

河野先生のインタビュースクリプト（その2）

Interviewer:

So, you are a Portuguese language teacher and. . . So why did you at first consider to study Portuguese language?

Kono:

It's a long story. And recently my colleagues published a special issue of our academic journal *Revista de Estudos Brasileiros* dedicated to. . . to me, and I wrote a little autobiography. And when I was a student, junior high school student, I liked English very much because I'm a baby boomer—I was born in 1948—so, as you know, our generation has received a lot of experience from American popular culture. So I grew up listening to American popular songs and watching American TV shows and American movies. So, those days we cannot easily go to. . . go to foreign countries. The dollar was extremely expensive and ordinary Japanese can't go on a sightseeing trip. So we were sort of longing for a world outside of Japan. So I liked English very much. But, and as I grew up in Tokyo, I used to listen to a then called FEN, Far East Network, a radio station for American personnel. And I used to listen to, for example, American Top 20, that kind of music program. And one day around 1964, as a Brazilian music named “The Girl from Ipanema” was the number one on the Billboard chart. And I went to a local record store to look for the record, but I can't. . . I couldn't find it, and the store clerk showed me instead a jazz album called Getz Gilberto. It's a LP recorded with the Brazilian singer João Gilberto and the American tenor sax player Stan Getz. And in that album there are many Brazilian music recorded and Joao Gilberto sang in Portuguese. That was my first time to listen to the sound of Brazilian Portuguese. And also during my high school days I used to take a music class and our music teacher taught us how to sing Italian songs like, eh, famous Italian songs in Italian. So those Romance languages fascinated me so much that I decided to major in some other languages than English. For me, English is banal. Everybody studies English. And I thought that if you speak more than one languages, it would be fine. So I decided to study Portuguese. So I'm not. . . I was not interested in, at all, in Brazil nor in Portugal. I knew nothing about those countries and their cultures. But since I began to study Portuguese, I also became interested in those cultures of those countries because. . . quite different from today. . . . Brazil and Portugal were not very well known in Japan. So I used to read a lot of books on Brazil and Portugal in English and in. . . . There were no bibliography in Japanese, so I had to rely on more English books. That's why I kept on studying English, although my interest was in Brazil and Portugal and the Portuguese language. But I also never gave up studying English.

Kono:

Well, I always recommend to my students that. . . . Now that you've begun to study Portuguese, as a teacher of Portuguese I say you have to concentrate on Portuguese lang. . . the study of Portuguese language. But also your knowledge of English will help you to improve your Portuguese. And it would be

wonderful if you could speak more than two languages. And I'm sorry to say that usually here in Japan, people majoring in the English language or professors working in the area of American studies or British studies, they speak only English. And it's like Americans or British are, who are, monolingual and they are losing a lot of things. But if you study more than two languages—English and Portuguese or Spanish or whatever language—your world vision will be much, much better. And it would be also very wonderful. For example in the business world, you talk with many clients from many different countries and the official meeting can be done in English, but after the official meeting, you can go out drinking with your colleagues, local colleagues, speaking their own language. That would be very interesting. So, in a sense, Brazilian businessmen and intellectuals and professors speak English, but if you really try to understand Brazilian people and Brazilian culture, you have to study your. . . you have to study Portuguese. So it's not mutually exclusive and you have to study. . . keep on studying English and also as well as Portuguese that's your major language. So that would be wonderful for our students to be at least bilingual in two foreign languages. That's how I suggest to my students.