, in his memoir (1833), on page 2, the following:

[D]e tolken, die het Nederduitsch enkel door den omgang met de *Hollanders* in *Japan* leeren, bij het aankomen van nieuwe ambtenaren, wier taal hun nog vreemd is, de grootste moeite hadden om dezelve te verstaan, terwijl tevens hunne uitspraak en hunne geheele taal, naar de Japansche spraakwendingen gewijzigd, voor die aankomelingen ten hoogste moeijelijk zijn.	The interpreters, who learn Dutch only through the encounters with the Dutch in Japan, in the occasion of the arrival of new officials, whose language is still foreign to them, had the hardest problems understanding them, while at the same time their pronunciation and the entirety of their language, distorted by the Japanese changes in speech, is extremely difficult for the newcomers.

Again, on page 142 of his 1856 memoir, Cornelis Theodoor van Assendelft de Coningh (1821 – 1890) writes about "the miserable Dutch of the interpreters" (*het ellendig Hollandsch der tolken*). As for the Dutch actually spoken in Dejima, it is worth mentioning that the accents spoken by each agent certainly varied significantly. The agents on board of VOC ships originally came from various cities of the Republic, as can be seen from an example of a crew list from the ship Princes Marianne, that reached Dejima on 23 July 1833 (KATAGIRI 2016, 8-11). In fact, the VOC often also hired international crew members, as it is also attested by Van Assendelft de Coningh in his own memoir, in the excerpt below, found on page 27:

Daar de bemanning op onze koopvaardijschepen uit een mengelmoes van allerlei natiën bestaat, en de mijne zeker voor twee derde uit vreemdelingen was zamengesteld, had ik den stuurman vooraf een monsterrol doen gereed maken, om voor te lezen, waarbij hij van alle niet-Hollanders, Amsterdammers, Rotterdammers, en Schiedammers had gemaakt, en liep er al eens eene enkele Finlander of Italiaan onder, die het Hollandsch zóó deerlijk radbraakte, dat zelfs een Japansche tolk het opmerkte, dan heette het maar, dat hij een Berg-Hollander was, die bij ons uit het gebergte in het binnenland van daan kwam.	Since the crew of our trading ships is composed of a mixture of all sorts of nations, and mine was certainly made of two thirds of foreigners, I had informed the steersman about it, so that he could make a crewmembers' list – that had to be read out – where all non-Dutch people were turned into citizens of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Schiedam. There were even a Finn and an Italian whose Dutch was so broken that the Japanese interpreters themselves could notice it. We would call them Mountain-Hollanders, who thus had come to us from the mountainous inland regions.

Since the Dutch source admits to lying on the official documents regarding the nationality of the crewmembers, in order for them to be allowed into Japan even

though they were not of Dutch nationality, I do not believe it is possible to know how many of the VOC agents in Japan were actually not native of any of the territories corresponding to the present-day Netherlands and Flanders. There is also no reason to believe that Van Assendelft de Coningh's ship, with two thirds of the crew being composed of foreigners, has been the norm in the circa 250 years of Dutch-Japanese relations. It is known that a few Germans stayed in Japan among the Dutch, just like the abovementioned Engelbert Kaempfer and Philip Franz Balthasar von Siebold (1796 – 1866), the latter often known as *yama no orandajin* 山のオランダ人 'the Dutch of the mountains', exactly to hide his German nationality to the Japanese officials.

Some Japanese sources of the time state that because of the so-called *sakoku* policies, any deep knowledge of the Dutch language could not be attained in the first half of the Edo period, because it was not allowed for their ancestors to even read any Dutch. This is claimed, for example, by Baba Sajūrō, as I will claim in 2.1, but also by Sugita Genpaku and Ōtsuki Gentaku, as evidenced by GOODMAN (2000, 36), although the accuracy of these claims may also be questioned. GOODMAN (2000) also adds that he believes that the reason for the shortcomings in the ability of the Japanese to speak Dutch were not connected to the limitations imposed by the government, but rather by the fact that the Japanese scholars lacked "essential materials (grammar, dictionaries, etc.)". This is an interesting point, for the purpose of the present research, and it certainly concerns the important role of Shizuki's works: he was the first Japanese who studied the theory of grammar of Dutch and put it in a written form, so that his knowledge could spread among the Japanese scholars. Regardless of the interpreter's skills of Dutch, in the second half of the 17th century there are numerous examples of Dutch physicians imparting lessons to a few Japanese individuals (GOODMAN 2000, 38-42).

It is only at the turn of the century, and mostly in the first half of the 18th century that things start to change. The socio-political situation of Japan evolves from a militaristic state to a more intellectualism-oriented society – also epitomized by the fall of the samurai class – and this gives birth to a few new schools of thought (see Chapter VI). The openness toward new ideas also characterized the shogunate. Starting from the eighth shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune 徳川吉宗 (1684 – 1751), who ruled between the years 1716 and 1745, the pursuit of Dutch studies was actively incentivized by the *bakufu* themselves (GOODMAN 2000, 49-65; HORIUCHI 2003, 148). It is in this period that one also sees the rise of a new type of scholar of Dutch: the so-called *Edo no rangakusha* 江戸の蘭学者, the scholars of Dutch of Edo. These individuals, who worked in the capital, were directly employed by the shogun to provide translations of Dutch books on various topics concerning European knowledge. They were different from the interpreters of Nagasaki (*Nagasaki tsūji* 長崎通詞), in that the latter were believed to be mostly concerned with spoken language, so much so that Sugita Genpaku used the term *setsujin* 舌人 'men of tongue' to disparage them (see 2.1), reinforcing the idea that the Nagasaki interpreters could not really read Dutch but only speak it, an idea GOODMAN (2000, 36) calls a "legend". However, the relationship between these two types of scholars was probably not as grim as suggested. It was far from uncommon, in fact, for a

scholar of Edo to spend some time in Nagasaki in order to improve their knowledge of the language, through contact with the interpreters and with the Dutch themselves, in a social practice called *yūgaku* 遊学 (SUGIMOTO 2013, 146-149), a concept that roughly corresponds to "exchange study". It is exactly in such an occasion that Shizuki Tadao got acquainted with the Ōtsuki family, and it is believed that it is thanks to the latter that Shizuki's manuscripts reached Edo (see 2.1). Ōtsuki Gentaku, specifically, has played a central role in the foundation in 1811 of the translation bureau (*bansho wage goyō* 蛮書和解御用) by the Japanese government (GOODMAN 2000, 119), often known in English as *Bansho shirabesho* 蕃書調所, the name it took in 1856 (GOODMAN 2000, 5). Most of the scholars who participated in the *yūgaku* were physicians who originally received an education based on Confucianism and Chinese studies (MATSUDA 2008,140).

It is with the legendary story of Sugita Genpaku and Maeno Ryōtaku's 1774 translation from Dutch of the first book on anatomy and the subsequent publication of the story of that process in *Rangaku kotohajime* 蘭学事始, in 1815 (see 2.1) that the concept of *rangaku* 'Dutch studies' really got popularized and started to flourish, with many Japanese engaging with similar endeavors. The term "Dutch studies" or *rangaku* 蘭学, in Japanese, is often used to refer to the entirety of the research conducted by the Japanese on anything concerning the Dutch. The Japanese used the Dutch language for so many different purposes. Dutch was used to communicate with the VOC agents, to trade with them, to entertain friendly and romantic relationships, to arrange bureaucratic agreements and oftentimes to learn new knowledge and ideas, by reading and translating the books they imported. If one defines *rangaku* so broadly, one can claim that this school existed from the very first encounter with the Dutch in 1600 until the end of the Edo period, in the second half of the 19th century. However, I believe that this definition is too broad and does not allow for a concrete appreciation of the reality of the evolution of the Japanese research on Dutch things. As I have argued in the present section, no real research on Dutch knowledge had started before the second half of the 17th century. When it comes to language, it is likely that no structured study started before the second half of the 18th century. In fact, I believe that a distinction needs to be made between the broader label of *rangaku* and the more precise concept of *rangogaku* 蘭語学, the study of the Dutch language. Of course, some Dutch was known in Japan as early as the first half of the 17th century, yet when I talk about *ragogaku* I only want to focus on the structured scholarship of the research on the Dutch language, intentionally recorded in manuscripts and handed down among the Japanese scholars. With this definition, it appears that *rangogaku* did not start until the second half of the 18th century, when Aoki Kon'yō 青木昆陽 (1698 – 1769) and Noro Genjō 野呂現丈 (1693 – 1761) started to compile the first glossaries (MATSUDA 2008, 139; see also section 1.8). Nonetheless, in order to avoid the confusion between these two concepts, I will refrain from using either term. I do not find these terms particularly useful, and one might end up inadvertently pigeon-holing into one subject scholars whose works were certainly much more diverse than one can describe by "sticking a label onto them", as one says in Japanese by means of a Dutch-derived expression: *retteru wo haru* レッテルを貼る.

1.6 Research question

The research carried out by Shizuki on the Dutch language is evidently distinct from what other Japanese scholars of Dutch were doing, at the time. None of the research on Dutch conducted by Shizuki's precursors and contemporaries ever included thorough analysis of grammar, let alone the theory of grammar. This might have also been caused by the fact that the Dutch sources on language they could access were limited in their scope. MATSUDA (2008, 139) attests that the Dutch sources of these first scholars were mostly limited to primers and similar publications, only covering the alphabet in its various fonts, the pronunciation of each letter and syllable, a few words and, occasionally, also elementary algebra. MATSUDA (2008) names *Opregt onderwys van de letter-konst* (1752) by Berend Hakvoord (c. 1660 – 1730), *Trap der jeugd* (1732, first edition 1640) by Carel de Gelliers (? – 1644) and *Groot ABC Boek*.[21] As I will discuss in 5.1, approaching the research of a language by studying its script and the sounds connected to that very script was a rather common method in Japan before and during the Edo period. Thus, it only makes sense that the earliest structured manuscripts on Dutch compiled by the Japanese covered these issues. For example, Shizuki's master Motoki Yoshinaga 本木良永 (1735 – 1794, also Ryōei) published *Wage reigen* 和解例言 ('Japanese Understanding of Some Examples of Word'), that roughly features the following content: the Latin alphabet, its fonts, and special characters; the numerals; pronunciation of each letter; and a long table of all Dutch syllables with *katakana* annotation. Another early work was published by Aoki Kon'yō, with the title *Oranda moji ryakukō* 和蘭文字略考 ('Brief Thoughts on Dutch Letters') that also contained explanations of the Latin alphabet in different scripts, the numerals, the pronunciation of complex syllables and a small glossary of Dutch words divided in syllables. Interestingly, these words are provided with two pronunciations: a pronunciation based on each syllable's sound, and one spelling out each letter.[22] Another early author of documents on the Dutch language is the abovementioned Maeno Ryōtaku who published several works. In *Jigaku shōsei* 字学小成 ('Small Success in the Study of Characters'), Maeno briefly illustrates a few issues concerning the pronunciation of Dutch letters. In *Oranda yakusen* 和蘭訳筌 ('Fishing Net of Dutch Translation', see 6.1.1), he deals with similar topics, though in much deeper details, this time also including a few Dutch words and sample sentences whose Japanese translation gets explained. Since these translations occur according to a reworked *kanbun kundoku*, there are a few mentions to the parts of speech of the tradition of Chinese studies (see 5.5), albeit very limited. The brief

[21] MATSUDA (2008, 139) simply names this title without specifying the author or the edition. The question regarding which specific abecedaries used to circulate in Japan at the time is still unresolved, as I discuss in 2.4.4 and, mostly, in 3.3.9.

[22] The syllabic division of these words does not seem to be particularly faithful to the Dutch traditional fashion. For example, the Dutch word *rood* 'red' has one syllable. Aoki recognizes two syllables < roo > and < t >, this is because the Japanese (*katakana*) transcription features the two syllables *rō* ロー and *to* ト. Additionally, Aoki provides a *katakana* adaptation of the spelling of each letter as follows: *era* エラ (for the letter < R >), *o* ヲ, *o* ヲ, *te* テ.

Rango zuihitsu 蘭語随筆 (‘Loose Thoughts on Dutch’)[23] also mostly ponders on the pronunciation of Dutch letters and syllables. This approach to Dutch, strongly connected to its written form, is also visible in authors who published roughly in the same period as Shizuki, like Ōtsuki Genkan 大槻玄幹 (1785 – c.1838), who will eventually meet and become friends with Shizuki (see 2.1). Ōtsuki Genkan’s father was the renowned Ōtsuki Gentaku 大槻玄沢 (1757 – 1827) who published the famous *Rangaku kaitei* 蘭学階梯 (1788, ‘Introductory Steps in Dutch Studies’), whose content is not particularly different from the abovementioned works, at least as far as its general topics are concerned.[24]

Shizuki’s works represent a breaking point from this traditional approach. He does not cover “elementary” topics such as the alphabet and its pronunciation. Instead, he chooses dictionaries, grammar handbooks and literary works (NESPOLI 2022) as sources for grammatical rules. In a cultural context in which Dutch studies only happened via the methodologies I have just illustrated above, one wonders how Shizuki could come up with his theories. Where does his pivotal methodology – so distinct form his precursors and contemporaries – come from? The knowledge of Dutch grammar visible from his works is certainly very detailed but what is more astounding is his understanding of complex and subtle morphosyntactic mechanics of Dutch that one can hardly find in any Dutch source of the time either. On the one hand, this means Shizuki must have had access to more Dutch books than usually assumed (see NESPOLI 2022 and Chapter II below). On the other hand, Dutch handbooks of grammar and dictionaries could not have been the only tools Shizuki utilized to construct his complex and unique theories on grammar. This is the reason why one needs to also know and deeply understand the (pseudo-)grammatical contents of the Japanese sources Shizuki consulted. Understanding how the process of creation of Shizuki’s theories on grammar happened is the ultimate goal of the present research. After Shizuki’s theories spread among his disciples and beyond, the *rangogaku*, the study of Dutch language in Japan mostly shifted focus, with many authors deciding to write about Dutch grammar, rather than its letters and pronunciation (for example Baba Sajūrō, Mitsukuri Genpo or Tsurumine Shigenobu).

[23] The concept of *zuihitsu* 随筆 (literally ‘according to the brush’s will’) refers to a literary genre consisting of books that were compiled mostly without precedent planning, where the author spontaneously wrote about his or her feeling observing the surroundings. For this reason, I have adapted it as “Loose Thoughts”.

[24] DE GROOT (2005) describes a few additional works of this type, some even containing entries in both Dutch and Portuguese together. This source also demonstrates that the practice of compiling glossaries of Dutch words lasted until most of the Edo period.