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Title: Toward Critical Consciousness: Rhetorical Grammar as Anti-Racist Praxis in the First Year Composition Classroom

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While grammar is a core aspect of written and oral communication, many find grammar instruction equally frustrating and boring, and as such, grammar receives very little formal attention in the university system (Hoffman). My thesis draws attention to this overlooked, and yet central component of composition, and asks a radical question: "what happens when you try to cross the teaching of grammar and anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom?"

According to the literature, Standard English grammatical practices have a much more prominent role in perpetuating hegemonic ideology than one would think (Phillipson, Inoue, Micciche, Clark, Greenfield). In fact, Standard English grammar's structural nature and historical lineage of whiteness makes it a perfect candidate for critical deconstruction and examination of privilege and power.

In this work, I capitalize on both grammar's capacity for larger social exploration and its pedagogical flaws to argue that we as a field consider (a modified version of) a still largely underrepresented grammar pedagogy: rhetorical grammar. I build off of Martha Kolln and Laura Micciche's conceptions of rhetorical grammar and use the multicultural concept of raising critical consciousness, the sociological lens of colorblind racism, and the linguistics concept of code-meshing to further self-examination of the practices' gaps in practicing inclusive and equitable pedagogy. Through this lens I develop the beginning steps for a much-needed model of implementation so instructors can better utilize rhetorical grammar to prompt discourse on race and privilege in first year composition classrooms.

Toward Critical Consciousness:
Rhetorical Grammar as Anti-Racist Praxis in the First Year Composition Classroom

by
Addison Koneval

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Addison Koneval, Author

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INTRODUCTION

In August 2017 the NAACP released a travel advisory for Missouri after Senate Bill 43 was passed. The bill requires victims of racial, gender, or religious discrimination to prove discrimination the "motivating" factor rather than a single "contributing" factor in any instance of discrimination in the work place (99th General Assembly, Winns). In response to the NAACP's travel advisory and concerns about the bill "perpetuat[ing] inequality, discrimination, and oppression," the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Board began intense discussion regarding the safety of constituents and participants of color at CCCC 2018, which would take place in Kansas City, Missouri (CCCC Executive Committee).

The CCCC Executive Committee was faced with a series of difficult choices. The committee ultimately decided to engage the racist discourses head on, and show CCCC's commitment to justice and representation. In response, we saw an unprecedented outpouring of rhetoricians and compositionists addressing issues of racism in practice that continued even into the March event. From convention-wide acts like creating the Task Force on Social Justice and Activism at Cs to scholars volunteering to run activism workshops, action-based responses to racism continued to ripple through the field.

The outpouring commitment to racial justice prompted me to think about spaces of my own control; as a graduate student with virtually no sway within the field or the university, my contribution to further not just discourse, but also personal action committed to racial justice would happen in the classroom. My thesis suddenly became an opportunity to dissect my own pedagogy epistemologically and socially toward the end of socially just practice. I found an aspect of Composition curricula that allowed me to explore my pedagogy through both avenues—grammar, specifically rhetorical grammar.

My thesis responds to the question: "what happens when you try to cross the teaching of grammar and anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom?" Grammar is integral to successful written and oral communication, and yet, as a topic of instruction, many find grammar equally frustrating and boring, and as such, grammar receives very little formal attention in the university system as compared to some K-12 school systems that require grammar in curriculum (Hoffman). In this thesis I take this integral and yet overlooked component of successful composition and transform grammar pedagogy into a mode for engaging dialogue on racial and economic privilege. I build off of Martha Kolln and Laura Micciche's conceptions of rhetorical grammar using the multicultural concept of developing critical consciousness. Through this lens I find ways for instructors to better utilize rhetorical grammar to prompt discourse on race and privilege in first-year composition classrooms.

As structural race theory has reiterated extensively, racism is pervasive throughout the structures of society. In fact, it is so pervasive that it is rendered invisible, or *colorblind*, through its ubiquity. Economics, justice systems, and languages are all suffused with hegemonic ideology (Inoue, Bonilla-Silva, Martinez, Clark). Linguistics scholar Suresh Canagarajah writes that "mastering a language is essentially a matter of acquiring its grammatical system" (13). As with the structure of language, grammar is by definition a standardizing force, and yet also always subject to the influence of cultural movements—and biases—making grammar a reasonable site of structural racism.

Given grammar's structural quality and ideological imbuement, it is incumbent upon us as writing instructors and scholars to explore grammar's capacity for hegemonic reproduction. We have examined structural racism's influence in areas like the economy and the university, and particularly in rhetoric and composition through the integration of theories like social

epistemic rhetoric and critical race studies (Berlin, Bonilla-Silva, Galman et al.). Many Rhetoric and Composition scholars agree the field has a commitment to teaching "cultural critique" (Berlin, Laditka, Micciche), and that rhetoric has a clear role "in addressing competing discursive claims of value in the social, political, and cultural" (Berlin 477).

The composition course is dedicated to rhetorical awareness and critical engagement with contemporary cultural issues and ideas. The turn to cultural spheres in the classroom has prompted engagement and awareness, ranging in explicitness from overt formal rhetorical analysis assignments to more subtle, integrated and continual assessments of purpose and audience. Yet, grammar is still mostly missing from the theoretical discussions on critical engagement and ideological awareness, "largely absent from [liberatory pedagogies] descriptions of critical education," Laura Micciche says (729). As composition classes have become more rhetorically focused and critically conscious, grammar instruction has developed into an outlier to these practices, lagging behind pedagogically. While other writing pedagogies have evolved, grammar pedagogy still parallels the general formalist writing practices from the 1940s through the mid-1960s. Grammar instruction not only demonstrates a lack of pedagogical efficacy, but also its capacity for teaching cultural critique.

Despite the formal practices surrounding grammar in composition classrooms across the nation, scholars have repeatedly recognized grammar pedagogy's shortcomings, and the field has challenged the neutrality of Standard Academic English (SAE) repeatedly. Such questioning can be seen through the NCTE's "Students' Right to their Own Language," Greenfield and Rowan's "Writing Centers and the New Racism." The "Students' Rights to Their Own Language," as part of a special issue of *College Composition and Communication* in 1974, issued an official statement from the NCTE defending the "language habits of students who come from a wide

variety of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds" (2). Appropriately, Greenfield and Rowan's article deconstructs the cultural assumption implied by university writing practices that SAE is the only form, let alone the truest or best form of English communication:

> The belief that 'Standard English' is an inherently superior language has been used to justify pedagogies that insist upon the teaching of only 'Standard English' in writing classrooms and writing centers (and indeed across the curriculum). Such pedagogies, when built upon this faulty assumption, implicitly privilege a racist view of history rather than an intellectually sound understanding of linguistic phenomena (38).

These scholars' works not only centralize the racist potential for teaching SAE, but also SAE's reinforcement of invisible hegemony. Ursula Clark stresses that linguistic norms "associated with Standard English are predicated upon and replicate white, cultural hegemony." Asao Inoue extends Clark's view further, contending that not just linguistic norms, but all language-based university standards are "informed by a white discourse" because "whiteness and white racial formations historically are closely tied with SEAEs and dominant discourses" (42, 29). Robert Phillipson offers a framework for this linguistic hegemony, which he names linguicism.

While they represent only a sprinkling of the voices extending these views, these scholar's works are central; they articulate the clear precedent for shifting pedagogy toward more diffuse, less hegemonic linguistic practices. They demonstrate that there are clear theoretical underpinnings for deconstructing the hegemonic structures inherent within the grammatical structures of language and university structures at large. And yet, as a discipline we still lack pedagogical tools to actually expose these institutions' hegemonic complicity or to do something pedagogically productive for furthering discussions of privilege among our students. This is especially true when it comes to issues of parsing out racism in language (and grammar).

I argue, therefore, that it is our role to be provocateurs of the whiteness existent in SAE linguistic structures and to facilitate the multicultural concept of conscientization through grammar pedagogy. Grammar can be the intervention point for drawing attention to and disrupting the inherent structures privileging whiteness in our academic systems—by teaching grammar rhetorically. Rhetorical grammar offers an awareness of the social, political and overall structural factors that influence use of language and grammar by focusing on the relationship between user, content, and context. As such, rhetorical grammar specifically can be a throughway into larger conversations about critical discourse and systemic factors that form identity—and therefore race and class-based privilege.

To begin this critical intervention, we must first understand grammar pedagogy and recent advancements in theorizing rhetorical grammar, which leads discussion to the work of Martha Kolln and Laura Micciche in my first chapter. In the second chapter, I look for connections to race in both Kolln and Micciche's work through a close reading to uncover areas for methodological refinement. This critical racial assessment shapes the foundations for future race-focused, conscientizing grammar practices. In my final section, I conclude with initial tools (instructional strategies, sample activities, and sample analyses) for and steps of implementation to prompt further exploration of the topics of structure, race, class, and privilege through an academic lens.

CHAPTER I: A REVIEW OF RACE, GRAMMAR, & PEDAGOGY IN ACADEMIA

"If they erase the history and the language, within a few generations a society, culture, or whatever you want to call it will no longer exist. The target here is Western Civilization. Anyway, we have identified another university that my children will not attend."
—***Breitbart* Commenter**

"The racist conditions of our society are not simply a matter of bias or prejudice that some people hold. In fact, most racism, for instance, is not accomplished through intent. Racism is the normal condition of things. Racism is pervasive."
—**University of Washington Tacoma Writing Center**

In the Writing Center at University of Washington Tacoma hangs a declaration (See Appendix), a pronouncement of antiracist and social justice efforts. Most notable about this declaration, spearheaded by center director and rhetoric scholar Asao Inoue, is a statement denouncing the racist potentials for privileging a single "standard" English over others as the only correct form ("Statement on Antiracist"). The statement declares, "racism is pervasive" throughout the "systems, structures, rules, languages, expectations, and guidelines that make up our classes, school and society." And, since language is mutable, evolving, and dynamic, it is "very difficult to justify placing people in hierarchies or restricting opportunities and privileges because of the way people communicate in particular versions of English."

Because of these realizations, The UW Tacoma Writing Center established a responsive commitment to inclusivity and diversity. The statement reiterates the intent to resist privileging Standard Academic English's (SAE) rules and expectations as the singularly correct option, because of their hegemonic exclusivity. As the statement extends, systems of racism are structural and imbedded in linguistic practice, particularly university language practice. So, in response, the Writing Center developed a list of tangible practices for displacing these racist structures. The list includes measures such as being "sensitive to our language practices," emphasizing "the importance of rhetorical situations over grammatical 'correctness,'" and challenging "conventional word choices and writing explanations."

The statement was meant as a proclamation of inclusion and diversity, but the bold link between systemic racism and linguistic practice sparked outrage. In mid-February of 2017, alt-right media outlet *Breitbart* picked up the story. They released a short article featuring the headline "University of Washington Tacoma Declares Proper Grammar is Racist" and the image of a Merriam-Webster dictionary aggressively crossed out in bright red ink. The article's author—Tom Ciccotta—reiterates the statement's sentiments, pulling quotes from the text that emphasize the malleability of language and standard English in conjunction with racism. Ciccotta's ultimate claim is that Inoue and the UW Tacoma Writing Center "suggests that racism has produced certain unfair standards in education," and that "pressure to conform to proper American grammar standards perpetuate systems of racism."

Although the article did offer more direct quotation than commentary in an attempt at objectivity and truth, it seems that all it took was an epistemically suggestive image and the phrase "suggests that racism has produced certain unfair standards" to set off a host of virulent comments on the *Breitbart* page (Ciccotta). The skewed misunderstanding of the declaration quickly escalated, exhibiting the very beliefs and ideas the center originally hoped to combat. Commenters identified the statement as an attack on white culture, while others used the opportunity to spew racist views about linguistic diversity. Comments on the page range from "the target here is Western Civilization. Anyway, we have identified another university that my children will not attend" (Non Sequitur) to Ebonics being deemed "as fake in terms of English as Kwanzaa is a made-up holiday. But that incomprehensible garbage was routinely spoken by the ghetto gutter thug trash invited to the White House for 8 years" (oldmountainman).

Soon, the article caught regional attention, and discourse on the issue exploded. The UW Tacoma Writing Center issued a response and the university wrote a clarifying article as well,

stating that the media had misrepresented them. "The Writing Center statement is not about changing the standard for how UW Tacoma teaches commonly accepted English, grammar and composition," the statement reads. "The statement is about the Writing Center's commitment to be inclusive" and "describes the Center's commitment to helping students critically understand the broader context of language, including how different dialects are judged in various settings" (UW Tacoma Writing Center). Meanwhile, news of the statement spread like wildfire across the state, getting picked up by other outlets including *The Daily Caller*, *Fox News*, *The News Tribune*, and *The Washington Post*.

The topic even became of point of public interest for political leaders, like State Representative Matt Manweller. In a half-minute clip posted on Twitter, Manweller expresses:

> When you start talking about this notion that writing well, using good grammar, and encouraging students to use good grammar is somehow a social justice issue that crosses racism, the broader society, like [sic], looks at them and they lose some credibility. Everything is subjective, and good writing and grammar skills is [sic] not subjective— you write well or you don't, and that's why we send kids to college. And I cannot take their tuition money and then send them out as poor writers because some group of social justice warriors think that it's okay for everybody to write however they want and for me to criticize that is somehow a racist micro-aggression. (@MManweller)

Manweller defends a system that privileges only those who mirror his own educational, economic, and cultural status in society, representing a dominant view of "good grammar" as an immutable norm rather than a marker of class and race. Ultimately his statement reflects the very underlying ideologies that Inoue and the UW Writing Center critique—and yet, we have to ask ourselves how did an anti-racist statement on grammar, one of the most apathy-inducing

components of English education (for many), cause such a dramatic outcry across an entire state?

Additionally, as instructors of writing, we must ask: if there is such a deeply imbedded

understanding of the ways grammar is symptomatic of systemic racial inequality, is there a way

to take advantage of that in a classroom like first year composition? Perhaps grammar itself can

work as a tool to encourage critical discourse, and if that is true, what needs to happen to

implement such a radical practice in grammar pedagogy?

SAE: Facing A Racist System

> *"Compulsory education in America compels accommodation to exclusively White forms of 'English.'*
> *White English, in America, is 'Standard English.'"*
> *–* ***June Jordan***,
> Poet, Playwright, Essayist, Professor

Standard Academic English as Linguicism

Standard American English (SAE) primarily refers to a technical form of English used in

academic and professional fora (Nordquist). In classes spanning elementary to graduate,

instructors teach SAE not simply as the norm, but as the only "correct" form (Greenfield and

Rowan). Although the dominant view of SAE deems it an immutable, stable norm, this stance of

SAE is really a product of hegemonic influence. Authors focused on linguistic diversity have

gestured toward SAE's racial roots. Asao Inoue points out that, "we define 'good' writing in

standard ways that have historically been informed by a white discourse" (18), and similarly

June Jordan proffers that, "White English, in America, is 'Standard English" (364). Imbedded in

both stances are a necessary signal to the cultural confluence of "norm" and "hegemony"

especially present in SAE—and a necessary challenge to that cultural belief.

This section deconstructs the very premise of SAE as a norm to explicate how hegemonic

ideology has informed our understanding of a right, correct English. Despite the vast diversity of

linguistic nuances in "English" practiced in the United States (and around the globe), "White

standards of English persist, supreme and unquestioned, in the United States," (Jordan 364).

Academe has become the primary standardizing force and perpetuator of Standard English. Among linguists is a consensus that this racial norm "cannot be considered an entirely innocent activity" as language learning "raises the possibility of ideological domination" (Canagajarah 14). Teaching SAE is teaching the "linguistic manners of the privileged" (Sledd 59). These views are not isolated to a few voices; major voices in the field have reiterated the hegemonic undercurrents of SAE practice.

Urszula Clark writes that teaching a single form of linguistic conventions, specifically SAE, as the correct system perpetuates the view that "any deviation is at best 'incorrect' or 'illiterate' and at worst, a threat to social stability." Such expectation encourages hegemonic practices of linguistics, which in turn conceals exertions of power as normative, standard language-use. The Language Education Policy analogously argues that teaching and expecting SAE pushes universities to "enact linguistic hegemony, persuading either interior minorities or majorities in colonized or dominated countries that their language is associated with a perception of lack of value, ideological and economic inferiority and belittlement." Similarly, Greenfield and Rowan argue that teaching SAE as the correct option "implicitly privilege[s] a racist view of history rather than an intellectually sound understanding of linguistic phenomena" (38).

Each of these views refers to SAE's hegemonic qualities—its capacity for domination through cultural and ideological means (Gramsci). More specifically, these stances refer to a specific subset of hegemony: linguistic hegemony. Robert Phillipson names such linguistic hegemony "linguicism," which refers to "ideologies and structures where language is the means for effecting or maintaining an unequal allocation of power and resources" (55). In his work, *Linguistic Imperialism,* He details linguicism's quotidian presence, demonstrating ways linguicism is accomplished, such as stigmatizing or ignoring local dialects in the classroom.

Invisible Damage: The White Habitus

In his 2015 work on writing assessment measures, Asao Inoue articulates the expanse of hegemonic practices imbedded in university practice. His work reveals that traditional pedagogical practices in general, like assessment measures and SAE-based practices, develop not just linguicism, but also an exclusionary culture of hegemonic whiteness. Drawing on statistics, anecdotes, and data trends, Inoue argues that assessment measures privilege white, middle class experiences and knowledge. This, in turn, supports a "dominant white discourse" in the classroom, which gives way to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's idea of the "white habitus."

As Inoue uses the term, "white habitus" refers to the combined set of "structuring structures" that privilege the success of white, middle class and upper class students over all others (42). The concept is predicated on the idea that race is formed through a "set of dispositions that are discursive, material, and performative in nature" (43). So, a white habitus contextualized within the university is the structures that preference white students and excludes many other minority voices. Inoue criticizes this disregard for normalized whiteness as it functionally negates minority experiences and produces racist pedagogical practice (45).

Linguistically, reinforcing SAE grammar practices buttresses the white habitus because SAE prioritizes the educational backgrounds of the white middle and upper class. Writing assessment measures specifically are largely invisible compared to other measures open to critique (i.e. admissions practices failing to reach out to lower class communities or make college more affordable; writing centers not being made known to vulnerable, underprepared student populations, etc.); however, Inoue argues that the majority of systems are subject to the same criticisms of benefitting white, middle class students. They are therefore subject to the same

analysis and deconstruction. SAE practices, primarily enforced through SAE grammar, also perpetuate an exclusionary, invisible, hegemonic habitus in the university classroom.

Inoue's work unearths the real need to dislodge traditional SAE practices from the position as the singular norm. Chiefly, he shows that linguicism is not a series of isolated acts, but rather a culture of hegemonic reproduction that deems white privilege invisible. If Rhetoric and Composition's goals align with a "commitment to teach critical thinking and cultural critique" as Laura Micciche names it, then it is vital for the field and its instructors to turn that critical interrogation toward understanding how invisible systems of privilege are built into the classroom through language use. Such critical interrogation is vital for both the homogenously white classroom and the diverse classroom alike; it can establish tools of empowerment for students of color and tools of empathy, productive discomfort, and awareness for students and instructors of privilege.

Theoretical Support for a Shift

Within the field, scholars have established strong theoretical support to shift away from the invisibly dangerous hegemonic language practices that SAE propagates. In response to the damage done by linguistic practices in the classroom, Suresh Canagarajah contends that teachers should "attempt to critically interrogate the hidden curricula of their courses, related learning to larger socio-political realities" through an approach of critical pedagogy (14, 16). Canagarajah's work urges teachers to consider practices of conscientization. Conscientization, an idea from Paulo Freire, refers to the development of critical consciousness of one's own privileges and powers within a given social system, most notably related to race (Freire, Beilke 2). Conscientization is at the heart of multicultural studies practices for unpacking privilege and "interrupting white racial knowledge" in the classroom (Galman et al. 227).

Conscientization complements theoretical underpinnings for critical "interrogation," as Canagarajah describes it, by framing interrogation as "budding disruption" of privilege. Critical interrogation calls instructors to critically examine their courses' effects. Canagarajah argues that anytime a teacher instructs students on grammar, s/he instructs students on the "'hidden curriculum' of values, ideology, and thinking" reflective of hegemonic practice. Therefore, interrogation of hegemonic values is not only justified, but a necessity, Canagarajah asserts. Inoue compatibly suggests that such interrogation begins with comparison. He asserts that students need to compare dominant to non-dominant discourses as "the non-dominant ones becomes the ways toward critical examination, toward critical assessment practices" (75).

There is also extensive theoretical support from multicultural studies to support parallel practices in composition (Beilke, Galman et al., Suoto-Manning). Scholars in Multicultural Studies have provided significant resources for unpacking privilege and "aggressively, yet tenderly, navigating and interrupting white racial knowledge" in the classroom (Galman et al. 227). A few pedagogies that integrate conscientizing practice include required service-learning projects with reflective journals (Beilke) and theatre games to explore power dynamics (Souto-Manning). Multicultural Education's wealth of conscientizing tools—strategies for exposing and engaging privilege—simultaneously offers a successful schema for implementing efficacious tools of conscientization. It also raises questions of how well Composition is equipped for handling these same issues in a rhetoric or composition-centric way. The research shows that despite present theory within the very field of Composition to justify a shift in SAE practices, very little exists in terms of Composition-specific tools to dissect hegemonic structures in genre-specific and content-appropriate ways. This can be seen throughout all SAE practices, even down to practices such as grammar instruction.

The literature reveals that SAE grammar pedagogy is one of the university's primary conduits for enforcing SAE, which in turn reinforces hegemonic ideology. Additionally, scholars demonstrate that the very structural nature of traditional SAE grammar lends itself as a productive site for deconstruction and as a mode of curious interrogation of hegemonic influence. The exact elements that have cultivated traditional grammar instruction into a source of boredom, frustration, and (equally so) hegemonic reproduction, also make grammar the ideal candidate for imbuing Composition pedagogy practice with conscientizing practice. This is especially true when we can compare dominant discourse (SAE grammar) with non-dominant discourse (dialectal alternatives of grammar). Therefore, it would be productive to narrow analytic scope of linguistic hegemony down to grammar practices.

SAE Grammar: Lacking Tools of Intervention

Patrick Hartwell's "Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar" argues that the "grammar issue" (the complex, contradictory research and questions about practice and implementation) is "a complicated one" (105), largely due to differing uses and definitions of the word "grammar." In response, Hartwell explores five different types, or meanings of, "grammar" as they are used and practiced within the field. Hartwell draws on W. Nelson Francis to define Grammar 1, 2, and 3. Grammar 1, according to Francis, is "the set of formal patterns in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey larger meanings." Grammar 2 is the branch of linguistics "concerned with the description, analysis, and formalization of formal language patterns." Francis' final contribution, Grammar 3, is grammar as "linguistic etiquette" (qtd. in Hartwell). Hartwell argues that Francis' Grammar 3 is not actually grammar, but rather "usage" (110).

Hartwell offers Karl W. Dykema's grammar as "school grammar" for Grammar 4: "meaning, quite literally, 'the grammars used in the schools'" (qtd. in Hartwell 110). Hartwell argues that the final way grammar is used is to refer to "stylistic grammar" (110). Hartwell relies on Martha Kolln's definition of "grammatical terms used the interest of teaching style" to identify Grammar 5 (110). It is vital that we acknowledge the different ways scholar, teachers, and administrators alike conceive of "grammar." It clarifies why it has been so difficult to make clear, productive advances in grammar instruction, and emphasizes the necessity for specifying which grammar we refer to when discussing grammar instruction because of the differences in use. I acknowledge these differences, and rely on Grammar 4 in contrast to Grammars 1 and 2 in this project. Specifically, I explore the ways SAE grammar is taught prescriptively in the university, and compare it with how grammar should be taught as socially influenced structures of language. In other words, I am concerned with how we might teach grammar rhetorically.

Grammar instruction is traditionally a prescriptivist, rules-based practice—a tradition that is rooted in the formalism, the first in the three major trends in composition: formalism (1940s – mid-60s), constructivism (late 1960s – early 80s), and social constructivism (1980s). Scholars characterize formalism as "the study of prescriptive grammar, usage, and rhetorical principles" (Nystrand et al. 274). Formalism presents grammar as a "fixed" system, immutable against linguistic development (278), and the pedagogy entails enforcing de-contextualized, drills and rules-based practices of grammar. While at formalism's height, researchers began to questions its pedagogical efficacy. In 1963, Braddock et al. conducted one of the first major studies on grammar, focusing on middle and high school settings. They found that teaching of formal grammar had "a harmful effect on the improvement of writing" (38). Braddock et al.'s study was replicated a number of times, with comparable results, deeming formalist practices anywhere

from ineffectual to impeding (Elley et al., Ferris et al.) Research led to a consensus: formalist grammar pedagogy was ineffective, and as the field moved into constructivism, scholars began to recognize the flaws in such a strictly prescriptivist system and responded accordingly.

Unfortunately, the field has lost many of the constructivist grammar pedagogies. In their article on grammar practices, Ferris et al. explain that despite the boom in more effective, needs-based linguistic approaches to teaching grammar 1960s and 70s, those "applied grammar pedagogies" were dismissed in the social constructivist era of composition in the 1980s (420). Even now, contemporary grammar teaching practices function as a hangover from the formalist era, out of date with the socially aware pedagogies that guide all other areas of composition instruction. Despite their ubiquity, these approaches are ineffective for developing overall writing skill, engaging students, and increasing understanding of how language works; yet, these stereotypes of grammar pedagogy still exist.

There are several possible reasons for grammar's perceived immutability, both in terms of the view many assume of language and the minimally updated pedagogical approaches for teaching grammar. First, grammar rarely receives attention in the collegiate classroom because of strong emotional reactions both students and teachers have to grammar instruction. Grammar scholar Annabel Watson explicates these affective responses of English teachers to grammar. Watson found a large portion of English instructors have strongly negatively valenced responses to grammar.

According to Watson, "a majority of teachers expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to deal with grammar, both due to subject knowledge and to pedagogical issues," while "other teachers saw grammar as inherently uninteresting, even when their students appeared to enjoy it. This was often related to teachers' own experiences as learners, either experiences of

traditional grammar teaching which they found dull and unhelpful" (10). Watson's research reveals the primary reasons formalist grammar pedagogy does not work: it systematizes grammar in ways inconsistent with the successful composition practice, and many writers dislike this. As such, grammar is a significant source of difficulty for teachers, Watson argues. When contextualized in formalist grammar practices, teachers' feelings of boredom, anxiety and fear not only seem natural, but also signal to a larger symptoms of an ineffective system. She writes that if we are to ease resistance to implementing grammar in the classroom, "teachers will need support in order to develop the linguistic and pedagogical subject knowledge which can translate this into successful classroom practice" (6). Watson's work reveals that the extant Formalist approach has diminished the importance of grammar—by both turning it into a niche subject requiring expert knowledge and reducing it to a system of boredom.

The second issue with grammar stems from concerns about systematic, drills-based grammar's limited usefulness when not contextualized. Constance Weaver maintains that teaching grammar contextually has more pedagogical potential than teaching systematic grammar alone. She advocates for a minimalist approach for maximum benefits, using grammar to address sentence revision, style and editing. According to Weaver, instructors should teach a "minimum of grammar for a maximum of benefits" as this model best utilizes grammar (16).

Scholar Rebecca Sipe mirrors and extends the premise that prescriptive grammar detracts from learning language usage. Sipe's solution is context. She proposes that looking at grammar "within the context of real reading and writing" helps "open up conversations that anchor language study in authentic contexts" (16). Sipe asserts that a contextual approach to grammar requires rhetorical awareness and therefore activates the critical capacities of grammar. Sipe and Weaver's approaches to grammar underscore a widely recognized limitation of prescriptive

grammar, even external to ideology. They maintain that Formalist approaches to grammar do little to further students' ability to apply or critically think about grammar in context. However, more work is needed. Even though scholars like Sipe and Weaver acknowledge problems with a systematic, decontextualized view of grammar, their contextualized grammar practices still demand a focus on prescriptive rules and reliance on SAE as the norm.

Their reliance on stable SAE-specific rules and our relatively unchanged instruction beg the question: why is grammar still integral to composition pedagogy? Stable grammar practices do establish norms for communication, and they also build the ability to navigate different grammatical dialects. However, this stance is limited in efficacy—the field seems to be lacking specific practices for teaching dialectal fluency outside of SAE. Even when grammar is viewed stylistically, and used as a "generative" toolkit rather than prescriptive instruction, the toolkit's usage is still predicated on correct understanding of SAE's grammatical basics (D'Angelo). So, when we consider the reasons collegiate instructors of English resist grammatical instruction, it becomes clear why it has become difficult to navigate changes to instruction.

Despite how entrenched prescriptive grammar practice is within composition classrooms, criticisms of isolated, drills-based grammatical practices have remained extant within the field at large for some time. In 1985, the NCTE released an official resolution on grammar teaching practices:

> Resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English affirm the position that the use of isolated grammar and usage exercises not supported by theory and research is a deterrent to the improvement of students' speaking and writing and that, in order to improve both of these, class time at all levels must be devoted to opportunities for meaningful listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

This statement importantly affirms the discipline's general consensus that the dominant practices of grammar established by the Formalist movement is not only outdated, but also not serviceable to learning reading and writing (Nystrand et al. 274). Additionally it echoes the field's meta-awareness of concurrent grammar pedagogy's flaws and desire for change.

The NCTE has issued other statements, both formal and informal, regarding the goals and purposes of grammar education. A similar statement expresses the value of learning grammar:

> Knowing about grammar is important for numerous reasons. It's the language that lets us talk about language. It names the type of words and word groups that comprise sentences in English and other languages. It helps with understanding what makes sentences and paragraphs clear, interesting, and precise. It can be part of literature discussions as we examine the sentences in poetry and stories. It lets us understand that all languages and all dialects follow grammatical patterns. Research shows that learning grammar is best done in the context of reading, writing, and speaking.

This portion of the NCTE's statement defends two important components for grammar instruction. First, it articulates the importance of teaching grammar as a way to arm students with the tools to dissect grammatical construction and its effects. Second, the statement conveys the importance of learning grammar contextually rather than in a vacuum. The movement toward audience and context represents an acknowledgement of the necessity for rhetorical awareness, if only expressed in prototype.

What this inkling toward rhetorical approaches, as present in these and a number of other statements by the NCTE on grammar (bookended by a defense of Ebonics in 2016), linguistics, and language, demonstrates is an acute awareness of the issues of teaching SAE grammar in the university. Simultaneously, the thirty-year span of acknowledgements, condemnations, and

stances regarding grammar reflect a lack of resolution in grammatical practices. None of the statements, including the two included here, offer much in terms of instruction to implement grammar practices outside of SAE systems. Small movements have been made, moving English toward a sense that grammar needs to also serve and consider deviations from SAE, but the movement is slow and instructional tools are lacking—with a few exceptions. Attempts to overhaul grammar through ideological efforts and critiques are not completely missing from the discipline.

In his article "Grammar for Social Awareness in Time of Class Warfare," James Sledd unpacks the power of looking at grammar as not only stylistic, but also racially and dialectically. Teaching correct usage is teaching the "linguistic manners of the privileged" (59). Sledd not only identifies the white, middle class, native English speaking legacy that SAE has come to embody, but also incites pushback against this norm treating SAE, and therefore the privileged class SAE represents, as the best and correct option.

He prompts this pushback through education on the linguicism of SAE. Sledd argues that students "should never be set to study usage and grammar without conscious understanding of the nature and social functions of the dialect whose structure and use they are invited to learn. If they are ready for abstractions like subjects and predicates, they are ready for the abstractions of race and class" (62). Sledd not only exposes the racism implicit in our grammatical practices, but also exposes our assumptions about our students. He first highlights the ways English instructors have narrowed student audience to those who most prominently funnel through the collegiate system successfully. He second, rightfully so, indicts instructors for assuming our students are incapable of understanding grammatical structure's parallel to systemic social structures.

Sledd prompts his readers, primarily teachers, to consider their reasons for teaching grammar. His analysis immediately pinpoints the socially hierarchical nature of differing grammars as an issue of power. According to Sledd, recognizing grammar as a reflection of hegemonic privilege can transform grammar into a tool of resistance and autonomy. "It is wiser to teach the standard, and to teach its nature, as a tool, a weapon which the dominant have too commonly used for purposes of domination but which the dominated can use for purposes of resistance and of access to the best values of multiple cultures and traditions" (62). As Sledd demonstrates, teaching grammar socially and racially helps students realize the default hegemonic assumptions of language that silence and suppress minority voices.

Finally, Sledd argues that teaching SAE "as a tool, a weapon which the dominant have too commonly used for purposes of domination but which the dominated can use for purposes of resistance and of access to the best values of multiple cultures and traditions" (62). In other words, teaching grammar through a racial lens cannot simply expose the racist structures imbedded in the structures of language, but can also become a tool for resistance against hegemonic structures. As instructors in a field committed to exposing those same structures through critical tools, a model akin to Sledd's ideal seems natural, if not necessary to updates in grammar instruction.

Sledd argues that the field simply needs new tools. He writes that this deficit is a prominent hurdle for actually decentralizing SAE in deference to more inclusive approaches to grammar. There are inadequate resources to teach grammar in multiple dialects both because of accessibility and because of cost (Sledd 61). Cheap and readily distributed materials for teaching critically conscious grammar do not exist, but given the lack of change in practices, the reason does not seem to be as simple as that. The field supports the theoretical and pedagogical reasons

for new, different grammar pedagogies. Despite this, the field has yet to adopt new practices. Why? What really keeps the field from implementing such "radical" changes in grammar instruction?

I believe practice would be well served by a robust interrogation of this question. Promoting the tools necessary for comprehensive change will require a new wave of scholarship that looks into the many facets of grammar's complex social, structural nature; I am providing an initial investigation of this insight. Based on my research, I argue that there are several factors that have prevented us from developing productive tools for socially conscious, efficacious grammar pedagogies. The dearth of effective grammar resources has to do with not just affective anxieties around grammar pedagogy, but also (and primarily) racial and structural walls imbedded in the system of academe. In response to response the need for new grammar pedagogies, I proffer it is necessary for us to adapt a rhetorical approach to teaching grammar.

Rhetorical Grammar: A Solution

> *"Rhetorical grammar instruction can be demonstrated to students that language does purposeful, consequential work in the world—work that can be learned and applied."*
> **Laura Micciche**, "Making a Case for Rhetorical Grammar"

The Term's History & The Concept's Current State

In the scope of both grammar and rhetoric's histories, rhetorical grammar is a relatively young term. In modern composition, the idea first received traction in the 90's primarily through the work of grammar scholar Martha Kolln. Kolln wrote several articles calling for a departure in the field of composition from 'formal' or "'traditional' grammar to a more 'functional' grammar, which Kolln termed as 'rhetorical grammar' ("A Comment on" 875). Kolln differentiates rhetorical grammar from traditional grammar by including linguistic and stylistic grammar frameworks ("Rhetorical Grammar" 29).

Kolln specifies the language of "rhetorical" grammar instead "functional" grammar because of the important connotation "rhetorical" has that "functional" lacks. Namely, the "rhetorical" in "rhetorical grammar" identifies "grammar in the service of rhetoric: grammar knowledge as a tool that enables the writer to make effective choices" ("Rhetorical Grammar" 29) as opposed to a practice one. So, rhetorical grammar is focused on the stylistic and effect-based impacts of choice. While other literature on rhetorical grammar exists, it is not extensive. Kolln remains the primary voice vying for rhetorical grammar. The next most prominent voice in rhetorical grammar is rhetoric scholar Laura Micciche. In her article "Making a Case for Rhetorical Grammar," Micciche offers an important update on rhetorical grammar that reshapes rhetorical grammar as a social and epistemic practice. Relying on ideas reflective of Berlin's social epistemic rhetoric, the article situates grammar culturally. Through this lens Micciche contends rhetorical grammar analyzes the ways "grammatical techniques intertwine with meaning" (722). From this premise she asserts that teaching grammar rhetorically helps students engage the ideological exploration of language that Berlin (1988) refers to.

Micciche's updates augment Kolln's emphases on choice in writing and extend the impact of selection. She asserts that grammatical form has not just an impact on effect, but also on interpretation of content. Expanding the definition of rhetorical grammar offers readers tools for textual analysis similar to a close reading. So while Kolln offers rhetorical tools for the writer, Micciche provides rhetorical tools also for the reader. Namely, she enables writers to dissect and interpret the social consequences and implications of SAE grammar pedagogy.

As of now, the only major existing texts on rhetorical grammar pedagogy are Kolln and Micciche's. That is to say despite the intensive work done by both scholars on the topic, and parallel work done in applied linguistics and ELL scholarship, rhetorical grammar is still in a

proto-phase. Rhetorical grammar pedagogy is still not well circulated in the field. Nor is it is

largely implemented into composition classrooms as a valid alternative to traditional prescriptive

grammar. This indicates that rhetorical grammar is a helpful tool for teaching grammar;

however, the modes of implementing rhetorical grammar need refinement to reach a level of

reliable reproducibility. In the following section, I analyze the foundational structures of

rhetorical grammar in Kolln and Micciche's work to understand the basis for implementation. I

then further expose the gaps in rhetorical grammar to finally show how rhetorical grammar can

be used to accomplish critical conscious-raising goals in an engaging, reproducible way.

An Overview of Kolln

Martha Kolln spent years of her career defending "rhetorical grammar" over prescriptive

or "functional" grammar ("Rhetorical Grammar: A Modification Lesson," "A Comment on

'Grammmar'"). This work culminated in her textbook on rhetorical grammar, *Rhetorical*

Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects. The textbook breaks down her take on

rhetorical grammar into neat chapters of lessons, examples, group discussion prompts, exercises,

rhetorical reminders, and punctuation cues.

Kolln's textbook responds to traditional prescriptive drills and rules-based grammar

pedagogy. In his review of Kolln's textbook, Bryan Tutt writes that Kolln crafts her textbook to

encourage students to think of grammar as a functional tool (499). Tutt praises Kolln for

recognizing student apprehensions about taking grammar courses and making "every effort to

put students at ease" by teaching the most common sentence patterns and emphasizing the

rhetorical purpose of grammar (499-500). According to Tutt, the text ultimately functions as a

textbook and a reference guide focused on the effect of grammatical choice (502).

Tutt's review underscores the importance of Kolln's rhetorical contribution to grammar. Focusing on audience, effect, and functionality steers students away from the problematic issues of systematic grammar and redirects their understanding to a more accessible and positively valenced affective approach to grammar. Kolln's textbook works on two fronts: structures and effects. The first section mirrors most traditional grammar textbooks by teaching basic grammatical structures. It focuses on formal techniques to accomplish stylistic effects, such as rhythm and cohesion. In this portion she describes components such as subordinating clauses and appropriate punctuation surrounding clauses.

It is Kolln's second portion that distinguishes her textbook among traditional types. This portion rhetorically emphasizes the role of choice in grammar usage. As an example, Kolln imbeds "rhetorical reminders" in the text to guide the reader's decision making regarding grammar choice. Rhetorical reminders in this section look like "have you considered a transition and cohesion and the known-new contract in using adverbials?" and "do my opening subordinate clauses contain the known information?" In these chapters, Kolln's rhetorical reminders function to clarify how choice should be used to further stylistic effect or clarity. Specifically, the book contains four major parts: "Understanding Sentences," "Making Choices," "A Way with Words," and "Punctuation." The first section, "Understanding Sentences," introduces basic sentence patterns and sentence slots (subjects, predicates). It covers elements such as sentence structure, elements of rhythm, tone, diction, and subject-verb agreement. The first section establishes foundations for manipulation introduced in the second section: "Making Choices."

"Making Choices" focuses primarily on sentence slots. The section details the effects of placement, type, and purpose. For example, in chapter 7, "Choosing Verbs," Kolln discusses the importance of choosing verbs that show rather than tell. The writer should choose a verb that

"heightens the drama of a sentence and makes its meaning clear" (129). After this, Kolln ends with a chapter on stylistic variation. The chapter focuses on elements including word order, repetition, rhetorical devices, and deliberate fragments. "Choosing Stylistic Variations" epitomizes' Kolln's analysis of choice and effect (and mimics literature on grammatical style's role in creative literature), which helps establish grammar's fluidity and Tetris-like capabilities.

Section three, "A Way With Words," details two topics: word classes and pronouns. Chapter 12 explicates forms of classes and parts of speech. Chapter 13 is vital to furthering rhetorical grammar. It offers the central critical analysis of grammar offered in Kolln's text—an ideological examination of pronouns. Here, Kolln proffers that there are limitations in SAE grammar by extending that pronouns often lean toward the masculine. Kolln argues that the default to the masculine is sexist, and as a resolution she offers alternative options to the "he."

The final section of the textbook covers punctuation's functions, rhetorical effects, and purposes. In this section Kolln explores stylistic choice to its greatest degree through grammar. Kolln writes:

> A theme that runs throughout the chapters is the importance of understanding consciously that language structures you use subconsciously so that you choose the structures that will achieve your desired rhetorical effects. When you understand how those structures work, they become effective tools in your hands. Those grammatical choices, of course, include punctuation choices. (278)

The theme is one that Kolln has worked to set up throughout the text, and arguably best exemplifies through her example analyses of punctuation choices.

In one portion, Kolln analyzes options for connecting the two clauses "I loved the book" and "I hated the movie" to emphasize the differences commas, periods and semicolons (etc.)

have on reader experience. "You have a choice. If you want the reader to pause, to put strong stress on the opening element, particularly on its last word, then go ahead and use the comma," she writes (279). Here, Kolln prompts her reader to think about his or her own audiences' reading experience, which is at the heart of rhetorical grammar. This section on punctuation receives the most attention rhetorically in the entire textbook. The emphasis on rhetorical approaches to punctuation suggests that punctuation has the greatest viability for rhetorical manipulation (at least for Kolln).

Kolln's punctuation-based rhetorical grammar best demonstrate (under her framework) grammar's capacity for rhetorical grammar. However, the focus on punctuation de-emphasizes the rhetorical capacity for other components of grammar, like parts of speech and syntax. This is largely problematic for the practice; the stance reduces rhetorical grammar to formulaic stylistic practices rather than treating grammar as a toolbox, whose tools can be used in unique combinations. Emphasizing punctuation as the primary conduit of rhetorical use reverts rhetorical grammar to a set of prescriptive rules rather than opening up rhetorical grammar to audience-specific manipulation. There is little flexibility for real manipulation of grammar here.

An Overview of Micciche

Kolln's text still stands as the primary authority on rhetorical grammar, and so it reasons that Micciche's article is a response to and adaptation of Kolln's work. In her article, "Making a Case for Rhetorical Grammar," Micciche fills some of the ideological gaps in Kolln's work. Micciche strives to justify teaching rhetorical grammar, first, as a cultural-contextual response, and second, as "central to composition's driving commitment to teach critical thinking and cultural critique" (717-8). Her ultimate goal teaching rhetorical grammar is to link grammar and emancipatory teaching as a way to explore "cultural attitudes, beliefs and assumptions" (732).

Micciche first situates grammar in a broader rhetorical range. She moves her students' understandings beyond SAE; she does this by prompting them to consider that all language is informed by ideology (721), and opening that up to examples beyond the classroom. She proposes that content and form are always related. More so, she contends that form has social impacts (722). To teach this, Micciche explains that she brings in texts like bell hook's "Language," James Baldwin's "If Black Language Isn't a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?" and George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" (723). According to Micciche, chose these texts because they demonstrate the connections between language, grammar and culture well. She even extends that grammar is can be a tool of resistance, which she explore in texts like hook's essay on slave songs (723). hook's essay argues that deviation from Standard English in slave songs reflects an ideological brokenness slaves experienced, an ambiguity that reinforces greater meaning, and a "spirit of rebellion that claimed language as a site of resistance" (170).

Here Micciche expands Kolln's work into a broader social realm and acknowledges the ideological connection between grammar and meaning in an extremely productive way. She even goes so far as to connect rhetorical grammar to critical pedagogy. Micciche's conceptual movement of rhetorical grammar from the writer to the reader allows for social critique and analysis. This is my foundation for utilizing rhetorical grammar in the classroom. Placing student experience within a linguistic context positions their language use in an experiential, and culturally specific frame, which opens up space for dialogue, pushback, and self-reflection on socio-cultural topics, like race, class, and language use.

Of course, any foundation depends on implementation, and my practices are formulated around and in response to Micciche's implementation, which centers on making connections. Micciche writes that she encourages her students to explore the connections between form and

content. She assigns commonplace books, which require students to collect, write down, and analyze interesting quotations. Quotations can be one-line excerpts from a novel or a paragraph from a speech. Micciche's aim with the commonplace is to create an opportunity for students to learn "how to recognize and reflect on language as made and made to work on people's lives is central to being able to use language strategically" (724). She argues that the commonplace book encourages students to move beyond a correct/incorrect dichotomy, while gaining vocabulary for analyzing language. Micciche's goal here is arguably one of the most important goals and/or products of rhetorical grammar. Without language to articulate how structures are working and to what effect, they cannot replicate, master, or utilize such structures.

Micciche's students develop and practice using this vocabulary via commonplace books, and ultimately funnel those ideas into a larger paper analyzing the relationship between form and content in greater depth. Micciche reiterates the types of analyses her students pursue, including a breakdown of Vonnegut's use of repetition to emphasize character qualities of authenticity and Irving's use of dashes to relate a character's internal emotional state (726-7). Micciche offers her students' analyses to show rhetorical grammar's capacity for teaching form's relationship to meaning. Grammar becomes as much a tool for doing literary analysis—rhetorically—as much as it becomes a tool for exploring subtler themes such as interiority and beliefs.

What is still missing from Micciche's work, however, is a set of clear tools for moving students to critical engagement with the socio-economic factors that produce the effects that they explore in their papers. All the aforementioned student papers expose a limitation on Micciche's practices. Students do not move beyond the characters within the text and the author of the text; their rhetorical awareness is limited and dissociated from any kind of cultural or social context. This gap offers space for driving analysis further into the theoretical realm that Micciche

establishes so well with her own literature review and examples. I argue that adding a layer of racial critique may be the needed element to usher students into the next level of analysis and awareness.

In the following section, I demonstrate rhetorical grammar's capacity to integrate a racial lens of social-critique. Specifically, I build upon rhetorical grammar's capacity for fighting hegemonic norms by further exploring how rhetorical grammar and methods of conscientization intersect. By placing a race-focused lens on Kolln and Micciche's work, we can see what ways rhetorical grammar can be developed further to effectively engage concepts of privilege and disassemble the white habitus of grammar construction. This analysis will illuminate the possibility for grammar-centered anti-racist pedagogies in the first-year composition classroom.

CHAPTER II: IDEOLOGY IN STRUCTURE

Critical Race Theory's Transference to Grammar

An Analytical Critical Frame: Colorblind Racism

A critically conscious practice requires a critical frame; while Kolln and Micciche begin to excavate the ideological assumptions of grammar, they fail to directly address the inextricable tie between grammar and race. Since SAE grammar pedagogies are ensconced in a tradition and expectation of status-ed whiteness, a critical racial frame is appropriate. Such a frame would help elucidate the markers of class and race "hidden" in the grammatical system. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's work on color-blind racism helps the critical reader expose those very systems.

Bonilla-Silva defines a society's racial structure as "the totality of the social relations and practices that reinforce white privilege" (19). His definition of structural racism parallels the university's treatment of SAE grammar similar to the ways Canagarajah, Clark, and Sledd posit that language and grammatical structure mimics structural racism. In fact, his focus acts as a theoretical umbrella under which linguistic hegemony functions. Bonilla-Silva's work provides a several layers of context as well as tools for analysis. First, he reminds us that while we are experiencing overt racist ideologies spreading throughout contemporary America, the university has maintained the reputation of a site of social, ideologically left-wing progress. More often than not, the idea of the university is associated with practices of equity and inclusion. However, Bonilla-Silva complicates the liberal ideology associated with the university, arguing that even at their best efforts, these systems are subject to external (and internal) cultural influences.

Just as Inoue argues of the white habitus, Bonilla-Silva proffers that these influences permeate the subtlest infrastructures of the university. He says this is because of the lineage of the university; academia has been built around the white middle/upper class male. "For most

people of color racism is systemic or institutionalized," Bonilla-Silva asserts. Racist institutionalization is not only an economic and political reality, but is also just as much an educational reality for students of color. In *Racism without Racists*, Bonilla-Silva dissects the cultural mindsets and narratives that contribute to the culture of racist institutionalization in the university. He argues that white individuals have developed narratives that justify and minimize racist ideas, actions, and attitudes. Bonilla-Silva contends "that whites have developed powerful explanations—which have ultimately become justifications—for contemporary racial inequality that exculpate them from responsibility for the status of people of color" (14). He argues that this ideology is carried out through deflective narrative whites have about race are cultural lenses, or "frames," that allow structural racism to go invisible.

An example frame Bonilla-Silva proffers is "naturalism." Naturalization suggests that racial phenomena are "natural occurrences." For instance, naturalism might suggest that segregation occurs because people gravitate naturally toward others that are similar to themselves (70). Naturalism and the other three frames, "abstract liberalism," "cultural racism" and "minimization of racism," all contribute to the dominant narratives perpetuating white dominance. Bonilla-Silva names this systemic, narrative-based practice of racism "color-blind racism." Bonilla-Silva's deconstruction of narrative-based racism aligns well with the linguistics-based racism that authors like Inoue, Clark, and Phillipson outline—all views dependent on culturally influenced language use that perpetuates hegemonic ideology.

Extending the argument that curricula and teaching practices are subject to the same invisible influences of racism, therefore, is not a far stretch. Rather, the parallel helps explain why so little has been done to implement socially conscious grammar in the classroom. As the literature confirms, most expansions, alterations and re-conceptualizations of grammar pedagogy

and practice ultimately rely on SAE as stable context. Most grammar practices simply highlight variation with SAE and brand it as re-conceptualization. They do not deviate from the structure or suggest that alternatives exist, which, in turn reinforces hegemonic linguicism in the classroom. So, as Bonilla-Silva clarifies, even rhetorical grammar's practices, if based in SAE, invisibly perpetuate hegemony. I utilize colorblind racism in my latter analysis of current rhetorical grammar to expose the hegemonic tendencies in Kolln and Micciche's rhetorical grammar practices.

A Critical Pedagogical Frame: Code-Meshing

To develop a successful, critically conscious pedagogy, we need more than just an analytical frame for exposure. Successful rhetorical grammar pedagogy also requires a critically conscious guiding frame. Verhsawn Ashanti Young provides a goal-oriented critical framework centered on creating an inclusive pedagogy focused on encouraging multiplicity of truly diverse voices; this frame is integral to the formation of my conception of rhetorical grammar pedagogy.

In his book *Your Average Nigga: Performing Race, Literacy, and Masculinity*, Young challenges the most common defense of teaching SAE—code-switching. While code-switching is the most common practice for teaching groups for whom SAE is not their dialectal norm, Young claims that the pedagogical practice deems SAE as the only appropriate dialect for academia. Simultaneously, code-switching also reinforces the notion that alternative vernaculars are appropriate only for the private, personal sphere, which in turn becomes exclusionary. So, Young argues instead for code-meshing, a literacy practice that integrates linguistic diversity into the classroom. Code-meshing is the idea of blending vernacular, and in Young's case, refers specifically to blending SAE and BEV (Black English Vernacular). While code-switching requires students to learn SAE in addition to their natural dialect of English with equal

proficiency and then switch between the two based on context, code-meshing integrates BEV into the classroom. Young argues that code-meshing disrupts SAE and SAE's hegemonic influence and effects by challenging the normativity of SAE, creating space for alternative linguistic options within the academic sphere, and authenticates a diversity of language users.

Young's call for code-meshing offers theoretical framing that helps parse out the invisible structures present in our language practices. He calls forward the hegemonic practices associated with SAE and call for an accommodation of alternatives, which helps validate alternative dialects. Young shows first and foremost an awareness of audience, which is at the heart of rhetorical analysis and first year writing curriculum. Most teaching practices reflect this; however, the same is not true of grammar. Rhetorical grammar should have an awareness not just of the presumed reader (likely a white, middle class instructor), but also the writer. If we aim to move toward racial and ethnic equity in the classroom, we need awareness and validation of non-dominant voices and backgrounds. Rhetorical grammar becomes an extension of practicing code-meshing. It integrates dialectal differences into academic grammar, expanding our understanding of SAE, rather than privileging SAE as the standard for understanding grammar components. This is vital as the heart of Young's code-meshing is the idea of integration of diversity, gradation of acquisition, and expansion of linguistic repertoire.

Ultimately, conceiving of code-meshing as expanding our students' repertoire of communication and grammar may be the necessary lens for reshaping at least our grammar-specific curriculum in a socially-just and academically-valid way. Code-meshing acknowledges that language is fluid across superficial demarcations of "dialect." Speakers carry aspects of language from group to group rather than abandoning their base dialect completely for another one; the man speaking to his friends, then to the teller at the bank, and then to his boss is going to

speak to each person over the course of the day in gradations of formality, identification, and "correctness" according to SAE. Discourse practices are diffuse, and extend across communities and appropriation of others' discourse practices is happening constantly. Teaching difference expands the repertoire to allow better audience-tailored communication. Teach difference also draws student attention to the disparities of power imbedded in language use. Young's code-meshing, therefore, is not just useful, but vital to teaching grammar rhetorically. It first justifies teaching both SAE and non-dominant discourses as valid forms of communication part of a larger skill set, without privileging SAE over the others. Second it authenticates non-dominant grammar as valid focuses of collegiate grammar practice.

In the following section I expound upon the ways rhetorical grammar has not yet reached its capacity for critically exploring and dismantling assumptions of whiteness in our grammar systems. Utilizing Bonilla-Silva's ideas of racism's invisibility, I expose the racial neglect in Kolln and Micciche's pieces. Then, utilizing Young's frame of code-meshing, I argue that if we can reframe rhetorical grammar to consider populations outside the expectations of SAE grammar, like code-meshing does, then we may be able to best consider accompanying alternative dialects and reframe them as valid variants rather than deviations. Through this model I demonstrate how we can prompt critical self-evaluation through language.

A Racial Analysis of Kolln & Micciche's Rhetorical Grammar

Overall, Kolln's textbook does stabilize an understanding of choice in context through rhetorical awareness, but it only barely begins to consider grammar as social-ideological choices—with one vital exception. In her chapter on pronouns, Kolln delves into the details of personal pronouns, explaining number and person, and in doing so addresses the apparent limitations of the common options. She writes:

This set of personal pronouns may look complete--and, unfortunately, it does include all

we have. But, in fact, it has a gap, one that is responsible for a great deal of sexism in our

language. The gap occurs in the third person singular slot, the slot that already includes

three pronouns representing masculine (he), feminine (she), and neuter (it). (251)

Kolln then explains possible options for resolving the gap, offering options like using plural

pronouns, using gender neutral terms like "one," or rewriting the phrase. Kolln's examination of

pronoun use is pivotal to understanding grammar's capacity for analysis. This rare moment

drives grammar beyond style and effect—and into a conduit of value systems. More specifically,

the paragraph indicates that grammatical choice has ideological consequences, which she argues

extend as far as perpetuating sexism.

Kolln's exegesis of sexist ideology in pronoun use demonstrates potential. The analysis

suggests rhetorical grammar's capacity for also identifying racial ideology. While Kolln does not

address racial and class-specific ideology in language, she cannot be blamed. Gendered language

is clear, explicit; (as Bonilla-Silva points out) racialized and class-specific language is not.

Therefore, the primary challenge is that while sexism is apparent in SAE, racism is not as easily

identified. The disproportionate visibility of gendered issues in grammar can be both

corroborated and exemplified by contemporary etiquette guides, such as the Purdue OWL's

"Using Appropriate Language" guide and the AP Stylebook's updated pronoun guidelines.

The Purdue OWL's "Using Appropriate Language" section discusses avoiding

"stereotypes and biased language," which is broken down into a single example under the

stereotyped language and a list of fifteen gender-biased language examples. Despite the

conscious effort to denote "Stereotyped Language" as a distinct category addressing assumptions

"about a group of people," the section also revolves around gender (OWL Content Development

Staff). The example places an "Incorrect" and "Correct" option side by side, suggesting replacing "Although she was blonde, Mary was intelligent" with "Mary was intelligent" (OWL Content Development Staff). The return to gender as the sole example under a section about stereotypes—which is often identified through race—reveals the varying levels of visibility power structures of race versus gender present in language.

One would think a racial example would appear under the section, but perhaps such examples are omitted because they are *too* overt and people presumably do not need education on correction. Gender acts as a point of contrast as it is socially imbedded enough that defaulting to masculine pronouns is the norm, but also overt enough that any person can identify that masculine pronouns are being preferred. Race, on the other hand, seems to only exist in language on opposite ends of the spectrum as either blatantly racist or nearly imperceptible.

A similar example garnered national media attention only a year ago. March 27, 2017. NBC news headline reads: "AP Stylebook Embraces 'They' as Singular, Gender-Neutral Pronoun." The shift's prominence reflected a difficult and long-standing issue within the grammar community; for years, as evidenced by Kolln's own analysis of pronouns, grammarians argued about best practice for implementing neutral pronoun use in language. Inserting both feminine and masculine pronouns each use feel clunky, while using only the plural seems equally limiting, and in the current age of LGBTQ+ language, the need for non-binary language seemed ever more evident. AP recognized that.

As cited in the NBC article, lead editor for the AP Stylebook, Paula Froke, offered two reasons for the shift in pronoun use: "recognition that the spoken language uses they as singular, and we also recognize the need for a pronoun for people that don't identify as a he or a she." The shift was slow moving, but the issue was visible long before the change occurred. Racialized

implications for SAE, in contrast, are not so apparent. There are no major grammatical structures being questioned for their racial stereotyping—those structures are subtler, more invisible.

Kolln's pronoun analysis demonstrates her models' potential for culturally analyzing grammar. She shows that grammatical choice can reflect hetero-patriarchal ideology; however, she fails to elucidate how it reveals whiteness. Analyzing Kolln's own examination of sexist pronouns reveals a few principal pitfalls. These pitfalls need to be addressed for rhetorical grammar to work as a tool of conscientization. The first pitfall is rooted in the question, *why can we easily identify sexism, but not necessarily racism in SAE grammar*? The problem seems to be rooted in limitations of choice within SAE. While pronoun use can default to sexist uses, there are clear alternatives, such as "one" or "she" or "they." So even within the existing model of academic writing, there are clear alternative paths to negate sexist defaults. Racist language in SAE, however, is much more invisible when we have no other dialects to compare it to. This is because whiteness is expected and normalized in SAE grammar. So, the first pitfall of Kolln's rhetorical grammar pedagogy is the reliance on SAE grammar.

Academia's dependence on SAE form and grammar is so deeply ingrained that Kolln's rhetorical stance on grammar does not even consider alterations. Her note on "agreed-upon conventions" exemplifies Kolln's internalization of hegemonic grammatical practices. Kolln writes that these "are rules that you should know thoroughly" because "the reader will have more confidence in your ideas when you demonstrated your expertise of the standard punctuation conventions" (280). The "agree-upon conventions" that Kolln refers to are class markers of the white, educated middle to upper class (280). The "standard" is fixed within academe, and it does not consider variant audiences within or alternative audiences outside of the genre.

Although her framework may not consider alternatives technically incorrect, alternatives are considered less valid (i.e. writing an "incomplete sentence" that depends on only a phrase instead of a clause). Kolln cites the 'ethos argument' to answer why writers should abide by "best practices." She reasons that "chances are, the reader will have more confidence in your ideas when you demonstrated your expertise of standard punctuation conventions" (280). The language in Kolln's work is not uncommon to hear. It is a standard explanation for proper grammar and language use in the college classroom. The language helps justify and clarify SAE's role in academic writing; however, such expectations reinforce what Phillipson and others argue—that positioning SAE as an ethos builder reinforces white, middle/upper class power. Establishing SAE as the default and reinforces it as the dialect with the most social capital. Finally, keeping SAE normalized keeps invisible the historical whiteness in academia that Inoue, Bonilla-Silva and Jordan invoke. It also continues to put dominant pressure on language by deeming all alternatives insufficient for academia. Parading SAE as the default reinforces the "correctness" of the cultural norms and expectations associated with the structures upon which SAE is premised.

There is another pitfall associated with teaching only SAE in the classroom. Defaulting to SAE alone limits our capacities for analysis. Since SAE practice is entrenched in the lineage of academia (middle/upper class male whiteness), we cannot expect to see its racist consequences without comparing SAE's expectations with alternatives or deviations. In other words, to reveal SAE's status as simply one among many (rather than the norm challenged by a single anomaly) requires comparison to many alternative grammatical dialects. And so, because the writer always expects an academic audience abiding by SAE grammar, the capacities of rhetorical analysis of grammar are limited as well. It requires no specific attention to audience, or at the very least an

expectation that the audience is fluent in SAE. Rhetorical awareness in Kolln's text, and as expressed through SAE, goes only so far as to invoke a reader who exists within the American university.

The previous analysis should ultimately highlight two takeaways: racism is not obvious, and all example analysis of SAE grammar is compliant with hegemonic ideology. The two major authorities on appropriate SAE etiquette have only made gender-based and not racially based changes in recent years. From this it should be clear that grammar's racial and class-related undertones are difficult to parse out, likely because SAE has culturally become the default for processing ideas within the academic sphere. Instructors continually further this perspective when they reinforce SAE as the only site for mining examples of grammatical analysis. As long as examples are drawn from within SAE's schema, analysis is not challenging SAE as a norm. For as long as we allow SAE to be the paradigm of grammar correctness, we do not position students in a posture of awareness, but rather continually reinforce the invisibility of student whiteness by limiting assumed audience of academic writing.

The literature review and analysis portion of Micciche's article responds to some of the issues in Kolln's argument of rhetorical grammar as primarily style and effects-based by offering a perspective that is socially and critically aware. However, as the student assignments portion of Micciche's article demonstrates, work on the implementation portion is needed for rhetorical grammar to fully function as a true tool of cultural critique. Progressing the capacities of rhetorical grammar for teaching cultural critique depends on offering a racial analysis primarily on Kolln's practical methodology rather than theoretical methodology. As mentioned before, Micciche's model needs to focus on socially positioning white students in relation to texts more. The model teaches students how grammar works to communicate to specific audiences, but does

not overtly position the reader's own privilege and experiences in relation to the racialized undertones of grammar. Students learn the skills of connecting form and content, but still reflect on texts in a manner analogous to a literary close reading that explores the nuances of characterization and meaning through a grammatical approach.

We are missing the tools to move students to consider next the implications of class, gender, race implied by grammar use. Students will gravitate toward texts that are well known and comfortable to them. For students learning in a primarily white, middle to upper class educated environment, it is expected that they will chose texts that fit that paradigm. Most of the texts that fit that schema, again, fit into SAE grammar. As long as students gear their analysis towards these texts, rhetorical grammar pedagogy will be ill-equipped to expose holes in the popular texts reflective of the invisible hegemonic influences on SAE.

Redirecting contemplation through a racial lens, and not just through a rhetorical lens alone sets the foundation the reader needs to situate their language use, and therefore the self, amongst other uses while maintaining alternate uses' value. This accomplishes two things. First, redirecting the frame asks the student to expand their audience to include texts that do not necessarily comply with SAE. Second, it re-contextualizes grammar into a social sphere, as Micciche strives for in her literature review and argument for teaching rhetorical grammar.

I argue that rhetorical grammar pedagogy needs to place pressure on the connections between audience, writer, form, content, and privilege if it is supposed to incite racial realizations. With this view, instructors can aid student recognition of racism in language similar to our identification of sexism in language. This analysis will tease out assumptions of whiteness in academic writing and challenging the normativity of whiteness in grammar practices.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY & IMPLEMENTATION

Departing from Current Implementation

Before I begin, it is important to note who I've had in mind when I designed this model of implementation. As Sledd demonstrates, teaching grammar socially and critically can accomplish different purposes for different student audiences. While Sledd works to craft a grammar pedagogy that empowers a population that is largely oppressed through SAE, my model is designed for primarily white, middle/upper class first year composition students. Accordingly, this model means to draw awareness to student privilege imbedded in academic language use and lead students to question those grounds of privilege associated with their identity the academic system.

Because Micciche constructs her pedagogy based on Kolln, and because of the advances in her pedagogy toward the goals of critical engagement and reflection, I will be utilizing Micciche's method of implementation as the foundation for my own pedagogy. To reiterate, Micciche's pedagogy begins with first teaching "rhetorical grammar as a way of thinking" and modeling that "grammar is never divorced from ideological functions" (719, 721). She accomplishes both by teaching works by authors like bell hooks, Robin Lakoff, and James Baldwin—authors who deconstruct language use, primarily SAE-divergent language. (723).

She then asks students "to focus on the connections between grammar and concepts such as audience and purpose" as "an art of selection" through the use of a commonplace book (a journal in which students write compelling quotes and excerpts in to practice grammatical rhetorical analysis on). Students utilize commonplace books for record keeping; students record interesting passages from books, poems, etc. that prompt interesting grammar use. Under each entry, students provide at least one paragraph of analysis "in which they identify the work

achieved by specific grammatical techniques in the passage" (723-4). Based on these commonplace book passages, students write a rhetorical grammar essay that gives them the opportunity to expand their rhetorical analysis in depth.

Under the methodology, her students' rhetorical analysis heavily resembled a literary close reading on the sentence level. She offers examples of analysis like one student's breakdown Malcolm X's use of "you" to directly address his audience as a call for unity (729-30). She cites another student's analysis of Kurt Vonnegut's word choice as a reinforcement of a satirical tone (727). Other examples include analyses of parallelism, dash-use and hedging, highlighting ideology and emphasis through choice. Micciche points to the way rapper Eminem "uses repetition and power words—or words of emphasis to create culturally relevant and, for some people, resonant stories" (721). In another section, she details the way her students note former president Bush's hedging in his 2002 speech denouncing terrorism (725). Each of these examples analysis are unified by one thing: analysis of stylistic choice.

Micciche's pedagogical approach can be successful in having students engage grammar and increase their investment in analysis, but the former approach presents some challenges. First, despite strong models of linguistic rhetorical analysis (via authors like hooks and Baldwin), students seem to be stuck on practicing literary analysis, rather than expanding their notion to the larger concept of rhetorical analysis of grammar. This analytical stagnancy seems to be rooted in students' dependence on literary, and SAE, canon. Despite the strong analysis, none of Micciche's student examples address largely divergent uses of SAE; they focus on manipulating or pointedly emphasizing elements of SAE style as they relate to meaning. While the treatment of stylistic elements does improve student ability to do analysis, it mimics literary analysis more so than rhetorical analysis. The analyses on language and word choice do clarify the linguistic

roles of grammar. Yet, the same kind of analysis can act independently of grammar and be considered purely a tool of literary analysis. For example, the reference to "you" as a subject of address easily vacillates between being a "symbol" and a rhetorical construction, and a long pedagogical tradition of treating word choice as symbolic tools of literary analysis teaches students to treat diction as symbolic, not structural like grammar. It seems students' have a muddled grasp of distinction between the literary and rhetorical uses for diction choices, which suggests an instructional gap in teaching that distinction. Such a gap should not be overlooked; without sufficient, clear tools for teaching proper rhetorical grammar, we are ill equipped for exposing students to the racial constructions of grammar.

Second, students are not just relying on literary-specific tools of analysis, but also literary-specific texts most likely to be compliant with SAE and an SAE-expected audience. The focus on stylistic grammatical practices, like unpacking parallelism, places grammatical flourish, rather than basics, at the forefront of analysis. A student can easily avoid implementing parallelism and be a clear writer and communicator. In fact, rarely will students use the more extreme stylistic flourishes, like syntax inversion, in everyday speech. Most problematically, most stylistic devices and flourishes observe traditional SAE grammatical rules. If they do break those rules, they do so in direct reference to it. There is not true deviation, simply variation and manipulation of the "best practices" set in SAE that Kolln outlines in her text (280).

Analysis of grammatical flourish is accessible because it falls into the same category of literary analysis: it fits within known conventions similar to literary analysis and is compliant with SAE. Methodology has not prepared students for dealing with departures from cannon. So while classics like Langston Hughes or Kurt Vonnegut seem ideal candidates for deconstruction, such work does not offer much for dealing with contemporary subcultures of reflective of real-

world literacy and communication practices. Conversely, ELL grammar and rap slang seem inappropriate within academia and well outside of expected texts. And yet, these sites of language hold some of the greatest potential for widening grammar-meaning relations up to structures of linguistic and social power dynamics.

Of course there are valuable classical texts that afford strong analysis, but for the sake of contextualizing SAE as a single option within a larger social frame, we may be best served by looking outward toward the linguistic practices outside academia and the classroom. From there, we may be able to teach students the nuances of what denotes a worthwhile text (even within literary canon) for socially conscious rhetorical analysis. When alternative options for English are offered, we can begin to compare and reconfigure SAE's placement within our linguistic practices—and so, this is very place where I deviate from Micciche's implementation of rhetorical grammar.

My proposed method of implementation continues to use rhetorical grammar's focus on audience and questioning, but simply extends those qualities further under a socially conscious lens. This pedagogy accomplishes this by practicing rhetorical questioning on examples of grammar that deviate from SAE. In the following section I detail the principles, main steps, and examples of a consciousness raising rhetorical grammar pedagogy.

Designing Conscientizing Methods of Implementation

In this section, I proffer kernels of methodology for implementing rhetorical grammar, with the intention of prompting further exploration. In developing these practices, it was first important to create methods implementable in the first-year composition classroom. Grammar is central to the first-year composition course, and exploring grammar as a throughway to ideological conversations about race and privilege seems like a natural route to conscientization.

Additionally, for many students, first-year composition may likely be some students' only opportunity to engage the conscientizing practices built into other English coursework, such as upper division English courses. So, teaching rhetorical grammar early on makes most sense.

As both Micciche and Kolln demonstrate, rhetorical grammar does not disregard grammatical rules and practices of SAE. In fact, it encourages dialectal fluency in SAE grammar, as well as other forms like Ebonics, LGBTQ slang, and other through directed comparison and questioning. The first goal aims to have students acknowledge dialectal diversity and to understand them as valid. The second goal is to encourage code-meshing by introducing alternative dialects into the classroom. The third goal uses the analysis process to ask the reader to position his or her own language use among others in a productive consideration of privilege.

Setting the Stage: Spacing out Grammar

The disruption of regular grammatical practices begins with a rhetorical approach most like Micciche's practices. As she has demonstrated, rhetorical grammar requires integrating a variety of dialects for students to understand differences between dialects of grammar use. Integrating texts that model the connection between language, purpose, and audience, like excerpts from Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands* and June Jordan's article "Nobody Mean More to Me than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan," (just as Micciche does) demonstrates language's capacity for informing larger social constructs like meaning and identity.

Formal grammar integration can be scaffolded through rhetorical grammar curriculum or chunked together in one or two lessons. It does not need to be time consuming. In my own first-year composition courses, I have incorporated grammar lessons through short 10-15 lessons and worksheets once a week during our 80-minute classes. Teaching SAE's grammatical conventions is not detrimental when it is taught as an option rather than the only valid form. We can

immediately begin displacing SAE's centrality by first breaking it down into isolated elements,

like basic parts of speech, punctuation, or phrases and clauses. Subsequently we can then provide

a variety of grammatical structures demonstrating dialectal diversity. This might manifest, for

example, as a lesson on punctuation, then a list of examples exemplifying the multiplicity of

options for comma use. Offering diverse examples, like Micciche does, establishes a strong base

for analyzing form's relationship to content. It additionally arms students with the vocabulary to

engage in more complex topics regarding language, race, and social dynamics of power.

Criteria for Choosing Texts

Coaching students to find the underlying hegemonic assumptions of SAE grammar first

requires that students have clear models that illuminate differences in grammar usage based in

class, race, and culture. So, we must learn to teach students to find socially situated text ripe for

analysis. This requires that we draw their attention toward specific types of examples. We can

approach this by finding texts that fit a number of specific criteria. As noted above, specificity

requires generating content under the distinct parameters of *language that intentionally deviates*

from standard uses of grammar.

The first criterion for choosing texts is deviation; the sample text must break the

grammatical rules of SAE in some way. Deviation may include searching for double negatives,

slang-heavy examples, linguistic blends (like Anzaldua's *Borderlands*), or group-specific

terminology. Rather than a mistake (i.e. a verbal flub, a typing error, etc.) in SAE, this example

should express some intentionality. Intentionality can be tested with in-group understandings of

the manipulation. The intentional difference can include an omission, an addition, or a

manipulation of a grammatical structure (at least in part). Note that it is not simply diction-based,

but is reliant on the formal elements of grammar, which can be syntactical, but must always be based in the use and order of parts of speech.

The second criterion requires the text to be rooted outside of academia. There are scholarly authors, like Anzaldua and Villanueva, who accomplish this in their academic writing, but their intentional diversions and blends mean to draw awareness to these differences for a white academic audience. There are of course exceptions within the genre of canon texts, but the demarcations of intent and audience are fluid and difficult to parse out. When first learning how to differentiate between rhetorical and literary analysis, reliance on canonical texts can obfuscate students' search and analysis of "appropriate" samples. A clear solution to this nuance is to teach students to instead gather examples that reflect the culture and class that the language is speaking to. Teaching this nuance takes time; offering several opportunities or stratifying the steps may be necessary, if not simply helpful for ensuring students' full understanding. If such examples are to be productive, they must be rooted in authentic cultural contexts. This is why the deviation must be set outside of academic writing. It is not to discourage analysis of literature, but to steer students toward texts that lend themselves well to socially aware grammatical rhetorical analysis.

The third criterion is also related to authorship. Students must be able to identify the interlocutor(s) utilizing the deviation, even if only broadly. Identification can be as specific as naming the individuals in the communication exchange or as broad as naming the region that the interlocutors reside in, or the community, culture, or race/ethnicity that they belong to. If we can teach students to think about user and audience, we can more easily point out that grammar is always contextual and socially rooted. We need to know the origins of a deviating phrase to account for the evolving and dialectal natures of grammar use and language in general, and to encourage more complex analysis from our students.

Relying on audience and speaker can also help students find pieces that deviate for cultural reason. bell hooks' essay on slave songs models how audience becomes a pathway to understanding cultural motivations for linguistic deviation. Her piece argues that that linguistic deviation allowed slaves in pre-civil war America to code their songs with covert meaning. They used this system to communicate secret, group-specific messages unbeknownst to their slave owners—an act of resistance (170). The piece demonstrates how looking for speakers whose language patterns deviate from the norm may provide a clear guide to finding specific examples for analysis. It also shows how interlocutor relationship shape communication standards.

Assignment Sheets

Understanding the criteria for choosing texts is foundational for successful analysis and practice of rhetorical grammar. While there are several options for communicating the criteria, arguably the most direct is the assignment sheet. We can build a clear foundation for accurate rhetorical analysis of grammar by offering these clear standards. Ultimately, if we can provide clear, tangible steps for analysis, we will be better equipped to help students transfer their critical examination of grammar to a critical examination of social power dynamics implicit in language. The assignment sheet can fill that role through guiding questions. As the natural question '*why?*' emerges, we instructors can begin to help students respond to this question with a series of other questions such as '*who is the audience?,*' and "*who is our writer in relationship to their audience?*" intended to move students toward connecting form, content, meaning and finally social implication. The following is a sample assignment sheet that demonstrates how to integrate the criteria, structure the questions into analysis, and prompt student engagement with the social, cultural and racial implications of language. Primarily it demonstrates how to incorporate guiding questions crafted to encourage this specific trajectory of analysis:

RHETORICAL GRAMMAR

The goal of this assignment is to explore and examine the ways our language works on a grammatical level. This term we have covered basic components of the sentence and ways to put those components together into sentences within Standard Academic English (SAE). Remember, that SAE refers the professional and academic form of English you'd engage in a college writing class. *In this 3-4 page assignment, your task is to search for examples of grammar "in the wild" that demonstrate difference from what we've come to expect as the norm in college English writing classes and examine them through a rhetorical lens.* **Specific instructions are below**:

1. ***Look for 'bite-sized' examples of sentences that do not match the "correct" grammar you'd expect in a writing class and keep a written record of the sentences and their origins.*** You are looking for a 1-4 sentence long quotation that seems grammatically 'incorrect.' The text may be considered incorrect because the verbs and subjects do not match up, because certain parts of speech have been added or detracted from the sentence, because the order of words has been manipulated, etc. Simply, it should deviate from your expectations of proper grammar for an English writing class. You might find these examples on Twitter, on Instagram, or in conversation. Please keep your record; we will use them in class, and you will attach your record to the *3-5 page paper* (directions #2-4).

2. ***Pick 1 example for further analysis of the rhetorical situation and cultural context.*** For this analysis, you are identifying the audience of the sentence and explicating what we need to know for this sentence to work or make meaning. In this section, to the best of your ability you are answering questions like the following:

- 'Who is the audience? What can you tell about the audience (i.e. location, cultural background, racial/ethnic background, class, etc.)?'
- 'Who is our speaker? What can you tell about the speaker?'
- 'What is the relationship between the speaker and his/her/their audience?'

3. ***Continue to break down the meaning in your "in the wild" example created by differences from the formal SAE meaning.*** In this section, you will be examining how the unique combination, inclusions, or omissions of certain parts of speech create unique meaning. You can take the approach of comparing and contrasting the example to a version of the sentence that might be considered correct for SAE, or simply exploring the new meaning made. A list of guiding questions for this section includes:

- "How does the writer's grammar deviate from Standard Academic English?"
- 'Who benefits from this specialized use of grammar?'
- 'How does the writer build credibility through their use of grammar in the text?'
- 'What do the specific deviations accomplish?'

4. ***Finally, evaluate the choices and their effects as well as what the choices imply about the speaker.*** From a rhetorical perspective, what do you see as the goals, purposes, and references to the appeals of the grammatical choices? Answer the following questions for this final section:

- 'What do the deviations show about beliefs or values of the audience and/or the writer?'
- 'What might be the purpose(s) behind the deviating grammar?'

DUE:
50 pts.

This example assignment sheet scaffolds the analytical process. The ultimate goal is to move students toward personal reflection of privilege, language and self through structured questioning. The assignment sheet clusters the questions into general steps, i.e. contextualizing use with the interlocutors, exploring how use aids the user (in developing credibility or enacting resistance, etc.), engaging grammar itself, and finally unpacking ideological purposes of grammar. Note that the assignment sheet was designed with flexibility in mind. The assignment can be an in-class activity, a series of low-stakes practice analysis, or a group project. This assignment sheet is simply a base template to be tailored to specific classes and students' needs.

While the question list is not exhaustive, it does establish the kinds of rhetorical questions appropriate for encouraging ideological analysis of grammar. Such specific questions about writer-audience relationships aim to guide students through processing why deviations from SAE are justified, why they may be necessary, and for whom they may be necessary. By prompting rhetorical analyses through specific questions of form, meaning, and belief, we can spur discussion about SAE grammatical practices with questions focused on the benefits, limitations, purposes, and expectations of SAE grammar in relation to our students' experiences—this all for the sake of inclusivity. Through these practices we can build up to the final question of '*how does my background benefit my ability to communicate in the world of academia?*' Although these steps are present, the practice needs more continuity between these steps so that it can be as reproducible practice to best provide instructor support.

Following are sample analyses (from my perspective as instructor) that might stem from the assignment. The examples vacillate between modes of teaching and analyzing to demonstrate the complexity of analysis that rhetorical grammar can achieve. The sample analyses simultaneously provide pedagogical cues for implementing and practicing rhetorical grammar.

Sample Analyses

Example 1: "You Good"

I first encountered this example on my social media feed (see figure 1). The text itself is an examination of black linguistics practice. Even without the additional context the marginalia provides, the example is a strong artifact for rhetorical analysis. It fits the requirements of deviating language by intentionally omitting the verb "are," it is language agreed upon within a specific sub-group, and its interlocutors are identifiable for the purpose of analysis.

Figure 1: "'You Good' Facebook Post." Retweet via Facebook; 21 Jan 2018.

The original tweet, from user duRANT., writes: "'you good' means like 7 different things to black people." While there are likely dozens of independent threads exploring the meaning, this particular version gets explicated by Facebook user Cherizar Crippen. Crippen outlines her seven versions for the meaning of "you good." According to @HortonHead13 and Crippen, inflection dictates the phrase's meaning, intent, and tone. The phrase's function is vast, and can

range from kindly asking a question to curtly ending a conversation. This example importantly emphasizes the flexibility deviation has with meaning for creating non-dominant discourses. Primarily the example focuses on the ways omission can allow for a greater number of meanings than the SAE form would permit. Crippen models interpretation of a deviating text; she offers the following "translations:" 1. "you good=are you ok?" 2. "you good=you are ok" 3. "you good=how have you been?" 4. "you good=stop talking to me" 5. "you good=you're welcome" 6. "you good=no need to say sorry" 7. "you good=you need some money?"

Crippen does most of the decoding for us, but I could choose to ask students to figure out as many meanings for "you good" as they can even before introducing Crippen's explication. However, decoding makes up only a small portion of the analytical process of a rhetorical approach to grammar use. We still have more to analyze in relation to audience, context, and value of the deviation. Before addressing the meanings themselves, I would set up the space for the deviating example. I might ask my students to treat this like any piece of rhetoric and ask: "who is the author, who is the audience, and what is their relationship?" The answer has multiple layers. The first is that duRANT and Crippen are speaking for the larger community that uses the phrase. Secondly, they are speaking for themselves. So, the author and audience become intertwined because the phrase does not necessarily originate from the Twitter user, but the specific community that uses the language. So, the author and audience can be either discrete entities or one and the same.

The overlap clarifies not only who the author and audience are, but also what their relationship is to one another in the context of the language use. The phrase exists within and for culturally black communities. The semantics of what constitutes that community is less important than what it reveals about dialectal difference. The construct represents a cultural sub-

group; language reflects cultural differences even with English. This deduction is the first goal I want my students to reach with rhetorical grammar. From here, I would ask my students to examine the differences from SAE and their effects and purposes for this specific group. As noted above, at the most basic level, the deviation of "you good" comes from the lack of verb, presumably the verb "are." On a syntactical level, the omission allows for a variety of sentence orders. Such an omission provides an opportunity to discuss and compare uses of verbs and even find similar parallels in SAE grammar.

The first option is to place the "are" before the "you good," resulting in "are you good?" The order could be interpreted as any of Crippen's questions: "are you ok?," "how have you been?," or "do you need money?" In terms of the diction, SAE would require "well" rather than "good" to correctly ask if someone's state of health, both immediately or in the past. So, the incorrect form allows for the ambiguity of meaning, expanding its usage. In any frame, "you good" is not a direct translation, but rather depends on the SAE forms of full sentiments like "are you okay" or "do you need money?" to function. An alternative placement for the "are" is after "you," which would create the phrase "you are good." This gives way to the imperative and declarative interpretations of "you good." These include "you are ok," "stop talking to me," and "no need to say sorry." Again, none of these are direct translations, but rely largely on intonation to express the context of the phrase and the symbolic sentiments they signify.

All the examples act as a short hand, quite literally through the verb's omission, for communication. The ambiguity of "you good" allows language users to address delicate situations like asking someone if they need money or if they are doing okay covertly. I could use this to point out to my students that an indirect, "incorrect" structure like this one has important social and communicative value. Like code-meshing explains, the phrase "you good"

manipulates SAE to expand it rather than attempting to create a dialect completely new; it is rooted in cultural context and external cultural influences. The "you good" example demonstrates the richness of meaning that speakers can accomplish by manipulating standard structures, and this richness in variation (based on context) can play important social roles for specific sub-cultures and minority communities.

This example is chiefly important as it acts as a model for toggling between grammar as structural—how the individual parts being manipulated create meaning different from SAE—and grammar as socially contextual—how the use has social implications. Contextualizing grammar structure socially helps us to "de-isolate" grammar and to simultaneously reconfigure our mindsets toward grammar as a tool of code-switching. Deviation from SAE simply means that we are deviating from dominant discourse, and grammatical tools for engaging non-dominant discourse are, if not should be, different.

Example 2: "I Don't Know Nothing"

The second example, the double negative, highlights the extent to which specific user impacts use. In other words, the example focuses on the ways identity of the interlocutors differentiates purpose and use of a specific deviating grammatical structure, like the double negative. The double negative structure has several linguistic stereotypes associated with it. Primarily, it is either associated with white "trailer park trash" slang or with the English Language Learner who speaks in broken English. These two stereotypes of grammar deviation are viewed as a product of poor knowledge about grammar. In reality, however, they are rooted in deeper social, cultural and linguistic structures.

In an excerpt from his book, Inoue describes the role of the dialectal practices in his literacy narrative. Inoue shares that he grew up in a trailer park and the double negative was a

class marker. He used "the double –negative for the similar rhetorical reasons that was prevalent in the white working class neighborhood and schools [he] went to in middle school and high school" (124). In this context, Inoue and his neighbors' deviation is an intentional departure from SAE that confers insider status onto the deviation. The users signal belonging by establishing the deviation as a cultural norm—the community chooses to deviate from SAE despite knowing the correct form. However, this is only one use of the double negative.

Alternatively, Spanish speakers learning English also use the double negative. Their reason for practicing the construction can be quite divergent from its use by native English speakers. They use the construct because of the similar, but not equal translations of grammar structure for double negatives. While English requires "I don't know *anything*," the Spanish "no sé nada" transliterates into "I don't know nothing." The vast differences in speaker, audience, usage, and purpose reflected in the two example uses of the double negative reflect how socially, economically, and politically rooted grammar use is. Unpacking the direct correlation of language users to language use reveals how closely and accurately grammatical structure mimic social structures, which can be explained and modeled by rhetorically dissecting an example like "I don't know nothing" that has double meaning and double context situated in culture and class.

Understanding the rhetorical purpose of the double negative, therefore, requires a turn to audience. While one speaker and the coordinating audience (ie. a white man in the south speaking to a neighbor) utilize deviation to signal belonging, the other (ie. a native Spanish speaker) relies on a standard grammar norm in their native language. Understanding who interlocutors are therefore clarifies how they use the construction, as well as how the relationship between content, audience, and speaker functions in general. A native English speaker rather than a non-native English speaker may receive the use of the double negative differently. Even

then there is variety within those two options. An ELL tutoring another ELL is likely to address the error; however, An ELL whose English is more proficient than their parents' English may not correct the parent when they use the double negative. The list goes on. This is to say that there are many factors woven into the dynamics of linguistic communicative exchange.

Ultimately, I want my students to think about the question: "how does the intersection of race, class, English language proficiency, relational dynamics, etc. contribute to how interlocutors might use and respond to a grammatical deviation?" As the above examples clarify, these dynamics are complex and depend on context. We need, then, to ground the dynamics of audience, speaker and structure with tangible specificity.

To narrow down the multiplicity of factors that contribute to use, I might approach the double negative through two specific hypothetical situations. The first hypothetical case positions a native Spanish speaker still learning English, perhaps a Generation 1.5[1] student, speaking to a similar ELL peer who also speaks English at the same level. In this situation, the deviation may not be intentional, but rather an uncorrected grammatical mistranslation from both speakers' native languages. However, if both students learn that the double negative is not "formally" correct and chose to continue to use the phrase, the use becomes an act of resistance (hooks 170). Rather than speaking in their native language to one another, their choosing to use a deviating form of SAE acknowledges English. Through the act, they additionally reframe SAE to suit their own grammatical patterns and desires.

The two students benefit from this deviating form by adapting to English while honoring the structure of their native language. They additionally benefit by building language for their group of two—an act of solidarity. If I placed this interaction in a public school classroom, I

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[1] Generation 1.5 students—U.S. educated English Learners who demonstrate characteristics of both first and second generation immigrants (Singhal 1)

might argue that these students might be building solidarity because they feel alienated from the rest of the class or perhaps even by the teacher (an individual response to a culture of linguicism in the classroom). Credibility can therefore be maintained between the two and meant only for the two.

As this hypothetical example evolves and potentially snowballs, its point should emerge: deviation has many motives and cannot be separated from the external social, psychological, and structural factors that produce it. Race cannot be taken out of this scenario for the motives to make sense, or the context of being a bilingual, Generation 1.5 student in an all white classroom with Native English speakers. In fact, unveiling the underlying social structures and power dynamics at play in such an example discloses the values and beliefs of the recipient of the non-standard SAE use. If the teacher or class were to reject the double negative as "wrong" without qualification, they would reinforce only a white middle and upper class status quo of the education system. Movement is away from inclusion of diversity rather than toward. The argument recoils to the larger critique of the educational treatment of SAE: exclusion of alternative forms shows a preference for middle to upper class whiteness and a simultaneous displacement of people of color, non-native English speakers, and "basic writers" who lacked the skills white middle and upper class education affords.

The educational space of the collegiate classroom will always include interlocutors that privilege SAE and the hegemonic discourses that accompany SAE. It is clear, then, how the goals of traditional SAE formalist practices of teaching grammar place dominant and non-dominant modes of discourse in conflict with one another. If this situation took place in another locale with another interlocutor whose goal was not to enforce SAE, then purpose for deviation

could be entirely different. The primarily takeaway from this note is simply that *who* is speaking and with *what purpose* impacts use and reception of deviation in grammar use.

If we were to approach the phrase "I don't know nothing" through a hypothetical similar to the scenario Inoue outlines, the analysis proves different implications of the deviation. Rather than being a potential site for resistance, the context for this deviation is simply cultural. The double negative, also known as a negative concord, is a dialectal difference used in specific geographical and socioeconomic pockets around the United States, but is primarily regional to the South in states like Alabama and Texas ("Negative Concord"). In this instance, the speaker and audience may both be native speakers and may even know that this version does not fit school expectations. Even without the aid of research, students know of deviations like these through conduits of information like the media, family members, and orally passed traditions and knowledge. This is to point out that while these examples can be validated through research, they are still knowable and accessible to the average first year composition student.

Regardless, the double negative becomes a form of identification between members of that specific socioeconomic group. In these areas, the double negative may be the norm and a part of the linguistic practices just as much as saying "pop" versus "coke" versus "soda" is. The dialectal difference reveals an insider/outsider dichotomy important to local identity. Speakers build credibility through the familiarity of language practices, even grammatical ones.

Further focusing on the context of the language practice can push the discussion of grammar onto the plane of values. What do the deviations reveal about the values or beliefs of the speaker and audience? Specifying the details of audience and speaker helps situate the deviation's cultural context, reason for use, and effects of the grammatical use. For example, by situating the main interlocutors as white, lower class, and living in the rural south, we emphasize

the values of small town community and solidarity. Insider versus outsider status becomes an important signifier for treatment of others in this hypothetical town, especially for the analyzer.

Ultimately, the two examples are rooted in opposite motivations. The first hypothetical use of the double negative structure stems from alienation and resistance for a few against the status quo of a narrow community (the classroom). The second hypothetical use of the same exact grammatical structure stems from solidarity within the status quo of a community (the town). Audience and speaker are as important to meaning and purpose as content is, and culture, race, class, and linguistic background vitally affect motivation of and effect of grammatical use in this instance. All difference is happening in spite of a common deviation that produces that same difference in meaning for both sub-groups mentioned here (and all others using the structure).

Example 3: "Needs Washed"

The *Yale Grammatical Diversity Project: English in North America* project tracks regional grammatical differences across the United States and Canada. On the site, they explain and breakdown over 30 dialectal ticks such as double comparatives, the invariant be, and negative inversions into information about how the differences are used, who uses them (and where), and the syntactic properties of them. One of these grammatical constructions primarily used in the mid-west, particularly Western Pennsylvania, Eastern Ohio, Northern West Virginia, and Central Indiana is the "need/want + verb-en construction," i.e. "the car needs washed."

This final example analysis explores the relationship between locale and grammar. The "needs washed" construction is a regional practice, which differentiates it from examples like the "you good" construction which is a racial/ethnic practice. Despite the difference of the grammatical origin in locale over personal identity, both are inflected by racial structure. Region

is often tied to race and ethnicity. As such, the linguistic practices are often tied to the racial makeup of the region. On the topic, linguists Murray and Simon state that "whites favor the construction" (149) more than other races and ethnicities. Like the second example, "I don't know nothing," the geography and audience analysis alone of "needs washed" provides reasonable context for the social purpose of the structure. The construction is a social norm, not a response to the norm, as to say that it is a regional practice. Yet, it is also likely connected to the intersectionality of race and class given the large presence of rural populations in the areas that the grammatical structure is used.

The structure of "needs washed" deviates from the SAE "needs to be washed" (an infinitive) or "needs washing" (a gerund). The deviation, therefore, can manifest as an omission (of the infinitive) or a manipulation (of the gerund). Meaning, regardless of the transformation, remains intact, and the Yale site shows that the phrase can be attached to a variety of structures with decent flexibility with little to no impact on meaning. Functionally, the omission or manipulation of SAE operates socially more than denotatively. The "needs washed" example is extension of what the second version of the "I don't know nothing" construction points out. Like the double negative, which is situated in Southern states like Alabama, the "needs washed" construction is a regional dialect meant to denote in-group versus out-group status of a specific race and class within the region. The strictly regional nature of the "needs washed" construction (compared to the flexibility of the "I don't know nothing" form), however, better lends it to expressing the import of regionalism to grammar use than the "I don't know nothing" form does.

The examples from *The Yale Project* shift overtly toward a linguistic approach rather than grammatical, but the examples offer an important takeaway regarding grammar education. This last example bridges the class-based and race-based implications for grammar usage with

geographic implications for grammar usage. In reality, often times all factors overlap. Unique dialectal differences are ubiquitous across the United States. Regionalism, then, can be a throughway to contextualize grammar socially, racially, and structurally. Local dialects are rooted in local context; students can draw on pre-existent knowledge of local dialects and integrate that knowledge into their analysis of contextual grammar use. From my experience, when students can identify with the local dialects, they feel connected, and therefore invested in the analysis. Placing pressure on the immediately known language use forces analysis of students' immediate world. This is the ultimate goal of practicing rhetorical grammar—to further connections between linguistic structure and social structure, and to use those connections to critically examine personal position within this larger schema.

Final Notes for Implementation & Next Steps

In the three previous examples, we saw the products of the three criteria—that the sample texts deviate from traditional SAE grammar, that they are deviations truly found "in the wild" and not academic in nature, and that the interlocutors associated with the sample text can be identified in some capacity—as texts that emphasize that deviating grammar has a significant capacity for reshaping meaning, that its purpose is dependent on user, and that deviating grammar has large implications for regional dynamics of race, class, and gender.

These three examples are meant to be samples of analysis, not metonymous of the entire range of deviating grammatical constructions. They are models for critical analysis that need to be expanded to function well as sites of comparison to dominant discourse. Gauging how many examples to model and/or to assigned students to work through to create a sufficient critical mass for further analysis and connecting to social themes depends. Students, course content, course theme, and allotted time for practicing rhetorical grammar are all major factors affecting when

you should transition into discussions of the larger implications of practicing rhetorical grammar. Ultimately the goal is to use this pedagogy to prompt examination of the relationship between race, privilege and grammar and critical examination of personal benefits from the linguistic expectations in place, particularly at the University

One goal of rhetorical grammar is to teach dialectal fluency. Another is to prompt students most likely to be unaware of their linguistic privilege to critically examine this very power dynamic. Rhetorical grammar does not deny the purpose or attempt to condemn SAE, but rather asks students to view SAE as a single communication option among many. The practice teaches and depends upon first building a basic understanding of SAE grammar. From here, the pedagogy works to examine university grammar standards by asking students to identify and analyze patterns. However, the most important goals of reframing rhetorical grammar are to validate alternate non-dominant discourses and dialects, to force students to consider how "white" the audience of SAE is, and to disrupt the discursive expectations that reinforce exclusionary conceptions of race in the classroom. Through this, we may be able to prompt supplemental large-class, small-group, or individual exploration about structures of the university and whiteness and class.

CONCLUSION

Grammar is complex, and not simply because of the diverse set of rules for complying with SAE's expectations of correctness. It is an intricate product of socially constructed knowledge and power structures; and despite this, grammar's multifaceted nature is an asset to composition. This thesis was premised on grammar's value, arguing not just that it is needed, but also that grammar can do more. The thesis proffers techniques for retailoring grammar instruction to better serve composition curricula and for contributing to discourse on composition practices' connection to the social world. I began by surveying the literature on hegemonic systems within the university and within grammar to demonstrate how SAE's privileges students of a white racial and middle/upper socio-economic bracket. This survey also divulged the social need for a change in grammar instruction. The subsequent review of grammar instruction's history further revealed epistemological and pedagogical issues with the traditionally prescriptivist grammar pedagogy, which wedged opened space for rhetorical grammar to ease those anxieties and address the socio-cultural components inherent in grammar's structure.

My examination of current rhetorical grammar practice reiterated the field's entrenched lineage of whiteness and the need for further racial analysis of grammar pedagogy. When I placed Kolln and Micciche's pedagogies under the necessary pressure of two critical racial frames, I began to identify the limitations of current rhetorical grammar practice. I also began to detect the largely indiscernible hegemonic whiteness in rhetorical grammar pedagogy that I was previously blinded to. This revelation centrally informed how to press rhetorical grammar forward with critically conscious goals in mind, and reshape it as tool for disrupting linguicism and the SAE-enforced white habitus. Most concretely, these steps also afforded a way to diversify and critically transform grammar into a tool of discourse on racial issues of import.

Rhetorical grammar is not just a resolution to some of the pedagogical issues of traditional grammar, but equally a tool for engaging social issues beyond the classroom. It is a tool akin to code-meshing—validating cultural knowledge and language production outside the conventions of academia. This is vastly important for dismantling practices that tailor academia to the "elite." If we want to deconstruct the boundaries of education between the university as institution and student, then the university first needs movement toward diversity and inclusion. Second, it needs to find interesting access points in the curriculum to achieve academic outcomes in conjunction with making educational success accessible to a diverse background of students.

As with Kolln and Micciche's rhetorical grammars, this version of rhetorical grammar is still in its infancy and in need of development and refinement. In the future, I see this research needing immediate development in two areas. First, this work assumes instructors have a minimum level of grammar understanding (enough to teach it). Rhetorical grammar needs more development if it is to be accessible to the teacher uncomfortable with grammar. Again, while my goal is not to provide a grammar textbook (because this work has already been done, and because my goal is to provide strategies for implementation rather than providing explanations of component parts), there is power in detailing how to move from knowledge about what a part of speech is and does to how it can be applied. Developing examples that begin with explanations of a specific component and move toward the final goal of application would increase rhetorical grammar's reproducibility. Secondly, this research aims not only to teach students grammar in a pedagogically effective way. It also ultimately hopes to move students toward the question: "how do I benefit from this system of language?" as way to help students locate themselves within the curriculum, and to materialize a platform for exploring social responsibility and social engagement. Rhetorical grammar still requires a lot of work in this area.

Even if we do not have all the answers to how even this small practice might work, the time is right to ask these questions. We are prompted by the very political climate to develop a pedagogy of praxis that responds to our students' need for greater tools for social engagement. Sentiments like the ones posted on the *Breitbart* page over a year ago are still representative of contemporary beliefs about and understandings of hegemonic infrastructure, even for many who went through the "liberal" university model. But, what if we could prompt the public to put more critical pressure on misrepresented socio-political topics through minute curricular changes that find interesting intervention points for teaching and identifying the "pervasive" nature of racism?

If we were to reimagine the UW Tacoma Writing Center/*Breitbart* scenario with an audience who had been exposed to conscientizing pedagogy in their Gen-Eds, such as rhetorical grammar in first year composition, then perhaps the comments would have been different. Perhaps, the writing center statement, let alone the article, would not have been necessary in the first place. Of course these hypotheticals are a far stretch, but this hopeful thinking marks a step in the direction toward goals fields like Rhetoric and Composition are committed to. Within rhetoric and composition classrooms, we as teachers have the capacity to equip students with critical thinking skills, tools of articulation, and knowledge of inequalities. It would be naïve to assume that our students are uninterested in applying those skills to socially relevant topics. Showing that critical engagement can be taught even through a topic as perfunctory and perceptibly bland as grammar demonstrates our capacity for empowerment. Our practices can produce change if we take a rhetorical approach that is mindful of the world outside the classroom and academia. When struggling to remember why such practices matter, it is important to ask a few questions questions: Whom are you teaching for? How are you teaching your students? And what are the stakes of those practices?

Appendix:

"Statement of Antiracist and Social Justice Work in the Writing Center"

Our Beliefs

The writing center works from several important beliefs that are crucial to helping writers write and succeed in a racist society. The racist conditions of our society are not simply a matter of bias or prejudice that some people hold. In fact, most racism, for instance, is not accomplished through intent. Racism is the normal condition of things. Racism is pervasive. It is in the systems, structures, rules, languages, expectations, and guidelines that make up our classes, school, and society. For example, linguistic and writing research has shown clearly for many decades that there is no inherent "standard" of English. Language is constantly changing. These two facts make it very difficult to justify placing people in hierarchies or restricting opportunities and privileges because of the way people communicate in particular versions of English.

Because we all live, work, learn, and communicate within such racist systems, the consultants in the writing center assume that a big part of our job is to help students become more critical of these unjust language structures as they affect students' writing and the judgment of that writing. In particular, being aware of racism as structural offers students the best chances to develop as writers and succeed on their own terms in an inherently racist society.

Furthermore, by acknowledging and critiquing the systemic racism that forms parts of UWT and the languages and literacies expected in it, students and writing center consultants can cultivate a more socially just future for everyone. Just avoiding racism is not enough because it means we are doing nothing to stop racism at large, and it amounts to allowing racism to continue.

Our Commitment

The writing center consultants and staff promise to listen and look carefully and compassionately for ways that we may unintentionally perpetuate racism or social injustice, actively engaging in antiracist practices. For instance, we promise to:

- be sensitive to our language practices (what we say or allow to be said) and other microaggressions that may make some people feel uncomfortable or feel in some way inferior;

- openly discuss social justice issues as they pertain to the writing at hand;

- emphasize the importance of rhetorical situations over grammatical "correctness" in the production of texts;

- be reflective and critical of the practices we engage in;

- provide students ways to be more aware of grammar as a rhetorical set of choices with various consequences;

- discuss racism and social justice issues openly in productive ways;

- advocate for the things that will make our Center safe, welcoming, productive, proactive;

- challenge conventional word choices and writing explanations;

- conduct on-going assessments of the work of the writing center, looking specifically for patterns or potential inequalities or oppressive practices that may be occurring in the Center.

We also realize that racism is connected to other forms of social injustice, such as classism, sexism, heteronormative assumptions, etc., in similar ways. We promise further to do our best to compassionately address these issues as they pertain to student writing as well.

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