

Dekasegi Portuguese: Towards a Nomenclature and Outlining of the Existence of a Portuguese Language Variety in Japan

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ABSTRACT

Dekasegi Portuguese: Towards a Nomenclature and Outlining of the Existence of a Portuguese Language Variety in Japan: In the 1990s, pressured by an economic slowdown, workforce shortage and a decrease in the birth rate, the Japanese government decided to change some of its immigration laws. This permitted foreign-born individuals who possessed Japanese ancestry (Nikkei) to have access to the Japanese labor market, primarily as blue-collar workers. Since then, a considerable number of Brazilians have moved to Japan and have brought with them their habits, culture, and language. This is the context of the Portuguese language spoken by these Brazilians, which has considerably changed through contact with Japanese and other foreign languages. This new Portuguese language variety has been detected and is being steadily explored in academia, and it has received a range of distinct names. In this paper, I seek to standardize the nomenclature in Portuguese, to develop and establish a name in English and other foreign languages for the variety, as well as to provide a clear definition for the phenomenon to distinguish it from other possible language contacts involving Portuguese and Japanese.

Keywords: Dekasegi Portuguese, Nomenclature, Language contact, Loanword, Language change

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INTRODUCTION

Generally translated as ‘someone who works away from home’, *dekasegi* became a popular label to define the context of Latin Americans of Japanese ancestry, their partners, and their offspring who moves to Japan (Tsuda 2003; Beltrão and Sugahara 2006; Sayaka 2015; Yamashita 2019). Sometimes, this movement can be permanent, but can also be back and forth from their country of origin to Japan or vice-versa, establishing a circular migration (Tsuda 2003; Newland 2009; Manzenreiter 2017). Regardless of a more nomad or sedentary approach, these individuals are considered members of a *dekasegi* community (Tsuda 2003; Ferreira 2007; K. Sasaki 2008; Moreno 2009; Vilog 2011). As a community, those members might be associated through geographic location (Córdova Quero 2009), labor (Roncato 2013), religion (Lange 2013; Córdova Quero and Shoji 2014), relationship (Tsuda 2003; Sato 2013), but also through the use of language and technology, such as news websites, blogs, and social networks groups in Portuguese and Spanish on the internet (Moreno 2009; E. Sasaki 2009a; Dall’Ava forthcoming).

In this paper, we will introduce some features of the Portuguese language as employed by the Brazilian *dekasegi* community, which presents some variation from Standard Brazilian Portuguese and other varieties (Dias 2015; Matsumoto and Okumura 2020b). Still, our main goal here will be presenting and recommending an expression to identify it. Before that, though, we need to discuss some extra background regarding the context in which this variety developed.

CONTEXT:

WHERE AND HOW THIS VARIETY EMERGED?

By 1990, the government of Japan decided to ease some of its immigration restrictions, aiming to bring Japanese descendants to somehow compensate for its lack of human capital and workforce, but simultaneously, trying not to draw attention to racial or ethnic elements (Lie 2001; Costa 2007; Córdova Quero 2009). That opened up a new option and had a considerable impact on the life of Nikkei Latin Americans who were looking for higher-paying jobs (Tsuda 1998) or more stable conditions than in their homeland (Costa 2007). Since then, Japan has received a huge flux of these immigrants. The increase and growth of this population came not

only from the movement of these workers but also from their family members. That was especially the case for individuals from Brazil, a country which a century before, during a period of Japanese diaspora, became the new home for countless Japanese fellows, developing into what we would know today as the largest Japanese community outside the archipelago. This process of back and forth between two regions by a certain group, a characteristic of the *dekasegi*, is an already well-described phenomenon known as circular migration (Newland 2009).

When moving to Japan, these Brazilians, although sometimes aware of a few Japanese customs, usually didn't have enough command in Standard Japanese (Beltrão and Sugahara 2006). Frequently, though, they had some background knowledge in Japanese words via a Japanese-Brazilian Portuguese variety (PT¹: *Variedade Nipo-Brasileira*): somewhat influenced by Japanese, it is a Portuguese variety spoken by Japanese Brazilians, which exists in a diglossic context with Brazilian Portuguese in areas with a high concentration of Japanese descendants in Brazil (Suehiro Matsumoto and Bueno 2017). Alongside other varieties, such as South and Southeast Brazilian dialects (Matsumoto and Okumura 2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2020b), these Brazilians made use of Portuguese as their vernacular daily language in Japan, which also became the Latin American *dekasegi* community *lingua franca* (Takenaka 2009; Rącz 2019).

Thereby, thirty years after the first wave of Brazilians experiencing the 'return to the homeland' (Yamanaka 1996; Tsuda 2003; Soares and Motta 2012; Matsue and Pereira 2017), the Portuguese language in Japan would develop idiosyncratic features and present variation when compared with Standard Brazilian Portuguese and other varieties. We are not the first ones to observe this, though. As early as the beginning of this century, Kono (2001) already noticed Japanese loanwords being commonly used in Portuguese by the Brazilian community in Japan. Although much more concerned with code-switching, Nakamizu (2003) would also provide extra examples of how Portuguese would perform under a Japanese language context. More recently, Dias (2015) would bring more loanwords examples and a further discussion regarding the development of a new Portuguese variety. The following example is provided by her (Dias 2015, 85)²:

1 We will make use of the following abbreviations based on ISO 639-1 (2021): (PT) Standard Brazilian Portuguese; (EN) Standard American English; (ES) Standard Latin American Spanish; (FR) Standard Metropolitan French; and (JA) Standard Japanese.

2 All sentence examples will be presented as they originally occurred, followed by a translation in Standard Brazilian Portuguese (example a) and Standard American English (example b).

- (1) *Gomen*, eu esqueci meu *keitai* e nem deu para te avisar que ia ter *zangyo*.
 (1a) *Desculpe-me*, eu esqueci meu *celular* e nem deu para te avisar que ia ter *hora-extra*.
 (1b) *Sorry*, I forgot my *cellphone* and I couldn't tell you about the *overtime*.

Words like *gomen*, *keitai*, and *zangyo* (a non-standard spelling of *zangyo*) aren't segments of the Standard Brazilian Portuguese lexicon and they don't convey a meaning on most Portuguese varieties either. These are loanwords from Japanese, which were adapted, phonetically and orthographically, to Portuguese and are extensively adopted in this variety. The morphology is influenced as well, which corroborates for the development of new words, such as (Dias 2015, 90):

- (2) Ele vai ter que *gambatear* muito...
 (2a) Ele vai ter que se *esforçar* muito...
 (2b) He will have to *work* very *hard*...

In the same way, *gambatear* has no meaning in Standard Brazilian Portuguese. *Gambatear* comes from *ganbatte* (JA: 頑張つて), the conjunctive form of verb *ganbaru* (JA: 頑張る) meaning to work hard or to do your best. Likewise, the suffix *-ar* is added since it is one of the verbal endings that produce the infinitive in Portuguese, mainly, when we are dealing with neologisms through loanwords (Assirati 1998; Fujiwara 2014; Santos 2017; Ganança 2018).

As part of thesis research, we have also actively identifying loanwords and neologisms of Japanese origin in the speech of *dekasegi* community members throughout social media. We primarily focused on job advertisements and subsequent comments produced by its members in social media groups (Facebook). Therefore, our data was presented and collected in the written form and originally posted by and/or turned to *dekasegi* community members in a social network.³ To better illustrate some of the linguistic phenomena happening in this variety, we will provide a few examples from our *corpus* collected through the years

3 We opted to not collect direct information from individuals in the posts. Still, all of our *corpus* was gathered from Facebook groups that were thoroughly turned to the daily life or work domain of Brazilians living in Japan. In our examples, all information displayed was entirely of free access, which means that we needed no more than a Facebook account to visualize those jobs advertisements. Still for privacy and security reasons, we left out all possible personal data such as cellphones, names, QR codes, etc, that could eventually trace back to it. For more details of our data collection methodology and further examples, see Dall'Ava (forthcoming).

2019/2020. All of the original extracts can be observed in the appendix attached at the end of this paper. We are going to start with three examples selected from a job advertisement:

- (3) Temos “*teate*” para motorista.
 - (3a) Oferecemos *bônus* para motoristas.
 - (3b) We offer *compensation* for drivers.

- (4) *Yakin* ou *hirukin* com *zangyo*!!
 - (4a) *Turno noturno* ou *turno diurno* com *hora-extra*!
 - (4b) *Night shift* or *day shift* with *overtime*!

- (5) Pessoas com carteira do *keuren* e empilhadeira são bem-vindas.
 - (5a) Pessoas com carteira de motorista de *guindaste* e empilhadeira são bem-vindas.
 - (5b) People with *crane* and fork-lift driver’s licenses are welcome.

We have Japanese loanwords like *teata*, *yakin*, *hirukin*, *zangyo*, and *keuren*. In example (3), the use of quotation marks reveals a certain instability of the word *teata* when employed in Portuguese, a common trait of neologisms when first adopted in a new language (Alves 1988; Torrano 2010; Janeli and Orsi 2020). In the other sentences, much like as we saw in Dias, those loanwords didn’t reveal any kind of visual graphic distinction from the other common words. They still, though, went through some adjustments to adapt themselves to the new language and spelling system. In (4) and (5), orthographic adaptations of the romanization system were detected: words like *zangyo* and *keuren* are spelled without any indication of a long vowel. It is not submitted to the stricter rules of a Hepburn system as in *zangyō* and *kūren*, but it also doesn’t follow a more lenient system as Waapuro style either, which there is no need to use diacritics, just add an extra *u*, as in *zangyou* and *kuuren*. Orthographic adaptations, such as these, might also be related to phonetic/phonological adaptations (Vendelin and Peperkamp 2006; Kang 2010). Although long vowels are distinctive features in Japanese, they are certainly not in Portuguese. If we add to this that most Brazilians in Japan don’t have high proficiency language skills in Standard Japanese language (Beltrão and Sugahara 2006), with no surprise, these vowels frequently don’t make through when they arrive as loanwords in Portuguese. In sum, for a non-Japanese speaker, and especially for a Portuguese speaker, it wouldn’t make sense to add such a vowel in a romanization, since it is unnoticeable. This,

though, isn't the only reason why these vowels were deleted. Here is another job advertisement example:

- (6) Ola *lifiteiros* vim trazer uma vaga de trabalho para *liftos*.
 (6a) Olá, *operadores de empilhadeiras*. Trago uma vaga de trabalho em *empilhadeiras*.
 (6b) Hello, *forklift operators*. I present a *forklift* job vacancy.

Example (6) deviates from Standard Brazilian Portuguese spelling. There is no standard use (or no use at all) of diacritics and punctuation. These are traits of a casual language used throughout certain domains of the Internet (Squires 2010). Such an environment would hardly promote the use of an extra imperceptible vowel, especially considering the adaptation features we previously discussed. Example (6) also brings the words *lifto* and *lifiteiro*, both neologisms presented in the plural form, *liftos* and *lifiteiros*, developed through the loanword *rifuto* (JP: リフト), curiously, also a loanword in Japanese, coming from the English word *lift*.⁴ Much like as we saw in example (2), *lifiteiros* is a nativized word, given that it incorporates Portuguese suffixes: *-eiro* which, among its numerous meanings (Gonçalves et al. 1998; Santos 2017), in this context, refer to a type or place of work, and *-s* as the typical plural marker in that language. Moreover, although *lifto* and *lifiteiro* are used in the same sentence and have the same root, their spelling rather diverges from each other. While *lifiteiro* adds an extra vowel between the consonants *f* and *t*, certainly pursuing the reasoning that in Portuguese this consonant cluster is not permitted (Kickhöfel Alves 2008); *lifto* keeps a spelling more prone to the English one, without the extra vowel. Formal instability such as this confirms the neological nature of these words, and how the process of integration is occurring in the new linguistic system (Alves 1984; Antunes et al. 2012).

We would like to provide one last example, this one more related to the buying and selling marketplace within the Dekasegi community:

- (7) Qualquer um desses *keizinhos* por apenas 99.999 ienes (...)
 (7a) Qualquer um desses *carrinhos compactos* por apenas 99.999 ienes (...)
 (7b) Any of these *adorable microcars* just for 99.999 yens (...)

4 For a further discussion examining *lifto* as loanword from Japanese and not directly via English, see Dall'Ava (forthcoming).

As we saw in (6), we have another fully nativized word *keizinho*. The word root is the morpheme *kei-*, which derives from *keijidōsha* (JP: 軽自動車), a type of compact car quite common in Asia, particularly, in Japan. Then it is followed by an epenthetic consonant *-z-*, the suffix *-inho*,⁵ and *-s* as a plural marker. The suffix *-inho* is usually regarded as the typical morpheme that indicates diminutive in Portuguese. Still, in this context, carry a sense of sympathy and affection (Barbosa 2012). Therefore, *keizinho* doesn't mean that a compact car, that is already small, is even smaller. It just means that the said car is lovely, adorable, or charming. It is somewhat similar to the *-y* suffix in English, as in *doggy*. That said, the loanwords and neologisms in this and the previous examples give us a hint on how deep these words are applied in this variety.

Beyond these lexical implications, in their turn, Matsumoto and Okumura (2020a; 2020b) present some fresh phonological phenomena, and extra data regarding such variety, which its emergence might be explained through a koineization process. According to them, Brazilian Portuguese speakers that came to Japan were originally from different Brazilian regions, mostly from the South and Southeast, and naturally brought their varieties with them. In short, the merging of these varieties through the process of reduction in the variation (leveling), and crystallization of a new variety (focusing) (Trudgill 1986; Trudgill et al. 2000) plus the influence from Japanese, and other foreign and immigrant languages such as Spanish or Tagalog, would make this Portuguese variety diverge and develop differently from those that we would find in Brazil.⁶

Besides loanwords and neologisms, mostly of Japanese origin, these authors also reported noticeable innovations and rearrangement of the rhotic paradigm system, and the emergence of a new phonetic segment, a voiceless bilabial fricative [ɸ], which is absent in other Portuguese varieties, but present in Japanese. In Brazilian Portuguese, the strong-R⁷ is a posterior fricative having pivot points in velar, uvular or glottal

5 The segment *-z-* can either be considered an epenthetic consonant or a single morpheme as *-zinho*. See Lee (1999), and Cagliari and Massini-Cagliari (2000).

6 In their study, Matsumoto and Okumura (2020b) are more concerned with the Portuguese language as spoken in Jōsō City, Ibaraki. But most (if not all) of their findings must be extended to the language description of other Brazilian communities in Japan, especially, if we consider the dekasegi population continuous internal migration in the archipelago. See Kono (2001), Beltrão and Sugahara (2006), and Matsumoto and Okumura (2020b).

7 Possible phonological contexts that rhotic sounds emerge in Brazilian Portuguese: strong-R (beginning of word, intervocalic, preceded by a nasal vowel, and preceded by [w], [z] or [ʒ]); weak-r (consonant cluster and intervocalic); coda (end of a syllable followed by consonant and end of a word). See Rennie (2015).

articulation [r, R, x, ʁ, χ, ʁ, h, h̃], while the weak-r articulates as an alveolar tap [ɾ]. By its turn, in the coda position, it can be realized as either a strong-R or weak-r, in addition to other possibilities [ɹ, Ø] (Rennicke 2015; Bouchard 2019). Yet, in this new variety, we may observe the realization of strong-R and weak-r diverging from what is found in Brazilian Portuguese. There is the possibility of tap [ɾ] or a fricative [ʃ] in contexts that are typically regarded as strong-R. For instance, the fricative can oddly be found at beginning of a word, such as *rural* [ʃu'ɾaw]. As for the tap, some rhotic sounds may lose their distinction, so words like *carro* (EN: car) and *caro* (EN: expensive), which are usually respectively pronounced as strong-R and weak-r, might be both realized as [kafu]. Features like these would be particularly noticeable in those who were born in Japan or lived most of their own lives quite far away from their parents' homeland (Matsumoto and Okumura 2019a, 2020a).

In this paper, we will certainly advocate for the establishment, emergence, and development of this new variety. Besides being spoken by virtually every Brazilian in Japan, it may also be seen written, usually in bilingual Japanese-Portuguese signs inside housing complex such as Homi Danchi in Nagoya or in general public signs where Brazilian communities might be found, such as Toyota, Hamamatsu, Oizumi, Ibaraki and so on. As well noticed by Matsumoto and Okumura (2020b), it is even possible to find it making use of kanas (hiragana/katakana) instead of the expected Latin alphabet at supermarket gondolas.

Throughout this paper, we will bring some of the nomenclature discussions regarding this variety of Portuguese, a language spoken and written all over Japan by Brazilian *dekasegi* immigrants. What still isn't clear, though, is a matter of terminology: how exactly should we name it? In the following section, we will present some past attempts to do so, and also promote a particular and original terminology more in tune with how languages and varieties names are usually standardized in English and Portuguese.

A MATTER OF TERMINOLOGY

By the time this paper was composed, there was no English name that indicates this variety. In large part, because most of the studies written or related to the subject in English are limited to recent works led by Kazuko Matsumoto research group (Feijó 2016; Feijó 2019;

Matsumoto et al. 2019; Matsumoto and Okumura 2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2020b). There is no attempt to name it, but it is accepted and recognized that there is a ‘newly emerging variety’ (Matsumoto and Okumura 2020b, 198). In Japanese, according to Shigematsu (2012) and Dias (2015), the term Dekasegi-go (JA: 出稼ぎ語), which can be roughly translated as ‘Language of the Dekasegi’, is already quite commonly used, at least, at the academic level.

Now, in Portuguese, although there is no consensus, there is quite a range of possible candidates for this position: Dekassês (EN: Dekassese), Dekasseguês (EN: Dekasseguese), Nihonguês (EN: Nihonguese), and VPBJ (PT: Variante do Português Brasileiro no Japão; EN: Brazilian Portuguese Variety in Japan) just to name a few. Dias (2015, 68) points out that the speakers themselves don’t actually have a precise name for this variety and might not even recognize a terminology, such as Dekasseguês.

Initially, we were inclined to choose between one of these forms, translate it, and advocate for it as a standard name in English and Portuguese. However, as we analyzed each one of these, we realized that they could lead to different problems, mostly including name or description oscillation, visibility, and translation issues. In the next section, we will lead to some arguments explaining why these labels present issues and are not the most adequate choice for a more standard nomenclature. But first, in the following subsections, we will introduce and discuss each of these four candidates and the contexts that they were ultimately employed.

Dekassês

Roughly, Dekassese may be taken as a translation to Dekassês. Morphologically, it could be understood under two similar procedures: 1) as a portmanteau of Dekasegi (PT: Dekassegui/Decasségui) and Portuguese (PT: Português); or 2) from the word Dekasegi added the suffix *-ês*, which in Portuguese commonly produce nouns and adjectives indicating a native place (PT: França → Francês; EN: France → French) or the name of certain languages (PT: Japão → Japonês; EN: Japan → Japanese).

According to Kono (2001, 181), this term was first coined by a well-known Portuguese language magazine addressed to the Brazilian community in Japan IPC.Digital (by the time, known as International Press) on June 11, 1995; and it is defined as: “(…) the use of some Japanese

words and expressions in the Portuguese language spoken by Brazilians”.⁸ Considering the mass dekasegi immigration started in the early 1990s (Tsuda 2003; Córdova Quero 2009; Sakai 2010; Goshima 2011; Watarai 2014) this indicates that right from the start the phenomenon was well noticed. This also shows this is one of the oldest nomenclatures that we have a record.

Unfortunately, looks like the term wasn't quite appealing enough and didn't turn out to be very popular. For instance, a fast search on the internet⁹ for Dekassês shows only two results: one from Kono's article and another from Cherrier (2013), in which she makes reference to Kono's work and cites it as a competing term for Nihonguês and Dekasseguês. This last one, much more prominent, at least on academy articles, will be addressed in the following subsection.

Dekasseguês

Similarly to Dekassês, Dekasseguês (EN: Dekasseguese) can also be understood as a portmanteau of Dekasegi and Português, or as a Dekasegi with the addition of the suffix *-ês*; this time, though, keeping the *-gi* segment of the loanword.

Sometimes spelled as Decasseguês (Dias 2015) or even Decaseguês (Moreno 2009), Dekasseguês presents a wide variety of definitions, fluctuating according to each author. For instance, Ferreira da Silva (2008, 68) says it is “a language only comprehensible for those familiar with the Japanese language”¹⁰; Moreno (2009, 197) presents it as a “hybrid language”¹¹; Mizumura (2011, 102) claims it to be “Japanese words in sentences with a Portuguese structure”; Sato (2013, 41) comments about “the use of the Portuguese language gerund, which Brazilians mix with the Japanese language”¹²; and Fujiwara (2014, 105) assumes it to be a “language spoken by the [Brazilians] descendants of Japanese people, or by the dekasegi” which also “presents features of code-switching”.¹³ Although interesting, these definitions don't clear

8 **free translation.** Original [(...) o uso de algumas palavras e expressões japonesas no português falado pelos brasileiros.]

9 We resorted to Google's default search bar for this. The result was achieved on November 15, 2020.

10 **free translation.** Original [(...) uma linguagem compreensível somente para quem está familiarizado com o japonês.]

11 **free translation.** Original [língua híbrida.]

12 **free translation.** Original [(...) o uso do gerúndio da língua portuguesa que os brasileiros mesclam à língua japonesa.]

up what kind of phenomenon we are dealing with, so we could be referring to a range of different language processes such as code-switching (Myers-Scotton 2000), mixed/hybrid language (Matras and Bakker 2003), or neologism/loanword borrowing (Alves 1984; Paradis and Lebel 1994). Also, it is important to apprehend that some of these authors opt to use quotation marks when referring to Dekasseguês, which is pointing to terminology instability, signaling to some hesitation towards its name, and lacking precision as well, when describing what kind of phenomenon we are dealing with.

Dias (2015, 79) would be the first one to comprehend it as a variety of Portuguese, making her definition more in tune with the understanding we are looking for:

Dekasseguese is a variety of Brazilian Portuguese in which we can observe the influence of the Japanese language and the main area of occurrence is in Brazilian communities throughout Japan. It is defined by the use of Japanese words and expressions in Portuguese conversations and also by the use of Japanese words and expressions adapted to Portuguese.¹⁴

Nonetheless, we don't agree on spotlighting only 'words and expressions' to define this variety, since these adaptations might occur in other linguistic components, besides the lexicon. These adjustments also apply to phonological level and orthographic aspects, as noted by Matsumoto and Okumura (2020b) and even by Dias (2015).

Summing up, we could say that Dekasseguese has received some recent attention and discussion, and it is a more popular name variation of Dekassese. There are still, though, other contestants as we are about to see in the consecutive subsections.

Nihonguês

Akin to previous options, Nihonguês (EN: Nihonguese) can also be comprehended as portmanteau: Nihongo (JA: 日本語; EN: Japanese language) and Português (EN: Portuguese); or as Nihongo with the addition

13 **free translation.** Original [Língua falada pelos descendentes de japoneses, ou pelos decasséguis (...) apresenta traços de code-switching (...)]

14 **free translation.** Original [O dekassequês é uma variedade do português brasileiro na qual podemos observar a influência do idioma japonês e cuja principal área de ocorrência são as comunidades brasileiras no Japão. Caracteriza-se pelo uso de palavras e expressões japonesas nas conversas em português e também pelo uso de palavras e expressões japonesas aporuguesadas.]

of the suffix *-ês*.

Although not very extensively, there are still some authors that sketch a few comments about it, usually, comparing to some other terminology. Dias (2015, 79), for instance, notice it as an alternative name to Dekasseguês, according to her, something mentioned by her informants; Cherrier (2013, 5) compares it with Dekasseguês and Dekassês and adds that she has already heard Nihonguês coming “from the mouth of Brazilians living in Japan”.¹⁵ Fujiwara (2014, 119) would go further and present a definition for it: “Nihonguese would designate the language formed by the mixture of Japanese and Portuguese, that is, the Portuguese language with interferences from Japanese, and/or vice versa.”¹⁶ But much like as we have seen previously if we take this definition at its face value, we would challenge ambiguity, especially under the ‘mixing’ factor, since we could be referring to a wide spectrum of phenomena.

There is still, though, one last contender we should consider as we will see in the following subsection.

VPBJ

Differently presenting itself and going against the tide, VPBJ or BPVJ don’t follow our portmanteau terminology pattern. This one stands for an acronym: Brazilian Portuguese Variety in Japan (PT: Variante do Português Brasileiro no Japão). It is also the most recently conceived term and it is presented as an alternative to Dekasseguês. According to Sakaguchi (2017, 2018), a new name is needed, because she believes that a word such as dekasegi (temporary migrant worker) might hold a negative meaning.¹⁷

Although Sakaguchi doesn’t offer a definition herself, she leans on Mizumura (2011, 99) which describes it as “(…) Brazilization and Japanization of words and whole expressions (….) [it’s an] unique speech”.¹⁸ Yet, she does contribute with some enlightening comments (Sakaguchi 2018, 141):

15 **free translation.** Original [(...) de la bouche de Brésiliens vivant au Japon.]

16 **free translation.** Original [Nihonguês designaria a língua formada pela mistura de japonês e português, ou seja, a língua portuguesa com interferências do japonês, e/ou vice-versa.]

17 We do believe a new term must be coined, but for a different reason. See section ‘Dekasegi Portuguese’.

18 **free translation.** Original [(...) abrasileiramentos e ajaponesamentos de vocábulos e expressões inteiras (...) [sua] linguagem é única.]

(...) this variety became more prominent in the form of Japanese loanwords and expressions from the daily lives of community members. It is important to highlight that, in everyday life, the use of these loans is not random, there are conventions shared by the interlocutors within a cultural and/or situational context that restricts the lexical repertoire (...)¹⁹

For her, similar to Dias's description of Dekasseguês, VPBJ is likewise intrinsically connected to the loanwords. This saves us from the ambiguity we found ourselves in the past names, but still makes us wonder if we could tag a variety based only on lexical innovation and cultural/situation context, but not taking into account other structural variation (Coelho et al. 2012). In our case, it leaves aside other attested linguistic phenomena detected in such variety, such as phonological change (Matsumoto and Okumura 2019b).

POINTING OUT SOME ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Now, with all our contestants presented, we will introduce in the following subsections, problems when embracing any of these names, highlighting its issues and comparing them with a similar language contact context. After that, we are going to promote a distinct terminology and definition, which we believe will fitly cover the phenomenon.

A Similar Related Debate:

The Spanish Language Developed by the Dekasegi in Japan

Before moving on to a terminology debate, we need to present one last element which will impact and enrich this discussion. It is important to emphasize here that dekasegi doesn't refer only to Brazilians, but also to other Latin American groups moving to Japan: mainly Peruvians, alongside Argentinians, Bolivians, and so on. Usually, these groups are Spanish-speaking immigrants. Not much different from the Portuguese language counterpart, a new Spanish variety has also emerged in these dekasegi communities (Rossi, 2009a, 2009b; Niland, 2012).

19 **free translation.** Original [(...) essa variante ficou mais proeminente sob a forma de empréstimos de palavras e expressões japoneses do dia-a-dia dos membros da comunidade. É importante destacar que, no cotidiano, o uso desses empréstimos não é aleatório, há convenções partilhadas pelos interlocutores dentro de um contexto cultural e/ou situacional que restringe o repertório lexical (...)]

Sometimes called Japoñol or even Japoñolés, this contact variety suffers from the same definition, classification, and label issues we saw previously. For instance, Japoñol might include phenomena much beyond the dekasegi one (Irigoyen, 2018; Flores and Williams, 2019), whereas Japoñolés could include different language contexts as well (Niland, 2012). Hypothetically and without further clarification, Dekasseguês (ES: Dekasegués) could also refer to such a Spanish variety. That is why when choosing our nomenclature, we will have to opt for a name as transparent as possible and consider the existence of comparable phenomena in a similar context. When we decide to name the Portuguese variety, we must consider the Spanish one as well, and try not to make these terms even more ambiguous. In short, we must seek not to mix up those concepts.

The Terminology Quarrel

All terminologies presented so far raise one or more of the following inconsistencies:

(I) Lack of consensus – as we have seen previously, although it is common sense in the literature that we are dealing with a language variety, each of these terms may refer to a range of distinct phenomena (code-switching, code-mixing, neologism, phonological change) without clearing up what exactly we are working with. For instance, what some authors might call Nihonguês (Cherrier 2013; Dias 2015) might apply to something different for others (Fujiwara 2014). As we noted and it is well-observed by Dias (2015), the lack of consensus on how to call it doesn't apply only to the academy, but also extends to the members of the Brazilian dekasegi community.

(II) Oscillation / Ambiguity – somewhat related to the previous point, there are also problems with the specific use of each of these names. For example, Nihonguês can refer to any linguistic contact that occurs between Japanese and Portuguese (Fujiwara 2014). Terms like Dekassês and Dekasseguês, despite making an obvious reference to the dekasegi, it does not make clear what kind of linguistic contact we are considering. Now, BPVJ (Brazilian Portuguese Variety in Japan) does present a technical definition of the variety we are working with, which is certainly a plus. However, besides being an extensive description, which might be harder to apprehend and process, it can also be taken as ambiguous or opaque, considering that it would be necessary to advocate for a variety of Brazilian

Portuguese outside of Brazil.²⁰

(III) Visibility – perhaps, saving for Dekasseguês, most of these terminologies are used in a quite broad sense embracing any kind of language contact or mixing; and, at least up to now, none of them are widely adopted, consolidated, and stabilized as referring to such Portuguese variety, whether in the academy or in the dekasegi community itself. In the long run, this can present as an eventual problem for scientific dissemination. This type of clash and turmoil between different names could also bring other issues, for instance, when it comes to the use of keywords and problems associates with synonymy in natural language (Siddiqi and Sharan 2015). This is especially the case for automatic search tools that make extensive use of text keywords, such as Google’s search bar, or even Acrobat Reader’s or Microsoft Word’s navigation toolbar (Ctrl-F). It is preferable to converge all or most of the results to just one term, at least, when we are considering the very same concept (Cole 1987). For example, this would make it easier for a researcher to find what s/he is looking for, and afterward, spreading it out through publications or presentations. Thus, it is fairly difficult to advocate for the maintenance of a disjoined *status quo* with multiple names and ambiguous definitions, which is the position we find ourselves in at the moment.

(IV) Translation – translating technical terms is always troublesome. Throughout our work, we presented some suggestions in English for each one of the terminologies that were originally in Portuguese: Dekassese, Dekasseguese, Nihonguese, and BPVJ. Of course, these are straightforward translations and even if we had decided to keep them, they still would need some adjustment and polishing. For instance: what would be the ideal translation for Dekassês or Japoñol? If we followed that path, we would certainly face a nomenclature mismatch and inconsistency between some of the main languages that publish about the development of a Portuguese variety in Japan, such as Portuguese, Spanish or English. Every time we selected a different language, a straightforward translation wouldn’t work, and a new term would have to be coined or previously known by heart. Of course, another option

20 Much like Matsumoto and Okumura (2020a, 2020b), we do recognize the importance of Brazilian Portuguese varieties in the formation of what we call Dekasegi Portuguese. We don’t think, though, that tagging it as a Brazilian Portuguese variety is adequate. Besides, limiting it to a certain geographic area, such as Japan or Brazil, make it sound like a dialect. In fact, we believe we are dealing with a Portuguese language sociolect that was primarily raised in Japan, but also in Brazil (Dall’Ava, forthcoming).

is leaving the name untranslated and present as it appears in the original language (Cole 1987), but that would go against our goal of being as transparent as possible when forging a new name, especially, concerning languages other than Portuguese.

In sum, we consider that none of the terms previously presented are clear enough. We are seeking a name that is as straightforward as possible to translate, at least from Portuguese to Spanish or English, and somehow also represents the context of Brazilian communities in Japan.

A NEW TERMINOLOGY

Under the next subsections, we will bring arguments that are going to support an original nomenclature for this new variety of Portuguese. We will start discussing our inspirations and methodology on how to compose a name for a language variety. We will also present our terminology and bring some further details about our choice.

How to Formulate a New Terminology?

Most languages will receive their name in a quite natural way. By natural, we mean that their speakers or communities will present soon or later a name that will designate such peoples, languages, varieties, etc. Sometimes, foreigners or communities in contact will do this job (Murdoch 2004). But in our case, at least when this article was composed, there is no name broadly recognized by the Brazilian dekasegi community; and in the academy, although there is a collection of suggestions and a dispute between (ambiguous) terms, there is no well-established name.

We are also concerned with principles to orientate ourselves in our goal to construct a new terminology. Thus, as a research methodology, we contemplate a comparative terminology scheme, such as presented in Cole (1987). It is a pertinent method to consider, given that it applies to our needs since it is useful to establish and compare nomenclatures in more than one language. According to him, there are two main notions to grasp when approaching terminologies: a concept, an abstraction with all the characteristics of the object; and a term, which designates a specific concept. Moreover, to coin a new term, guidelines must be followed: the need for new terminology, research for a vocabulary, concept to

be delimited, equivalence between terms, and evaluation of terms. Up to this point, we have already gone through all these instructions, but as we saw in previous sections, we don't evaluate well any of the previously presented terms.

If still isn't possible to convey terms through this method, it is possible to forge new ones. For that, though, according to Cole (1987), it is desirable to have a model or an endorsement from a standardization body. All that said, there isn't a strict rule on how to name a language or variety. Hence, we present how they are usually named across Indo-European languages, try to emulate this mechanism, and follow some previous patterns already noticed in other works. Language varieties names frequently follow this path in English:

Relevant Adjective(s) + Language Name

In Romance languages such as Portuguese, Spanish, and French, the general rule is similar but just swapped (Language Name + Relevant Adjective(s)). Although it is not the only possible procedure, it is one of the most common practices found at sites designed to language taxonomy or description, such as Glottolog (2020), Linguasphere (2020), and Phoible (2020). The relevant adjective(s) may specify a certain region, people, or community. For instance, for a standard or set of varieties, we have Brazilian Portuguese (PT: Português Brasileiro) and European Portuguese (PT: Português Europeu) referring to a region. The same applies to English: American English (PT: Inglês Americano) and British English (PT: Inglês Britânico). Similarly, dialects also follow an analogous pattern: Caipira Portuguese (PT: Português Caipira) (Azevedo, 1984) and Carioca Portuguese (PT: Português Carioca) (Koike 1986; Gradoville 2018) indicating a region and/or people. Other kinds of lects, such as Ethnolects or Sociolects follow a similar path, for example, African-American Vernacular English (PT: Inglês Vernáculo Afro-Americano) (Mufwene 2001), Popular African French (FR: Français Populaire Africain) (Bassolé 2004) and Afro-Brazilian Portuguese (PT: Português Afro-Brasileiro) (Lucchesi et al. 2009) denominating a people and/or community.

As discussed throughout this paper, we are trying to find the best nomenclature that will better fit multiple languages commonly adopted in the academy, particularly, those frequently promoted in the dekasegi

discussion. For example, the use of the suffix *-ese* (PT: *-ês*) is much more prolific in Portuguese than in English. So, it is also possible to find in Portuguese linguistics literature terms like *Caipirês* (Pires Santos 2012), *Carioquês* (Barros and Savedra 2011), or *Dekasseguês* (Dias 2015), but not so much in English: *Caipirese*, *Carioquese* or *Dekasseguese*. Besides that, *-ese* might be used both for naming languages and varieties, heading for some instability, which we are trying to deflect here. Considering these issues, we are proceeding to the next subsection in which we are going to offer a new and original terminology for the Portuguese variety in the study.

Dekasegi Portuguese

We are mostly concerned with naming issues for the following languages: English, Portuguese, Spanish, and French. These languages were selected because these were the ones we mostly found a bibliography related to Dekasegi Portuguese matter. Largely, that happens because these are some of the most common widespread lingua francas throughout the academic literature (Phillipson 2008; Mortensen and Haberland 2012; Agost 2015) or in general (Ethnologue 2021).²¹

Regarding Japanese, another language which we might find significant published material related to the dekasegi community, we will not suggest a new nomenclature for two reasons: firstly, as formerly addressed, Shigematsu (2012) and Dias (2015) already confirmed that *Dekasegi-go* is a well-established name, at least for the Portuguese variety. Secondly, at this point, we don't feel comfortable enough to make a name suggestion to a language we don't have a sufficient morphological grasp. Either way, we do recognize though, that in Japanese, as in any other language that might be employed to discuss this matter, discernment between the Portuguese and Spanish varieties of Dekasegi communities must be a major concern and might eventually be required.

As the title of this section suggested, our new proposed nomenclature is *Dekasegi Portuguese*.²² The Portuguese segment for the new term is quite clear: since it is a variety of Portuguese, it makes sense to add

21 Retrieved on January 9, 2021: <https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/ethnologue200>

22 The denomination *Dekasegi Portuguese* was inspired by an unfinished hyperlink in an article in the Wikipedia English version. Notably, by the time, as there was no specific article about *Dekasegi Portuguese*, the hyperlink led to the main article about *Dekasegi*. It was achieved on November 11, 2020: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interlanguage>

it to the newly coined name as it is generally the rule. Now, we will designate Dekasegi as part of the nomenclature, because it can be regarded as a matter of pride, belonging or identification for Brazilians and other Latin Americans (Oliveira 1997; Tsuda 2003), as a term extensively used both by institutions or members of the Brazilian community (E. Sasaki 1998; E. Sasaki 2009a) and supported in the academic field in general (Kono 2001; E. Sasaki 2009b; Soares and Motta 2012; Roncato 2013; Dias 2015; Souza and Almeida 2015). Even Sakaguchi (2018, 47) which has previously criticized the term, also recognizes that “the negative connotation of the term ‘dekasegi’ faded away and has become a synonym for an opportunity to profit in a relatively short period”²³. Thus, we will define this variety as:

Dekasegi Portuguese – a variety of Portuguese language employed by members of the Brazilian dekasegi community and developed through constant and diglossic language contact with Japanese, and to a lesser extent with Spanish, Tagalog, and other foreign languages in Japan.

Regarding the definition, we are making it as broad as possible, not restricting ourselves to just the lexicon (loanwords, neologisms, etc) as happened to previous statements, since there are changes and adaptations already attested in grammar. Besides recognizing the influence of Japanese, Spanish, and Tagalog, we leave it open and don’t rule out the possible influence of other foreign languages, especially, the language of those individuals or groups that might fit in a similar dekasegi reality in Japan, such as Koreans, Chinese, Indonesians, and Thai (Shipper 2002; Córdova Quero 2009; Vilog 2011). We are also taking precautions measures when describing Dekasegi Portuguese and avoiding obscure or blurred descriptions. For instance, if notions like dekasegi and dekasegi community weren’t previously established, making use of them to define Dekasegi Portuguese could sound like a circular definition. Hence, we make sure that dekasegi and dekasegi community are concepts well-discussed and already established in the literature (Tsuda 2003; Moreno 2009; E. Sasaki 2009a; Vilog 2011). In other words: including these notions when describing Dekasegi Portuguese doesn’t compromise the suggested definition at all, and instead, show that we are in sync with the discussions in the

23 **free translation.** Original [(...) a carga negativa do termo ‘dekassegui’ foi se atenuando e se converteu em sinônimo de oportunidade de ganhos expressivos em relativo curto prazo (...)]

field, dialoguing with it and anchoring our description in some of its fundamental notions.

Furthermore, we notice some advantages regarding this name. Firstly, it is not an ambiguous term denoting several distinct linguistic phenomena. Also, it is not too extensive, neither bear obscure or unclear content for the nomenclature. It is in pair with the usual naming process of other Portuguese varieties. Moreover, it is an uncomplicated and transparent term to translate (PT: Português Decasségui; ES: Portugués Dekasegi; FR: Portugais Dekasegi).

Besides all that, it already leaves a trodden path or an arrangement to the naming process of other language varieties in similar contexts that suffer from comparable issues. For instance, following the same procedure, we could advocate for the Spanish variety developed by the Hispanic dekasegi community in Japan as Dekasegi Spanish (PT: Espanhol Decasségui; ES: Español Dekasegi; FR: Espagnol Dekasegi).

In the following and last section, we will bring some final remarks, presenting some thoughts on how and where these terms might be employed, and making it clear in what kind of context we are planning to make use of them.

REMARKS

Throughout our paper, we presented an already fairly noticed Portuguese variety developed by the Brazilian dekasegi community in Japan, which was born, grown, and developed in a strong language contact context. Then, we moved the discussion to its name. We introduced several past candidates, why they weren't necessarily the best option, and then we focused on offering and delineating a new term and definition for such variety. Since we believe it is crucial some kind of name standardization to outline and make it clear what kind of phenomenon we are dealing with, one of our main goals was removing any of the ambiguities past terms granted, and at the same time, trying to deal with possible translation issues.

Yet, it is important to notice and emphasize that we are making a suggestion, especially to be used within academia. There is no point in recommending a term that isn't 'catchy' enough. Ultimately, we know that it is the dekasegi community and the academy, each one in its

niche (but certainly influencing each other), the final judges that will define which nomenclature and notion will be elected and employed hereafter.²⁴

24 Acknowledgments: This research was funded by the UM Macao Talent Program through the UM Macao Ph.D. Scholarship (MPDS), University of Macau. I would like to thank Roberval Teixeira e Silva and Lucas Dall'Ava for their support and for reviewing earlier drafts of the manuscript. Nilta Dias for gladly sharing extra and unpublished material regarding the Portuguese language in Japan. Kazuko Matsumoto for promptly sharing her thoughts about the development of Portuguese varieties in immigrant communities in the Japanese archipelago. Also, the three anonymous reviewers for checking an advanced version of the manuscript and leaving insightful comments.

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Article Received: 2021. 02. 02
Revised: 2021. 04. 08
Accepted: 2021. 04. 14

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – examples (3), (4), and (5).

IBARAKI-KEN
FÁBRICA DE PÃES
Massa de pão para congelar
¥900/h + adic. noturno + ajuda de combustível

Yakin ou hirukin c/ zangyo!!
FÁBRICA DE TEKIN
¥1.200/h + 25% h.extras/ adic. noturno
• Pessoas com carteira de kuren e empilhadeira são bem-vindas
• Jovens são bem-vindos
Ambiente predominante masculino e de jovens

AICHI-KEN **LINHA E COZINHA**
¥930/h ~ ¥950/h + 25% h.extras
• Aumento conforme a capacidade produtiva e função
• Transporte do Homi Danchi
• Diurno ou noturno (não é alternado)
• Temos "teate" para motorista
• Ajuda de transporte

FÁBRICA DE MASSA (LÁMEN)
TAKETOYO-CHO
¥950/h + 25% h.extras ou + 25% adic. noturno
• Fazemos a sua mudança
• Ambiente predominante feminino

Oferecemos: -Shakai Hoken -Férias remuneradas
-Apartamento semimobiliado

Appendix 2 – example (6)



URGENTE

URGENTE
TRABALHO
PARA LIFTO
SALARIO:1300
VAGA ABERTA
PARA 1 PESSOA
NAO PERCA

Bom dia boa tarde e boa noite

Ola lifiteiros vim trazer uma vaga de trabalho para liftos

Nihongo basico que tenha para conversa com japones
O horario de trabalho etc perguntas que tiver
Ligue ja !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

1 20 Shares

Like Share

Appendix 3 – example (7)

Qualquer um desses keizinhos por apenas 99.999 ienes pagamento a vista no cash.

Moco ano 18(shaken 10meses km 122)

Ek ano 16 (shaken 1 ano km 118)

Wagon r ano 17 (sem shaken km 111)obs:shaken a parte.

Aceito Visa ou master e faço financiamento próprio com entrada de 30.000 e parcelas a combinar...



¥99,999

Na semana do 9.Keizinho para trabalho

 Message

 2

