Review:

Vershawn Ashanti and Aja Martinez, Eds. *Code-Meshing as World English: Pedagogy, Policy, Performance.*

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Currently, the cultures of our students clash in the composition classroom. These classrooms are like brackish river deltas where the saline language of the university, which many of these students haven't yet learned to use naturally, collides with the home languages they comfortably employ in everyday contexts. This often results in an awkward focus on translating student writing into an academic code. As some scholars have argued, this practice has historically reinscribed certain narratives of cultural and racial hierarchy by teaching students that some codes are objectively better than others.

Vershawn Ashanti Young and Aja Martinez' edited collection, *Code-Meshing as World English*, addresses the recent re-imagination of the process of code-switching, whereby certain linguistic codes are privileged, as code-meshing, which recognizes the intricacy and value of our students' home languages.

Perhaps the best way to begin this review is by referring to Suresh Canagarajah's thoughtful afterword. Canagarajah warns that "scholars must guard against the romanticization" of code-meshing and the early research reported in this collection (276). While his warning is warranted, the collection speaks to the common sense of incorporating home languages, cultural ways of making meaning, and communicative (ab)normalities that fall outside of the accepted academic codes. Canagarajah's afterword also highlights the dearth of scholarship on the topic of assessing code-meshed student texts, an important predicate to implementation. However, when presented with the compelling evidence of the efficacy of code-meshing contained in this collection, we as educators would be remiss not to pay close attention to and attempt to broaden the body of research on code-meshing, particularly in the area of assessment, which was evidently not a preliminary focus of this early selection of pieces on the subject. This collection provides composition instructors with avenues for efficient application of code-meshing as a pedagogical practice and leaves readers considering implications for further research.

Young and Martinez' collection effectively acts as its own advisory against overly eager adoption of code-meshing as a pedagogical approach in two ways: by admitting the assessment problem and by its qualitative nature. Very little of the research reported in *Code-Meshing as World English* is replicable, aggregable, and data-driven, and the problem of how to assess code-meshed student texts still remains nearly undeveloped. All the same, this collection's implications for the writing classroom and instructor are great, varied, and ultimately prescient, given the evolution of composition. While the collection, holistically considered, could seem like a radical (re)examination of linguistic practices in the classroom that could deaden traditional writing pedagogy, the three parts into which Young and Martinez have split this collection deal with facets of code-meshing that are all beneficial to composition instructors in higher education and the community. The pedagogy section speaks to those in the contact zone with students experiencing diverse linguistic development who might traditionally be classified as deficient. The policy section provides administrators and advocates of inclusive literacy practices with methods for enacting code-meshing in the classroom, regardless of the classroom's location. Finally, the practice section shows us what code-meshing really looks like, defining its logic and explaining

how student code-meshing transcends error and contributes to the development of identity.

The first section centers on pedagogical implications of code-meshing. The most notable chapter is Gerald Graff's "Code-Meshing Meets Teaching the Conflicts." Here, Graff echoes Young's early concerns about code-switching as reifying racial hierarchy, carving out a place for and ascribing special merit to our conversations about nonstandard linguistic codes. The chapter opens up the discussion of code-meshing as pedagogical practice and simultaneously asks what code-meshing looks like in the critical composition classroom. Graff expands our conception of what counts as a distinct code and, as a result, expands the pedagogical implications of code-meshing, emphasizing the value of a collection like this one. His aim in this chapter, and indeed the aim of the collection, is summed up by his assertion that "whatever side we may take in debates about whether our primary obligation is to teach the dominant cultural discourse to disadvantaged students or to validate their home discourse, making the debate a central subject of the course is a good pedagogical tactic" (18). Accepting the import of this affirms the necessity of the remainder this collection.

The second section details policy issues related to code-meshing. Two chapters in particular, Nichole E. Stanford's "Publishing in the Contact Zone: Strategies from the Cajun Canaille" and Richard Westbury Nettell's "Depreciating Diversity: Language Prejudice, Pidgin, and the Aloha State," describe two important aspects of the debate about code-meshing and its value. Stanford calls for educators who embrace code-meshing to make this a feature of their own publications to validate it within the discipline and begin to displace inscribed language prejudices. Nettell's chapter expands on that point by explaining how educators and policymakers need to actively advocate for inclusive linguistic practices. His biggest critique could be applied to many English departments across the country. Nettell states "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" (170). This section can help

educators and policymakers make conscious decisions that don't reinforce linguistic hierarchies, consequently opening up the academy and helping it serve students better.

The third section, dealing with performance of code-meshing, synthesizes the concepts discussed in the first two sections and explains how these ideas work in practice. This portion of the collection contains several narrative, qualitative pieces, as well as hard linguistic analyses, that deal with code-meshing in practice. However, Kevin Roozen's "Polyliterate Orientations: Mapping Meshings of Textual Practice" is the highlight of the section. Roozen explains in his chapter how students consciously and unconsciously employ textual practices that they appropriate from other contexts. He elaborates the idea that students in composition classrooms have to harness the available means to improve their writing and otherwise use nonstandard codes to accomplish their goals. Roozen's chapter and this section in general characterize the often unnoticed implications of code-meshing at work in many classrooms.

Young and Martinez have done well, returning to Canagarajah's warnings about romanticizing the concept, in collecting a series of pieces that illustrate the breadth and depth of code-meshing research to this point without overblowing its significance. This collection essentially provides a roadmap for implementing these practices in the classroom and, maybe more tentatively, at the policy level. Fundamentally, however, what Young and Martinez have done is compile a collection of progressive research and scholarship on the concept of code-meshing that should inspire much further work, particularly on the problem of assessing code-meshed texts, on deciding what counts as an error and what doesn't.

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