Multilingual play: Children's code-switching, role play, and agency in Dominica, West Indies

A M Y L . P A U G H

Department of Sociology AND Anthropology
James Madison University
MSC 7501, Sheldon Hall
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
paughal@jmu.edu

A B S T R A C T

In Dominica, rural adults forbid children from speaking Patwa (a French-lexicon creole) in favor of acquiring English (the official language), contributing to a rapid language shift in most villages. However, adults value Patwa for a range of expressive functions and frequently code-switch around and to children. Children increasingly use English but employ Patwa for some functions during peer play when away from adults. This study examines how, despite possible sanctions, children use Patwa to enact particular adult roles during peer play, and what this signifies about their knowledge of role- and place-appropriate language use. Critically, they draw on their verbal resources and physically embodied social action to create imaginary play spaces both organized by and appropriate for Patwa. The examination of children's social worlds provides a more nuanced picture of language shift – and potential maintenance – than observing only adult-adult or adult-child interaction. (Language socialization, language shift, code-switching, children, role play, creole, Dominica, Caribbean.)*

I N T R O D U C T I O N

A growing body of literature on peer interactions in multilingual settings illustrates that adolescents and school-age children use code-switching for a variety of functions, such as structuring play, games, and other activities, negotiating meanings and rights, and asserting their shifting identities and allegiances (e.g., Auer 1984, 1998; Cromdal 2004; Cromdal & Aronsson 2000; Garrett 1999; Guldal 1997; Hewitt 1986; Howard 2003; Jørgensen 1998; Paugh 2001; Rampton 1995, 1998; Schieffelin 1994; Woolard 1995; Zentella 1997, 1998). Young bilingual children, like older children and adults, may pragmatically switch languages for emphasis, clarification, or addressee specification, or to gain or retain attention (Goodz 1989; Lanza 1997). However, children's use of two or more languages to construct imaginary adult roles during spontaneous pretend play, particularly when adults are not present,[1] has received little systematic attention (though see Guldal 1997, Halmari & Smith 1994, Kwan-Terry 1992). Yet the

ways in which children employ the language varieties available to them to depict different kinds of people, activities, and situations offer insights into their emergent understandings of linguistic variation and multilingualism, language attitudes, and the links between language and social identity. The present study examines children's language choice as they enact adult roles in spontaneous imaginary play with peers in Dominica, where rural villages are undergoing a rapid language shift from Patwa,[2] a French-based creole, to English, the official language of the nation. Employing a language socialization approach, the research illustrates that the examination of children's social worlds provides a more nuanced picture of language shift – and potential maintenance – than does observing only adult-adult or adult-child interaction.

CHILDREN, LANGUAGE, AND ROLE PLAY

Children distinguish roles using language features that index salient characteristics of the ways individuals speak. For example, Anglo-American children have been shown to employ registers associated with adult roles and activities in their play with peers (Andersen 1990, 1996; Hoyle 1998; Kyratzis et al. 2001). Among the Huli in Papua New Guinea, Goldman 1998 found that children overlay their role play with adult storytelling genres, creating "mythological narratives" about their play. In addition, they occasionally use Tok Pisin lexemes, along with changes in intonation and voice quality, in their Huli speech to add "role authenticity and integrity" to their portrayals of post-colonial roles such as administrators and hospital personnel who speak Tok Pisin (1998:155–56). In two studies of bilingual children, Kwan-Terry 1992 and Halmari & Smith 1994[3] found that the children enacted imaginary characters in English (their second language in both studies), but they used their first languages (Cantonese and Finnish, respectively) for running commentary on the play or for negotiating play frames.[4] Kwan-Terry (1992:246–47) attributes this to English being the language the child associates with "the world at large." Halmari & Smith (1994:431), on the other hand, suggest that code-switching acts with other features, such as tense changes and use of imperatives, to indicate a shift between two "sub-registers" in play: "in-character play" and "negotiation of the play" (also see Guldal 1997). Thus, language is a vital resource used by children to enact as well as to signal particular social roles in play.

Children in Dominica also engage in complex code-switching practices between English and Patwa in their role play with peers. Their language choice in role enactment illustrates their emerging sensitivity to the ways in which these contrasting languages index particular social identities, places, and activities (Ochs 1996). The analysis of children's role play presented here is thus contextualized within an in-depth examination of language socialization practices at home and at school, and of the linguistic practices and language ideologies (Kroskrity 2000, Schieffelin et al. 1998, Woolard & Schieffelin 1994) of their

communities and nation. Language socialization research maintains that children are socialized THROUGH language as they are socialized to USE language (Ochs 1988, 1996; Ochs & Schieffelin 1984; Schieffelin 1990; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986a, 1986b; also see recent reviews by Garrett & Baquedano-López 2002 and Kulick & Schieffelin 2004). In other words, through interactions with more knowledgeable members (such as adults and older children), children learn and are socialized to learn the cultural and linguistic knowledge necessary to participate in everyday social activities and interactions, including ideologies about class, status, race, ethnicity, gender, morality, and language itself. Children are viewed as active agents in both reproducing and subtly changing linguistic practices and ideologies through the jointly occurring processes of sociocultural and linguistic learning (Ochs 2001). Though language socialization studies initially focused on monolingual societies, this approach offers unique insights into the study of multilingual speech practices and language contact phenomena such as language shift, convergence, and maintenance (Fader 2000, 2001; Garrett 1999, 2000, 2003; Garrett & Baquedano-López 2002; Kulick 1992; Paugh 2001, in press; Riley 2001; Schieffelin 1994; Zentella 1997).

Peer play offers a prime context for such cultural and linguistic learning, exploration, and socialization. Older children are socialized through acting as directors of social action, mentors, and examples for others to follow, while younger children imitate "more competent partners" (Goodwin 1990:12). Yet children's play is not simply a process of imitating others or passively developing into an adult end state; rather, it offers a context within which children can actively explore power dynamics, social rules, identities, and roles normally not accessible to them in everyday life, when they are subordinate to adults (Kyratzis 2000). Through role play, children display and exploit their understandings of morality, ethnicity, gender relations, social identities, and power hierarchies at familial, local, national, and global levels (Aronsson & Thorell 1999; de León 2002; Goldman 1998; Goodwin 1990, 1993; 2002; Kyratzis et al. 2001; Kyratzis & Wade 2002; Reynolds 2002; Rindstedt & Aronsson 2002; Schieffelin 1990; Thorne 1993).[5] As they structure and engage in such activities in peer groups, they are able to practice them without an adult presence, trying on various social identities or "voices" (in Bahktin's sense) otherwise restricted from them. In this exploration and reflection on social norms, children create alternative social realities in which THEY hold the positions of authority, power, and control, and in doing so, they may also challenge and transform those realities (Reynolds 2002). The examination of role play activities as children construct them offers a window into their understandings of adult culture and practices, demonstrating "the salience and importance of these activities and the child's ability to understand the details and sequences that constitute them" (Schieffelin 1990:225).

A focus on children's role play in Dominica demonstrates the importance of observing children interacting with and socializing other children within their own peer groups (cf. Corsaro 1985, 1997; Goodwin 1990; Hirschfeld 2002), par-

ticularly in situations of significant sociocultural and linguistic change where children are a pointed focus of language policies in both official (e.g., school) and informal (e.g., home) settings. While their language choice in role play could be viewed as reproducing broader ideologies about the kinds of people and places appropriate for Patwa, it simultaneously challenges adult/child status differences as expressed through language (Patwa for adults, English for children), and it may transform children's own perceptions of the languages and people who speak them. Children, in turn, socialize one another in these performance genres of play, opening up a creative space that may better represent their multilingual world as they experience it. The examination of children's language use in role play (and play more generally) offers insights into their agency,[6] particularly in using a linguistic variety they are otherwise forbidden to speak in the presence of adults. Such investigation sheds light on children's roles in processes of sociocultural and linguistic reproduction as well as those of innovation and change.

GEOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

Located in the eastern Caribbean between the French overseas departments of Martinique and Guadeloupe, Dominica is a mountainous island nation with a population of approximately 71,000. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, with bananas the chief export crop. Dominica has a complex sociolinguistic situation that was shaped by a dual French-British colonial history, with the island changing hands at least seven times before becoming British in 1763. Since then, English has remained the official language of the nation, government, schools, and urban settings, while Patwa has been the oral language of the rural population since French colonization in the 17th century. Because of historical and geographical factors, the most "standard" English is spoken in the capital town, Roseau, while Patwa and varieties of English are spoken in rural villages.[7] In the past, urbanites and education officials disdained Patwa as the impoverished language of poor, uneducated peasants and did not allow their children to speak it. However, since Dominica became independent from England in 1978, the state and an urban intellectual elite have claimed that Patwa is integral to the nation's development and cultural identity, and they have undertaken Patwa revitalization efforts.[8] Nevertheless, both languages have come to index differences and boundaries related to class, rural/urban origin, level of education, gender, and age or generation (cf. Irvine & Gal 2000). Different ideologies about the languages, as well as opinions about when, where, and with whom to use them, influence language choice and usage in everyday interactions in both urban and rural settings. Rural adults are acutely aware of this, and over the past few decades they have become concerned that Patwa hinders children's acquisition of English and thus restricts social mobility. Most rural adults strive to speak only English to their children and forbid them to speak Patwa in their presence.

These widespread language socialization practices are contributing to a rapid language shift from Patwa to varieties of English (however "nonstandard" or creolized) in most villages.[9]

Village adults have complex and often competing ideologies concerning the languages of their communities. Despite expressing overtly negative attitudes toward Patwa, adults simultaneously value it for intimate communication and to fulfill a range of expressive functions. In practice, the languages are functionally distributed across different contexts, activities, participants, and speech acts, with code-switching (both intra- and inter-sentential) a regular part of the community's adult language practices. Generally speaking, English is associated with more formal contexts and the activities and persons that take part in them, such as going to school, church, village meetings, and Roseau, while Patwa is considered appropriate for more informal contexts, such as gathering with friends at home or on the road, working in the banana field, or washing clothes at the river. However, Patwa is considered by most to be "better" for emotionally expressive speech acts like gossiping, arguing, joking, cursing, teasing, and assessing others. Adults draw on this expressive quality of Patwa in their speech to children, frequently speaking Patwa directly to them for affectively marked functions. These include expressing positive affect through a Patwa babytalk lexicon, lullabies, and some routines, and more negative affect through using Patwa for discipline and scolding, for intensified directives, and as a moral discourse to negatively evaluate children's behavior or demeanor (Paugh 2001, in press).

As children learn to speak, they simultaneously learn the complex associations with both languages – particularly, that it is the language of adults. While the majority now acquire English as their first language and use it for most interactions, many also demonstrate some productive competence in Patwa, particularly when alone with peers and not monitored by adults. Their code-switching practices, though restricted when compared to those of adults, illustrate the associations of the languages with particular people, places, and functions; in particular, Patwa is identified with affective stances that complement or intensify those expressed through English (Paugh 2001, in press). This becomes especially evident during everyday social interactions with peers, when children use Patwa lexical items, expletives, and exclamations for affective marking and intensification within their ENGLISH speech (e.g., curses like *tèt papa'w* 'your father's head', or intensified directives like *sòti la* 'come out of there'). Like adults, they code-switch into Patwa for various stylistic and pragmatic functions, such as directing, evaluating, and criticizing one another's actions, speech, and demeanor.

For children, code-switching into Patwa is a multifunctional linguistic strategy used to assert dominance over other children, to display shifting footings, and to claim adultlike roles and status through the revoicing of adult commands, evaluations, and registers (Paugh 2001, in press; cf. Cromdal 2004, Jørgensen 1998). This is particularly striking when children enact adult roles in

spontaneous imaginary play, which offers the most extensive and elaborate Patwa usages that I observed among children. In other types of play (such as object play) and everyday conversations with peers, children primarily speak English with occasional isolated code-switches into Patwa; in role play, however, children's Patwa speech may span several turns and consist of complete Patwa sentences. Children's role play is thus a rich site for the examination of their competence in different language varieties and registers, and their creativity and agency in using them to structure imaginative play. Furthermore, it provides a prime context within which children can practice, learn, and socialize Patwa among themselves.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

I investigated children's language use and play through 18 months of ethnographic research and a longitudinal language socialization study in one rural farming village in 1996–1998.[10] Six language-learning children ages 2 to 4 years were video-audio recorded over a period of 12 consecutive months (except for one child who was recorded for 6 months), with a minimum of 2 hours of each child's naturally occurring speech recorded each month. The children interacted with various family and community members and engaged in diverse daily activities as active participants and observers (Lave & Wenger 1991). The resulting recordings were transcribed with the help of the children's caregivers, eliciting metalinguistic commentary by more culturally competent members, including older children, in the process (Kulick 1992, Schieffelin 1990). During recording I tried to assume the role of observer rather than participant, and I did not elicit speech from the children or other interlocutors (though I was occasionally pulled into ongoing conversations, and would not assume that my presence had no effect). The children seemed to become very comfortable with me, to the point that during transcription, their caregivers often disapproved of how they treated me as if I was another child (such as calling me "girl" or taking me with them through the bush).

As a language socialization study, the central focus was on adult-child interactions in the home, school, and community. However, it became clear that a primary socializing context for both girls and boys of differing ages is playing in large groups of children with little adult supervision.[11] Children are surrounded by other children from birth, and most spend a minimum of 2 to 3 hours a day playing with peers, and often much longer on weekends and school vacations. In this verbally rich environment, they first begin to engage in peer play with their siblings, cousins, and other children who share the same home or yard, or live close by. As soon as they begin to walk and talk, small children are generally welcome to join in mixed-age and mixed-gendered peer and sibling play.[12] Adults do not usually allow such groups of children inside the home, claiming that children disrupt the household, interrupt adult activities (such as cleaning the house

or preparing meals), and generally make too much "noise." The home and yard are clearly demarcated from the surrounding areas, and, like the school, are under the control of adults. Groups of children consequently tend to play outside in the yard, road, or nearby bush with minimal or no adult supervision. Although children are socialized to monitor their speech and behavior around adults, this unsupervised peer play creates a critical space for them to explore the range of their linguistic repertoires without being told "no Patwa" by adults (see Garrett 1999 for a similar situation in St. Lucia).[13] They learn to negotiate and navigate through the spatial (home, yard, school) and temporal (when adults are present, during school) restrictions placed on their language use. Thus, while my attention to adult-child socialization activities anchors my understanding of local language ideologies and practices, I found it extremely productive to observe and video-record children of ages 2 to 13 as they engaged in group (social) as well as solitary play.

DOING "BEING ADULT"[14]: CHILDREN'S CODE-SWITCHING IN ROLE PLAY

Role-playing is a common activity when village children play in groups. They pretend to engage in a number of activities that they observe adults do regularly, but from which children are normally excluded or allowed to participate in only marginally, such as cooking, farming, teaching, or driving a bus.[15] Older children often direct younger children in what to do or say, and narrate the activity or event. Small children are rarely purposely excluded from imaginary play frames by older children, and they often become lead characters. Talk is very important in creating and sustaining such play frames, since children do not usually have elaborate imported toys to act as props.[16] Critically, children tend to use proportionately more Patwa in role-playing than in other activities, employing their verbal resources as well as physically embodied social action (like pretending to weed crops) to create imaginary play spaces both organized by and appropriate for Patwa, a language they are otherwise restricted from speaking. Their code-switching practices demonstrate their emerging sensitivity to how the languages index particular social identities, places, and activities, and code-switching plays a key role in creating and sustaining play frames.

There are differences between children's negotiations ABOUT role play and their language use WITHIN role play frames. Children generally use English for interactions about the play, such as negotiating the play frame and directing one another's actions (similar to findings by Halmari & Smith 1994 and Kwan-Terry 1992). Children also occasionally use Patwa for local interactional functions in the negotiation of role play, such as for affective marking and issuing intensified directives, in ways similar to how they use it in their everyday peer interaction (as described above). However, within the play frame itself, children regularly alternate languages according to the roles and activities they are depicting and

narrating. In other words, children use both languages in their role play but tend to employ much more Patwa than they typically do in any other kind of social interaction. In this way, their enactment of adult roles matches both the activities undertaken and languages used by adults in everyday life. Children's understandings of the interrelations between language and place, and the meanings and appropriateness of using particular linguistic varieties in particular places, become especially evident (also see Schieffelin 2003).

English-speaking roles and activities[17]

Soon after they begin to talk, children are able to identify which language varieties to employ and what activities are entailed in enacting specific roles. When enacting certain kinds of adult roles, like parents or teachers, children tend to employ English with little or no use of Patwa. When role-playing mommies and daddies, for example, children carry out such routine tasks as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, and bathing and feeding their offspring (typically younger siblings, pets, or dolls, if they have them). Children enacting these roles tell their pretend charges in English to *come and bathe*, *eat your food*, and *sleep, baby, sleep*. However, they also frequently employ Patwa lexicon and terms of endearment that characterize the community-wide babytalk register used by adults and older children with babies and young children. These appear in their otherwise English speech and are frequently spoken in a higher-pitched voice. When I began recording Alisia (1;11),[18] she played "mommy" with her baby brother. She lifted her shirt, pulled her brother toward her, and said, *Baby, look **tété*** 'baby, look **breast**' (i.e., to breast-feed). Even Jonah (2;9) once called to his puppy and then repeatedly asked it, *You want **tété***?" His mother playfully questioned him, *Where you taking **tété** to give it?* Jonah pointed to his chest and responded, *There. And there*. Such expressions are commonly used by mothers when nursing their infants.

When playing school, the structuring of the play frame, roles (both teacher and student), and activities are carried out almost entirely in English. As teachers, children strive to speak a more standard variety of English, with careful articulation and an authoritative tone of voice. Occasionally, however, they switch to Patwa to issue an intensified command or negative evaluation within the play frame, as teachers themselves admit to doing when schoolchildren are particularly unruly (e.g., *Sizé!* '**sit down**'; *You **mal élivé*** 'You are **badly brought up/ badly behaved**'). This again points to children's understandings of Patwa as part of an adult register linked to authority and control (Paugh 2001, in press). But more typically, children employ English, the language of the school, when enacting the roles of teachers and students. Children pretending to be teachers instruct their students to "spell" their names or other words, to tell about themselves in English, and to sing English songs commonly learned at school. Often they use physical props from around the house or yard, such as old lesson books or pretend chalkboards made from sheets of galvanized metal. They also dem-

onstrate an understanding of the differential power dynamics and unequal positions of authority involved in the teacher-student relationship, particularly ways in which teachers control their students if they do not meet their expectations. For example, children portraying teachers frequently find a "whip" (such as a branch from a bush) and walk around their pretend students, threatening to "give them licks" if they disobey or don't answer questions correctly.

Such themes are illustrated in the following example. Sonia (6 years) initiates a game of playing school with a group of six other children: her sister Marissa (age 3;8), brothers Nicholas (11 years) and Oscar (7 months), friend Henrietta (7 years), and neighbors, twin brothers Aaron and Albert (9 years). Sonia's mother is cleaning inside the house and has put three chairs on the veranda while she mops the kitchen floor. The children have arranged the chairs in a line facing out from the veranda. The girls sit on the chairs, and the three boys sit on the veranda wall (Henrietta is holding Oscar). Sonia begins the play frame by retrieving a school workbook entitled *Practice reading* from inside the house, and then standing in front of the other children. Though speaking softly at first, she commands them to stand up, which is how teachers obtain children's attention to begin the school day: *All stand*. The children stand up and face her, indicating their agreement to take part in the play frame. Sonia then begins to take on a deeper, more authoritative tone of voice as she leads them through an array of activities common to a school day: morning prayer and songs, stretching exercises, picture book study, tell about yourself, days of the week, months of the year, ABCs, counting, and reading exercises. Though maintaining a degree of seriousness throughout, Sonia occasionally seems to mock how teachers carry out these activities. For example, soon after starting, she repeatedly tells the children to sit and then stand, directives commonly issued by teachers. However, she speaks so fast that the children have trouble keeping up, particularly the boys, who must climb up and down from the veranda wall, and all begin laughing:

(1a)

1	Sonia:	SIT down! Stand! Sit! Stand! Sit! Stand! Sit!
2	((children laugh as they try to keep up))	
3	Sonia:	Stand! ((laughs)) Sit! Stand! Sit! Stand.
4	(.5)	
5	Sonia:	Hands up!
6	Marissa:	((repeating Sonia)) Hands up. Whoo::!
7	Sonia:	Out!
8	Marissa:	((repeating Sonia)) Out!
9	Sonia:	In! Down! Down! Up! In!
10	((children are out of sync with Sonia's commands))	
11	Sonia:	In! Out. Down! Sit.
12	((children laugh))	

In a similar vein, Sonia employs the disciplinary tactic of hitting the children with a "whip" when they disobey. She finds a branch from a bush in the yard to punish an uncooperative student, Nicholas, who has left a small radio on despite her previous directives to turn it off:

(1b)

1	Sonia:	((loudly, to Nicholas)) You WANT to hear and you PLAYing a radio?!
2	((children laugh))	
3	Nicholas:	OK. Just now.
		'OK. Wait'
4	Sonia:	((firm voice)) Well PUT it off.
5	((Aaron and Albert laugh))	
6	Sonia:	((exits the veranda))
7	Nicholas:	OK. It stopping. ((unintelligible)) a student that put it on.
8	((Nicholas, Aaron, and Albert laugh))	
9	Sonia:	((pulls a branch from a nearby bush))
10	Nicholas:	OK. OK. I will put it off. ((turns down the radio))
11	Sonia:	((yelling, returning to veranda)) Put it off!
12	Nicholas:	It off!
13	Sonia:	((hits Nicholas twice on the hand with the branch))
14	Nicholas:	OK I going put it off. ((turns off the radio))
15	Sonia:	((turns back to class, holding workbook)) ((speaking slowly)) Can you read this?
16	Sonia:	((to Marissa)) You can read a book Marissa?
17	Marissa:	Yes.

When her rhetorical question (line 1) and directives (lines 4, 11) do not work, Sonia disciplines a disobedient pupil with corporal punishment (line 13). She regains control of her class and continues with the lesson (lines 15–16), but throughout the rest of the play session, she repeatedly hits all the children (except Oscar) with the whip whenever they laugh, fail to answer a question, or otherwise "disobey." She does it so frequently as to seem to poke fun at it, commenting on the teacher-student relationship. Despite Sonia's seeming impatience with her students, which could possibly provoke a switch to Patwa, all roles and activities in this play frame (which lasted for 16 minutes) are constructed in English.

Patwa-speaking roles and activities

In contrast to English roles and activities, which typically take place within the home, school, and other formal settings, like church, children tend to employ Patwa to enact roles and activities that occur in places outside the human-built environment. These include predominantly male, uneducated occupations, such as farmers, bus drivers, and pig hunters, which take place in the garden, banana field, road, or bush, where adults most regularly speak Patwa with one another. Strikingly, this often entails both verbally and physically creating such an imaginary place where it is in theory safe, or at least more appropriate, to use Patwa. Children's language choice helps both to establish the context (Goodwin & Duranti 1992) and to create the role and activity they are enacting, and their language choice is just as important as the use of physical props, such as tools to play garden or a couch serving as a pretend bus.[19]

  Children as young as 2 to 4 years old use Patwa in role play sequences that are brief but telling. Often they employ nonsense words in their play that sound like Patwa and are interpreted as such by adult transcribers. For example, Reis-

ton and Sherona (both 3 years) are playing in a small field of bananas maintained by Sherona's father near her home. Sherona's older sister Hannah (12 years) is walking near the edge of the banana field, looking for ripe papayas. Sherona and Reiston begin stomping around the field, shouting rapidly in what appears to be both English and Patwa for several minutes. Aside from the Patwa personal pronouns *mwen* 'I' and *ou* 'you', and present tense verb marker *ka*, very little was intelligible to me or their grandmother and cousin, Marcel (11 years), during transcription. At one point, however, Reiston stops and bends over, pulling on weeds as if clearing the field:

(2)

1	Reiston:	((looking down, pulling weeds)) ***Mwen ka twavay.***
		'I'm working.'
2	Sherona:	((watching Hannah)) A jumby will go with you though.
		'An evil spirit will take you' (i.e., if she continues walking near the edge of the banana field)
3	Reiston:	((looking up, concerned)) Shero let's go.
4	Sherona:	((looks back to the banana field and begins stomping down the hill again)) ((speaking fast in a gruff voice)) ***Mwen ka alé. Mwen ka alé.***
		'I'm going. I'm going.'
5	Reiston:	((following Sherona, stomping with arms flailing)) ***Mwen ka alé.***
6		((children continue stomping down the hill, again shouting unintelligibly in what sounds like Patwa))

The children engage in an imaginary play frame by stomping around like farmers in a field. Reiston's grandmother and cousin interpreted their pretend play as depicting somewhat agitated farmers who have apparently been angered by something (perhaps the poor condition of their banana field). Though their speech is difficult to comprehend as they tromp through the field, Reiston speaks a clear Patwa utterance when he bends down and pretends to weed crops, expressing a common adult activity, working (*Mwen ka twavay*, line 1). Sherona, however, apparently becomes concerned about her sister and steps out of the play frame on line 2 to warn her in English that a "jumby" might come and take her away for getting too close to the bush. Reiston appears to become unsettled about this warning – perhaps not realizing it was directed at Hannah – and similarly speaks English in his related directive to leave, *Shero let's go* (line 3). His use of English can be viewed as affiliative with Sherona's language choice in line 2, as well as representing an utterance that is out of the play frame. Sherona then recommences the play frame, looking away from her sister and back to the banana field, and once again embodying the role of farmer by stomping around and speaking Patwa. She employs a common leave-taking expression heard among adults, *Mwen ka alé* (line 4). Though "going" is not specifically an adult activity, when children take leave, they are only heard to say its English vernacular equivalent, *I going* (in fact, I never heard Sherona use the Patwa phrase outside of imaginary play). This further suggests that Sherona is continuing her role as an adult farmer. Reiston similarly uses the Patwa version as he begins stomping and

waving his arms (line 5). Both children continue shouting in fragmented Patwa as they stomp around the field for the next few minutes.

Bus driver and passengers

While example (2) takes place in a banana field, the actual place where such (predominantly male) farming activity and Patwa language use occur, the following two examples illustrate how children verbally and physically CREATE places both associated with and appropriate for Patwa as they perform adult roles. In example (3), three cousins, Henry (3 years), Tamika (2;7), and Kenrick (2;1), negotiate and co-produce a shared imaginative frame that enacts Patwa-speaking adult roles, a bus driver and two passengers, in appropriate social spaces – the bus and bus stop on the road – within the living room of Tamika's house. The children are alone while Tamika's mother cooks lunch in her outdoor kitchen, located about five feet from the house. First, Kenrick and Tamika close the front door and windows of the house, making it almost impossible for anyone to see inside.[20] Without any prompts from the other two children, Henry immediately initiates a pretend play session in which the couch is transformed into a bus going along the road. He assumes the role of bus driver, positioning himself at one end of the couch with his feet dangling through the railing, and pretending to hold a steering wheel. Kenrick and Tamika become the passengers getting on and off along the road. The bus is a prime context for the use of Patwa for gossip among adults, and bus drivers typically speak Patwa rather than English to their passengers. Imitating real-life drivers, Henry advises his passengers when to get on and off in Patwa, as one so often hears on a ride to town:

(3a)

1	Henry:	((speaking fast)) ***Batjé batjé batjé! Atè***!
		'**Get on board, get on board, get on board! On the ground**! [i.e., disembark from the bus]'
2		((Tamika and Kenrick run to the couch))
3	Tamika:	((climbing on the couch)) ***Batjé:***
4	Kenrick:	[((climbing on the couch)) Eh:::
5	Henry:	[((makes driving noises))
6	Tamika:	((rushing to sit on the couch railing)) ***Batjé:***
7	Henry:	((continues making driving noises for 4 seconds))
8	Henry:	((turns head to look back at Tamika and Kenrick, smiling)) All you reach. '**You have arrived**' [at the desired destination]
9	Tamika:	((climbs off the couch))
10	Henry:	((continues making driving noises))
11	Tamika:	((jumping up and down)) ***Nou alé!*** [((climbs back on the couch)) '**We go!**'
12	Henry:	[((stops making driving noises))
13	Kenrick:	***Nou alé!***
14	Tamika:	***Nou alé!***
15	Kenrick:	***Nou alé!***
16	Henry:	((continues making driving noises))

Henry physically positions himself on the end of the couch as if at the head of a bus and calls out two commands in Patwa, *batjé* and *atè* (line 1). Though Henry

does not provide any metacommunicative framing (e.g., 'we are playing bus'), Tamika and Kenrick immediately take his cue and join in, climbing on the pretend bus like passengers (lines 2–4 and 6). Henry continues making driving noises until he announces that they have reached their destination: *All you reach* (line 8). Though Henry is clearly still playing bus, he speaks English here despite his previous directives in Patwa. As this code-switch does not appear to serve a local interactional function, it appears that Henry may not know how to say it in Patwa, or that he has heard *all you reach* more often than a Patwa equivalent such as *zò wivé* 'you (plural) have arrived'. Regardless, Tamika appropriately climbs off (line 9). She climbs on again after Henry resumes making driving noises, further adding to the joint construction of the play by exclaiming in Patwa, *Nou alé!* (lines 11 and 14), a common expression one hears among adults who have been waiting for a ride at a bus stop. Kenrick excitedly repeats it on lines 13 and 15.

The children continue getting on and off for several minutes as Henry exclaims, *Batjé!*, until Tamika decides to move the couch for better access. The negotiation of moving the furniture takes place entirely IN ENGLISH, predominantly consisting of Tamika issuing directives to the other children:

(3b)

1	Tamika:	Just now.
		'Wait' [before continuing the game]
2	Henry:	((makes driving noises))
3	Tamika:	((to Henry)) Henry move on that. [re: the couch]
4	Henry:	((stops making driving noises and moves back from the edge, but remains on the couch))
5	Tamika:	((to Henry)) Move on that. Move you on that. Move on that. Move!
6	Henry:	What you going do?
7	Tamika:	((touching bottom of couch)) There. There.
8	Kenrick:	((repeating Tamika)) There. There.
9	Tamika:	Henry!
10	Henry:	Hm?
11	Tamika:	Come push there. Push it.
12	Kenrick:	((unintelligible))
13		((5-second pause as the children slide the couch into the center of the room; Henry looks unsure about doing it and hardly helps))
14	Henry:	((climbing on the couch)) ***Bondyé! Annou batjé!***
		'**God (interjection)! Let's get on board!**'
15	Kenrick:	***Bondyé!***
16	Henry:	***Annou batjé::! Annou batjé::!***
17	Kenrick:	Yeah!

After Tamika's numerous English directives, Henry goes along with the moving of the couch, though appearing unsure about it. When they finish, he happily resumes the play frame in Patwa (line 14). Soon after this segment, however, he again becomes concerned and tries to persuade Tamika to return the couch because of the potential negative consequences of reorganizing her mother's furniture. He repeatedly tells her, *Lorna hit us* 'Lorna will hit us'. When out of the imaginary play frame and back to being children – who might get in trouble for

their actions – they speak English. When Tamika's mother eventually returns, she does in fact scold the children in both English and Patwa for moving the couch. She reopens the door and windows and guides the ensuing talk, with Henry and Kenrick remaining practically silent (and only speaking English when they do talk) for as long as she is in the house. Later, during transcription, Lorna said she was shocked at how much Henry spoke, claiming that she never hears him talk as he is "too afraid" of people. But as soon as she was gone and there was no adult presence (besides me) to monitor their speech or behavior, he and the other children talked extensively, creatively employing their linguistic resources to construct a vivid imaginary play sequence.

This example illustrates the awareness of children as young as 2 and 3 years old of role-appropriate language and how to use it creatively and pragmatically in their imaginary play. But where did such young children learn about riding buses and the use of Patwa by bus drivers and passengers? Their primary caregivers rarely take the bus into town because of the cost of a round-trip fare and the bumpy two-hour ride each way. When adults do go, they typically leave the children home with relatives or friends because they have many errands to accomplish in the short time before the once-daily bus returns to the village. However, children are frequently present in the village as people wait for the bus and other rides, and they may overhear such interactions as adults get on board. As small children silently follow behind their adult caregivers, they observe what is going on around them and are socialized as to the ways speech indexes people, practices, and places. But importantly, older children also expose young children to such ways of playing and portraying adult activities during their peer play. Kenrick and Tamika's older siblings and cousins frequently give each other (and pets, insects, etc.) rides on objects they find around the house, like old plastic bags and cardboard boxes. On several occasions I heard them say *batjé* to their "passengers," though not in the exact sequence created by Henry, Tamika, and Kenrick. During a recording session two months prior to the above example, Kenrick received an explicit lesson on the meaning of *batjé* from his older cousin. He and three older cousins were taking turns "riding" a box down a small hill in Tamika's yard, pretending it was a truck. At one point in the play, Kenrick began whining. His cousin Robert (8 years), who was in the box, asked him: *You want a ride? To **batjé**? To go up?*"[21] Such questions serve to ascertain if Kenrick wants a turn in the box, but they also define and socialize the use of the Patwa verb *batjé*, offering insights into the activity and multiple ways to talk about it (e.g., to get "a ride" or "to go up" into a truck or bus). Children thus learn not only from their observations of and taking part in the adult world, but also from how they reconstruct and portray that world in their play and interactions with other children.

Farmers going to and from the garden

In their role play, children use the language varieties available to them to create realistic imaginary activities, characters, and scenes. Furthermore, they seek out

real places AND actively construct imaginary ones that are associated with and appropriate for the use of Patwa by the characters they depict. However, the constraints on children's Patwa usage become clear when imaginary play enters the "real" world, as the following example illustrates. Marcel (11 years) initiates and directs a play frame that is structured around a routine everyday practice in the village – going to the garden to tend one's crops. He is playing on the concrete-paved yard outside his home with his three male cousins: Reiston (3;8), Alex (6 years), and Junior (9 years). His grandmother is sitting on the veranda of the house but is out of the children's view. Prompted by the discovery of several pairs of work boots under the house, Marcel begins an imaginary play session in which the boys are going to the *jaden* 'garden' to weed potatoes:

(4a)

  1 Marcel: ((putting on boots)) Let's put our boots yeah? We going *jaden*.
                  'Let's put on our boots yeah? We're going to the **garden**.'
  2 Reiston: ((putting on boots)) Yes.
  3 Marcel: We going *sèklé* our *patat*.
                  'We're going to **weed** our **potatoes**.'
  4 ((Marcel comes out from under the house wearing a pair of boots))
  5 Marcel: Let's go and *sèklé* the *patat*.
                  'Let's go and **weed** the **potatoes**.'
  6 ((Reiston tries to follow Marcel, but is walking slowly in the large boots))
  7 Marcel: ((loud and impatiently)) Let's go Reiston!
  8 ((Marcel stops just outside the yard, and looks at some grass on the ground))
  9 Marcel: ***Patat sala ka fè zèb déja wi zò*** ((sucks teeth)).
                  '**Those potatoes [the potato patch] are making grass already yeah (sentence final tag) (exclamation)**'
  10 ((Marcel bends down and pretends to weed a potato patch))
  11 Marcel: Reiston go and cut the *patat* with me:. *I ka fè zèb*.
                  'Reiston go and cut the **potatoes** with me. **It** [the potato patch] **is making grass**.'

Prior to this event, Marcel was speaking English with the children. However, when he finds the work boots, he begins to enact the role of a Patwa-speaking farmer. At first he uses English to direct Reiston to join him, except for framing the place (*jaden*) in Patwa: *Let's put our boots yeah? We going **jaden*** (line 1). He then further defines the activity, directing Reiston in English, but framing the activity, weeding a potato patch, in Patwa: *We going **sèklé** our **patat**. Let's go and **sèklé** the **patat*** (lines 3 and 5). Then, as he moves from the yard to just outside its boundaries (and becomes further involved in his role as farmer examining his garden), his Patwa usage increases. Once he is off the concrete paved yard and in the garden behind the house – a place associated with adult male activity and Patwa – he produces a completely Patwa utterance: ***Patat sala ka fè zèb déja wi zò*** (line 9). In addition, he draws air through his teeth to make a sharp sucking sound, employing a common adult gesture (known as "suck teeth") to indicate his annoyance that weeds are growing so soon.[22] He again switches to English to direct Reiston, *Reiston go and cut the **patat** with me*, but he uses

Patwa to refer to the object, **patat**, and to provide narrative description, *I ka fè zèb* (line 11).

After 10 minutes of play, Marcel ends the play frame and leads the boys out of the garden, back into the English-speaking domain of the yard:

(4b)

1	Marcel:	***Annou ay. Nou sòti an jaden.***
		'**Let's go. We're leaving the garden.**'
2	((Junior stumbles))	
3	Reiston:	((laughs at Junior))
4	Marcel:	***Nou sòti an jaden. Nou sòti an jaden.***
		'**We're leaving the garden. We're leaving the garden**.'
5	((Reiston tries to step up where the concrete begins, but falls forward onto it))	
6	Alex:	***Ga!*** ((laughs))
		'**Look!**'
7	Alex:	[Reiston cannot even going* up.
8	Marcel:	[*Ga! Nonm la fèb. I pa sa mouté bik la.*
		'**Look! The man is weak. He cannot climb the hill.**'
9	((Marcel walks back to Reiston to help him stand up and walk))	
10	Marcel:	((to Reiston)) ***Nonm ou fèb*** yeah. ***Ou ni GWO*** boot ***la, ou la***.
		'**Man you are weak** yeah. **You have the big** boot, **you there**.'
11	Grandmother:	((to Marcel, speaking fast)) Stop the Patwa in the yard ***mouché*** Marcel.
		'Stop speaking Patwa in the yard **mister** Marcel.'

Marcel uses Patwa to issue the imperative ***Annou ay***, and to define the activity, ***Nou sòti an jaden*** (line 1). In contrast to his earlier English directives to Reiston, these Patwa utterances include Marcel as one of the farmers. When Reiston falls (line 5), both Alex and Marcel call attention to it by exclaiming ***Ga!*** (lines 6 and 8), an affective Patwa marker used for attention getting and expressing surprise, especially by children (Paugh 2001). Alex then appears to exit the play frame, referring to Reiston by name (rather than as a farmer) and speaking in English: *Reiston cannot even going up*. This could be interpreted as Alex orienting himself to leaving the garden and re-entering the adult-controlled yard where children are prohibited from speaking Patwa. In contrast, Marcel includes the fall as part of the play action by pretending that Reiston is a farmer having trouble climbing a hill on his way home from the garden: ***Nonm la fèb. I pa sa mouté bik la*** (line 8). Marcel helps Reiston up and continues narrating in Patwa: ***Nonm ou fèb*** *yeah*. ***Ou ni GWO*** *boot* ***la, ou la*** (line 10). At this point, he is within earshot of his grandmother, who quickly scolds him for his choice of language: *Stop the Patwa in the yard* ***mouché*** *Marcel*.

With very few props, Marcel's use of Patwa helps to create the adult role he is enacting. Furthermore, he draws on the distinction between the home area and the garden, which in the village is viewed as a more Patwa-speaking domain, to create an imaginary play space where it is more acceptable to use Patwa according to village language ideologies. However, by incorporating Reiston's fall into the original play frame, Marcel continues to structure the play in Patwa even though he is now inside the boundaries of the yard and within hearing range of

78

his grandmother. This violates the usually unspoken rule (for children) of no Patwa in the home or yard, and Marcel is negatively sanctioned for it with a place-related admonishment, *in the yard*. Furthermore, the Patwa address term ***mouché Marcel***" 'mister Marcel' used by his grandmother is often employed by caregivers when scolding children and implies that a child is acting TOO ADULT-LIKE, highlighting adult-child status differences (see Paugh, in press). After the scolding, Marcel returned to speaking mostly English for the rest of the afternoon.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has illustrated that a focus on children's play in multilingual settings can shed light on their understandings, explorations, and transformations of the complex linguistic practices and language ideologies they experience in their daily lives. It offered insights from Dominica, where children employ Patwa, a language they are otherwise forbidden to speak at home and at school, to create vivid imaginary play frames, roles, and places. In this situation where multiple social and linguistic ideologies are in tension, children's peer groups provide a "safe" space in which they can try out other language varieties and social identities without negative consequences from adults. It allows them to explore roles, positions of authority, and languages that are otherwise restricted for them. Children tend to use English (with occasional code-switching into Patwa) for most social interactions and for negotiating play frames, but in role play, they actively choose between the linguistic varieties available to them according to the role, activity, and place they are depicting. Their use of Patwa in play illustrates that they are active agents in their socialization, not simply passive recipients of culture or merely doing what adults tell them to do, despite possible sanctions. If they were, they would only speak English. Their peer play affords a glimpse into their ability to acquire Patwa without actively using it with adults, the presumed experts, as well as their agency in using Patwa to structure their play, explore multiple voices and identities, and creatively depict adult roles.

Children's language choice in role play thus has implications for larger processes of sociocultural and linguistic reproduction and change. On the one hand, their differential language use when enacting particular kinds of adults may reproduce more broadly held ideologies about the languages, the people who use them, and appropriate social spaces for their use. On the other hand, children do not use Patwa to portray submissive or unintelligent roles within their play frames. Rather, their use of Patwa provides access to particular practices, identities, and positions of autonomy or authority, which in turn enable them to position themselves as leaders of play activities and hence to direct and shape the actions and speech of other children (cf. Cromdal 2004, Jørgensen 1998, Paugh 2001). They draw on current ideologies about language use in innovative and creative ways (such as creating imaginary play spaces where Patwa would in theory be allowed), rather than merely submitting themselves to them.

In other words, children explore and comment on existing power structures, but in a way that does not appear to belittle the people or activities they are depicting. This may prove critical to the process of language shift from Patwa to varieties of English, as children transform the associations with the languages through using them in their play – creating positive associations between Patwa and adult authority, status, and autonomy that may motivate them to use Patwa in their peer interactions as adults. Furthermore, as older children create and structure play frames that depend on code-switching between English and Patwa, they socialize younger children to engage in such play and language use themselves. Hence, children's language use may contribute to the maintenance of Patwa – at least for particular stylistic and pragmatic functions – despite other reasons to shift.

Ultimately, this article highlights the value of observing and recording children interacting with children, especially in such a complex, multilingual situation where they are socialized to monitor their speech and behavior around adults (who consciously strive NOT to transmit Patwa to children). Peer play is a critical site by which to gauge how children interpret, understand, negotiate, resist, transform, reproduce, and socialize one another in these ideologies, meanings, and practices. If only adult-child interactions had been observed, children's extensive uses of Patwa with their peers, and this very critical part of their social worlds, would have been missed entirely.

NOTES

[1] Schwartzman 1983 highlights the importance of examining "child-structured play" that is not initiated or directed by adults (also see Goldman 1998:102).

[2] The spelling *Patwa*, rather than *Patois*, follows the orthography developed in *Dominica's English-Creole Dictionary* (Fontaine & Roberts 1992). All Patwa speech was transcribed with this orthography. For descriptions of the genesis, grammar, and phonology of Patwa, see Amastae 1979a, 1983; Christie 1982; Holm 1989; Taylor 1977; Wylie 1995.

[3] Kwan-Terry 1992 followed one bilingual Cantonese-English child from age 3.5 to 5 years. Halmari & Smith 1994 observed two Finnish-English bilingual sisters who were 8 and 9 years old.

[4] Three other studies of children's imaginary play in bilingual settings did not find systematic language alternation in adult role enactment. Guldal 1997, examining three prearranged Norwegian-English bilingual play triads (ages 4–6 years) in Norway, found that children used contrasting code selection to mark different "reality levels" in role play (real life, directing, and fictional levels), but that norms for language choice varied according to group preference rather than for enacting particular roles. Similarly, Cromdal & Aronsson 2000 attribute children's code-switching during recess in a bilingual English-Swedish school (40 children ages 6–8 years) to individual language choice, ac-

commodation to monolingual children, or a need to display shifting "footings" (Goffman 1981) or orientations toward different play activities, rather than to playing specific roles. These cases contrast with a language shift situation described by Rindstedt & Aronsson 2002 in San Antonio, Ecuador, where bilingual adults speak Spanish and Quichua, while children under 10 years old are growing up primarily monolingual in Spanish. The authors find that children only use Spanish in imaginary role play, as "the adult's language, Quichua, is not adopted as children's play language" (2002:736).

[5] In addition to these studies, pretend play has long been a focus in developmental psychology in terms of children's psychosocial and linguistic development (e.g., Bretherton 1984, Göncü et al. 1999, Piaget 1962, Vygotsky 1966). For detailed reviews of various approaches to children's pretense, see Schwartzman 1976, 1978 and Goldman 1998. According to Goldman, "We still know very little about what role culture plays in child pretend play" (1998:39).

[6] Language use is a critical site to examine the enactment of agency, which can be defined as the "socioculturally mediated" capacity or ability to act in a way that affects other beings or objects in the world (Ahearn 2001, Duranti 2004).

[7] Proficiency in Patwa varies across geographic, generational, and socioeconomic lines, with the most spoken by village elders and the least by urban youths (Christie 1990, 1994; Stuart 1993) and rural children (Paugh 2001).

[8] The Konmité Pou Etid Kwéyòl (Committee for Creole Studies, or KEK) was established in 1981 as part of the government's Cultural Division in order to preserve and revitalize Patwa. KEK has developed Patwa literacy, promotes its use during annual Independence celebrations and on "Creole Day," and seeks to introduce Patwa education in schools.

[9] The varieties of English have been described in terms of a distinction between "standard" and "creole" English, with variation between the two ends of the continuum (Amastae 1979b; Carrington 1969; Christie 1983, 1990, 1994; Holm 1989). Christie 1990, 1994 suggests that 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 (for a similar situation in St. Lucia, see Garrett 1999, 2000, 2003). Locally, there are no specific terms for the Englishes spoken throughout the island, except for a historically distinct variety called Kokoy spoken in one small geographic area (see Christie 1990, 1994). Most villagers distinguish between "good" and "bad" or "broken" English.

[10] Accompanying the home recordings are extensive ethnographic notes on and audio-video recordings of daily community and family life, everyday social interactions, and village meetings and events. Linguistic practices and language ideologies were also investigated in the school and nation. The school component included periodic audio-video recordings of the local preschool and grades one and two at the primary school. Interviews were conducted with parents, teachers, and Ministry of Education personnel. A point of contrast to these quotidian practices was provided through investigation of the construction, representation, and planned performance of culture in the national arena, including KEK's Patwa-promoting efforts (see Paugh 2001 for more details).

[11] The number of children in such groups depends on how many children live in a given area and the activity being pursued. Generally, the oldest girl is responsible for looking after younger children. When no older girls are present, adults generally hold the oldest boy responsible.

[12] However, by seventh grade (ages 11–12 years), both boys and girls are usually too busy to spend time playing with younger children owing to an intensive after-school study program in preparation for the Common Entrance Exam to attend secondary school. In addition to this program and increased homework, they are also given more responsibilities (especially chores) at home.

[13] However, children sometimes monitor one another's language use in ways that are similar to adult caregivers and teachers (see Paugh 2001, chap. 7).

[14] This phrase is adapted from Sacks 1984, "On doing 'being ordinary.'"

[15] Children are exposed to the work activities of adults from birth. Babies are brought along to the garden, river, and elsewhere as adults do their work (as well as when visiting family and friends, or attending village events and meetings). Thus, children are exposed to adult activities and language use (including a great deal of code-switching) long before they begin to participate verbally in social interaction or to enact adult roles themselves.

[16] Children often employ household furniture or materials outside (such as garbage from behind the house) to construct imaginary places and props for their play. Girls sometimes have dolls and small children have stuffed animals, particularly when they have relatives living abroad who can send them. Boys often drive "trucks" they fashion themselves. A truck consists of a long stick as the body, with two small boards (or sticks) attached horizontally across the top (for steering) and bottom

(for attaching two wheels, usually carved from the soles of old shoes). Strings run from the top board to the bottom board to allow for steering.

[17] Transcription conventions:

bold italic	Patwa speech
bold	English glosses of Patwa speech
CAPITALS	Emphasis
:	Elongated speech
(.5)	Pause between utterances
((action))	Non-verbal action
*	Ungrammatical utterance
?	Rising intonation, question
!	Exclamation
?!	Rhetorical question
[	Overlapping speech

[18] The ages of the focal children in the study are provided in years and months. Thus, "1;11" means that a child is 1 year and 11 months old. The ages of other, nonfocal children over 1 year old are given in years only (e.g., 6 years). The names of all children and other participants were changed to preserve their anonymity.

[19] This brings to mind Gumperz's description of "situational switching" (as distinct from "metaphorical switching"):

> In situational switching, where a code or speech style is regularly associated with a certain class of activities, it comes to signify or connote them, so that its very use can signal the enactment of these activities even in the absence of other clear contextual cues. Component messages are then interpreted in terms of the norms and symbolic associations that apply to the signaled activity. (Gumperz 1982:98).

For Dominican children, Patwa appears to be so strongly associated with particular kinds of adult activities that the switch into Patwa can signal the enactment of a particular role.

[20] The "closing up" of the house is significant in itself. The home is considered by villagers to be more private than the yard, but one is expected to leave the front door and windows open when home during the day or risk being considered antisocial. Additionally, it is considered particularly rude for children to shut out an adult, which implies that they are doing something they should not be doing. In this case, it seems to have facilitated the children's private display of competence.

[21] Despite Robert's offer, Kenrick became interested in a flap of the box that had fallen off. He began trying to ride it down the hill, and Robert continued riding in the box.

[22] In the *Dictionary of Jamaican English*, "suck (one's) teeth" is defined as a verb phrase meaning "to make a sound of annoyance, displeasure, ill-nature, or disrespect by sucking air audibly through the teeth and over the tongue" (Cassidy & LePage 1967:428; cf. Allsopp 1996:538). Rickford & Rickford (1979:365–66) similarly define it as "an expression of anger, impatience, exasperation or annoyance," highlighting that "its use by children in the presence of their parents or other adults is considered rude and insubordinate."

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