

Code-Meshing as Multimodal Composing in FY Writing Classrooms

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The habitual *Be* in African American English

(Smitherman, 1977, p. 19)

¹ The most distinctive differences in the structure of Black Dialect are patterns using *be* (sometimes written and pronounced as *bees* or *be's*). ² These forms are mainly used to indicate a condition that occurs habitually. ³ *Be* is omitted if the condition or event is not one that is repeated or recurring. ⁴ For example, *The coffee bees cold* means *Every day the coffee's cold*, which is different from *The coffee cold* which means *Today the coffee's cold*. ⁵ In other words if you the cook and *The coffee cold*, you might only just get talked about that day, but if *The coffee bees cold*, pretty soon you ain't gon have no job!

Language types

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Levels of formality– or, registers

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Multimodality

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Voice and Design

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How code-meshing works in Smitherman's quote

- **In addition to mixing different languages (in this case, AAE and standard English), code-meshing can also involve shifting across different registers—or language of different levels of formality (in this case, the quote shifts between an academic text and a conversational text).**
- **Code-meshing can be enhanced—and is often enhanced through aural and visual means, that is, via multimodal strategies.**
- **As the text moves in and out of different linguistic codes in the quote, code-meshing has the potential to evoke a range of sensory, affective, and epistemological responses in the readers as well as the writer.**

Code- meshing, multiliteracies pedagogy, and sociolinguistics theories

- The way code-meshing works can be explained by the concept of multiliteracies pedagogy of the New London Group (1996; Cope, & Kalantzis, 2000; Leverick, 2015).
- Specifically in light of the multiliteracies framework, 1) literacy practices, not least writing, are multimodal by default and 2) the writer develops a metalinguistic awareness and is held up as the Designer of their text.
- Code-meshing allows writers to discover their voice, negotiate their identity, while constructing texts that have the potential to move beyond the dominant discourse and can be generative and transformative at the discourse level (Lam, 2000; Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2007; Young, 2010; Canagarajah, 2011; Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011).

Code- meshing, multiliteracies pedagogy, and sociolinguistics theories

- Pertaining to consciousness raising and critical language use, code-meshing also requires substantial audience participation (Gee 1986, 2000; Villanueva, 2013; Lovejoy, 2014).
- While the result can be rewarding to both the writer and the reader, there are risks of communication breakdown that the writer needs to be aware of and overcome.
- Mastering code-meshing does not automatically ensure inclusivity, equal access to social resources and opportunities, or eradication of racism and linguistic injustice (Atkinson, & Kelly-Holmes, 2011; Leonard, 2013).
- More studies and more work are needed to overcome the influence of other social factors on the issues of equal access and social mobility.

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