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"Does it have to be in English?": Decolonizing TPC Pedagogies with Community-based Translation

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Abstract: To counter monolingual colonial English practices in technical and professional communication (TPC) scholars (Gonzales, 2016; Haas, 2012; Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2021; Rivera, 2022) have proposed conceptualizing translation as a site of decolonial efforts. In this article, we extend those efforts by putting translation studies into conversation with community-engaged social justice work in TPC. We develop pedagogies that prioritize personal stories focused on translation work that students complete in relation to local and campus communities. Using an introductory TPC course as our case study, we recognize and outline the necessity for more community-based translation work in TPC conversations.

Keywords: Translation, Decolonial, Community, Pedagogy

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Introduction

The history of translation in the US has been traced back to encounters among indigenous people prior to colonialism, and with settler colonialists upon their arrival in the first century (Rivera, 2022). In those instances, translation was deemed necessary to mediate meaning, to negotiate treaties, and to facilitate communication. Despite this rich history, translation has been approached as a neutral practice and prized for its factual objectivity. This myth of neutrality has, however, been rightly questioned in the wake of centering humanistic concerns in TPC as well as in recognizing the complex role that language plays in shaping reality. And language, as we know, is at the heart of translation. This is how translation work in TPC *can* do the work of social justice. It is how translation has taken the social justice turn, not to upend the core work of transmitting technical communication, but rather to account for the values and knowledges of end users and various audiences. It is how translation can operate at the intersection of UX, access, and technology, often in the service of under-resourced users.

This shift in perspective has equipped translation as a social justice undertaking through which TPC can promote "active equality" (Colton and Holmes, 2016). By centering on difference as a strength and not a deficit, translation work in TPC can become especially justice oriented in its efforts to level the playing field (Agboka & Dorpenyo, 2022). This line of scholarship is consistent with more general approaches to composition pedagogies that speak about integrating translation initiatives as part of equity-oriented (Ayash, 2020) composition pedagogies in the US, where English monolingualism continues to be a base language ideology. Moreover, translation pedagogies enrich our understanding of the rhetorical labor and knowledge that goes into translating/interpreting in the professions and across technical genres (Gonzales & Bloom-Pojar, 2018).

As Harding & i Cortés (2018) explain, translation is "a site of creativity and subversion, or a tool for the powerful and the disempowered, the majority status quo and minority voices" (p.1). Therefore, in contexts of global structural inequities, translation can illuminate inequitable social dynamics and/or contribute to counter them. For example, Bandia speaks about translation as "reparation" in the context of Africa, where "the writer-as-translator works to redress linguistic and cultural power inequities that would maintain postcolonial African writers at the periphery of the metropole" (Bandia, 2008, as cited in Garane, 2014, p. 189).

We understand translation in line with decolonial theory, not as a binary between the "target" and the "source" cultures and/or languages, but as a hybrid "third" space (Bhabha, 1994) of meaning-making that is contextually situated. These processes are not neutral, and colonial discourses can use translation to control marginalized subjects (Niranjana, 1990) or spread neoliberal agendas (Sánchez-Martín, 2017). Translation has also been instrumental in activism. For example, Lising (2020) investigated how informative materials (such as infographics) were created and disseminated to prevent COVID-19 in The Philippines, demonstrating that grassroots-generated rather than state-initiated translation initiatives were vital in the production of public health information to counter the dominance of English and Tagalog (https://www.languageonthemove.com/covid-19-health-information-campaigns-in-the-philippines/). As we describe below, community-engaged translation initiatives contribute to linguistic justice (Cardinal et al. 2021).

This type of work does not necessarily remain within the logographic (textual) dimension of language, such as translating from one named-language to another named-language (English to Spanish, for instance) or translating from one register to another one (academic or specialized jargon into a more accessible one). In fact, translation (and by extension all communication) must be expanded into meaning-making created in one modality (visual, aural, gestural, spatial, linguistic) into a different one. This is particularly important in the context of US technical communication programs, where translation is one of the activities that are part of the larger enterprise of localization. Localization[1] is broadly defined as

the linguistic and cultural adaptation of digital content to the requirements and the locale of a foreign market; it includes the provision of services and technologies for the management of multilingualism across the digital global information flow. Thus, localization activities include translation (of digital material as diverse as user assistance, websites and videogames) and a wide range of additional activities (Schäler, 2017, p. 209).

What stems from this definition is the idealist nature of a neutral localization process, detached from power relations and complex social, and linguistic contexts. Some scholars note that the type of localization happening when the product is designed (developer localization) differs from the localization that users employ as they interact with it in more concrete cultural contexts (Sun, 2012). Therefore, we draw from scholars who also take a decolonial approach to localization (Sun, 2012; Agboka, 2014, Dorpenyo, 2019) and decolonial (Haas, 2012) or socially just pedagogies (Jones, 2016) of technical communication. More specifically, Dorpenyo identifies the following tenets of decolonial localization (and translation) work in TPC:

1. The ever-increasing commitment to the recognition and realization of social justice
2. Equity and equality for all peoples, underpinned by social models of difference
3. Enhanced sensitivity to the role of discourse in constructing and framing identities and relationships
4. Various consequences of globalization and improved communications and technologies which have had the effect of shrinking the world and bringing people from far-flung places into closer contact with each other (cited in Agboka, 2014, p. 303) (Dorpenyo, 2019, p. 58).

For Haas (2012), in technical communication, "decolonial methodologies and pedagogies serve to (a) redress colonial influences on perceptions of people, literacy, language, culture, and community and the relationships therein and (b) support the coexistence of cultures, languages, literacies, memories, histories, places, and spaces—and encourage respectful and reciprocal dialogue between and across them" (p. 297). Others define decolonial lenses to technical communication more strictly tied to concrete Indigenous peoples and communities and/or places (Itchuaqiyaq, & Matheson, 2021). Although this project has taken place in the lands of the Coast Salish peoples of the Pacific Northwest, we take a broader perspective (Dorpenyo, 2019; Haas, 2012; Jones, 2016;) that connects translation to social justice and decolonial efforts in technical communication, specifically one where "the human experience has been and should continue to

[1] We distinguish between these two processes that are part of technical writing, although we followed a more general approach to translation in the teaching case described below.

be a core concern" (Jones, 2016, p. 345) in TPC scholarship and pedagogical design through community-engagement (more details below).

With these principles in mind, our article describes the integration of a community-based translation project in technical communication courses taught at a large public university in the Pacific Northwest, where the key values of the writing program include establishing, designing, teaching, and providing spaces for anti-racist curricula through equitable classroom and community practices while subverting oppressive, colonial norms of gender, race, sexuality, language, and other social and cultural identities. For us, decolonial scholarship and pedagogies are a necessary step in antiracist practice, since they allow us to unlearn and relearn some of the principles that have guided scholarly work and our own participation in systems of oppression. As many scholars have pointed out, the language policies, practices, pedagogies, and ideologies that we have inherited are shaped by colonialism and tied to racism. More specifically, monolingualism (thinking about language as separate discrete abstract systems detached from people's multilingual experiences) has been used to further nationalistic colonial agendas that present White Mainstream English (Baker-Bell, 2020) as the norm and multilinguals as deficient racialized individuals (Flores, 2019). In doing this work, we support antiracist practice in that we "actively identify and oppose" (Boston University Community Service https://www.bu.edu/csc/edref-2/antiracism/) systemic and epistemological racism emerging from monolingual language ideologies and pedagogies. As we will discuss below, this small step to learn about and seek language justice through community-engaged translation pedagogies is, we hope, part of larger and collective efforts to transform our institutions.

Our Positionalities in this Research Project

The combination of our positionalities speaks to the complexities of integrating translation as part of social and language justice pedagogies in TPC.

First, as the instructor of the course that we describe below, Francis joins this project as the sole white, male, monolingual scholar. Although he identifies as monolingual, his life and work are surrounded by multilingual speakers, spaces, places, and cultures and he engages in Spanish-based interactions frequently. As a monolingual speaker, Francis is in a unique position to not only understand the limitations of monolingualism, but to also recognize how translation and localization efforts are not solely tied to multilingualism - a common misconception that became evident through this project. As a composition scholar, he acknowledges the gap that exists in TPC scholarship concerning decolonial, community-based pedagogies and the impact that this project can have on the field as a whole. Finally, as a digital technofeminist, he brings his knowledge of digital communication tools and their affordances and limitations. His commitment to equitable and socially just work in technical and professional communication directly connects to the decolonial, community-based framework this project promotes, discusses, and analyzes.

Cristina comes to this project as a Spanish-speaking faculty member interested in scholarship and pedagogies around multilingualism and social justice in relation to colonial English. Being a non-US Spanish-speaking individual, she is often positioned as a racialized speaker of English, despite being a white person. She brings to this project her experiences studying translation as a

decolonial and mediational tool for language justice. As we will describe in the "teaching case" section below, she has also had some professional experiences related to translation and technical communication (besides translating on a daily basis in all kinds of situations). For example, she worked as a member of a localization team for an IBM affiliate company in Salamanca (Spain) where she participated in localizing information from English to Spanish for various global companies operating in Central and Latin America. The team she worked with included a project manager located in Belgium, a group of content generators in India, and the localization group in Spain. While doing this job, Cristina realized several issues regarding unequal power relations at the global level such as global multinational companies outsourcing operations. In terms of translation, she realized how the content was being translated without the input of Spanish-speaking communities from the Americas. What linguistic expressions were preferred for a more impactful and accurate translation? What was the need for the translation? Who benefited from it? What information could be lost or obscured in the translation and localization processes? How would target readers experience access to certain information? These questions reflect tensions between "colonial-capitalist" and the decolonial potential of cross-cultural and translation practices (Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2021), which lingered in her mind as she participated in several localization projects without successfully resolving any of them.

Josephine's interest in this project stems from her status as a multilingual person. This status, while it is the norm for most of the world's societies, is rather unusual in the US context. From this position of multilingualism, Josephine has gained some insights into the nature of technical communication for non-native speakers of English and communities in the Global South. For one thing, increased mobility and migration around the world by necessity brings technical communication into communion with speakers of other languages. This fact alone compels us to ponder ways to equitably and ethically design TPC products for these users. For another, multilingual speakers bring with them a depth and richness of several languages that invariably make their way into the dominant English language. And finally, as dealing with the global pandemic has shown, language is the tool of first response in communicating crisis and risk information. Its role in translation is immeasurable.

The three of us joined efforts to initiate conversations around the role of translation in technical communication at our university, located in the lands of the Coast Salish peoples. While technical communication courses remain in the orbit of English monolingualism, both the stories of the lands where our university is located as well as the student and faculty demographics are multilingual. As Dorpenyo (2019) states, "users of technology have been marginalized in a lot of ways and we need to recover their voices" (p. 57). Therefore, our work aims to find and dedicate space in the classroom to the "alternative stories" (Dorpenyo, 2019, p. 57) within technical communication courses in an English department, especially those of our students and community members whose daily lived experiences speak to the power of English colonization.

In what follows, we dissect and expand on the interconnected nature of translation, localization, and language justice in technical communication.

Translation in Technical Communication

In TPC, translation is considered a mediating form of intervention that helps "facilitate understanding across global and local contexts" (Martín, Maylath, and Pacheco Pinto, 2015, p.3). For other scholars, "translation always implies that there is something to be articulated, a message to be communicated, and a context that facilitates communication" (Cronin, 2009, p. 61). Maylath et al (2009) decry limiting translation to functional and instrumental goals that focus on communicating a message. In its earliest conception, translation was understood as the literal replacing of words from one language to another (Cronin, 2009; Gnecci et al., 2011). Over time, the meaning of translation has broadened to account for linguistic and cultural adaptation as well as modes and mediums in which communication occurs. To that end, translation is invoked in the same context as localization and user-centeredness as well as ethics and multilingualism (Gonzales and Turner, 2017).

Given that technical and professional communication is a process that manages information so users can act on it (Johnson-Sheehan, 2015), translation serves to facilitate information exchange in, perhaps multiple locally attuned languages. The translator mediates or bridges the gap between the source text and the target language to ensure that meaning is accurately negotiated and communicated. Translation normally takes place in specific sites—be they physical as in community centers or virtual as in online spaces to enable users of those sites to access the kind of information that would enable them to complete tasks. And because such content is intended for particular audiences, translation done right is the ultimate exemplar in audience-centered communication (Bartova, 2014, p. 328).

Translation shifts away from the source text to focus on the culture at hand as well as the people and their needs in that moment. Regardless of its transactional nature, intended to transmit "concrete technical information" (Dombrowski 2000, p. 3), the rhetorical nature of technical communication renders it socially grounded and user centered. Thus, doing the work of translation necessitates accounting for the "values, ethics, and tacit assumptions" of intended audiences (Dombrowoski, 2000, p. 3). Another element of translation is that it mediates among languages and with it the issue of multilingualism. Multilingual speakers are viewed, in some scholarship, as technical communicators (see Gonzales & Turner, 2017; Gonzales, 2018) because language is considered a tool in the translation arsenal through which meaning can be negotiated across cultures to convey technical communication capaciously. Moreover, according to Maylath (2013), the process of translating is a collaborative endeavor that calls for multiple forms of competencies. It requires understanding the context of translation and with it drafting, revising, and? editing. Thus, translators must be creative. Some of the creative ways translators have used are storytelling or taken up creative acts involving gestures and other non-verbal forms of communication to translate words and phrases into units of meaning.

Needless to say, there is more to translation than replacing words or otherwise articulating those words in a different language. What is at stake is communicating expert, technical, and highly complex information to end-users, tasks that require a variety of rhetorical and analytical skills. Additionally, knowing the rhetorical purpose of the content encapsulates the goals of users and the social conditions surrounding the content. From UX to HCD and localization, technical communication has been about centering the human experience (Quesenbery & Szuc, 2012;

Redish, 2010; Schumacher, 2010; Sun, 2012). As TPC scholars have demonstrated, the role technical information plays in perpetuating injustices either through omission or commission as Agboka's study (2013) showed of Ghanaian users, translation must be attuned to these issues. Often, translators must contend with systems and institutions responsible for creating disenfranchised social classes. In such cases, ethical translation takes on advocacy work rather than simply transcribing texts.

In TPC, where translation operates at the intersection of UX, access, and technology, among other areas, it is often in the service of under-resourced users. And translation pedagogies enrich our understanding of the rhetorical labor and knowledge that goes into translating/ interpreting in the professions and across technical genres (Gonzales & Bloom-Pojar, 2018). As Martín, Maylath, and Pacheco Pinto (2015) observe, translating today often involves several agents with different roles" creatively working in "collaborative networks in highly technological, distributed environments" (p. 3). This shift in perspective has rendered translation a social justice endeavor through which TPC can promote "active equality" (Colton & Holmes, 2016), decolonize language, and de-center the dominant discourse.

Centering on difference as a strength and not a deficit is critical to some approaches of translation, which can also render it especially justice-oriented in its efforts to level the playing field (Agboka and Dorpenyo, 2022). Agboka (2014) argues that decolonial approaches to TPC are necessary to contextualize content and to take into account the linguistic factors pertaining to end users. Decolonial approaches call for reflection and designing the work of translation from the point of view of the end-users (See Agboka, 2013 p. 301). The approach requires that the translator be actively involved with end-users rather than be removed from them in ways that assume familiarity.

Given that individuals or communities that often require translation are unenfranchised / disenfranchised, decoloniality is critical in translation. A decolonial approach to translation allows the translator to move beyond word-for-word inscription and create new knowledge that discards the presumptions, interests, or motivations reflected in the source text. Translators can deconstruct the source text and render it not just accessible but responsive to, as Agboka (2014) offers, be especially sensitive to the "role of discourse in constructing and framing identities and relationships" (p. 303).

However, knowing how language works is necessary for translation. Consider how colonial language ideologies intersect with other oppressive conditions that multilingual speakers experience. Traditionally, colonial language practices in Spanish or French would require speakers to follow a binary gender construct. However, translator and community activists are increasingly pushing against these "normative" colonial practices by using rhetorical and linguistic expansive gender expressions outside of the binary construct (the use of "e" or "x" in Spanish instead of the traditional "a" or "o" to denote gender identifications). These examples showcase how through translation, we can make visible decolonial efforts to support language justice." In this sense, differences across communities offer opportunities for the translator to tap into language practices that support the expressions and identities of communities marginalized through decolonial practices. Guy Deutscher (2010) references another example: the differences among speakers of the Guugu Yimithirr Aboriginal language who rely on geographical

coordinates [as opposed to "egocentric coordinates"] to describe spatial relations. To them, things are "facing north," or you are asked to "move a bit to the east" (Deutscher, 2010, para. 15) where in the English language, egocentric coordinates use left or right directions. That means that among the Guugu Yimithirr, awareness of the geographic orientation is central to their spatial orientation and that, perhaps, human beings have an innate ability to orient themselves geographically. By identifying these possibilities, translators can support expansive rather than reductionist constructions of the world that are consistent with the values of the communities they work with.

Community-based Translation and User Localization

Framing translation as only one piece of the puzzle of "language justice" in mainstream white-dominated and monolingual US technical communication, Cardinal et al. state that "(a) translation does not guarantee that the document is usable or helpful for the targeted community. "Access" focuses only on languages, not on building trust and relationships with communities. Access also often lacks a commitment to communities' overall success and vitality. To be inclusive, language work needs to broadly reorient itself towards justice for marginalized communities" (2021, p. 39).

To illustrate this idea, we use the following anecdote. In June 2022, Cristina attended the Latin American Philosophy of Education Society (LAPES) symposium, multilingually entitled "Pedagogías Feministas Movements, Solidarity, and Disobedience for New Worlds" (https://www.lapes.org/symposium).The event provided Spanish-English onsite interpretation and ongoing multilingual exchanges between organizers, participants, and attendees. Two interpreters worked back-to-back with each presenter and participants, to provide language access to the audience on the spot. One of the sessions was led by Sylvia Gonzales from the non-profit organization *Casa Latina* in Seattle who is part of the group "Mujeres sin fronteras" in the organization (https://casa-latina.org/work/mujeres-sin-fronteras/).

> At the beginning of her session, Sylvia made the following remark: "no somos trabajadoras domésticas—somos trabajadoras del hogar. La palabra doméstica conlleva una historia de la dominación, del control" (we are not "female domestic" workers, we are "workers of the home". The word domestic implies a history of domination, of control). Pausing her presentation, she continued saying
>
> en español, la palabra doméstica tiene un fondo muy duro, viene de domesticar, de dominar. Hay un esfuerzo, un movimiento que quiere educar para cambiar este concepto, en un mundo moderno de esclavitud cambiar la forma en la que usamos las palabras." (In Spanish, the feminine gendered word "domestic"has a really harsh back-meaning, it comes from "to domesticate" to "dominate". There is an effort, a movement that aims to educate in order to change this concept in a modern world of slavery where we need to change the ways in whihc we use words) (https://padlet.com/ssabati/dsyn2392rrkf4onp).

Sylvia's insider's multilingual knowledge illustrates that translation must be highly situated in the communities and based on "practitioner expertise" (Cardinal et al, 2022). It also reflects

Jones' claim about the importance of community-based research to "collaboratively to address or solve a problem that directly impacts the community" (2016, p. 354).

Zooming into the role of language in TPC, recent work about language difference outside of US monolingual whiteness and technical communication conceptualizes multilingualism as "technology" (Gonzales, 2018), especially in the context of community-engaged communication. For example, in their study about the user localization experiences of multilinguals, Gonzales and Zantjer (2015) identify a wide range of activities, including acting, comparing/contrasting, deconstructing, gesturing, intonation, negotiating, sketching, and storytelling. These findings speak about the types of "undertheorized" intellectual work that multilingual individuals and communities draw from in their user localized translation practices. Therefore, we call for technical communication teacher-scholars to frame "translation as an experience-centric event" that is "iterative and responsive" (2015, p. 281) rather than detached processes of meaning-making. This type of approach would serve to validate multilinguals' translation experiences as rich rhetorical practices from which teacher-scholars and professionals in the industry could learn more about translation and localization processes.

Involving multilingual communities and individuals whose experiences have not been part of mainstream technical communication scholarship is thus part of decolonizing efforts. As Cardinal et al. (2021) remind us, "(w)hen thinking about how practitioners and scholars design communication for linguistically and culturally diverse audiences, we must ask these specific questions: Whose communication practices, cultures, and languages are at the center of an organization?" (p. 39).

Working with translators in a non-profit organization with a mission of community-engagement through language access, and professional development of multilingual Latinx communities, Gonzales and Turner's 2017 study described how "translators engaged in multiple, overlapping activities normally undertaken by specialized project managers, translators, user experience designers and Web developers" (p. 134). This laborious work took up to 100 hours and was completed in a collective of people taking on different tasks. Moreover, the organization also invited Spanish classes where translators, teachers, and students "worked together to determine how information could be best presented to Spanish-speaking users in the community" (2017, p. 137).

Building on this line of work, our project aims to introduce technical communication students to current practices of translation and/or user localization, specifically those that engage linguistically underserved communities in the Seattle area in order to promote linguistic justice. As mentioned in the introduction, we approach linguistic justice as an outcome of decolonial work, that in turn, allows us to be "antiracist" in persistently and actively seeking to undo the systemic and epistemological racism inherent in monolingualism. In what follows, we describe the methodological approach for this study.

Methodology: Reflexive Teaching Case

Our methodological approach is grounded in a teaching case, which aims to provide opportunities for technical communication teachers to reflect on their pedagogical practices

according to students' learning experiences. A teaching case approach suggests including a detailed description of pedagogical context and background information around the teacher's course design.

The goals of our project involved:

1. Understanding how to intentionally create opportunities to investigate and participate in initiatives related to language justice in different communities and contexts related to students' lives;
2. Intentionally acknowledge multilingualism already present in technical communication classroom spaces that rarely gets to be acknowledged in predominantly white institutions, like ours; and
3. Considering ways forward in the implementation of a decolonial and community-based translation approach to technical communication pedagogies.

The gist of this project is on the teacher's reflexivity (Francis) as he was doing the "work toward listening to theory, building a course, and selecting the right tools for the job" of a decolonial and social justice technical communication pedagogy (Haas, 2012, p. 278).

First, we describe the teaching case in detail, including the context of the program, student demographics, the approach to the entire course, and how the three of us developed the project around decolonial community-engaged translation collaboratively.

Next, we focus on the specificity of the translation project and provide some general information about the teacher's (Francis) overall interpretation of students' work before our discussion on key pedagogical aspects for future implementations of community-based translation projects in TPC courses. In other words, we conceptualize this reflexive teaching case as "a starting point" (Jones, 2016, p. 356) to collaboratively develop pedagogies of language justice in TPC programs.

The Teaching Case: Institutional And Demographic Context

This teaching case was situated in the context of a technical communication program. More specifically, it describes a translation-based project taught in two sections of the course ENGL 288 – Introduction to Technical and Professional Communication run by the Program in Writing Across Campus.

One section had 22 students and the other one had 23 students. The university lists the following demographics: 39.7% white, 22.1%, Asian, 8.4% Hispanic or Latino, 6.6% two or more races, 3.15% Black or African American, .444% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and .339% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders. The full-time undergraduate programs are most commonly White female (19.4%) followed by white male (16.1%) and Asian female (14.9%). The students typically come from a more middle to upper-middle class.

Although there are no concrete demographics for the two courses, they were both representative of the overall university.

Overall Description Of The Course[2]

Over the course of a 10-week quarter, the class covers a wide variety of practical and theoretical topics directly connected to the students' interests, majors, minors, job aspirations, etc. In line with Huatong Sun's (2012) framework, the course is built around a genre studies model that sees composition (including technical communication) as activity systems of conventions, expectations, audiences, purposes, and contexts of genres. Using this approach allows students to take the projects in the direction that is most useful for them. The course instructor began with a more traditionally genre studies/research approach to TPC and then pivoted into more specific TPC topics (document design/testing, accessibility, usability, multimodal communication, collaborative composition, etc.). All these topics are underpinned by equitable theories of positionality, privilege, and power, which form the core of discussions that connect the course content throughout the quarter.

Making Pedagogical Decisions Collaboratively

Before we began this work, we discussed how we wanted to present community-based translation to an introductory technical and professional composition course, since we believe in the impact of collaborative efforts, especially when it comes to bringing our different positionalities to this project. In doing this, we echo Jones' (2016) claim about the importance to "open and encourage dialogue among various groups and stakeholders, priming a rhetorical space for critical reflection and action (praxis) that supports advocacy goals and creates alliances with populations that have been traditionally marginalized and othered" (p. 356).

With only ten weeks in a quarter and a lot to cover in an introductory course, we had to be strategic with how we handled the readings, discussions, assignments, and project. We started by choosing our readings carefully. Since this is an undergrad class, Francis (as the course instructor) didn't want to overwhelm the students with anything too dense or theory heavy. We ultimately decided on three articles: "The Difference is in the Design: How Untranslatable Words Challenge Technology and Pedagogy" by Rebecca Zantjer; "The Importance of Translation: An Interview with Dr. Laura Gonzales" by Miriam F. Williams; and "Anthropology Association Apologizes to Native Americans for the Field's Legacy of Harm" by Rachel Parsons. We chose these articles based on their accessibility, but also on their topics - we wanted to frame this case study as a decolonial approach that aims to decenter English and showcase the language labor of multilingual communities. One of our goals was to ensure that the students understood the relationship between language, community, translation, and composing in technical and professional settings. Thus, we tried to find articles that would exemplify this relationship from different perspectives. In order to spur conversations, each day in class started with a "Free Write" about the readings that would lead to some very thoughtful discussions. The readings, free writes, and daily dialogues helped introduce the larger, more practical assignments that gave the students a better opportunity to personally research the communities.

[2] ENGL 288 engages in professional genres and communication practices in light of emerging technologies. Students produce texts that prepare them to enter professional spaces (University description of course in course catalog).

The Community-Engaged Translation Project

Creating a space in which students feel comfortable to participate in a variety of ways is integral to successful classroom discussions. By starting off with a "Free Write," the students get a chance to think through the readings a bit more before we start our conversation. By simply asking, "What does translation mean to you?" it becomes apparent that many of the students felt "translation" was only language-to-language – the substitute model used by Google Translate. Zantjer challenges this notion using a very practical and fun topic: untranslatable words. These are words that have no one-to-one direct translation, and every language has their own versions. This spurred one of the liveliest discussions we had all quarter. Although we are face-to-face, many students still wear masks, which is not always conducive to thorough discussions. Everyone was chiming in with their favorite untranslatable words and trying to explain them to the class. In doing this, they began to recognize the limitations of the substitution language-to-language model of translation. Non-verbal cues, gestures, and facial expressions, all are required to help reveal the culture behind the languages (and the languages behind the culture). This then moved us to our next topic: language myths and stereotypes. Again, this led to another riveting conversation. The students were excited to share the myths and stereotypes that they have encountered in their lives. These stereotype narratives we (safely) revealed to each other (either as the stereotyper or the one being stereotyped), mirror Rivera's (2022) pain point testimonios.

Although her work is primarily focused on Indigenous testimonios and none of Francis's students identify as Indigenous, her testimonio methodology is useful in unpacking the emotional, economical, and physical weight of language and translation work. To continue these fruitful discussions, and to further examine some of the more practical sides of community-based translation work, we invited Cristina as a guest speaker. While we had discussed inviting a guest speaker from a community organization where translation and/or language justice is part of their mission, time constraints exacerbated due to the pandemic prevented us from securing this opportunity. However, Cristina was able to share her years of practical translation experience and was able to talk with students more about some of the intricacies and differentiations of literary translation, localization, daily translation practices, and non-profit activist work with communities. These were topics that Francis was not familiar with, so it was useful to have Cristina be able to expand on these topics much more. After all of the assignments, readings, free writes, and discussions, the next piece was the final project.

There are three main projects that all build off each other ultimately culminating in the genre production project, in which students are tasked with creating the genre they have been researching for the first eight weeks of the quarter. During this most recent quarter, the instructor added a translation option to the final project that coincided with the weeks spent discussing translation and how it connects to professional and technical communication. To best integrate our discussions about translation and community-based work, we assigned a collection of different readings, two homework assignments, several in-class assignments, and the aforementioned translation option for the final project. Unfortunately, only two students took the translation option, and neither of their projects were language-to-language translation. All of the other students chose to stick with the original, genre-based project option. One translated a scholarly article into a wiki that was more accessible to the general public, and the other student translated a YouTube video into a text document. The homework and in-class assignments

proved to be much better tools to better understand how students approach translation and what they do with it. As mentioned earlier in the article, translation and user localization practices do not only involve named languages, but modes of communication and different registers of language (such as specialized disciplinary-based or more widely accessible language). Moreover, these processes include multiple overlapping activities across languages and/or modalities (Gonzales and Zantjer, 2015; Turner & Gonzales, 2017).

Having said that, the most successful assignment was the "Analyzing a Community's Digital Presence" homework assignment because it opened up a conversation about how to better serve and interact with communities, and also the ethical issues emerging from this work as it pertains to translation and the dominance of English. Since only a few of the students had participated in community-based work prior to this course, we decided to choose three different communities that match our values of decolonial, multilingual, and community-engaged approaches that the students could choose from. The organizations are: Casa Latina, Native Life and Tribal Relations, and International Student Services. Before choosing the community, the students read the short article "Anthropology Association Apologizes to Native Americans for the Field's Legacy of Harm" by Rachel Parsons to not only introduce them to what community-based work could look like, but also the ethical, cultural, and social issues that plague some community work. Since most of the students in the two classes were unfamiliar with this kind of work, we wanted to emphasized the importance of understanding that they were working *with* the communities and that their presence and positionalities in the communities could have a reciprocal impact that they needed to prepare for by learning about the community and what it takes to become a *participant* in it. After identifying the community they'd work with and on, students were asked to analyze the digital presence of each community based on their websites and social media accounts. Once they had spent some time understanding the communities in terms of what they do, how they function, who they service, and what their online presence looks like, they are tasked with translating something (a webpage, a social media post, a flier, a poster, a video, etc.) *for* that community. Once again, this was one of the pitfalls of our approach, since due to time constraints, we were not able to provide more space for more direct interactions between the students and these communities, especially *Casa Latina* (and off-campus organization). Moreover, the students initially seemed hesitant, especially the monolingual students, but their work did not reflect this hesitancy. As a monolingual speaker himself, Francis shares some of the same hesitations concerning translation (How can I contribute or support the community's efforts as a monolingual person? What translation efforts can *I* do that will be beneficial for these communities?) As our discussions progressed and the idea of what "translation" means broadened, those hesitancies were quickly squashed. Below is a chart that outlines the various kinds of translations the students attempted for this assignment. The following table illustrates the variety of translations that took place.

Language-to-Language Translations	Mode-to-Mode Translations	Register-to-Register within English translations
Webpage from English to Norwegian	YouTube video to PowerPoint slides	Scholarly article to wiki
Instructions from English to Chinese x8	Blog post to audio recording	Scholarly article to PowerPoint
Social media post from English to Chinese x2	Website information to audio recording	Simplify visa information from website to chart
Social media from English to Spanish x2	Online event invitation to flier invitation	Simplify "pre-arrival" checklist for freshman x3
Social media from Spanish to English x2	Online form to printable paper form	Website information to Tweet x3
Email from English to Japanese	Video to text description	Flier to Instagram post

Table 1

Types of translations from the assignment "Translating a Community's Digital Presence"

This chart reveals that language-to-language translations were the preferred choice for this smaller assignment; despite the initial hesitancy, the majority of students in the courses put their multilingual skills and knowledge to practice. This demonstrates that, when given the option to directly engage languages other than English, students' multilingual experiences can become a central and enriching aspect of technical communication. Moreover, together with the many genres and modalities involved across all these translations, students' work reflects the complex yet ordinary nature of translating activities in any composing or communicative situation.

Discussion

Throughout this introductory research and pedagogical project, it has become clear to us that TPC still has some work to do to catch up to the social justice turn embraced by the field. While the field is on the verge of "…reciprocating by contributing to the interdisciplinary work transpiring at the intersections of race, rhetoric, and technology" (Haas, 2012, 282) and multilingualism, we are not there just yet. Still, as Jones (2016) recognizes "[t]here is much work to be done and technical communicators are ideally positioned to impact positive change" (357). Based on our goals to approach a community-based translation project in a technical communication course through a decolonial lens, we have identified three major points of discussion and further learning that were relevant to our pedagogies. As "technical communicators [we] must be aware of the ways that the texts and technologies that they create and critique reinforce certain ideologies and question how communication shaped by certain ideologies affect individuals" (Jones, 2016, 345). Francis's connection to digital communication technologies has led to the first discussion point: how to decolonize digital translation technologies. The second point of discussion revolves around the students' understanding of the complexities of language and cultural positionalities. This was evident through their free writing and homework assignments. Finally, the students surprised us with their unsolicited advocacy for each other and the communities they were working with for the translation assignments. The surprises are usually more fruitful than the expectations, and this was no exception. What follows is a more thorough analysis of some of these examples and what they taught us.

The first point of discussion comes from the readings and free writes (which are designed to allow the students expand upon what they learned from the readings and any questions they might have) and reveal the ways in which our decolonial approach connects with the technologies utilized throughout many one-to-one translation situations. One of the first questions discussed through the free writes in Francis's class was "what does 'translation' mean to you?" The initial responses reflected the stereotypical expectation that translation is about substitution; the replacement model of word-for-word/language-to-language. After discussing some of the readings, the students, especially the monolingual students, were open to the idea of translation as a larger concept that embodies more than just language-to-language translation. This shift has an impact on social justice and decolonial pedagogies, since it allows for a more direct recognition of the work that multilingual students and writers already put forth and does not mark them as different and/or deficient.

When asked about the tools they use for translation, one stood out more than any other: Google Translate. The tool itself has become a bastion of language-to-language translation and is often seen as the epitome of digital translation tools. The issue is that "[m]ost current digital translation tools have no mechanisms to account for the richness of language. They do not consider the gestures, motions, sounds, and other strategies multilingual speakers employ when trying to explain untranslatable words" (Zantjer, 2014). These tools "also present complex ethical and theoretical issues that may also undermine decolonial efforts by imposing a colonial ethos onto the user" (Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2012, 304). Considering tools such as Google Translate, users do not have an option to challenge the translation that it spits out. The tool itself imposes a one-to-one, colonized translation that strips the language of any nuance, subtlety, or culture. To rectify this, Francis requested that students only undertake the translations that their literacies, histories, and languages would allow for and cautioned them not to overreach or overextend their abilities or access to tools for translation. This would avoid any usage of colonial translation tools that strip the language of culture and nuance. Although it was clear that some students did a little plug-and-play with Google translate, the overwhelming avoidance of such tools was unexpected. Ultimately, the students took it upon themselves to translate a variety of compositions without the use of one-to-one, substitutive translation tools. Instead, they relied on their own literacies and knowledges to translate the documents they chose for the "Community Translation Practice" assignment.

This metaphorical removal of some colonial tools of translation had several positive impacts on students and their perceptions of translation—how it functions, who it is for/who it benefits, and how they can best utilize their own literacies in translations. By avoiding the substitutive model of translation, the word-for-word style of translation, the students were not only able to recognize translation as more than language-to-language but were also able to investigate how language-to-language translation is more than mere word-for-word substitution. Stereotypes such as, "[m]ultilingual speakers just need to know more vocabulary words," "[w]hen it comes to translation, all you need are words," and "[m]ultilingual speakers need extra guidance in thinking about audience" were all hot topics of discussion (Zantjer, 2014). Through the sharing of personal experiences with these stereotypes, the students concluded that these stereotypes are based on the opposite of language realities. As Zantjer (2014) concludes, "…multilingual speakers are typically more sensitive to rhetorical considerations— precisely because of the

complex navigations they make on a daily basis" (para. 15), which represents the antithesis of these stereotypes, and the realization that many of the students recognized through their free writes and homework. The students remained resistant to typical understandings of translation and language, recognizing multilingualism as cognitive and embodied assets, not deficits.

Student free writes and homework were also indicators of the second discussion point that arose throughout the quarter. There were many instances of students recognizing the complexity of language alongside their positionalities, but one in particular, from the "Community Translation Practice" homework assignment (discussed above), stood out. The main translation that the student completed was of a webpage for *Casa Latina* (a non-profit organization that advocates for Latinx workers and women) from English to Spanish. Before she began the translation, she outlined a few warnings she had. First, she wanted to let us know that she speaks European Spanish and, second, that she would use Google Translate for a few individual words. Although the use of Google Translate was not recommended for the assignments, her transparency reveals the ways in which translators can mitigate certain issues concerning translation – especially technical communicators who do not disclose the translations they conducted during their research (Williams, 2022). The recognition of her language positionality alongside the dialect of Spanish she was utilizing is a type of acknowledgement that was unprecedented and unexpected. From the other side of the desk, "…we should make our curricular and pedagogical goals as well as the theories and methodologies underpinning those goals, transparent to our students from the start of the semester" (Haas, 2012, p. 303). This kind of transparency can lead to unexpected results.

The final point of discussion exposed how multilingual students can act as advocates of their own and other communities for linguistic justice without being asked. This was something we were unprepared for. Five students translated a document, .PDF, webpage, or video to another language, media, mode, or register for their "Translating a Community's Digital Presence" assignment. Each translation was focused on a specific aspect related to international student relations. Three for "Pre-Arrival Checklists" for multilingual students from different countries, one for expired visas, and one for visa requirements. As burgeoning technical communicators, the students recognized that they "must be aware of the ways that the texts and technologies that they create and critique reinforce certain ideologies and question how communication shaped by certain ideologies affect individuals. The translation itself was not as important as their analysis in which they described the purposes of their translations. As international students themselves, they recognized the lack of information in either multiple languages, modes, or media and acted upon it. Similar to Haas (2012), "[we] posit that decolonial, critical race theories, methodologies, and pedagogies have the potential to help us imagine that we are capable and that doing so will generate responsible and productive ways of imagining a diversity of users of and participants in our discipline and other technical communication workplaces" (Haas, 2012, p. 304). The students' responses to an open-ended option of translation for homework were honest and more productive for the communities than we imagined. It is clear that "scholars must now encourage a reconceptualization of the field to incorporate contexts of social justice and human rights. Acknowledging the social impacts of communication legitimizes TPC as a field that fully understands, appreciates, and addresses the social contexts in which it operates" (Jones, 2016, p. 344). Decolonial, community-based translation projects are at home in TPC, even with many of the issues.

We also recognized some (expected and) unexpected dangers of a decolonial, community-based translation TPC pedagogies. Many of the issues we ran into concerned the typical problems that plague decolonial classrooms, but some we could not prepare for. Although primarily centered on critical race theory, Haas (2012) presents a succinct explanation of the issues that surround pedagogical practices that investigate more open-minded and narrative-based perspectives:

> …making critical race theory central to our inquiry can be uncomfortable for professors and students, depending on their socioeconomical, geographical, racial, gendered, political—and otherwise embodied—location. Regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, professors are always already held up for scrutiny as to their motivations for teaching ethnic texts, whether it be white liberal guilt, the anger of a professor of color, or some other rhetorical trope used to justify resistance to radical pedagogies, social justice pedagogies, or pedagogies of the oppressed. We should expect at least some resistance, even if minimal, and prepare for these moments, if possible (p. 303).

As a white, middle-class, cis-gendered, heterosexual, monolingual male, Francis does not identify as a marginalized scholar. This led to some uncertainties and fears while preparing the materials for the weeks' lessons, which ultimately propagated into the classroom. In a classroom with nearly as many (if not more) multilingual speakers and (multi)marginalized students, Francis worried that his legitimacy in discussing these topics would be questioned. Although this never happened, it was a perpetuating fear that influenced the prep, readings, assignments, and discussions that occurred. After all was said and done, Francis recognized that while his insecurities would not interfere with any topic brought forth in the classroom, this type of non-marginalized, monolingual guilt can stifle productive, equitable, and social-justice forward conversations. Unfortunately, these are questions and concerns that many of us are familiar with. Beyond this, many of us who value "decolonial methodologies but are not in the position to offer an entire course on race, rhetoric, and technology may wonder about the value and sustainability of this framework in other technical communication courses" (Haas, 2012, p. 302). These are questions we were not able to answer completely; however, based on the free writes, responses, discussions, assignments, and projects, students have proven the impact of this sort of pedagogy. It might not land with every student, and we shouldn't expect it to. The goal is to use "decolonial strategies because it aims to build restorative justice for racially marginalized individuals" (Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2021, p. 302). Decolonial efforts, like all pedagogical efforts, are dynamic. The implications that follow represent our future perceptions of the fields, their relationships, advantages, and limitations.

Implications

Our work in this project reminds us that we need to further recognize translation and multilingualism as technologies in the TPC classroom in all its complexities. Although many students do the work of translation regularly to complete assignments and in their daily lives in and outside of school, only a few chose to focus on it for the final project. We can't be sure about the reason behind these choices, but we are certain that translation is part of communities and students' work, yet this work remains invisible in many classrooms. The fact that students' homework and smaller activities were more enabling of conversations about translation points in

that direction. We recognize that translation is an "undertheorized" intellectual work that multilingual individuals and communities draw from in their user localized translation practices (Cardinal et al. 2021), especially in the classroom.

Along with this insight, we need to recognize that the activity of translating is not invisible, only the products are. To make the practice visible, we need to consider how we can shift our attention to the more daily and routinized practices of multilingual speakers. This might entail more sustained community-involvement and attention to the many overlapping processes involved in the translation itself (interviews, usability testing, iterative processes to continue considering the communities preferred technologies, language, and modality choices).

Moreover, the nuanced stories around translation that students shared in these smaller classroom activities tell us that we must continue to draw from multilingual students' own knowledge and that of their communities in the US and beyond. Incorporating transnational perspectives into our understanding of unequal social and language dynamics can be indicative of conversations that we have yet to hold. For example, how can dominant speakers of a language become advocates of others who are positioned as less privileged speakers in that same language?

Finally, our work supports the idea that a decolonial methodology of translation and user localization is a "recovery process" (Dorpenyo, 2019). In other words, these pedagogies can function as a tool for linguistic justice as it critically centers the experiences of multilingual users and writers (Gonzales & Zantjer, 2015), especially those individuals at different points in colonial axes of power. We call for additional materials and scholarship related to experiences of translation and technical communication. One way to continue supporting this work could be integrating (counter)storytelling to focus on "the human experience" (Jones, 2016) across the many facets of technical communication. Another possibility involves implementing a version of Cardinal et al.'s (2021) participatory values statement in our pedagogies. This project could help students' to collectively construct and share their ongoing experiences with translation and those of the communities.

Final Thoughts

To end, we would like to share an anecdote experienced by Francis and the reflective component that followed such a pedagogical moment.

During the Fall quarter of 2021, Francis assigned an interview assignment in his Technical and Professional Writing course. The project asked students to interview a credible source associated with their field of study, career aspirations, major, minor, or just plain interest. Although he had assigned this project before, he was caught off guard by the first question asked after introducing the project: "does it [the interview] have to be in English?". He had never thought about this before. Does it have to be in English? If so, why? If not, how will he (as a monolingual speaker) be able to understand the questions and responses to accurately assess the interview? Unbeknownst to him at the time, these questions directly influenced this pedagogical case study and caused him to reflect on how language functions in the classroom and how we can make space for conversations about multilingualism in TPC courses. This moment opened up possibilities for questioning the types of language ideologies inherent in other aspects and

processes of TPC. We would like to encourage other TPC instructors and scholars to consider integrating more decolonial, multilingual-forward, community-based projects, assignments, and readings in their classrooms and scholarship. Language is already a prodigious topic of discussion in technical and professional communication, so why are languages outside of English often ignored in these conversations? It is time we embrace multilingualism that is critical of power relations in TPC and acknowledge that monolingualism is not a barrier to entry.

So, the question remains: does it have to be in English? No, it absolutely does not.

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