

7 Researching Style: Methods in Rhetoric, Composition, and Related Disciplines

When researchers analyze patterns of language for their larger meanings, they are conducting stylistic analysis. One of the great but frustrating things about academia is that several names can exist for a similar activity across different disciplines. Thus, there are at least four different terms for the study of language patterns: stylistics, rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis, and genre analysis. Teachers and researchers in rhetoric and composition will likely recognize the term *rhetorical analysis*, but those who do not study style may be unfamiliar with the discipline of European stylistics or the method of discourse analysis, as it is mainly used by sociolinguists but is becoming increasingly popular in related disciplines.

This chapter briefly outlines how style is studied within rhetoric and composition, and explains how other approaches can strengthen our understanding of style and lead to innovations in research and teaching. In particular, this chapter describes how American stylistics faded during the 1970s, only to return within the last several years through work by Butler, Pace, Johnson, and other scholars discussed in the section on style's revival in Chapter 4. This chapter also builds on discussions of language difference started in Chapter 6, revealing its connections to areas such as sociolinguistics, dialectology, and world Englishes. The methods of research, and insights from these areas, help diversify style by outlining their study of language practices in other varieties of English across the US and worldwide.

RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Let us begin with approaches to style within rhetoric and composition. A variety of research methods exist here, as originally outlined in Gesa Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan's 1992 book, *Methods and*

Methodology in Composition Research. Research on style within the field draws on most, if not all, of the research methods identified in this book. Although twenty years old now, Kirsch and Sullivan's book is still largely accurate in terms of the methods of inquiry: theoretical and meta-theoretical (e.g., North, Miller, Sanchez, Dobrin), historical (e.g., Enoch, Gold, Connors, Crowley), feminist (e.g., Schell and Rawn, Ballif, Jarratt, Hawhee), and ethnographic (e.g., Rose, Carter, Brandt, and Sternglass). The rest of this section briefly explains how researchers approach style from these various standpoints.

Theoretical approaches to style make explicit assertions about its role in writing and rhetoric. In short, they offer a theory of style and then seek to explain its validity. Aristotle promotes a theory of style when he advises plain language with minimal use of metaphor and other figures, asserting that the plainest style is the most suitable to his view of language as representative of thought. If we agree with Aristotle's theory of language as a vessel for meaning, it follows that all language should be plain when attempting to convey information. Although the sophists did not advance an explicit theory of style, Chapter 2 of this book considers work by T. R. Johnson and Susan Jarratt, both of whom construct a theory of style from sophistic texts that oppose Aristotle's. When contemporary scholars such as Paul Butler and Catherine Prendergast advance a view of style as deviation from norms, they advance a theory of style as the expression of individuality that contrasts with those of most handbooks, including Strunk and White's, that theorize style as putting oneself in the background. Theoretical approaches to style often turn to histories, analysis of public discourse, or discussions of pedagogy to elaborate on their theories. For example, Chapter 6 describes how Canagarajah and Lu theorize style as the negotiation of linguistic difference, and then employ literary analysis of student texts as persuasive evidence.

An historical approach to style, as Chapter 2 illustrates, often focuses on interpretations of major figures, treatises, movements, documents, or institutions in a given time period. Historians interested in style ask questions about what educators of a given period say about style and its teaching, the role it played in actual educational practices, and what alternative views existed. Alternative historians seek out voices not represented in the classical tradition or in dominant histories. Such historians endeavor to recover styles and theories about style that are not contained in treatises—such as literary texts or other

records. For example, an alternative historian would analyze poetry by Sappho and fragments of Aspasia to construct an implicit theory of style, or perhaps an enactment of style that subverts more dominant, masculine styles.

Histories of style can examine any time period. In many ways, Butler's work takes an historical approach by describing the "exodus" of style into several specializations within rhetoric and composition and, thus, its dissolution as a distinct form of research by itself. Robert Connors was nothing if not an historian, and his examination of late nineteenth and early twentieth century handbooks, textbooks, and other materials illustrate how style became associated with correctness and grammar at elite institutions such as Harvard. A more recent historical perspective on style appears in Tara Lockhart's 2012 *College English* essay, "The Shifting Rhetorics of Style." The article examines the evolution of Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's treatment of style over several editions of their textbook, *Modern Rhetoric*, a book that ultimately seemed to "eschew style in ways that parallel broader trends in the field as it moves from the 1970s to the 1980s" (Lockhart 19). In addition to her analysis of all four editions of *Modern Rhetoric*, Lockhart also examines reviews of various editions of the textbook and correspondence between Brooks and Warren.

Historians focusing on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often focus on archives and special collections housed at universities, as well as government agencies, professional organizations like NCTE, or non-profit organizations like the YMCA. Newspapers, manuals, transcripts, conference proceedings, or virtually any other record is of value to historians if it reveals contexts relevant to their projects. For anyone interested in pursuing these engaging issues, research begins with published or collected primary and secondary documents, and then proceeds to archival work, as described in Alexis Ramsey et al.'s collection *Working in the Archives*, as well as Kirsch and Rohan's *Beyond the Archives*.

Feminist approaches to style, also covered in Chapter 6, emphasize the use of language as a means to circumvent or disrupt dominant or phallogentric assumptions. Feminist scholars can take an historical approach, recovering texts from marginalized voices in a given historical period and showing how they push back against theories of style such as Aristotle's. They might also take a literary and/or theoretical approach like Cixous, writing in a style that deviates from prevalent

attitudes about what is “acceptable” or “clear.” Feminist approaches to style are especially known for their performative approach, advocating subversion of masculine styles, including admonitions by Strunk and White to be clear and concise, while also performing subversion through active deviation in their own writing. No doubt such methods have influenced work in other areas of our field, evidenced by writers such as Geneva Smitherman and Vershawn Young, who argue in favor of blended Englishes while blending the conventions of academic prose with AAVE. Feminist scholars can also advocate for pedagogies that encourage students to become more aware of how dominant conventions work to suppress individual expression through language choices, helping them discover means to write their ways through and beyond these dominant conventions.

No precise ethnography on writing styles has been published in rhetoric and composition; however, such a work is interesting to hypothesize. An ethnographic approach to style would seek to understand what students themselves think about it, and how it surfaces in their daily literate practices. Some central questions for an ethnography of style would ask to what extent writers’ own attitudes and behaviors confirm, contradict, or question our current theories and pedagogies on this subject. Like Marilyn Sternglass in the ethnography, *Time to Know Them*, researchers might interview students or writers at various points over a single semester about their language choices as they move from classroom spaces to social and online ones.

The information students provide about differences and overlaps between style in their academic and social lives could illuminate how students negotiate the desire for expression with demands for clarity and adherence to a single set of standards. An example of the kind of information an ethnography of style could gather appears in Rebecca Lorimore Leonard’s 2014 *College English* piece, “Multilingual Writing as Rhetorical Attunement.” One multilingual writer Leonard interviewed, Alicia, describes her negotiation of stylistic preferences between Spanish and English:

When I think of writing in Spanish in comparison to English, we were encouraged to use longer sentences because you sound more sophisticated and like you know what you’re talking about. That was very interesting process switching to English because it’s the complete opposite. Chop chop chop,

extra words extra words. No need. Where are your periods and sentences? (241)

Alicia goes on to describe the emergence of her own multilingual stylistic aesthetic as she adjusts to shifting preferences between these two languages for shorter and longer sentences. Ultimately, when writing in English, Alicia balances the expectation for shorter sentences with her own tendency to write “a lot of sentences that could be three, four lines long,” because “I like them that way. They make sense to me” (241). According to Leonard, Alicia and many other Spanish students in her study demonstrate a preference for “longer sentences, fewer periods, and more coordination,” and believed it contributed to an intelligent, mature voice (241).

Interviews, field notes, and observations like those described above are the primary means by which ethnographic researchers gather information. Researchers would then interpret this data and explain its significance to current research and teaching methods about style. Ethnographers might also conduct more formal background research, seek records and transcripts from students’ online activities, papers they write for various classes, and any other data that might help illuminate how they negotiate different language norms. Such basic methods are described in Wendy Bishop’s book, *Ethnographic Writing Research*. Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater’s chapter on ethnography in *Exploring Composition Studies* also outlines the primary methods and goals of ethnographic research, and references foundational texts such as Shirley Brice Heath’s *Ways with Words*, Beverly Moss’s *A Community Text Arises*, and Ellen Cushman’s *The Struggle and the Tools*. As Chiseri-Strater describes, these main goals involve gathering information about aspects of literacy as they occur inside and outside classroom spaces.⁴⁶ To achieve such goals, ethnographies can target populations other than students—for the sake of learning more about the role of style in various workplaces, social spheres, and other extra-institutional contexts. Ethnographies by Moss and Cushman, as well as Deborah Brandt’s work on literacy sponsors in *Literacy in American Lives*, and Graham Smart’s exploration of workplace literacies in “Reinventing Expertise,” provide examples of such spaces.

46. A recent turn toward critical ethnography, advocated by Stephen Brown and Sidney Dobrin in *Ethnography Unbound*, also calls for researchers to acknowledge their roles in these ethnographies and employ them in helping to contest or transform material conditions.

Quantitative methods have gained traction since admonitions from Richard Haswell, Richard Fulkerson, and Chris Anson, who all urgently pleaded in three separate articles for more replicable, aggregative, and data supported (RAD) research in rhetoric and composition. Such methods drive a good deal of research published in the journals *Written Communication*, *Journal of Writing Research*, and *Research in the Teaching of English*. A 2012 CCC article by Susan Lang and Craig Baehr advocates for using data-mining to support writing and writing program research as a way of strengthening our theoretical knowledge and intuitions gleaned from practitioner lore. A later section of this chapter explains the methods of corpus research, a particular type of data-mining used by sociolinguists to analyze stylistic elements of language use in a variety of settings. As the next sections show, quantitative methods often inform research in linguistics and sociolinguistics, producing findings that can—like the other methods described here—inform the ways in which rhetoric and composition scholars define, teach, and discuss style.

STYLISTICS

Stylistics involves the analysis and interpretation of literary and non-literary texts for the methods by which addressors communicate with addressees. Although stylistic analysis goes back to the classical era, the appeal to scientific terminology originated with Roman Jakobson's "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," presented at the Style in Language Conference of 1958. There, Jakobson urged attendees to draw on structural linguistics to move beyond the simplistic, subjective descriptions of prose in literary analysis. Many scholars publishing critiques of literary analysis in composition, such as Milic and Ohmann, became proponents of stylistics. The early project also involved M. A. K. Halliday, who used formal grammar to parse literary texts such as William Golding's *The Inheritors*.

Early stylistics followed the New Critical distinction between literary and non-literary texts, presuming form and content as inseparable in the latter, but not in the former. Moreover, literary texts possess an inherent style apart from readers' interpretations and expectations. The goal of early stylistics was to subject texts to mechanical analysis,

producing statistical data on ratios of different syntactic structures.⁴⁷ Stylistics made a dramatic shift from this method as the result of three events: Derek Attridge's retrospective on Jacobson's closing statement, Stanley Fish's condemnation of stylistics, and Michael Toolan's partial redemption of stylistics in response to Fish. All three essays denied Jacobson's attempt to erase readers, taking issue with the tendency of Chomskian linguistics to ignore the socio-political dimensions of structures in language. Specifically, Fish alleges an over-reliance on generative grammar in the work of Ohmann and Halliday. Doing so was "predictable" (107) in Fish's view, because stylistics always privileged abstract structure over real-word context. Rather than dismiss stylistics altogether, Fish states an alternative: "In the kind of stylistics I propose, interpretive acts are what is being described; they, rather than verbal patterns arranging themselves in space, are the content of the analysis" (110).

In the introduction to *The Stylistics Reader*, Jean Jacques Weber observes that the discipline flailed slightly in the wake of Fish's critique, as many others followed. Rather than fade altogether, stylistics re-invented itself and ultimately accepted the role of readers in the formation of textual meaning and form, just as Fish encouraged. Thus, several areas of stylistics emerged that Weber uses to structure his anthology: formalist stylistics (analysis of high literature), functionalist stylistics (analysis of everyday texts), affective stylistics (focus on readers' response to stylistic moves), pedagogical stylistics (approaches to teaching style), pragmatic stylistics (style used in social situations), critical stylistics (the role of style in power dynamics), and feminist stylistics (the role of style in constructing gender).

In an *Introduction to Stylistics*, Peter Verdonk defines these areas succinctly and offers a view of style and its study as the "distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect" (4). Over the next hundred pages, Verdonk unpacks this definition by introducing fundamental terms, including internal foregrounding (the linguistic choices authors make to emphasize information), semantics (formal meaning), and pragmatics (contextual or social meaning). For contemporary stylisticians, any text—whether a road sign or a novel—contains internal and external factors that weigh on the au-

47. Ohmann published representative essays taking this approach, including "Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature," "Speech, Action, and Style," and "Instrumental Style: Notes on the Theory of Speech and Action."

thor's style. Semantics is concerned with textual and internal elements such as grammatical construction, sentence length, and use of stylistic devices. Pragmatics is concerned with contextual elements. Verdonk lists seven:

1. text type or genre;
2. topic, purpose, and function;
3. temporary and physical setting;
4. social, cultural, and historical setting;
5. identities, knowledge, emotions, etc.;
6. relationships between speaker and hearer or author and reader;
and
7. associations with other text types. (19)

Moreover, pragmatic stylistics does not consider language as representational, as much as indicative and indexical. Language proceeds via *deixis*, or the process by which speakers and writers orient their addressees to aspects of place, time, and identity. One recent and well-known example of pragmatic approaches to style published after Verdonk's book is Norma Mendoza-Denton's 2005 book, *Homegirls*, a book that analyzes the style-shifting used by adolescent women in Latina youth gangs in Los Angeles. Mendoza-Denton demonstrates the various ways that linguistic choices contribute to her subjects' performance of identity, and also how socio-cultural circumstances determine those choices and identities.

All of these perspectives (e.g., linguistic, pragmatic, and literary) help stylisticians grapple with what Verdonk refers to as "the central issue that stylistics is concerned with: how far can we adduce textual evidence for a particular interpretation, and how far can we assign significance to particular textual features" (31). How stylisticians frame these questions, and what types of texts (genres) they interpret, depends on whether their readings are informed by literary stylistics, feminist stylistics, linguistic stylistics, or a combination thereof. Many of the terms and topics stylisticians draw on may seem familiar to readers, such as point of view, free indirect discourse, stream of consciousness, and interior monologue. These are but a few of the terms used to analyze the style of a particular discourse. A range of terms for stylistic analysis derive from rhetorical stylistics, going back to figures of thought and expression catalogued during the Roman era. Fahnestock and Bialostosky both show that figures of thought and expression in

classical rhetoric describe linguistic phenomenon and often have counterpart terms in these other disciplines. The only difference is that classical rhetoricians catalogued hundreds of such linguistic phenomenon, perhaps more than any other endeavor to study language. As this book frequently demonstrates, it stands to reason that such cross-disciplinary efforts can enrich the study of style.

In the 2005 *Rhetoric Review* essay, “Performative Stylistics and the Question of Academic Prose,” Holcomb models the kind of analysis that stylistics conducts, attending to what he refers to as the performative style of Judith Butler. Holcomb examines the stylistic choices made by Butler, and shows how they contribute to her direct attempts to perform a liberal, intellectual identity for her readers. Holcomb identifies the classical figures of *antimetabole*, *ploche*, and *polyptoton* used by Butler as “cultural forms”—more specifically as “ritualizations of language,” the use of which “structures larger movements in the essay” and serves to secure Butler’s own status as a radical academic (202). In Holcomb’s interpretation, Butler chooses deliberately complicated sentence patterns to showcase her intellect and exaggerate the complexity of her ideas. The style she performs is aimed at securing her own status as a radical public intellectual.

Verndock’s book serves as an excellent, short introduction to the topic of stylistics, and it contains an overview and selected passages from landmark books in the discipline, as well as a glossary of terms used by the various branches (literary, poetic, feminist, linguistic, and pragmatic). Some of the books mentioned include Sara Mill’s *Feministic Stylistics* (1995), Ronald Carter and Walter Nash’s *Seeing Through Language: A Guide to Styles of English* (1990), Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Mary Louise Pratt’s *Linguistics for Students of Literature* (1980), Roger Fowler’s *Literature as Social Discourse: The Practice of Linguistic Criticism* (1981), and H. G. Widdowson’s *Practical Stylistics: An Approach to Poetry* (1992).

The various areas of stylistics still demonstrate vitality, and work in them appears regularly in the journal *Language and Literature*. Recent special issues included topics in rhetorical, pedagogical, and feminist stylistics, as well as new media studies and internationalization. A 2012 special issue of the journal was devoted to stylistic analysis of crime writing. In one compelling article, Christiana Gregoriou analyzes posts on a discussion thread about the popular crime drama, *Dexter*. Gregoriou looks at the use of allusions, metaphor, comparison,

irony, humor, and word choice in posters to show how fans indulge in debates about the ethical quandaries of the show, but ultimately subscribe to its ideology, justifying and forgiving Dexter's murders. The word choice of one poster even implies justification for the show's villains, sexualizing the victims in one season as possible prostitutes who "have a look," and so, as Gregoriou summarizes, "their appearance [is] made into an actual justification for their downfall" (283).

In other issues of *Language and Literature*, Kay Richardson outlines a methodology for studying dialogue in popular film and television, Roberta Piazza studies the relationship of visual cues and narrative styles of voice-over in the films of Italian director Antonioni, and Michael Abbott and Charles Foreceville analyze styles of illustrating emotion through facial expressions and body language in Japanese manga. Dan Shen charted the evolution of traditional and westernized stylistics in China, describing their use in analyzing linguistic choice in translations. Masayuki Teranishi, Aiko Saito, Kiyo Sakamoto, and Masako Nasu provide a history of pedagogical stylistics in Japan, attending to its role in English as a Foreign Language instruction as well as instruction in Japanese literature. These recent studies underscore the expanding diversity and potential of stylistic studies in interdisciplinary projects.

A number of comprehensive books exist on stylistics that are accessible to non-linguists and students. These include Lesley Jeffries and Daniel McIntyre's *Stylistics* (2010), a book entitled *Teaching Stylistics* by the same editors, Paul Simpson's *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students* (2004), Katie Wales's *A Dictionary of Stylistics* (2011), and Elena Semino's and Mick Short's *Corpus Stylistics* (2004). Several more books are published in Bloomsbury's series, *Advances in Stylistics*. It is hard to ignore the fact that most of these authors are based at research institutions outside the US, namely in Britain. The absence of major voices in stylistics from the US may underscore some of the common themes in this book regarding the history of language and writing instruction at US colleges. It could also be that Fish's words still ring in the ears of many, and that his impact on the way writing and literature is taught in the US has been profound.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis has become an increasingly utilized method of inquiry in many fields, as it overlaps with stylistics and rhetorical analysis. This form of analysis involves the close study of socio-discursive situations that often fall outside the traditional scope of rhetoric and literature—such as conversations, meetings, arguments, email exchanges, and even comment threads on websites. In such situations, language users make stylistic decisions, even if they are not completely aware of doing so. We all use certain stylistic devices when we speak, and we all make conscious or unconscious decisions in sentence construction based on with whom we are speaking. When looking at records or transcripts of such exchanges, a discourse analyst observes how a range of social factors determine our speaking styles. For example, researchers might analyze a graduate student’s sentence structure when pointing out an oversight by a professor on his or her thesis committee. Consider the difference between these two statements:

1. I just received your email about my thesis. You didn’t actually attach the file with your comments. Please send the email again so I can start revising.
2. Thanks for reading through the latest draft of my chapter. It doesn’t look like the file was attached. If you have time, could you send the attachment?

The first statement is not antagonistic per se, but many academics might cringe at the idea of ever sending such an email to someone in such an asymmetric relationship. The graduate student is in a weak position, needing the professor in order to complete the thesis. Unfortunately, a tenured professor is in a much stronger position, being under no obligation to serve on the thesis committee at all, much less provide detailed feedback.

A discourse analysis would examine how the student’s language demonstrates a lack of awareness, or perhaps even a deliberate disregard, for these circumstances. For instance, the second sentence is phrased as a declarative statement in the active voice, clearly stating that the professor made a mistake. The third sentence is phrased as a command, albeit prefaced with a courteous, “please.” These grammatical-stylistic decisions contribute to a certain tone that might strike the professor as confrontational, ungrateful, or arrogant. By contrast,

the second example hedges the statement of fact with the phrase “It doesn’t look like,” and then judiciously uses passive voice to mask who is at fault. Finally, the second email concludes with a request rather than a command, again hedging with a clause, “If you have time.” Thus, through discourse analysis of several exchanges like this one, we could come to understand a great deal about how professors and students communicate with one another in light of their different positions within the context of a particular university, as well as academia more broadly.

We might be satisfied by defining a discourse analyst as an applied linguist who analyzes a wide range of texts, focusing on specific language choices that contribute to an overall meaning or stance. Applying these research methods in classrooms, teachers could show students that they already possess a great deal of innate knowledge about style, that it is not an alien world of grammatical terms, tropes, and figures. If style is ultimately about the manipulation of language, then students have a great deal of practice in altering their styles in the situations that discourse analysis uses as sites of inquiry. The stylistic decisions that speakers use in daily situations are often spontaneous, unplanned, and partly unconscious. Discourse analysis makes their socio-discursive dimensions more apparent, showing that in explicit rhetorical situations, style is not so different from style in ordinary interactions with peers, colleagues, co-workers, clients, professors, bosses, and landlords.

Discourse analysts analyze texts in a range of modes and genres, including corpora, archives, conversations, television, new media, and social media. With oral texts, discourse analysts focus on how speakers deliver information in spurts that are marked according to stylistic choices such as intonation, or the stresses that speakers place on individual words and syllables and the pitches they use when stressing them. When conducting conversation analysis, discourse between speakers is marked and broken up in what James Paul Gee calls “stanzas” because the blocks of texts resemble those of poems. Line breaks occur when analysts detect non-final (/) and final (//) intonation contours. Analysts pay attention to stressed words and pitch glides, in which speakers raise and lower their pitch when pronouncing a single word. Speakers do this both consciously and unconsciously to emphasize information in a sentence that they feel is important to a conversation, speech, or any piece of information they deliver to an

audience. Gee routinely refers to the differences in stress, word choice, and grammatical structure in terms of style and “social languages,” including varieties of a single language. Different social languages of English would include Appalachian and AAVE, but also academic and specialist versions of languages. Linguists specifically refer to some of these social languages in terms of register.

In a 2009 issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, Sclafani uses many of these techniques when analyzing two parodies of Martha Stewart. First, Sclafani establishes the discourse patterns Stewart has typically used on television, as they conform to Robin Lakoff’s characteristics of Woman’s Language (WL):

1. lexical items related specifically to women’s interests (e.g., dollop, mandolin);
2. hedges (you could, if you like);
3. hyper-correct grammar (British pronunciation of herb with initial /h/, aspirated intervocalic /t/);
4. super-polite forms (double-thanking guests; i.e., “thank you, thank you very much”);
5. no joking;
6. speaking in italics (i.e., using emphatic stress);
7. the use of intensive “so” (these are *so* tasty);
8. empty adjectives (gorgeous, utterly fantastic);
9. wider intonation range; and
10. question intonation in declaratives. (qtd. in Sclafani 617)

Sclafani then analyzes parodies of Stewart’s discourse style on the television shows *South Park* and *MAD TV*. Analyzing the parody of *South Park*, Sclafani focuses on the exaggeration of Stewart’s intonation, raising her pitch at the end of declarative statements and elongating vowels. Her analysis adds a characteristic not included in Lakoff’s list: Stewart’s persistent use of the pronoun “we” in an effort to build rapport with viewers. Sclafani also studies Stewart’s hyper-pronunciation, conducting a quantitative analysis of the host’s enunciation (or fortification) of the consonant /t/ in a ten-minute segment. Her analysis shows, somewhat expectedly, that while the actual Martha Stewart does fortify /t/ a noticeable six percent of the time in the middle of utterances, and twenty-three percent of the time at the end of utterances, the *MAD TV* actress fortifies /t/ one hundred percent and eighty percent of the time, respectively.

True, this particular discourse analysis studies pronunciation as part of a speaker's style, and so we cannot apply it directly to an analysis of prose style. However, the study demonstrates the value of quantitative analysis of aspects of language used for effect. We could conduct a similar analysis of any writer's prose using other linguistic features from Lakoff's list, such as lexical items, hedging, use of intensives like "so," and empty adjectives. In this way, discourse analysis of spoken or written discourse helps researchers understand how such linguistic features indicate positions and relationships with other speakers or audiences (including readers). The quantitative aspects of discourse analysis make it a potentially useful complement to stylistic analysis, as stylistic analysis does not necessarily use the statistical frequency of stylistic traits as evidence to support interpretations of a writer's style. In other words, a stylistic analysis of Martha Stewart and/or parodies of her would discuss the effect of lexical items or empty adjectives in certain instances, but it might not go so far as to quantify such features. As such, discourse and corpus-based analysis may help us learn about writer's styles with a greater degree of accuracy and precision, validating impressions of someone's style with hard data.

An important part of the analysis lies not only in the data, but also in the context. As James Paul Gee notes, there is always a question of framing a transcript or passage of discourse in terms of context, because researchers can always discover more context that may contribute to their understanding of speakers' interactions, affecting the conclusions they draw.⁴⁸ This context can include speakers' prior interactions and their relationships (both personal and professional), in addition to social, historical, cultural, and political histories. Researchers know when to suspend their consideration of context when their understanding or interpretations of a particular interaction cease to change upon the discovery of further information.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Rhetorical analysis does not preclude stylistic analysis, but the field of rhetoric and composition today usually privileges patterns of argu-

48. Several other introductory books exist on discourse analysis and corpus-based analysis methods: Brian Paltridge; David Machin; Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer; and Norman Fairclough.

ment over patterns of language. In *Out of Style*, Paul Butler asserts that stylistic analysis has been subsumed into rhetorical analysis and, consequently, receives less attention than it could. For Butler, rhetorical analysis may devote passing attention to an author's or speaker's use of a few tropes, schemes, and figures, but it often falls short of fully appreciating the extent to which language choices contribute to more global meanings. For instance, it is almost impossible to conduct a rhetorical analysis of a speech like Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" without some attention to King's use of anaphora and metaphor. A thorough rhetorical analysis would ideally make substantial connections between a rhetor's purpose, use of evidence, awareness of audience, and manipulation of language to achieve that purpose.

Despite the wide array of frameworks for analyzing arguments, it is possible to describe a general approach and set of methods, as Jack Selzer does in *What Writing Does and How it Does it*. Selzer defines rhetorical analysis as "studying carefully some kind of symbolic action, often after the fact of its delivery," in order to achieve "a heightened awareness of the message under rhetorical consideration, and an appreciation for the ways people manipulate language and other symbols for persuasive purposes" (281). In *Discourse Studies and Composition*, Jeanne Fahnestock and Mary Secor define some specific questions addressed by rhetorical analysis: "How is the speaker of this text being constructed? How is the audience constructed? How is the argument constructed? And how do these three aspects either reinforce or interfere with each other?" (180).

Regarding methods, rhetorical analysis often proceeds this way: Writers summarize a text's main argument or arguments, and list its major claims. They then lay out the evidence in support of each claim. Their intention in doing this lies in assessing the manner in which an author has successfully engaged different audiences. Many teachers and researchers follow the classical tradition, and divide evidence into *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*. Others might follow Stephen Toulmin's method, explained in *The Uses of Argument* as the mapping of an argument into claims, warrants (underlying assumptions), and backing (evidence). Still others may use Lloyd Bitzer's method of analyzing rhetorical situations: occasion (event), exigence (context), and constraints (limits on what can be said). Yet another prominent method of rhetorical analysis lies in Kenneth Burke's pentad, as it guides the analysis of any rhetorical event via act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose (see

Burke's *Rhetoric of Motives*). Finally, many teachers use a version of Roman Stasis Theory, a framework for analyzing arguments and issues according to four questions: conjecture, definition, quality, and policy (see Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee's *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*). These different approaches complement one another, and rhetorical analysis can draw terminology from each of these.

All of these frameworks necessitate attention to how stylistic decisions help writers and speakers persuade audiences. Style can serve as a major component of any rhetorical analysis, because writers and speakers always amplify their discourse using stylistic devices such as tropes, schemes, and figures—even if they are not trained rhetors or even astutely aware of the devices they are using. As Jack Selzer states, the terms used in classical treatises “have been devised to guide rhetorical performance,” but “they have also been used to help analysts understand better the tactics visible in specific instances of rhetoric” (284).

As it is taught today, rhetorical analysis is an adaptation of the classical tradition that often blends terminology used by the likes of Quintilian with the language of modern grammar and linguistics. While Fahnestock and Secor point to tropes and figures as means of amplifying a rhetor's use of appeals, they also maintain that “a rhetorical analysis of style need not limit itself to the classical tradition,” given that “contemporary linguistics has addressed . . . less remarkable linguistic choices, like ordinary predication and the choice of agents” (182). A rhetorical analysis might explore a writer's use of *hyperbole* (a classical figure) and sentence coordination and parallelism to show how each serve a larger purpose to ignite certain emotions (*pathos*) in an audience, or to reinforce a logical appeal. Use of parallelism can be described using grammatical terms, but it can also be identified as the classical device, *isocolon*. Whether we use classical or linguistic terminology, or both, is not a major issue. The main point is to tie local decisions to broader, persuasive goals.

Literary analysis and stylistics up through the 1960s and 1970s often treated an author's style as fixed, maintaining that one could identify a distinctive series of stylistic traits to, essentially, fingerprint an author. (In my research, I encountered scores of old dissertations and books beholden to this view.) Today, rhetorical analysis is less concerned with an author's distinct style as if it were “a sort of genetic

code,” and more with style “as characteristic of a particular occasion for writing, as something that is as appropriate to reader and subject and genre as it is to a particular author” (Selzer 289). To illustrate, Selzer analyzes E. B. White’s essay, “Education” (a satirical narrative about school), for its use of parataxis and short, declarative sentences that make it seem “informal and conversational, never remote or scholarly” (290). White’s rhetorical purpose seems to be to critique education, and is supported by a series of narrative anecdotes about the displeasures of attending school. Selzer shows how White achieves this goal through a relatively plain or middle style. His writing uses parallelism to give the prose a “remarkably concrete, remarkably vivid quality” (290). Other devices such as hyperbole and irony give the essay a mock-heroic tone, and contribute to the author’s voice. Nonetheless, the absence of anastrophe and parentheses (inverted sentences and interruptions) immerse readers in a story about the emotions experienced during a day in the life of a schoolboy.

Fahnestock and Secor model the process of rhetorical analysis by using an op-ed piece by Stanley Fish and considering his use of the appeals, examples, and analogies, as well as his amplification of them through devices such as *hypophora* (posing and answering one’s own question) and *prosopopoeia* (personification, or speaking the thoughts of an absent or imaginary person). Their sample illustrates how rhetorical analysis of the style of a writer or speaker should include such specific devices or grammatical constructions in order to show how choices at the local level accumulate and contribute to meaning at the global level. As Chapter 5 discusses, Martha Kolln and Laura Micciche argue similarly through the concept of rhetorical grammar. Whenever we study any text for its use of rhetoric, it is important to understand the author’s use of language, evidence, and appeals as part of the rhetorical situation.

One key goal of college writing courses is to instill in students the ability to produce rhetorically effective prose that relies, in part, upon appreciating language strategies in other works. Rhetorical analysis orients students to the relationship between authors, audiences, and contexts, and trains students to identify specific techniques that contribute to the overall persuasiveness of texts. As such, appropriate attention to style in rhetorical analysis helps writers see how their overall impressions or reactions to arguments is influenced by the skilled manipulation of discourse—the use of rhetorical devices, control over

diction and syntax, and variation in punctuation. Analysis makes the tools and terminology of style accessible, and provides a foundation for discussing the effectiveness of students' writing. More broadly, rhetorical analysis aids critical thinking; its tools enable a sensitivity and awareness in novice writers and experienced researchers. Rather than simply accept claims at face value, we are able to step back and assess a situation, identify motives, and determine the validity of arguments for ourselves.

FROM STYLE TO STYLES: AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS

We learn from sociolinguistics that our ideas about correctness and standards are not universal, but are relative and contingent. What counts as adherence to conventions or norms in one variety of language can qualify as the deviation from norms in another. This basic principle has already surfaced at multiple points throughout the book, especially in the discussion of language difference and the influence of linguistics on composition in the 1960s and 1970s, provided in Chapter 6. Researchers in language difference have essentially applied findings in sociolinguistics, a field that has traditionally focused on oral language, to writing. In a 2013 issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, Theresa Lillis indicates work by Suresh Canagarajah in particular as helping to elevate written discourse as an area of inquiry for sociolinguists, and she calls on other researchers to “tackle head on the strongly evaluate/’error’ oriented stance that overshadows the languages of description around writing” (427). Forwarding Lillis’s call, this section considers a number of subfields of sociolinguistics as a method of inquiry for prose style.

When it comes to style, sociolinguistic evidence shows that there is not just one “best” style that is universal. Even academic style is an evolving blend of conventions influenced by literate and oral discourse practices, other Englishes, and even other languages. Yet, much of what we do as academics, including our teaching, presumes the opposite. Chapter 1 discussed how our pedagogies, reinforced or perhaps prompted by textbooks and handbooks, led to a somewhat monolithic understanding of style based on Standard English. Understanding the methods and insights of sociolinguists encourage even the most conservative guardians of English to concede that more than one style exists, and that a writer’s style, or voice, is a blend of many different

varieties of English—including different dialects and registers. The more researchers and teachers in rhetoric and composition know about the polyphonic world of English through the eyes of sociolinguists, the more they can know style as heterogeneous, not homogenous.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, style refers to a range of markers and indicators that characterize a speaker's use of language and attitude toward interlocutors within different social contexts. Speakers may shift their styles for a variety of reasons, either to accommodate listeners or to perform certain identities or social roles. Sociolinguistic data shows that other varieties of English, conceived of as different styles of speaking, are not impoverished but are, in fact, rule-governed and dynamic. Many college students try to incorporate oral styles from non-standard languages into their writing, only to be penalized for doing so because they are not reproducing the "correct" stylistic conventions of academic discourse and Standard English. Insights from sociolinguistic research can expand writing teachers' existing notions of style by showing how language users navigate many styles, rather than just the dominant one. Linguistic realities outside of academia are polyvocal, and studying them lends support to views within rhetoric and composition (e.g., pedagogies of language difference, dialogic pedagogies based on the work of Bakhtin) that teachers should negotiate stylistic conventions of academic writing.

Miriam Meyerhoff's book, *Introducing Sociolinguistics*, provides a thorough yet accessible orientation to the field's qualitative and quantitative methods in data gathering, and an analysis of the ways speakers innovate language. Meyerhoff covers the basic strategies of interviewing, discourse analysis, and corpus analysis while also discussing the importance of triangulation, or the use of a variety of methods to confirm data and conclusions reached by studies on the same issue. Triangulating data gives sociolinguists assurance that their insights have validity. These basic methods are used by researchers in areas across sociolinguistics, including applied linguistics, dialectology, language planning, and World Englishes.

Meyerhoff includes overviews of foundational studies in the field, their reception over time, and current questions being addressed by contemporary research. Each chapter concludes with a list of recommended readings. The anthology, *The Routledge Sociolinguistics Reader*, serves as a companion sourcebook for *Introducing Sociolinguistics*, and contains a wealth of historical and contemporary research pub-

lished by key figures such as William Labov, Alan Bell, Howard Giles, Deborah Tannen, and Walt Wolfram. Nikolas Coupland's book *Style: Language Variation and Identity* devotes particular attention to research methods and frameworks by Labov, Bell, and Giles as well as approaches that emphasize individual styles and social performance. The next section highlights major works by such key figures, while mapping various branches of sociolinguistics that have the potential to inform teachers' and researchers' approaches to style. It outlines methods used by sociolinguists to gather and interpret information about diverse linguistic practices. These methods provide useful maps for teachers and researchers who want to see how oral styles may influence the written compositions of students.

Dialectology

Dialectology is simply the study of dialects and the production of knowledge about their lexicons and syntax. Many writers operate in more than one dialect, and their styles in fact consist of layered dialects. Dialectology provides us with a formal method of understanding the structure of different dialects that, in turn, helps stylisticians attend to how writers draw on them when making stylistic decisions. It enriches our analysis of an author's style when we can determine when some of the elements of their prose deploys dialect strategically, rather than using mere idiosyncrasy or figurative language. We can also recognize that what might otherwise be mistaken as "error" is really an author introducing the norms of another dialect for stylistic effect.

The distinctive literary styles of writers such as James Baldwin and Langston Hughes owe, at least in part, to their sophisticated negotiation of AAVE and Standard English. Southern writers such as Ron Rash, Fred Chapel, and Allan Gurganas crafted unique styles or voices by drawing on regional varieties of English. We see similar layers of dialects almost everywhere in popular culture, and sometimes (though rarely) in academic writing. Thus, part of diversifying and renewing style in rhetoric and composition should stem from using what we know about style, and placing it in conversation with what sociolinguists know about dialect.

Three areas of dialectology exist. Regional dialectology was the first, originating with the work of William Labov, who published studies on language variation in St. Martha's Vineyard and the lower east side of New York. These studies relied primarily on interviews

with a wide range of speakers in the chosen area, documenting their own reports on the way they pronounced words. Social dialectology (the second branch) emerged soon thereafter, and focused more on observations of speakers in their environments rather than explicit interviews in which they were more aware of their habits. The third branch of dialectology is perceptual, a branch that emphasizes speakers' perceptions about and attitudes toward varieties of a language.

Style-shifting is a key term that refers to the way speakers modify the grammar and pronunciation of their speech for different situations. Most sociolinguists recognize this as a central focus of their work. Labov's foundational study on style-shifting proposed a theory to explain this act as largely unconscious. Subsequent efforts by Howard Giles gave an alternative account of style-shifting, known as accommodation theory (sometimes called speech accommodation theory or communication accommodation theory). According to Giles, speakers may not be able to fully explain their motivations for style-shifting, but certainly make conscious decisions when doing so. These decisions aim to accommodate to their listeners. Alan Bell took this idea further, developing an audience-design model based on the idea that speakers alter their language not only in response to an audience but also to initiate new meanings with interlocutors. Still, Bell's model held that an individual speaker's stylistic shifts never exceed the variation within his or her speech community. Nikolas Coupland's synthesis of research on style and identity performance contests this idea, showing that speakers will often cross the linguistic boundaries of class, ethnicity, and gender in order to perform rhetorical identities and personas.

Although these early studies are foundational, and are still referenced by contemporary studies of dialect, the methods of sociolinguists have evolved over time. Craig and Washington developed a method they call the dialect density measure (DDM), used for their 2006 study of AAVE. The DDM calculates the number of dialect features per unit of communication (independent clause plus modifiers), based on a list of thirty-three features culled from four decades' worth of prior studies on AAVE. For example, two prevalent grammatical features of AAVE are *s*-absence in third person verbs (e.g., "She go to the store") and copula verb absence (e.g., "She nice"). A 2010 article by van Hofwegen and Walt Wolfram uses this method in a longitudinal study to analyze the frequency of AAVE patterns in thirty-two children at six stages in their language development: forty-eight months,

first grade, fourth grade, sixth grade, eighth grade, and tenth grade. The researchers used transcripts from informal and formal interviews, as well as observations with the children at each stage. For example, during the last three stages (grades six, eight, and ten), researchers studied the children as they worked with a peer to complete a problem-solving task. Their findings show that the children's use of AAVE recedes during first and fourth grades, but returns strongly in adolescence, during sixth through tenth grades.

The broad implications of both Craig and Washington's study and van Hofwegen and Wolfram's are that early schooling and socialization in Standard English are responsible for the reduction of AAVE patterns in elementary school. They return later on, when children become older and begin to see the non-standard dialect as a means of asserting a social identity. This kind of quantitative and longitudinal analysis could enhance our understanding of dialect's relationship to style. Aside from the qualitative work of scholars in language difference in the field of rhetoric and composition, we honestly do not know much about students' actual style-shifting in college. If we do hope to invite students to blend or mesh different vernaculars with academic writing, as Canagarajah and Young recommend, then methods such as those used by contemporary dialectologists would yield more specific information about how college writers actually already *do* mesh Englishes inside and outside of the classroom. Knowing this information can give teachers and researchers a baseline for constructing lessons and assignments to help merge their vernacular language practices, and to realize such practices as a stylistic resource for their academic writing.

Knowledge of dialectology and its empirical methods can push teachers and researchers toward approaches to style that go beyond the analysis of traditional texts and the study of treatises and handbooks. Empirical research on language users and how they make stylistic decisions across a variety of languages and dialects shows that style is a matter of lived knowledge. When students make stylistic choices in their papers that deviate from the norms of Strunk and White or the Modern Language Association (MLA), they are not simply indulging idiosyncratic preferences that developed inside a vacuum. A writer's unique style or voice, to use Elbow's terms discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4 of this book, evolves from the synthesis of their written and oral discourse practices, and the latter develops within a rich, hetero-

glossic world. The most effective ways for students to learn how their linguistic realities may inform their writing lies in these methods.

Dialectology and sociolinguistics have had a profound influence on rhetoric and composition, evidenced in the 1974 statement, “Students Right to Their Own Language,” as well as in the more recent trends in language difference and translanguaging. For instance, Ver-shawn Young’s term, code-meshing, refers to what sociolinguists refer to as both code-switching and code-mixing. The only difference is that sociolinguists and dialectologists tend to study code-switching and code-mixing in habitual, rule-governed forms, whereas Young and Canagarajah adapt the term to the study of students’ perceived deviation from norms in their academic work. We might think of the authors described in the section on language difference in Chapter 6 as bringing the fieldwork of dialectologists into the classroom in order to help students incorporate stylistic norms or preferences from their oral, social realities that are seen as deviations in academic contexts.

CORPUS LINGUISTICS AND STYLISTICS

Stylisticians typically analyze single texts or small groups of texts, allowing them to make claims about a particular author’s style or stylistic traits that run across a particular set of texts. Whereas stylistics takes a qualitative approach, corpus stylistics takes a more quantitative and empirical approach by analyzing language practices in very large collections of texts. As a resource for the study of style, corpus analysis helps produce hard evidence about the language choices people make in different contexts, especially regarding diction and sentence structure. For example, if we wanted to test an assumption that authors in the sciences use passive voice more often than those in the humanities, we could construct a corpus of journal articles in these fields and calculate the frequency of passive and active constructions, either by hand or by computer. The more times researchers can reach similar conclusions from the same large corpus, or from a different, related corpus, the more validity and scope their claims gain. Corpus size also determines the validity of the evidence: the larger the corpus, the more accurately it represents language use. So, the more journals added to a corpus, and the more samples taken from that corpus, the more accurate the claims about the use of active and passive voice in different fields.

In a special issue of the *Journal of Writing Research* devoted to corpus research, Joel Bloch describes the use of corpus-based methods to develop and use concordances (a list of words or phrases generated from a corpus) when teaching grammatical and stylistic issues to writers, specifically regarding differences in reporting verbs such as “claim,” “argue,” “mention,” and “suggest.” Using scientific journals, Bloch develops a small corpus to provide students with ample textual data of how these verbs are used by professional writers in order to help them appreciate the subtle differences between verbs. For example, Bloch finds that authors tend to use verbs like “argue” when paraphrasing the sources they agree with, but use the verb “claim” when summarizing sources they disagree with. Bloch also notes that academic writers use the verb “mention” when describing sources that do not discuss a particular issue with enough depth. In this case, the corpus study helps us understand that these are not idiosyncratic choices made by one or two writers. They are, in fact, part of the unspoken or partially intuited aspects of style that most writers trained in the academy use to implicitly convey different meanings. While teachers *might* think to discuss differences in reporting verbs, and might be able to illustrate them through the analysis of one or two articles, a corpus study shows much more convincingly and specifically how reporting verbs function and how students can use them in their own essays.

The most substantial stylistic study relying on corpus-driven data is Elena Semino and Mick Short’s *Corpus Stylistics*. Short and Semino describe an ongoing corpus-based project that analyzes the frequency of speech and thought presentation in three genres of written narrative discourse: novels, news reports, and biographies and autobiographies. Their purpose was to gather statistical information on the frequency of these presentations. For example, they explore how often authors of news stories report speech (i.e., quoting politicians or interviewing eye-witnesses) versus authors in the other two genres. As with Bloch’s study on reporting verbs, such information may confirm or alter preconceptions about these components of genres, and therefore help researchers, teachers, and writers understand them more fully. In the case of direct and indirect speech reporting, it is not altogether shocking, but still surprising, to learn that the vast majority of newspaper narratives consist of speech reporting: 17% more so than novels, and 22% more so than biographies and autobiographies. Meanwhile, thought presentation (i.e., when writers explain what they or someone else is thinking)

occurs three times as much in biography and autobiography compared to news reports, with 992 versus 306 instances.

There does not seem to be a hard-and-fast rule on corpus size: Just make it as large and representative as possible in light of how much time you want to spend annotating it. The methods described in *Corpus Stylistics* may be helpful to teachers and researchers interested in conducting their own studies, either on a small or large scale. Because individual news reports are much shorter than two-thousand words, Short and Semino sampled four days' worth of standard news reports on a single event, from a handful of national British newspapers. The authors generated a corpus of 120 text samples (based on similar studies), with forty texts in each of their three categories (novels, newspapers, biographies and autobiographies). Each text sample consisted of roughly two-thousand words, usually of entire sections or chapters of novels and biographies or autobiographies. Corpus size can be measured and evaluated by wordage, and this study weighs in at 258,348 words—about a quarter the size of the largest corpora maintained by major research universities in Britain.

The authors subdivided each category into serious and popular works: literary versus genre novels; biographies or autobiographies of politicians versus those of celebrities; and newspapers such as *The Guardian* versus tabloids like *The Sun*. They limited themselves to three main genres because these constitute the main forms of narrative written discourse. For coherence and specificity, they also limited their study to British publications. While it is always possible to expand a corpus, deciding whether to do so depends on time and resources. As the authors explain, they decided to annotate the text samples manually in order to exercise contextual judgment about what qualifies as direct speech or thought reporting, rather than rely on a software program (19-41). Manual annotation is time-intensive, as it requires reading through every text sample and tagging it with appreciations such as DS (direct speech) and DT (direct thought).

Anyone can construct a corpus to analyze a particular set of stylistic features in written discourse, if they are willing to commit the time. For instance, Paul Butler's discussion of pronoun use in a college syllabus that builds upon Bawarshi's original analysis in *Genre and the Invention of the Writer*, shows how a single author uses pronouns such as "we," "you," and "I" to indicate power relationships between faculty and students, at times using "we" in a hegemonic sense—in the way

a parent might tell a child, “We’re going home if you can’t behave,” when what is meant is more along the lines of “*I’m* taking *you* home if you can’t behave.” We could conduct a corpus-based study on this same topic to gather statistical information about how instructors use pronouns in their syllabi for stylistic effect. We might want to know how often instructors use a hegemonic “we,” and in what parts of their syllabi they do so. Proceeding from this question, we might collect 120 syllabi from first-year composition teachers at three or four major research universities in the Southeast as a pilot study. We would then devise a set of markers like HP (hegemonic pronoun), FP (first-person pronoun) and SP (second-person pronoun), and then tag each instance of these features in all of the collected syllabi.

Corpus researchers must always be careful about claims they make based on their research, and must resist the temptation to generalize beyond the data. Every corpus has limits. In this case, what we learn about the use of pronouns in college syllabi may only be accurate for first-year composition courses at those particular universities, although they might provide at least some tentative insights into the styles used in first-year writing course syllabi across many institutions. A desire for greater accuracy would encourage us to expand the corpus, adding syllabi from other universities, and perhaps creating categories such as syllabi written by teaching assistants (TAs) versus tenured and untenured faculty. The results could be interesting, perhaps showing whether TAs tend to use pronouns in different ways than other faculty in order to compensate for their more tenuous position in the university or to distance themselves from students, who may not be much younger than them. Regardless, the key is to always be mindful of the size and diversity of the corpus.

RESEARCH(ES) ON WORLD ENGLISHES AND GLOBAL ENGLISH

The US is home to dozens of dialects, but globalization has, almost exponentially, multiplied the varieties of English. Elements of style such as diction and idiom vary widely between these varieties of English. The stylistic decisions that speakers and writers make within a single variety of written English (WE), like Singlish (Singapore English), appear normal within the context of that variety. However, Singlish speakers may strike speakers of Standard American English as stylistically unsophisticated, or as somehow speaking in “broken”

English. Understanding style from a WE perspective recognizes, first, that stylistic norms differ, and that this does not make other varieties of English inferior to privileged ones spoken in the US and Britain. Second, research on WE may push teachers and researchers interested in style to acknowledge that linguistically diverse students are far from stylistically disadvantaged. If anything, these students possess a rich set of resources they can tap into when writing for their classes. Their innovations and code-mixing can differ greatly from what many writing teachers think of as style, in the sense of rigid adherence to the norms or preferences of academic writing and Standard English. It is important for researchers and teachers to appreciate that a writer's apparent "error" could in fact be a stylistic decision based on a student's various linguistic influences.

Researchers of WE specialize in how these types of English relate to one another, and how language users negotiate them within different academic, professional, civic, and social spheres. Although English has become a lingua franca, its grammar and vocabulary vary significantly between localities, regions, nations, and cultures. Braj Kachru has been a pioneer in WE, and his original categorization of Englishes according to inner, outer, and expanding circles in the 1982 book *The Other Tongue* remains familiar today, if somewhat contested. The inner circle refers to nation-states where English has an historical presence, and is learned as a first language; while the outer circle as where English is learned as a second language, and functions within that state's government and commerce. An expanding circle is where English is learned as a foreign language, and does not serve a major role in the state's public discourse, though is used for commercial or social purposes. These categorizations have become standard practice, and it appears throughout articles and books published on WE.

Researchers in this area employ a variety of methods, including ones discussed in this chapter: stylistic analysis, discourse analysis, and corpus studies. In a 2006 issue of the journal *World Englishes*, Philip Seargeant observes that while "there is no core methodology by which investigation in world Englishes operates," and it "draws on a range of theoretical traditions," researchers nonetheless share a more or less common endeavor to problematize "the notion of monolithic English and to investigate the social and political implications of the spread of the language around the world" (122–23). For example, Taofiz Adedayo Alabi analyzes the poet Toba Olusunle for his use of

Nigerian poetic conventions to diffuse tension through assonance (the repetition of vowel sounds), and to alternate it with other forms of alliteration, such as consonance (the repetition of consonant sounds). Alabi also examines Olusunle's use of indented triplets to simulate the discursive importance of repetition in Nigerian culture, as it "signals emphasis, warning, and caution of alertness to wage an unflinching war against all odds" (235). In a 2010 article, Angela Tan conducts a discourse analysis of conversations in Singlish in order to classify the word "right" as a discourse marker when speakers seek confirmation of shared knowledge or agreement on a topic. Speakers of Singapore English differ from American English in that they insert "right" into the middle and ends of sentences without concern for grammatical conventions. Gerald Nelson's 2006 corpus-based study of WE identifies an absolute common core of English words among six varieties, using corpora maintained by the International Corpus of English (a project originated in 1990). Nelson generated 40,000-word lists using corpora for Great Britain, New Zealand, India, Singapore, the Philippines, and Hong Kong. The study reveals that these six varieties share roughly 30% of their vocabularies—therefore constituting a core—with the remaining 70% on the periphery.

Research on WE is focused not only on gathering qualitative and quantitative data on stable varieties of English across the world, but also on the different strategies WE speakers use to communicate. Suresh Canagarajah describes this emerging field as focused on varieties of English "with a highly systematized and stable variety of English in postcolonial communities" ("Multilingual Strategies" 24). Translingualists such as Canagarajah distinguish WE approaches to language from their own for this reason. However, investigations in WE often discuss what Canagarajah refers to as plurilingual English (PE), defined as "a communicative practice, not a stable variety" in which speakers of *different* stable forms of WE negotiate rather than correct one another when discoursing (24).

There is a lesson in these strategies for writing teachers: Many teachers and researchers may often think of style as the advanced, sophisticated performances of speakers or writers fluent in one or more languages. Thinking this way, they can overlook or dismiss the opportunity to teach style, as is described in the last three chapters as the negotiation of language difference. One key plurilingual strategy described by Canagarajah is the "let it pass" principle, a term he

traces back to a 2007 study by Alan Firth and Johannes Wagner (19-20). Firth and Wagner analyzed transcripts of business calls between a Danish dairy distributor and an Egyptian wholesaler, showing how the two non-native speakers resolved misunderstandings based on a lexical item, “blowing,” that the Danish speaker did not understand:

1. A: . . so I told him not to u: :h send the:: cheese after the- (.)
the blowing (.) in the customs
2. (0.4)
3. A: we don't want the order after the cheese is u: :h (.) blow-
ing.
4. H: see, yes.
5. A: so I don't know what we can uh do with the order now. (.)
What do you
6. think we should uh do with this is all blo:wing Mister Han-
sen
7. (0.5)
8. H: I'm not uh (0.7) blowing uh what uh, what is this u: :h
too big or what?
9. (0.2)
10. A: no the cheese is bad Mister Hansen
11. (0.4)
12. A: it is like (.) fermenting in the customs' cool rooms
13. H: ah it's gone off
14. A: yes it's gone off
15. H: we: ll you know you don't have to uh do uh anything
because it's not (continues). (808)

Firth and Wagner's analysis focuses on how the Egyptian speaker switches from his original description of the cheese (blowing) to the Danish speaker's phrase, “gone off,” in order to confirm his meaning. For Firth and Wagner, such moments occur regularly in interactions between non-native speakers, revealing “people who [are] artfully adept at overcoming apparent linguistic hurdles, exquisitely able to work together internationally, despite having what at first blush appeared to be an imperfect command of the languages they were using” (801). Here the idea of “let it pass” means that the speakers work toward understanding, sometimes adopting and appropriating each other's discourse styles—including new lexical and semantic constructions—rather than insist on the other speaker adopting their own respective norms.

Canagarajah applies this idea of “let it pass” to a graduate student in one of his seminars, named Buthainah, who frequently experiments with language in a way that disrupts the assumptions of native speakers about English prose style, frustrating her peers during workshops of essay drafts. For example, the student uses phrases such as “storms of thought stampede” and “an illustration of my literacy development shunt me to continue,” as well as the verb “adore”—a verb that native speakers found imprecise or incorrect (41). By contrast, Canagarajah interviews the student and applies the “let it pass” principle to her work, concluding that such deviations are “perhaps shaped by the linguistic and cultural influences Buthainah brings with her” (41). As such, Canagarajah encourages teachers and students to consider such deviations for “issues of critical thinking, rhetorical effectiveness, and linguistic creativity, and [therefore] giving less importance to issues of grammatical correctness” (42).

The patterns and communicative practices of those in outer and expanding circles are worthy of stylistic study. First, such studies push research on style beyond a somewhat limited preoccupation with polished writing or eloquent speech. A major theme of this book has been moving beyond a view of style as a ready-made product to be analyzed, and toward a treatment of style as a series of dynamic interactions in real-world situations. Studies such as Firth and Wagner’s present that reality in global contexts. Style can be a work in progress, an improvisation between different varieties of a language to produce meaning. If style also embraced spontaneity and risk in language, then studying the lexicons and syntax of WE varieties, as well as how speakers experiment with them in discursive interactions, can only widen our own stylistic repertoires and give us more options to choose from in our own writing.

Such an attitude toward language as fluid and open-ended is a primary objective of many researchers in the study of global English. This attitude raises productive questions for the study of style, because it breaks down traditional binaries in classical approaches, as when Quintilian warns rhetors against barbarisms—or the use of foreign linguistic features (e.g., words, spellings, pronunciations) in Latin. Many of us may see “proper” style in modern English as similarly threatened by the proliferation of English varieties that conflict with our own, but given the shifting multilingual realities of discourse, global English is a frontier for research in style if seen as a rhetor’s manipulation and

exploration of options grounded in one set of conventions, and yet still receptive to others from around the world.

As this chapter has shown, style manifests in a variety of research areas within rhetoric and composition and related disciplines. Style has often served as a topic of historical inquiry, but it can also be a subject of theoretical and ethnographic studies that generate information about writing and writers. It plays a somewhat familiar role in rhetorical, stylistic, and discourse analysis; and yet, each mode of analysis explored here examines language choices in different ways, opening possibilities for interdisciplinary inquiries into the function of style in persuasive writing, a range of literary and non-literary texts, oral discourse, and a number of situations that are less explicitly persuasive.

Style also becomes a matter of concern for research in sociolinguistics and World Englishes, whose methods of studying variations in diction and syntax across multiple Englishes contributes to the revival of stylistic studies in our own discipline. Dialectology, a branch of sociolinguistics, has already impacted rhetoric and composition by charting the rule-governed systems of other vernaculars in order to challenge the myth of a single, standardized English. The use of features from these social languages constitutes stylistic decisions. Finally, corpus studies offer methods of both corroborating and overturning teachers' and researchers' ideas about style through empirical evidence based on the analysis of large bodies of texts. The questions and methods of these areas differ in significant ways, but they are not mutually exclusive. As style continues its return from the margins, researchers are crossing disciplinary boundaries and conducting inquiries into language that expand existing knowledge about what style is and how it functions in discourse.