

SERIOUS GAMES¹: CODE-SWITCHING AND GENDERED IDENTITIES IN MOROCCAN IMMIGRANT GIRLS' PRETEND PLAY

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Abstract

This paper examines the situated ways in which Moroccan immigrant children in Spain create imagined, alternative life worlds and explore possible forms of identification through an investigation of these children's hybrid linguistic practices in the midst of play. Drawing on Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) notions of heteroglossia and hybridity, the analysis focuses on the meanings of codeswitching practices that a group of Moroccan immigrant girls deploy in pretend-play sequences involving dolls to construct female identities; identities that they treat as desirable in the context of Spanish idealizations of femininity, but that are considered transgressional by adults in Moroccan diaspora communities in Spain. Neighborhood peer group play affords Moroccan immigrant girls' transformations and engagement in subversive *tactics*, in that these activities take place outside the scrutiny of parents and other adults. The rich verbal and sociocultural environment of Moroccan immigrant children's peer groups provide us with an excellent window to investigate peer language socialization processes in relation to how immigrant children negotiate, transform, and subvert in the midst of play the different, and often incongruous, socio-cultural and linguistic expectations and constraints that they encounter on a daily basis. Use of Moroccan Arabic and Spanish in this pretend play, in particular, results in a heteroglossic polyphony of voices imbued with moral tensions (Bahktin 1981, 1986). This analysis highlights the importance of these hybrid linguistic practices in immigrant girls' explorations of alternative processes of gendered identification in multilingual, culturally-syncretic environments. Through surreptitious pretend-play, Moroccan immigrant girls explore imagined transgressional possible identities and moral worlds. In this sense, this research also underscores the implications of children's language use and language choice in pretend-play for larger processes of cultural continuity and transformation in transnational, diasporic communities undergoing rapid change.

Keywords: Code-switching; Gender identities; Moroccan immigrant children; Spain; Pretend play; Language socialization.

¹ The first part of the title of this paper makes reference to Ortner's formulation of *serious games* (Ortner 1996, 1999, 2006) as a way of understanding how in social life and relations, "social actors through their living, on the ground, variable practices, reproduce, transform - and usually some of each-the culture that made them" (2006: 129). Although the social activity that this group of immigrant girls is engaged in is indeed a *game*, the metaphorical notion of *serious games* is particularly useful for the purposes of this paper because it takes into account both the complex dimensions of the subjectivity of social actors and the complex forms of social relations of power, inequality, and solidarity. In this sense, the notion captures the constraints and affordances of individuals as agents in relation to the larger forces of formation, reproduction, and transformation of social and cultural life. Much like the doll-pretend play that this group of immigrant girls enacts, a *serious games* perspective considers the possibility of how the engagement of social actors with others in the play of *serious games* (or the micropolitics of social life, involving both routine and intentionalized action), "contain the potential to disrupt particular plays of the game in the case of individuals, and the very continuity of the game as a social and cultural formation over the long run" (2006: 151).

1. Introduction

In recent years, the complex relationship between children and their multiple languages as intertwined with the multifaceted identities they have to negotiate in different arenas of their social life has been emphasized in language socialization research in multilingual, diasporic communities undergoing rapid change (e.g. Baquedano-López 2000; Garrett 2007b; He 2001; Paugh 2005). Understanding how immigrant children develop a sense of self is particularly important in hybrid, multilingual communities where these children juggle not only multiple linguistic codes and their social valences but also conflicting sociocultural expectations, moral frameworks and notions of personhood (Fader 2001, 2009). Sociocultural research in immigrant communities emphasizes the daily complex acts of cultural negotiation involved when immigrant youth attempt to traverse contradictory influences on their sense of self (Hall 1995, 2002, 2004). Yet, few studies have paid close attention to the everyday communicative practices involved in these daily acts of negotiation, or *acts of cultural translation* (Bhabha 1990). Many sociologists of immigration point to the need to understand how immigrant youth navigate the countervailing influences and scrutiny of elder generations in their heritage communities and a host society attempting to re-enculturate them (Samad 2007). Yet, little is understood about the on-the-ground ways in which immigrant children create autonomous arenas for action that may give rise to hybrid *processes of identification* (Brubaker and Cooper 2000).

Drawing on Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) notions of heteroglossia and hybridity, this paper examines ways in which Moroccan immigrant children in Spain create imagined, alternative life worlds and explore possible forms of identification, through an investigation of these children's hybrid language practices in the midst of play. In particular, the analysis focuses on codeswitching practices and clandestine *tactics* (De Certeau 1988) that Moroccan immigrant girls deploy in pretend-play to construct desirable female identities in the context of Spanish idealizations of femininity, but which are transgressional in Moroccan diaspora communities.

2. Communicative practices and play in children's peer groups

Previous research on children's communicative practices in peer networks has shown these contexts to be crucial for processes of language socialization, in that these contexts allow children to construct autonomous arenas for action where they can develop competencies as language users and social actors relatively free from adult censure, disapproval, and scrutiny (e.g. Aronsson and Thorell 1999; Blum-Kulka and Snow 2004; Corsaro 1988a, 1988b, 1994, 2000; Goodwin 2000, 1998, 1997, 1990a, 1990b; Goodwin and Kyratzis 2007; Kyratzis 2004). Children use the multiple languages available in their linguistic repertoires to structure games and other activities, as well as to challenge, transform and reproduce societal ideologies about languages and ethnic relations (Evaldsson and Cekaite *this volume*; Howard 2007; Minks *this volume*). Hybrid linguistic practices, in particular, have been shown to socialize peers into alternative notions of morality, and facilitate the negotiation of hierarchies and multiple, fluid identities (e.g. Cekaite and Aronsson 2005; Evaldsson 2005; García-Sánchez 2005; Jørgensen 1998; Kyratzis *this volume*; Rampton 1995, 1998; Reynolds 2002, *this volume*; Zentella 1997, 1998).

More specifically, children's codeswitching has been described to differentiate between '*negotiation of the play*' and '*in-character play*', as well as the negotiation of ongoing social interaction -- teasing, by-play, displays of power or anger, participants roles and topic changes (e.g. Cromdal and Aronsson 2000; Cromdal 2004; Ervin-Tripp and Reyes 2005; Gudal 1997). Codeswitching is used to signal different *sub-registers* during play, i.e. '*in character play*' and '*negotiation of the play*', and to enact different *voices*, i.e. the voice of the child, the voice of the role-character, and the voice of the director. In this regard, a number of studies has consistently found that in multi- or bilingual situations, play characters speak and are spoken to in one language, while running metacommentary on the game is usually carried out in a different code (Kwan-Terry 1992; Halmari and Smith 1994). Codeswitching during play has also been shown to be an important resource for children's constructions of their emerging understandings of how contrasting languages index social identities, activities, and language ideologies (Garrett 2007b; Minks *this volume*). In Dominica, for instance, where children's use of Patwa is closely monitored and forbidden by adults, Paugh (2005) found that, in peer group contexts where children are free from this linguistic surveillance, they use Patwa to enact specific adult roles and activities, such as bus driver, and English to enact other roles, such as the role of teacher.

A second important line of inquiry for the present analysis is sociolinguistic research on youth peer groups of North African immigrant descent and other ethnic minorities in Europe, since these youth groups also come to be under heavy adult surveillance and are frequently racialized as '*young delinquents*' and '*trouble-makers*'. Drawing on Corsaro's notion of *interpretive reproduction*², Poveda and Marcos (2005), for instance, have argued that Spanish Romani minority children use playful transformations of popular songs and rhymes in the safe contexts of their peer groups as a way to assert themselves socially against the larger backdrop of social exclusion and discrimination. This playful interactions provide them with resources to confront racially marked facets of their daily experiences.

Tetreault (2007, 2008, 2009) investigated the hybrid language practices of adolescent peer groups of Algerian descent in France and the importance of these practices for articulating ties to immigrant origins and emergent adolescent subcultures. From her analysis of parental name calling in ritual insults (2007) to her recent study of these youths' use of mock style French TV host register (2009), Tetreault illustrates how communicative practices in the peer group constitute an intricate web of personal and cultural relations in the self-presentations of these adolescents. More importantly, these interactional practices also reveal how French adolescents of North African descent subvert, transgress, and reinforce different forms of identification and gendered expectations in both French dominant discourses and their immigrant communities. For female adolescents of North African descent, in particular, gendered identifications are fraught with anxieties and moral ambivalence, involving a complex processes of simultaneous identification and dis-identification with their choices of self-representation (Tetreault 2008). Similarly, Hall's (1995, 2002) descriptions of how British Sikh youth negotiate – and often subvert- gendered expectations across the

² Corsaro's (1994, 1997) notion of *interpretive reproduction* suggests that in the peer cultures in which children participate and create, children do not just merely reproduce aspects of the adult social world. Rather, by creatively appropriating information and knowledge about the larger social world, they are able to extend it and transform it, as well as reproduce it.

cultural worlds of their families, peer groups, and other ethnic communal arrangements, have shown how the process is profoundly conflictual and ambivalent for these youth.

3. The ethnographic context of the girls' lives

This analysis is part of a two year ethnographic, language socialization study, investigating the linguistic ecology of the lives of Moroccan immigrant children (8 to 11 years-old) in South-Central Western Spain. This study examines these children's communicative practices in relation to the extent to which they are able to juggle languages and social practices against the backdrop of rising levels of tension against immigrants from North Africa. During 2005-2007, I conducted fieldwork in a rural Spanish town, located approximately 125 miles southwest of Madrid urban area, with a total population of 10, 815. This rural Spanish community has been a major settlement area for Moroccan immigrants since the early 1990's, when, initially single males, and subsequently entire families, came looking for jobs in the booming agricultural sector. The total immigrant population makes up 37% of the total population of the town, with the bulk of this percentage being overwhelmingly of Moroccan origin. The current geopolitical, as well as local, climate of suspicion surrounding immigrants from North Africa and the Muslim world, in addition to historical, economic, sociocultural, and linguistic factors, make the intergroup dynamics between immigrants and locals in this community difficult and fraught with tension.

These delicate and precarious interethnic relations impinge upon the life of Moroccan immigrant children in complex and consequential ways. For instance, at the public school, Moroccan immigrant children are ethnicized as the 'Other' and constituted as 'outsiders' through routine participation in exclusionary interactional practices with teachers and peers and through linguistically mediated regimes of surveillance. One characteristic of these practices of social exclusion is the active monitoring of Moroccan immigrant children's behavior that, in many ways, echo the intense surveillance to which the Moroccan immigrant community as a whole is subjected at the national and local levels (García Sánchez 2007, 2009). Another important form of social exclusion to which these children are subjected is that Spanish girls avoid contact with Moroccan immigrant girls in social settings at school and also outside school. A telling example of the distinct boundaries of separation that Spanish girls attempt to build around Moroccan girls is an episode that occurred as the whole fourth grade class was preparing their costumes to celebrate the annual Carnival Festival at the school. Children were supposed to design and craft their own costumes during Plastic Arts class. Although the whole fourth grade class was dressing up as birds, children had the prerogative to choose the dominant color of their feather design. A group of the most socially popular Spanish girls requested pink as their dominant color. Immediately, Wafiya and Sarah, two of the Moroccan girls followed in this study, asked the teacher whether they could also have pink. When the teacher also granted Wafiya and Sarah's request to have pink, the group of Spanish girls approached the teacher and informed her that they had changed their minds and now wanted blue as the dominant color of their outfit design.

Moroccan immigrant girls may sometimes experience additional layers of social constraints and surveillance by members of their own diaspora communities. Gender inequality has been documented in other immigrant communities around the world, for

example, among Hmong immigrant families in the United States (Lee 2005). In Europe, more specifically, higher levels of social restrictions for girls, such as avoiding spending too much time outdoors and adopting appropriate styles of dress, have also been reported for adolescent girls of Algerian descent in North African diaspora communities in France (Tetreault 2008). In this community, adults and older male siblings in the Moroccan community often monitor girls' actions and behaviors, sometimes curtailing the girls' participation in certain extracurricular activities, such as school field trips, or in recreational activities, such as going to the swimming pool, to the weekly outdoor market, or to the town's annual fair. In this community, in particular, male siblings often behave towards their sisters in a more authoritarian way than the girls' own parents, i.e. controlling their ways of dressing and speaking, as well as their peer group activities, sometimes even disciplining the girls on their own accounts, without necessarily having parental authorization (or parental knowledge) to do so³. In fact, during the course of my fieldwork, I observed a number of instances of older siblings getting in trouble with their parents for disciplining their sisters on their own. Many of the focal girls, in particular, Worda, Sarah, and Wafiya, repeatedly complained about what they considered their brothers' *nagging* behavior in videotaped interviews and in more private conversations.

Moroccan girls' and boys' participation in certain extra-curricular activities was often further limited by the tight financial circumstances that many of the immigrant families in this community faced. As children of economic migrants, they and their families tend to occupy subaltern positions in the socio-political structure of the town's social hierarchy.

The powerful convergence of all the influences described above (discrimination and social exclusion; economic exclusion; and gendered exclusion) is crucial to understand the constraints and affordances of Moroccan immigrant girls' lives, as crystallized in communicative practices and peer group pretend-play.

4. Data and methodology

4.1. Data collection and analysis

In documenting the linguistic ecology of the lives of Moroccan immigrant, I focused on the everyday, face-to-face communicative and social practices that the children participated in with extended family, peers, teachers, and other community members in the diverse settings that make up their daily lives and activities⁴. The six focal children

³ In documenting patterns of sociological change observed in Moroccan youth in the last few decades, El Harras (2004: 41-42) has discussed a similar phenomenon in Morocco. He has claimed that, although the control of parents over female children seems to have weakened in the last few decades, the control of male siblings over their sisters has tightened and increased. Many male youth adopt the self-appointed role of guardians of the moral conduct of their sisters and, in general, of the family honor.

⁴ In addition to children's interactions with peers, I videotaped the children's participation in routine activities with members of their extended households once a month. Because a central goal of this study was to investigate how children juggled languages and social practices to meet different situational expectations, once a week I also videotaped focal children's linguistic practices in different institutional learning contexts (the town public school and Koranic classes at the local mosque) and formal after-school activities (training sessions with the local track and field team). Finally, I also had the opportunity to videotape children at the local health center where they would often translate for their parents during

in the study were relatively recent immigrants to the country, ranging from one to five years of residence. The naturally occurring interactional routines of this group of children were systematically observed and video/audio-recorded over a period of 12 consecutive months. The audio and videotaped corpus yielded by this body of data collection was transcribed according to the system developed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), as adapted by Goodwin (1990)⁵. The transcripts were further ethnographically annotated with the help of two Moroccan Arabic native speaker assistants, who provided nuanced metalinguistic commentary of children's language use and insights into cultural ideologies and attitudes toward that use (Garrett 2007a; Schieffelin 1990). In addition, questions concerning the actions and speech of the children, as well as the situations in which these occurred, were addressed to the children's caregivers during several interviews and consultation periods over the course of the study. The transcripts were also annotated with the information gained in these consultations.

During the course of the recordings I adopted the role of observer and minimized my participation in any of the activities that the children themselves organized in the context of their interactions with peers; for instance, I never elicited any speech or form of language use, and I never directed or made decisions regarding peer group activities. In a few occasions, some children participating in these activities, particularly those friends of the focal children who were not as accustomed to my presence and systematic observation, tried to recruit my intervention in games and on-going interactions, especially when conflict and disagreement erupted among themselves, but also for ludic purposes. However, even in this handful of occasions, I reminded the children that I was interested in knowing how they played and learned together, and I did not intervene in any subsequent course of action they children took.

visits to the pediatrician. This last set of data is the least systematically recorded due to the unpredictability of medical needs and/or children's availability to act as language brokers in these encounters. Accompanying the video record, there are comprehensive ethnographic notes, along with photographs, maps and charts, children's textbooks and other printed material collected during fieldwork, about family and social interactions in the community, including celebrations, professional meetings, and special events, as well as more quotidian aspects of the community life. In-depth ethnographic interviews were also conducted over a period of several months with focal children, parents, teachers, and school officials.

⁵ Transcription conventions adapted from Goodwin (1990), pp. 25-26:

| | |
|--|---|
| : | Lengthening |
| ° | Low Volume |
| . | Falling contour |
| ? | Rising contour |
| ↑ | Higher Pitch |
| [| Overlap |
| = | Latching (no interval between turns) |
| ~ | Rapid speech |
| - | Sudden cut-off |
| (.) | Brief Pause |
| () | Material in parenthesis indicate a hearing the transcriber was unsure about |
| (()) | Comment by the transcriber. Not part of the talk being transcribed |
| <u>BOLD UNDERLINED CAPITALS</u> | Increased volume |

4.2. The peer groups as a unit of analysis

Moroccan immigrant children in this rural Spanish community spend a significant amount of their out-of-school time with other Moroccan immigrant children in the local park, on the street pavement near their homes, or in several building-free plots of land scattered in various places around the town. From an early age they spend at least an average of three hours daily playing and interacting with school friends, neighborhood children, siblings and other children in their extended families, an amount that increases during holidays and school breaks. Most Moroccan parents do not consider the household an appropriate domain for children to engage in ludic interactions and usually do not allow peer groups into the homes. Home and street/park are clearly delineated spaces not only by physical boundaries, but also by the activities that routinely take place in them. The home is restricted for household and other adult-dominated activities, while children's games are seen as an interference⁶ to those activities. This distinct delineation of spaces allows Moroccan children to carry out their peer group activities with little interference and surveillance from adults.

With very few exceptions, peer groups are distinctly divided along ethnic and gender lines in this community. Moroccan girls play with other Moroccan girls and Moroccan boys play with other Moroccan boys; Spanish girls play with other Spanish girls and Spanish boys with other Spanish boys. Small boys are sometimes present in Moroccan female peer groups because, starting in middle childhood, Moroccan girls are often assigned the responsibility of caring for younger siblings. If the girls go out to play with friends they bring with them their younger brothers. In these cases, the young boy is rarely a participant of the focal activities of the female peer group, remaining on the sidelines either as an observer or engaging in his own forms of play.

Although similar gendered-segregated arrangements have been described in children's cultures and peer groups across a wide range of settings and speech communities (Goodwin 1990; Thorne 1993), what is striking about the organization of peer groups in this town is the pervasive lack of multiethnic children's groups in informal settings⁷, which can be seen as a reverberation of the complex and tense interethnic dynamics of this community, as well as an extension of the pervasive practices of social exclusion and surveillance that Moroccan immigrant children are subjected to by their own Spanish peers at school.

Moroccan immigrant peer groups are composed of children of different ages who often possess varying degrees of expertise and experience with Spanish and Moroccan

⁶ Paugh (2005) has also discussed the significance of place and spatial restrictions on children's language use in her study of children's multilingual play in Dominica. See also, Schieffelin's (2003) discussion of language and play in children's worlds.

⁷ The only out-of school context in which both Moroccan immigrant children and Spanish children of mixed genders came together in a socially shared space of action was the track-and-field team. In this arena, boys and girls of multiple ethnicities participated jointly in weekly training and weekend competitions. However, these endeavors cannot be considered peer group activities *per se* since they are supervised by adults, namely two male coaches and several parents, who would sometimes accompany the children in some of the most geographically removed competitions. In addition, even in these contexts, I was able to document a tendency for Spanish children and Moroccan children (again, segregated by gender) to cluster separately during training breaks or down-times before and after the competition. Certainly, during the often long bus rides that would take the children to different competition sites, Moroccan and Spanish children rarely sat together.

cultures and languages. A peer group may include a child who has been born in Spain, a child who has spent most of his/her childhood in Morocco and has just recently arrived in Spain, and a child who came to Spain when s/he was just a toddler. The intergenerational, mixed-expertise character of Moroccan immigrant children's peer groups allows for an original range of possible types of participation as experts and/or novices that blur the age distinctions usually associated with these roles. This characteristic, along with the minimal adult supervision of peer group activities, also underscores the importance of the peer group as an autonomous arena for action in which immigrant children are agents of language socialization into communicative practices and sociocultural norms.

Moroccan immigrant children peer groups are usually fluid in their composition. While a handful of children in the study remained in peer groups, there was also an ebb and flow of participants present at any given recording of peer group interactions. Often different neighborhood children, cousins, or siblings would join in the play activities. The size of a peer group could range from three to eight children, and even sometimes more, although this was not very common.

Two focal children, Worda and Wafiya, both 9 years old, are the main participants in the pretend-play games analyzed below. They both arrived in Spain as toddlers: Worda had been living in the country for five years and Wafiya for four years. They were friends at school, where they both attended fourth grade, and teammates in the local Track-and-Field team. They spent most of their out-of-school time together, either training, playing, doing homework, or hanging out. The core of Worda and Wafiya's⁸ peer group –the group that I was able to follow more consistently– was composed of Salma, age 10, who is Worda's oldest sister; Dunia, age 4, Worda's youngest sister, who had been born in Spain; and Manal, age 11, a neighbor of Worda's who had arrived in Spain after kindergarten. Also, apart from being neighbors, Worda and Manal's mothers were close friends. In addition, a number of other girls were *part-time* members of this peer group, participating on and off in different games and activities. Among the most important is Sarah, age 9, who was in the same fourth class as Wafiya and also one of the focal children. She had spent most of her childhood in Morocco and was a recent arrival into the country, having been in Spain for less than one year. Other part-time participants were: Houriya, aged 11, who was a member of the local Track-and-Field team and trained with Worda and Wafiya; Lamia, aged 8, Worda's next door neighbor; and Leila, aged 8, a distant relative of Wafiya's family who also attended the track-and-field training sessions from time to time.

In the context of their peer groups, these and other children engaged in a wide variety of activities, such as pretend-play, marbles, soccer, hopscotch, jump rope games, singing nursery rhymes and traditional and popular songs, clapping rhymes, tag and other chasing games. Children's discursive practices were also varied and include: Word play, arguing, negotiating, reciting, gossiping, and explaining game rules. The prevailing feature of these activities is their hybrid nature. These activities are characterized by a high incidence of codeswitching between Spanish and Moroccan Arabic.

⁸ These are not the children's real names. In order to safeguard the anonymity and privacy of the children who participated in the study, all the names in this paper are pseudonyms that the girls themselves chose.

5. Interactional frames and identity construction in pretend-play

Pretend-play is frequent in Moroccan immigrant girls' peer groups. Girls enact pretend-play sequences related to the ordinary contexts of their lives, including school and mass media and popular culture, e.g. role-playing T.V. soap operas and sitcoms and popular movies. Whether enacting everyday or extraordinary situations, what Moroccan immigrant girls bring to pretend play activities is the double orientation of the cultural and linguistic dispositions of their heritage community and of the larger Spanish community. Linguistic practices in pretend play, in particular, the high rate of codeswitching between Spanish and Moroccan Arabic, are primordial means by which this double orientation is accomplished. Codeswitching also evidences the *double-voicedness* of this hybrid linguistic practice (Bahktin 1981), in that instances of codeswitching point to girls' ambivalent, transgressional, and clandestine orientation towards the activities they enact in play. The *reflexivity* inherent in how this group of girls enacts the tensions between activities and linguistic varieties can be clearly seen in their keen awareness that they could be '*discovered*'.

Role-play interaction involving dolls figures prominently in Moroccan immigrant girls' games of pretend. This type of pretend-play activity is particularly interesting because, as they construct imaginary life worlds for their dolls, the girls interweave ordinary routines and settings with the extraordinary, idealized life styles that female characters are likely to lead in T.V. sitcoms. The following analysis focuses on two extended doll-play sequences involving five participants: Worda and Wafiya, Salma, Dunia, and Lamia⁹. In both occasions, the girls are playing a few houses down the street from Worda's family's home, where they often meet on weekend afternoons while their mothers are at home either tending to house chores or having tea and visiting with other female neighbors and relatives, and their fathers are in the town square or locally-run Moroccan coffee shops meeting other male friends.

5.1. Patterns of code choice and use: Managing play and interactional frames

This group of girls uses Spanish and Moroccan Arabic in most social situations of their daily lives. At school they use only Spanish in their encounters with teachers and Spanish peers, but they often use Moroccan Arabic to interact among themselves¹⁰. Similarly, at home while Moroccan Arabic tends to predominate in most interactions between the children and their parents, the children among themselves, particularly those who have spent a long period of time in Spain, frequently use Spanish. In the context of their pretend-play, they overwhelmingly use Spanish - and more specifically a stylized register of Spanish- when ventriloquizing their dolls and for stage-setting and narrative emplotment (Kyratzis and Ervin-Tripp 1999). Conversely, Moroccan Arabic is used (1) to negotiate the specifics of the game; (2) for metacommentary on the play frame; (3) to resolve conflict among the girls (usually conflict springing from the

⁹ For more ethnographic information about these girls and the composition of this peer group, see section 4.2 above.

¹⁰ It is also important to mention that Moroccan immigrant children also attend Arabic Heritage Language classes at school once a week as part of a first-language maintenance program that is jointly funded by the Moroccan and Spanish Ministries of Education.

game); (4) to monitor and control the behavior of younger siblings, who are present in the interaction, even if they are not fully ratified participants of the game sequence; and (5) to interact with passers-by (usually other Moroccan neighbors, family members or acquaintances). Thus, codeswitching between Spanish and Moroccan Arabic is essential to create and sustain interactional and play frames during doll games. **Figure 1** summarizes the distribution of code use and codeswitching patterns during pretend-play activities. As mentioned above, a similar distribution of code labor has also been observed in children's games in bi/multilingual play in other speech communities (e.g. Cromdal 2004; Gudal 1997; Halmari and Smith 1994; Kwan-Terry 1992; Paugh 2005).

Figure 1: Distribution of code choice and use

| Spanish | Moroccan Arabic |
|-----------------------|---|
| In-character Dialogue | Negotiating parameters of the game |
| Stage-setting | Metacommentary on the play frame |
| Narrative Emplotment | Resolving conflict among participants |
| | Monitoring the behavior of younger siblings |
| | Interacting with passers-by |

In the present study, there are also important differences with regards to language choice and use between enacting the voices of the dolls and creating a fantasy play space on the one hand, and interactions among the children to negotiate parameters of the play frame and solve intra-group conflicts on the other (See **Figure 1**). Interestingly, the issue of which code to use when speaking *in character* is in itself a matter of metalinguistic awareness among the girls. Indeed, the choice of Spanish to ventriloquize the dolls is one of the parameters of the game that the girls themselves settle early on in their play interaction. The following example takes place towards the beginning of the play sequence. Immediately before the beginning of this excerpt, the girls had been speaking in Moroccan Arabic about the different hairstyles of their dolls and about the array of props and doll accessories that they have brought to play with. This excerpt inaugurates the play frame, in that this is the first time that the girls ventriloquize the voices of the dolls:

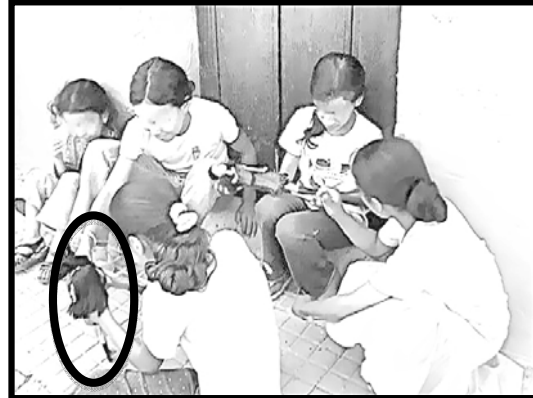
Example # 1: Key: Key: Spanish (Regular Font) --- Moroccan Arabic (***Bold Italics***)¹¹

| |
|----------------------|
| Participants: |
| Worda |
| Wafiya |
| Salma |

¹¹ See Appendix I for Arabic transliteration symbols.

((Worda and Wafiya pretend their dolls have met on the street and greet each other))

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. WAFIYA: <i>Sala::m</i> Hello</p> <p>2. WORDA: <i>Kiraki dayra?</i> How are you?</p> <p>3. WAFIYA: <i>labas</i></p> | → |
|--|---|



Fine

4. WORDA: *Haçri aSbanyouliya Haçri*
Speak Spanish Speak
5. WAFIYA: Hola
Hello
6. WORDA: qué tal?
how are you?
7. SALMA: Nn:: ((Vocalizes to signal to Wafiya that she has dropped her doll's purse))¹²
8. WORDA: Se te ha caído el bolso?
Did you drop the purse?
9. WAFIYA: y yo también
and me too
10. WORDA: Te vas a la playa?
Are you going to the beach?
11. WAFIYA: Sí vamos
Yes, let's go
12. WORDA: vale
ok

Worda and Wafiya stage a scenario in which their dolls have run into each other on the street. The sequence opens with an exchange of greetings that is realized both verbally (lines 1-3) and kinetically with a mutual exchange of kisses on the cheek (see

¹² Salma suffered a serious ear infection as a baby. As a consequence, she lost most her auditory ability and cannot speak.

frame grab above)¹³. It is important to note that, although the girls perform this initial greeting in Moroccan Arabic, Worda explicitly instructs Wafiya to speak in Spanish in line 4 with a bold, repeated imperative in Moroccan Arabic “Haḍri aSbanyouliya Haḍri” (Speak Spanish Speak). Wafiya orients positively to this command by initiating a second greeting exchange in Spanish in line 5 - “Hola” (Hello) - that closely mirrors her initial greeting in Moroccan Arabic in line 1 - “Sala::m” (Hello::) - . Similarly, Worda responds to this new greeting in Spanish with a sequentially appropriate “Qué tal?” (How are you?) in line 6 that is equivalent to her greeting in line 2 - “Kiraki dayra?” (How are you?). After this second greeting exchange in Spanish, code alternation between Spanish and Moroccan Arabic is fairly consistent throughout the game, and the girls speak in Spanish only when speaking *for the dolls*. In addition, it is important to mention that some of the activities the girls begin to enact in this opening excerpt - in Line 10, “Te vas a la playa?” (Are you going to the beach?) and Line 11, “Sí vamos (Yes, let’s go)- could be assessed negatively by adults. Unlike their male siblings, some of the girls participating in this doll-play, in particular Worda and her sisters and Wafiya, were not allowed to go to the municipal swimming pool during the summer¹⁴.

The pattern of code choice, as established by the girls themselves in the opening sequence of their pretend game, is crucial not only to sustain and signal shifts between *in-play* and *off-play* interactional frames but also to mark children’s changes in footing (Goffman 1981) and affective stances towards the game itself and towards each other. For instance, although in their daily lives interactions with siblings often take place in Spanish, *off-play* interactions among siblings throughout the game are carried out in Moroccan Arabic. In particular, negotiating disagreement and controlling the rogue behavior of siblings as well as the mischievous behavior of other girls are two activities that very often trigger switches into Moroccan Arabic. In this sense, codeswitching can also be considered as playing an important interactional role in the construction and enforcement of in-group norms of behavior that regulate interactions among peers. In addition, older siblings’ linguistic behavior also has important implications for intergenerational socio-cultural and language maintenance.

Example 2 illuminates ways in which codeswitching is a crucial linguistic resource not only for signaling shifts between on-play and off-play interactional frames but also for this group of girls’ interactional management of sibling conflict and appropriate conduct during the game. The excerpt opens with an exchange in Moroccan Arabic between Worda and her sister Salma. Salma has repeatedly refused to participate with her doll in the pretend-play that her sister and the other girls are enacting, and, furthermore is upset because of the way her doll looks. Worda has been trying to calm her down and to convince her to participate in the game. In Line 1, Worda attempts to convince her sister one more time to participate in the game. Immediately before this excerpt, Worda has been dressing and styling Salma’s doll.

¹³ Kissing on both cheeks is a pervasive, ritualistic feature of greetings among friends and acquaintances in both Moroccan and Spanish communities.

¹⁴ In conversations with the girls and their mothers, I learned that this prohibition was related to parents’ concern about their daughters exposing themselves publicly in swimwear. Interestingly, the issue of swimwear is also made relevant by the girls later in the game (See Example 4 below).

Example # 2: Key: Spanish (Regular Font) --- Moroccan Arabic (***Bold Italics***)

| |
|---|
| Participants: Worda Wafiya Salma Lamia |
|---|

1. **WORDA:** *šuf druk raha žayya Hsan man gbila, yaki?*
 Look now, she's better than before, right? ((Referring to Salma's Doll))

((Wafiya communicates with Salma with gestures expressing that the doll looks very pretty.))

2. **SALMA:** Nn:::
 ((Salma vocalizes, still unhappy))

3. **WORDA:** *iwa haki, go 'di*
 Listen take it, sit down



4. **SALMA:** Nn::: Nn:::
 ((Salma vocalizes, still unhappy))

5. **WORDA:** *mabġitiš? iwa ruHi barra*
 you don't want?, ok Go away



6. **WORDA:** Estamos tardando mucho, eh?
 We're taking a long time, ah?

7. **WAFIYA:** Y el collar te lo has traído?
 And the necklace did you bring it?

(...)

8. **WORDA:** Vamos, vamos que hemos tardao mucho
 Come on, come on. It's already taken us a long time

9. **WORDA:** Uy ya hemos llegao. Me voy a dormir así la siesta
 We have already arrived. I'm going to take a nap.

10. **WORDA:** Vamos a qued- *matšaddihaš man š'ar tfu* (xxx)
 Let's stay- don't grab her by the hair (xxx)





Worda responds to Salma's refusals to participate in the game with a series of bold directives in line 3 "iwa haki, go'di" (Listen, take it, sit down) and line 5 - " ruHi barra" (Go away). This last directive is particularly aggravated, as it can also be seen in Worda's gesture in the frame grab above, and results in Salma being asked to leave the group. Immediately following this last directive, Worda code-switches into Spanish in line 6, closing the *off-play* sequence and resuming *in-character dialogue*. Moreover, in ventriloquizing the voice of the doll as saying "Estamos tardando mucho, eh?" (We are taking a long time, ah?- -Line 6), Worda is not only effectively shifting frames but also constructing the *on-play* interactional frame as the main activity. She treats the preceding exchange with her sister as a parenthetical insertion, clearly separate and distinct from the *on-play* interactional frame. A second interesting instance of codeswitching takes place a few turns later in line 10. Worda and Wafiya are engaged in *in-character dialogue* and are enacting a play scene between their dolls involving a trip to the beach. In the midst of their dialogue, Wafiya grabs Worda's doll by her hair with a forceful movement. Worda then interrupts her turn in mid-sentence and code-switches into Moroccan Arabic with the bold directive "matšaddihaš man š'ar tfu" (Don't grab her by the hair), rebuking Wafiya for her careless handling of the doll.

The previous examples demonstrate the interactional importance of codeswitching between Spanish and Moroccan Arabic for the on-going organization of distinct interactional and play frames, for social control of siblings and other girls, and for management of pretend-play peer norms, preferences, and expectations. The following sections examine how codeswitching also plays a crucial role in girls' construction of gendered identities for their play characters.

5.2. Linguistic resources for the construction of social identities and life worlds

The indexical meanings (or metaphorical meanings, Gumperz 1982) of children's codeswitching practices to create social identities for play characters, as well as of children's own metacommentary on these enactments, is particularly relevant in multilingual immigrant contexts. Because these contexts are not only linguistically complex, but socially, culturally, and politically complicated as well, Bakhtin's (1981) notion of heteroglossia is particularly useful to get at all the socio-ideological layers of

children's hybrid voicing. To examine how all the layers in these immigrant girls' codeswitching practices co-occur to indexicalize class-, ethnicity-, and gender-inflected social identities, it is important to pay attention to three aspects of language-use in codeswitching: Naming practices, in-character dialogue, and stage-setting narration.

5.2.1. Naming practices

The power inherent in naming, as both a language and an identity act, has been highlighted cross-culturally in studies on names and naming practices (Alford 1988; Blum 1997; Eid 1995; Markstrom and Iborra 2003; Rymes 1996). Far from being arbitrary or a one-time fixed label, a name can be constitutive of personal and social identity, in that naming is thoroughly embedded in the way people constitute relationships with themselves, with one another and with the world that surrounds them (Blum 1997)¹⁵. Choosing 'appropriate' names for their dolls and for other imaginary play characters is an important activity in Moroccan immigrant girls' pretend-play. The social and indexical meanings of this group of girls' naming practices become even more relevant against the backdrop of transgressional socio-cultural and linguistic subversion that characterize their peer-group codeswitching practices and interactions. Example 7.3 is excerpted from one of the negotiation sequences involving the assignation of names for play characters. As part of this negotiation, different names of Spanish and Arabic origins are proposed; the first are accepted and ratified, while the latter are invariably rejected. In this sense, the excerpt illustrates both the indexical values of codes for the construction of the social identities of the play characters. The segment starts in Spanish, since the girls have been ventriloquizing their dolls in the previous turns. In line 3, Worda codeswitches into Moroccan Arabic, shifting frames as the girls begin a negotiation sequence to decide the names of their dolls. This negotiation ends in line 14 when all the girls have chosen *appropriate* names for their dolls, and Worda codeswitches again into Spanish, resuming *in-character play*. In addition to codeswitching, this shift in frame is also achieved by the Spanish discourse marker¹⁶ "vale," which is often used as a closing sequence device to signal that agreement has been reached by all parties in an interaction about a particular topic.

Example # 3: Key: Spanish (Regular Font) --- Moroccan Arabic (***Bold Italics***)

| |
|--|
| <p>Participants: Worda Wafiya Dunia Lamia</p> |
|--|

¹⁵ The importance of names has been particularly emphasized in research on naming in relation to gender and identity (Alford 1988; Eid 1995). For example, in their study of Navajo female rites of passage, Markstrom and Iborra (2003) have discussed how the new names adopted in these ceremonies defined adolescent girls' changing identities, as well as new social roles and expectations.

¹⁶ Discourse markers have also been described an important interactional resource by which children in monolingual contexts manage different interactional and play frames in peer interaction (See Kyratzis and Ervin-Tripp 1999).

1. **WORDA:** *Cómo te llamas? Yo Carolina*
Wafiya, what's your name? I am Carolina
2. **LAMIA:** *Yo (Lidia/Lilia) ((Laughing))*
I am (Lidia/Lilia)
3. **WORDA:** *Lidia *goli* Lidia *ba 'da**
Lidia call her Lidia at least
4. **WAFIYA:** *ana Lidia, ana Lidia*
I am Lidia, I am Lidia
5. **LAMIA:** *ana Lidia, anti?*
I am Lidia, you are?
6. **LAMIA:** [*Lidia ((pointing at herself))*]
7. **WAFIYA:** [*wana ana Zora-Suriya=*]
And I am Zora-Suriya=
8. **LAMIA:** *=Zoraida=*
=Zoraida=
9. **WORDA:** *=la, la, la*
=no, no, no
10. **LAMIA:** *=Soraya*
=Soraya
11. **WAFIYA:** *Tsk, Tsk, Tsk ((Shaking her head)) E::h*
Tsk, Tsk, Tsk ((Shaking her head)) E::h
12. **WORDA:** *ana Rosi*
I am Rosi
13. **WAFIYA:** *ana Carolina*
I am Carolina
14. **WORDA:** [*Vale? Carolina yo me voy*]
Ok? Carolina I am leaving
15. **LAMIA:** [*el pelo como está- es rubia o-*]
My hair how it is- It's blond or
16. **WAFIYA:** *Pos adiós*
Then, good-bye
17. **WORDA:** *Te vas a quedar?*

Are you staying?

18. WAFIYA: No yo también [me voy
No, I am also [leaving

19. WORDA: [Qué- qué tonta eres!
[How- how silly you are

The act of naming that these girls perform during role-play is crucial for imparting an identity for their play characters. In negotiating what names are acceptable for their dolls, the girls construct specific ethnic and gendered social identities, while simultaneously rejecting other identities associated with first generation Moroccan immigrants. Only Spanish names are ratified and accepted, while names of Arabic origin, such as Suriya or Zoraida, are repeatedly rejected (in lines 9 and 11, respectively), paralleling the girls' choice of Spanish to ventriloquize the dolls. Through Spanish naming practices, girls attempt to access *technologies of power* (Foucault 1982/1988). Thus, in the play frame, they become full-fledged host society 'insiders' able to exert power and agency.

Their local versions of Spanish femininity (or what being a Spanish female means to them), become more subtle and complex as the interaction unfolds. In addition to their choices of name and code, it is important to pay attention to girls' shift to a highly stylized feminine register of Spanish during *in-character dialogue* and to the dreamy life worlds that the girls construct for the dolls through the combination of *in-character dialogue* and *stage-setting narration*. The language practices described, which the girls bring to bear in *the voices they enact for the dolls*, are crucial in unpacking how social identities encapsulated in these names are related to the girls' perceptions of the links between language, social roles, status, and expectations.

5.2.2. Register shifts in 'in-character dialogue'

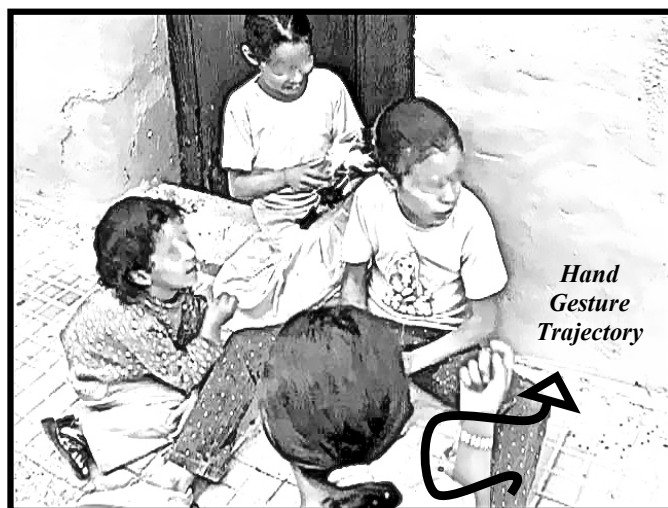
Many times when voicing the play characters, the girls shift to a stylized register of Spanish that is highly distinct from the Spanish variety that the girls use in most contexts of their daily lives. Girls' enregisterment when voicing their play characters is consequential for their construction of idealized versions of Spanish femininity, in that the indexical value of this register is rooted in its recognizable association with upper class, *fashionable* women (Agha 2005). This *in-character dialogue* register is characterized by exaggerated affectation of manners and stance. This heightened affective orientation and artificial posturing operates concurrently at several levels of linguistic structure: Phonological, morphological and discursive (Ochs and Schieffelin 1989). At the phonological level, the register is characterized by use of exaggerated intonation contours, amplified pitch, and vowel elongation, such as in:

(a) **WORDA:** ↑Eduardo::: (.) ya ha venido mi marido Eduardo
 ↑Eduardo::: (.) **my husband Eduardo has already arrived**

And, also, by the hyper-pronunciation of final sounds (i.e. /s/), as in

(b) **WAFIYA:** yo- lo que pidaS, pidelo

I- what you order, order it
 (=meaning whatever you order, order it for me as well)



This hyper-pronunciation of final /s/ is particularly salient in the sociolinguistic environment of Southwestern Spain, where one of the most widespread dialectal features is the systematic aspiration or dropping of all final sounds. In addition, the affectation indexed by this kind of hyper-pronunciation is rendered more powerful by its co-occurrence with equally affected gestures and other non-verbal behavior. Although it is difficult to convey the full range of a hand gesture in a single image, the frame grab above captures the endpoint of a continuous hand gesture, whose upward and outward trajectory is rendered by the curvy arrow. This gesture is frequently used to affect women of higher class. Girls' linguistic and corporeal behavior, in this regard, is reminiscent of hypercorrection phenomena documented as common among socially insecure groups of low socio-economic status (Labov 1964, 1966), who appropriate linguistic features of socio-economic dominant groups in an attempt to *gain* social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1991).

At the morphological level, there is a conspicuous use of affect-loaded suffixes, such as '-ito,' as in:

(c) **WORDA:** = \uparrow UY que cafeci:to me voy a tomar!

= \uparrow UY what a good little coffee I am going to have!

Finally, at the discourse level, the affected quality of this register is accomplished by the deployment of stereotypical speech genres of girl talk, such as the *demure* or *fake-embarrassment* genre. In Example 4, one of the girls enacts this appearance-conscious genre when voicing her doll's repeated requests for attention to the way in which she is wearing her imaginary bikini.

Example # 4: Key: Spanish (Regular Font)

| |
|---|
| Participants: Worda Wafiya Dunia Lamia |
|---|

1. **WORDA:** \uparrow O:::H, Me lo he puesto al revés. Me lo he puesto al revés o no? (1.5)
 Di:::!
 \uparrow O:::H, **I have put it inside out. Have I put it inside out or not? (1.5)**
 Te:::ll me!
2. **WAFIYA:** Qué?
 What?
3. **WORDA:** Que si me lo he puesto al revés?
Whether I have put it inside out?
4. **WAFIYA:** Qué es?
 What is it?
5. **LAMIA:** Qué?
 What?
6. **WORDA:** El bikini
 My bikini

 ((Girls laugh))
7. **WAFIYA:** °No:
 No
8. **WORDA:** Vaya
 Oh, well.

As noted above, many of these girls, including Worda, are not allowed to wear swimwear in public. In this respect, what is also striking about this excerpt is that the doll is actually not wearing a bikini. Yet, Worda performs this genre in an affected and emphatic manner as evidenced by the initial, phonologically salient “O:::H” in Line 1 and by her repeated requests for other girls’ attention in Line 1 “Di:::!” (Te:::ll me!) and in Line 3 “Que si me lo he puesto al revés?” (Whether I have put it inside out?). Once she has secured other participants’ undivided attention, Worda delivers the *punch line* with maximal effect in Line 6 “El bikini” (My bikini). The subsequent eruption of laughter indexes girls’ embarrassment and their awareness of the transgressional possibilities of their game.

5.2.3. *Emplotment through stage-setting narration and in-character dialogue*

Although some facets of emplotment of play dramas are accomplished in Moroccan Arabic, much stage setting of the activities the dolls are to perform is carried out in Spanish. Narratives enacted through the voices of the play characters create an idealized Spanish high society life style, with independence, access to financial resources, professional success, and a lively social agenda of activities that take place outside of home domains.

The doll characters, as performed by the girls, spend much of their time socializing with their *friends* (i.e. the other dolls): They go to the beach and the swimming pool; they go out to have coffee, dinners, and to nighttime parties. The dolls are portrayed as financially well off and go on several shopping trips for cell phones and clothes. In addition, they make plans to go to a nearby town to look for an apartment to rent, since they have just gotten jobs as '*directora*' (manager) and '*profesora*' (professor). In a later iteration of this game the dolls turn out to be married to Spanish men; the choice of names for the dolls' *husbands* (Eduardo, Miguel, and Alfredo, respectively) is also crucial in establishing identifications for these other imaginary characters. Example 5 is part of a larger sequence in which the girls enact a social outing to have coffee and dinner with friends.

Example # 5: Key: Key: Spanish (Regular Font) --- Moroccan Arabic (***Bold Italics***)

| |
|---|
| Participants: Worda Wafiya Lamia Dunia |
|---|

1. **WORDA:** Estamos en la cafetería=
We're in the cafeteria

2. **WAFIYA:** =Va**MOS** ((inaudible))
=Let's go ((inaudible))

((Worda and Wafiya sit their dolls in a circle they have created with their legs))

3. **WORDA:** *alla alkašni dyal hadi a Wafiya* ((She returns the shawl to Lamia))
No, no that's the shawl of this one

4. **WAFIYA:** He he he ((laughing))

5. **WORDA:** *A Wafiya* ((inaudible))
Wafiya ((inaudible))

6. **WAFIYA:** Qué tal?
How are you?

7. **WORDA:** Bien
Fine
8. **WAFIYA:** °Estamos aquí
 °We are here
9. **WAFIYA:** Te lo pongo?
Do I put it on for you? = ((Referring to Lamia's doll's shawl))
10. **WORDA:** = ↑**UY** qué cafeci:to me voy a tomar!
 = ↑**UY** what a good little coffee I am going to have!
11. **WAFIYA:** Y yo también
And me too
12. **DUNIA:** Toma, toma ((Giving a toy purse to Lamia))
Take it, take it
13. **DUNIA:** Se te [cayó ((Still speaking to Lamia))
It [fell
14. **WORDA:** [Qué guay
How cool
- (...)
15. **WORDA:** No. Yo he pedido na mas ketchup con pollo y::: pescado
No. I have ordered anything else. Ketchup with chicken and fish
16. **WAFIYA:** Pollo, pescado [patatas fritas
Chicken, fish, [French fries
17. **WORDA:** [y, y
[and, and
18. **WORDA:** y whisky
And whisky
19. **WAFIYA:** Yo whisky y patatas fritas con ketchup y pollo y pescado
I whisky and French fries with ketchup and chicken and fish

This excerpt illustrates how these idealized life worlds are created in both *in-character dialogue* (Lines 6-11, and line 14. See also, lines 15-19) and *stage-setting narration* (Line 1 and Line 8)¹⁷. As they dramatize this cafeteria outing and, through the

¹⁷ Lines 3-5 involve negotiation of conflict over a piece of clothing for the doll. As mentioned earlier when discussing play and interactional frames, negotiations interspersed in the emplotment of the

voices of the dolls, engage in transgressional behaviors, such as drinking alcohol, the girls are also exploring imagined possibilities that are part of their repertoires of selves, identities, and moral worlds. The imagined possibilities that the pretend-play and the dolls, as part of the girls' material culture, afford are constrained in the real world by family expectations, monitoring and control over girls' behavior, by unequal structures of the Spanish society which considers them outsiders, and by the socio-economic positions of their families within these structures. Yet, as the girls construct through the voices of the dolls alternative social realities and life worlds in which they hold decision-making authority, they momentarily challenge, subvert, and transform restrictions and conflicts they experience in other everyday environments. In this sense, *in-character dialogue* and *stage setting* function as powerful counter-narratives to subject and economic subaltern positions assigned to them by the host society and to other cultural narratives about female behavior in their diasporic communities.

The role of the peer group as a relatively autonomous arena for action with limited, if any, adult supervision is critical for these immigrant girls' explorations of ways of being in the world that their families could consider transgressional, such as drinking alcohol, attending night time parties, or exposing themselves in swimwear. Furthermore, the extraordinarily dreamy life worlds that the girls construct for their play characters, along with the highly stylized register of Spanish with which they enact the social voices (Agha 2005; Bakhtin 1981, 1986) of the dolls, also suggests an idealization of Spanish femininity as desirable. Desire often reverberates interactionally when the girls, *through the voices of the dolls*, make evaluations of the activities they enact, as in example 7.5: "Qué guay!" (How cool! Line 14).

5.3. Ambivalent stances and the moral inflection of codes

Although a positive stance of playfulness and desire dominates pretend-play, a closer analysis of girls' codeswitching practices reveals a more ambivalent stance towards the actions and gendered identifications that they are performing in their games. The ambivalent stances that permeate Moroccan immigrant girls' doll play are reminiscent of other ethnographically situated accounts of identity formation among immigrant youth in other communities across Europe (Hall 1995, 2002; Treteault, 2008).

Codeswitching into Moroccan Arabic to make metacommentaries about girls' own behavior, the behavior of the other girls, and the actions they are enacting in their imaginary play serve as an important function for the interactional management of the girls' conflicting affective stances towards their *Spanish* gendered identifications. Instances of metacommentaries interspersed throughout the game indicate a high level of *reflexivity* (Bakhtin 1981) in that girls are aware that they are acting transgressionally. Example 6 opens with the girls ventriloquizing the voices of the dolls as they are getting ready to leave for the beach. When Salma refuses to join in the pretend-play, an explosion of laughter follows. Lamia happens to laugh particularly boisterously. Worda then code-switches into Moroccan Arabic to reprimand Lamia's noisy behavior, because it has the potential *to give them away*:

pretend-play are carried out in Moroccan Arabic. Lines 12-13 are part of a concurrent interaction between Dunia and Lamia. Lamia is dressing up her doll to meet the other dolls in the cafeteria, and Dunia gives her a toy purse that Lamia had dropped.

Example # 4: Key: Spanish (Regular Font) --- Moroccan Arabic (***Bold Italics***)

| |
|---|
| Participants: Worda Wafiya Salma Lamia Dunia |
|---|

1. **WORDA:** Yo me voy, eh? Vamo:s
I'm leaving, ah? Let's go
2. **WAFIYA:** Vamo:::s
Let's go!
3. **WORDA:** ((inaudible)) **yalla** ((To Salma))
((inaudible)) **let's go**
4. **SALMA:** Nn::: Nn:::: ((Shaking her head))

((Wafiya starts laughing and Lamia laughs extremely loud))



5. **WORDA:** *a Lamia ġadi tfađHina*
Lamia is going to give us away

((To Lamia))ruHi ġalsi alhiha falbab adyalna
go sit down by our door

This metacommentary marks the pretend-play they are engaged in as a *clandestine interaction* (De Certeau 1988; Sterponi 2004: 96-97) meant to take place surreptitiously away from the gaze and the ears of adult authority figures. Central to the construction of the doll-play as *clandestine* is the semantics of the verb ‘fđeH,’ (to give away), used when one has a secret to protect or is doing something stealthily. Making

too much noise is in this context dangerous, because it may attract the attention of parents and others to the activities of the girls in the peer group. Girls' own construction of their pretend-play as a clandestine activity and the ambivalence this reveals towards the actions they perform as part of the game infuses the social meanings of codes in this peer group. Use of Moroccan Arabic and Spanish in this pretend play results in a heteroglossic polyphony of voices imbued with moral tensions (Bahktin 1981, 1986). The struggle (in Bakhtin's sense) between the Moroccan voices of the girls in their metacommentaries and the Spanish voices they enact for their play characters inflects the codes with ethical valences. Moroccan Arabic is the code in which the girls voice their moral ambiguity, and Spanish is the furtive language that they bring to bear in their clandestine explorations of imagined transgressional possibilities, repertoires of selves, and ways of being in the world. The hybrid linguistic practices allow the voice of the *characters*, the voice of the *narrator*, and the voice of the *director* to represent distinct points of view on the world.

6. The peer group as a context for language socialization into communicative practices and gendered identities

The examples discussed in this paper illustrate immigrant children's acute sensitivity to the power of contrasting languages and registers to index and construct stances, acts, activities, and social identities (Ochs 1992, 1993, 2002). How do children learn the complex linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge that they deploy in ludic interactions among peers? As noted above, in pretend-play girls interweave ordinary aspects of their lives with '*high society*' and glamorous behaviors, actions, and even ways of speaking. Some of the behaviors that the girls make relevant in their pretend-play can be traced to girls' everyday activities, such as training for and running in public arena races, watching T.V., going to the store and so on. Codeswitching as a practice is itself part of the girls' repertoire of everyday ways of speaking. At the same time, the girls' role enactments include a range of behaviors (including ways of speaking, such as the highly stylized register of Spanish that they use when ventriloquizing the dolls) that are far removed from their daily lives. They are, after all, enacting *being adult women* whose conducts are barred for them, because of socio-economic constraints or moral expectations. I would like to consider further these more extraordinary enactments.

Some enactments in pretend-play were remote for the girls due to the difficult socio-economic situation of many of these immigrant families (e.g. expensive shopping trips for clothes and technology), or to family prohibitions for female behavior (e.g. going to the local swimming pool or participating in some of the festivities that take place annually in the town). Parental sanctions are particularly relevant because, as Kulick and Schieffelin (2004: 335) have discussed in their account of language socialization in relation to culturally-discouraged subject positions or 'bad subjects', prohibitions may act as an instigator of desire: "verbal admonitions which are intended to discourage particular desires, in fact often sustain them," (2004: 357). This dynamic may partially account for the idealization and stance of desire that permeates the Spanish-dominant doll pretend-play interactions analyzed in this paper. Alternatively, although their mothers or older sister would very rarely go out to coffee shops or engage in the kind of social outings that the girls perform in the course of the doll-play, the girls would observe many other groups of women going to bars, restaurants and coffee shops on

weekend afternoons and early evenings. They were also exposed to their female teachers' conversations in informal school settings, where plans and weekend activities were often discussed. In addition, they would also frequently overhear exchanges among the most socially popular female peers in their classes about shopping trips to near, larger cities, where many of them often went to purchase clothes and school materials.

Another crucial aspect to consider in the girls' constructions and idealizations of the dolls' femininity is the role that TV sitcoms and soap operas may play in these girls' imaginative play. Many of the girls that I studied were avid consumers of these types of programs. As mentioned, characters and plots from these television programs were some of the most common themes of pretend-play in these girls' peer groups. Discussion about the 'previous day's episode' was common in school during class breaks and other social venues not only among Moroccan immigrant girls but also among their Spanish female peers. The girls' exposure to varied ways of speaking and possible ways of being in the world as females, through mass media, observation and vicarious participation in adult and classmate-organized activities affords their socialization into host society (1) gendered identities, (2) socio-economic hierarchies, and (3) indexical associations for different codes and language practices.

An important dimension that I would like to highlight is how the peer group itself is a crucial context for children's socialization into communicative practices and processes of identification (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2007; Goodwin 2000; García-Sánchez 2005; Paugh 2005). As noted, Moroccan immigrant peer groups are composed of children of different ages and with different levels of expertise in and experience with Moroccan and Spanish linguistic and socio-cultural practices (See Section 4.2). In pretend-play, older girls, or girls with longer migratory histories, also expose and socialize younger children and children with shorter lengths of stay in the country into hybrid uses of language varieties available to them and into ways of (re)fashioning alternative social identities.

The significance of play for children's socio-cultural learning has been highlighted in a number of fields. Goodwin (1985: 316-317) has argued that a continuity exists between hierarchical forms of interaction within games and non-game domains of experience. Moroccan girls' play allows them to experiment with the meaning of socio-cultural processes in game domains and with the meaning of those processes in other domains of their daily lives. In addition, Rogoff (1998) has pointed out that in play children contribute to each other's learning as well as to their own development. *Intent participation*, in particular, (Rogoff, Paradise, Mejía Arauz, Correa-Chávez, and Angelillo 2003) entails keen observation of an on-going activity in which the novice is already participating or is expected to participate and is a pervasive and effective way of learning in children's lives. Intent participation involves collaboration between experts and novices in a shared endeavor.

In the pretend-play sequences under analysis, intent participation organizes the learning process of child novices in powerful ways. Throughout the games, children novices, such as Dunia, Worda's youngest sister, can be seen keenly observing the actions of her older peers, often in anticipation of participation (See Figure 2 below). Many times in these pretend play sequences, Dunia picks up her sister's and other girls' dolls, while the rest argued and negotiated different parameters of the game, to practice and rehearse the actions that she had seen the other girls previously enact, often carrying out quasi-whispering self-dialogues with the dolls. Dunia always ran after her peers

whenever they went to their houses or to the near-by construction site to pick up further props for their games. In addition, Dunia's emerging participation and understanding of the practices enacted in this doll-play interaction can be observed in her self-appointed role as a 'look-out,' collecting doll's props, such as toy purses or glasses that fell off the dolls in the midst of play, and most importantly, warning her sister and the other girls whenever any adult or adolescent boys approached the peer group.

Figure 2: Dunia's observation and intent participation



The peer group is a primordial locus for immigrant children's language socialization as well when they share stories with each other about some of the social outings in which they were allowed to participate. They would often incorporate events of these outings in their games. Not all Moroccan girls in this study experience the same levels of restriction and monitoring. While some parents would not permit the daughters' participation in extra-curricular school field trips, other parents did not object to such occasions. One of the field trips that took place during my fieldwork was an outing to a movie theater in a nearby, larger city to see the popular movie "The Chronicles of Narnia." A day after this field trip took place, a large number of Moroccan girls gathered in the park after school. Among them were three of the participants in this doll pretend play (Worda, Wafiya, and Dunia). Those girls who had been allowed to go to the movies started telling the other girls their experiences in the theater and described the plot of the movie. Eventually, all the girls decided that they were going to *pretend-play* "The Chronicles of Narnia," which I had the opportunity to record. In these ways, pretend-play with peers offers a prime context for immigrant children's socio-cultural and linguistic learning, and socialization into dominant cultural dispositions and practices otherwise out of reach for many of the girls in this study.

7. Conclusion

The minimal adult supervision of peer group activities makes pretend-play a crucial context for immigrant children to become active agents in their own and other children's socialization into communicative practices and sociocultural norms. The rich verbal and sociocultural environments of peer groups provide an excellent window to investigate how immigrant children negotiate and subvert through play the different, and often incongruous, socio-cultural and linguistic expectations and constraints that they encounter on a daily basis. Codeswitching between Spanish and Moroccan Arabic play a critical role in these processes. This analysis has highlighted the importance of these hybrid linguistic practices in immigrant girls' explorations of alternative processes of gendered identification and future life paths in multilingual, culturally-syncretic environments where, not only languages, but also ways of being in the world enter into conflict. This research underscores the implications of children's language use and choice in pretend-play for larger processes of cultural continuity and transformation in transnational, diasporic communities undergoing rapid change (See also Paugh 2005).

In addition, the indexically-complex linguistic practices in this immigrant girls' peer group illuminate important aspects of the relation between codeswitching and social identity. Many instances of codeswitching, particularly those involving shifts to a register highly distinct from the Spanish that the girls use in the communicative contexts that make up their daily lives are more related to the dynamic aspects of translanguaging phenomena, such as Rampton's (1995, 1998) description of *crossing*¹⁸, than to the one-to-one mapping between codeswitching and social identity, such as solidarity-distance and in-group/out-group dichotomies, that characterized some of the earlier research on codeswitching (See Woolard 2004 and Auer 1998 for a review and critique this literature).

Narrative emplotment, in-character dialogue, and running metacommentary inflect the codes with sociopolitical and moral values. The girls' own ideological interpretations of and stances towards these values mobilized in their codeswitching practices offer a vantage point into their developing gendered and ethnic subjectivities and sociocultural consciousness (Hill 1985; Gal 1987), as well as into their incipient political consciousness. The investigation of children's development of gender, sociocultural, and political consciousness, particularly the role that everyday linguistic and social practices play in them, may be particularly important for immigrant girls' complex and ambiguous processes of identification. As Hall (1995: 244) noted in her discussion of how young British Sikh imagine their futures in relation to numerous possible identities, as they contend with the contrasting ideologies of their families and host country: "Identity formation is not simply a matter of preserving a cultural tradition handed down by one's parents. For ethnic minorities marginalized by the forces of racism and nationalism as well as forms of class and gender inequality, cultural-identity formation, I will argue, is an inherently political process."

Finally, although outside of the scope of the present paper, peer play involving toys, and dolls in particular, also have important implications for the affordances that material culture has in the life of children and how children exploit these affordances as they

¹⁸ Rampton's (1995) notion of crossing refers to the act of codeswitching into a code or linguistic variety (usually a minority language) that is not 'owned' by the speaker, but rather belongs to a group which they cannot legitimately claim to be part of.

learn to navigate their own ways through societal structures and hierarchies (Thorne *Forthcoming*).

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Appendix I

Arabic Transliteration Symbols**

| | |
|----------|---------|
| ا = ā | ظ = ṭ |
| ب = b | ع = ʿ |
| ت = t | غ = ġ |
| ث = z | ف = f |
| ج = ĵ | ق = g/q |
| ح = H | ك = k |
| خ = kh | ل = l |
| د = d | م = m |
| ذ = D | ن = n |
| ر/rr = r | ه = h |
| ز = ẓ | ي = ī/y |
| س = s | ء = ʾ |
| ش = š | َ = a/e |
| ص = S | ُ = u/o |
| ض = ḍ | ِ = i |
| ط = T | |