

THEORETICAL ESSAY

# *Ianua linguarum*: From Roboredo (1619) to Comenius (1631)

Marli Quadros LEITE 

Universidade de São Paulo (USP)

Cíntia Cardoso de SIQUEIRA 

Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD)

Universidade de São Paulo (USP)



OPEN ACCESS

## EDITED BY

- Gonçalo Fernandes (UTAD)
- Leonardo Ferreira Kaltner (UFF)
- Ronaldo Batista (UPM)

## REVIEWED BY

- Neusa Bastos (PUC-SP)
- Luciano Tocaia (UFMG)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

- Marli Quadros Leite  
Research, Supervision, Writing – original draft –, Writing – analysis and editing.
- Cíntia Cardoso de Siqueira  
Research, Writing – original draft –, Writing – analysis and editing

## DATES

- Received: 09/15/2021
- Accepted: 09/23/2021
- Published: 12/07/2021

## HOW TO CITE

Leite, M. Q.; Siqueira, C. C. (2021). *Ianua linguarum*: From Roboredo (1619) to Comenius (1631). *Revista da Abralín*, v. 20, n. 3, p. 375-410, 2021.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to offer some considerations on the didactic and pedagogical thought of two important figures in seventeenth-century language instruction: the Portuguese grammarian Amaro de Roboredo (~1580–165?) and the Moravian educator Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670), in order to show how a broad horizon of retrospection of knowledge constituted at that time was decisive in enabling these authors to work on common topics despite their physical distance from one another. The object of this study is the method of language instruction defended by both authors based on the work *Ianua linguarum* (1611) by Irish priests of Salamanca, probably authored by William Bathe. To this end, we propose treating certain aspects of the horizon of retrospection specific to these authors to situate them in their own time and space as well as to identify the main ideas in language instruction revealed in the following works: *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas* (1619) and *Porta de linguas ou modo muito acomodado para as entender* (1623) by Roboredo as well as *Ianua linguarum reserata* (1631) and *Didactica magna* (1657) by Comenius. Basing our work on the theoretical and methodological perspective of Sylvain Auroux (1989; 1992; 2008) we establish a method of defining the causes that led these authors to propose a specific method for language instruction as well as the effects stemming from this method to shed light on the theoretical and philosophical foundations common to them, by means of a broad horizon of retrospection of knowledge, as evidenced by the co-presence of

significant authors of that time. Finally, because it is related to the investigation of the construction of knowledge regarding language and language instruction through an analysis of the causes of changes in knowledge, considering dimensions (object, time, space parameters external to the text, and the interference of interpreters) and their relationship (Auroux, 2008), this work is inscribed in the History of Linguistic Idea.

#### RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é tecer considerações acerca do pensamento didático-pedagógico de duas importantes personagens do cenário de ensino de línguas do século XVII: Amaro de Roboredo (~1580–165?), gramático português, e Jan Amós Comenius (1592–1670), educador morávio, para mostrar como o horizonte de retrospectção amplo do conhecimento, formado então, foi decisivo para que esses autores trabalhassem sobre pontos comuns, estando espacialmente distantes entre si. O objeto do estudo é o método de ensino de línguas defendido por ambos os autores, baseado na obra *Ianua Linguarum* (1611), dos padres irlandeses, provavelmente de autoria de William Bathe. Para tanto, propomo-nos a tratar de certos aspectos do horizonte de retrospectção específico dos autores, de modo a situá-los em seu tempo-espaço, bem como a identificar as principais ideias sobre o ensino de línguas reveladas nas seguintes obras: *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas* (1619) e *Porta de linguas ou modo muito acomodado para as entender* (1623), de Roboredo, e *Ianua linguarum reserata* (1631) e *Didactica magna* (1657), de Comenius. Fundamentando-nos na perspectiva teórico-metodológica de Sylvain Auroux (1989; 1992; 2008), estabelecemos um método de definição das causas que levaram os autores à proposição de um método específico para o ensino de línguas, bem como dos efeitos dele decorrentes, de modo a evidenciar a base teórico-filosófica comum a ambos, por meio do horizonte de retrospectção amplo do conhecimento, evidenciado na copresença de vozes de autores relevantes da época. Enfim, por relacionar-se à investigação da construção de saberes acerca da língua e seu ensino, por meio da análise das causas da mudança do conhecimento e consideração de dimensões (objeto, tempo, espaço, parâmetros externos ao texto e interferência de interpretantes) e suas relações (Auroux, 2008), este trabalho inscreve-se no campo da História das Ideias Linguísticas.

KEYWORDS

Roboredo. Comenius. *Ianua linguarum*. History of Linguistic Ideas. History of Linguistics.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Roboredo. Comenius. *Ianua linguarum*. História das Ideias Linguísticas. Historiografia Linguística.

## Introduction

The purpose of this article is to weave together a set of considerations on the didactic and pedagogical thought of two important figures in seventeenth-century language instruction: the Portuguese grammarian Amaro de Roboredo (~1580–165?) and the Moravian educator Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670), to show how the horizon of retrospection, formed then, was decisive in enabling these authors to work on common topics despite their physical distance from one another. The object of this study is the method of language instruction defended by both authors based on the work *Ianua linguarum* (1611) by Irish priests of Salamanca, probably authored by William Bathe. To this end, we propose treating certain aspects of the *broad and specific horizons of retrospection* of these authors to situate them in their own time and space as well as to identify the main ideas in language instruction revealed in the following works: *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas* (1619) and *Porta de linguas ou modo muito acomodado para as entender* (1623) by Roboredo and *Ianua linguarum reserata* (1631) and *Didactica magna* (1657) by Comenius.

Here we use the concepts of *broad horizon of retrospection* and *specific horizon of retrospection* (cf. LEITE, 2021), taking up once more the concept of Auroux (1987; 2006) for whom the horizon of retrospection is “the entirety of prior knowledge.” In this way, his concept appears above all to suggest in an indeterminate way<sup>1</sup> that such knowledge is that existing and valid in space and time common to all. It constitutes *common knowledge*. The cycle of production of new knowledge begins when authors appropriate this “common knowledge” and avail themselves of it, indexing it by means (more or less explicit) of citations and bibliographic references or integrating it into their work without citing its authorship. Moreover, in working with *common knowledge* authors may, in general, go beyond it to create new knowledge that, if validated by their peers (the community of interpreters), renews the science, passing on this new knowledge to be integrated into the nucleus of *common knowledge*.

Such clarifications are important in the context of this work because the two authors lived in the same period, between 1580 and 1670, with a difference of about ten years between the birth and death of each. From the coincidence of many other ideas about language instruction method, our

---

<sup>1</sup> In the sense of not having specified “whose antecedent.”

hypothesis is that both benefited from a common horizon of retrospection in science, philosophy, and language instruction.

For this reason, we will speak briefly about each of these authors, then move on to an analysis of their related ideas about education and the method of language instruction, based essentially on the above-quoted works.

## 1. Notes on the horizons of retrospection of Amaro de Roboredo and Jan Amos Comenius

About Amaro de Roboredo, as Kossarik says (2002, p. 9), not much can be said as his biographical data are not known. On the frontispiece of his *Methodo*, he is said to be a native of the Portuguese city of Algosó. From the dedications in other works of his, we learn that Roboredo had ties to the nobility, which is possible given the relationships he maintained with some of his students, for it is known that one of these was a son of the Conde Castelo Branco, to whom Roboredo dedicated his works. He wrote: "Roboredo dedicates his linguistic works to this noble family." Kossarik (2002, p. 9) also says that "from these dedications we learn that he was the chaplain of the family."

The seventeenth century was not a fertile period for grammatical works on Portuguese language, but it was for works on Portuguese orthography. Furthermore, Portuguese production during this century has yet to receive due attention from linguists and philologists. The linguistic works of Amaro de Roboredo published during his life are as follows:

1615 - Regras da Orthographia Portugueza.

1615 - Verdadeira grammatica latina para se bem saber em breve tempo, scritta na lingua portugueza.

1619 - Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas.

1621 - Raizes da lingua latina mostradas em hum trattato e dictionario, isto he, hum compendio do Calepino com a composiçãõ, e derivaçãõ das palavras, com a ortografia, quantidade e frase dellas.

1623 - Porta de linguas, ou methodo muito accommodado para as entender (first published with the Spanish translation).

1625 - Grammatica Latina de Amaro de Roboredo. Mais breve, e facil que as publicadas até agora na qual precedem os exemplos aas regras.

With regard to the work *Regras da Orthographia Portugueza*, the authorship of the original is unknown but is said to be merely an edition prepared by Father Vitorino José da Costa in the eighteenth century (cf. ASSUNÇÃO; FERNANDES, 2007, p. XVI). The *Verdadeira grammatica latina* was deemed lost until very recently but was recovered by three Portuguese linguists (cf. ASSUNÇÃO;

FERNANDES; PONCE DE LÉON, 2007) and republished in 2007. The book *Raízes da Língua Latina* is a Latin-Portuguese-Spanish dictionary in which Roboredo pays particular attention to problems in the “formation of words and semantic and phonetic changes that occur during the process of derivation.” The book *Porta de linguas* is a collection of texts in Latin, Portuguese, and Spanish enriched with linguistic treatises and content based on the Latin work *Ianua linguarum*, about which we will speak a little further on. In his final work, *Grammatica Latina de Amaro de Roboredo*, the author returns to certain pedagogical and linguistic ideas from the *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas* (cf. ASSUNÇÃO; FERNANDES, 2007).

Kossarik (2002, p. 10-11) points to a citation by Cardoso<sup>2</sup> (1994), according to which the following text belonged to Roboredo as well, but the date cited in this reference is from the eighteenth century, specifically from 1752.

Roboredo, Amaro de: Acordo engenhoso, que conduz a estabelecer paz entre Alvaristas, Sanchistas e todos os grammaticos de bom juizo ... sobre o modo de ensinar a grammatica latina e dado em resposta a quem fala contra o Methodo ultimamente experimentado por Aleixo Nicoláo S. e inventado no século passado por Amaro de Roboredo. Lisboa, 1752. A.C.: 11-arm.4.7.43 B.N.L.: 350 P. (CARDOSO, 1994, p. 175, apud KOSSARIK, 2002, p. 10-11).

[Roboredo, Amaro de: An ingenious accord leading to the establishment of peace among the Alvaristas and Sanchistas and all grammarians of sound judgment ... on the method of teaching Latin grammar and intended as a reply to those who have recently spoken ill of the Methodo as it was recently tested by Aleixo Nicoláo S. and invented in the last century by Amaro de Roboredo. Lisbon, 1752. A.C.: 11-arm.4.7.43 B.N.L.: 350 P.]

One sign of the pedagogical and linguistic importance of the *Methodo* of Roboredo up until the nineteenth century appears in a work by Dias<sup>3</sup> (1851, p. 25, apud CARDOSO, 1994, p. 187) in a citation by a certain Monsieur Scribot, who recommends to Portuguese grammarians the *Methodo* of Amaro de Roboredo in the following terms: “Discours adressé aux plus insignes grammairiens de Portugal, dans lequel Mr. Scribot... leur propose la Méthode d'Amaro de Roboredo, enrichie de remarques, pour traduire élégamment le portugais en latin et le latin en portugais” (apud CARDOSO, 1994, p. 187).

Though Roboredo was a man of the seventeenth century he may still be considered a “Renaissance author” in that certain qualities of his work are consistent with this period. One of these is the renewal of Latin, in that as we can see only one of Roboredo’s works, the *Regras da Ortographia Portugueza*, from 1615<sup>4</sup> was dedicated completely to Portuguese, while the others, including the *Methodo*, focused on Latin and used Portuguese only as a means for the student to master it.

<sup>2</sup> CARDOSO, S. *Historiografia gramatical (1500-1920): língua portuguesa-autores portugueses / comp. e org. de Simão Cardoso*. Porto: Faculdade de Letras, 1994. *Anexo VII da Revista da Faculdade de Letras: línguas e literaturas*.

<sup>3</sup> DIAS, J. A. *Grammatica franceza*. Lisboa, 1851.

<sup>4</sup> Note that this work, as Assunção and Fernandes observe (2007, p. XVI), is known by means of a seventeenth-century version, possibly from 1738 and originating with Father Victorino José da Costa.

We should not conclude because of this, however, that Portuguese was at a disadvantage to Latin. On the contrary, it was valued because as a “barbaric tongue” the fact that it served as a vehicle that could be used by students for learning the rules of the classical language was an important step forward for the esteem in which it was held. This, then, is a second characteristic of the Renaissance: a respect for vernacular languages, as was mentioned above. Remember the idea that in cases of learning a “linguagem” [language] (Portuguese in this case) it would be easier for students to comprehend the “língua” [idiom], that is, Latin, an idea present in the *Grammatica da lingoagem portugueza* of Fernão de Oliveira (1536) and later on also in the *Grammatica da lingua portugueza* of João de Barros (1540).

The *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*, as indicated by its title, is a proposed technique for the teaching of foreign languages in general<sup>5</sup> and not just the grammar of Latin or Portuguese. The achievement of this purpose comes about through the use of Portuguese metalanguage by which the student might gradually understand the rules of Latin, although as Roboredo explains, this method may be used for any language. The work consists of a prologue in which justifications are provided for the *Methodo* and three other divisions, which are:

- (1) the **Grammatica**, in which the rules of Latin and Portuguese are described and compared, by means of which the disciple would become more familiar with his native tongue, which he knows “by use,” and, based on that knowledge, he would be able to learn the Latin language. This division is divided into three books, each subdivided into chapters.
- (2) In the **Cópia**,<sup>6</sup> in which 1,200 Latin phrases are presented through which the disciple must study the vocabulary and structure of the language, memorizing them before moving on to read texts in the language to be learned, in this case, Latin. Roboredo explains that 1,141 phrases were removed from the *Ianua linguarum* published in 1611 by the Irish Jesuit fathers who had sought refuge in Salamanca (cf. ROBOREDO, 1619, p. 79).
- (3) **Frase**, in which 187 Latin phrases are presented and translated into Portuguese, in relation to which Roboredo explains peculiarities of Latin syntax in comparison with the Portuguese.

The prologue of the *Methodo* is a letter from the author to D. Gaspar Alvarez Vega, a professor of Latin at the University of Salamanca. In fact, this text functions as a “letter of intent” in which precise information is found about the theoretical and methodological conceptions according to which the work would be organized. The author himself, in the “mostrador da materia,” provides a summary of this prologue. He says:

---

<sup>5</sup> Kossarik (2002, p. 56) says: “The work of Amaro de Roboredo has one more innovative feature: this author should be appreciated as one of the pioneers in teaching foreign languages according to modern principles” (our translation). We can add that these principles were initiated by Juan Luis Vives, as we will show below.

<sup>6</sup> The sense of the word “cópia” [“copious”] is “abundance”: In this case it means an abundance of vocabulary.

No prologo se toca hũa succinta apologia: em que lingua se devem screver as Grammaticas: que respeito ha de ter quem as faz, & quem as ensina: a importancia de se eregir escola da Materna: o motivo, & traça desta arte: como ficará universal; as condições do discipulo: os efeitos, que se vão mostrando. (ROBOREDO, 1619, f. 3).

[In the prologue a brief apology is set forth: in which language the Grammars were to be written; the respect due to he who creates it and who will teach it; the importance of establishing elementary schooling; the motive and the outline of the art; how it becomes universal; the conditions of the student; and the effects that will be shown.]

Roboredo lived in a time and place in which ideas about education were being renewed by the views of such humanists as Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469–1536), Thomas More (1478–1535), Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540), and Francisco Sanchez de las Brozas (1523–1600). These thinkers built a *horizon of retrospection* that for centuries served thinkers in the form of common knowledge.

Erasmus of Rotterdam was a humanist who, with skill and subtlety, “undermined the foundations of the thinking of that (the medieval) period without creating any disturbance” (OLIVEIRA, 1979, p. XV, our translation). He led a troubled life full of battles fought in the form of works defending his convictions and human free will. His ideal for society appears in the second edition of his *Colloquia Selecta* (1512) in which he “presents a just and rational society that is genuinely Christian and a friend of peace” (OLIVEIRA, 1979, p. XVII).<sup>7</sup> At one point he found himself caught between Luther and the Pope, resisting the power of both: During the Protestant Reformation Luther had insisted that he fight for reform while the Vatican urged him to resist it, going so far as to offer him the office of cardinal. Erasmus, however, “made a point of preserving his absolute personal independence” (ibidem, p. XVII).

Rummel (2017) explains that while Erasmus served only briefly as a professor, questions about education were central to his life. The foundation of his educational philosophy was the belief that man could achieve perfection given his power of self-knowledge. Thus he believed that children had a natural potential to grow intellectually and morally and that it was first up to the parents and later to the teacher to ensure they reached their potential. The educational thought of Erasmus regarding the curriculum of the time had more to do with ethics than with logic and more to do with character formation than with factual education (cf. op. cit.).

Erasmus’s thinking on education was not systematic (cf. RUMMEL, 2017) but even so was doubtless innovative and important, both in guiding the discussions and actions of contemporaries such as Vives and in constructing a horizon of retrospection from which thinkers from every period would benefit, including Roboredo and Comenius, with whom we are concerned here.

Among the educational works of Erasmus, it is important to cite the following: *De ratione studii* [On the Method of Study], 1511; the *Institutio principis Christiani* [On the Education of a Christian Prince], 1516; the *Ratio verae theologiae* [The Method of True Theology], 1518; *De Pueris Instituendis*

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf., for example, “Doze coloquios de Erasmo, varon doctissimo y eloquentissimo / traduzidos de latin en romance, por que los que no entienden la lengua latina gozen assi mismo de doctrina de tan alto varon.” MDXXXX. Work available from the website gallica.bnf.fr.



[On the Education of Children], 1529; and *De civilitate morum puerilium* [On Civility of Children], 1530.<sup>8</sup> In these works, Erasmus touched on education and discussed the school curriculum of the day, in order, for instance, to illustrate the conceptual aspects of education, albeit in a more general and rhetorical way. More specifically, however, he made a point of recommending instruction in the classical languages, Latin, and Greek, and by the same token the importance of reading classical authors such as Homer, Terence, Plautus, Virgil, Horace, and Cicero.

Though an elite humanist, Erasmus adopted the classical doctrine on education according to which three prerequisites are necessary to lead a child to learn: *natural talent, instruction, and practice*. Even so, Erasmus did not believe that failures in the educational process were due to internal causes, such as a lack of talent on the part of the student, but rather to external causes, such as errors in the educational process, that is, failures of educational technique.

The author we have been following, Rummel (2017), emphasizes four recurring themes related to education in the educational thought of Erasmus:

1. the humanizing effect of education;
2. the efficacy of cooperative approaches rather than coercive ones;
3. the capacity of both sexes to benefit from education;
4. the importance of internalizing the subject matter taught.

These points were crucial to the inauguration of a new mindset with respect to educational principles and practices. Other thinkers were familiar with such principles as well, including Thomas More, a very close friend of Erasmus with whom he shared the struggle for social justice and freedom. More was also of the greatest importance in the development of the spirit of the age and of the mindset of those who came after. More, like Erasmus, was subtle in the dissemination of his ideology. In his works, and especially in his *Utopia*, More expressed in concrete terms, but without commotion, the principles of social and political education, civility, and respect for others and for the common good. Likewise, his life was exemplary of these ideals: His conduct was a model of humanity, honesty, and respect for the freedom of thought. These two friends and scholars not only shared the same principles of humanity and civility but also a strong Christian religious feeling that further united them.

In terms of production on educational and humanist themes, another scholar to be remembered for the importance of the repercussions of his ideas was Juan Luis Vives, who though younger than the other two mentioned above was acknowledged by both for his culture and his intellectual

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the French translation *La civilité puérile* (1877), with an introductory study by Alcide Bonneau. Available on the website [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr).



production over the course of his life. His ideas on education were much more effective and exact than those of Erasmus and More, who we might say prepared the ground for the flourishing of more specific studies of education.

Vives, though also a polymath, was dedicated to education and left behind quite a coherent body of work on this subject. In the words of Cura (2011), we can catch a glimpse of the qualities of this author so important to the field of education:

Vives is a model humanist who promoted the idea that the human being understands, through literature, the value of education and virtuous life, the ultimate meaning of his existence, the dignity afforded human nature, and the unfathomable love of God as revealed in the perfect man who was his Son Jesus Christ, in whom his plenitude is found. (CURA, 2011, p. 139, our translation)

This quotation gives us a glimpse of a humanist who remains quite theocentric, though with innovative ideas about other aspects of life. As we saw, Vives was a humanist who, like Erasmus and More, was tied to the change the world clamored for during the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, even if this humanism remained highly religious. What is interesting to highlight here, however, is the attention to, and valuing of, arts and letters by this author and his construction of a solid edifice of knowledge regarding education. Vives was a “pedagogical” humanist though still exclusively oriented toward Latin, writing in this language and defending it as a universal language, as we see in this passage from his *Tratado de la enseñanza*:

Es la lengua a modo de un sagrario de la instrucción, como una despensa de la cual se toma o en la que se guarda lo necesario. Siendo, pues, el tesoro de nuestra erudición y un instrumento de la sociedad humana, nuestro mayor interés estaría en que hubiese solamente una lengua común para todas las naciones [...].

Mas ya que la pluralidad de lenguas es castigo del primer pecado, convendría que fuese cada una de ellas suave y también docta y abundante. [...]

Tales condiciones reúne, a nuestro juicio, la lengua latina, entre las que emplean los hombres y el autor conoce. (VIVES, 1533 [2004], positions 1664-1674).

The dedication of the Valencian scholar to education is evident in one of his most important works, the *De tradendis disciplinis* (1531),<sup>9</sup> composed of five volumes, in which he presents his program of educational reform. Vives’s point of departure for the elaboration of his educational program is Aristotelian, based on a metaphysics of motion (act and potential), that is, related to the transformation capacity that is in the nature of creatures. As to human beings, his thesis is that man has the

---

<sup>9</sup> This work is one of the three parts of the encyclopedic treatise of Vives, the *De disciplinis* of 1531. Casini (2017) describes this treatise as follows: *De causis corruptarum artium* (On the causes of the corruption of the arts) in seven volumes dedicated to a thorough critique of contemporary education; *De tradendis disciplinis* (On Education), in five volumes, in which Vives writes of his educational reforms; and five shorter treatises, *De artibus* (On the Arts), which have mainly to do with logic and metaphysics. These five treatises include *De prima philosophia* (On First Philosophy), a compendium of Aristotelian physics and metaphysics from a Christian viewpoint; *De censura veri* (On Judging the Truth), a discussion on the proposition and the forms of argumentation; *De explaine cuiusque essentiae* (On the explanation of each essence); *De instrumento probabilitatis* (On the Instrument of Probability), which contains a theory of knowledge as well as a detailed statement on dialectical invention; and *De disputatione* (On Disputation), in which informal proofs are discussed.

potential to transform himself because change is innate in him by nature (potential) and that education is the act that can propitiate change so that it can perfect the human essence (cf. CURA, 2011). The role of education for Vives is to awaken in this manner the intelligence within the man, representing his potential so that he can come to comprehend the world and that which is being taught to him. And so although intelligence may be natural to the man, he needs the educational act to activate it.

For Vives, education begins with what parents teach their children to make them good and virtuous. Afterward, in school, the masters continue this education, teaching arts and languages, philosophy and sciences, after which, depending on the desire and the effort of the student, the educational process will be entirely successful. For this reason, the philosopher argues that education must have a cause that guides it toward an end: the refinement of the soul of the human being. Cura (2011, p. 127), recognizing the principle of educational causation in Vives, says these concepts “apply to the causal intervention of the educators as efficient agents, in order to achieve the formative objectives” of education, that is, the transformation of the man into an educated being. Education, in the view of the Valencian scholar, therefore has internal and external causes for the student. Its internal causes are the condition of the student himself, his capacity for learning and his personal effort, bearing in mind that the “efficient internal cause” (op. cit., p. 132) of learning for this philosopher is the student’s active role with respect to his intention to learn. External causes comprise such agents as family, educators, rulers, the Church, and even God.

Watson (1913)<sup>10</sup> says that Vives is the “second Quintilian” because, as the Renaissance made possible a return to antiquity to recuperate intellectual enthusiasm for the construction of future progress, Vives was the equal of the greatest of Roman critical thinkers on education. The author just cited reminds us, however, that Vives was not, like the scholastic philosophers, bound by the science of the past, in that he conducted independent research by means of direct interaction with nature. He was for his time a modern man whose thought surpassed the limits of tradition.

In his youth, Vives had opposed Antonio de Nebrija, a Spaniard who, in 1492, the year Vives was born, wrote the best-known vernacular grammar in Europe.<sup>11</sup> The humanist, however, according to Watson (1913, cap. II, p. 88), changed his mind about the Castilian grammarian and his aversion was transformed into pride in, and admiration for, Nebrija, because of the maturity and learning he later acquired as well as his national pride. Vives’s idea was that the child should learn the vernacular with his mother, something he deemed essential for the later acquisition of Latin. According to Vives, the

---

<sup>10</sup> Chapter III. Reading by means of an e-book does not permit the citation of pages because e-books are dynamic and appear differently depending on the dimensions of the device used for reading.

<sup>11</sup> Until the beginning of the twentieth century, Nebrija’s *Grammar de la lengua castilana* (1492) was accepted as the first vernacular grammar in Europe (as Watson, 1913, chapter III states [note 292]); however, today it is known that other works existed before that, for example, the grammars of Irish (Araicept, 650 and Bardic Treatises, 12th – 14th century), Icelandic (Fyirsta, 12th century), Provençal (Vidal, c. 1200, Faidit, c. 1240, and Leys d’Amors, 1356); Welsh (Cerddwriaeth); French (Barton, 1409); and Italian (Alberti, 1437-1441) (cf. Auroux, 1992, p. 14).

school must be bilingual: The vernacular was to be perfected at school while Latin was being taught by the masters (op. cit.).

In the context of Latin instruction, there was at that time much uneasiness among scholars such as Erasmus, More, and Vives because Latin was being practiced with great imperfection (corruption), a situation illustrated by Henry Bebel in the work *Misuse of Latin Language* (WATSON, 1913, cap III, p. 78). And yet, according to Watson, it was the book by the Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457), *Elegantiae linguae latinae* (1471), published prior to the *De Tradendis Disciplines* of Vives, that in terms of the depth with which it dealt with topics related to syntax was a relative advance over what had previously existed in the field of Latin education. Vives criticized the *Elegantiae* in regard to certain of the grammatical points contained therein but admitted its advantages over works of Latin grammar. According to Burke (2021), the *Elegantiae linguae latinae* “was the first book of Latin grammar written since the end of Antiquity and became very popular in secondary schools throughout Europe.” Valla, then, is another significant author who figures in the horizon of retrospection of Vives.

In regard to teaching method, Vives emphasizes the practice of writing as a means of developing “great language” and proposes a technique for translating sentences from Latin to the vernacular, explaining: Así, después de aprendida la sintaxis, pondrá el alumno oraciones sencillas en latín, y éstas a su vez en el idioma propio, al principio muy cortas y aumentando un poco todos los días” (VIVES, 1533 [2004], position 1927). The author also recommends that the same procedure be used with the Greek language.

Despite the enormous intellectual importance of this author, he was not widely recognized in his own time as a great educator and philosopher. Recognition, which endures down to the present day, came after his death. This lack of immediate recognition of his value in the Europe of his time was due to personal and geopolitical reasons. On this issue, Daly (1924) affirms that Vives was not the European leader in education he could have been and deserved to be for the following reasons:

- in Germany, his lack of sympathy for the Reformation;
- in England, his attitude to the divorce of Henry VIII and Queen Catherine;
- in France, the spirit of revolt that swept the country;
- in Spain, his early departure and his relations with the English royal court.

But there was no lack of recognition of Vives by his peers, the intellectuals of the day. The opinions of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Thomas More, for example, were captured by Daly (id.) in a letter from More to Erasmus in which More states that there had never been anyone more elegant or erudite than Vives: “Quibus necque magis elegans, neque magis eruditum quicquam iam diu vidi.” And he goes on to say, “I am ashamed, my Erasmus, of myself and various others, who will overshadow the name of Erasmus.” And like these two men of learning, many others have availed

themselves of the ideas of Vives, without, however, affording him his due and deserved credit. They have recognized his merit, though not explicitly, and yet his ideas have become passed into history. Daly (op. cit., p. 4) says that Roger Ascham, for example, had become known for his use of double translation (Latin-English and English-Latin) in a work published in 1570 with no reference to Vives.

Vives did not apply his theory about the teaching of Latin through the vernacular language, but another Spaniard materialized this ideal. This was Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas, an intellectual who was a professor of rhetoric, Greek, and Latin at the University of Salamanca and author of treatises on rhetoric and Latin and Greek grammars, including *Minerva*, published in Salamanca, in the year 1587. This work is one of Amaro de Roboredo's main references for the composition of his *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*. This is already proven in the text of the letter that the Portuguese wrote to Dom Gaspar Alvarez, professor of Latin at the University of Salamanca, to whom he dedicated his *Methodo*, because, metonymically, he refers to his work as a *Minerva*, expressing himself thus: “em comprimento do que V. M. me screveo, vá a sua *Minerva*, para que com sua lingua lhe dê a forma, & spirito, com que possa aparecer” [“in fulfillment of what you has written to me, I send you your *Minerva*, so that with your language you can give it the form and spirit, with which it can appear”]. According to Colombat (1999, p. 49-50), Sánchez is the creator of the theory of the ellipse, so productive in rationalist grammars, as it was functional until the end of the eighteenth century. As the French author notes, this theory renews the study of the construction of verbs and the study of agreement.

Very briefly, we clarify that the presence of Sánchez in Roboredo's horizon of retrospection is evident for many reasons: first, because Sánchez put into practice Vives's theory regarding the importance of, and even the need for, teaching the learner's mother tongue before Latin, as it would be from the known language that the learner would have access in a faster, easier, and more efficient way to Latin, for example – so much so that in 1579 he wrote the work *Arte para en breve saber latim* [Art for learning Latin in a short time], in Spanish. This was the guiding principle for the elaboration of Roboredo's work referred to here. In addition, still according to Colombat (op. cit. p. 49), Sánchez intended to produce an efficient, clear, and economical grammar, for he aimed, in the words of the French Latinist, to “give the structures of Latin a clear vision, thanks to some fundamental rules and principles that allowed him to reduce the variety of uses.” The grammarians that appear in Sánchez's horizon of retrospection are, mainly, Quintilian, Prisciano, Nebrija, Escalígero, Pedro Ramos (Ramus), and Erasmus, although the last one is criticized by Sánchez for his imperfect Latin. Thus, Lourenço Valla was also much criticized for his obscurity, excess of theories, and lack of method.

Later, as we now say, we recall that Roboredo seemed to be working on the *Methodo* with ideas belonging to Vives without mentioning him in this connection. The Portuguese author quotes Vives as an exemplary figure, for as he says, “Os livros, que no principio se irão acrescentando serão primeiramente de conceitos, & frase clara: como os Dialogos de Vives, ou outros semelhantes, cujo exercicio de memoria não importa pouco: (...)” (ROBOREDO, 1619, p. 83) [The books, which will be added at the beginning, must first present concepts and clear sentences: such as Dialogues of Vives, or similar ones, whose memory exercise matters a lot]. Roboredo's discourse flows naturally from

ideas constituting a *horizon of retrospection* common to all those incorporating the ideology of renewal in education. A short time later Comenius quotes Vives in various passages of his *Didactica magna* (1657), such as when, for example, he emphasizes that the primitive state of man is goodness and that all should return to it, and then transcribes the following passage: “Que outra coisa é o cristão senão o homem regressado à sua natureza e restituído, por assim dizer, à sua origem de onde o demônio o havia afastado?” (VIVES,<sup>12</sup> 1555 apud COMÉNIIO,<sup>13</sup> 2015 [1657], p. 101) [What else is the Christian if not man returned to his nature and restored, as it were, to his origin from where the devil had taken him?].

In this context in which humanistic thought was being developed, Jan Amos Comenius was born in Nivnice, Moravia, a region belonging to the former Kingdom of Bohemia (present-day Czech Republic). His family belonged to the religious congregation of the Moravian Brotherhood, a community of Hussite reformers,<sup>14</sup> a fact that certainly must not be overlooked in seeking to clarify his thoughts on society and the role of education.

In 1611, Comenius entered the University of Herborn, where he had an opportunity to come to know “the advanced educational system of Holland, which at the time was the most advanced cultural center in Europe” (GASPARIN, 1997, p. 20). At that time, and as a result of such experiences, as Narodowski says, “his mind was already sufficiently open and receptive to the influences of the atmosphere he was breathing, which suggested a reform of language instruction” (2004, p. 17-18).

During his time in Herborn, Comenius also “would make contact with the theoretical work of some of the authors who would have the greatest influence on his intellectual production: Ratke, Campanella, and Vives especially” (BOTO, 2017, p. 182, our translation). In fact, humanist ideals regarding education and instruction as found in the work of the aforementioned authors appear in the works of Comenius, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, indicating their presence within Comenius’s specific horizon of retrospection. It is also worth noting that, just like Comenius, these authors were dedicated to thinking about education and the educational process as a whole, not only language teaching.

Vives, as we noted above, is referred to by Comenius in more than one passage in the *Didactica magna*, so different aspects of the thought of the Spanish humanist can be identified in the work of Comenius. In presenting his “Fundamentals for solid teaching and learning,” for example, the Moravian educator says, “All that is explained, after being learned by the intellectual faculty, also becomes fixed in the memory.” And then, to reinforce his argument, he quotes Vives:

E [diz] Luís de Vives: “Durante a primeira idade, exercite-se a memória, pois ela desenvolve-se, cultivando-a; confie-se-lhe muitas coisas, com cuidado e frequentemente. Com efeito, aquela idade não

<sup>12</sup> VIVES, J. L. *De concordia et discordia in humano genere*, in *Opera Omnia*, Basileia, 1555, vol. II, p. 764.

<sup>13</sup> The spellings Comenius (Latin) and Coménio (Portuguese) can be seen in the references, depending on the font used. However, in the body of the text, we decided for the Latin spelling.

<sup>14</sup> The term “Hussites” designates followers of Jan Hus (1369–1415), a religious reformer and precursor of the Protestant movement.

sente a fadiga, porque nem sequer pensa nela. Assim, sem fadiga e sem tédio, a memória alarga-se e torna-se capacíssima”. (COMENIUS, 2015 [1657], p. 261-262).

[And Luís de Vives [says]: “During early age, exercise your memory, as it develops, cultivating it; communicate many things to memory, carefully and often. In fact, that age doesn’t feel fatigue, because it doesn’t even think about it. Thus, without fatigue and without boredom, the memory expands and becomes very capable.”]

In another chapter of the work, “A Method for Teaching the Arts,” Comenius mentions Vives in defense of attributing a practical character to instruction:

1. “A teoria das coisas é fácil e breve, e não produz senão prazer; ao contrário, a sua aplicação é árdua e demorada, proporcionando maravilhosas vantagens”, diz Vives. Sendo as coisas assim, importa investigar com diligência o método de guiar facilmente a juventude a pôr em prática as coisas que dizem respeito às artes técnicas. (COMÉNIO, 2015 [1657], p. 319).

[1. “The theory of things is easy and brief, and produces nothing but pleasure; on the contrary, its application is arduous and time-consuming, providing wonderful advantages,” says Vives. Therefore, it is important to investigate diligently the method of easily guiding the youth to put into practice the things that concern the technical arts.]

The instructional method critique that enriches these highly theoretical studies is also found in the work of the Dominican friar and philosopher Tommaso Campanella<sup>15</sup> (1568–1639) who, in his *La Città del Sole* [*City of the Sun*] (1602),<sup>16</sup> demonstrates using a dialogue among his characters that excessive dedication to the reading of “grammars and the logic of Aristotle or other authors” inclines “[...] a man to inertia, for he can find no incentive to penetrate into the understanding of things and contents himself with a collection of words, debasing the soul and wearying it with dead letters” (CAMPANELLA, 2002 [1602], p. 18-19, our translation). Also in the *La Città del Sole*, Campanella expresses the need to educate inhabitants of the ideal city in various arts and sciences and not just by means of books, stating, “[...] it is well known that a man has no science at all who has been taught only one, and that he possesses a contemptible wit who, prepared in only a single science, has borrowed it from books” (CAMPANELLA, 2002 [1602], p. 19, our translation). The critique of excessive memorization (without proper prior understanding) and the idea of “teaching everything to everyone” are also part of Comenius’s work as we will see below.

For his part, the German pedagogue Wolfgang Ratke (1571–1635), according to Luzuriaga (2001, p. 137), “took pains to introduce into education both theoretically and practically the ideas of Bacon,” and for that reason was the “first of the realist innovators.” In his main work, *Memorial*, dated 1612,

the problem receiving the most attention was that of the fundamental and natural method of learning: Education must follow the course of nature and proceed from the simple to the complex, from the known to the unknown *iuxta methodum naturae omnia*, using the mother tongue at first as a way of

---

<sup>15</sup> Born in Stilo, Italy, Giovanni Domenico Campanella adopted the name Tommaso upon joining the Dominican order in 1583.

<sup>16</sup> This work is a utopian narrative in the same vein as the *Utopia* of Thomas More (1516).

reaching foreign languages and starting out with things in order to arrive at rules. (CAMBI, 1999, p. 282, our translation).

Indeed, the principle of taking into account the natural development of things, starting from the simple to arrive at the complex, from what is known to the unknown, is a recurrent theme in the works of Comenius as well. What is most noteworthy, however, is how much the vernacular language is prized as the basis of instruction both in the writings of Ratke and those of the Moravian pedagogue, as we will see below.

Returning to Moravia in 1614, Comenius assumed a professorship in the Latin school of the Moravian Brothers in Prerov, where he begins “his practical work in the teaching of Latin, soon to be made systematic in the textbooks, of which *Grammaticae facillioris praecepta* (1616) was the first and made him famous throughout Europe” (Kulesza, 1992, p. 29). In his first experience as a professor, Comenius reveals his innovative spirit, and, according to Covello,

[...] does not adapt to the existing schemes but instead initiates genuine pedagogical reform at his school, introducing useful materials into the curriculum and adopting more efficient methods for education in sciences and arts. In this, he is inspired by the didactic principles of Ratke, and he obtains good results, earning a reputation as a competent professor. (COVELLO, 1999, p. 29, our translation).

Again according to Covello (1999, p. 29), the young Czech educator was already striving to bring energy and clarity to teaching, taking care to budget classroom time properly and seeking to distance himself from mere verbalism and exercises consisting exclusively of memorization. These observations show that Comenius sought to experiment, from the start of his career as an educator, with that which he would later record in his pedagogical writings.

In 1625, Comenius published the *Česká didaktika*, a preliminary version of the text that would later be included in the *Didactica magna* (1657). In 1628, Comenius and the brothers established themselves in Lezno, joining another group of exiles. Exile in Poland made it possible for Comenius to make contact not only with other reformed communities but also with more liberal cultural atmospheres and exponents of contemporary European culture. These conditions “induced him to modify his original projects for religious and educational reform in the direction of formulating a universal science capable of producing that universal peace among men that was the ultimate aspiration of his life” (CAMBI, 1999, p. 286, our translation). This universal science would be his pansophism, which would place into debate an ideal of education for all, the purpose of which would be to make it possible for “everyone to know everything.”

Based on his ideals for education and his belief that education will be essential in lifting up the Czech nation after the war, Comenius wrote a work in the vernacular dedicated to children in the first years of their lives, the *Guia da escola maternal* [Nursery school guide], in which he singles out the role of mothers and nurses in the initial learning process, which takes place while the child is still in the home.

Despite his previous intellectual output, it was only after 1631, when he published the *Ianua linguarum reserata* (published in England as *The Gate of Tongues Unlocked and Opened*), that Comenius achieved international recognition as a pedagogical innovator. This work, distancing itself from



current theories of instruction, was presented as a practical manual on language instruction not limited to Latin and other classical languages, such as Greek, for it could be applied as well to the teaching of vernacular languages. As Leite emphasizes (2021, p. 413), although it was not the first proposal for teaching languages by this method, the *Ianua linguarum reserata* primarily, together with the *Didactica magna*, achieved such great success that it brought its author worldwide fame as the founder of pedagogy. Commenting on the achievement of the *Ianua linguarum reserata*, Lang (1891, p. 10-11) states that the elaboration of this work would have been enough to immortalize Comenius: “This work was, shortly after its appearance, translated into twelve European and four Oriental languages. As Pierre Bayle writes of the work in his *Dictionnaire Historique and Critique*, ‘[i]f Comenius had written nothing but this work he would have become immortal.’”

Between 1632 and 1638, the educator took up the translation of his *Česká didaktika* into Latin, expanding and revising it. Revised, expanded, and translated, the *Česká didaktika* then received a new title, *Didactica magna*, which in the words of its author “was written primarily in the vernacular of my people and then translated into Latin on the advice of distinguished men, so that it might be of service to the public” (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 18, our translation). The work would only be published in 1657, however. Before bringing it to light, Comenius had asked some friends to analyze it, and then received a thoroughly negative opinion from Joachim Hübner, an admirer of pansophism, which no doubt was what caused the publication of the *Didactica magna* to be postponed for nearly twenty years.

During a journey through England between 1641 and 1642 Comenius produced *Via Lucis*, in which he records a synthesis of “his pansophical ideas: universal schooling, a universal language and above all a college of learned men dedicated to the well-being of humanity” (COVELLO, 1999, p. 71).

Comenius continued his pilgrimage in search of ways to disseminate and implant his pansophist ideas, traveling through various countries, including Sweden and East Prussia, but without stopping work on a number of didactic projects, such as the *Methodos linguarum novissima* and other educational books. In November 1670, in Amsterdam, Comenius passed away at the age of 78.

Having lived in a period of profound social transformations during which remnants of medieval thought were woven together with new ways of understanding the world of the modern age, Comenius expresses in his work both a medieval religiosity and mode of thinking and an assimilation of ideas and theories arising from modern thought.

According to Araujo,

[...] Comenius' thinking clearly reflects the following elements: The Bible (Old and New Testament); ancient philosophy (Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Seneca and Quintilian) and the 'new' Renaissance and Humanist philosophy of the XVIIth Century (Bacon, Campanella, Cusanus, Vives, Bodin, Andreae, Alsted, Ratichius, Luther and Erasmus). (ARAUJO, 1993, p. 41-42 apud GASPARIN, 1997, p. 64, our translation).

---

<sup>17</sup> ARAUJO, B. S. A atualidade de pensamento pedagógico de Johannes Amos Comenius. Master's dissertation. Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, 1993.

As will be noted, then, within the broad horizon of retrospection of Comenius, religious thought is woven together with Greek philosophy and ideals originating from the Renaissance and from the humanist thought of the seventeenth century, which clearly mark his pedagogical construction.

According to Cambi, “the pedagogical concept of Comenius is based on a deeply religious ideal that conceives of man and nature as manifestations of a precise divine design. For Comenius, God is at the center of the world and the very life of mankind” (CAMBI, 1999, p. 286, our translation). Because man is a divine manifestation, Comenius believes that he is here to learn and to prepare for everlasting life:

1. Por tender para outra, esta vida não é vida (propriamente dita), mas um preâmbulo para a vida verdadeira e eterna; isso fica claro pelos testemunhos que provêm de nós mesmos, do mundo e da Santa Escritura.

2. Se nos observarmos a nós mesmos, veremos que tudo procede gradualmente, e o que vem antes abre caminho para o que se segue. Por exemplo: inicialmente nossa vida tem lugar no útero materno. Com que fim? Por si mesma? Não, absolutamente: trata-se apenas de formar um corpo apto a servir de morada e instrumento para a alma, para a vida que levaremos debaixo do sol. [...] Do mesmo modo, esta vida sobre a terra não passa de preparação para a eterna e, por esse motivo, não é de admirar que a alma, utilizando o corpo, procure obter o que quer que lhe seja útil na vida futura. (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 49).

[1. As it tends towards another life, this life is not life (properly said), but a preamble to true and eternal life; this is made clear by the testimonies that come from ourselves, from the world and from Holy Scripture.

2. If we observe ourselves, we will see that everything proceeds gradually, and what comes before makes way for what follows. For example: initially our life takes place in the mother's womb. To what end? By yourself? No, absolutely: it is just a matter of forming a body capable of serving as habitation and instrument for the soul, for the life we will lead under the sun. [...] In the same way, this life on Earth is nothing more than preparation for the eternal life and, for this reason, it is not surprising that the soul, using the body, seeks to obtain whatever is useful for future life.]

Based on the idea that man's journey through the world must correspond to a period of learning, the Moravian pedagogue understands the human being as a microcosm, containing implicitly within himself all that which is part of the macrocosm and who for that reason carries within himself the seeds he must develop to become human; here Comenius implicitly rescues the idea of Vives about the potential (intelligence) natural to mankind. In the words of Comenius,

[...] Os filósofos definiram o homem como μικρόκοσμος [microcosmo], síntese do universo, que em si encerra implicitamente todas as coisas que se veem esparsas por todo o macrocosmo: que assim é, será demonstrado em outro lugar. A mente do homem quando chega ao mundo é oportunamente comparada a uma semente ou a um núcleo em que, embora não exista em ato a forma da erva ou da planta, sem dúvida contém em si a erva ou a planta: de fato, uma vez enterrada, a semente expande para baixo as raízes e para cima os brotos, que, em seguida, pela força da natureza, se transformam em ramos e fronde, cobrem-se de folhas, adornam-se com flores e frutos. Portanto, **o homem nada recebe do exterior, mas só precisa expandir e desenvolver as coisas que já traz implícitas em si, mostrando a natureza de cada uma.** [...] (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 59, our emphasis).

[Philosophers defined man as μικρόκοσμος [microcosm], a synthesis of the universe, which encloses all the things found scattered throughout the macrocosm: that this is so will be demonstrated elsewhere.

When man's mind arrives in the world, it is opportunely compared to a seed or a nucleus in which, although the form of the herb or the plant does not actually exist, it undoubtedly contains the herb or the plant within itself: in fact, once buried, the seed expands the roots downwards and upwards the shoots, which then, by the force of nature, transform into branches and fronds, cover themselves with leaves, adorn themselves with flowers and fruits. Therefore, **man receives nothing from the outside, but he only needs to expand and develop the things he already has implicit in himself, showing the nature of each one.**]

Thus, carrying in himself the seeds of that which must develop, man must be educated and disciplined to develop his potential and so become a man:

1. Vimos que a natureza dá as sementes da ciência, da honestidade, da religião, mas não dá a ciência, a virtude, a religião; estas são adquiridas apenas com a prece, com o estudo, com o esforço pessoal. Por isso, e não sem razão, alguém definiu o homem como um animal disciplinável, porque ninguém pode tornar-se homem sem disciplina.

[...]

10. Fique estabelecido, pois, que a todos que nasceram homens a educação é necessária, para que sejam homens e não animais ferozes, não animais brutos, não paus inúteis. (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 71-76).

[1. We see that nature provides the seeds of science, of honesty, of religion, but does not provide science, virtue or religion: these come only with prayer and study and personal effort. Thus, and not without reason, someone has defined man as a creature subject to discipline, for no one can become a man without discipline.

[...]

10. It has been established then that education is necessary to all those who are born men in order that they might become human and not ferocious animals or useless sticks.]

In order to attribute “humanity” to man, educating him in the end to live in peace, Comenius structures a universal pedagogical proposal contained in his *Didactica Magna: Treatise on a Universal Art of Teaching Everything to Everyone*, and because of this work is considered the founder of pedagogy as a branch of human knowledge. From this moment on, “education became a field of study and the production of knowledge anchored in the didactic; or as he himself says, the ‘art of instruction’” (BOTO, 2017, p. 184, our translation).

And so, motivated by religious ideals, Comenius seeks to attribute a scientific quality to his pedagogical proposal, putting forward a universal method that could be applied to the education of children all over the world and which, according to the author, would be rational and well organized, so that students would be able to learn efficiently the greatest number of subjects in the least amount of time possible. But the ideals of Comenius, their religious cast notwithstanding, were intended to provide individuals with a civilized and rational way of life in accordance with the model of a civilized and well-educated man, the ideal of the modern subject.

Below we will examine aspects of the *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas* of Amaro de Robredo, move on to the theorizing of Comenius, and then show how the aforementioned authors, as well as Robredo, are historicized in the work of the Moravian pedagogue. This approach will explain the cause of changes in the positions taken with regard to education that made him an educator respected throughout the Western world.

## 2. Notes on the *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*

A close analysis of the *Methodo* reveals that starting from the idea of the universalization of linguistic rules, Roboredo builds a theory and a method for language learning, the basis of which is translation in two directions: first, from the mother tongue into Latin, and second, from Latin into the mother tongue. In order to be viable in the learning process, the manual presents a selection of grammatical topics that the author understands as essential to language instruction and learning. The reduction of topics reflects both the choice of a few grammatical topics from the mother tongue and foreign languages and also the rejection of others deemed superfluous:

Acrescento, que não somente os ditos sequazes [os mestres que insistem em trabalhar sobre uma quantidade excessiva de regras e exemplos] procederom aas avessas, & ainda os que screvendo na Materna deixaram as Conjugações, procedendo da Latina para a Materna; mas que também ignorárom a necessidade, que há de se reduzir primeiro a arte a língua Materna; & logo a Latina, Grega, & Hebrea & as mais que quiserem aprender, mui correspondentes no mesmo Methodo. (ROBOREDO, 1619, p. a4).

[I add that not only the so-called henchman [the masters who insist on working on an excessive amount of rules and examples] proceeded in reverse, and still those who wrote in the mother tongue, but left the conjugations, proceeding from the Latin to the mother tongue; and they also ignored the need to reduce the mother tongue to art first, and then do the same with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and the other ones that the student wants to learn and that are very suitable to the same method.]

The *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas* is, effectively, a manual for teaching the Latin language through the mother tongue, which, in this case, is Portuguese. Because the student must master Portuguese metalanguage and grammar to learn Latin, the author ends up inserting in the Latin grammar a theoretical piece on Portuguese, which appears in the *Mostrador* [Summary] with the title “Ao curioso português” [To the Curious Portuguese]. Furthermore, a comparison of the two languages reveals certain differences in Portuguese compared with Latin, which the author describes, attributing all of them to *usage*. From this flows the theoretical and methodological principles of the *Methodo*, which may be summarized in the following points:

- An unknown language cannot be learned if the explanation of its functioning is given in the language itself.
- The mother tongue, due to its ease of use, is the most efficient means for ensuring that explanations of the rules governing the functioning of an unknown language will be understood and assimilated.
- The learning of one language in terms of another is viable because there are universal rules for all languages.

- A language has, in addition to universal rules, certain peculiarities arising from usage, which should be recognized by the student.
- The rules of the mother tongue should be conscientiously learned so that through comparison the rules of the unknown language can be explained, understood, and assimilated.
- Teaching and learning a foreign language comes about through the comparison of the two grammars.
- The rules of the two languages should be repeated and memorized by the student.
- Phrases serving as a basis for foreign language learning should be studied at all levels (orthographic, lexico-semantic, and syntactic) and memorized.
- The technique for foreign language learning is translation.

We see then that translation is the cornerstone of the method, the fundamental principle on which it is built, for it is this principle that supports the author's thesis that it is through the mother tongue that Latin is arrived at and that then, in a more advanced stage of the study, the return journey from Latin to Portuguese can be undertaken. At that point in the seventeenth century, the Portuguese language still had no space at the universities and royal courts but only at the elementary schools where students learned to read and write, and there was, as Roboredo expresses, any study of Portuguese grammar. For this reason one of the advantages of his method is that it allows the student to learn the rules of his own language to compare them with the rules of Latin, enabling him to recognize similarities and differences between them and to learn the foreign language rapidly.

More advanced study of the mother tongue would also have the advantage of allowing the users of a language, as they broaden their knowledge of it, to alter certain linguistic habits and broaden their vocabulary, and in this way achieve other possibilities of expression because

a pobreza das Maternas na tradução de livros Gregos, & Latinos, & na declaração de spiculações filosóficas se manifesta. Saberão [os principiantes] fugir de palavras externas ainda não recebidas quando tem próprias, por não mostrarem que a língua he mais pobre: como o Jurista que usa Dolo quando tem, Engano, & Dirimir; quando tem Apartar, Desfazer. Isto Gregos e Latinos o fizerom (...). (ROBOREDO, 1619, p. a4).

[the poverty of mother tongues is manifested in the translation of Greek and Latin books, and in the statement of philosophical speculations. They will know [the beginners] to run away from external words not yet received when they have their own, for not showing that the language is poorer: like the Jurist who uses Fraud instead of Mistake, and Eliminate instead of Apart, Undo. This is what Greeks and Latins did (...).]

Knowledge of the mother tongue makes it possible for the student to make the necessary connections with Latin, in that he recognizes the similarities and differences between them, enabling him to move from Portuguese to Latin and from Latin back to Portuguese:

Desta obrigação do Artífice [coleccionar exemplos fáceis e acessíveis ao aluno] nasce outra ao executor do Artificio: que he declarar primeiro as Declinações, Conjugações, & Orações na língua Materna do ouvinte, tocando a seu tempo a correspondencia da língua que há de aprender, tocando sua conveniência, & differença pois vão emparelhadas: & isso com muita repetição de exemplos, & das mesmas regras, pelas palavras, & modo, porque, Obscurm est quod multipliciter dicitur: segundo a terceira raiz: Ex multis actibus fit habitus. E o que explicar no livro Latino traduzirá o ouvinte na sua Materna, cuja frase irá assi aprendendo, exercitando a pena, & Ortographia, notando a differença, & correspondência de ambas as línguas. (ROBOREDO, 1619, p. b3).

[From this obligation of the artificer [collecting examples that are easy and accessible to the student] another arises for the performer of the artifice: to declare first the declinations, conjugations, and sentences in the mother tongue of the listener, touching in time the correspondence of the language he will learn, touching his convenience, and difference because they go hand in hand: and that with a lot of repetition of examples, and of the same rules, by words, and manner, because, Obscurm est quod multipliciter dicitur: according to the third root: Ex multis actibus fit habitus. And what is explained in the Latin book will translate the listener into his mother tongue, whose phrase he will thus learn, exercising the pen, and orthography, noting the difference and correspondence of both languages.]

The *Methodo*, as its author explains, takes into account the universe of the language and so is structured according to degrees arranged from lesser to greater: from grammar to vocabulary to phraseology. This shows that Roboredo viewed grammar as a lesser, or finite, system of rules, expressed in ascending order from word to text. The same conclusion follows from the two concepts of grammar in the work. The first concept appears early in Book I of the first part of the *Methodo*, dedicated to the explanation of “Grammatica,” which the author considers the first stage of the method. Its title is “Exemplo Portugues e Latino da Grammatica – Primeira parte do Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas”:

Grammatica significa arte de letras, derivada de gramma, que em Grego significa letra. [...] Das letras se compõem as palavras que ou são nomes, ou Preposições, ou Verbos, ou Adverbios, ou Conjunções; que se dizem as cinco partes, de que a oração consta. (ROBOREDO, 1619, p.1).

[Grammar means art of letters, derived from gramma, which in Greek means letter. [...] From letters are composed the words that are either names, or prepositions, or verbs, or adverbs, or conjunctions, which are said to be the five parts of which the sentence consists.]

In this case, that is, upon assuming this concept of grammar, Roboredo distances himself from the opinion of De las Brosas, who openly disagreed with grammarians who assumed this posture, as we will see below.

D'autres [grammairiens] divisent la grammaire en 'lettre', 'syllabe' 'mot', et discours, ou, ce qui revient au même en 'orthographe', 'prosodie', 'étymologie' et 'syntaxe'. Mais les discours ou la syntaxe est la fin de la grammaire et non pas une partie d'elle, car, comme le dit Cicéron: 'C'est une chose qu'un art, et c'est autre chose que sa fin, car aucun art ne se prend lui-même pour objet'. (Fin. V). De la même façon, autre chose est la grammaire, autre chose la fin de la grammaire et son but ou ce que l'on appelle

en grec *δλωχείμενον*. Ensuite la lettre est une partie de la syllabe, la syllabe est une partie du mot, et les mot des parties du discours, et donc ce ne sont pas des parties de la grammaire. Une partie d'une chose, quelle qu'elle soit, ne peut être une partie d'autre. (SANCTIUS, 1982 [1587], p. 107).

Roboredo, however, returns to the topic and presents a second concept, also in the first part of the *Methodo*, in the third book. Its title is “Da universal explicação resolutive, & compositiva das partes da Oração exemplificada na língua Latina,” situated in Chapter I. This time the author discourses on the concept of grammar along the lines indicated by De las Brosas, dealing with its object, its purpose, and its division, in the following terms:

Grammatica he arte de fallar, que tem por fim a Oração bem concertada: a qual he um coerente disposição de palavras, de que consta como de partes. Procedese para a Oração per Letras, Syllabas, & Dicções, ou Palavras.

[...]

A Grammatica se divide também em cinco partes: em Variação que pertence ao Nome, & Verbo: em simples Composição, & Derivação, que todos aquelles cinco gêneros admitem: em Concordia, que pertence ao Nome, & Verbo: & finalmente em Regencia, que toca ao Nome, Preposição, Verbo, & ainda ao Adverbio; ou per figura ou tomado em lugar de Nome. (ROBOREDO, 1619, p. 64-65).

[Grammar is the art of speaking, which aims to build a well-concerted sentence, which has a coherent arrangement of words, of which it appears as parts. We proceed to the sentence by letters, syllables, & dictions, or words.

[...]

Grammar is also divided into five parts: Variation, which belongs to the Noun, & Verb: simple Composition, & Derivation, which all those five genera admit: Concordia, which belongs to the Noun, & Verb: & finally Regency, which touches the Noun, Preposition, Verb, & also the Adverb; either per figura or taken in place of the Noun.]

With this second conception Roboredo is in harmony with what De las Brosas says in the excerpt below:

Pour nous, renoçant à toute division de la grammaire, car aucune ne se présentait à nous comme suffisamment adéquate, nous sommes parti du point suivant; la grammaire est l'art de parler correctement. Quand je dis 'art', j'entends 'discipline'. En effet une discipline est une science acquie chez celui qui apprend. J'ajoute ensuite: dont le but est un discours cohérent. Ce discours se compose des signes vocaux ou mots, les mots à leur tour des syllabes (9 V<sup>o</sup>), les syllabes de lettres, et puisqu'on ne peut aller plus loin dans la division, nous appelons 'lettres' la saisie d'un son indivisible. (SANCTIUS, 1982 [1587], p. 107).

It is important to emphasize that in Roboredo's concept of grammar the idea of universality applies only to the first level, that of grammar. The other two levels, those of imitation (or words) and phraseology (or text), are unique to each language and so present a greater degree of difficulty in translation in the passage from one language to another (cf. ROBOREDO, 1619, p. 182).

Among the difficulties of translation, the most salient mainly have to do with the lack of precise correspondence among the words of different languages, making word-for-word translation impossible, as well as the different positioning of words in a phrase, that is, word order in the phrase. Based on the nature of these questions, Roboredo informs us he will not deal with such issues, given that



the first issue, the correspondence of terms, is learned through usage and the second requires special treatment.

As to the difficulties involving translation, Roboredo speaks of interference by the mother tongue in the foreign language. Most importantly, however, this observation does not constitute condemnation of such interference but simply a recognition of it. Furthermore, Roboredo says that the worst issue is not this interference but the inability to know any language at all except for the mother tongue.

As shown above, however, the author does recognize other issues related to translation than those he deals with, in a greater or lesser degree of depth, such as the use of figurative language in each language, the figure of metaphor (“first root”) and ellipsis (“third root”), the existence of synonymy and polysemy (“second root”), and the lack of syntactic agreement among the languages (“fourth and fifth roots”).

A more explicit theoretical statement on translation, however, appears in the work *Porta de linguas* (1623), in which Roboredo achieves his desire, explicitly expressed in the *Methodo*, of translating the 1,141 sentences of the *Ianua Linguarum*. As Assunção and Fernandes explain, however (2007, p. XXI, our translation),

the compendium presents a total of 1,262 Latin sentences with their respective translations into Portuguese and Castilian (Roboredo had filled in the 59 sentences left blank by the Jesuits of Salamanca in the eleventh century) and 62 more in an appendix entitled “Appenso de palavras duvidosas” da *Ianua Linguarum sive modus maxime* (...).

The theorizing on translation in the *Porta de linguas* is much more closely concatenated and explanatory than in the *Methodo*, although essentially it contributes nothing new to what had been expressed before. The types and stages of translation discussed by Roboredo are the following: (1) literal translation; (2) translation as it were word by word; (3) translation by clauses (phrases); (4) translation by concept or paraphrastic (cf. ASSUNÇÃO; FERNANDES, 2007, p. XXIX).

From Roboredo’s text it may be concluded, as Assunção and Fernandes have also understood (op. cit.), that according to our author it is highly recommended that students practice the second and third stages of translation, because for Roboredo translation is not merely “a strategy for learning the morphosyntactic structures of both the languages studied” (idem) but also, he adds, to come to know the text by studying the phrase.”

The “second phase,” as Roboredo explains, is the translation of phrases from Latin starting from studying the morphosyntax of the terms and translating them into Portuguese so that the rules of the two languages can be compared. The student must memorize the Latin words of these phrases, which are presented as follows in the *Methodo*:

1.	1. 2. mens, inis 4. us. 3. as, atis.	<b>In Nomine Sanctissimæ Trinitatis.</b>
2.	6. us. 5. us, i. 7. or, oris. 1. us, oris 2. 3. a, æ.	<b>Soli Deo creatori decus, &amp; gloria.</b>
β.	2. um, i. 1. as, atis. 3. us. 4.	<b>Initii difficultas toleranda.</b>
4.	1. um, i. 3. um, i. 4. tus.	<b>Principium dimidium totius.</b>

FIGURE 1 – Example of translation technique in the second stage.  
Source: Leite (2011, p. 160).

The explanation for this method of translation is as follows: The interlinear numerals placed above the words indicate the correct order of the words in the phrase translated; the letters indicate declension. The student is to observe in the translation the agreement and the government that the words must obey to form a phrase. Some numerals appear in isolation or are missing. This indicates that there are elliptical terms in the phrase and that the student is to translate the phrase while recovering them.

As is known, Roboredo was one of the first grammarians to use the interlinear numbering method that in the seventeenth century was widely used in teaching Latin in France and other places. For this reason, Ponce de Léon (2001, p. 327, our translation) states that “this novelty, which as we have said was not so great, affects the form and especially the technique through which students were to progress in their learning of Latin through translation and interlinear numbering.”

The third stage requires the student to observe the peculiarities of each language through the study of phrases presented in both languages. Because the method focuses on the syntax of agreement and of government and because in Portuguese propositions govern cases that in Latin are not governed by them (the genitive and ablative), the first one hundred phrases explore phrases in which the Portuguese prepositions “de” and “a” are used in contexts that in Latin correspond to the various cases (genitive, dative, ablative, and accusative); the remaining eighty-seven phrases focus on the study of the “various uses and phrasing of verbs” in Portuguese, corresponding to the Latin translation. These phrases are presented side by side with the Portuguese texts on the left and Latin texts on the right. The first group, for example, is organized like this:

Exemplo das Frases, que respondem a esta Preposição Portuguesa, De,	Exemplum phrasium huic Praepositioni Lusitanæ, De, respondentium.
1. Nunca se aparte de ti o temor do Senhor, que do altissimo muito grao de dignidade precipitou os soberbos no inferno para a morte.	1. Nunquam a te divellatur timor Domini, que ex, e, de dignitatis gradu altissimo in Infernum as mortem superbos præcipitavit.
2. Se Dues for da parte de teu entendimento muito poderás para com todos.	2. Si Deus tua mente, & a mente stet, plurimum ipsâ apud emnes poteris, at que valebis.
3. Não te esqueças de Deus para que elle se lembre de ti.	3. Dei, & Deum ne obliviscaris, ut tibi, te, & de te recordetur, at que reminiscatur.

FIGURE 2 - Example of translation technique, third stage.

Source: Leite (2011, p. 161).

The other groups follow the same principle. The phrases translated from the two languages are meant to lead the student to observe in particular the underscored problems encountered when Portuguese and Latin diverge: the use of the prepositions “de” and “a” in the genitive and dative and the use of transitive verbs calling for other cases after the accusative.

### 3. Notes on the method of Comenius for language instruction

According to Narodowski (2004, p. 18), Comenius’s first venture into the field of educational innovation took place when he returned from Heidelberg to Moravia, with the writing of a small textbook on grammar (the *Gramaticae facillioris praecepta*, as we noted before), using the method of Ratke, which had already at its core displayed empiricist influences.

As we have seen, Ratke, in the work *Memorial* (1612), not only proposes that education follow the laws of nature, gradually increasing the complexity of the subject of instruction, but also recommends that the mother tongue be studied from the beginning of schooling, serving as a basis for instruction. Thus, in the *Artigos nos quais de Baseia Especificamente a Arte de Ensinar de Wolfgang Ratke* [Articles on Which the Art of Instruction Are Specifically Based by Wolfgang Ratke] (1616), written in the form of aphorisms, the author renews his recommendation that schooling begins with the vernacular language, declaring in the fifth article:

5. First of all, everything in the mother tongue.

The advantage of the mother tongue is that the student needs concentrate only on those things along with others that come later in the educational process. When he understands everything in his mother tongue the student will have no difficulty studying the same material in another language because he will use the same books composed in the same way in all his language courses. And there is another advantage: when all knowledge that is useful and necessary to daily life is taught in German, the student, regardless of which class he is in, will be better able to understand and arrange things to be able to judge them. (RATKE, 2018 [1616], p. 54, our translation).

The German educator also argues that language education should be conducted using the reading of an author so that the student can learn grammatical rules based on contact with the text, clearly differentiating the concepts of “language” and “grammar”:

[...] If language is taught with grammar, learning becomes forced and many incorrect things are learned. When language teaching is based on grammar, many falsehoods will be received. But if instruction proceeds from the study of an author, an exact idea is formed as to the unique quality of the language. [...] Why then take great pains to learn that which does not lead to certainty but readily leads to error? It has already been seen how rules devoid of content baffle the spirit. This does not mean that examples should be placed beside every rule, but doing so does not imply stuffing and cutting and sewing them together in hundreds of pieces. We cannot begin with fragments, extracts and passages from the text of works that are unrelated to one another. Examples are always important but should be selected from the same author who has been chosen. [...] (ibid., p. 57-58, our translation).

Comenius, for his part, as Gasparin (1997, p. 27) relates, had already perceived the failings of Latin instruction during his studies at Prerov and, with the publication of his *Ianua linguarum reserata* in 1631, he intended to provide his students with an easier and more effective learning experience not only in Latin but also in the vernaculars, based on the reading of texts he deemed meaningful for students and in subsequent translation, and making use of a comparative reading of the same text in different languages.

This work, organized into one hundred chapters, presents itself as a kind of textbook comprising a thousand sentences (ten per chapter) of increasing complexity, in which the author avoids the repetition of terms in the two (or more) languages: Latin and the vernacular.

Consistent with the ideas of this scholar on language learning in the Preface to the work (and as reaffirmed later in the *Didactica magna*), the sentences of which the *Ianua linguarum* is composed deal with a variety of subjects and are intended as a means to present students with the words associated with the things they mean, through a comparison of the Latin and the vernacular.

In the words of Comenius,

Car puis que les mots son signes des choses, si on ne conoit pas les choses, que signefieront ils? Qu'un enfant me sçache reciter un million de mots, s'il ne les sçait pas appliquer aux choses, à que luy servira tout ce grand appareil? C'estuy-la aujſi qui eſpere qu'avec des mots separez on pourra former un discours, peut de meſmes eſperer qu'on pourra lier le ſablon en faiſceaux, ou qu'on pourra drefſer un mur de blocaille ſans chaux. C'eſt doncques une chose fort difficile que d'apprendre la langue Latine par vocabulaires ou Dictionnaires. (COMENIUS, 1643 [1631], p. 3).

[If words are signs of things, if we know nothing of the things, what good will they be to us? What good does it do for a child to recite a million words if he does not learn them to apply them to things? Who benefits from this entire vast apparatus? If we hope that isolated words will form a discourse, we might as well hope to tie up the sand into bundles or build a wall without lime. By the same token it is extremely difficult to learn Latin out of vocabularies or dictionaries.]

Out of a desire to relate words to things, therefore, Comenius prepared a multilingual instruction manual resembling “a simplified encyclopedia on a wide variety of terms (98 in all) beginning with the origins of the Earth and ending with a section on angels” (Narodowski, 2004, p. 21), by means of which the student would build knowledge of vocabulary and syntax in a new language through

the study of phrases (examples) on the basis of which he would inductively learn the rules, starting from the particular (examples) to reach the universal (rules).

As we will see in the excerpt that follows, which corresponds to the first sentences of the introductory chapter of the 1643 edition, phrases in different languages are numbered and arranged in columns side by side to facilitate comparison:

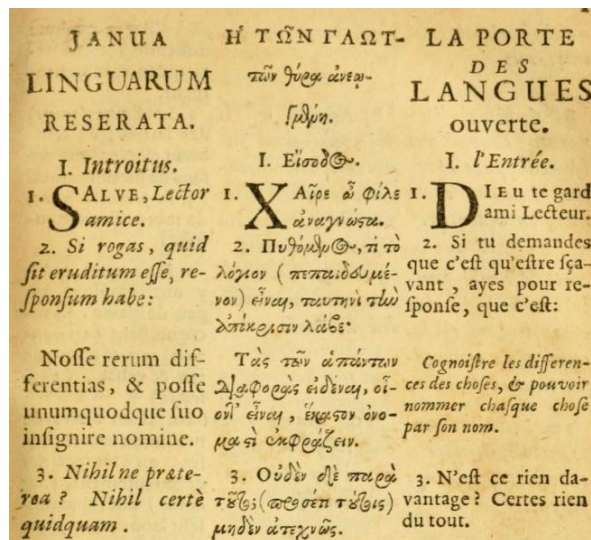


FIGURE 3 - Excerpt from the *Ianua linguarum reserata* of Comenius.  
Source: Comenius, 1643 [1631], p. A.<sup>18</sup>

To the *Ianua linguarum* of Comenius is attributed the influence of a work by William Bathe (1564-1614), the *Ianua linguarum sive modus maxime accomodatus, quo patefit aditus ad omnes linguas intelligendas*, published in 1611, as attested by the Czech educator himself in the Preface of his work:

C'est ce qu'a déjà remarqué des quelques années en çà un certain Jesuite, qui a donné au public, sous le nom du College Irlandois, à Salamanque en Espagne, un abbregé de toute la langue Latine, recueillie en un faisceau en Latin et en Espagnol, et l'a appellé, la Porte des Langues, là où tous les mots les plus usitez de la langue Latine sont compris en douze Centuries de sentences [...]. (COMENIUS, 1643 [1631], p. 5).

[This is what was noted some years ago by a certain Jesuit father who published, through the Irish College at Salamanca, in Spain, a compendium of the entire Latin language, collected into a single fascicle, in Latin and Spanish, calling it the "Door of Languages," in which all the Latin words most commonly used are included in 12,000 phrases[...].]

The Jesuit to whom Comenius refers is William Bathe. According to Fernandes (2004, p. 170, our translation), "for William Bathe and his collaborators, grammatical rules could be learned from the analysis of various sentences from the twelve centuries and therefore without the need for any

<sup>18</sup> The edition consulted is part of the collection of the John Adams Library (Boston Public Library) and is also available from digital library the Internet Archive (archive.org).

specific grammar, especially in the vulgar tongues [...],” which illustrates the relationship between the two works. The *Ianua linguarum* of the Irish refugees in Salamanca was published as Kulesza indicates (1992, p. 75) with the intention of teaching Latin to the Spanish based on their vernacular and they were already presenting phrases in Latin and Spanish in columns arranged side by side, inaugurating a structure that would later be consecrated in the work of Comenius. In 1619, however, as we saw, Amaro de Roboredo not only referred to the work of the Irish priests but availed himself of the method they proposed in his *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*, in which he proposes to teach Latin through the translation of phrases, first from the mother tongue into Latin and then from Latin into the mother tongue, and later, in 1623, he published his *Porta de linguas ou modo muito accommodado para as entender*.

It is relevant to note as well that during the interval between the publication of the *Ianua* of Bathe and the *Ianua* of Comenius, there were, according to Fernandes (2004, p. 179), reports of other versions of the *Ianua Linguarum*, other than the one published by Roboredo: In 1615, in London, William Welde was said to have eliminated the Spanish and presented an English translation; in 1617, also in London, Jean Barbier was said to be preparing a new edition, combining the two previous works and adding a French translation; and in 1629, Habrecht published a *Ianua linguarum bilinguis* in Strasbourg.

It must also be emphasized that if Roboredo was proposing innovations, particularly in the technique of translation with interlinear numbering in his version of the *Ianua linguarum*, Comenius, for his part, was preparing a book that encompassed various topics relating to the sciences and arts for the purpose of attributing meanings to terms and relating them to the things they named, so that knowledge of a language could be acquired together with knowledge of the world. In the Preface to the *Ianua linguarum reserata*, the Moravian scholar criticizes the proposal of the Irish, especially as to the vocabulary selected for the construction of sentences, which, according to Comenius, present the student with uncommon and ambiguous terms and terms used figuratively; he does, however, acknowledge the importance of the work of the Jesuits, stating that it would lead to innovations:

Mais d'autant que ces Peres ont les premiers essayé de trouver un tel abrégé de toute la langue Latine, nous, recognoissons leur invention et leur en sçavons bon gré, leur pardonnans benignement ce en quoy ils ont failli. Et d'autant que c'esuy une chose bien aisée d'adjouster aux invention d'autruy, et a l'occasion d'une invention d'en inventer une autre, pourquoi n'essayerons nous de faire quelque chose de plus? (COMENIUS, 1643 [1631], p. 7).

[But as much as these Fathers were the first to attempt to prepare a compendium of the entire Latin language, we recognize their invention and are grateful to them, indulgently forgiving them the errors they committed. And furthermore, because it is easy to add to the inventions of others and then when an invention appears to invent another, why not attempt to achieve something greater?]

It appears to us that consensus exists among the commentators on Comenius that his *Ianua linguarum* enjoyed great renown and success in Europe and outside it; but it has also been said that “it may have been the work by Johannes Amos Comenius (1592-1670) that contributed to the fact that the work of the Irish Jesuits came to be in a certain sense marginalized by historians of linguistics”

(FERNANDES, 2004, p. 179, our translation), for it was Comenius's work that became more widely known, serving as a model for authors in other languages. Furthermore, as Caravolas (1980) states, the *Ianua* of Comenius was a landmark in the moment in the founding of language instruction as an autonomous discipline.

The ideas on language instruction that led Comenius to publish the *Ianua linguarum* are revisited and systematized in his *Didactica magna* (1657).<sup>19</sup> In this work, discussing the need for innovation in education so that schools would in fact live up to their aims, Comenius criticizes the current method for the teaching of Latin, stressing its ineffectiveness and saying:

[m]esmo se considerarmos apenas o estudo do latim (para tomar um exemplo ao acaso), como é intrincado, cansativo, prolixo, bom Deus! Os vivandeiros, os almocreves, os sapateiros e todos os serviçais da cozinha, da milícia e de outros trabalhos mais humildes aprendem uma língua, às vezes muito diferente da sua, ou mesmo duas ou três, com mais facilidade do que os alunos das escolas demonstram para aprenderem apenas a língua latina em meio à maior paz e concentração. E com que diferença de resultado! Aqueles, depois de alguns meses, podem expressar com desembaraço; estes, depois de quinze ou vinte anos, só podem dizer as mesmas coisas em latim com a ajuda das muletas que são as gramáticas e os léxicos; e não sem hesitações e incertezas. De onde pode provir esse danado desperdício de tempo e energias senão de um vício do método? (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 106-107).

[even if we consider only the study of Latin (to take a random example), how complex it is! How tiring! How verbose! Dear God! The farmers and the muleteers, the shoemakers and all the kitchen servants and policemen and others of humbler vocation learn a language sometimes very different from their own, or even two or three languages, with greater ease than students in the schools display to learn only Latin in the most peaceful and concentrated of settings. And with what a difference in the result! In just a few months the former can express themselves with confidence while the latter, after fifteen or twenty years of study, can only say the same thing in Latin with the help of those crutches that are dictionaries and grammars, and not without hesitation or uncertainty. Whence comes this damnable waste of time and energy except from a flaw in the method?]

In the same vein, and reaffirming the idea that a child should learn from examples and not through the presentation of rules, the author critiques language education that is oriented by the teaching of grammar, saying “it is the authors and, in their own way, the lexicons that furnish the material of their discourse, that is, the vocabulary items: Grammar adds only form or, we should say, the laws for the formation, organization and unification of the terms” (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 150, our translation).

In *Chapter XXII – Method for the teaching of languages*, while arguing for the need to follow the course of nature in language instruction, Comenius makes it clear that there must be a gradation in this learning process, starting with what is familiar to the child and therefore simpler and easier, to arrive at a stage of greater complexity. He says:

[...] **tanto o intelecto quanto o discurso das crianças deverão ser formados principalmente com base em temas que lhes digam respeito**, e as coisas viris devem ser reservadas para a idade madura. [...] Ora, se não entendem as coisas, como poderão entender a arte de expressar com vigor essas mesmas

<sup>19</sup> But the fact that this work corresponds to a revised and expanded *Česká didaktika* (1625) indicates that the ideas about education that sustained the *Ianua linguarum* had already been revealed, at least in part, by their author.



coisas? Muito mais útil é dedicar esse tempo a assuntos mais modestos, para aperfeiçoar gradualmente, tanto a linguagem quanto a mente. A natureza não dá saltos; nem a arte, quando imita a natureza. A criança precisa aprender a andar antes de exercitar-se na dança, a cavalgar varas de pau antes de montar cavalos ajaezados, a pronunciar sílabas antes de falar, a falar antes de discursar [...]. (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 255, emphasis ours).

[...] **both the intellect and the discourse of children must be shaped mainly on the basis of themes relevant to them**, while adult matters should be set aside for a mature age. [...] How if they do not understand things can they understand the art of expressing with vigor those same things? Much more useful is to dedicate this time to more modest subjects in order to bring about a gradual improvement both in language and in the mind. Nature does not make leaps; nor does art, when it imitates nature. The child needs to learn to walk before joining the dance, to ride a hobbyhorse before mounting a horse with harness, to pronounce syllables before speaking, to speak before making speeches [...].

In the same chapter of the *Didactica magna*, in explaining the principle that “words should not be learned without reference to things, for things do not exist nor are they known separately from words, so that in their connection with words they exist here or there, perform this or that operation [...]” (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 254, our translation), the author underscores the fact that he had already published a work on this subject in 1631, the *Ianua linguarum reserata*, “in which words are found in phrases that at the same time express the structure of things” (ibid., p. 254), that is, when presented in context, words make it possible for the learner to relate them to the things to which they refer.

Comenius underscores as well the expediency of learning one language at a time, for the student must “in the first place learn the vernacular and then the language to be used in its place, such as languages of adjoining peoples (vulgar languages should precede the learned one); next, Latin followed by Greek and Hebrew, but always one after the other, never together, otherwise confusion will result” (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 256, our translation).

The author also stresses the practical character that should be assigned to language teaching, postulating that “every language should be learned more by practice than by rules” (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 256, our translation). This would mean having the opportunity to hear a speaker of the language; to read, reread, and copy texts; and to take part in exercises in imitation, both written and oral; that is, the student should participate actively in the learning process.

As an additional point relating to the method of language instruction presented in the *Didactica magna*, we should emphasize Comenius’s belief that all languages can be taught using a single method, “through practice and the addition of very easy rules demonstrating only the difference between the language already known and exercises on subjects already familiar, etc.” (COMENIUS, 2011 [1657], p. 258, our translation). Comenius accordingly proposes that language instruction be carried out in four stages, corresponding to the four ages of life, in which individuals should: (1) learn to speak simply; (2) learn to speak correctly; (3) learn to speak with elegance; and (4) learn to speak forcefully.

To consolidate his method for language instruction Comenius proposes the preparation of textbooks that would correspond to the four stages, which he proposes to name as follows: *Vestíbulo* [Vestibule], *Porta* [Door], *Palácio* [Palace], and *Tesouro* [Treasure].

The *Vestíbulo* would contain material for someone just now learning to speak: a few hundred words, organized into short phrases, with the “tables” of declensions and conjunctions appended.

The *Porta* would present the words most frequently used in the language (some eight thousand, according to the author), arranged in brief phrases “that express things as they are in their natural situation,” as well as grammatical rules presented clearly and simply, for the purpose of teaching “the authentic and genuine manner of writing and pronouncing words, and of forming and constructing the phrases of this language” (COMÊNIO, 2015 [1657], p. 338).

The *Palácio* in turn would contain passages from various authors “on every topic, full of all kinds of manner of phrases and flowers of eloquence,” accompanied by notes indicating authorship, along with rules on how to “vary and color” style.

And lastly the *Tesouro* would correspond to a collection of classical authors, preceded by “the rules on the investigation and choice of the more vigorous parts of a speech as well as the precise translation of idiomatic expression (which is one of the most important rules to be observed)” (COMÊNIO, 2015 [1657], p. 338).

It should also be noted that according to Comenius, textbooks should be accompanied by supplemental volumes: a vocabulary of the mother tongue to Latin and Latin to the mother tongue for the *Vestíbulo*; an etymological dictionary from Latin to Latin and the mother tongue to the mother tongue for the *Porta*; a phraseological dictionary from mother tongue to mother tongue and Latin to Latin, and from Greek to Greek as well if needed, for the *Palácio*; and a “universal handbook” with information on the riches of each language as demonstrated by terms and expressions proper to each language for the *Tesouro*, for as the author says:

Não é, com efeito, verossímil que exista uma língua materna tão pobre que não possua uma quantidade suficiente de palavras, de expressões e de provérbios que se não possam judiciosamente pôr em ordem e confrontar com os do latim; ou, com certeza, não há nenhuma língua materna que não possua essa quantidade de palavras, se se é suficientemente hábil na arte de imitar e de formar termos, derivando-os dos semelhantes das línguas semelhantes. (COMÊNIO, 2015 [1657], p. 339).

[It is not in fact likely that there would be a mother tongue so impoverished that it would not possess a sufficient number of words, expressions and proverbs that could be judiciously set in order and compared with those of Latin; and there is certainly no mother tongue that lacks this number of words if one is sufficiently skilled at the art of imitating and forming terms, deriving them from similar terms in similar languages.]

In describing the content the textbooks and supplemental volumes should comprise, the author stresses the use of phrases that gradually increase in complexity as a basis for language instruction, making it clear as well that the mother tongue would be present at all levels of instruction, functioning not only as a “means” to the learning of Latin but also as something to be studied in terms of what is peculiar to it.

We see then that Comenius’s methodological proposal for language instruction is consistent with the general didactic notions he defended, showing himself to be an innovator by distancing himself from the dominant pedagogy of the Jesuits, who defended instruction in Latin prior to instruction in the vernacular; the exclusive use of Latin for oral communication in the classroom;

exercises in repetition; and the study of grammar, as can be verified in *Ratio Studiorum*, a document published in 1599 in which these points figure as a set of prescriptions intended to make the schools of the Jesuit order systematic.

## 4. Final remarks

In this study, we believe we have demonstrated how, despite being spatially distant, Amaro de Roboredo and Johannes Amos Comenius based their works on common knowledge about education, essentially the humanist ideals prevalent in seventeenth-century Europe, which, therefore, are part of the broad horizon of retrospection of both authors. And, beyond that, we hope to have evidenced the coincidence between the indexed knowledge that the authors reveal in their works, such as those related to the thought of the Spanish educator Juan Luis Vives, and the methodology for teaching languages initially proposed by the Irish Jesuits of Salamanca, which made up the specific horizon of retrospection for both the Portuguese grammarian and the Moravian educator. However, it is evident that each author also reveals, in their work, other knowledge, particular to their specific horizons of retrospection, which influenced the conception of their works.

Roboredo and Comenius were imbued with renewed ideas from a humanist perspective about education and, taking their inspiration especially from the work of the Irish Jesuits, they proposed teaching methodologies for the teaching of Latin and other classical languages, but which ended up valuing the vernaculars, even if, initially, these acted as “means” to teach Latin and other classical languages and not as an “end” in themselves.

Finally, it is worth clarifying that the analysis carried out here shows two facts: First, that the method proposed by Roboredo presents significant innovations in relation to the edition by William Bathe, for instance, because Roboredo employed the technique of translating from Latin to Portuguese using numbers between lines, which helps the student to reflect on the grammar of the two languages; secondly, the *Ianua linguarum reserata* elaborated by Comenius is the work that, in turn, widely disseminated the method of teaching-learning Latin through the vernacular language. While Roboredo’s work was forgotten in Portugal, Comenius’s was translated into more than ten European and Asian languages in about a decade. However, in 2002, Kossarik brought to light a new edition of *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*, with a Preface and introductory study, and since then, it has been the object of investigation by Portuguese and Brazilian researchers, as well as, Lusitanists from many parts of the world. Assunção and Fernandes, for example, published in 2007 another edition that presents a previously lost insert, entitled *Recompilaçam da grammatica portugueza, e latina*. Thus, the *Methodo* of Roboredo finally got the projection it deserved.

In order to have a schematic summary of the horizons of retrospection of the two authors, Roboredo and Comenius, we present, as a conclusion, the following figure:

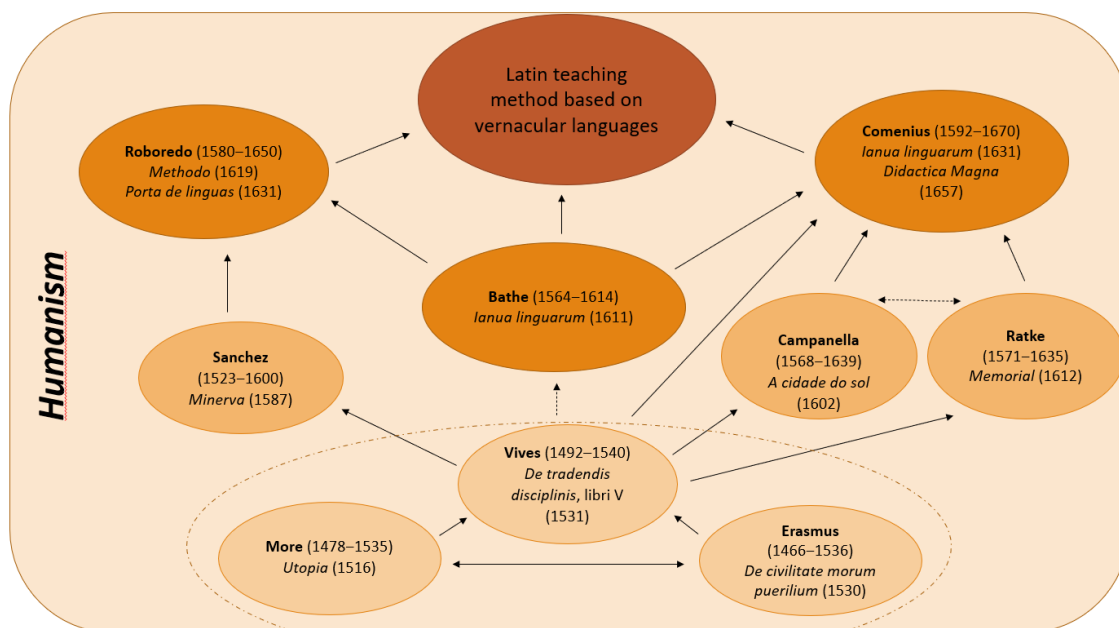


FIGURE 4 – Horizons of retrospection of Roboredo and Comenius.  
Source: The authors.

## Acknowledgements

This research project was funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), through the Center for Studies in Letters (CEL), reference no. UIDP/00707/2020, Portugal.

### REFERENCES

### SOURCES

COMÉNIUS, J. A. *Didactica magna*. Introduction by Joaquim Ferreira Gomes. 6. ed. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2015.

COMENIUS, J. A. *Didactica magna*. Critical apparatus by Marta Fattori. Transl. Ivone C. Benedetti. 4. ed. São Paulo: Editora WMF Martins Fontes, 2011.

COMENIUS, J. A. *Janua linguarum reserata aurea*. Editio Postrema. Amstedolami, Apud Joannem Janssonium. Anno MDCLXII. Available from: <https://archive.org/details/jacomeniianuali00come/page/n1/mode/2up>. Accessed July 10, 2021.

ROBOREDO, A. *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*. Lisboa: Pedro Craesbeeck, 1619. Available from: <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/chi.61050508>. Accessed February 23, 2021.

ROBOREDO, A. *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*. Facsimile ed. Lisboa: Pedro Craesbeeck. Preface and introductory study by Carlos Assunção e Gonçalo Fernandes. Vila Real: Centro de Estudos em Letras, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Coleção Linguística, 1, 2007 [1619].

ROBOREDO, A. *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*. Facsimile ed. Lisboa: Pedro Craesbeeck. Introductory study by Marina Kossarik. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional-Casa-da-Moeda, 2002 [1619].

## GRAMMARS AND OTHER LINGUISTIC INSTRUMENTS

ROBOREDO, A. *Verdadeira grammatica latina para se bem saber em breve tempo, scritta na lingua portugueza*. Facsimile ed. Vila Real: Centro de Estudos em Letras, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Coleção Linguística, 2, 2007.

BURKE, U. P. Lorenzo Valla. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 1, 2021. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lorenzo-Valla>. Accessed February 27, 2021.

SANCTIUS. *Minerve ous les causes de la langue latine*. Transl. and ed. G. Clerico. Lile: Presses Universitaires de Lile, 1982 [1587].

## THEORETICAL TEXTS AND OTHERS

ASSUNÇÃO, C.; FERNANDES, G. Preface and introductory study. In: Amaro de Roboredo. *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*. Facsimile ed. Vila Real: Centro de Estudos em Letras, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, p. VII–CII, Coleção Linguística 1, 2007.

ASSUNÇÃO, C.; FERNANDES, G.; PONCE DE LÉON, R. Introductory study. In: *Verdadeira grammatica latina para se bem saber em breve tempo, scritta na lingua portugueza*. Facsimile ed. Vila Real: Centro de Estudos em Letras, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, p. XI–XL, Coleção Linguística, 2, 2007.

AUROUX, S. *Histoire des sciences et entropie des sytèmes scientifiques*. Les horizons de rétrospection, *Geschichte der Sprachtheorie* (P. Schmitter, ed), 7 bde. Tübingen, G. Narr. Bd. I. Zur Theorie und Methode der Geschichtsschreibung der Linguistik. *Analysen und Reflexionen*, 1987. p. 20–42.

AUROUX, S. Introduction. *Histoire des idées linguistiques – tome 1, La naissance des métalangages en orient et en occident*. Liège : Mardaga, 1989. p. 13–37.

AUROUX, S. *Histoire des idées linguistiques – tome 2*. Liège: Mardaga, 1992.

AUROUX, S. Les modes d'historicisation. In: *Histoire épistémologie langage*, tome 28, fascicule 1, 2006. *Histoire des idées linguistiques et horizons de rétrospection*. p. 105–116. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.3406/hel.2006.2869>. Accessed July 30, 2021.

AUROUX, S. *A questão da origem das linguas*, seguido de A historicidade das ciências. Transl. Mariângela P. G. Joaquinho. Campinas: Editora RG, 2008.

AUROUX, S. *A revolução tecnológica da gramatização*. Transl. Eni P. Orlandi. 2. ed. Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 2009.

BOTO, C. *A liturgia escolar na Idade Moderna: Cultura em classes, por escrito*. Campinas: Papirus, 2017.

CAMBI, F. *História da pedagogia*. Transl. Álvaro Lorencini. São Paulo: Fundação Editora da UNESP (FEU), 1999.

CAMPANELLA, T. *Cidade do Sol*. S.l. Ciberfil Literatura Digital, 2002. Available from: [http://cairu.cairu.br/biblioteca/arquivos/Filosofia/Cidade\\_Sol\\_Campanella.pdf](http://cairu.cairu.br/biblioteca/arquivos/Filosofia/Cidade_Sol_Campanella.pdf). Accessed May 20, 2021.

CARAVOLAS, J. *Janua Linguarum Reserata 350 ans après*. *Revue des sciences de l'éducation*, 6 (3), p. 511-521, 1980. Available from: <<https://doi.org/10.7202/900301ar>>. Accessed March 27, 2021.

CARDOSO, S. *Historiografia gramatical (1500-1920): língua portuguesa-autores portugueses / comp. e org. de Simão Cardoso*. Porto: Faculdade de Letras, 1994. Anexo VII da Revista da Faculdade de Letras: línguas e literaturas.

CASINI, L. *Juan Luis Vives [Joannes Ludovicus Vives]*. In: Edward N. Zalta (Ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2017 (Spring Edition). Available from: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/vives/>>. Accessed April 15, 2021.

COLOMBAT, B. *La grammaire latine en France à la Renaissance et à l'âge classique*. Grenoble: ELLUG, 1999.

COVELLO, S. C. *Comenius: A construção da pedagogia*. 3. ed. São Paulo: Editora Comenius, 1999.

CURA, R. O. *La filosofía educativa de Juan Luis Vives*. Tesis de licenciatura. Universidad Católica Argentina, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 2011. Available from: <http://bibliotecadigital.uca.edu.ar/repositorio/tesis/filosofia-educativa-juan-luis-vives.pdf>. Accessed February 24, 2021.

DALY, W. A. *The educational psychology of Juan Luis*. Tesis. Washington: Catholic University of America, 1924.

FERNANDES, G. *A Ianua Linguarum dos Jesuítas Irlandeses (Salamanca, 1611) e a Porta de Linguas de Amaro de Roboredo (Lisboa, 1623)*. *Boletim de Estudos Clássicos*. No. 42. Coimbra: Associação Portuguesa de Estudos Clássicos, 2004, p. 165-181.

GASPARIN, J. L. *Comênio: A emergência da modernidade na educação*. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 1997.

KOSSARICK, M. *Estudo introdutório*. In: ROBOREDO, A. *Methodo grammatical para todas as linguas*. Facsimile ed. Lisboa: Pedro Craesbeeck. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional-Casa-da-Moeda, 2002.

KULESZA, W. A. *Comenius: A persistência da utopia em educação*. Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 1992.

LANG, O. H. *Comenius: His life and principles of education*. New York and Chicago: E. L. Kellogg & CO, 1891. Available from: <https://archive.org/details/comeniushislifep00langiala/page/n3/mode/2up>. Accessed June 13, 2021.

LEITE, M. Q. *Considerações sobre uso e Norma na Gramática Portuguesa – O Methodo Grammatical para todas as Linguas (1619), de Amaro de Roboredo*. *Filologia e linguística portuguesa*. n. 13 (2), 2011, p. 337-368. Available from: <http://www.revistas.usp.br/flp/article/view/59891/63000>. Accessed Nov. 01, 2020.

LEITE, M. Q. Método de ensino de gramática em Portugal nos séculos XVII e XVIII: de Roboredo a Verney. *Confluência*. Rio de Janeiro: Liceu Literário Português, Especial 30 anos, p. 372-435, June, 2021. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18364/rc.2021InEsp.496>. Accessed July 02, 2021.

LUZURIAGA, L. *História da educação e da pedagogia*. Trad. e notas Luiz Damasco Penna e J. B. Damasco Penna. 19. ed. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 2001. (Atualidades pedagógicas, v. 59).

MONROE, W. S. *Comenius and the beginnings of educational reform*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1900. (The Great Educators). Available from: <https://archive.org/details/comeniusandbegi03monrgoog/page/n150/mode/2up>.> Accessed July 01, 2021.

NARODOWSKI, M. *Comenius & a educação*. Transl. Alfredo Veiga-Neto. 2. ed. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2004.

OLIVEIRA, P. M. Vida e obra de Erasmo de Rotherdam. In: Rotherdam, Erasmo. *Elogio da loucura*. Trad. e notas de Paulo M. Oliveira. 2. ed. São Paulo: Abril Cultural, 1979.

PONCE DE LÉON, R. El Álvarez en vernaculo: las exegesis de los de "Institutione grammatica libri tres" en Portugal durante el siglo XVII. *Revista da Faculdade de Letras 'Linguas e Literaturas'*. Porto, XVIII, p. 317-338, 2001. Available from: <https://ojs.letras.up.pt/index.php/rll/article/view/8137>>. Accessed July 11, 2021.

RATKE, W. *Escritos sobre A Nova Arte de Ensinar de Wolfgang Ratke (1571-1635): textos escolhidos*. Transl. Sandino Hoff. Campinas: Autores Associados, 2018. (Col. Clássicos da Educação). E-book.

RUMMEL, E. Desiderius Erasmus. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Winter 2017 Edition, Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Available from: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/erasmus/>>. Accessed June 15, 2021.

VIVES, J. L. *Tratado de la enseñanza*. Introducción a la sabiduría. Escola del Alma. Diálogos. Pedagogía Pueril. 2. ed. México: Editorial Porrúa, 2004. E-book.

WATSON, F. Introduction. In: VIVES, J. L. *Vives, on education* [Tradendis disciplinis of Juan Vives]. Translated by Foster Watson. Cambridge at de University Press, 1913. E-book.