Acting Adult: Language Socialization, Shift, and Ideologies in Dominica, West Indies

Amy L. Paugh
James Madison University

1. Introduction

In Dominica, two languages are in tension: English is the official language of government, schools, and urban settings, while a French-based creole commonly called Patwa[1] has been the oral language of the rural population for centuries. Over the past few decades, however, rural parents have become concerned that Patwa hinders children's acquisition of English and thus restricts social mobility, and have instituted their own community-level policy prohibiting children from speaking Patwa in most settings. This is contributing to a rapid language shift from Patwa to varieties of English in most villages. Yet, adults simultaneously value Patwa for a range of expressive functions, and frequently codeswitch in the presence of and to children. Children learn the complex associations with both languages, and often acquire those aspects of Patwa that are affectively salient in their verbal environments. Children also learn to monitor their language use around adults, and rarely speak Patwa at home or at school. When they do, adults correct their most isolated uses, but in a way that often highlights place- and age-related constraints.

This paper explores these complex language socialization practices and ideologies, which are a driving force in the language shift but also may contribute to the maintenance of Patwa, at least for particular functions.[2] The paper suggests that in the process of language shift, Patwa and English have become indexically linked to local notions of personhood, status, and authority within the context of the adult-child relationship. Bilingual adults may use both languages, but children are socialized to be English dominant and are monitored by adults for any Patwa usage. This division relates to more than the future-oriented strategy of providing children with English so that they may succeed in school and the job market, as adults claim. It is embedded within local theories of personhood and expectations of children, who are considered "naturally" disobedient and in need of control. In this way, children's Patwa usage has become threatening not only to their English, as adults so often maintain, but also to adult authority and control, particularly at home and at school. Thus, while Patwa has historically held a relatively powerless position compared to English in the national linguistic economy (Bourdieu 1977, 1991; Gal 1988; Heller 1995; Jaffe 1999; Rampton 1995; Woolard 1985, 1989), it has come to carry significant symbolic weight in rural villages as a powerful linguistic resource for adults to control their children, and for children to structure and organize their own peer play (Paugh 2001). In order to illustrate this, the paper examines several examples of children's use of Patwa at home and at school, and the responses of parents and teachers to these "transgressions." The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of this ideological shift for recent urban-based language revitalization efforts, which seek to introduce Patwa into schools – one of the most strictly English and adult-controlled domains in rural villages.

---

[1] *Patwa*, rather than *Patois*, follows the orthography developed by the government-sponsored Konmité Pou Etid Kwéyòl (Committee for Creole Studies) in *Dominica's English-Creole Dictionary* (Fontaine & Roberts 1992). All Patwa speech was transcribed with this orthography.

2. Geographic and sociolinguistic background

Not to be confused with the Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic, Dominica is an independent Caribbean island nation located between the French overseas departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique. It has a population of approximately 71,000 (Commonwealth of Dominica 2001) and an agriculturally-based economy, with bananas the chief export crop. Though it is only 16 miles wide and 29 miles long, it is the most mountainous island in the Lesser Antilles. Most of its villages are scattered around the rugged coast, and were isolated by the mountains from each other and from the capital town of Roseau until roads began to connect them in the latter part of the 20th century (see Trouillot 1988 for more on this historical "spatial dismemberment"; also Baker 1994; Myers 1987). This geography, in conjunction with a dual French-British colonial history, significantly shaped its complex sociolinguistic situation. Though "discovered" by Columbus in 1493, it was left unclaimed by European colonizers until it became a French colony in 1635. The French began the importation of enslaved Africans as a source of estate labor, and it was in this context that Patwa arose by the early 18th century (for more on the genesis, grammar, and phonology of Patwa, see Amastae 1979a, 1983; Christie 1982; Holm 1989; Taylor 1977; Wylie 1995). However, France's claims to the island did not go unchallenged by British colonizers in the Caribbean, and many battles ensued. The island exchanged hands at least seven times before becoming British in 1763, when English replaced French as the official language.

Over the next two centuries, British colonial officials and a rising local mulatto elite disdained Patwa as the impoverished language of a poor, uneducated rural population, and did not allow their children to speak it. These negative attitudes were reinforced by colonial reports well into the 20th century, such as this 1945 education report calling for its eradication:

> The position of Dominica is exceptional in that in many of the districts patois is the language of the population even where English is known. This patois is of no cultural value and there is no question of preserving a racial language as in Wales or Quebec. The aim should not be to make the children bi-lingual but ultimately to make English the mother tongue. (Hammond 1945)

In the early 20th century, there was even reportedly a "League for the Suppression of French-Patois," attended by Roseau elite (Paravisini-Gebert 1996:22).

When Dominica attained independence from England in 1978, English was retained as the official language. However, the state and an urban intellectual elite began to regard Patwa as integral to the newly independent nation's development and cultural identity. One government-sponsored Independence day publication heralded Patwa as "one of the most outstanding contributors in pinpointing a distinct Dominican identity" (Henderson 1988). The Konmité Pou Etid Kwéyòl (Committee for Creole Studies, commonly called KEK) was established in 1981 as part of the government's Cultural Division in order to preserve and revitalize Patwa. KEK's efforts have focused on introducing Patwa into domains from which it was previously restricted, including Patwa literacy, radio programming, and the annual Jounen Kwéyòl or Creole Day, one day in which all Dominicans are called upon to speak Patwa in all places from which its use would normally be restricted, such as in schools, government offices, and banks. KEK's current goal is to develop and implement the teaching of Patwa within the national school curriculum (Fontaine & Leather 1992; Konmité Pou Étid Kwéyòl 1997). Yet, rural villagers express ambivalence toward KEK's efforts, as they continue to face historically dominant policies and ideologies devaluing and excluding Patwa from institutional settings and the most desired white-collar occupations.

Language proficiency today varies across geographic, generational, and socioeconomic lines, with the most Patwa spoken by village elders and the least by urban youths (Christie 1990, 1994; Paugh 2001; Stuart 1993). Stuart (1993) describes Dominica as a "fragmented language situation," identifying five sociolinguistic groups broadly defined by age and residence. Monolingual Patwa-speakers are primarily over age 60 and live in rural areas. Middle-aged rural villagers speak English more fluently than their parents, but with restricted vocabulary and in restricted contexts. Rural youth are usually bilingual in Patwa and at least one variety of English, but tend to view Patwa as a liability. Middle-aged urbanites speak little or no Patwa but may understand it, while a small group of young

middle-class urban adults are beginning to value Patwa and are learning to speak it or are mixing it with English (Stuart 1993:61-62). My research, while more-or-less concurring with this description, further suggests that rural children are increasingly acquiring varieties of English as their first language, evidencing the ongoing process of language shift.[3] Furthermore, there seems to be at least one more group in the urban context: urban children and teens who neither speak nor understand Patwa and have mixed feelings toward learning the language (see also Fontaine & Leather 1992). Approximately 80% of the population is reported to be literate in English (Holm 1989), but for most this is functionally restricted (Carrington 1988; Stuart 1993).   Literacy in Patwa is a recent development restricted to a small group of urban intellectual elite (particularly KEK members), and the language remains for most an exclusively oral medium.

3. Language socialization and language ideologies

I investigated the tensions between language ideologies, institutional policies, and language socialization practices in this complex multilingual setting through 18 months of ethnographic research, including a language socialization study at home and at school in one rural village called Penville (population 750). The language socialization paradigm maintains that children are socialized *through* language as they are socialized to *use* language (Ochs 1988, 1996, 2001; Ochs & Schieffelin 1984; Schieffelin 1990; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986; also see Garrett & Baquedano-López 2002; Kulick 1992). Child language socialization patterns are shaped, organized, and indicative of wider patterns of interaction and ideologies held by a community or social group. Through linguistic practices such as codeswitching, verbal play and teasing, praising, and reprimanding, adults display to children culturally salient values and appropriate linguistic and social behavior across a range of activities. Children acquire knowledge of status and social role through language use with those around them, and may even begin employing more complex forms before their relatively simpler counterparts due to social constraints on the use of such forms by children (Ochs 1986, 1988; Platt 1986). Furthermore, during early socialization activities, parents and caregivers often make explicit for children's benefit cultural rules and knowledge that are usually implicit. With its focus on everyday interactions between children and adults, this approach facilitates the study of how cultural and linguistic practices and values are transmitted, transformed, or abandoned in a social group, including processes of language maintenance, shift, and change (e.g., Fader 2000; Garrett 1999; Kulick 1992; Riley 2001; Schieffelin 1994; Zentella 1987, 1997).

Kulick's (1992) study exemplifies the application of a language socialization approach to the investigation of language shift and cultural reproduction in the small village of Gapun in Papua New Guinea. In Gapun, the village vernacular, known as Taiap, is rapidly being replaced among the current generation of children by the widespread lingua franca of New Guinea, Tok Pisin. Kulick finds that parental ideology does not advocate this, but rather, adult villagers blame their children for willfully refusing to learn or speak the vernacular. But despite adults' claims to the contrary, there is an implicit devaluation of Taiap through language socialization practices, as adults codeswitch into Tok Pisin when speaking to children and ignore or criticize their usage when they do speak the vernacular. Kulick argues that this is connected to changing values, goals, and notions of personhood in the community that are related to local interpretations of macrosociological changes. In Gapun, there are two basic conceptions of the self, *hed* (associated with selfishness and individualism) and *save* (associated with cooperation and sociability). The expression of these dual aspects of personhood were formerly subsumed within one language (Taiap), but have now become separated along linguistic lines. Taiap has become linked to the expression of one's *hed*, the more negative side of the self with associations to backwardness, paganism, and women, while Tok Pisin has come to represent *save*, the more positive aspect of self associated with modernity, Christianity, education, and men. Though both are valued aspects of the self, villagers attempt to show their own *save* by accommodating children's

---

[3] The varieties of English have been described along a continuum ranging from "standard" to "creole" or "vernacular" English (Amastae 1979b; Carrington 1969; Christie 1983, 1990, 1994; Holm 1989). Christie (1990, 1994) suggests there is an emergent English creole, "Dominican English Creole" or DEC," that shares many features with Patwa (largely through calquing of Patwa syntax and phrases).

use of Tok Pisin and structuring their interactions with children in Tok Pisin. A consequence of this is that children are increasingly exposed to less and less of the village vernacular. Kulick (1992:21) argues that it is this cosmological shift that underlies the ongoing language shift, as he states, "In reproducing the self, Gapuners are changing the symbolic means through which the self can be reproduced."

Like Kulick's work, my approach focuses on the interrelations between and ideological underpinnings of language socialization practices and the process of language shift. It pays careful attention to language ideologies, which can be loosely defined as shared bodies of cultural conceptions and commonsense notions about the nature, structure, uses, and purposes of language (Kroskrity 2000; Schieffelin et al. 1998; Woolard 1998). Language ideologies act as a "mediating link between social structures and forms of talk" (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994:55). Through the study of language socialization practices, it is possible to examine the mobilization of language ideologies (and ambivalence or contradiction0s within them) in practice, which often result in unintended consequences. In Dominica, different ideologies about the languages themselves as well as when, where, and with whom to use them dictate and surround their choice and usage in everyday interactions in both town and village, and are reproduced through everyday socializing activities. Through an investigation of both language socialization practices and ideologies of language, my research indicates that speech to, with, and by children is influenced by widespread ideologies about appropriate *places for* and *users of* English and Patwa, and these practices are contributing to the language shift in most rural areas.

The research was conducted at three interrelated levels of observation and analysis: the home, the school, and the nation. The primary data set includes a longitudinal language socialization study of six children between the ages of 2 to 4 years learning to talk. The focal children were audio-video recorded during diverse daily activities with various family and community members at regular monthly intervals over a consecutive twelve-month period (except for one child who could only be recorded for six months). Each month, a minimum of two hours of children's naturally occurring speech was recorded (totaling over 130 hours of video-audio data). This was transcribed with the help of the children's caregivers, eliciting metalinguistic commentary by more culturally competent members in the process. The home component was combined with periodic observation and approximately 12 hours of audio-video recording of classroom language use by schoolchildren and teachers at the local preschool and grades one and two at the village primary school, with particular attention to language choice and teachers' corrections of children's language use during everyday lessons. Schools act as central forces in the production and reproduction of social structure, including relations of power and dominance (Bourdieu & Passeron1990[1970]). Interviews were conducted with teachers and Ministry of Education personnel, as well as with the focal children's caregivers.

The analysis of these micro-level everyday socializing events at home and at school is situated within the contributing frameworks of Dominican history and the construction, representation, and planned performance of culture and language in the national arena. The Patwa revitalization and literacy activities of urban activists were followed through collection of written materials and interviews, as well as through attendance at national events and cultural shows. This affords a view of which forms of creative expression are considered part of so-called traditional Dominican culture and in need of preservation, and how this is being organized at local and national levels. The observation of these intersecting spheres provides a critical perspective on how Patwa is actively being used, discussed, portrayed, and documented in private and public arenas.

4. Language ideologies and practices in the village

Residents of the 60 or so villages scattered around the island's coast express ambivalence, both "shame" and "pride" at the same moment, toward Patwa. In Penville, local language ideologies are similarly complex.[4] On the one hand, they strongly reflect the negative attitudes accorded Patwa since colonial times. Villagers claim that Patwa has "held them back," hindering their personal and

---

[4] Furthermore, such ideologies are not homogeneous, as in any given community (Irvine & Gal 2000).

community development. Some call it "broken French," and others doubt that it is a "real" language at all. They recount experiences of being ridiculed and labeled as "country folk" for speaking Patwa in Roseau, as one women in her late thirties explains:

> But you see, most people see Patwa as an inferior language. Like you can speak Patwa, you are nobody... So right now everybody want to speak English, English, English. And you see it's not our fault, because that is how it was before. Like I remember days gone by, Penville was just a Patwa community. So everybody up here is Patwa, Patwa, Patwa, and when you go out, [it's] as though you feeling yourself as nobody among other people.

A predominant metaphor that has shaped villagers' language ideologies relates to their views on how the village is remote and had to "get" things before it could begin to develop. Villagers claim that English had to be "brought in" to the village, just as they describe bringing in modern goods and supplies from Roseau (see Paugh 2001). This was accomplished principally through the introduction of a village school in the early 1950s, which provided the first sustained access to an English domain. From then until the early 1990s, the schoolmaster patrolled the school grounds and used corporal punishment for any child caught speaking Patwa. Today, the principal (who was appointed in 1994) says this is no longer necessary, as children come to school speaking varieties of English acquired at home. Yet, teachers and most village adults assert that Patwa continues to "interfere" with children's English acquisition, and they strive to keep children from speaking it. Villagers overwhelmingly cite the shift from Patwa to varieties of English as one of the most positive and consequential changes in the village's development, essential to them "moving forward."

However, while adults frequently talk about how Patwa is devalued and disempowering *outside* the village, they also indicate that Patwa is very powerful *within* the village, particularly for self-expression and as a means of controlling children. English is viewed as necessary for education and socioeconomic success, but it is also considered less expressive and less intimate than Patwa. Villagers describe English as *two mòl*, meaning too "soft" or "gentle," while Patwa is "rough," "vulgar," and *pli wèd*, or "harder" than English. Codeswitching between the languages is a regular part of community language practices, though for certain situations (as well as topics and addressees), one language may be considered more appropriate and effective than the other. English is associated with more formal contexts, such as school, church, village meetings, and going to Roseau, while Patwa is appropriate for more informal contexts, such as working in the banana field or gathering with friends at home, on the road, or in the rum shop. Adults maintain that Patwa is "better" than English for emotionally expressive speech acts with other adults, like joking, cursing, arguing, gossiping, teasing, and assessing others.

Furthermore, adults throughout the village often speak Patwa *directly to* children for scolding, directing, and negatively evaluating their behavior, claiming in their metapragmatic reflections that it is more "commanding" than English. Such codeswitching systematically draws on the contrast between the two languages to indicate an escalation in seriousness when adults have already told a child to do or not to do something several times in English with no result. The escalation proceeds from speaking in English, to speaking in Patwa, to threat or carrying out of corporal punishment. When they switch to Patwa, adults say their patience has run out and they are just "fed up." A mother three boys, for example, answers the question "do you ever speak Patwa to your children?" with the following:[5]

> Yes, as though if I have something to say fast. I will say *Michael pwen sa ba mwen*, *Nicky ay mété sa la, Nicky pa fè sa* ['I will say **Michael take that for me**. **Nicky go put that there. Nicky don't do that**']. Something they make me vex, I'll make a rage and talk Patwa to them but I don't, that is not something I really do to talk Patwa for them. My talking is English for them.

---

[5] All names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Even a village teacher says that though she does not normally speak Patwa to children, she will switch into it to direct and discipline students at school and her own children at home:

> Yes sometimes I do. Even at home I do that you know because when you see I speak <u>twice</u> in English and they do not - um, not to say they don't understand, but as in the Patwa word comes out more, you know. And then it's harder, its <u>rough</u> you know so as if they <u>listen</u> to me better (laughs) when I give it to them in Patwa.

Particularly when a command has already been issued in English, the marked use of Patwa is multifunctional, fulfilling an intensifying function as an emphatic, rhetorical device in addition to transmitting a message to children (i.e., not just referential or a translation). Codeswitching into Patwa marks a change in affective stance and keys a more serious tone (cf. Ochs & Schieffelin 1989:14), signaling to children that the situation has escalated and the stakes have increased.[6]

The following example with Tamika (2;9) and her mother exemplifies the escalation to Patwa. Her mother wants her to come to take a bath, while Tamika is preoccupied with looking for her cup of juice (see Appendix A for transcription conventions):

(1)
1	Mother:	Well go and take the soap for you to bathe.
2	Tamika:	Where my own mommy? [re: her juice]
3	Mother:	It there. Go and take the soap for you to bathe and come for your own.
4	Tamika:	Take it for me. [re: her juice]
5	Mother:	Come and bathe.
6	Tamika:	((does not move))
7	Mother:	((yelling loud and fast)) *Fè vit pou mwen ay fè twavay mwen! Mwen ni pou jis lavé.*
		('**Hurry up for me to go do my work! I have to wash [clothes]**.')
8	Tamika:	((gets the soap))

Before switching to Patwa, Tamika's mother issues at least four directives in English for Tamika to come take her bath (on lines 1, 3, 5). But it is after the codeswitch into Patwa (line 7), accompanied by a rise in tone of voice and faster speech, that Tamika gets the soap and goes to her mother to bathe (line 8). As this example illustrates, children are extremely sensitive to such switches (and the possibility of a more serious punishment to follow), and typically do what they are told immediately. The contrast in languages also highlights the contrast between adult-child roles and status, with Patwa indexing adult authority. Caregivers often call explicit attention to such power differentials with comments on children's behavior and demeanor, like "*Ou toujou vlé koumandé kò'w*" ('**You always want to rule yourself,**' i.e., you always want to do what you want, with the implication that this is not acceptable childhood behavior). Codeswitching from English to Patwa is a discursive means by which parents and teachers can maintain control of their children within the domains of home and school.

Though seemingly conflicting in that adults forbid children from speaking Patwa but continue to speak it to them for particular functions, these language ideologies and language socialization practices mesh well with local ideologies of child rearing, childhood behavior, and personhood. Children are expected to be obedient, respectful and deferent to their elders, and do as they are told. A child who disobeys, does what they want, or talks in a way that is considered too "grown up" is criticized for acting *two nonm* "too mannish" or *two fanm* "too womanish," explained to me by one parent as: "*ni mannyé gwo moun*" ('**to act like a grown up**'). Such expectations about childhood behavior have

---

[6] Codeswitching has been shown to be a means of aggravating (and conversely, mitigating) the force of requests (Valdés 1981; also Hill & Hill 1986; Zentella 1997). In situations of language shift, it may not just be the act of codeswitching that signals the aggravation, but the switch into one particular language over the other. Kulick (1992:217), for example, found that in Gapun, Papua New Guinea, where the village vernacular Taiap is being rapidly replaced by Tok Pisin (see Section 3), Taiap is increasingly becoming linked to the reprimand and scolding of children.

become linked to village language ideologies that associate English with education, politeness, accommodation, formality, and "the outside," and Patwa with individual will, autonomy, informality, and community. English represents qualities and demeanors (like politeness and obedience) that make it an ideal language for children, who are socialized to be respectful, deferent, and accommodating to their elders. Patwa, on the other hand, has become linked to adult status, roles, and authority, something that children are not supposed to obtain until they are older, have finished school, and have had their own children. Codeswitching into Patwa serves as a potent resource for expressiveness for adults, not only for solidarity amongst themselves, but also for social stratification and enforcing adult-child status differences within the family and classroom (a form of symbolic domination [Bourdieu 1977, 1991; Heller & Martin-Jones 2001] in context of the adult-child relationship, rather than large-scale). In this way, teachers and caregivers are not challenging the authority of English – rather, they embrace it by speaking English to children and requiring children to do the same. But in the context of the adult-child relationship within rural villages, Patwa assumes a position of ultimate authority. These complex child language socialization practices and ideologies are directly shaping the course of the language shift.

5. The consequences of children's Patwa usage

Children are thus exposed to a great deal of Patwa in their everyday verbal environments, and they appear to learn early on that Patwa is associated with particular affective stances that complement or intensify those expressed through English. From soon after they begin to talk, they use Patwa lexical items, expletives, and exclamations for affective marking within their English speech (see Appendix B), though typically during peer play when they are less likely to be monitored by adults. Like adults, they use Patwa to direct and evaluate one another's actions, and to intensify their speech. Such Patwa usage evokes a "taste" of the adult world and can be highly effective in structuring children's social organization and relationships. In addition, their imaginary adult role play demonstrates an acute awareness of how Patwa and English index contrasting social identities and activities, as they use English to enact teachers and office workers, and Patwa to enact male-dominated, uneducated roles like bus drivers, pig hunters, and farmers (Paugh 2001, 2002). Though congruent with community patterns of language use, and relatively rare compared to their English usage, children's use of Patwa anywhere within the adult-controlled settings of the house, yard, or school is negatively sanctioned – but often in a way that highlights place- and age-related constraints.

5.1 Children's Patwa use at school

In school, children's Patwa usage is rare, and typically consists of a single lexical item within an otherwise English utterance. It may occur as a child attempts to answer questions posed by the teacher, particularly when referring to a story book or object. Pedagogical strategy reported by teachers is to then tell children the English translation for them to repeat and presumably learn. While this does occur, particularly in preschool, teachers from grade one on become more explicit about why they are correcting children's language use, often drawing attention to the place-related constraints on Patwa usage, and grammatical or phonological errors in English.

The following example takes place during "picture study" in the first grade class, during which the teacher holds up a book and asks the class questions about what is taking place on each page. The book is called "Lucky Dip," and is about a boy and girl who pay a fee to pick a wrapped prize from a barrel at a carnival. On this page, the boy is looking at the barrel of prizes, but has not yet paid in order to pick one. There are 26 students in the class (ages 5-6 years old), and the teacher has lived in the village all her life and been teaching for almost 30 years:

(2a)

1	Teacher:	Alright. He's looking at it and he's saying to himself, I want one I want one. But ... why do you think he just cannot just push his hand and take it?
2	Boy 1:	Miss!
3	Boy 2:	Miss!
4	Boy 1:	[Because he didn't pay.]
5	Boy 2:	[Because they will call him] _vòlè_. ('Because they will call him **thief**.')
6	Teacher:	Because he did no:t?
7	Some:	Pay.
8	Teacher:	He did not pay. Somebody say they would -
9	Teacher:	[They will call him -
10	Boy 3:	[They will call him _vòlè_.
11	Teacher:	They will call him _vòlè_. Now ... _vòlè_ is a - listen to tha:t! ((speaking slowly)) _Vòlè_ is a Patwa word.
12	Girl:	((to teacher)) Miss!
13	Teacher:	((louder)) And when we are in school we spea::k?
14	Class:	English!
15	Teacher:	We speak English.

In everyday village life, _vòlè_ would commonly be used to call after a person who had just stolen something, as it is more affectively marked than the English "thief." But _vòlè_ is not allowed in school because it is Patwa, and its usage initiates a correction and language lesson from the teacher. She lectures "_Vòlè_ is a Patwa word. And when we are in school we spea::k?" (lines 11-13). The class loudly responds "English!" (line 14), enthusiastically displaying that by first grade, they are well aware that English is the language of the classroom. The lesson continues:

(2b)

16	Girl:	[((loudly, to teacher)) He have to say /tif/ [thief].
17	Teacher:	[All those (unintelligible).
18	Teacher:	((to Girl)) Huh?
19	Girl:	/tif/.
20	Teacher:	((to Girl)) You have to say thief.
21	Boy 2:	Steal.
22	Teacher:	((to Girl)) Not /tif/.
23	Boy 2:	((louder)) Miss steal!
24	Some:	Thief.
25	Teacher:	Not /tif/ but you have to sa::y?
26	Some:	Steal.
27	Teacher:	Steal. Very good.
28	Some:	Steal.
29	Teacher:	He'll steal. So a person who steals is called a:: ... [stealer.
30	Boy 4:	[_Vòlè_.
31	Teacher:	((impatiently)) Not a _vòlè_. We don't say a _vòlè_ is Patwa!? ((speaking slowly)) A person who steals is a:: ... stealer or a ... thief. What do we sa::y?
32	Boy 5:	((loudly)) Thief!
33	Teacher:	A thief. All right. So he doesn't - so he doesn't want people to call him _vole_- he doesn't want people to call him thief. So then he is wai::ting for the man to::?
34	Some:	Give him one. ((re: a prize from the lucky dip))
35	Teacher:	To give him one.

A female student offers the English word "thief" instead of _vòlè_ (lines 16, 19). However, her non-standard pronunciation as /tif/, although characteristic of the village English vernacular, now singles her out for correction by the teacher (lines 20, 22). In contrast to _vòlè_, /tif/ is portrayed as simply

wrong, not affected by context or place. Boy 2, the same child who originally said *vòlè*, then eagerly exclaims "steal" (line 21, 23). As this is another *English* alternative, the teacher prompts the children to repeat it, and then praises them with a "Very good" (line 27). But at this point, "thief," the English translation of the Patwa noun *vòlè*, has been replaced by the verb "steal," which no longer fits in the original problematic sentence frame, "Because they will call him *vòlè*." The teacher then tells the children: "So a person who steals is called a:: ... stealer" (line 29). Now she has gone so far in trying to correct the Patwa that she suggests "stealer," a word I never heard used during my fieldwork, as people say "thief," /tif/, or *vòlè*. Yet despite her many corrections, another boy (Boy 4) again offers the response, "*Vòlè*" (line 30). She rebukes him impatiently, "Not a *vòlè*. We don't say a *vòlè* is Patwa!?" (line 31). She then tells the children, "A person who steals is a:: ... stealer or a ... <u>thief</u>" (line 31). The lesson continues after a brief recap, during which the teacher uses *vòlè* as well as thief (line 33), though perhaps by mistake.

This example shows the lengths to which a teacher is willing to go to remove a Patwa word from school. Yet, by saying "when we are in *school* we speak English," she simultaneously suggests that Patwa may be acceptable elsewhere. But where? Children's speech at home is now just as heavily monitored for Patwa usage, though again, often with place- and age-related implications, especially as children get older.

5.2 Children's Patwa use at home

At home, young children may be told "no Patwa," or simply have the Patwa word replaced with its English equivalent. For example, Reiston (3;5) and his grandmother are sitting in the living room of their house when she drops the knife she is using to trim straw to weave a basket:

(3)
1	Grandmother:	((drops knife))
2	Reiston:	*Ga!* Where granny *kouto?*
		('**Look (exclamation)**! Where is granny's **knife**?')
3	Grandmother:	Is not a *kouto*. <u>Knife</u>.
4	Reiston:	Where the knife?
5	Grandmother:	It fall down. I see it. ((picking up the knife)) I get it.

Reiston calls attention to the knife dropping with the Patwa exclamation, "*Ga!*", and then asks where it has gone (line 2). His grandmother does not answer his question, but rather, corrects his use of *kouto* (line 3). She does not explain that *kouto* is a Patwa word and that he should use the English term, nor does she give a reason why "knife" is preferred over *kouto*. In fact, she phrases her correction as if he has completely given the wrong name for something, as if he has called it a fork or spoon instead of a knife (e.g., 'Is not a fork. Knife'). Reiston, who is accustomed to such correction, simply repeats his question, replacing the Patwa lexeme with its English equivalent (line 4).

But as children get older, adults' corrections often simultaneously suggest that it may be permissible for them to speak Patwa in some other place or at another point in their developmental cycle. In the following example, Claudette (13 years) is scolded by her aunt, Marlena, for a Patwa utterance inside Marlena's kitchen. Claudette, Marlena, and Marlena's children, Jonah (2 years) and Theodora (5 years), have been discussing if a hen would lay an egg in a nest in the corner of the kitchen. The conversation had been in English until Claudette looked in the nest and noticed an egg that wasn't there before – another child had put it there to fool Claudette:

(4)
1 Claudette: *Ga* there the fowl put the egg.
                  ('**Look** where the fowl put the egg.')
2 Claudette: ((reaches for the egg but quickly stops as Marlena speaks))
3 Marlena: [Claudette leave the fowl alone.   ]
4 Theodora: [It going and make a other   ] one Claudette. [re: another egg]
5 ((pause))
6 Claudette: ((continuing to watch the hen)) *An patjé zé i ni an bonda'y* man.
                  ('**It has lots of eggs its bottom** man')
7 Marlena: ((very low tone of voice)) Claudette.
8 Claudette: ((looking up)) Yeah?
9 ((2 second pause))
10 Marlena: ((quiet but scolding tone)) *Ou déwò?!*
                  ('**Are you outside?!**')
11 ((no response from Claudette))

The implication of Marlena's short but powerful Patwa scolding (line 10) is that Claudette has crossed a context-related boundary by using Patwa within the home, but that such usage is acceptable somewhere else ("outside"). But at another level, Claudette has also crossed the boundaries of acceptable childhood behavior. This key point emerged during my transcription with Marlena, when she explained that she chastised Claudette for her Patwa utterance because: "She [was] feeling so big to use that word there." I asked what she meant by "big," and she explained that by using Patwa, Claudette was trying to act "too womanish," in other words, too much like an adult.

A similar age- and place-related admonishment occurred when Marcel (age 11) structured a play frame in Patwa to depict farmers, played by his three cousins Reiston (3;8), Alex (6 years), and Junior (9 years), going to and from the garden. The children were playing in the garden behind the house, but upon re-entering the yard, Marcel continues speaking Patwa to narrate the role-play activity. As soon as he is within hearing range of his grandmother, she quickly scolds him: "Stop the Patwa in the yard *mouché Marcel*" (for the full example, see Paugh 2001, 2002). Significantly, she does not tell him to stop speaking Patwa completely, but rather qualifies it with "in the yard." Furthermore, she uses a Patwa address term, *"mouché Marcel"* ('mister Marcel') in her directive. This is frequently used by caregivers when scolding children in both Patwa and English, and it implies that a child is acting *too adult-like*. When children use Patwa, they come across as acting too grown-up for their age, challenging adult-child status differences and adult control.

6. Conclusion

Despite that there are no longer significant differences in language use patterns between school and home, whereby teachers were previously the primary or only source of English for children, villagers are adamantly against the implementation of Patwa revitalization programs in their own communities. At one level, they express concern that the English they have fought so hard to "bring in" would be lost if Patwa were to be encouraged at school or at home. Most parents fear that if children hear too much Patwa, it can "grab them" and English can start to "come out" of them (the reverse of the "bringing in" metaphor), to be replaced by Patwa. When I asked her opinion of teaching Patwa in school, the third grade teacher bluntly stated: "That would kill their English." Furthermore, many say it would be a "waste of time," since Patwa is not recognized in official, institutional settings. The seventh-grade teacher poses a very practical question about bringing Patwa into the school, pointing to other contexts from which it is excluded: "But if you reject it um, like on the job you reject it, and in the office you reject it, [and] in the exam room, why would you put it into the classroom?" This point is critical, considering that most parents and teachers now want children to secure jobs that take place *in offices*. In terms of their children's futures, they view Patwa as a liability, while English is associated with education, social mobility, and modernity. Evoking the rural/urban dichotomy that so influences village language ideologies, most suggest that it could be taught *elsewhere* in Dominica

where Patwa is not spoken regularly, such as in Roseau, perhaps as a "foreign language" subject in secondary school.

But at another level, English and Patwa have come to index different aspects of personhood, particularly as related to expectations of children and childhood status. English is considered more polite and educated, but importantly, it also represents social distance and respect, and accommodation by bilingual adults to strangers and officials – just as children are expected to be polite and accommodating to adults. Patwa is linked to rural peasant life and lack of education, but also the very valuable qualities of boldness, self-sufficiency, and independence – something that children are restricted from attaining until they are older. Not allowing children to speak Patwa while using it to control children is a suppression not only of the language but also of children's own will and autonomy to the authority of adults, thus paralleling more broadly-held cultural ideas about the status of children in Dominica and other Caribbean societies. The powerful place held by English (and relative lack of power of Patwa) within the national speech economy is in a sense turned on its head in the village, where children are socialized to speak English in order to express deference and respect to their elders. In the village symbolic system, Patwa becomes powerful in expressing one's own autonomy, will, and right to control others.

This is contributing centrally to the course of language shift in Penville, and marks a major change from only three generations ago when Patwa was the primary language of this community. But while children increasingly use English for most functions, Patwa is an important conversational resource for them to "act adult." They learn the associations of Patwa with adult roles and authority early on, and employ it in similar ways within their peer play to intensify their speech, direct and evaluate one another's behavior, and enact adult roles. This may act as a means of language maintenance, as children may continue using Patwa for similar functions as they grow up and have their own children, similarly transmitting positive covert messages about the expressiveness and authoritativeness of Patwa in particular contexts. However, urban-based Patwa revitalization that seek to introduce this adult code into the school – where teacher control is central – could inadvertently challenge local language ideologies and patterns of use that have developed among rural villagers in response to long-standing institutional policies and ideologies devaluing and rejecting Patwa. In order to effectively and positively impact the lives and linguistic practices of rural villagers, these complex linguistic ideologies and language socialization practices must be addressed in formulating and implementing any language-related policy.

Appendix A: Transcription Conventions

italic	Patwa speech
bold	English glosses of Patwa speech
<u>under</u>	Emphasis
:	Elongated speech
...	Pause within speech
((pause))	Pause between turns; non-verbal interaction
?	Rising intonation, Question
!	Exclamation
?!	Rhetorical question
[	Overlapping speech

Appendix B: Examples of young children's affectively-marked Patwa usages

Babytalk lexicon:

dodo	(n) sleep; (v) to sleep
nana	(n) food; (v) to eat
tété	(n) breast; (v) to suckle

Exclamations and interjections:

Bondyé, *Papa mèt*	God
mach	scram (particularly to dogs, chickens, and other animals)
ga	imperative 'look (at)'; affective marker expressing shock or surprise; attention-getter

Curses:

patat mama'w	'your mother's vagina'
tèt papa'w	'your father's head'

Negatively evaluative adjectives:

modi	bad, headstrong
malpwòp	nasty, dirty, untidy
sòt	stupid

Intensifiers within English utterances:

"I going *kwévé* you"	'I'm going to **beat you badly**'
"You *blésé* my *bobo*"	'You **hurt** my **sore/injury**'

Nouns referring to scary or evil creatures:

soukwiyan	witch
dyab	devil; evil spirit

References

Amastae, Jon. 1979a. Dominican Creole Phonology, I and II. Georgetown University Papers on Languages and Linguistics 15(Spring):83-122 and 16(Fall):1-32.

Amastae, Jon. 1979b. Dominican English Creole Phonology: An Initial Sketch. Anthropological Linguistics 21(4):182-204.

Amastae, Jon. 1983. Agentless Constructions in Dominican Creole. Lingua 59(1):47-75.

Baker, Patrick L. 1994. Centring the Periphery: Chaos, Order, and the Ethnohistory of Dominica. Buffalo, NY: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges. Social Science Information 16:645-668.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. Language and Symbolic Power. John B. Thompson, ed. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, trans. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1990[1970]. Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture. London: Sage.

Carrington, Lawrence D. 1969. Deviations from Standard English in the Speech of Primary School Children in St. Lucia and Dominica: A Preliminary Survey, I and II. International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching 7(3):165-184 and 7(4):259-281.

Carrington, Lawrence D. 1988. Creole Discourse and Social Development. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

Christie, Pauline G. 1982. Language Maintenance and Language Shift in Dominica. Caribbean Quarterly 28(4):41-51.

Christie, Pauline G. 1983. In Search of the Boundaries of Caribbean Creoles. *In* Studies in Caribbean Language. Lawrence D. Carrington, ed. Pp. 13-22. St. Augustine: Society for Caribbean Linguistics.

Christie, Pauline G. 1990. Language as Expression of Identity in Dominica. International Journal of the Sociology of Language 85:61-69.

Christie, Pauline G. 1994. Language Preference in Two Communities in Dominica, West Indies. La Linguistique 30:7-16.

Commonwealth of Dominica. 2001. Population and Housing Census. Roseau, Dominica.

Fader, Ayala. 2000. Gender, Morality and Language: Socialization Practices in a Hasidic Community. Ph.D dissertation, New York University.

Fontaine, Marcel, and Jonathan Leather. 1992. Kwéyòl Usage and Attitudes of Dominican Second-Formers. Dominica: Folk Research Institute.

Fontaine, Marcel, and Peter A. Roberts. 1992. Dominica's English-Creole Dictionary. Cave Hill, Barbados: Learning Resource Center, University of the West Indies.

Gal, Susan. 1988. The Political Economy of Code Choice. *In* Codeswitching: Anthropological and Sociolinguistic Perspectives. Monica Heller, ed. Pp. 245-264. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Garrett, Paul B. 1999. Language Socialization, Convergence, and Shift in St. Lucia, West Indies. Ph.D dissertation, New York University.

Garrett, Paul B., and Patricia Baquedano-López. 2002. Language Socialization: Reproduction and Continuity, Transformation and Change. Annual Review of Anthropology 31:339-361.

Hammond, S. A. 1945. The Reorganisation of Schools, Section 12. Colonial, Development and Welfare Report.

Heller, Monica. 1995. Code-switching and the Politics of Language. *In* One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-disciplinary Perspectives on Code-switching. Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken, eds. Pp. 158-174. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Heller, Monica, and Marilyn Martin-Jones. 2001. Introduction: Symbolic Domination, Education, and Linguistic Difference. *In* Voices of Authority: Education and Linguistic Difference. Monica Heller and Marilyn Martin-Jones, eds. Pp. 1-28. Westport, CT: Ablex.

Henderson, Felix. 1988. History and Development of Creole in Dominica. *In* Palé Kwéyòl Donmnik. Pp. 4-6. Roseau, Dominica: Tropical Printers.

Hill, Jane H., and Kenneth C. Hill. 1986. Speaking Mexicano: Dynamics of Syncretic Language in Central Mexico. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Holm, John. 1989. Pidgins and Creoles: Reference Survey. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Irvine, Judith T., and Susan Gal. 2000. Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation. *In* Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Polities, and Identities. Paul V. Kroskrity, ed. Pp.35-83. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series.

Jaffe, Alexandra. 1999. Ideologies in Action: Language Politics on Corsica. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Konmité pou Étid Kwéyòl. 1997. Kwéyòl in Education: Experiences and Attitudes of Dominican Teachers. Unpublished report.

Kroskrity, Paul V., ed. 2000. Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Polities, and Identities. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series.

Kulick, Don. 1992. Language Shift and Cultural Reproduction: Socialization, Self, and Syncretism in a Papua New Guinean Village. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Myers, Robert A. 1987. A Resource Guide to Dominica, 1493-1986. 3 Volumes. New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files.

Ochs, Elinor. 1986. Introduction. *In* Language Socialization Across Cultures. Bambi B. Schieffelin and Elinor Ochs, eds. Pp. 1-13. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, Elinor. 1988. Culture and Language Development: Language Acquisition and Language Socialization in a Samoan Village. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, Elinor. 1996. Linguistic Resources for Socializing Humanity. *In* Rethinking Linguistic Relativity. John J. Gumperz and Stephen C. Levinson, eds. Pp. 407-437. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, Elinor. 2001. Socialization. *In* Key Terms in Language and Culture. Alessandro Duranti, ed. Pp. 227-230. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Ochs, Elinor, and Bambi B. Schieffelin. 1984. Language Acquisition and Socialization: Three Developmental Stories and Their Implications. *In* Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion. Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. LeVine, eds. Pp. 276-320. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, Elinor, and Bambi B. Schieffelin. 1989. Language Has a Heart. Text 9(1):7-25.

Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth. 1996. Phyllis Shand Allfrey: A Caribbean Life. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Paugh, Amy L. 2001. "Creole Day is Every Day": Language Socialization, Shift, and Ideologies in Dominica, West Indies. Ph.D dissertation, New York University.

Paugh, Amy L. 2002. "Doing Being Adult": Children's Codeswitching, Play, and Agency in Dominica, West Indies. Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 22.

Platt, Martha. 1986. Social Norms and Lexical Acquisition: A Study of Deictic Verbs in Samoan Child Language. *In* Language Socialization Across Cultures. Bambi B. Schieffelin and Elinor Ochs, eds. Pp. 127-152. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rampton, Ben. 1995. Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents. London: Longman.

Riley, Kathleen C. 2001. The Emergence of Dialogic Identities: Transforming Heteroglossia in the Marquesas, F. P. Ph.D dissertation, CUNY Graduate Center.

Schieffelin, Bambi B. 1990. The Give and Take of Everyday Life: Language Socialization of Kaluli Children. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schieffelin, Bambi B. 1994. Codeswitching and Language Socialization: Some Probable Relationships. *In* Pragmatics: From Theory to Practice. Judith Felson Duchan, Lynne E. Hewitt, and Rae M. Sonnenmeier, eds. Pp. 20-42. NY: Prentice Hall.

Schieffelin, Bambi B., and Elinor Ochs. 1986. Language Socialization. Annual Review of Anthropology 15:163-191.

Schieffelin, Bambi B., Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, eds. 1998. Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory. New York: Oxford University Press.

Stuart, Stephanie. 1993. Dominican Patwa – Mother Tongue or Cultural Relic? International Journal of the Sociology of Language 102:57-72.

Taylor, Douglas. 1977. Languages of the West Indies. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1988. Peasants and Capital: Dominica in the World Economy. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Valdés, Guadalupe. 1981. Codeswitching as Deliberate Verbal Strategy: A Microanalysis of Direct and Indirect Requests among Bilingual Chicano Speakers. *In* Latino Language and Communicative Behavior. Richard P. Durán, ed. Pp. 95-108. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Woolard, Kathryn A. 1985. Language Variation and Cultural Hegemony: Toward an Integration of Sociolinguistic and Social Theory. American Ethnologist 12:738-748.

Woolard, Kathryn A. 1989. Double Talk: Bilingualism and the Politics of Ethnicity in Catalonia. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Woolard, Kathryn A. 1998. Introduction: Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry. *In* Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory. Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, eds. Pp. 3-47. New York: Oxford University Press.

Woolard, Kathryn A., and Bambi B. Schieffelin. 1994. Language Ideology. Annual Review of Anthropology 23:55-82.

Wylie, Jonathan. 1995. The Origins of Lesser Antillean French Creole: Some Literary and Lexical Evidence. Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages 10(1):77-126.

Zentella, Ana Celia. 1987. Language and Female Identity in the Puerto Rican Community. *In* Women and Language in Transition. J. Penfield, ed. Pp. 57-71. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Zentella, Ana Celia. 1997. Growing Up Bilingual: Puerto Rican Children in New York City. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

ISB4: Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism

edited by James Cohen, Kara T. McAlister, Kellie Rolstad, and Jeff MacSwan

Cascadilla Press   Somerville, MA   2005

Web access and citation information

This paper is available from www.cascadilla.com/isb4.html and is identical
to the version published by Cascadilla Press on CD-ROM and in library binding.