What a language is good for: Language socialization, language shift, and the persistence of code-specific genres in St. Lucia

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ABSTRACT

In many bilingual and multilingual communities, certain communicative practices are CODE-SPECIFIC in that they conventionally require, and are constituted in part through, the speaker's use of a particular code. Code-specific communicative practices, in turn, simultaneously constitute and partake of CODE-SPECIFIC GENRES: normative, relatively stable, often metapragmatically salient types of utterance, or modes of discourse, that conventionally call for use of a particular code. This article suggests that the notions of code specificity and code-specific genre can be useful ones for theorizing the relationship between code and communicative practice in bilingual/multilingual settings, particularly those in which language shift and other contact-induced processes of linguistic and cultural change tend to highlight that relationship. This is demonstrated through an examination of how young children in St. Lucia are socialized to "curse" and otherwise assert themselves by means of a creole language that under most circumstances they are discouraged from using. (Bilingualism, code-switching, creoles, diglossia, genre, language contact, language shift, language socialization.)*

INTRODUCTION

In many bilingual and multilingual communities – understood here to include communities in which two or more varieties (e.g. standard and nonstandard) of a single normatively defined "language" are spoken – certain communicative practices may be said to be CODE-SPECIFIC in that they conventionally require, and are constituted in part through, the speaker's use of a particular code. Where two or more languages or varieties coexist in a hierarchical relationship, and where functional differentiation of codes is a salient feature of everyday language use – as is the case in most creole settings and many other situations of language contact (Thomason 2001, Garrett 2004), particularly those where diglossia in Fishman's (1967) expanded sense may be said to obtain – speakers may assert that a

particular code in their community repertoire[1] is particularly well suited for certain types of communicative practices, but ill suited for others. Typical examples of the kinds of communicative practices in question include joking, scolding, gossiping, storytelling, insulting, and cursing,[2] thus running the gamut from what Goffman 1981 characterizes as "self-talk," such as cursing aloud to oneself (or perhaps at an inanimate object or someone not co-present) as a form of "response cry," to more overtly performance-like modes of language use that presuppose the co-presence and relatively focused attention of at least one addressee, such as telling a joke or a story. In most bilingual/multilingual settings, code-specific communicative practices such as these simultaneously constitute and partake of what I shall call CODE-SPECIFIC GENRES: normative, relatively stable, often metapragmatically salient types of utterance, or modes of discourse, that conventionally call for the use of a particular code.

In this article I suggest that the notion of code specificity, and the related notion of code-specific genre, can be useful ones for theorizing the relationship between code and communicative practice in bilingual/multilingual settings – particularly settings in which language shift and other contact-induced processes of linguistic and cultural change tend to highlight that relationship. In order to demonstrate this, and to show how the notions of code specificity and code-specific genre can be applied to a specific ethnographic case, I examine how young children in a St. Lucian community are socialized to "curse" and otherwise assert themselves by means of a code that under most circumstances they are strongly discouraged from using. Among the questions that arise are the following: How and why does a particular set of code-specific communicative practices come to be singled out and given special emphasis in language socialization interactions? In a situation of ongoing language shift, how and why do children manage to acquire just enough of the obsolescent code to engage in these specific practices (but not others)? Finally, what might be the implications of these language socialization activities for processes of language shift? In order to address these questions, I begin by developing further the notions of code specificity and code-specific genre. I then examine some typical language socialization practices involving code-specific genres that I observed and recorded in a St. Lucian community where language shift is currently underway.

FROM DIGLOSSIA TO CODE-SPECIFIC GENRE

A striking commonality across bilingual/multilingual communities is that speakers, when engaging in communicative practices such as those mentioned above, tend strongly to use the language or language variety that is generally regarded as occupying the "lowest" position in the local hierarchy of codes. In many cases, the language or variety that occupies this position is nonstandard, lacks official status, and is unwritten; or else it is considered to be "broken," "corrupted," or "impure," and therefore something less than a "real language." By

virtue of these broad but potentially significant commonalities, the aforementioned communicative practices are an excellent point of departure for examining code specificity and code-specific genres as widespread phenomena that demand to be accounted for theoretically.

Why should particular communicative practices in bilingual/multilingual contexts call for the use of a particular code – in the case of cursing, scolding, insulting, and other practices like those considered here, the "Low" code?[3] For Ferguson 1959 and numerous others since (Hudson 1992) who have described such contexts in terms of diglossia, the explanation lies in broad correlations, empirically observable and readily demonstrable by means of quantitative analyses, between speakers' code selections and particular domains of usage (or "situations," in Ferguson's original formulation). Such correlations between code and domain reflect what Ferguson (1959:328) characterized as "specialization of function for H[igh] and L[ow]," the first of his nine defining characteristics of diglossia. Other early work on language choice or code selection in bilingual/ multilingual settings (e.g. Fishman 1965, 1972) likewise took broad correlations between code and domain as their focus, usually also taking into account conventional associations between code and domain that were expressed by (or could be elicited from) native speakers in response to questionnaires and/or structured interviews.

Other investigators, particularly those with an ethnographic orientation, have tended to regard the same kinds of empirically observable, relatively stable patterns of communicative practice as deriving from the choices and behaviors of individuals (rather than vice versa, as in domain-centered approaches). While acknowledging that language use is always to some extent constrained by and responsive to "higher-order societal structures" (Milroy & Muysken 1995:6), these investigators have considered code selection and other aspects of communicative practice to be fundamentally open-ended and underdetermined, and they have emphasized the agency of the individual speaker. As pioneers of this type of approach, Gumperz and his colleagues (e.g. Blom & Gumperz 1972, Gumperz 1982) provided an enduringly influential alternative to correlational and domain-centered approaches to code-switching, functional differentiation of codes, and related phenomena. More recent linguistic anthropological approaches (e.g. Woolard 1989, Rampton 1995b, Urciuoli 1996, Zentella 1997, Bailey 2002) have continued to build on this foundation, particularly in investigations of code-switching, which is regarded as "systematic, skilled, and socially meaningful" use of two or more codes (Woolard 2004:74).[4]

Recent ethnographic works such as these reveal an important shortcoming of the diglossia model and other domain-centered approaches: They tend to overlook (if not ignore altogether) the facts that there is always some slippage between code and domain, and that speakers can and do exploit that slippage as a communicative resource in and of itself. In other words, domain-centered approaches do not take adequately into account the fact that codes are not actually

tied in any hard and fast way to the domains with which they may be conventionally associated by native speakers, or correlatively and statistically associated by investigators (particularly those who uncritically espouse the approaches in question). Consequently, such approaches are unable to account for much of the situated communicative behavior that can be observed at almost any given time in any community. Constantly and in myriad ways in everyday interaction, speakers actively and creatively exploit the looseness of fit between code and domain in order to achieve specific communicative effects. (The porosity of code boundaries in many language contact situations opens up further expressive possibilities, as Woolard 1998 demonstrates in her discussion of "bivalency.") To take a simple example,[5] an august personage, expounding publicly in the "High" variety, may make a humorous aside in the "Low" variety – just as a jokester in a neighborhood bar the next day may use the High variety in lampooning the same august personage. In both cases, it is in large part the incongruity, the lack of "fit," between code and domain that renders a readily apprehended humorous effect. Domain-centered approaches occasionally make passing note of phenomena such as this, but they fall well short of providing satisfactory explanations of these and other aspects of situated language usage.

As noted previously, cursing, scolding, and other such code-specific communicative practices – which are to some degree conventionalized and a focus of metapragmatic attention in most if not all communities – can usefully be regarded as what Bakhtin (1986:60 *et passim*) calls SPEECH GENRES: "Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own RELATIVELY STABLE TYPES of these utterances. These we may call SPEECH GENRES" (original emphasis).[6] On the surface, this basic definition, with its emphasis on "spheres" of usage, might suggest a domain-oriented approach that is as limited and limiting as those mentioned above. But actually, Bakhtin's notion of genre is much more sophisticated and dynamic in that it explicitly addresses the tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces that, in Bakhtin's (1981) view, are constantly acting on language.[7] To understand the dynamics of that tension is one of Bakhtin's foremost theoretical concerns. Another is to find principled ways of coping with the seemingly overwhelming multiplicity of utterances – that is, *langage*, "the heterogeneous mass of speech facts" that was adumbrated and then almost immediately bracketed and set aside by Saussure (1966:7–15 *et passim*). Genres, as "relatively stable and normative forms of the utterance" (Bakhtin 1986:81), provide a principled means of cutting through that multiplicity and bringing order to the heterogeneity. For Bakhtin, the utterance, "with all its individuality and creativity, can in no way be regarded as a completely free combination of forms of language" (1986:81). Genres, irreducibly social in origin, normative and conventionalizing in nature, are the key constraint on the forms that utterances take and the ways in which those forms are combined and recombined, effectively setting parameters for the individual speaker's situated use of language at any given moment (Saussure's

parole). At the same time, from an analytic perspective, the notion of genre provides a basis for classifying and categorizing utterances, and ultimately for developing a taxonomy of utterances that is amenable to theorizing.[8]

Drawing on the insights of Bakhtin and others, Bauman (2000:84) has recently defined "genre" as "a constellation of systemically related, co-occurrent formal features and structures that serves as a conventionalized orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse." (This definition succinctly encapsulates some of the major ideas about genre developed in Briggs & Bauman 1992; see also Bauman 1992.) As Bauman's definition suggests, in order for the notion of genre to serve as a coherent unit of analysis that is of explanatory and classificatory utility in the study of situated utterances, certain minimal commonalities of form and/or function must be identified at some level.[9] Bauman notes that the concept of genre "emphasizes conventionality and textuality" (85); that is, it relates a given text to prior texts. This intertextual aspect of genre is a crucial one in that it facilitates the recognition and interpretation of a particular utterance or performance as belonging to (i.e., as being a token of) a particular genre. Clearly, in a bilingual or multilingual setting, the code conventionally used for a particular communicative practice may be an important consideration in these regards: to the extent that a code-specific communicative practice is constitutive of its corresponding "primary" genre, in Bakhtin's (1986) sense[10] – for example, to the extent that the practice "joking" is constitutive of, and coterminous with, the genre "joke" – the genre in question can likewise be described as code-specific. But just as clearly, the code conventionally used is not sufficient in and of itself to be definitive of a given genre; this is true even of the most singular and most rigidly code-specific genres that can be imagined, such as an incantation that requires rote use of an archaic or otherwise esoteric ritual language (which may be referentially opaque even to the few who have knowledge of it and are deemed qualified to use it).

It is therefore necessary to look to other features. In the case of code-specific genres, domain may present itself as a likely candidate; to continue with the example just given, an incantation is unlikely to be heard outside the specific ritual context in which its functionality and performativity are realized (and realizable). But as is suggested by the hypothetical example given previously of the distinguished orator and the mocking jokester, a genre that is code-specific (e.g. the oration or the joke) is not necessarily domain-specific as well. Indeed, it would seem that there can be no such thing as a truly domain-specific genre (though doubtless some genres can be said to be more domain-specific than others; the ritual incantation and the joke, for example, can perhaps be located at two different points on a continuum of domain specificity). Although a particular code-specific genre may well be strongly associated with a particular domain, genres by definition have the potential, indeed the tendency, to traverse domain boundaries. Code-specific genres are no exception in this regard; hence the vernacular joke that punctuates the otherwise solemn oration. In order to

avoid the problems presented by the presumption of an overly tight linkage between code and domain, and in order to be able to account for those instances in which a given genre slips the bounds, if only momentarily, of the domain with which it is typically associated, utterances "belonging to" that genre must be identified and classified as such with reference to other criteria and other levels of analysis. The same is true if particular genres are to be grouped together in sets and placed under higher-level rubrics such as the one proposed here, code-specific genres.

To these ends, it may be necessary to look beyond formal features (the usual criteria for identifying and defining genres) and to take pragmatics into account.[11] One salient characteristic that cursing, joking, and the other code-specific communicative practices under consideration here have in common is that each involves a self-assertive stance on the speaker's part. In each case, the speaker is effectively calling attention to himself or herself, either as someone who has been offended or slighted in some way (as with cursing, scolding, and insulting of the earnestly vituperative sort) or as a performer of some kind (as with joking, gossiping, storytelling, and various forms of ritual insulting). Furthermore, the speaker is presenting himself or herself as someone whose words are straightforward, candid, and uncensored,[12] and are to be understood and evaluated in terms of local, in-group values and vernacular frames of reference. (In the case of certain types of verbal performances, such as telling folktales, notions of authenticity may also be relevant.) In other words, in invoking one of these code-specific genres, the speaker is claiming for himself or herself – at the moment of speaking, at least – those positively evaluated characteristics that are typically associated with the vernacular or "Low" code and its community of speakers, and is at the same time implicitly rejecting, or at least distancing himself or herself from, the pretense, subterfuge, and artifice (or merely the heightened self-monitoring and self-censorship) that are commonly associated with the use of, and users of, the official-standard variety or "High" code.[13] The self-assertive stances that are typically associated with and indexed by the genres under consideration here, I suggest, are a function of the code specificity of those genres. Or to approach the matter from a different and perhaps more productive angle: The tendency for certain genres in bilingual/multilingual settings to be code-specific, I suggest, is a function of the fact that the invocation of those genres is a conventional means of indexing and displaying certain kinds of self-assertive stances.

CODE-SPECIFIC GENRES AS AN ASPECT OF HABITUS

Considerations such as the above raise the possibility that for bilingual or multi-lingual speakers, selection of genre may sometimes take precedence over selection of code, and may effectively preempt it. When a code-specific genre is selected by a speaker, the code conventionally called for by that genre is presup-

posed and thus entailed by the genre itself, rather than being selected (or "chosen") in a separate exercise of pragmatic judgment on the speaker's part. That is, when a speaker formulates an utterance so that it conforms to and partakes of a code-specific genre, the speaker does not also make a separate (even if closely and integrally related) pragmatic judgment as to which of the codes in his or her repertoire is the most appropriate one for invoking that genre. The code selection is predetermined, inasmuch as it is a constitutive aspect of the genre – a matter of social convention rather than of individual choice or preference, stylistic or otherwise.[14]

What makes code specificity a matter of theoretical interest, I suggest, is that it inheres in the genre itself as a constitutive feature thereof; it is not contingent upon, nor a function of, the individual speaker's situated invocation of that genre. Thus code specificity is not reducible to, nor is it merely an epiphenomenon of, code-switching, register-shifting, or style-shifting. (As this suggests, much of what has been regarded as "code choice" or "code selection" in the literature on code-switching is perhaps better regarded as genre selection.) Consequently, code specificity, and the situated invocation of code-specific genres by speakers, require a different mode of analysis from these other phenomena. Where a code-specific genre is concerned, "code choice" or "code selection" (if such terms even apply) is not a matter of the individual speaker's making context-sensitive modulations in his or her communicative behavior in response to factors such as the relative status of his or her addressee(s) or the presence of potential overhearers. If anything, code specificity can be expected to have a constraining effect on code-switching and style-shifting, particularly situational switching (Blom & Gumperz 1972).[15] A speaker who is conversing with someone of higher social status in the High code or in an honorific register, for example, will most likely refrain from cursing or gossiping in the first place[16]; and a speaker who becomes aware of the approach of potential overhearers is more likely to cease cursing or gossiping altogether than to switch to an alternate code and continue doing so.[17]

Even speakers who code-switch extensively in everyday interaction may be observed to curse, joke, or scold predominantly if not exclusively in one particular code. Asked to reflect on the matter, they may go so far as to assert that it would be impossible to do so in any other available code. The other side of the coin is that speakers may feel that the code in question is good ONLY for such practices[18] – or that it is iconic of those practices, and of those who characteristically engage in them (Irvine & Gal 2000). The poet David Dabydeen, who grew up in Guyana before migrating to England as a teenager, begins an essay with this observation:

> It's hard to put two words together in creole without swearing. Words are spat out from the mouth like live squibs.... The creole language is angry, crude, energetic. The canecutter chopping away at the crop bursts out in a spate of obscene words, a natural gush from the gut. (1990:3)

Commenting on the canonical forms of English poetry as well as the English language itself, Dabydeen ultimately asserts, "I cannot feel or write poetry like a white man" (13). Authentic artistic expression for Dabydeen necessitates using the creole, "a language that is both lyrical and barbaric" (5).[19]

Dabydeen's dissatisfaction with English as vehicle of poetic expression for his own sentiments, life experiences, and artistic sensibilities – notwithstanding the fact that it is, overwhelmingly, the usual medium of written and printed communication in England as well as in Guyana and elsewhere in the "anglophone" Caribbean – can be regarded as one manifestation of the intuitive and deeply felt (though generally tacit and unreflective) sense that speakers have of how the two or more codes at their disposal are to be deployed, under what circumstances, and to what ends.[20] For creole speakers in Guyana, St. Lucia, and elsewhere, pragmatic, stylistic, and aesthetic judgments such as these are expressions of an ideology of language (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994, Schieffelin et al. 1998) that is rooted in speakers' subjective experience of the creole as the language of intimacy and sentiment – of local life as locally lived. Attempts to convey these sentiments and experiences (whether in poetry and other literary genres or in talk) through the official-standard or High variety fail to ring true; the results invariably seem forced, artificial, inauthentic.[21] The code itself lacks the immediacy and transparency of its vernacular counterpart. As a second language for many speakers, shot through with prescriptive regimentations, it over-mediates, demanding attention for its own sake and impeding free, "heartfelt" expression. In addition to impediments such as lexical gaps (real or perceived),[22] there is a deeply felt sense that the insult would not be as cutting, the gossip not as juicy, the scold not responded to with sufficient alacrity; that the joke would fall flat,[23] or that uttering the curse would be, at best, less than satisfying. In Austin's (1962) terms, the speaker's use of the "right" code thus qualifies as a felicity condition for these speech acts; to use the "wrong" code (if the possibility of doing so can even be entertained by native speakers) would be to render the speech act infelicitous.[24] Even in situations where the link between code and genre is a looser one, and where the speaker has somewhat more flexibility as to code selection – a teacher scolding an unruly student in the schoolyard during recess, for example[25] – the speaker's selection of one code over another may contribute substantially to the perlocutionary force of the utterance.

Observations such as these highlight the embodied, even visceral character of bilingual/multilingual speakers' subjective experience of codes and code-specific genres, and the intimately related "practical sense" of language that guides their usage of the codes at their disposal. Hanks (1996:246) regards genres as "modes of practice," observing that "they are among the best examples of habitus as a set of enduring dispositions to perceive the world and act upon it in certain ways ... they embody just the kinds of schemes for practice that constitute the habitus." Further evidence that knowledge of genres is part of habitus (Bourdieu 1977, 1991)[26] is the fact that such knowledge is largely preconscious and tacit. As

Bakhtin (1986:78) comments, "Our repertoire of oral (and written) speech genres is rich. We use them confidently and skillfully IN PRACTICE, and it is quite possible for us not even to suspect their existence IN THEORY" (original emphasis). Lacking the benefit of Bourdieu's theoretical formulations (see Hanks 1987 for a particularly useful statement of how genres can fit into a practice theory framework), Bakhtin imputes to the speaker a "speech plan" or "speech will," which is "manifested primarily in the CHOICE OF A PARTICULAR SPEECH GENRE" (1986:77–78ff., original emphasis). Whatever the ontological or phenomenological underpinnings of this "speech will," and however the speaker's "choice" (or selection) of genre comes about in practice, the speaker conforms his or her utterance more or less rigidly to that genre through the process characterized by Briggs & Bauman 1992 as "calibrating the intertextual gap" – a process that is as fundamental to everyday conversational exchanges as it is to verbal artistry and performance in both oral and written modes. But there are limits to the flexibility afforded to the speaker by any given genre. These are best thought of as parametric constraints (as opposed to hard and fast limits) on the individual speaker's idiosyncratic use of language: If an utterance or performance departs too radically from its generic antecedents, the intertextual gap widens to a point where the "conventionalized orienting framework" begins to give way, with all of the consequences for intersubjectivity and mutual intelligibility that this entails.

   Habitus, in Bourdieu's well-known formulation, is "inculcated," that is, socialized. But HOW is it socialized? In particular, how do children in bilingual/multilingual communities acquire the subtle, finely tuned, embodied sense of when and how to deploy the codes available to them? Bakhtin's observations in this regard would seem to point in the right direction:

> We speak only in definite speech genres . . . We are given these speech genres in almost the same way that we are given our native language, which we master fluently long before we begin to study grammar . . . The forms of language and the typical forms of utterances, that is, speech genres, enter our experience and our consciousness together, and in close connection with one another. (1986:78)

As these observations suggest, and as the literature on language socialization amply demonstrates (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986a, 1986b, Garrett & Baquedano-López 2002), linguistic and sociocultural knowledge are acquired simultaneously and are inextricably bound up with one another; thus language socialization is in large part a matter of the child's or novice's acquiring the particular configuration of historically, socially, and culturally specific "dispositions" that, taken collectively and as an integrated whole, constitute his or her habitus. A speaker's knowledge of the genres of his or her community is inseparable from his or her knowledge of the various other aspects (semantic, syntactic, etc.) of that community's language(s). A language socialization approach to the issue of code specificity thus has the potential to enhance our understanding of how children

and other novices in bilingual/multilingual settings learn to cope with code-specific genres, as well as how those genres are reproduced and transformed in the process. This in turn has the potential to illuminate how children's emergent mastery of code-specific genres articulates with their emergent socially grounded knowledge of the codes themselves.

THE CASE OF ST. LUCIA

St. Lucia's Afro-French creole, known locally as Patwa or Kwéyòl,[27] dates from the island's early French colonial period (c. 1642–1814), which after numerous military and diplomatic skirmishes between rivals France and England was followed by a British colonial period (1814–1979). For most of its brief history, Kwéyòl has been regarded, even by its own speakers, as a sort of "broken" or "corrupted" French: the coarse, unrefined tongue of slaves and, later, peasants – in short, something less than a "real language." Today, after several decades of coexistence with English, Kwéyòl continues to be spoken by the majority of St. Lucians, most of whom are now bilingual to varying degrees. But this situation is changing fairly rapidly: Many St. Lucian children today are acquiring only limited proficiency in Kwéyòl, if any. There are clear indications that Kwéyòl is going into decline and that it is being replaced, or rather displaced, by a simultaneously emerging vernacular variety of nonstandard English, which I refer to as Vernacular English of St. Lucia, or VESL (Garrett 2000, 2003). Although English prevails in formal and official domains, relatively few St. Lucians control the standard variety; by and large, it is the emergent VESL, not standard English, that is effectively displacing Kwéyòl as the vernacular of many members of today's younger generations. VESL is heavily influenced by Kwéyòl in its lexicon, syntax, phonology, and other subsystems (Garrett 2003).

Language shift in St. Lucia has progressed to a point where some children, particularly in and around the capital city of Castries (where VESL has made the greatest headway), are growing up as monolingual speakers of VESL. In rural areas, meanwhile, both Kwéyòl and VESL are spoken. In the rural village where I conducted fieldwork, Morne Carré, many of the oldest residents are virtually monolingual speakers of Kwéyòl, while most persons middle-aged and younger are bilingual (to varying degrees) in Kwéyòl and VESL. Many of their children are also bilingual to some extent, their proficiency in Kwéyòl and VESL broadly reflecting the extent to which each language is used with them by their caregivers and other members of their households. This varies considerably: In some households, caregivers are diligent about speaking only "English" (really VESL) with children, while in others, Kwéyòl is used almost exclusively. Most Morne Carré households fall somewhere between these two extremes, with adults speaking mostly Kwéyòl among themselves but showing a strong preference for the use of "English" with children. The preference for the use of English BY children

is even stronger; children are expected to respond in English even when addressed in Kwéyòl by an angry or impatient caregiver.[28]

Some language socialization activities that adults commonly engage in with children, such as calling-out and greeting routines, can be regarded as characteristically "creole" regardless of the code used; such routines thus highlight important historical continuities in local notions of personhood, sociability, and morality, despite the fact that they are now used in ways that privilege displays of communicative competence in VESL rather than Kwéyòl. But other socialization routines that foster the development of locally valued social and verbal skills, particularly self-assertion, seem to require Kwéyòl – despite the fact that children are otherwise discouraged more or less systematically from using the language.

What role might these varied language socialization practices be playing in the ongoing process of language shift that was outlined above? It is perhaps best to begin by reversing the elements of the question and asking what impact this process of language shift is having on cursing and other genres that St. Lucians at present continue to constitute, virtually without exception, through the use of Kwéyòl. In this and any other case of language shift, one clear possibility is that the code toward which speakers are shifting – the "new" code, as it were – will simply be pressed into service for these "old" vernacular functions. There are likely to be impediments to such a process, however, such as the high overt prestige of that code and its associations with pedagogy and other relatively formal domains of usage, and the prescriptive regimentation that these entail.[29] Another, perhaps more likely possibility is that speakers will persist in using the obsolescent code (the code that speakers are shifting away from) for the particular communicative practices that call for it, and in the particular domains of usage in which these practices figure prominently, even after they have ceased to use the code for other practices and in other domains. Various observers of language shift and obsolescence have noted that certain words and phrases, such as greetings and exclamations, may continue to be used as salient markers of ethnic identity and group membership – as "diacritica," in Barth's (1969) sense – long after the process of shift has gotten underway. These forms may be used as such even by semi-speakers, near-passive bilinguals, and others whose overall proficiency in the language is quite limited. Dorian 1982 provides a well-known example of this phenomenon, making the larger point that the ability to use even a very limited repertoire of such words and phrases appropriately, in accordance with local norms of interaction, is a crucial aspect of communicative competence (Hymes 1972) – so much so that it may allow for full participation and "membership" in the speech community even on the part of persons who have quite limited proficiency in the obsolescent code. Dorian further notes that it may actually have the effect of masking the (semi-)speaker's relative lack of productive competence and fluency.[30]

In his pioneering study of language contact, Weinreich (1953:95) notes, "An obsolescent language seems destined to acquire peculiar connotations and to be applied in special functions even after it has lost its main communicative role." One likely outcome identified by Weinreich is for the language to "acquire a certain esoteric value" – that is, to become a sort of "secret" code that speakers can use to exclude community outsiders and/or members of the younger generations of their own community. A second tendency is for the language to develop "comic associations"; Weinreich notes that among the children of American immigrants, "the mere utterance of a word in their parents' language easily evokes laughter."

It is the third likely outcome noted by Weinreich that will be the focus here: the retention, maintenance, and reproduction of certain pragmatically salient lexical items and expressions in the speech of members of the younger generations whose proficiency in the obsolescent language is otherwise quite limited. As Weinreich puts it:

> The stylistic specialization of an obsolescent language and the association of it with intimate childhood experiences is conducive to the borrowing of its lexical elements into the younger people's speech, especially in discourse that is informal and uninhibited by pretensions of high social status. Particularly apt to be transferred are colorful idiomatic expressions, difficult to translate, with strong affective overtones, whether endearing, pejorative, or mildly obscene. (1953:95)

For present purposes, I shall dispense with endearments[31] and focus here on items that fall under Weinreich's categories of "pejorative" and/or "mildly obscene." However, I depart from Weinreich's conceptualization of this phenomenon as a process of "stylistic specialization"[32] via "borrowing" or "transfer" on the part of younger speakers. I regard it rather as the retention and ongoing reproduction, through language socialization, of such items, and of the larger communicative practices in which they are embedded.

KWÉYÒL AND "ENGLISH" IN MORNE CARRÉ

The data excerpts to be examined here are drawn from a large corpus (over 100 hours) of naturalistic audio-video recordings gathered as part of a language socialization study (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986a, 1986b; Garrett & Baquedano-López 2002) that I conducted in St. Lucia during 16 months of fieldwork in 1996–1997. The study focused on five children in five different households whose ages at the beginning of the study ranged from 18 months to 3 years. Each child's language acquisition and social development were followed longitudinally as I examined how the children and their caregivers interacted in culturally specific socializing routines and activities whereby the children learned to recognize, negotiate, and indeed to create and co-construct various kinds of locally mean-

ingful interactional contexts. A central goal was to examine these micro-level, locally situated developmental processes in the contexts of everyday home and community life, and to relate them to various macro-level linguistic, ideological, and sociocultural changes currently underway in St. Lucia. In addition to the process of language shift outlined previously, these include such transformations as the increasing accessibility of primary education and the gradual transition from agriculture to international tourism as the island's economic mainstay.

Morne Carré is a rural village with a population of just under 300. It is situated atop a low but steep mountain ridge that rises above the relatively remote and sparsely populated northeastern coast of the island. Most Morne Carré residents earn their living, or a significant portion thereof, as small farmers; production of bananas for export is the primary source of income for many households, and indeed makes up the bulk of St. Lucia's economy as a whole. (Tourism remains a distant second, but the gap has been gradually closing in recent years.) Most Morne Carré families also grow traditional subsistence crops such as cassava, yams, and taro in small provision gardens. Many of today's young adults, preferring to avoid these more traditional ways of making a living, opt to make the arduous daily commute to wage-earning jobs in Castries. As for education, there is a primary school in the village, but it was not established until the mid-1970s. Today's parents of young children are therefore members of the first local generation to have had access to primary education. Most older villagers never had the opportunity to attend school at all, and many are monolingual speakers of Kwéyòl.

In Morne Carré and throughout St. Lucia today, there is a deep-seated ambivalence toward both Kwéyòl and English. Now more than ever before, English is undeniably the language of education, social mobility, and communication with the wider world. But it is also the language of colonial and postcolonial domination, and of persistently asymmetric power relations which are experienced by many St. Lucians as denigration and rejection when they fail to meet the standards of the formal education system (in which Kwéyòl has no sanctioned place) and the fairly rapidly modernizing labor market. Kwéyòl, on the other hand, has always been the language of home, community, and sentiment, and is the only language in which many St. Lucians can express themselves fully and comfortably. But it is also considered by many to be the language of backwardness, rurality, poverty, and lack of social mobility. Attitudes toward Kwéyòl have changed appreciably in recent years, particularly since St. Lucia's independence in 1979, owing to the concerted efforts of a fairly small but dedicated group of pro-Kwéyòl activists to "preserve" and "instrumentalize" the language as a *sine qua non* of St. Lucia's cultural heritage and national identity in the postcolonial era. But as explained in Garrett 2000, there remains a sizable gulf between attitude and practice, particularly where children are concerned. Most St. Lucians subscribe to a sort of locally adapted notion of subtractive bilingualism: Even among those who unreservedly express pride in Kwéyòl, it is widely and quite

firmly believed that the simultaneous acquisition of Kwéyòl has a profoundly detrimental effect on children's acquisition of English. As a result of Kwéyòl's putative potential for interference – "contamination" would not be too strong a word – adults insist that children must learn to speak "English" (really VESL) before they are allowed to begin speaking Kwéyòl. While "English" must be explicitly taught to children, Kwéyòl need not be taught at all – it will come naturally, adults say, and they assume that children will eventually begin speaking Kwéyòl of their own volition.

This does not necessarily prove to be the case, at least not to the extent that parents and other caregivers assume. In households where caregivers are especially vigilant about their children's use of English, and where the children consequently receive limited Kwéyòl input and have few opportunities to speak the language, only occasionally do adults seem to notice that their children's Kwéyòl proficiency is surprisingly lacking – for example, when a school-age child fails to understand something said to him or her by an elderly visitor, or even by one of the child's own grandparents. Most St. Lucians dismissed my occasional musings that such instances may indicate that Kwéyòl is going into decline. "Kwéyòl is everywhere" in St. Lucia, they assured me; children can't help but "pick it up." There is some truth in this: Most St. Lucian children, particularly those living in rural villages such as Morne Carré, do indeed "pick up" some Kwéyòl – particularly in late childhood and adolescence, when they begin to spend more time out of the earshot of adults and community-wide vigilance over their "verbal hygiene" (Cameron 1995) decreases. Adults do not always realize, however, that what children are acquiring is not necessarily full conversational proficiency in Kwéyòl. What they are "picking up," in many cases, are a few relatively small sets or subsets of Kwéyòl words and phrases, by no means random, that reveal certain culturally and historically specific tendencies in local language socialization practices.

LEARNING TO CURSE

Despite adults' concern that young children, from the time they first begin to produce intelligible single words, should acquire "English," many do from time to time engage children in certain kinds of Kwéyòl exchanges that provide limited opportunities for the children to acquire some Kwéyòl as well. The focus of the language socialization practice that will be examined here is cursing. The communicative practice known in St. Lucia as "cursing," and the genre associated with it, are invariably constituted through Kwéyòl and hence can be regarded as code-specific; the relevant Kwéyòl verb is *jiwé* 'to curse'.[33] Sporadically but with some frequency, adults actively encourage and provoke young children to "curse" in Kwéyòl,[34] despite the fact that in most other contexts they discourage or prohibit children from using Kwéyòl at all.

Below is an excerpt from one such interaction involving a child named Tonia. This interaction occurred about two weeks before Tonia's third birthday; also present were Tonia's mother and Tonia's mother's younger sister (Tonia's maternal aunt), Noelicia. I too was present, videotaping. The setting is a standpipe where women gather, often bringing their preschool-age children along, to launder clothes and socialize. As this excerpt begins, Noelicia, who has been conversing with Tonia's mother in Kwéyòl, suddenly directs Tonia – also in Kwéyòl – to fling a curse in my direction, apparently just for the sake of general amusement. Thanks to just this sort of coaching on Noelicia's part, Tonia had by this time already acquired the semi-habit of referring to me by the Kwéyòl nickname *Kaka Bouwik* 'Donkey Shit'. (I hasten to add – and not merely to underscore a central theme of this article – that a certain something is lost in the translation. As with most such nicknames, I never heard Noelicia or anyone else translate it into English. Despite their brevity, Kwéyòl nicknames themselves can perhaps be considered a sort of code-specific genre.[35]) References to *Paya* in this excerpt are nickname references to Tonia's mother; unlike *Kaka Bouwik*, *Paya* is not also a common noun and therefore cannot be translated. Kwéyòl utterances are shown in the standardized orthography set forth in Louisy & Turmel-John 1983; VESL utterances are shown in phonemic transcription[36] and are underlined.

(1)

1	Noelicia: [to Tonia]	*Di Paul "Bat tjou'w," ah* 'Tell Paul "Beat your ass," eh'
2	Tonia: [to Paul]	*Bat tjou mama'w* 'Beat your mother's ass'
3	Mother:	*Bondou!* [variant of *Bondyé* 'God'; an exclamation of surprise/shock]
4	Paul:	*Sa i di mwen?!* 'What did she say to me?!'
5	Mother:	*"Bat tjou mama'w"!*
6	Tonia:	*Bat tjou Kaka Bouwik* 'Beat Donkey Shit's ass'
7	Noelicia: [gleeful]	*"Bat tjou Kaka Bouwik"!* [Tonia is mouthing a clothespin]
8	Mother:	*Paul wil biit yuu – Teek out dat in yoh mouf!* 'Paul will beat you – Take that out of your mouth!' *Lanng sal kon'w yé!* 'Dirty-mouthed thing that you are!'
9	Tonia:	*Lanng sal Kaka Bouwik* 'Dirty-mouth Donkey Shit'
10	Mother:	*Pé djòl ou! Pa di sa!* 'Shut your mouth! Don't say that!' *Vyé lanng sal, Paul iz naat yoh fren* 'Nasty dirty-mouthed thing, Paul is not your friend'
11	Noelicia: [to Tonia] [to Mother]	*Di'y "kaka bouwik"* 'Tell her "donkey shit"' *"Bat tjou'w" mwen enmen tann i di wi* '"Beat your ass" [is what] I like to hear her say'

12	Mother:	*Paul naat koming in yoh bofdee patii*
		'Paul is not going to come to your birthday party'
13	Noelicia:	*Di'y las bat djòl li ah,*
		'Tell her quit running her mouth'
		di'y sa, di Paya "Las bat djòl ou," ah
		'tell her that, tell Paya "Quit running your mouth," eh'
14	Tonia:	*Paya, bat tjou mama'w*
		'Paya, beat your mother's ass'
15	Mother:	*Wai yuu seeying dat, Tonia?!*
		'Why are you saying that, Tonia?!'
16	Noelicia:	*"Las bat djòl ou," mwen di'w di*
		' "Quit running your mouth," I told you to say'
17	Tonia:	*Noelicia, gadé pantii*
		'Noelicia, look at [the] panties'
18	Mother:	*Ki sa- Poutji ou ka di mwen sa?!*
		'What- Why are you saying that to me?!'
19	Noelicia:	*Di Paya pa mandé'w salopté,*
		'Tell Paya not to ask you crap,'
		pa "Tjou mama'w" mwen té di'w di,
		'not "Your mother's ass" I told you to say,'
		"Las bat djòl ou," di'y sa
		' "Quit running your mouth," tell her that'
20	Tonia:	*Paya, bat tjou'w*
		'Paya, beat your ass'
21	Noelicia:	*"Las bat djòl ou," di'y sa*
		' "Quit running your mouth," tell her that'
22	Tonia:	*Noelicia, giv mii duu dat*
		'Noelicia, give me do that' [i.e. 'let me do that']
23	Mother:	*Timanmay, ladjé kloozpin mwen avan mwen kasé bwa'w!*
		'Child, let go of my clothespin before I break your arm!'

Tonia's response to Noelicia's initial prompting (in utterance 1) to tell me to beat my ass – a response that evidently takes both Noelicia and Tonia's mother by surprise – is to tell me to beat my mother's ass (2). (Here again, something is lost in the literal translation. The expression in 1 is rather similar to the colloquial North American English expression *Shove it up your ass*.) Mention of a person's mother is a conventionalized means of escalating virtually any Kwéyòl curse or insult; Tonia is displaying here a verbal skill that the women may not have been aware that she has yet acquired. (Then again, this interpretation may give Tonia too much credit; having heard this expression before, she may simply be repeating Noelicia's model inaccurately, and may be innocent of how her inadvertent embellishment alters it.) Both Paul and Mother respond with appropriate expressions of shock (3, 4, 5). Gamely, and no doubt encouraged by these responses, Tonia then produces another (slightly nonsensical) variant on Noelicia's model (6), which Noelicia gleefully echoes (7).

Mother, although certainly amused by this, takes the stance that would be expected of any good mother by scolding Tonia, first in VESL, then in Kwéyòl (8). Mother's threat here that I will beat Tonia is typical; it is generally expected that the punishment for such an offense will be meted out by the person who has been offended, regardless of that person's relationship to the child (and without

need of explicit permission from any caregiver present).[37] Although the scold is delivered in a serious tone of voice, Tonia, having engaged in this type of routine before, knows that no punishment will actually befall her (certainly not from me). Furthermore, she has a good idea of what Noelicia and the other amused onlookers want from her, so she takes the initiative here and flings an appropriately sassy Kwéyòl reply at her mother (9). Her mother scolds her this time in a slightly more serious tone, again in Kwéyòl; this is followed by a half-Kwéyòl, half-VESL reproach (10). Note that the epithet meaning 'nasty dirty-mouthed thing' is in Kwéyòl (as in 8), but the warning that immediately follows – which is meant to be heeded – is in VESL. (The literal translation 'Paul is not your friend' fails to convey the sense of this VESL expression, which adults use frequently in correcting children. Mother is not suggesting that I will withdraw my friendship, as might be construed by most speakers of North American English; rather, she is reminding Tonia that I am not one of her age-mates, not someone with whom she can be playful with impunity, and that as an adult I must be shown proper respect.) Mother likewise uses VESL in 12, when she points out a potential real-life consequence of Tonia's behavior – namely, the possibility that I will not come to her birthday party (bearing a gift, to be sure).

The reply to this that is suggested and then modeled by Noelicia (13) is an appropriately coarse Kwéyòl imperative, *Las bat djòl ou*. (The coarseness derives primarily from the combined effects of the verb *bat* – literally 'beat', used here as in the colloquial North American English expression "Quit beating your gums" – and the noun *djòl*, an impolite way of referring to a person's mouth.) But Tonia instead produces the same insult that she had used with me previously: *Bat tjou mama'w* (14). Mother's response, probably expressing real exasperation now, is in VESL (15). Noelicia's response, however, is an attempt to "correct" Tonia (16), whose attention has apparently wandered to a pair of panties (17); or it may be that she has now become uncomfortable with the tension created by this fairly lengthy routine and is trying to change the subject. In either case, Mother is having none of it; she follows up with a reproachful rhetorical question in Kwéyòl (18). Noelicia follows up on her previous correction, but it is not clear that Tonia understands the relatively complex instructions, entirely in Kwéyòl, that she gets from Noelicia (19); she now somewhat listlessly reverts to the tried and true *Bat tjou'w* (20). Tonia has by now become uncooperative, but Noelicia presses on, so preoccupied that she ignores Tonia's utterance in 22, a VESL calque on Kwéyòl *Ba mwen fè sa* that ordinarily would have been noticed and corrected immediately. (VESL *giv* is an overly literal translation of the Kwéyòl verb *ba*.) Mother likewise ignores this, perhaps not noticing it because Tonia is annoying her by trying to wrest a clothespin out of her hand. This prompts a relatively lengthy Kwéyòl rebuke, the referential meaning of which Tonia is not necessarily expected to understand; Mother's tone of voice here, and the gestures that accompany it, are more than sufficient to bring about the desired response. What is perhaps most noteworthy about these final exchanges is that

Tonia, in what seems to be an attempt once and for all to break out of the Kwéyòl routine begun by Noelicia, does not merely attempt to change the subject (as she did in 17, unsuccessfully); she switches from Kwéyòl to VESL, thus reverting to the code that is normally expected of a child her age, and in which she is more proficient.

Significantly, children older than Tonia are not engaged by caregivers in this type of routine; Tonia's older sister and brother (approximately 2 and 4 years older, respectively) never were, for example. The cutoff point is about the time that the child is becoming old enough to understand the meanings (both literal and figurative) and the pragmatic impact of the strong words being bandied about – and old enough to produce them without prompting. In fact, Tonia's fairly formidable display of skills in this instance is a good indicator that she is quickly reaching the point at which this type of routine will no longer be age-appropriate. An older child is thought to be naturally inclined to be disobedient and disrespectful, and therefore needs no encouragement to be cheeky and self-assertive, verbally or otherwise. Self-assertiveness itself does not need to be learned; on the contrary, children need to be socialized to keep their self-assertiveness in check. But at the same time, expressions of self-assertiveness are valued and at times rewarded, even in children – provided that they do not violate or exceed certain parameters such as those that become discernible in routines like the one just examined.

As all of this suggests, there is a certain element of contradiction or paradox in villagers' ideology of language. No one in Morne Carré, least of all Tonia's mother, doubts that children need to master "English," or that they must be taught it more or less explicitly. But at the same time it is recognized, at least implicitly, that children also need to be able to fend for themselves in Kwéyòl. Verbal assertiveness is an important and respected skill in all areas of social life, as necessary within one's own household as it is in the workplace or on the streets of Castries. And more often than not, verbal assertiveness requires the use of Kwéyòl, especially when it might be necessary to insult or to curse one's opponent (either in jest or in earnest).[38] Notwithstanding the undisputed value of English in more and more domains in a rapidly "modernizing" St. Lucia, it seems clear that a certain level of proficiency in Kwéyòl, and above all in certain code-specific genres such as cursing, remains useful and even necessary. A complaint occasionally heard from St. Lucian adults who have minimal or no proficiency in Kwéyòl is that they are at a real disadvantage: Although they may be able to understand the gist of the abuse being hurled at them in Kwéyòl by an antagonist, they are not able to return it nearly as effectively (which makes it risky to even attempt to do so – for if one attempts and falters, one opens oneself up to further abuse and ridicule). Even in cases where the exchange is a less affectively charged one, such as a bargaining situation, one who does not speak Kwéyòl may be at a disadvantage. A woman from Castries who reported having been reared in an English-only household – her father, a Barbadian, did not speak

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Kwéyòl and forbade its use in the home – half-jokingly told me that she would like to learn Kwéyòl so as to be able "to keep up with the market women." She was referring to the vendors of fresh produce and other goods in the Castries marketplace, who speak Kwéyòl almost exclusively among themselves and with their Kwéyòl-speaking customers – and who are reputed to give less favorable prices to non-speakers of Kwéyòl.

LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND TO INDIRECTION

In most social situations, of course, it will not do to fling an unprovoked curse or insult at an unsuspecting addressee, as Noelicia encourages Tonia to do in the opening of the excerpt examined above. Even more important than the ability to formulate such an utterance verbally – and a rather more difficult thing both to teach and to learn – is the ability to monitor and evaluate a social interaction as it is unfolding, and to judge, while immersed in that interaction, when and how it might be necessary, fitting, or desirable to deploy such an utterance.

Often, such an utterance is called for as a retort to a conversational move made by another, or as a response to a stance taken (either verbally or nonverbally) by another. The excerpt below is taken from the same recording as the previous one and occurs shortly thereafter. The location is the same, but the group has now been joined by Andrea, another of Tonia's maternal aunts, and Sharice, Tonia's 7-year-old cousin. As the excerpt begins, Andrea, gazing at Tonia, initiates a teasing routine by casually venturing the opinion (in Kwéyòl) that Tonia's older sister Brita is *pli bèl* 'more pretty/prettier'. (Brita, the older sister referred to, is not present.) This invidious comment – ostensibly directed to the adults present, but actually intended to provoke Tonia and get a response out of her – fails to do so until Tonia's mother begins coaching Tonia in how to recognize and respond to this oblique verbal affront:

(2)

1	Andrea:	*Brita ki pli bèl wi.*
		'[It's] Brita who's prettier.'
2	Noelicia:	*Ki moun?*
		'Who?'
3	Andrea:	*Brita. Brita ki pli bèl wi.*
		'Brita. [It's] Brita who's prettier.'
4	Mother:	*Ou pa hont?*
		'You're not ashamed?' [i.e. ashamed to say this right in front of Tonia]
5	Andrea:	*Ov kohs, Brita sé an bèl fanm wi.*
	[to Mother]	'Of course [it's true], Brita is a pretty woman.'
	[to Noelicia]	*Brita pli- Ou kay wè si Brita pa kay pli bèl pasé Tonia, Noelicia.*
		'Brita is- You'll see if Brita won't be prettier than Tonia, Noelicia.'
		Ou kay wè si Brita pa kay bèl pasé Tonia.
		'You'll see if Brita won't be prettier than Tonia' [as they get older].
6	Sharice:	*Jessie ki pli bèl [x3], li èk Tonia*
		'[It's] Jessie who is prettier [x3], she and Tonia'

7	Mother:	*Di'y- Fè'y- Mi Andrea ka di ou lèd, di'y an bagay*
	[to Tonia]	'Tell her- Make her- Here's Andrea saying you're ugly, tell her a thing'
		[a thing or two, i.e. talk back to her]
8	Tonia:	*Andrea, ou lèd*
		'Andrea, you're ugly'
9	Sharice:	*Tonia lèd!*
		'Tonia's ugly!'
10	Andrea:	*Ou lèd! Brita bèl pasé ou*
	[to Tonia]	'You're ugly! Brita is prettier than you'
11	Noelicia:	*Di'y "Bat tjou'w" ah*
	[to Tonia]	'Tell her "Beat your ass," eh'
12	Tonia:	*Bat tjou'w!*
		'Beat your ass!'
13	Sharice:	*Jessie bèl, Jessie bèl pasé ou*
		'Jessie's pretty, Jessie's prettier than you'
14	Andrea:	*Bat sa'w a tou ah*
		'Beat your own too, eh'
15	Noelicia:	*Di'y ou ka bat tjou mama'y ba'y*
		'Tell her you're going to beat her mother's ass for her'
16	Andrea:	*Bat s- Bat sa'w a tou ah, Tonia!*
		'Beat y- Beat yours too, eh, Tonia!'
17	Noelicia:	*Di'y- Di'y "Mwen ka bat tjou mama'w ba'w"*
		'Tell her- Tell her "I'm going to beat your mother's ass for you"'
18	Andrea:	*Tonia, bat tjou'w tou ah*
		'Tonia, beat your ass too, eh'

Andrea's invidious remarks are at first made without explicit reference to Tonia (utterances 1, 3), although the construction *pli bèl* 'more pretty, prettier' indicates that she is making a comparison to someone. (This type of provocative indirection is common, and is quite similar to "signifying" as described in the literature on African American Vernacular English, e.g. Mitchell-Kernan 1972, Morgan 1996.) For Tonia, this is part of the lesson to be learned – how to recognize when she is the intended recipient of such an obliquely directed remark. In this instance, despite an additional cue from Mother (4), Tonia gives no indication that she understands Andrea's intent. This leads Andrea to reformulate her comment in a more explicit fashion (5); even here, however, she addresses the comment not to Tonia but to Mother and Noelicia. Sharice, Andrea's 7-year-old daughter, attempts to join in the routine (6); but misapprehending what is going on and thereby displaying incompetence, particularly with regard to the relevant participation framework (Goodwin 1990), she is ignored by all.

Tonia still has shown no sign of understanding what is going on, so her mother briefly explains – in Kwéyòl, but in relatively simple, direct terms that Tonia can be expected to grasp – and urges her to take immediate verbal action (7). Mother does not specify what action would be appropriate, however. Tonia responds by calling Andrea ugly (8), but it is quite possible that she is merely responding to Mother's prompt, rather than returning Andrea's previous verbal volleys; it is still not clear that she understands what is going on. Sharice again tries to join in, this time making a somewhat more germane contribution (9); but by the implicit

"rules" of the game being played, it is for Andrea to make the next move here, not Sharice, and she is again ignored by all.

Indirection is now abandoned by Andrea, who is obliged to respond to Tonia's direct insult with a direct insult of her own (10). This time Tonia is prompted to respond by Noelicia, who offers a model utterance for Tonia to repeat (11–12) – the same one that was directed toward me in the previous routine. Sharice again tries to join in, again blunders – this time by bringing up another, irrelevant party, Tonia's preverbal infant sister Jessie (as well as by intruding on, or at least trying to insinuate herself into, the exchanges between Tonia and Noelicia) – and continues to be ignored by all (13). Andrea responds to Tonia with a simple reversal of Tonia's insult (14). She is purposely keeping the game down at Tonia's level; had an adult issued the same insult, it would have been incumbent upon Andrea to come up with a more creative and virtuosic response. Noelicia now suggests that Tonia raise the stakes a bit by mentioning Andrea's mother (15). Andrea's mother is Tonia's grandmother and one of her primary caregivers, but that is irrelevant here; mention of a person's mother in a playful exchange such as this is understood to involve a certain degree of abstraction. Now the routine gets hurried along, probably because the adults are growing bored with it and realize that they have reached the limits of Tonia's present abilities anyway. Without waiting for Tonia to repeat Noelicia's prompt, Andrea responds to it as if Tonia herself had delivered the insult (16). This occurs one more time (17–18) before the women abandon the routine and return to their own conversation.

As mentioned previously, adults no longer engage children in such routines once they become slightly older than Tonia is in this excerpt. Notice that Sharice makes three attempts to participate (6, 9, 13), but is simply ignored by the others. At 7 years of age, her time for such things has passed. Her primary concern should be to learn English well; indeed, her limited use of Kwéyòl here might not even have been tolerated had it not occurred within this particular interaction, or rather on the periphery of it (Lave & Wenger 1991). Children Sharice's age are regarded by adults as needing no encouragement in being self-assertive, nor in the use of Kwéyòl; on the contrary, they need containment and rigid, no-nonsense discipline, and their developing English needs to be monitored and reinforced. Furthermore, older children do not need or deserve any assistance in fending for themselves in verbal confrontations, which occur frequently among peers; if such a confrontation is overheard by an adult, she or he is more likely to warn the children involved not to use overly strong language (such as Kwéyòl "curses") than to squelch the confrontation altogether. For these and related reasons, the blunders that Sharice makes in trying to participate in the routine examined above go ignored and uncorrected. On one hand, her evident lack of skill notwithstanding, she is a few years too old for the kind of verbal coaching that Tonia receives; on the other hand, she is several years too young to join the women in engaging Tonia in this kind of routine (or otherwise to be part of their Kwéyòl conversations). As party to this interaction, then, the

only age-appropriate thing for Sharice to do is to learn by silent observation. Her learning, it is worth noting, can be on either of two levels (or perhaps both): She can learn the same lessons being taught to Tonia (how to interpret and respond to indirection, how to manage a confrontation, how to be verbally assertive), and/or she can learn how persons older than herself engage children younger than herself in this type of socialization routine.

It is not so much the Kwéyòl language that is being socialized here as it is a particular affective stance – a way of comporting oneself in certain types of confrontational situations that arise quite frequently in local social life. (The notion of "teaching" Kwéyòl to a child, whether directly or indirectly, would be a rather odd one to most St. Lucian adults, and anathema to some.) The fact that the code deemed most appropriate for communicating and displaying the affective stance in question is Kwéyòl, it would seem, is little more than incidental. The crucial lesson here is that one must be able to fend for oneself, to make known one's needs and wants, to stand up for one's rights, to demand respect, and to be prepared to give as good as one gets. This is taught more or less explicitly to young children in various other ways that are less directly dependent on language. Preschool-age children are often teased by adults, both verbally and physically, and are encouraged by their caregivers to stand up to their mock tormentors. Just as a mother will look on approvingly if an unrelated person (e.g. a family friend, or even a casual acquaintance of the mother whom the child has never before encountered) delivers a bit of justly deserved punishment to a 3-year-old child who has misbehaved toward him, she will stand by as he teases the child, verbally and/or physically (e.g. by threatening to take away a bit of food or a toy), to the point that the child begins to cry and hide behind the mother's legs. At that point she will either ignore the child or encourage him or her to act assertively, often modeling an appropriate utterance or physical action.

INDEXICALITY OF CODE-SPECIFIC GENRES

In effect, what is being socialized in the excerpts examined above is how to conform one's utterances to particular genres – genres that are code-specific and that highlight self-assertion. Like all genres, those examined here bear the imprint of the sociohistorical contexts out of which they emerge; and like most, they are colored by affect. As Kulick & Schieffelin (2004:352) note, "Everyone has ideas about and conventions for displaying, invoking and interpreting affect ... [T]he ability to display culturally intelligible affective stances is a crucial dimension of the process of becoming a recognizable subject in any social group." Genres are surely a crucial means by which these ideas, conventions, and stances are organized, understood, and enacted by speakers, and by which they are socialized.

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Bakhtin 1986 discusses the affective dimension of genre in terms of "expressive intonation." Utterances, according to Bakhtin, are produced by the speaker and apperceived by others not as sentences (which as mere "units of language" are expressively neutral, in his formulation), but as "kinds of speech genres that embody typical expression . . . One of the means of expressing the speaker's emotionally evaluative attitude toward the subject of his speech is expressive intonation, which resounds clearly in oral speech" (1986:85). Developing further his analytic distinction between the sentence and the utterance, he notes, "A speech genre is not a form of language, but a typical form of utterance; as such the genre also includes A CERTAIN TYPICAL KIND OF EXPRESSION THAT INHERES IN IT" (87; emphasis added). Bakhtin does not propose a mechanism by which this inherence comes about, however. The existence of code-specific genres, as has been proposed here, suggests that those genres that, taken collectively, typify the characteristic ways in which a particular code is used in a bilingual/multilingual setting leave a certain "imprint" on that code via the code-specific genres with which it is associated; and that this is a central mechanism in the semiotic process by which particular codes in bilingual/multilingual settings come to be laden with specific, more or less conventionalized (though still open-ended and negotiable, and hence fundamentally emergent) social meanings.

But what is the nature of that semiotic process? Code specificity of genres is, fundamentally, a matter of indexicality of the type that Silverstein 1976 refers to as "nonreferential" indexicality. Nonreferential indexes are "features of speech which, independent of any referential speech events that may be occurring, signal some particular value of one or more contextual variables" (1976:29). Silverstein uses as his examples language-internal sets of differentiated forms, such as the speech levels of Javanese by means of which speakers index differences of status, rank, age, and other culturally salient variables. Likewise, in virtually any sociolinguistic setting in which two or more distinct codes are in use, speakers tend to exploit code selection for broadly analogous nonreferential indexical functions; as Ochs (1990:293) notes, various categories of sociocultural information (genre and affective stance among them) may be indexed in this way. Ochs goes on to note that such indexing may be accomplished by means of either a single linguistic feature or a set of such features. In the latter case, which she refers to as "collocational" indexing, "contextual information is indexed through a set of co-occurring structures . . . Here social identity of speaker or addressee, genre, communicative activity taking place, and the like are indexed through a set of linguistic features that systematically co-occur rather than through a single feature."

Code-specific genres such as have been described here provide prime examples of collocational indexing: Code and genre are tightly linked, and they index accordingly. That is, it is not just a matter of code indexing genre (although certainly this is the case); code and genre TOGETHER index some "local contextual

dimension" (Ochs 1990:293) – a particular culturally salient affective stance, in the examples examined here. As Ochs observes, the implications for language socialization are significant:

> That context is indexed through collocation of indexes as well as through single indexes is a sociolinguistic generalization that must be incorporated into a developmental model of how sociocultural and linguistic knowledge interface in the course of language socialization. We must represent the fact that children come to understand constraints on co-occurrence and ordering of indexes and, further, that they come to understand how indexes interact to signal contextual information. (1990:294)

As this suggests, language socialization practices may be a particularly important site for examining code-specific genres, across social and cultural contexts as well as across historical contexts – for example, as a means of shedding light on historical accounts from the Caribbean colonial era that mention (usually with shock and disapproval) the children of European planter families speaking the creole language of their African caregivers and playmates. Likewise in contemporary contexts in the USA, as Schieffelin notes,

> [W]e need to acknowledge ... and take into account the many nonstandard English speakers and non-English speakers who are employed to take care of the children. We cannot ignore the fact that these caregivers speak to other people's children similarly to the ways in which they speak to their own, using the language(s) in which they are most comfortable and that they feel to be the most appropriate to express what they need to say. (1994:38)

Schieffelin's primary concern here is with the implications of code-switching for language socialization, particularly the ways in which code-switching constitutes a source of information for the child about language, social context, and relationships between the two. The implications of code-specific genres are worth consideration along similar lines, in that genres constitute an intermediate level in the organization of talk – between code and context, or in broader terms, between language and social structure – by means of which children learn about the codes in their environment, the social order within which they function, and the varied ways in which the former constitute and organize the latter. Studies of language acquisition in bilingual/multilingual settings, including those in which code-switching is prevalent, have demonstrated that code-switching and other types of mixed input do not present special problems for the language-acquiring child, and that the child is able to differentiate languages from a very early age (Döpke 2001). Just how the child is able to do so, however, remains to be addressed. Attention to genres, particularly code-specific genres, makes possible a more adequate account of how code-switching serves as a source of information to the child in the ways that Schieffelin suggests.

CONCLUSION: CODE-SPECIFIC GENRES AND THE TENSION
BETWEEN PERSISTENCE AND SHIFT

Research concerned with the question of why nonstandard and "low-prestige" varieties persist in the face of strong hegemonic pressures from dominant and standard varieties has often stressed their function as "markers" of group identity, and the issue of "solidarity" more generally. Too often this has led to simplistic conclusions such as that offered by Ryan (1979:155): "[L]ow-prestige speech varieties persist basically because people do not want to give them up." Other accounts, more attentive to situated language use, find in the persistence of these varieties a "seamless discourse" of resistance; but such approaches also have their shortcomings, particularly when the result is "an uncritical romanticism of resistance everywhere" (Limón 1996:188). Meanwhile, some of the most sophisticated ethnographic studies dealing with nonstandard varieties and their speakers (e.g. Heath 1983, Goodwin 1990) do not explicitly address the issue of persistence as such, focusing instead on the richly complex ways in which speakers draw upon these varieties in constructing and sustaining their culturally distinctive social worlds. Although these studies tend to focus on communicative practices much like those that have been considered here, they do not explicitly problematize the relationship between these practices and the language varieties through which they are constituted and enacted.

The St. Lucian case suggests that investigators seeking to account for the persistence of a particular code in a situation of contact would do well to focus less on the code itself than on the genres through which that code is instantiated in the course of everyday interactions. Insofar as those genres persist, particularly those that are code-specific, the code persists as well. But depending on the number of code-specific genres and the level of linguistic proficiency that they require – cursing, for example, does not require a particularly high level – the code may persist only in an attenuated form, and may remain vulnerable to processes of language shift. This seems to be the case at present in St. Lucia. Bakhtin (1986:80) notes, "Many people who have an excellent command of a language often feel quite helpless in certain spheres of communication precisely because they do not have a practical command of the generic forms used in the given spheres." As this suggests, command of a code and command of a genre are of two different orders. The St. Lucian case, like those described by Dorian 1982 and Jackson 1974, shows that in some bilingual/multilingual settings, speakers who have good command of a particular set or subset of code-specific genres may get along quite comfortably and effectively in everyday interaction despite having very limited command of the code itself. As Hanks points out,

> In order for two or more people to communicate, at whatever level of effectiveness, it is neither sufficient nor necessary that they 'share' the same grammar. What they must share, to a variable degree, is the ability to orient

themselves verbally, perceptually, and physically to each other and to their social world. . . . This kind of sharing – partial, orientational, and socially distributed – may be based on common schemes of perception that go far beyond language. (1996:229)

As Hanks suggests, we must look beyond code to other dimensions of communicative practice, broadly conceived, in order to understand how intersubjectivity is achieved and sustained in such situations. Genre, understood to comprise affective stance and other suprasegmental and paralinguistic features of language use, is one such dimension (Hanks 1996:242–46).

The notion of code-specific genre can help account for why "low-prestige" varieties persist as well as why, in the St. Lucian case and numerous others, they tend to persist (if only in attenuated form) through cursing and other genres in which self-assertion is highlighted and solidarity is created. (The paradox here is more apparent than real, as various studies of ritual insulting and other vernacular genres suggest, e.g. Mitchell-Kernan 1972, Limón 1996, Morgan 1996.) At present in St. Lucia, notions of what it means to be St. Lucian are a matter of ongoing negotiation and contestation – as they have been for some time, particularly since the local dawning of the postcolonial era in the 1970s. Language-related issues, particularly the relationship between Kwéyòl and English and the relative importance of Kwéyòl as an aspect of St. Lucian identity, figure prominently in current debates, though not always explicitly (Garrett 2000). As mentioned earlier, many St. Lucians of the current, largely bilingual generation of young adults take for granted that all St. Lucians speak Kwéyòl, and that their own children likewise will eventually speak it. But the growing numbers of young St. Lucians who in fact do not speak Kwéyòl proficiently, and may not even understand it well, is a phenomenon with which all St. Lucians, even those living in rural villages such as Morne Carré, are now confronted from time to time. Must one speak Kwéyòl in order to be regarded as a "real" St. Lucian by other St. Lucians? The answer at present would seem to be a qualified no. That is, a St. Lucian need not be a fluent speaker of Kwéyòl, but in order to avoid the sometimes disadvantageous or ambiguous status, particularly in (mock-)confrontational situations, of the St. Lucian who does not speak any Kwéyòl at all, she or he must at least be able to use Kwéyòl in what Jackson 1974 characterizes as an "emblematic" fashion. And in order to use Kwéyòl emblematically, one need not master the code per se; it is sufficient to master a few salient code-specific genres such as those that have been examined here.

As objects or units of analysis, genres, like languages, are reifications – abstractions from the dynamic flux of communicative practice. Thus, the notion of genre offers advantages as well as potential pitfalls. Analytic emphasis on the conventionality, stability, and durability of genres is of great theoretical utility in that it allows one to discern areas of relative stability in the aforementioned flux and to render them amenable to analysis and theorizing. But it must always be

borne in mind that the stability and durability of any given genre are only rela-
tive, and that there is considerable variation among genres along these very di-
mensions; some genres remain fairly resistant to innovation and transformation
for remarkably long periods, while others morph more readily and more rapidly
into new forms. In Bakhtinian terms, genres are subject to the same centrifugal
and centripetal forces as languages, and their coherence (and hence their identi-
fiability and utility as units of analysis) ultimately derives from the same kinds
of resultant tensions (Bakhtin 1981, 1986).

Bakhtin (1986:65) asserts that genres are "the drive belts from the history of
society to the history of language." Situated between social structure and linguis-
tic structure, partaking of both and sensitively registering changes in both, genres
function as conduits linking the two in complex dialectical relationships. As this
suggests, genres are centrally involved in processes of sociocultural and linguis-
tic persistence, stability, and continuity as well as in processes of transformation
and change. This makes them particularly valuable as units of analysis for inves-
tigating cases of linguistic and cultural contact, which often present intriguing
combinations of profound conservatism and radical innovation – as can be seen
in the sorts of dynamic processes commonly characterized as creolization, hy-
bridization, and syncretism. The language socialization routines that have been
examined here can perhaps be read broadly as a form of "resistance" or, taking a
more nuanced view, as a means by which speakers open up an alternative social
space in which they collaboratively "negate the alienating constraints of the his-
torically given social order . . . and affirm the possibilities of a different social
order," as Limón (1996:193) puts it in his insightful study of working-class
Mexican-American men in south Texas. Such interactively constructed social
spaces can even be regarded as sites of potentially profound and far-reaching
social change, as Rampton 1995a, 1995b suggests in his study of "crossing."

But St. Lucians' code-specific practices, and the genres and social spaces that
they constitute, can perhaps just as well be regarded as sites of continuity – a
means by which St. Lucians are holding onto and reproducing a distinctively St.
Lucian sense of personhood, even as much else is changing in their society. Ur-
ban (1985:326) suggests that "the contexts and subject matters most focal in a
given cultural system will be those highlighted by the most salient speech styles."
The features that characterize a given speech style, Urban proposes, will be those
"whose indexical meaning in the everyday code or elsewhere is appropriate to
the overall indexical function of the speech style as sign vehicle" (324); thus the
salient constituent features of Shokleng ritual wailing, such as "creaky voice"
and "broken voice," are those that occur as "pragmatic alternatives to ordinary
voice in the everyday code" and that index intense feelings of grief (322). Essen-
tially the same semiotic process is at work when (semi-)bilingual St. Lucian adults
who generally avoid speaking Kwéyòl with children use that very code – which
in everyday usage is associated with directness, straightforwardness, frankness,
and emotional expressiveness – in certain types of socialization activities that

involve the playful instigation, enactment, and display of self-assertive stances. Recent changes in the sociopolitical status, "prestige," and symbolism of Kwéyòl notwithstanding, when St. Lucians socialize children to "curse" or otherwise to speak and act self-assertively by means of Kwéyòl, the central issue at stake is less what it means to be St. Lucian than what it means to St. Lucians to be a person – that is, a socially competent individual and community member. While the former has changed significantly in recent years and remains a point of negotiation and contestation, it would seem that the latter has remained quite stable.

In all communities, certain core cultural values, which may generally remain tacit, are socialized through language. Such values are instantiated in and through particular genres, which may or may not be code-specific (see Field 2001 for a case in which they apparently are not). If the relevant genres ARE code-specific, as in the St. Lucian case, caregivers can be expected to make certain focused efforts (though not necessarily conscious efforts) to ensure that both code and genre are being reproduced to the extent necessary for children to be able to demonstrate their awareness of that value in conventionally expected, locally intelligible ways. Where language shift is underway, this in turn may have an overall retarding effect on the process; or it may present a sort of snag or sticking point, such that language shift proceeds somewhat unevenly, giving rise to a situation in which certain vestiges of the obsolescent code linger on and perhaps ultimately become assimilated into the code toward which the community is shifting.[39]

Language shift is never a simple or straightforward process, and is notoriously unpredictable. Even so, the study of language shift and obsolescence, particularly ethnographically oriented research since the late 1970s (e.g. Gal 1979, Schmidt 1985, Hill & Hill 1986, Dorian 1989, Kulick 1992, Errington 1998, Tsitsipis 1998, Jaffe 1999), has yielded important insights that help delimit the range of outcomes to which a given case of language shift may give rise. As these studies demonstrate, a multitude of factors – some self-evidently language-related, others much less so – can accelerate or decelerate the process of shift, and still others can introduce unexpected twists and turns. The value of a language socialization approach to language shift and other phenomena associated with language contact has been demonstrated in several recent studies (Garrett & Baquedano-López 2002); and as Kulick & Schieffelin point out still more recently,

> language socialization studies can document not only how and when practices are acquired, but also how and when they are acquired differently from what was intended, or not acquired at all. Hence, reproduction is not assumed, and unintended consequences of socializing practices, or change, can be documented and accounted for in empirically delineated social contexts. (2004:352)

A language socialization approach that brings to bear the notions of code specificity and code-specific genre can help elucidate such processes and their implications for larger issues of linguistic and cultural reproduction and change.

NOTES

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[1] This notion of community repertoire is not meant to suggest a COMMUNAL repertoire; neither should it be taken to suggest that all speakers have equal control of, or even access to, all of the codes comprised. On the contrary, as suggested by Pratt's (1987) critique of "linguistic utopias," it should be assumed that this is NOT the case.

[2] This brief list of *verba dicendi* is not intended to privilege the culturally specific communicative practices typically recognized and named by speakers of (standard) English, nor to exclude from consideration those of other groups.

[3] The focus here will be on genres that entail use of the vernacular/nonstandard/"Low" code, but speakers typically have equally strong feelings that other genres, such as lectures and sermons, necessitate use of the formal-official/standard/"High" code (Ferguson 1959).

[4] See Stroud 1992 for an insightful critique of certain assumptions that tend to inhere in such approaches.

[5] See Morgan (1996:409–14ff.) on "reading dialect" for an intriguingly more complex example.

[6] Presumably Bakhtin, a literary scholar, refers here to "speech genres" (rather than simply "genres") in order to stress that his concerns extend beyond literary genres and written texts.

[7] Briefly, centripetal forces are those that tend to have centralizing, homogenizing, regimenting, normative (often prescriptive, standardizing) effects on language and language use. Centrifugal forces are those that tend toward decentralization, heterodoxy, and diversity, and often involve the lifting or breaking (or breakdown) of normative constraints.

[8] This is not to suggest that genres are static. As Ben-Amos (1976:xxxi) puts it, genres are "evolving forms ... not merely analytical constructs, classificatory categories for archives, file cabinets, and libraries ... but distinct modes of communication."

[9] As an anonymous reviewer for *Language in Society* points out, the notion of "genre" as used here has much in common with the notion of "speech style" as used by Hymes 1989[1974] and Urban 1985.

[10] This is not to suggest that communicative practices logically (or ontologically) precede genres; the two should be regarded as mutually constitutive.

[11] Bauman (1992:138) observes, "As suggestive as they are ... Bakhtin's writings engender a certain amount of frustration ... his perspective seems to demand a dimension of formal analysis, but he never provides it."

[12] The objection might be raised that such terms as these do not apply to ritual insults, which clearly are not meant to be taken at face value. But consider that ritual insults are situated on the tense boundary between self-censorship and self-abandon – between what can and cannot be said freely and openly. One who engages skillfully in ritual insults is displaying expert knowledge of precisely where that boundary lies.

[13] For an interesting examination of how the tensions generated by such a polarization of codes have been dealt with in the Haitian context, see Schieffelin & Doucet 1994.

[14] This is not to suggest that the code selection is OVERdetermined. It is possible for a speaker to "bend" a generic frame without breaking it – and in a bilingual/multilingual context, use of a non-conventional code might well be one way of doing so. In Briggs & Bauman's (1992) terms, this would constitute a "widening" of the "intertextual gap." It is also worth noting here that the code conventionally used for a code-specific genre may shift, either gradually or abruptly. (An example of abrupt shift would be the shift from Latin to local languages in the Roman Catholic liturgy after the Second Vatican Council.)

[15] In contrast to situational switching, metaphorical switching (Blom & Gumperz 1972) may be exploited quite extensively by the speaker within the parameters of those code-specific genres that

can be regarded as "secondary genres" in Bakhtin's (1981) sense. Gossip is a prime example: Although the vernacular invariably serves as the matrix code (Myers-Scotton 2002), the gossiper may very well code-switch when quoting someone, or perhaps as a way of characterizing someone's manner or behavior (either verbal or nonverbal). This underlines the larger point that code specificity need not constrain the speaker's creativity and expressiveness; indeed, in this and other ways, a genre's code specificity can itself be exploited to these ends.

[16] See Haas 1964 on "interlingual word taboos" for a description of an interesting related phenomenon. A brief example: Haas noticed that Thai students in the United States, when in the presence of English speakers, "tend to avoid certain words of their own language which bear a phonetic resemblance to English obscene words," such as *fàg* 'sheath, (bean-)pod', *khán* 'to crush, squeeze out', and *phríg* '(chili) pepper'.

[17] But cf. Reisman (1970:139) on what he characterizes as "the fading effect" in Antigua: "By the fading effect I mean the tendency of Creole speech to fade or disappear without any marked or noticeable shift in the manner of speaking when outsiders, particularly whites, and even white investigators of language, approach."

[18] As an anonymous reviewer for *Language in Society* urges me to point out, native speakers of a language commonly make metapragmatic assertions that are demonstrably untrue and/or contradictory, that tend to perpetuate stereotypes about the language and its speakers, and that may be discrepant with their own everyday use of the language. It is not my intent to propagate, condone, or even countenance any of the evaluations of specific languages or language varieties that I describe, report, or allude to in this article.

[19] Analogous assertions extolling the expressive, poetic and other virtues of creole languages are made by other creolophone writers, including Brathwaite 1984 and Bernabé, Chamoiseau, & Confiant 1993; the works of writers and performers such as Louise Bennett and Mutabaruka (both renowned for their use of Jamaican Creole) are also worth consideration in this regard. See also Ngũgĩ 1986 on the use of African indigenous languages in literature; and cf. Gates (1990:45–46) on what he characterizes as the "mockingbird" posture. For a discussion of the use of creole languages in the novel and other written genres, see Mühleisen 2002.

[20] Hymes (1989[1974]:451) notes that "fluent members of communities often enough themselves evaluate their languages as not equivalent. It is not only that one language, or variety, often is preferred for some uses, another for others, but also that there is experience with what can in fact be best done with one or the other."

[21] Clearly this broadly generalizing statement is in no way intended to dismiss or discount the formidable and well-known accomplishments of the many Caribbean writers, orators, and others who have made, and continue to make, brilliant use of these languages.

[22] Commenting on a different but related issue – the "negative definition" of Creole, vis-à-vis English, in Antigua – Reisman (1970:137) notes, "In speaking with non-Creole speakers, or in any formal context that uses English as a main code, villagers are almost universally both unwilling and unable to cite Creole forms, to translate from English to Creole, or to repeat Creole utterances in even vaguely the same form."

[23] Michaels 2003 provides an example to demonstrate the semi-futility of translating a Yiddish joke into English:

> The rabbi says, 'What's green, hangs on the wall, and whistles?'
> The student says, 'I don't know.'
> The rabbi says, 'A herring.'
> The student says, 'Maybe a herring could be green and hang on the wall, but it absolutely doesn't whistle.'
> The rabbi says, 'So it doesn't whistle.'

Michaels comments, "The joke is inherent in Yiddish, not any other language. It's funny, and, like a story by Kafka, it isn't funny."

[24] For present purposes, Austin's notion of speech act can be regarded as broadly equivalent to Bakhtin's speech genre in that both authors are concerned with the recurrent, conventionalized aspects of language usage. (It is perhaps worth noting here that Austin has been critiqued by linguistic anthropologists for allowing his thinking on this issue to be limited by the *verba dicendi* of Western languages.)

[25] An observation made by Reisman (1970:140) on language use in Antigua is interesting to consider in this regard: "Creole is intrinsically felt to be the code of the genuine. School teachers, even head teachers, may, or may be forced to, move into Creole to convince the children that they really mean what they are saying. Thus other forms of speech carry some aura of falseness."

[26] See Bourdieu 1991 for focused discussion of "linguistic habitus" – the more or less coherent, integrated set of "socially constructed dispositions . . . which imply a certain propensity to speak and to say determinate things (the expressive interest) and a certain capacity to speak, which involves both the linguistic capacity to generate an infinite number of grammatically correct discourses, and the social capacity to use this competence adequately in a determinate situation" (1991:37).

[27] The label *Patwa* (or *patois*) is of colonial origin, and some St. Lucians – though by no means all – consider it pejorative. Those who hold this view now prefer to call the language Kwéyòl instead. Because the latter appellation is now widely recognized (though still not widely used colloquially) among the general public in St. Lucia, I refer to the language as Kwéyòl here.

[28] When the annual cultural festival *Jounen Kwéyòl* 'Creole Day' was observed during my fieldwork, one of the teachers in the Morne Carré school, as part of the day's special activities for the occasion, asked her class of 8- to 10-year-olds to tell her some things that they knew how to say in Kwéyòl. Getting only puzzled looks, she then asked the students to tell her some things that they hear their mothers and fathers say in Kwéyòl. This got an enthusiastic response, as the giggling children called out phrases such as *Pa fè sa!* 'Don't do that!', *Sòti la!* 'Get away from there!', and *Sa ki wivé'w?!* 'What's the matter with you?!'.

[29] In a case of relatively recent contact between two languages and cultures with extremely disparate histories, the challenges of adapting a vernacular to the exigencies of a novel genre may be even more formidable, as Schieffelin 1996, 2000 demonstrates. The "hybrid" or "boundary" genres of colonial Yucatán described by Hanks 2000 are another interesting case to consider in this regard.

[30] In other cases, knowledge and use of such verbal formulae serves as an important means of conveying respect or goodwill toward members of a group to which one does not belong (Heller 1982, Jackson 1974), and may even make it possible for persons who clearly are not (and cannot become) members of a particular group to interact with members of that group on an intimate level (Rampton 1995b, Spears 1998, Urciuoli 1996, Zentella 1997).

[31] Kwéyòl endearments (e.g. *doudou* 'sweetie') are in fact commonly used by St. Lucian caregivers.

[32] Cf. Dorian 1994 on this point.

[33] The Kwéyòl verb *jiwé* is clearly a reflex of French *jurer* 'to swear; to make a vow or oath; to blaspheme'. St. Lucians translate *jiwé* into English as "curse," however, and use it in the colloquial sense of the English term: 'to use vulgar, obscene, or abusive language; to denounce or execrate by means of such language'.

[34] Cf. Sidnell's (1998) examination of use of the verb *kos* 'curse' as a "metapragmatic framing device" among children and their caregivers in a Guyanese community.

[35] As Bakhtin (1986:81–82) notes, genres as "forms of utterances" are "extremely diverse in compositional structure, particularly in size (speech length) – from the single-word rejoinder to a large novel." A relevant consideration here is whether or not the vocative use of a nickname can constitute a "complete utterance" in Bakhtin's sense. Aceto's (2002) analysis of nicknames as a socially embedded communicative practice in Caribbean (and other) contexts suggests that it can and often does, as do Butler's (1997) remarks on naming or addressing as a form of interpellation (in Althusser's sense).

[36] The system of phonemic transcription used here for VESL is that used by Rickford 1987 for Guyanese; Rickford's system, in turn, is based on that devised by Cassidy 1961 for Jamaican.

[37] Caregivers generally look on approvingly if someone from outside the household, such as a family friend or neighbor, delivers a sound slap to a child who is misbehaving toward him or her; the prevailing sentiment is that it serves the child right. On numerous occasions I was encouraged to slap a child who was judged to be misbehaving toward me; when I good-naturedly declined, as I always did, I was sometimes admonished that children (not merely the child in question, but children in general) would *pwan'w pou papicho* 'take you for nonsense', that is, become accustomed to treating me as someone who need not be shown proper respect.

[38] Cursing is considered a prosecutable offense in St. Lucia, as in various other West Indian societies. In Morne Carré, a heated verbal exchange that culminates in a cursing may result in the offended party's making a complaint to the police. But it may take the police a matter of days to follow up on such a complaint, by which time the complainant's sense of aggrievement may have subsided.

[39] It would seem that this has been the case in Trinidad, Grenada, and possibly other Caribbean islands where varieties of French-lexified creole closely related to that of St. Lucia were formerly spoken (Garrett 2003). In these islands the French creole has now been almost entirely supplanted by local varieties of vernacular English or English-lexified creole, but numerous vestiges of French creole remain in common use. Significantly, prominent among these are local labels for precisely the kinds of genres that have been considered here, such as *konmès* 'gossip; slander; a state of noisy confusion or disturbance' and *mako*, a verb meaning 'to pry into or be overly attentive to others' affairs; to be nosy', and also a noun meaning 'busybody; nosy or overly inquisitive person' (Allsopp 1996). Not surprisingly, Kwéyòl words such as these are also common in VESL.

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