Bordering on National Language Varieties:
Political and linguistic borders in the Wolof of Senegal and The Gambia

Dissertation

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Jane F. Mitsch

Graduate Program in Linguistics

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Dissertation Committee:

Professor Brian Joseph, Advisor
Professor Cynthia Clopper
Professor Fiona McLaughlin
Professor Mark Moritz
Professor Don Winford
ABSTRACT

Political borders can act as powerful instruments of inclusion and exclusion, and language can often be used to reinforce the social reality of borders (Boberg 2000, Auer 2005, Llamas 2007, Watt & Llamas 2014). This dissertation explores the way Wolof speakers’ ideologies, practices, and sociolinguistic variation help shape a political border. Sociolinguistic studies have shown the potency of political borders (and national identities) in shaping the linguistic landscape in the English-speaking world (Boberg 2000, Llamas 2007, Watt & Llamas 2014) as well as in the Germanic-speaking world (Auer 2005, de Vriend 2008). These studies illustrate how political borders can be reinforced by linguistic borders and how they can play a role in language change. But these studies have focused on predominantly monolingual areas in Europe and North America. In this dissertation I use ethnographic and sociolinguistic methods to examine the way border interaction, national orientation, and Wolof language use interact in four communities immediately adjacent to the political border.

Following sociolinguists like Britain (2013) and Johnstone (2004), I adopt a framework in which places and spaces are socially constructed through the practices and routines (linguistic and otherwise) of local inhabitants. The political border that separates
Senegal and The Gambia is a relic of colonial history, formerly separating a French colony from a British colony, but the same borders continue to separate two independent nations, Senegal and The Gambia. Along with the colonial boundaries, these two independent nation-states have maintained as official languages French and English, respectively. Prior to becoming a borderland, this area was part of an indigenous kingdom known as Saloum. Saloum is (unofficially) recognized today as a Wolof-speaking territory and a Wolof variety. Exploring the linguistic and social practices of the borderland inhabitants allows a localized perspective of how language, place, and borders are constructed from the periphery. By studying the routines, ideologies and linguistic patterns of speakers in this area, I examine how the border influences social and linguistic practices of Wolof speakers in this borderland where historically unified local identity (Saloum) is shared, but nationality (Senegalese and Gambian) is divided.

Living in this border area and engaging in participant observation for nine months in 2013, I collected 64 sociolinguistic interviews in four different communities on both sides of the border, including both urban and rural sites on both sides. Using linguistic variables associated with different levels of grammar, I assess to what degree the political border also constitutes a linguistic border. Through the lens of the local social and linguistic practices, I focus on how the border is constructed and/or subverted. The results show a complex relationship between linguistic variables, cognitive space, and local versus national orientations.

In order to better understand how a border may become a source for linguistic divergence between borderland communities, I examined variables from three levels of Wolof grammar: phonetic, morphosyntactic, and lexical. While each variable had a
slightly different pattern in the way borderland speakers use its variants, it became clear that none of the features categorically contribute to a linguistic border. For each feature, there are varying degrees of overlap for different segments of the population. The phonetic features and the lexical features are part of a gendered construction of nationality (and modernity) versus traditional locality while the morphosyntactic variable is linked to mobility and contact with the Gambian capital. This study reveals that ideologically, the borderland (and the boundary) can represent different things to different borderland inhabitants. It also shows, more importantly, that a linguistic border is not an automatic reflex of a political border, but that speakers’ linguistic practices can reflect a range of local identities.
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VITA

2005…………………………..B.A. in Program of Liberal Studies, University of Notre Dame

2013……………………………M.A. in Linguistics, The Ohio State University

Publications


Fields of Study:

Major Field: Linguistics
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

International borders are often represented as solid, continuous lines on a two-dimensional map. This representation gives the impression that all borders carve up space in a consistent way, neatly separating one cohesive territory from another. In reality, borders can take many different shapes as territorial boundaries: fences, walls, rivers, or sporadically-placed signs. Whatever their three-dimensional, material representation on the ground, however, they have real social implications for people’s lives and language use. From a social constructionist point of view, borders often become embodied, or “performed” by the communities that inhabit the social space that “touches” the official boundary line, also known as borderlands. I investigate here the way in which inhabitants of a West African borderland use language to construct the social space surrounding the political border and, in turn, are affected, linguistically and otherwise, by that border. I bring together methods from sociolinguistics, ethnography, and discourse analysis to assess the ways that inhabitants of the borderland between Senegal and The Gambia — the two nations sometimes collectively referred to as Senegambia — construe the border ideologically and linguistically. I focus on the Wolof spoken in the northwestern border area that separates The Gambia from Senegal, often referred to as part of the Saloum, as a historically unified area that has been politically divided since colonial times.
1.1 Motivation for research
Several sociolinguistic studies have shown how language can be employed to construct and reinforce social identities such as ethnicity, nationalism, and gender and how language can evoke a strong sense of solidarity or separation among speakers (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985, Woolard 1989, Fishman 2010, Heller 2010). Urcioli (1995) noted that linguistic boundaries often take on sharp edges at geographic, social, or political boundaries as people enact or index identities defined by these boundaries. Just like political borders, language can serve to highlight who belongs (and does not belong) to what groups.

Nationality is a highly salient type of identity constituted by social boundaries (Anderson 1983, Barth 1969). Nationality is a type of identity, typically delimited by political boundaries while ethnicity is often defined by presence or absence of cultural features such as language, religion, customs, ancestral origins etc. (and is therefore often ideologically linked to territory). In some idealized sense of nationality, political and ethnic nationalist identity are aligned and claims to ethnonationalism are often based on this premise. This is what Fishman (1968) refers to nationalism proper. Yet in reality, nationality and ethnicity are rarely ever in perfect one-to-one alignment in much of the world and political nation-states often have to promote a sense of unity out of ethnic plurality. This type of phenomenon, which Fishman (1968) refers to as nationalism, seems to be especially true in Africa, where the national boundaries were created largely through colonial policies. Moreover, although these borders were mostly maintained through independence, they rarely represent the nations (ethnic or political in nature) that preceded the colonial borders. In this Senegambian context, therefore, where ethnic
boundaries span the political border and provide a cohesive force, national boundaries (in theory) constitute a dividing force for borderlanders’ identity. Fishman argues that *nationism* and (ethnic) *nationalism* may come into conflict in places like Africa. But they also may co-exist. The former Saloum kingdom continues to exist as a ‘place’ for Wolof speakers, and although it was a multi-ethnic polity, people on both sides of the border consider themselves to be part of the Saloum. How their linguistic practices as part of the “Saloum” Wolof language community help to construct or erase this political boundary is explored in what follows. This chapter serves to introduce background information on the social theory of borders and nationalism, including the particular studies relating to West African borders. I then offer a sociohistorical background on African borders in general and the Senegambia borders in particular (and the implications for language use). I end with an overview of other studies on borders and language.

Chapter 2 lays out the profiles of the specific communities targeted in this study as well as the methods used to collect and analyze data. Chapter 3 gives a more in-depth explanation of the linguistic situation in Senegal, The Gambia, and the borderlands, and explores some of the language ideologies held by the borderland inhabitants. The subsequent chapters focus on specific linguistic variables and how they relate to the sociolinguistic construction of the border. Chapter 4 is a sociophonetic examination of the mid-central vowel realization. Chapter 5 examines the morphosyntactic variation of an imperfective marker. In Chapter 6 I examine how “borrowed” and “native” discourse particles are used in conversational language to construct national and localized identities, and then in Chapter 7 I conclude by considering what these sociolinguistic variables can reveal about political boundaries and sociolinguistic borders.
1.2 Identity, nations, and border theory

Benedict Anderson’s famous book *Imagined Communities* (originally published in 1983) proclaimed that nations are imagined communities; they are recent political inventions engineered by political elites through print media and a mythology of shared history and destiny resulting in “deep, horizontal comradeship” known as nationalism (7). As Conversi (1995) puts it, “As the state is the most universal mode of political power in the world, nationalism also becomes the most universal ideology in the contemporary world.” (75). He defines nationalism a “a process of border creation and/or maintenance….needed to ensure a distinction between two or more groups, or the spaces they inhabit” (73). Nationalism is therefore intimately linked to the process of border maintenance. Political scientists and human geographers may have different perspectives about how the border is maintained, with the former focusing on the centralized government and institutions and the latter stressing the everyday behaviors and attitudes of borderland inhabitants. My study adopts the latter perspective, without discounting the role the centralized institutions (both colonial and postcolonial) have had in creating the border.

As sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have become more aware of how language is used to construct ‘sense of place’ and associated identities, many have begun to borrow concepts from human geography, namely a distinction between space and place (Feld and Basso 1996, Johnstone 2004, Britain 2013). Space is considered abstract and undifferentiated dimension that allows movement while place, located within space, is endowed with meaning (Tuan 1977). As Johnstone (2004) puts it, “space becomes place through humans’ interaction with it, both through physical manipulation…and
symbolically” (68). Britain (2013) names three different aspects of space which all interact to inform human behavior (including language use): Euclidean space, social space, and cognitive space. Borderlands are prime examples of geographic sites where lines or boundaries seem to cut through space, but the border itself takes on meaning(s) for various stakeholders. As Llamas (2007) remarks, “Despite this locally constructed or ‘imagined’ aspect of communities, there remain social realities, such as political boundaries, that contribute significantly to where psychological boundaries are drawn” (583). Human behavior is often constrained by geographic and institutionalized space, as mountains and borders can both inhibit movement. But people also find creative ways to inhabit and transform space to their needs and borders are sites of both division and contact with implications for language use.

Because borders are regulated and governed by central powers rather than by the borderland populations themselves, there are often competing discourses surrounding the role of the border that distinguish the “center” from the “periphery” or margin. Previously, border studies adopted a perspective of the “center,” meaning center of power, but often also geographic centers. The project of nation-building, from the perspective of the politically powerful usually located in the capitals, involves maintaining borders to demarcate those who are part of that nation and those who are not. Joseph (2008) claims that “[T]o do this [nation-building], it is necessary to convince those living at the frontiers of the nation, near the borders, that they are one people with those in the centre and not with those neighbors just across the border” (105). According to Anderson (1983) and others, this “convincing” is done through the propagation of print media and standardized education. Sturgeon (2005) criticizes these “center-focused”
studies of borders for treating boundaries “as if these projects had already been
completed” (29) rather than something continuously created through experience. It is a
perspective that also erases the agency of the borderland inhabitants in constructing their
localized sense of what the border means. Sahlins (1998) challenges the viewpoint that
“the nation was imposed and built from the center outward, and … that its acceptance
meant giving up local identities and territories.” Communities living within the
borderland often find ways to ignore, challenge, or undermine the economic and
territorial sanctions placed on them. While the central governments (and their colonial
predecessors) and international treaties may be responsible for the delimiting and
maintaining of the official boundary extending in Euclidean space, the borderland
inhabitants themselves are active participants in the construction of the borderland as a
social space and both the center and the periphery interact to influence the psychological
space of the borderland.

Inseparable from the theorization of space, place, and borders is the historical role
of colonization in much of the creation of the modern world. Gupta and Ferguson (1992)
point out that “postcoloniality further problematizes the relationship between space and
culture” by inviting the question, “Does the colonial encounter create a “new culture” in
both the colonized and colonizing country, or does it destabilize the notion that nations
and cultures are isomorphic?” (8). Either outcome envisioned by Gupta and Ferguson
must acknowledge the way colonial borders shaped the modern spaces in question. In the
historical process of modern state formation, South America, South Asia, and Africa
shared similar fates in establishing their independent nation-states in that they “had to
make do with inherited colonial boundaries” (Ajomo 1989, 40). This principle, called uti
possidetis (Latin for ‘as you possess’), was seen as the most efficient way for newly emergent governments to enter the international community and economy and was upheld by the United Nations, as well. The newly-formed African Union, in compliance with the United Nations policy, pledged to respect the borders that existed upon Independence, which were by and large colonial creations. As the Prime Minister of Ethiopia said at the first meeting of the African Union:

[I]f we are to redraw the map of Africa on the basis of religion, race or language, I fear that many States would cease to exist. It is in the interest of all Africans today to respect the frontiers drawn on maps, even though they were drawn by former colonists (as quoted in Asiwaju 1989, 40).

So in Africa, as in Latin America and South Asia, the colonial territories (along with their borders) were translated into independent nation-states with the support of many local political elites.

While some argue that the external imposition of boundaries in these postcolonial situations is what makes colonial boundaries more absurd and unjust than other international boundaries, other scholars assert that all borders are an imposition of the central power on the periphery and that all borders are social constructions. Hargreaves (2005) asserts that there was no malicious, conspiratorial intent behind the boundary-making activities of the European powers during the Scramble for Africa between 1884 and 1898, but that these somewhat illogical borders that resulted were historical accidents, the result of conflicting interests between local African leaders, colonial rivalries and appeals to existing trade or natural boundaries. While some have argued that all modern borders and nations are “artificial” and that there is nothing inherently different about African or European borders, the question remains open to empirical
investigation: is this particular African border different in nature from the European and North American borders in the way they are construed linguistically?

1.3 African border studies

The Scramble for Africa of the 19th century, which largely defined most of the modern borders in West Africa, was characterized by European powers laying claim to areas they suspected to be of some material advantage to them. In the first few centuries of European presence in West Africa, it was largely commercial rather than political interests that drove the Europeans’ activities on this continent (Hargreaves 2005). There was no pressing need to establish boundaries until imperial rivalries made it clear that only one power could occupy one territory at a time. The Berlin Conference of 1884-5 was instrumental in establishing many of the boundaries. The colonial treatises that “created” the political borders in places like Vienna and Paris, far removed from the borders themselves, relied on the descriptions of the territory by intrepid surveying teams to delimit their sovereignty. Geographers and cartographers may use a combination of natural boundaries and lines of latitude and longitude to create these borders. The surveyors and the commissioners charged with demarcating the borders of Nigeria, for example, combed both environmental landmarks and cartographical landmarks like lines of longitude and latitude. While the process of map-making and territory-delimiting has become part of the process of establishing sovereignty as a nation-state, the descriptions of the territories and lines on the maps ultimately must translate into a three-dimensional sociopolitical reality. But the effects may or may not have been felt at the local level: “The process was a temporary measure pleasing to the European Powers who had, at
least, gained some territories, however small or amorphous, but grossly inconvenient for the indigens living around the boundaries” (Balogun 1989, 183). These “indigens” living around the African boundaries are generally thought to be less invested in the nation-state and its centralized power structures.

Miles & Rocherfort (1991) investigated the apparent tension between ethnic and national identity in the Hausa communities on either side of the Niger-Nigeria border. They challenged the “conventional wisdom…that populations on the periphery will accord greater significance to ethnic solidarity than to national consciousness.” Through surveys, the researchers asked participants to rank attributes of their identity, including birthplace, village residence, country, province, ethnic group, and religion. They found that while religion (Islam) was by far the most important identity attribute for both groups, Hausas, in general, also do not rank their ethnic identity above their national identity. Moreover, Hausas expressed more solidarity with non-Hausa compatriots than they did with Hausas across the border. They also found that national identity factored as more important for the Niger Hausas than for the Nigeria Hausas, which they attributed to “a stricter, more instructive colonial experience in French Niger than British Nigeria.”

Miles (2014) has found that across the post-colonial world, the “scars of partition” left by European colonialists are so deep that they have undercut traditional ethnic groups and have “give[n] rise to discrete national versions of ethnic identity” (44).

On the other hand, African border specialists like Asiwaju (1985) have outlined the countless ethnic groups that were divided by colonial powers and suggests that their traditional ethnolinguistic identities and cultural heritage still mean much more to them than their modern, nationalist identities: “Judged…from the viewpoint of border society
life in many parts of Africa, the Partition can hardly be said to have taken place” (4). Most of the social science studies of African borderlands have involved (anglophone) Nigerian borders with its (francophone) neighbors. The Yoruba speakers in the Nigeria-Benin borders have been the subject of some careful, close-range ethnographic studies that have suggested a peaceful coexistence with the political border, but also strong connections across it, and even exploitation of the border. This border is of particular interest to this study because it, too, was a product of French and British colonial boundaries. The famous quotation of the Oba (king) of the Yoruba (“We regard the boundary as dividing the British and the French, not the Yoruba”) captures the viewpoint shared by Asiwaju (1985, 1989) and others that the border is a mere colonial artifact with little to no influence on Yoruba identity and unity. Flynn (1997) found that the Yoruba living on either side of the Nigeria-Benin borderland work together to exploit the border and the economic policies of both country’s sides by dominating the cross-border trade. Kehinde (2010) in his political science dissertation similarly shows that at the Nigeria-Benin border, there is a common Yoruba identity and sense of affinity that transcends the often-contentious national border. The Yoruba transborder network is strong enough that even when the political border closes due to strife between the two countries, resources continue to flow between the Nigerian and Beninois Yoruba communities through unofficial channels.

Omoniyi (2004) conducted a study on language attitudes within the Yoruba community in the Nigerian-Benin borderlands, finding that the borderland multilingual communities differ from the “mainstream” multilingual communities in that they have more complex layering of identity that their more central multilingual ethnic groups, even
of the same ethnicity. Through surveys about language choice and language use, he found that “nationality more than sex and network is the variable upon which much variation in language behavior is based among the population at the border.” He found that the Beninois were more likely to reported use of French than the Nigerians reported using English, but both communities found Yoruba to be appropriate for similar set of circumstances. Like Miles & Rochefort (1991), however, Omoniyi also found that the Beninois Yoruba were more likely to foreground their national identity through language choice, while the Nigerian Yoruba were more likely to foreground their own local identity through their language choices. Omoniyi also claims that the reason for this apparent difference lies in the French colonial history of Benin and “the lingering colonial grip” (9).

These studies involving former British colony Nigeria and its borderlands with former French colony neighbors are useful for a comparison with borderland situation of The Gambia and Senegal, also former British and French colonies, respectively. Yet thus far, no variationist sociolinguistic study has been carried out on language production in a language community traversing an international political border in sub-Saharan Africa. Still unexplained is what happens to the shared language in contexts where a relatively new political border is superimposed upon long-existing ethnic areas, or in multilingual contexts in which language is a salient marker of ethnic identity, particularly where the language at issue is not an official language and has no established standard variety. My research contributes to the fields of sociolinguistics, anthropology, and the growing field of border studies by helping to clarify how the political borders interact with ethnic identity to affect language variation and change. By applying the rigorous methodology
of sociolinguistics and ethnography to this rich multilingual and multiethnic situation in sub-Saharan Africa, we can learn a great deal about how these social and historical factors help shape and interact with identity and linguistic variation.

1.3.1 The Senegalese and Gambian border

The cartographic symbolism of the political boundaries of Senegal as a nation-state cannot be represented without simultaneously representing The Gambia (see Figure 1). Similarly, it is virtually impossible to represent The Gambia without reference to Senegal. This border relationship looms large for both countries as it affects political and economic issues in both countries. As a near enclave, The Gambia’s borders are traced by the 740 km of border it shares exclusively with Senegal to the North, South, and East. On the West it is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean. Local legend has it that the border was established by British ships shooting a cannon from the Gambia River to the shore, although there is no historical record that this is true. According to Wright (2004), this tale is apocryphal and the border was established by a Franco-British surveying unit, but its popularity serves to highlight how the seemingly arbitrary border was the result of colonial rivalries.
Senghor (2013) claims that while it is commonly accepted that almost all modern African borders divide some ethnic groups into distinct nation-states, Senegal and The Gambia are uniquely positioned because all of their ethnic groups are distributed on both sides of the border. The Gambia’s geographic positioning flanking the Gambia River (in most places with only 10km on either side) and its lock-and-key position within Senegal means that most of this tiny country’s population is in contact with surrounding populations of Senegalese.

Nevertheless, in spite of its history, the continued existence and maintenance of the Senegambian border offer a perspective from a political border that persists in spite of shared ethnolinguistic groups, ethnolinguistic and religious identities, and interconnected social networks. According to Renner (1985), the colonial legacy had very limited influence:

Among the divided peoples, it was mainly the assimilated élites in the colony areas who were affected by the colonial boundaries. The majority of Senegambians living in the rural areas acted very much as if the frontiers did not
exist. Socially, the precolonial intercourse which had operated from time immemorial continued unchecked and even unnoticed (78).

Drawing a distinction between the elites in political power and the “rural” people, Renner demonstrates how the border came to have simultaneously different meaning for different stakeholders, depending upon their relationship to the state.

Because the postcolonial states maintained English and French as the official languages of The Gambia and Senegal, respectively, and continue to use these languages in government and higher education, there is a linguistic element to the division. While Renner (1975) notes that the educated, assimilated élites were a minority in the way they were affected by these linguistic policies, there were political implications. According to Awasom (2010), “[T]he Francophoneness of Senegal and the Anglophoneness of The Gambia have militated against political union despite the fact that the two states constitute the same ethnic groups and are intimately interwoven” (43). From the perspective of the political center, the official language and tradition of education may also have implications for national identity, but for a large proportion of the population, English and French language practices have no place in their daily lives. For scholars like Miles (2014) and Omoniyi (2004), however, based on studies carried out mostly by attitudinal surveys, the colonial imprint transcends official language policies and can influence even the most peripheral or marginal populations.

1.3.2 History of Saloum

Many studies have shown how precolonial regionalism and social structures like trade routes have been relatively impervious to the border (Fall 2004, Fall 2009, Renner
The Saloum kingdom, far from the seats of colonial power held by the French and British, remained mostly unregulated, even in colonial times. It was historically ruled by Seereer and then Wolof families before being annexed into the Jollof Empire (Sonko-Goodwin 2003). In 1885 when British and French authorities negotiated their colonial border, they decided on a boundary that cut straight through the Saloum area: a straight line running eastward from the Djinak islands just off the Atlantic coast. Although the territorial boundaries of the Saloum Kingdom were never fixed and the vast territory today has no official recognition¹, the inhabitants of the four communities targeted in this study continue to identify themselves as part the Saloum (Figure 2), and the term Saloum is used to describe a dialect of Wolof spoken in the area (Dramé 2013). Johnstone (2004) explains how “[p]opular labels for places often reflect the ways in which places are constituted through shared experiences and shared orientations” (69) and today the Saloum area remains a viable source of identity and language characterization.

This map provided in Figure 2 comes from one of the older descriptions of Wolof as spoken in St. Louis (the former capital of the French West African colonies) by David Boilat in 1853 (a priest of French and Wolof parentage). The position of the Saloum Kingdom is located between the Gambia River to the south and the Saloum River to the north. This Wolof grammar was written before the establishment of the official colonial boundary, but it still falls into one of the pitfalls of mapmaking acknowledged by

¹ The label Saloum is still used in some official place names, however. The Saloum River, traditionally marks the northern limit of the kingdom, is located in Senegal. Several villages on both sides of the border use the term “Saloum” in their place names. Two official Gambian districts (Upper Saloum and Lower Saloum) also refer to to their relationship to the Saloum River basin.
geographers: it suggests a one-to-one correspondence between territory and ethnic groups. While the Saloum Kingdom was once ruled by Seereer (here written as ‘Sérére’) families, according to scholars like Sonko-Goodwin (2008) and Fall (2009), this area has been multietnic and multilingual since precolonial days. Fall (2009) describes how the official end of slavery in Senegal at the beginning of the twentieth century led former members of the slave caste from other parts of the Wolof-speaking areas to settle in the sparsely-populated Saloum area.

Figure 2: Map of the Saloum Kingdom according to an 1853 cartographic description by David Boilat.
Colonial policies like taxation and military drafting after the establishment of the border caused large sections of the local population (and sometimes entire villages) to switch sides of the border or in cases of ambiguous border placement, to pledge allegiance to whichever colonial regime seemed less oppressive at the time (Fall 2009). Renner (1985) points out that practices in the area formerly known as the Saloum that spanned the border (characterized by rural communities) remained unaffected by the Partition and served to strengthen a sense of cross-border cohesion: “Interrmarriage continued between Senegalese in the Sine-Saloum district and Gambians in Upper Saloum, a largely Wolof-Serer and Tucolor area” (78). The former kingdom of Saloum still exists in popular imagination today as a place where true, undiluted Wolof is spoken and cross-border marriage and family bonds also remain strong. Today it is a densely populated area and the Seereer, Mandinka, Wolof and Pulaar communities exist side-by-side and multiple ethnic groups are usually found within the same village and even within the same family compound. Figure 3 shows the placement of the four communities targeted in this study and their relationship to the border. Although it may be difficult to tell from a comparison with Figure 2 that these communities are all part of the former Saloum kingdom, participants on both sides of the border confirmed that they are part of the Saloum area and that most people in this area speak “Saloum” Wolof:

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2 The “Sine-Saloum” district in Senegal as mentioned here was re-zoned into the Fatick and Kaolack regions and no longer reflects the territories of the pre-colonial kingdoms.
Wolof is the lingua franca of the Saloum area and the language of inter-ethnic communication; it can be heard in the weekly markets and local radio programs. There is a strong association between Saloum region and Wolof language and the latter is a major force in the place-making of the former. The conflicting forces of national identity on the one hand and traditional/regional/ethnolinguistic identity on the other hand create differing border perspectives that warrant further investigation regarding the social and linguistic practices of those inhabiting the Saloum area of the Senegambia borderland.

1.4 (Socio)linguistic studies of borders

Determining the relationship between language and geographic space has traditionally been the domain of dialectology. Books of dialect maps were created in order to show where isoglosses (linguistic borders) form. These endeavors were typically
carried out within the bounds of a nation-state like France or Germany, however. By combining the methods and scope of both dialectology and historical linguistics, Auer (2005) was able to demonstrate that the establishment of modern nation-state borders has had real linguistic consequences. He found that the varieties of Germanic spoken around Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the Netherlands all formed some sort of dialect continua. The continuum of dialect features between Low German and Dutch, for instance, was interrupted with the introduction of the political border and the national standard language (High German on the one hand and standard Dutch on the other). In other words, the linguistic border began to take the same shape as the political border. Auer argues that the political border has a cognitive reality that in turn influences language use, saying, “It is the cognitive-mental act of construing those on the other side of the border as being different from those within one’s own social group (nation) that has an impact on language” (13). He argues that the type of divergence seen at the borders cannot be explained by a model of contact since sometimes the disappearance of a border does not necessarily lead to increased linguistic similarity. The border is thus part of the mental or cognitive space discussed by Britain (2013) and the linguistic divergence results from the way people construe their social belonging across territories. De Vriend et al. (2008) counter this claim that contact across the border between Germany and the Netherlands is not accountable for linguistic change by showing that cross-border marriage rates have dropped from 30% in 1850-1870 to less than 5% in current times, showing that people’s practices and communicative patterns are very much influenced by the border. They concluded that “the dialect variation in our research area is closely related to the existence of the state border and to the social structure of the area.
The geographic spatial configuration hardly plays a role anymore” (133). For de Vriend et al. (2008) therefore the linguistic reality of the border is preceded by changes in routines and practices, not just the cognitive effect it has on people’s spatial identities. Whether the divergence is due to the cognitive impact the border has, or the change in contact it brings about, both Auer (2005) and de Vriend (2008) demonstrate how the social and psychological space created by the border seem more important than Euclidean space when it comes to dialect features.

Sociolinguists soon noticed that models of how language changes diffuse across social space (like Trudgill’s 1974 adaptation of the gravity model) needed to be able to account for political and social borders. Boberg (2000), for instance, found that the Canadian-American border was an effective block against the diffusion of some (though not all) linguistic changes. The Northern Cities Vowel Shift (NCVS), for example, is a change in progress that is spreading from city to city and even into the rural areas along the Great Lakes (and areas adjacent to the Canadian border). Given the size and influence of the American cities in this area, Trudgill’s gravity model (1974) would predict the NCVS to spread to small Canadian cities like Windsor. Boberg (2000) finds that this change has not spread to Canada and surmises that Canadians at the border are resistant to changes associated with American identity (like the NCVS). Other changes, however, (including /u/ fronting and quotative ‘BE like’) seem to transcend the border because of a broader association of youth (rather than American) identity. This study demonstrates that as social contact continues and borders remain porous to channels of linguistic diffusion, certain linguistic features may be blocked due to nationalistic identification of speakers.
Information about a speaker’s nationality may even influence how people “hear” accent information. Also focusing on the U.S.-Canada border, Niedzielski (1999) showed that listeners from Detroit would match vowels involving Canadian Raising (CR) with a speaker they believed to be from Canada, but they did not “hear” any CR with a speaker they believed to be from Detroit. The speech samples they heard were all synthesized from the same Detroit speaker. But this study shows that social information (including nationality) that is made known to a listener will influence how she or he “hears” a speaker’s accent. This perceptual study could support claims made by Auer (2005) and Boberg (2000) that the border has a psychological reality that causes people to project linguistic differences onto social differences.

Another border that has received quite a bit of attention from dialectologists and sociolinguists is the Scottish-English border. This border has been called the tightest bundle of isoglosses that separates two dialects (Llamas 2007). The group known as the Accent and Identity on the Scottish-English Border (AISEB) project has initiated several studies of various sociophonetic variables in production, perception, and attitudes. The research group has focused on variables of which speakers are highly aware (such as the production of /r/ in the borderlands) and also variables such as voice-onset time (VOT), which speakers are generally less aware of or able to manipulate. The studies focusing on /r/ (Llamas et al. 2009; Llamas 2010; Watt et al. 2010) found dialect differences between two sets of twin border cities on the east and west coast of Britain. While the dialect boundary seems to be somewhat more stable in the east, they found evidence of young speakers converging towards each other in the Western border.
Llamas et al. (2009) examined the effects of accommodation to stereotypically English and Scottish interviewers in a border town in order to assess whether people living at the border and thus possessing multi-layered identity might show patterns of accommodation towards one kind of national identity or another. They conclude, “Given the hybrid nature of the variety and the participants’ identities under investigation, this may be, in some ways, predictable as in intergroup terms participants may not wish to accommodate too closely to one interviewer or the other” (401). The researchers thus chose to highlight the fact that those living in the borderlands between England and Scotland might have a hybrid identity: not entire English and not entirely Scottish, but a bit of both.

For the less salient sociophonetic variable (VOT), Docherty et al. (2011) and Watt et al. (2014) examined the effects of social information like nation, coast, age, sex, and class. They found the effect of age to be significant, showing that VOT is getting longer for younger speakers in general, but also significantly shorter for Scottish speakers in general, significantly shorter for those on the East Coast, in particular. They also found from surveys designed to capture “attitudinal factors,” that residents of the Scottish city on the eastern part of the border consistently ranked their “Scottish” identity higher than a shared “British” identity. The fact that these attitudes about identity correlated with linguistic differences is no coincidence; language use is part of the process of place-based identity construction and also part of the process of place construction.

In this study I employ sociolinguistic and ethnographic methods to examine how different linguistic features are used by speakers in the borderlands across both urban and rural space and how these features contribute to local borderland identities and, in turn,
how these identities contribute to local borderland place-making. In this borderland where two nations meet and one former kingdom remains part of people’s cognitive geography, I examine how language ideologies and linguistic features contribute to the on-going social construction (or erasure) of the border.

1.5 Summary

While borders have been gaining traction in the study of sociolinguistics, most of these studies have focused on the Western world, where both borders and standard varieties of the languages in question experience quite a bit of institutional support and infrastructure (cf. Omoniyi 2004). Although variationist studies have contributed to our understanding of language variation and geolinguistic diffusion, they have privileged well-described varieties and “strong” political borders leaving open the questions about how non-Western boundaries may or may not take on linguistic boundaries as well. The current study aims to fill that gap by presenting ethnographic and sociolinguistic evidence about the local construction of a small portion of the Senegambia border.
Although borders have traditionally been thought of as containers for states and their inhabitants, recent anthropological studies have shown that some border areas are far more integrated and symbiotic than previously thought (Martínez 1994, Donnan & Wilson 2000). Recently, sociolinguists have also joined the discussion about borders, language, and identity (Watt and Llamas 2014). This study attempted to build upon both the anthropological and sociolinguistic findings in order to look past the readily-available units of social differentiation (including nationality or gender or ethnicity) and observe the life of the border and its concomitant linguistic construction in four communities: Karang and Djidak (on the Senegalese side) and Amdallaye and Ker Malick Sarr (on the Gambian side). All four communities comprise a small subset of what could be referred to as the Senegal-Gambia borderland. Because of their geographic relationship, The Gambia shares 740 km of border with Senegal (and no other country, but also about 80km of coast bordering the Atlantic Ocean). This particular area under investigation is also a subset of the area known as Saloum for the former Wolof (and previously Seereer) kingdom that occupied this area. These four communities were targeted for their geographic location adjacent to the border and because they form a sort of sister-city mirror. Karang and Amdallaye on the one hand and (7km to the east) Djidak and Ker Malick Sarr on the other hand form two pairs of border communities in which the border
takes on different shape and representation. This is a sociolinguistic investigation of how this particular borderland is inhabited and constructed (linguistically) across this space.

Britain (2013) makes a compelling case for linguists to pay closer attention to the role of space and mobility in linguistic diffusion and variation. He distinguishes three types of space: Euclidean, social, and perceived space. Euclidean space can be measured in square meters, miles, or acres. Social space is shaped by human activity and includes things like roads, borders, buildings. According to Britain, this space is usually organized or controlled by political units. Finally, perceived space is the way that individuals and groups understand the proximate and distant space that shapes their practices and attitudes. All three of these theoretical concepts are important in this study of the post-colonial political border under consideration.

The first point, concerning the Euclidean distances of this study, is that the entire surface area of the borderland under investigation is rather small. For instance the Sunset District neighborhood of San Francisco investigated in the sociolinguistic ethnography of Hall-Lew (2009) covers a surface area of 14.8 square kilometers. This current study covers a smaller surface area of just 13 square kilometers, but with a much different construction of space, with at least five distinct communities within this space. Secondly, the border itself, as shown on the map, appears to be uniform, extending evenly and consistently across Euclidean space. This is what Nugent (2008) refers to as the “tyranny of the map.” This imagined line can take its physical shape in the form of a fence or a wall, but more often than not in West Africa, the demarcation of a border involves either the construction of a border checkpoint (usually on a paved road that traverses the border) complete with border guards and customs officials or concrete pillars to mark the
geographic limits of state territory. These differing manifestations of the political border may have vastly different social implications. One of the resources actors use to socially construct geographic space is language. Humans can create space through the construction of buildings and signs. These buildings and signs often bear written forms that help index the dominant visual language systems (see Bloemmaert 2008 for a discussion of linguistic landscapes). These are more permanent and visually-oriented ways of constructing space. But spoken language can also contribute to the social construction of space. In addition to their metalinguistic commentary, speakers’ use of various linguistic variables contribute to the construction of social space. Both the Euclidean space and the socially-constructed space, in turn, contribute to perceived or psychological space. In this dissertation I attempt to focus on social construction of space, but also draw upon the ideas of Euclidean space to elaborate my argument about the ways borderland speakers construct and deconstruct the political border.

The data for this dissertation were collected during a nine-month period in 2013. The Senegalese portion of this study, which is supported by the Boren Foundation, took place between January and May 2013. The data for the Gambian portion of this research, supported by an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement grant, was collected from June through October 2013. Ethnographic methods complement traditional sociolinguistic methods (such as the use of a modified sociolinguistic interview) for a more localized understanding of how the political border influences life and language in this area dividing Senegal and The Gambia. In order to understand the local meaning of the border, it was necessary to live in the borderland and to continually refine my ideas about the “meaning” of the border: I tried to discover through several different methods how
the border is spoken about, thought about, interacted with, or avoided and ultimately how these things influence or interact with language variation in Wolof. In some respects, ethnographic and traditional sociolinguistic methods can be seen as at odds with one another: ethnography requires initial agnosticism about the social categories and local meaning, putting off the traditional scientific method of hypothesis-forming preceding data collection. Sociolinguistic methods, on the other hand, require a preparation of interview materials (thus, some certainty about the linguistic variables in question) and community sampling methods (thus, some ideas about the social variables in question). Both ways of viewing the sociocultural landscape and gathering data, however, can be used to understand the subtleties of linguistic variation in socially complex areas such as borderlands. In this chapter, I discuss the communities targeted, conceptual frameworks, and methods used in data collection and data analysis.

2.1 Borderland communities

Together with the help of research assistants, four communities were targeted. The communities are adjacent to the border and within a close distance to one another (see Chapter 1, Figure 2). Sixteen Wolof speakers in each village were recruited, balancing for age (younger, older) and sex (male or female), with four speakers of each type. Although this borderland area has been characterized by its pluriethnic and multilingual makeup for centuries, today its lingua franca is Wolof and so we targeted speakers who consider themselves fluent in Wolof, regardless of ethnicity or first language. As Lûpke (2010) points out, the notions of “first language” or “maternal language” in this part of the world are misguided since it is not at all uncommon for
children within the same household to grow up speaking two or three local languages like Seereer, Wolof, and Mandinka before they even begin to be exposed to English, French, or Arabic in their school-age years. In the household where I lived in Karang, for instance, the family was ethnically Seereer and all of the children in the household might say that their maternal language was Seereer, but they almost never spoke Seereer or if the grandparents tried to address the younger inhabitants in Seereer, they would respond in Wolof. The young woman who sold ice in the garage might also speak Mandinka and Pulaar on any given day at work. On the Gambian side, the family was Mandinka on the maternal side, “Naar” (Northern Senegal) on the paternal side, but communicated almost exclusively in Wolof. Even if the young mother was conversing with her older cousin, the patriarch of the extended compound, more often than not, Wolof was used instead of Mandinka. The children all spoke Wolof to each other and responded in Wolof to their parents, although they would tell people that they are Mandinka and this is their “mother tongue.” For this reason, we took note of people’s “mother tongue” and “other” languages, but did not select speakers according to the criterion of L1 Wolof. These two communities served as my hosts, but like many locals, I spent quite a bit of my time moving back and forth between several borderland communities and attending local markets and weddings and visiting friends. The four communities ultimately targeted for this study are discussed below (shown in Figure 4):
In spite of frequent movement between these communities, rural inhabitants (from places like Djidah and Ker Malick Sarr) have more reason to go to the urban places (like Karang and Amdallaye) for commercial or personal needs. Urban inhabitants might travel to the rural spaces less frequently to visit family or attend a wedding or baptism. A paved road that runs north to south connects Karang and Amdallaye, while dirt roads and footpaths connect the rural communities to each other and to the urban communities.

2.1.1 Karang, Senegal

The towns and villages explored in this dissertation are different from the urban landscape of traditional/foundational sociolinguistic studies, where different
neighborhoods are dominated by different socioeconomic classes or ethnic groups. Large sprawling African urban centers like Dakar and Banjul might have such neighborhoods where socioeconomic status is apparent and children from different neighborhoods attend different schools. But in Karang, the biggest town in this study (population ~12,000 in 2013), different quartiers, or neighborhoods, are not distinguished by the quality of homes or schools and socioeconomic class does not seem to define neighborhoods. But due to its rapid growth in the past two decades (since the transnational highway that cuts through Karang and Amdallaye was paved), Karang is expanding on all sides and people are filling in every available parcel of land with temporary (mud huts with thatched roofs) and permanent (cement block with corrugated tin roof) housing structures. Because Karang is bounded by the Gambian border on the south and pre-existing villages to the West, it is mostly expanding to the north and the west.

Karang is part of the arrondissement (district) of Foundiounge, which is in turn part of the region of Fatick. The delta/coastal area is characterized by bolongs or river ways that make it difficult to access either Foundiougne or Fatick. Culturally, historically, and geographically, Karang is much closer to Kaolack, the third biggest city in Senegal, than to Foundiounge. A two-hour ride on a road riddled with potholes to the extent that most drivers prefer to drive off the road connects Karang to Kaolack, where several banks, ATMs, a large hospital, and high-speed internet are found. Karang houses the garage that connects people of the borderland area to other places in Senegal or those from Senegal trying to go to The Gambia. The gare routiere of Karang offers a source of income to many Karang natives who spend their day selling cashews, ice, candy, or
changing money to the many passengers who come through this location on their way to other places in Senegal or The Gambia.

Another marker of Karang as urban space is the fact that it houses a mairie or mayor’s office with elected officials (as opposed to chiefs who in Wolof society are selected by village elders according to the criteria of lineage and ability). Karang also has a reasonably large hospital (rather than the village-sized case de santé, which are usually staffed by one or two village health workers) and is the only community in this study on the electrical grid of Senegal (SENELEC). As of 2013 Karang had its first high school class in its third year of high school (terminale in the French system). Previously students went 20km away on the main road to Sokone to attend high school classes and often stayed in dorms or with friends or family in Sokone. Karang is also home to several different smaller mosques (jakka) and two large mosques (juma) and also has a Catholic church as the town is home to a sizable Christian population (~5-10% of the population), who usually belong to the Seereer and Joola ethnic groups. Finally, Karang has a daily market, an outdoor space designated for the daily sale of vegetables, dry goods, and fish that draws people from both Karang and beyond for the purchase of these goods (this daily market in no way replaces the weekly market, which takes place 2km from the border on the Gambian side, and is as much a social event as a commercial event). The autoroute that connects Senegal to The Gambia is the lifeblood of Karang. The entire town straddles the only paved road in the area and along the road young men sit with their motorcycles, waiting for clients who need to go on errands or return home to the village. Several boutiques sell sugar, tea, bread, and soft drinks to passengers waiting for a car to fill up to go into Senegal. Young boys known as taalibe (disciples) beg for alms.
to take back to their marabout (religious leaders). The main road is the bustling part of town and is bookended by the customs officials and police station (douane) on the north side of town and the official border crossing and border patrol police on the south side of the town. On Independence Day (April 4, 2014), most of the inhabitants of Karang lined the side of this road to watch a parade full of school children dressed in traditional clothing, marching bands, and men in military costumes. There were a handful of Senegalese flags waving in the parade. Some Gambian school children from the neighboring town Amdallaye also marched in the parade, purportedly to show their support of Senegalese Independence. As the parade wound down, several children wanted to keep things going. “Keep going until Amdallaye!” they shouted. For many people it is just the next town over and does not necessarily represent an entirely different country, or at least not “core” Gambian space. Except for one night of riots after a football match between Senegal and The Gambia in 2010 resulted in a tie, residents reported no conflicts or problems with their neighbors across the border.

2.1.2 Amdallaye, The Gambia
Amdallaye is the border town on the Gambian side of the border, approximately 7km due west from Djidah and Ker Malick Sarr. For all intents and purposes it seems like a continuation or a quartier of Karang everywhere except on the main road where a blockade prevents automobiles from passing through and two large buildings that house Senegalese and Gambian border control remind people that they are passing from one state to another. As soon as you cross past the Gambian border patrol, you are greeted by
a large billboard featuring the Gambian president’s smiling face and reminding readers (in English) of his accomplishments (see Figure 5):

![Figure 5: A photo of a billboard on the transnational highway adjacent to the border.](image)

The linguistic landscape may announce that you have entered a different country, but for much of the population, this type of landscape is irrelevant. The soundscape, on the other hand, does not seem to change much. It is entirely possible to cross from Karang to Amdallaye (and vice-versa) by foot or by motorcycle on dirt roads without encountering any border officials. But the paved road is where people congregate to enjoy the
economic benefits of being a border town with high levels of traffic and people in transit between both countries.

Amdallaye was a predominantly Seereer community but within the last thirty years with the paving of the transnational highway and the growing of the border crossing, merchants from as far away as Mauritania and even Lebanon have come to take advantage of Gambian economic policy and Amdallaye’s geographic proximity to Senegal. Goods like sugar, oil, and fabric are usually much cheaper in The Gambia and so Amdallaye is a convenient place for Senegalese and travelers to come buy these goods without having to go “into” The Gambia. With a population of approximately 3000 people, Amdallaye is not as large as Karang but is now home to the major ethnicities of the area: Mandinka, Wolof, Bambara, Diola in addition to Seereer. Amdallaye does not have any secondary schools, but does have an elementary school in addition to a few koranic schools. Some children attend French schools on the Senegalese side, but for those who wish to progress in English education, they usually attend middle school in Fas (the weekly market town) and high school in Banjul. Because development in The Gambia radiates outward from the capital Banjul which is located on the western tip of the South Bank of the Gambia river, Amdallaye (and much of the North Bank) is considered remote. The electric grid has not yet come this far north so most people in Amdallaye live without electricity in their homes (some have generators or even solar panels). This does not prevent the inhabitants of Amdallaye from enjoying the convenience of electronics. They frequently go to Karang to watch television or charge their mobile phones or to buy refrigerated beverages. One older Amdallaye resident said he could remember when Amdallaye did not have a single boutique so as children they
were always sent to Karang to fetch matches, candles, or tea at the boutiques in Karang. He also remembered a time when the border crossing consisted of impermanent structures like thatched huts and the occasional border police.

2.1.3 Djidah, Senegal

Djidah is an average sized (~500 inhabitants during the growing season) village approximately 7km east of Karang. It is an agrarian village with several brick houses, and a few dozen mud huts. The village is surrounded by farmland on all sides. The village inhabitants grow mostly millet, beans, and groundnuts. All members of the community work in the fields during the rainy season, except elders and those who are studying. During the dry season many women grow okra, eggplants and other vegetables for consumption. The village has several wells. The chief also spoke of an agreement with a German NGO that will bring electricity to the village (it was unclear if this meant solar power or some other source). The village has one daara (koranic school) and one French school. Several children spend the school year in Karang for middle and high school. A few children even go to school in The Gambia. A seasonal spring runs next to the fields and its waters are said to be healing. The spring is also technically in The Gambia.

The village chief and his extended family are all of Wolof ethnicity, but a good portion of the village is also Seereer or Pulaar. The village chief used to live in Dakar as a taxi driver but was called back to Djidah to be chief when his brother passed away. He is lively and prides himself on his Saloum identity. Two of his wives came from The Gambia. He is also quite friendly with the chief of Ker Malick Sarr, just across the border. Walking around the fields of this village with some of the inhabitants, I asked
about border markers and was told that previously some trees had been painted and that there was a cement pole the next village over (Keur Set). Djidah was founded about three generations ago and is commonly known as Santhie Modou Juli (named for its founder and his mother). I was told that the founders relocated from The Gambia (a village called Ceesay Mas) and that the founders came and settled right on the Senegalese side of the border. A village elder whose grandparent was among the founders even said that they came to keep the village of Ker Malick Sarr company.

2.1.4 Ker Malick Sarr, The Gambia

If Amdallaye feels like a suburb or neighborhood of Karang, then Ker Malick Sarr and Djidah seem more like twin/sister villages since they are more similar in size. They are separated by agricultural fields and the small seasonal stream runs between them in rainy season, but they are connected by multiple dirt paths. When fields are dry and empty and visibility is high, you can see Djidah from Ker Malick Sarr. Inhabitants walk from one village to the other to attend weddings, baptisms, and funerals without impediment. Their fields may even extend into the others’ territories.

The name of the village suggests that Ker Malick Sarr was founded by Malick Sarr (Ker means “house (of)”) and the chief today and his extended family are still of the surname Sarr. The village name also denotes the Wolof heritage of the village (since ker is a Wolof word), and may also serve as an icon of national orthography since Senegal represents the same word as keur. While most people in Senegal assume that the family name Sarr indexes Seereer ethnic identity, the son of the chief (whose mother is from Senegal) insisted that neither his parents nor his grandparents ever spoke Seereer or even
considered themselves ethnically Seereer, but have always been Wolof. The chief’s family and most of the inhabitants of Ker Malick Sarr consider themselves Wolof although there are Pulaar, Bambara, Seereer, and Diola households in the village. Ker Malick Sarr has no English-medium schools at the moment, but the children walk to Touba Anglais, a mere 1km away by dirt path, in order to attend English-medium elementary school. They can also study koranic school there or with the village marabout or across the border in Senegal. Most people in Ker Malick Sarr are farmers, although the chief pointed out that farming is a seasonal occupation so young men often leave to work in the city (Banjul) during the dry season to supplement their farming income.

2.2 Ethnographic methods
Since Gumperz & Hymes (1964), ethnography has been an accepted way of approaching speech communities in sociolinguistics to connect the macro-level sociocultural landscape and micro-level of interpersonal interactions. In the years since the quantitative paradigm came to dominate sociolinguistics, ethnography has enjoyed a renaissance and has become a staple in the methodological toolbox of many sociolinguists. The advantages of ethnography include allowing a researcher to become (as much as possible) part of the community under investigation and opening up the social analysis to include locally-relevant groups or practices. Rather than using pre-defined categories like socio-economic status (SES) which may not even be relevant for all communities, linguists use ethnographic methods like participant observation and field notes in order to assess the locally-relevant identities and categories and to refine their research questions as they learn more about the communities being researched.
Although Labov (1963) used ethnography to better understand the linguistic variation in his famous Martha’s Vineyard study, Eckert (1989) brought these methods to mainstream sociolinguistics with her study of changes in progress at Belten High School near Detroit. By becoming a participant observer at the high school, she was able to discern the locally important categories of “jock” and “burnout,” which, in turn, correlated with different rates of participation in an on-going change known as Northern Cities Vowel Shift. Mendoza-Denton (1997), and Drager (2009) also used ethnographic methods to study the social life of high schoolers and how their participation in gangs or cliques correlates with subtler phonetic differences in speech. Researchers like Johnstone (2004), Hall-Lew (2009), and Carmichael (2014) have also shown how ethnography is essential to the study of the sociolinguistic construction of place.

As noted above, and as articulated by Juffermans (2010), doing ethnographic research means that “[q]uestions emerge mainly during and in-between fieldwork, not before fieldwork” (4). Ethnographic research ultimately tries to let the local meanings of ordinary activities emerge through long-term participation in the social setting and activities of interest. In a dialectal process, the hypotheses about the sociocultural structure of the communities and the meaning of sociolinguistic variation are adapted to account for the observations and experiences in the field. Ethnographic research also involves acknowledging how the presence of the ethnographer influences the actions and explanations of the participants. As a non-native Wolof speaker and obvious outsider with a research agenda, I must contend with how my presence, the interview structure and interview questions may have influenced the data.
My interest and participation in the borderland areas began in 2005-7 as an American Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal. I spent two years in a town called Sokone and encountered many Gambians who came to Sokone to visit religious leaders, spend vacation with family, or to participate in commercial activities of the local weekly market. Although official Peace Corps policy prevented me from crossing the border to the Gambian side, these experiences shaped my interest in this border and helped hone my cultural and linguistic knowledge of the area. Subsequent trips to the area as a researcher allowed me to become more familiar with the Gambian side of the border and local Wolof linguistic features and language attitudes.

2.2.1 Participant observation

“When it’s done right, participant observation turns fieldworkers into instruments of data collection and data analysis.” (Bernard 2013)

As a participant observer in the borderland during this most recent fieldwork, I split my time between communities on the Senegalese and Gambian sides of the border. I lived with Wolof-speaking families and participated in activities such as watching news, music videos, and important sporting events like wrestling and soccer on television. I visited neighbors and families and weekly markets that sometimes involved crossing the border with community members and gaining a localized perspective about the “border” and the borderland area. At other times, I crossed the border to visit friends or attend weekly markets by myself. These activities all helped shape my questions about the hows and the whys of the border: when and how do people engage with the border? Do they cross at
official checkpoints or not? What are the official checkpoints like? How fluid is the border at the official checkpoints versus outside their purview? Since my ethnographic focus is on the border and the social life of borderland communities, these questions occurred to me as I participated in life near to the border and helped shape the way I took field notes and asked questions of participants. I also conducted sociolinguistic interviews in four different communities on both sides of the border with the help of research assistants from the area (see below). The ethnographic record consists of fieldnotes, semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews, and photographs all collected during this period of fieldwork. Bernard (2008) states, it takes quite a bit of time to fully integrate into a community due to the time it takes to learn the language and norms and community politics. Nine months seemed a sufficient amount of time to experience the rhythms of rainy season and dry season in the borderland. Although my fieldwork sites were different from my Peace Corps site and my previous research sites, the cultural competency gained during those trips helped smooth the integration process during my dissertation fieldwork.

A total of 3.5 months during dry season (from February to May 2013) were spent in Karang, Senegal, the most important Senegalese border town as one travels from Dakar to Banjul or vice versa. My choice to live in Karang, the only border community in this sample with running water and electricity. I frequented the daily market and the garage, a bustling place where both locals and travelers from The Gambia go for transportation “into” Senegal. I attended a community meeting at the mayor’s office and made frequent visits to the schools. But I did not limit my participant observation to Karang. I made frequent trips to the border crossing and into The Gambia for the closest
weekly market. I also went with Senegalese friends around the official border posts to attend an initiation ceremony in The Gambia. From Karang I based my travels out into neighboring villages, usually via car or motorcycle, where with the help of my research assistant Omar I found people to interview. Omar is an educated young man (one year of an English degree at the university in Dakar) but has spent most of his life in Karang. His father was the veterinarian for most of the borderland area and Omar became well-acquainted with the neighboring villages making trips with his father to check on the livestock of the area. His work is usually in the mayor’s office helping people from Karang and neighboring (Senegalese) communities obtain birth certificates, marriage certificates etc.

Although I did not stay in the rural villages in this study, I spent significant amounts of time there, bringing kola nuts to the elders, eating lunch, sitting under the trees when it was too hot to work. Members of these communities would also visit me on occasion if they came to Karang for business or pleasure. Staying with a host family that had electricity had several benefits. First it allowed me to frequently back up interviews on my laptop. Also being a house with a television set made the compound a local hub. I got to watch local wrestling matches and Senegalese soap operas and the news with both members of the compound and neighbors, an important way to learn about the humor, politics, and the ways the media of the center (because most of the television programs consumed were filmed and produced in Dakar) influences the periphery.

From June until October 2013, including the rainy season, I lived in a smaller town on the Gambian side of the border called Mayamba, closer to the river where one crosses over to Banjul than to the border, but still within 10km of the border. This town
was chosen again because of the electricity and because of the personal connections I had in The Gambia. The Gambia is roughly divided into the North Bank and the South Bank. The area of interest to me was the Wolof-speaking area of the North Bank. The North Bank of The Gambia, being further away from the capital, is less developed and the electric grid has not yet extended to include those communities near the Senegalese border. But given its long, narrow geographic shape nestled in the mouth of Senegal, nearly all of The Gambia constitutes borderland. The closest weekly market was still the same weekly market I attended in Senegal. Although the community where I lived was not included in my borderland communities, I used it as a base to become acquainted with a Gambian community and Gambian Wolof. Here I got to experience watching both Gambian television and Senegalese television (the family preferred the latter) and accompanying the children to their English-medium schools. My Gambian research assistant was also a university-educated male who worked for the Peace Corps. His work often took him to smaller villages. With close work colleagues who came from Amdallaye and Ker Malick Sarr, he was able to help me establish contacts and friends in those communities, too. From Mayamba I made forays out into Gambian villages near the border and across the river to Banjul, the capital where Wolof is widely spoken. Since my original intention was to include ten different communities in this study, including the Gambian capital Banjul, Mayamba was a strategic location for accessing several different villages. The family with whom I lived in Mayamba still made frequent trips to Karang and the neighboring Senegalese villages where the local religious leaders lived.
Fieldnotes were jotted down daily in a notebook and elaborated upon (Emerson et al. 2006) on a laptop. These fieldnotes were used to help create conceptual codes that were later used to understand speakers’ various orientations to place and to the border.

2.3 Sociolinguistic methods

Because the focus of this dissertation is on how a political border may or may not contribute to linguistic variation, some of the methods in this research come from traditional sociolinguistics. Four Wolof-speaking communities immediately adjacent to the border were chosen to conduct sociolinguistic interviews with community members in order to measure particular linguistic variables. Interviews were collected with participants one at a time and conducted by a paid research assistant from the area (in both cases young men with some level of university education). Participants were selected using a snowball, or friend-of-friend, method, but certain parameters were given: village samples were balanced for age (under or over 50, or roughly, those born before and after Independence) and gender. Speakers’ demographic profiles are presented in Appendix A.

2.3.1 Speech community

Another methodological issue inherent in sociolinguistics is defining the scope of the social group under investigation. Sociolinguists, who want to show the patterns of variability often obscured by dialectology and descriptive linguistics, have grappled with this challenge by adopting different units of analysis. William Labov’s dissertation about New York City, among other things, established that the city constitutes a single speech
community in spite of the variation because of its shared linguistic norms as evidenced by the patterned orientation towards prestige and local variants in careful and casual speech. Beginning with researchers like Penelope Eckert, who relied on ethnographic methods to access the locally meaningful social categories, there was a shift in the scale of focus. The theoretical construct of a speech community was contested by linguistic anthropologists like Duranti (1997) and Bucholtz (1999) for placing its focus on abstract notions about language as the definition of community and some researchers therefore have shifted their linguistic analysis to communities of practice. A community of practice is defined by people coming together around a shared endeavor and so relies less on abstract concepts like “shared language norms” and more on practice. The community of practice is also more accessible to ethnographers, as they are smaller in size than speech communities and an ethnographer can sometimes get to know all the members of a community of practice, allowing researchers to become more familiar with group organization and roles of individuals.

For the researcher interested in local meanings of place, a trade-off exists between the generalizability or breadth gained by studying a speech community compared to the intimacy and depth gained by studying a community of practice. This current study approaches the sociolinguistic analysis of the bigger picture, the borderland speech community, but with a special focus on the ways that communities of practice in this area are mobile and overlapping. I define the borderland communities targeted in this study as part of a larger “Saloum Wolof” speech community, a term I heard used by many people in the borderlands. Certain cross-border communities of practice may exist within this speech community, like the koranic schools that draw students from both sides of the
border or the weekly market where local people go to buy and sell goods, or even families that have members living just across the border. Almost every social event I attended in the borderland involved some cross-border relationships. Like Martinez (1994), I take the borderland itself to be a unit of analysis as a speech community, downplaying the obvious political sub-units such as nation or city or neighborhood, which have been the focus of many larger sociolinguistic studies (Labov 1972, Johnstone 2006, Hall-Lew 2009, Carmichael 2014). The communities in this study are part of larger speech communities (Saloum Wolof, and perhaps the national varieties of Wolof, as well), but also contain smaller units of cross-border communities of practice that motivate its treatment as a cohesive area. The fluidity and connectedness of this area predates the colonial border so in order to understand the social construction of the border and the life of the borderlanders, the scope of my study must extend beyond one village or one neighborhood.

Whether focusing on a city, a neighborhood, or a high school cohort, most sociolinguistic ethnographers have had an urban bias (except, of course, Labov’s groundbreaking Martha’s Vineyard study). Britain (2009) surmises that this is a reaction against the preference for foundational dialectology studies to focus on rural areas as a means to get access to the more archaic, conservative forms of language. While urban locales have a lot to offer in terms of populations that exhibit social and linguistic stratification, they are not qualitatively different in terms of linguistic processes than rural areas. Human geographers have in fact come to the conclusion that the dichotomy between “urban” and “rural” spaces is a false one and, Britain points out, the processes of language/dialect contact and change are not qualitatively different across these different
types of space. The field’s bias towards urban spaces may be motivated by the fact that urban centers have greater intensity of contact and less dense social networks, but this is not necessarily the case. This ideology that frames rural populations as immobile and isolated is precisely the same essentialized logic that led dialectologists to seek out the rural communities in search of the uncontaminated dialects. Early sociolinguistic studies therefore did not question the qualitative difference between urban and rural locality, but merely shifted their focus. When it comes to distinguishing urban from rural space in the Senegambian borderland, the differences become more gradiant. What counts as urban (**teru**) here, would not seem urban to someone in an industrialized nation. Rather than treating urban and rural space as dichotomous independent variables, Britain argues for a more nuanced perspective on what causes change and how it relates to space. For this reason, I include both urban and rural communities in this borderland study to examine how these spaces co-construct the boundary across varied social space.

### 2.3.2 The Sociolinguistic Interview

Several linguistic differences between Senegalese and Gambian Wolof have been pointed out by linguists and by speakers themselves. These differences will be discussed in more depth in the following chapters, but I selected three sociolinguistic variables to represent various levels of the Wolof speakers’ repertoires: a phonological variable, a morphosyntactic\(^3\) variable, and lexical elements. These variables were first confirmed during observations in the borderlands, and then recorded during a sociolinguistic interview.

\(^3\) With regard to the particular morphosyntactic variable examined here, an aspect marker, my interest is in the morphophonological variation it shows.
interview designed to capture the spoken Wolof of various types of borderland inhabitants. Sociolinguistic interviews were originally designed to elicit natural speech with different stylistic features. The canonical sociolinguistic interview contains questions relating to various topics (from school to near death experiences) to elicit more casual speech, a reading passage and a wordlist to elicit increasingly careful pronunciation (Labov 1972). Most Wolof speakers in the rural areas are not literate in Wolof so I used printed pictures in order to elicit a wordlist-like production of Wolof words selected from a (Senegalese) Wolof dictionary in order to target certain vowels in various phonological contexts. Next I asked speakers to listen to short recordings of Wolof speakers from both sides of the border counting from one to five and say where they believed them to be from (these data are not analyzed in this dissertation). Finally my research assistant and the participant engaged in a semi-structured interview about life in the borderland. Interview questions also address features of the subjects’ attitudes towards the political border as well as ethnic and national affinities. The majority of the recordings were made using a Audio-Technica lavalier microphone with an Edirol 09-HR recorder and then, when the latter stopped working partway through the Gambian fieldwork, a Zoom H2 digital recorder with the same lavalier microphone. The interviews were all recorded at a 44.1 Hz sampling rate for transcription in ELAN (Sloetjes & Wittenburg 2008) and acoustic analysis in Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2010).

2.3.2.1 Wordlist
The first type of variable I tried to isolate is a phonological difference in the vowel inventories described for Senegalese and Gambian Wolof (Njie 1982,
The picture-naming task took the place of the traditional wordlist used by Labov (1972) in order to obtain citation-like pronunciations of words selected to target different phonological contexts for the short vowels of Wolof in various phonological contexts. The speaker was coached by the research assistant until the target word was uttered (although the research assistant never uttered the target word himself; he simply described the picture, used semantic association or proverbs to elicit), and then asked to repeat it for a total of two repetitions of each word. Words were selected from a Senegalese Wolof dictionary based on the phonological variables discussed below and the degree to which the referent could be represented in pictures. The pictures were tested on an informant from the Saloum living in Dakar before being printed and taken to the border area for data collection.

This wordlist portion of the research is intended to test Njie’s claim (1999) that Gambian Wolof has only seven vowels while Senegalese Wolof has eight. In particular, the status of the vowel sometimes represented as /ə/ in the literature, which can occur in stressed position in Senegalese Wolof, is said to not exist in Gambian Wolof. Traoré (1994), in a phonetic analysis of (Senegalese) Wolof’s central vowels characterized this vowel as follows: “la voyelle notée graphiquement ë correspondrait à la réalisation [ə] avec comme caractéristiques acoustiques F1 450 Hz et F2 1450 Hz et une durée moyenne de 6 cs.” These raw

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4 “The vowel noted graphically as ë corresponds to the realization [ə] with acoustic characteristics of like an F1 of 450 Hz and F2 of 1450 Hz and a duration of 6 cs.” (translation mine)
measurements do not tell us much, except in relation to the rest of the vowel space of the same speaker. This justification of the existence of a schwa by Traore (1994) in Senegalese Wolof does not make any claims about the roundedness or unroundedness of the vowel. It also does not take into account differences noted for Gambian Wolof. According to Njie, Gambian Wolof lacks a schwa in any stressed position. Njie (1982) and Becher (2001) claim that what is realized as [ə] in Senegalese Wolof, is realized as either [o], [e], or [u] in Gambian Wolof. In order to ascertain the status of this vowel in the borderlands, minimal pairs and near-minimal pairs were elicited whenever possible (e.g., fër ‘to overeat’ ∼ for ‘to gather’, kër ‘house’ ∼ ker ‘shade’ dëgg ‘truth’ ∼ dugg ‘to enter’) in order to control for phonological context that may distinguish the mid-central vowel production in Senegalese Wolof and Gambian Wolof.

2.3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

The next part of the sociolinguistic interview involved getting the participant talking in more naturalistic, running speech. The interview was also designed to start with the more innocuous topics like food and childhood before delving into topics like practices of border crossing and attitudes towards the people on the other side of the border. The variables under investigation from this section of the interview are morphosyntactic variables. Speakers were asked to tell about their habitual behaviors such as how they study, worship, shop, and interact with extended family and friends (see Appendix B). Questions asking participants about a habitual action was designed to elicit the active habitual marker (said to
be –y in Senegalese Wolof and de in Gambian Wolof). These questions were also used to elicit data on speakers’ histories and habits. Speakers were asked about the frequency of their mobility practices including local cross-border travel and contact with the larger capital cities (Dakar and Banjul). Each speaker was assigned a mobility score based on frequency for each (local, Dakar, Banjul). In addition to these questions, they were asked to relate a story such as a folktale or a story from their youth to invoke the narrative constructions described in Torrence (2012) which employ the neutralis series of pronouns (and often lack aspect marking).

*Imperfective marker -y/de*

One major marker of the Gambian dialect that is different from the Senegalese dialect is the use of the tense-aspect marker de (which Ferris & Jah 1989 describe as a frequentative marker) where Senegalese Wolof is said to use –y in most present tense contexts. This morpheme is also called a habitual marker (Gamble 1991) or an imperfective marker (Robert 1991, Torrence 2012), but most agree that it has a meaning of incomplete action. In the subject focus construction, illustrated below, the morpheme of interest is bolded and marked in the transcription as IMV (for imperfective marker):

(1) Maa ko-\textbf{y} lekk. (Senegalese Wolof)

(2) Maa ko \textbf{de} lekk. (Gambian Wolof)

\begin{tabular}{lll}
1SG.SubFoc & 3SG-\textbf{IMP} & eat \\
\end{tabular}

‘I am eating it.’
The morphosyntactic and phonological descriptions of this variable are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. The interviews about people’s lives, routines, habits, and feelings about living near the border were able to elicit several instances of this imperfective marker form each speaker. Since the interviews varied widely in length (from 21 minutes to 75 minutes long), however, each interview was analyzed for each speaker from minute 5 to minute 15 to help control for the different amounts of speech for each participant. By normalizing the interview time and disregarding the first five minutes of the interview (like Sankoff 1995), I was able to capture several tokens of this habitual marker in a variety of linguistic and syntactic environments from each speaker. Statistical analyses allow me to determine which linguistic environments or social identities may favor different variants.

**Discourse particles**

One of the most noticeable differences between Senegalese Wolof and Gambian Wolof is the source of borrowed lexical items. It has been noted in the literature on urban varieties of Wolof the degree to which speakers borrow from French (Swigart 1994, McLaughlin 2001) and English (Juffermans & McGlynn 2010). While it is difficult to compare the distribution of borrowed lexical items throughout the course of a sociolinguistic interview, discourse particles (like *because* and *parce que; mais* and *but*) were frequent enough in these interview portions to offer some insight into how speakers can mark their Wolof as “urban” or “hybridized” by using borrowed discourse particles (Swigart 2000). Furthermore, unlike the central vowel or the aspect marker, borrowed discourse
markers are frequently commented on by speakers. Metalinguistic awareness signals a linguistic stereotype (Labov 1971) so in this dissertation I examine the distribution of borrowed discourse particles as well as the native Wolof discourse markers. Although French, English, and Wolof discourse markers are all in circulation within the borderland, speakers’ use of certain borrowed words can be connected via socioindexical properties to local borderland identities. Although several more variables could have been examined, this dissertation focuses on just three linguistic levels (phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical). Variables such as the Saloum morpheme-initial /h/ (which varies with glides in Gambian Wolof and vowels in Senegalese Wolof), the third person singular negative marker –ut (which seems common in the Saloum and Gambian Wolof but is realized as –ul in Senegalese Wolof), or other lexical items unique to Saloum or the borderland could also be explored in this corpus in future studies.

2.3.2.3 National practices and ideologies
Participants were also asked about their nationalistic practices such as voting, obtaining national identity cards, support of the national football team, and formal schooling. To get a sense of how much cross-border radio and television transmission influence people, they were also asked about media consumption (it turns out Gambian radio waves are much more easy to access in this area, while Senegalese television is much more popular) as well as popular culture questions about music stars and traditional wrestling stars. They were also asked to characterize their own nationality and that of those across the border and to
explain any differences. These answers are all used to evaluate the degree of participants’ nationalistic identities as well as their attitudes and stances towards their own nationality and that of their neighbors across the border. Interviews were coded to give each speaker a score for their national and transnational practices.

2.3.2.4 Linguistic practices and ideologies

Participants were asked about their language repertoire, and domains of usage if they are multilingual. I instructed the research assistants to ask open-ended questions about different types of Wolof spoken in this area and what types of social or geographic relationships exist between varieties of Wolof and their speakers. Without prompting speakers to address national varieties of Wolof, I expected that their own salient categories would emerge and point to the relative importance of the border. They were also asked to discuss where they think the “best” Wolof is spoken and why in order to assess how language attitudes and ideologies are constructed in the absence of an obvious standard language variety. Answers to these questions were used as part of the ethnographic record to evaluate how speakers’ cognitive maps of linguistic variation are structured. Although speakers’ mental maps of language variation can often be at odds with the dialectal facts (Preston & Bakos 2010), the perceptual boundaries and cognitive space are an important aspect of the transformation of space into place (Britain 2013, Johnstone 2004). Speakers’ discourses were probed and assigned a code for their relevant language and border ideologies.
2.4 Summary

In this chapter I have laid out the explicit methods and frameworks used to collect data for this dissertation. Ethnographic and sociolinguistic methods complement each other to help construct a full picture of the “total linguistic fact” (Silverstein 1998) in the borderland, across urban and rural spaces and for various types of borderland inhabitants. This approach allows a broader view of language use and social practices in an area where little empirical sociolinguistic research has been done. The social lives of borderland inhabitants, including factors that emerge as important to borderland life like mobility, can be examined in relationship to the linguistic variables. These linguistic variables, in turn, can be construed as part of the social space known as the frontière (>French ‘border’) or the borderland, or as part of a larger sociocultural space known as the ‘Saloum,’ or as part of one of two nation states, Senegal or The Gambia. The border is not a fait accompli (finished product), but emerges through people’s practices (both linguistic and social). These practices are best captured through a combination of variationist sociolinguistic methods and ethnographic methods.
Ideologies about language are often considered banal and self-evident by those who hold them—like common sense or conventional wisdom about the world. For speakers who hold these ideologies, it is just the way things are. But implicit in ideologies about language, there are almost always underlying ideologies that link social groups (and polities like nation, region, or ethnicity) to social hierarchy. Conversely, these language ideologies are also used to prop up certain social boundaries (which are often projected as ethnic or political boundaries). In this chapter I describe some of the ideologies (of both linguists and local borderland inhabitants) surrounding Wolof and its varieties and how these ideologies contribute to the complex relationship between the border and Wolof.

### 3.1 Identities, boundaries, and ideologies

As Barth (1969) theorized, ethnic or national boundaries are inherently defined by their relationships negotiated between entities, not *a priori* or primordial categories. Since the dawn of the early modern nation-state (and the early days of modern linguistics), language has been used as a defining features of “a people” or a nation and has been used as evidence for the social unity of groups, but also as evidence for their separateness from other groups. As Meillet succinctly put it
in 1918, “Rien ne marque plus nettement l’existence d’une nation que la possession d’une langue qui lui soit propre.”5 This sentiment (still widely held) seems self-evident in places where populations are largely (and ideally) monolingual. The modern territorial configuration of the nation-state (compared to the previous political model of empires with vague boundaries), was accompanied by ideologies about what defined a state (namely, a “people” with a “culture” and a “language”). In the European context, this state-based ideology was followed by patterns of language standardization that helped reinforce the nationalist ideology of unity and sameness within the state’s boundaries such that “no more than one nation (and no more than one standard language) can ‘occupy’ a territory, and no nation (and no standard language) is conceivable without a territory” (Auer 2005, 12). But can a modern territory be conceivable without a standard language ideology? In multilingual, pluralistic places where the independent nation states have inherited the territory and structures (including the language) of the colonizer, ideologies about language and nation become rooted in tensions between modern (postcolonial) history and traditional (precolonial) notions of nationhood.

Although the ideologies about language and nation may not fully explain the actual linguistic facts, they offer an illuminating link between the overarching structures that shape people’s identities and speakers’ relationships to them. Woolard (1992) explains how “language ideology is a much-needed bridge

5 Nothing marks more clearly the existence of a nation than the language that belongs to it.
between linguistic and social theory, because it relates the microculture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality, confronting macrosocial constraints on language behavior” (236). As Preston (2010) puts it, people’s regard (attitudes, ideologies and folk perceptions) for perceived language varieties and variation can influence their social interactions. But as I show in this chapter, even defining what counts as macro (often assumed to be the political entity of the nation-state) and what counts as micro (or local) is not a straightforward notion in the Saloum borderland. I examine the layered and disjointed language and border ideologies at play in the periphery of two developing nations, Senegal and The Gambia.

Language ideologies permeate the discourses about nationalism, ethnicity, and borders in Senegambia. From linguists to politicians to the borderland inhabitants themselves, people construct various types of social borders through these ideologies. The differing language policies (and colonial legacies) of Senegal and The Gambia, while ostensibly a dividing force, are not as influential as they may seem. Calvet (1994) distinguishes between the in vitro language policies concocted by people with political interests in their offices and the in vivo language policies that govern language use in the streets, or in common interactions. While the in vitro policies may reflect language ideologies of the politically powerful, most people at the border (the literal and figurative margins or periphery) engage in their daily lives in a common language and with an ambivalent attitude towards the border. Different ethnic majorities, however, become a source for popular ideologies and for many ethnolinguistic identity and
nationality can be mapped on to one another. This chapter also explores some of the implicit ideologies surrounding the border itself. The tensions created by various actors’ understandings of language, identity, and the boundary itself reveal the complex nature of both social and linguistic boundaries. As Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) put it, ideologies of language “are not only about language” (55) but are often about the power to exclude and include various people under umbrellas of identity.

As Newman (2001) points out, “The relationship between identity and borders is, to a great extent, a function of the degree to which sociospatial ordering takes places, undergoes territorial reconfiguration, and is maintained for any significant period of time” (147). The sociospatial ordering is not necessarily dependent solely on ideologies of nationalism and territorialism, but also subnational, transnational and ethnolinguistic ideologies that involve language. As I explained in Chapter 1, there is often a tension in studies of African borderlands between a focus on transborder ethnic affinity and similarity on the one hand and a focus on the indelible effects of colonial and modern territorialization and nationalism on the other hand. Each type of focus is dependent upon a different type of language and border ideology and the complexity of the issue can be seen in the ideologies and attitudes of borderland inhabitants themselves. People with power and authority like politicians, teachers, even linguists, and other “interstitial cultural brokers” (Silverstein 1998) alike contribute to the ideological linking of language, social space, and relevant identities. But regular speakers
themselves also give voice to particular language ideologies that may or may not reflect the “official” positions of linguists or policy-makers.

Regarding how the “locality” of local languages is construed, Silverstein (1998) remarks that “the ideological aspect of analysis is central and key to understanding how people experience the cultural continuities and interruptions” in complex language communities. The political border is certainly a salient ideological “interruption” in the distribution of linguistic and political resources. For some speakers in the borderland, however, the cultural continuity of the Saloum area is more relevant than the supposedly discontinuous nation-state.

3.2 Linguistic “problems” of nations and borderlands

Part of what contributes to the perception of African nation-states as weak is the fact that they are pluriethnic and that ethnic rivalries can result in conflict. Reigning political ideology since the rise of the nation-state in 19th century Europe is that one nation=one territory=one people (=one language). According to Blommaert and Verschueren (1992), the hegemonic ideology in Europe at the end of the twentieth century was that monolingual societies are more cohesive than plurilingual societies: “Pluri-ethnic or pluri-lingual societies are seen as problem-prone, because they require forms of state organization that run counter to the ‘natural’ characteristics of groupings of people” (362). While it is not the case that Europe and other Western or strong states lack ethnic diversity, this diversity can be downplayed and differences minimized by the hegemonic political ideology of unity and the emergence of national standard languages has promoted a shift
towards linguistic homogenization (Segal 1988). Semiotic erasure of African heteroglossia and ethnic diversity for the sake of national unity has not been easily achieved and this failure of monolingual hegemony, in part, leads people to consider African states and African borders less stable and less “natural” than those in Europe. While it may be true that all nations and all borders are arbitrary to a certain extent, the ethnic diversity surrounding African borders make them seem even more arbitrary.

Almost all political borders created during the partition of Africa during the late 19th century cut through some ethnic groups (Asiwaju 1989). Senghor (2013) claims that Senegal and The Gambia are unique because all ethnicities found in one country are also found in the other, not just a subset. Due to shared ethnic populations in both countries, many shared cultural practices, religious beliefs (over 90% of the population is Muslim), and the long histories of peaceful interactions and mixing between ethnic groups, ethnicity is not a divisive factor in this area (Smith 2004, Cruis O’Brien 1998). Furthermore, Senghor says, “the Wolof language is the lingua franca in both countries and, to a lesser extent, Wolof culture has made significant inroads” in popular culture (220), strengthening a sense of cross-border unity. Ethnic harmony, shared linguistic and cultural practices, and shared religion all serve to strengthen cross-border relationships. Senghor goes on to say that “[t]he disunities, on the other hand, are derivatives of the historical fact of colonialism, namely, history, élite orientations, and the economies” (220). However artificial these historical facts may seem when compared with ethnolinguistic and religious similarity, from the perspective
of the nations, the language ecology of each nation state is quite different. Table 1 is adapted from Mansour (1993) and shows the distribution of languages divided by nation-state:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Majority Language</th>
<th>Sub-National Linguae Francae</th>
<th>Official Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>Mandinka 42% (T 60%)</td>
<td>Pulaar 18% Wolof 16%</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td><strong>Wolof 44% (T &gt;80%)</strong></td>
<td>Pulaar 21% Mandinka 6%</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The distribution of Wolof and other languages in Senegal and The Gambia as L1s. The numbers in parentheses represent the total percentage of speakers in the population (L1 and L2). Adapted from Mansour 1993.

While French and English are represented as exclusively associated with Senegal and The Gambia, there is an overlapping distribution of the local languages. The percentages associated with the nation-state divide these languages into different “majority” and “minority” positions, but a table like this may obscure the situation in the Saloum region where Wolof is the majority language and lingua franca on both sides of the border. As Silverstein (1998) points out, “Within polities, these numerical data allow labeling of "majority" and "minority" languages…bespeaking an economistic or market-like conceptualization of power, of political telos, and so on” (15). These economistic views are strongly
influenced by the perspective of the nation-state, which is often taken to be the natural perspective. Nations are portrayed as “containers” for peoples and languages and the interactions or blurred boundaries that may exist for local borderland inhabitants are ignored. According to Auer (2005), most speakers in southwest Germany present ethnodialectal maps that follow a “center-periphery” model of linguistic differences (e.g. gradual differences that spread out across geographic space), but “they often switch to a model of bounded, mutually exclusive geographical spaces when it comes to political borders” (14) that erase heterogeneity within the borders. The types of language descriptions that most linguists and politicians employ are positioned from the “center” of the nation-state that takes the borders and their role in containing similarities and excluding differences for granted. The view from the borderland does not always look so tidy.

3. 3 Language and nation in the postcolony

The linguistic consequences of the Senegambian border are most evident in the postcolonial language policies of each nation-state, codified in their respective constitutions. Just like almost every other newly independent African nation, Senegal and The Gambia retained the linguistic legacies of their colonizers, adopting French and English respectively as their official languages. Official languages are the medium for all government proceedings and education, but they are not necessarily intended to replace the local languages as the home languages. There is a lack of widespread proficiency in the official languages, but those who
do obtain a mastery of the official languages (usually through schooling) can occupy official posts as civil servants or engage in international commerce. This same phenomenon was observed by Myers-Scotton (1993) in East Africa and she called it *élite closure*. While the élite political classes are credited with enjoying the privileges offered by having access to the official languages, they are also often the group engaged in the nation-building activities like governing and teaching. The ideas of the élite do not necessarily constitute the mainstream ideologies about the nation-state and language, however. In Senegal and The Gambia, the failure of French and English (respectively) to take off as languages of wider communication does not mean that the nation-building process based on language ideology has failed. Even discourses about shared ethnolinguistic identities are problematized by ideas of “discrete national versions of ethnic identity” (Miles 2014). In this chapter, I explore some of the various ideologies held by linguists and lay people alike regarding the linguistic nature of the border.

### 3.4 Wolofization of the Senegalese nation

In his edited volume titled, *Language Problems of Developing Nations*, Fishman (1968) asserts that the postcolonial world has endured more problems associated with multilingualism and ethnic plurality than other places. He offers a useful distinction between two types of political ideologies linking groups of people to nations. On the one hand, what is often referred to as *nationalism* Fishman defines as the tendency for a group of people with cultural, ethnic, and linguistic similarities to assert their right to political autonomy. On the other hand, he coins
the term *nationism* to refer to the process in which a disparate group with shared territory moves towards political unity, usually via claims for linguistic and cultural unity. Implicit in this model is the way people perceive their participation in a group and its associated territory. In his essay he claims that most of the postcolonial nation-states that found themselves at independence with inherited territories and borders are engaged in *nationism*, but in the Saloum region, the unofficial area encompassing the borderland in question which is geographically peripheral to both modern states, an undercurrent of linguistic nationalism (associated with the Saloum region) remains at odds with the mainstream discourse of linguistic nationalism.

Blommaert and Verschueren (1992) state that homogenization is the ideology at the heart of all nation-building processes (including what Fishman would call *nationism*). Language standardization is an important part of this homogenizing process. While the nation-building process does not seem to involve standard language ideology in Senegal and The Gambia, a process known as wolofization has been noted and associated with a process of nation-building in Senegal (Cruise O’Brien 1989, Swigart 2000, McLaughlin 2001). A supra-ethnic, urban identity associated with Dakar/Urban Wolof is facilitating its rapid spread across the Senegalese nation. As Cruise O’Brien (1998) points out:

> Wolof identification is perhaps best seen as a process, one which relates to a range of subjects: urbanization, migration, religion, statehood. There are no fixed ethnic boundaries here, no lines of battle drawn up by colonial experience, on the whole no primordialism, rather what may be (for the state) a helpful ambiguity and flux” (27).
Its lack of official status and institutional support make Wolof a vehicle for the “shadow politics” of nationalism. Although only roughly 40% of the population considers itself to be ethnically Wolof, over 80% of the population speaks Wolof as a first or second language (and this estimate is probably conservative, see McLaughlin 2001, Lüpke 2013) and many people think of Wolof as the national language of Senegal, even though the Senegalese constitution affords it no special status compared to the other 15 indigenous languages. Although Woolard & Schieffelin (1994) point out that language mixing is often evaluated as imperfect competency (63) and although Senegalese urban Wolof carries no overt prestige, it seems to filling a role of nation-building that no colonial language has been able to do (Cruise O’Brien 1989). Thus while people may speak disparagingly of Urban Wolof, it has become emblematic of Senegalese nationality. Although some suggest that a parallel process of Mandeization is ongoing in The Gambia, the effects are not nearly as widespread as that of the Wolofization of Senegal. Perhaps due to the size and influence of its only neighbor, Wolof seems to be growing in The Gambia, as well (Juffernans & McGlynn 2010), but the links remain strong between The Gambia and its dominant ethnic group Mandinka. These processes can be seen as a “shadow politics” move towards modern nationalism (or in Fishman’s terms, nationism) without adhering to the logic of the neocolonial language ideology (where the political élite thought that French or English might unite a multiethnic, multilingual nation) or the standard language ideologies of Europe and North America. Other processes of homogenization can bring about a sense of national unity but it remains to be seen whether the
wolofization of Senegal leads to strengthened linguistic borders by way of common national variety the same way standard language diffusion does?

3.5 Linguists’ ideologies

Although Senegal and The Gambia clearly have a complex relationship between their respective in vivo language policies and in vitro language policies (Calvet 1994), with quite a bit of overlap in the in vivo domain (especially in the borderland), linguists often reflexively adopt a the linguistic perspective of the capital or larger urban centers when describing the linguistic situation of the entire nation-state. The political, economic, or geographic centers often have a strong influence in processes like standard language development when the variety of the powerful comes to stand for the “correct way of speaking” (Milroy 2001, Auer 2005). But Wolof is a language without a standard variety, in the sense that there is no prestigious variety and very few people are aware of national orthographies, so its written form is limited. Torrence (2012) explains how Dakar Wolof (or urban Senegalese Wolof, see below) has become the normative variety in Senegal due to Dakar’s role as the political, cultural, and population center of Senegal, but how nobody would classify it as good or correct Wolof due to its mixed nature (see below). It also happens to be the most well-described variety of Wolof and thus comes to stand for all Wolof varieties for those doing formal linguistic analyses. Without a “standard” Wolof, therefore, it is questionable how this language may play a role in building national consciousness and territorial
borders in Senegal and The Gambia given the role standard languages have played in divergence at the boundaries (Auer 2005, Boberg 2000).

_Ethnologue_, the most exhaustive inventory of the world’s language, lists Gambian Wolof as a dialect different from Senegalese Wolof, “but with significant enough differences to require adaptation of materials.” They conclude that the issue “[n]eeds further investigation.” Other researchers (Njie 1982, Juffermans & McGlynn 2010, Gamble 1991 etc.) have also noted that the national varieties of Wolof differ slightly from one another, without impeding mutual intelligibility. Most authors also cite the influence of the colonial languages on the national varieties with a large number of established French loanwords in Senegalese Wolof and some English loanwords in Gambian Wolof. A review of a Senegalese Wolof dictionary reveals a French loanword inventory of 702 out of 3,242 entries (or 21.7%), while a Gambian Wolof dictionary reveals a French loanword inventory of 111 out of 2,947 words (or 3.8%) and is much more careful about excluding English loanwords. Dictionaries tend to be conservative in what they allow as part of a language’s makeup, often idealizing a “pure” form of the language and eschewing borrowings, but they provide an important if only conservative measure for the importance of loanwords in a given language.

In addition to these two national varieties that are differentiated with respect to their lexical inventories (as well as some morphosyntactic and phonological variables), Wolof seems to be further fractured along an urban-rural dimension as well. The French presence in Senegal was most strongly felt in urban centers where they ran businesses, governments, and other institutions:
“The long contact between French and Wolof has created two major varieties of Wolof: “urban” Wolof (strongly influenced by French) used especially in cities, and... “pure” Wolof mostly used in rural areas” (Ngom 2004). In a post-colony like Senegal, French is not only a “dominant” official language used in formal contexts like school and government, but also a language that pervades modern urban life. According to Thiam (1994), French is available not just to the educated elite, but to most people who live urban lives:

D'où la diversité des modes d’appropriation de cette langue qui, loin de se limiter aux circuits formels de la scolarisation, investit quasiment tous les aspects de la vie sociale, dans les grandes villes en particulier, des médias audiovisuels aux contacts interindividuels entre les locuteurs légitimes du français (Wald 1990) et les autres. On peut dire qu'en définitive, dans une ville comme Dakar, tout le monde est plus ou moins francophone et l'émergence du code mixte wolof-français en est le témoignage le plus direct. (13)\(^6\)

This kind of mixed code, which Thiam says is available to even monolinguals or people who do not speak French, is nevertheless a product of mixture between Wolof and French, but is neither French nor Wolof, but a third code called “frolof” or “francolof” by those who speak it or Dakar Wolof and “urban Wolof” by linguists. He says this situation is different from classic code-switching, in which balanced bilinguals can switch between two separate codes, of which they have a great deal of competence. Since many urban Senegalese are not educated in French but still use a lot of French in their informal Wolof speech, Thiam

\(^6\) Hence the diversity of modes of acquisition of this language which, far from being limited to formal channels of education, fuses almost all aspects of social life in large cities in particular, from audiovisual media to interpersonal contacts with legitimate French speakers (Wald 1990) and others. We can say that ultimately, in a city like Dakar, everyone is more or less the emergence of French and French-Wolof mixed code is the most direct testimony.

68
(1994), Swigart (1999) and McLaughlin (2001) conclude that these speakers have learned an entirely different variety of Wolof that has undergone more intensive borrowing from French, and rather than signaling an educated identity or identification with the colonizer as Fanon says, indexes an urban savviness and is used most frequently by the male youths of the city.

Just as in Senegal, language in The Gambia has an urban-rural dimension. Juffermans & McGlynn describe the linguistic landscape of The Gambia, saying, “Urban Gambian Wolof is characterised by extensive ‘monolectal code-switching’ with English”; But they also acknowledge that “the level of hybridisation is reportedly not as advanced as in urban Senegal” (335). Haust (1995) did extensive ethnographic and sociolinguistic work in the Gambian capital and describes a situation where Wolof and Mandinka are in competition for the role of the lingua franca, but these languages and other indigenous languages are also considered the low varieties in comparison with English. Haust’s research reveals that, as is typical in diglossic situations, code-switching occurs, but only with insertions of English, which acts as the embedded language, into either Wolof or Mandinka, which function as the matrix languages. This type of phrase insertion is said to signal dual identity (Scotton 1993b); English insertions, in particular, index an identity as part of The Gambia’s educated elite (Haust 1995, 372).

Besides the urban “nationalized” varieties of Wolof named by linguists, certain varieties associated with the precolonial kingdom areas have also been acknowledged. These varieties are thought to be less influenced by the colonial
languages than the urban varieties. A variety known as Saloum-Saloum or faana-faana is geographically linked to the Saloum region. Dramé (2012) describes Faana-faana in the following way:

Le faana-faana du Saloum, variante dialectale du Saloum, se démarque des autres parlers centraux (les parlers du Cayor, du Ndiambour, du Djolof, du Baol) et de l’Ouest (celui du Cap-vert) de par son éloignement géographique, par l’enclavement de sa zone et par une longue sédentarisation de ses locuteurs qui font qu’il ne subit pratiquement pas l’influence desdits parlers (centraux et de l’ouest) qui pourraient modifier ses structures phonétiques, morphologiques et syntaxiques.7

In this idealized description, the rural speakers are distinguished by their “éloignement géographique” and “longue sédentarisation” and so remain untouched by potentially corrupting influences of the colonial languages or other varieties. While Dramé acknowledges that the Saloum extends in The Gambia, it is not clear to what extent. I have argued that perhaps some labels applied to Wolof varieties are misleading in suggesting that different varieties exclusively occupy different geographic territories. Rather than enumerating and identifying boundaries between Senegalese Wolof and Gambian Wolof on the one hand, or Senegalese Urban Wolof and Gambian Urban Wolof and Faana-faana on the other, it may be more useful to think of these varieties corresponding to various linguistic repertoires and resources speakers have at their disposal (Mitsch 2015a).

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7 The Faana-faana of the Saloum, a kind of dialect of the Saloum, differentiates itself from other central speakers (speakers from Cayor, Ndiambour, Djolof, and Baol) and from the West (like Cap-vert) by its geographic distance, by the separation of its zone by a long settlement of its speakers which make it not subject to the influences of the above-mentioned speakers (central and west), which could modify its phonetic, morphological, and syntactic structures.
3.5.1 Orthography and ideology

As Lüpke & Storch (2013) point out, most Senegalese (and Gambians) are part of an exoglossic system where people’s primary language of literacy and primary oral languages do not match. Since Wolof literacy remains low and largely unregulated, orthographic differences cannot be said to contribute to widespread ideology about symbolic linguistic differences, however. As Evers (2011) points out, at least three different systems are used by particular groups in Senegal (Ajami or Arabic script, French conventions, and the nationally-sanctioned orthography) and each one carries with it strong indexical links to political ideologies. Nevertheless, each country has adopted a separate “official orthography” for written Wolof, contributing to the perception that Senegal and The Gambia have two distinct varieties of Wolof. While orthographies may be seen as politically neutral tools necessary for literacy, they are often sites for subtly imparting ideologies about language and “standardization.” Woolard and Schieffelin (2000) point out that “orthographic systems cannot be conceptualized simply as reducing speech to writing, but rather they are symbols that carry historical, cultural, and political meanings” (65). Varieties like Serbian and Croatian or Hindi and Urdu are symbolically construed in different scripts to reinforce the ideology that they are separate languages, whatever the linguistic facts about mutual intelligibility (Mascia 1991, Bloomers & Verschueren 1992). The officially sanctioned orthographies also contrast with the conventionalized French and English ways of writing Wolof (including local names and places). For instance, the word for ‘house,’ which is a part of many village names, is rendered in almost all Senegalese maps and signs as *keur*, whereas in The Gambia it is written as *ker*. This orthographic choice also reflects the French digraph
(<eu>) convention for representing central, rounded vowels (which is part of the Senegalese Wolof vowel inventory) and on the Gambian side (where a central rounded vowel is not part of the official vowel inventory), a simple <e> represents the vowel. Last names also get reconfigured depending on which side of the border one is on: a Diop on the Senegalese side of the border may become a Jobe on the Gambian side. These differences are subtle and do not impede comprehension, but may take on an iconic status as they come to form a symbolic relationship with the nation.

All of these descriptions of Wolof, however, may lead to different hypotheses about linguistic differentiation at the border. On the one hand, different varieties associated with the nation-state suggest a linguistic and political border that coincides. On the other hand, territorial and linguistic descriptions of Saloum Wolof (which extends into The Gambia) may lead to the conclusion that the political border has less influence on language use. These linguistic territorial ideologies about Wolof are further complicated by the fact that that several languages are in circulation in this area.

3.6 Language ideologies of borderland Wolof speakers

While linguists may captures broad trends in the dialectal patterns of language use in Senegal and The Gambia, the borderland is a place where all of these distinctions (Senegalese and Gambian, urban and rural) begin to blend into one another. How speakers position themselves in relationship to language politics reveals something about their sociospatial ordering. Perhaps the most obvious classification of Wolof depends upon its association with the colonial language. For instance, many Senegalese refer to The Gambia as côte anglais (“the English
side”), strengthening the relationship between the place on the other side of the border and the official language that defines it, but also using French terms to do so. Numbers related to currency and time differ, as well. One day when crossing the border on horse cart on the way to the weekly market in a nearby town with both Senegalese and Gambian fellow travelers, someone asked the time (in Wolof) and a (presumably Gambian) man answered “ten o’clock” (in English). My Senegalese companion responded, “Lan la? onze heure? (what’s that? eleven o’clock?).” The misunderstanding was met with laughter and acknowledgment that it was confusing to have both English and French numbers (in addition to Wolof numbers, which are only rarely used in telling time) (field notes, March 2013). Similar issues with different currencies (also usually counted in French or English numbers) can cause frustration and allow for deception at the borderland markets, but experienced buyers and sellers have become conversant in both systems and both boutiques and occasional sellers in this area often accept both kinds of currency.

But in spite of this confusion caused by time-telling conventions, there is quite a bit of linguistic sharing of colonial language borrowings. On both sides of the border, one can ask for “half mburu” (or half a baguette), at a bitik (< Fr. boutique). Whether one orders it with beurre or buttah (‘butter’) may depend on which side of the border one is on, but generally most borderlanders can use both forms interchangeable. Although English and French have failed to take hold as unifying languages of these respective nations, there is no doubt that elements of each contribute to the Wolof spoken in the borderland. Many speakers in the
borderland acknowledge the competing influences of French on the Senegalese side and English on the Gambian side of the border, but as Joseph and Friedman (2015) point out, most “borrowed” linguistic features are impervious to the border and can spread regardless of the language of origin. In fact only the most educated citizens may be aware of the language of origin and its relationship to the nation-state. The colonial language influence may still be seen as a border-reinforcing force, but borderland inhabitants may also feel more free to adopt loanwords from both colonial languages, creating their own borderland hybrid. In the following sections I explore the broader discourses that link language to place or peoples in an ideological way. I draw upon the metalinguistic commentary from the recorded interviews to show that although the nation-state figures prominently in the discourses, ethnonational and local Saloum-based strains of discourse compete with the hegemonic ideology of the state.

3.6.1 Ethnonational Ideologies

Gal and Irvine (2000) point out that the colonial project of enumerating and classifying African languages was based on European notions of language, culture, and ethnicity and mostly served to subordinate these populations. As anthropologists and linguists have inherited many of these classifications and many of the same notions about language mapping onto ethnic identity, researchers like linguists and anthropologists are not free from colonial language ideologies (Gal & Irvine 2000).

For some people, holding all of conflicting ideologies simultaneously (nationalism, transnationalism, and ethnonationalism) can be reconciled through both
iconization and erasure. The chief of the Senegalese border village, for instance, Speaker 27, iconically links The Gambia to Mandinka (and thus to “racist” behavior of refusing to speak Wolof), but then concedes and says all Wolof (Gambians and Senegalese) are the same and, echoing the Yoruba Oba quoted in Chapter 1, says the division is a superficial one between the European colonizers (1):


But you know that Gambians... they are related to us...we are all one. Gambia and Senegal are all one. But Gambia is racist. A Gambian...especially our relatives, the Soose (Mandinka). They...they don’t respect anyone. Yes. They...they...if you talk, they say they don’t understand Wolof, but they refuse to understand Wolof. They refuse to understand Wolof. They only speak their Soose (Mandinka). That’s why Senegalese and Gambians know each other thus. But we Wolof... but the Wolof...we the Wolof of Gambia and the Wolof of Senegal, we are all the same. Yes. The same. The whites, they divided the country into English and French.

First, and most notably, a discourse about ethnolinguistic groups (Mandinka speakers and their refusal to learn Wolof) is a fractal representation, linking a difference between ethnolinguistic groups Wolof and Mandinka (and the latter’s “refusal” to learn Wolof) to corresponding national differences between Senegal and The Gambia. This feature of populist ethnonationalism among Mandinka contrasts with the unspoken wolofization of Senegal and the acquiescence of all other ethnic groups to speaking Wolof. The chief immediately amends his divisive statement by saying the Wolof are all the same, regardless of the border.
For him, even a position that aligns ethnolinguistic groups with nationality leaves room for ethnic nationalism because his neighbors, the Gambian Wolof, share a cultural history with the Senegalese Wolof, but were artificially divided by the “toubab” (white people). Because the division is an accident of history (and therefore not naturalized and timelessly true), he can reframe his antipathy towards Gambians as antipathy towards Mandinka who “refuse” to learn Wolof. This move also allows him to reconcile his myriad cross-border relationships and transnational activity (including voting in Gambian elections) he engages in as consistent with his political ideology.

3.6.2 Nationalist Ideologies

While the border established by the “toubabs” may have artificially divided the historical Saloum region, it also created the conditions in which Mandinka speakers in The Gambia were the linguistic majority. This equating the Wolof language with a nation-state involves an ideological linking of nation to ethnolinguistic majority, but such views are common in the borderland. This highly educated Wolof speaker in the Gambian village Ker Malick Sarr (Speaker 76) claims that in his country, where Wolof is a minority language, it is normal to have to learn Mandinka (2). He also voices a common perception that Wolof has some sort of official status within the Senegalese nation-state:

(2) Xam nga Senegal seen reew bokkul. Seetuloo ça? …Seen… men na wax seen language-u government saax Olof la. Comme ça ñun ak ñoom fu ñu uute moy ñun suñu country sax, olof moo fii gën a nekk fa. Ci miisal, Soose moo fi ëpp. Leegiy suma de waxee Olof laa, ma nekk ci biir Sosê, su yaggee, suma ol- lakk daf may reer. Waaw. Yow mën naa xam ne yow Soose ngay wax, te may nango because Soose ñoo ëpp. Waaye Senegal men na am ci seen majority fi ñuy lakk ñëpp Olof la.
You know Senegal, their country isn’t the same. Didn’t you notice that? Their government’s language, even, it’s Wolof. In that way we are different from them: in their country, there is more Wolof. For example, Soose (Mandinka) is more popular here. Now if I am saying I am Wolof, but I am among Mandinka, before long, my Wo- my language will be lost. You— I may know that you speak Soose and I accept it because Sosé is more popular here. But Senegal, it could be that in their majority there, they all speak Wolof.

In spite of the fact that he is in the Saloum borderland, where Wolof is the lingua franca, he draws a distinction between Wolof in Senegal, where its majority status makes it (in his view) the language of the government, and the Gambian side of the border, things are different. For Speaker 76 more than for Speaker 27, the political border creates a situation where different ethnolinguistic groups have different rights and expectations for language use. This move makes Wolof speakers in The Gambia peripheral in two ways: they are minorities when compared to the Wolof-speaking population in Senegal, but also they are a minority in relation to the Mandinka-speakers of The Gambia. This may lead to the widely-held perception that their Wolof is inferior, as well, an opinion I heard frequently in interviews on both sides of the border.

3.6.3 Saloum Ideologies

The one-to-one linking of nation and language is not an unusual ideological move. But rather than admit that English and French, or Senegalese and Gambian Wolof serve to differentiate populations, the last two speakers mentioned select indigenous majority groups to link to the nation-state. But the perception of the relevant “nation” may also be relative. As Speaker 68, the 47-year-old chief of Ker Malick Sarr, explains:
Because each place you name, your mind will go to a language. Example: if you say ‘Gambia,’ your mind goes to Mandinka. If you say ‘Mauritania,’ your mind goes to Hassaniya, if you say ‘Saloum,’ Wolof is the only language you will think of.

He too links Mandinka to the nation-state of The Gambia, but alongside The Gambia and Mauritania, he names Saloum as a relevant unit for comparison and links this territory to Wolof. Saloum is therefore a place a part, but on equal footing in terms of having its own language, from The Gambia. This labeling and linguistic iconization reinforces the idea that this Saloum borderland is less a space of division and more a place with its own internal coherence. When the nation-states of Senegal and The Gambia begin to take on the ethnonational identities (Senegal as Wolof and The Gambia as Mandinka), individuals and groups within the polity can become marginalized. One strategy for Wolof-speaking borderland inhabitants in The Gambia is to invoke a scale or place (Saloum) that lends ideological authenticity and history to their perceived ethnolinguistic identity. Compared to the young man quoted in (2), the village chief does not consider himself beholden to the Gambian ethnolinguistic politics. Being part of the Saloum erases the border and legitimizes his Wolof.

3.7 Border Ideologies

As noted in Chapter 1, social scientific studies on borders have shifted from concepts of borders as static, deterministic results of policy and history towards something more dynamic, often referred to as “bordering” (Newman 2006). The on-going process of
borderland construction is due in large part to the activities and lifestyles of the borderland inhabitants, which in turn may influence their own border ideologies. As shown in some of the metalinguistic commentary above, sometimes language ideologies take the shape of national borders, sometimes ethnic borders, sometimes regional borders, and sometimes a combination of these. Martínez (1994) was at the vanguard of the academic ideological shift away from the political science “center-focused” view of borders towards a more “periphery-focused” view of how the lives and attitudes of borderland inhabitants help shape the larger significance of the border. He developed a taxonomy of Mexico-U.S. borderland inhabitants based on ideologies towards Mexican nationality, American nationality, and degree of transnationality based on the life histories and attitudes of hundreds of subjects. He found that “[n]ationalists are particularly visible in the intellectual community, which includes professors, students, journalists, writers, and artists” (73). The characterization of educated professionals more invested in the nation-state echoes the sentiments of Renner (1985) as stated in Chapter 1, that only an educated élite acutely felt the partition between Senegal and The Gambia due to their position within the nation-state. Nevertheless there seems to be a strong linkage between education, nationalism, and border maintenance. Throughout my ethnographic coding of interviews, I marked a contrast between those for whom the border constituted an exact, extended, invisible line and those for whom the “border” really mean the border post where customs officials and border police regulated the coming and going of people.

One way Martínez could characterize people as national or transnational borderlanders was through their language and “cultural” habits. The most transnational people were bilingual and bicultural, employing both English and Spanish and engaging
in practices from Mexican culture and American culture. Given the distribution of languages and cultural practices in Senegal and The Gambia, the same sort of measurements cannot be used. To speak of a bicultural borderland inhabitant in this area would not elicit any concept of “Senegalese culture” contrasted with “Gambian culture,” nor would language use index either type of nationality except for official language proficiency where English would index Gambian national identity and French would index Senegalese national identity. These languages, along with other national artifacts like flags, national anthems, and national football teams, become symbols of the nation and people’s engagement with these symbols can index national identity to an extent. Transnational identity in this Senegambian context has more to do with an individual’s mobility, cross-border social network, and affinity towards cross-border neighbors. Speakers were asked about all of these practices during interviews, which were subsequently coded and tested as independent variables in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. While most of these factors alone did not account for the linguistic variation in the area (except for Banjul mobility in Chapter 5), taken together they can index the complex nature of the borderland where both national and transnational practices are common. For some with the fuzzy border ideology, it was difficult to assess the degree of affinity for neighbors across the border because the border is mostly transparent. As Nugent (2008), referring to West African borders, says, “What people think about borders and what the maps boldly proclaim are often at considerable variance with one another, which is hardly surprising given that most border people—and for that matter most officials—have never seen the maps in question” (122). Furthermore, the socially constructed space does not necessarily respect the two-dimensional cartographic representations. The cognitive or ideological
representation of the border may vary in this particular borderland. Nugent (2008) offers the metaphor of a net: the border may be effective in stopping or “catching” certain entities in transit (particularly foreign travelers and large cargo vehicles), but for those who can and do pass back and forth freely, unmolested by the agents of the state, the border has little effect on their routines and may not figure into their cognitive representations of space. Throughout the interviews conducted with people about their routines and mobility, I tried to assess the way each thought of the border or the borderland in how they talked about it: was it an invisible line cutting through space and dividing two nations? Was it a particular place on the main road, the border post between Karang and Amdallaye? For some people, it seemed that even the Gambia River was the “real” boundary and that The Gambia was the place south of the river. I explored the interviews and observed people’s behavior in the borderland to try to grasp the local meaning(s) of the border and found two broad trends in the way people in the Saloum borderland perceive the borderland.

3.7.1 Borderland as a zone

Some people in this borderland area conceptualize the space as its own “in-between” or “overlapping” area. This pattern can also be specifically linked to the Saloum “place-making” ideology. It became clear early on that for some people, “crossing the border” referred to the specific act of going through the customs and border control post on the paved road between Senegal and The Gambia. All other “cross-border” activity did not count. For example, my host in The Gambia told me she had never crossed the border before in her life but later I learned that she had been several times to the village of
Sirmang (1km northwest of Karang, Senegal) where an eminent religious leader and healer lived. She paid for her transport and consultation in Gambian currency and felt no indication of having “left” The Gambia through language use or behavior of those she encountered.

One woman from Djidah (Senegal) estimated that she “goes to The Gambia” once a year, but also attends the weekly market in Fas (The Gambia) every week. Both statements can be true if she conceptualizes The Gambia as a place apart from the borderland. Similarly, Speaker 67, a woman in her sixties from Ker Malick Sarr says emphatically that she has never left The Gambia (“gennuma benn Gambia!”) but later discusses her shopping trips in the Karang (Senegal) market and other communities “ci frontiere bi” (in the border).

Finally Speaker 29 in Djidah (Senegal) discussed her few trips to Senegal as if she was not already residing in Senegal. Similarly, for many of the borderland speakers (on both sides), “going to The Gambia” meant crossing the Gambia River (usually to go to the Gambian capital Banjul). There were several conversations in which it became clear that the place name “Gambie” was being metonymically used to refer to “Banjul.” Since this is where the seat of power for The Gambia (economic and political) is located, speakers who perceive “Banjul” as synonymous with “The Gambia” are implicitly adopting a center-periphery model of the state. Furthermore, since the areas surrounding the border share ecological, cultural, and linguistic features with cross-border neighbors, it is unsurprising that Speaker 58, a high school senior in Karang (Senegal) said she did not feel like she was in a different country until she was on the ferry, crossing the river.
3.7.2 Border as a line

Unsurprisingly the two classes of people who were most aware of the border’s abstract and invisible properties were those who were most educated and those who were intimately involved in the commercial sector since taxes and sanctions weigh most heavily on them.

Speaker 59, a woman in her fifties from Karang (Senegal), says her sister got married in “Anglais” (a shorthand term for The Gambia), a small village adjacent to the border near Ker Malick Sarr. Even though her sister is less than a 15-minutes horsecart ride away from Karang, she does not like going to The Gambia to visit her sister because she is unsure about the laws there and she has been apprehended for bringing “baggage” through the border.

Speaker 139 is in her late forties and resides in Amdallaye. She sells porridge in Karang near the market and so crosses daily. She says she can cross freely at the border post and nobody bothers her, but the women in the Karang market laugh at her Wolof and tell her she sounds like she is speaking Mandinka. She sometimes goes around the official border post but still considers going north of Amdallaye to be “crossing” the border. She acknowledges a gradient nature of “going to Senegal,” however and does not count the border area (“frontière”) as traveling outside of The Gambia. Going to religious festivals in a major Senegalese city called Tivavoune, however, counts for her as “traveling to a foreign country.”

Speaker 76 is a young 21-year-old man living in Ker Malick Sarr (The Gambia). With a high school degree, he is among the most educated in this village and spent his high school years in the capital Banjul. He has recently come back home to farm, engage
in petty commerce, and until recently teach Wolof writing to adult learners. When asked about how often he goes to Senegal, he differentiates between “ci biir” (inside) and “ci frontiere” (in the border area), explaining that he crosses at least weekly within “frontiere” area to buy onions and resell them at the weekly market in Fas (on the Gambian side). While he acknowledges a gradient difference between “inside” and “in the borderland” of Senegal, he still counts his trips within the borderland as “crossing,” thus acknowledging the invisible line. Due to his education and exposure to the “central” parts of The Gambia, he has a fairly strong sense of Gambian nationality and because of his mobility and contacts on the Senegalese side, he also ranks highly on the transnational mobility scale (which were scored based on interviewe questions about frequency of crossing the border). But his awareness of the border across unmarked space puts him in the “border as a line” camp.

Speaker 26 is a 31-year old man with one year of university in Dakar living and teaching elementary school in his childhood village Djidah (Senegal). He knew where the border markers are located (one outside of the next village over, one inside of the stream that seasonally runs next to Djidah) and how surveyors from the Senegalese government had come out to place these markers. When my research assistant probed him about rumors that parts of Djidah actually extend into The Gambia, he was defensive and said that this is not even legally possible. One village cannot be in both countries. In spite of his acknowledgement of territorial border limits and law, he feels favorably towards the neighboring villages and says he cannot go one day without crossing into The Gambia since every time he leaves his house he is practically in The Gambia. He also recounts how some of his younger siblings go to English-medium school on the Gambian side and
how this has helped enrich his own language repertoire since he can study their textbooks and learn how to read English. Although as a public school teacher he is an employee of the Senegalese state, he acknowledges the benefits of being in the borderland.

3.8 Conclusion

Listening to metalinguistic commentary about language, place, and identity reveals a complex network of nationalist, ethnic, and regional language ideologies that all circulate within the borderland. While official institutions like governments, newspapers, and schools are important “cultural brokers” in the process of nation-building, interpreting the language ideologies of the borderland people themselves helps complete the “total linguistic fact” (Silverstein 1998) of their lives. I have tried to offer an overview of the various competing ideologies in this area by selecting choice metalinguistic passages from interviews and tried to show how they relate to dominant ideologies about national identity, ethnic identity, and place-identity. These ideologies and attitudes about language and its relationship to the various identities in the borderlands would not be complete without an ethnographic understanding of what the border means to people in this area as well. My interviews revealed two broad types of ideologies that conceive of the border as the official border post, where official representatives of the state regulate mobility surrounded by frontier zone, that overlapping frontier border area where two nations may blend into one another, as spelled out by Donnan and Wilson (1999). The other ideology understands borders as sometimes invisible lines running through space and separating two territories. Sometimes these two positions can be reconciled, as well, as many people in my interviews spoke of crossing only within the borderland area. These two types of
border ideologies are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but much like the language ideologies explored above, may contribute to the localized understanding of the border. Speakers (like Speaker 27 quoted in (1)) can simultaneously hold multiple ideologies about the relevant “place” and its relationship to Wolof and they may also hold competing border ideologies depending on the activity. This ideological complexity may explain why the categories to which I assigned speakers did not result in significant linguistic patterns. The ideologies are nevertheless part of the “total linguistic fact” (Silverstein 1985).

Ideologies about languages, borders, and their interaction are reproduced by linguists, nation-building political elites, and the average people inhabiting the borderland themselves. These ideologies are important in shaping the way language is represented as a force for reinforcing or erasing political boundaries, and contributing to notions about perceived space. If homogenization is at the heart of all nationalistic projects, as Blommaert & Verschueren (1992) claim, then it is important to understand how nationalist ideologies take shape in the borderland and also how border ideologies take shape. Wolof speakers in the borderland confront a complex array of identities associated with ethnic groups, the nation-state, and precolonial regions and for each of these types of configurations, different configurations of the border become more salient.

In this chapter I have attempted to lay out the broad discourses about language and its relationship to the Saloum borderland and how these discourses might co-construct perceptions about nation, ethnicity, region, and identity. Both linguists and borderland inhabitants give voice to various models of language difference and language contact in this area (both center-periphery models and container models). While
metalinguistic commentary may not directly represent people’s linguistic practices, the ideologies about language and space in this multilingual contact area do help shape their “cognitive maps” or what Britain (2013) would call perceived space. Linguists have created labels for Wolof dialects that invoke different senses of space and inadvertently reinforce artificial boundaries (e.g. the boundaries between nations as well as the boundaries between urban and rural language use); the labels Senegalese Wolof and Gambian Wolof, for example, invoke the nation-state. Urban Wolof most often refers to Wolof as spoken in large cities like Dakar or St.Louis in Senegal or Banjul in The Gambia and seen as a foil for “pure” or “deep” Wolof (Ngom 2004). These terms and descriptions leave sometimes contrasting impressions about language variation in the rural borderland that separates Senegal and The Gambia. For some speakers the political border is an invisible line with indelible effects and represents a linguistic border or an ethnolinguistic border. For some speakers, movement within the borderland and encounters with other borderland speakers is unremarkable and does not constitute “crossing.” These ideologies are important to consider as part of the “total linguistic fact” when investigating some of the linguistic variation in this borderland.
CHAPTER 4: THE MID-CENTRAL VOWEL(S)

The previous chapters have introduced the complex relationship between language use and political boundaries. The Saloum borderland in this study is of particular interest because of the multilayered relationship to place and because of its multiethnic, multilingual makeup. I have shown how competing ideologies orient a speaker towards Wolof as the language of a nation-state (Senegal), the language of an ethnic group (the Wolof), the language of a precolonial territory (Saloum), and even a minority language (in The Gambia). Several factors may influence the orientation of an individual (e.g. gender, education, mobility, cross-border ties, and even ethnicity), which in turn influences their relationship to the political boundary. But how do speakers’ particular linguistic habits help reinforce or undermine the political border? This chapter will investigate the relationship between the social lives of borderland inhabitants and their production of a (set of) mid-central vowel(s) using methods from sociophonetics.

4.1 Background

Sociophonetics is a subdiscipline of sociolinguistics (and phonetics) that focuses on the subtle yet real ways that acoustic properties of sounds pattern with social dimensions. Such minute aspects of pronunciation like voice onset time (VOT), rhoticity (the realization of /r/ sounds), or the formants of vowels can all be measured with accuracy
thanks to the availability of recording equipment and acoustic analysis software like Praat. Since many acoustic features are often “below” the level of consciousness for speakers, these variables can capture the low-level processes of language variation and change. Recent trends in sociolinguistics have begun to show how speakers avail themselves of linguistic resources as well as other aspects of material culture to construct their place-based identities (Docherty, Watt & Llamas 2011, Hall-Lew 2009, Mendoza-Denton 2008). A speaker’s VOT may be just as important (though perhaps less salient) as her eyeliner for indicating her membership in a certain community. His or her orientation towards the relevant place or space in question may also be correlated with particular phonetic variables (Carmichael 2014, Johnstone 2010). In this chapter I explore the association between the realization of a particular vowel and the social forces that may contribute to place-based linguistic differences in the borderland.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the Saloum area is quintessentially multilingual with Wolof functioning as the lingua franca: on the streets and in the markets, Wolof is the language used among strangers or acquaintances of different ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Most non-Wolof households speak Wolof alongside a mother tongue. Speaker 142 from Amdallaye (The Gambia) explained how although her family is technically Halpulaar (Pulaar-speaking), her sons prefer to speak Wolof at home after they come home from speaking Wolof all day with playmates and in koranic school. Speaker 62 from Karang (Senegal) said that in spite of Mandinka heritage, her Wolof is much stronger as her language of daily use. As a result of the intensive cross-linguistic contact and early bilingual acquisition in this area, many people claim that they can “pass” as native speakers of a language that is not their mother tongue. As one older man
from Djidah (Senegal) noted during his interview when explaining the ethnolinguistic makeup of the town:

(1) Koñ xeet bi dafa dal di réér
   Ñun ñëpp benn lañu leegiy
   Waaw
   [???] réér na
   Ndax man Seereer laa.
   Te buma waxee danga defee ne man doomu Olof laa.
   Te man Seereer laa.
   Man lima degg Olof, noonu laa degg lima namp
   Kooñ kii Peul la
   Waay moom it bu waxee Seereer nga defee ne moom du Peul, Seereer la
   Koñ ñun ñëpp benn lañu leegiy

So ethnicities are beginning to be lost. We are all one now. Yes. [???] [imperceptible] is lost. Because I am Seereer. But when I speak you would believe I am the son of Wolof. But I am Seereer. Me, how I speak Wolof, that’s how I speak what I nursed on [my mother tongue]. And that guy is Pulaar, but when he speaks Seereer, you would think he’s not Pulaar, he’s Seereer. So we are all one now.

Territorial identities like Saloum Saloum can transcend ethnic divisions, but are also united under the umbrella of Wolof language proficiency. For many speakers, then, their daily linguistic habits and abilities as multilingual make them an integral part of the Wolof-speaking borderland area. Including multilingual Wolof-speakers in the analysis helps construct a fuller picture of the way Wolof language use projects political boundaries and place-affiliation. Although many sociolinguistic studies target monolingual speakers or eschew multilingual speakers in phonetic analyses (DeCamp 1953) for fear that they may not represent the local speech community well, Lüpke (2010) has shown how language repertoires in West Africa complicate notions like “first language” or even “dominant language.” Multilingualism is a fact of life in the Saloum
borderland and speakers with various linguistic repertoires comprise the mosaic of the Wolof-speaking borderland. Although all speakers grew up speaking Wolof and may be considered “simultaneous early bilinguals” (Baker 2005:2) or even “simultaneous early multilinguals,” almost half of the sample reported a “mother tongue” different from Wolof, which may influence their production of phonological segments. Neither Pulaar, Mandinka, Joola, or Seereer (the other languages spoken by participants in this study) has the mid-central vowel in question. Those whose “mother tongue” is not Wolof may show some interference from their mother tongue in their spoken Wolof when it comes to the production of this vowel. But it is important to consider them as part of the Wolof-speaking language community in this borderland area.

4.2 The mid-central vowel variable

While few studies have outlined the differences between Senegalese and Gambian Wolof, it was noted as early as 1939 in Ida Ward’s study of two Wolof speakers (one Senegalese, one Gambian) that “a vowel similar to ρ…is used in a closed syllable in Senegal and not in Gambian Wolof” (328-9). According to Njie (1982), Senegalese Wolof /a/ corresponds to back vowels /o/ (or sometimes /u/) when it occurs adjacent to a labial consonant and /e/ elsewhere in Gambian Wolof. Becher (2000; 32) calls this central vowel, which lacks a long counterpart, an “innovation” in her comparative description of “Dakar Wolof” (DW); “Banjul Wolof” (BW) does not show this innovation and so has the same vowel inventory as “Archaic Wolof” (AW). Becher provides the vowel inventory for AW shown in Figure 6 and claims that BW is identical to AW in its vowel inventory.
According to these analyses, then, what Becher calls “Dakar Wolof” (and what others have called “Senegalese Wolof,” or simply “Wolof”) has eight short vowels as shown in Figure 7 from Gamble (1991). According to the anthropologist Gamble (1991), the Wolof spoken on the North Shore of The Gambia possesses the same vowel inventory as Senegalese Wolof. The rest of this chapter examines how borderland speakers produce the central vowel categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
<th>u</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>é</td>
<td>ó</td>
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<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This innovative central vowel is the only short vowel to lack a phonemic length
distinction. In Gambian Wolof, this vowel corresponds to the other [+ATR] mid vowels
/e/ and /o/, written in the both official orthographies as é and ó. As Becher (2001) notes,
Gamble (1991) offers the only description of Gambian Wolof vowel inventory that
includes /ë/, but she claims that she found no instances of a mid-central vowel in her
Banjul Wolof corpus and claims that this vowel is an innovation of Dakar Wolof. As will
be discussed below, this discrepancy may be due to differences between a focus on North
Bank Wolof (by Gamble) rather than Wolof as spoken in the greater Banjul area on the
speakers speak the same variety of Wolof as their Senegalese neighbors, suggesting that
the river (not the political boundary) is the linguistic boundary.

Wolof phonology distinguishes vowels based on advanced tongue root (ATR)
(indicated by accents in Figures 6 and 7) and several analyses (including Torrence 2012)
have classified /ə/ as [+ATR] and is said to correspond to [+ATR] mid vowels /e/ and /o/
in Gambian Wolof, but Njie (1982) claims that sometimes /ə/ corresponds to /u/. While
she offers no phonological description of this alternation, it seems from her description
that the [+ATR] quality of the vowel is maintained in both Senegalese and Gambian
productions. It soon became apparent after my fieldwork began and access to Gambian
Wolof materials became more available (such as wordlists and dictionaries), however, that this correspondence relates to the voicing status of the adjacent labial consonant. Table 2 shows the relationship between the Senegalese orthography and corresponding vowel and the Gambian orthography and corresponding vowel realization. The realization of this vowel adjacent to voiceless labial consonants is not the canonical high back /u/, but rather a low-back, unrounded pronunciation, which I represent as /ʌ/. As Table 2 shows, Senegalese /ə/ actually corresponds to three different Gambian variants depending upon phonological environment. As Table 2 shows, words that have a voiced labial consonant like /mb/ or /b/ have a /ə/ in Senegalese Wolof but an /o/ in Gambian Wolof. Words that contain voiceless labial consonants like /f/ and /p/ contain a /ʌ/ as the vowel in Gambian Wolof but a /ə/ in Senegalese Wolof. Other words that contain /ə/ in Senegalese Wolof contain /e/ in Gambian Wolof.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word (Senegalese Wolof orthography)</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>vowel</th>
<th>word (Gambian Wolof orthography)</th>
<th>vowel</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sët</td>
<td>grandchild</td>
<td>/ə/</td>
<td>sët</td>
<td>/e/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kër</td>
<td>house</td>
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<td>kér</td>
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<td>bët</td>
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<tr>
<td>mbër</td>
<td>wrestler</td>
<td>/ə/</td>
<td>mbór</td>
<td>/o/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fër</td>
<td>stomach ache</td>
<td>/ə/</td>
<td>fur</td>
<td>/ʌ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xëpp</td>
<td>to dump (a liquid)</td>
<td>/ə/</td>
<td>xupa</td>
<td>/ʌ/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Some target words in Senegalese Wolof and Gambian Wolof

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8 Unfortunately this was after fieldwork had already begun and the wordlist and printed photos for elicitation were already prepared. Once I was in the field it was not easy to adapt these materials so as to collect balanced samples of each phonological context.
Unlike the variables discussed in the next two chapters, this mid vowel set was never brought up as a marker of national identity by borderland speakers. Since phonetic and phonological variation is considered “low level” and more “automatic” when compared to other levels of the grammar, it is often less salient to speakers than morphosyntactic or lexical differences (Bullock & Toribio 2009). Although the different orthographies adopted by each country may reflect this variation in its conventions, this fact may not contribute to awareness of national differences since Wolof literacy in the official orthographies is quite low.

Descriptions of “Gambian Wolof” have almost all been based on speech of Wolof speakers in the area in and around the capital Banjul, south of the Gambia River. Becher (2001) is most precise in her descriptions of “Banjul Wolof” and “Dakar Wolof” but leaves large swaths of Wolof-speaking territory unaccounted for. According to Dramé (2013) Saloum Wolof has the same vowel inventory as Dakar Wolof, presumably including a mid-central vowel /a/. Gamble (1991) claims that Senegalese Wolof is spoken on the North Bank of the Gambia River and indeed many of the Wolof-speaking parts of the North Bank were part of the historic Saloum kingdom. It seems plausible that historically the Gambia River may act as a linguistic boundary, with the eight-vowel system in the Wolof-speaking areas north of the river and the seven-vowel system to the south, but it remains to be seen how borderland speakers produce this central vowel. Do borderland speakers show any difference in the production of this central mid-vowel? Is this vowel set part of the linguistic practices used in the construction of the social national border between Senegal and The Gambia? Allowing that this political border, a
legacy of colonial policy, does not correspond to any natural (geophysical) or social (ethnic or cultural) borders, the question remains as to whether Senegalese Wolof speakers and Gambian Wolof speakers at the border produce a centralized vowel for all consonant contexts (in line with descriptions of Senegalese Wolof), or whether the production of this /ə/ involves three distinct mid vowels (in line with descriptions of Gambian Wolof).

Unfortunately there are no previous linguistic studies of this particular area, so no definitive predictions can be made about the direction of this variation may take or if it is perhaps a stable variable. As noted by Gamble (1991) and echoed by many participants in this study, however, the North Bank or Saloum Gambians speak Wolof more like their Senegalese neighbors than like their Gambian compatriots in the capital across the river. These facts suggest that a) the label “Gambian Wolof” as used by Njie (1982), Dialo (1983), Dramé (2013) and others refers primarily to the Wolof spoken in and around the Gambian capital on the South Bank; b) the Gambia River is a more significant linguistic boundary than the political border; c) Wolof in this Saloum area have historically had a vowel system more like their Senegalese neighbors. For borderland inhabitants, this mid-central vowel realization could be a source of linguistic differentiation, separating the Senegalese from the Gambians or it could be used for indexing other types of common identities such as Saloum Wolof.

4.3 Methods

Because Senegalese Wolof is the better described variety, lexical items were selected from a Senegalese Wolof dictionary (Camara 2008). Lexical items were selected to
represent the eight short vowels described in the Senegalese Wolof vowel system in closed, stressed syllables in various phonological environments (initially selected to balance labial and non-labial phonological categories). Sixty-four participants were shown images (due to low literacy in Wolof) to elicit a wordlist-like utterance of each target word. Several tokens for each vowel category were sought, although the phonological conditions that produce /ʌ/ in Gambian Wolof were not well understood until after elicitation materials were prepared. Each speaker produced roughly fourteen tokens where /ɔ/ is adjacent to non-labial consonants (in Senegalese Wolof dictionary), eight tokens where /ɔ/ is adjacent to a voiced labial consonant, and six tokens where /ɔ/ is adjacent to a voiceless labial consonant. Vowels were segmented by hand and formant measurements were taken at the 25%, 50%, and 75% points of the vowel using a Praat script. Vowels were hand-checked for each speaker by observing individual vowel plots. Average F1 and F2 measurements for each word were calculated and then converted to a Bark scale to better reflect perceptual space, then normalized with a Lobanov’s z-score procedure. This vowel-extrinsic procedure uses all available vowel categories to normalize the vowel space so that differences attributed to factors such as vocal tract size do not appear as differences in vowel space configuration. Using normalized Bark values for F1 and F2, the tokens containing the mid central vowel /ə/ were separated according to their phonological environment (voiced labial consonant, voiceless labial consonant, other) in order to analyse the degree to which these categories are different.

Because the correspondence set is phonologically conditioned (voiced labial consonant contexts producing a more back, rounded realization in the “Gambian” variety), a Pillai trace (Hall-Lew 2009; Hay et al. 2006) is best suited to measure the
degree of distinction between these (sub)sets of Gambian Wolof vowels from the Senegalese Wolof wordlist (/o/ in a voiced labial consonant context, /ʌ/ in a voiceless labial context, and /e/ elsewhere). The Pillai trace is calculated using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) between each vowel category (based on its phonological environment) using F1 and F2 values (in normalized Bark scale). A higher Pillai score represents the amount of variance accounted for by each of the subcategories of /ə/ and indicates a greater degree of distinction between these categories. The Pillai score is preferable to a simple measure of F2 difference (which measures the front-back dimension of a vowel) because it also captures variation along the F1 scale, which measures vowel height. The MANOVA can also account for imbalanced numbers of tokens in each category (Hall-Lew 2009), so the Pillai score is preferable to other measures of category overlap.  

Since I found Senegalese Wolof /ə/ to vary systematically with not just /e/ and /o/ but also with lower back vowel /ʌ/ in Gambian Wolof, a measure of variation in vowel height is crucial in assessing the degree of overlap across these phonologically conditioned contexts. Because each speaker is represented by exactly one Pillai score, the dependent variable in the models is calculated across only 64 observations (one for each speaker). Because the wordlist is unbalanced, however (with fewer tokens that correspond to Gambian Wolof /ʌ/), the Pillai trace is the best calculation of variance within and between each of these vowel categories.

The terms “merged” and “unmerged” suggest a directionality that is difficult to determine in this particular borderland area since no previous studies have documented

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9 This score can only account for the differences between all three categories, not for differences between any two pairs of these categories.
the vowel inventories for this area. The Pillai Score is a measure of category distinctiveness, however, and need not refer to the historical direction of the trends. Based on insights from speakers themselves and scholars like Gamble (1991) and Dramé (2013), however, it is reasonable to assume that in recent history the Saloum vowel system was similar to what has been described as the Senegalese system (although according to Becher’s comparative study of Wolof, Senegalese Wolof was innovative compared to Banjul Wolof). It seems likely therefore that the “unmerging” of this vowel category (in line with the description of Banjul Wolof) is not a characteristic of traditional Saloum Wolof. A larger Pillai score corresponds to this “unmerging” with the separate phonological categories account for more variation between these three sets of vowels. A smaller Pillai score represents a great degree of similarity across these three categories and therefore tends towards a more “Senegalese” vowel system.

For the dependent variable, each speaker is represented by a unique Pillai score, which can then be used in a linear regression model to estimate those independent variables that best predict the Pillai Scores. A step-up process was used to add the independent variables of social factors (nationality, age, sex, mother tongue, place orientation, and cross-border mobility) one by one and with their interactions. Each more complex model (“step”) goes through a cycle in which it adds and subtracts the independent factors and their interactions from a list, creating linear regressions beginning with no variables, and adding and subtracting variables and interactions until the model with the lowest Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) is achieved, accounting for both the complexity (in terms of factors) of the model as well the amount of variance the model accounts for. The independent variables listed in this stepwise regression
included nationality, urban vs. rural location, cross-border mobility, degree of contact with Dakar, degree of contact with Banjul, sex, place orientation (Senegal, The Gambia, or Saloum), and age.

4.4. Results and analysis

Pillai scores range from 0.081 (a largely overlapping distribution of all three phonological contexts) to 0.983 (relatively distinct vowel categories), showing a broad range of production within the borderland. Figure 8 shows an example of two speakers with large differences in their Pillai scores. Figure 8 shows the average of all short vowel categories for each speaker with the mid-central vowel subcategories on the Bark scale represented by words (e.g. *bat* represents the tokens in voiced labial contexts, *far* represents the tokens in voiceless labial contexts, and *set* represents all other phonological contexts for tokens containing /a/ in Senegalese Wolof):

![Figure 8: The average vowel space in Bark scale for two speakers with the mid-central vowel categories represented by lexical items. The voiced labial category (*bat*), voiceless labial category (*far*), and the other phonological contexts (*set*).](image-url)
Figure 8 shows what a vowel space for a speaker with a low Pillai score (left) and a speaker with a high Pillai score (right) look like. Speaker 54 has a lower Pillai score of 0.13 and it is clear that all three subcategories of /ə/ are fairly close together in the middle of the vowel space. Speaker 140, with a Pillai score of 0.92, shows a large distance between both of the labial contexts on the one hand and the non-labial context category on the other hand. The MANOVA used to calculate the Pillai trace measures the amount of variance within each vowel category across F1 and F2. A Pillai score near zero means that the variance cannot be accounted for by vowel category while a Pillai score near one means most of the variance can be accounted for by vowel category. The Pillai scores are therefore used as the dependent variable in the generalized linear model described below.

The step-up process, carried out by the step function in R, resulted in a model in which dependent variable Pillai Score is best predicted by the variables sex, nationality, and their interaction with an AIC of 3.98 (compared to a baseline AIC of 14.08). The generalized linear model produced by these two variables and their interaction shows that Pillai scores vary in the direction expected with regard to nationality. As the results from this model show (Table 3), the negative value of the estimate for Senegalese speakers indicates a lower Pillai Score than the baseline population which means that the Senegalese population has a more merged central vowel (I selected Gambian nationality and Male sex as the baseline values):
Table 3 also shows that women have lower Pillai scores (more merged) than men. The relationship between sex and sociolinguistic variation has been well-established across several studies, but since the direction of change is not known, I did not have a theoretically grounded hypothesis about how gender would affect this vowel production. Once the interaction between nationality and sex is considered, however, it becomes easier to extrapolate the way borderland Wolof vowel variation contributes to a gendered nationality in the borderland. Figure 3 shows the relationship between nationality and sex with regard to Pillai scores:

Table 3: Output from the generalized linear model with nationality, sex, and their interaction predicting Pillai scores

|                  | Estimate | Std. Error | t value | Pr (>|t|) |
|------------------|----------|------------|---------|-----------|
| Intercept        | 0.83058  | 0.05960    | 13.953  | < 2e-16***|
| Nationality (Senegalese) | -0.23441 | 0.08429    | -2.781  | 0.007**   |
| Sex (Female)     | -0.29499 | 0.0429     | -3.5    | 0.0009*** |
| Nationality x Sex| 0.22421  | 0.11921    | 1.881   | 0.06 .    |
Although the resulting p-value from the interaction of variables in generalized linear model shown above was not significant (p=0.06), since the interaction was selected in the step-wise process of model selection, the interaction warrants discussion and also makes the main effects interpretable. There is a considerable amount of overlap between Senegalese (men and women) and Gambian women, but Gambian men produce the most “unmerged” mid-vowel set that differs from the rest. In the next section I discuss what these results mean in terms of the socially constructed linguistic border(s).
4.5 Discussion

In spite of not knowing the history of the vowel space in this area, it becomes clear that the synchronic existence of linguistic border is most dramatic between Gambian men and the rest of the borderland population. Although women are often found to be innovators when it comes to on-going language changes (above the level of consciousness), the fact that Gambian women’s Pillai scores values are more similar to their Senegalese neighbors of both genders suggests that Gambian men are the ones innovating and adopting a more Banjul-like production of this mid vowel set rather than assuming that Gambian men have a more conservative production while everyone else is innovating to sound more Senegalese.

4.5.1 Nationality

Given the previous descriptions of Senegalese Wolof and Gambian Wolof with their different vowel systems, it would be reasonable to expect a situation like the one described by Boberg (2000) at the U.S.-Canadian border where changing phonological configurations of the vowel space failed to “cross” the border in spite of rapid spread across the U.S. and intensive contact between the Canadian and American populations on both sides of the border. With Boberg’s study, however, as the name “shift” suggests, much is already known about a change in progress as well as previous states of the vowel inventories in both national varieties of English and the historical settlement patterns also suggest that the two populations have distinct histories. No such “separate histories” can be assumed for the Saloum borderland, in fact the historical settlement of this borderland area is intertwined and marked by frequent cross-border migrations. It seems, therefore,
that some reason other than separate historical patterns must be responsible for the effect of nationality on Pillai score.

Becher (2001) claims that Banjul Wolof’s seven short-vowel system (lacking the mid-central vowel) is more archaic, she suggests that the emergence of a central vowel is an innovation of Dakar Wolof. Dakar and its Wolof speakers are over 200km away from the borderland, while Banjul is only about 30km away. While it seems logical that the borderland vowel system would be more likely to reflect Banjul Wolof pattern, it appears, however, that Dramé (2013) and Gamble (1991) were correct in suggesting that the Saloum/ North Bank Wolof speakers overall show similarity in their vowel production with the rest of “Senegal.” The river seems to be the archaic dialect boundary for vowel inventory.

Although Pillai Scores do not offer an absolute threshold for merged or unmerged vowel categories, Hall-Lew (2009) tentatively sets the level for unmerged Pillai score at 0.3 and finds that only eight speakers (out of thirty) have a fully merged low back vowel system (LOT-THOUGHT distinction) in the San Francisco neighborhood she investigates. According to this (somewhat arbitrary) standard, very few borderland Wolof speakers would be considered to have a merged mid-central vowel. Only ten speakers (out of 64) fall below the 0.3 threshold of Pillai scores (3 Senegalese men, 4 Senegalese women, 3 Gambian women, and no Gambian men), suggesting that most borderland speakers do not have a totally “merged” central vowel at all. Because the vowel categories are phonologically conditioned (unlike the LOT-THOUGHT merger discussed in Hall-Lew 2009), it is difficult to compare vowel categories across phonological conditions, and these phonetically conditioned differences probably lead to a more robust
variance between categories. The Gambian nationality seems to predict a significantly more “unmerged” system, however, suggesting that the border is intervening to create divergence.

4.5.2 Sex
As mentioned above, the relationship between speaker sex and sociolinguistic variation has been so strong that Labov (1990) has formulated what he calls sociolinguistic principles based on the relationship between sex/gender and language variation. Unfortunately he phrases this relationship in terms of “standard” and “non-standard,” a concept that may not apply to this Wolof borderland community:

Principle 1: In stable sociolinguistic stratification, men use a higher frequency of non-standard forms than women.
Principle 1a: In change from above, women favor the incoming prestige forms more than men.
Principle 2: In change from below, women are more often the innovators.

These principles regarding sex and sociolinguistic stratification depend upon crucial relationships between standard language ideology and gender ideologies (which link social structures of gender to sex; see Eckert 1989, Cheshire 2002) in industrialized, class-conscious societies. One explanation for the fact that women tend to lead sound changes in the Wester, industrialized world is that they tend to be more status-conscious and orient towards the prestige variety, thus selecting forms associated with supralocal (national) or standard varieties instead of local or dialectal features. Another explanation (Trudgill 1972) has been that women have more extended social networks than men,
which promotes the diffusion of linguistic changes, usually in favor of standard variants. He found that the tight-knit social networks of working class men promoted an increased usage of non-standard variants.

Assessing the degree to which borderland Wolof follows Labov’s sociolinguistic principles also requires knowing the “direction” of a given linguistic change or trend and also the way gender is structured in the community. In Principles 1a and 2, the “change from above” and “change from below” relate to what Labov calls the “level of consciousness” or the degree to which the change is noticed by speakers. Women favor “prestige” and “standard” forms, but they also lead the changes that are “below” the level of consciousness, or not noticed by speakers. Although “prestige” and “standard” forms are not transparent concepts in this area, I found no evidence in my interviews and ethnographic observation that this vowel variation is noticed by speakers in the borderland. If this variation is “below the level of consciousness,” can it be said that women are leading a change?

As noted above, based on descriptions by Dramé (2013) and Gamble (1991), there is good reason to believe that speakers in the borderland would be closer to the Senegalese (merged) system than to the Gambian (unmerged) system due to the geographic boundary of the Gambia River. If women in this area, with their smaller Pillai scores, are the innovative speakers, then it seems that Senegalese men are following suit. Alternatively, the change to a more merged system may have taken hold in Senegal while Gambian women are leading the change in the Gambian borderland. Hall-Lew (2009) also found smaller Pillai Scores among women in her Sunset District study of the LOT-THOUGHT merger and attributed it to the fact that women are leading a sound change in
this area (as women are often shown to do in studies of Western, industrialized
countries). Again, it is difficult to assess the direction of this change or the role women
have in leading sound changes. What seems to be a more probable cause for the gender
effect in the realization of these vowel sets is the fact that the Gambian men are orienting
towards the vowel system of their fellow Gambians across the river in Banjul. This fact
can be best understood through a discussion on the relationship between gender and
nationality in the borderland.

4.5.3 Sex and Nationality interaction

Although I suggest that this variation in the vowel system is below the level of
consciousness, it does not seem like women (and Senegalese men) are leading a change
towards a more merged system. It seems that perhaps Gambian men are diverging from
local Saloum norms (where the central vowel set is more merged) towards a more
prototypically “Gambian” (or Banjul) system where the vowel set is totally unmerged.
This explanation is simplest if we assume that the Gambia river has historically been the
dialect border separating “Banjul Wolof” from “North Bank Gambian Wolof” (which is
said to resemble Senegalese Wolof. Since there is no previous information about the
vowel inventory of this borderland area, it is difficult to say which groups are innovating,
but given the observations that the Gambian system is representative of Banjul, which is
on the South Bank of the Gambia River and that the North Bank was thought to speak
Senegalese Wolof (Gamble 1991), it seems more likely that the Gambian men are the
innovators in this border area.
While “standard” and “prestige” forms of Wolof spoken in the borderland are difficult to assess, there is an overwhelming sense that “Gambian Wolof” lacks any overt prestige (due to its minority status within The Gambia and presumed influence of Mandinka and English). In spite of the fact that Becher (2001) claims that the Banjul Wolof vowel system is more globally conservative than Dakar Wolof, it seems that most borderland speakers have a low opinion of “Gambian Wolof.” Many Wolof speakers, Senegalese and Gambian alike, describe Gambian Wolof as *diis* (‘heavy’) and *setul* (‘not clean’). In keeping with Labov’s principles, therefore, a totally unmerged mid vowel set, associated with Gambian Wolof and lacking overt prestige, may deter borderland women from adopting such a vowel system, keeping with Labov’s linguistic principle about the role of women in changes from below. If the more unmerged system has some sort of covert prestige, then it fits with what Hinksens et al. (2000) have said about covert prestige in the role of linguistic divergence: “Features having covert (instead of overt) prestige play a role as a source of linguistic diversity instead of uniformity within the speech community at large. … In such cases…psychological divergence results in linguistic divergence” (15). Although they are referring to the nonstandard urban varieties that develop among the minority youth in Europe, a similar process of orienting towards the covert prestige of Gambian Wolof could be an act of national identity for Gambian men, differentiating themselves from their Senegalese neighbors (and from Gambian women).

Furthermore, national identity and gender identity in this West African context intersect in important ways and the socially constructed boundaries may be the result of gendered practices of nationalism. For one thing, in this borderland, exogamous
marriages are the norm. Women typically leave their parents’ home to go to their husband’s family’s home (as young as 14 in the rural areas). Cross-border marriages are extremely common in this area and as one young woman put it, séyi amul frontiere, or “marriage has no borders.” Although almost all participants (except one) reported having family across the border, women are far more likely than men to have close cross-border family ties. Maintaining close cross-border family networks may involve reducing or limiting subtle sociophonetic differences like those involving vowel space structure. According to my assessment of speakers’ place-based orientations, women on the Gambian side of the border were far more likely to orient towards a Saloum-based identity (n=14) than towards a Gambian-based identity (n=2). While place-orientation was not selected as a significant factor in the generalized linear model (perhaps due to its correlation with gender), it is important to note that overall women tended to orient more towards a local Saloum identity than towards a nationalist Gambian or Senegalese identity (cf. Miles & Rochefort 1992).

Although mobility to Banjul and national education were not chosen as main effects by the stepwise process of model selection, I found that men in this area are far more likely to advance far enough in school to attend high school or even university in Banjul. There were no Gambian women in this sample who studied beyond middle school, but a handful of the men had spent time in high school or university in Banjul or even just in schools with instructors who had spent time in Banjul. Regardless of education, men are also more likely to hold official posts in the government and become involved in state-level organizations. Whether as chief of a village (Speaker 68 and Speaker 27) or vice-president of the Cashew Farmers Association (Speaker 132), men are
involved in the organizations and networks that draw legitimacy and power from the level of the nation-state. Furthermore, women are often seen as excluded from the political sphere of nation-building, particularly in the patriarchal nations. As Cornwall (2005) writes, “Studies of gender and governance in the post-colonial era [of Africa] highlight continuities between the colonial disregard for women and the subsequent institutionalisation of male bias in state bureaucracies and policy formation” (12).

Cultural and religious tendencies, coupled with a bias of men in governing and other state-building positions, conspire to keep borderland women mostly out of the political realm and less invested in the production of nationalist identities.

While women may be excluded from official sources of power connected to the nation-state, they are not passive agents, following men in the processes of nation-building. They are creative agents who can exploit transnational or ambiguous Saloum identities and the nature of the porous border to meet their own needs. Speaker 28 from Djidah (an older man from rural Senegal) explains how most women in the village cross the border into The Gambia for healthcare because Gambian medicine and doctors fees are cheaper:

(2) Fii lañu dekk di sos ci frontiere bi (mmm)\(^{10}\) Dinañu uut kayitu d'identite Gambie (d’identite Gambie) Boo fa demee, boo yoobuu di fajju du am benn probleme Te duñu la laj dara, ngay dem rek ŋu fajj la nga ŋibsi (waaw). Loolu moo taxoon jigeen yi ŋëpp nak goor ŋi ŋu bëri amoon. Waaye jigeen yi dañu werantewoon ŋoom ŋi nga xam ŋooy nekk jigeen u wërut. Nga xam ne ŋooy dem di passe yooyu ji, ndax xam ne foofu amul pay amul dara di nga daan dem ŋu seet leen, jox leen garaab, ŋu ŋibsi, duñu ŋaq dërëm bu du passe bi la daan yoobu.

*Here we live touching the border. (mmm) we will seek Gambian identity cards (Gambian identity cards). When you go there, when you bring it for healthcare,*

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\(^{10}\) Utterances in parentheses are from the interviewer Omar
there is no problem. And they don’t ask you anything. You just go, they heal you, you return home (yeah). That is why all women and a lot of men had [Gambian identity cards]. But the women they discussed it, some women who were not well. You know they went and paid their bus fare, because you know there is no payment there. They went, they saw them, gave them medicine, they returned home; they didn’t miss any money that wasn’t their bus fare.

Although most participants denied having an identity card from the neighboring country (perhaps because the practice is technically illegal), this older man explains how the practice is common among Senegalese borderland inhabitants because it is economically beneficial to seek healthcare in The Gambia, especially for the women who are often responsible for their own healthcare and that of their children. The women came to the conclusion that paying transportation fare to receive Gambian healthcare was more cost-effective that seeking healthcare at the local hospital in Karang (Senegal) and they continue to reap the benefits of living in the borderland.

Perhaps because of their ability to “pass” as transnational, borderland women also seem more fully able to pass through the pores of the border unmolested by the official borderland authorities (Nugent 2008). My research assistant Omar seemed incredulous when a young woman from Djidah (Speaker 18) said she does not even bring an identity card when crossing the border:

(3)

Omar:  Li ngay dem Gambie kenn mësul a fa sonal ci wàllu këyit ak yóoy ?
        When you go to Gambia, don’t they [border officials] ever bother you about papers and such?

Speaker 18:  Déedet, déedet wax dëgg, bu may dem sax sumay këyit, fii laa koy bayi.
            No, no, to tell the truth, when I go, I even leave my papers here.

Omar:  Fii ngay bayi ?
       You leave them here?
Most men (particularly the youth) on both sides of the border had stories of encountering difficulties with official representatives of the state at the border: stories in which they were harassed by border police and customs officials. One Senegalese young man (Speaker 53) was fined in The Gambia for wearing military-style camouflage pants, a rule he did not know he was breaking. One Gambian man and his elderly father-in-law were detained by Senegalese customs officials who accused them of stealing the large sums of cash they were carrying during the holidays. While it is likely true that men are usually more engaged in the processes of nation-building and more likely to foreground national identities (Miles & Rochefort 1991) than women, they are also much more likely to encounter difficulties at the border. It is difficult to tell whether the border difficulties lead to increased nationalist sentiments or whether nationalist sentiments lead to difficulties at the border. But it is clear that the social processes of border construction has a gender component to it.

For the reasons discussed above, I suggest that construction of a nationalistic identity (and the resulting linguistic differences in the vowel system) in this area is a gendered process. While the Pillai score differences between the borderland men are emphasized, the differences between Senegalese and Gambian women are downplayed. This fact results in a strong differentiation between Gambian men and everyone else in
the borderland. It seems that Gambian borderland men are adopting the vowel system of 
Banjul, the economic and political center of the nation-state. Due to the historical 
similarity between the Saloum vowel system and the broader “Senegalese” (or what 
Becher calls “Dakar”) Wolof vowel system, it is not possible to differentiate the more 
localized production from the broader nationalist “Senegalese” production. Senegalese 
borderland men are following the local pattern, which also corresponds to the broader 
Senegalese pattern (Dramé 2013). Women are also following the localized patterns, but 
because they are less invested in the nation-state and more involved in the local, I 
propose that they are able to take advantage of a transnational Saloum identity.

The lack of effect of age coupled with the lack of previous phonetic studies in this 
area makes it difficult to say if there is a trend towards one system or another on either 
side of the border. Also surprising is the fact that mother tongue does not significantly 
affect the measurement of this merger. Since (Senegalese) Wolof is the only indigenous 
language in this area to have a mid-central vowel, it was reasonable to expect that a 
speaker’s mother tongue would influence vowel production. Given the fact that speakers 
generally acquire Wolof alongside their mother tongue, however, speakers are “balanced” 
bilinguals with native-like production, as the speaker in (1) claimed.

It seems clear, however, that stable categories like nationality and gender seem to 
influence this variable more than other types of categories that may change over the 
course of a lifetime like mobility or place-orientation. These results lend credence to the 
idea that certain parts of the grammar, especially phonology, are more fixed than others 
for speakers (Van Coetsem 1988); but they also seem to contradict other recent 
sociophonetic studies that find a strong correlation between subtle acoustic variables and
categories like place-based orientation or athletic preference or shifting social categories (Carmichael 2014, Hall-Lew 2009). The small number of observations (n=64) in the dependent variable also limit the power in the statistical model to select other social factors that may also influence vowel production. While gender and nationality are major social categories (with the latter remaining more fixed across a lifetime for men than women due to exogamous marriage practices in the area) that may influence speakers’ vowel space more than others, a larger sample of Pillai scores for borderland speakers might also allow researchers to test the effect more mutable social categories like perception of the border and place orientation have on the vowel space of borderland speakers.

4.6 Conclusion

Do political borders have a strong enough cognitive reality to lead to dialect divergence for phonological variables as Auer (2005) suggests? Evidence from a linguistic feature that receives little to no attention from speakers themselves suggests that linguistic borders are formed as part of other social identities like gender and nationalism. This political border that cuts through the Saloum, which is about a half-century younger than the German-Dutch border discussed by Auer (2005) and de Vriend et al. (2008), does show a national rift when it comes to this subtle marker of affiliation with a particular nation-state. De Vriend et al. (2008) and Britain (2013) suggest that the border impinges upon people’s social and geographic mobility, which leads to divergence or linguistic borders. But cross-border mobility in this area is high and furthermore, it was not selected as a predictive factor in the step-up model. This fact suggests that mental representation
of the border may outweigh the social implications of the border, as suggested by Auer (2005). Boberg (2000) also found that in spite of frequent contact between people on the American and Canadian sides of the border in places like Detroit, U.S.A., and Windsor, Canada, differences in the vowel systems persist. As noted above, however, this was attributed more to the different settlement histories of English speakers around the border than to the “cognitive” influence of the border. Auer (2005) claims that the cognitive reality of the border is enough to influence people’s language use in a way that exaggerates differences.

This finding suggests that processes of cognitive boundaries and linguistic divergence at the border, particularly at the phonological level, need to be understood in the context of other processes of social identification like gender. While women are thought to lead non-stigmatized language changes in Western, industrialized societies with standard language ideologies, the evidence from the Wolof-speaking borderlands can provide some insight about the gendered practices of linguistic variation and change in other types of societies. In this geographic area where local Saloum norms in the vowel system are thought to be similar to supralocal Senegalese norms, this study provides evidence that Gambian men of the area are innovating their vowel system to match “Gambian” norms. The source for these Gambian norms seems to be Banjul Wolof, in keeping with a center-periphery model of language diffusion. The lack of prestige associated with Gambian Wolof may be causing Gambian women to avoid this innovation, but it could also be explained by less engagement with nationalist identities. Future studies with evidence from the vowel productions of speakers from Dakar and Banjul could confirm that the varieties associated with the “centers” of each nation are
influencing the more peripheral areas in a situation similar to what Clyne (1992) calls “pluricentric” language varieties. Due to the historic similarity between Saloum Wolof and (what Becher 2001 calls) Dakar Wolof vowel systems, however, it is difficult to know the extent of the influence of the Senegalese center on the Saloum periphery for this particular variable. It seems clear, however, that national norms influence Gambian borderland men in a way that they do not influence Gambian borderland women.
In the last chapter, I discussed how gender and nationality contribute to the construction of a sociophonetic linguistic border between Gambian men and Senegalese on the one hand and between Gambian men and Gambian women on the other hand. This variation can be attributed to men on the Gambian side tending towards a more un-merged production of a mid-central vowel set like the Wolof speakers of Banjul. Although Gambian borderland men may be adopting a feature associated with Banjul, the Gambian borderland women are clearly not following “Gambian” patterns. I have demonstrated in previous chapters how the ideological link between a national language variety and the variety spoken in the capital can be problematic, especially in the borderlands. Since capitals large urban centers are the sites of political and economic power for each nation, it seems reasonable to suppose that the varieties spoken in the capitals and large cities would have some influence over other areas within the nation (see Trudgill’s gravity model). In the instances where Dakar Wolof and Banjul Wolof diverge, however, a situation of “pluricentric” language norms arises (Clyne 1992), leading to the question: which linguistic norms do the borderland inhabitants follow? This chapter examines the distribution of a morphosyntactic variable and the way borderland inhabitants’ practices and orientations towards the center influence this variable.
5.1 Background on morphosyntactic variation

Clyne (1992) defines “pluricentric” language as a language with different national standards like English, Spanish or German. Each nation-state that uses these languages has a particular variety of a given language that is deemed standard and used in government, education, and other formal settings. As mentioned in Chapter 1, however, an exogenous official language—specifically the colonial languages French and English, respectively—operates in the “standard” domains of Senegal and The Gambia. It is not evident, therefore, that there is a standard variety of Wolof (or any other indigenous language in this area). As Torrence (2012) points out, Dakar Wolof is often considered “standard” Wolof, but it has no official status as a language of school or government and is rarely used in writing. Its ‘standard’ status is complicated by the fact that it is also not considered “good” or “pure” Wolof (Torrence 2012, 7-8) insofar as its urban association and hybrid identity make it seem to many speakers like a polluted, watered-down version of rural Wolof or “deep Wolof.” In this sense, “default” may be a better descriptor than ‘standard’ since most linguistic descriptions of Wolof have focused on Dakar, and also since most of Senegal’s (Wolof-speaking) population is located in Dakar. On the Gambian side, however, with a significant Wolof-speaking population in Banjul, a different set of norms has been described. While neither Dakar Wolof nor Banjul Wolof may be “standard,” their respective influence still might come into competition, especially in the peripheral areas of the borderland.
Moreso than phonological systems, morphological and morphosyntactic systems have a stronger link to notions of language standardization (Lavandera 1978, Buchstaller 2009). As mentioned in the previous chapter, different linguistic “levels” have various degrees of salience and speakers are generally more aware of morphological or grammatical differences between different dialects or language varieties or styles (Van Coetsem 1988). In describing the opposition between two morphophonological variants (such as the ING variable with its velar and alveolar variants), sociolinguists often posit an opposition between a “standard” and a “non-standard” form. In describing how sociolinguists should carefully define the variable for quantitative analysis, Buchstaller (2009) even implicitly suggests in her equation that the rate of usage of the “non-standard” variant is the object of interest for sociolinguists (see Figure 10):

\[
\frac{\Sigma \text{tokens of variant A}}{\Sigma \text{tokens of variant A + \Sigma tokens of all other variants}} = \frac{\text{non-standard variant}}{\text{variable}}
\]

Figure 10: equation from Buchstaller (2009) showing the relationship between a linguistic variant and the linguistic variable.

These formulations of standard variants in opposition to non-standard variants have also informed the way linguists account for language change in places like the Germanic-speaking areas where a dialect continuum has given way to sharp linguistic boundaries due to influence from national standard varieties like High German and Standard Dutch (Auer 2005). Hinskens et al. (2000) call standard languages the “roofing material” for nations and the cause for dialect divergence at European borders (or convergence towards
the standard language). They describe what happens when both sides of the border have their own national variety, as in the German-Dutch or Spanish-Portuguese cases (divergence of local dialects at the border) and what happens when one side of the border has a national standard but the other side does not, as in the case of German spoken in the Alsace region of France or Swedish speakers in Finland (a situation which often leads to dialect loss and language shift away from the local dialect and towards the national language). However, Hinskens et al. do not offer a typology for when both sides of the border have a “roofless” situation, both lacking any national standard. Dakar and Banjul, as the respective capitals and population centers of both nations, are important poles in the Wolof-speaking world and may be thought to generate “pluricentric” language norms (Clyne 1992). But in the borderland, the periphery or frontier zone between these two countries and their two capitals, the morphosyntactic variation may reveal speakers’ orientations towards their respective nations, or at least towards the “national variety” of Wolof that comes from the capitals, though these varieties may not have the ideological weight of standardization promoting their spread.

5.2 Morphosyntax and semantics of di

Wolof is classified as an SVO language, but the ordering of constituents is highly variable depending on several factors such as tense, aspect, and focus (Becher 2001, Torrence 2000, Torrence 2012). It has a rich verbal system with different classes of verbs (active and stative) and different types of focus (subject, complement, and verb, which contrast with presentative and neutral), each with its own system of ordering constituents and marking tense and aspect. Most scholars (e.g. Robert 1992, Becher 2000, Torrence
2012) identify Wolof as a primarily aspect-marking language (with perfective and imperfective features). Torrence (2003) calls it an “asymmetrical” system in which the ordering of elements like subject agreement, negation, and tense differs between perfective and imperfective constructions, but scholars like Robert (1991) and Becher (2001) agree that the perfective construction is the unmarked construction, while imperfective constructions are marked with the imperfective marker di. Robert (1991) claims that the perfective system is the default, unmarked system from which the imperfective is derived.

As Torrence (2000) shows, the “imperfective” meaning marked by this di morpheme covers several different meanings: incomplete (“I am working”), habitual (“John works here”), future (“I will work”), and generic (“Dogs chew bones”). Mangold (1977) says that this morpheme carries “present progressive, present habitual, immediate future” (72). In addition to its aspect-marking system, Wolof has a complex focus-marking system within which this range of imperfective meaning can be expressed. Becher (2001) offers a helpful diagram (Figure 11) that shows how the imperfective (-PV) di is used across focus constructions, each of which has its own series of pronouns:
Except for the imperfective aspect focus (which is often called the Future tense construction), where $di$ precedes the pronoun, $di$ follows the pronoun (and precedes the verb) in all other constructions. While the semantic role of $di$ has been linked to imperfective meaning, there has not been agreement about its status. Njie (1982) calls $di$ an auxiliary and groups it together with auxiliary verbs with clearer semantics (e.g. dem ‘to go’, $bañ$, ‘to refuse’ etc.), although this classification seems to be based on the ability for $di$ to modify the main verb. She said that “$di$ est clairement un auxiliaire. Il ne peut apparaître que dans des constructions où il est suivi d’un autre verbe qu’il

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Some of its different roles depend on the syntactic arrangement shown in examples (1), (2), and (3), where different placement of di leads to different meaning:

(1) da-ngueen **di** dem  
    VbFoc-2pl IMV go  
    “You all are going”

(2) **di**-ngeen dem  
    IMV-2pl go  
    “You all will go”

(3) ngeen taxaw, **di** wax musiba gi  
    Neutral2Pl stand, IMV talk scandal DET  
    “You all stood, talking about the scandal”

In (1), the morpheme is situated between the pronoun and the verb to denote a present imperfective (habitual or progressive) meaning. It can also combine with past morphemes (+oon or +aan) to indicate past habitual action. In (2), the di goes before a pronoun series (usually associated with the perfective aspect) to indicate future action. In (3), the di follows the main verb clause and precedes another verb to denote simultaneous action (and syntactic subordination). This chapter will focus on the sentence type in (1) where the di comes between the pronoun and the verb.

Njie (1982) notes the range of meaning for di when combined with other tense or negation morphemes all relate back to its core meaning of inaccompli or incomplete actions. Torrence (2000, 2012) calls di an “imperfective marker” and Ferris & Jah (1989),

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11 “di is clearly an auxiliary. It can only appear in the constructions where it is followed by another verb that it modifies.” (translation mine)
focusing on Banjul Wolof, prefer the term “frequentative marker” for this morpheme since it is often used to talk about on-going or habitual action.

While most believe that the default marker for some sort of incomplete or habitual action is *di*, Torrence (2000, 2012) identifies “its clitic variants” as -y, which is conditioned by the final segment of the pronoun it follows. The *di* morpheme occurs after consonants and the -y clitic follows vowels. Becher (2001) offers the following consonant-final example sentences from what she calls Dakar Wolof (DW) where the *di*, positioned between a pronoun and the verb, indicates imperfective aspect:

(4) dañu leen di gis  
VbFoc3pl Obj2pl IMV see  
“They see you all”

(5) dangeen di gis  
VbFoc2pl IMV see  
“You all see”

Most of the pronouns in Wolof do not end in a consonant, however. Table 4 shows the various subject and object pronouns used in different aspect constructions with the consonant-final pronouns highlighted:
It is clear from this table that the only consonant-final pronouns are associated with second person plural pronouns (except Subject Focus) and third person plural object pronouns. Since these pronouns form just a small part of these pronoun paradigms, it is important to consider what happens with the vowel-final pronouns. Becher (2001) also offers the following vowel-final example sentences to demonstrate the phonological rule where di is realized as -y following a vowel:

(6)  
\[ \text{da} \text{n} \text{u-y gis} \]  
\[ \text{VbFoc3pl-IMV see} \]  
\[ \text{“They see”} \]

(7)  
\[ \text{dangeen ko-y gis} \]  
\[ \text{VbFoc2pl Obj3sg-IMV see} \]  
\[ \text{“You all see it”} \]

Most linguists consider -y (sometimes written as -i) to be the phonological derivative of di, which has wider distribution across different tense constructions. For linguists who consider the di in (1) and (2) and (3) to be the “same” morpheme, it seems logical that the
relationship between *di* and -*y* involves a consonant deletion following a vowel in the present tense. But in these present tense constructions, which represent the largest part of the data discussed in this chapter, its realization between pronoun and verb, -*y* has a much greater distribution when the phonological rule is applied.

Its more limited distribution, coupled with the fact that *di* only occurs in this construction after pronouns that end in alveolar nasals like *ngeen* and *leen* (and have homorganic place of articulation with *d*-), suggesting a phonological rule where *d* is inserted before -*y/-i* after consonants), may in part explain why Robert (1991), in contrast to most other linguists, considers *di* and -*y* to be different morphemes. She claims that “une telle variation formelle ne s’explique nullement par des règles phonétiques”\(^\text{12}\) (259) and also offers further evidence that a construction like *dinaay dem* ("I will go (usually)") is composed of both morphemes *di* and *y*, suggesting that the former has a wider range of meaning and can occur in a less restricted syntactic position. As Joseph and Janda (1999) point out, sometimes phonologically linked realizations and overlapping meanings do not necessarily mean morphemes share an etymological origin, but may become linked in a “constellation” of meanings associated with morphs. Given the focus of this chapter on the specific morphophonological alternation between *di* (and other realizations of the vowel) and -*y* in post-pronominal, pre-verbal position, the specific semantic or historical relationship between this *di* and other *di* forms does not affect my argument. In her reconstruction of “Archaic Wolof” (AW), however, Becher (2001) found that the *di* morpheme could follow vowel-final pronouns and that the -*y* in DW is an innovation:

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\(^{12}\) “this type of formal variation is in no way explained by phonetic rules.” (translation mine)
Although the constructions shown by Becher (2001) are verb-focus constructions and are meant to demonstrate a diachronic relationship, further evidence that *di* and *-y* are “the same” morpheme is found in Mangold’s 1977 Wolof grammar (73). He identifies the same form and function for morpheme *-di* and its variant (which he writes as *i*) in the following subject-focused examples:

Intransitive:

(9)  
Maa *i* dem  
Maa *di* dem  
SubFoc1Sg IMP go  
“I shall leave”

Transitive:

(10)  
Maa ko *i* gis  
Maa ko *di* gis  
I him - see  
“I shall see him”

Although he suggests that *di* and *-i* are used to refer to immediate future or on-going action, they can also be linked to the imperfective morpheme discussed by Torrence (2012), Njie (1982) and Robert (1992). The fact that Mangold (1977), who worked with two Dakar Wolof-speaking consultants in the 1950s, found both types of constructions (*-i* and *di*) to be grammatical suggests that at some point these morphosyntactic variants
might have been in free variation. What Mangold (1977) writes as \(i\) and Njie (1982), Torrence (2000; 2012), and others have transcribed as \(-y\) has been demonstrated to show the same morphosyntactic distribution and the meaning as \(di\) in these present constructions preceding active verb constructions.\(^\text{13}\) In the rest of this chapter I follow Njie (1982), Torrence (2000, 2003, 2012), and Robert (2012) in their transcription convention of using \(-y\).

The above descriptions of the relationship between \(di\) and \(-y\) have been largely based on Wolof as spoken in Dakar (Senegal). In their paper on Banjul (The Gambia) Wolof, Ferris & Jah describe \(dee\) in Banjul Wolof as a “frequentative marker.” Its meaning and distribution are the same as the \(di\) described above, except that, as the examples that follow show, there is no post-vocalic constraint on \(dee\):

\[
(11) \quad \text{xanxa laa} \quad \text{dee} \quad \text{defar-e} \quad \text{taabul} \\
\quad \text{wood} \quad \text{NonSubFoc1sg} \quad \text{IMV} \quad \text{make-INST} \quad \text{table} \\
\quad \text{“I make the table out of wood”}
\]

\[
(12) \quad \text{da-ma} \quad \text{dee} \quad \text{dox neg bi waxtu bu-neka} \\
\quad \text{VbFocus-1sg} \quad \text{IMV} \quad \text{walk} \quad \text{room} \quad \text{DET} \quad \text{hour} \quad \text{REL-is} \\
\quad \text{“I walk home everyday”}
\]

Ferris & Jah (1989), writing about Banjul Wolof, state: “There is considerable formal variation for the frequentative particle \(dee\); in Banjul Wolof it also appears as \(di\); in Dakar Wolof \(dii, di,\) or the truncated form \(i\) are found” (461). Although their transcription \(dee\) is different in both vowel quality and vowel length from the \(di\) morpheme described in Dakar Wolof, they acknowledge a range of realizations for which they offer certain

\(^\text{13}\) Wolof distinguishes between active and stative verbs, but the imperfective marker can only occur in active verb constructions.
transcriptions. In my transcriptions of this variable, I chose to attend to differences in vowel quality but not vowel length\textsuperscript{14} and therefore coded these instances as either $di$ or $de$. In other words, the morpheme that Ferris & Jah (1989) transcribe as $dee$, as the cognate of $di$ described in the Senegalese variety, I represent in the following analysis as $de$.

In this section I have shown how various descriptions of Wolof (which have been focused on the varieties spoken in Banjul and Dakar) have represented the aspectual marker $di$. Its morphosyntactic alternation with -$y$ and $de$ when occurring between pronouns and verbs is the central focus of this chapter. In descriptions of Dakar Wolof, the -$y$ surface form is conditioned by the preceding segment of the pronoun (or locative adverb). No such conditioning is apparent in descriptions of Banjul Wolof. For the Banjul variety of Wolof the $di$ (or $de$) can occur in a post-vocalic position. Given these two sets of norms associated with two different national “centers,” I explore the way that these morphemes vary in the borderland.

5.3 Morphosyntactic variation in the borderland

Although Becher (2001) suggests that -$y$ is the global innovative morphosyntactic variable in Wolof and links it to Dakar Wolof, there is reason to believe that borderland Saloum Wolof follows the Dakar Wolof pattern. Anthropologists like Gamble (1991) consider the Gambia River to be a cultural and linguistic boundary, claiming that North Bank Wolof speakers speak “Senegalese Wolof” and South Bank Wolof speakers (where

\textsuperscript{14} I do not agree with Ferris & Jah’s transcription of this morpheme with a long vowel.
Banjul is located) have their own variety. Given the history of the Saloum area and the intense contact between the borderland populations, it would make sense if the Gambia River were a stronger linguistic boundary than the political border, isolating Banjul Wolof as the rest of Senegambian Wolof speakers adopted the innovative morphophonological rule. Nevertheless, during my time in the area as a linguist, it became apparent that de is part of the borderland repertoire of some speakers.

Speakers themselves in my interviews indicate an indexical link between the de morpheme and Gambian (Banjul) Wolof. As Speaker 26 from Djidah (Senegal) said about the difference between Gambian and Senegalese Wolof:

(13)  Ay de de de lañuy wax!  
"Those de de de they speak!"

The chief of Ker Malick Sarr, the rural community on the Gambian side of the border, drew the distinction between the Wolof of Banjul and his own (Saloum) Wolof:

(14)  Dañuy jél Olof boole kook Soose, boole kook Tubaab. Waaw, "so dama de…dama de def nangam." Xam nga lóol du Olof.

"they take Wolof and mix it with Mandinka, mix it with English. Yeah, “so I am…I am doing something.” You know that’s not Wolof.”

It is worth noting that in their own, unmarked speech, the -y clitic is used for both Speaker 26 and Speaker 67 (quoted in (13) and (14), respectively). In his quoted “mock” Banjul Wolof, where he says they mix in Mandinka and “tubaab” (which means “white people” but usually can mean either English or French, depending on the context), Speaker 67 uses the Verb-focus construction “dama de” to demonstrate what “is not
Wolof.” In his approximation of Urban Gambian Wolof, he not only uses *de* in the performance, but couples it with “so,” an English discourse marker that is widely used by urban and anglophone Gambian Wolof speakers (see Chapter 6). The metalinguistic awareness exhibited in these examples and the way it is linked to Gambian Wolof and Banjul Wolof suggests that it carries the ideological weight of a linguistic stereotype or a second-order index among Wolof speakers. It therefore may serve as an important marker of Gambian (or Urban Gambian) identity.

Mock varieties of a language demonstrate an individual’s perceptions about another language or variety (e.g., Mock Spanish by Anglos or Mock African American Vernacular on the internet), but also presuppose a shared understanding with the hearer about the social characteristics indexed by these linguistic features. These speakers in (13) and (14) are drawing upon this feature *de* and linking it to Gambian and Banjul Wolof. The value judgment added by the speaker in (11) also demonstrates the perception that due to contact with English and Mandinka, this type of speech is not authentically Wolof. This perception suggests that for these speakers, *de* is an innovation in the area, associated with the “inauthentic” Banjul Wolof (as opposed to the “authentic” Saloum Wolof) and perhaps suggesting that the use of *de* is due to contact with a foreign language like Mandinka or English. Determining whether or not the general post-vocalic realization of *di* (or *de*) is a Banjul innovation or a part of “archaic” Saloum Wolof is beyond the scope of the present chapter. I demonstrate, however, that while the morphosyntactic realization of -*y* is more widely used in this borderland area, in the current sociolinguistic distribution the usage of *de* can be linked to contact with Banjul.
5.4 Methods

Early quantitative variationist sociolinguistic studies pioneered by Labov (1963, 1966) have focused on variation at the phonological level in part because of the frequency of these segmental variables in a given string of speech. The other major reason for focusing on variation at the sound-level of speech is that it largely escapes the problematic notion of “meaning.” For example, when the dependent variable in question is a phonological phenomenon (like r-lessness), the linguistic meaning of a phrase like *fourth floor* is the same whether the */r/* segments are realized or not. Sankoff (1973) suggested that given the probabilistic nature of phonological variation that patterned with internal (linguistic) and external (social and stylistic) factors for phonological variables, “[t]here is no reason not to expect similar patterning elsewhere in the grammar” (58). Lavendera (1978) and Romaine (1980) have questioned whether the same methods of comparing different types of “higher level” domains of the grammar like morphosyntactic structures is sound since different syntactic structures may carry different pragmatic meanings (e.g., *they broke into the liquor cabinet* vs. *the liquor cabinet was broken into*). Hudon (1980) even postulates that syntax is less prone to grammatical variation because of the social forces of “standardization” (as quoted in Romaine 1980). Labov’s criterion for linguistic equivalence rests on the notion that “the variants are identical in truth value, but opposed in their social and/or stylistic significance” (1972; 271).

Buchstaller (2009) demonstrates how sociolinguists can apply the quantitative techniques of sociolinguistics to morphological, syntactic, or even discourse variables by ensuring the definition of “the denominator” when comparing relative frequencies of variants—this can be achieved by proving either the semantic or “functional” equivalence
of variants so that a study can focus on a “closed set” of forms or functions and focus on the distributional frequency of variants across a normalized or comparable amount of speech for different speakers. As noted above, most of the studies about morphophonological variation (including ING, s-deletion, t/d deletion, etc.) have focused on the competition between “standard” and “non-standard” forms. While Wolof may not have “standard” or “non-standard” variants to speak of, the -y, di, and de realizations of the imperfective marker are functionally and semantically equivalent in this present-tense construction, positioned between pronoun and verb. The set of the denominator is therefore “closed” by attending to all instances of y or di or de when they follow one of the sets of pronouns shown in Table 4.

As seen in Chapter 2, sixty-four participants were selected from four communities (16 in each community) adjacent to the border (two communities on each side), balanced for gender and age group (18-45, 45 and above) to participate in informal interviews, conducted by a Wolof-speaking research assistant. The portion of the interview where people discussed their daily lives as well as their routines and habits ranged from 20 minutes long to 75 minutes long. In order to normalize the speech sample for each speaker, 10 minutes of each of this part of the interview (from 5 minutes to 15 minutes) was transcribed, aligned, and coded in ELAN.

Although Njie (1982) does not discuss the following types of examples explicitly, they occurred with enough frequency in my interviews that they are worth mentioning. Because Wolof (like other West African languages) is primarily an aspectual language, this imperfective marker can combine with various tense markers as well. For this reason,
a future tense construction like in (2) could also have a di in the postpronominal, preverbal position, like the example (4) given by Robert (1991):

(15)    di-naa-y dem
          AspFoc1sg-IMV go
          “I will (usually) go”

Although the di prefixed to the perfective pronoun construction denotes future tense, the di that follows the pronoun denotes habitual or progressive action in the future. Becher (2001) classifies this future construction (without the second di) as Aspect Focus (although aspect is inherently perfective according to her) and I do the same (see Figure 2).

This morpheme can also occur after negative pronoun series:

(16)    du-ma-y dem
          VbNeg-1sg-IMV go
          ‘I don’t (usually) go”

While this imperfective marker with negative construction is optional, Njie (1982) says that if it occurs with a negative pronoun it indicates “un fait permanent” with a reading like “I never go.” Finally, this di morpheme occurs with the Neutral Focus in conditional or hypothetical constructions like in (17):

(17)    bu ma-y dem-ee louma, dinaa toog ba
          WHEN-Neutral1Sg-di go-weekly market, di-AspectFoc1Sg sit until
          afternoon
          “When I go to the weekly market, I will sit until evening”
Relative clauses also made up a large portion of usages of the neutral focus in this corpus. I coded them as the tense of the main clause:

(18) dinga dégg sax li ñu-y wax
    AsFoc-2Sg understand even REL Neutral1PL-IMP say “you will even understand what we say”

Each verb phrase that contained one of these imperfective variants in one of the syntactic contexts defined above was flagged and coded for tense (present, future, conditional) focus (subject, complement, verb, or neutral), the case of the pronominal constituent immediately preceding the verb (Subject, Nonsubject, or Locative), the polarity of the verb phrase (positive or negative) and the person and number of the pronoun immediately preceding the morpheme, and the particular verb.

The fact that the third person singular subject-focus construction with a copula invariably occurs with -y suggests that this element has been reanalyzed as a unit.

Similarly, the fact that third person plural object pronoun and second person plural subject constructions (which all end with -een) are always followed bi di/de suggests that this is a fixed construction and not subject to the variation that the imperfective marker between vowel-final pronouns and verbs is.

5.5 Results and analysis

There were a total of 1166 instances of the use of a post-pronominal imperfective marker in all 64 samples of speech (excluding instances of “mock” or quoted speech such as those in (13) and (14)). A total of 534 tokens came from Gambian speakers while 632
were from Senegalese speakers. Because there were only 6 tokens total of *di* (less than half of a percentage of the total tokens), *di* tokens were combined with *de* (of which there were 237 tokens) in the analyses of the imperfective marker.

A step-up approach was taken to construct a mixed-effect logistic regression with speaker as a random intercept. The realization of the binary dependent variable (with variants *de* and *y*) was examined as the result of several social and linguistic variables. The built-in step-wise function in R does not work with mixed effects models so the models were constructed and compared based on AIC. Fixed effects were added in the following order: sex, age group, nationality, locality (urban vs. rural), education, borderland mobility, Dakar mobility, Banjul mobility, place orientation, and border conception. Johnson (2008) suggests first adding effects for which the status is unchanging like sex and age of a speaker before effects that might change from situation to situation (as opposed to linguistic factors which may condition variation). Therefore only social variables were included in this model. Linguistic factors will be discussed below. A log-likelihood comparison of models selected nationality and contact with Banjul, and their interaction as the best-fit model with an AIC of 797.0 (compared to the model with only random effects, which has an AIC of 835.53). Table 5 shows the results from this model:
Taken individually, these results suggest that nationality alone is a strong predictor of imperfective morpheme usage and that this variable serves to highlight a linguistic border. From Table 6, it becomes clear that *di/de* comprises less than 5% of all Senegalese imperfective morphemes (excluding the consonant-final contexts where *di* seems to be invariant). The variation on the Gambian side, however, is more balanced, with approximately 41% of all imperfective markers realized as *di/de*.

Table 5: Output from the mixed effects logistic regression

|                                | Estimate | Standard Error | z value | Pr(>|z|)   |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------------|---------|------------|
| (Intercept)                    | -3.0464  | 0.4695         | -6.489  | 8.64e-11***|
| Nationality (Gambian)          | 1.7539   | 0.6494         | 2.701   | 0.00692**   |
| Banjul Mobility (high)         | -1.8154  | 0.7485         | -2.425  | 0.01530*    |
| Gambian x high Banjul Mobility | 2.6663   | 0.9352         | 2.851   | 0.00436 **  |
It is clear that Gambians are still using -y a majority of the time, however, so it cannot be said to be a case of total divergence in the borderland. Since I hypothesized that di/de in all post-pronoun, pre-verbal positions is a feature of Banjul (rather than Gambian) Wolof and an innovation in this Saloum borderland area, it seems surprising at first to see that high Banjul mobility is actually correlated with a lower usage of di/de than low Banjul mobility. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Banjul is the closest major city to the borderlands, but it is not easy to get there; without a bridge, Banjul-bound travelers usually have to wait for the two slow government-run ferries (which often stop running when the water gets too choppy) or take the privately owned fishing boats (gaal) that are often packed to the maximum capacity and offer no comforts or guarantees of arriving dry. Most borderland people, Senegalese and Gambian alike, complain about the river crossing, but the economic and social incentives of Banjul can be strong—Banjul imports foreign goods without the high tariffs of Senegal and Banjul is home to government offices, good post-secondary schools, and hospitals. For this reason all borderland inhabitants find themselves in some contact with Banjul, but overall those Senegalese with higher contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>di/de</th>
<th>-y</th>
<th>Total (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Distribution of imperfective markers according to country
show a greater tendency to avoid \textit{di/de} than the borderland inhabitants with low Banjul contact.

But there is more to this story than these simple main effects. The tendency to adopt this morphophonological variant can be better understood when we examine the interaction between Banjul mobility and nationality. High Banjul contact means 6 or more times per year or having lived there at some point. Looking at the way Banjul contact and nationality interact, it becomes clear that high Banjul contact leads to increased \textit{di/de} usage for Gambians, as shown in Table 7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Banjul contact</th>
<th>\textit{di/de}</th>
<th>-\textit{y}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>98.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Percentages of imperfective markers according to nationality and contact with Banjul

Although the number of observations of \textit{de/di} is quite low for Senegalese borderlanders, the trend indicated by the logistic regression and by the proportions shown in Table 4 show that for Senegalese, high contact with Banjul may lead to a decreased usage of this Banjul Wolof feature, while increased Banjul contact may lead to increased \textit{di/de} usage among Gambian borderland Wolof speakers.

Britain (2009) points out that language variation and change has more to do with mobility, contact, and routines than it does with static socio-spatial classifications like
“urban” or “rural.” People’s lives and routines are what influence variation, not abstract geo-social categories. It seems like that inhabitants of Amdallaye and Karang, which are on a paved road that leads directly to the river crossing, may have greater contact with Banjul than the rural communities Ker Malick Sarr and Djidah, a Chi-square test for independence for Gambians with high versus low mobility to Banjul shows that these factors are not independent (chsq=6.78, df=1, p< 0.05), with almost all urban Gambians reporting frequent mobility to Banjul (once a month or more). Being on the main road makes access to the ferry-crossing easier for residents of Amdallaye. Furthermore many more residents of Amdallaye work in the commercial sector, which makes travel to Banjul a more necessary part of their lives. Almost half of the rural Gambians (n=7) also report high contact with Banjul, however. One of the most frequent users of *de* (Speaker 76) in the entire sample was from Ker Malick Sarr (The Gambia, rural), but had done much of his advanced schooling in Banjul. It is speakers like him who seem to be introducing this “Gambian” feature to the borderlands. High contact with Banjul is a better predictor of *de* morpheme usage that urban locality because it does not rely on an unexamined notion of language variation across space (Britain 2009, 2013; Johnstone 2004), but instead looks at the personal histories, networks, and routines of individual Wolof speakers in the borderland.

Linguistic features do not travel across rivers and roads as isolated elements, but rather they travel with speakers across space and time and contribute to the social construction of places. As Joseph (1992) points out, language change is driven primarily by speakers with social lives and motivations and not by abstract principles about universal tendencies like cluster simplification. Language change amounts to various
stages of synchronic variation and as sociolinguists since Labov (1963) have demonstrated again and again, synchronic variation is tied to the social structure of a given place. Although borderland Wolof speakers may be in frequent contact with one another, crossing the border and exchanging speech with an arsenal of repertoire choices (Benor 2011), some linguistic channels are more important than others for the diffusion of forms. For Gambians with frequent contact with their capital, a stronger sense of Gambian-ness (as opposed to Saloum-ness or other localized borderland identities) may facilitate the diffusion and transmission of linguistic features linked to Banjul, the “center” of The Gambia. For the Senegalese who frequent Banjul, on the other hand, a tendency towards divergence from the Banjul feature may in fact index a rejection of Gambian-ness in favor of a more Senegalese or Saloum-centered identity. It is clear that many in the Saloum area on both sides of the border consider de/di to be a Gambian innovation, not even really Wolof (cf. Becher 2000).

Although the social factors of nationality, Banjul contact, and their interaction were clearly significant in this global sample, it is worth considering if there are any linguistic constraints on the innovative di/de among Gambians, who account for 90% of the de/di realizations. Some descriptive statistics will show different linguistic patterns of the rate of di/de usage. As discussed above, utterance focus determines much about the structure of a Wolof sentence, including its pronoun selection (see Figure 11 and Table 4). If Gambians are adopting the de/di imperfective morpheme, I wanted to determine if there were any linguistic constraints to this trend. As Table 8 shows, the Verb Focus construction shows the highest rate of di/de usage (at 50%):
A Chi-square test for independence shows that these categories vary independently from one another ($\chi^2=29.5$, df=4, $p < 0.001$). Verb Focus and Subject Focus constructions seem to promote the most frequent use of the *de/di* morpheme for Gambian speakers, but this could merely be a factor of the interview structure in which the participants were talking about themselves, their community, and their activities. The Chi-square statistic compares proportions and so takes into account discrepancies in distribution. Verb focus constructions were the most frequent overall and so may allow more instances for speakers to use the innovative *de/di* marker. The neutral focus is most commonly used in relative clauses and shows a clear preference for -y; (although in Senegalese speakers neutral focus accounts for 20 out of 24 instances of *de*, suggesting that Senegalese borderland Wolof speakers have different norms) The complement focus, in which the subject pronoun follows the focused direct or indirect object also shows a clear preference for -y usage. While these trends may just be a function of the interview format and a focus on activities (perhaps priming a Verb Focus preference), the data show that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>di/de</th>
<th>-y</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complement</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Distribution of morphological variants according to clause focus
verb-phrase focus may influence imperfect-marking variation. Another intervening factor that may influence the usage of de/di or -y is the case of the pronoun preceding the verb is the case of the pronoun; whether it is a thematic subject, object, or locative adverb (fa). This distribution is shown in Table 9:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case of Pronoun</th>
<th>de/di</th>
<th>\[-y]</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Distribution of morphological variants according to the case of the preceding pronoun

Although instances where the subject of the sentence precedes the imperfective marker are more numerous overall, these constructions show a preference for the -y morpheme. When it is an object pronoun that precedes the imperfective marker, however, there is a slight preference for de. A Chi-square test for independence reveals that the case categories of the pronoun preceding the imperfective marker vary independently of each other ($\chi^2=7.4$, df=2, p=0.02). Given the nature of the corpus (conversational data), it is impossible to control for linguistic factors that may influence the use of a particular morphophonological variant, resulting in skewed linguistic contexts. Although Pichler (2010) points out that univariate analyses of morphosyntactic variables are not ideal, it is
important to note for future study that there may be linguistic factors constraining an incoming morphophonological variable for Gambian speakers. When the various factors are probed individually, there are a few clear trends that show the conditions that favor the *de/di* variant such as focus and case. Since the influence of these linguistic factors has not been discussed in the literature, future studies of other varieties of Wolof may reveal different trends related to the phonological preferences of syllable weight in Banjul Wolof.

5.6 Discussion

Compared to the sociophonetic variable discussed in the previous chapter, this morphophonological variable is not part of the sex-based construction of national identity. This “higher level” part of the grammar seems to depend on a complex social process, like nationality as it relates to contact with the Gambian capital, rather than “ascribed” identity like sex. Both variables seem to contribute in subtle ways to the construction of a linguistic border. Even if the usage of *de/di* as the imperfective marker after vowel-final pronouns is a characteristic of more archaic forms of Wolof, in this area at least it is perceived by Senegalese and Gambian borderland Wolof speakers alike to index “Banjul” or “Gambian” Wolof. Affiliation with a political or geographic “center” can be seen as an important contributing factor to the sociolinguistic construction of the border, though its very definition should be observed through an ethnographic lens.

Frequent contact with Banjul, as reported by participants, is highly correlated with the use of this imperfective morpheme. While the central vowel categories discussed in Chapter 4 seemed impervious to this type of mobility or activity, the morphosyntactic
marker seems to be coming into borderland Gambians’ speech via their contact with the capital.

Britain (2013) has observed that while most sociolinguists either have tried to control for or have entirely ignored the role of mobility on linguistic patterns, it is an important facet of the social space created through routines and networks. Some types of mobility and routines may matter more than others, however. In this borderland area, linguistic differentiation seems to result from an increased contact with Banjul for Gambians. Since Banjul is the geographic, political, economic, and cultural “center” for The Gambia, it is not surprising that Gambian borderland inhabitants with frequent Banjul contact would begin to adopt its linguistic norms. Britain (2014) found, for instance, that the marshy Fenland used to be a dialect boundary in England, but even after the marshes were drained and roads were built, social space and perceptual space contributed to the maintenance of a dialect boundary in that area. In some sense, the reverse seems to be happening in The Gambia: the “natural” or geographic boundary of the Gambia River may be giving way to the “artificial” or political boundary, as mobility coupled with the ideological importance of national identity reshapes the distribution of certain dialect features.

As with the central vowel categories explored in the previous chapter, the local Saloum norms seem to match the national Senegalese norms, making it difficult to say whether frequent contact with Senegal’s “center” (including large cities like Dakar and St. Louis) has a similar influence on Senegalese borderland inhabitants for this particular linguistic variable.
It is tempting to speak of language variation and change in terms of standard and non-standard varieties and to look for evidence of people using the supralocal standard to index some identities and the local, non-standard to index local identities. In Senegal and The Gambia, however, there is no national “standard” variety of Wolof and furthermore, Wolof does not have any institutional role in schools or government activities. It is, however, the language used in everyday common interactions between strangers and friends in this area, growing in importance as it becomes the national lingua franca of Senegal (McLaughlin 2008; Ngom 2004; Swigart 2000). It is also the language associated with traditional Saloum identity, an identity that transcends the political border and is common to both Senegalese and Gambians in this area. Nevertheless, the cognitive reality of the border does seem to have some influence on those Gambians who are in contact with the Banjul variety of Wolof.

5.7 Conclusion
Returning to the question about which “norms” the Wolof-speaking borderland inhabitants use in a pluricentric (though not necessarily “standard language”) situation, it is clear that the political border plays a role in the way features are diffused and transmitted, but it seems to interact with other social features of people’s daily lives. Since Banjul is geographically the closest large city and since all borderland inhabitants have at least some contact with Banjul, we would expect Banjul Wolof (given the gravity model of diffusion adapted by Trudgill 1974) to have an influence in this area. Given the fact that Gambia River seems to have been an important linguistic boundary historically, however, most accounts of Saloum Wolof imply that it shares more features with broader
Senegalese Wolof. In spite of the fact that there are no bridges and that crossing this fluvial boundary can be quite difficult, forces of nationalist norm-making seem to be surmounting the geographic border and shifting the social, perceptual, and linguistic boundary to the political border for some speakers. Although this morphosyntactic feature *de/di* still remains in the minority in this area, Gambians with high Banjul contact have the highest incidence of this feature while Senegalese with high Banjul contact have the lowest, a fact that demonstrates that although the center (Banjul) may surmount geographical boundaries to influence the periphery (the borderland), this influence virtually stops at the political boundary.

Sociolinguists are beginning to account for the ways that linguistic variation can help transform space into place. Whether the cognitive reality of the border is enough (Auer 2005) or whether the border changes people’s routines and patterns (Britain 2013) and thus influences the cognitive maps, it is a complex process through which people come to conceptualize territory as belonging to larger political entities like nations or regions. The Saloum area has traditionally been and to some extent continues to be a peripheral area of intense cross-border contact, but perhaps this cross-border cohesion is slowly giving way to nationalistic norms. The ideological model of the modern nation-state is pervasive and it constructs a nation-state with its own unique cultures and languages. In spite of the lack of a standard form(s), speakers can be influenced by their “own” center (and also by the boundaries) and the “pluricentric” model of shared language leads to divergence at the border.
Perhaps the most widely cited reason (both in the “folk” metalinguistic commentary of speakers and by linguists) for a fissure developing between Senegalese Wolof and Gambian Wolof has to do with the influence of the respective colonial/official languages. The most obvious way that the border may result in divergent varieties has to do with the fact that the colonial border separates official languages and the contact conditions that ensue. Because these official languages are the medium of education and governance and occupy a prestigious position in the hierarchy of languages, it seems plausible that due to contact with the official, exogenous languages, contact-induced variation may take on the same shape as the political border. In this chapter I examine the way two discourse particles are employed as part of the linguistic resources used by borderland Wolof speakers as indexical tools that help construct various borderland identities.

6.1 Urban Wolof(s)

Urban Wolof (Swigart 2000, McLaughlin 2001, Ngom 2004, Thiam 1994) as spoken in Dakar and other urban centers in Senegal has been thoroughly described and has even been shown to have been in use for longer than most people thought (McLaughlin 2008). Swigart (1994) justified her designation of (Senegalese) Urban Wolof as a mixed or creolized code due to the difficulty both speakers and researchers have in disentangling the product into two separate codes (due to the near impossibility of distinguishing
established loanwords, impromptu borrowings, and code-switching from the source language and base language for each speaker). According to Ngom (2004), “It is important to note that many older people who are illiterate in French and religious men… find ‘urban’ Wolof to be disrespectful, and consider it to be a symbol of an ongoing acculturation” (97). In this regard, its association with youth language and urban or non-traditional lifestyle might be cause for certain borderland inhabitants to avoid incorporating French or English elements into their Wolof.

Less has been said about urban Wolof in The Gambia, except that it is found in the capital Banjul and involves mixing Wolof and English along with some French and some Arabic, although it is not as hybridized as Senegalese Urban Wolof (Juffermans & McGlynn 2010). Just like Senegalese Urban Wolof, it also appears to be a hallmark of young men. The link between young men’s speaking styles and hybridized repertoires is not straightforward. As Britain (2009) points out, there is no causal relationship between geographic concepts like ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ and the linguistic features used. Cities are places of contact and places where the official language may carry more weight. Young men seeking economic or educational opportunities may migrate to the cities in larger numbers and may therefore develop a distinctive way of speaking that draws on the official language(s) to convey a modern, city-based identity. Increased mobility and communicative technologies may unsettle this widespread notion that “urban youth language” can only be found in the large cities. Residents of smaller towns and villages may also employ various elements of the Urban Wolof repertoires if they wish to index youthful or modern identities.
Furthermore, while there are problems with reifying “Urban” Wolof and “Pure” Wolof as two distinct varieties, it seems to be a matter of the degree to which words or phrases from French and English are used rather than a categorical difference or the geographic location in which it is spoken (Mitsch 2015a). It is more helpful to think of Urban Wolof as a repertoire (Benor 2011) that signals membership in a group. The repertoires favored by the young Wolof speakers may also serve to further the divergence between Wolof speakers on either side of the border. As illustrated by excerpt (1) from my interviews, a young (23-year-old) Senegalese man states that language is one of the first things noted to differentiate Gambians and Senegalese due to the different sources of language mixing and then links this phenomenon to the youth “up to twenty-five.”

(1) Gambian, su waxee dangay xam ne kii Gambian la. Parce que ŋoom seen Olof bi day am anglais tuuti. ŋi seen Olof bi… comme ŋi muj juddo comme man ak ŋennenn… manaam ŋi am vingt ans, vingt-trois ans ba vingt-cinq ans yëpp seen Olof bi day am français.

_A Gambian, if s/he talks you know that s/he is Gambian. Because for them, their Wolof has a bit of English. Us, our Wolof, like those who were recently born like me and others…I mean those who are twenty, twenty-three, up to twenty-five years old, all of them, their Wolof has French._
The participant in (1) seems to be describing the varieties associated with Urban Wolof(s) and their tendency to borrow from their official languages. Swigart (1994) has argued that what she calls “cultural creolization” resulting from modernizing life in the cities comes with language mixing. The cities are linked to the metropole and thus to the official/former colonial language. Speaking of Urban Wolof as a hybrid entity rather than a series of code-switches or just as intensive borrowing avoids the problem of expecting speakers to be able to disentangle Code A from Code B. Whether or not the language mixing is conscious or a choice is not necessarily the point. Speakers do have some agency in the way they select among linguistic resources available to them. As scholars like Blom & Gumperz (1972), Hymes (1968), and Benor (2010) have suggested, speakers can choose from various linguistic resources in various settings and contexts. Rather than trying to distinguish between loanwords and borrowings and other theoretical problems involved in describing contact-induced changes in the lexicon, I follow Blom & Gumperz (1972) and Benor (2011) in treating discourse particle variants as part of the choices speakers may have in their arsenal for identity construction rather than as part of a specific, differentiated variety like Urban Wolof or Pure Wolof. Since it becomes clear that both native Wolof and foreign, borrowed discourse particles are in circulation in this borderland area, I show that the use of one or another is part of a repertoire associated with gendered, urban, nationalist identities. For those in the borderland, the “foreign” source is a ready-made index for nationality and for distinguishing between Gambian and Senegalese, but not everybody makes use of these nationality-indexing features that would contribute to a linguistic border between the two nations.
Due to the porous nature of the border in question, life in the borderland is characterized by fluidity and contact. Strong network ties of family and friends link people on both sides of the border and the strong network ties suggest a great degree of linguistic exchange. As speakers of Gambian Wolof and Senegalese Wolof frequently interact, discourse markers may stand out in their foreign-ness. When asked if she could tell the difference between Senegalese and Gambians, one Gambian border village woman in these interviews pointed out one way to know someone’s nationality:

(2) Gambian day wax ‘so, because.’ Senegalais, ‘mais, alors…parce que.’

A Gambian says, ‘so, because.’ A Senegalese, ‘mais, alors…parce que.’

She pinpoints discourse particles like *so* and *because* (without explicitly mentioning their English origin) as being used by Gambians and *mais* (‘but’ in French), *alors* (‘so’ or ‘then’ in French) and *parce que* (‘because’ in French) as used by Senegalese. The linkage is semiotically linked in a move that turns a linguistic feature into an icon of nationality (Gal and Irvine 2000). This kind of metalinguistic awareness shows that discourse particles have a special indexing role in the Wolof one speaks. This iconization in (1) and (2) is a semiotic process of differentiation (Irvine & Gal 2000) rooted in language ideology that “naturalizes” practice through the lens of social differences (Bucholtz & Hall 2004). Through this semiotic process, English-flavored Wolof becomes an icon of Gambian nationality and French-flavored Wolof becomes an icon of Senegalese nationality.
For those borderland Wolof speakers, certain repertoire choices are nevertheless available to them in their progressive identity formation. Discourse particles present an opportunity to study the distribution of foreign and native elements in the language mixing repertoires of Wolof speakers in the borderland. While discourse particles of both Wolof and borrowed origin are manifold in this corpus, I focus on two specific categories of discourse markers that were most common across all speakers: the BUT variable and the BECAUSE variable.

6.2 Discourse particles in language contact

Discourse particles share certain properties cross-linguistically. They are often syntactically peripheral, prosodically unmarked, and “do not form part of the propositional content of an utterance, but serve multiple functions at the discourse level” (Norrby and Wirdenäs 2003, p.248). These elements have been notoriously difficult to define due to the broad range of discourse functions they perform, though many studies have attempted different definitions. Schiffrin (1987) was author of the first major work to examine discourse particles from a quantitative and qualitative perspective and she included oh, well, and, but, or, so, because, now, then, and I mean in her description of English discourse markers. What these words share is certain pragmatic features in that 1) they are never obligatory the way a determiner or verb may be and 2) they structure the discourse by linking clauses to one another. Some linguists prefer the terms “discourse marker” or “pragmatic device” instead of discourse particle in order to include a wider range of functions that includes adverbials and conjunctions, but following Matras (2009), I employ the term discourse particle to refer to the BECAUSE and BUT lexical
categories to be examined in this chapter. This chapter focuses on these two discourse particle categories that show functional similarity but variation in form among the Wolof speaking borderland inhabitants.

Thiam (1994) in a study of the language mixing habits of Wolof speakers in Dakar found frequent borrowings from French, only 22% of which can be considered “established” borrowings (20). He then explained how concept of an “established loanword,” a term taken from Poplack (1980), is problematic in this area. Like the contrast Matras (2000) makes between fusion and convergence, the difference may depend upon whether a single speaker or an entire speech community has adopted a loanword into their inventory and thus depends on a diachronic perspective. For Myers-Scotton (1993) there is a continuum between borrowings (which are established and often phonologically adapted) and one-word code-switches, depending upon their variability. The former are on the less variable end of the spectrum, the latter are on the more variable end of the spectrum. While it is clear that Urban Wolof speakers use varying amounts of French elements in their speech, certain French loanwords are widespread and require no fluency in French, but still show quite a bit of variability. While lexical borrowings can be difficult to compare from speaker to speaker or interview to interview in conversational speech, one class of words that seems to be borrowed in spite of L2 competence in discourse particles. Discourse particles offer an ideal site to examine the way language contact with the official languages French and English influences Wolof at the border across a variety of speakers. For one thing, their relative frequency in a single discourse (as compared to other lexical items) means that trends can be observed and inferences drawn from their relative distribution. Second, as several linguists have noted
(Matras 2009, de Rooij 2000, and Swigart 1980), discourse particles are highly borrowable. Compared to other parts of the lexicon that may require more familiarity with the contact language, discourse particles can easily be borrowed in local speech communities and speakers’ repertoires without any formal exposure to the language. This ease of adopting may be because discourse particles are “essentially rooted in conversation” (the “ERIC loans” of Friedman and Joseph 2014, 2016), meaning that they occur across interactions but are not usually acquired through textbook or formal language learning. Given the low level of formal fluency in the official languages in this area, discourse particles are an ideal lexical class to compare the repertoires of borderland Wolof-speakers in similar contexts (informal interviews) across similar topics (practices and routines of borderland life).

Poplack (1980), in her foundational work on code-switching, argued that for the less proficient bilinguals, discourse markers could afford an overall sense of prestige to the discourse and that it sets them apart (as polyglots) from monolinguals. This social function is similar to the social function of Urban Wolof, as described by Swigart (1994) and McLaughlin (2000). These “emblematic” code switches, as Poplack (1980) calls them, are easily accessible to those without education or a formal grasp of the source language. Sankoff et al. (1997) also found that formal education in French did not correlate with native-like discourse particle usage among L2 French speakers in Montreal, but association and participation with French-speakers was a better indicator of French discourse particle usage. Combined, these studies confirm what Friedman and Joseph (2014, 2016) claim about this class of words being transmitted primarily through
casual, conversational discourse (and not necessarily in any sort of formal learning situation).

De Rooij (2000) highlights the conversational function of French discourse markers in Shaba Swahili from 8 hours of conversation between two bilingual speakers. He claims that the ease with which syntactically independent discourse markers can be borrowed does not explain their frequency in Shaba Swahili. Instead, from a conversational point of view he highlights the “importance of increasing contrastiveness as a way of maximizing saliency” (463). In this corpus of Shaba Swahili discourse between two French-educated males, the French discourse markers accounted for (in order of frequency) are *mais, bon, donc, puisque, alors, non, parce que*, and *et puis*. Just like in Senegal and The Gambia, the exogenous official language (French) is a prestigious language compared to the native language (Shaba Swahili). In the borderland, many speakers have some familiarity with these languages, but only a small group has any fluency (unlike the speakers in de Rooij’s study). Few Senegambians in the borderland considered themselves proficient or fluent in the official language, but borrowed discourse markers may still be used to mark contrastiveness or increase salience. While discourse particles like *donc, bon, alors, puisque* and *so* do occur in my corpus of spoken Wolof, they are limited to a very small number of (usually educated) speakers. *Mais* and *parce que* are the most common borrowed discourse particles in my corpus.

The advantage of examining the various forms associated with the classes BUT and **BECAUSE** is that they can be defined as linguistic variables based on functional criteria (with variants taking different forms) and that both the native Wolof and
“borrowed” discourse particles occur regularly throughout the conversations. Of all of the discourse particles examined by Schiffrin, BUT and BECAUSE seem to have more limited functions (compared to oh or well or I mean). But is what she calls a connective and because is a causal marker. These words have equivalents in both French and Wolof, which means that their distribution can be compared as a closed set of variants (with three potential forms each). As Matras (2000) points out, however, the borrowed lexical class must in fact be separate from the native lexicon in the mind of the speakers in order to have this effect of increasing saliency. When the systems are fused at the community level, convergence of the two lexical classes has taken place. On an individual level, however, he claims “fusion” is the cognitive non-separation of a class of words, which aids the speaker in the onerous task of simultaneously speaking and directing activities. I argue that within a speech community, however, where convergence may not be complete and where fusion is difficult to identify for individuals, we can nevertheless observe that the discourse markers also have a social function that helps construct identities in the borderlands.

Although Schiffrin (1987) applied some quantitative analysis to the discussion of discourse markers in her corpus of English conversation, with only three speakers involved, it was not designed to reveal broader social patterns of language variation and use. As Pichler (2010) explains, variationist studies of discourse particles have been rare due to the many methodological issues involved. Nevertheless, interest in the distribution of discourse particles grew as researchers realized their importance in carrying social meaning, and there has been “accumulative evidence that discourse features are systematically involved in patterns of language variation and change” (3). It is precisely
the things that define them as a class of words that make discourse particles difficult to operationalize as linguistic variables: their lack of fixed syntactic position and their variable meaning(s). Dines (1980) and Tagliamonte & Denis (2010), for example, have based their studies on general extenders (*and stuff, and all that, and things*) on their functional similarity (i.e. they perform the same function by pointing to a bigger set of objects). Pichler (2008) based her definition of the discourse marker variable on phrases like *I think* and *I know* based on their structural similarity, but admits that this methodology is not appropriate for all cases of discourse particle variation. While many studies of discourse particles have focused on those that usually mark informal speech (Tagliamonte & Denis 2010), some discourse particles are not necessarily reserved just for casual or informal speech.

I selected the discourse particle categories BECAUSE and BUT for two reasons. First, they were the most frequent discourse particle categories in this corpus and second, across all three languages these particles have the same functions. In spite of what the speaker in example (2) says, *so* (from English) and *alors* (French for ‘so’ or ‘then’) were relatively rare in this corpus. The fact that BUT and BECAUSE have the same functions in each of the source languages in question (Wolof, English, and French) also makes them easier to borrow (Matras 2009). Each discourse particle category and its forms are discussed briefly.

6.2.1 The BUT variable

While Sankoff et al. (1997) does not consider conjunctions like *mais* or *but* to be discourse markers, other linguists like Schiffrin (1987) and Matras (2009) point out that
these types of words are highly important for structuring discourse. It is because of their salience and syntactic detachability that they are easily borrowed. Matras (2009) found that *but* words are some of the most borrowable cross-linguistically. He found this trend to be so robust that he developed a hierarchy of borrowability among connectives (sometimes called conjunctions) that follows a pattern: *but* > *or* > *and*. Stoltz (1996) surveyed several Central American and Pacific languages and came up with a generalization relating *pero* (‘but’) and *por que* (‘because’). He found that if a language has borrowed *por que* ‘because,’ then it will always have borrowed *pero* ‘but,’ suggesting that *pero* is more “borrowable” than *por que*. He also found that if a language has borrowed more than two discourse particles from Spanish, *pero* (‘but’) is among them. These trends cited by Matras (2009) and Stoltz (1996) are purported to be typological universals, but as these data show, this same ordering of borrowed discourse particles does not hold in this speech community. Schiffrin (1987) found that *but* has two major functions, which can operate simultaneously. The first (a discourse function) is to contrast two portions of talk. The second is a pragmatic function that a speaker uses to regain a speaking turn. Examples from my interviews demonstrate the functional equivalence of discourse particle variants in the BUT category and the BECAUSE category before examining their relative distributions in the Wolof interviews.

In the entire corpus, there was only one instance of English-source *but* from one university-educated speaker in Ker Malick Sarr (rural The Gambia):
It is arguable that this instance of *but* is both a discourse particle, contrasting Dakar (a city in Senegal) with Banjul (a city in The Gambia) when the speaker is discussing the nature of Wolof spoken there. It may also be a pragmatic strategy to maintain the speaking turn. As the only instance of this English source BUT, however, it appears to be anomalous in this border area. Perhaps due to this particular speaker’s exposure to English, this usage represents a momentary code-switch rather than a borrowing that is in wider circulation in the borderland area.

The French variant *mais* was much more common in this corpus of borderland Wolof, including examples of contrasting units of discourse (17) and of pragmatic turn-taking (18) described by Schiffrin (1987):

(4) Dinaa ko suivre det, mais nak ci gën a bëri kora bi laay suivre, *quoi*.\(^{15}\)

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\(^{15}\) The discourse marker *quoi* from French was used mostly among young Senegalese men, just as Swigart (2000) found in Dakar Wolof. It roughly translates to English discourse particle *like* but occupies a different syntactic position.
I will follow it, but also more often it’s kora that I follow.

(5) Speaker 62: Daanaa def controle de devise. Ehhh…Douanes.

_ I used to do estimate control. Ehhh… Customs._

Omar: Waaw, douanes.

_Yes, customs._

Speaker 62: Mais boobu ba leegy liigey bi arrêtee daal

_But since then until now, that work has stopped._

The Wolof word *waaye* performs the same functions of contrasting and turn-regaining as shown in the examples for *mais* and in Schiffrin’s analysis of *but*. It sometimes takes the variant form *waante*, but that form only surfaced five times in this corpus of spoken Wolof, so I grouped *waaye* and *waante* together as a single variant.

(6) Speaker 129: Añ kaay, dina wax ak moom waaye du bèri det.

_Yes indeed, I will talk to him, but not a lot._

(7) Speaker 18: Deedet, deedet wax degg, bu may dem sax sumay kayit, fii laa koy bayi.

_No, no, to tell the truth, when I go, I even leave my papers here._

Omar: Fii ngay bayi?

_You leave them here?_

Speaker 18: *Waaye* mësuñu ma ci sonal det.

_But they never bother me about it._
Once again, part of the function of the BUT particle as a way to regain a turn often involves contrasting the utterance, either with the previous utterance of the same speaker, or the utterance of the interlocutor. The discourse and pragmatic functions are not necessarily distinct functions. This section has included examples from Wolof discourse to demonstrate the fact that the borrowed and native particles can fulfill the same functions within borderland Wolof.

6.2.2 The BECAUSE variable

According to Schiffrin (1987), the most thorough functional description of these discourse particles to date, the English discourse particle because has several discourse functions. As in the examples provided by Schiffrin (1987), this causal can signal cause (as in 8) or warrant (as in 9) and it can motivate a prior speech act (as in 10):

(8)  John is home because [B]he is sick (B causes A)

(9)  John is home because [B]the lights are burning (B warrants A)

(10) Is John home? [B]Because the lights are burning (B motivates speech act A)

A Schiffrin notes, these functions need not be separate. The because used in the borderland (Gambian) Wolof seems to fulfill these same functions (cause, warrant, motivation of speech act), as shown in the following examples:
(11) Speaker 129: Um… suma brother waa fii la… eh.. Accident bi moo ko yóóbuwoon Kaolack because accident dafa happenoon (>Eng. happen) Senegal.

_Uhm…my brother, he’s from here…eh..The accident took him to Kaolack [Senegal] because the accident happened in Senegal._

(12) Speaker 138: Moom bu ko fii waxee, Amdalaay fii rek, daňoo xam ne oh! kii dëkut area bi ýép because Olof bi mu lakk.

_That one, if s/he says that here in Amdallaye [Gambian town], they know that oh! this person does not live in this whole area because of the Wolof he speaks._

(13) Speaker 129: Oh! Lóólu… lóólu mënuna ko konte. Because dama fii dee toog ba guddi sax, ma dem.. ngoonaari ji suma xarityi fa nekk uhuu.

_Oh! That… that I can’t count. Because I sit here until evening (even), then go…spend the evening with my friends that are there. Uuhuh_

The ways _parce que_ is used in Wolof also fulfills the same functions as _because_ as borrowed into Wolof. The causal meaning, warranting meaning, and speech act motivation function are illustrated below.

(14) Speaker 136: Dama ko de jall parce que suma mbokk ŋungiy Senegal.

_I cross it [the border] because my family is in Senegal._
(15) Speaker 52: Mu ne ma, “xam naa sa tubey la parce que yaa ko sol.”\(^{16}\)

_He said to me, “I know they are your pants because you are wearing them.”_

(16) Speaker 141: Ôor-uma ndax am na Senegal nak….Parce que man suma tank bëriwul Senegal.

_I’m not sure whether Senegal has them….Because me, I don’t go to Senegal often._

The Wolof equivalent of _because_ and _parce que_ is _ndax_. Textbooks often provide _ndax te_ (with _te_ usually conjoining verb phrases) as a gloss for _because_, and while it is not unheard of in the borderland, _ndax te_ never occurred in this small corpus. Impressionistically, it seems to be associated with a stylized, formal Wolof such as that heard on Wolof radio and television broadcasting. On the other hand, _ndax_ was used as a causal marker throughout the corpus. It has all the functions that Schiffrin (1987) described for _because_ as shown in the following examples, plus one additional function described below:

(17) Speaker 19: Waaw dinaa fa yagg det ndax ham na foofu suma doom bu fa nek.

\(^{16}\) It is worth noting that in (15) a Senegalese young man is quoting a Gambian police officer, but still uses _parce que_ as the quotative. If he had been employing Mock Gambian Wolof, perhaps he would have used _because_.

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Yes I’ll stay a long time there because I have there...my child who is there.

(18) Speaker 33: Guddee sax yeen say doo sangu ndax topp nga foo mi

At night, sometimes you didn’t even bathe because you were out playing.

(19) Ebrima: Bi nga commencee dem Senegal ak leegiy, yoon yi ngay dem Senegal, bëri na?

When you started to go to Senegal and now, those times you go to Senegal, are there many?


Yes, yes. Because I took my first wife from Senegal.

Example (17) shows how ndax connects clause B (staying a long time) is caused by phrase A (having a child there). Example (18) shows how phrase B (playing) warrant phrase A (not bathing). Example (19) shows how ndax is used to motivate the previous speech act (emphatic agreement) with an explanation. Ebrima’s question may call for a simple yes/no answer, but the Speaker used ndax as a pragmatic device for motivating the choice. It is worth reiterating that each of these discourse particle
functions can be simultaneously deployed by speakers, as in (14) where the *ndax* particle both motivates the previous speech act and provides a warrant for an affirmative answer about crossing the border frequently (taking his first wife from Senegal). There is one final function for *ndax* in which it does not overlap with *parce que* or *because*: introducing/relativizing yes/no questions. Example (16) includes an example in which *ndax* follows an existential verb *(w)ôôr* (‘to be sure’) plus negative 1sg marker -*uma*. In cases like this usage in (16) *ndax* translates better to *whether* or *if*, e.g., ‘I am not sure whether Senegal has them.’ As example (20) shows, *ndax* can stand alone to introduce a yes/no question:

(20) Speaker 65: Ndax yow xam nga foofu?

```
ndax 2sgSubj know 2sgNonSubjFoc there?
```

*Do you know that place? (Are you familiar with that place?)*

All instances in which this *ndax* was used to introduce a question or an embedded question were excluded from this sample and only those instances where its usage was analogous to *because* and *parce que* were included.\(^ {17} \) These foreign BECAUSE particles were never used in place of *ndax* in its question-marking function, suggesting that speakers are faithful to the source language meanings of discourse particles when borrowing them in to Wolof.

\(^ {17} \) This question-introducing usage of *ndax* is by far the most common in this corpus.
6.3 Methodology

The same ten minutes of interview Wolof from the same sixty-four speakers discussed in the previous chapter provide the corpus for the examination of these discourse particles. This strategy helped control for the fact that some speakers were more loquacious than others. By limiting the sample of discourse to 10 minutes per speaker and excluding the first five minutes of the interview, a comparable sample of each speaker’s use of discourse particles is employed. With time-aligned transcriptions in ELAN files, I coded each instance of BUT and BECAUSE and its source language. The variable rate of usage of foreign (vs. native) discourse variables (BUT) and (BECAUSE) was examined in a separate mixed-effect logistic regression model with various social factors used as fixed effects and speaker as random intercept. Just as in the previous chapter, for each dependent variable, a step-up process in which main effects and potential interactions were added (in the following order: sex, age group, nationality, locality (urban vs. rural), education, borderland mobility, Banjul mobility, Dakar mobility, place orientation, and border conception). This step-up method was used in order to select the best-fit model from a small data set. Speaker was included as a random effect so that individual speakers’ individual intercepts would not unfairly skew the results. The AIC scores (a measure of variance) were used to determine the best-fit models. The results are described in the next section.

6.4 Results

In this section I describe the quantitative analysis of discourse particles as found in the 10-minute samples from all 64 borderland speakers. The global averages for each variant
on each side of the border are presented, followed by the results from the logistic regression. While the logistic regression only differentiates between native versus foreign discourse particle variant usage, a discussion about the social effects on discourse particle variants also takes into account the source of variant choice.

6.4.1 BUT results

With a total token count of 473, BUT is the most frequent discourse particle in this corpus. Speakers on the Senegalese side of the border have a slightly higher rate of BUT usage than speakers on the Gambian side overall, though the difference is small. As Table 10 shows, both Senegalese and Gambian speakers prefer the native Wolof waaye relative to the borrowed terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>waaye (Wolof)</th>
<th>mais (French)</th>
<th>but (English)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Global averages for BUT variants on each side of the border

For Senegalese Wolof speakers, however, mais (‘but’) is the most frequent foreign discourse particle overall in this subset of the corpus, but it still is not as widely used as waaye. Gambians overwhelmingly prefer waaye to either mais or but. There is little
transborder usage of *mais* and none of *but*, suggesting that these elements do contribute to the linguistic border between Senegal and The Gambia.

A more detailed investigation into the social factors that predict the usage of a foreign marker was conducted with a generalized mixed-effects logistic regression with random intercepts for speaker included. A step-up approach was taken in which fixed effects and their interactions were added one by one in the following order: sex, age group, nationality, urban vs. rural, education, borderland mobility, Banjul mobility, Dakar mobility, place orientation, and border conception. Due to the small sample size, many of the larger models with many interactions failed to converge. A log-likelihood comparison of models shows the model with the lowest variance (AIC = 243.11) to be the one in which nationality and age group were main effects with interactions of sex and nationality and age group and urban. Table 11 shows the resulting statistics from this model:

|                          | Estimate | Standard Error | z value | Pr (>|z|) |
|--------------------------|----------|----------------|---------|-----------|
| Intercept                | -2.124   | 0.829          | -2.561  | 0.010*    |
| Nationality (Gambian)    | -2.294   | 1.223          | -1.876  | 0.061     |
| Age Group (Young)        | 2.976    | 1.071          | 2.780   | 0.005**   |
| Nationality (S) x Sex (M)| 3.914    | 0.824          | 4.746   | 2.07e-06 ***|
| Nationality (G) x Sex (M)| 1.291    | 1.252          | 1.031   | 0.303     |
| Age Group (O) x Rural    | -3.868   | 1.101          | 3.512   | 0.0004 ***|
| Age Group (Y) x Rural    | -1.393   | 0.735          | 1.894   | 0.06      |

Table 11: Results from the mixed-effects logistic regression predicting foreign BUT usage

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I adjusted the reference levels such that Senegalese, older, urban females represent the baseline score. Table 11 shows that while nationality alone does not reach significance, it does interact with sex so that Senegalese men use far more foreign variants of BUT. Overall the young people (< 45 years old) are using foreign discourse particles significantly more than older people. But rural older people are using foreign BUT significantly less (and young rural people slightly less) than urban older borderland Wolof speakers.

The first main effect to note is that nationality is not a significant predictor of foreign BUT usage, but it is clear from Table 11 that Senegalese Wolof speakers use a foreign form (mais) more than one-third of the time while Gambians use a foreign form (and it is almost always mais) less than 3% of the time. From Figure 12 it becomes clear that the majority of these foreign BUT tokens come from Senegalese men.

![Figure 12: Percentages of discourse particle BUT usage according to gender and nationality (with token totals reported)](image)
Age is also a main effect and interacts with locality (urban or rural) to help predict the use of foreign BUT marker. As a main effect, Age Group predicts that young speakers use foreign BUT marker more frequently than older speakers; however, upon closer inspection of the interaction shown in Figure 13, it appears that younger urban inhabitants have the highest rate of foreign BUT usage. While older urban inhabitants and younger rural inhabitants have similar rates of foreign BUT usage, older rural borderland inhabitants demonstrate the lowest rate of foreign BUT usage:

Figure 13: Percentages of discourse particle BUT usage according to age group and locality with token totals reported
Older borderland inhabitants have the greatest number of BUT tokens overall, but clearly prefer the native Wolof words (*waaye* or *waante*) compared to the foreign variants. Young urban speakers prefer foreign BUT approximately 40% of the time. Language-mixing and heavy borrowing is characteristic of Urban Wolof, but it is also clearly associated with younger speakers who may wish to sound more urban and modern.

6.4.2 *BECAUSE* results

The *BECAUSE* discourse particles were also widely distributed in this corpus of borderland Wolof. In this section I compare the foreign/borrowed variants (*parce que* and *because*) with their Wolof equivalent *ndax*. Although only 298 tokens of *BECAUSE* occur in this corpus, it is fairly common across speakers and so its distribution can be predicted by models including social variables. Unlike the BUT variable, the English-source word *because* is common in this corpus among Gambian speakers. The lack of *but* in this corpus compared to *because* among Gambian speakers calls into question the universality of the pattern found by Matras (2009) and Stoltz (1996) that BUT is the most borrowable discourse particle. As Table 12 shows, it accounts for 25.7% of the Gambian *BECAUSE* variants, but no English tokens produced by Senegalese speakers:
Just as with the BUT variable, a mixed-effects logistic regression with speaker as a random slope was constructed in a step-wise progression in which social variables of sex, age group, nationality, locality (urban vs. rural), place-orientation, cross-border mobility, and capital contact were added. The dependent variable was a binomial choice between foreign and native marker. Descriptive statistics describe the relationships between social categories and foreign BECAUSE marker choice (Figures 14 & 15). An interaction of sex and nationality and a main effect of urban locality are significant predictors of foreign BECAUSE. This model had the lowest AIC (288.2). The results from the regression are presented in Table 13:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>parce que</th>
<th>because</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Global token totals and percentages of BECAUSE particle usage on each side of the border.
The main effects of locality type and gender show that nationality alone cannot explain foreign discourse particle usage. Just as with the phonetic and morphosyntactic variables discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the use of foreign discourse markers patterns in a complex way with the social identities of speakers, not simply nationality. Since two foreign markers are in circulation in this borderland area, this binomial mixed-effects regression cannot tell which significant main effects and interactions predict *because* or *parce que*. The descriptive statistics below make the patterns more clear.

As Figure 14 shows, rural inhabitants use the Wolof BECAUSE variant *ndax* most frequently (n=78), while foreign BECAUSE variants (n=47) are less frequent, and English *because* is least frequent (n=5). In the urban localities, however, foreign BECAUSE variants are almost twice as frequent (n=113) as the native Wolof variant (n=60). Within the foreign BECAUSE variants, there is a clear preference for *parce que*,

| Estimate | Standard Error | z value | Pr(>|z|) |
|----------|----------------|---------|----------|
| Intercept | -2.566         | 0.802   | -3.199   | 0.001    |
| Rural    | -1.236         | 0.584   | -2.118   | 0.034*   |
| Gambian  | 3.6119         | 1.015   | 3.557    | 0.0004***|
| Male     | 4.466          | 1.002   | 4.455    | 8.39e-06***|
| Gambian x Male | -3.921 | 1.315 | -2.981 | 0.003** |

Table 13: Results from the mixed-effects logistic regression predicting foreign BECAUSE usage
which can be heard on both sides of the border. But *because* seems to be associated with a certain Gambian demographic as the next section shows.

The interaction between nationality and sex as shown in Figure 15 shows that Gambian men use fewer foreign discourse particles than Senegalese men, but the only group that uses more foreign discourse particles is Senegalese men (Gambian men use foreign *BECause* particles 70% of the time, while Senegalese men use foreign *BECause* particles 72% of the time). Gambian men are divided between (French source) *parce que* and (English source) *because*, but given the direction of the other trends towards a
national Gambian variety, it seems reasonable to suspect that *because* is on the rise among Gambian borderland men and may soon replace *parce que*. Although age group was not a significant predictor in this model, it seems that the features associated with Banjul or the Gambian “center” are on the rise among Gambian men in the borderland. Gambian men and Senegalese men show similar rates of *ndax* or native *BECAUSE* usage (30% and 28%, respectively).

![Bar graph showing the percentages of BECAUSE variants according to sex and nationality](image)

Figure 15: Bar graph showing the percentages of BECAUSE variants according to sex and nationality (with token totals reported).

Interestingly, Senegalese females have the lowest rate of foreign BECAUSE usage with just nine tokens of *parce que* (12%). It appears that among the Senegalese, *parce que* is part of the gendered repertoire of Senegalese men, while *ndax* is the preferred form for
Senegalese women, but interestingly parce que is the preferred particle form among Gambian women. Among the Gambians, parce que accounts for about one-third of all BECAUSE particles, but whereas Gambian men also use because, Gambian women do not seem to have adopted this particle.

With all of this variation in BECAUSE particles in the borderland, it seems as if there is a gendered phenomenon wherein Senegalese women prefer native Wolof ndax in direct contrast with Senegalese men’s overall preference for parce que. The French source of the discourse particle may be a ready-made gender/nationality index for Senegalese men, while ndax may index a more traditional, local Wolof identity for women. Since words and phrases borrowed from French are a core part of Urban (Senegalese) Wolof, which marks a speaker as savvy and modern, it seems as if the use of parce que among Senegalese men is part of their borderland repertoire. I have suggested that Urban Wolof may be more of a gendered phenomenon than a locality (urban versus rural) phenomenon (Mitsch 2015b). Although Urban Wolof may be gaining legitimacy in national media, in comic strips, and among youth-based political movements (McLaughlin 2001, Diallo 2010), Ngom (2004) maintains that it lacks any overt prestige in broader national language attitudes. It may be for this reason that Senegalese women avoid the French source parce que. Gambian men and women, on the other hand, may not share the same evaluation of parce que as their Senegalese neighbors, perhaps because, due to lack of exposure to French, they are unaware of its source. If they are not aware that it is a French source word or that it marks one as an Urban Wolof speaker, then they may not have the same motivation to avoid it. It may also be part of Gambian women’s transborder repertoire that allows them to slip through
the porous border, not marked as Gambian (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, Gambian women seem to prefer *parce que* to *ndax* or *because*. Gambian men, on the other, show balanced variation in their choice of *because* particle across all three variants. They may be adopting *because* as a part of their Gambian Urban Wolof repertoire and it may increase among younger male speakers, strengthening the linguistic border between Gambian and Senegalese men.

6.5 Discussion

Borrowed discourse particles are a common occurrence cross-linguistically, but the motivation for borrowing them remains unclear. As de Rooij (2002) points out, just because they are easy to borrow does not mean all speakers will use borrowed variants all the time. But also, assuming saliency or discourse contrastiveness is a goal shared by all speakers, these discourse parameters described by de Rooij are not enough alone to explain the distribution of borrowed and native discourse particles. For both discourse particles described above showing variation between borrowed (foreign) and native options, models with nationality as a main effect were selected by a stepwise process of model construction, suggesting that the distribution of foreign particles contributes in some sense to the linguistic border that may be developing in this Saloum borderland area. I examine foreign discourse particle usage as one measure of language mixing described by many (Swigart 2000, McLaughlin 2001, and Ngom 2004) as Urban Wolof. Senegalese speakers seem to have adopted foreign **BUT** particle in part of their nationalized Urban repertoire, whereas Gambian speakers seem to have adopted foreign **BECAUSE** particles into their repertoires. Nationality interacts with other social variants in both cases,
however, further suggesting that the social construction of the linguistic border is part of more complex borderland social identities.

For BUT, the choice between *mais* and *waaye/waante* also seems to be driven by social variables like age, gender, and locality, with young Senegalese men preferring *mais* to the native Wolof variant. For the BECAUSE variable, nationality also interacts with gender with men once again preferring foreign variants to native Wolof variants. As with the sociophonetic variable in Chapter 4, these findings offer further evidence that the social construction of the linguistic border may be primarily part of the gendered identity construction of borderland men.

Both BECAUSE and BUT variables also showed significant variation between speakers from rural and urban localities. This finding is in concert with what has been found about language mixing being an urban phenomenon. While Karang (Senegal) and Amdallaye (The Gambia) are hardly as cosmopolitan as places like the capitals Dakar (Senegal) or Banjul (The Gambia), their relatively larger populations in this area and location on the paved transnational road mean that these urban spaces have much more contact with people from across Senegambia as they relocate or pass through on their ways to other places. The presence of official state-sponsored schools, official language signage, flags, and government buildings is also more prevalent in Karang and Amdallaye than in the rural spaces. Although official national education was not selected as a predictor of foreign discourse marker usage (similar to Sankoff et al. 1997), the presence of more teachers, students, and people educated in the official languages in the urban spaces may promote the usage of more borrowed lexical items including discourse markers in Wolof. The rural Wolof speakers also have frequent contact with urban
centers Karang and Amdallaye, but for many of the older speakers in the rural areas, it is a source of pride that they do not “mix” their Wolof with “toubab” (the Wolof word for European, but used to mean French or English depending on the context). Different language norms in the rural areas may prevent the frequent usage of borrowed elements due to their association with modern, urban lifestyle. If village inhabitants tend to participate in a more traditional agrarian lifestyle and are more conservative religiously, association with the European languages may be frowned upon. Ker Malick Sarr (The Gambia) did not have any English schools although the village inhabitants expressed interest in having an English-medium primary school. Djidah (Senegal) had a French school and an Arabic school, although most of the inhabitants I talked to preferred the koranic education for their children. Those village inhabitants who studied in English or French-medium schools often became teachers or advisors to the chief upon their return from bigger towns or cities. Their “toubab” education does not seem to exclude them from having positions of local authority, but it seems like their language abilities do not necessarily lead to increased usage of borrowed discourse particles across the population. Because these particles are so salient they have become linguistic stereotypes (Labov 1972) that speakers may have more agency to respond to social motivations to adopt or avoid the foreign source discourse particles.

6.6 Conclusion

I have discussed the social lives of borderlands and the trends in their local usage of discourse markers from Wolof, French, and English sources. Although Wolof is the lingua franca in this area, colonial history has led to complex language contact situations
in the respective countries and, as a result, divergent “urban” varieties have emerged. Because young people are the most active users of the urban varieties of language, we may expect young people to use more foreign discourse particles as well. In this area, which may be more conservative in terms of gender roles than the capitals Dakar and Banjul, young men are at the vanguard of adopting the nationalized urban varieties, which results in a gendered divergence at the border.

Due to the metapragmatic awareness associated with borrowed discourse markers, they can be classified as a Labovian stereotype or a second-order index. When speakers are explicitly aware of an association between a language form and the demographics of users associated with this form, the social attributes associated with this demographic often also get indexically linked to the linguistic form. The “indexical field” of social meaning (Eckert 2008) activated by these borrowed forms includes a constellation of associated social meanings: *modern, young,* and *Senegalese* are the social meanings activated in the case of the French discourse markers. Their Wolof counterparts, on the other hand, while perhaps unmarked (and unremarked upon), would index “traditional” identities and associated attributes, which may be deemed more appropriate for women in this area. As Campbell-Kibler (2006) points out, just as linguistic variation is structured by various social factors like salience, habits formed over time, and markedness, social meaning is also structured by ideologies and beliefs about the social order. Although French, English, and Wolof discourse markers are all in circulation within the borderland, speakers in this study variably index traditional or modern, national or local, and other associated attributes through their usage.
The distribution of discourse markers among the borderland Wolof speakers confirms what Juffermans and McGlynn (2010) predicted, namely that Gambian Urban Wolof is not quite as advanced in its hybridization as Senegalese Urban Wolof. The reasons for this difference are unclear, although it may have to do with the degree of prestige accorded the French language since colonial times. This chapter also shows that, unlike the Central American and Pacific languages examined by Stolz (1996), Gambian Wolof speakers have adopted *because* into their before but, calling into question the principle suggested by Stoltz (1996) and Matras (2009) that ‘but’ is one of the most easily borrowed discourse particles in situations of language contact. Furthermore, the presence of French markers in Gambian speech shows that while some discourse markers associated with Senegal (*mais* and *parce que*) can cross the border into Gambians’ repertories, the Gambian markers (like *because*) are entirely absent from the Senegalese Wolof speakers’ repertories. This fact suggests that Senegalese Wolof has a greater influence on Gambian Wolof than vice versa, perhaps due to its majority status and use in popular media.

Furthermore, as Swigart (1994, 2000) and McLaughlin (2000) discuss, Senegalese Urban Wolof is an unmarked mixed code for certain city-dwellers and is characterized by the frequent use of French words and phrases. The distinction between urban and rural Wolof is not quite as clearcut (Mitsch 2015a), however, and with many youth spending their vacations in the capitals or bigger cities, even the rural youth have some exposure to urban Wolof on both sides of the border. Whether the motivation is to increase salience of an utterance by inserting foreign elements, or whether these elements are an integrated part of Urban Wolof repertoires that index “youth” and “modernity” in contrast to
“traditional” and “rural” identities, it is clear from their distribution that young men are more likely to use the “borrowed” discourse markers while the young women are more likely to use native Wolof elements. In most variationist studies, women are thought to be the innovators when there is no stigma involved (Labov 2001), but for many young Wolof-speaking women, language mixing is frowned upon for its associations with the corrupting side of modernity and Western influence (Ngom 2004).

While some young Wolof women in the borderlands do occasionally use borrowed discourse markers, the variation found here suggests a stable distribution where masculinity is indirectly indexed by borrowed discourse markers. The ‘constellation’ of social meanings associated with language mixing and borrowed discourse markers creates what Eckert (2008) calls an “indexical field.” The discourse markers themselves may not directly index gender, but through their associated meanings of modernity and savviness, ideologies about gender may intervene in the structure of the indexical field. A by-product of the indexical field links ‘modernity’ to ‘nationality,’ as young men more often index their ‘Senegalese’ or ‘Gambian’ through the iconic use of French or English borrowings. This value of modernity (which comes to index urban affiliation and then nationality) seems to be the desired identification for many borderland young men, though not for borderland women (and older men).
In this dissertation I have discussed several variables at various levels of the Wolof grammar that may contribute to the social construction of a political border in this postcolonial West African borderland between Senegal and The Gambia. I have also used ethnographic methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews to formulate a better understanding of how people comprehend and interact with this international boundary in their midst. A handful of studies in the past two decades have examined the impact international boundaries can have on the language varieties spoken in their vicinity. The overwhelming evidence in these studies confirms that the modern nation-state influences the language use (and language ideologies) of its citizens, including those who live in the geographic periphery or borderlands, through the development of a national standard variety. Some of these borders are ancient (e.g., the Scottish-English border in the AISEB project led by Watt, Llamas, and their colleagues), while some are more recent inventions (e.g., the German-speaking world examined by Auer 2005, Hinksens & Auer 2005; or the Canadian-U.S. border studied by Boberg 2000, 2010, 2014). The long-term effects of these borders are understood as a result of settlement patterns, historical antagonism, or the growing influence of a national standard variety. On the other hand, Omoniyi (2004) found that based on language attitudes alone, Yoruba speakers in the rural Benin-Nigerian borderland exist as a complex speech community with two layers: the base layer of traditional ethnic Yoruba identity, which is
transborder in nature and unites the two communities, and the more “superficial” layer of national identity linked to the official language(s) divides the two communities. This Yoruba-speaking situation is more similar to the Wolof-speaking situation I examined in this dissertation. Focusing on the ideologies as well as the language use of Wolof as spoken in the Senegambian borderland offers an opportunity to explore how an “artificial” or externally imposed political border may or may not become a linguistic border in the absence of national standard languages.

7.1 Review of the findings
In Chapter one, I introduced the motivating questions for this study and outlined what scholars have discovered about modern nations and their borders. As pointed out by Watt and Llamas (2014), in spite of the burgeoning cross-disciplinary field known as “borderland studies,” few researchers have investigated the role language plays in the construction of borderland identities: “It is as though once the point has been made that accent and dialect are crucial, nothing much more needs to be said about the matter; readers are left to fill in the gaps themselves” (2). Some studies that have specifically studied the linguistic reality of borderland inhabitants have also offered more depth, but few have coupled rigorous sociolinguistic techniques and ethnography. I also propose that postcolonial African borders might be different in quality from the borders of Europe and North America due to their social history and the fact that they cross-cut many ethnolinguistic groups. Scholars differ in their opinions about whether the historical scars of differing colonial policies (e.g., British vs. French approaches to their colonies) were felt in the remote, peripheral borderlands. Miles (2014) and Miles and Rocherfort (1991)
found that among the Hausa of Niger and Nigeria, ethnic affiliation was subordinated to national affiliation (which was, in turn, less important than religious affiliation). Omoniyi (2004) studied the language attitudes of Yoruba in the Benin-Nigerian borderland and found that there is a complex layering of national and ethnic identity that takes place in these borderlands. I argue that a more in-depth study of linguistic variation can be used in the Wolof-speaking Saloum borderlands to better understand how the borders are socially reproduced through language use.

In Chapter two I described the sociolinguistic and ethnographic methods used to approach the language use in this particular borderland. I showed how these methodologies were complementary in understanding the way borderland inhabitants interact with the political border and the linguistic resources that are used in this area. The sociolinguistic interview, adapted for this speech community (i.e., wordlist replaced with picture-naming task and no reading passage) allowed me to capture several aspects of borderlanders’ speech, from the relatively more controlled picture-naming task, designed to capture particular vowels in various phonological contexts, to the open-ended semi-structured interview where participants talked about their lives in the borderland, including stories about conflict at the border or routines or practices that define their life at the margins of two nations. At the end of the interview, participants were asked about the languages and varieties of Wolof spoken in the area. The interviews helped complement the ethnographic experience of living near the border and crossing it with friends for baptisms and shopping trips. Observing the lives of borderland inhabitants in action and keeping detailed field notes helped me formulate hypotheses and pay attention to nuances when developing a schema for coding my interviews.
In Chapter three I examined some of the language ideologies that have shaped the ways both linguists and local borderland inhabitants think about language. Additionally, I explored the ways the border is conceived of as either constituting an invisible line, dividing two discrete territories (the view more in line with modern notions of a nation-state) as well as the conception that the borderland is transitional zone, somewhere in between Senegal and The Gambia, but the border is constituted by the official post (with border guards, customs officials, money changers, etc.) between Karang and Amdallaye on the transnational highway (a more pragmatic view of the border). I analyzed the interviews and the ways each speaker talked about mobility and what it means to cross to classify them according to their border conception. While none of these ideologies about language or borders seemed to be significant predictors of linguistic variation, it is still important to understand the local meanings of the border. The ethnographic experience of living near and crossing the border with locals helped me uncover these competing perspectives on the localized meaning of the border as a line and the border as a point.

In Chapter four, the variable production of a mid-central vowel, presumed to be part of the Saloum (and Senegalese) vowel system, was examined across several phonological contexts that are said to condition separate vowel categories in Gambian Wolof. Sex and nationality and their interaction were significant predictors of a Pillai score (a MANOVA measure of overlap between categories) for these central vowel categories. Gambian men were significantly less merged than the rest of the borderland. I argue that Gambian men are adopting the production associated with Banjul, the center of their nation, while women and Senegalese men are producing the vowel categories of the local Saloum, or the broader, supralocal Senegalese variety.
Chapter five explored the distribution of a morphosyntactic variable between imperfective markers following vowel-final pronouns and preceding verbs. Gambian (Banjul) Wolof can have the “default” morpheme di or de in post-vocalic positions while Senegalese (Dakar) Wolof has the clitic form -y in this phonological context. This variable was most clearly linked to contact with the supposed source of the incoming variant; contact with Banjul combined with Gambian nationality was the significant predictor for use of di/de in postvocalic contexts.

Chapter six explored the distribution of two types of discourse particles with widespread use in the borderland community, BUT and BECAUSE to try to better understand the practices of “language mixing” known as Urban Wolof. Since two separate varieties of Urban Wolof have been widely used in the urban centers of both nations, divergence seems to be the result of contact with the exogenous official languages in each country. Once again, nationality and gender were significant predictors for both of these discourse particle categories, with Senegalese men marking their discourse more frequently with mais in contrast to other borderland groups that prefer the native Wolof variant waaye. While Senegalese women prefer the native ndax to any borrowed options, Senegalese men show a preference for parce que. Gambian men show variation between because, parce que, and ndax but Gambian women show little use of because, preferring either parce que or ndax. The discourse markers borrowed from the national official language seem to be strongly linked to masculinility and urban identities in the borderland.
7.2 Discussion of linguistic factors

In dialect geography, linguistic borders are often presented as bundles of isoglosses (or lines demarcating one linguistic feature from another on dialect maps. However, as Mühläuser (1996), puts it, “[I]soglosses typically fail to bundle in topological or social space and scattered transitional dialects are the norm” (11). Sociolinguists nevertheless rely on isoglosses to try to demarcate the major dialect zones and often these isoglosses are based upon phonological features of the dialect (e.g., Labov et al. 2006). These isoglosses can, in turn, cluster around the social space of political boundaries as in the case of the Scottish-English border, often called the tightest bundle of isoglosses in the English-speaking world (Watt & Ingham 1999). As Auer (2005) has shown, this “norm” of transitional dialect zones can be affected by 1) the presence of a political border and 2) the spread of a national standard variety. But does the political border influence linguistic variation at all levels of the grammar? In this dissertation I have examined variation at the phonological (phonetic), morphosyntactic, and lexical/discourse levels to try to better understand how these different levels may contribute to the social construction of the linguistic border.

According to Boberg (2000, 2014), “[T]he border acts as a barrier to diffusion of phonetic patterns related to underlying differences in phonemic contrast…but is relatively permeable for less structurally embedded features” (2015; 52).\(^\text{18}\) If the national norms are spreading from the large urban centers outward towards the periphery, how might the border influence their transmission and diffusion in Senegal and The Gambia? Or, from a

\(^{18}\) By structurally embedded, Boberg seems to mean a linguistic element that is part of the grammar (i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax) as opposed to the lexicon.
more synchronic perspective, how do different linguistic levels get employed in this borderland to index national differences or similarities? At the phonological and discourse particle levels, gender proved to be a significant factor in the linguistic differences between Senegal and The Gambia. It seems that this is a process of divergence being led primarily by men: Gambian men in the case of the mid-central vowel merger and the use of discourse particle because and Senegalese men in their preference for French-source mais as a discourse particle. The explanation I proposed for this gendered divergence is that men are more active members of the nation-building activities; they are more involved in the politics and organizational activities that glean their power from the nation state. As a result, men (consciously or not) adopt nationalized norms (which are mostly associated with the national capital or other large cities), thereby contributing to the linguistic boundary taking the same form as the political boundary. As Boberg (2000, 2014) predicted, however, the less-structurally embedded particles like the borrowed discourse markers seem to cross the border easily, as mais and parce que (presumably adopted due to Senegalese Wolof contact with French) are relatively frequent on the Gambian side of the border. Nevertheless, because has not been adopted on the Senegalese side. This distribution might be due to the relative prestige Senegalese Wolof has in comparison to Gambian Wolof. The morphosyntactic variable shown to be linked to Banjul contact for Gambians also does not seem to be crossing the border into Senegal although there is some usage among those Senegalese who do not have frequent contact with Banjul. Again, this seems to have less to do with how “structurally embedded” this feature is than with the social history of this variant and identity-linked features it carries. In order to better understand the role that the border
plays in blocking or promoting cross-border diffusion, however, more needs to be known about the diachronic state of this area.

7.3 Discussion of social factors

While the various linguistic levels seem to play different roles in the construction of the border (with the most salient levels being the lexical/discourse level and the morphosyntactic level), they are also influenced by different aspects of borderland inhabitants’ social identities. The ethnographic experience of living in the borderland on both sides of the border revealed the rich social landscape of the borderlands. As Woolard (1989) said of the various identities professed by Castilian and Catalans speakers in the Barcelona area, “People usually did not argue about their identities, they performed them” (40). One of the resources people use to index particular social identities is language. By focusing on how various borderland inhabitants from diverse backgrounds speak Wolof, I was able to use quantitative methods to uncover some of the social identities that are linked to linguistic factors. Several other sociohistorical factors that may influence language use in the borderland were not statistically significant but do warrant some discussion and directions for future research. I discuss the various social and historical elements that appear to contribute to both the ideologies surrounding the borderland language use the linguistic variation of features in the borderland.

7.3.1 Colonial Legacies

Some scholars have suggested that the French colonial policy of assimilation (compared to the British colonial policy of association) has resulted in stronger sense of nationalism
among citizens of the former French colonies. Miles (2014) says that “Britain and France placed different emphases on the desired outcomes among their colonized subjects: technical competence for the former, culture appropriation (even *amour propre*) for the latter” (8-9). Many historians have recently criticized the view that colonial policy had any real lasting impact on the cultures and populations of the former colonies (e.g., Mamdani 1996). Nevertheless, an impression remains among scholars and among local people alike that colonial contact left an enduring influence on the cultures of local people. If this historical legacy of French assimilationist policy were to have any impact on the language use in the Saloum borderlands, we might expect that the Senegalese would have a stronger national affiliation than the Gambians. In this study I found no evidence that the Senegalese borderland inhabitants have a stronger sense of national identity or national pride than Gambians, nor did I find any evidence that Senegalese use a more linguistically distinct variety to try to distinguish themselves from their “anglophone” neighbors.

7.3.2. *Standard language ideologies*

Standard language ideologies (and the accompanying dialect leveling that seems to take place as a result) can be a powerful force in the process of nation-building, and according to Anderson (1991) the print media and the language variety represented in the media are an instrumental part of the centralized production of an “imagined community” known as the modern nation-state. But just as Anderson’s focus on print media inadvertently ignored large sections of the global population who do not participate in such typically Western “regimes of literacy” (Blommaert 2008), many scholars of borderland linguistic
situation have given much credit to the influence of standard languages without considering situations in which there is no standard or standardized variety.

Although sociolinguists have been vocal in promoting the validity of minority dialects, many linguists have implicitly reproduced some of the standard language ideologies that threaten these dialects. As Benor (2010) points out, “sociolinguists’ language ideologies shine through in their academic work” when they refer to varieties as “standard” and “non-standards”. In most variationist studies this amounts to “[t]he notion of an unmarked norm [that] privileges the speech of middle- and upper-class European Americans and others in power” (172). But I have also pointed out in Chapter 5 that many sociolinguists seem to presume that all variation exists as competition between “standard” variant and “non-standard” (or dialect) variants. It is true that in many societies, standard language varieties are quite powerful; they are thought to coincide with the rise of the nation-state in the nineteenth century Europe and the two phenomena have been seen as linked and mutually constitutive:

With the formation of nation states in the course of the nineteenth century and the subsequent processes of national unification, there occurred a gradual large-scale social spread of active oral skills in the “new” standard languages, the importance of which steadily grew not only as the main means of communication at the expense of traditional dialects, but also as the totem of national identity. (Hinskens et al. 2000)

Not only does the standard national variety become a “totem” of national identity, but it also provides speaker access to legitimacy and power (Bourdieu 1991). The concept of “standard” language or a national standardized variety is complicated by the regular disconnect between what Calvet (1994) calls the in vitro language policies (those conceived of in the laboratories of government offices) and the in vivo language policies
(those enacted in the streets) that regulate communication in Senegambia. The *in vitro* policies favor exogenous ex-colonial languages, but the *in vivo* policies favor local languages, and for much of Senegal and The Gambia, Wolof is the *in vivo* official language. While Wolof is recognized and codified by each government as a “national language,” there is no “standard” variety to speak of (Torrence 2012). In this Senegambian context where Wolof has little to no institutionalized support and no explicit standard variety, the relationship between power and language use becomes more complicated. To be sure, as in any society, there is a sense of prestige in the way one speaks. As Bloomfield noted in 1927, in the popular imagination of most Western societies, correct speaking is seen as linked to correct writing and he (along with many other linguists) seem to think that the existence of a national standard language is intimately tied to a standard language variety (435). But as he found with the Menomini speakers in Wisconsin, a written or literary standard need not exist for speakers to have intuitions about “good” and “bad” speech.

It seems that national norms and standards can develop in such a way that national (urban) centers of nations can come to influence the peripheries. These urban centers, when ideologically positioned as the “center” of a nation-state, can become the norm-makers for the periphery, leading to a “pluricentric” language situation (Clyne 1992). The power and influence associated with these centers can lead to the curious case in which the varieties associated with Dakar or Banjul, while often overtly criticized as polluted or corrupted Wolof, are becoming the influential varieties that can mark national identity in the borderland among certain speakers.
As Irvine (1975, 1982, 1989) points out, Wolof’s cultural history and association with the caste system means historically griots (soothsayers, praise singers) have been expected to have the best command of “deep Wolof” in comparison with nobles. Griots were the oral historians or bards of each community or of a single noble family, and because their livelihood was dependent on the largesse of the noble families, their linguistic ability and facility with “deep Wolof” to sing the praises of this family came to be associated with a role of supplication or seeking money or favors. While this ability may be overtly valued by other speakers of Wolof, it may also indexically mark a speaker as part of this caste that seeks remuneration for its verbal abilities. Caste designations have been quickly losing social meaning across Senegal and The Gambia in modern times (along with ethnic differences) and caste differences only came up once in my interviews, when a speaker said she was a descendent of blacksmiths. As mentioned in Chapter 2, according to Fall (2009), much of the Saloum was settled by liberated lower castes (like blacksmiths and leather workers) after the abolition of slavery in the early twentieth century. While the social differentiation of the castes may no longer be relevant in modern Senegambian life (at least in the Saloum), the indexical link of linguistic ability in “pure Wolof” may still carry the association with this caste or traditional livelihood of griots. Most speakers do not go out of their way to avoid “borrowed” words, whether they are aware of the origins or not. On the flip side, some highly educated French-speaking élite of Dakar have also taken an interest in a renaissance of “pure Wolof” and are able to avoid what they know to be French loanwords (Swigart 2000). Thus, while Urban Wolof is overtly denied prestige by most speakers, it also links a speaker to modern life (economic, political etc.). As standard language ideologies
become linked to history and purism, Gambian Wolof becomes associated with a minority dialect and less connected to its roots than Senegalese Wolof in the borderland region, in spite of the fact that many of the “Gambian” features examined in this dissertation are said to be remnants of archaic Wolof (Becher 2000). Speakers do not necessarily know the history of their language, but they can develop theories about “original” or “better” Wolof based on non-linguistic facts. For these reasons, Wolof speakers in Senegal and The Gambia have a complex relationship to “pure” (or would-be “standard”) Wolof, which, in turn, has a complex relationship to concepts like power and prestige that are usually associated with standard language varieties.

7.3.3 Gender
Across several variables, there was a consistent effect of the speaker’s sex on the linguistic variation in the borderland. As Cheshire (2003) and Eckert (1989) point out, it is reductive to automatically link sex and gender in variationist studies without a more ethnographic understanding of how the complex social reality of gender relates to other identities. There is good reason in this borderland area, however, to see gender co-constituted through a link between women and traditional, local identities and men through a more modern, nationally or internationally oriented identity. It would be overly simplistic to imply that men feel a stronger sense of national pride or patriotism in this borderland area and that their linguistic habits reflect an antagonism towards their neighbors across the boundary line. Many men also reap the economic and political benefits of living in the borderland and fluidly passing through the “net” (Nugent 2008). Speaker 127, a young man from Djidah (Senegal), who has also lived and worked in The
Gambia at various periods in his life, responded as follows when asked whether he considered himself to be Senegalese or Gambian:

(1) Man, instant senegalais laa. Instant maangi Senegal.

As for me, right now I am Senegalese. Right now I am in Senegal.

Although he was perhaps being flippant, this response implies that at other times when he is not in Senegal, his identity may shift. In this utterance, he makes use of a French source word *instant* (pronounced [ɛ̃stɛ̃] rather than [ɪnstɛnt]) and the French descriptor *sénégalais* [sɛnɛgale] rather than the English *Senegalese* [senɛgaliz], but it is clear that he sees this national identity as mutable, tied to the socio-geographic space he may be inhabiting at the time. As part of the social constructivist paradigm, Bucholtz & Hall (2004) argue that identities are best understood as the outcome of language use, requiring researchers to shift our focus from identity as fixed categories to “identification as an ongoing social and political process” (10). Many borderland inhabitants at some point or another in their lives have found themselves living or spending extended periods of time on the other side of the border. Perhaps when Speaker 127 is living and working in The Gambia he is also able to manipulate certain aspects of his speech to sound more like a “Gambian” young man. Various factors may influence his desire to do so. Perhaps sounding Senegalese when speaking Wolof is more prestigious than sounding Gambian in The Gambia. Nevertheless, the ability to “cross” or to adopt “Gambian” elements into his repertoire does not necessarily un-do the linguistic boundary largely projected by men in this study, but rather would serve to reinforce it. If moving between Senegalese and
Gambian identities for men means adopting the linguistic repertoires of their peers, then a speaker like Speaker 127 may have to become proficient in the English-flavored Gambian Urban Wolof. Future research could examine the linguistic practices across interactional settings of those borderland inhabitants whose national identity is shifting or contingent upon current location. Now that it is better understood what linguistic variables are circulating in the borderland and what types of identities they may index, it would be interesting to understand how people negotiate their local and national identities in contexts like bargaining in the weekly market or interacting with the border guards.

7.3.4 Age
In sociolinguistic studies, age is often used as an indicator of change in “apparent time.” It is often assumed that if young people use a linguistic feature more than older people, that feature is on the rise. Sometimes, age-based differences are also a result of the temporary, changing repertoires that young people may adopt to assert their differences and stances towards authority and tradition. In Africa this has led to an increase of youth varieties used to signal an orientation towards modernity and to carve out a space in the power structure that has traditionally favored a small elite group (Mous & Kießling 2004). As Cruise O’Brien (1996) says, “In West Africa the formation of a political identity is an area of possibility for the young, one thing that young people can do in an otherwise prevailing powerlessness” (55). This politicized identity may have linguistic consequences. In a desire to separate themselves from both the post-colonial elite (and the language(s) that index them: French or English) and the traditional power structures
(indexed by traditional, “pure” Wolof), young people are adopting hybridized or creolized identities that may indexically link them to the national urban centers.

As Cruise O’Brien also notes, the Senegalese population is increasingly young and increasingly urban (58), and these two phenomena in Senegal and The Gambia seem to be linked in the identities of young men in particular. Employing the features of what has been called Urban Wolof, whether they are in the border towns or border villages, is a strategy used mostly by young men. Whether the goal is to mark themselves as urban or young, the resulting index is also a “modern” attribute. Through this urban, youthful, modern identity also comes a national identity that sets them apart from the young men across the border.

The relationship of youth (particularly young men) to the nation-state can be ambivalent, however. On the one hand, their disillusionment with the state and the political economy is evident in Senegal where the 2012 elections were marked by protest and young men have been emigrating in large numbers to Europe. Political involvement and dissent are riskier endeavors in The Gambia and many Senegalese pointed out that traveling to The Gambia often meant taking greater care to censure their speech due to the authoritarian reputation of the current regime. Cruise O’Brien articulates this ambivalence felt by the youth, saying, “Access to the state is the most valued of prizes, while the exactions and impositions of the state are resented and feared, coming as they often do in brutal or incomprehensible forms” (55). In this borderland area, the fear and resentment felt by many young men are a result of differential treatment by representatives of the state at the border posts. Based on my observation and the experiences narrated by participants, it seems that customs officials and border police
seem to flex their power and authority towards young men more than the rest of the population. The result is that young men seem to be more aware of the state and its boundary and this cognizance is realized in the form of linguistic differences that reinforce the boundary. While the only age effect found in this study was related to the discourse particle BUT (in an interaction with locality), it does seem important to note how age contributes to the linguistic border due to its association (along with gender and locality) with the respective “Urban Wolofs” of each nation. As Boberg (2000) found in Canada, some linguistic features are marked for their association with youth culture rather than nationality and therefore are spread more easily across the border. In this case, youth culture is highly gendered and highly nationalized, serving to reinscribe the boundary.

7.3.5 Urban and rural borders

Although the entire area covered by this study amounts to only 13km², there are four discrete communities within this space, two of which I considered “urban” due to their location on the main road. The towns and villages explored in this dissertation may also be different from the urban landscape of traditional/foundational sociolinguistic studies, where different neighborhoods are predominated by different tranches of the socioeconomic spectrum and where neighborhoods are discretely zoned. While large sprawling African urban centers like Dakar and Banjul might have such neighborhoods where socioeconomic status is apparent and children from different neighborhoods attend different schools, in Karang, the biggest town in this study (population ~12,000 in 2013), different quartiers, or neighborhoods are not distinguished by the quality of homes or schools. The fact that this town has a mayor’s office, a high school, a hospital, and
electricity is primarily what mark Karang as (the most) urban space in this Saloum area. While Amdallaye feels more or less like an extension of Karang (since many residents of Amdallaye attend school, mosque, or church in Karang and also charge their mobile phones there), the fact remains that they are territorially part of distinct nation-states. The urban spaces are also marked by a tangible, imposing representation of the boundary: the official border post situated on the main road between Karang and Amdallaye. The salience of this boundary marker is in stark contrast with the absence of any boundary marking in the Djiah-Ker Malick Sarr borderland. The relative imposition of these boundary markings might influence language use according to the cognitive border model of Auer (2005), although neither border seems to hinder the social space carved out by cross-border contact or routines.

Urban locality was predictive of only one linguistic variable in this study (the discourse particle BECAUSE variants), with urban inhabitants favoring borrowed forms and rural inhabitants favoring the native Wolof form. The lexical level of differentiation is what Boberg (2014) refers to a relatively “superficial” part of a speaker’s grammar. Perhaps the fact that there were not more linguistic differences between urban and rural space should surprise us. But as Britain (2013) pointed out, the sociolinguistic preoccupation with urban spaces has skewed the perspective about language variation and change. In fact, the same principles of language variation and change apply to both places. The only thing that distinguishes urban space from rural space in terms of language is that the former experience more population contact and movement. Karang and Amdallaye have also experienced rapid growth in the past 25 years due to the paving of the transnational highway. People have come from all over to reap the economic
benefits of borderland life. Djidah and Ker Malick Sarr have remained relatively isolated, however.

7.3.6 Mobility and border construction

Geographic mobility typically has been seen as the bane of dialectologists, who have sought to find the “authentic” varieties associated with the non-mobile residents of an area. But Britain (2013) calls upon sociolinguists to follow the example of human geographers and examine how mobility influences linguistic repertoires in the construction of place. Ever since Milroy (1987) found that more mobile individuals with their weak, diffuse networks were the channels through which changes spread, the notion of mobility has tended to be associated with innovation (where most speakers innovate towards a supralocal standard variant). But Johnstone (2006) confronts the idea that increased mobility has led to “dialect leveling” across various language communities as she found that increased awareness of “Pittsburghese” has led to its commodification and place-based identity marking. Yet mobility is an important aspect of borderland life and helps contribute to the production of social space through linguistic contact. In terms of social space, national borders are much more than lines on a map. They emerge through people’s identities and behaviors and can be reflected in speech patterns. A variety of social factors are therefore considered in relation to this linguistic measure of central vowel distance, including mobility, nationality, education, and mother tongue. These factors help highlight the complexity of borderland life and the centripetal and centrifugal

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19 As Trudgill (2003) points out, a traditional dialect map of Greece would not be possible today due to intensive migration towards Athens and other urban centers
forces that contribute to Saloum Wolof borderland speech and the social spatiality of the borderland.

Mobility may lead to experience with other dialects, and as Walker (2014) and others have shown, experience with a second dialect can cause subtle shifts in speakers’ production (and perception) of their own dialect. But as Chapter 5 shows, almost all speakers in this area have varying degrees of mobility with Banjul (the capital of The Gambia) because it is the closest large city (compared to Dakar, which is 495 km away). Experience with Banjul Wolof may therefore be shifting all borderland speakers’ productions to some extent, but it seems to be shifting the most for the Gambian borderland inhabitants with more Banjul Wolof experience. It could be that Gambian speakers choose to highlight an affiliation with their national “center,” while for those Gambians with less Banjul contact prefer the local morphosyntactic pattern, which also happens to be affiliated with Senegalese Wolof.

Auer (2005) proposes that linguistic divergence is a result of the cognitive effects of the border and the resultant opposing identities that speakers adopt. Britain (2002, 2013) claims that while cognitive space is an important component of place-making (and therefore place-based identities), mobility, routines, and infrastructure (or the social construction of Euclidean space) are the driving forces behind cognitive space. My study suggests that the boundary does play an important cognitive role for those with more mobility towards Banjul. Contact with the Gambian capital seems to reinforce the national differences linked to this particular variable. The political border is not a hindrance for Senegalese borderlanders seeking health care or commercial interests in
Banjul, but those with high Banjul contact seem to avoid the Banjul morphosyntactic pattern more than other borderlanders.

7.3.7 Accommodation

Since I employed different research assistants on each side of the border, the effect that interviewer national identity may have on these findings cannot be ignored. Omar is Senegalese and conducted the interviews on the Senegalese side of the border; Ebrima is Gambian and conducted interviews on the Gambian side of the border. While both men are from the borderland and have lived much of their lives near the border, both men are also university-educated and therefore have had significantly more contact with the Wolof varieties spoken in the respective capitals than most. They are also both fluent in their nation’s official language (Omar is also conversant in English in addition to being fluent in French). The effects of linguistic accommodation towards the interviewer or researcher have a long history in sociolinguistic literature (Giles 1984). According to Llamas et al. (2009), “[S]alient features will be accommodated to unless factors such as phonemic contrasts, phonotactic constraints, homonymic clash, and the strength of stereotyping intervene to delay, inhibit, or prevent the accommodation” (384). On the one hand, many long-term linguistic change happens by accommodation, the slow accrual of linguistic features due to frequent linguistic contact between speakers on a macro level (Auer & Hinskens 2005). This is the type of accommodation we may expect to influence the spread of national varieties when people’s behaviors and routines tend to be within rather than across borders.
There is also what Auer & Hinskens (2005) call the “identity-projection model” in which speakers accommodate to their interlocutors on a micro level during interactions. According to Llamas et al. (2009), “Speakers attempt to converge toward or diverge from the speech patterns they believe to be characteristic of their interlocutors” (385), depending upon their desire to be part of an in-group with the interlocutor. Although a reasonable explanation for the age and gender effects found in this study could be due the fact that the interviewers are young men with high “center” contact. Certain speakers in this study may wish to project an in-group identity with the interviewers and accommodated to what they believed to be the interviewers’ style. The question remains, however, why some speakers would want to project this in-group identity and others would not and the answer may again be related to nationalist identities, age, and gender.

Furthermore, Llamas et al. (2009) found little evidence that borderland speakers were converging or diverging with interviewers meant to represent either Scottish or English national varieties, concluding that borderland inhabitants may not wish to project an in-group with either nationality, concluding that “[t]he interviewer effect does not, therefore, appear to pose a significant problem for the compilation of a data set in terms of the increased or decreased use of phonological variants associated with relevant in-groups and out-groups” (402). Furthermore, several studies have shown that in sociolinguistic situations, interviewers often accommodate to their interviewees (Trudgill 1986). The accommodation is not unidirectional. As part of the AISEB project, however, Watt et al. (2010) found that “[t]he data show evidence of the interviewer reacting to both the national identity category and also the age grouping of her interactants” (285). If the participants and the interviewer in the interview are accommodating due to identity-
projection within the interaction, then we may expect all participants to converge mutually upon some in-group norm rather than participants converging upon the variety or repertoires used by the interviewer. Nevertheless, future directions for this study might test the linguistic performance of the interviewers across the various interviews.

7.4 Contribution of the study

Variationist studies on languages or varieties other than English, Spanish, or French are quite rare and as a result, few computational or research tools are at the disposal of researchers (such as forced aligners or even research assistants who are familiar with the language). Nevertheless, this dissertation is my attempt to bring a lesser-studied (and more multilingual) speech community to the attention of variationist linguists and to begin the dialogue about some of the ways social identities (such as age and gender) may interact with language variation. Some sociolinguistic trends have been so constant across studies (like variation and gender) that they have been deemed principles of language variation and change. This study shows a change from below (the central vowel category) being led by Gambian men. While women are thought to prefer prestige forms, this phenomenon is usually linked to notions of standard language influence and prestige. A study of Wolof or other languages that lack “standard” varieties can test the universality of these principles and offer more insight into how gender is linguistically constructed in non-industrialized societies.

This dissertation has sought to identify the broader trends of language variation in the borderlands with an ethnographically informed way of understanding the social life in the Saloum borderland. This research invites further probing into the way identities are
constructed in micro sociolinguistic situations, such as exchanges between border personnel and borderlanders or in other cross-border interactions. Speakers in this area no doubt have exposure to an array of linguistic variables that they can use to construct or mitigate the social boundaries between nationalities or ethnicities in a given interaction.

Sociolinguistic methods and the quantitative study of the distribution of variables can help those interested in variation understand the patterns of language use in a given area, but ethnographic techniques like participant observation and extended ethnographic interviews are needed to help understand the why of these patterns. Understanding how life is structured around or in spite of the boundary in the borderland is an important ingredient in the larger picture of understanding how political borders become linguistic borders.

7.5 Future directions

One surprising result from this study is that mother tongue (which is also usually the ethnicity claimed) is not a major predictor of linguistic variation in this area. National identity and ethnic identity are often seen as irreconcilable in Africa, where every nation is multiethnic and almost every ethnicity is distributed across several nations. Researchers wonder about “the extent to which a sense of common identity can be developed in the poly-ethnic African countries” (Eriksen 1999, 48). Nowhere is this more problematic than in the borderland, the peripheral parts of the nations where nationalities and ethnicities and their combinations may multiply. Although the Saloum has long been a multiethnic, multilingual area, most people learn to speak Wolof alongside their mother tongue or at a very young age. Nevertheless, many other studies in other parts of the
world have found a strong influence of mother tongue on linguistic production. Since none of the other local languages in this area have a “merged” mid-central vowel category, we might expect some production-level interference in the production of Wolof. In Senegal and The Gambia, “[e]thnic identification does not in general take on a sharp adversarial quality” (Cruise O’Brien 1996; 63) and Wolof was learned at an early age by these speakers, perhaps speakers are able to avoid marking mother tongue or ethnicity in their production of Wolof.

Although national education did not prove to be an important predictor of the linguistic variation examined in these chapters, one cannot help but wonder about the effects of different education in the borderland; the choice between the state-funded national schools (taught in English, French, and sometimes Arabic), the koranic schools run by local religious leaders (often taught in Wolof or another local language), or no schooling at all may lead to different degrees of participation in the nation-state. Besides the promotion of the exogenous official languages, the state-sponsored schools also are rife with other nation-making symbols (e.g., flags, pictures of presidents, national anthems, maps). As Le Page (1964) puts it, one of the primary goals of the school system in post-colonial countries has been “to establish cultural homogeneity and a common sense of identity among the members of diverse races and cultures who find themselves members of one state as a result of a series of historical accidents” (23). The school system also “produces inequality and privilege” (Cruise O’Brien, 65), although in recent generations education has failed to provide the promised access to government jobs, leaving young people disillusioned about the opportunities promised by educators. On the other hand, koranic educators often draw students from both sides of the border.
Memorization of koranic verses is supplemented by interpretation and instruction in local language and the primary learning objectives for students have little or nothing to do with the nation-state. A more balanced sample of borderland inhabitants (both rural and urban) with different educational backgrounds would be necessary to fully examine the role of education in the linguistic (re)production of the border.

Since The Gambia shares all 740 km of its land border with Senegal, it would be fascinating to compare how different portions of the border may be construed. The border that The Gambia shares with the area known as the Casamance in Senegal, for example, might yield different results since the majority language and lingua franca in this area (Joola) is not a majority language in either nation-state. Furthermore, the Casamance has been engaged in a low level civil war for the past 40 years, trying to gain independence from the Senegalese nation that its inhabitants feel cut off from. Many of the Saloum speakers in this study, in fact, listed the Casamance as a foreign country they had visited. The Joola-speaking areas in the southern parts of the Gambia and the Joola areas in the Casamance may show stronger effects of inter-ethnic affinity and cross-border linguistic similarity, even among the men.

Boberg (2010) found that different portions of the U.S.-Canadian border yield different results in terms of what linguistic features are used to construe a linguistic border; in the eastern section, phonological variables (in particular vowel shifts from both sides) seem to stop at the border. In the western parts, however, where the Northern Cities Vowel Shift on the American side begins to fade out, lexical differences are more important difference-markers than accent. Boberg (2010) attributes this condition to settlement patterns and “the separate histories of the United States and Canada” (51).
Similarly, the AISEB researchers have found differences between the eastern and western parts of the Scottish-English border towns, not just in terms of accent but also in terms of national identity (feelings of Scottishness or Englishness versus general British identities vary across this borderland space). With evidence from just this small Saloum area that the border has different meaning and different realities for different border villages and towns, it would be interesting to compare larger geographic stretches of the border. While Senegalese and Gambian modern settlement patterns may be somewhat influenced by the national border (in the sense that people are more likely to migrate to their own nation’s larger cities for work or school), these two nations cannot be said to have “separate histories” based on settlement colonies in the same way that the United States and Canada have. The historical (and enduring) local kingdoms still provide important social categories and may influence people’s cognitive and social maps to a similar degree as the contemporary nation-states.

7.6 Concluding remarks

This political border has “existed” on maps and in the minds of colonial administrators and stewards of the nation-state for over a century, but I argue, however, that the border comes into being and is continually produced and reproduced through the lives and routines of borderland inhabitants and others who cross the border. The border post with its brick and mortar buildings and armed guards and police checking passengers’ paperwork is only a fraction of the “reality” of the border. While it is a salient force in the boundary-making between two internationally recognized nation-states, for most
borderland inhabitants it is merely an inconvenience to be side-stepped by using dirt roads or by not drawing attention to oneself in the bustling border post area.

“Borders are difficult things to generalise about; each stands as the product of a unique set of historical contingencies, and its existence can symbolise very different things to different groups,” according to Watt and Llamas (2014; 1) in their introduction to the volume *Language, Borders, and Identity*, but this should not stop linguists and other researchers from training their focus away from the centers and towards the margins and borders where dialects and identities interact with abstracted boundaries. In this dissertation, I have shown that linguistic borders are not an immediate reflex of political borders, but they also do not need the official channels of national standard varieties to develop. Different borderland speakers, due to their different social identities or mobility practices, may adopt variants that can reinforce social boundaries between nationalities. But for many speakers, the boundary is permeable and linguistic variants can flow through channels of heavy contact, reinforced by ideologies about shared history, undermining the power of the boundary for many. As Abbott (1995) noted, “[S]ocial entities are often secondary to social boundaries” (880). Although he was referring to the creation and existence of various professions, the same might be said for other social categories like nationality. In this sense, a literal boundary line associated with the nation-states logically and temporally precedes the social categories associated with the nation-state. Abbott urges researchers to examine the boundaries between “things” and to understand the nature of the boundary before we can study the “things” in an of themselves. So while “things” like Senegalese Wolof or Gambian Wolof may be valuable heuristic labels to employ in the description of the current state of language
variation, it is also useful to ask why these categories exist and what gives rise to their separateness. Is the relevant sociolinguistic boundary just an artifact of colonial history imprinted on linguists’ ideologies about language or does it arise out of pluricentric language norms? This line of questioning cannot help but lead straight to the borderland, where the boundary may or may not be found.


# Appendix A: Participants Demographics

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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

1a. Where were you born?
1b. Can you describe where you were born?
   Is it a big town, small village? What kinds of people live there?

2a. Where did you grow up?
   (If different from answer to 1)
   Can you describe where you grew up?
2b. (If 2 is different from 1):
   Why did you move there? Who did you live with?

3a. What is [NAME OF VILLAGE] like?

4a. What languages do you speak?
4b. Which one did you learn first?
4c. Which one(s) do you use every day?
4d. Where do you speak X as opposed to Wolof?
4e. What do you speak at home?
4f. Do you ever speak several languages in the same conversation?

5. (If the answer to 4b is not Wolof)
   5a. When did you learn Wolof?
   5b. To whom do you speak Wolof?
   5c. How often do you speak it?

6a. What kind of Wolof do you and your neighbors speak?
6a. Where do they speak Wolof just like you?
6b. Where is best Wolof spoken?
6c. Why do you think they speak the best Wolof there?
6d. Where do they speak the most different Wolof?

7. What do people do here?
   7a. women?
   7b. men?
   7c. children?
   7d. Where do the children of the community go to school?
      7d1. Daarraa?
      7d2. Primary?
      7d3. Middle school?
7d4. High school?
7d5. University?
7e. Do any children study in Senegal/The Gambia? If so, what kind of school?

8a. Where do people go if they get sick?
   8b. Where is the nearest hospital?
   8c. Do some people go to Senegal for hospital care?

9a. Where do women here go to get married?
   Do you have any daughters/sisters? Where did they get married?
9b. Where do men get their wives?
   Do you have any sons/brothers? Where did they get their wives?

10a. How do people practice religion here?
   10b. Where are the biggest marabouts of the area?
   10c. Where do people go for gamous and ziaras?
   10d. Where is your marabout?
   10e. Do you go to gamou? Where?

11. What is your job?
12a. Have you ever worked or lived anywhere else?
13a. Have you ever traveled outside the country?
   13b. where?

14a. Do you cross the border often?
   14b. Where do you cross?
   14c. Where do you go after you cross?
   14d. How do you usually cross? (walk, car, bike, charette etc.)
   14e. Do you ever have difficulties crossing the border?

15a. How often do you go to Senegal/The Gambia?
   15b. How many times have you been to Senegal/The Gambia in the past month?
   15c. year?
   15d. in your life?

16. What do you do when you go to Senegal/The Gambia?
   16b. Can you describe what a typical trip is like for you?
   16c. Can you describe a trip to Senegal/The Gambia that you remember well?
   16d. Where do you usually stay? With whom do you usually stay?
   16e. How long do you stay?

17. Do you ever have difficulties in Senegal/The Gambia?
18. Do you go to the weekly market? If so, which one?

19. Do you know the Gambian/Senegalese national anthem?
20. Do you support the Gambian/Senegalese football team?

21. Do you follow [opposite country] football?
   Why or why not?

22a. Do you watch wrestling?
   22b. Who is your favorite wrestler?
   22c. Why?
   22d. Do you follow Senegalese wrestling?

23a. Do you ever go to Banjul? (y/n)
   20b. What do you do there?
   20c. How long do you stay?
   20d. With whom do you stay?

24a. Do you ever go to Dakar?
   21b. What do you do there?
   21c. How long do you stay?
   21d. With whom do you stay?

25a. Do you watch television?
   26b. What stations?
   26c. In what languages?
   26d. What programs do you watch?
   26e. Do you ever listen to Senegalese news?

26a. Listen to the radio?
   27b. What stations?
   27c. What language(s) are spoken?
   27d. What programs do you listen to?

27a. Do you have a cell phone?
   28b. What network(s) do you have?
   28c. Do you call people in Senegal very often?

28a. Do you hold an identity card? (y/n)
   28b. Gambia? Senegal?
   28c. Have you ever had a (Senegalese) carte d’identité?
29a. Did you vote in the last election? (y/n)
   29b. Where did you vote?
   29c. Have you ever voted in [opposite country]?

30a. Did you go to school? (y/n) Jang nga iskool?
   30b. What schools? Yan iskool?
   30c. Where did you study?
   30d. What levels? Agg nga ba fan?
   30e. How old were you when you stopped studying?
   30f. What kinds of things did you study?
   30g. Why did you stop studying?

31. What is The Gambia/ Senegal best known for?

32a. Do you have family in Senegal?
   32b. Are they Senegalese or Gambian?

33. What makes someone Gambian? (Born there? Live there 10 years? Have an identity card? Etc.)
34. What makes someone Senegalese?

35. Are the Senegalese different from the Gambians? How?

36a. Do you know a Senegalese from their appearance? How so?
   36b. Do you know a Gambian from their appearance?

37a. Do you know a Senegalese from their behavior? How so?
   37b. Do you know a Gambian from their behavior?

38a. Do you know a Senegalese from their language? How so?
   40b. Do you know a Gambian from their language?

39c. What is Senegalese Wolof like?
   39d. Is it different from Gambian Wolof?

40a. What are the ethnic groups [xeet] in The Gambia?
   40b. Which one do you belong to?
   40c. Your mother?
   40d. Your father?
   40e. Your grandparents?
41. What are the ethnic groups in Senegal?

42. What makes the Wolof different from the other [xeet] like the Mandinka, the Seereer, the Pulaar, the Joola?

43. Are the Wolof in The Gambia the same as the Wolof in Senegal? (if yes, please explain how and why)

45. Can you tell me how ceeb-u-jen / bennacin is made/done?

46. What did you do last Tabaski?

47. Can you tell me a story from your childhood?

48. Can you tell me a folk tale or proverb?