LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES IN BARBADOS: PROCESSES AND PARADIGMS

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Abstract

Barbadian ways of speaking draw their stylistic richness from intertwined and differentially valued resources of Creole (Bajan) and Barbadian English. Barbadians (and linguists) interpret this formal diversity through two ideological paradigms. One (labeled in Bajan, “adjusting to suit”) corresponds to linguist’s “register”. By attending to laminations of individual repertoires and to skills of their selective contextual deployment, the paradigm indexes the richness of speakers’ resources. The other paradigm interprets the stylistic diversity of speakers’ repertoires in essentializing, “sociolectal” terms that iconically link social categories and polarized language varieties. By exaggerating the distinctiveness of language varieties and by turning them into unambiguous indices of fixed social personae, the paradigm colludes with the hierarchies of linguistic and social prestige. These paradigms and hierarchies can be approached in terms of historical processes that defined their social and linguistic targets. Such a framework, however, neglects institutional sites pivotal in the continued production of cultural orders of language - the literature, media, and theater. Within these sites, characterized by heightened metadiscursive awareness, ideological tensions surrounding language and its couplings with social, racial, and national identities are scripted and launched into public domain. Macrohistorical explanations also neglect the processes that turn specific linguistic forms into emblems of Barbadian language varieties while erasing others. By considering strategies and practices of (re)allocation of linguistic styles to characters in literature, journalism, and theater, I explore sociocultural and semiotic underpinnings of drawing Creole and Barbadian English forms into production of linguistically marked social identities and socially marked language varieties.

Keywords: Metapragmatics, Sociolinguistic representations, Language hierarchies, Bajan

1. Introduction

In this article I consider ideological processes that shape representations of sociolinguistic diversity in Barbados.¹ By refracting and simplifying linguistic practices in a creole

¹ My warm thanks go to Adonijah, Carmen, Nailah Fulami Imoja, Norma Meek, Mr. Marshall, Kassanne, Pat, Alfred Pragnell, to two newspaper editors who have chosen to remain anonymous, and to the inhabitants of Arawak Hill who made this research possible. I wish to acknowledge Kristina Fenigsen-Zieba for her skill and commitment in transcribing interviews recorded in the summer 2002. I also thank the faculty at the Linguistics Program at the University of the West Indies, in particular, Hazel Simmons-McDonald, for help with many aspects of my fieldwork in 2002. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of *Pragmatics* for close, critical and helpful reading of an earlier draft of this paper.

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I dedicate this paper to the memory of Mrs. Hurley, Mr. Best, Mrs. Stanford and Mrs. Marshall from

continuum, these representations turn Bajan Creole and Barbadian English into linguistically marked social identities and socially marked language varieties. In relating linguistic variation to social roles and identities they participate in debates about nationhood, regiment access to social roles and networks, and underwrite membership in social collectives (Bourdieu 1991; Gumperz 1982; Irvine and Gal 2001; Silverstein 2003). Because they can be articulated in the ways that foreground their linguistic rather than social aspects, linguistic ideologies allow for seemingly neutral and acceptable discourse about issues that are as central to nation-building as they are sensitive and divisive: Race, poverty, and the problematic relationship to the colonial history and its heritage. But how do they come into being? How are they perpetuated?

Drawing on my current research among Barbadian journalists and writers and on my earlier work in Arawak Hill, a village in the northern part of the island, I explore political economic and semiotic factors that regiment representations of sociolinguistic patterns in the media and literature. As Bakhtin observed, every instance of language use represents, displays, and - potentially - models discursive and sociolinguistic patterns (1981: 336), but not all instances are created equal. Some are more persuasive, carry more authority or, simply, reach larger audiences than others (Spitulnik 1998). In the media and literature, the ideological tensions surrounding language and its links with social contexts and identities are scripted, articulated, censored and launched into public domain. To trace shifts involved in the entextualization of sociolinguistic patterns, I consider metapragmatic commentaries made by the speakers in the formal and informal interviews I have conducted, and in spontaneous conversations with me and their Barbadian interlocutors.²

Arawak Hill, remarkable people and generous friends. I miss them very much.

² In 1994 I conducted 74 semi-formal interviews in Arawak Hill. The interviews were based on a set of questions repeated in each interview yet allowed the interviewees ample opportunity for elaboration. To improve the appropriateness and clarity of the tool, I had tested the questions with five consultants from Arawak Hill prior to conducting the interviews. All interviews but one were audio-recorded. One person preferred I took notes. The questions focused on the perceived linguistic distinctions between Bajan and Barbadian English, and on linguistic values and practices. All interviews included questions about the use of Bajan and the use of English. To clarify which linguistic forms the respondent identified as Bajan and which as English, I asked for examples of each usage. For each example I asked for an English/Bajan equivalent ("how would you say it in Bajan/English?"). My more specific interest in linguistic awareness has developed at the later stages of my research when I have transcribed most of the data. That interest led me to further pursue the issue of Mr. Marshall's identification of his welcoming address as entirely performed in English.

The respondents were not randomly selected. I aimed to interview one person from each of the 72 residences in Arawak Hill representing a total of 220 residents in all age categories, and the six teachers in the local primary school. Three persons declined to be interviewed and one was physically unable to participate, bringing the total number of these interviews to 74.

Interviewing followed five months of my residence in the village. By that time, I had conducted a significant portion of my ethnographic research in the village focused on the social life, relations, interactions, and networks. Through my participation in social gatherings, school activities, religious worship, and plantation work, I have also become familiar to most of the village residents. That research allowed me better to contextualize linguistic practices and values against the backdrop of contemporary life in rural Barbados and of historical memory of plantation colonialism. Obviously, only a portion of that research figures in this article.

During the research, I was recording spontaneous communication in a variety of village settings.

I compare these commentaries with pragmatic practices in spontaneous recorded interactions that draw on alternations between Bajan and Barbadian English, and sociolinguistic representations. My goal is, on the one hand, to identify some of the filtering mechanisms involved in ideological processes and, on the other hand, to explore the question of how these two types of limitations - political economic and semiotic - intersect and interact.

1.1. *Theoretical perspectives: Politics and semiotics of metapragmatic awareness*

Sociolinguists have tended to treat sociolinguistic categories as unproblematic epiphenomena of macro-social partitions (Irvine 1985; Silverstein 1995). In linguistic anthropology, concerns with the semiotics of representations and institutional and political aspects of language have directed attention to practices and forces that configure sociolinguistic fields and identities (Mertz and Parmentier 1985; Silverstein 1976, 1995). A number of approaches have defined work in this direction, some focusing on the politics of misrecognition, others emphasizing the semiotic mechanisms that chart sociolinguistic boundaries and restrict the awareness of pragmatic phenomena (Bourdieu 1991; Irvine and Gal 2001; Silverstein 1995, 1998, 2001[1977]; Woolard 1998).

For Bourdieu, ideologies are determined by the interests of the classes they express, the interests of those who produce them, and the logic specific to the markets of their production (1991: 169). The shifts inherent in ideological representations veil the arbitrary nature of power and serve to impose “an apprehension of the established order as natural (orthodoxy) through the disguised imposition of systems of classification and of mental structures that are objectively adjusted to social structures” (1991: 169). Misrecognition penetrates the habitus, the set of dispositions to generate regularized and naturalized practices, perceptions and attitudes that coincide with their conditions of existence. A function and a tool of hegemony, misrecognition transforms the arbitrary - and thus, presumably, open to challenge - into the natural and immutable.

But ideologies are shaped by semiotic as well as political economic processes. Irvine and Gal (2001) identify three such processes: *Iconization*, *recursivity*, and *erasure*. Iconization transforms the sign relationship between linguistic and social features; recursivity maps the oppositions salient at one level of the relationship between social and linguistic distinctions onto another; erasure selectively highlights some aspects of the perception of sociolinguistic relations and elides others. The distortions that result from these processes often collude with broader political interests.

Exploring the limits of native speakers’ awareness of their language, Silverstein

I participated in some of these conversations. In other cases, with permission of the participants, I left the tape-recorder turned on. I then verified with the participants their continued permission to use the materials. In several instances, following the wishes of persons involved, I had erased the recorded material. In one instance I was granted the permission to retain the material under the condition of refraining from its direct quoting so as to prevent the identification of the participants. I have 168 hours of audio-recorded spontaneous - that is, not elicited by me - communication.

In 2002 I had conducted seven interviews with Barbadian poets, writers, and journalists. While I knew three of the interviewees from previous occasions, my personal acquaintance with the other four interviewees was limited to the event of interviewing.

argues that not all pragmatic forms are equally available to perception and analysis (2001[1977]). If the argument obtains, the perceptual limitations need to be considered in the analyses of language ideologies to avoid the risk of reading, *faute de mieux*, political meanings into essentially cognitive processes. Silverstein identifies three semiotic attributes crucial for the availability of pragmatic forms to metapragmatic awareness: (a) *unavoidable referentiality*, (b) *continuous segmentability* and (c) *relative presuppositionality of linguistic forms toward the context of use* (2001[1977]). Alternation involved in the pronominal address systems of deference vs. solidarity, the so-called T/V forms such as French *tous* vs. *vous* (Brown and Gilman 1960) exemplify *unavoidable referentiality*. Such utterances have an identifiable pragmatic function - in the case of T/V forms it is establishing the footing with the hearer in speech events - and form units of reference. In contrast, the phonetic markers of social stratification in American English that depend on variable articulation of certain sounds operate independently of units of reference. The classic example of this is the correlation of the distribution of post-vocalic /r/ in New York speech with class, gender, and the formality of discourse (Labov 1966, 1972). Although easily interpretable by native speakers, such markers do not have a referential function.

Continuous segmentability characterizes these pragmatic forms that occur in sequential order as overt meaningful units in speech, such as morphological units (stems and affixes), phrases, and sentences. *The relative degree of presuppositionality and creativity* concerns the question of whether pragmatic signals depend on or bring some contextual factors into existence. The use of deixis such as “this” or “that” involves high degree of presuppositionality. In contrast, the use of sociolectal shibboleths such as socially marked phonological variants can serve to conjure a particular social role or identity and therefore be highly creative. The use of Creole phonology in linguistic crossing of ethnic, national, and gender boundaries described by Rampton (1995: 207-8; 233) is an example of such creativity. Silverstein suggests that pragmatic forms that are unavoidably referential, continuously segmentable and relatively presupposing are much more easily available to awareness, and considers these attributes necessary for such availability.

Silverstein puts this framework to test by comparing the alternation of mother-in-law and everyday vocabularies in Djirbal of North Queensland with augmentative-diminutive gradation in a Wishram-Chinookan language, Kiksht. In support of his argument, the examples that contrast on all three semiotic dimensions considered by Silverstein as necessary for metapragmatic awareness - unavoidable referentiality, continuous segmentability, and relative presuppositionality - also fully contrast in their metapragmatic availability to the native speakers. However, my own data from spontaneous conversations and interviews recorded in Arawak Hill in Barbados show that, with one exception, speakers are aware of and able to comment on some pragmatic forms that are not characterized by such a clear-cut convergence of the semiotic attributes. While I realize the limitations of using a single pragmatic instance as the only datum to illustrate the elusive forms, I believe it is important to include it for its contrast with the forms available to speakers’ awareness. For the concern with the mechanisms that contribute to shifts between linguistic practices and ideologies, central to the present analysis, these data considered as a set raise the question about factors that influence the availability to conscious awareness of some of these forms - even though in terms of Silverstein’s model they should not be - and to the unavailability of the form seemingly no different in its semiotic properties from these upon which speakers are able to reflect. Related to that is the question of the ways in

which such semiotically fuzzy forms intersect with other mechanisms that operate on the ideologies of language: The constraints of linguistic markets.

I will explore these questions through a multilayered juxtaposition of the pragmatic forms recorded in spontaneous language use and metapragmatic commentaries about these form, with broader ideologies of language in Barbados and the sociolinguistic representations in the media and literature.

1.2. Linguistic markets in Barbados

While in some settings Creole languages have shed their stigma (Kulick 1992; Romaine 1994; Schieffelin and Doucet 1998), Bajan and English continue to be locked in a diglossic hierarchy of dichotomizing discourses and values informed by over three centuries of British colonialism. Drawing in their daily communication on the intertwined resources of Bajan, an English-related Creole, and of Barbadian English, Barbadians often note that they value Bajan for its naturalness, humor, and as an emblem of “self-knowing” (Herzfeld 1987) Barbadianness. These attributes are offset by the perception of Bajan as “broken English” associated with the lack of education and of respectable social standing.

These language ideologies depend on, and contribute to the cultural imagery surrounding the speakers. By naturalizing and preying on sociolinguistic distinctions, the “indexically pregnant forms” (Silverstein 1998: 136) legitimize access to social roles, networks, and configure social selves. The formal closeness of English and Bajan add uncertainty regarding the placement of intervarectal boundaries to linguistic pressures. While “broad” Bajan accent may disqualify a primary school math teacher for promotion or a journalist for employment with a newspaper,³ the identification of this accent selectively highlights some phonological divergences from the perceived standard while erasing another. Alfred Pragnell, a renowned radio personality and performer of humorous skits in Bajan who trains and hires radio announcers, explained to me that a Barbadian accent is acceptable, even desirable, for an announcer for it points to the local, authentic character of the media. In contrast, a “broad” Bajan accent is disadvantageous in most kinds of programming - humor and call-in programs being exceptions to this - as it suggests lack of education and professionalism. Pragnell illustrated the acceptable Barbadianism with the pronunciation of “high /oi/ (frontal rounded diphthong) like the Yorkshire speakers.” In contrast, the pronunciation of the glottal stop /b ʌ?/ in place of the dental one /b ʌt/, is stigmatized.

Language ideologies in Barbados are steeped in the colonial history that charted the society and its linguistic repertoire. Bringing a closure to over three centuries of British colonial rule and two hundred years of slavery, the Barbadian state came into existence in 1966. The new nation faced the task of reinventing its collective self that involved revisiting the paradox of the memory of subjugation set against pride and - for many - an authentic sense of belonging with the British imperial project. Representing Barbadianness for “self-display” (Herzfeld 1987), English fits into this complex relationship with the past

³ I owe the information concerning the critical role of the command of spoken English in interviews for jobs in print journalism and broadcasting to two seasoned media personalities who routinely interview job candidates, Adonijah and Alfred Pragnell.

as an emblem of its treasured aspects: Civilization, Westminster democracy, and education.

This emblematic role of English was at the center of recent controversy that concerned young Barbadian athletes interviewed on the regional Caribbean media at 2002 Carifta games. The Barbadian press reported that the members of Barbadian national team were “articulate and answered appropriately,” while Jamaicans in the same interview either failed to respond to questions or answered in monosyllables (*The Barbados Advocate*, Thursday, April 11, 2002). Yet, in press commentaries, this favorable impression of the Barbadians has been eclipsed by their use of Bajan, whereas the Jamaicans were commended for speaking in “Standard English.”

Blaming relaxed standards in Barbadian schools for the athletes’ assumed inability to “speak properly,” that is, in English, the *Advocate* editorial referred to their public performance as “loads of linguistic garbage,” and charged them with bringing shame to their country.⁴ In response, some readers defended Bajan as a “part of Barbadian heritage,” “beautiful art form,” and a “national treasure.” Far from threatening Standard English or national pride, one letter stated, Bajan was at risk of sharing the fate of other nostalgic tropes of Barbadian identity such as sugar cane, the flying fish, and native beach rights. Although in everyday life Bajan is a robust vehicle of communication for Barbadians of all ages and at issue was the use of Bajan by teenagers, the same reader presented Bajan as the language of the elderly. With the passing of the older generation, he suggested, the dialect, too, will disappear. Constructing Bajan now as a national stigma, now as a bucolic component of national heritage, the debate continued for weeks. Illustrating the salience of linguistic choices for Barbadians, the Carifta debate underscores the sociolinguistic constructs that underpin linguistic values, and points to their controversial character. Further, it allows a glimpse at the ways linguistic markets are performatively constituted.

I learned of the Carifta debate three months later from a Barbadian poet, Norma Meek who, unlike the mainstream writers, uses Bajan in her work. Hoping that Bajan and its speakers will gain acceptance, she views Bajan poetry as instrumental to stimulating literary interests among Barbadians. Courses in the Caribbean Linguistics that she took at the University of the West Indies contributed to her perspective on language. She recapitulates this experience in “Nation Language,” a poem published in her first dialect book,

I went to University and learn ‘bout Linguistics.
But I wonder if them serious or if them playing tricks?
They tell me what I born and hear and learn to talk from small,
Did a proper language on it own, not ‘bad English’ at all.
They say Barbados got a dialect that they does call ‘Bajan’
With a structure and a syntax, that is the nation own.
And when Bajans hear them dialect, don’t care how far them roam,
They does get real excited, and turn them thoughts to home.

⁴ I had an opportunity to interview and record two of the members of the Barbados national sport team featured in the Carifta debate. Because both have subsequently requested that I removed the interviews from my data, the materials could not be incorporated in the analysis. Each person agreed, however, to my reporting their ability to speak English, as well as their experience of harsh criticism and punitive measures meted out by their school teachers and administration in reaction to negative publicity related to the incident as the reason for the withdrawal of the permission to use the interviews. One of these persons reported having received a failing grade in English for the use of Bajan in the media interview in question.

(Two strophes omitted)

Well, I did glad to hear that. But I did wonder why
Them academics know this and wouldn't even try
To teach people 'bout here they don't have to be shame
To speak we nation language - there wouldn't be no blame.

(Meek 2001: 9)

For her language choice, Meek notes, she gets “lashes from official Barbados, and all those die-hard British people, Black Britishers,” who blame her for the linguistic corruption of Barbadian youth. This kind of work is difficult to publish through official venues. For example, in spite of the favorable foreword written by a professor at the University of the West Indies, *Cool*, the university magazine, rejected her poetry. As other Barbadian writers, Norma Meek publishes her work herself. It sells well to a diverse audience including tourists who charge on their credit cards the authentication of their exotic destinations inscribed in language artifacts. She also performs her poems in public readings and some enterprising teachers occasionally use them in the classroom.

My conversations with Meek show the limits of the censorial power of the media. Through its assault on Bajan, the Carifta debate reinforced Meek's commitment to Bajan writing. Further, Meek's views on the legitimacy and value of dialect are occasionally published in the “Opinion” column in the *Advocate*, with the caveat of not representing the editors' perspective. Her Bajan writing has been cited in the debate and on other occasions as an example of the negative influences on the language of young Barbadians. Yet, their criticisms of Meek's work notwithstanding, the media provide the writer with free publicity and an opportunity to broadcast her views.

Meek's writing and linguistic choices entailed by it are situated at the intersection of multiple linguistic markets. Corroborating the critiques of Bourdieu's paradigm for its lack of attention to the diversity of such markets and for overestimating the hold of hegemony (Woolard 1985), Meek's work has been motivated by the linguistic relativism of *homo academicus*, the prescriptivist orthodoxy of the official publishing, and the exoticism-seeking tastes of the modern global tourist. The ideologies of media and the writer who operates on these media's margins are at odds with each other. But the desktop publishing technology allows Meek to break free from the monopoly of the official publishing market - though not its censorship - and to surrender her writing to the control of her readers.

Clearly, metapragmatic events such as the Carifta debate have an important role in broadcasting the ideological dogma of hegemonic institutions. Further, by influencing those directly involved in media and literary production, such events not only display but also entail the terms - values and categories - of the very markets that censor them. Yet, the direction of this influence is far from obvious.

And, Barbadian press has been shifting its approach to the representation of sociolinguistic diversity. In the mid-nineties, Bajan appeared in serious reporting only in direct quotation with close attention to accuracy of represented speech. As one editor told me, “If the person speaks dialect and we quote, we quote verbatim, that is, in dialect. We have the responsibility for projecting the specific language of that particular person” (personal interview, September 2, 1996). The commitment to accuracy has not prevented

the foregrounding of Bajan speech of some individuals and their erasure from the speech of others, constructing social contrasts through conjured linguistic ones. While the press has often represented lower-class Barbadians as speaking Bajan, the editorial policy has been to clean up any non-standard features when representing the language of higher-status speakers. Although Barbadian politicians at times can be heard on the radio and television using Bajan, in newspaper reporting they are always represented as speaking English (Fenigsen 1999). Another editor justified the policy, "As a journalist you are a person of public responsibility, and you want to project a certain image [of Barbados] to the local and overseas public" (personal interview, September 7, 1996). This systematic representational bias and the recognition of the resulting stigmatization of lower-class speakers have led the editors of *The Nation*, one of two major newspapers in Barbados, to adopt a policy of the exclusive use of English in representing spoken discourse.

The ideological framework that reduces Barbadian sociolinguistic diversity to homogenous registers and discrete social dialects continues to present an opportunity as well as a problem for creative writers. Because these sociolinguistic constructs are highly recognizable, writing that conforms to that framework - aside from the widespread reluctance toward print representation of Bajan (Fenigsen 1999) - is relatively risk-free and decodable. To illustrate these dynamics, I will draw on my conversations with Nailah Folami Imoja, a writer, poet, and journalist who spent part of her childhood in England and moved to Barbados with her Barbadian parents when she was 11 years old.

Imoja notes several factors as influential on her perspective on language: The experience of having to master Bajan as a second language, an involvement with the "Nation Language" literary movement inspired by Kamau Braithwaite, courses in linguistics and critical theory she took in college, and her work as an editor of *The Nation*. Discussing her representational choices and the feedback she has received from the readers, Imoja noted that texts that attribute undiluted Bajan usage to lower class black speakers and Standard English to the "upper classes" meet with much greater acceptance than efforts to represent "the fact that we switch all the time." A reader wrote about Imoja's recently published, first romance novel, *To Star, with love* (Nyeelah 2001), "This book outshines [other romance novels] because it's about my people." A clerk at the University of the West Indies Bookstore, aware of my interest in language, enthusiastically recommended the novel to me because "it shows how real Bajans talk." The romance features Star, a teacher, Randall, a TV broadcaster, and - in passing - Star's great-grandmother, an old woman from rural Barbados. Conforming to the ruling ideological paradigm, the dialogue attributed to Star and Randall is in English. The only Bajan phrases are uttered by Star's ancient relative.

At the time, Imoja was working on another manuscript where, she said, to invoke different roles and moods of the narrator, she was employing the strategy of blending Bajan with English. As she told me, her friend commented about her manuscript-in-progress that the "mixing" of Bajan with English was confusing because it didn't "go along with the person or situation," in other words, because it did not reduce the variability to diagrammatically transparent and presupposing registers and dialects. A reviewer for an undisclosed international publisher criticized the manuscript for the same perceived shortcomings. To conform to the expectations of her readers and publisher, Imoja intended to revise the manuscript by reverting to her previous representational strategy. Noting that "some people think the character should speak the same way even though that's not reality," whenever introducing more of stylistic complexity, Imoja would "have characters explain

why they switch between Bajan and English, ‘I’m a teacher so here I have to speak like this,’ “I work in a hotel so here or to this person I have to speak like this.”

The writer’s metapragmatic framework allows her to penetrate the complexities of Barbadian linguistic practices with greater delicacy than accessible to many others and thus to move beyond the staple interpretations in terms of register and dialect. But the expectations of her readership and the gatekeepers in the publishing industry push her representational strategies to conform to the prevalent paradigm. Such representations participate in the dialectics of indexical orders (Silverstein 1995) that press the linguistic variability and social diversity into the familiar hierarchies of value and prestige. By reflecting the dominant ideologies, once launched into public domain such representations further contribute to their durability.

2. Interpretive toolkit: Local metapragmatics

Barbadians interpret their linguistic diversity through two central paradigms. One, captured by a local expression, “adjusting to suit,” in attending to the situation of language use corresponds to the linguist’s “register.” The other, in its focus on the connections between social identities and linguistic differentiation corresponds to the linguist’s “sociolect.” In various ways, each supports the hierarchical ranking of language varieties and their speakers. By highlighting the layering of individual repertoires and the speaker’s skill in their contextual deployment the first paradigm points to the richness of speaker’s resources. It recognizes, however, only a passive, reactive role of the speaker who is seen as adjusting to, rather than creatively manipulating the context. Further, it entails a “register demand” (Silverstein 1995: 286), an expectation for the speaker to employ the contextually stipulated variant. Failure may result in embarrassment, job loss, or - in the case of the athletes - in the onslaught by the media. Attributing Bajan to lower-class uneducated Black Barbadians and Barbadian English to upper-class educated Whites, the second paradigm ranks social and linguistic diversity and essentializes and simplifies the relationship between them. For some speakers at least, the richness and complexity of individual repertoires presupposed by the notion of “adjusting to suit,” becomes overshadowed by the emblematic value assigned to the relationship between language varieties and categories of speakers. By emphasizing the low prestige of Bajan and high prestige of English, and by turning these varieties into emblems of seemingly discrete social categories of race, class, and education, the paradigm further reifies the hierarchies it presupposes.

2.1. Pronouncing personal qualities

In line with the familiar (tauto)logic of sociolinguistic stigmatization, the stigma attached to Bajan and the stigma attached to its essentialized speaker mutually reinforce each other. In the interviews I conducted in Arawak Hill, 68 out of 74 respondents observed that for Barbadians Bajan points to plantation labor, poor education, backwardness and shiftlessness, and that low social status presupposes Bajan speech. To illustrate, elderly plantation workers, Mrs. Blake and Mr. Blackett offered a perspective on language that links language and class and, in case of Mr. Blackett, formal education:

- Mr. Blackett: [educated people] put them words in proper place
 Mrs. Blake: I would say that *en* [negative] depend on the edu - on how you come up, eh? The man that got to come up in top class he talk proper, the lower class man talk
 Mr. Blackett: put words anyhow
 J. Fenigsen: how come?
 Mrs. Blake: you *en* [negative.] get the opportunity - you may have the interest, want talk good and thing but the Lord *en* [negative] give you the opportunity in life. If you poor, your talk poor too.
 Mr. Blackett: true, true

Mrs. Blake further suggested that frequent and early contacts with people who speak “good,” “the way you come up,” may be as important as education. In a similar vein, Mr. Rogers, a Black police officer, comments:

If you had to meet some person working in the cane field, you will pick it up fairly easy that that person is from the kind of old school and of no education. “Coma,” you know, “looka here.” You find that kind of language. “Bring some wa[ter] fo me,” that kind of thing, you know. Yes, well, it will be hard-core dialect.

English, on the other hand, indicates intelligence:

You can know in this very short space of time the role the person puts over himself and or herself in what they saying. A person of intelligence, they will probably fairly well attuned to English language.

An extreme perspective on the association between Bajan, intelligence and class presented Mr Walcott, the only middle class white Barbadian among my Arawak Hill consultants:

There is one fellow tending the chicken pen and he’s a good example of probably as crude broad Barbadian... he’s not vulgar but his language is so poor that even the workers have difficulty comprehending what he’s saying. As a child he was knocked down by a car and he has a very large scar in his head. He’s obviously extremely simple, one a rare case, he’s also probably a bit retarded, that will probably run in the family. A typical agricultural laborer of, say, twenty - thirty years ago.

Let me stress that this bold metonymic nomination of a supposedly “extremely simple” and “a bit retarded” person as a quintessential Bajan speaker is unique; the connection between Bajan, plantation labor and educational deficiency is much more common.⁵

⁵ 54 of the interviewed 74 persons associated Bajan with plantation labor, poor education, backwardness, lack of striving and low social status. 12 others pointed out that one’s social environment may be more important than formal education. Three respondents (all of whom had extensive experience as church preachers), argued that other social circumstances can be overcome by individual effort, that is, by striving. Addington Forde, a member of Barbados Cultural Council, made the same point in an interview with me in the Summer 2002. Three other respondents from Arawak Hill (each of whom spent an extended time working in England and Canada) pointed this experience as the main factor in language shift. Two respondents had no opinion on the matter.

56 respondents, self-identified as Black Barbadians, considered Bajan as “Black people’s” talk, while acknowledging that white Barbadians, too, often speak it. The only White Barbadian included in these interviews held the same opinion. 15 respondents, self-identified as Black Barbadians, considered Bajan

In contrast, Mr. Niles, a retired plantation worker and preacher keenly aware of stereotypes linking language and social class, deflects their typifying power:

People look down on an agriculturer, they feel that they is a grade above agriculture, people wouldn't want to expect not even an expression. The thing that the agriculturer can't talk proper, we say, "plain English," is for years now. I was talking with a certain individual so he asked me what assignment I follow up [in life], I says, "agriculturing" and the fellow had doubted me, he said, "but you don't act so." Because people expect that just what you is you act like that. But I want to tell you, you not supposed to act up to satisfy they claim, really, you know.

The differences between these positions remind us that language ideologies may be consensual as they are contentious. If we set aside Mr. Walcott's extraordinary link between "broad" Bajan and mental retardation, these speakers share the inventory of factors that may be accountable for social variability of linguistic repertoires but disagree in assigning importance to these factors. The differences between Mrs. Blake, Mr. Blackett, and Mr. Niles include not only the kinds of social circumstances seen as crucial in shaping one's repertoire but also a more fundamental contrast between two kinds of sociolinguistic hermeneutics: One privileges structure, the other agency as the final determinants of one's ways of speaking. While Mrs. Blake and Mr. Blackett assign determinant role to socio-structural factors such as class and formal education, Mr. Niles puts up an ideological battle against this deterministic perspective and claims the right and ability to desert his sociolinguistic pigeon-hole.

2.2. History and anatomy: Essentializing language and race

Any reasoning that interprets a relationship between linguistic form and a category of speakers may rationalize "the indexical value of the forms in terms (...) that are independent of the usages at issue" (Silverstein 1992: 316). At times, such explanatory paradigms treat linguistic practices as indexical of some natural essences of the speakers. The claim of inherent, virtually indexical linkages between Bajan and race is unique in my Arawak Hill data but so is the person who has made it - the only white Barbadian⁶ in the vicinity of the village where in 1994 I did my fieldwork.

Identifying Bajan as his home variety, Mr. Walcott⁷ notes that, as did other "poor whites," he learned English later in life, and emphasizes the contributions of his ancestors - the indentured servants - to the development of Bajan. However, he does not consider it as

unmarked for race. All these respondents were in the youngest age group (total of 22) within the cohort, between 18 and 21 years old. A generation shift from considering Bajan "Black Talk" to considering Bajan as a population-wide colloquial talk is one possible explanation for this age distribution. This explanation receives an indirect support from the data discussed above and concerning Carifta incident when young athletes used Bajan in the Caribbean media interview.

⁶ I do not treat Mr. Walcott's views as representative of other White Barbadians.

⁷ Aside from these writers and media personalities who agreed to be acknowledged by their real names, Adonijah, Nailah Fulami Imoja, Norma Meek, and Alfred Pragnell, I use pseudonyms for all my other consultants.

“properly” the “poor whites” way of speaking. In a painstaking exegesis that naturalizes linguistic differences and forges their socially emblematic value, Walcott attempts to reconcile his depiction of the use of Bajan by both Blacks and Whites with his efforts to distance the poor whites from dialect.

Walcott credits the indentured servants with quaint components of Bajan lexicon, such as *tayching* ‘boiling sugar’ and *grabble* ‘grab’ that “you can find in Shakespeare.”⁸ Further, he attributes the “poor whites” phonological influence that he describes as “spelling out your Rs,” and “dropping your tee eitches” to the Scottish and Irish dialects of English. He does not, however, trace all Bajan features to the British ancestry. He attributes its “ungrammaticalities,” “messing up your tenses,” “lack of carefulness,” and the “overall crudeness of speech,” to the African slaves - “obviously uneducated” and “quite primitive” - who would “inevitably tarnish any civilized expression.” Walcott seeks to naturalize the purported Blacks’ responsibility for the stigmatized phonology by suggesting “black persons” to be literally “thick-tongued” and “anatomically unable to pronounce good English as we know it;” for example, to get “their tee-eitches come off right.” Striking in Walcott’s position is not only his anatomical naturalization of the phonological difference between Bajan and English, but also the ideologically greased shift in the explanation of the same trait depending on the race of the speakers: When Whites do not fricate their dentals, it bespeaks for him of their British-dialectal heritage; the same feature of black speech, in his view, exposes anatomical impairment.

For Walcott, when Black Barbadians speak “educated” English “projecting the image that this is the language of that particular segment like you are a blue blood person,” it is “very pretentious for them to carry on like that.” While he considers good English obligatory for Black Barbadians representing a “high office” or “Barbados to the international public,” they should not use it when “conversating under normal circumstances.” The contextual obligation to use English does not imply entitlement to it as an emblem of educated Black identity. In Walcott’s sociolinguistic universe, Black Barbadians have no proprietary claims on Queen’s English.

Another angle in this ideological triangulation is Walcott’s self-distancing from Bajan. According to him, “poor whites” owe dialect speech to their association with Black laborers and exposure to their “uneducated ways.” Thus, Bajan, a result of a linguistic joint venture between Whites and Blacks, habitually used by the “poor whites,” and seldom used by “the educated black classes,” remains “essentially black.” Walcott’s recognition of the social distribution of Bajan and English does not hinder his reordering of the communities of linguistic practice into imagined communities of (bio) cultural and sociolinguistic essences.

2.3. *Language and mobility*

For people who grew up speaking Bajan, the acquisition of English is semiotic proof - an index and an icon - of their social advancement. The trajectory of one’s linguistic arrival parallels that of one’s social mobility. Notes the police officer, Mr. Rogers:

⁸ Mr. Walcott credits Frank Collymore’s (1955) glossary of Barbadian dialect for his lexical knowledge.

No matter whether the parents are still die-hard, hard-core Bajan dialect speakers, you have to show that, hey, you have improved, you've come, you're representing them, you don't stay one place. Take my father, my mother, they were labourers, you know. And my father eggs on, we must be growing, at least he can look at him and say, "hey this fellow has gone on, this fellow has learnt some thing,"

Mr. Rogers works on erasing the shibboleths of Bajan from the speech of his son, Ben:

You have to improve yourself, what can you do. I'm trying to tell my son, no, "I miakes," no, "I does," no that's not, son, boy. When you're taught this thing you realize it sounds wrong to say, "I miakes," and "I has" and that kind of thing so, is wrong!

For, good English is indispensable for professional advancement:

Someone who has a pretty good job, it is incumbent upon you to speak properly, because you may be the company's representative you know, and your company not gonna feel very good if you're representing them and you can't speak English. Whether is electronic or printed media you have to be able to project yourself well and project the image of the company. You are forced to speak well. And those people who have a good grasp of English language will stand out definitely.

The perception of English as an index of status and class that regiments access to jobs and social networks in Barbados is not new. Alfred Pragnell recalls:

It was a symbol of the lower class, and everybody was striving in these very difficult thirties and forties to make a better life for themselves. So the language, speaking Standard English - not with the fat phony accent, but good strong Barbadian accent - and speaking well and clearly, this was like having a passport. I remember, "oh, he speaks so well," or "she speaks so well" and people liked that. It was a little entrée into better jobs, into society, into something else, you know. It opened the door.

In the linguistic-ideological universe where English opens the door to social mobility and is requisite in the representation of one's professional self, people who, like Mr. Rogers, have walked the road of linguistic progress from cane fields to white-collar jobs are in a vulnerable position. As Mr. Rogers observes, these jobs and their visible markers such as clothing, trigger expectations of specific linguistic faculties:

The middle class people would give you a knocking for dialect speech. Mostly those people must be wearing a tie, and people associate anyone who's wearing a tie as intelligent and how is he a person who can be living in town. That goes with the territory. As you put on a tie, is automatically assumed that hey, that person can speak well. So if you formed not to be like that, you'll run into trouble, especially if you go to business places where the people are very versed in English. They don't scoff upon you openly, they will behind your back. And the message they may get back to your boss, "what kind o person you're sending to deal with us." So I'm saying is important, for that person, if he's coming to represent the company to be of some standing and how we can deliver it into our speech.

In describing these exclusionary practices, Mr. Rogers carves out for himself an ambivalent position within the middle-class linguistic field. Through his pronominal usage, he situates himself as a potential target of scoffing. It is "they" who scoff and "may get back to your boss," but it is "we" who need to "deliver it [the social standing] into our speech." However, his being privy to those behind-the-back scoffs suggests an ability to cross to the

other side. According to Bakhtin (1981[1935]: 295-6) and, later, Bourdieu (1991[1982]: chpt.1), it is precisely such liminally placed individuals who develop a sharp awareness of linguistic differentiation and its underpinning power relations.

An unknowing interlocutor of Bourdieu, Mr. Rogers knows the middle-class strategies of intimidation and articulates the tensions resulting from the disparity between linguistic competence acquired within one's linguistic habitus (Bourdieu 1991: 51, 81) and the social expectations for the superposed variety in which one is only - more or less - "versed" (see also Ferguson 1959):

You could be at a loss. You could observe quickly, the confidence goes. Especially if you confronted with people who essentially speak English and good English. You gonna feel uneasy in that kind of company. You gonna be understood, yeah, what you say is gonna be understood, but you're not part of the crowd.

2.4. *Conjuring sociolinguistic inferior*

The entry-level members of Barbadian middle classes recursively (Irvine and Gal 2001) reproduce the sociolinguistic contrasts they perceive as setting them apart from the elites by projecting such contrasts onto the relationship between themselves and the working classes whom they consider prone to hypercorrection (Labov 1966). One morphosyntactic feature often so identified is the use of the post-verbal affix /s/. Mr. Rogers observes:

They make an effort to speak English, but is difficult in a lot of ways. They put on an /s/ to the thing, "I miakes," and "I does" and that kind of thing-so. They couldn't a say "I do," and "I make," so when they try to speak properly, you'll find that they always add on an /s/, to verbs that are not ending in it, you know. They try to speak it ok, and you couldn't dissuade them from it, them think they are speaking correctly. If, for instance, you go and you interview them, they say "ok, this kind of person now, you have to speak fairly well," and you'll hear "I does" and "I miakes." And let me tell you, it's so much embedded in them that you can't tell them they're not speaking proper English, that's the fact.

According to these widespread perceptions, these speakers recognize the value of legitimate variety (Bourdieu 1991: 62), yet lack the knowledge of its grammatical rules such as the distribution of the post-verbal affix /s/.⁹ While these forms indeed do appear in Barbadian discourse, their use is neither very frequent in more formal registers of the working class speech, nor is it entirely absent from the corresponding registers of the middle class. The attribution of such practices to the working class by the new middle class suggests that this kind of metapragmatic reflection serves to erect a barrier of sociolinguistic distinction between these middle class speakers and those from whose ranks they have come.

In Barbados, as in other places, linguistic ideologies participate in the broader semiotics of difference that encompasses such things as race, clothing, and the articulatory habits. Herzfeld's (1987: 112) point that Greek linguistic tensions are "not purely, or even

⁹ Other metapragmatically salient and often mentioned features of hypercorrect usage more broadly pertain to the person and number marking of auxiliary verbs and to the tense system - that is, to the formal areas of discontinuity between Bajan and English privileged in the corrective practices at school.

primarily, a matter of language,” is clearly valid in Barbados, an Atlantic of histories apart from Greece and its islands. And, its inflections notwithstanding, this ideological ordering of the linguistic varieties and their paradigmatic speakers can be persuasive. As Mr. Niles tells us, an effort linguistically to break away from that grid meets with incredulity: An “agriculturur” who talks “plain”? No way.

The above examples illustrate the intricacy of linguistic practices and the heterogeneity of language ideologies. Linguistic practices, including the formal distribution of varietal tokens, are more than epiphenomenal correlates of social identities and contexts; they also serve as a strategic tool for creative negotiation of one’s relationships with others. By selectively drawing on Barbadian discourses of inequality and language, people manipulate links between social personae, contexts, and varietal usage to configure self and its alignments within the sociolinguistic system. Further, the differences between Mrs. Blake’s and Mr. Blackett’s relatively essentializing approach to linguistic and social differentiation and the perspective cognizant of individual agency of the speaker presented by Mr. Niles - each of whom share a similar social background - suggest that ideologies of language are only shared to a degree and the social distribution of ideological frameworks does not directly reflect the social positioning of their proponents. For concerns with language ideologies attention to such ideological heterogeneity is important. The ability of one speaker to articulate phenomena elusive to others suggests the need for an inclusion of liminality and for consideration of properties of the phenomena only liminally available to reflection in our thinking about linguistic awareness.

2.5. Registering context

The most salient dimension of register differentiation in Barbadian metapragmatics draws on formal contrasts between English and Bajan. When asked how they choose between Bajan and English my village consultants describe the choice between English and Bajan as situational. One of the contextual components they consider central to this choice is the perceived relative status of one’s interlocutors. English, or its best approximation available to the speaker, is preferred in interactions with persons of higher status. Bajan is preferred - and often obligatory - in interactions with persons of equal or lower status. In this regard, the pragmatic functioning of Bajan and English parallels the T/V forms of address (Brown and Gilman 1960).

However, the same respondents note that status relations can be mitigated by familiarity that authorizes, even stipulates, the use of Bajan. These norms are complicated even further by other contextual considerations, notably by the requirement for the use of English in formal communication. In formal communication, political speeches, church and the media, the majority of my consultants want to speak and hear Barbadian Standard English. They sanction, even encourage Bajan usage in such settings, but only in regimented functions. In church, regardless of denomination, excerpts from the Scriptures are to be delivered in BSE, as is the sermon, while the admonitory parts of the sermon may be seasoned with Bajan “quotes.” I have recorded spontaneous conversations between parishioners in which they sternly criticized some local clergy for the use of Bajan phonology. On television and the radio, BSE is considered the obligatory matrix for serious reporting, but humorous Bajan “side-lines” are appreciated. Bajan is admitted into discourse

designated by the consultants as formal in specialized functions and discursive slots. It may serve an invocation of a shared, "grassroots" Bajan identity or index a community of laughter, but it has to be confined to sanitized quotes, indicated in the oral discourse by a change of voice quality, or discourse-framing phrases ("as people say . . .") that distance the authorial voice from the ventrilocution. Such uses of Bajan are safe for the speaker as long as their deliberateness is sufficiently indexed, protecting the speaker from the suspicion of having resorted to it, in Bourdieu's words, *faute de mieux* (1991: 69).

The following three examples from my fieldwork in Arawak Hill in 1994 illustrate the distribution of the contrasting English and Bajan forms that reflects the complexity of considerations at play, and suggest the varying degree of the speakers' awareness of these choices. The first example shows, among other things, that the requirement for the use of English toward persons of higher status can be overridden by relationship of familiarity and the use of Bajan it entails. In this case, my relatively high status as an addressee that depended on the participants' knowledge of my educational level specified the use of English as the unmarked choice. Nevertheless, the participants who knew me well opted for Bajan. The second example shows the contextually creative use of English with me by a person with whom I was on "Bajan" terms for the purpose of "undoing" that familiar relationship. The third example shows Bajan interjections in an official, public performance. The intriguing aspect of this last case is that although the speaker's use of Bajan conforms to the norms articulated to me by my consultants, including this particular person, and the same speaker identified the linguistic features involved in the interjections as typically Bajan, the speaker nevertheless considered the entire speech as performed in Bajan. I will tentatively suggest some factors that may be accountable for the speaker's linguistic classification of his usage.

Example 1.

Carmen and Pat, relatives of Mrs. Farley, an elderly woman with whom I stayed, paid her a visit. The two sisters worked in an insurance company in Bridgetown and lived in Oistins. At first, Mrs. Farley, her vision and hearing fading, did not recognize the visitors. In the transcript, Bajan forms appear in boldface.

- 1 CC Good mornin aunt Liz
- 2 EF Mornin mornin, who **de** person is?
- 3 CC Carmen. How **Ø** you goin'?
- 4 EF Praise the Lor, I **Ø** still here
- 5 PC (to JF) How are you? Aunt Liz, how **Ø** you goin'?
- 6 JF Thank you, I'm fine
- 7 CC (to JF) **Dat** **Ø** my siste Pat (unint.)
- 8 EF (to JF) move that, bring **dat** chair over here
- 9 PC (to JF) That's all right, (to EF) your hip **Ø** still hurtin you?
- 10 EF **de** pain **en gan** away, old age **Ø** no sport, man
- 11 CC I **bring** you some Vapo Vaporub (a heating ointment), Marla, **Boysie** sista **de** one **a** **de** pharmacy
- 12 send **um** for you to **troi** .
- 13 EF I **en** expec you carry **nan** for me, **de** love **Ø** still there, you hear?
- 14 CC An how **Ø** you **mean** (turning to JF) So you **Ø** doin all right?
- 15 JF Oh yeah, I'm doing all right, getting on with my work
- 16 PC Is this your first visit to Barbados?
- 17 JF No, but for the first time
- 18 CC You stay long enough

- 19 PC So you've been here before, then. How are you enjoying Barbados?
 20 JF I really like it
 21 PC (to CC) Ø you goin help she wid de car?

Mrs. Farley's initial inquiry directed at seemingly unfamiliar visitors has a Barbadian colloquial English syntax that co-occurs with Bajan phonology that, according to my extended observation of Mrs. Farley's speech when I lived with her during my fieldwork, prevalently though not exclusively co-occurred with English syntax in her usage (line 2). Once the identity of her relatives is established Mrs. Farley uses Bajan copula-less construction of verb phrases (lines 10, 13), the negator /en/ (lines 10, 13), and a double negative (line 13). Carmen and Pat use Bajan talking to Mrs. Farley and to each other. Carmen also uses Bajan while talking to me.¹⁰ Pat switches between Bajan and English forms, depending on whom she was talking to. She uses Bajan with Mrs. Farley and Carmen.¹¹ Talking to me, Pat switches to English syntax and phonology.¹² While Pat's code-switching strategy conforms to the rules for "adjusting to suit," Carmen's use of Bajan to me violates the principle of choosing the variety spoken by the interlocutor. My own linguistic usage during this conversation is not Bajan, and one would expect Carmen to use "plain" ("correct") English, as her sister does. Indeed, when we first met, Carmen used "plain English," only eventually shifting to Bajan. Her attentiveness to code choice became apparent when at one point she asked if I did not mind her speaking Bajan to me. Once she had gotten to know me better, she said, it felt more natural. The difference between Pat's and Carmen's linguistic choices reflects the varying degree of familiarity: To Pat I am still a stranger, Carmen knows me well. The next example shows that the contrast between Bajan and English may not only reflect but also manipulate the relationship.

Example 2

The event involves Kassanne, a woman of scandalous reputation in the village as sexually reckless and a practitioner of *obeah*. Shortly before, she took center stage in

¹⁰ The Bajan syntactic features in Carmen's talk directed at me include a copula-less construction of interrogative phrases (lines 3, and 14), the absence of the stative "is" in the evidential phrase "dhet mai siste Pat" (line 7), and a verb form "bring," unmarked for past tense (line 11). Carmen also uses an undifferentiated-for-gender pronoun "um" (line 12). The Bajan phonological features of Carmen's discourse include the alveolar articulation of V-ing final nasal consonants (lines 1, 3, 14). Since the English interdental fricative articulation /dh/ is often found in Bajan discourse of many speakers, I do not consider Carmen's articulation of it in lines 7 as a phonological code switch. These Bajan syntactic and phonological features also occur in Carmen's discourse directed to me (lines 7, 14).

¹¹ The Bajan syntactic features in Pat's talk directed at Mrs. Farley and Carmen include a copula-less construction of the continuative verb phrase (lines 5, 21), and the use of the objective case pronominal form "she," in a context where English usage requires a subjective case "her" (line 21). The Bajan phonological features of Pat's discourse include an alveolar articulation of the V-ing final consonant (lines 5, 9 and 21). These Bajan features of Pat's discourse are limited to her two turns directed at Mrs. Farley and Carmen.

¹² English syntactic forms in Pat's talk directed at me include the copula-full construction of continuative verb phrases (lines 5 and 19) and the auxiliary stative "is" in affirmative and interrogative constructions (lines 9 and 16). The phonological features include the velar articulation of the V-ing final nasal. The English syntactic and phonological features occur exclusively in the segments of Pat's talk directed at me.

village gossip. Accused by a local shopkeeper of stealing money from his cash box, Kassanne filed a complaint at the police station against her accuser for sexual harassment casting the theft charges as a cover-up. In private discussions village opinion was divided, but in public people voiced support for the storekeeper and ostracized the woman and her family.

I lived at that time with Mrs. Farley who requested that I stopped visiting Kassanne. As I was debating what to do, the situation took a dramatic turn: During a gambling dispute, Kassanne's eleven-year-old son seriously wounded one of Mrs. Farley's nephews with a "collin" (machete). Weeks passed without my visiting Kassanne when one morning I was helping to clean Mrs. Farley's front yard and Kassanne stepped off the 10:15 bus, dressed in tight denim shorts, a figure-hugging tank top, and shiny-yellow platform shoes. Kassanne had always avoided Mrs. Farley and I was quite surprised to see her walk, arms akimbo, into Mrs. Farley's "gap" (the driveway to a house). Kassanne waited until I straightened up, and said, "Good morning, mistress, how are you going today." And then she just turned around and left. I was perplexed by her abrupt appearance, formal English - a distant echo of our first meeting months earlier - and the form "mistress" instead of my first name.

Mrs. Farley appeared in the doorway and proceeded to chide me for talking with this "worthless," "ugly" (also a term of moral condemnation) woman. About Kassanne's greeting she commented, "a sheer mockery, man!" Her friend, Vonnice, also considered Kassanne's behavior offensive, "Just look at she, how she talking, talking, insulting people like that! I would give she a 'mistress!' No manners, no manners at all." Then, focusing on the social distance sealed by Kassanne's utterance, Vonnice summed up the situation, "she en [neg.] know you, you en [neg.] know she, fine with me!" In her subsequent narratives of the incident Mrs. Farley reported (and censored) the form, "Mistress" and the English of Kassanne's greeting.

Eight years later, I saw Kassanne again. She greeted me with the familiar, "how you going, Jenny." Invoking a Bajan expression about using English to put on airs, "talking great," she joked about having taught me a lesson, "you play great with me, I play great with you." The old grudge has been forgiven.

Barbadian speakers routinely employ this kind of pragmatics of familiarity and distance and easily comment on its principles in general terms and identify instances of its use. But what accounts for its availability to the speakers' awareness? In terms of the semiotic criteria distinguished by Silverstein, the forms involved present a mixed score. The properties of pragmatic forms involved in the register alternation between Bajan and English include contrasts between formal features that are unavoidably referential and between those that are not. For instance, the alternation of auxiliary inclusive and of zero auxiliary progressive tense involves an unavoidably referential form. The phonological alternation does not. Likewise, the syntactic alternation is continuously segmentable and the phonological one is not. While the pragmatic function of the alternation between Bajan and English presupposes the cultural salience of the familiarity vs. distance, in entailing familiarity or distance through its situational use the alternation has a context-creative function. Indeed, Barbadian speakers interpret familiarity as negotiated through such pragmatic practices.

2.6. So, what is missing?

I have suggested that the speakers have at their disposal subtle metapragmatic resources for reflecting and commenting on the sociolectal and register-type variation. While essentializing the relationships between linguistic and social differentiation, this interpretive framework still recognizes the creative employment of register switching to strategically invoke the modalities of social relations. However, the following example from the speech I have recorded at the school graduation ceremony in Arawak Hill in June, 1994, shows that some pragmatic phenomena elude that metapragmatic framework. The sequence that includes Bajan forms is italicized. Bajan forms appear in boldface.

Example 3.

Now, with the exercises having been completed we shall now move on, and my present task is now to introduce to you the guest speaker, Honorable Keith Simmons. (...). I've known the guest speaker from the time I was a boy, a long time before the nineties (audience laughs). And I'll say no more of that. At first he was educated at Saint John Baptist, Good Shepherd, and Wellesley Hall primary schools, and then followed to Combremere. After the Combremere, he joined the civil service in nineteen fifty eight. After working there four years, he left the island, went to UK, where he joined the London School Executive. From there he went on to the Royal Air Force (...). During his stay in UK, he studied law and was called to bar at Middle Temple. On his returning to Barbados, he practiced his law for three years, nineteen seventy-seventy three and became a Magistrate. Keith Simmons worked not only in Barbados but in Bermuda for eight years (...). If we go back a little bit, he was a member of Supreme Court in nineteen eighty three, a Minister of Education in nineteen ninety three to ninety four. So, he's a man of many parts. That's not all. During the years seventy to seventy two, he was the Secretary of the Amateur Athletic Association, he was senior vice-President of the Barbados Football Association (...) founder of the Men Ball Club, and it was there that I learned much more about him, I learned to respect him after this, and that's where I had met him. And one thing, let me tell you about the kind of person he was—as he tried to stir me, not to stir me but move on the field of playing. I've turned up, but didn't have enough practice, and *jus' as I was on **de** way home from another engagement I **stop** in to watch the guys practice. An' he **show** it to me, a nice football gear, and **say**, what about practicing? I say, **wha'?**! And over **dat** moment, I **jus'** come to anoder temptation **dat** come on my way home (unintelligible). And he said nothing else. I saw **hi** reaching into **hi** pocket, and **dat** face. So I take ball in my **han'**, I said, **Keif**, so you've **fait** ('faith') I can play **gua r'**? Why so positively, **Keif**? He **say**, **dat** as you say **dat**, you here at **muh** ('me'). He **say**, "well, go get them," and I chose not to ask only (unintelligible.). And here I was now, how to use other words, I don't know. He said: "go get **um**," and that was **de** most careful and genuinely fine advice (audience laughs). And here I learned it quite enough that I, **dat dis** club, that I **did** invited to **dis** club (laughter). I have been drafted most carefully (unint.). That settles it all right, bu? **Ø is** then I **learn** what kind of man I was dealing with* The man was trying teach me to play football. However, as I said a while ago, I'm glad that I did encounter the man (...). Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me a great pleasure to introduce to you at this time, the guest speaker of honor, Mister Keith Simmons!*

In that speech, Mr. Marshall, the assistant headmaster, uses Barbadian English while presenting Mr. Simmons, the Minister of Education, and listing his political and professional accomplishments. When he turns, however, to the memories of his past contacts with Mr. Simmons who coached Mr. Marshall's football (soccer) team years ago, Mr. Marshall uses Bajan to entail and perform his long-standing familiarity with the guest of honor. Mr. Marshall uses Bajan morphology and syntax by including unmarked past tense in, "he **show** it tu me ... a **n' say**," a null dummy subject and unmarked past tense verbs in, "bu? **Ø is den** I **learn**," and the preverbal copula "did" in "I **did** invited to **dis**

club.” He also draws on Bajan phonological features including word-final glottal stop in “bu?” /but/, a palatized approximant in “wey” /where/ and “seeey” /say/, a voiced alveolar stop in “den” /then/ and “de” /the/, the alveolar nasal in “train” /trying/, and reduced consonant clusters in “jus” /just/ “wha” /what/ and “han” /hand/, to list only some.

Mr. Marshall, as do other Barbadians, readily points to some of these features - the alveolar stop in the distribution parallel to that of dental fricatives in English, the null past tense marking and the null third person singular verb marking - as distinctly Bajan. As a school teacher, Mr. Marshall closely attends to intervocalic distinctions correcting his students for Bajan articulation. Still, when Mr. Marshall was helping me with the transcription and we repeatedly listened to the tape, he insisted that the entire speech was in English.

In the environment that censors Bajan, an effort to gloss over a potentially embarrassing linguistic slip could be a plausible interpretation of Mr. Marshall’s identification. But Mr. Marshall, a seasoned public speaker, freely admits his rhetorical use of Bajan in humorous and “grass-roots” interjections. He pointed out such interjections in another of his speeches I had recorded. Their formal properties are similar to those listed above. For example, in his welcoming address to the board members of the Parent Teacher Organization in Arawak Hill, Mr. Marshall explained in Barbadian English why the school authorities had been waiting with making inquiries with the Ministry of Education about a rumored school merger. To justify the delay, he quoted a popular Barbadian saying, “my mind give me, ‘don’t trouble trouble till de trouble trouble you,’” using an unmarked for the third person singular verb form in the framing of the saying and then in the saying itself.

While explaining the need to rally a dependable support, Mr. Marshall alluded to an anecdote about a fisherman who did not want to go to sea in a leaking boat but market women anxious for the catch convinced him by promising to sail out together, “we don’t want end up like that fisherman, **dey** all egg **hi** on, when **de** boat goin down **dem** all jump **de** boat.” The Bajan features here include the alveolar stop in “**dey**” and “**dem**,” alveolar nasal in “goin,” zero past tense verb marking in “egg” and “jump,” zero copula in “de boat goin down,” stative pronominal case in “egg hi on,” and dative pronominal case in “dem all jump.” Mr. Marshall commented on these interjections, “you gotta lapse into Bajan now and then to make your point, if you want to bring in some humor or grass-roots perspective.”

I have revisited the puzzle with Mr. Marshall in the summer 2002 when he was assisting me with further revisions of the transcript of his graduation speech. We listened repeatedly to the tape and Mr. Marshall eventually pointed out several Bajan phonological features I had missed in the Bajan vignette. He conceded, “It is Bajan alright, funny I missed it (before). Language in Barbados is a very rich thing, at times is hard to pin it all down.” Although salient enough to guide the discursive performance, this stylistic deployment of Bajan resisted articulation. How then, can we account for this difficulty?

As in the first two examples, the formal characteristics of the pragmatic forms in the third one make these forms less likely to be available to the speaker’s awareness. The semiotic properties of forms involved in the stylistic alternation between Bajan and English in the graduation speech include contrasts between features that are unavoidably referential and between those that are not. For instance, while the alternation of null and plus dummy subject depends on unavoidably referential pragmatic form, this is not the case with the phonological alternation between certain sounds. Likewise, the syntactic alternation is

continuously segmentable and the phonological one is not. While the pragmatic function of the alternation between Bajan and English presupposes the cultural salience of the familiarity vs. distance, in entailing these relational dimensions through its situational use the alternation has a context-creative function. However, as previous examples show, pragmatic forms that have similar attributes can be identified, reported, and interpreted by speakers. Carmen linked her Bajan usage with getting to know me better. Mrs. Farley identified, commented on, and reported Kassanne's greeting. Vonnice, her friend, identified its context-creative function: The termination of social relationship between the speaker and the addressee and, later, so has Kassanne herself.

A closer attention to the contextual function of these pragmatic markers suggests, however, differences between the first two examples and the last one that may be accountable for their differential metapragmatic salience. The first difference is between the kinds of context involved in the pragmatic usage. The relationship of familiarity entailed by the first two events was situated in the immediate context of interactions. In the third event, the Bajan interjection operates on the immediate context by laminating it with another, populated with other voices, relational selves (Coupland 2001) and interpersonal relations. The constraints of the formal register allow Bajan for designated, performance-oriented purposes such as humor and the invocation of folk perspective that indexes the down-to-earth perspective and summons autochthonous solidarity between the speaker and the audience. Under these constraints, it would be problematic for Mr. Marshall to address Mr. Simmons by his first name and to address him in Bajan in the welcoming address. The quote from the past allowed the speaker to smuggle in these forms while demarcating them as separate from the matrix of discourse. By invoking the episode that actualized Mr. Marshall's past shared with the guest of honor, the interjection further authenticated his prior, referentially predicated claim, "I've known the guest speaker from the time I was a boy, a long time before the nineties" and instantiated the suggested familiarity between the speaker and Mr. Simmons in their other social roles without violating the rules of the formal register.

Further, the pragmatics of distance and familiarity involved in the first two examples is well aligned with the metapragmatics of registers that can and should be "adjusted to suit" the contextual dimensions such as the relative status of the addressee and the kind of relationship between the speaker and the addressee specific to the immediate context of talk. This metapragmatic framework neither precludes nor does it recognize layered interpersonal relations motivated by shifting contexts, audiences and speech genres and thus opens an interstitial space for practices liminally available to awareness.

Irvine in her recent discussion of style conceptualizes style in the way that foreshadows its elusiveness to awareness. Style, Irvine suggests, draws on the same formal resources as do dialect and register but differs from the other two in being a creative process that is not tied down to a predetermined formal and contextual structure and is creatively constitutive of social distinctiveness (2001: 42-43). Irvine writes, "style includes...the more subtle ways individuals navigate among available varieties and try to perform a coherent representation of a distinctive self - a self that may be in turn subdividable into a differentiated system of aspects of self" (2001: 31). Such stylistic practices exploit relatively presupposing indexicals such as register and dialect and subtle contrasts of linguistic forms to create more complex, multifaceted, and less essentialized images of self and its relations to others (Irvine 2001; Urban 1989). Approached from this

perspective, the concept of style allows to capture the more free-flowing, less routinized play on linguistic forms - including these drawn from separate dialects - than the kinds of usage we describe as register.¹³

I do not wish to imply that either registers or dialects are completely available to the conscious awareness of the speakers. And, I realize the limitations involved in the use only one “elusive” pragmatic instance for analysis. These caveats notwithstanding, I would like to tentatively suggest that stylistic practices that on one hand cloud the prescriptive and descriptive norms concerned with situational and social allocation of linguistic forms central to Barbadian metapragmatics, and on the other make use of formal contrasts that meet only some of the semiotic criteria defining the availability of pragmatic phenomena to speakers’ awareness, may be particularly elusive.

3. Conclusions

With some important exceptions (Jaffe 1999; Silverstein 1995; Spitulnik 1998; Woolard 1990, 1998), the analyses of language politics and ideology in literature and the media, have devoted more attention to textual artifacts than to processes involved in their production. While textual analyses are able to pin down the stratum of language ideologies sedimented in the text, they lack a diagnostic ability to assess the broader universe of representational choices negotiated by the writer, journalist, or poet, choices of which only some leave legible textual marks. Likewise lost is the negotiation process itself with whatever it could reveal about the politics and semiotics of representation. By approaching sociolinguistic hierarchies as lived, negotiated and situated within a range of sites pivotal to the production of the cultural orders of language, sites that include among others literary production and media, I have tried in this paper to trace processes that contribute to the formation of language ideologies. Setting the representations of pragmatic phenomena in literature against the backdrop of spontaneous communicative usage, I have argued that ideologies of language emerge at the confluence of semiotic constraints and the dynamics of multiple linguistic markets that chart but do not determine the representational choices available to those who like Meek and Imoja navigate these markets.

By showing that speakers may be able to identify and comment even upon these pragmatic phenomena that do not fully meet the semiotic criteria proposed by Silverstein as necessary conditions for the availability to speakers’ reflection and awareness, my data suggest some limitations to the paradigm. More importantly still, they suggest the need for attention to the phenomena that occupy a liminal position in their accessibility for metapragmatic reflection and commentary. And, at issue here is not the intentionality of the

¹³ A recent interview with a Democratic presidential candidate in the United States, North Carolina senator John Edwards, includes a nice example of such stylistic usage that draws on formal resources of dialect. Southern English is a stigmatized variety in the United States but political analysts view American South as crucial in the upcoming elections. Drawing on his South Carolinian roots and fluency in Southern dialect, Mr. Edwards used Southern phonology in his otherwise regionally sanitized speech when making a claim about the populism of his political views. In contrast to his glide articulation characteristic of “network English” considered to be regionally unmarked in the States, Mr. Edwards used aspirated, pure vowel /ʌ/ in his articulation of “my.” This minute yet significant switch into Southern dialect does not lend itself to classification as register and seems better captured as a stylistic device.

speakers who incorporate such forms in their usage. The question, instead, is the ability to recognize and comment upon these forms and their pragmatic functioning when they do occur.

I have argued for the importance of closer attention to these elusive pragmatic phenomena, even though I have been able to offer only a tentative account of their liminal status. In spite of their presence in linguistic practices, they are difficult to talk about, edited out of popular literature and absent from local debates about sociolinguistic diversity. When such metapragmatic erasures shore up hegemonic ideologies, semiotic limits to awareness collude with misrecognition.

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