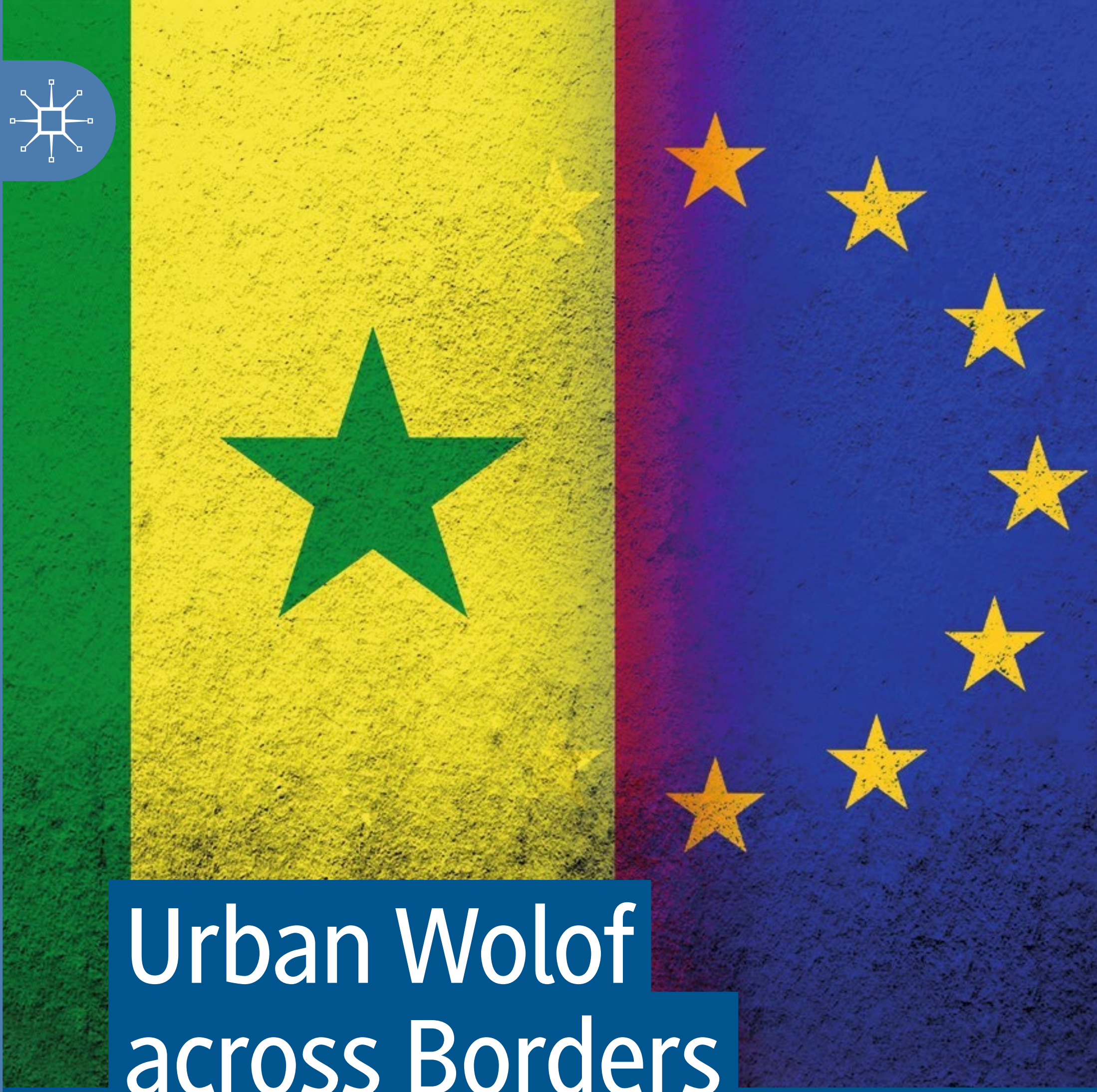

Urban Wolof across Borders

Translanguaging while Transmigrating

Aziz Dieng

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Urban Wolof across Borders

“Through the lens of linguistic ethnography and anthropology, Urban Wolof across Borders offers a captivating linguistic journey, providing readers with a comprehensive exploration of the language dynamics among millions of Wolof speakers in Senegal and worldwide. Aziz possesses a unique ability to interconnect central macrolinguistic and microlinguistic aspects, expanding the limits of Wolof studies and paving the way for future research endeavors.”

—Pedro Álvarez-Mosquera, *University of Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain*

“This important book provides major new insights into urban Wolof, Senegalese transmigration and its impact on language practices. Breaking with the conventional approach of looking at these practices through the lens of codeswitching, Dieng shows how the Senegalese diaspora use a single linguistic repertoire that draws on many languages, including Wolof, French, English and Arabic. His questioning of the very notion of codeswitching in the African context has significance that goes well beyond the specific case of Senegal and will be of great interest to those working in Applied Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, African Diaspora Studies and Francophone African Studies. It is a truly fascinating read.”

—Tony Chafer, *Professor of African and French Studies, University of Portsmouth, UK*

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Foreword

With over fifteen years of experience dedicated to creating bridges between Africa and Europe, my specialisation in sociolinguistics and language teaching has led me to work extensively on aspects related to linguistic attitudes, intercultural perceptions, and the role of language in enhancing access to knowledge and fostering optimal cognitive development. It was within this framework, while coordinating the *African Languages Day* at the University of Salamanca, with Senegal as the invited country, that I became familiar with Dr Aziz Dieng's work and accomplishments. Dr Dieng embodies the qualities of an outstanding researcher and eloquent communicator. His wholehearted dedication to the examination of Senegal's sociolinguistic reality is clearly reflected in the theoretical foundations, the careful attention given to sensitive aspects of speakers' identity, and a rigorous approach to data, all contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the intricate situation of the Wolof language in the diaspora. His in-depth knowledge of the linguistic context within this community of speakers outside Senegal, combined with his insider perspective as a speaker of both a minority language in the country and Wolof itself, ideally situates him to pose the right questions and provide the data that readers eagerly seek.

The present book represents a unique multifaceted research work that provides the reader with the indispensable conceptual insights needed to establish an *original* connection between Senegal and its diaspora through linguistic and cultural practices. More specifically, as author challenges previous theoretical postulations of the code-based approach applied to urban Wolof studies, encompassing phenomena like codeswitching and code-mixing, readers are steered towards new routes into more inclusive alternatives of examining communicative events co-created by the speakers. In this sense, the audience embarks on a journey into the mind of the African multilingual speaker to reflect upon central aspects, including the fact that “switching between languages or codes is exactly what is *not* happening; they are simply deploying idiolectal features, housed, as it were, in a larger linguistic repertoire that knows no boundaries, unfettered by linguistic rules and precepts.” In this enlightening experience, the author also succeeds in shedding new light on the bidirectional process of linguistic identity construction between the homeland and diasporic communities. In the pages that follow, we are invited to accompany the Senegalese transmigrant on a journey through the intricate fabric of language and identity. Examined through the perspective of Wolof, this book is a testament to the power of language to transcend borders, to bridge cultures, and encapsulate ideologies, without losing sight of the major contextual and cultural clues that often shape the diverse human experience. May the insights within these pages inspire other researchers to delve deeper into the fascinating realm of Wolof studies and contribute to this renewed appreciation for the vibrant mosaic that humans and languages represent.

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Pedro Álvarez-Mosquera

Acknowledgements

Most of the content of this book was birthed out of my doctoral as well as previous academic work in which many people furnished unfaltering support. A theoretical article I wrote in 2022 entitled "Research Methodologies in Urban Wolof Studies: A Critical Review of the Literature and Suggestion for New Analytical Perspectives", is incorporated as one of the sections of the introductory chapter, under the title "Novel Perspectives in urban Wolof Studies". I thank *The European Scientific Journal* (open access) for their cooperation. I would like to start by thanking my beloved Mentor. I should like to extend my gratitude and warm regards to my wife, Michaila and my mother, Mariam, for supporting me throughout this journey. Special thanks to Professor Tony Chafer, Dr Mario Saraceni, and Dr Glenn Hadikin, my PhD supervisors, who have actively participated, with their valuable advice, in the making of this book.

I am also greatly indebted to my participants without whom this research would not have been possible. Their engagement and interest in the study kept me going. A huge thank you to all of them. They have been pivotal in both my data collection and analysis, acting, as they did, more like fellow linguistic ethnographers than mere research subjects. Their creativity has permitted me to pave novel inroads into multilingualism. My gratitude to Mr Langlet from the *Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations* (BULAC) in Paris, for allowing me access to what is believed to be the only copy of Descemet's (1864) book on the urban Wolof of Saint-Louis, Senegal. I cannot finish without thanking my friend, Professor Pedro, from the Department of English Philology at the University of Salamanca, for offering me platforms to discuss my project, and for accepting to write the foreword of this book. Finally, special thanks to Cathy Scott, Antony Sami, and the editorial and production team at Palgrave Macmillan.

Transcription Conventions and Translation

Transcription

…	Abandonment of turn space or encroachment of turn space.
CAPITALS	Denotes loudness.
:::	Utterance lengthener.
(*explanation*)	In dialogues, represents supplementary explanation.
/ /	Phonetic transcription.

NB: In conformity with the principles of translanguaging, there was no distinction in fonts, in the dialogues, between features from different "languages". This was in a bid to capture the smoothness with which they transgressively flow into one another.

Translation

All the translations are mine.

Contents

1 **Introduction and Conceptual Considerations** 1
When Transmigrants Translanguage 1
Background and Aims of the Book 14
Urban Wolof Communicative Events 18
Codeswitching Versus Translanguaging 22
  Codeswitching 22
  The Unitary View of Translanguaging 25
Under the Palaver Tree 31
Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Contexts and Chronotopes 36
Outline of the Book 38
References 43

2 **Identity and Roles of the Senegalese Transmigrant** 51
Introduction 51
In-Betweenness of Self-Identification 52
Wolof as a Marker of the Senegalese Diasporans' Identity 70
French as the Language of Activism: Highlighting Their Francophone Identity 75
English: Global Multilingual Identity Formation 93
Conclusion 102
References 104

3 Language Practices in the Dahiras 109
- Introduction 109
- The Senegalese Migration Pattern in the Cities of the Global North 110
  - The Mouride Transmigration 113
  - The Ontology of the Mouride Dahiras 116
- The Diasporic Dahiras as Chronotopic Situations for Rurality 119
  - Replicating the Touba Wolof in the Dahiras 124
  - The Only Way Is Ethics 136
  - Effacing My Blackness Through Mimicry 145
- Conclusion 155
- References 156

4 Commensality 161
- Introduction 161
- Ethnic and Patronymic Banter During Commensality 163
- Some Cultural Considerations About Food 178
  - First Cause: Eating Entails Pooing 179
  - Second Cause: Soul Eaters Catch Their Victims Through Food 184
- Concluding Thoughts 189
- References 191

5 Language Attitudes and Identity Construction 193
- Introduction 193
- Urban Wolof Is Not a Postcolonial Phenomenon 194
- Rural Exodus and Language Attitudes in Senegal: Urbanity Versus Rurality 197
- Language and Ethnic Identity: Emic Narratives on Who Is Wolof and What Is Wolof 200
- Rural Wolof Good! Urban Wolof Bad! 220
  - Rural Wolof 221
  - The Diasporans' Views on Urban Wolof and Translanguaging 229
- Conclusion 244
- References 246

6 Conclusions 251
Revisiting Urban Wolof: Insights from Transmigration and Translanguaging 251
Decoloniality: A Call for More Indigenous Methodologies 260
References 263

Index 267

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Inventory of positive, negative, and neutral determiners 70
Table 3.1 The archaic use of the singular indefinite article in wolof 143
Table 4.1 Comparison of Wolof and Sereer pronunciations 178
Table 5.1 Various appellations of urban Wolof 245

1

Introduction and Conceptual Considerations

When Transmigrants Translanguage

One warm afternoon, I was standing outside one of the few mosques in Saint-Mary's, one of the busiest and most ethnically diverse areas of Southampton, England. I was with a couple of my Senegalese friends. We had just finished our Friday prayer. There was a strong smell of oriental incense coming out of the exotic shops that line Saint-Mary's Street. We began to wander slowly to the mosque's car park while waiting for Mourtalla who always takes longer to come out of the mosque. I took that opportunity to put my recording device back on. I had it switched off during the prayer. By this time, my friends, who are also my research participants, were already familiar with the device I had been using to record urban Wolof speech data. My occasional ethnographic jottings equally left them undisturbed. Urban Wolof is our main language of communication. Wolof is the language of millions of Senegalese in Senegal and abroad. Urban Wolof (UW) is the form of Wolof spoken in the major cities in Senegal and in most parts of the diaspora. Whereas studies on UW in Senegal abound, the same cannot be said about UW abroad. With the affordances of the ethnographic privilege of an insider researcher, I aim to give a novel reconceptualisation of UW by examining the effect of mobility on this language.

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A. Dieng, *Urban Wolof across Borders*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-57812-0_1

In this chapter, I start by drawing a parallel between my participants' complex transnational movements across borders and the complex nature of their language practices, followed by a description of the scope and objectives of the book. I then go on to highlight the dynamic nature of an UW communicative event as comprising diverse resources of which language is but a part. After laying out the limitations of the code-based approach, I go on to outline novel theoretical perspectives and methodologies to approach UW data, underpinned by hermeneutic phenomenological tools which are in line with ethnographically informed methodologies that this book adopts. The book argues that only linguistic ethnography can account for the complex and dynamic communicative events taking place in the various spaces that the diasporic urban Wolophones create. For, it is ethnography that contextualises language (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 8; Tusting, 2020, p. 1; Timmermans & Prickett, 2019, p. 55). The chapter concludes with a summary of all subsequent chapters of the book.

Tapha, Babacar, and I are former fellow graduates from the University of Dakar in the late 1990s. Babacar is a Sereer, one of the many ethnic groups in Senegal. As a Fulani by ethnicity, I often exchange a bit of banter with him, as is the custom in Senegal where specific ethnicities enter into a form of ethnic banter with each other. He grew up in the urban city of Thiès, some seventy kilometres East of Dakar where he taught English in a secondary school for two years before moving to the UK in the early 2000s. We often teasingly call him by the nickname *Bouton* (French for button), a term we use for people who are obsessed with timekeeping. Soon enough, under the sweltering heat, he glanced at his watch and exclaimed, “Waa mais les gars, xanaa Mourtalla day extra time?” (What the hell guys, is Mourtalla playing extra time or what?). At which point, Tapha burst into laughter and exclaimed, “Sama Sereer bi daa xiif, añagul!” (My little Sereer hasn't eaten yet; he's hungry!). Tapha is the joker of the group. He laughs at most things. He is a Wolofised Fulani, born and raised in Dakar. After graduating from university, he dabbled in street commerce for a few years in Dakar before he came to England around the same time as Babacar and I did.

As the mosque continued to disgorge its occupants, we saw Mourtalla finally coming out. As he was walking towards us, he displayed a shy smile then apologised for taking so long. In a way, his lateness was unsurprising because, in his capacity as the *kilifa*[1] of our group, it is expected that he should say longer prayers. Mourtalla's kilifahood is solely based on the fact that he is originally from the holy city of Touba, Senegal and is highly religious and speaks Wolof like a kilifa, that is, with the rural accent of Touba which is characteristic of respectable dignitaries. He worked in Dakar as a street vendor for a few years before moving to Spain when he was in his early twenties. He lived there for fifteen years before moving to England in the early 2010s. He is equally as urbanised as the rest of my participants. Only, he makes his rural diction more prominent in many situations.

We all shook hands with him, and, in turn, prostrated on the back of his hand immediately after the handshake. He replicated the gesture by prostrating on our respective hands. This form of greeting is known as *mbëkk* and is at once a sign of respect and a way of giving and getting *baraka* (blessing). It is profusely used by my participants and most members of the Mouride community. The Mouride are members of the Sufi order founded by the Senegalese leader Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, in the holy city of Touba, central Senegal, the heartland of the Mouride confraternity (Ross, 2011, pp. 2930–1). Ahmadou Bamba's followers bear the name *taalibe*, a Wolofised Arab word meaning *seekers,* but which has taken on the connotative meaning of *followers*. A few of my participants are self-confessed Baye Fall. The Baye Fall are members of the Mouride branch which follow Cheikh Ibra Fall who was Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's first disciple. One can visibly identify the Baye Fall from their long dreadlocks and their patchwork outfits known as *njaxas*.

Touba, the second most populated city in Senegal after the capital city Dakar, is today a global holy city and capital of the Mouride Sufi order. Every year, millions of adepts worldwide return to Touba on a pilgrimage known as the Grand Màggal of Touba. All my participants, including myself, are members of the Mouride brotherhood called *dahira*. *Dahiras* are closely knit religious and cultural organisations whose principal objective is to keep the *taalibe* together as one cohesive body through regular gatherings. Dahiras are environments where the *taalibe* come to find solace and engage in various religious practices (O'Brien, 1971, p. 255) but also discussions of current affairs including topics pertaining to the living conditions of their compatriots back home. In our case, the dahira is held at Mourtalla's house every Friday.

---

[1] Highly respected person.

After the handshakes and greetings that can take up to several minutes at a time, we decided to head to the venue for some *ataaya*. *Ataaya* is a tea-drink ritual that my participants engage in at every gathering. Needless to say, it is part of the ethnographic décor. *Ataaya* is made with three ingredients: green tea, known by the Senegalese as *warga*, fresh mint leaves we call *naanaa*, and sugar. It is all too likely that this practice was adopted centuries ago from neighbouring Mauritania on account of the fact that nearly all the terminology surrounding this drink is of Hasaniyya origin, one of the languages spoken in Mauritania. I believe the Wolof term *ataaya* to have originated from the Hasaniyya word *atay* referring to the same tea ceremony in Mauritania. Additionally, *warga* is the Hasaniyya way of pronouncing the Arabic word ورقة/waraqa/. The tea ceremony can last up to several hours at a time. It is served in three stages. It is also known as the three concoctions often called *lëwël* (first service), *deuxième* (second service), and *troisième* (third service) by the urbanites. Note, in addition, that *lëwël* is from the Arabic الأول/al-ewel/.

Mourtalla's house is also the main setting for my ethnographic work where the bulk of my data was collected during the dahira sessions. Before we leave the mosque on Fridays, we always make sure that there is enough *warga* at the venue.

> Aziz: Am nga warga gàlle?
> Mourtalla: Xaaral ma woo MBayang xool
> Tapha: Sinon man naa daw ci Asian shop bi rak tak.
> Babacar: The warga I brought back from Paris is it gone?
> Aziz: Mais Elaa warna andaale non?
> Mourtalla: Xaaral ma laajte.
> [Aziz: Have you got tea at home?
> Mourtalla: Let me give MBayang a call and see.
> Tapha: If not I can run to the Asian shop quick.
> Babacar: Is the warga I brought back from Paris gone already?

Aziz: Surely, Elaa must've brought some back.
Mourtalla: Hang on; let me check.]

After a few minutes on the phone with his wife MBayang, Mourtalla confirmed that Elaa had brought back some *warga* and that we only needed *naanaa* (fresh mint leaves). Elaa, lives next door to Mourtalla. He is an assistant coach in a junior football club in Hampshire. He moved to UK in 2011 from Finland where he ran a small dance school for five years. He goes back over to Helsinki every few months as he has family ties there. That afternoon, he was not with us at the mosque. He was at home catching up with some sleep because he had just come back from Spain earlier that morning, but promised he would be at the venue for when we returned from the mosque.

As the conversation above shows, UW is characterised by the presence, within the Wolof language, of linguistic features belonging to other languages such as French, English, Fulani, Arabic, etc. This little interaction is an example of when the speakers deploy their full linguistic repertoire, which tends to be their normal, natural way of speaking, although, in some situations we may observe other forms of language practices informed by different situated uses. Whilst the speakers appear to waltz from language to language, seemingly switching codes, I show in chapters to come that the urban Wolophone is instead making selections from a single repertoire of linguistic features with no sense of compartmentalisations and language borders. The foregoing is the central argument of what constitutes translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014). The analyses in this book rest on solid theoretical frameworks which turn away from notions of language as a code and towards the prioritising of meaning-making (Wei, 2022, p. 2). The meanings the speaker wants to ascribe to the situated uses is what will somewhat determine the idiolect the speaker is going to select, almost as if to say, "the end justifies the means".

Babacar glanced at his watch again and handed Tapha a pound coin: "Saawaay dawal coacher naanaa. Mourtalla kaay toog ci kanam. Aziz, you can sit at the back; moo ëpp leg room. Tapha, soo yeexee nak fii laa lay bàyyi." (Mate, can you get us some mint leaves. Mourtalla come sit at the front. Aziz, you can sit at the back; there's more leg room. Tapha quick don't be long or you're walking home). Tapha responded with a mocking grin, revealing his big white teeth. In an awkward, gangling gait, he headed to the shop. He looked elegant in his colourful *njaxas* and thick dreadlocks. While we were waiting, Babacar had a look at his phone and said, "Ils vont le laisser comme ça croupir en prison! CIIPETU::: Baal ma Mourtalla." (They're gonna bloody let him rot in prison like that! I'm so pissed off! Sorry Mourtalla). He was referring to the jailed Senegalese opposition leader, Ousmane Sonko who has recently been banned from running for presidency. He looked visibly upset and apologised to Mourtalla for raising his voice and using the Wolof paralinguistic click called *ciipetu*, an expression of frustration that can also be perceived as rude to use in front of elders or respectable people. My analysis of UW verbal data includes such prosodic elements which Grenoble et al. (2015) call "verbal gestures". They are also known as "paralinguistic clicks" (Gil, 2013).

UW scholars have given comparatively little or no attention to this aspect of language which occupies a central position in most African languages. Amputating such verbal gestures as clicks or humming from the Wolof phonemic repertoire will majorly affect the communicative effect. An examination of my data shows a preponderance of verbal gestures in UW. The *ciipetu* sound is characterised by a lateral sucking (long or short) of the teeth which produces a fricative sound. The short suck-teeth (*cipetu*[2]), differs from the long one in that Wolophones use the latter (*ciipetu*) for negative evaluations, when, say, expressing anger or discontent, whereas a short suck-teeth is used to express sadness. The characteristic of a *cipetu* is that it is accompanied straightaway with the pursing of the lips and a lateral shaking of the head to accentuate the sad state of affairs.

When Tapha came back from the shop, he jokingly asked Babacar, "Mbaa yagguma rek?" (Was I long?). Babacar shook his head and ignited the car. On our way to Mourtalla's house, Babacar did not utter a word. Tapha, Mourtalla, and I exchanged a few words amid lulls in the blaring *khassaides* playing in the car. The thumping noise from the speakers was deafening. We were clicking our fingers to the beat of the chants. *Khassaides* are poems written by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and chanted by the adepts at Mouride ceremonies. About twenty minutes after we left the mosque, we arrived at "Kër Sëriñ Touba" (the house of Sëriñ Touba[3]), which was the name of our weekly venue. Many Mouride establishments in the diaspora generally go by this name (Bava, 2017, pp. 336–7). The globalisation of the city of Touba (Ross, 2011) accounts for the proliferation of such nomenclature virtually everywhere in the world.

---

[2] I propose to use different spellings for the two types of suck-teeth. CIIPETU for the elongated sound, and CIPETU for the short one. Grenoble et al. (2015, p. 116) use both spellings interchangeably.

When we pulled up outside, we were welcomed at the door by MBayang. We could smell the strong, distinctive aroma of the inevitable *ataaya* which Saliou had started to brew. Saliou, 51, is originally from Touba. After obtaining his Baccalaureate in Dakar, he moved to New York in 2000. For the past fifteen years, he has been living in the UK. He is one of the Baye Falls of the group. Like Tapha and Elaa, and the rest of the Baye Falls in the group, he believes in serving God through rendering service. MBayang, in her mid-thirties, is also from Touba but had lived part of her life in Dakar, Spain, and Italy before moving to England in the early 2010s with her husband Mourtalla and two of her distant cousins Mame Diarra and Maguette who are both in their mid-twenties. Mame Diarra grew up in Italy and Maguette lived in Spain for eight years. All three ladies are fluent in Italian, Spanish, French, and English besides Wolof. Maguette works as a part-time assistant nurse. Mame Diarra works in the human hair extension market and is active in London, Bristol, and some parts of Europe.

In the corridor leading to the front room, an imposing portrait of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba hung on the wall. Tapha touched the Sheikh's picture and wiped his forehead with the same hand. Both Mourtalla and Tapha have a pendant picture frame of the Sheikh hanging on their neck. The khassaides in the house were barely audible amid the chatter and intensive greetings which took several minutes.

Tapha: Kong kong koooong! Liy xeeñ moom neex na dey!
MBayang: Mame Diarra mooy rëgël!
Babacar: Mais Mame Diarra ma foog ni dem nga Milan?

---

[3] Sëriñ Touba is another name for Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, the founder of the Mouride Sufi order.

> Mame Diarra: Non demain matin laay dem. Maguette moo dem Barça tey.
> Babacar: Ah.
> Saliou: Fall, joxma naanaa bi. Jaaraama!
> [Hello hello helllllooo! The food smells nice!
> MBayang: Mame Diarra is in the kitchen today.
> Babacar: Mame Diarra, I thought you were in Milan?
> Mame Diarra: No, I'm going tomorrow. It's Maguette who went to Barcelona today.
> Babacar: I see.
> Saliou: Mate, give us the mint please. Cheers mate!]

Earlier that morning, Maguette had flown to Spain to attend a religious celebration which was to take place in a few days. As a prominent dahira member of a few other dahiras in France, Spain, and Italy, she usually goes over early to help with preparation. It is well to note that these three destinations hold the highest concentration of dahiras in Europe. The dahira movements in the UK are a more recent phenomenon. That is perhaps why most of the Senegalese transmigration literature is mainly concentrated on France and non-Anglophone European countries (Bava, 2017; Smith, 2019; Heil, 2020; Riccio, 2001). Whilst data on the demographics of Senegalese living in the UK is virtually non-existent, it is nonetheless documented that large numbers of Senegalese came to settle in the UK in the 1980s, when emigration to France had become increasingly difficult (Ross, 2011, p. 2936). Francophone West Africans like the Senegalese are, however, still an understudied group in the UK. A survey of the current Senegalese transmigration scholarship reveals that emigration from Senegal continues to shift slightly towards other, non-Francophone countries of the Global North. Smith (2019, p. 29) writes that in the aftermath of Senegal's independence from France, and especially in the 1970s, many Senegalese started travelling to America for economic reasons. Until now, their main destination has been New York. However, it was not until the mid-1980s that emigration to the United States came to a head (Babou, 2002, p. 159). The area in Harlem called Little Senegal (Smith, 2019, p. 29; Sheff, 2009, p. 43) testifies to the long-standing relationship between Senegal and New York.

With the way my participants move throughout the diaspora, I choose to characterise them as transmigrants rather than just migrants, a term I owe to Glick Schiller et al. (1995, p. 48) who use it to denote migrants who, by forging multi-stranded relations, move across borders while maintaining ties with their places of origin. Because the Senegalese movement across nations is characterised by a certain fluidity, and, in many cases, by a blurred sense of national borders, their transnational mobility is best described as *transmigration*. With regard to dahiras, there is an interconnectedness between them all. Their transnational nature is such that many of my informants have got designated responsibilities in other dahiras throughout Europe. There have been many appellations related to the smoothness of this complex cross-border movement. Basch et al. (1992) have popularised the term *transnationalism* after it had been adopted in the field of history as "transnational history" (Tyrell, 1991). However, I concur with Riccio that the movements of communities such as those of the Senegalese group should not be perceived as "reified transnational networks", reasoning that "dynamic process of constantly networking with transnational spaces" (2001, p. 585) requires an appellation which goes beyond the concept of just going between nations. Kane (2011, p. 8), for example, adopts the appellation transnationalism "to describe the practices of Senegalese immigrants who are simultaneously seeking to integrate American society and making a major socioeconomic and political impact on their homeland". I adopted the term *transmigration* because the practices of the Senegalese go beyond just a movement beyond sending and receiving countries. Those communities almost view borders as artificial, animated, as they are, by a strong sense of membership, a community which cannot be bodied as it spans across many nations and extends into the digital and mental world. However, it is important to stress that, although they see beyond national borders, the Senegalese transmigrants do acknowledge the existence of nations, and, as a general rule, respect border control laws.

I have known my participants for several years. This pre-knowledge afforded me with an avant-goût of some biographical data that I would otherwise have had to collect. That data was instrumental in my selection process of the participants. For example, I chose to only include Senegalese participants who have been in the West for at least a few years and are able to freely travel as “normal” Senegalese transmigrants. I use here the adjective “normal” loosely, to denote Senegalese migrants living in the West with no immigration restrictions. This is particularly important as the dahira requirements necessitate traveling regularly to other European countries and occasionally North American. Being mobile, then, is part of the Senegalese transmigrants’ identity work. It was therefore logical for me to exclude, knowingly, some Senegalese whose immigration statuses only allowed them to live and work in the UK and travel back to Senegal, as that is not the true characteristic of a Senegalese transmigrant. A Senegalese transmigrant, according to the spirit of the dahiras, cannot be bound by national borders.

The other selection criterion I used was of a linguistic nature. Because of the prestige attached to the dahiras and the festive atmosphere they present, I am aware that some Gambians who frequent Senegalese gatherings sometimes identify as Senegalese. It can therefore be hard, if one is not familiar with different Wolof accents, to tell a Gambian from a Senegalese, in view of the fact that they speak the same African languages, despite The Gambia being an Anglophone country. And, because both groups use English in the West, the confusion, to a non-initiate’s ear, becomes more entrenched. The reason I chose to exclude them from the selection is that, naturally, my participants tend to avoid discussing issues pertaining to neighbouring countries when they are not on their own. Their exclusion from the verbal events affords the possibility of collecting authentic, naturally occurring data.

There are, for example, many mentions of the Gambia in my data and I presume that would not have been the case if there had been Gambians in the group. A great bulk of our weekly discussions is about good governance and development in Africa and there are many instances where discussants compare Senegal with neighbouring African countries. Furthermore, some metalinguistic discussions about different African accents and language practices directly concern The Gambia. As such, it was not practical to have the Gambians in the group during my ethnographic fieldwork. Besides, many of our political and economic discussions are framed using a substantial amount of French linguistic features. Understandably, this would be an unpropitious situation for Gambians who are Anglophones. Besides, the spirit of *La teraanga Sénégalaise* (hospitality, inclusion) would preclude those otherwise authentic speech events from occurring.

The concept of *La teraanga Sénégalaise* (henceforth, *teraanga*), which consists in opening up to, and interacting with, the other, is an old Senegalese cultural practice. The term has been translated by *hospitality* in many respects (Smith, 2019; Coleman, 2021), but the practice goes beyond the need to be friendly and welcoming. It is too complex to be summed up in a single word. It is best understood in its many situated uses. Suffice to say at this point that it is an inclusion strategy. For example, there are some translanguaging practices among the urban Wolophones that are solely designed to take into account the presence of an outsider, or to include them in the communicative event (Dieng, 2021). They therefore become part of the "audience" but are not necessarily an "addressee", to use Bell's (1984) terms.

This aspect of teraanga is a phenomenon which I have always observed in multicultural Dakar, and which is also highly prevalent among the Senegalese diasporans. Incidentally, the Senegalese national football squad is called *Les Lions de la Teraanga* (The Lions of *teraanga*). Many names of public places also contain the term *teraanga*. Needless to say, it is a deeply entrenched reality which informs the speakers' language practices. *Teraanga* strategies can even influence the credibility of self-reported storied data, or of interview data. For example, *teraanga* does not allow for certain truths to be told if they are perceived to likely offend the other. This is what lies in the core of the Wolof adage *fen buy defar …* that is, *A lie that binds is better than a truth that sets asunder*, one of the central tenets of *teraanga*. Note, in passing, that the Wolof maxim is elided for reasons of eloquence and economy of words, a linguistic device I will come back to subsequently.

All my participants are multilingual adults. Most of them have lived or live in different parts of Europe. Most of them are constantly on the move; they move around Europe and stay with other members of the Mouride dahira up to several weeks at a time. Some of them have their base in the UK but have ties elsewhere in Europe. My typical informant, therefore, could be described as a *multilingual transmigrant*. This is in conformity with Smith's (2019, p. 136) finding that the two main characteristics which the Senegalese diasporans ascribe to themselves, as pivotal to their identity work, are that they are “multilingual” and “mobile”. The places that my participants are most active in are Italy, Spain, Germany, Finland, France, and North American to a certain extent. For the latter, a few of my participants tend to go once a year to attend the Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Day in various parts of America. For example, thousands of Senegalese adepts parade in the streets of New York City every year, chanting praises of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba (Kane, 2009, p. 216). They march peacefully and often brandish placards with messages of peace inscribed on them. It is noteworthy that the Senegalese transmigrants can do just as much in Parma, Italy, or Zaragoza, Spain, or New York as they can do in Touba, Senegal, as far as religiosity and culture are concerned.

Out of the many Senegalese diasporans who are accessible to me, I have chosen those I think are most representative of the qualities of a transmigrant and have limited the number of my participants to no more than twenty consisting of twelve men and eight women. And, because I was more interested in my participants’ language practices and attitudes, I did not see the need to recruit more respondents. The potential problem for the small number of participants is lack of representativeness, as Poplack (2018, p. 17) pointed out. However, I have attempted to minimise the problem by complementing this deficit with a substantial amount of diachronic data. To better reflect the reality on the ground, I did not give importance to the ratio between men and women. I availed myself of what was available on the ethnographic field and on the basis of who fit the selection criteria. Because I came across more males than females, I did not see the relevance of seeking an equal number of males and females. As Steeves (2000, p. 50) states, attempting to readjust ratios to an imagined equilibrium would be tantamount to an oversimplification of the “the complex human world that affects the way people interpret their experiences”.

It is well to mention that only a small number of my participants are native Wolof although they are all Wolophones. The rest of the participants are from various ethnic groups (Bambara, Fulani, Sereer, Mandinka, etc.). In fact, the demographic of our dahira can be said to be representative of Senegal’s linguistic ecology. Indeed, a large percentage of Senegalese people are not native Wolof, although 90% of the population are naturally conversant in Wolof (Diallo, 2010, p. 19). Besides, native speakerhood is problematic in Africa and this is observable among my informants. For example, Tapha's patronym indicates that he is Fulani (or Pulaar) by ethnicity but does not speak Fula (or Pulaar) and, therefore, sometimes identifies as a Wolof. Sometimes, however, he calls himself a Pulaar, indecisively. Furthermore, some of my informants have more than one "native language". For example, Elaa's mother is Fulani, and his father is Mandinka. Additionally, he grew up speaking Wolof. Therefore, it is debatable which of the aforementioned is his native language.

Whereas scholarly works on the Senegalese transmigration abound, the same cannot be said about their language practices abroad. Beyond the research undertaken in the areas of economy, politics, racial identities, and religion, very little, if at all, is known about the linguistic aspect of their everyday life. It is this book's mission to fill this void. The topic of religion has especially received considerable attention (see for example Kane, 2011) due, mainly, to the Senegalese endeavour to display another facet of Islam in the West known to some historians as "Black Islam" and which the Senegalese regard as "good Islam" in comparison to the "Moorish Islam" (Diouf, 2013, pp. 7–9). Little or no attention has been paid to the linguistic aspect of the transmigrants' spiritual journey into and throughout the West. Thus, in one aspect, *Urban Wolof across Borders* supplements the substantial body of transmigration research by arguing for a more focussed attention on language, thereby bridging the gap between ethnographic narratives of the Senegalese diasporans and their linguistic practices. Even in contemporary ethnographies, the group is rarely studied in relation to their language practices. Where studies on the Senegalese transmigration and those on UW have hitherto been kept apart, I seek to bring both sides together, with the view to shedding more light on how the Senegalese diasporans engage in their daily translanguaging practices.

This book will therefore not only benefit the field of Applied Linguistics but also a variety of other disciplines such as Sociolinguistics, African Diaspora Studies, and indeed, Francophone African Studies, in view of the fact that Francophone West Africans have received little scholarly attention in the Anglosphere. By intersecting transmigration and language practices, I argue that mobility not only has a bearing on how my study informants speak, but I also demonstrate that their language attitudes differ greatly from those of their co-nationals in Senegal. By and large, studies on UW have failed to account for transmigration and mobility as key variables in understanding the Senegalese multilingual practices. Even UW studies conducted in Senegal must, in my view, be informed by mobility because the locals' language practices are also influenced by returning migrants. The ensuing chapters will demonstrate that my participants defy and flout the central rules set down by the traditional methods of analysing UW data, namely codeswitching. Rather than switching codes, I propose that the urban Wolophone translanguages. The foregoing is the central argument of this book.

Background and Aims of the Book

My interest in UW and translanguaging was born from a project I did on codeswitching in Dakar, Senegal. My review of the scholarship then led me to discover many theories, the most prominent of which was the code-based approach of looking at bilingualism and at UW in particular. I was first fascinated by such theories as developed by proponents of codeswitching such as Myers-Scotton (1993a) and MacSwan (1999, 2005, 2009), both of whom have elaborated a certain number of language mixing rules. MacSwan, for example, contends that some morphemes from different languages are incompatible with each other (1999, 2005, 2009). Such views are born from the idea that multilinguals mix languages in specific ways that obey set rules. But, as García and Otheguy (2020, p. 17) have observed, multilinguals such as Africans have been known to use translingual practices in manners that are not consistent with how named languages are defined. Whilst I find the codeswitching rules interesting, they do not fully reflect how urban Wolophones in my study speak. My data presents many instances where speakers speak in such creative ways as to flout many of the codeswitching precepts.

Very early on, Swigart (1992), one of the earliest UW scholars, was emphatic in her stance that the smoothness with which the Dakarois[4] speak contrasts in many respects with what is normally observable in codeswitching, reasoning, in addition, that UW, although a product of seemingly two codes (Wolof and French), should be viewed as “one code” (1992, p. 97). This idea of *one code*, as opposed to two codes, was what later led me to translanguaging. In subsequent investigations into the concept of translanguaging, I came across much research, the central argument of which was that the multilingual language user has “one linguistic repertoire” (García & Wei, 2014, p. 21). Looking at this principle closely, I made the argument that Swigart’s (1992) idea of UW being “one code” is not far off from the concept of “one linguistic repertoire”, the central tenet of the theory of translanguaging.

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[4] Inhabitants of Dakar, Senegal.

In the scholarship, UW is still viewed through the code-based approach of language mixing. Some of the most recent UW works (see Smith, 2019; Tramutoli, 2021; McLaughlin, 2022) still reason in terms of codes. Needless to say, this area is now a crowded field. In this book, I offer a reconceptualisation of UW in the light of two principal concepts: the “unitary view” of translanguaging (García et al., 2018, p. 8) and mobility or “(im)mobility” as nuanced by De Fina and Mazzaferro (2021). There is a considerable body of research on UW, where the Senegalese urbanites’ speech has been the object of scrutiny. The Senegalese city dwellers have a rather relatively large linguistic repertoire which scholars have called by many names such as “Franlof”, “Francolof”, “Fran-Wolof” (Thiam, 1994, p. 13); “Dakar Wolof” (McLaughlin, 2001) and “urban Wolof” (Swigart, 1992; Calvet, 1994a, 1994b; Juillard et al., 1994; McLaughlin, 2008a, 2008c). What the scholarship is mainly concentrated on is how the Senegalese city dweller languages in Senegal. What is missing is the aspect of mobility which *Urban Wolof across Borders* considers. That is to say that I have taken Wolof outside the confines of Senegal and into the diaspora. As such, the dynamicity of language is observed not only at a micro-level (of translanguaging) but also at a macro level (of transmigration), as speakers move across borders freely, the same way they appear to move across languages with ease, making the urban Wolophones’ language repertoires amenable to change, as they adopt novel features to widen their idiolect. There are two main avenues that I am endeavouring to explore.

On the one hand, there is the nonexistence or paucity of research on UW in the diaspora. Although there is a substantial amount of research