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Developing a pedagogy of pluralistic linguistic expression in the first year composition classroom

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DEVELOPING A PEDAGOGY OF PLURALISTIC LINGUISTIC EXPRESSION IN
THE FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

A Thesis

Presented To

Eastern Washington University

Cheney, Washington

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Masters of Arts English: Rhetoric and Technical Communication

By

April Dawn Ridgeway

Fall 2013

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MASTERS THESIS

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Abstract

Over the past 40 years, the field of composition has recognized of the importance of legitimizing students' linguistic diversity in the composition classroom. However, a framework for a pedagogy of linguistic diversity does not yet exist. This thesis seeks to provide such a framework by identifying a new genre of academic writing entitled Pluralistic Linguistic Expression (PLE). First, this thesis begins with the research question, how do educators respect students' linguistic diversity in writing while still teaching them rhetorically appropriate discourse? A review of the historical approaches to PLE and the current pedagogical research provides a framework for further discussion. By using the work of Karlyn Campbell as a lens to identify unique substantive and stylistic features of the PLE genre, this thesis conducts a rhetorical analysis of five published examples of PLE documents. This analysis substantiates the finding that PLE constitutes a new academic genre. Afterwards, current best practices of college composition are reviewed to show how the PLE genre can be integrated into established First Year Composition curriculums to form a framework for pedagogy. Finally, a performance of the PLE genre demonstrates the conclusion that conceptualizing PLE as an academic genre is a useful method for developing a pedagogy based on legitimizing linguistic diversity in academic writing.

Keywords: code-meshing, First Year Composition, genre, linguistic diversity, pedagogy, Pluralistic Linguistic Expression, Standard Academic Writing, Students Right to Their Own Language

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Chapter One: Forty Years of Students' Right to Their Own Language

Students' Right to Their Own Language

In March of 1972, the Executive Committee of the Conference of College Composition and Communication (CCCC) began a two-year journey to draft a position statement on the presence and use of student dialects in the classroom. The final document, entitled *Students' Right to Their Own Language* (SRTOL), was adopted as a resolution by the CCCC in April of 1974 and published in a special issue of the journal *College Composition and Communication* (CCC) in Fall, 1974 (p. 1). Acknowledging that the resolution would be both controversial and require extensive explanation, the CCCC accompanied the resolution with a background statement that supported the assertions made in the resolution with then current research on language and usage. The policy and background statement represent a seminal effort to address a historically problematic issue: How were teachers supposed to respond to linguistic variety, especially that of English dialectical difference, within the confines of the composition classroom?

In the introduction of the CCCC background statement, the committee acknowledged the “emotional nature of the controversy” and the resistance to linguistic variance represented by a public that principally values a standardized, edited English (1974, p. 2–4). The statement rejects the validity of such protests, using linguistic research and evidence to back a claim of the importance of enfranchising linguistic diversity. After establishing the committee’s position, the statement explores how common beliefs about the inferiority of language varieties can be rejected on the basis of

linguistic research. Then, the statement discusses research on how language varieties influence learning, concluding that they do not inhibit growth or acquisition of reading skills and can positively affect writing skills, if the essential functions of such skills are understood to be “expressing oneself, communicating information and attitudes, and discovering meaning through both logic and metaphor” (CCCC, 1974, p. 11). A discussion of educational policy follows, where the inadvisability and limitations of instruction based around handbook rules is contrasted with positive teaching methods that support linguistic diversity in the context of rhetorical choice. Finally, a list of 12 areas of competence for language teachers is presented. The document ends with an annotated bibliography of 129 entries that reflects the sociolinguistic concerns of the 1960’s and 1970’s and is divided into four sections aligned with the four principle assertions in the SRTOL statement for reader reference (CCCC, 1974).

The SRTOL resolution has formed the foundation for discussion of linguistic diversity in the fields of composition and communication for the last 40 years. A mere paragraph, the document simultaneously supports students’ rights to use any and all language varieties, chastises efforts to restrict linguistic variety as elitist and discriminatory, and strongly suggests the education of all English teachers to ensure linguistic diversity in the classroom:

We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another.

Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language. (CCCC, 1974, p. 1)

Of chief concern to the current discussion is the resolution's last sentence. While SRTOL attempts to protect students' rights by commenting on the experience and training of teachers, it fails to give specific information on what these stipulations should entail. Furthermore, the statement falls short of offering concrete pedagogical guidelines under which an educator or composition program can function. In fact, in a 2006 annotated bibliography update to the original background statement, the CCCC Language Policy Committee recognizes that the original resolution has benefited the composition community by sparking discussion:

Acceptance, recognition, and celebration of language diversity on a nation-wide educational level remain elusive. Indeed, present-day congressional and state legislative efforts to make English the sole official language of the U.S., as well as the standardized English only mandate of educational policies such as "No Child Left Behind," are current reminders that the language struggle continues. (p. 42)

In response to such ambiguity and lack of concrete progress toward the ideals presented in SRTOL, educators and researchers have continued exploring policies regarding linguistic variance over the last 40 years. Recently, one such effort has resulted in a proposed resolution to the original SRTOL document:

Let it be resolved that every native speaker of English and English language learner...has a right to code-mesh—to blend accents, dialects, and varieties of English with school-based, academic, professional, and public Englishes, in any and all formal and informal contexts...It further includes freedom to explore and to be taught in school how to exploit and combine the best rhetorical strategies, syntactical possibilities, and forms of usage from the various grammars (Young, Martinez, & Naviaux, 2011, p. xxi)

This resolution attempts to correct the ambiguity in the first SRTOL document by adopting a specific approach to incorporating and enfranchising linguistic diversity, as well as outlining a few pedagogical options toward teaching this approach in the classroom. While this position statement and the text it appears in work to move the conversation about the pedagogical implications of linguistic diversity forward, it still fails to produce a cohesive vision that can be put into play in a classroom.

Developing a Pedagogy

Currently, supporters of diversity of linguistic expression and the teachers seeking answers to pedagogical best practices have focused their attention on different acts that produce a document containing linguistic variation. These acts have been described under various neologisms and categorized behind yet more, although the current favorite is termed code-meshing. Favored though it may be, there is still dissention among scholars as to the term's definition, which actions constitute code-meshing, and whether it is indeed the preferred practice to support students' linguistic rights. In fact, some scholars are now concerned that the very term might enforce an expectation of writing that reifies concepts of appropriate writing practices, forcing a student to conform in a way that is no

different than asking them to only produce Standard Academic English (SAE) (Horner, 2013, March). In short, 40 years after STROL, scholars and educators are no closer to establishing a standard for linguistic diversity in writing that can be translated into classroom pedagogy.

The current debate surrounding the appropriateness or efficacy of different actions and methods for achieving linguistic diversity in writing distracts from the central point of STROL: Regardless of *how* it is accomplished, students must have the right to exercise the totality of their linguistic repertoire in their writing. Suresh Canagarajah observes, "The need for a neologism is proved by the way it challenges traditional ways of looking at experiences and opens up new perspectives" (2011b, p. 273). To refocus the discussion on STROL's central point, this thesis uses the term Pluralistic Linguistic Expression (PLE) to denote the blending of linguistic varieties in composition. This neologism is a noun that establishes a category of blended linguistic writing that is separate from the commonly recognized methods of achieving this blending and the multitude of terms used to describe those practices. PLE is meant to be an all-inclusive term that does not favor one method over another. For a composition to contain PLE, the blending must be a **deliberate, conscious** effort on behalf of the author to meet a **specific rhetorical purpose**. PLE may be achieved by blending linguistic dialects, varieties, registers, contrastive rhetorics, rhetorical patterns or styles, modalities, or genres.

PLE is not a label that would apply to circumstances in which writers accidentally shift between linguistic varieties. If, for example, a student slips from SAE into vernacular usage, but does so with no knowledge or intent, this student has made an error, not practiced PLE. PLE is not an excuse for writers to avoid learning the rules and

conventions of the academic genre or SAE. On the contrary, PLE reinforces the skills built under SAE by requiring the conscious and deliberate manipulation of those rules and genre conventions for a rhetorical purpose. A writer practicing PLE must be employing PLE in order to enhance or influence his or her rhetoric in a way that would not be possible through SAE alone. In this way, SAE and PLE exist in a symbiotic relationship where knowledge and mastery of both are valued.

The purpose of this thesis to explore questions surrounding the central issues in the linguistic diversity debate: How do educators respect students' identity and culture while still teaching them rhetorically appropriate discourse? How do educators prepare students for a world that expects SAE if they do not teach students to abandon their individual linguistic difference? These are questions of negotiating the intersection of identity and power. Add to the problem the recent increase in multilingual and international students in First Year Composition (FYC) classrooms, and the field is left with under-prepared and unsure educators who struggle to adequately serve their students.

Literature Review

While concern for the sanctity and importance of SAE is still prevalent, the field of composition has largely accepted the recommendations of SRTOL as appropriate and necessary for the composition classroom. However, acceptance has not led to consensus about the appropriate methods for inclusion of linguistic variance into the composition classroom or the pedagogy useful for actuating this inclusion. In addition, the concerns over enfranchising student language diversity and voice span more than just the discipline of composition, including scholars from World Englishes, Linguistics, and Teaching

English as a Second Language. This confluence of disciplines and voices has made it difficult to extract a useful thread of information and agreement necessary for putting SRTOL into practice in the classroom.

In an effort to move away from a traditional approach of removing linguistic variance completely from a student's writing, the practice of code-switching allows students to compose generatively in their home languages but eventually transfers the student's compositions into SAE for publication. Bizzell (1982/2011) conceptualizes this forced shift as a method for students to learn and assimilate into a new discourse community. Elbow (1999/2011) supports this discourse community approach by attempting to value students' linguistic backgrounds in their initial drafts but still teaching them SAE as the "language of power" appropriate for published or finished work.

The practice of code-switching is currently contested in favor of methods that allow an integration and inclusion of linguistic variance in students' writing from invention to publication. Translanguaging, code-meshing, and translanguaging are all neologisms applied to these practices of linguistic inclusion, each with a different definition and ideological foundation (Canagarajah, 2011b). For some, this practice is seen as developing a new paradigm for viewing language which moves away from conceptions of stability and regularity (Horner, Lu, Toyster, & Trimbur, 2011). For others, practices of blending SAE with other languages or dialects are defined as fundamentally oppositional in nature, with an ideology that espouses resistance to dominant power structures (Anzuldúa, 1987; Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2007; Young et al., 2011). The lack of agreement on the definition and purpose of the integration of linguistic variance into student writing and SAE has complicated efforts to accept,

understand, and teach the practice. This absence of consensus is visible in the way scholars choose to demonstrate their commitment to their ideas in academic publications; some scholars choose to simply discuss the need for linguistic variance while others deliberately mesh languages and dialects within their work to act out their arguments.

In addition to the discussion of how to support linguistic diversity, scholars have been trying to develop pedagogical methods of practicing their theories inside of the composition classroom. Graff (2011) and Welford (2011) have offered up personal accounts of classroom assignments and philosophies. These accounts are informative but far from generalizable or replicable. Hayes (2011) and Perryman-Clark (2012) have both offered qualitative studies of classroom pedagogy. Hayes presents a case-study of one student's changing viewpoint toward her own dialect, and Perryman-Clark offers textual analysis to examine how the discussion of linguistic variance can support programmatic learning goals in a composition classroom. These studies present a more complete picture of specific pedagogical practices, but do not actually involve students practicing linguistic blending in the classroom, only discussing the implications of such blending. Finally, Michael-Luna and Canagarajah present a complete analysis of a qualitative and quantitative study of code-meshing in the classroom (2008). Unlike other scholars, their study concentrates on a first-grade classroom and then generalizes results to make recommendations for higher education.

In all cases, scholars' work toward defining written linguistic variance in the classroom and developing a pedagogy to support this variance has succumbed to the same deficiencies of SRTOL: Theoretical acceptance and support has not resulted in any useful praxis for enacting scholars' commitment to enfranchising linguistic variance.

Scholars grappling with these questions have universally agreed that they struggle with how to effectively practice PLE themselves, let alone teach it in the classroom.

Throughout the research, the one common thread bridging different scholars' perspectives is the perception of PLE as an act grounded in rhetoric and conscious rhetorical choice.

The following thesis will use this thread as a stepping stone for establishing a view of PLE that allows for the building of pedagogical best practices.

Thesis Overview

To address questions of method and pedagogy, this thesis advances the claim that PLE is a distinct genre of academic writing. Through careful rhetorical analysis, the substantive and stylistic features of the genre will be established. Once the rhetorical features of the genre are understood, the PLE genre can be used to teach students how to consciously choose to integrate, or avoid, linguistic variance in their compositions according to the demands of the rhetorical situation. This understanding of rhetorical genre will then serve as the foundation for pedagogical best practices that can be integrated into current methods of teaching genre-based FYC.

It is important to note that this thesis does not reject the necessity of teaching SAE. Nor does it engage in the debate of whether SAE should be taught, promoted, elevated above other dialects, etc. Those conversations are outside the scope of this research. Bluntly, whether a consensus has been reached among academics or not, 40 years ago the NCTE strongly supported the acceptance and accommodation of linguistic variance in composition classrooms with SRTOL. This thesis moves forward from that recommendation, without entering the controversy surrounding it. Instead, this thesis is focused on practical application: The NCTE says educators need to deal with linguistic

variance; how is that accomplished? Do educators, as Patricia Bizzell suggests, treat variance as a symptom of learning a new discourse community and so support immersion and transfer to that discourse community, separating other varieties and dialects of English and regulating them to their own communities? Do all instances of blending linguistic variance represent errors in production symptomatic of learning a new discourse community? Do educators follow in Peter Elbow's footsteps by allowing students to compose in their native dialects and then force a transfer over to SAE at the last moment, thereby acknowledging student identity and culture while still teaching them to access the language of power? Or do educators jump on the critical pedagogy bandwagon driven by Vershawn Ashanti Young, Bruce Horner, and Suresh Canagarajah and encourage students to write in their own languages and varieties as an act of deliberate rebellion and rejection of the status quo? Are there other options entirely? This research focuses on providing a way for PLE to be present in the composition classroom without endangering the students by abandoning the teaching of SAE and without teaching students that their own varieties and dialects are lesser.

Additionally, this thesis is primarily focused on native English speakers, a new direction from current and previous research that frames the discussion in terms of multilingual students. It is therefore important to understand that according to this thesis, every individual speaks multiple "languages," even if they are "monolingual." In agreement with the field of World Englishes, this work rejects the idea of a single, static language English. Instead, it is acknowledged that many different versions of the language English exist, both as recognized dialects and as the presence of different registers that modify syntax, vocabulary, and structure. Therefore, an individual can be a

monolingual, native English speaker and yet speak multiple "languages." Language here, then, is a term with a broad semantic range, used to denote knowledge of different varieties, dialects, and registers. If nothing else, it is assumed that a student speaks a "home language" that is a variety of English and is learning SAE in the composition classroom.

To better understand the status of the conversations surrounding PLE and identify the gaps in current research, Chapter Two will cover the historical approaches to PLE and the current approaches to PLE pedagogy. Chapter Three includes a brief introduction to genre theory and will present a definition for genre that will form the basis for establishing PLE as a distinct academic genre. Then, Karlyn Campbell's article "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron" (1973/1999a) is used as a lens to guide a rhetorical analysis that establishes the substantive and stylistic features of the PLE genre. Chapter Four will then examine current best practices for FYC and explain how the PLE genre can be integrated into these classrooms. Finally, Chapter Five will demonstrate the PLE genre as a concluding argument to the efficacy of PLE as academic writing. This progression will combine to produce a framework that can finally begin to systematically address the pedagogical implications of the STROL statement, a step forward for the field of composition that is 40 years in the making.

Chapter Two: History and Pedagogy

Historical Approaches to Differences in Language

Code-meshing, a term that can be traced back to Canagarajah in 2006 (Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2007, p. 56), is a new way of looking at an old problem: When viewing academic writing through an “ideology of monolingualism” in which language is seen as “discrete, uniform, and stable” (Horner et al., 2011, p. 306), how does one deal with writing that includes deviations from Standard Written English? Here, Standard Academic English (SAE) can be understood as synonymous with any and all terms codifying English under a philosophy that supports a single, static, correct approach to the language, including but not limited to Standard Written English (SWE) and Edited American English (EAE).

In their paper “Opinion: Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach,” Horner et al. (2011) espouse a call to action that attempts to establish a new paradigm for viewing difference in language called a “translingual approach” (p. 303). Inspired by discussions arising from an October 2009 symposium at the University of Louisville, the essay’s purpose is to spark conversation and aggressive engagement of the topic of linguistic difference, with “an eye toward change in the conceptual, analytical, and pedagogical frameworks” (p. 315). As part of establishing the superiority of their approach, Horner et al. reviews two types of responses to linguistic variance that have characterized the teaching of writing in the United States (p. 306). Under the traditional approach, which is closely aligned with Current-Traditional rhetorical theory, differences in linguistic expression are suppressed or eradicated as a means of ensuring correctness in language and adherence to SAE. Horner et al. lists the drawbacks to such an approach,

citing the failure to acknowledge language as historically dynamic and fluid, as well as the use of the “correct” label to enforce dominant power structures (p. 306).

A more current and accepted approach to linguistic diversity appears to be less exclusionary and restrictive than its predecessor. This second response as outlined by Horner et al. seeks to recognize differences in language use. Each set of language is codified and assigned a specific sphere (p. 306). Commonly referred to as “code-switching,” supporters of this approach encourage students to move from one codified language to another depending on the situation.

In her article “Cognition, Convention, and Certainty” (1982/2011), Patricia Bizzell examines the difficulties students face when negotiating the differences between these language options and learning new language forms that are contained within and enforced by the expectations of different discourse communities. This article reviews research and theories in composition about the development of language and thought. The beliefs of inner-directed theorists like Linda Flower and John R. Hayes are examined alongside those of outer-directed theorists like Lev Vygotsky, George Dillon, and Stanley Fish. The combination of evidence presented from empirical research and qualitative studies alike attempts to outline the cognitive process of writing as well as deficiencies of the enmeshed theories. Ultimately, Bizzell’s goal is to “make it very clear that our teaching task is not only to convey information but also to transform students’ whole world view” (p. 367). While Bizzell clearly recognizes that “educational problems associated with language use should be understood as difficulties with joining an unfamiliar discourse community” (p. 377), she tacitly accepts that students must be

taught to switch codified languages in order to properly engage with each discourse community instead of having the choice to blend known linguistic sets or options.

Similarly, in his essay “Inviting the Mother Tongue: Beyond ‘Mistakes,’ ‘Bad English,’ and ‘Wrong Language’” (1999/2011), Peter Elbow exercises his famous “both/and” approach to student voice (Elbow, 2007) by espousing a rhetoric which values individual linguistic expression in academic writing during drafting while simultaneously requiring that all student work be edited into SAE as a final step toward publication. This article compares Elbow’s own experiences with his mother tongue with that of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to justify his pedagogical approach. He outlines his pedagogy by listing different requirements and classroom practices that he believes support linguistic variance while bowing to the inevitability of a public preference for SAE. Throughout, Elbow expresses a common conviction of proponents of code-switching: that “students cannot have that crucial experience of safety for writing *inside* our classrooms unless we can also show them how to be safe *outside*—that is, unless we can also help them produce final drafts that conform to Standard Written English” (p. 361). He further posits that to fail to teach students how to “master the dialects of power” is to fail to enable those students access to power through language (p. 380).

The rhetoric of code-switching is attractive because it appears to allow students to both exercise individualized means of expression and meaning making and negotiate the expectations of the world at large and the individual discourse communities the student inhabits. However, Horner et al. (2011) succinctly points out the problems with subscribing to this method. Code-switching fails to understand the ways in which a codified language is malleable and interacts with other languages outside of its

designated sphere. Also, it refuses to challenge the implicit power play of privileging the expression of specific codified languages in specific contexts (p. 306). In his essay, Elbow acknowledges three counterarguments to his method. First, speakers of nonmainstream dialects cannot simply copy edit drafts because they will have substantial differences in rhetorical and organization structure (p. 370). Second, his pedagogy will accelerate the colonialization and eventual extinction of nonmainstream dialects. Third, the pedagogy is too accommodating and not sufficiently rigorous to allow students access to the dialect of power (p. 380–381). While he rejects each of these arguments in turn, later research and theoretical approaches to linguistic variance uphold each argument and demonstrate the weakness of his approach.

From Code-Switching to Code-Meshing

In response to the deficiencies in code-switching theories, multiple scholars have rallied around a new multilinguistic and pluralistic approach to teaching writing: code-meshing (Condon, 2011; Graff, 2011; Horner et al., 2011; Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2007; Leki, 2004; Welford, 2011; Young et al., 2011). Instead of requiring students to select from discrete, codified languages depending on discourse community or audience, code-meshing operates on the assumption that students can consciously make a choice to blend or mesh different language varieties and dialects to form new ways of meaning making.

In her article “Meaning and Development of Academic Literacy in a Second Language,” Ilona Leki (2004) argues that the increased demand for English learners to develop academic literacy is both ethically problematic and possibly harmful to language learners (p. 330). Without using the term code-meshing, Leki addresses the ways in

which literacy values vary between different cultures, including responsibility for meaning making and contrastive rhetorics. Her article outlines four distinct categories in which differences in the definition of academic literacy between English and other languages can negatively impact students: correctness, range, identity issues, and academic discourse community values. While not explicitly espousing the practice of combining these differences within a single context, Leki nonetheless acknowledges that multilingual students will naturally and unavoidably code-mesh during the composition process, and she advocates an increased awareness and tolerance of multilinguistic expression. Likewise, Horner et al. (2011) calls code-meshing the “translingual approach” that argues in favor of

- (1) honoring the power of all language users to shape language to specific ends;
- (2) recognizing the linguistic heterogeneity of all users of language both within the United States and globally; and (3) directly confronting English monolingualist expectations by researching and teaching how writers can work with and against, not simply within, those expectations. (p. 305)

Code-meshing, then, is a concept that goes beyond simply allowing students to combine different linguistic styles to a practice that is “used for specific rhetorical and ideological purposes in which a multilingual speaker intentionally integrates local and academic discourse as a form of resistance, reappropriation, and/or transformation of the academic discourse” (Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2007, p. 56). Similarly, Horner et al. (2011) clearly indicate that code-meshing is more than a simple approach to diversifying language in writing. They do this by examining their translingual approach in three ways: 1) in terms of redefining language fluency, proficiency, and competence; 2) in terms of

its support of ESL, bilingual, and foreign language instruction; and 3) in terms of its implications in language rights, immigration, and state language policy.

Code-meshing has gained sufficient purchase as a viable alternative to historical approaches to language difference to warrant a thorough investigation of the topic in the NCTE published text *Code-Meshing as World English: Pedagogy, Policy, Performance* (Young & Martinez, 2011). As the name indicates, this anthology, edited by Vershawn Ashanti Young and Aja Y. Martinez, investigates the implications of the adoption of code-meshing in terms of its influences on composition pedagogy, policy, and performance. In the introduction to the text, Young et al. clearly define the scope of the term:

[We] envision code-meshing as a way to promote the linguistic democracy of English to increase the acquisition and egalitarian, effective use of English in school, in government, in public, and at home. We look forward to the day....when teaching English prescriptively ("These are the rules; learn how to follow them!") is replaced with models of instruction for teaching English descriptively ("These are the rules from various language systems; learn to combine them effectively"). (p. xx-xxi)

PLE Pedagogy

As the support behind code-meshing grows, a new understanding of how to both legitimize and teach code-meshing in the classroom must be developed. In noting the difficulty of actively adopting code-meshing in the classroom, Young et al. (2011) dismiss the currently dominate practice of code-switching in the United States as a practice that "isn't much different from legal racial segregation" (p. xxiii). Quoting

Smith, Young et al. find “the very goal of teaching students to change from their dialects to Standard English...to be hypocritical and ideologically at odds with efforts to support linguistic rights (p. xxiii). Young et al. also acknowledge that teachers of code-meshing will encounter strong resistance due to the objections of the public and “the demands of the marketplace” (p. xxvii).

Currently, partly due to the newness of the code-meshing movement and partly due to concerns from skeptics, research into the pedagogy of code-meshing is just beginning. Nichole E. Stanford (2011), in an academically code-meshed article “Publishing in the Contact Zone: Strategies from the Cajun Canaille,” notes, “Code-meshing is a difficult strategy to master....one that is so challenging that most academics do not know how to do it, far less how to teach it” (p. 129). Published articles on the subject tend to each concentrate on a different method or focus for code-meshing or linguistic diversity in the classroom, usually limiting the scope of their investigation to research within a specific dialect or population.

In “Code-Meshing meets Teaching the Conflicts,” Gerald Graff (2011) turns his attention toward using debate, or the rhetoric of conflict, to “help bridge the gap between African American students and our society’s dominant forms of literacy” (p. 12–13). In his essay, which is a position statement that only alludes to (as opposed to explicates) his own teaching practices, Graff is using a rhetorical strength of the African American community to enfranchise student voice in the classroom. In doing so, Graff aligns himself with Vershawn Ashanti Young’s support of code-meshing in his book *Your Average Nigga: Performing Race, Literacy, and Masculinity* (2007). Throughout his article, Graff compares a pedagogical approach that prioritizes argumentative rhetoric

and specifically the code-meshed combination of Black English Vernacular (BEV) and SAE with the assertion supported by Young that code-meshing would “help undo the reified and rigidified associations that oppose these dialects in the first place” (as cited in Graff, 2011, p. 19). However, Graff realizes that he has failed to address “*how* to mesh vernacular and standard dialects—about which particular meshing are effective with which audiences and which are not” (p. 13). He goes on to point out that Young has also failed to answer several pertinent questions, among them “What does *competent* code-meshing look like in student writing and speaking, and how will teachers determine the difference between successful and effective code-meshing and awkwardly cobbled together mixes of formal and vernacular English?” (p. 16). Therefore, the praxis of the pedagogy remains in doubt.

Similar to Graff, Theresa Malphrus Welford (2011) writes about her own classroom choices in “Code-Meshing and Creative Assignments: How Students Can Stop Worrying and Learn to Write Like Da Bomb.” In this article, she capitalizes on the similarity between the code-meshing movement and expressionistic rhetoric by “encourag[ing] them to ‘mesh’ informal language and academic language in *all* their written work... I give them assignments that blur the boundaries between traditional academic writing and creative writing” (p. 21). Welford’s article examines, with considerable disdain, the perceptions that establish the expectations of the role of college composition instructors and the quality of writing their students produce. She then makes a case for the role creative assignments can take in the academic composition classroom, noting the disadvantages of furthering a pedagogy that supports writing deemed inappropriate outside of the walls of her classroom. The strength of this article comes

from a plethora of textual examples from successful assignments her students have completed. She outlines assignments that require students to write in the voice of a character from a piece of literature, the use of multigenre research papers, presenting academic argumentation in the form of a conversation or play, and the blending of unusual stylistic features such as second-person pronouns and present-tense verbs with academic genres (Welford, 2011). In all of these examples, the definition of code-meshing is expanded beyond considerations of linguistic variety to include the meshing of genre, rhetoric, and style. However, while espousing the philosophy of code-meshing and presenting a method of incorporating the practice into the classroom, Welford's essay stops before giving any useful directions on how to teach and evaluate the code-meshing practice. Her examples persuasively demonstrate the effectiveness of her teaching strategies, but they stop short of outlining the steps that yielded the results, therefore failing to provide replicable methods to the reader.

Moving closer to qualitative research with definable results, Amanda Hayes (2011) focuses on SRTOL and Appalachian dialects in her article "Op'nin' the Door for Appalachia in the Writing Classroom." Hayes' purpose is to "explore possible reasons why recognition and respect have not been given to Appalachian dialects and speakers historically, in addition to reasons why these dialects do merit the respect envisioned under the CCCC resolution [SRTOL]" (p. 169). She begins this exploration by contextualizing a working definition of the term "Appalachia" (p.169). She then turns to a literature review that demonstrates why Appalachian culture has been overlooked by establishing outside ignorance of cultural distinction, cultural discrimination, and the influences of economic and social concerns (p. 170–172). Like several scholars before

her, Hayes notes that even teachers who share the Appalachian dialects of their students “may feel compelled to save their students from this [prejudiced social] judgment via enforcing standardized dialect and cultural values” (p. 173).

After outlining the harmful elements specific to Appalachian dialects, Hayes continues by building a case for the importance of working to preserve them. Again referencing the ideals presented in SRTOL, Hayes claims Appalachian dialects are important due to cultural and linguistic uniqueness, evidence of linguistic creativity, and their inseparability from students’ identity and culture which makes it impossible to overlook or remove dialects without harming the students. Nowhere in Hayes’s article is the word code-meshing mentioned; however, she is clearly aligned with both its purpose and its practice:

Student speakers of Appalachian dialects deserve to have their dialects treated as an active part of the composition classroom, along with EAE, rather than ignored or treated as the object of required corrections (p. 173). . . . This in no way precludes EAE from playing an academic role; students deserve to understand Standard English as the language of power, but they also need awareness of it for what it is at root: another form of English, appropriate to some but not all discourse communities, just as their own mother tongues are most appropriate to others. (p. 176)

Hayes ends her article by presenting a case study of a single student from her own FYC classroom. Her student, Audrey, is described as a “life-long resident of the area who had foregone college in favor of the workforce” and who had returned to a community college to improve her education and employability (p. 178). Audrey was selected as a

participant because she exhibited a common viewpoint of her dialect: Instead of feeling deeply connected to her dialect or deeply disdainful of it, she instead “ha[d] never much considered [her] dialect one way or another, beyond ‘knowing’ that deviations from Standard English represent incorrectness or a lack of intelligence and will bar them from academic or professional opportunity” (p. 177–178). Hayes’s case study grew out of action research in her own classroom; her methods include beginning the class with a language survey to explain educational experiences with local dialects and to define students’ perceptions of “Appalachian dialect” versus “Standard English” (p. 178). Students then examined the concept of dialect through assigned readings and finally completed a capstone project of a “language analysis paper examining various aspects of dialect and an essay examining two specific language situations they might typically encounter, each at a separate setting...” (p. 178). The survey and writing samples were examined in the case study to establish the change in attitude toward personal dialect that Audrey experienced. While Audrey initially exhibited a very negative attitude toward her dialect in the professional and academic world, over the course of the semester she demonstrates an increased awareness of linguistic choice, a connection between her dialect and her sense of community and culture, and the appropriateness of studying language differences in an education setting as well as situational awareness of when her dialect might be more rhetorically effective in the workplace. Hayes uses this informal analysis of Audrey’s transformation to support her claim of the importance of foregrounding and preserving Appalachian dialect in the classroom. Like the rest of the sources reviewed thus far, the weakness of this article is its lack of specificity in methods that interferes with the ability to generalize the results. While Hayes does include an

appendix that outlines examples of supplemental texts she includes in her instruction which would be helpful to a teacher trying to design a similar curriculum, she does not provide enough detail to establish a pedagogical practice.

Just as Hayes's work supports code-meshing without referencing the practice, Staci M. Perryman-Clark (2012) offers a view of a classroom that supports discussion and inclusion of linguistic diversity without concentrating on code-meshing as the method. In "Toward a Pedagogy of Linguistic Diversity: Understanding African American Linguistic Practices and Programmatic Learning Goals," Perryman-Clark "offer[s] an example of one course that focuses on rhetoric and composition scholarship as the discipline for investigation with the focus exclusively on Ebonics as a specific African American linguistic practice," as a way to enfranchise linguistic diversity in the classroom (p. 231). Perryman-Clark's course objectives "aim to introduce students to Ebonics as a legitimate form of communication, to introduce them to the discipline of rhetoric and composition, and to fulfill the shared learning goals designated by our first-year writing program" (p. 231). For her research, Perryman-Clark chose to design and conduct a qualitative study that employs textual analyses from a student research assignment to investigate how well student learning objectives were met in the context of an Ebonics-based curriculum structured around studying the discipline of rhetoric and composition.

The participants in Perryman-Clark's study included 21 students recruited from a total of 23 students who voluntarily registered in a themed FYC course in the fall semester of 2008–2009. The participants differ from those in similar studies by the diversity of race and ethnicities represented: African-American, African, Asian, Latino,

European, and European-American ethnicities were all present (p. 233). The assignment analyzed, the disciplinary literacies assignment, “requires that students demonstrate knowledge of Ebonics and the field of rhetoric and composition by addressing the ways that Ebonics is discussed in disciplinary published scholarship” (p. 232). Perryman-Clark’s methods for textual analysis involved first reading each essay and identifying regularly occurring patterns and themes that identified students’ interpretations of disciplinary conversations. She then categorized excerpts from the essays that corresponded to each theme to place each student’s essay within one or more of the categories. Textual evidence of how the essays were categorized was provided by two examples that demonstrated each theme. Finally, Perryman-Clark interpreted each text and assessed the quality of the arguments present for alignment with learning objectives (p. 234). Perryman-Clark determined,

From these discussions, it is clear that students may need additional work with some of the learning goals, particularly the goal that calls for them to apply methods of inquiry to generate new knowledge (p. 240)...it is clear that not only are they [the students] participating in academic inquiry when they are able to talk about research, but also, and perhaps more importantly, they are participating in the conversations as active members of the field. (p. 241)

The strengths of this study include a clear outline of methods and results, multiple examples from student texts to substantiate conclusions, and an appendix which provides the entire prompt for the assignment analyzed as well as possible readings. Individuals interested in replicating the study would be able to design a similar classroom pedagogy and assignment based on the information provided. Perhaps more importantly, the study

demonstrates the ability of a pedagogy focused on a specific linguistic variety of English to successfully support programmatic learning goals, an important step towards generating greater support for PLE. However, since this particular article does not focus on developing linguistic variety as an authentic and valid choice for writing within the context of academic assignments, it is somewhat less useful for the discussion on PLE as a specific pedagogy.

The most thorough account of code-meshing in the classroom comes from S. Michael-Luna and A. Suresh Canagarajah's 2007 article "Multilingual Academic Literacies: Pedagogical Foundations for Code Meshing in Primary and Higher Education." In this paper, the authors use a 28-month participant-observer ethnographic study of a first grade classroom to outline six strategies for supporting code-meshing in the classroom. Their research question for the study was, "How does language used by teachers, students, and texts within literacy events contribute to negotiating texts in a first grade dual language (Spanish-English) classroom?" (p. 59). The research was conducted in a large urban English-dominant elementary school in a medium sized city in the Upper Midwestern United States. The study examines code-meshing in a context not previously explored: a bilingual education 90/10 model where students receive 90% of their instruction in their primary language until they are at or above their grade reading level (p. 59). Study participants included 25 students with Spanish as their primary language and focused on seven-year old Mexican immigrant students from families below the poverty line. Study methods included critical discourse analysis of participant interviews and multimodal artifacts (p. 60).

The study evidence offers support of six key pedagogic strategies for supporting code-meshing in the classroom:

- A multilingual text selection
- B activation of knowledge from inside and outside the text
- C valuing multilingual code meshing
- D modeling oral code meshing
- E modeling written code meshing
- F strategic scaffolding of text negotiation (p. 60)

In their article, Michael-Luna and Canagarajah offer descriptive evidence of the effectiveness of each of these strategies as they were applied to the first grade classroom. They conclude that the code-meshing strategies employed by the teacher “served to increase opportunity for students to engage with content area knowledge and have a formally recognized and valued multilingual voice” (p. 68).

In order to extrapolate from the results their application to a higher education context, Michael-Luna and Canagarajah compared their study with findings from a previously reported ethnography in a higher education (HE) classroom, also conducted by Canagarajah in 2007. This earlier study is described as a failure because “while the instructor intentionally created space... for critical reflection and critique of academic writing, the students and instructor were unable to create clear opportunities for coherent code-meshed academic writing in high-stakes essay writing” (p. 70). It is worth noting that this study employed a code-switching model of instruction. By applying the results of their work with first grade students to the context of HE, the authors conclude that “a move toward valuing multivocal, multilingual rhetorical strategies and knowledge will

serve to bring HE academic literacies into line with the linguistic pluralism of recent scholarly writing as well as of ‘real world’ communications” (p. 72). While helpful for the consideration of how to set up a classroom or program that legitimizes, models, and encourages code-meshing, this article does not define how to teach deliberate choices that lead to successful student code-meshing, nor does it address the explicit teaching of code-meshing as a rhetorical strategy.

Opportunities for Future Research

Clearly, current research into code-meshing pedagogy falls short of the NCTE goal of “be[ing] taught in school how to exploit and combine the best rhetorical strategies, syntactical possibilities, and forms of usage from the various grammars” (Young et al., 2011, p. xxi). The current focus of pedagogical theory concentrates on how to legitimize or encourage PLE practices in the classroom and create opportunities for students to utilize the full spectrum of their multilinguistic backgrounds. Further research is necessary to understand the intricacies of teaching students how to consciously choose when and how to exercise PLE for a product that accomplishes their individual purpose. In his article entitled “Code-Meshing Meshed Codes: Some Complications and Possibilities,” John Vance (2009) acknowledges that one of the primary challenges to the acceptance, and therefore the teaching, of code-meshing is “the fundamental instability, slipperiness and polyvalence of the ‘codes’ in question” (p. 281). He offers an important caution against deconstructing code-meshed documents and establishing reified categories based on code-meshed samples. What is consistently represented in the research reviewed is the conviction that PLE and the act of code-meshing is a part of rhetorical choice and should be approached as a part of rhetorical instruction in the

classroom. If the goal is to establish a sound basis of pedagogical best practices for classroom instruction, rhetorical analysis of primary sources which employ PLE could help to define the rhetorical choices that an author must make in order to code-mesh effectively in a document. Far from confining PLE to limited categories, such an analysis would help educators understand the full rhetorical situation of PLE discourse and how attention to different aspects of the rhetorical situation could guide a writer's choices towards effective PLE strategies. The following chapter performs such an analysis, conceptualizing the rhetorical elements of PLE discourse as components that establish a unique genre of academic writing, a genre that can be later used to inform pedagogical practices.

Chapter 3: The PLE Genre

The idea that language choice can perform an integral rhetorical function is not a new one. In “Sounding Cajun: The Rhetorical Use of Dialect in Speech and Writing,” Dubois and Horvath (2002) acknowledge, “People can often use their conscious or unconscious knowledge of dialectal variation to achieve some rhetorical effect: friendliness, humor, earthiness, honesty, nostalgia, and a host of other possibilities” (p. 264). Similarly, John Vance (2009) notes, “Students, who (like everyone) are always already code-meshers, thus learn how to select and manipulate multiple codes at once and modulate their employment of them in terms of the different rhetorical exigencies they encounter” (p. 282). Indeed, the father of rhetoric himself would concur: “For it is not enough to know *what* we ought to say; we must also say it as we ought; much help is thus afforded towards producing the right impression of a speech” (Aristotle, 2011, Book 3, Ch. 1, 1404a).

However, difficulty is encountered when individuals attempt to convey a plurality of language variety in writing:

But in writing, standardization imposes a special problem for using linguistic variation rhetorically. Written languages homogenize much of the linguistic variation that identifies a speaker’s background, and if writers want readers to know a narrator’s or a character’s social and geographic background, they either have to state it explicitly or break the rules....The problem for writers who break the rules...is that misspellings [or other forms demonstrating PLE] are also the sign of an uneducated person. (Dubois & Horvath, 2002, p. 264–265)

Within the walls of the education system, this difficulty is particularly apparent:

“Writing...is generally considered a different process, and the requirement that it be conducted in both standard format and Standard English remains relatively sacrosanct” (Nettell, 2011, p. 170). Aristotle underscores this tension throughout Book Three of *Rhetoric*, noting that “the style of written prose is not that of spoken oratory” (2011, Book 3, Ch. 12, 1413b). Aristotle defines and endorses a concept of "correct" language, insisting that “the foundation of good style is the correctness of language” (Book 3, Ch. 5, 1407a) and warning that

bad taste in language may take any of four forms:—(1) the misuse of compound words...(2) the employment of strange words...(3) the use of long, unseasonable, or frequent epithets... (4) Metaphors like other things may be inappropriate. Some are so because they are ridiculous;... Others are too grand and theatrical.... (Book 3, Ch.5, 1406a–1406b)

Thankfully, current linguistic research and composition theory departs from our Aristotelian parentage on the subject of reified language:

The history of the English language is, after all, well documented, and the arbitrariness of the eventual codification process and the changing fashions behind what today is prescribed as proper and correct are plain to see for all who agree to look....(Nettell, 2011, p. 169–170)

Nettell goes on to say that "prescriptive condemnation of certain varieties of writing as substandard and subliterate is clearly as detrimental to the future success of these learners as it is to university retention rates" (2011, p. 170). However, supporters of PLE and the writing practices that produce PLE in an academic context (like code-meshing) are still at

a loss as to how to assess the efficacy of something so variable (see Graff, 2011; Hayes, 2011; Stanford, 2011). Suresh Canagarajah (2011b) explores the complexity of the situation from a teacher's perspective:

We have to also explore ways of judging rhetorical effectiveness. Are there effective and ineffective forms of code-meshing? How do we distinguish them?...Teachers have to help their students explore the implications of their choices for style, voice, aesthetics, and effect, and teachers must be open to learning and accepting styles, voices, aesthetics that they are unaccustomed to. (p. 278)

If, as Vance argues, the instability of codes creates an impenetrable barrier for instruction and assessment of PLE in student writing, judgment of such writing on purely rhetorical grounds is an equally improbable, if not impossible, task for teachers, despite PLE being clearly rhetorical in nature. Therefore, it is necessary to turn toward other areas of composition theory to help create a robust picture of PLE that is measurable and assessable.

Mixing in Genre Theory

When turning toward other areas of composition theory for support, it is necessary to consider theories which are able to add acceptable *ethos* (credibility of character) to that of PLE, in order to avoid the current status quo where

too many education policymakers, school administrators, and teachers prefer to disregard the linguistic evidence and stick with what they were taught in school: unquestioning respect for one language and one nation as well as for the well-defined and even better defended borders both require. (Nettel, 2011, p. 170)

Where else in composition theory exists a practice that is at once readily recognizable but highly variable, that is already a part of the established FYC curriculum and yet still contains ephemeral borders in definition that are adaptable and highly contested? What emerged as an acceptable, teachable, and even assessable answer was the concept of rhetorical genre, explored at length by Karlyn Campbell (1973/1999a) in her article "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron." While educators may be comfortably familiar with the Aristotelian definition of rhetoric "as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (2011, Book 1, Ch. 2, 1355b), a stable definition of rhetorical genre has yet to be conclusively established. Therefore, before diving headlong into a definition and application of rhetorical genre to the problem of PLE, it is useful to review the applicable components of current genre theory.

Genre: Stable Instability.

A stable working definition of genre has eluded students and theorists alike for years. From a student perspective, genre is a term used to denote a taxonomy, a structure into which their discourse must fit. Primarily focusing on appropriate content and rigid form, students often conceptualize genre as a series of formulaic rules for composition. Others regard genre in a more literary sense, where the content denotes the category. While student concepts of genre can be easily dismissed on the basis of their ignorance, Miller (1984) notes that even an exploration of genre from a theoretical rhetorical perspective yields "rhetorical genres [that] have been defined by similarities in strategies or forms in the discourses, by similarities in the audience, by similarities in modes of thinking, by similarities in rhetorical situations" (p. 151). As Miller points out, these competing paradigms for the concept of genre create a difficult situation for theorists, and

students, who are interested in both understanding what genre is and how genre is used in both classification and construction of discourse artifacts.

Up until Miller's seminal essay "Genre as Social Action" (1984), genre had been regarded as either a definition applied to similarities in substance or similarities in form. Miller was the first to attempt to bridge these disparate systems by proposing that "a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (1984, p. 151). However, theorists in the last 30 years have been moving away from this model to one that centers around the concept of contextualized action instead (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Bakhtin, 2001; Benoit, 2000; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 2004; Miller, 1984). Specifically, in their essay "Genre Identification and Communicative Purpose: A Problem and a Possible Solution," Askehave and Swales (2001) argue strongly against the classification of genre based on communicative purpose, exploring the problems of such a model and proposing a classification system based on contextualized action as the remedy.

Examining the work of Miller and Askehave and Swales in combination with research by other theorists (Bakhtin, 2001; Benoit, 2000; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 2004) yields several common themes which can be used to establish a working definition of genre. Such a definition needs to blend the considerations of the purpose-driven and action-driven approaches as well as substantive and formal elements. It should be able to be used not only to examine a text rhetorically for theoretical purposes, but also applicable to expedient designation of genre to an artifact. The synthesis of theoretical perspectives yields a definition that consists of five components:

- Genre is an innate constituent of all discourse
- Genre is formed by recurrent action rooted in socially-constructed exigence
- Genre contains within it all the considerations of rhetoric
- Genre can be contextualized at different levels
- Genre is open-class, relatively stable, with blurred boundaries

Each component is founded on previous research, and together they attempt to create a complete picture of the term genre that is useful both in theory and in practice.

One of the first considerations in establishing the definition of genre is the question of when genre comes into being. Benoit (2000) established genre as resulting from rhetorical choices; rhetors construct genre as they make specific rhetorical choices that recur over time. While this perception places the genesis of genre on the shoulders of individual rhetors and their choices, a more commonly held belief is that genre is the product of situated social experience (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Bakhtin, 2001; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 2004; Miller, 1984). Here, genre is an innate part of communication and thus informs and constrains appropriate rhetorical action. Bakhtin (2001) points out that “the forms of language and the typical forms of utterances, that is, speech genres, enter our experience and our consciousness together, and in close connection with one another” (p. 956). Therefore, all discourse is necessarily already part of a genre, and indeed, it is not possible to separate utterances from genre while retaining meaning (Bakhtin, 2001). Genre is not only a noun of classification here, but a verb for the complex interconnected actions individuals take while communicating.

Because genre is an embedded part of all discourse, genre is by necessity based in recurrence (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Bakhtin, 2001; Benoit, 2000; Berkenkotter &

Huckin, 2004; Miller, 1984). Miller is careful to define recurrence as more than the material or subjective manifestation of a situation. Instead “recurrence is an intersubjective phenomenon, a social occurrence, and cannot be understood on materialist terms” (p. 156). The impetus behind the social situation which recurs is what Miller terms exigence, or the ability to be aware that a need for communication exists. “Exigence is a form of social knowledge—a mutual construing of objects, events, interests, and purposes that not only links them but also makes them what they are: an objectified social need” (Miller, 1984, p. 157).

Genre, then, grows out of social interactions which naturally establish patterns of communication (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Bakhtin, 2001; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 2004; Miller, 1984). Each situation is unique in and of itself, but the interpretation of that situation—the contract of meaning-making between the rhetor and his/her audience—establishes a greater pattern of genre (Miller, 1984). Miller describes this definition of genre as being “...more than a formal entity; it becomes pragmatic, fully rhetorical, a point of connection between intention and effect, an aspect of social action” (p. 153).

The above discussion concerns the substantive elements of a definition of genre. All previous research agrees that formal elements, those observable constituents of the actual artifact that are the focus of rhetorical theory, cannot be relied upon as the primary classifiers of genre. However, they are still necessary components of any functioning definition. Therefore, a move to define genre in terms of social action does not negate the importance of form, content, style, or rhetorical agents within the concept of genre (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Bakhtin, 2001; Benoit, 2000; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 2004; Miller, 1984). In fact, there is still a strong push to use different aspects of the rhetorical

situation as a basis for identifying genre, but in conjunction with other elements (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Benoit, 2000). Miller agrees by acknowledging the importance of context, form, and substance as the actions that constitute a genre but situates them in a lower level of hierarchical considerations within the overall scope of genre. Benoit turns to the Burkean pentad as a basis for a full understanding of rhetorical action. In his work, Benoit makes an important contribution by establishing that the rhetorical choices of purpose-act, scene-act, agent-act, and agency-act can be employed to varying degrees within the same genre. “The extent to which each ratio influences the invention of discourse varies from one rhetorical act or group of rhetorical acts to another” (Benoit, 2000, p. 180). Therefore, while these considerations are inherently part of the overall generic picture, the degree to which they are analyzed, utilized, or emphasized will vary between individual artifacts contained within a single genre or in comparison of different genres to one another, hence their unreliability as key indicators of genre.

Due to the shifting nature of the constituent actions and choices that make up the overall picture of genre, a definition of genre can be generalized or specified at different hierarchical levels (Benoit, 2000; Miller, 1984). In fact, in order to gain an illuminating picture of genre, it is necessary to determine to which level of abstraction the term genre is being applied. Otherwise, attempts to conceptualize genre in multiple levels results in a complicated interplay of considerations which yields more confusion than elucidation (Tardy, 2003). This means that while genre is still centered around recurrent action based on social exigence, genre can be analyzed with respect to a specific content, form, audience, or so on (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Benoit, 2000; Miller, 1984).

Finally, due to the fact genre is a manifestation of a social construction, genre is by nature an open class system, meaning it can change in response to the time and society in which it is employed (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Bakhtin, 2001; Benoit, 2000; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 2004; Miller, 1984). Berkenkotter and Huckin (2004) caution that “to be fully effective... genres must be flexible and dynamic, capable of modification according to the rhetorical exigencies of the situation. At the same time, though, they must be stable enough to capture those aspects of situations that tend to recur” (p. 304). It is therefore imperative that genre is not abstracted to a point in which it no longer encompasses a predictable social exigence; nor is it useful to attempt to define genre in terms of a finite situation that represents an individual variation that is either not recurrent or not socially constructed. Also, this lack of a concrete and static generic concept leads to categories of genre which have soluble boundaries (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 2004; Miller, 1984). Depending on the level of hierarchical focus, timing, or culture, an artifact may be interpreted as belonging to multiple genres and genre categories may include overlap.

After considering the current theories that compose a working definition of rhetorical genre, several parallels between genre theory and PLE become apparent. Just as genre is an inseparable part of all discourse, PLE is the picture of linguistic reality where different registers, discourse communities, varieties, and dialects are used together as natural elements of communication. Likewise, the degree to which an individual exercises PLE is regulated by socially-constructed exigence; we perceive when it is appropriate to practice PLE based on our audience and a mutually agreed upon, socially constructed expectation for standard action. Indeed, the current struggle for acceptance of

PLE in SAE writing is hinged on the lack of mutual agreement of exigency, which seemingly negates the possibility of it becoming recurrent action. Genre and PLE are both constituents of rhetoric. As part of rhetoric, PLE can be analyzed at the different intersections of the rhetorical situation. Finally, and most obviously, the boundaries of PLE are extremely blurry, and the content of PLE is constantly shifting. It is the purpose of this thesis to establish the stability of PLE by defining it as a rhetorical genre, subject to substantive and formative features like any other genre currently taught in FYC. In order to do so, the work of Karlyn Campbell (1973/1999a) is used as a lens for analyzing linguistic artifacts and establishing the common substantive and formative features that classify the group of artifacts as a typified response to a social situation.

Legitimizing New Genre

In 1973, Karlyn Campbell was collecting feminist documents during the beginning of the second wave of the women's movement. As she later reflects, the diversity of students at Cal State, along with protests and the rise of counterculture, "was a milieu conducive to reexamining assumptions and to developing alternative ways of analyzing the discourses of protestors" (1999b, p. 138). In preparation for a presentation on social movements at the Western States Convention, Campbell began to attempt to analyze the rhetoric of the movement: "Like a well-trained graduate student, I tried to make the women's liberation materials fit one or more of the published templates for the analysis of social movement rhetoric, but the discourse resisted and I could not write the paper" (1999b, p. 138–139). Campbell was experiencing a similar dilemma of classification to that of current PLE scholars:

If we all rely on the meshing of different languages and dialects in our daily discursive practices, and if, moreover, the languages on which we rely are themselves amalgamations of other languages and dialects, then how can we even appropriately affix labels to the codes we use, much less map the dynamics of our “meshing” of them? (Vance, 2009, p. 281)

In other words, how do scholars or teachers make sense of that which defies existing labels? How do they dissect, discuss, elevate, teach, and practice that which is neither here nor there, neither academic nor alternative, neither completely homogenous nor truly heterogeneous from traditional methods of composition?

Campbell’s solution was to “try to produce a framework that would encompass all of the different kinds of discourse identified with women’s liberation” (1999b, p. 139) by moving away from the paradigm of a movement and re-conceptualizing the rhetoric of women’s liberation as a genre. While Campbell admits, “if I were writing today, I would not call the rhetoric of the second wave a genre,” she still insists that

I do not believe there is any general framework that will fit the rhetoric of these different activists. Because members constitute a distinctive group, because the aggravations they face and the social structures that inhere in their communities are distinctive to them, each will generate distinctive rhetoric. (1999b, p. 139)

Although Campbell may retract her use of the term genre, it remains an apt heuristic for developing a framework within which educators can teach, support, and legitimize PLE in the classroom. Herbert Simons (1970/1999) in the article “Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements” attempts to “provide a broad framework within which persuasion in the social movements, particularly reformist

and revolutionary movements, may be analyzed” (p. 393). At first glance, this outline of rhetorical considerations for the leader of a movement and the complications that result from attempting to satisfy those objectives would be a good starting point for the analysis of PLE. After all, many documents containing PLE and the authors who write them are campaigning for a change in the academic paradigm. However, like feminist rhetoric, PLE lacks the leaders, cooperation, or unity necessary to define it as a movement. The very diversity of terms used to describe PLE are exemplifiers of the fact: translingual writing (Horner et al., 2011), multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), translanguaging (Garcia & Baetens, 2009; Canagarajah, 2011a), plurilingualism (Council of Europe, 2000), and of course the neologism presented here, PLE, among others. The concept of rhetorical genre is therefore more useful for the examination of this body of composition, which can be grouped as alike in rhetorical features and ideological commitments yet lacking overall cohesion or focus.

Substantive Elements

Campbell argues that a body of discourses “merits *separate* critical treatment if, and only if, the symbolic acts of which it is composed can be show[n] to be distinctive on both substantive and stylistic grounds” (1973/1999a, p. 397). While Campbell does not adequately define what is considered substantive or stylistic in this essay, she does examine feminist rhetoric by its departure from traditional rhetoric in the areas of “conventional or familiar definitions... analyses of rhetorical situations, and descriptions of rhetorical movements” (1973/1999a, p. 405). Subsequently, Campbell has clarified her definitions: “The substantive category was designed to capture the ideology, the set of demands for change and the rationales offered in their support, that characterized second

wave feminism” (1999b, p. 140). A close look at her outline of substantive elements shows attention to divergent or unique ideology and conceptualization of elements of the rhetorical situation, considerations in line with the five-part definition of genre established previously. These areas then can focus attention when applying the rhetorical genre model to PLE.

PLE, like feminist rhetoric,

is substantively unique by definition, because no matter how traditional its argumentation, how justificatory its form, how discursive its method, or how scholarly its style, it attacks the entire psychosocial reality, the most fundamental values, of the cultural context in which it occurs. (Campbell, 1973/1999a, p.398)

Campbell identifies the sex role requirements for women as being in direct contradiction of the values of American culture: "self-reliance, achievement, and independence" (1973/1999a, p. 398). Campbell uses examples of legal, economic, and social inequalities between men and women to demonstrate American societal values that encourage a meek and subjugated feminine role. She further argues the "*very assumption* [of the role of rhetor] *is a violation of the female role* (1973/1999a, p. 398). In other words, a woman taking on the role of a rhetor and vocalizing for equality or independence automatically violates American sex role culture and "provoke[s] an unusually intense and profound 'rhetoric of moral conflict'" (1973/1999a, p. 398). Audiences may not sympathize with feminist rhetoric without threatening to undermine their basic societal values.

For PLE, the cultural context is that of the academy, and the attack is on traditions of episteme. Specifically, traditional academic values, including those of rhetoric, are

based on a positivistic perspective, that which Richard Cherwitz and James Hikins (1983/1999) term the "rhetorical dialectic." The rhetorical dialectic position

argues for the existence of independent realities in both the "empirical" and "social" realms...Rhetoric's role is not to *create* realities about such concepts; it is rather to *discover* them and articulate relationships between or among them through the process of argumentative discourse. (Cherwitz & Hikins, 1983/1999, p. 181)

The tradition of academic acculturation values hegemony in the form of Standard Academic English (SAE), which establishes the "truth" of a correct way of speaking and composing, both in linguistic features and in rhetoric. As Jacqueline Jones Royster (2002) describes,

There is *the* language, *the* discourse of academe and there are *other* languages and discourses that are not academic. We distill the variations that we otherwise specify and use general terms in ways that suggest sameness, tacit understanding, and static, non-contentious representations, not just of language or discourse but also of *goodness*. Despite our occasional intent to suggest otherwise, such habits of distillation have engendered in our field hierarchies of power, privilege, and value, and they have continually reified notions of insider/outsider, center/margin, us/other, and also notions of good/suspect. (p. 24)

In contrast, PLE subscribes to a perspectivist epistemology. PLE espouses the value of an individualized world view and way of knowing based on unique linguistic repertoire, or perspective. In fact, the main impetus behind PLE's call to action is that of valuing individualized episteme. And while perspectivism is presented by Cherwitz and Hikins as

a bridge between the dualism of the subjective versus objective epistemological camps, in truth this bridging can only function if both parties abandon their foundations in favor of the middle ground. At present, the major hurdle for PLE rhetoric is the persistent perception on behalf of the academy that PLE episteme and ideology is misguided, resulting in a rejection of the concept by the established majority.

This tension between the proponents of PLE and the established majority is well documented by PLE scholars. Michael Spooner (2002), in "An Essay We're Learning to Read: Responding to Alt.Style," illustrates the conflict between academic discourse and alternative writing styles by including editorial notes in the margins of his essay:

I notice you're beginning with stream of consciousness. Will the academic reader be okay with this? Won't they expect a more expository approach? You seem to drop this voice later. Will you come back to it? Glancing ahead, not clear to me how you'll segue smoothly into the argument....(2002, p. 156)

This invented editorial voice underscores the conflict between what is expected in academic writing and what is accepted, even in the work of established scholars.

Likewise, Christopher Thaiss and Terry Myers Zawacki (2002) conducted interviews with scholars from a range of disciplines in their article "Questioning Alternative Discourses: Reports from Across the Disciplines" to establish that

each of our informants easily noted a formal center of the discipline or a clear range of acceptable styles in terms of ways of thinking, standards of evidence, and format....All informants could readily identify alternative discourses relevant to their disciplines, and all would advise probationary tenure-line faculty to avoid them. (p. 83–84)

Here, the caution against employment of alternative discourses by junior faculty is proof of a commonly held academic standard generally considered inviolable by all but the elite few. Finally, Peter Elbow (2002) highlights the academic/PLE divide succinctly:

My strongest desire is to invite all students to write in whatever dialect or variety of English is theirs....On the other hand, my desire is vulnerable to strong criticism that takes various forms: (a) I hear Lisa Delpit saying that such an invitation is a white liberal way to keep Black students from getting power (1988). (b) I hear teachers (like me!) saying, "But what about helping students satisfy writing program assessments and other faculty?" (c) I hear critics of so-called expressivism saying, "We must concentrate on academic discourse."

Summing up this conflict: How can we change the culture of literacy yet also help all students *prosper* in the present culture? (p. 126)

This tension creates a paradoxical situation that is central to the substantive differences that establish PLE as its own rhetorical genre. At first glance, PLE seems to be rooted in postcolonialism:

The postcolonial "subject" is forced into a nomadic, diasporic position that is marked by what Gloria Anzaldua (1987) calls a "mestiza" consciousness—a consciousness of the borderlands....Being part of two or more cultures, and yet not belonging to either one, the postcolonial subject is equipped to see that national and cultural identities cannot be essentialized. (Shome, 1996/1999, p. 595).

And indeed, PLE works to view texts “against a larger backdrop of neocolonialism and racism” (Shome, 1996/1999, p. 592). However, while PLE embraces this critical

perspective, it fails to locate exposure of Eurocentrism as its primary purpose. Instead, it is rooted in the persistent reflexive relationship between social marginality and authority as described by Robert Hariman (1986/1999) in his article "Status, Marginality, and Rhetorical Theory." PLE is focused on individualized instead of public discourse and on a "rhetorical theory [that] is aggressively deconstructive, subverting its authority to adjudicate discourses by emphasizing its reliance upon philosophically unacceptable discourse" (Hariman, 1986/1999, p. 43).

In this reflexive relationship exists the central paradox that is a main substantive difference in PLE rhetoric. This paradox stems from the types of voices practicing an ideology of personal perspective and deconstruction from the margins. Keith Gilyard (2000) points out that "whenever we [scholars] participate in the dominant discourse, no matter how liberally we may tweak it, we help to maintain it" (p. 268). Here he notes that while the rhetorical ideology of PLE is the support of marginalized voices, PLE is currently only practiced from positions of authority and status. Thus, practitioners of PLE are both speaking against the established power structure while operating within its confines. This presents a unique problem for establishing a clear ideology, because while PLE authors are sincere in their belief in personalized episteme and an ideology of marginality, it seems that the authors' status gained through the established majority is what gives them the luxury of such beliefs. They simultaneously oppose yet establish marginality.

This dual identity of PLE authors forms the basis of the last substantive difference of its rhetoric. Because these authors are speaking both as the marginalized and the elite, they require an understanding of rhetorical situation that allows for a both/and position

that articulates a fluidity of identity. This framing of the rhetorical situation is best conceptualized by Barbara Biesecker (1989/1999) in her article "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from within the Thematic of Différance." Here, Biesecker employs Derrida's theory of deconstruction to help understand and explain rhetorical events. Biesecker uses Derrida's concept of *différance* to frame the rhetorical situation "as an event that makes possible the production of identities and social relations" (p. 242). Derrida's term *différance* relies on a concept of relationality which is central to understanding the PLE rhetorical situation: "Only to the extent that we are able to differ, as in spatial distinction or relation to an other, and to defer, as in temporalizing or delay, are we able to produce anything" (Biesecker, 1989/1999, p. 237). Relationality articulates a reality that is constructed by relationships formed through differences between individuals (echoing the previously covered theory of perspectivism) as well as relationships formed by differences between *individual elements of self*. This acknowledgment of a multifaceted identity makes the unique rhetorical position of the PLE author possible. This definition of rhetorical situation is vital because "if the subject is shifting and unstable...then the rhetorical event may be seen as an incident that produces and reproduces the identities of subjects and constructs and reconstructs linkages between them" (Biesecker, 1989/1999, p. 242). PLE authors operate in a rhetorical situation that isn't existent and definable, either in terms of known audience or known social impetus for a rhetorical response. Rather,

a reading of the rhetorical situation that presumes a text whose meaning is the effect of *différance* and a subject whose identity is produced and reproduced in

discursive practices, resituates the rhetorical situation on a trajectory of becoming rather than Being. (Biesecker, 1989/1999, p. 243)

While initially difficult to understand, Biesecker's existent yet non-existent, constantly emergent reality helps PLE authors occupy the in-between spaces of elite academics who are also speaking from the margins, constructing through relationships and shifting identities the realities of their rhetorical situation and the possibilities of their rhetoric.

The above conversation establishes the substantive properties of PLE according to the unique epistemological and ideological foundations of the genre and associated conceptualization of the rhetorical situation: 1) it attacks the fundamental values of the cultural context in which it occurs, 2) a perspectivist ideology, 3) support of marginality while maintaining authority, and 4) a fluidity of identity within the rhetorical situation. After the examination of substantive elements, an analysis of the unique stylistic features of the genre will add to an understanding of its taxis.

Stylistic Elements

The stylistic features of Campbell's criteria for rhetorical genre are more straightforward than the substantive elements. In her argument for the genre of feminist rhetoric, Campbell includes "characteristic modes of rhetorical interaction, typical ways of structuring the relationships among participants in a rhetorical transaction, and emphasis on particular forms of argument, proof, and evidence" (1973/1999a, p. 400). In her subsequent reflection, Campbell further describes style as "the strategic adaptations advocates made to a particularly challenging set of rhetorical obstacles" (1999b, p. 140).

As noted in the discussion of substantive features, the rhetoric of PLE is focused on individualized instead of public discourse. Individualized rhetoric is still intended for

public transmission, part of a public discussion, and persuasive in message; As Campbell describes, “the goal is to make the personal political: to create awareness (through shared experiences) that what were thought to be personal deficiencies and individual problems are common and shared...” (1973/1999a, p. 400). The linguistic features and language of discourse in each act of PLE is as unique as a fingerprint; also like feminist rhetoric, personal experience and the affirmation of the affective are critical stylistic components of its rhetoric. Thus, PLE employs the same "consciousness-raising" paradigm of feminist rhetoric that “involves meetings of small, leaderless groups in which each person is encouraged to express her personal feelings and experience” (Campbell, 1973/1999a, p. 400).

PLE also shares some of the “antirhetorical” features of feminist rhetoric (Campbell, 1973/1999a, p. 400). PLE is deliberately non-adaptive to its audience, shifting the responsibility for meaning-making from speaker to audience in a distinctly non-Western rhetorical tradition. It also uses “confrontative, nonadjustive strategies” that are not necessarily eristic (as examples of suasive PLE documents are many) but that employ *topoi* (traditional themes or formulae) and enthymemes that are deliberately nonsensical to the audience (Campbell, 1973/1999a, p. 402). The fact that PLE manages to speak to an audience at all, let alone persuade one, is accounted for by integrating one last rhetorical perspective in the form of the narrative paradigm as posed by Walter Fisher (1984/1999).

Fisher’s article “Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument” blends “the argumentative, persuasive theme and the literary, aesthetic theme” into a paradigm well suited to PLE public discourse based on personal,

individualized experience and expression. Fisher contends that “the grounds for determining meaning, validity, reason, rationality, and truth must be a narrative context: history, culture, biography, and character” (1984/1999, p. 267). This narrative paradigm explains how the seemingly antirhetorical stylistic components of PLE can communicate effectively with an audience. Even though PLE deliberately uses words, enthymemes, *topoi*, and structures that are unfamiliar to any that do not share the codes represented within the discourse (and therefore most, if not all, audience members), audience members are able to test the narrative presented within PLE rhetoric against their own inherent awareness of narrative probability and narrative fidelity (Fisher, 1984/1999, p. 272). Therefore, “...the experts are storytellers and the audience is not a group of observers but are active participants in the meaning-formation of the stories” (Fisher, 1984/1999, p. 277). The result is an act of translation on behalf of the audience that allows these stylistic elements to function rhetorically.

The stylistic features of the PLE genre, 1) "consciousness-raising" through personal experience and the affirmation of the affective, 2) nonadaptivity to the audience, and 3) use of a narrative paradigm, are manifested in semi-predictable rhetorical features in a PLE document. These features will be explored during the following rhetorical analysis to help establish a picture of the formative features of the PLE genre.

Rhetorical Analysis

In order to substantiate the above claims about the substantive and stylistic features of PLE as well as support the identification of PLE as a unique rhetorical genre, five PLE documents are rhetorically analyzed in the rest of this chapter:

- Gloria Anzaldúa's chapter "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" from her text *Borderlands, La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987)
- Vershawn Ashanti Young's "Your Average Nigga" (2004)
- Nichole E. Stanford's "Publishing in the Contact Zone: Strategies from the Cajun Canaille" (2011)
- Jeremy B. Jones's "Fiddlin' Tongue" (2011)
- Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez's "Meshed América: Confessions of a Mercacirce" (2011)

While other examples of PLE certainly exist, these five documents were chosen to span a variety of PLE methods: two represent meshing of two readily recognized separate languages (Spanish and English) while the other three concentrate on the intermixing of various dialects and registers of English. The pervasivity of PLE in each document is varied. Some include a scattering of a few choice words while others incorporate a fluid interchangeability of language throughout the entire document. Furthermore, the documents represent PLE that occurs not just linguistically, but rhetorically (incorporating rhetorical styles from meshed languages) and generically (moving between formative or stylistic features of different genres). Perhaps most importantly, these examples are all part of published academic texts, as opposed to student texts (see Graff, 2011; Horner et al., 2004; Roozen, 2011; Welford, 2011), poetry or other creative genres (see Richardson, 2011; Milson-Whyte, 2011), or historical accounts (see Pratt, 1991). As published academic texts, these examples are all written by respected scholars. Anzaldúa has taught in various universities and conducted writing workshops around the country, as well as been a contributing editor to two publications (Anzaldúa, 1987, back

matter). Young is an associate professor completing two books. Stanford, as a doctoral candidate, is the most junior scholar of the group. Jones, like Young, is an associate professor and prize-winning author. Likewise, Vaquera-Vásquez, another associate professor, has a distinguished publication record in journals and anthologies (Young & Martinez, 2011, p. 293–298). The backgrounds of these scholars play an important part in their PLE writing.

The decision to exclude non-academic PLE texts is a crucial one; because genre is a typified response to a socially constructed situation, it is necessary to analyze documents that are part of that situation. The existence of a socially recognized exigence is proven by concentrating on published academic documents. The presence of these documents shows not only the need for action as recognized by both the writer and the audience of academics to which the document is written, but it also the acceptance of a specific response, one that is appropriate enough to warrant publication and academic discussion. The elucidation of that response will provide the elements that comprise the genre.

Substance, ideology, purpose.

The substantive elements of the PLE genre are generally easy to demonstrate, in part because authors of this genre of writing typically work to make their rhetoric deliberately transparent. The first substantive component, that the PLE genre attacks or confronts the fundamental values of the cultural context in which it occurs, is frequently directly addressed by the authors themselves. For example, Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) is painfully blunt about the position her heritage, identity, languages, and ideologies have in the academy:

Attacks on one's form of expression with the intent to censor are a violation of the First Amendment. *El Anglo con cara de inocente nos arrancó la lengua* [The Anglo with an innocent face ripped out our tongue/language]. Wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out. (p. 54)

Here Anzaldúa powerfully demonstrates the rejection of her self and her language while simultaneously alluding to the hegemonic practices in composition classrooms that still to this day attempt to "cut out" language that is not readily identified as SAE. Anzaldúa illustrates this point later in her chapter by remembering some of her experiences as a professional educator:

In 1971, when I started teaching High School English to Chicano students, I tried to supplement the required texts with works by Chicanos, only to be reprimanded and forbidden to do so by the principal. He claimed that I was supposed to teach "American" and English literature. At the risk of being fired, I swore my students to secrecy and slipped in Chicano short stories, poems, a play. In graduate school, while working toward a Ph.D., I had to "argue" with one advisor after the other, semester after semester, before I was allowed to make Chicano literature an area of focus. (p. 60)

To teach Chicano literature and recognize it as equal to "American" literature is grounds for rejection and expulsion. This example demonstrates the academy's reaction to what Campbell would identify as a subversion of its core identity and values. Chicano literature is not part of the established definition of "American" literature, and so teaching it is not only seen as a departure from appropriate classroom topics; it is also a challenge to the cultural values that establish appropriate topics in the first place.

Young's (2004) story echos the same lament as Anzuldúa when he shares his mother's questions of "why it was that I'd gotten myself run out of Mount Vernon High School...where some of my white students...complained that the literature I taught was always pitting whites against blacks in ways that made them feel uncomfortable" (p. 694).

These words echo Momma's saying—"Ahma eat you up"—that she uttered right before she whipped her kids for disobeying her command. Being eaten up came to mean being punished by those demanding my compliance and fittingly figures the alienation I faced in the white schools I attended from high school on. (Young, 2004, p. 698)

Again, here are seen the themes of "alienation," "compliance," and "disobedience/punishment" directly connected to contexts of education. Young's observations portray the struggle he has experienced between identity, beliefs, and the culture of the academy.

The second substantive feature, a perspectivist ideology, is exemplified by the authors' commitment to their personal experiences and how those experiences shape their epistemology. Jones's (2011) essay explores the deliberate loss and tentative reclaiming of his home dialect and finds value in its presence:

Perhaps there is no mother tongue to uncover, only a filter to loosen, only rhetorical bits that I should release from the corners into which I've shamefully shoved them. If I don't like the stereotypes willingly and pervasively spread about us hillbillies, then I reckon I ought to allow the mountains in my head back onto my tongue, right alongside the other pieces of my life. (p. 201)

Jones's story traces his efforts to eliminate his dialect, as well as the worldview and identity attached to that dialect, from his identity and speech as he moved away from Appalachia and became an educated professional. However, in the midst of a music festival in his native mountains, Jones rediscovers his dialect. This rediscovery helps Jones understand that his dialectical identity can offer a unique perspective and insight to the more rigid and prescriptive SAE identity that had supplanted it. Vaquera-Vásquez (2011) takes a less hesitant stance, proudly proclaiming his identity as “an unrepentant border crosser”:

I confess that I was born Mexicano in the USA. When I entered school and became educated in English, I became a Mexican American, compounded in name, identity, and language. When I entered the university, I was rapidly politicized and became a Chicano. Upon completing my doctorate, I had accepted my mutating self, my border-crossing identity, my adapted mind: not wholly from here and not wholly from there. *Soy Pocho y qué.* (p. 259)

This acknowledgement of the fluidity of Vaquera-Vásquez's identity is an apt representation of how language influences identity and worldview or perspective. Vaquera-Vásquez connects language, ethnic labeling, and education to paint a picture of how cultural context can alter identity association. For authors of PLE, his final ownership of an "adapted mind" demonstrates the importance of perspective on identity, and how each worldview can be valued as a contributor to the whole.

The third substantive feature of PLE, support of marginality while maintaining authority, is less demonstrated through analysis of the textual elements of the PLE document than through analysis of the authors themselves. All five authors are

academics: four are professors, one is completing her dissertation. Their commitment to excellence in their field is exemplified by biographies listing awards, publications, and university affiliations (Anzaldúa, 1987, back matter; Young & Martinez, 2011, p. 293–298). Their choice to write in PLE and espouse the ideologies inherent in the genre underline their commitment to marginalized voices, including their own, while their list of accomplishments shows a clear allegiance to the *ethos* of the academy all the same.

The juxtaposition of personal biographies alongside PLE rhetoric illustrates the last substantive component of the genre: a fluidity of identity within the rhetorical situation. PLE authors must be both/and: the elite and the marginalized, operating within the confines of privilege while working to analyze and at times deconstruct it. Therefore, the rhetorical situation in which they write is also both/and, and they must write in between the margins of this mixed social exigency. Young ruthlessly explores the difficulty of this varied position:

I had mentally classified him as a nigger in order to stabilize my own non-“nigga” masculinity. And after beginning to read his paper, I began to realize just how much my success hinged upon his failure... Would not my validating his vernacular usage in order to affirm his black masculine identity demean my own? (2004, p. 702)

Stanford, on the other hand, bases her call to action around her and other academics' fluid identity by insisting that “for academics the second ‘keeping quiet’ problem is peacefully limiting our implementation of language equality to our classroom, treating them as sites for revolutionary pedagogies without code-meshing publicly in our scholarship” (2011, p. 128). Here, Stanford underscores the responsibilities inherent in the dual role assumed by

PLE scholars and educators. Stanford espouses a both/and position that is not limited solely to support of PLE ideas; rather, she calls for scholars to deliberately enact the rhetoric they claim to support by publishing PLE. Both of these statements acknowledge the complexities of a rhetorical situation in which the writer is “not wholly from here and not wholly from there” and the consequences of exercising PLE within these spaces.

Style, *ethos*, *enthymeme*.

The stylistic features of the PLE genre are the building blocks of rhetoric that closely support and project the substantive elements explored above. These features are the adaptive practices that make the manifestation of substantive ideology and position possible; as such, their examples are equally present in the above discussion. For instance, examples of "consciousness-raising," the first stylistic feature of the PLE genre, are prolific throughout the five documents and indeed many of the previous quotations show the importance placed on individual experience and the affective. There are, however, specific formative elements in PLE documents that are used to achieve each stylistic element. In the case of Campbell's term "consciousness-raising," the authors employ a unique appeal to *ethos* that would not be effective or possible without PLE.

Due to the both/and positioning of the rhetorical situation, the authors of PLE documents must establish their authority and identity with two disparate audiences. On the one hand, the authors work to encourage solidarity between the shared experiences and needs of marginality. On the other hand, these authors must simultaneously establish the legitimacy of their argument within the established power structures of the majority. The authors achieve this balance through carefully intermixed appeals to *ethos*. Anzaldúa's prose leaps between each of these perspectives, intermixing quotations from

other Chicana authors to substantiate her marginal identity while critically and academically analyzing the divisions drawn between the tongues she speaks. Throughout it all, Anzaldúa maintains the "we" pronoun, a strategic rhetorical move that assumes an audience complicit in her *ethos*:

Deslenguadas [foul-mouthed, in the feminine plural]. *Somos los del español deficiente* [We are those of the deficient Spanish]. We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic *mestisaje* [crossbreeding], the subject of your *burla* [taunt]. Because we speak in tongues of fire we are culturally crucified. Racially, culturally and linguistically *somos huérfanos*—we speak an orphan tongue (1987, p. 58).

Notice also a deliberately elevated vocabulary that underscores Anzaldúa's educated position. Many times, PLE is conceptualized as a unidirectional shift from SAE into a different (and perceived lesser) dialect or register. However, Anzaldúa's prose demonstrates how linguistic variance is not separable; even when speaking in a "deficient" Spanish, Anzaldúa exhibits a refinement of language usually only associated with SAE. This further establishes her academic *ethos* by preventing her audience from forgetting her academic stature, even when she is speaking in a language, register, and voice that may be unknown or even antagonistic to them.

Another way in which authors establish this dual *ethos* is by calling on dual voices. Authors quote other PLE-practicing scholars or use quotations that demonstrate their membership of a marginalized community. They then reinforce this position by citing academic research and scholarship. In this way, their dual identity is established by aligning themselves with two generally disparate communities of expertise. Stanford

demonstrates this type of *ethos*-building by shifting between stories of her "Paw-paw's" lessons and quotations from other academics substantiating the wrongness of a hegemonic view of language. She also aligns herself with other PLE-ers:

Carmen Kynard, bell hooks, Kermit Campbell, Gilyard, and Young also offer meshings of AAVE as forms of ideological resistance...Gloria Anzaldúa models the code-meshing linguistic practices of Chicanas in the borderlands, and Villanueva structures his code-meshed narrative and analysis on a rhetorical form of Puerto Rican modes of logic...This is where y'all come in. Think about what you have been silencing. (2011, p. 134)

Here Stanford takes additional steps in "consciousness-raising" by establishing membership in a new community of academics who compose in the both/and spaces. Like Anzaldúa, she also breaks the fourth wall by directly addressing her audience, further emphasizing a shared awareness and the appropriateness of her appeal.

After "consciousness-raising," the second stylistic feature of the PLE genre is nonadaptivity to the audience through use of enthymemes, vocabulary, rhetorical structures, or other devices. As noted before, this does not mean all pieces of PLE are eristic or must have features that are incomprehensible, although some authors do make this choice, as is readily recognizable in Anzaldúa's case. Instead, nonadaptivity denotes a kind of unapologetic ownership of each author's unique perspective, linguistic heritage, and rhetorical license. For example, Stanford is very careful throughout her article to explicitly introduce Cajun vocabulary and rhetorical structures before she integrates them into her discourse, allowing her audience to understand the use of each. However, she also insists, "When we code-mesh, we do not need to apologize for it, or set it off in

italics or quotation marks, as if it needs permission" (2011, p. 133). Indeed, most PLE authors do no such thing. Young talks about getting "fagged and sissied out" (2004, p. 694), uses unconventional grammatical structures such as "[n]ope, Momma beat the hell out the ghetto" (p. 695), and unfamiliar vocabulary like "playa-hate" (p. 708) without any hesitation or acknowledgement whatsoever of their difference from SAE. Then, in the notes after the end of his paper, he finally acknowledges the differences in an aside: "...What I call *code meshing*, means allowing black students to mix a black English style with an academic register (much as I do in this essay)" (p. 713). Vaquera-Vásquez takes this seamless PLE one step further by writing in what would commonly be identified as Spanglish, a term which he both accepts and rejects:

Spanglish is not words here y there, a veces inserting certain jerga to give it that toque nice y cool...Spanglish is a fluid construction, broder, and those of us who speak with forked tongues are not tongue tied: we leap from one language to another sin darnos cuenta. (2011, p. 268–269)

While the PLE constructions are nonadaptive and unrepentant, they are still comprehensible by an audience; the message or purpose of the document remains decipherable. For instance, at no point does the reader need to understand Young's vocabulary or grammatical constructions to understand his point. Instead, his meshing offers an additional layer for those who share his community without detracting from a message that is written in SAE. Similarly, it might be useful for a reader to understand that the word "broder" in the above quotation is not a true Spanish word but a phonetic demonstration of Spanglish through a Spanish pronunciation of the English word "brother;" however, even without this knowledge, the reader is capable of understanding

Vaquera-Vásquez's point that Spanglish is a language in its own right that enables rather than hinders its speakers. This is another element of what makes the PLE genre distinctive: the author's rhetoric is doubly written, so that while it remains nonadaptive, the message will still come through in one mode or the other.

The final stylistic feature of the PLE genre is the enactment of a narrative paradigm. This component bridges the gap between the efforts of "consciousness-raising" and the seemingly oppositional elements of nonadaptive rhetoric. This feature is enacted through narrative accounts that allow the audience to compare the experiences and claims of the narrative against their own stories, checking for compliance with their own sense of likelihood and truth. Much like "consciousness-raising," this paradigm allows PLE to use an appeal to *logos* (logic, reason, or judgment) that is multifaceted, containing more depth to the appeal than would be possible otherwise.

Unlike the traditional structure of most academic articles, Jones's essay is comprised primarily of narrative. However, the accuracy of his observations is conveyed to his audience through this layered *logos*:

I've likely heard fifty songs today, and I'm suddenly struck that several are about leaving and longing, about getting back home. I start tallying them, feeling joined by their desire to return.

She's a flyin', I think, as the girl's arm blurs on stage. When I begin to write "she is flyin'" in the margins of my notebook, I stop myself and think about my wayback machine and the words in my head. *A flyin'*, I decide to write and keep on with my list. (2011, p. 199)

It does not matter if the audience reading this piece identifies with or even recognizes the PLE offered in this passage; through the narrative paradigm, they are able to compare Jones's experience of self-editing and ownership of language and thoughts against similar experiences in their own lives and therefore understand the core message, one of acceptance, the both/and identity, and perspectivism. Furthermore, Jones uses another rhetorical device, that of the extended metaphor, seen here in his musing about the songs and reference to his "wayback machine," to enthymematically carry his message on to his audience. Not all audience members may recognize the "wayback machine" as an internet tool to uncover lost data and pages, but the core idea of returning to something lost is maintained. Likewise, Vaquera-Vásquez speaks of "peanut butter and jelly tacos.

Welcome Back, Kotter and *Chespirito*. Reading *Superman* and *Kalimán*. For communities living in the borderlands, hybrid strategies for negotiating the spaces between national cultures become empowering methods of constructing identity" (2011, p. 266). These references function as enthymemes and metaphors, painting a picture the reader is not likely to share. However, it is likely that audience members will be able to recognize themes of difference and the experience of realizing a personal identity, a family or cultural tradition or mannerism, isn't shared by the world at large. In a word, the audience still has a *topos* to match the narrative shared, enabling an appeal to *logos* that is almost unconscious while being deeply persuasive.

The above discussion is only meant as a demonstration of a few select PLE documents to aid in identification and establishment of the PLE genre. PLE can appear in different ways and different applications than presented here. However, the core substantive and stylistic features are shared, regardless of the individuality of their

specific manifestations. Thus, viewing PLE as a distinct rhetorical genre allows an examination its epistemological foundations, its conception of rhetorical situation, and how elements that seem to oppose the concept of rhetoric can function together to communicate both persuasively and effectively to an audience. With this heuristic, PLE can be recognized as a legitimate, typified response to a social exigence, and therefore its place within an academic curriculum can begin to be established.

Chapter 4: From Genre to Pedagogy

And at the same time, students have so much trouble writing Standard English that we are driven away from stylistic considerations back to the basics of grammar and mechanics. Teaching style from model essays has not prepared us to explain or repair these student' deficiencies. (Bizzell, 1982/2011, p. 368)

These new [mixed] discourses are still academic, in that they are doing the intellectual work of the academy—rigorous, reflective scholarship...I want to emphasize that I see these mixed forms not simply as more comfortable or more congenial—they would not be gaining currency if comfort was all they provided, because the powerful people in the academic community are still, to a large extent, middle- and upper-class white men who would have no stake in allowing discourse forms that were alien to them. Rather, I think these new, alternative or mixed discourse forms are gaining ground because they allow their practitioners to do intellectual work in ways they could not if confined to traditional academic discourse. (Bizzell, 2002, p. 2–3)

The two above epigraphs show one scholar's shift in position over time to an understanding of the place and importance PLE has in the composition classroom. And it is true, as educators move from a pedagogy mired in Current-Traditional epistemology to the more egalitarian position offered by a Social-Epistemic worldview (Berlin, 1988), the composition curriculum has adopted the theoretical position of acceptance of linguistic diversity in the classroom. Geneva Smitherman (1977), a preeminent scholar of Black Vernacular English (BVE), sums up the position of those supporting a critical pedagogy:

Communicative competence, quite simply, refers to the ability to communicate effectively...to speak or write with power is a very complex business, involving a universe of linguistic choices and alternatives...Such are the real components of language power, and they cannot be measured or mastered by narrow conceptions of "correct grammar." While teachers frequently correct student language on the basis of such misguided conceptions, saying something correctly, and saying it well, are two entirely different Thangs. (p. 228–229)

What Bizell's words more tellingly point out, however, is how commitment to so-called "alternative" discourses allows students and scholars to meaningfully expand academic inquiry *in ways they would not otherwise have access to*. This validation transcends the fundamental moral or ethical argument of SAE advocates and leaves modern educators just one question: How? How should teachers empower students through a respect for diversity and identity in the writing classroom? How do educators move from the ideological underpinnings of SRTOL to a taxis for pedagogy? And how does such a move still provide students with the tools to access the "language of power?"

Accepting PLE as a distinct academic genre is a positive step toward answering these questions. First, it is necessary to explore the current standards and theories that inform the design and pedagogical practices of FYC. By understanding these guidelines, educators can then begin to conceptualize of the role the PLE genre can have in the classroom and how it can achieve the goals set out by SRTOL 40 years ago without replacing or compromising students' equal right to learn to access SAE.

FYC Standards

In an era of Common Core Standards (a national initiative to unify K–12 education by establishing a united, standards-based curriculum across the United States), institutions in higher education enjoy relative freedom to develop composition curriculum as they determine is best for their students. This freedom has resulted in a large degree of variance between programs across the nation. In fact, Lynn Bloom, previous director of multiple different writing programs, is quoted as saying, "Yet what these writers should learn is, characteristic of the profession, the subject of perennial disagreement" (Harrington et al., 2001, p. 321). This does not mean, however, that an attempt to establish a consensus has not been made, or that a set of standards has not been published. On the contrary, two organizations, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) have undertaken these efforts and have published standards and guidelines that influence the practice of the teaching of writing in college composition. These two organizations are comprised of a body of professionals that represent the interests of the composition profession in the United States through voluntary membership and elected officials. While these organizations do not have the authority to mandate policy in writing programs, they do influence programmatic and legislative decisions through publication of standards and guides. These publications are meant to represent the collective consensus of the profession's scholarly experts and are used to inform decision-making at all levels of English instruction. An overview of these standards, moving from a broad view of all English instruction to guidelines specifically addressing FYC writing, will

help form the basis for an understanding of how the PLE genre can be successfully integrated into the FYC classroom.

NCTE guidelines are published position statements "found to be consistent with NCTE positions on education issues" (NCTE, 1991). The first position statement relevant to PLE in the FYC classroom is titled "NCTE's Position on the Teaching of English: Assumptions and Practices" (NCTE, 1991). This guideline forms a broad base for writing instruction pedagogy from elementary to college education. This document is not directly addressed to the teaching of FYC; however, as a generalized document, it offers a snapshot of the core values and culture that underpin FYC pedagogy. Within this document are several assumptions that are pertinent to a pedagogy inclusive of PLE:

- **Learners are aware of the uniqueness of each other's backgrounds, and value this uniqueness.** Learners have diverse backgrounds, which reflect a mosaic of cultural heritages. They bring to their classrooms their different language proficiencies, their learning styles, and their own authority and expertise. The community of learners appreciates these diversities of cultural heritage and socioeconomic background, validating and challenging learners' representations of the world. Every language, culture, and experience is a resource in the classroom.
- **Language is a vital medium for creating individual and social identities.** Through language, students make meaning and come to understand and define themselves. Through language, they communicate their sense of the world, function with others, and get things done. Through language, they exercise power over the world.

- **The power of language and the rules that it follows are discovered, not invoked.** Students know about the power of language to influence. They are able to recognize powerful language and to use it in some contexts. They learn about how language works through systematic analysis of what is said and written. Language instruction is developmental rather than remedial.
- Literacy has a wide range of genres and functions, which are important to teachers and learners.

In addition, the position statement offers 11 practices of the English/language arts curriculum. Two of these practices, number three and number six, are especially relevant to a discussion of PLE:

- bring their own cultural values, languages, and knowledge to their classroom reading and writing
 - learn grammar and usage by studying how their own language works in context
- (NCTE, 1991, n.p.)

While generalized to all levels of English instruction, these statements still inform the design of curriculum and the best practices of FYC pedagogy. Notice the repeated references to personal language usage and the acknowledgement of the inclusion of those linguistic practices in students' writing. This supports the practice of PLE by recognizing a place for diversity of language in academic writing. Also, prescriptive rules of language usage are eschewed in favor of learning how contextualized practices influence effective writing as defined by access to power. PLE fosters this contextualized learning by offering a genre where generative experimentation is welcome. Finally, the "NCTE's Position on the Teaching of English: Assumptions and Practices" highlights the influence

of genre on literacy development. This demonstrates the common practice of teaching literacy through genre, which allows for the addition of PLE into established programs.

The second publication relevant to PLE moves from a broad basis for English instruction to a focus specifically on college curriculum. "The English Coalition Conference: College" is an NCTE guideline directed toward higher education (1989). This document presents a series of assumptions about writing education, aims of writing programs, and recommendations for pedagogy and practices. Similar to the previous position statement, under the title of Assumptions, this guideline asserts that

- All students possess a rich fund of prior knowledge, based on unique linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and experiential backgrounds
- Acknowledging and appreciating diversity is necessary to a democratic society.

Under recommendations, the guideline includes a section specific to FYC curriculum. This section encourages a year-long, entry level course that is designed to

- Build on current theory and research to focus on the uses of language; on the value-laden nature of all such uses; and on the ways writing, reading, speaking, listening, and critical thinking shape our students as individuals and as members of academic and other communities;
- Offer a basis for students' continued language development as individuals, immediately in the academy and later in other communities. (1989, n.p)

These assumptions and recommendations do not specifically focus on the practice of writing. However, they show agreement for the important roles of diversity and language variety in the classroom. In particular, "The English Coalition Conference: College" guideline offers the additional perspective of a curriculum that conceptualizes students as

members of multiple communities, whose language use is universally value-laden. PLE supports this position through substantive features that espouse perspectivism, multiplicity of identities, and the associated formative elements that help students learn how to actuate those identities.

The final document useful for establishing a picture of current best practices in FYC comes from the WPA, entitled "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition" (Harrington, Malencyzk, Peckham, Rhodes, & Yancey, 2001). This statement is framed as a "curricular document that speaks to the common expectations, for students, of first-year composition programs" (Harrington et al., p. 323). In this essay, the authors offer an explanation for their focus on FYC, an explanation equally valid to the choice to restrict the conversation to PLE in the FYC classroom:

While first-year composition isn't always a universal requirement, it does persist as a nearly universal experience at colleges and universities across the country.

Given the ubiquity of first-year comp, then, it's useful to see some common assumptions undergirding all our programs, to be able to see, in other words, how our individual programs both participate in and depart from the statement represented here. (p. 322)

In other words, restricting the conversation to FYC is not meant to imply that the outcomes presented (or the PLE genre) are not applicable to other writing classrooms; rather, the experiences of FYC are the closest to being representative of all composition students country wide and therefore relevant to the broadest audience.

The ubiquity and importance of FYC being thus established, the document offers the following relevant outcomes for students completing a FYC course:

Rhetorical Knowledge

- Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
- Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
- Understand how genres shape reading and writing
- Write in several genres

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

- Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power

Knowledge of Conventions

- Learn common formats for different kinds of texts
- Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
- Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling (Harrington et al., 2001, p. 323–325)

Throughout these outcomes, a picture begins to emerge: that of a curriculum shaped around the teaching of genre. Appropriate responses, including conventions of format and structure, for a rhetorical situation are determined by genre. Likewise, the relationships between language, knowledge, and power are shaped by the substantive foundations of a genre. Finally, while often thought to be universal, conventions of syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling are determined in part by genre. For instance, while a narrative may contain declarative sentence fragments or lists lacking conjunctions as a function of style, these are generally considered unacceptable in formal SAE writing. Similarly, the Oxford or serial comma is generally encouraged in academic genres in composition and

the social sciences (as determined by the APA and MLA style guides) and yet discouraged in journalistic genres (as determined by the AP style guide).

If a FYC pedagogy is based around a curriculum that values linguistic variety, frames writing through contextualized practice, acknowledges students' membership in multiple communities and the use of writing within those communities, and is based in an understanding and the teaching of genre, then the inclusion of the PLE genre into an established curriculum becomes not only a possibility but an advantage. Accepting PLE as a distinct genre allows it to be taught in conjunction with other traditional academic genres, reinforcing an ideology of linguistic and cultural heterogeneity while encouraging students develop and understanding of the uses and limitations of SAE.

Implications

At this point, the advantages of including the PLE genre as a part of FYC pedagogy should be evident. PLE is a superior way to enfranchise student voice in the classroom (Horner et al., 2011; Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2008; Stanford, 2011; Young & Martinez, 2011). Young et al. concur, envisioning “code-meshing as a way to promote the linguistic democracy of English to increase the acquisition and egalitarian, effective use of English in school, in government, in public, and at home” (2011, p. xx-xxi), an aim in direct alignment with FYC standards. PLE is also a practice which enhances current studies of rhetoric and composition by “be[ing] taught in school how to exploit and combine the best rhetorical strategies, syntactical possibilities, and forms of usage from the various grammars” (Young et al., 2011, p. xxi). A pedagogy that includes the PLE genre will broaden students' conceptions of appropriate response to rhetorical

situation, one that may not be fully explored if left to the confines of traditional academic genres.

Succinctly put, the PLE genre is a possible solution the recurrent problem of how to handle linguistic diversity in the classroom. Traditional approaches to classroom instruction have assumed a Standard English that represents a "linguistically homogeneous situation" in which the goal of writing instruction "has been to reduce 'interference,' excising what appears to show difference" (Horner et al., 2011, p. 303). However,

growing numbers of U.S. teachers and scholars of writing recognize that traditional ways of understanding and responding to language differences are inadequate to the facts on the ground. Language use in our classrooms, our communities, the nation, and the world has always been multilingual rather than monolingual. (Horner et al., 2011, p. 303)

Therefore, composition instructors are placed in an urgent, daily situation where they have to decide what methods are appropriate for handling PLE in the classroom, and the inclusion of PLE as a distinct genre offers a facile way to do so.

Viewing PLE as a distinct genre allows educators to establish best practices in regards to PLE from the same set of methods they use to teach any other genre in the composition classroom. Furthermore, framing PLE as a genre overcomes the pedagogical questions currently plaguing scholars:

Are there effective and ineffective forms of code-meshing? How do we distinguish them?...How do teachers avoid imputing deficiency to the creative strategies of their students? How can they help advance students' code-meshing

strategies that teachers themselves may not practice? (Canagarajah, 2011b, p. 278)

The PLE genre contains a set of substantive and stylistic features that can be measured and evaluated. As a typified response, there are published examples of PLE that can be used to teach students to recognize context, audience concerns, and specific formative rhetorical strategies that can contribute to successful manifestation of the genre.

Additionally, engaging students in a dialogue about unfamiliar dialects, registers, vocabulary, rhetorical strategy, or any other aspect of PLE not shared between the teacher and the student offers the opportunity for students to learn reflective practices about their writing process, the influence a document has on the audience, the effectiveness of their rhetorical constructions, and finally how to negotiate identity, culture, and diversity in an academic context.

A discussion of the implications of the inclusion of the PLE genre in the FYC curriculum would not be complete without considering the student perspective.

Ultimately, it is the student that takes the risk, and reaps the rewards, of choosing to craft a PLE document. Pedagogy that currently supports and employs PLE in the composition classroom can help substantiate the benefits PLE offers. For instance, Gerald Graff's (2011) students are experiencing successful classroom experiences by being allowed to code-mesh in a situation that has historically marginalized them. Likewise, Hayes's (2011) pedagogy helps students take ownership of their own dialectical differences and conceptualize how those differences are employed in their lives. For the student, this move helps to preserve their sense of identity and culture while allowing them to consciously choose when it is appropriate to exhibit their unique language varieties. And

Perryman-Clark (2012), by just focusing on the intersections between rhetoric and composition scholarship and Ebonics without practicing PLE in the classroom, offers students a new and possibly more relevant vehicle for exploring concepts of race and language in the classroom.

The PLE genre, then, can benefit students by supporting opportunities for academic success, working against historical marginalization, allowing students to conceptualize and examine their own linguistic varieties, and opening up new avenues for research and exploration of relevant topics in the field of composition. However, current methods of teaching PLE carry with them inherent risks. For example, Welford (2011) acknowledges that "admittedly, the types of writing I encourage my students to do may be unwelcome in other settings" (p. 27). Similarly, Hayes (2011) acknowledges that one of the chief resistances of educators to incorporating code-meshing into the classroom is the protective effort to "save their students from this [prejudiced social] judgment via enforcing standardized dialect and cultural values" (p. 173). These examples point to a deeper concern for students, where employing PLE could result in negative labeling by society. In contrast to current methods, PLE as a genre is taught *in conjunction* with other traditional academic genres, thereby preserving students' opportunity to learn and master SAE. The PLE genre also gives students grounds for comparing PLE with other dominant codes and writing practices, allowing them to better grasp the complexities of rhetorical situation and typified response. The PLE genre can enhance students' preparation for writing *outside* of the academy by preserving their own linguistic differences and community identities, introducing them to the uniqueness of other students' constructions, and allowing equal development of the full depth of their linguistic skills.

Chapter Five: Evolution

Okay, now let's get real. This all is the scary part.

Language is an evolution. For sure, we all start in the same place, that mama dada goo-goo developmental stage that leads very quickly to NO and MINE! But the people who surround us on that journey, well, they're the important part, ya know? I recollect being small, the cadence of my Gramma's voice as she told me stories of her childhood: stories of her mother warshing laundry for 10 cents a day in the Depression, stories of the Menahoenies who always seemed t'know what she was up to, stories of caterwhalin' and carryin' on when she got in trouble and how her daddy would tan her hide. My Grampa, well, he mostly sat there an' smiled an' called me Apil, remindin' me from time to time that it weren't no never mind that I was All Girl. My Pop, well now, he taught me about how to use pacific tools and how electrical wasn't rocket science. And I developed my voice.

Then come school. And oh, how I loved the magic of the classroom! My mother had instilled in me a love of the written word, and by third grade I was determined to become a writer. With school came the speech therapist that tried to train my tongue to stay inside my mouth so I didn't slightly lisp my s's and zees, the teachers who carefully taught me that "ain't" isn't a word (You don't really want to talk like that, now do you?), and the conventions that allowed for personalized expression only within the sanctity of dialogue. And I developed my language.

High school and college brought an ever-progressing refinement of style, grammar, vocabulary, and academic ethos. I also learned my second language, Spanish, and while I frequently feel like I speak it about as well as my grandmother spoke English,

pues...no importa. With practice will come mastery. Today I am well-respected within my master's program, generally considered the resident student expert in editing and grammatical knowledge, and when my husband asks me "Now, why in the world do you call these 'tea towels?'" I color in embarrassment and rapidly learn the accepted vernacular, no...vernacular...is "dish towel." My linguistic identity has so strongly become enmeshed with the rhythms of the academy that to recall my little girl voice, the voice of my grandmother, of comfort and chicken an' dumplings and yellow plastered kitchen walls and HOME, feels incomodo and borderline fraudulent. Is that voice still a part of me?

Bhaktin teaches us that individual, concrete utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure...The transfer of style from one genre to another not only alters the way a style sounds, under conditions of a genre unnatural to it, but also violates or renews the given genre. (2001, p. 945 & 949)

My unease is thus explained, as the unconscious creep of my home voice into my academic language challenges the constraints and assumptions of that genre. Challenges, and loses. I let it lose every time, lest I lose: face, respect, authority, power. Certainly, my home voice is charming and has its place—a place that is dwindling with the death of my grandmother and the infrequent contact with my grandfather, the amusement that I have been conditioned to feel at my father's bumbling words—but a place nonetheless. Academic discourse just isn't that place. I would do Peter Elbow proud.

And yet.

I am sitting in my cubby of an office, pouring over the latest of my students' essays, picking out points on which to focus my feedback. My advisor has trained me well for this task. Writing is a process. Focus on formative feedback. Content is king. But I can't see the forest for the trees.

"How are your papers looking?" a colleague asks.

"Well, I have of course my all-star student that is destroying her writing by trying too hard to sound academic and then there are my students who think organization is something you do to your iTunes library even though we've explicitly covered it in class complete with a heuristic oh and you wouldn't believe how many students don't know the difference between 'then' and 'than' geez where do they *get* this stuff it's not that hard, people, and what really concerns me is I want to help my group of international students and they offer good ideas and a strong thesis in their papers but they have so many grammatical deficiencies that I really have to ask myself what am I here to teach and am I preparing them adequately if I don't correct their errors?!" It comes out in a breathless rush of angst and horror and very real teacherly concern while my colleague nods in understanding and sympathy. We've all been there. You know how it is.

Patricia Bizzell reminds us that "the academic community is changing, however, and becoming more diverse—more people of color, more women, more people from the lower social classes, more people whose native language is not English or not the so-called Standard English" (2002, p. 2). While I was lucky enough to be indoctrinated into the requirements of academic writing very early in my education, most of my students, and indeed, several of my colleagues, have not been so lucky. They struggle to adapt to

this new discourse community, to be self-aware about their linguistic habits and to not only perform the synthesis of ideas and critical, reflective practices of academic inquiry, but to do so within the confines of academic language.

I look back again at my pile of student papers and pull out one of my favorites. ¡Qué chévere, estudiante! Buen trabajo. The writing is engaging, the ideas well developed, the rhetoric persuasive, the substantiating evidence appropriate and logical. Oh, and the level of Academic English? Not exactly up to par. But do I understand the points this student is making? *Yes*. Do the deviations from SAE interfere with meaning-making, persuasion, or the rigor of scholarship? Well...*no*. In fact, in some cases, the departures actually enhance the student's rhetorical appeals. *Interesting*.

My position is evolving.

Gloria Anzaldúa angrily observes, "Even our own people, other Spanish speakers *nos quieren poner candados en la boca*. They would hold us back with their bag of *reglas de academia*" (1987, p. 54). I do not want to hold my students back with rules and strictures that tie their tongues. Al revés, I want to empower my students by explicitly acknowledging,

Since language is a social phenomenon that is a product of a particular historical moment, our notions of the observing self, the communities in which the self functions, and the very structures of the material world are social constructions—all specific to a particular time and culture. (Berlin, 1988, p. 488)

Language is power, but I reject the paradigm where "educational process [changes] into a form of assimilation and requires everyone—teacher and student both—either to accept or to refuse assimilation" (Young, 2004, p. 704). Screw that! How can I teach my

students to be critical about their positioning within our cultural paradigm if I refuse to acknowledge my complicity within the dominant power structure or change my positioning? The multiplicity of voices surrounds us, people, y no podemos evitarlos. I need to remember, this is my voice too. And if, "against the common argument that students must learn 'the standards' to meet demands by the dominant...to survive and thrive as active writers, students must understand how such demands are contingent and negotiable" (Horner et al, 2011, p. 305), then I ain't worth my salt if my pedagogical practices don't change to support a critical perspective. A critical perspective, mind, that espouses rhetorically conscious writing practices *that may or may not* participate in all this high falutin' malarkey we call SAE. Si, se puede! I'ma all fired up now. How 'bout you?

PLE is a call to action, people. It's a way to make all of our well-intentioned, carefully-considered, discursive scholarly conversations about the wrongness of positive attitudinal positions on linguistic homogeneity a pedagogical reality en la clase. "A goal without a plan is just a wish." —Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

Lying low and code-censoring for the sake of good grades, job security, tenure, or comfort is tempting, but we are in a position *as scholars* to move toward leveling the hierarchy of elite and nonelite Englishes and kick-start change in the sluggish genres of academic writing. Code-meshing is a strategy that claims what is already ours. (Stanford, 2011, p. 134)

No podemos simply espouse a pedagogy that investigates linguistic variety and its intersections with identity, race, and culture while reifying academic genres through continual commitment to the same restrictive set of standards for student writing. Stop an'

tell me, just how many times did you read *that* t'make it make sense? Let's try it another way: We can't go 'round saying we support mixing language and yakking 'bout doin' so if we still force students to practice the exact same types of writing over an' over. Better? Instead, we need to practice what we preach by providing spaces for our students to actively construct PLE documents—or not—depending on their perceptions of the appropriateness of rhetorical purpose and situation. The PLE genre gives us a way to do this. Put a hitch in that academic giddyap, wouldja? Use the foundations of genre theory to explore with students las opciones tienen to traditional discourses, y the substantive and stylistic features that give them the tools to construct rhetorically powerful pieces of discourse. What's more, you listen up an' remember:

This in no way precludes EAE from playing an academic role; students deserve to understand Standard English as the language of power, but they also need awareness of it for what it is at root: another form of English, appropriate to some but not all discourse communities, just as their own mother tongues are most appropriate to others. (Hayes, 2011, p. 176)

I'm bringin' it home, baby. PLE is a fundamental right for all of our students. It is a right that has been recognized as a natural extension of the fluidity of all language. An' it don't hurt none that we gone and written it into our best practices and what passes for academic standards with SRTOL. PLE as genre gives todos the ability to build on an existing set of methods and a paradigm for FYC instruction. Y'all can see that ifin' we want to support linguistic diversity, we gots to make it an active part of nuestras enseñanzas. So put your money where your mouth is. Add PLE as a genre to your classroom repertoire. If you gots the huevos, try a little of your own lost voices on for size the next time you take on

the work of the academy. Think. Create. Evolve. An' maybe, just maybe, we can take the first steps toward the progression to the next evolutionary level, where we understand qué todos somos un poco mixed, a little meshed, un pocito mestizo. Ya know?

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