Language alternation as a resource for identity negotiations among Dominican American bilinguals

Benjamin Bailey
Chapter 2
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1. Introduction

All language is heteroglot (Bakhtin 1981) and provides individuals with resources, i.e. linguistic and discursive forms, for the negotiation of identity. Bilingual, bicultural individuals have both an expanded set of resources for these omnipresent social negotiations, and a broader range of social categories that can be made relevant through talk as compared to monolingual, monocultural individuals. On the linguistic level, bilinguals can draw forms from two languages as well as hybrid forms resulting from language contact. On the social and cultural level, many are familiar with relatively diverse cultural frameworks for interpreting and evaluating the world and positioning themselves and others within it.

This chapter explores several ways in which a group of bilingual Dominican American high school students in Providence, Rhode Island, exploit language alternation in the negotiation of social identities in everyday peer-group talk. They negotiate these identities with a bilingual, multi-variety repertoire of language varieties that reflects Dominican immigrant heritage and socialization in a multi-ethnic, low-income, urban United States context (Bailey 2001a). This linguistic repertoire draws from various Dominican and American sociolects and forms resulting from Spanish-English language contact. Like many children of international migrants, second-generation Dominicans must negotiate between the linguistic and cultural worlds of their parents and those of the dominant society. They regularly confront questions of how to situate themselves and others within these worlds and how to construct a positive self in a broader social context that disparages their linguistic, ethnicracial, and class identities (cf. Zentella 1997: 13).

These Dominican American negotiations are particularly salient to monolingual white Americans because of the ambiguous fit of many Do-
minicans into dominant U.S. social categories and because of the relatively diverse social origins of their linguistic forms. Phenotypically, Dominicans span the categories of black and white, which are popularly understood as representing an unbridgeable distance in the U.S. (Smedley 1993; Bailey 2001 b). Linguistically, they draw forms from grammatical codes that count as distinct languages (Spanish and English) and those who are socialized in low-income, urban areas also draw from African American English, which is popularly understood to imply stark social difference.

In this chapter, I first define the terms *identity* and *style* as I use them, emphasizing that both are subjectively and ideologically constituted. After a brief methods section, I describe and illustrate with transcript examples an everyday form of linguistically unmarked language alternation - code switching as a discourse mode (Poplack 1981, 1988) - that is common among second-generation Dominican youth, as well as other children of international labor migrants (Auer 1984; Gal 1988; Zentella 1997). While this form of language alternation can be considered a *style*, I argue that its social implications for identity are very different at the local, interactional level than they are in the wider socio-political context.

In each of the next three sections, I consider short sequences of interaction in which specific instances of language alternation are socially and metaphorically loaded and explicitly linked to identity negotiations. In the first sequence, a relatively dark-skinned male student switches from English to Spanish in addressing a Guatemalan American female who has been led to believe that he is Haitian rather than Dominican. Addressing this student - with whom he otherwise speaks English - in Spanish serves to bolster his argument that he is Dominican rather than Haitian. In the second sequence, two female friends code switch into Spanish to negotiate a commonality with a Guatemalan American female who has been led to believe that he is Haitian rather than Dominican. Addressing this student - with whom he otherwise speaks English - in Spanish serves to bolster his argument that he is Dominican rather than Haitian. In the second sequence, two female friends code switch into Spanish to negotiate a commonality with each other in how others define them. In the final section, I illustrate how two Dominican American teenagers alternate between Spanish and several varieties of English to differentiate themselves along a variety of dimensions from a fellow, more-recently-arrived immigrant teenager.

The social meanings of these metaphorical code switches (Blom and Gumperz 1972) are both "brought along" to the interaction as well as "brought about" in the interaction itself (Auer 1992). They are *brought along* in that codes, and specific forms within codes, have social associations that pre-exist particular interactions. They are *brought about* in that codes have myriad social associations, and interlocutors creatively exploit particular associations in situationally specific ways. Thus, a switch into Spanish can be an index of Latino identity (example 5, below) or a way of making fun of a fellow Latino immigrant (example 6, below). A switch into English can highlight comity among Dominican Americans or it can be a way of communicating differences in family class origins in the Dominican Republic (example 7, below).

### 2. Identity and linguistic style

I approach both identity and linguistic style as dimensions of on-going, contingent processes of differentiation rather than as static essences or meanings that inhere in social groups or linguistic forms, respectively. My notion of identity draws from Barth's (1969) seminal argument that ethnic groups are defined by the *boundaries* that groups construct between themselves, rather than the characteristics of group members. It has long been noted that individuals have multiple characteristics and allegiances, so it is the situational and selective highlighting of commonalities and differences that is characteristic of identity groupings (Moerman 1965; Cohen 1978). Identities thus center on the processes through which individuals and groups create, maintain, or diminish social boundaries, marking themselves and others as the "same" or "different". From this phenomenological perspective, identity is a function of *self-ascription* - how one defines oneself - and *ascription by others* - how others define one (Barth 1969: 13).

Analysis of naturally occurring discourse is a means to understanding how individuals, as social actors, selectively highlight or diminish social boundaries and activate facets of identity. Interlocutors publicly display and continuously update for each other their on-going understandings of talk - including identity negotiations - as talk unfolds turn by turn, thereby making these negotiations of meaning visible for analytic treatment by social scientists (cf. Heritage and Atkinson 1984: 11). Since identity is a function of self- and other-ascription, the constitution of identities - through the negotiation of congruent ascriptions - can be visible in the turn-by-turn talk of individuals.

I see style in complementary, processual terms. Following Irvine (2001: 22), the key to style is *distinctiveness*. Styles draw meanings from contrast with other styles; they are themselves constituted as styles through this contrast, rather than through any inherent characteristics, just as identities
are constituted through boundary marking processes (or lack thereof). Whether two ways of speaking constitute distinct styles is a phenomenological question that is ideologically mediated. To a linguist whose perspective privileges formal categories, for example, any language alternation may be highly salient because of the alternation of two codes, thus constituting a distinctive style. To the monolingual, Anglophone majority in the U.S., English monolingualism is an emblem of citizenship and belonging, and any language alternation is an exercise in distinctiveness. To a bilingual child of international migrants, however, code switching in intragroup peer interaction is not commonly perceived by members as very distinct from speaking to such peers in English, or in Spanish, without alternation.

This conception of style - based on a semiotics of distinctiveness - is very different from the concept of style in U.S. sociolinguistics, which has been primarily concerned with correlations between linguistic and social variables (see Rickford and Eckert 2001 for a discussion of style in U.S. sociolinguistics and points of difference and overlap between U.S. sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological perspectives). Social categories in this tradition have been treated as given, i.e. pre-existing any interaction, and the agency of individuals and the role of ideology in language use has been downplayed, or even denied (Labov 1979: 328).

These formulations of identity and style emphasize the discursive and situational fluidity of meanings, but negotiations of meaning are always tethered to social structure and history. Our phenomenological understandings develop in an historical world in which history is omnipresent in embodied form, as *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990: 56). Individuals only ascribe identities to themselves, for example, that are imaginable and available in a particular social and historical context, and they are only ratified in identities (through other-ascription) that social history makes available to them. Negotiations of identity thus take place within the parameters that history has imposed in a particular time and place.

Similarly, the capacity of linguistic forms to index social meanings - and thus activate a position in a social system of distinction - has bases in social history. The base-line indexical meanings of linguistic forms are not idiosyncratic but are related to actual, historical usages by speakers in particular social positions. It is only through recurrent connections between a social phenomenon or context and a linguistic form that non-referential indexical meanings are constituted (Peirce 1955). Individual speakers creatively exploit and negotiate indexical form-meaning relationships, but these negotiations rely, at one level, on conventional associations.

### 3. Methods

Data in this chapter come from fieldwork conducted in Providence, Rhode Island during 1996 and 1997 (see Bailey 2002). Data collection methods included ethnographic observation, over 30 audio recorded interviews with high school students, and video recording of naturally occurring interaction of six principle subjects, aged 16 to 18, in school, home, and community contexts. Selected segments of interaction were transcribed in detail following conversation analytic conventions (Heritage and Atkinson 1984). Bilin­gual Dominican American consultants, including the six principle subjects, aided in the transcription and translation of talk and offered interpretations and explanations of interactions.

The six principle subjects were students at Central High School, a Providence city school of 1,350 students, which is over 20% Dominican. Roughly 60% of the student body is Hispanic, with Puerto Ricans and Guatemalans comprising the second and third largest Hispanic groups. About 16% of the students are of non-Hispanic African descent, 16% are South­east Asian, primarily first and second-generation Cambodian and Laotian refugees, and about 5% are white American. Almost ninety percent of the students at Central High School are categorized as poor based on federal guidelines, and more than half of the students officially enrolled in the 9th grade. The transcripts presented here are from recordings made at Central High School, except for the last one, which was made at a Friday evening Spanish language, Catholic youth group meeting.

### 4. Code switching as a discourse mode

Like many language practices, code switching is polysemous and multifunctional. Social and interactional functions of individual switches can range from highly metaphorical negotiations of identities, meanings, and obligations (Blom and Gumperz 1972; Myers-Scotton 1993: 84) to much less marked, local discourse management (Gumperz 1982; Auer 1984; Myers-Scotton 1993: 149; Alfonzetti 1998; Bailey 2000), Metaphorical meanings in code switching are typically generated by the partial violation of conventional associations between code and particular contexts. In cultures and contexts where codes are highly compartmentalized by domains (Kroskrity 1993) or are taken to represent particular political positions
(Heller 1992, 1995), code switching tends to be relatively less frequent and to communicate metaphorical meanings when it occurs, as it violates ideologies that link particular codes to particular and disparate social worlds.

The majority of code switches that I recorded among bilingual Dominican American high school students in peer interaction did not involve any evident metaphorical negotiations of identity or highlight indexical meanings of one code or another. Like children of many international labor migrants, second-generation Dominicans have access to both sending and host society languages and sociocultural roles. They straddle national, linguistic, cultural, and ethnic boundaries, embracing multiple social and linguistic worlds. With this relative lack of compartmentalization among languages and cultural worlds in their teenage lives, codes are not so conventionally linked to situations and domains as in many other situations, and metaphorical meanings are not generated by most switches.

Code switching among this group tends to be relatively frequent and unmarked, resulting in what Poplack (1981, 1988) calls "code switching as a discourse mode." Many switches in this style of speaking serve local discourse management functions, signaling shifts in speech activity or footing or helping to maintain discourse cohesion across turns. For many individual switches in this style of speaking, it can be difficult or impossible to assign a discrete interactional function.

The following two switches are typical of those that I recorded in interactions among U.S.-raised Dominicans in that they consist of relatively short bits of Spanish inserted into interactions that are otherwise in English, the dominant language of high school students who were U.S.-born or who arrived in the U.S. during their first school years.

(1) [(JS #2 10:51:30) Janelle, U.S.-born, and Jose, arrived in the U.S. at age 8, have been chatting in English during class. Janelle describes how she had her brother-in-law, Benny, give her a ride to a fashion show practice session that turned out to be cancelled.]

Janelle: I hope I don’t have fashion show practice today.
Jose: No?
Janelle: Cause yesterday I was mad, de balde yo fui para allá.

'I went there for nothing'

I told Benny to take me de balde.

'for nothing'

((Talk continues in English with occasional switches to Spanish)

In this example, there is no obvious function of these switches related to the structure of the discourse or to metaphorical meanings of English and Spanish. When codes are not compartmentalized by a group, the search for a function of a particular switch may be akin to trying to explain why a monolingual speaker selects one synonym or phrasing over another (Zentella 1997: 101).

In the following example, in contrast, there is a clear discourse contextualization function of the switch into Spanish, as the switch coincides with a change in footing, a temporary reframing of talk (Goffman 1979; cf. Zentella 1997: 93):

(2) [(JS #2 10:50:10) Discussing whether she needs new immunizations to do her summer job at a hospital.]

Janelle: I don’t know if I – I don’t know if I have to go again cause-dizque no es verdad qué

'supposedly isn’t it true that'

after a certain time- after a certain time you have to do it again? You gotta get shots again?

Janelle is unsure whether she needs new immunizations before beginning her summer job. She moves from reporting this uncertainty in the first part of her turn, to directly asking her interlocutor to confirm that one needs to be re-immunized after a certain period of time. This switch from a statement to a question coincides with a cut-off of cause - a shift in pitch and tempo, and a change of code, from English to Spanish. Code switching is a linguistic resource - like prosody or body alignment - that can be activated to highlight this shift in footing, or communicative activity, but it does not appear to have any greater social or metaphorical meaning related to conventional associations of Spanish or English language.

Group members do not see such individual switches as metaphorically loaded or as a means to constituting a distinctive style, and many individuals are not discursively conscious of why they code switch, or that they are code switching at any given moment.3 This is not the same, however, as arguing that such code switching has no meanings or implications for social identities. One must distinguish between local functions of particular code switches and the more global sociopolitical functions of code switching as a discourse mode (cf. Myers-Scotton 1993: 149; Zentella 1997: 101). Regardless of whether individual code switches serve identifiable conversa-
tional functions, the discourse mode, or style, of frequent switching has profound implications for social identity formation in the U.S.

The meanings that one finds in such switching are largely a function of one's subject position and analytical perspective. For many monolingual adults, both Spanish-speaking and Anglophone, code switching is a haphazard jumble of linguistic elements that is emblematic of the inability to speak what those adults see as the correct language, i.e. the ideological standard (Milroy and Milroy 1985; Silverstein 1996; Lippi-Green 1997). Many academics of the last 30 years, in contrast, have celebrated the linguistic sophistication displayed in code switching (McClure 1977; Sankoff and Poplack 1981; Lipski 1985) and the social 'strategies' that some forms of it imply (Gumperz 1982; cf. Myers-Scotton 1993: 74; cf. Woolard 2004). For more sociologically and anthropologically oriented analysts, unmarked code switching as a discourse mode can be seen as a form of resistance to dominant discourses of unquestioning assimilation (Gal 1988: 259) and a means to constructing a positive self in a political and economic context that disparages immigrant phenotypes, language, class status, and ethnic origins (Zentella 1997).

Frequent switching as a style is always socially marked in a wider U.S. society in which being a monolingual English speaker is an ideological default against which difference or distinctiveness is constructed (Urciuoli 1996). Various nativist English-only groups, for example, have sponsored legislation to limit or prohibit the use of languages other than English in many contexts, including school, government, and workplace. This ideology is part of a larger Western tradition of linguistic purism intertwined with a belief in a primordial unity among language, race, and ethnic/national identity (see Auer, this volume). This assumed unity - explicitly claimed and celebrated by European philosophers Herder (Gal 1989: 355) and, earlier, Condillac (Aarsleff 1982; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994) implicitly underlies Western social and linguistic categorization systems.

Even single code switches can thus have great significance for identity constitution, depending on whether bystanders (Goffman 1979, see Woolard, this volume) are present who see Spanish speaking as a direct index of Latino or Dominican identities. This is particularly significant for Dominican Americans who are native speakers of English and whose phenotypes might lead others to identify them as black American or white American rather than Latino. Many such individuals report having been perceived as black American, or having perceived other Dominicans as black American, until Spanish language use called attention to a Latino identity:

Regardless of the local conversational function of an instance of language alternation, it can be used by any bystander to position the speaker within an overall semiotic system of distinction.

5. Code switching as metaphorical resource for identity negotiations

5.1. Aren't you supposedly from Haiti?

While the majority of code switches in bilingual Dominican American peer interaction are unmarked to members in terms of social identities, some switches are metaphorically loaded. In the U1ree sequences presented in this section and the following two sections, interlocutors exploit the indexical potential of particular codes or forms to claim and enact identities in context-specific ways. Such negotiations provide a window onto the workings of the local social and linguistic worlds that these young Dominican Americans constitute and inhabit through their talk.

In Example 5, transcribed below, a student's ethnic/racial identity becomes a reference point for a joke in a bilingual conversation. In this conversation, a recent Dominican immigrant, Eduardo, jokingly claims that a relatively dark-skinned Dominican American, Wilson, is Haitian. This joking claim is directed (minimally) at Claudia, a Guatemalan American, who is sitting in front of Wilson and Eduardo, and is turned around to face them. Wilson initially goes along with this counterfactual claim, but then challenges it. This interaction involves not only Eduardo teasing the dark-
skinned student, but also Eduardo and Wilson collaborating to put on another student, a Guatemalan American. Through their talk, these teenagers negotiate racial identities and meanings that are popularly understood as inherent and immutable.

Code choice and alternation play a central role in the constitution of these negotiations of identity and social meanings. The recent immigrant Eduardo, whose English is limited, produces turns only in Spanish. Claudia, who is English dominant, produces turns only in English. Wilson, an English dominant bilingual, produces two turns in Spanish and four in English during this sequence. (He produces a longer series of turns in Spanish directed at Eduardo after this transcribed section.) Wilson’s Spanish turns (boldfaced) after he addresses Claudia in English have particular metaphorical import for his identity.

(5) [(WR #2 1:20:07) Setting and participants: Early in an 11th grade class period in May. There is a substitute teacher, and students are talking, flirting, and fooling around. Wilson, the student I was recording, has been speaking in both English and Spanish to various classmates. He came to the U.S. around age 7. Claudia’s parents are from Guatemala. Eduardo came from the Dominican Republic as a teenager.]

Wilson: «singing)) dame del Pollo
‘give me a little bit of that chicken’
Eduardo: Tú no disque eres(s) de Haití? Tú no eres(s) dominicano, Wilson.
‘Aren’t you supposedly from Haiti? You’re not Dominican, Wilson.’
Wilson: Yo nací en Haití, «Wilson turns to Eduardo, smiling)
‘I was born in Haiti’
Eduardo: lle ) «motions toward camera, Wilson turns to camera»
Wilson: lpero me crié en Santo Domingo.
‘but I was brought up in the Dominican Republic’
<Eduardo holds up both hands, palms forward, with middle and ring fingers curled down - the sign of the cuckold - behind Wilson’s head; Wilson turns back toward Eduardo and hits him in the leg with the back of his open hand>»

(1.5)
Claudia: So you’re Haitian, huh?
Wilson: No I’m Dominican
Claudia: You were born in DR?
Wilson: Yeah
Eduardo: Nací en Haití.
‘He was born in Haiti.’
Wilson: En Santo Domingo.
‘In the Dominican Republic.’

In their first turns at talk in this segment, Eduardo and Wilson speak Spanish, which is the language in which they address each other throughout this class. They jokingly create a counterfactual frame in which Wilson is not Dominican, but a Haitian who was raised in the Dominican Republic (Silie 1989; Duany 1994; Moya Pons 1995). In Dominican contexts, calling a relatively dark-skinned individual a Haitian is a form of ritual insult that is common among adolescent males (see examples in Diaz 1996).

Although Eduardo and Wilson are ostensibly addressing each other - Eduardo uses the second-person tú to address a first-pair part question to Wilson, to which Wilson responds with a second-pair part - their talk is directed to a wider audience of bystanders who understand Spanish, including Claudia. Claudia is likely unfamiliar with the Dominican social framework in which relatively dark-skinned Dominicans are jokingly accused of being Haitian.

Claudia responds to these claims by proffering a candidate understanding of Wilson’s identity - that he is Haitian - in English, the only language that she is observed speaking during this class period. This repair-like can-
Identity negotiations operate at many levels in this interaction. In terms of explicit identity categories and referential meanings, it is about whether Wilson is Haitian or Dominican. In terms of affiliation and disaffiliation among interlocutors, there are shifting negotiations. Eduardo and Wilson collaborate in creating a Dominican cultural framework through the use of Dominican Spanish — implicitly affiliating with each other - to tease a Guatemalan American female by getting her to believe something that is (to them) patently not true. While this collaborative joke draws a boundary between the two males and Claudia, it is simultaneously an attempt to engage her, an effort that Wilson and Eduardo repeat many times during this class period. At the same time that Eduardo and Wilson initially collaborate in this joke, the joke symbolically differentiates between them by invoking phenotypic differences (Wilson has darker skin than Eduardo), and this symbolic differentiation seeps into the interaction itself, creating disaffiliation.

5.2. They be like "loca, loca, epa, epa, huepa"

In the segment of transcript in this section, Isabella models the speech of a local category of immigrants, hicks, in both Spanish and English, in talking with her friend Janelle. Through affecting the voice of members of this category in a marked way, she mocks aspects of their speech and identities. This segment shows that metaphorical meanings of code switching can be locally brought about. While Spanish language use is conventionally an emblem of Dominican immigrant solidarity, the code switch into Spanish in this case is used to differentiate among desirable and less desirable Dominican immigrant identities.

(6) [(JS #2 12:40:58) Janelle and Isabella are sitting outside of their school. Janelle has noticed some students staring in her direction. Their attention is likely attracted by the spectacle of her being videotaped by the adult, white researcher.]

Isabella: I like Bulivan's dress. (gazing at a fellow student)
Janelle: I know.
Isabella: If it was sleeveless, it'd be nicer.
Janelle: What's up with them people looking over here, them hicks? And stuff.
Isabella: <No: hicks>. (deep pitched, husky voice; assuming slack-faced, dull stare)
Janelle: What do you call a hick? Cause Jose says a hick is someone ridiculous, somebody stupid. Isn't a hick someone who just came back from the country and they can't really dress, they can't speak English? And they, you know.

Isabella: They be like loca, loca, lie::: pa, epa::, huepa: 'honey, honey, he::::::y, alright!, alriiz::ght!, alriizght!' Yeah, right?

Janelle initially uses the term *hick* to refer to a group of students who are staring across the school grounds in her direction. Isabella then intones *No hicks*, taking on the voice of a "hick" by using a deep-pitched, husky, slow tempo pronunciation and assuming a slack-faced stare. In terms of linguistic surface features, this is not an accurate characterization of recent immigrant speech, in that recent immigrant teenagers speak more Spanish than English and speak English with distinct Spanish phonology. However, in American English, the slow tempo, monotone pronunciation, and slack face contribute to the impression of a slow-witted person. The overall accuracy of the mocking voice is less important than highlighting some features of the other's speech that are seen as emblematic of the targeted identities. Both the propositional content of her utterance (*No hicks*) as well as her marked pronunciation construct hicks as different and disparaged.

Janelle then checks her understanding of the meaning of the word *hick*, contrasting her understanding with that of her friend Jose, who understands *hick* only in terms of its local connotations of "stupid" or "ridiculous." Janelle offers a candidate understanding of a *hick* in referential terms: as someone who just came from the (Dominican) countryside, is not acculturated to urban American youth clothing fashions, and can't speak English. The fact that Janelle explicitly seeks to confirm a shared understanding of the category *hick* suggests that the meanings of such identity categories are not structurally fixed but are locally negotiated forms of attribution.

Isabella confirms Janelle's candidate understanding of "hicks" not through reference but by giving a representative direct quotation of their speech: *loca, loca, e::::::, epa, epa, huepa*. She squints and scrunches her face, using a nasal, slightly high-pitched register. In English Isabella uses a deep pitch with a blank stare and slack face to mimic a hick, while in Spanish she uses a nasal voice with slightly high pitch and a tensed face, i.e. squint, wrinkled nose, and lifted upper lip. She introduces this direct quote with the African American English habitual *be*, meaning that this category of person habitually and repeatedly says things of this sort. Janelle displays agreement with this characterization of "hicks" with an affirmative, overlapping *Yeah, right?*

This code switch into Spanish sets off directly quoted speech from surrounding talk, helping Janelle to take on the voice of a third party, which is an oft-noted discourse contextualization function of code switching. When a code switch is serving only such a local contextualization function, the code used for the quotation is not necessarily the same one that the speaker originally used, but simply one that contrasts with the immediately preceding talk. In this case, however, the code match between the quoted speech and the actual speech of members of the category "hick", which Isabella is modeling, is of significance.

Code switching here - along with the prosodic and visual features of the quoted speech (cf. 'marking' in Mitchell-Kernan 1972) — serves to index a stereotyped island Dominican gender style that is being constructed as inappropriate for an American urban youth context. *Loca, loca, e::::::, epa, epa, huepa* may be associated with the relative directness of heterosexual Dominican males and giving of *piropos* in Dominican contexts, i.e. unsolicited expressions of romantic interest and admiration directed by males to females in many Latin American contexts (Andrews 1977; Suarezorozco and Dundes 1984; Moore 1996). *Piropos* tend to be much more direct, frequent, and intense than analogous expressions in Anglo American U.S. culture, and many Anglo Americans would interpret them as a form of sexual harassment. Consultants as well as literature on Dominican gender roles (Pessar 1984, 1987; Grasmuck 1991) indicate that migration to the U.S. results in an increase in female authority in heterosexual, romantic relationships. "Hicks" not only know little English and fail to dress according to urban U.S. youth styles; they fail to adhere to appropriate local cultural frameworks and practices for heterosexual interaction.

Isabella's code switch into Spanish allows her to capture these social associations of a particular Dominican male way of speaking and being that might be difficult to capture in English. At the same time, she displays a stance toward a particular Dominican male way of speaking, a stance that is at least partly shared by Janelle. Isabella and Janelle collaborate in coming to a shared perspective on a disparaged category, thus constituting themselves, as interlocutors in the here-and-now as the same. This disparaged category is both modeled in marked fashion and explicitly named, while the category to which Isabella and Janelle belong remains implicit. The use of a locally marked style and explicit category names for constituting an "other" against which one defines oneself may be characteristic of relationships
between linguistic style and social identities more generally (see Gintzler, this volume). One’s own identity and ways of speaking are generally treated as normal, natural, and unmarked, so it can be difficult to call attention to them. It is through the highlighting of boundaries — through exaggeration of linguistic features seen as emblematic of other identities — that one’s own style and identities are constituted as distinct and discrete.

5.3. C’mon, dude

In the following segment, Alejandro and Jonathan use a variety of Spanish and English linguistic resources to negotiate identities and differentiate themselves from a third teenager, Samuel. This segment has several parallels to the last example: Alejandro and Jonathan came to the U.S. by their first school years, while Samuel, whom they tease, is a more recent immigrant; Alejandro code switches to assume a mocking voice to make fun of Samuel; and the interaction highlights comity between Alejandro and Jonathan. It differs from the last example in several other dimensions, however: urban versus rural origins in the Dominican Republic are the primary basis for differentiation, Alejandro uses an English language voice to mock Samuel, and Samuel is a party to the interaction. Like the other examples in this paper, this segment highlights the creativity of individual social actors in selecting from among linguistic forms and the local and interactional negotiations of the meanings of such forms.

Alejandro’s first utterance follows the adult leader’s mention of the fourth of July, a date when Alejandro will be in the Dominican Republic. He turns to Jonathan, one of his best friends, who is also going to spend the summer in the Dominican Republic, to celebrate his and Jonathan’s impending trips. This turn represents a code switch in that his most recent utterances have been in Spanish and the reference to the fourth of July that triggered his utterance was made in Spanish as well. Alejandro’s interaction with Jonathan and Samuel is a separate activity from the group leader’s talk, and the switch helps to contextualize it as such. Participants themselves treat it as distinct from the dominant communication by relaxing normally exigent turn-taking rules (Sacks, Schegloff et al. 1974), and extensively overlapping with the group leader’s talk. However, Alejandro’s use of English here also carries local metaphorical meaning. Church youth group games and Bible-study activities that involve the whole group are generally carried out
in Spanish, and the adult leader speaks little English. Spanish speaking helps to constitute these religious activities, and for many individuals there is a fairly strong language-domain link between Church and Spanish. English dominant individuals speak to each other in English or both languages, however, and bilingual male members of the group often use English to resist the Bible-reading and discussion activities in Spanish. In this case, Alejandro's use of English serves to metaphorically resist the ongoing official group frame, the leader's discussion of upcoming activities.

In his next turn, Alejandro switches to Spanish, but uses nonce borrowings of English proper names - Will Smith and Fresh Prince - unassimilated to Spanish phonology. Jonathan and Alejandro both treat this utterance as a cue to engage in a second hand slap and an over-the-shoulder pointing gesture with the thumb, which they execute in unison. This gesture comes from the television situation-comedy The Fresh Prince of Bel Air, which starred African American actor and rap artist Will Smith and played on the American network NBC from 1990 to 1996. The gesture was used by Will Smith's character to signal departure. Alejandro is thus using Dominican Spanish with English borrowings to coordinate a gesture drawn from a Hollywood version of African American male youth behavior to celebrate an upcoming trip to the Dominican Republic. This brief exchange highlights the relative hybridity of semiotic resources that interlocutors can activate in marking affiliation with each other.

After turning briefly back toward the group leader, Jonathan turns toward Samuel, directing a question at him in English, You going to DR? This question is topically tied to Alejandro and Jonathan's inmediately preceding interaction - impending summer trips to the Dominican Republic - which was visually and acoustically available to Samuel, but Samuel is only now ratified as a participant in this talk.

The choice of code to address Samuel is marked because Samuel is a recent Dominican immigrant who speaks little English. He had just minutes before volunteered to the entire group that he couldn't follow activities when English predominated, and in both the school and church group contexts that I observed, Alejandro and Jonathan addressed him otherwise only in Spanish. This use of English therefore violates basic expectations of situational code choice (Blom and Gumperz 1972) that Alejandro and Jonathan otherwise follow.

Samuel does not audibly respond to this question, but Alejandro and Jonathan's subsequent turns suggest that Samuel gave an affirmative visual response (he was off-camera), perhaps a vertical head nod. It is likely that being addressed in English deterred him from responding verbally.

While Alejandro and Jonathan jointly celebrated the fact that they were both going to the Dominican Republic, they treat Samuel's upcoming trip as grounds to make fun of him. Their subsequent turns addressed to Samuel are in English and have a derogatory tone, e.g. Alejandro tells him You gonna be in this campo, switching only on a word for which English equivalents fail to capture the appropriate connotations. Rural areas of the Dominican Republic contrast sharply with the urban centers in wealth, infrastructure, and education. Many rural areas lack electricity, pavement, safe drinking water, health care, and schools, and rural illiteracy and poverty rates are high. Following Jonathan's inaudible turn, Alejandro switches to a marked white English variety, C'mon, dude. He uses a relatively high pitched and slow tempo voice, and he uses the term of address dude, which was a common way for young white American males to address each other during the late 1990's (Kiesling 2004) but which I never heard Alejandro or other Dominicans that I observed and recorded use. While speaking he holds his hands up even with his shoulders, palms forward and directs his gaze forward as if performing a role for others to view. While white English is the prestige standard in educational, business, and many institutional contexts in the United States, it is a marked variety in many local Dominican American youth contexts, where it can suggest a lack of urban cool and authenticity. In this case, white English is being used by Alejandro to differentiate himself and Jonathan from Samuel. Marked white English is not normally an index of rural Dominican identities, but in this specific context, the negative connotations of such English are being used to communicate negative connotations of rural Dominican life for Alejandro and Jonathan.

Jonathan then claims in English that in Samuel's campo they do not have telephones, only telegraphs, and he mimes the tapping on a telegraph key. Alejandro counters in Spanish that they don't even have that contact with the outside world there - that the most exciting activity there is to sit by oneself and play Nintendo, and he mimes playing with a small, self-contained game. Jonathan continues in Spanish that individuals there don't even have Nintendo for entertainment (perhaps because Nintendo has positive value for them and does not capture their attitude toward rural Dominican life), just little sticks, and he mimes tossing little sticks up into the air and catching them.
Alejandro again switches footing, speaking in white English, his upper body stiff and upright, facing forward rather than to the side toward Jonathan or Samuel, his voice slightly high pitched and strained I want to go to the beach. These prosodic and visual features suggest that he is enacting a role, perhaps a mocking of Samuel or similar individual stuck in the campo. Alejandro had described to me his extensive plans for going out to nightclubs that summer and for going to various beaches. Dominicans are proud of the island's beaches, and middle- and upper-class urban youth, like Alejandro, regularly visit them in the summers. In contrast to Samuel, both Jonathan and Alejandro could expect a summer not just of socializing with relatives, but of enjoying urban entertainment such as nightclubs and taking trips to various beaches.

Alejandro cuts off his own speech, breaking off the white English voice and the teasing frame by turning to Jonathan, sitting less upright, and using the disjunct marker oh to display "sudden remembering" (Jefferson 1987), and describing, in Spanish, the spending money that he will receive in the Dominican Republic. Reflecting to the limitations of Samuel’s summer entertainment options may have triggered pleasurable anticipation of his own summer plans. Alejandro and Jonathan no longer address Samuel, directly or indirectly, but engage in talk of spending money, a relative’s vehicles in the Dominican Republic, and plans for summer activities there. In contrast to the immediately prior code switching, in which code and variety switching had clear metaphorical implications, this code switching is the unmarked sort common among bilingual Dominican Americans in everyday talk.

In this interaction, Alejandro and Jonathan exploit a wide range of linguistic resources, including language alternation, to constitute rapidly shifting interpretive frames. Their speech activities serve to disparage Samuel and differentiate him from themselves, thus indirectly constituting a non-disparaged category for them to inhabit. They say who they are by describing who they are not, both referentially and through indirect indexicals (Ochs 1992).

Alejandro and Jonathan’s code switching and assumption of different voices rely on metaphorical meanings of codes, styles, and referents in ways that are much more complicated than suggested by "we" vs. "they" codes and identities. The social connotations and implications for identity of their communicative resources - whether code switches, specific referents, or gestures - are highly context specific, requiring situated interpretation rather than reliance on just conventional meanings.

6. Conclusions

Like other bilingual children of international labor migrants, Dominican Americans straddle linguistic and sociocultural worlds, and their language alternation in intra-group peer interaction is emblematic of this straddling. Their form of frequent, unmarked switching - code switching as a discourse mode - is distinct from other ways of speaking in their communities and the wider society, and, as such, constitutes a style. The meanings that one attributes to this style are largely a function of one’s subject position. For members, such language alternation is an unmarked way of speaking and doing the things that high school student do with talk: gossip, flirt, tease, make social plans, ask about schoolwork, etc. Non-members often evaluate this style of speaking in very different terms that are tied to Western ideologies of linguistic purism and a unity of language, race, and nation. Frequent code switching is seen by many monolinguals as a sign of linguistic and cognitive deficiency, by nativist groups as a rejection of incorporation into U.S. society, and by many academics as a sophisticated, agentive, and strategic way of negotiating social and political structures and meanings.

At the everyday phenomenological level, language alternation has salient practical implications for ascriptions of individual identities among Dominican Americans. In the U.S., phenotype is the preeminent criterion for social classification, and many individual Dominican American phenotypes match those associated either with the category black American or the category white American. Displays of Spanish speaking trigger ascriptions of Latino identities from bystanders who might otherwise see individuals, based on physical appearance, as black or white.

Negotiations of identity through language alternation are often more fleeting and context specific than the terms style or social category might imply. As is evident from data in this chapter, cultural frameworks, linguistic indexes of social categories, and the ways individuals fit into categories are not static and predetermined but are negotiated and constructed at the local level. Both in monolingual and bilingual contexts, interlocutors display rapidly shifting stances toward each other, the activities in which they are engaged, and dimensions of the wider world, e.g. the relative value of various membership categories or individual members of them. These negotiations unfold on a turn-by-turn basis, both at the referential level and in terms of indexical meanings. Interlocutors can create and display alignment or disaffiliation with co-present interlocutors, they can position themselves
with respect to abstract categories referenced through talk, or, more commonly, do both simultaneously. Because interlocutors display these meanings and negotiations to each other, we, as analysts, can look over their shoulders and gain a window onto the workings of social worlds.

Notes

1. The English word "identity" is derived from Latin, *idem*, meaning "the same".

2. In a corpus of 1,685 switches among young New York Puerto Rican girls, Zentella (1997: 101) assigns fewer than half of her switches to specific conversational strategies, or functions, because most of the individual switches do not have a clear, analytically defensible function or do not co-occur with particular interactional patterns.

3. Zentella (1997: 1) artfully highlights this taken-for-granted, unmarked nature of code switching as a discourse mode in the opening of her book *Growing Up Bilingual*:
   "One day in El Barrio (New York City's east Harlem) in 1979 I asked a nine year old of Puerto Rican background what language she spoke with sisters and brothers. 'Hablamos los dos. We speak both,' she answered casually, as if it was the most natural thing in the world to speak two languages and to alternate between them. I was struck by her offhand tone and the seamless welding of Spanish and English which proved her point vividly."

4. Many English-dominant informants, for example, found the notion of attending English-language Catholic Mass strange if a Spanish-language Mass was available, and several reported that they prayed only in Spanish, even in non-Church contexts.

5. Alejandro, who came from an upper-middle class, urban background, was well aware of urban-rural hierarchies in the Dominican Republic. He alluded to this in discussing difficulties of acculturation faced by Dominican immigrants:
   "It depends on where they come from, if they come from the campo or the farm or whatever, it's kind of different than if you're over there from a city. If you come from the campo, from the farm, it's different, cause you live with the cows and everything."

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