Review:
Sites of Translation

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More people speak Spanish as their home language in the United States than in Spain. In fact, when considering the numbers of bilingual Spanish speakers, the United States has the second-largest Spanish-speaking population in the world, after Mexico—58 million in the United States and 123 million in Mexico, respectively (Instituto Cervantes 2017). Of the 545 million Spanish speakers worldwide, approximately one-third live in Mexico and the United States. Likewise, of the 1.8 billion speakers of English worldwide, close to 25 percent live in the two nations, with more than 15 million speakers of English in Mexico (Campos and Hernández 2013). The United States and Mexico are linked by histories, cultures, economies, and people, and, to be sure, no wall can stop the English and Spanish languages from crossing the international border.

The translingual relations of Spanish and English are the focus of Laura Gonzales's

(2018) book *Sites of Translation: What Multilinguals Can Teach Us About Digital Writing and Rhetoric.* Gonzales argues that translation is more than word-to-word equivalences as meaning making. Rather, translation moments are situated events when meaning moves between and across language systems, modalities, cultures, communities, literacies, and dynamics of power. *Sites of Translation* rethinks notions of translation in a framework that counters "traditional notions of translation that limit the analysis of language transformation to written alphabetic texts alone" (3). Gonzales's book breaks new ground by exploring how multilingualism further complicates static notions of linguistic homogeneity (Matsuda 2006), while also exploring the cultural rhetorical traditions of embodied translation for pedagogical ends. *Sites of Translation* speaks to this rhetoric of translation, but also probes the technical and technological aspects of translation in a book that connects cultural rhetoric, digital rhetoric, civic writing, and technical communication, following the path-breaking works of Adam Banks's monographs *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground* (2005) and *Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age* (2011) and Miriam F. Williams and Octavio Pimentel's edited collection *Communicating Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in Technical Communication* (2014). The book is an important contribution to the study of the translation practices of multilingual communities, offering a useful methodology for researchers interested in breaking the walled misconceptions of monolingualism in a translingual world.

Sites of Translation offers a much needed approach that brings multilingualism into the fold, while also exposing the transformative potential of multilingual individuals using technology for translingual communication. In doing this, Gonzales (2018) presents a well-theorized and implemented method for studying what she calls "translation moments," or "instances of rhetorical action embedded in the process of language transformation" (2). Gonzales describes translation moments as "analytical units that may be coded within the translation processes of multilingual communicators, providing a framework for studying the process and practice of translation rather than solely focusing on the products of these negotiations" (24). Rhetorically, translation moments are social events when individuals "make a rhetorical decision about how to translate a word or phrase

from one named language to another" (2; see also Gonzales and Zantjer 2017). During these processes, "translators move through the various linguistic modalities encompassed in their communicative repertoires, making deliberate rhetorical decisions about which practices to represent in their final translations and which alphabets to draw from to represent ideas to a specific community" (Gonzales 2018, 45).

Translation moments call upon individuals to use their complete meaning-making repertoires to negotiate communication, signaled by pauses when translators ask themselves, "Should I use this word or that word? What word or phrase would be most appropriate in this context, for this audience? Should I use a word at all, or would a picture be more useful?" (2). How individuals and communities respond to these questions demonstrates how they transform languages by using their full repertoires of semiotic resources, repertoires that are not segmented in L1 or L2 notions of linguistic differences. Instead, translation moments "inform how researchers, teachers, and practitioners understand language fluidity as a situated practice (rather than only as an ideological orientation or policy)" (21). This translingual movement in their repertoires breaks the walls that attempt to distinguish borders where one language ends and another begins, walls that distinguish so-called "natives" and "non-natives." As researchers adopt Gonzales's translation moments, they will see that these instances open up debates "among several options to decide how a word, phrase, or idea would be represented best in a different language" (12) where walls do not stop languages from colliding, mixing, and building from one another bridges for communication.

The final two chapters of *Sites of Translation* focus on two fieldwork sites, the Knightly Latino News at the University of Central Florida and the Language Services Department at the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan. The first site is a student-run, bilingual news broadcast that creates and translates content from another student-run, English-language publication at UCF. Gonzales interviews and observes members of the Knightly Latino News, focusing on translation moments when the students use digital tools and interpersonal negotiation to communicate content. At the second

site in Michigan, Gonzales explores how professional translators navigate translation moments at a nonprofit organization that supports that Latinx community of western Michigan. As with the Knightly Latino News, Gonzales observes and shadows translators who mediate communication between Spanish-speaking community members and service providers (such as government officials, medical facilities, and lawyers) who conduct business in English. The final two chapters of *Sites of Translation* could become another book that details the rich lived experiences of the communities engaging these civic writing practices. In such a project, the translation moments could be understood not as single instances, but also a sequenced series of moments—a translanguaging narrative unfolding over time in these communities, with certain elements repeating to form a translative rhythm that also demonstrates the fluctuations of power dynamics. Nevertheless, the rich theorization and methodology of *Sites of Translation* provide future public rhetoric, civic writing, and service learning researchers with a foundation to understand how translation happens and how multilingual communities make meaning in across diverse, situated contexts. Such research will be crucial in the efforts to build bridges across communities rather than walls that intend to house ideologies of exclusion.

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