Teaching Spanish in the Philippines: A queer-decolonial pedagogy

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Spanish, a masculine-feminine language, is characterized by lexical and morphological features that heavily rely on the traditional gender binary. How, then, do Filipino teachers and learners whose mother tongues are relatively more gender neutral negotiate these linguistic constraints in classes of Spanish as a foreign language? This autoethnographic study explores this question by sharing and reflecting on my experiences as a queer Spanish university professor in the Philippines. I position myself within the politics of ensuring that diverse gender and sexual identities are represented and celebrated in classroom discourses and materials, often shaped by heteronormative and Western-centric ideologies. The study begins by tracing the history of teaching Spanish in the Philippines in relation to our colonial history, and subsequently outlines the diachronic evolution of the Spanish language in light of gender-inclusive language. Drawing on language and gender theories, I critique how colonial and heteronormative power structures persist in contemporary foreign language education, and invite reflections on how these dynamics could be rethought and disrupted. Ultimately, the study foregrounds a paradigm shift to queer-decolonial pedagogy, an alternative approach to teaching Spanish in postcolonial contexts. Such an approach provides pedagogical guidelines for educators, students, scholars, and policymakers to design and to use gender-responsive and context-sensitive didactic materials in their classrooms.

References:

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