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### Publication Date

2013

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Multilingual Practices of Senegalese Immigrants in Paris and Rome: A Comparative Study of  
Language Use and Identity Construction

By

Maya Angela Smith

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Romance Languages and Literatures

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Richard Kern, Chair

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Spring 2013

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Language Use and Identity Construction

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By

Maya Angela Smith

## Abstract

# Multilingual Practices of Senegalese Immigrants in Paris and Rome: A Comparative Study of Language Use and Identity Construction

by

Maya Angela Smith

Doctor of Philosophy in Romance Languages and Literatures

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Richard Kern, Chair

This study investigates language use, language acquisition, and identity construction among Senegalese immigrants in Paris and Rome. Whereas previous research in second language acquisition (SLA) has focused on the relationship between identity and language use in single sites, this study compares how immigrants from one country learn and use language in two different settings. The study's research questions are the following:

- 1) How do immigrants conceptualize identity in relation to dominant ideologies in the host country?
- 2) How do these notions of identity affect immigrants' language learning, and more generally, their language use?
- 3) How do immigrants express identity through their use of multiple languages?

Through ethnographic fieldwork incorporating interviews, recorded conversations, and participant-observations, the study shows how these two groups, Senegalese immigrants in Paris and Senegalese immigrants in Rome, conceptualize and perform their identities through multilingual practices. Based on the discourse analytic approach adopted in the study, it is not only *what* they say that conveys certain understandings of self and environment. It is also *how* they speak—the ways in which they switch between languages and structure their discourse—that contributes to their expression of identity.

By juxtaposing the experiences of immigrants in a country with a strong colonial tie (France) to those in a country with no such relationship but with high levels of current immigration (Italy), the study presents a nuanced and detailed analysis of the relationship between host country and migrant community. With regard to the first question, the study shows that Senegalese immigrants in France have a more complex relationship to the host country than do Senegalese immigrants in Italy because of historical and social factors that influence how they relate to the language as well as to the second language culture. In both sites, not only did dominant discourses position Senegalese immigrants as “the Other” but in many instances the informants also positioned *themselves* in such a way. However, this “othering” was found to be more conflictual for the informants in France precisely because they demonstrated greater expectation and desire to be regarded as members of the in-group. In addition, Senegalese immigrants in Rome developed their language ideologies from personal experiences, whereas those in Paris formulated their ideologies not only out of personal experiences but also based on historical factors. Concerning the second question, contrary to what was expected, the findings

suggest that having to learn Italian did not dissuade Senegalese immigrants from migrating to Italy, nor did the majority of them have difficulties learning Italian because they used their knowledge of French to facilitate the process of acquisition. The informants also indicated that the multilingual context to which they were accustomed in Senegal created motivation to learn another language such as Italian. With regard to the third question, the study finds that just as in Senegal, many informants in Paris and Rome expressed a desire to use multiple languages in creative ways, implying that being multilingual is a valued aspect of their identity. However, multilingual practices such as code-switching were more common in the data from Rome, which may be because multilingual practices such as code-switching did not seem to affect the informants' perceived linguistic competence as much as it does in Paris.

Previous studies have focused on identity markers but do not fully contextualize these markers. The present study aims to fill this gap. Overall, this study shows how language ideologies and the identities that are constructed within them are context-dependent, foregrounding the dynamic nature of identity and demonstrating that comparative studies make these relationships salient. The study, therefore, not only corroborates previous studies that argue for the importance of factors such as race/ethnicity in second language environments, but also, by virtue of its comparative dimension, more adequately highlights how the specific relationship between immigrant group and host country setting influences language acquisition and identity construction.

For Emily, Elton, and Jonathan

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: Literature Review.....	5
1.1 Second Language Acquisition (SLA).....	5
1.2 Sociolinguistic SLA.....	6
1.2.1 Competence.....	7
1.2.1.1 Native speaker/Non-native speaker.....	8
1.2.1.2 Center vs. Periphery.....	9
1.2.2 Language ideologies.....	9
1.2.3 Language use.....	11
1.2.4 Settings.....	12
1.2.4.1 Natural settings.....	13
1.2.4.2 Comparative studies.....	14
1.3 Identity.....	15
1.3.1 Approaches.....	16
1.3.2 Identity in SLA.....	18
1.3.3 Variables.....	20
1.3.3.1 Social class.....	21
1.3.3.2 Race and Ethnicity.....	23
1.3.3.3 Gender.....	25
1.4 Multilingualism.....	26
1.4.1 Code-switching.....	28
1.4.1.1 Approaches to code-switching.....	28
1.5 Research aims.....	30
CHAPTER 2: Methodology.....	33
2.1 Field work: an ethnographic approach.....	33
2.1.1 Participant observation.....	35
2.1.2 The interview.....	36
2.1.3 Audio recordings.....	37
2.1.4 Transcription.....	38
2.1.5 My role as researcher.....	40
2.2 Discourse analysis.....	42
2.2.1 Narrative analysis.....	43
2.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis.....	45
2.3 Linguistic and discursive features.....	47
2.3.1 Code-switching.....	47
2.3.2 Deixis.....	48
2.3.3 Voicing and intertextuality.....	48
2.4 Limitations.....	50
CHAPTER 3: Description of Sites.....	52
3.1 Senegal.....	52
3.1.1 Languages.....	52
3.1.2 Patterns of migration.....	55
3.2 Host countries: France and Italy.....	57

3.2.1 Linguistic identity .....	57
3.2.2 Post-colonialism and national identity .....	62
CHAPTER 4: Paris .....	67
4.1 Data .....	67
4.2 Language acquisition and use .....	68
4.2.1 Language learning contexts .....	68
4.2.1.1 France as first setting for French language acquisition.....	69
4.2.1.2 Switch from educational to natural setting.....	70
4.2.1.3 Switch from one natural French language setting to another.....	71
4.2.1.4 Born in France.....	72
4.3 Language ideologies .....	73
4.3.1 The French language.....	73
4.3.2 Multilingualism.....	79
4.3.2.1 Multilingual Usage.....	85
4.4 Construction of identities and negotiation of boundaries .....	89
4.4.1 Desire for inclusion.....	89
4.4.2 Race, nationality, citizenship and the formation of identities.....	95
4.5 Conclusion .....	103
CHAPTER 5: Rome.....	106
5.1 Data.....	106
5.2 Language acquisition and use .....	106
5.2.1 Language learning contexts .....	106
5.2.2 Factors affecting acquisition .....	110
5.2.3 Gendered identity in language learning .....	117
5.3 Language ideologies .....	121
5.3.1 The Italian language.....	122
5.3.1.1 Non-standard Italian.....	126
5.3.2 Multilingualism.....	130
5.3.2.1 Multilingual usage.....	133
5.4 Construction of identities and negotiation of boundaries .....	135
5.4.1 Desire for Inclusion.....	136
5.4.2 Race, nationality, citizenship and the formation of identities.....	138
5.5 Conclusion .....	143
CHAPTER 6: Comparison.....	146
6.1 Language acquisition and use .....	146
6.1.1 Language learning contexts .....	146
6.1.2 Language ideologies .....	147
6.1.2.1 Motivation and investment.....	147
6.1.2.2 Language ownership .....	149
6.1.2.3 Competence.....	149
6.1.2.4 Linguistic repertoire.....	151
6.1.2.5 Code-switching .....	153
6.2 Construction of identities and negotiation of boundaries .....	156
6.2.1 Race/Ethnicity.....	156
6.2.2 Sense of belonging and home .....	159
6.3 Conclusion .....	160
CONCLUSION.....	164
Findings and Significance.....	164
Implications and Future Research.....	170
Closing Remarks.....	172



REFERENCES .....	173
APPENDICES .....	189
Appendix 1 .....	189
Appendix 2 .....	192
Appendix 3 .....	194

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am eternally indebted to the many people who have helped make this dissertation what it is: to my advisor Rick Kern, for his unwavering dedication, positive outlook, and overall pleasant demeanor, which has made the often stressful and bumpy road of a graduate student an enjoyable experience; to Mairi McLaughlin for being an outstanding role model, setting the bar high but providing much needed critical feedback to make sure I reached that bar; and to Claire Kramersch, whose fascinating seminars shaped my research interests and opened a new and exciting world to me.

I would also like to acknowledge those who have inspired or encouraged me at some point along the way: Laura Sterponi, who introduced me to ethnography and who has supported my non-academic as well as my academic endeavors; the late Anna Livia Brawn, whose passing was one of the most difficult moments in my graduate student career and whose memory lives on; Livi Yoshioka-Maxwell and Maria Vendetti, who have offered constant emotional and intellectual support, without whom this process would have been much worse; team RLL—Billy Heidenfeldt, Linda Louie, Elyse Ritchey, Mike Arrigo, Brock Imel, Jenelle Thomas, and Léa Huotari—whose humor and baked goods have kept me strong even when I have felt weak; Dave Malinowski, David Divita, Janet Sedlar, Susan Dennehy, Marie Therese Ellis, Anna Skrzypczynska, Maia Beyler-Noily, Jonathon Repinecz, Celine Piser, Stacey Battis, and the rest of the French department and School of Education, both students and professors; Mary Ajideh and Carol Dolcini, for daily laughs and decompression; Binta Faye Gaye, Paap Alsaan Sow, Daniele Santoni, and Nadine Amarelo for help with transcription and/or translation; and Jesse Williamson for his amazing editing ability and for being there for me.

I would like to express profound gratitude to my parents, Emily and Elton, who have had more faith in me than I ever have. They were convinced I would finish my Ph.D. Without their loving support interspersed with humor, I don't know if I would have been able to trudge through. To Jonathan, who could not be a more amazing brother and person.

Finally, I want to thank all the people in my study who agreed to be interviewed and followed around. They provided me with eye-opening data in addition to pleasant experiences in Paris, Rome, and Dakar.

# INTRODUCTION

My dissertation investigates language use and acquisition among Senegalese immigrants in Paris and Rome. Whereas previous research in Second Language Acquisition and Applied Linguistics has focused on the relationship between identity and language use in single sites, my study looks at how immigrants from one country function differently in two different settings. By conducting ethnographic fieldwork in which I rely on interviews, recorded conversations, and participant-observations, I show how these two groups, the Senegalese in Paris and the Senegalese in Rome, conceptualize their identities through multilingual practices. I wrote this dissertation because of a series of personal experiences as a language learner and as someone who has always reflected on her constantly changing identity.

In 2003, I embarked on a semester abroad in Dakar. I had spent the previous semester in Paris and thought it would be worthwhile to learn French in an entirely different setting. When I was looking at different abroad programs in Francophone countries, most advisers and program directors told me I should go to Dakar. They assured me that I would receive the best French language instruction there. Senegal's reputation for French language was a major factor in my decision to study in Dakar, and these attitudes from various people about the Senegalese' ability to speak French persisted once I arrived in Senegal. Different people I met and friends I made insisted that they, the Senegalese, speak the best French in Africa. I had not expected an African country to place so much pride in a European language and spent a lot of time pondering the matter.

When I returned to New York University the following fall, I began to conduct research for my senior thesis. I had been struck by the migrant stories I had heard in Senegal. It seemed as if every family had a member that was living in a foreign country. These members would send remittances to their family back home in Senegal. They would call every weekend with updates on their lives in France, Italy, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, etc. Deciding to tap into this strong migrant culture, I conducted my first ethnographic study by interviewing merchants in Harlem's Little Senegal. I asked questions that addressed different migration issues: integration, childrearing, religion, language, to name a few. When I was done with my thesis, I had more questions than answers.

Now in graduate school, working on a degree in Romance Languages and Linguistics, I have focused more on language issues among Senegalese immigrants in this dissertation than in the original research project. Although the construction and conceptualization of identity is the central theme for both theses, this time around I wanted to know how Senegalese immigrants formulate their identities through multilingual practices and language ideologies. In a global and post-colonial world where large numbers of people move between cultures, I wanted to explore language vis-à-vis identity construction by looking at how immigrants from Senegal behave in two different societies. I chose my fieldwork sites because they are major centers of immigration, in which the substantial Senegalese presence in each offers an opportunity for comparison. France shares a long and complex history with Senegal; Italy has only recently had a relationship with Senegal. France has a reputation for having a strong centralized government and for placing emphasis on language standardization; Italy is often portrayed as having a fragmented national and linguistic identity. French is a language of historical importance and global presence; Italian claims relatively few speakers worldwide. Looking at language attitudes and use in these

particular sites sheds light on the larger questions revolving around identity and language learning that the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) investigates.

In addition, my personal experience in these places led me to realize that these would be rich sites in which to study attitudes about language and identity. I lived in both France and Italy, learning French and Italian respectively. The experiences of learning French and Italian were very similar from a strictly linguistic standpoint. I had already mastered Spanish, another Romance language, and used the language learning strategies formed through that experience to aid in learning both French and Italian. However, when reflecting on my relationship to each language learning context, I realized that my experiences were in fact quite different.

Learning French in Paris was difficult. I was under the impression that Parisians had little patience for language learners, and I was generally self-conscious about my French speaking abilities. Paris was also stressful for other reasons. While I had an amazing group of friends, including several encouraging Parisians who showed me that I should not be so afraid to speak, I was bothered by how I was occasionally treated in French society. Never before in my travels had I been stopped randomly in the street by the police and asked to show identity papers. In my time in Paris, this happened on various occasions. One time, the officers apologized after realizing I was American. I was dumbfounded. None of my American classmates related similar experiences. I soon learned that I was being racially profiled. Conversations with African-American students and African immigrants demonstrated that this was a systemic problem. They, too, had stories of being stopped for no reason. Like me, they also shared tales of being denied entrance to nightclubs or other similar venues. Everything that I had learned about France's claim of a colorblind society contrasted with my personal experiences and the experiences of others like me.

When I lived in Rome, I was again in a cosmopolitan European city learning a Romance language, but my time there was quite different from my time in Paris. People seemed genuinely impressed that I could communicate in Italian. The standard question after hearing me rattle off a few words was "Come mai?" How come? Why would I want to learn Italian, they would ask. No one speaks it outside of Italy, they would muse. Impressing them motivated me to learn more Italian, and my self-consciousness as a language learner disappeared. In Rome, just as in Paris, my racial identity was occasionally flagged; however, the racism I experienced there seemed less institutionalized. I was very rarely uncomfortable with being black in Rome. The fact that I did not look anything like the traditional representation of an Italian speaker did not generate negative consequences. This identity combined with my language abilities actually garnered praise and respect.

Studies in SLA have helped me frame these issues. Through Norton (2000), I have realized that the social interactions I have with speakers in a particular setting are partially responsible for how I learn a second language and for the feelings I have regarding this experience: "the learning of a second language is not simply a skill that is acquired with hard work and dedication, but a complex social practice that engages the identities of language learners" (p. 132). The emphasis she places on power relations and the ability to "claim the right to speak" (p. 7) resonates with my understandings of my own language learning processes. Kinginger's (2004) study on Alice, an American study abroad student in France, demonstrates how a learner's motivation for learning a language is constantly changing depending on positive and negative feelings about specific social interactions. For instance, she remarks that "in the process of becoming competent in French, Alice continuously reconstructs her motives for learning, as she is challenged by real life difficulties of developing advanced language

proficiency, by the shock of the language immersion experience, and by the discovery of new social networks, their values along with their vocabulary” (p. 238). Meanwhile, Talburt and Stuart’s (1999) article on African-American women studying in Spain has hit close to home. They chronicle the sexualized and racialized experiences that these women experience and how these experiences influence their language learning.

From the research on identity and language learning by the aforementioned scholars to research on the acquisition of non-standard target language (Goldstein, 1987; Ibrahim, 1999), from the literature on competence (Hymes, 1973; Firth and Wagner, 1997) to discussions of the native speaker construct in SLA (Firth and Wagner, 1997; Canagarajah, 1999) and of Center vs. Periphery models (Kachru, 1986; Sridhar, 1994), from studies on language ideologies (Woolard, 2010; Irvine, 1989) to research on code-switching (Romaine, 1995; Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Zentella, 1997; Myers-Scotton, 1993), I have been able to not only situate my own experiences but to apply these theoretical notions to the experiences of others. Because of my background as a language learner and as a multilingual, I am interested in how all people conceive of and use language. Because of my connection to Senegal and my fascination with immigration issues, it was only logical to center my research on issues in Senegalese immigration. Therefore, my dissertation on Senegalese immigration to Europe is shaped by my personal experiences and grounded in the various approaches to and conceptualizations of identity construction with regard to second language acquisition that I have learned in my studies.

The first chapter provides a theoretical framework in which to situate my research. There is a brief discussion about the field of Second Language Acquisition, in which I dissect the different terms that comprise its name. I then highlight the social turn in SLA and what this social perspective meant for subsequent research. Key phenomena that have been researched in Sociolinguistic SLA are highlighted, from the notion of competence, which includes the reassessment of the native speaker/non-native speaker dichotomy, to language ideologies. I then focus on language learning settings and show the relative lack of comparative studies on settings in SLA, arguing that a comparative approach allows for a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the relationship between host country and migrant community from which SLA could benefit. The next part of the chapter looks at identity, both from a general perspective and from an SLA perspective, detailing the various approaches of analyzing identity and the different variables that constitute identity. An exploration of multilingualism and the presentation of my main research aims follow.

In the second chapter, I discuss my methodological approach with regard to both the set-up of the research project and the analysis of data. I demonstrate the qualitative nature of my research, discussing the ethnographic approach employed in my fieldwork. I reflect on the transcription process and my role as researcher. I then talk about the types of discourse analysis applied to the interpretation of the data, highlighting narrative analysis and critical discourse analysis. The chapter ends with a discussion of specific linguistic and discursive features, notably code-switching, deixis, voicing, and intertextuality.

The third chapter provides the reader with a more detailed understanding of the research sites, beginning with a discussion of languages and patterns of migration in Senegal. This discussion is followed by a reflection on linguistic identity in both France and Italy and the roles that post-colonialism and national identity play in each country.

Chapters 4 and 5 present an analysis of the data uncovered in each host country site, Paris and Rome. I look at Senegalese immigrants’ language acquisition and use, describing their language learning contexts. I then present the different language ideologies that are made salient

by the informants in each site. Chapters 4 and 5 begin respectively with an exploration of attitudes about the French and Italian languages and about multilingualism. Then, in each of these chapters, I discuss the construction of identities and negotiation of boundaries that are evident in the data.

Chapter 6 is meant to highlight the comparative aspect of my dissertation. Using the same organization as chapters 4 and 5, I demonstrate how immigrants from one country function differently in two different settings. By comparing these settings and the social, historical, and cultural relationships that people from one country have with two different settings, I am able to better display the influence that different sites have in the formation and negotiation of identity vis-à-vis language. Finally, I conclude by situating my findings against the backdrop of previous research in SLA and Identity Studies and by indicating future research avenues that have materialized from my study and that would further develop the conversation on identity and language learning.

# CHAPTER 1: Literature Review

## 1.1 *Second Language Acquisition (SLA)*

The field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) does what its name suggests: it researches the cognitive and social processes involved in the acquisition of a second language. However, each term in its name is nuanced in a way that researchers vary in their understanding what the field should entail, making it difficult to know just what constitutes SLA. For instance, while ‘second’ can denote a second language, it can also refer to a third or a fourth language.<sup>1</sup> A distinction can also be made to whether one is actually referring to a ‘second’ language or a ‘foreign’ language. A second language plays an important role in a community whose members speak a different mother tongue (i.e. immigrants learning English in the United States). A foreign language, on the other hand, is usually learned in a classroom setting, is not necessarily used by the community, and usually does not play a role in the community (i.e. American students learning French in high school). Meanwhile, in defining ‘language’ one can focus on the traditional morphosyntactic and phonological aspects that point to the underlying grammatical structures or one can broaden the definition to include more contextual aspects of language such as semantic and pragmatic characteristics that relate to the formation of meaning in real life situations.

The term ‘acquisition’ poses its own set of problems. Ellis highlights the difficulties in creating an operational definition by admitting that no one definition exists. While there are some scholars who make the distinction between ‘acquisition’ and ‘learning,’ Ellis (2008) argues that it is almost impossible to demonstrate what is conscious or not.<sup>2</sup> He thus uses the terms interchangeably, as will I for the purpose of this dissertation. To complicate matters, there is some debate among researchers whether to include the concept of ‘language use’ when investigating ‘acquisition.’ Firth and Wagner (1997) have been the most vocal in championing a position that elevates language use to a prominent position in SLA research. Some researchers in the field such as Long (1997) have resisted the emphasis on language use, claiming that although SLA does not take place in a vacuum, the relevance of the sociolinguistic context to language acquisition is questionable (p. 318). However, I follow the example of Gass & Selinker (2008) who incorporate language use in language acquisition and who, in response to those who would classify ‘language use’ under Second Language Studies, assert that they will “continue to use the term SLA as a cover term for a wide variety of phenomena, not because the term is necessarily the most descriptively accurate, but because the field has come to be known by that acronym” (p. 7). I will expound my reasons for including and even prioritizing language use in SLA when I revisit Firth and Wagner’s arguments in later sections.

I have begun this chapter by briefly scrutinizing some of the components of the name SLA to foreshadow the complexity of the field. Besides taking issue with what its very name means, researchers have difficulty situating SLA in a more general field of study. Researchers in SLA have backgrounds in linguistics, applied linguistics, educational psychology, foreign

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<sup>1</sup> Ellis (2006) suggests that ‘additional’ might be more appropriate (p. 5).

<sup>2</sup> According to Krashen (1981), acquisition is subconscious in which one ‘picks up’ a language. Learning, on the other hand, relates to the “conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them” (p. 10).

language education, and SLA, to name a few fields, and work within various theoretical and methodological frameworks. This diversity of disciplines exists because SLA has evolved and broadened since its conception. While SLA began with a focus in linguistics and psychology, a focus that still exists today, a more social perspective eventually has emerged as well.<sup>3</sup> I am drawn to this social perspective and am informed primarily by work in education, anthropology, sociology, education, applied linguistics, and bilingualism.

However, this diversity of disciplines can sometimes disorient a researcher and make it difficult to situate oneself in the field of SLA. The purpose of the following section is to demonstrate how I align myself to the work that precedes my research. To do so, I will focus particularly on defining how I approach the notion of competence, the bedrock of SLA studies; on presenting a detailed explanation of language use and its importance to SLA research; and on the value of natural settings when exploring language use and multilingual usage.

## **1.2 Sociolinguistic SLA**

Firth and Wagner, concerned with what they saw as a narrow view by SLA researchers in regards to what are acceptable studies, changed the face of SLA when they wrote “On Discourse, Communication, and Fundamental Concepts in SLA” (1997). They contended that “the predominant view of discourse and communication within SLA...is individualistic and mechanistic...fail[ing] to account in a satisfactory way for interactional and sociolinguistic dimensions of language” (p. 285). They worried that this problem was further exacerbated by the fact that many researchers wanted to narrow the field of SLA even more, citing Long, who promoted “theory culling” in order to prevent the “‘wild-flowering’ of disparate and ‘rivaling’ theories” (p. 286). However, as demonstrated by the variety of disciplines that feed into SLA, there is an inevitable diversity of issues that arise in SLA. Therefore, as a rallying cry for those researchers who privilege the social aspects of language learning, Firth and Wagner argued:

Although SLA research is imbalanced in favour of cognitive-oriented theories and methodologies, the fact remains that the branch of the discipline dealing with discourse and communication is, and always, has been, of necessity multitheoretical in its adopted approaches and conceptual apparatus. Hence, SLA would appear to require not so much a 'theory culling,' but rather a more critical discussion of its own presuppositions, methods, and fundamental (and implicitly accepted) concepts. (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 286)

Since Firth and Wagner’s appeal for the acceptance of a social perspective in SLA fifteen years ago, Sociolinguistic SLA has blossomed into its own multifaceted sub-field of SLA. Coupland (2001) borrows from general social theory (see Layder 1994) to enumerate three types of sociolinguistic theory, each with its own theoretical focus and methodology. Type 1 is referred to as socio-structural realism, which “gives clear priority to macro-level social organisation, where social structures are viewed as impinging on the lives and choices of individuals...the theoretical challenge is to develop models of social structure, referring to large-scale social groups, social institutions and social changes, and to chart their effects” (Coupland, 2001, p. 9).

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<sup>3</sup> Ortega (2007) demonstrates how SLA grew out of the fields of language teaching, linguistics, child language acquisition, and psychology. More recent fields represented in SLA research include bilingualism, cognitive science, education, anthropology, and sociology.



Type 2 constitutes social action perspectives, which prioritize “social action and individual agency at the micro level” (p. 10). It is assumed that “‘higher-order’ social structures and institutions have *no* meaningful existence outside of social interaction, and that the principal challenge is to establish how individuals make sense of social life in and through local actions and interactions” (p. 10). Accommodation theory and Conversational Analysis are two methodological approaches often used for type 2 sociolinguistics. Type 3, also known as integrationism, provides a middle ground in which both the macro and micro social orders are analyzed. Critical discourse analysis exemplifies the goal of type 3 sociolinguistics because of its focus on the socio-political contexts in which discourse is produced.

My research fits mainly within the constraints of a type 3 perspective because although I concentrate on examining discourse and interaction through local actions and practices, I am also cognizant of the benefits of highlighting the socio-political contexts shaping and being shaped by discourse. One researcher whose approach has informed how I conceptualize sociolinguistics is Rampton (1995). In his study on language crossing among ethnically diverse adolescents in England, he teases out four dimensions of interaction: language use, interactional structures and processes, institutional organization, and participants’ social knowledge about ethnic groups and their interrelationships (p. 345).<sup>4</sup> My approach to the data will attempt to analyze discourse in the context of the specific interactions while mapping them onto a larger social background because each perspective provides insight into what the discourse and the speakers of discourse are actually doing.

### 1.2.1 Competence

Since its conception, even if there has always been debate about what exactly constitutes the field of SLA, there has been an understanding of what SLA seeks to do: namely “to characterize learners’ underlying knowledge of the L2, i.e. to describe and explain their competence” (Ellis, 2008, p. 6). However, defining competence is problematic. While many types of competence have been described in SLA research, there are two primary types: linguistic competence, which concerns grammatical knowledge of the L2, and communicative competence, which includes both knowledge of the grammatical system as well as the social knowledge that dictates how and when to use language appropriately in particular contexts. SLA researchers have appropriated the notion of linguistic competence from Chomsky (1957). Even though his work is not related to the field of SLA, this appropriation has ensured the centrality of linguistic competence in SLA research. However, the primacy of linguistic competence would be called into question early in the history of SLA with Hymes’s (1961; 1962; 1973; 1974) anthropological approach to language. Pushing against Chomsky’s formalistic and universalistic notion of grammar, Hymes has argued for a more social view in which language is understood in context: “The thrust of Chomskian linguistics has been to depreciate the actuality of language... A broader, differently based notion of the form in which we encounter and use language in the world, a notion which I shall call *ways of speaking*, is needed” (Hymes, 1973, p.

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<sup>4</sup> While Rampton’s (1995) treatment of all of these phenomena include both macro and micro understandings, the following citation about language use epitomizes the balance of the macro and the micro: “Reference to a range of fairly large scale historical, social and political relationships is essential in the interpretation of language symbolism. But it is also vital to pay close attention to the particular conversational environments in which participants make use of this symbolism—symbolic interpretation is context-sensitive, drawing on the evidence presenting in the talk on hand as well as on background understanding.” (p. 346)

60). Hymes offers communicative competence as a means in which to explore real world linguistic applications in heterogeneous speech communities. Viewing speech as a culturally-situated practice, he contends that it is not only knowing what to say that is important but how to say it as well.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Norton (2000) would argue that an expanded definition of communicative competence should include the “right to speech” and “the power to impose reception” (p. 8), which calls into play hierarchical social structures.

### **1.2.1.1 Native speaker/Non-native speaker**

As we have seen, Firth and Wagner (1997) take issue with several fundamental concepts in SLA; however, their attention is most notably focused on the concept of native speaker (NS), an extremely problematic issue in SLA which is directly related to the notion of competence. In their opinion, the existence of the non-native speaker (NNS) leads “to an analytic mindset that elevates an idealized ‘native’ speaker above a stereotypicalized ‘nonnative,’ while viewing the latter as a defective communicator, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence” (p. 285). This idealized native speaker has implications that Firth and Wagner find detrimental to SLA theorization, and that, I would argue, directly affect identity formation in second language learners. These implications include the problematic portrayal of the NS as an omniscient figure, to which NNS are its subordinates, the common misconception that NS/NNS interactions are problematic, and the homogenizing of NS and NNS, which effectively erases all the other possible identities that speakers draw upon when communicating. Singh (1998) directly addresses the problem of the NS/NNS hierarchy, writing that “one must also ask whether the coinage of the expression ‘native speaker’ automatically implies the existence of an antonym of the term. All that we have is a negative version of it, e.g., ‘non-native’...the term ‘native speaker’ has emerged in the literature only to identify a class of non-native speakers that contrast with the privileged or the natives” (p. 17). This negation, by virtue of being a negation, infuses the term with a value judgment. If one were to subscribe to the Foucauldian notion of “right to speak” (Foucault, 1984), which Norton (2000) links to communicative competence, one could argue that being the negative version automatically places a person at a disadvantage in a conversation by stigmatizing him.

Meanwhile, Canagarajah (1999) addresses Firth and Wagner’s principal concern, that the concept of “idealized” is attached to the native speaker. This “idealized” being harkens back to Chomsky’s ideal speaker-hearer that accompanies the notion of linguistic competence. As Canagarajah notes, “Chomsky’s native speaker of a homogeneous speech community is an idealized construction. In the hybrid postcolonial age we live in today, one has to develop the heteroglossic competence to cope with the realities of language diversity, contact and mixing” (p. 79). Therefore, for those who deal with identity and language acquisition, it is pointless to apply Chomskian linguistics with its idealized notion of competence because Chomsky is not interested in language use or language variation. For this reason Chomskian linguistics does not take into account the fact that most of the communities where a language is spoken by native speakers are far from homogeneous and that many of these speakers routinely use multiple languages. Nevertheless, regardless of the actual validity of this idealized term in real world application, its legacy has almost insurmountable repercussions. As Canagarajah asserts, “the

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<sup>5</sup> In other words, Hymes (1970) is interested in “the constitutive role of sociocultural features..., socio-economic differences, multilingual mastery, relativity of competence..., expressive values, socially determined perception, contextual styles and shared norms for the evaluation of variables” (p. 277).

Chomskian notion that the native speaker is the authority on the language and that he or she is the ideal informant provides an understandable advantage to the native speaker in grammaticality judgments,” reinforcing the NS/NNS hierarchy and positioning the NNS as somehow deficient, even incompetent (p. 78). Consequently, although the Chomskian notion of the NS should not enter the debate on language use, there is an undercurrent that is impossible to ignore.

### **1.2.1.2 Center vs. Periphery**

Conceptualization of the native speaker is further problematized by the fact that many speakers do not regard all languages as equal. Just as there is a supposed superiority of NS over NNS, certain varieties of languages are considered superior in a hierarchy that is geographically determined. A distinction thus exists between speakers that come from the Center and those from the Periphery. Borrowing from political economy and referring to the English-speaking world, Canagarajah (1999) defines the Center as “the industrially/economically advanced communities of the West, which sustain their ideological hegemony by keeping less-developed communities in Periphery status” (p. 79). Meanwhile, the Periphery denotes “recent users of this language, many of whom would display sound multilingual competence in many codes—including the Center’s standard dialects as well as their indigenized variants of English—which they would use in contextually appropriate ways” (p. 79).<sup>6</sup> The concepts of Center and Periphery are relevant when looking at all countries from a post-colonial perspective, not just English-speaking countries. In most cases, the former colonizer has Center status and the former colonized country has Periphery status. Since traditional SLA research has mainly been concerned with acquiring a second language in monolingual settings common in Center communities, there has been a call to explore the dynamic multilingualism often present in Periphery communities (see Kachru 1986; Sridhar, 1994).

The Center vs. Periphery discussion is an important continuation to the NS/NNS debate with regard to the notion of competence. Periphery speakers are often seen as less competent in speaking a world language such as English or French, not because they lack proficiency in the language but because they speak a variety different from the Center’s standard dialect. Competence, in this regard, is not measured by how effectively you communicate but by what variety you own. In my research, I will show the ways in which members of the Senegalese communities I have interviewed are cognizant of their position in the Center-Periphery paradigm and how this understanding affects language attitudes.

### **1.2.2 Language ideologies**

The notion of competence with the related topics of NS and Center-Periphery is of paramount importance to any discussion on language ideology. Language ideology, most commonly explored in the field of linguistic anthropology but also in sociolinguistics and other related disciplines, is defined as the “cultural (or subcultural) system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests which is a

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<sup>6</sup> Most research on Center and Periphery looks at the English-speaking world. Kachru (1985) has created a model with three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. The inner circle refers to countries where English is the primary language spoken by a mainly monolingual community (Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). The outer circle encompasses countries that were once a colony and where English has been used in institutional settings. The expanding circle includes countries that use English as an international language or in other foreign language contexts. Phillipson (1992), meanwhile, uses the terms ‘core English-speaking countries’ (which corresponds with Kachru’s inner circle) and ‘periphery-English’ countries.

crucial mediating factor” (Irvine, 1989, p. 255). In other words, language ideologies help explain the moral and political values that individuals attach to specific languages and their culturally constructed attitudes toward using these languages. Woolard (2010) describes language ideology as “a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk,” in which the way people use language or languages is based on where they position themselves in society (p. 235). By exploring language ideologies, we uncover how societies conceptualize both language and communication and can address Center vs. Periphery arguments, language ownership, opinions on mono- and multilingualism, and a host of other topics.

One important aspect of language ideology that has received attention in the research literature concerns language attitudes in multilingual settings. For instance, Irvine’s work (1989) on the rural Senegalese Wolof focuses on the link between language ideology and social and linguistic structure by exploring Wolof attitudes toward French and Arabic as well as by looking at how different social groups in Senegal use various linguistic forms based on ethnic, class, and caste affiliation and their opinions on this language usage. Irvine has found that in some specific pre-1970’s locations in Senegal, the acquisition of French was lower than that of Arabic and that this difference correlated with a more favorable opinion of Arabic that led to a tendency to assimilate that language into their linguistic repertoire. In these same locations a couple decades later, there was a shift towards a more favorable French language ideology. Irvine suggests that the changing relationship between Senegal and France, in which Senegal became an independent nation, influenced the language ideologies and subsequently the linguistic repertoires of these rural Wolof speakers. More importantly, Irvine has found that the ideological shifts in this particular locale does not necessarily reflect what was happening in all of Senegal, leading her to conclude that the specific setting with its complex intersection of historical and social factors should be taken into consideration in any discussion of language ideologies.

Standard language and how it is perceived by a community is another type of language ideology. Standard language ideology relates back to the discussion of linguistic competence and NS ability in language. For instance, Lippi-Green (1997) has written one of the most influential studies to date on the effects of institutionalized language ideology in the United States. Looking at the regional, socio-economic, and racial factors that affect the speech of L1 speakers of English as well as the linguistic variations that exist in the speech of ESL speakers, she argues that “the evaluation of language effectiveness – while sometimes quite relevant – is often a covert way of judging not the delivery of the message, but the social identity of the messenger” (p. 17). She also posits that in a race conscious society, people look at accent as a means to discriminate because using other more salient identity markers is taboo: “Accent serves as the first point of gate keeping because we are forbidden by law and social custom, and perhaps by a prevailing sense of what is morally and ethically right, from using race, ethnicity, homeland or economics more directly” (p. 64).

According to Lippi-Green, who contends that the social identity of the individuals in a linguistic exchange often dictates the effectiveness of the conversation, “what we will see again and again in the case studies... is that members of the dominant language group feel perfectly empowered to reject their role, and to demand that a person with an accent carry the majority of responsibility in the communicative act” (p. 70). Meanwhile, these same case studies demonstrate that when members of the dominant language group encounter other mainstream members whose speech is unclear, they work harder to achieve mutual understanding. Lippi-Green suggests that social and psychological motivations influence the amount of effort a speaker is willing to exert in a communicative act and that these motivations are often related to

how connected we feel to our interlocutor. The existence of an accent might serve to create social distance where the speaker of the standard variety positions himself above the other speaker in the linguistic hierarchy.

This treatment could prove detrimental to L2 learners who might already be anxious about their performance, thus limiting not only the quality of the conversation but also the motivation to speak. Accordingly, the motivation of a second language learner is influenced not only by the speaker's attitudes and opinions toward the target language or by his ability to speak the language but by the dominant culture's language ideology. In addition, concerning the notion of competence, while most people assume that lack of communication is due to the inability to understand or communicate, Lippi-Green argues that "in many cases, breakdown of communication is due not so much to accent as it is to negative social evaluation of the accent in question, and a rejection of the communicative burden" (p. 71). Since these power relations are a part of any speech act, the implications it has on speakers with accents or non-standard speech is a serious matter as these speakers constantly run the risk of being misunderstood, or worse, discriminated against. Lippi-Green conveys the problematic nature of this phenomenon when writing that "accent discrimination can be found everywhere in our daily lives. In fact, such behavior is so commonly accepted, so widely perceived as appropriate, that it must be seen as the last back door to discrimination" (p.73).

### 1.2.3 Language use

To investigate notions such as communicative competence, the effects of the NS/NNS dichotomy, or language ideologies, one must study language use. In their reconceptualization of the field of SLA, Firth and Wagner (1997) call for "a significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use" (p. 286), arguing that this focus would allow researchers to better "understand and explicate how language is used *as it is being acquired through interaction*, and used resourcefully, contingently, and contextually" (p. 296). They also contend that "language is not only a cognitive phenomenon, the product of the individual's brain; it is also fundamentally a social phenomenon, acquired and used interactively, in a variety of contexts for myriad practical purposes" (p. 296). Firth and Wagner's position, while met with hesitance and disapproval by some scholars in the field, was not entirely new, as others had already argued similar sentiments.<sup>7</sup> However, Firth and Wagner have been credited with effectively creating a space for this social perspective that gives language use as much importance as language acquisition, allowing for sociolinguistic SLA to stake a claim in SLA studies. Emphasizing the social, Ellis (2008) remarks that "in sociolinguistic SLA, in contrast [with psycholinguistic SLA], no clear distinction between learning and language use is made. Rather it is assumed that because learning necessarily entails language use, it is sufficient to simply examine how learners use language and how social factors shape and are shaped by this use" (p. 284).<sup>8</sup>

Firth and Wagner have not simply argued for more studies on language use, since language use has always been investigated to explore acquisition; they are most interested in giving 'language use' a central role. A year after their 1997 article helped to widen the scope of

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<sup>7</sup> Firth and Wagner (1997) acknowledge the roles of Hall (1995), Rampton (1995), Pennycook (1994), and Kramsch (1995), in bringing this position to the forefront of SLA theory (p. 296).

<sup>8</sup> According to Ellis (2008), those who have thrived in the sociolinguistic SLA model would include Block (2003); Cook (2002); and Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997) (p. 283).

SLA studies, they issued a follow up article titled “SLA Property: No Trespassing” (1998) in response to their colleagues’ reactions. Here, they reiterate their concern that trying to distinguish between acquisition and use is a moot point because “what constitutes ‘acquisition’ is essentially unclear; we cannot be sure where ‘use’ ends and ‘acquisition’ begins” (p. 91). Taking issue with Gass (1998) who called their ideas naïve, they highlight the subordinate position of language use: “Research in language use is considered useful for, though ultimately secondary to, psycholinguistic research into acquisition, because—it is claimed—language use provides the context for psychological processes which are the real and bona fide focus of SLA” (Firth and Wagner, 1998, p. 91). By questioning the centrality of the psycholinguistic aspect of this framework, they open up the possibility of language use taking center stage in a sociolinguistic framework. In addition, they restate their view that valuing Chomskian linguistics in SLA over other theoretical frameworks harms the effectiveness of the field: “SLA seems to be dominated by Chomskian thinking to such a degree that others’ frames of reference for the understanding of language and cognition have become inconceivable. [They] are surprised that this structural, cognitive paradigm is advocated by researchers who actually study interactional aspects of SLA” (p. 92). While they do not discredit the value of a structural, cognitive paradigm, their point that even researchers who subscribe to this framework are in reality studying interactional aspects of SLA suggests that there is no need to restrict the field. The understanding of language use as an essential aspect of SLA research has contributed to the rise of sociolinguistic SLA in the fifteen years since Firth and Wagner (1997).

#### **1.2.4 Settings**

At this point I have shown that the field of SLA encompasses many different theoretical frameworks relying on several different disciplines. Another important distinction made in SLA is the difference between natural and instructed language acquisition, which depends on the type of setting where learning takes place. Natural settings include the workplace, home, or any other setting with naturally occurring social situations such as the media. Meanwhile, instructed language acquisition occurs in educational settings in schools, through text-books, or through computer-mediated activities. The field underlines the importance of this distinction for the following reasons:

A general assumption is that the learning that takes place in natural and educational settings is very different in nature. In natural settings informal learning occurs. That is, learning is considered to result from direct participation and observation without any articulation of the underlying principles or rules... Also, there is an emphasis on the social significance of what is being learnt rather than on the mastery of the subject matter. In contrast, formal learning is held to take place through conscious attention to rules and principles, and greater emphasis is placed on mastery of ‘subject matter’ treated as a decontextualized body of knowledge. However, the correlation between informal learning and natural settings on the one hand, and formal learning and educational setting on the other, is at best only a crude one... (Ellis, 2008, p. 288)

My research primarily focuses on language acquisition and use in natural settings, highlighting in particular how learners are participants in a larger social context.

### 1.2.4.1 Natural settings

Even after distinguishing between natural and educational settings, one finds that neither is homogenous. For example, Ellis (2008) distinguishes four types of natural L2 learning settings: majority language settings, official language settings, international settings, and minority language settings.<sup>9</sup> For my research, I am most interested in the first two. Majority language settings, the most researched type of setting according to Ellis (2008), refer to settings in which the L2 learner's target language is one of the native languages of the country (i.e. English in the United States). The people in my study are L2 learners of French in France and of Italian in Italy. However, the second type, official language settings, is also pertinent to my research, referring to settings in which the L2 learner's target language is only spoken as a mother tongue by a small portion of the population. Former colonies in Africa and Asia often have official languages that are vestiges from the colonial period. Senegal, as a former colony of France and whose official language is French, has a population that has been exposed to the French language, making the relationship between migrant group and host country more complex. By comparing Senegalese immigrants in France and in Italy, I juxtapose two groups that have different relationships to the target language. The group in France has experienced learning French in two different types of natural settings, one in their home country and another in their host country. In addition, even if they do not speak French at home, most Senegalese immigrants in France and Italy have also received some formal French language instruction since the Senegalese educational system follows the French model. The group in Italy, on the other hand, has only experienced Italian in a majority language setting. To my knowledge, work to date has not studied this specific comparative aspect of language learning in natural settings.

This being said, there is a rich amount of research that has looked at SLA in natural settings, which represents the foundation of my research. With respect to SLA in majority language settings, many influential studies have been produced. One aspect of language learning relates to reference group, in other words, the group of target language speakers that serve as a model in second language learning. For example, Goldstein's (1987) work investigates the motivation for a group of 28 Hispanic boys in New York City to make AAVE (African American Vernacular English) instead of standard English their target language. I will look at this study in more detail in the section on Identity in SLA; however, this research is important to mention here because it contrasts with other studies that depict the relative ease with which some L2 learners learn a standard variety of the target language (Taylor, 1980). Taylor postulates that there is a connection between social mobility, L1 maintenance, and L2 learning, in which some learners see rewards in maintaining the L1 for the obvious connection it has with the minority group while others see benefits in learning the L2 to improve their status with the majority group. Meanwhile, other studies have looked at access to majority language in natural settings. For instance, Norton (1997; 2000) delves deeply into the link between power relations and language learning opportunities. Because her research has been essential to how I have formulated my own work on identity and language learning/use, I will examine her study at length in the following section.

One other research trend that appears in the SLA literature on natural majority language settings is the focus on children of immigrants growing up in a majority language setting, typically in urban centers (see Harris 1995; Harris, Leung, and Rampton 2001). These types of

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<sup>9</sup> The first three were expounded by Judd (1978) while the fourth, minority language settings, was added by Siegel (2003).

studies are particularly relevant to my research because some of the most insightful information gleaned from my data include the responses of those Senegalese who have spent most or all of their lives in Paris but who have expressed an inability to feel like they belong to either their Senegalese heritage or their French environment. Ellis (2008) remarks that “the central finding of these studies is that these children develop hybrid cultures involving a mixing and fusing of disparate elements, which is reflected in their repertoire and use of languages” (p. 294). While the literature has found evidence of developing hybrid cultures which I explore as well, I want to also focus on how these hybrid identities influence how they perceive and speak about their understanding of themselves as both linguistic and social beings. In addition, I hope to highlight the post-colonial aspect that might influence these developing hybrid identities.

As for L2 learning in official language settings in which new varieties of these ex-colonial languages may develop, extensive research exists that frames my work. Bolton (2004), for instance, investigates the growing attention paid to the socio-political aspects of language use in addition to the traditional focus on linguistic descriptions when speaking about speakers of ex-colonial languages. Canagarajah (1999) has been instrumental in this discussion, particularly in relation to the Center-Periphery argument discussed earlier. Comparing Senegalese immigrants’ language use of French and Italian in their respective host countries will highlight the influence that official language settings in a migrant country have on the overall post-migration language use and linguistic attitudes in differing host countries.

#### **1.2.4.2 Comparative studies**

I have mentioned the importance of the comparative nature in my work, concentrating on language learning in two distinct immigrant settings. Most research on social setting in second language contexts focuses on the relationship between language learners and a single setting. For example, Rampton (1995) has conducted his research primarily in London, Norton (2000) in Toronto, Zentella (1997) in New York; and while these particular researchers and the others mentioned in this chapter have provided the field with thought-provoking and invaluable studies, I would argue that a nuanced understanding of social actors and their environments can be further developed when an explicit comparison of different settings is made, adding to an underdeveloped perspective in the SLA canon.

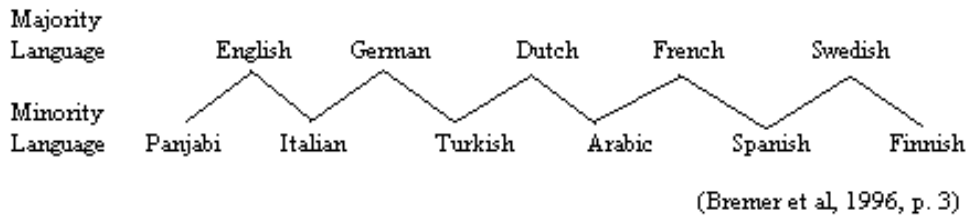
There is some research that has looked at the effect of setting on language use and acquisition.<sup>10</sup> One study that has looked at varying settings is Bremer *et al* (1996), which investigates adult immigrant second language acquisition in the United Kingdom, Germany, The Netherlands, France, and Sweden. I consider this an effective comparative study because two groups of minority language speakers were studied in each country and because each host country shared a language group with another country. Below is a graphic that illustrates this point:

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<sup>10</sup> According to Ellis (2008), “there is evidence to suggest that both language use and acquisition do vary according to setting” (p. 286-7).



Fig. 1



They found that their informants, regardless of the setting, had limited opportunities to interact with members of the majority setting. While providing ample comparative data, their study is mainly interested in language development and interaction, not identity, which is the crux of my research. In addition, with so many focal groups, target languages, and host countries, it is difficult to create a picture of how a migrant group from a single country adapts and grows in differing contexts.

Another example of a comparative look at settings is Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002). Investigating their bilingual children's language choices in two settings during a five year period—predominantly English-speaking Louisiana during the academic years and French-speaking Quebec during the summers—the researchers found that as the children approached adolescence they demonstrated a preference for speaking the dominant language in their social context. The language of their peer group carried more weight than the language of their family. While this is an interesting foray into looking at the relevance of settings, with regard to my own research, similarities are sparse. Caldas and Caron-Caldas were ultimately researching their own bilingual children (Caldas is an American citizen who was raised in English and Caron-Caldas is French-speaking from Quebec) in environments where they were not immigrants in the traditional sense, especially when compared to a group such as Senegalese immigrants in Europe. There is also no emphasis on larger socio-historical forces that would be present in research on immigrants from post-colonial countries. In my research, on the other hand, I seek to show the importance of the complex connection between the migrant and the host country because only then will a detailed understanding of second language acquisition with regard to migrants and host countries emerge.

### **1.3 Identity**

In the previous two sections I have demonstrated the historical and contemporary interdisciplinarity of the field of SLA. It is therefore unsurprising that the study of identity in SLA would have the same interdisciplinary aspect. Identity in SLA did not gain traction until the 1990s when researchers such as Norton pioneered its importance to the field. According to Block (2007), the role of identity in SLA “has been the result of systematic and extensive borrowing from contiguous social science fields of inquiry” (p. 2). He notes that Norton (1995) first relied on social theorist Chris Weedon (1987) and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977) to explore issues in identity. After this first venture into the social sciences, many other SLA identity researchers have followed suit, appropriating theories and ideas from various social scientists in fields of social theory, sociology, and anthropology until identity studies became a recognized as important to SLA research. Research on identity is now a thriving sub-field of study in SLA and researchers make no qualms about their reliance on similar social fields in their conceptualization and investigation of identity. In this section, I will briefly explain the inception

of identity studies in the social sciences in general before showing its development in SLA. In doing so, I will present various articulations of identity including terms used to express the general phenomenon of identity. I will also look at the various approaches to researching identity, paying particular attention to two competing traditions: structuralism and post-structuralism. I will then discuss the variables with regard to identity that have been researched in SLA.

### **1.3.1 Approaches**

In defining identity one must frame the discussion by explaining the two overarching approaches to conceptualizing identity in the social sciences: structuralism and post-structuralism. A structuralist approach to identity is concerned with uncovering the universals of human behavior and is heavily grounded in sociology (see Durkheim [1895] 1964) and anthropology (see Levi-Strauss 1972). In this tradition, identity is a product of social conditions in which “individuals are determined by their membership in social categories based on social class, religion, education, family, peer groups and so on. In a broader sense, it has also meant that they are shaped and formed by their ‘culture,’ understood to be the relatively fixed worldview, modes of behaviour and artefacts of a particular group of people” (Block, 2007, p. 12). Identity from a structuralist tradition is static and grounded in essentialism, the latter term described as “the position that the attributes and behavior of socially defined groups can be determined and explained by reference to cultural and/or biological characteristics believed to be inherent to the group” (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 400). Bucholtz adds that essentialism assumes that groups can be clearly delineated and that group members have something in common. Group members perpetuate and appropriate pre-existing characteristics, which often endure over a lifetime. Identity in this vein is often based on binary distinctions of rich/poor, black/white, male/female and is meant to distinguish a person from others.

Post-structuralism is the Post-Modern counterpart to structuralism. The static, essentializing description of identity has been transformed into a dynamic phenomenon in which identity is constantly being constructed in different contexts. As Block (2007) explains, “in current social science literature, poststructuralism is about moving beyond the search for such ‘universal and invariant laws of humanity’ to more nuanced, multileveled and ultimately, complicated framings of the world around us” (p. 13). One of the key tenets of the post-structuralist definition of identity is that it is through language that identity is constructed. For instance, Tann (2010) notes the following: identity is “both the process and product of a discursive formation that involves a discursive act of ‘identification’ by a social actor. It comes into play within a situated discourse to maintain a sense of consistency in the social order constructed through the discourse” (p. 165). In other words, language manifests who we are in a particular moment and it is this discursive practice that allows for identity formation.

The changing conceptualization of identity has provoked a proliferation of terminology that post-structuralists have viewed as more adequate in capturing the true essence of identity. Theorists such as Kristeva (1966) have argued that there are no fixed identities, just subject positions, because we are subjects in process, constantly creating ourselves and constructing ourselves through language. The term identity thus gave way to subjectivity in which a subject position is always in a dialogic relationship with the surrounding environment and conveyed through discourse (Bakhtin, 1986). While identity is a membership category that one can adopt or reject, subjectivity is sense of self, consciously or unconsciously constructed. Weedon ([1987] 1997) has been hailed as a foundational theorist in post-structuralist discussions of identity. Her

basic premise is that “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation in the world” constitute one’s identity (p. 32). In this vein, Kramersch (2010) details the formation of this sense of self by describing ‘subject position’ as “the way in which the subject presents and represents itself discursively, psychologically, socially, and culturally through the use of symbolic systems. It comes from a view of the subject as decentered, historically and socially contingent—a subject that defines itself and is defined in interaction with other contingent subjects” (p. 20). All of these scholars highlight the fact that identity, or subject position, does not exist in a vacuum but is constantly created and recreated by our surrounding environments, the players involved, and the language used to express these realities.

A post-structuralist conceptualization of identity also seeks to understand how we relate ourselves to a world that becomes increasingly borderless in the age of technology, the internet, and mass global migrations. Mathews (2000), for instance, posits the existence of a *cultural supermarket*, existing because of access to international media and technological advancements, in which “the world’s population [wanders] through...choosing, albeit in a highly conditioned way, the identities we perform within our social worlds” (p. 6). He is particularly interested in how this access to a cultural supermarket shapes individuals’ global identities since we tend to shape ourselves “in ways close to home, in congruence with our membership in our home societies” (p. 15). Meanwhile, migration “across geographical and sociocultural borders” (Block, 2007, p. 20) has facilitated the creation of hybrid or ‘third place’ identities for those who feel that no one identity can encompass who they are.<sup>11</sup> Bhabha (1994), writing in a post-colonial context, has led us to conceptualize “an *international culture*, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity. To that end we should remember that it is the ‘inter’ – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in between* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (p. 56).

From a language pedagogy framework, Kramersch (1993) conceptualizes border crossings in terms of foreign language learning and awareness of various frames of reference, in which “the telling of these boundary experiences makes participants become conscious of the paramount importance of context and how manipulating contextual frames and perspectives through language can give people power and control, as they make themselves at home in a culture ‘of a third kind’” (p. 235). Kramersch (2010) has more recently suggested, however, that ‘third place’ as a spatial metaphor seems too static in an increasingly globalized world. She has worried that “predicated on the existence of a first and second place that are all too often reified in ‘country of origin’ and ‘host country,’ third place can be easily romanticized as some hybrid position that contributes to the host country’s ideology of cultural diversity” (p. 200). Furthermore, she has contended that “the term ‘third place’ or ‘third culture’ too often ignores the symbolic nature of the multilingual subject—both as a signifying self and as a social actor who has the power to change social reality through the use of multiple symbolic systems” (p. 200). In order to address these issues, Kramersch has proposed reframing “the notion of third place as symbolic competence, an ability that is both theoretical and practical, and that emerges from the need to find appropriate subject positions within and across the language at hand. The multilingual subject is defined by his or her growing symbolic competence” (p. 200).

Another outcome of post-structural identity studies is that identity is imbued with a sense of agency. Block (2007) asks, “To what extent is identity a self-conscious, reflexive project of

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<sup>11</sup> See Bhabha, 1994; S. Hall, 1996; Papastergiadis, 2000; Kramersch, 1993.

individual agency, created and maintained by individuals?” (p. 22). Giddens (1991) demonstrates that individual choice cannot be overlooked in identity formulation by referring to the “reflexive constitution of self-identity” (p. 86). Nevertheless, there are some limitations to this agency. As Block (2007) notes in his understanding of current approaches to identity, it is “neither contained solely inside the individuals nor does it depend exclusively on how others define the individual. Rather, one needs to consider both self-generated subject positioning as well as subject positionings that are imposed on individuals by others” (p. 26). This clarification is important because some researchers are wary of the primacy of agency. For instance, scholars such as May (2001), Layder (1993, 1997) and Ortner (2005) question just how much agency a person actually possesses. They suggest that “social constructs such as ethnic affiliation, while not fixed for life, do nevertheless provide a grounding for much of our day-to-day activity” (Block, 2007, p. 23). While May would allow for the presence of negotiation in the construction of ethnicity, it is limited: “Individual and collective choices are circumscribed by the ethnic categories available at any given time and place. These categories are, in turn, socially and politically defined” (May, 2001, p. 40). Block (2007) points out that most scholars who subscribe to a more agentive understanding of identity take May’s apprehension seriously. One way to approach identity with these concerns in mind is by exploring individual participation in ‘communities of practice’ (see Lave and Wenger, 1991). In a community of practice a newcomer must earn membership by proving that he or she legitimately belongs. Thus, in a community of practice both the newcomer and the existing community have agency, and while newcomers come across pre-existing social structures created by the community, members have the ability to reformulate and reconstruct these structures. In keeping with the tenets of post-structuralism, identity in a community of practice is formed through an individual’s sense of self, the greater social environment, and the interaction between the two.

### 1.3.2 Identity in SLA

These various understandings of identity in a post-structuralist tradition have greatly influenced SLA, especially since the 1990s. In the beginning of this section I mentioned that Norton (1997, 2000; Norton Peirce 1995) is a pioneering member of identity research in SLA.<sup>12</sup> Norton theorizes that an individual’s perception of herself and the way others perceive her directly influence her ability to learn and use that language. Norton’s ethnographic study of five immigrant women attempting to learn English in Canada has been widely acknowledged as a key study on the relationship between identity and language learning, opening the field of second language acquisition to this notion of identity, a concept that has since generated much interest and controversy. In particular, Norton has revisited a key phenomenon in SLA research, motivation, which concerns the attitudes towards the target language and the goals one has for learning the target language, and has offered her own concept, *investment*.

Investment is a more dynamic concept than motivation because one’s degree of investment constantly changes depending on the social setting. Norton’s emphasis on investment over motivation enables researchers to address how L2 learners ‘claim the right to speak’:

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<sup>12</sup> According to Ellis, “Norton’s theory of social identity and language learning... takes up Pennycook’s (1990: 26) challenge to ‘rethink language acquisition in its social, cultural, and political contexts, taking into account gender, race, and other relations of power as well as the notion of the subject as multiple and formed within different discourses’” (Ellis, 2008, p. 336).

Because the right to speak intersects in important ways with a language learner's identity, I have used the term *investment* to signal the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it...The construct of investment conceives of the language learner as having a complex history and multiple desires. An investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity, which changes across time and space. (Norton, 1997, p. 411)

For Norton (2000), identity markers such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity may serve to marginalize L2 learners and influence their right to speak (p. 7). By focusing on the right to speak, Norton argues that the role of power relations is essential to any theorization of identity in language learning. Influenced by Foucault (1980), she contends that "power does not operate only at the macro level of powerful institutions...but also at the micro level of everyday social encounters between people with differential access to symbolic and material resources" (Norton, 2000, p.7). Foucault introduced this power element that became the crux of Bourdieu's discussion of identity, a view to which Norton has subscribed. Bourdieu argued that *habitus*, "an acquired system of generative schemes...makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production" (Bourdieu, [1980] 1991, p. 55). In other words, our previous experiences dictate how we perceive and act, a phenomenon that contributes directly to power relations. Menard-Warwick (2005) has thus argued that "since interactions between individuals tend to reflect the societal positions of the interlocutors, these interactions are likely to both express and reproduce the structures of society" (p. 256).

Norton is a self-described post-structuralist (Norton, 2000, p. 124) who has drawn particularly on the work of Weedon ([1987] 1997) and has argued that identity is a site of struggle, that identity changes over time, and that language learning is a social practice. In addition, Norton sees language learners as possessing agency and therefore not being restricted to pre-existing categories. However, Norton has been criticized as not being post-structural enough in her focus on pre-existing categories (see Price 1996).<sup>13</sup> In addition, Kramsch (2010) hints that SLA research in identity and language learning, such as Norton's, should also focus more on symbolic activity. According to her, this type of SLA research "has not explicitly associated affect, emotions, and identity to language learners' experience of symbolic form" (p. 50). Kramsch defined two meanings of symbolic: "language use is symbolic [1] because it mediates our existence through symbolic forms that are conventional and represent objective realities, and [2] because symbolic forms construct subject realities such as perceptions, emotions, attitudes, and values" (p. 7). In other words, Kramsch claims that SLA research "can explain these learners' objective successes or failures in their acquisition and use of a foreign language, but they cannot capture the subjective dimensions of their behavior" (p. 112).

Regardless of these critiques, Norton has at least forced scholars to reflect on what a post-structuralist approach means to identity studies in SLA and to question the seemingly static and

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<sup>13</sup> She also relies heavily on Bourdieu who is seen as a structuralist because of the emphasis he places on the power of institutions and because of the lack of importance given to discourse formation. In addition, his concepts of *habitus* and *field* are locked in in deterministic ways. However, his emphasis on the relationship between individual and society makes his approach to identity more dynamic than the traditional structuralist perspective. In turn, his work has influenced researchers who would see themselves as post-structuralist.

pre-existing categories such as race, class, and gender, leading to a growing field of identity and language study research. For instance, McKay and Wong (1996) have researched the language skills of Chinese immigrant students in California junior high schools by conceiving of “the second-language learner from a *contextualist perspective*,” which examines “interconnections of discourse and power in the language learning setting” (p. 578). By looking at multiple discourses in the social context (i.e. colonialist/racialized discourses on immigrants, model-minority discourse, gender discourses), they investigate “how each student’s learning of various English skills may be understood in terms of his/her investment” (p. 591).

Meanwhile, Kinginger (2004) has chronicled the experiences of Alice, an American study abroad student in France, by eliciting personal narrative detailing her four years abroad. Language learning in France proved to be an arduous task for Alice whose motives for learning French were constantly changing depending on the events in her life and her interactions with others. By collecting a personal account, Kinginger has been able to underline the ever-changing relationship between the negotiation/construction of identity and access to social networks (p. 220). As Alice’s position in various social networks changed so did her investment in the language. This constantly changing backdrop calls into question the traditional concept of a static language learner. By using personal accounts, Kinginger argues that “an understanding of these unique experiences...requires that the efforts of language learning be situated with respect to the ideological and sociopolitical processes which both constrain and enable (re)negotiation of identity” (p. 220). It is through this (re)negotiation of identity that a learner’s investment in a language changes. McKay and Wong (1996) and Kinginger (2004) are just a couple examples of how Norton (1995; 1997, 2000) has influenced the direction of identity studies in SLA.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.3.3 Variables

In order to understand how the field of SLA has researched identity, a discussion of variables is needed. Sociolinguistic SLA, which takes both structural and interactional views of language acquisition, explores social identity by not only documenting how variables such as class, gender and age influence language learners but by also acknowledging that language learners are constantly constructing and reconstructing their social identities depending on the environment and the participants (Ellis, 2008). Through Sociolinguistic SLA we see a desire for a post-structural approach to identity that tries to avoid relying on pre-existing social constructs. Most researchers working in identity studies do not deny the existence of these social constructs such as gender, class, and ethnicity; however, they are more interested in how individuals conceptualize these different constructs through language and discourse. The idea is that membership to different social groups is a complex and mutable process where “certain identities may be more salient than others, and for some individuals, particular identities may be more or less central to their sense of self” (Noels & Giles, 2009, p. 661). There are a variety of variables that can be investigated. In this section, however, I focus on the variables that are most relevant to the construction of identity for the Senegalese immigrants in Paris and Rome: social class, race/ethnicity, and gender.

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<sup>14</sup> As Block (2007) remarks, “a survey of recent publications focusing on topics such as language learning, language socialization and multilingual language practices reveals how this poststructuralist approach to identity has taken hold, to varying degrees, as a common way of conceptualizing identity in applied linguistics” (p. 13).

### 1.3.3.1 Social class

Traditionally, income, level of education, and occupation have been used to determine someone's social class. In my treatment of class, I take into account these factors, but I also borrow from Norton (2000), who argues that "a classed identity is one that is produced in specific sets of social, historical and economic relations of power which are reinforced and reproduced in everyday social encounters" (p. 13). While acknowledging the conventional factors, she adopts the approach of Connell *et al* (1982) who have contended that "it is not what people are, or even what they own, so much as what they do with the resources' that is central to an understanding of class (p. 33)" (p. 13). What I glean from Connell *et al* and Norton's position is that a classed identity is dynamic, changing based on social encounters, and that it is closely related to Foucauldian notions of power (Foucault, 1984) and understanding of different types of capital, made famous by Bourdieu (1991). Skeggs (1997, 2004) is another theorist who relies heavily on Bourdieu to define social class in a postmodern world. From a feminist and cultural theory perspective, Skeggs (1997) applies Bourdieu's conceptualization of social class to her ethnographic study of women and their various experiences in the world:

- 1 Economic capital: this includes income, wealth, financial inheritances and monetary assets.
- 2 Cultural capital: this can exist in three forms – in an embodied state, that is in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods; and in the institutionalized state, resulting in such things as educational qualifications...Cultural capital only exists in relation to the network of other forms of capital...
- 3 Social capital: resources based on connections and group membership. This is capital generated through relationships.
- 4 Symbolic capital: this is the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognized as legitimate. Legitimation is the key mechanism in the conversion to power...All capitals are context specific. (Skeggs, 1997, p. 8)

Examples of cultural capital include accent and attitude (behavioral patterns), knowledge and skills, and a connection to certain institutions such as universities while symbolic capital conveys social standing and includes aspects such as prestige, reputation, and fame (Bourdieu, 1991). In defining social class, I will focus on mainly nationality and citizenship, which I have identified in my research as the social factors that most significantly reflect class distinctions for my research population, all the while elaborating on Bourdieu's notions of capital and its connection to power relations. Class in terms of socio-economic status (SES), occupation, and level of education also influence the Senegalese communities that I investigate. For instance, the latter two factors are particularly relevant in the construction of gendered identity. However, I would argue that nationality and citizenship are the most relevant factors in the construction of the informants' classed identity.

I have decided to highlight nationality and citizenship while diminishing the role of SES for my particular research group because the experiences of members of a similar SES can differ greatly based on possession of citizenship. While anyone, citizen or not, with a low SES could lack sufficient capital to have a socially favorable position in society, being an immigrant, particularly an African immigrant erects even more barriers. Brubaker (1992) argues that

citizenship essentially concerns inclusion and exclusion in which the boundaries of a modern state are territorial but also indicate group membership. Members of the state have a sense of who belongs in their country based on various identity markers and those who do not fit into this conceptualization are often labeled as outsiders. Brubaker specifically cited identity checks that rely on ethnocultural features, whether legally or not, as an example of the state enforcing group membership. These ethnic minorities are therefore considered outsiders regardless of their citizenship status. In other words, the notion of inclusion/exclusion is maintained by the establishment of citizenship but also by the myriad of other co-variables. For half a century, sociological work concerning citizenship has taken into account these various factors (see Marshall 1950). Because of the particular relevance of these other variables, SES is relegated to a minor role with regard to learning a second language and embodying a second language identity for the group I have researched.

One reason why citizenship cannot be divorced from these other variables is because of how national identity is constructed. According to Anderson (1991), a nation is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (p. 6). He continues by saying: “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). In arguing why a nation is imagined as a community, he writes that “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (p. 7). In their conceptualization of nationhood and creation of comradeship, many inhabitants create specific images in their minds of who belongs to their nation, images created on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, shared histories and other factors. Even for immigrants who attempt to mimic prevailing imaginings of what it means to be from a certain nation, “there is the grating experience of presenting an acceptable multimodal package (accent, cultural capital, dress, movement, etc.) but still being positioned as ‘foreign’ by those who conform to the default assumed racial phenotype and overall physical appearance of the host community” (Block, 2007, p. 42).

However, it is not only the nation that is imagined. Those who are excluded from the nation are imagined as well. Bremer *et al* (1996), mentioned above, indicate that regardless of how a person self-identified before emigrating, he or she is perceived by the majority culture as disadvantaged on multiple fronts: “Even those who were skilled or professional workers in their own country, are identified in the new one, by their largely unskilled and marginal jobs or increasingly, their unemployed status” (p. 220). In addition, for those who are competent communicators in their native language, “their inexperience in the new language means that they lack communicative power, or linguistic capital, of the indigenous working class” (p. 220). Regardless of one’s actual competence or abilities, being identified as ‘foreign’ by the dominant class often changes how one’s ability to work or to speak is perceived. Miller (2003), in her work on immigrant children in Australia, invokes the notion of audibility, which suggests the ability to be heard. Miller argues that audibility is rooted in Bourdieu’s notions of social capital and the ‘right to speak’ in which the speaker has ‘the power to impose reception’ (p. 47). She chooses a theoretical framework that relies on these various notions to approach communicative competence and other traditional SLA concerns (p. 48). As we have seen, it is difficult to separate social class from other variables. Additionally, indelibly linked to nationality and citizenship are the notions of race and ethnicity.



### 1.3.3.2 Race and Ethnicity

While race and ethnicity are two concepts that are highly relevant to my research, speaking about them can be problematic for many reasons. There is disagreement in how each concept should be defined and what each concept entails as well as a divide between how scholars and the general public approach these concepts. Traditionally, race conveys a biological or genetic notion while ethnicity evokes cultural and religious characteristics. However, this dichotomy has proven problematic and has been challenged (Gunaratnam, 2003, p. 4). For instance, against the backdrop of an increasingly multicultural Britain in which ‘race’ is typically used to denote Afro-Caribbeans and ‘ethnicity’ to Asians, Hall (2000) argues that the binary opposition between ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ is too simplistic (p. 223). According to him, “biological racism privileges markers like skin colour, but those signifiers have always also been used, by discursive extension, to connote social and cultural differences,” aspects usually attributed to ‘ethnicity’ (p. 223). In the same vein, ethnicity can be as effective as race in creating a hierarchy in which being culturally different is synonymous with being inferior. Therefore, in reality, “the biological referent is never wholly absent from discourse of ethnicity, though it is more indirect” (p. 223). This reading suggests that one concept is not more valid than the other, but that each heavily influences the other, is conceptualized differently depending on the context and viewpoint, and is problematic for anyone who wishes to avoid essentialism.

Meanwhile, as scholars try to establish boundaries for race and ethnicity, “outside the academic world, pseudo-biological/scientific perspectives are still often felt to fit well with common sense ideas of race. For many people, significant populations around the world can be neatly grouped on the basis of their physical appearance, and this is frequently expressed in (unsatisfactory and inaccurate) colour designations like ‘black,’ ‘white’ and ‘yellow,’ or in classifications like Asian, Caucasian and African” (Harris and Rampton, 2003, p. 4). Harris and Rampton highlight that “one popular way of characterising the racial dimension is to nest it as one of a collection of elements that make up *ethnicity* – a common ancestry, a common language, a common religion and a *distinctive physical appearance*” (p. 5). To further complicate matters, when referring to these constructs in my own research the European understanding of race and ethnicity with regard to Senegalese immigrants may vary greatly from the Senegalese perspective. A European might assign the classification of ‘black’ or ‘African’ or more specifically ‘Senegalese.’ A Senegalese immigrant in Europe might also accept these very same terms in describing themselves. However, most of my Senegalese informants were also quick to distinguish their own ethnic differences with other Senegalese, in the framework of the various multiethnic societies found all over the African continent. Being Wolof or Peul or any of the other numerous ethnic groups was as important as being Senegalese. In my own understanding of race and ethnicity, I subscribe to the following argument put forth by Harris and Rampton (2003):

In everyday discussion, ethnicity is often equated with a ‘racially’ marked culture. It is assumed that individuals possess (or belong to) cultures that are relatively discrete, homogeneous and static, and that through childhood socialisation and community experience, ethnic culture provides us with tacit but distinctive, ingrained dispositions. This view of ethnicity-as-a-fixed and formative-inheritance has, however, been criticized as ‘ethnic absolutism’ (Gilroy 1987: Ch. 2), and contrasted with an approach in which ethnicity is regarded as something

that people can emphasise strategically in a range of different ways, according to their needs and purposes in particular situations. Instead, in this ‘strategic’ view, ethnicity is viewed more as a relatively flexible resource that individuals and groups use in the negotiation of social boundaries, aligning themselves with some people and institutions, dissociating from others, and this is sometimes described as a ‘roUtes’ rather than a ‘roOts’ conception of ethnicity. Compared with its predecessor, this version gives more credit to free will and active agency. However, it is still compatible with ethnicity-as-inheritance if you assume that people are limited by their ethnic-genetic descent to three options: either (a) embracing and cultivating their ethnocultural/linguistic legacy, (b) trying to downplay and drop it as a category that is relevant to them, or (c) drawing attention to the different ethnicities of other people... (Harris and Rampton, 2003, p. 5)

Keeping this in mind, my hope is that my approach to the data will highlight the ‘routes’ conception of ethnicity. Through analysis of the words and context, I will show that identity is dynamic, socially constructed, and complicated, while also demonstrating how language use expresses identity.

With regard to previous research on the topic, there have been several ways to approach ethnic identity. From a social-psychological perspective, the role of attitudes takes a primary position, in which “the attitudes that learners hold towards the learning of a particular L2 reflect the intersection of their views about their own ethnic identity and those about the target-language culture” (Ellis, 2008, p. 319). Gardner and Lambert have done extensive research on this aspect of ethnic identity (see Gardner and Lambert 1972; Gardner 1985) and suggest that “a strong motivation to learn a second language follows from a desire to be accepted as a member of the new linguistic community” and that there is a correlation between successful language acquisition and motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1959, p. 271). Other studies interested in ethnic identity have looked at non-standard target language and the accompanying culture of the group to which the target language belongs. Goldstein (1987), who was mentioned earlier, has investigated how Puerto Rican learners of English identified with African-Americans and how this contributed to the adopting of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) over standard English. Asking the question of why AAVE seems to be the target of some informants and not others, she argues that contact and feelings of identity play the biggest role.

Ibrahim (1999), conducting a similar study on non-standard target language but which focuses on issues of investment in the L2 and the influence that race, desire, and identification may have in the language learning process, researched predominantly West African francophone youth (age 14-19) and their motivation for learning Black Stylized English (BSE) (p. 352). For Ibrahim, “the rituals [of BSE] are more an expression of politics, moments of identification, and desire than they are of language or of mastering the language per se. It is a way of saying, ‘I too am Black’ or ‘I too desire to identify with Blackness’” (p. 351). Ibrahim thus challenges the idea that Blackness is marked by skin color. Blackness is, instead, a social construct imposed on a people that might not otherwise think of themselves as black, but as humans: “To be Black in a racially conscious society, like the Euro-Canadian and U.S. societies, means that one is expected to be Black, act Black, and so be the marginalized Other... continental African youths express their moments of identification in relation to African Americans and African American cultures and languages, thus becoming Black” (p. 353). The “racially conscious society” requires that

these youth fit somewhere and as Ibrahim has contended, “to fit somewhere signifies choosing or becoming aware of one’s being, which is partially reflected in one’s language practice” (p. 353).

While Ibrahim’s study considers attitude and ethnic affiliation in language acquisition as is typical of a social-psychological perspective, his emphasis on ethnic identity as a social construct that is enacted and expressed through language is also post-structural in nature. For Pavlenko (2002), post-structuralism “views language as an array of discourses imbued with meaning” which “serve to reproduce, maintain or challenge existing power and knowledge structures” (p. 283). Ellis signals the Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002) study, mentioned earlier, as an example of how ethnic identity is constructed through language because the subjects “constructed and revealed their sense of identity through their choice of language” in different contexts (Ellis, 2008, p.322). In the following subsection, we will look at how another social variable, gender, is constructed and understood.

### 1.3.3.3 Gender

Gender, sometimes called sex, although the latter suggests a biological distinction while the former makes a social distinction, has been thoroughly explored in SLA identity studies with much research focusing on whose language, male or female, more closely approximates standard target language norms.<sup>15</sup> Another approach to understanding gender and linguistic practices is through motivation. Gardner and Lambert (1972) concluded that “in the Louisiana setting, French-American girls appeared well adjusted to society and were apparently comfortable in English, preferring to speak it to French, at the same time that they showed a preference for the French over the American culture” (p. 70). Meanwhile, Gal’s (1978) study on women’s language usage in the Austrian-Hungarian community of Oberwart has acknowledged the prevailing tradition of concentrating on phonological variation regarding sex (see Labov 1972) but has argued that motivation could also be gendered: “In the linguistic repertoire of the bilingual community...one of the languages has come to symbolize a newly available social status. Young women’s language choices can be understood as part of their expression of preference for this newer social identity” (Gal, 1978, p. 2).

With regard to immigrant populations, both Norton and Ng have worked extensively on the intersection between gender and language learning. For instance, “Ng (1981) notes that immigrant women occupy a particular and different location in society to immigrant men, and that experiences of immigration must be understood as gendered ones” (Norton, 2000, p. 12). Norton (2000) argues that “it is in the public work that language learners have the opportunity to interact with members of the target language community, but it is the public work that is not easily accessible to immigrant women” (p. 12). Other researchers have witnessed similar instances of gendered exclusion. For example, Hill’s (1987) study on rural Mexican women’s usage of *castellano* Spanish and Nahuatl concentrates on “their lack of exposure to Spanish, the active construction of a female gender identity, or their exclusion from patterns of speech appropriate to men and to male-dominated social arenas” (p. 122). Hill argues that one reason why women were generally not as proficient in Spanish was because “to speak Spanish gives access to wage labor and the marketplace,” and this access is not easily granted in an exclusionist male-dominated society (p. 158). Paradoxically, men wished to restrict women from learning

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<sup>15</sup> For example, Burstall (1975), Boyle (1987), and Nyikos (1990) have found that women were generally better at producing the standard language.

Spanish to keep them from accessing certain work, and yet, the labor market was the space for women to be exposed to and learn Spanish.

Other studies have suggested that these gender restrictions are ingrained from an early age and are related to the phenomenon of language socialization, described by Ochs (1986) as “an interactional display (covert or overt) to a novice of expected ways of thinking, feeling, and acting...through their participation in social interactions, children come to internalize and gain performance competence in these sociocultural defined contexts” (p. 2). In a study similar to Hill’s with regard to Spanish spoken alongside an indigenous language (in this case, Aymara), Luyck (2003) argues that “it would be a rare society indeed in which language socialization was not tightly linked to gender. Gender is a central organizing principle in every human society; inevitably, the processes of language socialization both structure and are structured by gender roles and relations” (p. 26). Applying gender to language socialization, she has found that in this particular Bolivian town children learned “speech styles appropriate to their gender, observing and imitating the language habits of parents, grandparents, siblings, and others” (p. 28). This divergence in speech styles is further enhanced by Aymara customs that segregate the sexes in most public settings from an early age. Acquiring gender-appropriate speech styles mean that women’s linguistic repertoires are more limited because of limitations placed on the settings in which women could speak. More importantly, Luyck contends that “men could speak with the weight of tradition or an institution behind their words; when a woman spoke, she spoke for herself alone” (p. 38). This argument recalls the implication of power and the right to speak, a common thread throughout SLA research on language and gender.

While the majority of these studies have looked at societal exclusionary factors imposed on female language learners, Siegal (1996) exposes how a female learner can impose limitations on herself when the target language clashes with her gendered identity. Siegal’s main question revolves around the language learner’s self-conception, her/his position in society and the effects of her/his L2 attitudes on sociolinguistic competency (p. 356). In her work, Siegal has found that many Western women express disdain for the humility marker that women are expected to use in Japanese, culminating in a refusal to use it even if it means that their pragmatic competence suffers. Their decision says something about their internalized social identity as well as the social identity they wish to convey that creates conflict with accepted gender norms. While these women are making a statement about their gendered identity, they risk being labeled ineffective or incompetent communicators.

## **1.4 Multilingualism**

Multilingualism is the use of more than one language. While some theorists understandably make the distinction between multilingualism (more than two languages) and bilingualism (two languages), for the purpose of my study, I use the terms interchangeably (see Romaine 2004; Baker 2006), usually opting for the more inclusive multilingualism, especially since practically all the informants speak more than two languages. Other complications stem from the implication of the word ‘use’ as some people speak in one language and write in another, or are competent speakers in one language but lack competence in another. This last idea points to a definition of multilingualism based on ability. I have chosen, however, to focus primarily on the use of more than one language, not one’s ability in multiple languages. Another distinction in the discussion of multilingualism is whether one refers to an individual characteristic or to “a social group, community, region or country,” the former being called individual bilingualism and the latter, societal bilingualism (Baker, 2006, p. 2). In my study, both

types are relevant. The informants are multilingual speakers who have migrated from a multilingual society to a predominantly monolingual one. While I will go into greater detail about the multilingual constitutions of these different societies in chapter 3, at the present time, I will elaborate on this distinction in general.

When theorists discuss multilingual individuals, they often emphasize the perception of this multilingualism, in which additive bilingualism is seen as a positive aspect and subtractive bilingualism as a negative. Lambert (1980) and his colleagues at McGill, noticing fears among recent immigrants of losing their language and culture, have labeled these immigrants' experiences as "a 'subtractive' form of bilingualism wherein an ethnolinguistic minority group, in attempting to master a prestigious national or international language, may actually set aside or 'subtract out' for good the home language" (p. 422). They contrast this with "an 'additive' form wherein members of a high prestige linguistic community can easily, and with no fear of jeopardizing home language competence, 'add' one or more other languages to their repertoire of skills, reaping benefits of various sorts from their bilinguality" (p. 422). An example of additive bilingualism would be English-speaking American students learning a foreign language in which this foreign language is seen as a tool that will open doors in the job market or in other sectors.

Meanwhile, concerning language in society, the term diglossia is often preferred to as bilingualism (Baker, 2006, p. 69). Borrowing from the French word *diglossie*, Ferguson (1959) coined the term diglossia for situations in many speech communities where "two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions" (p. 1). Ferguson labeled the standard variety H for 'high' variety and the regional dialects L for 'low' varieties (p. 2). While Ferguson's definition was limited to dialects of the same language, Fishman (1972) argued that diglossia could also be applied to two separate languages in a common geographical area. In Ferguson's model of diglossia, the separation of high and low varieties is assumed to be relatively stable. However, some have questioned the stability of this H/L binary. For instance, Managan's (2004) ethnographic study on language use in Guadeloupe has found that because of the presence of code-switching and other linguistic features, it was often difficult to distinguish between languages. Her research builds on Prudent (1981), who has suggested that "the amount of code-switching in everyday Martinican speech renders it difficult to speak of two distinct systems... the binary division made in the Fergusonian model of diglossia is not adequate to describe the sociolinguistic situation in Martinique or Guadeloupe, because these societies cannot be divided up that way either linguistically or sociologically" (Managan, 2004, p. 253-4). Studies in diglossia highlight the complexities of societal bilingualism and how widespread this phenomenon is. While diglossia exists everywhere in the world, countries like France and Italy have championed a monolingual norm and most would describe these countries as predominantly monolingual, especially when compared to countries such as Senegal or other former colonies.

Traditionally, a monolingual bias exists in which people who use more than one language in conversations are seen as inefficient and deficient communicators (Kachru, 1994). However, there has been a trend towards debunking the inferiority of the bilingual speaker. For example, Pavlenko (2002), making a case for post-structuralist approaches, argues that they "allow SLA researchers to avoid monolingual and monocultural biases, to examine the multilingual reality of the contemporary world, and to see all individuals as users of multiple linguistic resources and as members of multiple communities of practice" (p. 295). Zentella (1997), who has investigated bilingualism in a New York Puerto Rican community, shows that children growing up in *El Bloquent* use all the languages at their disposal in order to convey different meanings while taking

pride in their unique ability to do so. She demonstrates that multilingualism is a complex phenomenon that we have only begun to explore. She also shows that one way to truly understand the intricacies and multilingualism is through an exploration of code-switching.

### 1.4.1 Code-switching

Weinreich (1953), one of the first to investigate bilingualism, claimed that “the ideal bilingual switches from one language to the other according to the appropriate changes in the speech situation (interlocutors, topic, etc.) but not in unchanged speech situations, and certainly not within a single sentence” (Weinreich, [1953] 1968, p. 73). Since then scholars such as Zentella have critiqued Weinreich for his limited view of bilingualism and have sought to approach bilingualism from a sociolinguistic perspective. Described by Milroy and Muysken (1995) as “perhaps the central issue of bilingualism research” (p. 7), code-switching (CS) is an essential phenomenon in any multilingual study. In its most simplistic definition, CS is the use of “varied combinations of two or more linguistic varieties,” in which three different types have been identified (already enlarging Weinreich’s limited scope) (Gardner-Chloros, 2009a, p. 4). According to Romaine (1995), the first type is called tag-switching, which “involves the insertion of a tag in one language into an utterance which is otherwise entirely in the other language, e.g. *you know, I mean*, etc., to take some English examples” (p. 122). Tag-switching is the most basic form of CS and does not require extensive knowledge of the tag language. Another type of CS is inter-sentential switching, which “involves a switch at a clause or sentence boundary, where each clause or sentence is in one language or another...Inter-sentential switching can be thought of as requiring greater fluency in both languages than tag switching since major portions of the utterance must conform to the rules of both language” (Romaine, 1995, p. 123). Romaine has deemed the third type, intra-sentential CS, as involving the greatest syntactic risk, requiring a competence that only the most fluent bilinguals possess. In describing this type of CS, she has offered the following examples:

Here switching of different types occurs within the clause or sentence boundary, as in this example from Tok Pisin/English: *What’s so funny? Come, be good. Otherwise, yu bai go long kot.* – ‘What’s so funny? Come, be good. Otherwise, you’ll go to court.’ It may also include mixing within word boundaries, so that we get, for example, English words with Panjabi inflectional morphology, e.g. *shoppã* – ‘shops’. (Romaine, 1995, p. 123)

Performers have all three types at their disposal; however, depending on the speaker, their CS ability, their interlocutor, their preference at that moment or in general, they may use only one or two of the different types.

#### 1.4.1.1 Approaches to code-switching

In addition to a CS typology, there are also different approaches to analyzing CS from a sociolinguistic perspective that developed in the frameworks of different disciplines. Gumperz (1964, 1967), credited with pioneering CS studies in the 1960s, has approached CS from a linguistic anthropology framework. In one of their most important contributions to the study of CS, Blom and Gumperz (1972) distinguish between situational (or transactional) CS and conversational (or metaphorical) CS.

Situational CS occurs when distinct varieties are associated with changes in interlocutor, context, or topic, and is therefore a direct consequence of a diglossic distribution of varieties. Conversational CS occurs when there are changes in variety without any such external prompting. Such switching is also termed metaphorical when the purpose of introducing a particular variety into the conversation is to evoke the connotations, the metaphorical ‘world’ of that variety. (Gardner-Chloros, 2009b, p. 107)

In other words, it is as if someone who engages in situational CS uses it in an expected way. As Rampton (1998) has argued, “‘situational’ code-switching can be seen as a relatively routine contextualisation cue, in which speakers introduce (and recipients accept) a new but fairly familiar and accessible definition of the situation” (p. 303). On the other hand, metaphorical CS “concerns the communicative effect the speaker intends to convey” (Romaine, 1995, p.161). This type of CS is arguably more creative and opens up endless possibilities for the expression of meaning. According to Gumperz (1982), “rather than claiming that speakers use language in response to a fixed, predetermined set of prescriptions, it seems more reasonable to assume that they build on their own and their audience’s abstract understanding of situational norms, to communicate metaphoric information about how they intend their words to be understood” (p. 61). This type of CS is complex because it implores the interlocutor to understand the intended message and respond in a way that keeps the conversation intact. Rampton’s (1998) take on metaphorical CS is that “like figurative language generally, it involves a violation of co-occurrence expectations which makes it difficult for recipients to end their search for meaning in the relatively neat solutions normally achieved with ordinary discourse” (p. 303). In other words, “it provides the recipient with no simple answer to the question ‘What next?’ (Auer 1988)” (Rampton, 1998, p. 303). This difficulty would suggest that conversational CS is usually reserved for those who are quite competent in the languages of the conversation or for those who enjoy engaging in linguistic play. Those involved must have at least a vague notion of underlying social layers. As Stroud (1998) argues, “conversational code-switching is so heavily implicated in social life that it cannot really be understood apart from an understanding of social phenomena” (p. 322).

Another perspective is the pragmatic/conversation analytic approach that identifies meanings based on the language choices of interlocutors.<sup>16</sup> Auer (1998) claims that “there is a level of conversational structure in bilingual speech which is sufficiently autonomous both from grammar (syntax) and from the larger societal and ideological structures to which the languages in question and their choice for a given interactional episode is related” (p. 3). Auer supports this claim by noting that “switching is more likely in certain sequential positions than in others (for example, responsive turns of components are less suited for switching than initiative ones), or that certain sequential patterns of alternating language choice direct participants’ interpretation” (p. 3). In addition, there are many ways “in which code-switching can contextualize conversational activities, for example on the level of participant constellation, topic management, the structure of narratives...” (p. 3). However, Auer is quick to point out that the ‘macro’ dimensions with regard to interpreting code-switching are also relevant because “conversationally regularities (such as the ones found to hold in turn-taking) are both context-

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<sup>16</sup> See Auer, 1984, 1995; Milroy and Gordon, 2003; McCormick, 2002.

independent and context-sensitive” (p. 3). Auer contends that discourse-related code-switching, in which code-switching organizes the conversation “by contributing to the interactional meaning of a particular utterance,” is one way in which “the wider social and cultural context of an interactional episode links up with conversational structure” (p. 3). Nevertheless, the majority of emphasis is still placed on the structure of the conversation and on the turns-of-talk.

A third approach to CS is based on sociolinguistic/ethnographic descriptions of CS situations and links “the manifestations of CS to aspects of the sociolinguistic situation” (Gardner-Chloros, 2009a, p. 10). The Markedness Model, created by Myers-Scotton (1993a), contributes to the dissecting of the sociolinguistic situation. The underlying premise is that “speakers use the possibility of making code choices to negotiate interpersonal relationships, and by extension to signal their perceptions or desires about group memberships” (Myers-Scotton, 1993a, p. 478). Her model stems from Gumperz’s work on the dynamics of interaction and on conceptualizing the speaker not as an identity-bearing individual but as a participant (Myers-Scotton, 1993b, pp. 56-7). Gumperz’s premise, which Myers-Scotton has tied closely to the Markedness Model, is that “speakers do not use language in the way they do simply because of their social identities or because of other situational factors. Rather they exploit the possibility of linguistic choices in order to convey intentional meaning of a socio-pragmatic nature” (Myers-Scotton, 1993b, p. 57). In other words, speakers are not restricted to a set formula, bound by contextual restraints as in situational CS. Nor is their identity pre-fixed and static. They are agents with access to what Gumperz and Myers-Scotton call *discourse strategies*. While the Markedness Model can coexist with the typology of situational and metaphorical CS, it goes further because while the latter seeks to explain what is happening in these exchanges, the former attempts to shed light on the motivations behind these code-switches.

## **1.5 Research aims**

My research aims stem from an understanding of language use and acquisition as a socially mediated process in which cultural and social factors influence how people speak and how they identify with their surrounding environment. In this vein, I see language and identity as dynamic and interconnected entities, an understanding that has been informed by sociolinguistic SLA, identity studies in SLA, and research on multilingualism. I have been particularly influenced by researchers such as Norton, Rampton, Ibrahim, Firth and Wagner, and Zentella. As I have already mentioned, my study adds to current research in an innovative way because it compares relationships between speakers, languages, and environments by looking at Senegalese immigrants in two different host countries. An emphasis on the comparative aspect allows for a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the relationship between host country and migrant community that sometimes disappears when language use in immigrant populations is addressed in general terms.

In other words, from Norton and other identity theorists in SLA we know that identity construction for second language learners is a dynamic process that is context-dependent. However, SLA is devoid of research that highlights the importance of context with regard to the relationship between host country and immigrant population. From post-colonial theorists such as Fanon, we have learned that present-day ideas about language and culture are influenced by colonial understandings that are still seen in interactions between the former colonizer and the former colonized. Nevertheless, SLA has not intensely engaged in post-colonial theory to understand how colonial history could affect language ideologies and acquisition. Meanwhile, the notion of competence has evolved to include a social perspective, from Hymes who



emphasized cultural knowledge to Norton who included the “right to speech” in the definition of communicative competence. However, no one has really investigated whether the ways in which competence is understood differs depending on the social environment. I have formulated the following research questions in order to address these issues:

- 1) How do immigrants conceptualize identity in relation to dominant ideologies in the host country?
- 2) How do these notions of identity affect immigrants’ language learning, and more generally, their language use?
- 3) How do immigrants express identity through their use of multiple languages?

For my first research question, pertaining to the relationship between immigrants’ and host-country speakers’ notions of identity, I hypothesize that the colonial history between France and Senegal will have implications for the relationship between the French population and Senegalese immigrants that would not exist for the informants in Italy. I approach this question by focusing on degrees of desire of inclusion that emerge from historical, social, and linguistic factors. My understanding is primarily shaped by Rampton’s (1995) work in which one of the dimensions he takes into consideration is the participants’ social knowledge about ethnic groups and their interrelationships, which includes “people’s ideas and feelings about ethnic groups, their attributes, their positions in society, their prestige, their interrelationships, its legitimacy and so forth” (p. 15). While Rampton is mainly concerned with whether ethnically diverse British-born urban youth “recognize and even exaggerate the differences in their communicative repertoires” (p. 21), I seek to uncover how this social knowledge translates into a desire of inclusion and how this desire is articulated differently depending on the immigrant group and its relation to the host country. Will a colonial legacy, a French-speaking tradition, historical access to citizenship, and different conceptualizations of ethnicity influence both the desire of inclusion and the expectations of this inclusion in the respective countries? Through this comparative study, I attempt to show how interlaced all these factors are as well as the importance of setting when analyzing immigration.

For the second research question about how notions of identity affect language learning, and more generally, language use (see Firth and Wagner 1997), I hypothesize that despite the colonial relationship between France and Senegal and the negative feelings that could exist because of this relationship, many immigrants would prefer to migrate to France and would experience greater ease in using French in their daily lives because of their prior familiarity with the language. I am particularly interested in applying Norton’s (2000) notion of investment in the host country’s language, her emphasis on claiming the right to speak, and how identity markers such as ethnicity and race (see Ibrahim 1999), class, nationality, and gender may influence this right to speak. At the same time, I incorporate Kramsch’s (2010) emphasis on understanding the construction of “subject realities such as perceptions, emotions, attitudes, and values of identity” in relation to symbolic form (p. 7). Concerning language investment, I am specifically aware of standard language ideologies of the host countries (Lippi-Green, 1997) and linguistic attitudes of Senegalese populations (Irvine, 1989) while also approaching language ideology from a Center-Periphery framework (Kachru, 1986; Canagarajah, 1999). The impact of this framework is enhanced by the comparative nature of my study, which juxtaposes a former colonial language (French) with a historically unrelated language (Italy).

For the third research question, namely how learners express identity through multilingual language use, I hypothesize that because switching between languages on a regular basis is normal in Senegal, I will find similar language practices in France and Italy. Attempting to sidestep traditional monolingual bias in order to understand the multilingual reality of the contemporary world (Pavlenko, 2002), I follow Zentella's (1997) example of conveying the complexities of multilingualism through code-switching. Looking at situational vs. metaphorical (Gumperz), pragmatic/conversation analytic (Auer), and sociolinguistic/ethnographic (Myers-Scotton) explanations of code-switching, I aim to elucidate language ideologies concerning how speakers' express different attitudes toward their multilingual identities as well as how they operate as multilingual beings. The results of these three questions will be shown first through detailed analyses in chapters 4 and 5 before examining their implications in chapter 6. However, I will use the next chapter to explain my methodological approach to this study, followed by a chapter that provides further background on Senegal, France, and Italy.

# CHAPTER 2: Methodology

## 2.1 Field work: an ethnographic approach

I have approached my fieldwork through an ethnographic sociolinguistic framework in order to explore the nuances of the Senegalese communities of Paris and Rome. As a methodology, ethnography is used in many disciplines to study cultures and explain how and why things are done in a certain way. According to Bauman (1972), ethnography is therefore “the process of construction through direct personal observation of social behavior, a theory of the working of a particular culture in terms as close as possible to the way members of that culture view the universe and organize their behavior within it” (p. 157). An ethnographer carries out the process of construction through three stages, the *reconnaissance* stage, the *reconnoiter* stage, and the *hypothesis-testing* stage, which build upon and overlap with each other (see Spindler 1982). In the *reconnaissance* stage the researcher orients herself by reading the relevant literature such as census data, newspapers, scholarly articles and other sources that offer information on the community of interest. This is also the moment when the researcher begins to spend time in the setting, looking for ways to enter the site. The main objective is to gain a sense of ‘what is out there.’ During the *reconnoiter* stage the ethnographer begins to approach members of the community in both an informal (i.e. having casual conversations) and formal manner (i.e. setting up interviews or making appointments). This is the stage when the researcher gains a sense of ‘what is going on.’ The *hypothesis-testing* stage occurs when the researcher has spent enough time with the community to develop hypotheses about what the subjects of the study find important.<sup>17</sup> She then focuses on finding ways to test these hypotheses. While the *hypothesis-testing* stage is considered the third stage, it can begin while the *reconnoiter* stage and even the *reconnaissance* stage are happening.

In my own research, the community I chose was the Senegalese immigrant population, and my main settings were the capital cities of Paris and Rome. I began the *reconnaissance* phase for each site before I arrived. I examined census data, articles and published documents to gain a sense of what types of people were migrating from Senegal to both Paris and Rome, under what circumstances, and influenced by what historical situations. At this time, I also started compiling a list of contacts, both from friends and acquaintances I had in Senegal and from French and Italian friends that might have some sort of connection to the Senegalese communities in these two cities. Once in Paris and Rome I looked online and visited cultural centers for any resources that could give me access to my focal communities. In the *reconnoiter* stage, I entered different settings in each site, from restaurants to dance classes, from student associations to Wolof classes. I chose any place where I could make direct contact with Senegalese people in a non-threatening way in order to present my research and intentions. After gaining the trust of potential informants, I arranged interviews to conduct the hypothesis-testing phase of my research. I designed each interview to test my hypotheses. As new questions arose, I incorporated these into succeeding interviews, making the hypothesis-testing phase continuously malleable.

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<sup>17</sup> While Spindler (1982) does not name this stage outright, the point of this stage is to test hypotheses, leading Guthrie & Hall (1984) to aptly refer to it as the hypothesis-testing stage.

Writing from a linguistic anthropology perspective, Heath (1982) expounds what an ethnographer aims to do:

The goal of ethnography is to describe the ways of living of a social group, a group in which there is in-group recognition of the individuals living and working together as a social unit. By becoming a participant in the social group, an ethnographer attempts to record and describe the overt, manifest, and explicit behaviors and values and tangible items of culture. By long residence, the ethnographer learns the language of the society and structures and functions of cultural components, before attempting to recognize patterns of behavior that may be covert, ideal, and implicit to members of the culture. (Heath, 1982, p. 34)

While cognizant of my own limitations as an ethnographer in this research project, namely an inability to spend more than three months in either Paris or Rome as well as a small working knowledge of Wolof, the most commonly spoken language of my subjects, I was able to conduct a useful ethnography by using other tactics. For instance, six months of living in Senegal with a host family in 2003 gave me a certain credibility among my participants, and my limited mastery of greetings and other phrases helped open the door to members of this group. I found that I was generally accepted by the group, which I will explain more fully in the section entitled ‘my role as researcher.’ I shared any reflections I had about cultural components with my Senegalese host-sister (from my time living in Senegal), who was my single most important informant. In the two weeks I spent in Dakar in 2010, after having completed my fieldwork in France and Italy, she helped with the transcription and translation of Wolof portions of my audio recordings and shared her understanding of why the informants used language in particular instances in the way they did. I will indicate where and how I use her interpretation in the analysis. I also spent this time looking at how languages were used on a daily basis in Dakar to refresh my understanding of multilingual practices in Senegal. I will compare these impressions of multilingual usage with scholarly work on the subject.

Heath (1982) adds that “ethnography, perhaps more than any other social science, strives for a comparative perspective. Research conducted in one social group should be accessible for comparison with that conducted in other social groups” (p. 35). As I have underlined in the previous chapter, one of the factors that makes my research relatively unique for a sociolinguistic study is the comparison of two different sites, Paris and Rome, with attention also paid to the home country of Senegal. In conducting a comparative study of two sites, I treat the Senegalese community in each site as a different social group. I argue that this comparative element will add value to a discussion of language and its importance in identity studies. An ethnographic approach allows for different aspects of this comparative study to be more clearly juxtaposed and explained. In addition, using this type of research for future studies in order to understand how other immigrant populations in France or Italy use their linguistic repertoire compared to the Senegalese community will add value to the body of data in this field as well.

Heath (1982) also touches on a possible pitfall in ethnographic research:

A seemingly inherent weakness of ethnography is that it has traditionally claimed to do everything and to do it with objectivity. In actuality, all anthropologists know that no completely holistic study of a culture exists and that by definition, such a study is impossible. One cannot recreate the whole of a culture in an

ethnography; therefore, the concept of holism is a guiding concept, one that holds out for anthropologists the constant reminder of the interdependent nature of culture, which is indeed greater than the sum of its parts. (Heath, 1982, p. 42)

While even the most well-intentioned studies cannot be completely holistic or objective, I believe that the use of qualitative methods such as participant observation, field notes, interviews, natural conversations, and key informants combined with background research provided by numerous academic resources and media outlets is the best way to provide a detailed account of these particular complex social situations. One of the aspects that draws me to ethnography is this holistic approach, especially in explaining a phenomenon as nuanced as culture and a concept as broad as identity in relation to language. Investigating different informants' own understandings of identity and culture will shed light on their language practices regardless of any short-comings the approach may have.

### **2.1.1 Participant observation**

One of the qualitative methods used in treating my research topic is participant observation, which includes spending an extended period of time in the community being studied; speaking the local language; participating in both routine and extraordinary activities alongside members of the community; 'hanging out' in informal settings; and recording observations in field notes (see DeWalt & DeWalt 2002). I have already addressed the issues of living in the context, learning the local language, and participating in activities from dance classes to Wolof classes, from visiting associations to eating in restaurants. In fact, the activity of eating was a central focus that was both daily and routine. In Rome, I frequented one particular restaurant as I realized its potential as a good source of casual conversation among various interlocutors. By making myself somewhat of a fixture, I found it easier to convince people to be recorded. I also found that spending time in restaurants gave me access to a wide range of discussion topics. Restaurants were also contained environments that made it easier to take notes and pay attention to detail. Invitations to meals in people's homes provided yet another setting in which to take notes and record conversations. The home space, more personal than a public space, allowed the informants to practice a time-honored Senegalese tradition, *teranga*, or hospitality. Unsurprisingly, people seemed to speak more freely in their home environment. 'Extraordinary events' included, for instance, a Senegalese business association's meeting to discuss investment and infrastructure that I attended in Paris, or Senegalese immigrants participating in a march calling for the rights of the immigrant community in Rome.

Recording observations in field notes was an important feature of my participant observation and took the form of a diary. While 'hanging out,' conducting interviews, engaging in informal conversations, and studying people from afar, I always had a small notebook on hand to jot down facial expressions, bodily actions, surroundings, composition of groups that I would then transfer to a journal I kept on my computer. I tried to be meticulous in writing down observations immediately and then transferring them that same day when the experiences were best remembered. I used this transfer activity to reflect on why people behaved the way they did. The journal/diary would rekindle questions and themes that had been stored in my mind, foregrounding those ideas that appeared most salient. The diary was used to contemplate the actions of others but also my own thoughts, helping to flesh out what social variables would be

most important in my treatment of language and identity.<sup>18</sup> This practice helped keep my objectivity in line as Guthrie and Hall (1984) have contended that the participant observer “must know what to look for, what to observe, and must try to remain objective” (p. 96). By constantly writing my inner thoughts combined with fresh descriptions from the field, I could track my thoughts and compare them to my observations.

### **2.1.2 The interview**

I have placed the interview, also a qualitative method, at the crux of my research project. I consider interviews to be a natural and indispensable method in the exploration of a group. As some have argued, “emphasis is often placed upon the importance of interpreting what people say in the context of their distinctive biographical experiences, which can probably only be accessed through interviews or elicited documents” (Hammersley, 2006, p. 9). Although my perspective as a young, middle-class, African-American woman will always be present in any ethnographic analysis I conduct, I want to ensure that the voice of the people I am studying takes center stage. Citing Vygotsky, Seidman (2006) notes that “every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness. Individuals’ consciousness gives access to the most complicated social and educational issues, because social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experience of people” (p. 7). The interview in a sociolinguistic study also provides an added bonus in that the process of interviewing unearths the very linguistic phenomena that I seek to uncover. I am, therefore, not only accessing attitudes about language use, concrete experiences of language use and acquisition over the lifetime of a subject, or the goals and dreams that these informants have concerning language use in their new countries of residence, I am also witnessing language in action. For those informants whom I have followed more closely and for whom I have recorded natural conversations, I can compare their interview responses with natural data, both in terms of content (i.e. how the way they use language reflects how they spoke about the way they use language) and function (i.e. how the way they use language in the natural setting compares to the way they use language in the more structured environment of the interview).

The interview becomes useful for directly exploring questions that have arisen during preliminary research, adding to the depth that is acquired through participant observation, information that is often tacit. As is often the case with a qualitative approach, my interviews were semi-structured, which follows an open-ended format. While I had an exact list of questions, and on most occasions I would ask these questions in a specific order, these questions served as a guide. The semi-structured interview was extremely useful because each interview yielded a piece of information different from the last and provoked a whole set of questions that I could later tie into the overarching themes of my research. This structure allowed me access to these new ideas and offered me a platform to explore these themes in subsequent interviews. Since I was transcribing and annotating my interviews on a regular basis, differing opinions and different perspectives were made visible that could be raised in subsequent interviews. As Guthrie and Hall (1984) note, information gleaned from one interview can be confirmed later by another informant. In addition, the analyses of how a question was received also helped me tailor the line of questioning in subsequent interviews, in case there was resistance for any reason to

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<sup>18</sup> Researchers often find using a diary useful because it tunes the investigator into his or her own thoughts and feelings as well as providing a means to verify other data. Guthrie & Hall (1984), in particular, recommend the use of diaries (p. 98).

certain questions. The semi-structured interviews also simulated an environment of mutual conversation. The informants would even occasionally ask me questions, sparking a real dialogue. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this meant that in a formal setting like an interview, I could possibly elicit informal speech to be analyzed later.

During the course of my research, I collected 52 interviews, 27 from Paris and 25 from Rome. My goal in obtaining this number of interviews was to have a sound backdrop against which to contextualize my primary subjects. I aimed to have three primary informants in each location. Those people I saw over the period of a few months provided a more detailed and in-depth look. Guthrie and Hall (1984) describes the value of the prolonged interview as establishing rapport and getting in-depth understanding of the subject:

It is of little consequence that this person will often be exceptional rather than typical. Nor is truth necessarily of the greatest concern. What is important is that beliefs, conceptions, and life experiences are captured. They reveal how the subject sees the world. (Guthrie and Hall, 1984, p. 99)

In addition, I chose one subject in each site to be a key informant, someone who I not only interviewed but with whom I discussed my research and hypotheses. The key informant helped to ensure the validity of my hypotheses. In addition, my host sister in Dakar, served as a key informant as well because she possessed a unique vantage point. She was privy to all the data during her transcribing and translating sessions with me. I had constant questions for her on which she could reflect from her distinctive perspective.

My Senegalese informants were not the only ones who participated in the interview process. I also interviewed language instructors and various professionals who have contact with immigrant populations including an immigration lawyer, two sociologists, and a volunteer for an NGO. The goal in interviewing members outside the Senegalese communities was to gain an etic view from someone other than myself, and more importantly, an etic view from members of the societies in which these Senegalese communities are now residing. I could then compare the responses of these non-Senegalese informants with the information I had amassed from newspapers, articles on public policies, and political statements. Debate around the issue of immigration and language acquisition in both of these countries has surged in the previous decade, which is reflected in both the popular and academic sources as well as in the interviews of these non-Senegalese informants.

### **2.1.3 Audio recordings**

The use of audio recordings, taken from all interviews and from various interactions, was another indispensable method that was beneficial for several reasons. They ensured that I could be as accurate as possible about the content of my discussions with the informants. They also allowed me to approach the material from several angles. According to Guthrie and Hall (1984), “employing audio or audiovisual equipment, the researcher is able to examine behaviors thoroughly and repeatedly. Social interaction is so complex that any on-the-spot recording of behavior is suspect. When one looks at the same piece of interaction over and over, a more complete and accurate description of the event will emerge” (p. 95). This ability to re-examine evidence is particularly necessary for code-switching research.

Audio recording did have some drawbacks in that it made the occasional participant uncomfortable at first. I explained to anyone who was recorded that these recordings would only

be used for the purposes of this research, basically reiterating what was stated in the informed written consent for audio recording. Giving consent did not mean that the informants were instantly put at ease, but in all cases, during the course of the interview or interaction, as people's glances toward the recorder became less frequent and eventually stopped, it seemed that they forgot that they were being recorded. I also tried to mitigate any discomfort by giving them an idea of the types of questions that would be asked even before I began recording. The fact that some informants were initially hesitant about being recorded added to my own discomfort; however, audio recording proved to be an invaluable method in my research, providing evidence of communicative behaviors and language habits of which speakers often have limited awareness. For my research objectives, simply taking notes on how the informants responded to questions was insufficient. Collecting recorded data meant that I could not only analyze what they said about their language use, I could also analyze their actual language use. In addition, I could also present the data to my key informants in case I needed clarification by native speakers on aspects of speech and its use in context.

### **2.1.4 Transcription**

Because I transcribed most of the recorded data, I was able to comb through the various interactions, unearthing themes that connected different informants. By transcribing the recording within days of the actual event, the data remained fresh in my mind. I used bold type for important sections so that I could easily return to them when analysis began. Once themes emerged, I created another document with headings for different ideas on which to focus. Under these headings, I inserted portions of the transcription so I could easily compare the informants' attitudes and experiences. As Fetterman (2009) notes, researchers usually edit their recordings, "transcribing only the most important sections. This keeps the ethnographer 'close to the data' enabling the ethnographer to identify subtle themes and patterns" (p. 71).

For my transcription, I first ascertained which portions would be approached mainly for content and which others would focus more intently on language usage. Since part of my aim in this dissertation is to show language attitudes and people's experiences with language acquisition and use, in some instances I highlighted the message conveyed by the informants. With these more content-focused portions of the transcription, I operated under a different set of parameters. I did not include every hesitation or false start or other aspects that had no bearing on the content. It was my intention that this type of transcription pays particular attention to content over form. Because my dissertation is as much about attitudes and experiences as it is about detailed analysis of discourse, I have tried to strike a balance while being true to the utterances.

However, I am also aware that many ideas about language and speaking can be conveyed not by what is said, but by how it is said. In these instances, the transcription needs to display these intricacies. When dealing with multilingual discourse and focusing on how different languages are used in that discourse, establishing transcription conventions that adequately present the data was paramount. While transcribing, I kept in mind Pavlenko's (2007) argument that "additions and omissions...pauses, self-corrections, repetitions, slips of the tongue, false starts and restarts, code-switches, requests for help, paralinguistic features, and temporal variation are crucial cues in analysis of lexical choice problems, in the understanding of speakers' intentions and positioning toward the subject matter" (p. 173). I remained as true to the oral text as possible, noting mid-utterance corrections and restarts. I tried to convey through writing everything that was uttered.



When beginning to create my transcription, I followed Gardner-Chloros (2009) explanation of a traditional transcription, most notably:

- There is a short introduction giving details of speakers and languages used;
  - Each speaker's turn is put in a separate paragraph following an indication of who is speaking;
  - Normal and italic fonts are used to indicate the language of each word/phrase...
- (p. 185)

I also found Sterponi (2007) to be of use to guide me. I have adapted her transcription notations to my work and created the following conventions:

- . The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence
- ? The question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
- , The comma indicates 'continuing' intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
- ::: Colons indicate stretching of the preceding sound, proportional to the number of colons
- A Hyphen after a word or a part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption.
- (( )) Double parentheses enclose descriptions of conduct
- (word) When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber's part
- ( ) Empty parentheses indicate an inaudible stretch of talk.
- [ Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate onset of a point of conversational overlap
- // Words between back-slashes are transcribed with the phonetic alphabet for instances in which a language's conventional writing conventions are inadequate.

In addition, because the multilingual aspect of my data is of considerable importance, I looked at examples from other researchers to see how they approached their data. For instance, to show different languages Meeuwis and Blommaert (1998, p. 86) use the following conventions: italics are used for Lingala, French is in bold print, and Swahili is in small capitals. Each line has the translation below in parentheses and single quotations. Ex: *Stéphane atéléphoner lobi te?* ('Stéphane didn't call yesterday?'). Because of the high number of languages represented in my data (e.g. French, Italian, Wolof, English, Spanish), using different fonts was a complicated endeavor. In each chapter, I have used normal font for the predominant language and have specified which font will be used for the other languages. It should be noted that I cite excerpts from the transcription by the first name of the informant and the date of the recording. I have provided pseudonyms for all informants.

I also occasionally use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in some transcriptions. I do so when an informant makes specific reference to the way he is pronouncing something or when I want to highlight certain non-standard language features. However, I use IPA very sparingly. As I have mentioned above, I use standard language writing conventions whenever I am focusing on content over form such as when I am citing people for their language ideologies. I also had a native speaker of French and Italian look over the data in French and Italian, respectively, to provide feedback on any examples of non-standard language usage.

With regard to translation, I have assumed that my readership has at least a reading knowledge of French and Italian and have therefore not provided English translations of text in these languages. I have included French translations of Wolof text in footnotes. Because the overarching informant translated the Wolof passages directly into French, I have decided to conserve the original translation in order to minimize the amount of information that is often lost through translation. However, I occasionally add English annotations to the French translations if more explanation is needed. I also had a teacher of Wolof go over the translations and transcriptions of the Wolof passages to ensure that I used standard Wolof orthography and for general revision.

### **2.1.5 My role as researcher**

With the primary focus of my research on the role that socially constructed identities play in everyday language use and interaction, it is imperative that I address my own identity as researcher. When collecting and analyzing data, I am well aware that the ways in which others view me and I view myself influence my access to the informants and to what they are willing to share. Admittedly, personal reflections on my own identity have steered me to both my research topic and how I have chosen to broach this topic. As a multilingual, I have questioned what it means to speak several languages, especially in a society such as the United States that adheres to a monolingual standard. As a member of a racial minority in the various countries where I learned different languages, I have often reflected on how my outward features influenced my linguistic interactions. For instance, Talburt and Stewart's (1999) discussion of an African-American woman's experience while studying abroad in Spain struck a chord with me because I could see my own personal history in their research. Focusing on the emphasis of race and sexuality that Spaniards placed on their interactions with this woman, Talburt and Stewart demonstrate how these aspects of identity served not only to position her as an outsider but also to objectify her. Because of the discomfort that accompanied this treatment, the student preferred to avoid contact with the host country population thus impeding her ability to learn the language. I remember commenting angrily to friends when I studied in Madrid in 2002 about how tired and disgusted I was that many Spaniards assumed that I was a prostitute and addressed me accordingly when walking down the street. While nothing in my dress or my manners would suggest that I was a prostitute, an overwhelming percent of the time, I was taken for one. It made me wary of striking up conversation with people, of seeking situations where I could access comprehensible output, because nothing was more degrading than feeling that you were less of a person just because of your color or your sex. As I will address later in the data analysis chapters, some of my own informants relayed similar experiences. Shared experiences such as this one beg the question: how much of a role do I play as the researcher?

Other than investigating a topic and a group of people towards whom I often feel empathy, I understand that my various identities also affect how the informants relate to me. On numerous occasions, I came away from an interview session with the impression that either my blackness, or my 'female-ness,' or my youth, or my 'American-ness' influenced an informant's frankness. There are advantages and disadvantages (although fortunately for my case mainly advantages) in ways others identify me and identity with me. Concerning gender, I feel that as a female I had more access to my female informants and that they were most likely more comfortable talking to me than if I were male, especially in a society where separate gender spheres seem more marked than in my own. As for my male informants, especially the ones that were single, I was aware that some of them might be overly willing to participate in the study

because of reasons other than for the good of my research. As for nationality, from the months spent living in Senegal, I had learned that most Senegalese had a relatively positive opinion of the United States. In addition, the fact that Obama was president at that moment made an even more favorable impression, with the US president and everything he symbolizes a popular topic of conversation in almost every interview I conducted. In terms of racial identity, I doubt most people would have been as candid as they were on issues of race, especially in France where the question of race is often a taboo subject, if they did not feel some sort of shared experience between us. On different occasions informants asked me questions such as if I knew what part of Africa from where my ancestors came or my opinion on race relations in the US. Even my age played a role as the older informants tended to act almost paternal towards me. These of course are not the only identity markers that existed in my exchanges, but they are the most evident.

In both my field notes and the actual interviews, there are numerous examples of how my various identities influenced the types of interactions I had. For instance, near the end of my three month stay in France, I wrote the following:

I understand that my identity as a black American female has much to do with the type of conversations I have. If I were white these discussions of race would not come so naturally, especially in a place where in my experience race is a more taboo subject than in my country. Comparisons with the United States are also almost inevitable and I don't think this would be the case as often if I were not American. I never ask direct questions about US-France comparisons even though I find them interesting and illuminating, and thus I always welcome these discussions if that is where the interview leads. (11.30.09)

However, nothing convinced me of how others viewed me more than the following episode with an informant in Rome as I wrote about it in my field notes:

The most important part of the conversation, at least in where my reflections have taken me recently, was when Abi said that she wouldn't have agreed to meet me if I hadn't told her I was American. She told me she had little interest in making friends with Italian people and if I had been Italian, she would've passed on the interview. It was only because she is a huge fan of America, American people, and the English language that she decided to meet me. That was quite a strong statement. I have sensed that my national identity plays a role in my access to the people I interview, but this is the first time it has been stated so blatantly. (3.28.10)

Nevertheless, the ease or difficulty I encountered in engaging informants as well as their willingness to answer my questions was not always tied to my physical identity markers. Sometimes, my approach or the subject matter I wished to investigate denoted the difference between a successful interview and a disappointing flop. When talking with one of my key informants in Rome, near the end of my stay after I had already met up with him on several occasions, he divulged why I was able to conduct my investigations with relative ease:

We were talking about what it's like to enter a population and gain their trust enough to have people talk to you. I met him through an Italian anthropologist

PhD student working on reproductive issues in the Senegalese community. He told me that he used to call her 007 because he suspected her of being either an undercover cop or a journalist. He said that Senegalese people are quite distrusting of people they don't know that want to talk to them about their experiences. However, my type of questions put him at ease right away when it was obvious that I was focusing on language issues. (4.21.10)

This student had already confided in me the difficulties she had in finding people who would talk to her about such an intimate subject as reproduction issues. While most of the people I interviewed were suspicious of me at first because of my role as an interviewer, which in their minds could signify a duplicitous cover, after the first few questions, most people opened up. I found that people liked talking about languages and wanted their voices to be heard.

## **2.2 Discourse analysis**

Discourse analysis is a vast field with many subcategories but whose main objective is to look “analytically, in various ways, at texts and conversational interaction with a view to achieving a greater understanding of textual cohesion and coherence, and rules for carrying out and interpreting conversation” (Trudgill, 1984, p. 3). Gee, Michaels, and O’Connor (1992) add that “discourse reflects human experience and, at the same time, constitutes important parts of that experience. Thus, discourse analysis may be concerned with any part of human experience touched on or constituted by discourse” (p. 228). Because I seek to understand human experience in relation to language, I argue that this definition is a good start in highlighting how I use discourse analysis in my study. While, as Gee *et al* (1992) note, “much discourse analysis focuses on the form, meaning, and regularities of these ‘suprasentence’ texts as representative instances of particular discourse genres,” my attention to discourse will fall under their description in the following sentence: “Other researchers take as their starting point the discourse of text and attempt to use it as evidence in their investigation of some larger social, cognitive, cultural, political, or psychological process” (pp. 229-230). The discourse of text includes these explicit attempts at sifting through individuals’ perception of the relationship between language and culture that is manifested in their interviews as well as the interactional component of “language-in-action” (Foucault, 1984) that exists in the multilingual conversations the informants have with other people.

Moreover, discourse analysis meshes well with a research strategy such as ethnography, and has been used by many researchers in varying fields. For instance, Gee and Green (1998) spell out this relationship in their own work. In their discussion of the relationship between discourse analysis and ethnography, they write the following:

We present a theoretical orientation to language as a sociocultural practice and social resource of a group, and, in so doing, we demonstrate that discourse analysis entails more than writing talk down and reading the transcript. Specifically, we show that an ethnographically grounded approach to discourse analysis involves a particular perspective on discourse and social action through language that forms an orienting framework for research design and implementation (e.g., data collection cycles or processes) as well for data analysis, interpretation, and explanation. (Gee and Green, 1998, p. 121)

They demonstrate here that they use a type of discourse analysis grounded in ethnography. I endeavor, as well, to use “an ethnographically grounded approach to discourse analysis” and to piece together an orienting framework that helps explain how a group like the Senegalese immigrants in Paris and Rome conceptualize their relationship to languages and to their interlocutors within a larger societal structure. The subsequent segments on narrative analysis, critical discourse analysis, and conversation analysis explain how discourse analysis uncovers these phenomena.

### **2.2.1 Narrative analysis**

Since such a large portion of my data is based on the interviews conducted with the informants, and since these interviews can be considered personal life narratives with a focus on language, I wanted to find an analytic tool that highlights the voice of my subjects. An article by Pavlenko entitled “Autobiographic Narratives as Data in Applied Linguistics” (2007) provided me with a springboard for approaching this type of data. Pavlenko begins by explaining a brief history of the narrative’s arrival as an important entity in Applied Linguistics. While narratives have been part of an evolving interdisciplinary field of study as early as the 1960’s, as Pavlenko notes, “the narrative turn also found its way into our field where the Schumanns (1977, 1980), Bailey (1980, 1983) and others began to examine L2 learners’ diaries to identify actors that impact the learning process” (p. 164). I initially wanted the informants to keep diaries, however because of time constraints, the diaries fell by the wayside. Fortunately, although the diaries would have been an excellent resource, the interviews provided a forum for the humanization of my subjects. According to Pavlenko (2007):

These studies challenged the portrayal of L2 learners as unidimensional abstractions and presented them as human beings who have feelings...who are positioned in terms of gender, race, and class...and who exercise their agency in the learning process...This deepened understanding of the L2 learners and users allowed researchers to advance new theoretical constructs for the study of second language acquisition (SLA), ranging from competitiveness and anxiety, to emotions, agency, and symbolic domination. (Pavlenko, 2007, p.164)

It is precisely this positioning in terms of gender, race, and class, this expression of emotion, and this usage of agency that I intend to display in the analysis portions of my dissertation. Pavlenko (2007) shows that researchers are now relying on linguistic biographies and autobiographies, life histories that explore the languages in a speaker’s repertoire. Through interviews, researchers learn how and why languages are acquired and used and the motivations and attitudes behind these acquisitions and uses.

However, these interviews should be treated as more than event-telling ‘facts’ because “this treatment disregards the interpretive nature of storytelling, that is the fact that the act of narration unalterably transforms its subject and any further interpretation interprets the telling and not the event in question” (p.168). Pavlenko, instead, values the “discursive constructions” used in conveying these events. Upon reading Pavlenko, I realized that my findings include devices that have been researched in the European tradition of narrative analysis, further bolstering my position that these devices are crucial to language use. She writes that “these analyses pay close attention to the deployment of narrative resources and examine a range of linguistic devices, including ethnic categories and personal pronouns (Cmejrkova 2003;

Nekvapil 2000).” She added that “the narrative data are frequently triangulated with sociohistoric and sociopolitical information, (Pavlenko, 2007, p.169), information that I seek to expose when discussing my data in the context of a greater societal framework.

Pavlenko (2007) also underlines the importance of the languages being used in the narrative, in my case, the interview:

A few studies also remind us that bi- and multilinguals’ narratives are by definition hybrid; therefore, in addition to linguistic devices commonly considered in studies with monolinguals, their authors examine unique features of bilingual speech, including lexical borrowing (Besemeres 2004), language play (Belz 2002), code-switching (Vitanova 2004, 2005) and shifts in linguistic competence (Franceschini 2003). (Pavlenko, 2007, pp.170-1)

Many of the features mentioned here have materialized in my data, both in the interviews and the recorded interactions, and will be explored in the data chapters. Regarding language, Pavlenko also warns of the inherent problems in collecting stories in one language, even if this language is most convenient for analysis, because it limits the speaker’s linguistic options.<sup>19</sup> Agreeing with Pavlenko, I instructed the informants to speak in whatever language they felt most comfortable. Although I warned them of my own difficulties in speaking Wolof, if an idea needed to be expressed in Wolof, I asked them to speak in Wolof. They were also encouraged at the beginning of the interview to use multiple languages if they saw a reason to switch language in the middle. They knew I was proficient in French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and English, and over the course of the fifty interviews, all those languages were used in one way or another, as well as the occasional phrase in Wolof. As Pavlenko contends, insisting on a single language equates the telling of their life story as a telling of facts, but I was interested in the process of telling a story about language in which language is the key element. This interview process was meant to be one more event in a lifetime of linguistic events, and I tried to treat it as such.

Pavlenko also promotes the use of varying contextual features, boiling down to a treatment of both macro and micro level analysis in which global and local contextual influences are treated.<sup>20</sup> In terms of micro-level influences, my own subject identities often came into play during the interview. I delineated certain identity features such as my race, nationality, and gender, and both the level of comfort and how the informants engaged in the discussion were often contingent upon how they saw me as a person and as my position as researcher. The setting also held sway over the unfolding of the interview. For instance, if the subject of race arose in an interview in Paris while we were in a public setting, the discussion often took on hushed tones,

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<sup>19</sup> For example, Pavlenko (2007) argues: “Settling on a single language in such studies signals an assumption that stories and interviews are simply descriptions of facts, whereas in reality the presentation of events may vary greatly with the language of the telling. The insistence on one language only also deprives bi- and multilingual speakers of an important linguistic resource with a range of semantic and affective functions, namely code-switching.” (p.172).

<sup>20</sup> According to Pavlenko (2007): “Different approaches to narrative analysis vary in the degree to which they include context (cf. Riessman 1993). I encourage researchers to consider both global and local contextual influences on narrative construction. The global or macro-level of analysis should attend to historic, political, economic, and cultural circumstances of narrative production. The local or micro-level should attend to the context of the interview or manuscript writing, and thus to the influence of language choice, audience, setting, modality, narrative functions, interactional concerns, and power relations on ways in which speakers and writers verbalize their experiences” (p. 175).

as if it were a taboo subject. On different occasions my field notes dissect these interactions and will be treated in more detail in the discussion of race in the chapter on France.

A matter as such can also be approached from a macro-level of analysis that looks at the historical and cultural reasons why a discussion about race in a country such as France could cause problems for an informant. In other words, “macroanalysis of form requires us to pay attention to how the speakers’ choices and omissions are shaped by culturally sanctioned topics, modes of expression, interpretive repertoires, and storytelling conventions” (Pavlenko, 2007, p.178). In a community such as the Senegalese in the European capitals of Paris and Rome, attention must be paid to the conventions of this particular group and to the conventions of the host societies because both entities could have an influence on how someone tells his life story. As such, Pavlenko succinctly summarizes how the macro and micro of an analysis work together: “analysis of form highlights linguistic, cultural, and genre influences on ways in which people structure their life stories (macro-level). It also allows us to examine how storytellers achieve their interactional goals through particular narrative devices or lexical choice (micro-level) and illuminates individual creativity and agency in the presentation of self” (p.177).<sup>21</sup>

In conclusion, narrative analysis serves to contextualize individual narratives in a larger historical, political, and social framework, shedding light on language ideologies and attitudes. However, as Pavlenko admitted herself, “these narratives work best if they supplement, and not substitute, other means of data collection, and are combined with linguistic analyses of narrators’ idiolects and competencies” (p.172).

### **2.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is another analytical tool at my disposal. While I will use this tool primarily to dissect the recorded interactions, I will also use it for exploring the interviews. Critical discourse analysis is well suited to my research questions because of the focus placed on the social aspects of speaking and on positioning the speech act in a larger societal framework.<sup>22</sup>

The purpose of CDA is to analyze ‘opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language’ (Wodak 1995:204). More specifically, ‘[CDA] studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed’ (Wodak 1997:173). (Blommaert & Bulcean, 2000, p. 448)

In the context of my study, CDA might best be suited to see how a ‘native’ French or Italian interacts with a Senegalese immigrant. Because of logistical constraints, however, I have very few recordings between a Senegalese person and a French or Italian person. When I do, the interactions are often among friends and therefore do not necessarily demonstrate an obvious power clash. Nevertheless, although I do not have recordings of informants interacting with members of a dominant social group other than their interactions with me, for the sake of this

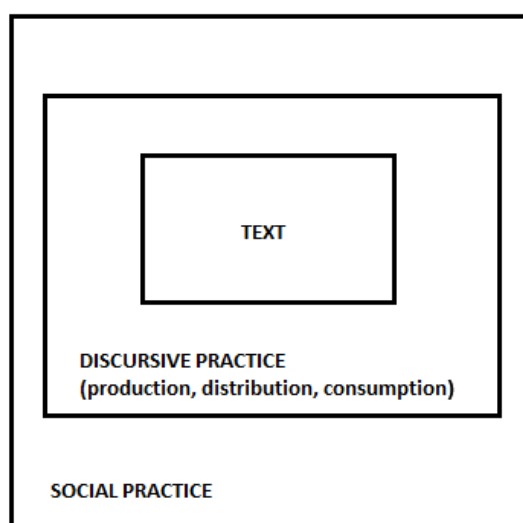
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<sup>21</sup> As seen earlier, type 3 sociolinguistics is greatly influenced by both the micro and macro approaches. See Rampton (1995).

<sup>22</sup> CDA was conceived in the late 1980s by researchers such as Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk.

particular study I argue that CDA can be just as effective in other ways. In analyzing the interviews partially through the lens of CDA, I seek to show how the Senegalese informants position themselves in their linguistic life narrative inside a larger societal narrative. I also aim to understand how their perceptions of their linguistic habits relate to how they use language, evidence which is taken from the recorded interactions. Notions of power emerge when looking at the different co-variables such as race, ethnicity, gender, class – co-variables that mark salient identity features and that influence a person’s conceptualization of his own linguistic nature.

Fairclough (1992) argues for a critical perspective in order to deconstruct what he denotes as the “three aspects of the constructive effects of discourse” (p. 64). In the first aspect, discourse contributes to “the construction of what are variously referred to as ‘social identities’ and ‘subject positions’ for social ‘subjects’ and types of ‘self’ (see Henriques *et al.* 1984; Weedon 1987)” (p. 64). He continues by stating that “secondly, discourse helps construct social relationships between people. And thirdly, discourse contributes to the construction of systems of knowledge and belief” (p. 64). Fairclough cautions that emphasis should be placed on the dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure in order to “avoid the pitfalls of overemphasizing on the one hand the social determination of discourse, and on the other hand the construction of the social in discourse” (p. 65). Fairclough also dissects CDA in three dimensions to show how discourse should be analyzed in this framework: discourse-as-text, discourse-as-discursive-practice, and discourse-as-social practice, in which each dimension is enveloped by the other as seen in the following model:



(Fairclough, 1993, p. 73)

Discourse-as-text refers to linguistic features including vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure (p. 75). This dimension is interested in discursive constructions much like those that Pavlenko mentioned in narrative analysis. The second dimension, discourse-as-discursive-practice, is closely related to the first because both involve formal features of text, but its emphasis is on the interactional consequences and implications of textual features (p. 75). With regard to textual features, discourse-as-discursive-practice is particularly concerned with “the ‘force’ of utterances, i.e. what sorts of speech acts (promises, requests, threats etc.) they constitute, the ‘coherence’ of texts, and the ‘intertextuality’ of texts” (p. 75). However, discourse-as-discursive-practice also focuses on the “processes of text production, distribution,



and consumption” and how “the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors” (p. 78). In other words, this dimension links text to context because the consumption of texts varies depending on the social context (p. 79). Meanwhile, the third dimension is discourse-as-social-practice in which discourse is related to ideology and to power. In this dimension, discourse sheds light on the evolution of power relations.

Fairclough highlights the importance of intertextuality, which he describes as “the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth” (p. 84). Blommaert and Bulcean (2000) add that “the way in which discourse is being represented, respoken, or rewritten sheds light on the emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts at control, and resistance against regimes in power” (p.449). According to them, it is Fairclough’s ambition to identify “the multiple ways in which individuals move through such institutionalized discursive regimes, constructing selves, social categories, and social realities” (p.449).

In the context of my study where I have two very different speech genres, the interview and the casual conversation, I can compare elements such as generic conventions, discourse types, register, and style. Regarding context, I will also have to discuss the difference between having the researcher as an interlocutor (the interview) and having a friend or acquaintance as the interlocutor (casual conversation). Through deconstructing the text and the discursive practices, I can apply these aspects to the larger social practice. I argue that the informants are internalizing social realities and categories, etched into their constructed selves through the everyday interactions they have with people and with institutions. Their experiences manipulate the way they see themselves in a larger society that many feel is not their own. I gain this general impression from the content of their interviews and aim to prove this theory through a deliberate dissection of their words, in terms of the words as a text itself, the words as a discursive practice, and the words as a social practice.

## **2.3 Linguistic and discursive features**

In order to effectively dissect discourse through narrative analysis and CDA, one has to focus on specific linguistic and discursive features. As already mentioned, Pavlenko is mainly concerned with features such as lexical borrowing, language play, and code-switching while Fairclough pays particular attention to vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, text structure, speech acts, coherence, and intertextuality. In my approach of the textual analysis, I will concentrate primarily on different types of code-switching, deixis, and intertextuality. I have selected these features because of their ability to expose and explain the formulation of multilingual and hybrid identities in relation to the larger context.

### **2.3.1 Code-switching**

Pavlenko (2007) discusses code-switching (CS) when analyzing multilingual narratives. The informants have produced multilingual oral texts in both their interviews and in natural interactions with others, and when this multilingualism is analyzed, it allows us to gain insight into the connections between language, society, culture, and identity. CS was discussed in the previous chapter where I detailed the different approaches used in analyzing CS: the linguistic anthropology perspective that separates situational from conversational CS, the pragmatic/conversation analytic perspective, and the sociolinguistic/ethnographic perspective.

Methodologically, in exploring CS in my research, I take an approach that seeks to explain the data from these different perspectives, keeping in mind a valid point that Gardner-Chloros has made. In her opinion, “CS is not an entity which exists out there in the objective world, but a construct which linguists have developed to help them describe their data” (Gardner-Chloros, 2009a, p. 10). In this vein, I offer my analysis of the data through these different approaches to help explain the complicated relationship between speakers and words and between speakers and their social environments. Because of the complex nature of code-switching, I also follow the advice of Gardner-Chloros (2009a) when she suggests that CS should be “taken at face value, rather than with a particular theory as the point of departure. It is important that CS be considered as the multifaceted phenomenon it is, rather than purely as a means of testing theoretical positions” (p. 7).

### **2.3.2 Deixis**

Deixis is an important linguistic feature, which Pavlenko mentions when speaking about “ethnic categories and personal pronouns” and which can fall under all three of Fairclough’s dimensions of discourse (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 169). Deixis is a phenomenon that indicates the subject position of a speaker in discourse and can be categorized by personal deixis, social deixis, temporal deixis and spatial deixis. Features such as pronouns or adverbs are incomprehensible if you do not know where the speaker stands. Personal pronouns represent personal deixis in which examples such as ‘my language,’ ‘our beliefs’ or ‘their country’ indicate how people position themselves in an environment or interaction. Personal deixis is particularly relevant in discussing issues of inclusion/exclusion and the formation of boundaries.

Meanwhile both spatial and temporal deixis indicate a speaker’s perspective that is fixed either physically or mentally. Spatial deixis can be conveyed through words such as *here*, while temporal deixis is marked by words such as *now* (Billig, 1995, p. 106). When comparing spatial and temporal deixis, “the psychological basis of temporal deixis seems to be similar to that of spatial deixis. We can treat temporal events as objects that move toward us (into view) or away from us (out of view)” (Yule, 1996, p. 14).

Social deixis, on the other hand, is marked in languages such as French or Italian in which a formal/informal distinction is made. In languages such as these, the younger or less powerful speaker will often address the older or more powerful interlocutor with *vous* while being addressed with *tu*. How speakers address each other or how speakers react to how others address them demonstrate attitudes and understandings of social networks and their relationship with language use. In other words, analyzing these features help to explain discursive constructions and their connection to the larger social picture.

### **2.3.3 Voicing and intertextuality**

Another concept, which Fairclough mentions explicitly in his explanation of discourse-as-discursive practice and discourse-as-social practice, is intertextuality, a phenomenon closely related to voicing and heteroglossia. Voicing is how a speaker represents or implies ownership of a particular utterance and stems from the notion of heteroglossia that Bakhtin (1986) expounded in his seminal work on heteroglossia, in which “utterances and discourse practices are historically embedded and contain the ideological and formal resources of previous speakers and

community members” (Poveda *et al*, 2005, p. 91).<sup>23</sup> In order to explain how an utterance is related to a larger social framework, one must rely on the concept of intertextuality, which was first coined by Kristeva in 1966 and has been appropriated by researchers in many fields. Lemke (1995) explains the links between these concepts in the following citation:

How has Bakhtin built his bridge between the event (the utterance) and the social system of heteroglossia (the social relations of various constituent groups in a society)? First by the principle of intertextuality, that the meaning of an utterance or event must be read against the background of other utterances and events occurring in the community, and second by introducing an intermediate notion between the social event and the system of social relations, the social language or voice characteristic of a particular group in a community. (Lemke, 1995, p. 6)

Bakhtin (1986) contended that “there can be no such thing as an absolutely neutral utterance” and that “the speaker’s evaluative attitude toward the subject of his speech (regardless of what his subject may be) also determines the choice of lexical, grammatical, and compositional means of the utterance” (p. 104). Relating an utterance to “a link in the chain of speech communication” (p. 106), Bakhtin delineated three aspects of any particular word: “a neutral word of a language, belonging to nobody; as an *other’s* word, which belongs to another person and is filled with echoes of the other’s utterance; and, finally, as *my* word, for, since I am dealing with it in a particular situation, with a particular speech plan, it is already imbued with my expression” (p. 105). In other words, when someone uses a word, it has already been uttered somewhere before, and therefore, the person revoices the word in a new context and tinged with new meanings.

By approaching my data from an intertextuality perspective, I can explore how different words become recontextualized when uttered by different people. Because I have interviewed Senegalese immigrants, any impressions they have are filtered through their own understandings. When they relate events to me or quote what others have told them, they are revoicing and borrowing text from other domains. In addition, when dealing with speakers of a language such as French or Italian whose ownership of this language is often questioned by themselves and by dominant speakers of the language, this type of perspective can provide intriguing insight into how languages and interactions are understood. Language investment, claiming the right to speak, language attitudes and ideologies are uncovered when voicing and intertextuality are investigated.

In sites such as France and Italy where the language practices of migrant communities and host country communities collide, leading to complex hybridity, the dissection of intertextuality is particularly pertinent. Fairclough (1999) argues that “working across differences is a process in our individual lives, within the groups we belong to, as well as between groups. Working across differences entails semiotic hybridity – the emergence of new combinations of languages, social dialects, voices, genres and discourse” (p. 151). Therefore, as speakers use language, especially multiple languages through code-switching in which words are juxtaposed with other words in new and innovative ways, studying intertextuality yields profound readings to the texts being analyzed. In addition, “hybridity, heterogeneity, intertextuality are salient features of contemporary discourse also because the boundaries

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<sup>23</sup> According to the back cover of the 1986 edition of *Speech genres and other late essays*, these works are from *Aesthetics of Creative Discourse*, published in Russian in 1979, four years after his death.

between domains and practices are in many cases fluid and open in a context of rapid and intense social change...” (p. 151). In other words, the social aspects of language can be highlighted and used to further imbue the texts with social meaning.

## **2.4 Limitations**

There are certain limitations to the methodological approaches used in my study, some which are related to my abilities as a researcher and some which concern the methodological choices I made. For instance, I decided to focus on qualitative instead of quantitative research methods. Quantitative research would allow for a more generalizable understanding of language and immigration and could shed light on what percentage of immigrants use which languages what percentage of the time. Quantitative research would also provide data that could be more easily incorporated in language policy, for instance. Regardless, my research offers valuable insight into how specific people conceptualize their identity and complements quantitative research to provide a more comprehensive picture of immigration and language learning.

Another limitation is the amount of time spent conducting research. I would have preferred to spend more than three months in each site. Longer periods of time would have allowed for more emphasis to be placed on the longitudinal aspects of this ethnography. The interviews and natural conversations told me a lot about language attitudes, acquisition, and use among the informants, but conducting follow-up interviews on how certain informants’ attitudes and understandings changed over a period of time would have added to the research.

In addition, while I was able to interview a large amount of informants, especially for a qualitative approach project, I could have benefited from more in depth interactions with the focal subjects. For example, my original goal was to have the primary informants write in journals on a regular basis to reflect on their language acquisition and use. I found the diary study that is a central part of Norton’s (2000) research to be a very rich source of data. While I gave journals to certain informants and asked them to write down any observations, due to lack of time or interest no one followed through. The journals would have provided me with written data as well as access to a more longitudinal understanding of the informants’ identity construction.

The types of informants I used have also influenced the outcome of my research. I consciously chose to include French citizens of Senegalese origin in the group of informants for France. I could be criticized for making this decision; however, I will show throughout the dissertation why the inclusion of this specific group is beneficial to my overall research aims. For instance, we will see how some informants feel positioned as immigrants in French society even if they have French citizenship. Including this demographic will help call into question the notion that integration is primarily a result of linguistic and cultural assimilation. That being said, the inclusion of French citizens also has repercussions for the types of learners being compared in the two sites. The data from Paris include native speakers of French from France. There is no such direct comparison with the data from Rome. Throughout my dissertation, I will have to acknowledge the implications of having a wider range of language learning backgrounds in Paris compared with Rome. However, I will show that the range of French language contexts in Senegal is also extremely diverse.

In addition, I found that I was limited in my access to informants from certain demographics in both France and Italy. In France, it was easier to find informants through online mechanisms such as student list-serves and community organizations than to find people through face to face interaction. This meant that my data was more skewed toward educated individuals.

I would have liked to interview more people that were still at earlier stages of the French language acquisition process as well as more people from socially disadvantaged areas. In Italy, I primarily found informants in known Senegalese hotspots. As I will explain in chapter 5, Senegalese women were less visible than men in Rome and I mainly met them through word of mouth. After becoming acquainted with the artist community, I had more access to women, but this means that half of my female informants in Rome were artists. This is most likely not representative of the Senegalese female population there. In addition, my own language competence was also a factor. I already commented on my small working knowledge of Wolof. While I had the help of overarching informants to help transcribe and translate the Wolof examples in my data, being a fluent speaker of Wolof would have made it easier for me to interview less educated informants and may have increased the amount of Wolof used by the people I did interview.

There are also limitations concerning how I analyze the data. With discourse analysis, I am making interpretations of the data without knowing what the informants actually intended to say. For the code-switching data in particular, I will be offering various ways of reading the texts based on how CS has been described and interpreted in previous literature (see Zentella, Gumperz, Auer, Myers-Scotton).

Even with the described limitations, I feel that I have solid data and analysis with which to draw insightful conclusions. By conducting ethnographic field work in which I rely on interviews, recorded conversations, and participant-observations, I intend to show how these two communities, the Senegalese in Paris and the Senegalese in Rome, conceptualize their identities through multilingual practices in which not only the content of their messages convey certain understandings of self and environment but the way in which they switch between languages and the presence of other discourse features also contribute to this expression of identity.

# CHAPTER 3: Description of Sites

## 3.1 Senegal

### 3.1.1 Languages

Senegal, a West African country of over 13.5 million people, is a former French colony whose official language is French. However, as little as 25% of the population speaks French, and only 10% of the entire population speaks French as a primary language. There are 25 indigenous languages in Senegal, of which 11 are recognized by the constitution. Wolof, which is spoken by over 80% of the population, is a vehicular language used by different ethnic groups to communicate, while the Wolof people represent 43% of the national population. In addition, it has been argued that as much as 90% of the population has a passive understanding of Wolof. Meanwhile, the Peuls and the Toucouleurs, who speak Pulaar, comprise the second largest group at 24 % followed by the Sereer at 15%. Other groups include the Lebou, Jola, Mandinka, Soninke, among others.<sup>24</sup>

As with any post-colonial nation, decisions concerning language policy are complex. Although opting for an indigenous language to replace the colonially imposed language might seem like a natural progression in Senegal's desire to distance itself from its former colonial power, there are many historically and politically motivated reasons to maintain the status quo. Historically, Senegal has a special relationship with France and the French language. Senegal was the first French West African colony. Administratively, France had more direct contact with Senegal than with any other colony in the region. In addition, this link to the French language is evident in the respect given to it during the formation of statehood. As McLaughlin (2001) has noted, Leopold Senghor, the country's first president "exhorted his people to speak French 'comme (des) bourgeois de Paris' ('like Parisian bourgeois') and was subsequently (if not consequently) elected member of the Académie Française" (p.159). Cisse (2005) adds that Senghor, who has the admiration of the vast majority of Senegalese, defended the French language vigorously, while Abdou Diouf, who succeeded Senghor, was also heavily interested in French language and is currently the Secretary General of the International Organization of La Francophonie (p. 100).

Cruise O'Brien (1998) tackles the different issues that arise in the discussion of French alongside national languages by exploring the politics of Wolofization. He notes that French represents a post-colonial privileged language that helps ensure a smooth transition as these countries become sovereign nations: "There may be very good political reasons, perhaps even that of the survival of the state, to fall back on the European language of colonial inheritance" (p. 27). Even in a post-colonial world, Senegal and the other former French colonies are tied to France in matters of business and in education. However, Senegal's economic decline since 1998 has resulted in less governmental hiring, providing little incentive for people to cultivate their French, which is seen by many as "the language of inaccessible officialdom" (p. 31). As for education, children who attend school only speak French in the classroom and use French textbooks for instruction, but Wolof is the language heard on the playground and the language that students (and some teachers) use to talk to each other (p. 37). While some might argue that

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<sup>24</sup> For more information see Trudell & Klass (2009), Cisse (2005), McLaughlin (2001, 2008), and Lewis (2009).

in an increasingly global society, speaking a language that has historically been used on an international level and that has been the official language in places as far away as South America and Asia could provide opportunities to those who want to communicate with a wider range of people. However, with the current dominance of English, French has been losing its prominence on the global stage.

With the diminishing dominance of the French language, the ascendancy of Wolof is not surprising, especially considering the historical influence of Wolof. Several factors explain why Wolof would be a logical substitution for French as the official language. As Cruise O'Brien (1998) has pointed out, France established the colony of Senegal in Wolof territory. The principal colonial towns, St. Louis, Dakar, Thies, and Rufisque, were set up along the coast and attracted migrants from the interior. Upon arriving to these towns, many of these migrants learned Wolof. Since independence, migration to these Wolof-speaking towns has only increased, further tipping the balance in favor of a Wolof-speaking nation. Meanwhile, McLaughlin (1995) explains the Wolof influence by not focusing as much on geographic location and migratory patterns as Cruise O'Brien but by highlighting the historical tradition of Wolof as a *lingua franca*:

Early and continuous contact with Europeans, dating from Portuguese contact in the second half of the sixteenth century, and the subsequent use of Wolof interpreters along the northern part of the West African coast, especially in trading posts at the mouths of the Senegal and Gambia rivers, led to the important position that Wolof has held as a trade language. In more recent economic history, Wolof has served as a trade language for Lebanese and Mauritanian merchants throughout Senegal, even in predominantly non-Wolof speaking areas of the country during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (McLaughlin, 1995, p. 154)

Wolof's dominance as the major trade language continues to the present day with Wolof being the most used language in Dakar's largest market, *Marché Sandaga*. However, Wolof's historical influence is not limited to trade. Religion is also a key factor. While Islamic instruction is often in Arabic, the fact that Wolof is the language of the Ndouride Muslim Sufi order presents another corridor for the Wolof language. And finally, supporting Wolof as an official language is important for national self-respect. During the push for decolonization, scholars such as Cheikh Anta Diop began to promote African languages to combat the marginalization of African cultures and societies (see Diop 1954). All these factors create favorable conditions for French to lose its dominance.

Nonetheless, replacing French with an indigenous language has consequences. While the majority of people speak Wolof, Senegal is ethnically diverse. Choosing one language over another might not be well-received by everyone, particularly the Pulaar-speaking Peuls and Toucouleurs who comprise a quarter of the Senegalese population.<sup>25</sup> McLaughlin (1995) has interviewed people in Dakar about their language habits and their attitudes toward the different languages spoken in Senegal. In explaining the often negative attitudes that Pulaar speakers have towards Wolof, she notes that "Wolofization is not only the spread of a language, it is the spread

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<sup>25</sup> One reason that the Wolof language was important in French colonization was because Wolof leaders cooperated with the French more than leaders from other ethnic groups. For more information see Cruise O'Brien, 2002.

of ethnicity. As Haalpulaar'en become more and more urbanized, they are becoming Wolofized in terms of language, but also in terms of ethnicity" (p. 162).<sup>26</sup> Many Pulaar speakers, resentful of Wolof's rising status as the dominant language, describe Pulaar as "a rich language because it has words for everything, whereas Wolof is impoverished and has to use French words for many concepts that are not easily expressed in the language. This is also taken as a sign that the Wolof have lost or been cut off from their values and traditions" (p. 156). Meanwhile, the third most represented ethnic group, the Sereer at 15% of Senegal's population, may sometimes display negative attitudes toward Wolof but are often less concerned: "Rather than accusing the Wolof of linguistic imperialism the way Haalpulaar'en frequently do, Seereer interviewees took what they considered a pragmatic approach to Wolofization, voicing time and time again the opinion that it was necessary to speak Wolof to get by in Senegal, especially as the Wolof themselves spoke nothing else" (p. 164).<sup>27</sup>

McLaughlin contends that these different perceptions are based on distinct understandings of the relationship between language and identity. While the Haalpulaar'en "use language as an indicator of acculturation to a Wolof identity, urban Seereer do not, in general, associate ethnicity with language" (p. 164). She also notes that "many Seereer who only speak Wolof adhere strongly to their Seereer identity and do not believe that speaking only Wolof makes one Wolof" (p. 164). McLaughlin cites the long history of interaction between the Sereer and Wolof with these two groups living side by side as a reason for the Sereer's more nonchalant attitude toward Wolof. In fact, many Sereer see themselves as better speakers of pure Wolof than those ethnic Wolof who have grown up in Dakar speaking an urban Wolof variety.

This distinction between urban Wolof and pure Wolof further complexifies the discussion of national language in Senegal. Swigart (1994) has been instrumental in presenting the case for the existence of an urban Wolof. She has found that the sociolinguistic literature which was based in "descriptions of how bilingual speakers suddenly shift from one language to another to evoke solidarity, to signal status, or to procure themselves some advantage through the use of a language carrying certain social significance" is insufficient in explaining the linguistic phenomena present in Dakar (p. 175). In noticing instances where both Wolof and French are used not only in a single conversation but also in the same utterance or morphemes in a single word, she surmises that speakers are not mixing French and Wolof for any specific aim or meaning. With this realization, she turns her attention from code-switching to language use and attitudes, leading her "to formulate a new category of Dakar speech distinct from the alternating use of two languages characteristic of codeswitching: Urban Wolof" (p. 175).

Swigart describes Urban Wolof as the merging of two languages into one code. She notes that this code "usually takes the form of a Wolof 'matrix' 'embedded' with a number of French lexical items (these terms are borrowed from Myers-Scotton, 1990), phonologically assimilated to Wolof or not, which create subtle stylistic or connotational effects" (p. 176). According to Swigart, Urban Wolof is used by many different socio-economic groups from various backgrounds, from the educated elite to middle class families, to the general population on the street. It is also important to note that these switches are part of a code that represents what Myers-Scotton has referred to as unmarked or expected variety.<sup>28</sup> Urban Wolof is not only considered the unmarked variety but the prestige variety as well. For instance, Swigart notes that

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<sup>26</sup> McLaughlin refers to Pulaar speakers as Haalpulaar-en.

<sup>27</sup> Sereer is sometimes spelled 'Seereer.'

<sup>28</sup> See Myers-Scotton (1993a) for more information on the Markedness Model.



“non-francophones embed many French phrases and lexical items into their speech, sometimes in a very creative manner, in imitation of the bilinguals” (p. 178). By inserting French in Wolof speech, these non-francophones access the prestige variety.

While the presence of both Wolof and French is needed to possess a prestige variety in the large cities, speakers are often required to practice a complicated balancing act. Pure Wolof, the kind that can be still found in rural villages, is often perceived as backwards, and a speaker may be labeled a *kawkaw* or ‘hick’ (Swigart, 2008). At the same time, using too much French poses its own problems. While it might be logical to conclude that since embedding French words and phrases into Wolof gives people access to the prestige variety, simply speaking French alone would highlight someone’s elite status even more. However, Swigart (1994) demonstrates that the center-periphery relationship between France and Senegal makes French a voluble presence. According to her, the use of French without the mitigating effects of Wolof “marks a Senegalese as *assimile*, a perhaps too willing victim of the French civilising mission. To speak French is desirable; to speak French too much is inappropriate. Most Senegalese do not wish to display that kind of admiration or closeness with the cultural ‘centre’ of colonial times” (p. 179).

This complex relationship with the former colonial power, which is displayed through the hybrid nature of Urban Wolof, is an archetypal example of hybridization and dual identity.<sup>29</sup> In conveying the image of a speaker with a foot in two worlds, Swigart (1994) argues that the speakers of Urban Wolof “have been moulded both by indigenous African culture and by Western education. They acknowledge and are proud of their traditional ‘roots’ but overlay them with a more international or metropolitan set of tastes and values” (p. 180). However, to reduce an Urban Wolof speaking identity to a simple mix of African and European identities would be misleading. Swigart convincingly argues:

As the charms of the cultural ‘centre’ of colonial times fade more and more for the Senegalese, and the creative vitality of their own ‘periphery’ takes over, this dual identity should perhaps more correctly be characterised as simply bilingual and urban. Urban Wolof as a cultural creole reflects more an affinity for African urban life and all it has to offer than any particular attachment to France. (Swigart, 1994, p. 186)

This focus on an urban identity over a post-colonial identity is evident in the fact that French is not the only language embedded in the Wolof matrix. English now appears in Urban Wolof, especially for young men who have shown an affiliation with the United States and urban hip-hop culture. Therefore, foreign languages are first and foremost sources of creative inspiration in a vast and constantly changing linguistic repertoire. In chapters 4 and 5, I will discuss how different urban settings, Paris and Rome, influence multilingual usage and explore how this multilingual usage ties in with identity construction.

### **3.1.2 Patterns of migration**

While Senegal has historically been important as a host country for intraregional migration within West Africa, it has recently gained notoriety as a country of transition and as a

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<sup>29</sup> See Bhabha (1994) for a discussion on hybridization. See Myers-Scotton (1988) for a discussion on dual identity.

source country for mass West African migrations to Europe.<sup>30</sup> There has always been a steady flow of emigration to France, where the Senegalese community currently numbers between 50,000 and 80,000.<sup>31</sup> As Riccio (2008) shows, “Senegalese emigration to Europe began in the colonial period with the French enrollment of Tirailleurs at the end of the nineteenth century and during World War I” (p. 218). France’s economic boom in the 1950s and 1960s increased unskilled foreign labor, attracting Toucouleur, Sereer and Soninke migrants from Senegal (p. 219). While France was the historical destination for Senegalese immigrants, the economic downturn in the 1980s restricted migration mainly to *regroupement familial* (family reunification) and transformed other parts of Europe as well as America into receiving countries. Spain, Italy and the USA represented the new face of host countries (p. 219). The most recent data shows that over 72,000 Senegalese residents currently live in Italy and this number obviously does not include illegal immigrants.<sup>32</sup> Numerically, Italy is on par with France as a major Senegalese migrant destination.

These newer destinations offer economic incentives for Senegalese migrants. Reliance on earning money abroad has transformed into an important remittance system where in 2007, over 500 billion CFA<sup>33</sup> francs (or 1 billion dollars) were sent to Senegal, constituting 7.6% of the national GDP.<sup>34</sup> While remittances have suffered since the global economic crisis, they are still an integral part of the Senegalese economy. Riccio explains the importance and impact of such remittances:

As Mansour Tall has shown, they are a cornerstone of the Senegalese economy (2002). In addition to their importance at the national level, remittances contribute to making ends meet for thousands of Senegalese and Ghanaian families. Often remittances are not just a supplement to the household economy, but the basis of its subsistence (CeSPI 2003). This is especially the case with households headed by elderly couples whose children live abroad (see Carling 2004). Remittances may also be directed into investment, especially in housing, and household goods and home improvement (Smith and Mazzucato 2004; Tall 1994). Such

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<sup>30</sup> To understand Senegal as a source of immigration to Europe, one must first contextualize this phenomenon against the backdrop of migration within Africa. As Ndiaye and Robin (2009) have written, in the past quarter century “Senegal switched from an immigration country to an emigration country, but is now assuredly a transit country, and one of the main gateways from Africa to ‘northern countries’” (p. 175). Historically, during the years following independence there were several migratory patterns including “east-to-west movement, from Mali, the western parts of Senegal, and the northwestern parts of Guinea to Senegal and the Gambia” (Berg, 1965, p. 161). In addition, lateral movements from Togo, Dahomey and eastern Nigeria resulted in migrations that “involve[d] perhaps 75,000 men annually, most of them *navétanes*, or peanut sharecroppers, in Senegal and Gambia, the rest wage earners in Dakar and other Senegalese urban centers” (p. 161). Mass migration led to expulsions such as when Senegal expelled Guineans in 1967 (Adepoju, 2007, p. 163). Senegal has also been a receiving country for Mauritanian refugees (see Bensaâd 2009).

<sup>31</sup> There are 52,473 Senegalese people in 2007 according to Caritas. However, the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) puts that estimate at 80,000 for 2007. It is also important to note that none of these figures would include French citizens of Senegalese origin.

<sup>32</sup> The figure provided by the Caritas 2010 census was 72,618 Senegalese residents or 1.7% of the total foreign population. Senegal is the most represented sub-Saharan African country. This number marks a huge increase from the 47,762 Senegalese in the 2004 Caritas report.

<sup>33</sup> A form of currency in West Africa that is guaranteed by the French treasury.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.un-instraw.org/data/media/documents/Remittances/UNDP%20project%20local%20dev/1-FACT%20SHEET%20SENEGAL-ENweb.pdf>

investments are amongst the most important sources of status in Ghana and Senegal. Remittances may also be channeled towards investment in small businesses. (Riccio, 2008, p. 225)

Because of Senegal's dependence on remittances and therefore on emigration, the country's perception of migrants has transformed them into heroes. Riccio discusses the effects on Senegalese discourse, "replete with the celebration of migrants as symbols of contemporary society because of their solidarity and their efforts in coping with being far from home for the well-being of their families" (p. 225). He mentions Youssou N'Dour and Ismael Lo as examples of Senegalese musicians who exalt migrants. He then demonstrates that "the overall economic success of migration stimulates the development of a culture of migration (Hannerz 1992) in which migrants become contemporary heroes" (p. 225). Achieving hero-like status helps alleviate the apprehension of illegal immigration or of dealing with the deplorable living conditions that often await them in their host countries.

### **3.2 Host countries: France and Italy**

One of the aims of my study is to compare relationships between speakers, languages, and environments, focusing on the connection between host country and migrant community. Several different links can be made. In this section I will concentrate on what I have identified as the two most notable factors: the linguistic identities of the host countries and the colonial connection between the host countries and the migrant communities.

#### **3.2.1 Linguistic identity**

The primary reason for choosing France and Italy as destination locations in a sociolinguistic study on second language acquisition is to highlight how different historical and contemporary understandings of linguistic identities not only influence the native populations of the countries but also have an impact on the integration of new populations as well as language use and acquisition among these newcomers. There is a certain mystique about the French language and its speakers that does not seem to exist for Italian.<sup>35</sup> According to Posner (1997), "the standard language is viewed in the French tradition as a *trésor*, a *patrimoine*—an institution, which has been elaborated and perfected over time" (p. 11). This view is in line with *l'exception française*, a notion that the way the French conceive of their language and have a relationship with their language is unparalleled in any other country. Coppel (2007) discusses this phenomenon, citing herself from 30 years earlier:

Pour les étudiants en linguistique qui, comme moi, ont fait leurs classes à la fin des années 1960, l'exception française, c'était l'extraordinaire attachement des Français non pas tant à leur langue – il n'y a rien d'extraordinaire à aimer sa langue – mais à la norme linguistique. En 1975, j'écrivais : « L'amour que les Français manifestent pour leur langue est singulier. Les querelles qui portent sur les problèmes de langue déchaînent les passions qui dépassent largement le cercle

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<sup>35</sup> While not much work has been done on attitudes toward Italian, the case of French is quite well documented. In addition, in my own experience I was always more comfortable speaking Italian with Italians than French with French because I felt my efforts were more appreciated and less judged with Italians. This is, however, based only on my perceptions and my own anecdotal evidence.

des spécialistes. Celles-ci vont jusqu'à fournir la matière de jeux télévisés... Cette attitude nous semble naturelle alors qu'elle étonne et choque les étrangers. Nous n'hésitons pas à corriger les fautes de français commises par les étrangers ; nous avons même la curieuse habitude de nous corriger entre nous, ce que les Anglais considèrent comme un manquement à la politesse, même si pour eux il ne s'agit pas d'une "faute", mais seulement d'une "erreur" (mistake) » (Coppel, 1975). (Coppel, 2007, p. 161-2).<sup>36</sup>

According to Coppel, the relationship that the French have to their language is special, manifested by the ways in which different sectors of the population engage with and discuss the national language. She mentions the points of view of the French and of foreigners. Showing that these language attitudes about the ability to speak French are not just toward native French speakers, she argues that the French have a reputation for correcting foreigners when they do not use the language correctly. These perceived notions about the French exist in foreign language classrooms as well. In looking at students' attitudes about the French language and people, Drewelow and Theobald (2007) note that "the French are thought to be merciless with foreigners who do not speak impeccable French (Platt, 2000). For many people in the United States, native French speakers apparently are more irritated than other nationalities when it comes to nonnative speakers' pronunciation of their language" (p. 494). These expectations about the French and their views on language could lead to anxiety for language learners in and out of the classroom.

When I began formulating my research project, I also wanted to choose two settings that were very different with regard to standard language ideologies. In my experience, France represents the perfect example of a country that highly emphasizes the importance of a standard national language and whose history shows a propensity for linguistic standardization.<sup>37</sup> The case of France and the French language is often cited as the model of standardization, most notably because Haugen's (1966) seminal work on standardization, which demonstrates the link between nationhood and a need for a standard, focuses on French. Meanwhile, Italy is often described as a place where the existence and use of a standard national language as well as the concept of nationhood arrived relatively late when compared to other European nations. With this in mind I wanted to know whether understandings of standard language and nation within France and Italy would have implications for the language attitudes and language acquisition of foreigners living in these settings.

In France, even though the French language had been on the road to standardization for centuries, the French Revolution marked the moment in French history when there was a concerted effort to have language unite the people.<sup>38</sup> This is important because as Haugen has

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<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that Coppel cited herself so that she could question whether there has been a shift in the conceptualization of language in France.

<sup>37</sup> According to Silverstein (1996), standardization is "a phenomenon in a linguistic community in which institutional maintenance of certain valued linguistic practices—in theory, fixed—acquires an explicitly-recognized hegemony over the definition of the community's norms" (p. 2). Haugen (1966) has articulated four aspects of language development needed to transform a dialect into a language or more importantly, a vernacular into a standard language: 1) selection of norm, 2) codification of form, 3) elaboration of function, and 4) acceptance by the community.

<sup>38</sup> Lodge (1993) argues that as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century "the French 'nation' (i.e. the Paris region) had come to dominate many of the other 'nations' of Gaul. The centralizing power led to the assimilation of the dominated provinces to the French 'nation' and in this process the dominant group began to see their language as a symbol of a new national identity" (p. 131).

argued, “In France, as in other countries, the process of standardization was intimately tied to the history of the nation itself. As the people developed a sense of cohesion around a common government, their language became a vehicle and a symbol of their unity” (p. 930). At the time of the French Revolution, only a small portion of people in France spoke French with the majority of the country speaking regional languages or dialects.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, there was a move to get French citizens to speak French as a sign of loyalty to the nation. No one encapsulated this idea better than Barère who famously contended in 1794 that “le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas-breton; l’émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemande; la contre révolution parle italien et le fanatisme parle basque.”<sup>40</sup> With discourse such as this, many scholars argue that the Revolution was a catalyst for Haugen’s fourth criterion of standardization, acceptance, a phenomenon that is directly related to nationhood and national identity. Posner (1997) demonstrates that while it was not necessarily planned, standardization was part of Revolutionary “One Nation” ideology. According to her, standardization in modern times is an emblem of ethnic identity (Andersen, 1991) while in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was to make language a prestige symbol. She adds that *l’imaginaire*—an image of national preeminence fostered by successive regimes and republican ideas—was probably the most important factor in the promotion of a standard language.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, Hagège (1996) shows that revolutionaries invented the idea of homeland and thus adopted French in a way that it had not been used before. French was not just promoted administratively. The new government also wanted the common man to know French so that he could properly represent his country. However, De Certeau, Julia, and Revel (1975) argue that the Revolution merely set the groundwork for standardization and that it was really mass education and communication that made it possible. In their opinion, the Ferry Laws of the Third Republic that granted free, compulsory and secular schooling, along with military inscription were the real reasons why French was able to reach the masses. The centralized structure of French society, which would soon include a centralized educational system, was the most powerful underlying force of standardization.

In comparing France with Italy, this centralized structure is often mentioned as the reason why France witnessed linguistic unity earlier and more strongly than Italy, where the infrastructure is often described as fragmented. According to Staulo (1990), this is not surprising:

[France] had experienced a central political force that radiated order and unity throughout the entire country at rather early stages in their aspiration for natural political and linguistic unity. Italy on the other hand obtained its political unity only in the second half of the 19th century and for centuries had political forms of government that tended to fragmentize each region into separate and permanent linguistic entities. When the other nations had already abandoned Latin from any official use, Italy as late as the 15th and 16th century was still using Latin in some form or another on an official level. (Staulo, 1990, pp. 8-9)

It was not until the completion of Italian Unification in 1871 that the environment was finally conducive to solidifying the Italian language debate, known as the *questione della lingua*, and

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<sup>39</sup> Gregoire’s report (1790-94) claimed that 46% of the 26 million people had no ability to speak French and that only 11% had complete control of the language (see Lodge 1993).

<sup>40</sup> Found in F. Brunot, 1967, IX: 213

<sup>41</sup> See the introduction and first chapter of Posner (1997).

transforming the linguistic landscape.<sup>42</sup> Migliorini (1984) argues that the following phenomena allowed finally for the emergence of Italian: the circulation of ideas, Rome becoming the capital, uniform laws for the whole country (civil code 1865, penal code 1889), the army, greater influence of public administration, and progress in elementary education (p. 404). One could also add mass media such as newspapers, radio, and eventually television. Of the aforementioned phenomena, the role of education probably had the biggest impact, just as in France. It is noteworthy that the Ferry Laws, which provided compulsory, free, universal education in France, took effect a decade later than similar legislation in Italy.<sup>43</sup>

While the existence of occasional similarities in the linguistic histories of France and Italy complicates the generalized comparison between a centralized France and a fragmented Italy, notions of national identity reinforce the idea that politically and linguistically France has a more cogent understanding of a shared national identity than Italy does. In order to create a shared national identity, however, France needed to deal with the existence of regional languages and dialects. As we have seen through Barère's discourse, these regional varieties threatened the emerging national identity whose groundwork was laid in the French Revolution. According to Hagège, the birth of French was closely tied to the birth of France with French reflecting the identity of the nation. His tone throughout *Le Français, histoire d'un combat* (1996) conveys the notion that formation of a standard French language through history should be lauded, even at the expense of the regional varieties, which would be attacked through legislation.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, the regional varieties that exist in France are more pronounced in Italy. It is arguably the presence of strong regional variation that most contributes to language ideologies in Italy. Cavanaugh (2008) demonstrates that "according to the latest available statistics (ISTAT 1999, 2007), approximately 60% of Italians continue to speak their local dialects in addition to Italian" (p. 19). The officially recognized minority languages have been protected by Italian law since September 2001 (Gambarota, 2011, p. 4).<sup>45</sup> While Italian legislation currently deems these languages worthy of preservation, their status and protection have not always been guaranteed. Minority languages were most notably threatened during the Fascist period. Cavanaugh (2008) equates the language question during this period with a declaration of war. She argues that "the Regime viewed dialects as holdovers from less modern times, indicators of lingering and widespread illiteracy, and potent symbols of the many sociogeographical divisions that still separated Italians from one another due to the peninsula's long history of being divided into

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<sup>42</sup> The *questione della lingua* (see Migliorini 1984; Lepschy and Lepschy 1977) emerged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and concerned which dialect should be accepted as the standard language in Italy. In addition to disagreements about which dialect would be selected as the standard, there was no central authority to pave the way for the acceptance of a national language and the debate raged on for three more centuries.

<sup>43</sup> "The Coppino act of 1877 made attendance at school obligatory for children over six. This had the result of reducing the percentage of illiterates from 78% in 1861 to under 50% in 1910" (Migliorini, 1984, p. 404).

<sup>44</sup> Revolutionary government legislation limited the domains in which regional languages could be spoken. Not until the Loi Deixonne (1951) could a school class in a regional language be held, and this was limited to one hour a week. Hagège (1996) notes that this change was permitted because the French nation was now strong enough to allow for teaching of regional languages without fear of it corrupting its citizens, suggesting that the regional varieties had been sufficiently weakened and were seen more as a novelty than as an insidious threat to French identity.

<sup>45</sup> Law no. 482 of 15 December 1999 recognizes 12 minority languages: "In attuazione dell'articolo 6 della Costituzione e in armonia con i principi generali stabiliti dagli organismi europei e internazionali, la Repubblica tutela la lingua e la cultura delle popolazioni albanesi, catalane, germaniche, greche, slovene e croate e di quelle parlanti il francese, il franco-provenzale, il friulano, il ladino, l'occitano e il sardo." Retrieved from: <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/994821.htm>.

numerous political entities (such as city-states, papal states, the Bourbon controlled south)” (p. 21). As such, there were attempts to eradicate these languages through legislation just as in France. In addition, the discourse surrounding minority languages mirrored that of Barère’s during the French Revolution where these languages were conceptualized as barriers to the formation of a national identity.

However, the suppression of these regional varieties was not as successful as in France. The continued use of regional varieties is evident in national statistics but also through anecdotal evidence. As Carter (1993) shows, because of this linguistic complexity, outsiders trying to learn the national language are often frustrated by the seeming lack of a national language. For instance, she relates the following story:

One Senegalese migrant, a recent arrival to Italy who was educated in French schools all his life and was working in construction in Italy, once complained: ‘This language is so difficult, Italian. At work my boss is Piedmontese and so he speaks Piedmontese. Another is Sicilian and he speaks only Sicilian. With all these languages, how am I to learn Italian?’ (Carter, 1993, p.143-44)

While the majority of Italians speak standard Italian, in everyday life many prefer to speak a different variety, displaying a certain pride in and loyalty to their native region. This linguistic diversity calls into question the notion of a coherent national Italian identity and complicates the language learning progress of foreigners who want to communicate in the preferred language of the local population.

In addition to regional varieties, social varieties should also be taken into account. What has been particularly relevant in the linguistic landscape of France are the emerging sociolects from the Parisian suburbs. While there are different ways of speaking French for all sectors of society based on factors such as class, sex, age, the variety that seems to receive the most attention is that which is spoken by the youth in the *banlieues*, specifically *le verlan*. One reason why this variety is so conspicuous is because of the marginalized position of its speakers. Doran (2007) describes *verlan* as a “linguistic bricolage,” in which borrowings from languages such as Arabic, American Rap English, Romani, and Wolof, reflect the multilingual and multicultural communities that developed this youth language (p. 497). Doran’s treatment of *verlan* is applicable to my study because it focuses on the contemporary relationship between language and identity that highlights the hybrid nature of the banlieue communities as they negotiate a space in the larger French society.<sup>46</sup> The multicultural, multilinguistic reality in the *banlieues* that contribute to the hybrid identity contrasts with the theory that if everyone assimilates to a recognized French norm, the French national identity will remain intact. As we have seen in the formation of standard French, a strong national identity is contingent upon a national language. Doran’s attention to French language ideologies has thus highlighted the following:

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<sup>46</sup> Doran (2007) situates this relationship along three major axes : 1) as a product of the particular spaces and populations of la banlieue, marked by marginalization, multiculturalism, multilingualism, and persistently negative dominant representations; 2) as a set of linguistic practices that differ from Standard French in ways that have symbolic value and identity stakes for their users; and 3) as a strategic and functional tool used to construct an alternative social universe, a “Third Space” (Bhabha) of social interaction in which youths can define themselves in their own terms, along a more métisse and hybrid identity continuum that rejects the fixed categories of “French” vs. “immigrant” that continue to dominate in mainstream journalistic and political discourse. (p. 498)

In a country where mastery of a carefully defined linguistic standard (le bon usage) is highly prized, and taken as a precondition for legitimate citizenship, the existence of this ‘deviant’ language is seen as representing a ‘fracture linguistique’ (Goudaillier 8), that mirrors a social breakdown between traditional French society and the *quartiers chauds* of the *banlieues*. (Doran, 2007, p. 499)

Doran goes on to show that this ‘fracture linguistique’ therefore clashes with republican ideology that seeks to assimilate those who enter its borders in a bid to preserve national unity, resulting in the negation of multiculturalism and the devaluing of minority languages.

For some speakers, the use of *verlan* is an attempt to mitigate the detrimental effects that this republican model has on the conceptualization of identity for those people who see themselves as more than just French. Doran suggests that the absence of hybrid identity terms means that other methods have to be used to express a sense of self that often goes against the image that is espoused by the French Republic.<sup>47</sup> She argues that it is through language that identity is established and maintained. Using personal deixis, she demonstrates that the youths who speak *verlan* do so to create a *we*-group in which they refer to their variety as “notre langage à nous,” a variety that is used in specific contexts when they deem that creating a boundary is necessary (p. 502). She concludes that “as such, youth language was not their *de facto* dialect, but rather a code used strategically to define a free zone of peer interaction outside the norms of either family languages or standard French (akin to Bhabha’s Third Space)” (p. 502). This youth language then perpetuates the boundaries that exist because of the rejection of these marginalized youth by the dominant society and a self-imposed alienation by the group in question. While this phenomenon could exist in Italy as well, not much research has been done on the subject of hybridized language, and more importantly, the relatively short presence of immigrants means that there has been less time to develop a drastically different variety or *we*-code.

### 3.2.2 Post-colonialism and national identity

One of the most fascinating aspects of comparing Senegalese immigration to France and Italy is the influence of the colonial past. Not only are there obvious differences in the relationships between the colonizer and the colonized, but the effects of colonization on the colonizer’s construction of national identity differ between France and Italy as well. As mentioned in section 3.1, because of France’s colonial conquests in West Africa, there have been centuries of interaction between France and Senegal, which allowed for the long history of migration between the two countries.<sup>48</sup> However, colonization also affects how racial identity has been and still is constructed. Speaking from the British perspective, Solomos (1999) demonstrates the effects of the colonial legacy on contemporary society. He discusses how colonialism has influenced understandings of race and culture by exploring the literature on this topic:

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<sup>47</sup> Doran mentioned Franco-Marocain, Franco-Pakistanaï, or Franco-Portugais as examples.

<sup>48</sup> According to Ginio (2006), “The federation of FWA (French West Africa) was officially established in 1895. However, French presence and some form of governance, at least in certain regions, had existed since the seventeenth century. The federation was composed of seven territories—Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, Dahomey (now Benin), French Sudan (now Mali), French Guinea, and Mauritania—as well as...Togo” (p. 3).



Among other things this work has helped to highlight, for example, the complex processes of racial and gender identification experienced by the colonised during the colonial and postcolonial periods. Other studies have sought to show that the oppressed themselves have produced their own discourses about race and identity in the context of their own experiences of domination and exclusion. In much of the literature on the development of racist ideologies and practices an important role is assigned to the ways in which colonialism and imperialism helped to construct images of the ‘other’ (Mannoni 1964)... There have also been a number of attempts to analyse the ways in which ideas about race were in one way or another the product of attempts to analyse the ‘differences’ between coloniser and colonised. (Solomos, 1999, p. 13)

We see a similar situation in France because both countries have had an extensive colonial territory over centuries. In fact, much has been said about the French colonial experience. Fanon (1967), for example, highlights the historical implications of colonialism from a linguistic and cultural perspective: “Every colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country” (p. 18). For Fanon, one of the vestiges of colonialism is the internalized inferiority complex that is directly related to the imposition of French language and culture at the expense of local language and culture. In addition, in Fanon’s discourse, the concepts of language and culture become racialized: “the Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language...Mastery of the language affords remarkable power” (p. 18). Fanon has equated whiteness with the acquisition of the colonizer’s language. Here, the degree of whiteness does not refer to skin color but to cultural and linguistic appropriation and to the process of becoming civilized. Fanon has also underlined the relationship between language and power that theorists such as Foucault, Bourdieu, and Norton have found central to discussions of language acquisition. These understandings of race, culture, language, and power that were inscribed into colonial practices still persist long after colonization ended and influence how France, its citizens, and its immigrants view themselves and each other today. These perceptions, in turn, affect how these groups construct and fit into a national identity.<sup>49</sup>

However, it is not easy to talk about race and its effects in France because the topic of race is often seen as taboo.<sup>50</sup> The Republican model, which was nobly constructed to ensure equality for all, makes it difficult to investigate the concept of race and how it affects individuals.<sup>51</sup> Ndiaye (2005) discusses how a paradox exists for visible minorities: “les Noirs de

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<sup>49</sup> Hargreaves (2007) argues, “Since the early 1980s, it has become commonplace in France to claim that immigration is a threat to national identity. Two-thirds of those questioned in a 1985 poll said France was in danger of losing her national identity if nothing was done to limit the foreign population (BVA poll in *Paris-Match*, 29 November 1985). By 1989, that view was shared by three-quarters of respondents (BVA poll in *Paris-Match*, 14 December 1989)” (p. 149).

<sup>50</sup> See Hargreaves 2007; Lloyd 1991.

<sup>51</sup> Van Der Valk (2003) demonstrates how the Republican model influences the integration of immigrants: “Notions of ‘community,’ ‘cultural pluralism,’ or any concept that emphasizes the importance of the immigrants’ culture of origin are rejected because they are assumed to reflect an immigrant’s state of non-integration. This state is believed to engender social problems between immigrants and French society, and thereby threaten social cohesion, which, in

France sont individuellement visibles, mais ils sont invisibles en tant que groupe social et qu'objet d'étude pour les universitaires. D'abord en tant que groupe social, ils sont censés ne pas exister, puisque la République française ne reconnaît pas officiellement les minorités, et ne les compte pas non plus" (p. 91). For Ndiaye, refusing to acknowledge racial groups does not mean that members of these groups do not experience a racialized identity. In the past decade, some people, most notably academics, have begun to question the color-blind model. The sociologists Fassin and Fassin (2006) have commented on the difficulties of approaching the concept of race in their most recent book: "La première parution de ce livre, en 2006, s'inscrivait dans une actualité: l'émergence d'une "question raciale" que jusqu'alors, dans la France républicaine, on croyait volontiers impensable—et que d'ailleurs personne n'aurait même osé formuler en ces termes" (p. 5). Calling into question a tradition that has focused solely on the role of social structures in the formulation of a national identity, their main premise is to show that "la question sociale est aussi une question raciale" (p. 13). This contemporary perspective on race and national identity will be explored in chapter 4.

On the surface, it would seem that colonialism has had less of an influence on race and national identity in Italy. Italy had a minor role in the colonization of Africa. It had no contact with Senegal and a limited presence in East Africa.<sup>52</sup> However, as Ben-Ghiat and Fuller (2005) argue, "although Italian colonialism was more restricted in geographical scope and duration than the French and British empires, it had no less an impact on the development of metropolitan conceptions of race, national identity, and geopolitical imaginaries" (p. 2). Two trends with regard to national identity have emerged from the colonial policy and the post-colonial aftermath in Italy: the attempted creation of a national identity reinforced by imperialism and racism on the one hand, and the strengthening of an already established North-South divide on the other hand.<sup>53</sup>

The North-South divide in Italy, also known as the Southern Question, is the historical and contemporary phenomenon in which the Northern provinces have economically dominated the South, causing mass migration from the South to the North and engendering feelings of cultural superiority by Northern residents.<sup>54</sup> The existence of this North-South became evident during Italian Unification. According to the North, the South was no better off than Africa. For instance, Moe (2002) argues that in the Northern imaginary, the South represented "both 'Africa' and *terra vergine*, a reservoir of feudal residues, sloth, and squalor on the one hand and of quaint peasants, rustic traditions, and exotica on the other" (p. 3). If Mussolini, under whom Italy's modern day imperialism was instituted, was serious about creating a uniform national identity

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turn, would favor the development of racism. 'Communitarism,' in the dominant vision, is considered a danger" (p. 312)

<sup>52</sup> While Italian missionaries arrived in Eritrea in 1837, it was not declared a colony until 1890. Somalia became a colony in 1908. Mussolini declared Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia as one colony in 1936 called *Africa Orientale Italiana* while Libya became a regional district of Italy's national territory (Ben-Ghiat & Fuller, 2005, pp. xiv-xvii).

<sup>53</sup> According to Sòrgoni (2002), "the conquest of Ethiopia also marked the starting point of a new racist policy in the colonies, and the promulgation of a series of racial laws aimed at creating a segregationist environment within the colonial territory. For instance, the 1936 decree on the administration of the empire definitively ruled out the possibility of indigenous subjects obtaining Italian citizenship" (p. 41).

<sup>54</sup> According to Moe (2002), "Pasquale Villari and Leopoldo Franchetti articulated for the first time the regional specificity of the social, political, and economic conditions of the Mezzogiorno. Their work, together with that of Franchetti's collaborator Sidney Sonnino, announced the existence of the Southern Question and, at the same time, inaugurated the rich tradition of inquiry and debate subsequently known as Meridionalism (*meridionalismo*)" (p. 224).

that effaced the understood differences between the North and South, he had to demonstrate the commonalities of all Italians while eliminating any notion that southerners were in any way related to Africans. As Gillette (2002) argues:

Racism would be used as a tool to accomplish this transformation. Mussolini thought it would strengthen the consciousness of the Italian identity, remind them of the imperial might of their ancestors, and foster the ardent desire to conquer new territories. Racism would become the driving force behind the creation of the new fascist man, the *uomo fascista*. (Gillette, 2002, p. 53)

Mussolini essentially denied that the differences between the North and South were relevant by arguing that although Northern and Southern Italians did not share many physical characteristics, “they belonged to the same race because their core beliefs and values were the same: namely, nationalist and fascist; and because they had formed a (relatively) undisturbed breeding population for at least fifteen hundred years” (p. 74). The construction of this Italian race went through various iterations with Mussolini first championing Italy’s Mediterranean nature.<sup>55</sup> However, as the alliance between Germany and Italy grew, Mussolini’s goal was to bring Italians more in line with German heritage. He therefore “decided to synthesize the Nordic Aryan myth with Romanità in his new racial model” (p. 55).

While Mussolini was trying to apply Nordic values to the whole of Italy and highlighted these values against the backdrop of its colonial subjects, the North continued to see itself as different from the South, as the true members of Nordic culture. Using the same racism that explained the differences between Italians and Africans, Northerners defined themselves as innately different from Southerners. These stark contrasts were made more evident with the migration of Southerners to the North:

Since World War II, Italy has seen a ‘great migration’ of Southern Italians to the North in search of work. These immigrants engendered widespread hostility among the indigenous Northerners, who indulged themselves in the stereotypes of Northern superiority and Southern inferiority that had long existed among some Italian racial theorists. (Gillette, 2002, p. 183)

The Southern Question, while always present as a footnote in any discussion of an Italian national identity, has been particularly relevant in the last couple of decades. As Moe (2002) explains, “The emergence of Umberto Bossi’s separatist Northern League during the 1990s has lent a new urgency to this question, providing millions of voters with a political channel through which to vent their discontent with the unified state formed from Italy’s various regions in 1860” (p. 1). Meanwhile, Pratt (2002) demonstrates that the main concern of the Northern League (known in Italy as the *Lega*) is to show that they are different from Southerners historically, ethnically and culturally and to use these differences to justify a separation between the two groups. Supporters of the *Lega* identify more with northern countries than they do their own fellow citizens, betraying the problematic nature of Italian national identity. The *Lega* has

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<sup>55</sup> “In 1933-4, during the worst period of Italo-German relations in the fascist era, Mussolini emphasized Italy’s Mediterranean nature, its affinity for other Latin countries, and fascist antipathy for Nazi racial theory” (Gillette, p. 45).

suggested that Southerners, who moved to the North during a long history of internal migration, are more similar to foreign immigrants than to their own people. This us vs. them formulation is a well-known concept in discussions about national identity. As Pratt argues, the *Lega* “has legitimated xenophobia. Since identities are in part oppositional, attacks first on Southerners (*terroni*) and then on international migrants (*extracomunitari*) have been a long-term theme in the construction of the North” (p. 37).

Meanwhile, Rome represents a peculiar case in the North-South discussion. Geographically, it is centrally located, neither in the north or the south. It is also a world capital, attracting people from all over and embodying a certain prestige. However, Rome is not immune to the different issues that surface in the North-South divide. The North looks down on Rome because regardless of Rome’s importance as the seat of government and as a tourist destination, the North is where the majority of industry originates. At the same time, Rome, like the North, receives internal migrants and immigrants from various countries, and therefore must deal with its own growing pains. In addition, while the majority of the right-wing rhetoric comes from the North, this type of rhetoric is part of the national political discourse and is thus felt all over Italy.

France has its own ultra-rightwing group, the *Front National* (FN), which uses much of the same rhetoric as the *Lega*. As Van Der Valk (2005) contends, “the FN program is based on the principle of ‘national preference’: giving priority to people of French origin and excluding ‘the Other’ at all levels: social, economic and political” (p. 309-10). However, the FN differs from the *Lega* in that it does not focus as much on the regional divide. Instead, immigrants are its main target, partially because they are represented as not sharing the same values as French people. In addition, while there is internal migration in France, with Paris as a center attracting people from all over the country, there is not the same phenomenon that exists in Italy with the North-South divide and mass migration northward. France’s conceptualization of race and the existence of social exclusion are directly tied to immigration, which is primarily related to colonization. Italy’s understanding of race exists because of mass internal migration and a complex formulation of race that developed through both internal processes and through a limited colonial project. The differences between these two countries with regard to these phenomena, and how Senegalese immigration and language use fit in, will be investigated in the following chapters.

# CHAPTER 4: Paris

## 4.1 Data

From September through December 2009, I conducted 27 interviews with Senegalese informants in Paris, 23 of which I recorded.<sup>56</sup> Combined with recorded natural conversations and interviews with language instructors, I have 125 pages of transcript.<sup>57</sup> The recordings include several conferences/meetings, such as one by an association of Senegalese students from the *Grandes Ecoles*, one by a Senegalese business association, one exploring life in the foyers both past and present, and one on the teaching of French to migrants. I also took notes on Wolof classes comprised of French students in a beginning class, and a mix of French, Senegalese and foreign students in an intermediate class.<sup>58</sup>

My contact with most of the informants consisted of an interview that averaged an hour. However, with a few of them, I had a more in depth contact. I visited one particular family every couple of weeks, taking notes on language use in the home space. They have been living in France for almost 20 years with some of the children having been born in Senegal and others in France. A second informant organized a dinner with both French and Senegalese friends. I interviewed several of the participants as well as recorded and took notes on the various conversations that arose throughout the evening. I followed around a third informant, a Senegalese rapper who has been in France for the last few years, sitting in on rehearsals with his multinational band, attending his concerts, and meeting with him on several occasions. He has given me access to all his music and lyrics, and I took notes at all his events so I could look at how he uses language to engage his audiences.

I gained access to the informants through various ways. Student informants were the easiest to approach because I joined various university list-servs, which led to my being invited to events and conferences. Methods in accessing other sectors of the population included eating at Senegalese restaurants and interviewing staff and patrons; going to public spaces like the Gare du Nord, Barbes-Rochechouart, and Sacre-Coeur to start conversations with people, particularly vendors; attending Wolof classes because practically everyone in these classes had contact with the Senegalese community; attending French language classes in order to meet Senegalese students; and asking my contacts from Senegal for a list of friends and relatives in Paris. I also relied on the “snowball effect” in which informants put me in touch with people they knew who would also be interested in participating in an interview.

With the data collected in France I address my three principal research questions, which to reiterate, are the following:

- 1) How do immigrants conceptualize identity in relation to dominant ideologies in the host country?

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<sup>56</sup> I took notes on the other four interviews since the interviewees requested not to be recorded.

<sup>57</sup> Appendix 1 provides demographic information on the informants in France.

<sup>58</sup> In this chapter, the transcription conventions for multilingual excerpts are as follows: French, **Wolof**, English, SPANISH. If only one language is used in the excerpt, standard print is used. For words that appear to be hybrid forms of more than one language, italics and underlining is used simultaneously: *Hybrid*. Appendix 3 reiterates the transcription conventions.

- 2) How do these notions of identity affect immigrants' language learning, and more generally, their language use?
- 3) How do immigrants express identity through their use of multiple languages?

However, I do not necessarily tackle these questions in this order because I have found that it is easier to start with the explicitly language related research questions and then situate this data in a larger social framework. Therefore, in this chapter I start by looking at how notions of identity affect language acquisition and use by first delineating the different French language learning contexts that the informants experienced in both Senegal and France (question 2). I then analyze various attitudes toward the acquisition and use of French and other languages (question 2). This focus on the other languages in their repertoires and on how they are used alongside French sheds light on the expression of identity through multilingual usage (question 3). I then conclude by analyzing how the informants view the world based on how they self-identify and identify with others. In particular, I show how desire for inclusion is expressed through language and through understanding social relationships (question 1).

## **4.2 Language acquisition and use**

### **4.2.1 Language learning contexts**

One of the reasons why I chose to research Senegalese immigrants in France is because of the linguistic connection between the two countries that stems from their colonial relationship. My intention is to show how this historical relationship has repercussions for the way that my Senegalese informants identify with the French language, but first, I would like to demonstrate how this historical relationship also complicates the discussion of language learning contexts. In the literature review, I mentioned that researchers make a distinction between natural and educational settings. In addition, with regard to natural settings a further distinction can be made between majority language settings and official language settings. However, there is no clean line between these different settings. The case of the French language for Senegalese immigrants highlights this fact. Senegal, as a former colony, constitutes an official language setting. This status as an official language setting is verified by the manner in which the informants refer to the French language. From a question such as “what language did you speak in Senegal?” many informants did not simply list French as a language, but qualified French with the description of ‘official language.’ For example, Latif states: “Le français c’est la langue officielle de mon pays et je l’ai étudiée depuis la première année scolaire jusqu’à maintenant à l’université” (Latif 10.20.09). Similarly, when asked how long she has spoken each language, Vera notes: “Pour le français, à l’école à l’âge de six ans mais aussi bien avant, à la maison un peu. Et à la maternelle à l’âge de trois ans. C’est notre langue officielle au Sénégal” (Vera 11.23.09). Meanwhile, Yasmina simply remarks, “Le français, c’est la langue officielle. C’est tout.” (Yasmina 12.08.09). In all these instances, the informants volunteer the extra information that French is an official language, a language that has a very specific function. However, while these three people refer to French as the official language, through these short statements we see how varied that official language context can be.

In Yasmina’s case, her utterance “c’est tout” indicates the restricted nature of the French language context. It could also suggest an attitude about the language: “that is it, and nothing more.” The other mentioned informants refer to French in a specifically educational context. Traditionally, natural and educational settings are seen as different types of contexts, and in the

case of Senegal (an official language setting and therefore a natural setting), many people only receive French instruction at school. For those students who have not been exposed to French at home, the classroom is the first instance for French language acquisition to occur and the only real setting for French to be used. Therefore, I argue that the term ‘official language setting’ only tenuously fits under the general heading of natural setting. However, it is hard to argue for the use of a different term or a different categorization of these terms because there is so much variation within Senegal with regard to the type of French language settings people experience.<sup>59</sup> For Vera, there was occasional French usage in the home, but the majority of her French language learning experience occurred in school. This type of setting is vastly different from a Senegalese person who considers French to be his or her mother tongue.

The diversity of French language users found in this official language setting hinders generalizations about French language acquisition in the host country. The complex relationship that Senegal has with the French language means that describing language acquisition is a complicated endeavor. Through the course of my research, I identified four different overarching categories concerning language acquisition. While other categories could exist, the following situations are the most prevalent in my data: 1) France represents the first major setting in which French language acquisition takes place even if there was some limited exposure to the French language in Senegal. This French language acquisition may occur in both a natural setting, through everyday interactions and an instructional setting, through language classes. 2) Senegal was the site of the first stage of French language acquisition found in an educational setting while France, as a natural language setting, is the site of the second stage of acquisition. 3) French language acquisition occurs in a natural language setting both in Senegal and in France because French was the main language spoken at home in Senegal. 4) French language acquisition occurs in one setting because these informants were born and raised in France. This is a natural language setting. In all situations except for the last, the informants have undergone a second stage of language acquisition but to varying degrees.

#### **4.2.1.1 France as first setting for French language acquisition**

Four of the informants fit into the first category that I have identified: Oumou, Nafi, Tambo, and Momar.<sup>60</sup> They all have similar educational profiles, from no formal education to some primary school education. For instance, Nafi left school at age ten to take care of her siblings after her father died and her mother became ill. Meanwhile, Momar grew up in a small village and received no formal education. Therefore, neither of them had the opportunity to achieve a solid French foundation while in Senegal. Nafi links her lack of schooling to her difficulties in French:

- (1) Le français, bon, je me débrouille. Si tu quittes l'école, tu ne connais pas. Si tu laisses, tu ne parles que ta langue. Après, tu oublies la langue française. Quand je suis venue en France, mon mari m'a dit, qu'est-ce que je vais faire. Je lui ai dit, je vais faire le ménage. Il m'a dit, ne fais pas le ménage. Essaie de faire

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<sup>59</sup> There are other ways to categorize language settings such as Kachru's (1985) three concentric circle model: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. But these distinctions are problematic as well. For instance, Yano (2001) argues that “the demarcation between the inner circle and the outer circle in the Kachruvian concentric circles will become more obscure and therefore less meaningful” as the flow of immigrants move from the outer circle to the inner circle and influence the language in question (p. 122).

<sup>60</sup> See appendix for more information on each informant.

l'alphabétisation. Je suis allée voir mon assistant social à la mairie...J'ai fait alphabétisation pour sept mois et on a renouvelé et augmenté encore deux mois. (Nafi 10.17.09)

While she could not complete her studies in Senegal, during her time in France she was able to acquire French and literacy skills in an institutional environment, and she is content with the progress she has made.

Oumou, on the other hand, expresses frustration with her inability to speak French well:

(2) Non non non, je ne la maîtrise pas bien. Mes enfants tous les jours n'arrêtent pas de me corriger. Je fais des fautes. Je ne maîtrise pas bien la langue. Je me débrouille, c'est tout. Parce que je n'ai pas fait de longues études.

M: Vous avez quel niveau?

O: Jusqu'à la cinquième. Je fais des fautes. Ça fait 25 ans que je suis là et je fais des fautes...25 ans que je parle la même chose.

M: Pourquoi vous pensez que vous n'avez pas maîtrisé la langue?

O: ...Je fais des fautes. Je sais que je fais des fautes.

M: Est-ce que vos collègues remarquent vos fautes?

O: Si si, ils les remarquent. Ils essaient de me corriger. Je dis que je suis Africaine. Laisse-moi tranquille. Ça passe. Je ne suis pas française.

M: Quel type de corrections? De grammaire?

O: C'est surtout la grammaire. Quand je parle je mélange les articles, le, la, je mélange tout...Je suis africaine. C'est pas ma langue. Je suis africaine. (Oumou 10.04.09)

Oumou uses similar words to Nafi in describing her ability: *Je me débrouille*. This phrase is used prolifically in Senegal to convey a sense of "getting by" in difficult situations. Oumou did not take formal classes since arriving in France but she works in a daycare, speaking French on a regular basis. However, she is disappointed in her French language competence and expresses this disappointment by eschewing any responsibility in needing to speak French. She argues, "Je suis africaine. C'est pas ma langue. Je suis africaine." Her words suggest that she should be excused for her language ability on the basis of her Africanness. This notion will be further explored during the discussion of language ideologies.

#### 4.2.1.2 Switch from educational to natural setting

The majority of the informants fit into the second category, in which the first type of language acquisition takes place in a primarily educational setting and the second in a natural setting.<sup>61</sup> These informants have achieved a much higher level of education than those in the previous category. In fact, most of them came to France to continue their studies in higher education. When asked if her manner of speaking French has changed since arriving in France, Yasirah remarks: "Je trouve pas. Je trouve pas vraiment. Personnellement, je trouve pas. C'est sûr que je le parle plus régulièrement qu'au Sénégal. C'est vrai aussi que mon vocabulaire, il y a beaucoup plus de mots de la vie quotidienne. Mais bon, le niveau de français reste le même, en tout cas, personnellement" (Yasirah 10.30.09). While not seeing a huge difference in the French

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<sup>61</sup> These informants include Duudu, Latif, Yasirah, Ngirin, Vera, Karafa, Djibril, Hakim, Nyambi.



she spoke in a predominantly educational setting in Senegal with the day to day French she speaks in France, she has noticed an increase in vocabulary. The increase makes sense for someone who used to speak in an educational setting and who is now confronted by a wider range of French usage.

On the other hand, while French is mainly contained to an educational setting for these informants, in an official language setting such as Senegal, the use of French is abundant in large cities whether in administrative contexts where the French language is used or in everyday communication in Wolof, which has been influenced by French in various ways:

(3) N: En fait, les expressions. Je sais qu'ici il n'y a pas les mêmes expressions qu'on utilise au Sénégal. Quand tu côtoies une langue, tu l'utilises à ta façon. On parle un français qui est vraiment de chez nous, quoi. C'est pas quelque chose de contestable grammaticalement. Les expressions, il faut que tu leur expliques pour que la personne puisse comprendre.

M: Tu as des exemples?

N: Par exemple, le mot 'boulangerie,' je ne sais pas si c'est un suffixe ou un préfixe mais on prend des mots en wolof et on met le truc là. Donc on dit 'essencerie'. Donc il y a les ministres, ou les professeurs de linguistique même, qui sont capables de dire 'essencerie.' Donc maintenant, on dit, c'est pas comme ça. Mais, on le fait naturellement. Il y a plein d'autres mots comme 'dibi'. 'Dibi' en wolof ça veut dire 'la viande grillée,' quoi. Donc les endroits qui se spécialisent en dibi, tout le monde les appelle 'dibiterie.' Ça fait partie de leur vocabulaire. (Ngirin 11.21.09)

In this excerpt, Ngirin shows the influence of French on Wolof, which, in turn, influences French. Demonstrating how the suffix *-erie* found in words such as *boulangerie* has been applied to both French words that normally would not take this suffix and Wolof words, Ngirin argues that this phenomenon is wide spread. According to him, this phenomenon not only affects the average person but the most highly educated. The word *essencerie*, created from the French root *essence* and the French suffix *-erie*, is undoubtedly French to many Senegalese, even if it is used in both French language and Wolof language contexts in Senegal. Therefore, a Senegalese person who migrates to France might be surprised that *station service* is commonly used for gas station and not *essencerie*. This excerpt shows that while French is limited to an educational context for many Senegalese people, the vast majority of the country has been exposed to French outside of the educational domain because of Senegal's status as an official French language setting.

#### 4.2.1.3 Switch from one natural French language setting to another

A quarter of the informants moved from one natural French setting to another when they came to France.<sup>62</sup> They either grew up in predominantly French-speaking homes (Sébastien, Jean-Paul, Abdu) or in homes that spoke both French and Wolof equally (Dib, Ali). Sébastien, for instance, intimates the following about his French language usage: "Depuis ma naissance, en fait. Je pense que le français est ma langue maternelle. Je parle français avec mes parents. Je parle français et wolof en fait avec mes parents mais je parle principalement français" (Sébastien

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<sup>62</sup> These informants include Sébastien, Jean-Paul, Abdu, Dib, Salif, Ajuma, and Ali.

11.08.09). Abdu, the son of a renowned francophone writer, is another informant that was exposed to French more than to one of the national languages. His mother insisted that they spoke French as often as possible in the house. Meanwhile, Salif describes his home situation as predominantly wolofophone, and yet, he identifies more as a French speaker than a Wolof speaker. He felt more confident speaking French while in Senegal and only after moving to France did he want to speak Wolof. In addition to these examples, we also have to consider the linguistic profiles of those people who migrated to Senegal since Senegal is as much an immigrant destination as a center of emigration. Many people in West Africa have migrated to Senegal for economic issues, but there are others who move there to work for various organizations. For example, Ajuma's family comes from Niger but moved to Senegal after a short stay in the United States due to his father's work. Because he grew up in Senegal, Ajuma primarily identifies as Senegalese. The main languages spoken in his house growing up were Zarma, a national language from Niger, and French.

For these informants, the second stage of immigration is similar to that of the previous category. There might be words or expressions that they find different between the two settings or they might notice differences in how they pronounce French, but there is not a huge clash between how the informants in these two categories speak French and the French they hear in various settings in France. For these two categories, the most common reason why these informants came to France was to continue with their studies; therefore, they are acquainted with an educational setting in both countries. Even outside of the classroom or professional milieus, they have not remarked a great difference between the way they speak and the way that French people speak. The only difference that may arise between this category and the previous category is the range of French used. For those informants who view French as a mother tongue, there might be more variation in register. For instance, Dib notes: "Le vocabulaire que j'utiliserais dans un milieu professionnel n'est pas le même que j'utiliserais dans la vie de tous les jours. Là aussi ça dépend de la situation. Quand je suis au travail il y a certaines expressions, certains mots" (Dib 11.08.09). As with any person whose mother tongue is the same as the language of instruction in school, there is a variety of registers that one can use. For those informants who tend to use French in an educational setting, there might be less variety and more of a tendency to speak predominantly academic French. It would be worthwhile in a follow-up study to test register variety.

#### **4.2.1.4 Born in France**

The fourth category I have identified are those who were born and raised in France to Senegalese families.<sup>63</sup> The vast majority of the informants that fit into this category have attended university. Looking at these informants' home environments with regard to language illuminates the different language practices that are possible. For instance, Chantal considers her home environment to be francophone. Her parents rarely speak to her in Wolof. When asked why this is the case, she responds: "Ma mère n'est pas patiente [laughs] donc chaque fois que j'essaie de parler en wolof, elle répond en français. Et mon père, je ne sais pas. Il n'a pas le temps" (Chantal 12.12.09). Lucie also grew up in a francophone family. Lucie's mother, who worried that learning Wolof would affect the ability to learn French, spoke to her mainly in French: "Ma mère voulait qu'on parlait bien français pour éviter d'avoir des difficultés à l'école parce qu'on parlait une autre langue" (Lucie 11.27.09). However, Lucie decided to take Wolof

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<sup>63</sup> These informants include Lucie, Faatu, Yasmina, Chantal, and Salif.

classes in Paris after visiting Senegal as a teenager and not being able to talk to her grandmother and other older relatives. She describes her experience as frustrating because of her inability to communicate. Meanwhile, other informants in this category learned national Senegalese languages alongside French at home and consider these languages to be their mother tongues instead of French. While the people in this category only undergo one stage of French language acquisition, their experiences growing up as French citizens of Senegalese origin will be particularly relevant in the section on identity construction.

### **4.3 Language ideologies**

Investigating language ideologies provides insight into the culturally constructed attitudes that speakers attach to languages and to the use of these languages. Concerning my data from Paris, I have decided to focus on two different aspects of language ideology: attitudes related to the French language and to multilingualism, because of the insight that these attitudes provide with regard to conceptualizations of identity. I approach French language attitudes from both a standard language perspective in which I research the informants' attitudes about standard Parisian French and from a more global perspective, looking at French in West Africa. This method highlights the Center vs. Periphery phenomenon. I then concentrate on attitudes pertaining to multilingualism. Through this discussion of language ideology, I explore the theme of language ownership that emerges throughout the interviews. To what extent do they feel that the French language belongs to them? Can they claim the language in the same way that French people can? How do the informants relate to the other languages in their repertoire? It is my intention to use this format in order to then address larger issues concerning how the informants construct their identities within the host country environment.

#### **4.3.1 The French language**

A discussion of language attitudes takes into account how a speaker relates to a particular language. When developing my research, I was keen to see how the informants would view French, an imposed colonial language, a half century after decolonization. What does the French language mean? What emotions does it evoke? How does it fit into the Senegalese frame of reference? I hypothesized that despite the possibility of negative feelings that could exist because of the colonial relationship between France and Senegal, the benefits that come with French language knowledge would outweigh any negative opinions. Indeed, for many of the informants the French language and France's relationship with Senegal are useful from a practical perspective. For instance, some of my older informants had French citizenship while Senegal belonged to France and were able to keep citizenship after independence. Others, who were part of a more recent immigration, have found that their knowledge of French has helped their transition into their new home. Still others are university students who have received special scholarships from the French government to study in France.<sup>64</sup> Besides being a practical language when migrating to France, French is also useful in Senegal. Since several national languages exist in Senegal, French can serve as a vehicular language. As Duudu notes, "le français c'est seulement une langue qu'on utilise pour pouvoir communiquer, quoi." (Duudu 10.03.09).

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<sup>64</sup> Many factors influence the informants' opinions of the French language: how they acquired French in Senegal, their reasons for migrating to France, experiences they have had with the French language in both settings.

The following example shows just how embedded the French language is in the Senegalese community as two people who want to express themselves in Wolof through writing are forced to use French to communicate. Lucie, who lives in Paris with her mother and siblings, relates the following:

- (4) Ma mère, quand elle écrit à sa mère, ça doit être en wolof parce que ma grand-mère ne parle que wolof. Mais ma mère ne sait pas écrire donc elle nous dicte ce qu'on doit écrire en français. Mon oncle au Sénégal va lire la lettre mais il va retranscrire la lettre en wolof. En fait, on passe par le français pour deux personnes qui s'expriment en wolof. C'est parce que le français est tellement présent au Sénégal que c'est la passerelle en fait. (Lucie 11.27.09)

Lucie presents French as a tool of communication, mirroring Duudu's impression of the language. They express this view of French in a neutral manner, as something that simply exists because of circumstance. However, other informants frame the reliance on French in a more negative light, portraying the use of French as an imposition. Karafa, when asked what languages he knows how to write, replies:

- (5) Le français...Le Sénégal était sous domination pendant cinq siècles.<sup>65</sup> On nous a imposé ce qu'il faut faire, ce qu'il faut pas faire. On n'a pas eu cette capacité pour pouvoir faire ce qui doit être fait pour ce pays en matière de langue. Tout doit être fait à travers la langue française au détriment de la langue wolof...Maintenant je commence un peu à écrire le wolof. (Karafa 11.26.09)

For Karafa, French serves as a tool because it was imposed on him to the detriment of Wolof, which could have been as useful as French. Arguably, the arrival of French impeded the ability of Wolof to develop into a widespread written language. His word choice is far from neutral. Words such as *domination* and *imposer* highlight the power dynamic between the two countries, while the word *détriment* shows the consequences of such power relations.

Reflections on this long history of domination demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between France and Senegal. While France had considerable colonial territory in French West Africa, Senegal's singular status as the administrative center of West African colonization has present-day implications on how the Senegalese understand their place in the colonial narrative.<sup>66</sup> My interview questions were sociolinguistic in nature, focusing on linguistic repertoires and language attitudes; however, the responses of the informants show how they tie their linguistic profile to their colonial history. Many informants made reference to the Four Communes (*Quatre Communes*), the oldest towns in colonial West Africa whose inhabitants, at least on paper, received full citizenship rights in 1848.<sup>67</sup> For instance, Nyambi mentions the Four Communes in the following excerpt:

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<sup>65</sup> French contact with West Africa dates as far back as the 15th century but the first trade port was established in St. Louis in 1659 (Cohen, 1980).

<sup>66</sup> French territory included the present day countries of Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Niger.

<sup>67</sup> The inhabitants of the oldest colonial towns (Saint-Louis, Goree, Dakar, and Rufisque) in French West Africa, found in present day Senegal, were granted full citizenship rights under the Second Republic. However, because of social and legal barriers, they seldom were able to exercise these rights (Searling, 2005).

- (6) Je pense que le Sénégal et la France sont très liés dans les évènements très difficiles. Pendant la guerre, pendant la guerre mondiale même il y avait des Sénégalais dans l'armée française. Le Sénégal, c'est un pays où il y a des villes où les gens étaient des habitants français, comme Dakar, Ile de Gorée, Rufisque et Saint-Louis. Bon, c'était, disons, il y a un certain département en fin de compte. Donc les Sénégalais se retrouvent en France, par l'histoire et puis par la culture. Parce qu'on est très français les Sénégalais. (Nyambi 10.08.09)

Nyambi describes the Senegalese as very French, as the two countries are bound by a shared history. This link is the main reason why so many Senegalese are in France, drawn to this country not only by historical events but also by a cultural connection. Nyambi seems to suggest a sense of pride in having such an intricate relationship with France, which includes having fought in the French army and historically having access to French nationality. While there is an obvious historical connection between France and Senegal, my aim is to depict how the different facets of this historical relationship influence contemporary attitudes toward language. Therefore, my main focus is to explore how the informants describe the French spoken in Senegal in comparison with the variety spoken in France and the varieties found in surrounding Francophone nations. In particular, I seek to situate these perceptions of Senegalese French in the discussion of Center vs. Periphery.

In comparing Senegalese French to standard French from France and to other West African varieties of French, Abdu states the following:

- (7) Ce qui est marrant, parfois quand j'écris des textes, je sors des expressions de l'ancien français, parce qu'au Sénégal le français n'est pas entré dans les masses. Du coup, on crée pas, on crée pas avec le français. On parle le français comme le français était de base. Nous parlons différemment des Ivoiriens. Chez eux, il est rentré dans les masses parce que tout le monde parle français là-bas. Ils ont une manière de parler qui ressemble à leur dialecte. Ils ne parlent pas français comme ici en France. (Abdu 11.25.09)

Abdu first addresses how Senegalese French is different from standard French in France by mentioning how there are still forms of expression that date back to when France first colonized Senegal. He views the evolution of the French language in Senegal as more static because of the limited domains in which it is used. He then turns his focus to the different varieties of French found in West Africa. Abdu speaks specifically of the varying functions of the French language in Senegal and the Ivory Coast. His statement refers to the fact that the Ivory Coast has developed a popular variety of French. Unlike in Senegal, French is a national as well as an official language in the Ivory Coast.<sup>68</sup> Abdu's rendition of the linguistic differences between Senegal and the Ivory Coast are more descriptive than judgmental when he compares these two post-colonial countries.

However, not everyone speaks of French linguistic variation with the lack of judgment that Abdu expresses. I witnessed an intriguing conversation between Yasmina and Hakim, whose tag team approach brought to the surface dormant attitudes about Senegalese French and its

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<sup>68</sup> See Ager, 1998.

position atop a hierarchy of West-African French varieties. Discussion of this topic began during my questioning about accents. In describing the differences between West African countries, Yasmina contends, “Avec l’accent on sent qu’ils viennent d’un autre pays, parce que c’est pas la même façon de parler le français. Ils mangent quelques mots ou bien ils ne respectent pas la conjugaison. Mais nous, je pense que, quand on parle, on parle vraiment français parce qu’on respecte la conjugaison, les articles, tout” (Yasmina and Hakim 12.08.09). Yasmina’s word choice is particularly telling of her perspective when she equates missing words as a lack of ‘respect,’ suggesting a negative opinion of the other varieties of French. Hakim then substantiates this hierarchy with an ethnocentric argument that “dans toute l’Afrique de l’Ouest, il n’y a que les Sénégalais qui parlent bien le français” (Yasmina and Hakim 12.08.09).

At this point I was fascinated by where the discussion was heading and will include a lengthy excerpt in order to convey their reasoning behind such a strong statement. In the turn following Hakim’s previous statement, I inquire:

(8) M: Pourquoi?

H: Bon, c’est vrai que toute l’Afrique de l’Ouest a été colonisée par les Français mais nous avons la chance d’avoir cet accent-là, cet accent un peu différent des autres pays. Peut-être à cause de la culture des autres pays, ils n’ont pas pu apprendre toute la base du français. Pour nous il a été très facile. Il y a aussi le fait qu’on a eu des écrivains comme Léopold Sédar Senghor qui était président de la République du Sénégal et était poète aussi. Ça a contribué à la culture du français, à la maîtrise du français. Il y a aussi le deuxième président, Abdou Diouf, qui vit maintenant en France. C’est vrai qu’il n’était pas poète mais il parlait très très bien le français. Il a fait ses études en France. C’est la raison qui fait que nous les Sénégalais, nous parlons mieux le français que les autres pays de l’Afrique de l’Ouest.

Y: Il y a aussi que peut-être les Français ont colonisé des autres pays mais qu’ils étaient plus basés au Sénégal.

H: Voilà, ça aussi. Il y avait vraiment la base au Sénégal.

Y: Entre Gorée et Saint-Louis.

H: Si tu entends les Ivoiriens parler, on sait que c’est un Ivoirien. Les Ivoiriens ne prononcent pas le *R*. *R*, ils ont du mal à prononcer. Les autres pays aussi comme le Zaïre, le Congo, parfois, ils mettent pas l’article. Par exemple, pour dire ‘je veux,’ parfois ils ne conjuguent pas. Parfois ils parlent comme Tarzan. Tarzan, quand il parle, il conjugue pas. Il dit ‘vouloir partir,’ ‘moi, avoir faim’ voilà. Ils parlent à peu près comme ça.

Y: Ouais, et parce qu’ils ont leurs propres langues mais ils parlent plus français aussi là-bas. C’est pas comme nous, le wolof—

H: Le français des autres pays c’est vraiment un français bizarre.

Y: Ils le raccommodent à leurs langues.

H: Voilà.

(Yasmina and Hakim 12.08.09)

Hakim begins his explanation by returning to the historical framework that I mentioned earlier. He presents a shared historical existence, one under colonization, but argues that by luck, a different accent evolved in Senegal compared to the rest of West Africa. He attributes the

positive nature of this French variety to the impact that the forefathers of the Senegalese Republic had on the creation of the state, a state that valued the French language. Both Senghor and Diouf studied in France, which Hakim equates with a certain pride of the language, and which in turn leads Hakim to conclude that Senegal speaks French better than any other country in West Africa. Yasmina then adds a key detail to Hakim's historical perspective by highlighting Senegal's important status under the colonial empire, again a nod to the Four Communes.

Hakim moves from a historical perspective to linguistic evidence, detailing the Ivoirians' inability to pronounce the French uvular R and their lack of conjugations. What strikes me, though, is not the evidence he provides but the way he presents his case, relating their speech to the speech of Tarzan.<sup>69</sup> Yasmina's next turn reflects Abdu's point from earlier, that French is more widely spoken in the Ivory Coast. It appears that she was about to explain how Wolof is used as the vehicular language in Senegal, although Hakim's interruption prevents me from knowing for sure. This excerpt then ends with the joint conclusion that the Ivoirians speak French as if it were one of their languages, apparently making a distinction with Senegalese French that is mainly reserved for the domains of administration and education. This limited domain of French also suggests a class distinction where only Senegalese of a certain class have access to French.

I was not surprised to hear this comparison with other West African countries. When I was deciding which country to choose for study abroad as a college student, I was told by academic counselors in the United States that Senegal would be the best place if I wanted to learn academic French. This sentiment was repeated in the five months that I lived in Senegal. There is a sense of pride I detect from many educated Senegalese, especially those who went to university, and if you press them as to why their French is superior to that of the rest of the region, Senghor's name is usually the first response. Just as Hakim, Nyambi also evokes the name of the first president. I include Nyambi's statement both to display this trend, but more importantly to show that comparisons are not just made with West Africa, but with the *métropole* as well: "Au Sénégal on parle le vrai français, ce français littéraire. Bon, on avait un président académicien, Léopold Sédar Senghor donc nous on était dans cette culture du français, du beau français, du classique, voilà. Et quand on est venu en France c'est tout-à-fait différent. Ma première difficulté, moi, j'avais mal à comprendre les gens. (Nyambi 10.08.09). Nyambi makes a strong statement when denoting Senegalese French as *le vrai français*. In fact, one could argue that Nyambi suggests that the French spoken in Senegal is more "correct" than that which is spoken in France. He tells of his difficulty understanding French in France, hinting that the way French people speak is inferior to his own variety. Nyambi's experience is interesting because it is usually the 'native speaker' who has difficulty understanding the foreigner. This idea was echoed in many of the interviews in which the informants were told by *français de souche* that they spoke better than the "real" French people.<sup>70</sup> For example, this position is articulated with regard to education when Ngirin makes the following remark: "Mais c'est vrai, nous parlons un français assez intellectuel parce que c'est le français de l'école. C'est vrai, je vois des Français scolarisés ici mais ils ont du mal à s'adapter à l'université" (Sandrine and Ngirin 11.21.09). Meanwhile, Yasmina and Hakim follow a similar line of reasoning:

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<sup>69</sup> The notion of Tarzan-speech usually comes up in research on foreigner talk (see Ferguson, 1975; Lipski, 2002)

<sup>70</sup> This term appears often in my interviews and denotes white French people whose families have lived in France for at least several generations. It has been translated as the "real" French people by Dubois (2000).

(9) H: ...Nous, au Sénégal, on a la chance d'avoir la même pédagogie qu'ici.

Y: Oui.

H: C'est le système éducatif français qui est enseigné au Sénégal. Quand nous venons en France, nous n'avons vraiment pas de problème. La preuve est qu'il y a des étudiants, des élèves, qui viennent continuer leurs études ici. Et ils réussissent beaucoup mieux que les Français qui sont élevés ici." (Yasmina and Hakim 12.08.09)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the educational system in Senegal is modeled on the French system, but one perception by my Senegalese informants is that because French is contained in a specific domain, there is less opportunity for evolution of the language to occur and thus French is preserved.<sup>71</sup>

The discussion of where Senegalese French fits in comparison with West African French varieties and even the varieties of French spoken in France marks an obvious valorization and hierarchization. The discourse of the previously quoted informants lends itself to a Center/Periphery analysis. While the Center traditionally refers to the economically advanced communities of the West, Senegal can be seen as occupying a center position based on the different attitudes expressed by the informants. For instance, many informants mention how many of the forefathers of the Republic, most notably President Senghor, lived and studied in France. Senghor has been immortalized by many as the harbinger of a new era that continued to be steeped in "cette culture du français, du beau français," giving Senegal a special status in relation to other countries with similar colonial histories (Nyambi 10.08.09). Many informants also demonstrate the close ties that education in Senegal has to that in France, even 50 years after independence. However, what I find most interesting about the informants' language attitudes is that some of them compare their language abilities directly to those of French people.<sup>72</sup>

According to the definition put forth by Canagarajah (1999), Senegal cannot be a representation of the Center because of its position on the wrong end of colonization. However, as we see with Hakim's quote, there is evidence in my data to suggest that many university educated Senegalese who continue their studies in France see their variety of standard French as good as or even better than the original 'owners' of the French language. What do these perceptions mean in defining and understanding Center status? I argue that immigrants' understandings of language use and abilities in a post-colonial context should be taken into account by theorists who explore present day notions of Center vs. Periphery. For these theorists, it might be worthwhile to have a less restrictive definition of what it means to be a member of the Center or the Periphery as well as to investigate how the Center vs. Periphery model maps onto different situations.

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<sup>71</sup> In their introduction, Hock and Joseph (1996) begin their discussion of language change by showing that it is not just limited to slang but to all language uses. They argue that linguistic change happens in even the most scholarly circles. It is a common misconception, however, that higher registers automatically impede change; therefore, it is not surprising that the informants were using similar logic when suggesting that their French had undergone less change than the French in France.

<sup>72</sup> It would be interesting to know if this situation is atypical. I have been unable to find in the research other examples of speakers from an official language setting arguing their variety of a colonial language as better than speakers from the original colonizing country. However, Yano (2001) cites anecdotal evidence from personal communication in which Singaporean speakers of English question the validity of inner circle speakers with regard to native-speakerness because they "feel that they are native speakers of English and they do have native speaker's intuition" (p. 122).



To further develop the Center/Periphery argument, a relationship between the former colonizer and colonized is not the only dichotomy worth discussing. Senegal can be seen as occupying a Center position in the Francophone African context because of its historically central position. The Four Communes, as explained earlier, was the administrative center of France's possessions in Africa, with its inhabitants in theory having citizenship rights. Embodied with a central status in terms of power, these areas in present-day Senegal were elevated above all others. When the French pulled out of West Africa, the vestiges of this positioning remained in the psyche of some Senegalese. With Western influences gone, Senegal became the new Center. However, the West not only represents a geographic location but implies a racial component as well, in which members of the center are assumed to be white Europeans. If we limit our consideration of Center vs. Periphery to Francophone Africa, the racial component is no longer relevant. The variable of race, however, can be exchanged for the variable of class, in which the elites of Senegal can be seen as occupying Center status over the rest of Senegal and over the elites and masses alike in neighboring francophone countries. Although this argument is based on a relatively small sample of data, I think that reconceptualizing the Center/Periphery dichotomy is an important point that needs to be explored further on a larger scale.<sup>73</sup>

### 4.3.2 Multilingualism

A discussion of French in Senegal requires acknowledgement of the various national languages that constitute its linguistic profile. While many informants highlight what they see as Senegal's superior position as a francophone country and the ability of its citizens to speak 'correct' French, other informants convey an unease about the French language, especially in comparison to the national languages of Senegal. For instance, the following quotations by Oumou suggest a complicated relationship to French. Using personal deixis, Oumou flags her affiliation to the Wolof language: "Avec quelqu'un qui est wolof, je ne veux pas parler français. Je parle ma langue" (Oumou 10.04.09). While it makes sense for someone to want to use the language with which they are most comfortable, especially if the interlocutor has the same relationship to the language in question, substituting "ma langue" for "Wolof" creates a non-neutral statement. The possessive "ma" suggests an emphasis on language ownership. Arguably, she feels she has the right to speak Wolof because it belongs to her. In the following excerpt, her relationship to French is expressed in a completely different way, in which there is a negative tone: "De toute manière, au Sénégal ils parlent le français aussi, il y a plein de mots, même s'ils parlent le wolof, ils mettent toujours du français. C'est ça. On n'y peut rien. Même si on essaie de parler wolof à la maison il y a toujours des mots français" (Oumou 10.04.09). "On n'y peut rien" conveys a sense of linguistic defeat, as if French has corrupted the Wolof language in some way. This opinion is similar to Karafa's discussion of linguistic domination.

At the same time, others highlight the diminishing practicality of the French language. While French is the language of education, administration, and access to job opportunities, there are those who see very little reason to speak French in Senegal. Cruise O'Brien (1998) argues

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<sup>73</sup> We see a similar situation with Spanish in Latin America in which historical and social factors have bearing on contemporary understandings of prestige that could be applied to a revised understanding of Center/Periphery. For example, Penny (2002) shows that because of Mexico City and Lima's position as the main administrative and cultural centers of Latin America, the speech in the highlands of Mexico and Peru/Bolivia became examples of prestigious varieties. The speakers of these two varieties could be seen as embodying Center status compared to the rest of Latin America, which has a more Periphery status. For more work on prestige varieties in Spanish, see Lipski (2008), Pountain (2003), and Hidalgo (1990).

that there is little motivation to learn French. According to him, “the language of material survival, in a Senegalese urban context, is the language of the informal or parallel or real economy, not French but Urban Wolof” (p. 31). Nafi confirms this argument when I asked if it was important to speak French in Senegal:

- (10) N: Au Sénégal, c’est pas important, eh. On n’est pas obligé parce qu’on est né wolof et je pense qu’on va mourir wolof. On ne peut pas mourir français.  
M: Mais pour avoir du boulot ou des opportunités on n’est pas obligé de parler français?  
N: Comme j’ai dit, on n’est pas obligé de parler français au Sénégal. On peut parler wolof parce qu’on est wolof. (Nafi 11.03.09)

Even taking into account access to the workforce, Nafi reiterates her argument that French is not important in Senegal. However, it is not the content of her words that fascinates me; what stands out is the strategy she uses to argue her point. She conflates language and ethnic group. Through her logic she argues that if one is born Wolof, one must die Wolof. One cannot die French because one is not French. Like Oumou, she signals language ownership and its relation to identity. The exchange gains complexity by virtue of the fact that her mother is Peul and she often speaks Pulaar with her husband, and yet, she is speaking of Senegal as if everyone were Wolof. Could she be highlighting the more monolithic perspective that equates Senegal with Wolof in order to create an opposition to French? McLaughlin (1995) notes that on several occasions a member from another ethnic group would describe themselves as Wolof.<sup>74</sup> She then argues that “in looking at the notion of urban identity as reflected in the writing of Urban Wolof at a particular historical moment, what is intriguing is the apparent emergence of an as yet inchoate identity that goes by the cover name of Wolof: Wolof ethnicity and Wolof language” (2001, p. 158). Swigart (1990), as well, shows that those who only speak Wolof claim to be ethnically Wolof. However, the conflation of language and ethnicity in Senegal has its limits. Nafi argues, “On ne peut pas mourir français.” It seems that, according to Nafi, even those Senegalese who speak French are not French and never will be French. Perhaps Nafi uses the exaggerated nature of the “dying French” image to convince me that a true French identity is out of reach.

Meanwhile, on the other end of the spectrum there are the experiences of those Senegalese who identify French as their maternal language. For instance, Sébastien explains:

- (11) Pendant longtemps je n’ai pas aimé parler d’autres langues. Je parle wolof mais je ne parle pas très très bien. Je n’aimais pas avoir de trop longues conversations en wolof avec les gens que je ne connais pas bien. En fait, le fait de vivre en France a renforcé mon wolof parce que quand je rencontre des gens du Sénégal, je parle systématiquement en wolof. Même avec ma famille, je parle plus en wolof dès que je suis venu en France. Ça renforce un lien culturel. (Sébastien 11.08.09)

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<sup>74</sup> Interview data from McLaughlin (1995): “Quand je suis chez moi je suis Haalpulaar, quand je suis a Dakar je suis Wolof (‘When I am at home I am Haalpulaar, when I am in Dakar I am Wolof’)” (p. 156).

Several issues surface in this excerpt. It calls attention to those people who do not possess a strong competence in one of the national languages, particularly Wolof. How does the inability to speak Wolof fluently or in an unmarked way influence a speaker's own self-identification? Sébastien describes himself as a French speaker first and foremost, but as I will expound in section 4.4, the ability to speak French perfectly does not necessarily make you French, even if you have French citizenship. One is almost imprisoned in a linguistic no man's land, not belonging to any group.

To further complicate matters, how one uses language in Senegal is greatly influenced by societal pressures, leading to an intricate multilingual balancing act. Swigart (1994) explains the circumstances that produce such an environment:

If embedding French lexical items and phrases into a Wolof matrix marks one as an elite Dakarois, wouldn't the use of French alone signal elite status to an even greater degree? Hannerz writes that 'as people go on speaking French and Portuguese in postcolonial lands, in postcolonial times, old center-periphery relationships get a prolonged lease on life' (1989: 67). It is exactly for this reason, however, that the use of pure French is avoided by educated Senegalese for all but very formal conversational purposes... To speak French is desirable; to speak French too much is inappropriate. Most Senegalese do not wish to display that kind of admiration or closeness with the cultural 'centre' of colonial times. (Swigart, 1994, p. 179)

Swigart reinforces the Center-Periphery relationship, which highlights the political nuances conjured by the historical nature of the French language in Africa. More importantly, she sheds light on why someone like Sébastien would express embarrassment for his language skills when he possesses language qualities normally reserved for the elite class. We are reminded of just how complicated the intersection between language and identity is when a language is touted as paving the way for success on one hand but represents a hindrance in societal acceptance on the other hand. However, another way to approach this multilingualism is to look at what it means for ethnic identity. Lo (1999) argues that the very act of code-switching is what signals identity: "the act of codeswitching itself makes salient the indexical links between a language, categories of ethnic identity, and speech community membership. These ethnic identities are contingent, as codeswitching which is not reciprocated rejects proposed claims to membership in a speech community" ( p. 462). In other words, while a group may use a language barrier to mark a language community and to delineate the in-group/out-group distinction, a group could also use code-switching to create the same type of barriers. Therefore, by using French and Wolof together on a regular basis, Sébastien signals his belonging to a society where this is the norm.

Sébastien's excerpt also demonstrates how investment in a language can change when the environment changes. He was uncomfortable speaking Wolof when living in Senegal because of perceived repercussions for his linguistic inadequacy. However, being away from home and all the things that signify home has turned Wolof into a cultural link for him. Wolof has transformed from an alienating force to a connective force that brings him closer to his former life. Sébastien is not alone in noticing an improvement in the ability to speak a Senegalese national language after moving to France. Other informants have mentioned similar changes in their relationships to national languages. Salif, a business student in France, considers Wolof his mother tongue but

is more comfortable speaking in French. Upon moving to France, he has made a concerted effort to reconnect with his culture:

(12) Mais en venant en France j'entends beaucoup plus le wolof. C'est marrant. Le fait de t'éloigner de ta culture, de chez toi, c'est un souci. Je t'explique. La musique sénégalaise s'appelle le mbalax. Au début, quand j'étais au Sénégal, tu mets une chanson mbalax, arrête, j'ai envie d'écouter R&B, j'ai envie d'écouter rap, 50 Cent et tout. Dès que j'arrive en France, mes premiers mois, j'étais vraiment très très content d'écouter Youssou N'Dour. Ça me rapproche de chez moi. Je sens cette nostalgie. En France quand tu vois un Sénégalais, c'est automatiquement le wolof qu'on parle. Par rapport aux autres qui habitent en Côte d'Ivoire, au Cameroun, eux, ils parlent beaucoup beaucoup beaucoup de langues chez eux. Au Cameroun disons 150-200 langues, je dois vérifier. Pour eux, c'est assez difficile de trouver quelqu'un qui parle leur langue. Chez nous, presque tout le monde parle le wolof. On se voit, automatiquement on le parle. C'est un truc qui nous rapproche. Tu te sens vraiment très proche de la personne. C'est un échange vraiment assez particulier. Il y a des choses que tu n'arrives pas à traduire en français. (Salif 12.07.09)

This excerpt is particularly telling because it demonstrates the marriage between language and culture. When talking about the need to speak Wolof, he frames this need in relation to culture. While he preferred to listen to black-American music in Senegal, a phenomenon that is mentioned in Ibrahim's (1999) study, the process of coping with the distance from his home country creates a new connection with the music from Senegal, especially mbalax, a popular form of music that is usually sung in Wolof. Therefore, while mbalax represents a link to his Senegalese culture, it also connects him with a Senegalese language that he was hesitant to use when he lived in Senegal.

Salif then makes an interesting comparison between Senegalese immigrants in France and those from other West African countries. He has noted that because the vast majority of people in Senegal speak Wolof, there is an instant connection with a Senegalese person when out of the country. While people from a predominantly monolingual country such as the United States might take this ability for granted, in countries whose residents speak a variety of languages and whose borders were arbitrarily imposed through colonization, being able to speak the language of a fellow countryman is not guaranteed. His reference to the Ivory Coast and Cameroon reminds us of this point.

Salif also mirrors Sébastien in his relationship with French and Wolof, finding French to be an easier language for him to speak. He tells of how his Senegalese friends often make fun of him when speaking Wolof: "Ils se moquent de moi en disant, mais tu as grandi au Sénégal? Ils disent, est-ce que ta maman t'a parlé wolof? Et puis, ils me le traduisent en français. J'en profite pour apprendre notre langue. Donc, la langue, le wolof" (Salif 12.07.09). Although Sébastien and Salif find themselves in similar situations, Salif seems less bothered by his superior competence in French in comparison to Wolof. This may be because he does not feel alone in his predicament. His words capture a sense of brotherhood as he refers to Wolof as 'notre langue,' a deictic marker that signals his connection to Wolof in relation to others like him. When I ask him if he is bothered by his friends laughing at his Wolof, he thoughtfully replies: "C'est vrai quand on se moque de toi, tu as tendance à dire je ne peux pas être assez sénégalais [laughs] mais non

parce qu'il y a des termes que je connais qu'ils ne connaissent pas et il y a des termes qu'ils connaissent que je ne connais pas. Personne n'a une connaissance très très complète, surtout nous les jeunes" (Salif 12.07.09). Salif's response suggests that using French when speaking Wolof does not affect his identity as a Senegalese person. However, it is worth reflecting on the type of Wolof in question. As shown in the previous chapter, Dakar Wolof is very heterogeneous as each person uses a combination of French and Wolof in a dynamic manner.<sup>75</sup> Many speakers are aware of just how influenced by French their Wolof is. Salif indicates that while there are words or phrases that he fails to know in Wolof, there are other instances where he is the Wolof expert. The youth have grown to expect this, making this dynamic hybrid their language. Salif further defines the sub-group of youth to which he belongs, those who are highly educated: "Le fait qu'on était à l'école française, qu'on apprend le français tous les jours, on a un usage de wolof simplement pour communiquer. On lit les livres en français. On fait les mathématiques en français, on maîtrise plus le français que le wolof. Voilà, en ce qui concerne nous qui sommes scolarisés" (Salif 12.07.09). For Salif, it is only natural that he sometimes fails to recall words when speaking Wolof because French is the primary language in so many of his linguistic domains. In addition, just as Duudu describes French as the language of communication, Salif refers to Wolof in the same way.

While informants speak of the communicative aspect of language, many of those same informants talk about the performative aspect as well. The use of multiple languages has been referred to as a game, a creative outlet. Duudu describes the switching between three languages in the following way:

- (13) La chance qu'on a entre amis c'est que nous tous avons fait des écoles françaises donc nous avons appris le français, nous avons tété cette langue qui est le peul, dès la naissance. Nous avons aussi grandi au Sénégal où on parle couramment le wolof, donc ça devient un melting pot où entre nous c'est n'importe quoi. On bascule du français au wolof au pulaar en moins de trois minutes. On ne sait même pas qu'est-ce qu'on parle. Ça devient du ragoût, quoi... parce que tellement qu'on maîtrise ces trois langues là, c'est devenu un jeu, quoi. Quand on parle le français, quand on parle le wolof, quand on parle le pulaar, on sait que dans la tête on est toujours sénégalais. (Duudu 10.03.09)

Duudu briefly mentions the different relationships he has with each language. French is the language of school. Wolof is the language of society. For Pulaar, he provides the image of nourishment, equating the maternal language with feeding from a mother's bosom: "nous avons

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<sup>75</sup> As we recall from chapter 3, Swigart (1994) argues that the 'mixing' of French and Wolof "seemed to have no readily specifiable aim or meaning" (p. 175). She therefore decides to "to formulate a new category of Dakar speech distinct from the alternating use of two languages characteristic of codeswitching: Urban Wolof" (p. 175). Swigart thus suggests that Urban Wolof seems to go beyond common understandings of CS. A few years prior Swigart (1992) has described Urban Wolof as "an innovative mode of speech that connotes informality, bilingualism and participation in the life of a large city" (p. 99). She has gone on to argue that "its characterisation is not simple since the ambivalence surrounding its status and its unconscious usage by many speakers complicates a straightforward evaluation of its position" (p. 99). In answering the question whether Urban Wolof should be considered a mix of two codes or its own distinct code, Swigart has concluded that it "is linguistically a variety of Wolof which has earned itself a separate sociolinguistic status" (p. 99).

tété cette langue.”<sup>76</sup> Duudu presents a positive description of this ability to switch between languages by setting up the discussion with the word *chance*. For him, being born in a place where he can utilize three languages is good luck. His word choice for switching between languages is *basculer*, conveying a sense of teetering back and forth. The words *melting pot* and *ragoût* put forth the image of a simmering stew with various ingredients. It is interesting that Duudu uses an English loan word, *melting pot*, which has been borrowed in the French language context to speak of diversity, adding another layer to the multilingualism that he describes. He then evokes the notion of language play by calling it all *un jeu*. He portrays code-switching as harmless and suggests that this use of multiple languages is innocuous because deep down he knows who he is, Senegalese. While he speaks many languages, his Senegalese identity remains intact.

Duudu’s discussion of multilingualism leads to a reflection on identity. A similar path develops in this excerpt by Abdu:

(14) M: Tu préfères quelle langue?

A: En fait des deux langues je me sens proche. Le wolof, c’est mon identité quelque part. Et moi, je fais du rap en français mais c’est pas du rap français. La manière d’avoir la réflexion c’est en wolof, quoi. La réflexion est en wolof. Les valeurs viennent de là-bas. Ce qu’on a vécu. Les images sont en wolof. Mais le rap est en français. Je mets de petits mots en wolof mais je ne peux pas écrire comme un guy qui est né en wolof, qui a capté le wolof.<sup>77</sup> Même mon accent, en fait. Je n’ai pas un vrai accent français ni un vrai accent wolof.

M: C’est problématique?

A: Je ne sais pas si c’est un problème. C’est mon identité en fait. Je n’ai pas de complexes.

M: Tes raps sont en quelles langues?

A: Français. Parfois je mets des mots en wolof mais je préfère soit écrire un morceau en français, soit en wolof. C’est vrai que parfois pour ‘argent’ je mets ‘xaalis’ mais j’aime pas que les gens soient perdus. En français, ça me permet de toucher les Guinéens, les Maliens, les Suisses, les Belges. (Abdu 11.25.09)

When asked about his language preference, he replies with the notion of proximity: he feels close to both languages. Wolof is part of his identity even if he raps in French. He speaks of *réflexion*. The way he thinks, his relationship with the world, is in Wolof. He conceptualizes the world in Wolof because of his time spent in Senegal, because of how he was raised, even if he grew up in a Francophone family and spent a large part of his childhood in France. Abdu identifies with Senegal and signals a Wolof identity by using the occasional Wolof word in his music.

<sup>76</sup> The relationship between breast-feeding and maternal language acquisition has been discussed for centuries. Bonfiglio (2010) looks at these different representations. For instance, he showed that Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) in *De vulgari eloquentia* wrote one of the first documented examples linking mother tongue to mother’s milk: “In musing over the origin of language, Dante is confronted with a problem; if we learn the first language from our nurses, then from whom did Adam learn his language, since he must have been a ‘man without mother or milk’ (*vir sine matre, vir sine lacte*) (Cap. 6, 1)” (p. 73). Bonfiglio also includes Johann Matthäus Meyfart (1590-1642) who wrote in *Teutsche Rhetorica* that “Germans do not seek their language from books...but instead, suck it, in the cradle, from the breasts of mothers’ (p. 144)” (p. 112).

<sup>77</sup> “Capter” in this context is a slang for “comprendre”.

Meanwhile, the use of French affords him a larger audience, allowing for a fan base in the francophone world. However, he emphasizes the fact that he raps in French but he does not produce French rap. He is separating the language from the culture by making this distinction. Once again, the language is seen mainly as a means of communicating. In the following segment, we will see examples of Abdu and a few other informants using a variety of languages, in which the switching between languages demonstrates both how multilingual beings can communicate in multiple languages and how they can express identity through their language choices.

#### 4.3.2.1 Multilingual Usage

Considering how much the informants professed to code-switching in their daily lives, I expected more code-switching data from Paris. I was, however, able to find a few examples of CS in the recordings of natural conversations, and these examples highlight the ways in which people use multiple languages for a variety of purposes.<sup>78</sup> For instance, the following example is from Abdu as he engages his band and the crowd at one of his concerts.<sup>79</sup>

- (15) Abdu: ...ce que j'ai envie de réaliser aujourd'hui--  
 B1: C'est quoi?  
 A: J'ai envie de partager, tu vois, aujourd'hui, tu vois, cette scène avec tous les gens qui sont là. Ce que je voudrais...je vais lui donner mon micro et il va traverser.  
 B1: OK.  
 A: Vous pensez que c'est possible? Vous pensez que c'est possible?  
 B1: C'est possible. C'est possible.  
 B2: Hold up, hold up, hold up. Abdu. Abdu. Hold up. Abdu, ça c'est quoi, ça?  
 Ça, ça, ça c'est quoi?  
 A: C'est Af-roots.  
 B2: Ça veut dire que ça parle de nos roots, quoi.  
 A: Oui, c'est ça.  
 B2: Yah, you know the deal. Afroroots. It's coming soon...  
 (Abdu 12.04.09)

During the concert, Abdu speaks to the crowd primarily in French. In addition, his music is also predominantly in French. In this excerpt, Abdu addresses the crowd but is engaged in dialogue with two band members. In an attempt to include the crowd in his musical creation, he plans to give them a voice by passing a microphone to them for the last song of the evening. What is striking in this excerpt is the CS between French and English that the second band member employs. He enters the conversation by using English. In this first turn of talk, the band member code-switches inter-sententially, moving between English and French at clause boundaries.<sup>80</sup> However, in his second turn of talk, he switches intra-sententially, substituting the English word *roots* for the French word *racines* while keeping the French possessive adjective *nos*, before

<sup>78</sup> In chapter 6 (section 6.1.2.5 on code-switching), I will compare the two sites and discuss reasons why I believe there were limited code-switching data in France.

<sup>79</sup> B1: band member no. 1, B2: band member no. 2

<sup>80</sup> Romaine (1995) makes the distinctions between tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. She argues that each of these is progressively more difficult than the preceding one.

using the French discourse marker *quoi*. While Abdu responds in French, in the next turn of talk, the band member switches completely to English.

The use of English could be a nod to the musical genre of hip-hop and its African-American English-language origin. When I ask Abdu in his interview if he often uses English, he responds: “Pas trop. Soit qu’il y a des mots intraductables comme ‘lyrics’ ou des mots en jargon de hip-hop qui sont la base”<sup>81</sup> (Abdu 11.25.09). While Abdu limits his English usage in concerts, he acknowledges the underlying presence of English and its influence on the hip-hop medium. When the band member enters the conversation with “hold up, hold up, hold up” there is nothing happening previously to warrant the switch. As mentioned in the literature review, Blom and Gumperz (1972) have distinguished between situational CS and conversational CS, in which the former requires some sort of change in interlocutor, context, or topic in order to take place.<sup>82</sup> Because nothing in the conversation seems to induce the switch, I argue that what the band member does here is due to conversational CS, where he is “introducing a particular variety into the conversation is to evoke the connotations, the metaphorical ‘world’ of that variety” (Gardner-Chloros, 2009b, p. 107). In this case, the metaphorical ‘world’ of the variety is that of hip-hop. I am particularly led to this reading because of the word *roots*. Hip-hop is now seen as a global phenomenon with local inflections, connected by an appreciation for African-American culture. The word *roots* is a term packed with all sorts of meanings, many of which relate to a type of African identity.<sup>83</sup> The band member highlights this link to Africa when he says *Afroroots*. If one applies the Markedness Model to this reading of code-switching, one can argue that the band member signals his desired affiliation with American hip-hop culture as well as sense of Pan-Africanism.<sup>84</sup>

Another example of CS in my data occurs during Nafi’s interview at her house. We are discussing her use of multiple languages when her husband enters and begins speaking with her in Pulaar and Wolof:

- (16) M: Quand vous parlez pulaar, est-ce que vous mélangez des mots—  
N: Wolof.  
M: --français?  
N: Oui, français. Tout. On mélange tout, nous.  
((Husband enters and starts talking in Pulaar and Wolof))...  
D: **Yeen, ban heure ngeen di dem?**<sup>85</sup>  
N: **Ñun, dañuy xaar ba ñu sóor rekk. Bu ñu sóor re—**<sup>86</sup>  
D: Le mouton de Sanu commander **naa ko.**<sup>87</sup>  
N: Ah commander **nga ko.**<sup>88</sup>

<sup>81</sup> It is interesting that Abdu says the word ‘lyrics’ is not translatable in French, even though the word *les paroles* exists. Perhaps he finds this word inadequate.

<sup>82</sup> Conversational CS is also known as metaphorical CS (see Gardner-Chloros, 2009b).

<sup>83</sup> The term evokes the name of the popular hip-hop band “The roots” as well as Alex Haley’s famous book and mini-series on his ancestors’ forced migration to the Americas from Africa.

<sup>84</sup> To reiterate from chapter 1, Myers-Scotton (1993a) argues that “speakers use the possibility of making code choices to negotiate interpersonal relationships, and by extension to signal their perceptions or desires about group memberships” (p. 478).

<sup>85</sup> **Vous partez à quelle heure?**

<sup>86</sup> **Nous, on va attendre jusqu’au moment où nous ayons accompli cette phase de la cuisson. Aussitôt que nous aurons accompli—**

<sup>87</sup> Le mouton de Sanu, **je l’ai commandé.**



D: Mais **nee naa ko dinaa ko** rappeler samedi. Non non jeudi.<sup>89</sup>  
N: Ah d'accord, d'accord. ((turns to me)) Prochaine fois tu viens?... (Nafi 10.18.09)

This excerpt is interesting from a multilingual perspective because we see the influence of French on Wolof.<sup>90</sup> In Duudu's line, the French verb *commander* is inflected with the Wolof tense morpheme *naa* that denotes a first person perfect marker. *Ko* is the object pronoun referring to the sheep ("le mouton"). Nafi then reiterates what Duudu says by using the second person perfect marker with *commander* in the following line. These lines show how a verb such as *commander* has been borrowed from French into Wolof. However, as the following line shows, it is hard to differentiate what are lexical borrowings and what are examples of CS: "Mais **nee naa ko dinaa ko** rappeler samedi. Non non jeudi." In this phrase, the French verb *rappeler* is another borrowing that has been inflected with Wolof morphemes. However, it is hard to know whether the subsequent words by Duudu and Nafi are borrowings as well or whether they have switched into French.<sup>91</sup> This uncertainty over whether speakers of Urban Wolof are using two codes or one is a central question, yet, Swigart's (1992) article attempts to reframe this question, concentrating more on language use and attitudes than on uncovering the specificities of this type of Wolof-French code-switching. Applying the Markedness model, she notes that Urban Wolof is often perceived as the unmarked and the prestige variety in places such as Dakar.

One question that has surfaced in looking at the use of Urban Wolof in Paris is whether there is a change in the percentage of French being used in conversation when two Wolof-speakers are in France as compared with Senegal. What is obvious from my research is that even in a new setting, the same dynamic use of French and Wolof thrives (even if there are not many examples of code-switching in my particular data). There is nothing in my data to suggest that living in France causes a higher percentage of French to be used when speaking Urban Wolof. However, future research is needed to systematically compare Urban Wolof speech in Dakar and in Paris to test this theory.

The following excerpt takes place at the Senegalese restaurant with Ndella and Boubacar and is noteworthy because a third language, English, enters the conversation. I have been asking what languages are important in Senegal according to them:

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<sup>88</sup> Ah, **tu l'as** commandé.

<sup>89</sup> Mais **je lui ai dit que je vais le** rappeler samedi. Non non, jeudi.

<sup>90</sup> This excerpt is also significant because of how Nafi only speaks in French when she addresses me. However, the way she poses her question, "Prochaine fois tu viens?", she seems to assume that I have been following along with the Wolof-language conversation. She does not specifically ask me about going to the next wedding in French, she simply asks if I'm am going, indicating that I know what the "where" is.

<sup>91</sup> There has been much discussion on the relationship between code-switching and borrowing. Some scholars argue that CS and borrowing are situated along opposite ends of a spectrum (e.g. Treffers-Daller, 1991; Myers-Scotton, 1993a). However, it is not always clear where the distinction lies between the two. For instance, Thomason (2001) offers the following critique: "If a foreign element appears just once in a bilingual speaker's discourse, then it is presumably safe to assume that it is a code-switch, not a borrowing... And conversely, if it appears very frequently, it is most reasonable to classify it as a borrowing. But all too often this criterion is difficult or impossible to apply in practice" p. 134. This excerpt is also significant because of how Nafi only speaks in French when she addresses me. However, the way she poses her question, "Prochaine fois tu viens?", she seems to assume that I have been following along with the Wolof-language conversation. She does not specifically ask me about going to the next wedding in French, she simply asks if I'm am going, indicating that I know what the "where" is.

- (17) N: Mais maintenant, il y en a beaucoup qui commencent à étudier l'anglais. Mais le président, il dit, il faut apprendre deux choses qui sont très importantes dans la vie: l'informatique et l'anglais... Dans la salle de théâtre je pouvais pratiquer anglais mais quand je suis venue ici il n'y avait personne avec qui je pouvais continuer l'anglais... J'aime bien l'anglais.
- B: **Dafa neex**, quoi. **Làkk bu neex la.**<sup>92</sup>
- N: **Torop.**<sup>93</sup>
- B: **Boo déggee loo wax ci toubap, soo ko waxee ci anglais day neex.**<sup>94</sup>
- N: **Yow, dégg nga** anglais?<sup>95</sup>
- B: Bien sur **dégg naa** anglais. **Man maa def** cinq ans en Hollande. Business man bu déggul anglais?<sup>96</sup>
- N: **Loolu, moom, dégg la.**<sup>97</sup>
- B: **Suba nga dem fenn. Bemeen nga dem fenn. Bu yàggee nga dégg** anglais.<sup>98</sup>
- N: **Foo dégge** anglais.<sup>99</sup>
- M: Quand est-ce que vous parlez anglais?
- B: Ça fait longtemps.
- N: Lui, il parle bien.
- M: How often do you speak English?
- B: Since 20 years.
- M: What kind of business do you do?
- B: I do everything. Except sell drugs. ((smiles)) Everything I do. (Boubacar and Ndella conversation 10.27.09)

Although the subject matter concerns English, neither Boubacar nor Ndella volunteer to speak English with me. Boubacar uses the English loanword *businessman* but does not speak to me in English until I prompt him with English questioning. He seems to follow the norms of situational CS, not switching languages until prompted by an external factor, in this case my use of English. In analyzing my own code-switch, I argue that I started speaking English for two reasons: 1) I was responding to Ndella's interjection that he speaks it well 2) I wanted to receive clarification on my previous question in French. By asking "Quand est-ce que vous parlez anglais?" I was interested in the situations he would speak English and the frequency that he speaks it in his daily life. Boubacar responds as if I had asked "Depuis quand?" When I asked the question in English, he offers a more exact timeframe (from "longtemps" to "20 years") but still does not answer my question.<sup>100</sup> It is as if my questions are structured in a parallel fashion ("Quand est-ce que vous parlez anglais?" and "How often do you speak English?") and his answers are

<sup>92</sup> **C'est bon**, quoi. **C'est une belle langue.**

<sup>93</sup> **Trop.** Note: The French loanword has been phonologically assimilated.

<sup>94</sup> **Si tu entends, tout ce que tu dis en français as une belle traduction en** anglais. Note: "toubap" has many meanings. The most common definition is "white person." However, when it denotes a language, it means "French".

<sup>95</sup> **Toi, tu parles** anglais?

<sup>96</sup> Bien sûr, **je parle** anglais. **Moi, j'ai fait** cinq ans en Holland. Un *business man* **qui ne parle pas** anglais?

<sup>97</sup> **Ça c'est vrai.**

<sup>98</sup> **Demain tu es là. Après demain, tu es autre part. A la longue tu comprendras** anglais.

<sup>99</sup> **Tu comprendras** anglais.

<sup>100</sup> My question is not a direct translation of the original but it is a way of clarifying one aspect of the question I want answered.

structured in the same way (“Ça fait longtemps” and “Since 20 years”), but the answers do not really address the questions.

Ndella’s role in the conversation is interesting to dissect as well. In this excerpt, she begins by speaking in French, responding to my question about what languages are important in Senegal. Boubacar starts speaking to her in Wolof, continuing with the same subject matter but effectively limiting my involvement in this part of the conversation. While she is responding to Boubacar in Wolof, she asks, “**Yow, dégg nga** anglais?” Her question to Boubacar seems at first to be a true question in that she asks it in order to obtain information that she does not yet have. However, later, when she says “Lui, il parle bien,” she suggests that she already knew the answer to this question. In which case, her question is quite possibly rhetorical in nature.

Boubacar’s response to her question portrays the English language as a necessity, something that needs to be learned if one is going to be successful. The use of “bien sûr” suggests that not knowing English would be unlikely for a person who identifies as a businessman. In addition, the phrase “**Bu yàggee nga dégg** anglais” highlights that English is essential for people who conduct business. He also implies the global importance of English by mentioning his five years in the Netherlands, a country that is not officially English-speaking. He does not mention Dutch, so I assume knowing English was sufficient for the time he spent there. However, Boubacar not only reflects about the usefulness of English, he also discusses English from an aesthetic point of view. Describing English as beautiful, he says, “**Làkk bu neex la.**” He then compares French and English, showing that whatever said in French can be beautifully translated in English: “**Boo déggee loo wax ci toubap, soo ko waxee ci** anglais **day neex.**” In this short excerpt, Boubacar and Ndella have reiterated many of the attitudes about the English language that have surfaced throughout my research, namely its usefulness, its global importance, its aesthetic appeal, and its distinction as a language that everyone wants to learn.

I have ended this section of the chapter by looking at actual multilingual language usage in natural conversation after looking at specific language ideologies expressed by the informants in their interviews. These excerpts show how linguistic questions such as “what language do you prefer to speak?” and “do you switch between languages?” induce reflections on identity. Notions of identity are further highlighted in the following section where I discuss the intersection between language and identity within the larger social context. How do formulations of personal identity fit into conceptualizations of national identity? How do understandings of identity on a personal level interact with understandings of identity on a social level? The construction of identity is a dynamic process that sheds light on individuals’ position in society.

## ***4.4 Construction of identities and negotiation of boundaries***

### **4.4.1 Desire for inclusion**

In approaching my main research question, which concerns the desire for inclusion and the articulation of this desire, I hypothesized that France’s colonial legacy, a French-speaking tradition, historical access to citizenship, and conceptualizations of ethnicity would influence the expectations of Senegalese immigrants in France. In looking at the different attitudes toward inclusion, it is important to acknowledge that to a certain extent all immigrants want to feel a sense of belonging in their adopted countries. For instance, in the following excerpt spoken by a member of the panel at a Senegalese Business Association meeting, he addresses a predominantly Senegalese audience and argues the importance of investing in France:

- (18) Nous devons investir en nos enfants pour que nos enfants puissent avoir une éducation, pour que nos enfants puissent aller dans les grandes écoles parce que nous ne sommes plus des immigrés. L'immigration est finie. Quelqu'un qui vit ici pendant des années, qui a des enfants qui sont majeurs, qui a fait trente ans, quarante ans dans ce pays mais qui se comporte encore comme un immigré, moi, je ne suis pas d'accord. Nous sommes des Français à part entière. Nous ne sommes pas des Français d'ailleurs mais un peuple d'ici. Il faut que nous nous battions ici. Certes, on a tendance à vouloir faire quelque chose au pays. Mais avant de le faire au pays, il faut le faire ici ((applause from the whole group)). (Senegalese Association meeting 11.21.09)

He highlights the idea that France is now their country and should be treated as such. His words could have been spoken to immigrants from any country. Nyambi, with a different perspective, frames the immigration discourse by placing emphasis on a need for a connection with the country of origin and with Africa in general:

- (19) ...la France est notre pays...Je pense que ma démarche c'était de ne pas oublier l'Afrique. Malheureusement, il y a beaucoup d'Africains quand ils viennent ici, ils oublient l'Afrique, quoi...Qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire pour l'Afrique? Qu'est-ce qu'on peut donner à l'Afrique? C'est ça qui nous manque, ces pensées positives pour l'Afrique. (Nyambi 10.08.09)

Nyambi takes a different position to that of the Senegalese Business Association speaker. Whereas the previous speaker feels that French people of Senegalese origin are first and foremost French and should fight for their rights as French citizens before helping those in Senegal, Nyambi suggests that these same people are most importantly African and this Africanness should come first. Nevertheless, they both convey a universal experience by highlighting the importance of remembering one's roots. While these two excerpts show different approaches to immigration and integration, they represent universal ideas that could be applicable to many immigrant communities. However, other excerpts suggest that the specific relationship between France and Senegal matters in understandings of belonging.

Oumou presents a context-specific perspective. She expresses her disdain for the inability of law-abiding immigrants to earn residency even though France had no problem in using Senegalese men in both World Wars:

- (20) C'est pas bien. Il y a des gens qui galèrent pour les papiers.<sup>101</sup> C'est un problème ici. Il y a des gens qui ne font pas des bêtises, ni rien du tout, qui n'ont pas de papiers, qui ont du travail et quand on les attrape, on les ramène dans leurs pays. Il y a les Africains qui font le travail que les blancs ne font pas. En plus ce sont eux qui sont partis les chercher en Afrique au Sénégal. Ils ont fait la guerre pour eux...Ça fait mal au cœur de voir l'histoire et après comme on nous traite. (Oumou 10.04.09)

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<sup>101</sup> "Galerer" in this context means "to slave away".

Oumou evokes the role of history. The place of Senegal in French history and the place of France in Senegalese history were common themes in my interviews and often informed the informants' opinions about the nature of French language and culture. Several people mentioned the *tirailleurs sénégalais* and their contribution to France's wars, others discussed the Four Communes, still others brought up Senghor and his position as a member of the Académie Française.<sup>102</sup> These topics were discussed as examples of Senegal's special relationship to France and were often used to express hurt or disbelief that people of Senegalese origin were not treated with more respect in France.

In addition, the understanding of history that many of the informants have demonstrated is often different from the official record taught in the French educational system or in general French discourse. In a conversation with Faatu in which she espouses the importance of knowing where you come from while also being able to integrate, she discusses her experience of learning history in France.

- (21) F: ... Les Français ont exploité beaucoup de pays d'Afrique. Ils ont volé beaucoup de richesse. L'histoire de l'Afrique est très forte.  
M: Dans le système éducatif en France, est-ce qu'on parle du colonialisme—  
F: Non, justement. Dans nos cours, ce qui manque, on ne parle pas de l'histoire de l'esclavage.  
M: Non?  
F: Non! On ne parle pas de ça en France. Et je trouve par rapport aux Etats-Unis, la France est très en arrière.  
M: Mais qu'est-ce qu'on dit parce que ça c'est l'histoire?  
F: Oui. L'histoire, c'est vrai, mais on ne fait pas trop allusion à l'esclavage ou au colonialisme. Vraiment, c'est un sujet absent, en fait. On trouve ça dommage parce que même dans les guides d'histoire, les sujets concernant les colonies, il y a plus les colonies occidentales en fait.  
M: Pourquoi tu penses qu'on ne parle pas de ça?  
F: Moi, je pense que les Français ont beaucoup à se reprocher, je pense...  
M: Dans les cours de géographie, est-ce qu'on parle des plusieurs pays?  
F: Oui, mais ça reste toujours l'Amérique latine, l'Amérique du Nord, la Russie. On parle de l'Afrique mais on ne l'approfondi pas.  
M: Pourquoi?  
F: Je ne sais pas. (Faatu 12.03.09)

In this excerpt, desire for inclusion involves a desire to be acknowledged in history books, to be woven into France's historical narrative rather than to be treated as some current invader that does not belong. As Madibbo (2006) argues, "Recorded history is selective in the sense that it has largely been written from the point of view of dominant peoples. This means that important facts, as well as the voices of the marginalized, were probably not included in the written history" (p. 13). It was not until 2001 that through legislation France decided to formally admit that slavery was a crime against community. The Loi Taubira also required that slavery and

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<sup>102</sup> Soldiers from the West African colonies that fought in various French wars. (See Echenberg 1991).

France's participation in the slave trade be taught in schools.<sup>103</sup> While this move was a step in the right direction, a law four years later created a huge controversy when it required that the positive role of colonialism be taught in schools before this portion of the law was repealed by Jacques Chirac in 2006.<sup>104</sup> Needless to say, there is often a disconnect between the understanding of historical events by many of the informants and the official stance taken by the French educational system and other French institutions. This disconnect often leads to feelings of alienation and lack of acceptance, especially by the informants who were born in France.

Mainstream political discourse on the relationship between France and Africa is another domain that contributes to feelings of exclusion. One of the most discussed discourses on the topic in recent history is the speech by Sarkozy at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar in 2007. Besides highlighting the positive aspects of colonialism, a tactic that mirrored the short-lived law on teaching colonialism in school, Sarkozy has enraged many by arguing that Africa had not entered history:<sup>105</sup>

Le problème de l'Afrique -- permettez à un ami de l'Afrique de le dire --, il est là. Le défi de l'Afrique, c'est d'entrer davantage dans l'Histoire, c'est de puiser en elle l'énergie, la force, l'envie, la volonté d'écouter et d'épouser sa propre histoire. Le problème de l'Afrique, c'est de cesser de toujours répéter, de toujours ressasser, de se libérer du mythe de l'éternel retour, c'est de prendre conscience que l'âge d'or qu'elle ne cesse de regretter ne reviendra pas pour la raison qu'il n'a jamais existé. Le problème de l'Afrique, c'est qu'elle vit trop le présent dans la nostalgie du paradis perdu de l'enfance. Le problème de l'Afrique, c'est que trop souvent elle juge le présent par rapport à une pureté des origines totalement imaginaire et que personne ne peut espérer ressusciter. (Sarkozy, July 26, 2007)

Sarkozy positions himself as a friend of Africa in order to suggest that he has the right to criticize it for what he sees as an inability to be relevant in history. The capitalization of the word "history" found in the version posted on an official governmental website implies that the history of which he speaks is the main history, his history, the history of the first world, a history into which Africa has not entered. Mbembe (2007), in his open letter, decries the speech for

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<sup>103</sup> Loi Taubira, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001. « Article 1: La République française reconnaît que la traite négrière transatlantique ainsi que la traite dans l'océan Indien d'une part, et l'esclavage d'autre part, perpétrés à partir du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, aux Amériques et aux Caraïbes, dans l'océan Indien et en Europe contre les populations africaines, amérindiennes, malgaches et indiennes constituent un crime contre l'humanité. Article 2: Les programmes scolaires et les programmes de recherche en histoire et en sciences humaines accorderont à la traite négrière et à l'esclavage la place conséquente qu'ils méritent. La coopération qui permettra de mettre en articulation les archives écrites disponibles en Europe avec les sources orales et les connaissances archéologiques accumulées en Afrique, dans les Amériques, aux Caraïbes et dans tous les autres territoires ayant connu l'esclavage sera encouragée et favorisée. »

<sup>104</sup> Loi n° 2005-158 February 23, 2005. Article 2, paragraphe 4: « Les programmes scolaires reconnaissent en particulier le rôle positif de la présence française outre-mer, notamment en Afrique du Nord, et accordent à l'histoire et aux sacrifices des combattants de l'armée française issus de ces territoires la place éminente à laquelle ils ont droit. » See Raizon (2006) for more information about Chirac's repeal of the law.

<sup>105</sup> Describing the colonizer, Sarkozy has argued: "Il a pris mais je veux dire avec respect qu'il a aussi donné. Il a construit des ponts, des routes, des hôpitaux, des dispensaires, des écoles. Il a rendu fécondes des terres vierges, il a donné sa peine, son travail, son savoir. Je veux le dire ici, tous les colons n'étaient pas des voleurs, tous les colons n'étaient pas des exploités. Il y avait parmi eux des Hommes mauvais mais il y avait aussi des Hommes de bonne volonté, des Hommes qui croyaient remplir une mission civilisatrice, des Hommes qui croyaient faire le bien."

perpetuating the same racist attitudes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, arguing that the postcolonial mentality of France is no different from its colonial mentality.<sup>106</sup>

The fact that Senegal was colonized by France means an ever-existing superiority complex that shows in the interactions between French and Senegalese people. For instance, Nyambi argues the following:

(22) Je pense que le problème du rapport entre la France et nous, c'est un problème de représentativité. C'est-à-dire, je ne dis pas que les Français sont racistes. Ce n'est pas ça. Mais, il y a un problème de représentativité. Si vous analysez un Français et il voit un noir devant lui, qu'est-ce qu'il pense? Il pense qu'il ne vient pas de chez lui. Alors qu'aujourd'hui je pense qu'il y a six millions de noirs, quoi. Il y a aussi des Antillais pour vous dire. Il dit dans sa tête que oui, il ne vient pas de chez nous, il vient du sud. Et je pense qu'il y a quelque chose de plus grave qu'il pense que c'est quelqu'un que nous avons colonisé. C'est-à-dire, quelqu'un qu'on a civilisé. C'est-à-dire, il y a une idée de supériorité et il y a une idée d'infériorité... Moi, c'est différent parce que j'ai fait un démarche. J'ai essayé d'étudier qui je suis, de comprendre c'est quoi un Africain et la culture africaine. Donc j'ai essayé d'apprendre des choses. Donc quand je discute avec eux je suis au même pied d'égalité. Je n'ai plus des complexes. Tout ça c'est fini, c'est terminé. (Nyambi 10.08.09)

For Nyambi, the lack of representation creates these problems because if one is invisible, one lacks a voice. There is also an implied power dynamic, related to the historical relationship between France and Senegal. This assertion is supported by Dubois (2000) who contends that “any representation of Africa that takes place within France is fundamentally hemmed in by the broader structures of power that echo certain voices and silence others” (p. 20). Therefore, while Nyambi sees lack of representation as synonymous with lack of voice, Dubois sees all representation of Africa as a form of silencing because of the existing power structures.

The question remains: how long will these power structures, which are steeped in a complex historical relationship, continue to dictate how people interact with each other? Nyambi suggests that through representation and through positioning oneself as equal, one can erode the present power structures. Moreover, Lucie surmises that it is only a matter of time before people, regardless of their differences, will be accepted. Conveying a sense of hope, she argues that this inability to be accepted as a non-white French person is a generational issue that will one day disappear: “Ça va peut-être se résoudre parce que c'est un problème de génération. Dans 10 ans, 15 ans, 20 ans, 50 ans ça changera parce que quand les Italiens sont arrivés, ils ont connu ce même phénomène. La seule différence c'est la couleur mais on s'est intégrés aux Etats-Unis, en Angleterre. Pourquoi pas ici?” (Lucie 11.27.09). She cites the United States and England as places where race is no longer linked to nationality. This reference to places such as the United States occurs frequently in my data. Because of African-American representation in such domains as government, films, music, many Senegalese assume that blacks in the United States have integrated. Having a presence means that topics of race or signaling of differences is not

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<sup>106</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.africultures.com/php/index.php?nav=article&no=6784>.

necessarily received badly.<sup>107</sup> For instance, Sandrine compares France and the United States in the following manner:

(23) Parce qu'aux Etats-Unis tu peux demander 'Tu viens d'où? Tes origines?' ouvertement. Ici, si tu dis 'Tu es de quelle origine?' 'Moi, je suis française' alors que visiblement la personne n'est pas française—Aux Etats-Unis tu peux dire directement sans te sentir attaqué. Oui, ma mère est telle, mon père est tel. Alors qu'ici, non, je suis française. Après, tout de suite, tu sens qu'il y a une tension.<sup>108</sup> (Sandrine and Ngirin 11.21.09)

Sandrine argues that it is acceptable to ask someone their heritage in the United States because it does not automatically mean that you assume they do not belong. Those words lack the same connotation that they have in the French context. According to Sandrine, being French subsumes a racial component in which someone who visibly challenges the archetypal image of a French person is labeled as an outsider.<sup>109</sup>

Many of the informants who have mentioned the designation *d'origine* view it negatively because of the implied in-group/out-group dichotomy. Nyambi, for example, states, "Quand ils parlent des étrangers ils disent tu es d'origine. Ça n'est pas bon. Tu es d'origine sénégalaise ou algérienne ou gabonaise. Il faut qu'ils arrêtent ça. Su tu es français, tu es français. Et ça on dit toujours à la télé. Quand quelqu'un est champion, il est français; quand il a des problèmes, il est d'origine, quoi" (Nyambi 10.8.09). Nyambi demonstrates how the label given to you can mark inclusion or exclusion. The nation is happy to include you if you are valuable in some way. If you are depicted in a negative light, you are labeled as *d'origine*. This phenomenon was particularly evident when comparing the media treatment of the French football teams in 1998 and 2010. When they won the World Cup in 1998 the *France multiculturelle* was celebrated.<sup>110</sup> However, when they lost in the first round of 2010, disgraced and embattled, the multicultural team was demonized for not extolling French values and for not representing France as they should have. The nation questioned its national identity. Discussions about the riots in the *banlieues* throughout the past decade resurfaced, drawing connections between the infighting on

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<sup>107</sup> I am in no way arguing that the United States does not deal with racial issues or have problems with representation. I am simply showing the perception that many of the informants have of the United States.

<sup>108</sup> Sandrine is the French wife of Ngirin. She is familiar with both France and the United States because one of her parents is French and the other is American.

<sup>109</sup> It was interesting to come to terms with this frame of reference during my own experiences in France. When people asked my nationality, I responded with 'American.' Most French people were unsatisfied with this response and would press me to explain where my parents came from. Even when I told them that I can trace at least six generations to the United States, my answer was insufficient. However, when Senegalese people asked where I was from, my response of 'American' drew admiration. I was never asked to justify my response or to explain further.

<sup>110</sup> According to Dubois (2000), "In the summer of 1998, in the midst of the euphoria surrounding France's World Cup victory, won by a team that symbolized the multicultural mix of France... it seemed possible that the Republic might achieve tolerance and coexistence among the different groups that now make up its population. The 'multicoloured' nature of the French team, and the fact that the youth of the *banlieue* saw themselves reflected in the team, was noted by observers. Many repeated the idea that in winning the World Cup, the French team had issued a powerful blow against Le Pen's *Front National* and its restricted vision of France. One commentator wrote: 'Through the World Cup, the French are discovering, in the faces of their team, what they have become, a *République métissée*, and that it works, that we can love one another and we can win' (Castro, 1998)." (p. 29)



the team and the civil unrest by marginalized sectors of the population. *Tu es d'origine?* is code for 'your presence is problematic.'

Understanding these feelings of exclusion are important from a sociolinguistic perspective. As previous research in SLA has shown, an individual's perception of herself and the way others perceive her directly influence her ability to learn and use that language (see Norton 2000, Kinginger 2004). If an immigrant harbors negative or conflicted feelings about her adopted country, these feelings could impede language acquisition. But even for those immigrants who have mastered the language of their host country, other language-related factors may hinder their ability to integrate into society. In the following section, I will demonstrate more clearly the link between language, identity markers, and societal integration, arguing that any discussion of language use and acquisition must take into account the sociological environment in which language learners and users exist.

#### **4.4.2 Race, nationality, citizenship and the formation of identities**

In December of 2009, Michel Aubouin, from the Direction de l'accueil, de l'intégration et de la citoyenneté (DAIC), gave the opening remarks at a teaching conference in Paris, in which he bemoaned the fact that only a small percentage of immigrants attend French language classes.<sup>111</sup> He argued that learning the national language is essential to being granted French citizenship. However, his views were not shared by the majority of language teachers and second language researchers in attendance. Veronique Laurens from CIMADE, a non-governmental agency that helps asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants, countered Aubouin, contending that requiring immigrants to prove they have a certain competence in French is not only exclusionary but it may actually impede language acquisition. This comment received applause from most of the audience.

Article 21-24 of the French civil code states that in order to pass the citizenship test immigrant must have sufficient knowledge of the language, history and culture of French society.<sup>112</sup> Requiring immigrants to prove their level of linguistic competence is controversial. Echoing Laurens's fear that the law is exclusionary, Archibald (2007), has argued that "la France met elle aussi un accent très important sur la langue dans l'évaluation des candidats à la naturalisation dont un pourcentage non négligeable se voit refuser la nationalité française pour des raisons de défaut d'assimilation linguistique" (p. 19).<sup>113</sup>

France obviously places a lot of importance on citizens being able to speak French. This policy suggests that once you can speak French, you will be an integrated member of society, accepted by the greater French community. However, my research demonstrates that the link between linguistic competence and acceptance in French society is questionable. Some of the

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<sup>111</sup> The conference was specifically on the teaching of French to migrants and was held by the Association pour l'Enseignement et la Formation des Travailleurs Immigrés et de leurs familles (AEFTI). Michel Aubouin is from the Direction de l'accueil, de l'intégration et de la citoyenneté (DAIC).

<sup>112</sup> Nul ne peut être naturalisé s'il ne justifie de son assimilation à la communauté française, notamment par une connaissance suffisante, selon sa condition, de la langue, de l'histoire, de la culture et de la société française, dont le niveau et les modalités d'évaluation sont fixés par décret en Conseil d'État, ainsi que par l'adhésion aux principes et aux valeurs essentiels de la République. (Réforme du contrôle).

<sup>113</sup> The required level of language competence is B1. Language competency levels have been put forth by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR): "niveau de fin de scolarité obligatoire. Peut comprendre des phrases formulées dans un langage clair ou standard. Peut se débrouiller dans le pays où l'on parle la langue. Peut raconter, en terme simple, un événement qui le concerne" (Reforme du contrôle de la connaissance de la langue française par les candidats à la nationalité).

informants are French citizens of Senegalese origin, born in France. Others were naturalized after immigrating. Some informants have residency cards, which they find sufficient and are not searching to obtain citizenship. Others are continuing their studies in France on student visas and plan to return to Senegal once they are done. Others are in the country illegally. Whatever their legal status, an overwhelming majority have expressed an inability to feel completely included or integrated in French society, even if they consider their language skills to be excellent.

For example, Lucie relates a story from a parent-teacher conference when she was a teaching intern in Montpellier:

- (24) J'expliquais à une mère que sa fille a fait du bon travail mais elle avait quelques petites fautes d'orthographe, et dans ma formulation je ne sais plus ce que j'ai dit mais j'ai dû faire une faute que j'ai corrigée après et la maman m'a dit 'c'est gênant de la part d'un professeur qui a mal à s'exprimer.' ... Et après il y avait des attaques, des attaques, des attaques. Donc elle a mis en question toutes mes méthodes, toutes mes façons de travailler ... J'ai analysé plusieurs fois cette faute-là—donc je pense que si je n'avais pas fait cette faute de langage elle n'aurait pas eu l'opportunité de me parler comme ça ... La fin est arrivée et je suis sortie, allée pleurer dans les toilettes. C'était trop fort. Je me suis sentie attaquée. Quand je suis sortie des toilettes j'ai vu mon collègue qui m'a dit 'Ça va? Tu vas bien? J'ai vu comme madame t'a traitée. C'est pas bien.' Je lui ai dit 'Mais d'être noir en France, c'est ça' (Lucie 11.27.09)

Lucie shows that the language mistake was a pretext for the woman to denigrate her, to demonstrate her annoyance with having someone like Lucie as her child's teacher. Because of life experience and a shared experience with others like her, she assumes the attack was racially motivated, something that comes with the territory of being black in France.<sup>114</sup> This anecdote echoes what Lippi-Green (1997) argues, that "the evaluation of language effectiveness – while sometimes quite relevant – is often a covert way of judging not the delivery of the message, but the social identity of the messenger" (p. 17). For Lippi-Green, questioning someone's linguistic competence is a way to avoid being politically incorrect in places where commentary on other identity markers is socially unacceptable. Lucie wrestles with her grammatical mistake, suggesting that a person who is marked as an Other must be vigilant to never commit an error. They are held to a higher standard.

In her research, Lippi-Green has focused primarily on how people's perceptions of accents influenced interactions between native and non-native speakers. She warns of native-speakers' tendencies to shirk their communicative duties when speaking to nonnative-speakers. These sort of issues are not restricted to second language learners, however. Fluent speakers of French are subjected to accent discrimination and other problems as well. When I ask Ngrin if anyone has ever made a remark about his accent, Sandrine, his French wife, responds:

- (25) S: Une fois, dans un entretien pour un emploi, ils ont dit que son accent pose un problème.  
M: Comment est-ce que tu t'es senti?

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<sup>114</sup> She has already discussed in her interview how she felt rejected as an adolescent because her skin color signified that she was not French: "Je me sentais rejetée, quoi. Tout le monde me dit que je suis étrangère donc je le sentais."

N: ((laughs)) J'étais pas du tout content ((laughs)).  
 S: Le mot accent, tout le monde a un accent. Pour un Marseillais, ça ne poserait pas un problème. Mais pour un accent africain, là tu dis, ça pose un problème.  
 M: Parlez-moi plus de ça. C'est intéressant, parce qu'il semble que c'est pas parce qu'il a un accent mais d'où vient cet accent--  
 N: Oui, exactement, c'est bien ce que tu as dit là.  
 M: Quelles sont vos opinions sur ça?  
 S: Je pense que la personne qui dit ça ne se considère pas comme raciste, alors que c'est raciste. La personne qui le dit ne se rend pas compte qu'il est raciste.  
 M: Tu as mis le mot raciste. Il faut expliquer un peu...  
 N: Le problème c'est pas l'accent mais d'où vient cet accent parce que ça se voit ici. Tu as des anglophones. Les anglophones américains, ça c'est chic, c'est sexy. L'accent anglophone si tu viens du Ghana, c'est dur. Il parle l'anglais comme l'autre, c'est juste que sa zone géographique est différente. Pour moi, il y a plus de racisme dedans mais ils ne vont pas l'accepter. Tu peux tout le temps trouver des artifices. On dit toujours, mais bon, c'est pas ça. Une chose que j'ai remarqué ici, parce que moi, je suis très interpellé par ce qui est l'immigration. Dans le sud de la France, même pas dans le sud, ici à Paris quoi, il y a plein d'Américains, Anglais, Irlandais qui viennent, s'installent en France qui ne comprennent pas un mot de français, ils veulent pas parler français. Tu sais que c'est une condition pour l'immigration ici. Les gens, ils les ont fait passer des tests de français que les gens qui ont fait le lycée ici ne réussiraient pas. C'est une politique de mesure. Autre chose. Combien de fois j'ai vu les gens qui entendent bien ce que je dis, je suis sûr qu'ils comprennent mais—mon accent pose un énorme problème. Pour te dire que cet accent est, c'est juste un prétexte, c'est faux.  
 (Sandrine and Ngirin 11.21.09)

The experience that Ngirin and Sandrine relate reflect many of the issues that Lippi-Green has discovered in her research. As we have already seen, a “wrong” accent may cause native-speakers to reject their role in a communicative act. Ngirin produces evidence of this when he tells of instances where people claim to not understand him when he is sure they do. Lippi-Green also argues, however, that having the “right” accent does not guarantee the end of racism. In this case, the “right” accent refers to the unmarked accent of native-speakers from the language community in question. For example, she debunks programs promoting accent reduction by questioning the idea that “discrimination is purely a matter of language, and that it is *first and primarily* the right accent which stands between marginalized social groups and a bright new world free of racism” (p. 50). The way that Ngirin and Sandrine dissect Ngirin’s story indicates their conviction of racist undertones. They argue that only some types of accents are scrutinized in French society, and these are the accents that correspond with marginalized groups. Lippi-Green has come to a similar conclusion: “Once again it becomes clear that the process of standardization and language subordination is concerned not so much with an overall homogeneity of language, but with excluding only *certain types* of language and variation, those linked to social differences which make us uncomfortable” (p. 121).<sup>115</sup>

<sup>115</sup> While I do not go into detail here, it is interesting to note that Lucie, who comes from Marseille, also had to contend with negative attitudes about her Marseillais accent when she began teaching outside of Paris: “Je dirais

This line of reasoning relates directly to the earlier discussion of Center and Periphery. For instance, Canagarajah (1999) argues that while there is a noticeable difference in accent, vocabulary, and discourse conventions among countries that represent the Center (North America, Britain, New Zealand and Australia), these different varieties are all considered prestigious because of political, historical, and economical reasons. Meanwhile, the Periphery is labeled as subordinate for these same reasons instead of for linguistic reasons. The Center countries highlighted by Canagarajah overlap with the countries mentioned by Ngirin and Sandrine when discussing foreigners in France. According to them, people from the United States, England, and Ireland move to France and often refuse to learn the language but are seldom criticized for failing to learn French or for speaking with a foreign accent. Meanwhile, English-speakers from Ghana, who share a common language with those from the United States, England, and Ireland, are held to a different standard. Ngirin and Sandrine contend that the difference in these experiences is due to racism. Lippi-Green (1997) produces evidence of this when she dissects different ads and articles promoting good accents. She shows with data that “‘Asian, Indian, and Middle Eastern accents and Spanish accents’ are not acceptable; apparently French, German, British, Swedish accents are, regardless of the communication difficulties those languages may cause in the learning of English” (p. 146). In other words, these accents do not represent “the Other” in the minds of most Americans who see people coming from these countries as equals. The same can be argued for Americans and British people in France. French society is not threatened by their presence on an individual level; therefore, there is no effort to single them out as different or as people who do not belong.<sup>116</sup>

The incident that Lucie has shared also offers a point of re-entry into the Center vs. Periphery argument. Periphery is no longer restricted to speakers of French born in former colonies. The notion of periphery extends to marginalized communities within the French *métropole*, a marginalization caused by perceptions of race and where race fits into nationhood. Even though Lucie is French and speaks an unmarked variety of French, she does not belong to the Center. Lucie’s reflections on her own experiences lend to this understanding: “On n’est pas un citoyen comme les autres. Quand tu es noir, tu n’es pas un Français comme les autres. Le Français de base, il est blanc. Il n’est pas noir” (Lucie 11.27.09). Lucie suggests that in the mindset of many people in French society, by virtue of being black she cannot be French; and therefore, she cannot be a native speaker of standard French.

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qu’à Paris, il faut essayer de pas parler avec un accent parce qu’à Paris, c’est la capitale et quand on remarque que tu as un accent, il y a le côté parisien supérieur aux provinces. Donc tu es inférieur aux Parisiens. Souvent parmi mes collègues au lycée, il y a quelques-uns qui cachent leur accent. Moi, j’ai essayé au début parce que je ne voulais pas que mes élèves sachent que je viens du sud” (Lucie 11.27.09). In work done by Paltridge and Giles (1984) on regional accents in France, the accent from Provence is seen as the most accented but comes second after the Parisian dialect in a hierarchy concerning positive attitudes about regional variation. Meanwhile, Kuiper (2005) has found that Parisians ranked speakers from Provence twentieth out of 24 regions for correctness but first for pleasantness (p. 36).

<sup>116</sup> This is not to say that sectors of the French population are not worried about the influence of the English Language. For instance, The Toubon Law, also called loi n° 94-665 du 4 août 1994, (which can be found in its entirety at <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000005616341&dateTexte=vig>), requires the use of French in official governmental publications, advertisements, workplaces, government-financed schools and other contexts. Many scholars, such as Belluzzi (1995), have suggested that this law was particularly aimed at English and its influence on French language and culture. Ager (1999) has written a whole chapter on Americanophobia. While many negative attitudes exist about the English language’s influence in France, these attitudes seem restricted to the language. When it comes to negative attitudes about the people who speak English, expats from England or America do not seem to pose a threat to French society on an individual level.

This phenomenon has been explored in the literature. Kubota (2009) shows that the accessibility to native speaker status is contingent upon more than just language ability. One must also match the image of a legitimate speaker: “the superiority of the native speaker is not based purely on the linguistic attributes of individual speakers. The question of which category one belongs to is determined by a discourse that produces a certain linguistic and racialized profile as legitimate or illegitimate speakers” (p. 236). She supports her argument by citing Kramsch (1997) who has stated that “native speakership...is more than privilege of birth or even education. It is acceptance by the group that created the distinction between native and nonnative speakers” (p. 363).

Lucie’s experience displays the complicated notion of competence and its relationship to legitimacy. Her story hinges on a grammatical mistake, a performance failure that indicated a lack of competence to her interlocutor. Jean-Paul’s story further complicates the notion of competence when he reflects on his language ability and the process of integration.<sup>117</sup>

(26) J: Even many French, I’m not going to say that, but I remember a French colleague, when I say French, I’m thinking of a white person, born of parents both born here for two or three generations, who told me once why I was thinking that much and expressing myself as I was reading a dictionary. At that point I wasn’t speaking in a formal way. It was just the way I was used to speaking with people. Of course I grew up with books. I grew up learning vocabulary and grammar and I liked literature so the word ‘catharsis’ means something for me and so I don’t have to think for three hours to say ‘catharsis.’ But some people will just think.

M: How did that make you feel when he made that comment?

J: Two things. I was thinking warning warning warning, if you want to integrate, and when I say integrate I mean when you are in a certain context you have to be at the level of the people but you can still show your differences as I don’t want to be at the level of the mass. I still keep my proficiency and I’m not going to be like uneducated people just so they can feel better. But in the same way, I was extremely shocked and surprised. (Jean-Paul 11.23.09)

A number of points stand out in this excerpt. First, Jean-Paul gives a description of a French person that is more than just a legal definition. He equates French with white race. He also indicates that the person’s family must have spent a few generations in France to ensure authenticity. He is essentially describing a *Français de souche*, a ‘real’ French person. Second, Jean-Paul refers to a certain register of French that he does not consider formal but that is not something used by what he considers ‘the masses.’ What is particularly interesting in this excerpt is his response to having his style of speaking scrutinized. He took the critique as a warning sign—evidence that he was not successfully integrating or “blending in.”

Looking at Lucie and Jean-Paul’s experiences together reveals a lot about the nature of linguistic competence. Lucie was positioned by the parent who verbally attacked her as an incompetent speaker based on a mistake in her speech. Meanwhile, Jean-Paul was labeled as incompetent in the eyes of his colleague because while he had great command of the language, his choice of diction was so “high falutin” as to sound either pretentious or stilted. Neither of

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<sup>117</sup> Jean-Paul insisted on being interviewed in English in order to practice.

them had an acceptable level of French language according to their critics. However, judging by how both Lucie and Jean-Paul relate their respective stories, they perceive this unacceptability as not just about language ability but also race. In other words, they both feel the need to transcend a label of “the other” that is based on their race, but in different ways. Lucie needs to speak in a way that overcomes a racist expectation of incompetence, while Jean Paul needs to sound more authentically French in order to overcome the *Français de souche* expectation of whiteness.

Horenczyk (2000), in looking at identity reconstruction of immigrants during cultural transition, argues that “a more complete picture of cultural identity redefinition during immigration will be achieved by accounting not only for the immigrants’ own attitudes toward acculturation, but also their views regarding the expectations held by the receiving society with respect to their social and cultural integration” (p. 16). I would argue that Jean-Paul’s racial definition of *Français de souche* and Lucie’s lament that “d’être noir en France, c’est ça” (such is it to be black in France) shows their perceptions of French expectations with regard to race and language.

Because of salient identity markers such as race, my informants are often positioned as outsiders and have, in turn, internalized this positioning. This emphasis on race materializes in most discussions of nationality and citizenship with my informants. For instance, Karafa, a man in his 50’s who has resided in France for around 30 years, told me that he had never applied for French citizenship because he likes his skin color:

(27) K: Non et je n’ai jamais demandé non plus.

M: Vous ne pouvez pas ou vous ne voulez pas?

K: Je ne veux pas parce que moi j’aime bien la couleur de ma peau.

(Karafa 11.26.09)

His reasoning suggests that being French and being black are mutually exclusive; he is perpetuating a racial restriction on Frenchness, using skin color as the main criterion. Exclusion can thus be a two way street, driven by strong feelings about race. Karafa, who is a permanent resident but also a Senegalese citizen, has the luxury of refusing French citizenship and/or identity on the basis of skin color if he so chooses. But for those people born in France who know no other home but France, a sense of nationality or “belonging” can be more problematic. Many informants have expressed resentment or sadness that the *Français de souche* will never see them as being French or as legitimate French-speakers.

Lucie expresses her frustration in the following example:

(28) L: Moi, je vais te dire que pendant toute mon adolescence, je ne me sentais pas française, pas forcément. Les gens me disaient que j’étais sénégalaise. Même pas sénégalaise, africaine. Je suis noire, donc je suis africaine. Je ne peux pas être noire et française. C’est trop surréaliste. Notre président Sarkozy, il est né, son père était encore hongrois. Moi, je suis née de parenté française mais ce que je trouve extraordinaire, lui, il est blanc. Moi, je suis noire.

M: Comment est-ce que tu te sens?

L: Je me sentais rejetée, quoi. Tout le monde me disait que je suis étrangère donc je le sentais. Mais moi, je ne connaissais pas le Sénégal. Je ne suis pas comme les gens qui se sentent algériens, sénégalais, parce qu’ils ont l’habitude de visiter ces pays. Moi, non. Donc j’étais entre les deux ... C’est quand j’allais au Sénégal

qu'ils me disaient que je suis française. J'ai un passeport français, je vis en France, je ne parle pas de langue sénégalaise. (Lucie 11.27.09)

For Lucie, the feeling of belonging is contingent upon skin color, advancing the argument that language can never be the main factor in proving nationality or in feeling a sense of belonging. She brings up the case of President Sarkozy to highlight the place that race has in the discussion and conceptualization of nationality. Sarkozy was mentioned a significant number of times in my interviews, with most people finding it unjust that the nationality of someone of Hungarian descent goes unquestioned, while someone of Senegalese descent is never acknowledged as French. Lucie's commentary elucidates the particularly difficult and frustrating position that she and others like her occupy. She has realized that the identity she has tried to appropriate, that of a Senegalese person, is also beyond her reach because her experiences are different from theirs. Lucie's predicament is common for many French of Senegalese origin. She has grown up in the French educational system, an institution that supposedly teaches French citizens how to be French. She is even a teacher herself. She speaks what she considers standard French. For all intents and purposes, she is integrated into French society, having done what is expected of her as a French citizen; and yet, she does not feel French. People do not assume she is French. People actually question her Frenchness.

Faatu, also born in France, relates a similar experience. She highlights the precarious nature of not having a homeland and feeling like a stranger everywhere:

(29) F: En fait, en France nous sommes des immigrés mais au Sénégal nous sommes des immigrés aussi. Donc quelque part on est au milieu. Lorsqu'on veut aller en Gambie qui est à l'intérieur du Sénégal on paye une sorte de taxe. On n'a pas la nationalité sénégalaise.

M: Comment est-ce que tu te sens parce que tu es au milieu de—

F: Pour quelque part ici c'est pas trop dérangeant parce que comment, c'est pas comment ils nous classent mais comment ils nous perçoivent, c'est comme si nous sommes des immigrés. Ils parlent d'intégration mais l'intégration n'est pas totale. Tandis qu'au Sénégal, ça ne me dérange pas parce qu'on est né ici mais les parents sont nés là-bas. C'est dérangeant qu'ils nous perçoivent comme des étrangers. On est comme eux. Tandis qu'ici on sent la différence.

M: Où est chez toi dans ton esprit?

F: Moi, dans mon esprit, Sénégal. Même si je suis née ici parce que si tu veux par rapport à beaucoup d'enfants qui sont nés ici, moi, il m'a attribué parce que le fait qu'il me voit que je parle la langue, en fait ils ont l'impression que je suis née là-bas.

M: Même si tu parles parfaitement français? Mais pourquoi?

F: Parce que c'est ma manière d'être, ma manière de parler de l'Afrique, la culture, les traditions...Moi, je ne me sens pas du tout—je sais que je suis d'origine africaine, sénégalaise, casamançaise. C'est vrai qu'on vit en France mais moi je ne m'identifie pas française.

M: Même si tu as passé toute ta vie ici?

F: J'ai du mal à m'identifier à eux parce que leur mode d'éducation, leur mode de vie est totalement différente de la nôtre. Nous sommes des gens accueillantes, aimables, tout ce que tu veux. Le Français, il est moins... (Faatu 12.03.09)

Faatu demonstrates that this inability to self-identify as French is deeper than race or skin color. While many of the informants feel they are reduced by the *Français de souche* to a color, quite a few informants underline that it is their familial education with all the customs and mores that accompany it that makes them less French. Duudu's perspective seems to imply that he is almost impersonating a "French" person when obligated to have certain European customs: "Si quelqu'un me demandait d'où je viens, je serais tellement content, très fier de lui dire que je suis un Africain qui vient du Sénégal, qui est né au Sénégal, qui a les racines sénégalaises qui vit en France, qui est obligé maintenant d'avoir certaines habitudes européennes pour rester dans le pays. Mais dans ma tête je suis toujours africain. Je suis toujours sénégalais" (Duudu 10.03.09).

Duudu speaks of African mores and customs. Others remark on religious identity and its effect on integration. In the following excerpt, Sébastien argues that the accepted mode of integration in France is assimilation and that people like him are not really able to be assimilated:

- (30) S: Par exemple, je suis croyant musulman et quand les gens l'apprennent, ils disent 'mais je ne savais pas que tu étais encore aussi proche de ta culture d'origine.'
- M: Qu'est-ce que tu penses quand les gens disent ça?
- S: Je trouve ça drôle, en fait ça me rappelle le modèle d'intégration française et le modèle d'assimilation.
- M: Qu'est-ce que tu penses de ces modèles?
- S: Je pense que c'est à l'échec parce que je ne peux jamais assimiler la couleur de peau. Pourquoi les immigrés italiens, polonais, espagnoles peuvent être intégrés à la population? C'est parce qu'ils sont tellement assimilables. C'est-à-dire, même tu peux franciser ton nom mais tu ne peux pas devenir blanc.
- (Sébastien 11.08.09)

What is intriguing here is that during his discussion of assimilation Sébastien goes from talking about his religious identity as a Muslim to a racial identity in one fell swoop, again highlighting the centralized position that race/skin color holds in the minds of many immigrants. This excerpt can be deconstructed further in terms of how the *Français de souche* view him ambiguously. Sébastien grew up speaking French as his mother tongue in Senegal, and he talks about how people in France always remark on his lack of accent or other linguistic features that would distinguish him as a foreigner. Therefore, when people learn he is a practicing Muslim, he does not fit into their notion of a secular French citizen. Meanwhile, I understand his religious status as less important than his skin color in his assimilation from the way that he moves effortlessly from talking about religion to skin color. He has much more to say about skin color, I am assuming, because it is more a factor in his day to day life. It is not obvious that he is Muslim. It is obvious that he is black. While religion can create a barrier to assimilation, skin color is even more problematic.

Jean-Paul's reflections on this matter give credence to the argument that both religion and skin color are barriers to acceptance:

- (31) It's known that most of the people with a foreign background, and as I say, what I was saying earlier, if you were white and Christian, after one generation you can be seen as a French. If you change your name, you could go perfectly and



no one would question you. Whereas, if your name has Arabic sound, or if you have dark skin, that won't happen, ever. And the question is, I haven't seen yet, being white and Muslim. What it would give. But to be honest, for me, to integrate in the French system, you have to be white and Christian. If possible, Catholic. Being black and Catholic doesn't change. I know because I'm Catholic. It's not an or, it's an and. (Jean-Paul 11.23.09)

According to many of the informants, if one is to truly assimilate, one has to completely fit into the model of a French person that has been imagined by the "rightful" members of the French nation. Unfortunately for those people who want to be accepted in their adopted country, there is no way to successfully imitate this model because one cannot transform skin color and one does not want to give up religious beliefs and customs. In addition, the discourse surrounding immigrants makes it almost impossible for immigrants to shed the stigma associated with them. For instance, Van Der Valk (2003) analyzes the language of parliamentary debates on immigration in France and found the following:

Assimilation apparently implies inclusion. The research reported in this article shows, however, that the discourse of the Right on immigration and nationality is characterized by major exclusive features. Similar to the right-extremist *Front National*, the mainstream Right uses strategies of positive self- and negative other-presentation, associates immigrants with problematic social phenomena and expresses fear about the decline of the French civilization. (Van Der Valk, 2003, p. 310-11)

Therefore, while it is often argued that race/ethnicity do not enter into the equation in determining who a French person is, the repetition of positive self- and negative other-images reinforce stereotypes and cause people to associate problems with the non-white Other.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Noting a lack of research on L2 acquisition in official language settings, Brown (2000) has called for a need to explore this topic. While I have not focused on language acquisition in Senegal *per se*, in this chapter I have highlighted how the colonial context influences understandings of language acquisition and use by Senegalese in France while making reference to the situation in Senegal. In Senegal we see a blurring of lines between the traditional understandings of majority and official language settings as well as institutional and natural language settings. The informants have shown a wide range of linguistic profiles with regard to the French language, from those whose only contact with French was in an educational setting to those who spoke French as a mother tongue. The diversity of linguistic profiles therefore makes it impossible to generalize French language acquisition in France. I have identified and explained four overarching categories of language acquisition in section 4.2.1., arguing that Senegal's status as a former colony directly influences these language learning contexts in France.

Besides the diverse language learning contexts associated with its status as a former colony, Senegal is also a site where rich opinions of the French language emerge. In section 3.1.1 I discussed the complicated nature of language policy in Senegal where French tenuously occupies the position of official language. In fact, informants such as Karafa emphasize the imposition of French and its ties to the colonial era. I hypothesized in my research, however, that

the benefits of knowing French would outweigh negative attitudes that informants may have of French being a colonial language. My hypothesis was generally correct: the Senegalese informants stressed the practical reasons for knowing how to speak French both in France and in Senegal. In France, speaking French serves in everyday communication, helps create an easier transition for recent immigrants, and allows Senegalese students access to certain university and post-graduate scholarships. In Senegal, French often serves as a vehicular language among various national languages. It also offers some social mobility. It should be noted that many informants mentioned the waning importance of French on the global stage. However, they were quick to add that it is always a good thing to speak a language regardless of its global importance. These reasons for speaking French and the positive opinions attached to these reasons are supported by the literature.

While I had foreseen many of the attitudes the informants displayed about the French language itself, many of the ways in which the informants have articulated their relationship to French are not present in previous literature. The ways in which members of a former colony compare their language competence to that of speakers from other parts of the world is missing from post-colonial research in general and from research on Senegal with regard to the French language in particular. Many informants in my study have compared their ways of speaking French to the French spoken in the rest of West Africa, often suggesting a superior competence. Informants have cited many reasons for superior French language in Senegal: Senegal's special status during colonialism, the importance placed on the French language by political leaders at the moment of statehood, and the fact that French is only an official language in Senegal unlike in places such as the Ivory Coast where it serves as a national language as well. Nyambi goes as far as to say that Senegalese French is *le vrai français*.

In this chapter, however, I have shown that comparing French language abilities is not limited to West Africa. Some informants have also argued a superior language competence to people from France. Through these various formulations of linguistic competence and hierarchization of French language varieties, the informants are making a statement about their relationship to the French language, suggesting that they have a right to be seen as “owners” of French. Speaking not only correct French but also a prestige variety of French is a status symbol that dispels notions of inferiority, notions that have not dissipated since the colonial era. In addition, the attitudes about language varieties and the hierarchy created by these attitudes can be read through the lens of Center vs. Periphery. While Center status is traditionally reserved for former colonizers, traditional understandings of Center vs. Periphery should be called into question in order to take into account the types of attitudes expressed in my data. A less restrictive definition of what it means to be a member of the Center or the Periphery and more research on how members of former colonies can display Center-like qualities would be productive and enlightening.

Although some of the informants display a sense of ownership of the French language, others disavow any right to it. As we saw, in referring to French Oumou has remarked, “C'est pas ma langue” (Oumou 10.04.09). Using the possessive adjective *ma* she instead flags her affiliation to Wolof: “Avec quelqu'un qui est wolof, je ne veux pas parler français. Je parle ma langue” (Oumou 10.04.09). Therefore, while attitudes about the French language are an important aspect of my research, attitudes about the various languages of their linguistic repertoires, decisions about when to use certain languages, and multilingual usage of these languages also provide insight into how informants construct their identities. Oumou recognizes a cultural and ethnic connection to Wolof. Her language choice makes a statement about how she

self-identifies and how she identifies with her interlocutor. Oumou's feelings about Wolof and French exist when she is in Senegal and in France. Sébastien, on the other hand, has demonstrated that his investment in the different languages changed when he moved from Senegal to France. With French as his mother tongue, he has often found himself self-conscious about his Wolof language competence and therefore preferred to speak French in Senegal. However, upon moving to France, he has realized that speaking Wolof was a way to highlight his Senegalese identity and to establish a cultural link with his country of origin. Still others, such as Duudu, have highlighted the positives of having so many languages at their disposal. He has equated the process of switching between languages to *un jeu*. His main point is that using multiple languages is harmless because he knows he is Senegalese and nothing will change that fact.

Except for the few informants who expressed discomfort with the French language, most people enjoy having access to a multilingual linguistic repertoire and admit to using multiple languages in conversation when around other multilingual beings. While there are relatively few examples of multilingual practices such as code-switching in the interview data, there are some instances of CS in the recorded natural conversations. I have shown an example of what I identify as conversational/metaphorical CS. I have also applied the Markedness Model to explain how one signals certain identities. In another example, I have analyzed CS in Urban Wolof. One question that has arisen that my research is unable to answer is whether there is a difference in how speakers of Urban Wolof speak in Dakar and how they speak in Paris. I have found nothing to indicate that living in France causes a higher percentage of French in Urban Wolof, but I argue that this is an interesting research avenue to explore.

I have therefore shown how the informants in France construct identities through language. Their attitudes about and use of language shed light on who they are as linguistic beings. However, language is only one factor in identity construction. Other identity markers such as race, ethnicity, and religion are just as important in determining how a person conceptualizes oneself and how s/he positions the self in a larger societal framework. This realization is particularly significant with regard to language policy. While the acquisition of the national language is often championed as the key to assimilation, the experiences of the informants call into question the achievability of assimilation. Some informants have demonstrated great language skills, certainly sufficient for the purposes of assimilation, and yet they have felt that their language abilities do not earn them the respect they expect. The reflections of the informants reveal that language ability is only part of the equation because speakers are not only evaluated on language but on the multiple facets of their identity.

In addition, the case of France is particularly interesting because of its intricate historical and contemporary relationship with Senegal. France's colonial legacy seems to influence expectations of Senegalese immigrants in France. Informants have indicated a desire to belong in French society because of historical sacrifices by Senegalese for France, and because of the cultural and linguistic connection between France and Senegal. However, political discourses such as Sarkozy's speech or personal experiences revolving around race or linguistic competence make it possible to achieve a sense of inclusion in French society. In the following chapter, I will turn my attention to Senegalese immigrants in Italy in order to highlight how language is experienced and identity is constructed in a setting that is similar to France but that also offers a completely different experience as well.

# CHAPTER 5: Rome

## 5.1 Data

During the three months in Rome from February through April, 2010, I completed 25 interviews and recorded various natural conversations, yielding 151 pages of transcription.<sup>118</sup> In addition to the informant interviews and conversations, I shadowed an elementary language class for immigrants for three months and sat in on a ‘classe media’ as well.<sup>119</sup> I also interviewed an immigration lawyer, a sociologist who helped explain certain phenomena unique to Italy, and the instructor of the language class I shadowed. My principal site for meeting potential informants and conducting interviews and natural recordings was a Senegalese restaurant, the only one in Rome. The central train station of Rome, Roma Termini, was another valuable site for meeting Senegalese immigrants, particularly men, because of the high concentration of street vendors. I also followed around the large artist community of singers, dancers, and musicians by attending classes and performances.<sup>120</sup>

As in Paris, the initial interview with the informants lasted for one hour on average while I had more in-depth contact with three of the informants. In Rome, my principal informant was Idi, a dancer, who invited me to the Senegalese restaurant and introduced me to the regular patrons. We would often meet at the restaurant to talk over a meal, and I would record conversations we would have with his friends and acquaintances. He also took me to the homes of his friends so that I could interview people in their home environments. Another informant from whom I received valuable data for discourse analysis was Ibou, who was one of the creators of the emergent Banca Etica della Diaspora Africana. Because of the nature of his work, he was in constant contact with a variety of people and I was able to observe these interactions. The third principal informant was named Ndiaga. We met on various occasions in different settings, and I was able to track his ideas and opinions about certain issues throughout the three month period.

## 5.2 Language acquisition and use

### 5.2.1 Language learning contexts

During the literature review I noted two different settings for language acquisition: natural settings and institutional settings. While a few of the informants had some form of formal instruction in Italian after migrating to Italy, the vast majority have not studied Italian in an institutional setting. There are several explanations to why this may be the case, and uncovering these reasons is beneficial not only from a second language acquisition perspective but also an immigration and integration perspective. As European countries such as Italy grapple with issues of integrating immigrants in their societies, there have been increased demands for learning the national language. Understanding how immigrants learn the language and what facilitates this

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<sup>118</sup> Appendix 2 provides demographic information on the informants in Italy.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Classe media’ is similar to a class taken in order to receive a General Equivalency Degree (GED).

<sup>120</sup> In this chapter, the transcription conventions for multilingual excerpts are as follows: Italian, *French*, **Wolof**, English, SPANISH. If only one language is used in the excerpt, standard print is used. For words that appear to be hybrid forms of more than one language, italics and underlining is used simultaneously: *Hybrid*.

learning is therefore paramount. In this section, I will show through the literature as well as through my own data that Senegalese immigrants in Italy have a reputation of learning Italian better than many other immigrant groups but are less likely than those same groups to receive institutional Italian language instruction. The specific motivations for learning Italian shed light on this seeming paradox and an understanding of these motivations should lead to a reevaluation of immigrant language policy with regard to integration.

Conventional wisdom suggests that taking courses in Italian would enhance second language learning for immigrants, providing linguistic information and explanations that are more difficult to acquire in just natural language settings alone. However, although Senegalese immigrants are seen as less likely to enroll in Italian language classes they are often labeled as good acquirers of Italian.<sup>121</sup> This disconnect has been a source of surprise for some, especially those who work in immigration fields. For instance, during an interview with an immigration lawyer, the person remarked off the record that she could not understand why Senegalese immigrants had so much difficulty acquiring permanent residency. This difficulty perplexed her because there was a negative correlation between these clients' language ability and success rates in gaining permanent residency. The following excerpt was taken from my field notes of the interview in question:

I had an interesting meeting with an immigration lawyer... She couldn't understand why Senegalese immigrants had the hardest time getting their papers and was hoping I could shed light on the situation. She remarked that people from Bangladesh, India, and Philippines have the most success in getting their residency even though a lot of them have the hardest time learning Italian. Meanwhile, the Senegalese community, who learns the Italian language better than almost any group, according to her, is at the bottom when it comes to obtaining residency. She argued that they are impossible to work with in the sense that they don't keep appointments, don't want to work in places like Sanatarias and so prefer to work on the black market, and don't do what they need to do to keep the legal process going. She wanted to brainstorm with me why this was the case. The only idea I had based on what I was seeing in my interviews was that no Senegalese person actually plans to live in Italy forever. They think they will be here for a few years, a decade maybe, sending money back to Senegal, with the idea that one day they will return. So perhaps the idea of permanent residency is not as important, especially if they are able to work on the black market and make the money they want for their remittances. The lawyer seemed quite convinced by this argument... (Field notes 4.29.10)

It is obvious that by specifically highlighting the language difficulties of groups that tend to complete the necessary requirements for achieving residency, she assumes that language competence is an important factor to integration and to successfully gaining a permanent legal status. My response to her was based on a recurring theme in my data and corroborated by other researchers. For instance, Riccio (2002) has suggested that Senegalese immigrants only

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<sup>121</sup> I attended an elementary Italian language class weekly. There were 18 students in the class from age 16 to 50 representing different nationalities. There was one Senegalese student who attended occasionally. Out of the 100+ students attending classes at this language institute, he was the only one from Senegal. Talking to the various teachers at the school, the consensus was that very seldom were Senegalese students enrolled in these classes.

superficially conform to integrationist policies, doing what they need to survive in the host country but with one foot firmly planted in their home country:

The lack of attachment to Italy and the transnational mobility of Senegalese contrast with the sedentarist logic on which these practices rely. Senegalese transmigrants in the end are not sufficiently ‘disciplined’ users: they fit in with, because they are able to bear, the precariousness of reception policies (especially so in Rimini), but they do not conform to the idea of the ‘integrating’ settler. More specifically, the majority of the Senegalese do not seem to fit the ideal of ‘second-stage reception’. (Riccio, 2002, p. 189)

This second-stage reception to which Riccio refers suggests a desire to root oneself in the host country, most commonly expressed through family reunification. However, very seldom is Senegalese family reunification achieved (p. 187). Instead, Senegalese immigration is marked by what Riccio deems a third way of integration (see Schmidt di Friedberg 1994), which lies somewhere between assimilation and pluralist segregation (Riccio, p. 181). This third way of integration may help explain the conundrum presented by the immigration lawyer. The average Senegalese immigrant in Italy does not envision living a life in Italy and therefore does not see investing in language classes as worthwhile. At the same time, there are other incentives to learn the language usually related to economic reasons such as finding jobs or selling merchandise on the streets. In these environments learning to speak while working or selling and thus focusing on the terminology used in these environments makes more sense. In addition, taking classes means time lost that could be used working. Learning ‘on the job’ may be seen as a more viable and valuable option.

While some informants do not place emphasis on learning in an instructional setting because of time constraints or from assuming that it is not the most effective way with regard to their needs, others cite their linguistic backgrounds as factors in this decision. For instance, Alfa suggests that as a French speaker, studying Italian is not necessarily required:

- (1) Sinceramente, io no sono andato à scuola per imparare l’italiano. No l’ho mai fatto. L’ho imparato parlando, ascoltando. Se uno studia il francese, poi francese, italiano sono un po’ simili, se hai studiato abbastanza francese, parlare italiano no è difficile. Prendere un dizionario, guardare per esempio i significati di tutto quanto, vedere la televisione, parlando con la gente. Nel giro di un mese, quasi parlavo italiano. (Alfa 2.25.10)

Alfa does not see the need to take formal courses because knowing French provides the foundation needed to learn Italian in a natural setting, a sentiment echoed by several informants. Alfa specifically mentions the similarity between the two languages as the main reason for the ability to learn Italian without instruction.

The multilingual setting to which many of the informants are accustomed in Senegal has been cited as another reason why many informants opted not to take formal classes. While multilingual use will be addressed in more detail later, it is important to note here that this understanding of multilingualism as a natural societal norm where multiple languages are learned and spoken in natural settings influences opinions about where and how languages should be learned. Some informants suggest that multilingualism paves the way for the acquisition of

subsequent languages. Here is a taste of this confidence in a discussion with Biondo (B) and his friend (G):

(2) M:...come hai imparato l'italiano? Per strada?

B: Per noi le lingue, no lo so. Siamo abituati a [parlare tante lingue.

G: [io, per la strada.

B: In mezzo alla strada. Io no ho mai studiato l'italiano e lo scrivo perfettamente.

M: Sì?

B: Lo leggo perfettamente e no l'ho maiii studiato l'italiano. Per la strada.

(Biondo 4.10.10)

Coming from a country where only the official language is taught in schools while all other languages are learned in the home sphere or on the street in order for different language speakers to communicate with their fellow citizens, it is not surprising that few people would seek language instruction in a formal setting. If an L2 learner has acquired several other second languages through natural contact, it would make sense to follow this pattern for a language such as Italian.

While it is obvious that some of the informants see it as a personal choice not to go to class, for others, it is an economic or a time issue. Another informant, Bachir, mentions the plight of the immigrant when he says: “Il y a peu d’immigrés qui vont étudier l’italien pour pouvoir le parler bien. A la fin, on est un peu obsédé tu peux dire du mécanisme de survie. Tu vois, tu arrives ici, tu ne peux pas trouver du temps pour dire, je vais étudier l’italien” (Bachir 2.12.10). According to Bachir, survival does not include formal language instruction. Finding work and making enough money to survive are far greater concerns. And while the majority of jobs that are available to illegal immigrants do not require a great command of the Italian language, people tend to pick up the language not through specific means and with a particular timeline in mind.

Anta demonstrates another example of having lack of access to language courses. When I ask her if she ever thought about taking a course, she responds, “Sì, pero dove. Oppure per pagare no ce l’ho. Il poco che c’ho,<sup>122</sup> pago l’affito. Pago per i mezzi. E devo mandare soldi in Africa. Allora?” (Anta/Ngoné 3.7.10). Paying rent, transport, and sending money back to Senegal are her top priorities. From what I gathered from my research, there are not a lot of economical options for courses in Rome, and as Ibou mentions in the following excerpt, Italy is not well organized for this type of thing:

(3) ...tanti hanno difficoltà à trovare il tempo anche per dedicarsi allo studio perché spesso subito sta nel bisogno di lavorare...Anche il sistema italiano no è benorganizzato à livello di accoglienza, ben strutturato per favorire un passaggio<sup>123</sup> di apprendimento della lingua automaticamente...Imparano piano piano. No è il modo migliore per entrare nella cultura o conoscere la lingua di un paese. (Ibou 2.19.10)

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<sup>122</sup> “C’ho” is in Roman dialect.

<sup>123</sup> processo

Ibou acknowledges that a course is probably the quickest and best way to learn a new language but is not always sustainable from a practical standpoint. However, one also has to take into account the motivation factor for enrolling in these classes among the Senegalese community. As we saw above, many of the informants see their linguistic background as a good foundation for learning another language; therefore, many often fail to see the point in paying money or spending valuable time on a course. Even access to free courses is often not a strong enough incentive. For instance, I gave Anta information about a free Italian language course offered by the Italian government; however, for some reason she decided not to apply. In the end, the majority of the people I interviewed learned to speak Italian through everyday contact with Italians, occasionally practicing Italian with their Senegalese friends and families, and relying on their other languages, especially French, to pave the way for the acquisition of Italian.

### 5.2.2 Factors affecting acquisition

In this section, we will look at reflections on language acquisition and the factors that affect learning Italian. Before beginning my research, I had hypothesized that most Senegalese immigrants would prefer to go to France because of their connection with the French language as the official language of Senegal. While I show in the section 5.4 that other considerations such as logistics and feeling of ‘homeness’ tend to outweigh perceived language ability when people migrating for economic reasons choose their destination location, this does not imply that learning Italian is not a huge obstacle or a cause for concern among the Senegalese community in Rome. Bachir summarizes the problem in the following excerpt, placing the ability to communicate just under illegal status as the greatest problem facing West African immigrants:

- (4) La majeure part des immigrés qui arrivent ici sont des immigrés de l’Afrique de l’Ouest. Le problème de la langue pose des problèmes parce qu’on parle français comme langue officielle et pas italien. Le moment qu’on arrive dans un pays où tu n’as pas appris cette langue, c’est une langue que tu dois apprendre dans l’état, en parlant. Ça devient un autre problème. En plus du problème de la clandestinité, tu vois. Je pense que ça c’est le plus gros problème. C’est la communication. Si tu n’arrives pas à parler, ils peuvent, même s’ils veulent t’aider, ils peuvent pas parce que tu ne communique pas. (Bachir 2.12.10)

Bachir discusses the plight of the immigrant community in terms of communication, remarking that even if there are people there to help, you must be able to communicate with them. However, Ndiaga’s anecdotal evidence as a newly arrived immigrant more aptly conveys the frustrations and feelings of helplessness that plague those people who have not acquired the language in their new place of residence:

- (5) N: Comunque è una cosa, prima era difficile venire in un paese. Per esempio, se andavo in Francia, parlavo francese. Ma di venire in un paese (in cui)...no capivo la lingua, è troppo difficile all’inizio. Perché guardavo la televisione e no capivo niente. Uscivo fuori e no capivo niente di che dicono le persone. Per darti un esempio, un giorno, i primi giorni, come no piaceva la pasta. Perché loro preparano la pasta, io no sono abituato alla pasta, no la mangiavo, no mi piaceva, é così. Ho detto no, ba bah, esco fuori, compro le uova per fare la frittata. Così sono uscito. Un negozio che vende alimentare. Sono entrato là. Il problema è che



io no so come se dice ‘ouvo’ in italiano ((laughs)). Ho cercato di farle capire. Ho cercato di parlare anche in francese ‘*des oeufs*’ ma loro no capiscono. ‘Io voglio comprare *des oeufs*.’ ‘*Je veux acheter des oeufs*.’ Loro mi hanno detto, che vuol dire ‘les oeufs.’ Io sono rimasto là cinque minuti. No ho visto le uova. Ma io so che ci sono. Ho cercato e girato ma no l’ho visto. Alla fine sono uscito, sono andato a casa e ho cercato di mangiare la pasta ((laughs)). Un altro giorno sono andato a un bar con qualche amico. Era estate. Era caldo. Volevo acqua. Ma no sapevamo come se dice acqua in italiano.

M: Il francese no aiuta, ‘eau’.

N: ‘Eau.’ Se tu mi dici, ‘damme un po’ *d’eau*’ no capisco. Loro no capiscono.<sup>124</sup>  
(Ndiaga 2.14.10)

This excerpt contains many different features worth noting. He succeeds in depicting a feeling of solitude that accompanies a lack of understanding. He then portrays the pressures of homesickness that leads him on a journey to buy eggs in order to avoid yet another meal of pasta. However, something as simple as eggs proves too difficult a feat because the tools available to someone learning a new language in this instance are inadequate. His first tactic is to rely on French, a method that is widely used by the informants. However, the word for ‘eggs,’ *oeufs*, is probably one of the least likely to be understood by fellow Romance speakers because it has been reduced to simple vowel sound: /ø/. Tactic number two is to find the item so that he can point to it or simply pick it up and be on his way. Because the eggs are not visible, he has to accept defeat instead. He is presented with the same difficulty when asking for water, another simple vowel sound in French: /o/. Again, his inability to explain what he wants through cognates leave him empty handed. He can laugh now while telling this story but ten years earlier, an episode like this signified frustration and helplessness.

I had assumed before beginning my research that many of the Senegalese immigrants in Italy would use whatever knowledge of French they had to facilitate the acquisition of Italian. In the following excerpt with Anta, I ask her whether some ideas are easier to express in one language or another. As expected, she is most comfortable in her mother tongue, Wolof; however, she finds French easier than Italian and sometimes uses it as a crutch to speak Italian. When I ask if some ideas were easier to express in one language or another, Anta responds:

- (6) Sì. Ci sono delle idee che quando voglio spiegare una cosa forse è più facile per me di spiegarlo in senegalese. E la mia madre lingua. E oppure anche il francese è più facile però si deve parlare italiano. Cerchiamo di avvicinare il francese e l’italiano, così vieni, le parole vengono velocemente. Sono più vicini.  
(Anta/Ngoné 3.7.10)

As a follow-up question, I ask if she uses French more often than Wolof when she speaks in Italian. She responds, “Sì sì sì. Quando parlo italiano, penso le parole in francese e lo ehh traduco in italiano.” Because of the similarity between the two languages, it is French not Wolof that she uses to translate into Italian, making French a useful resource. In fact, she conveys the notion of French as a tool when she says, “cerchiamo di avvicinare il francese e l’italiano” or as a loose translation, “we try to bring French and Italian together.” I take her to mean that she tries

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<sup>124</sup> ‘Damme’ in Roman dialect. ‘Dammi’ in standard Italian.

to use a French word that is close enough to the Italian word that mutual understanding is possible.

While Anta demonstrates that French is often a useful tool when speaking Italian, Ndiaga's story above shows that one cannot rely on French all the time. In fact, Ndiaga even suggests that French sometimes poses a hindrance. In trying to understand why non-francophone speaking immigrants he knows seem to have acquired Italian more easily than he has, he muses:

(7) È difficile per me. Perché quando parli francese, perché ho visto della gente che no capivo, prima di venire in Italia, no capiv—no aveva—no capivano francese, io ho visto che loro capiscono, *bon* parlano bene italiano *par rapport à* me, *à* io.<sup>125</sup> Per esempio. Come mai loro no capiscono francese ma parlano bene italiano. Forse perche io parlavo francese. E come italiano e francese sono un po' simili, anche questa similitudine rende le cose più difficili.<sup>126</sup> Ho pensato così. Come loro sono simili, questa similitudine fa, perche en generale, una parola che tu devi dire in italiano, preferisci dirla francese. (Ndiaga 2.14.10)

What is specifically significant in this excerpt is that Ndiaga's speech mimics the phenomenon of which he speaks. He argues that because French and Italian are similar, one might use the word in French when he should say it in Italian, exactly what he does by inserting *bon* and *par rapport à* in his Italian speech. For Ndiaga, knowing French has stifled the process of learning Italian. Meanwhile, for Ondine, it is the process of learning Italian that has complicated her usage of French: "Quando sai parlare bene l'italiano, il francese ti scappa. Io adesso faccio una confusione con il francese. Quando scrivo francese, lo confundo con l'italiano perché l'italiano, l'Italia, l'italiano è molto, quando lo parli, no sai quale parlare...perché è troppo geloso come mi dicono ((laughs)).<sup>127</sup> Sì, è vero" (Ondine 3.11.10). Ondine uses a phrase that I heard numerous times in my interviews, "Italian is jealous," anthropomorphizing the Italian language by suggesting that it does not want the speaker to utter any other language and therefore takes over when other languages are spoken. Ondine, however, does not suggest that this is problematic or a hindrance, just comical. While Ndiaga is one of a few people who actually state the their knowledge of French has hindered their ability, other issues raised in my research led me to realize that among the Senegalese community many other factors contribute to whether or not French offers a tactical advantage in learning Italian.

Demographic factors, such as class, geographic location, and gender, should be taken into account when discussing access to the French language and its role in learning Italian. While the gender gap with regard to education has decreased the last few decades, there are still more men than women receiving a formal French education in Senegal. There is also a difference between those born in small villages and those born in large cities like Dakar or Saint-Louis when it comes to using French in the acquisition of Italian. Education is the key to these discrepancies according to many of the informants. For instance, Keita notes that while some Senegalese people in Rome learn the language quickly others seem to never learn:

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<sup>125</sup> It is interesting how Nyambi corrected himself during his code-switch. If he had continued in French, he would have used the stressed pronoun *moi*. Upon switching back to Italian, he first chose the Italian stressed pronoun *me* but then changed to the subject pronoun *io*.

<sup>126</sup> *Somiglianza* or *similarità* would be the standard Italian version of *similitudine*.

<sup>127</sup> A native Italian speaker would probably say *permeloso* instead of *geloso*.

- (8) K: ...vedo alcuni che lo parlano malissimo. Che stanno qua tipo da cinque anni e ancora no riescono a parlare bene.  
 M: Perché pensi che—  
 K: Dipende. Quello lo sai perché? Perché...secondo me, perche il difetto che no hanno fatto scuola.<sup>128</sup> Perche *si* uno fa la scuola, alla fine sai anche fare le differenze delle *accents*, capito. Perche, c'è, perche io ho solo questo difetto perche no hanno fatto la scuola. Perche *si* uno fa la scuola, riesci a leggere, allora, *là*, ti danno molto più facilità di comunicare con la gente. (Keita 4.23.10)

He links learning a language such as Italian to literacy, explaining how he was able to use his reading ability to sound out the words and to make connections between the languages:

- (9) Quindi, *si* uno fa la scuola, ti aiuta di più. Perché io no è che ho fatto la scuola superiore pero almeno ho fatto fino al al da noi, se dice SEGUND, SEGUNDO, non?<sup>129</sup> Poi sono fermato la scuola.<sup>130</sup> Sono andato in conservatorio. Quello mi ha aiutato. Quando sono arrivato qua, leggevo tutto. Quando scrive in italiano, io leggo in francese. Però cerco di parlare come un italiano. Però leggendo in francese. Queste cose mi hanno aiutato. Alla fine ho saputo fare la differenza fra l'italiano e il francese.<sup>131</sup> (Keita 4.23.10)

He is also quick to indicate that a high level of education is not necessarily needed. He left school early in order to attend a music conservatory. However, the reading and writing he had learned until that point was the springboard needed for subsequent learning of languages like Italian.

Balla, who insists on speaking in English in his interview for the opportunity to practice, underlines the importance of education in learning languages: “For someone who is coming in a country that, then then we speak French, it is too easy. And if you go to, to school, and you get the, the mind opening, you know you can understand many things, you know” (Balla 3.28.10).<sup>132</sup> Balla acknowledges that growing up in Francophone Africa is a positive trait when it comes to learning another Romance language, but he qualifies this positive aspect by including the issue of education. To him, school not only allows for the learning a language such as French but also the ability to open your mind. Balla also sees a link between intelligence and language learning, a theory that has circulated in SLA under the rubric of individual differences: “Because the language, the language, I don’t go to school, for learning it. Because if you learn French, you know, if you are more, just a little, if you get a little intelligent, you can speak it. That’s why uh when I am here, I don’t feel it is necessary to to, to go to a school for learning well because no I try, and if I speak, they understand what I say” (Balla 3.28.10). However, while I am not sure

<sup>128</sup> For an Italian native speaker, it would make more sense: *non sono andati a scuola*.

<sup>129</sup> *Se dice* is Roman dialect. *Si dice* in standard Italian. It is interesting that pronounces it *se* here because he tends to say *si* for both *se* and *si*. Keita also speaks some Spanish. This could also be a case of interference from the Spanish *se dice* because the following word *segundo* is the Spanish word for secondary school.

<sup>130</sup> In this case, Keita uses the verb *fermare* to mean “to stop attending school.” Not a standard usage of the verb.

<sup>131</sup> *Distinguere* would be used in standard Italian instead of *fare la differenza*.

<sup>132</sup> Although Balla is speaking in English, I tried to transcribe the speech the same way I would French or Italian, focusing more on content than on form and structure, but still preserving the uniqueness of his manner of speaking..

whether his brand of intelligence is linked to the amount of schooling someone has, I have a feeling Balla relates to the argument about having learned French in school.

French, however, is not the only Romance Language that influences the acquisition of Italian. Some of the informants have also lived in Spain and found learning Italian to be fairly straight-forward because of the time spent in that country. For instance, Professore reflects on his linguistic repertoire:

- (10) All'inizio, io, l'italiano, perche avendo una base diciamo latino, perche tutte queste lingue sono, hanno una stessa base, francese, portoghese, e, l'italiano. Hanno la stessa base latina, capito?...Prima, quando sono venuto in Italia, parlavo più spagnolo che italiano. La cosa che mi ha più aiutato a capire veramente ba be, sapere più parlare meglio l'italiano, lo spagnolo. (Professore 4.24.10)<sup>133</sup>

There are various reasons why Spanish is spoken by over a fifth of the informants. Some people took Spanish as a foreign language in school. In addition, Spain, like Italy, is a main destination of economic immigration. Some have spent years living in Spain before either making their way to Italy or before returning home to Senegal and immigrating illegally again, this time to Italy. Others, such as Abi, were part of a dance troupe that toured Spain and so she lived there for a few months. We will look at the role of Spanish in her life and in other informants' lives in more detail in the section on multilingualism.

I was also not expecting so many people to mention other Senegalese languages as a contributing factor. Ibou sums up this idea succinctly as well as my earlier argument that those who lack a formal education in Senegal are still at a disadvantage:

- (11) M: Per le persone che vengono qua, è difficile imparare l'italiano?  
I: Per tanti senegalesi, ci sono tanti che no hanno fatto la scuola pubblica francese che e gia per loro è difficile, nello stesso tempo, può essere molto più facile per chi hanno fatto le lingue nazionali africane, o wolof, o pulaar, perche hanno molto similitudine a l'italiano...  
M: Parla un po' della somiglianza tra wolof, pulaar, e italiano che tu hai detto prima.  
I: Wolof, pulaar sono scritti con l'alfabeto latino e spesso se leggono come l'italiano. Se leggono come se scrivono. (Ibou 2.19.10)

Here is another example of the benefits of literacy in learning Italian. Senegal has taken the initiative of providing literacy courses for the national languages, especially in remote areas and for women. These initiatives treat the national languages as more than just languages spoken at home. They provide complex grammars and standardized spelling, attempting to teach both people who have no previous education and people who have gone through the French educational system. The language learning strategies acquired in these classes could be beneficial in the learning of another language. The pronunciation of complicated sounds in these national languages may also facilitate language acquisition.

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<sup>133</sup> "Professore" is a nickname that highlights his studious nature.

Literacy in Wolof and the similarities between Italian and Wolof in terms of graphic representations of sounds can give Senegalese learners of Italian an advantage. The following citation by Ndour transmits this idea, concentrating on the production of sounds:

(12) N:... Parce que la prononciation de wolof est vraiment très difficile. La prononciation des sons est quelque chose qui ressemble aux sons qui existent en français et aux sons qui existent en arabe. Donc ce sont ces différences-là qui facilitent les gens de parler les autres langues dans une manière très correcte. J'ai noté par exemple, les Sénégalais, quand ils vont en France, ils parlent le français, ils changent complètement. S'ils parlent, si tu ne vois pas, tu dirais que c'est des Français qui parlent. Si c'est l'anglais, un Sénégalais qui parle l'anglais, on le confond avec un Américain parce qu'il parle tellement bien. Ici aussi je ne sais pas. Tant de personnes me font des compliments parce que je parle très bien italien avec l'accent.

A: Oui.

N: Donc je me dis que ça ne peut être que ça.

M: Il y a des sons en italien qui sont difficiles?

N: Non. Ça devient facile quand tu as le wolof parce que l'italien est facile.

A: Mais parfois tu parles avec l'accent français.

N: *Si si*.<sup>134</sup> Même français, quand je le parle au Sénégal, quand je parle le wolof, on me dit mais toi tu as l'accent sereer. Parce que c'est dans la région où je suis né. Donc je te dis le mix. (Ndour with his Italian wife Adrianna 2.27.10)

Ndour credits the vast range of sounds in Wolof for the reason why Senegalese people excel at pronouncing sounds in other languages. There is a sense of pride in this ability to mimic languages, and perhaps it even increases motivation in learning a language. The phenomenon of resultative motivation is motivation that is the result of learning, not the cause (see Ellis 2004). Those who excel at learning a language are, in turn more motivated to learn that language. Having a wide phonemic base could be one reason why, many Senegalese immigrants seem to enjoy learning foreign languages. While this is only one of several factors that may contribute to language acquisition, it is worth noting.

As we see, however, Ndour's Italian wife, Adrianna, is quick to point out that his other languages, particularly French, also influence his Italian speech. Ndour does not deny this critique. In fact, he finds that each language influences every other language in his repertoire, creating a dynamic mix. All in all, Ndour sees the languages at his disposal playing a positive role in the acquisition of subsequent languages. Meanwhile, other informants hint at the hindering nature that speaking other languages have on acquiring pronunciation skills in a new language. Anta (A) and Ngoné (N) explain the situation as such:

(13) M: Ci sono dei suoni che sono difficili in italiano?

A: Sì sì. Perché francese e italiano, il problema è la pronuncia. Perché francese mm no fa la *prononciatione* di tut di di di ogni *syllabe*.<sup>135</sup> In italiano devi pronunciare. In francese devi attaccare. Allora per quello è un po' difficile.

<sup>134</sup> Italics used to represent Italian here.

<sup>135</sup> *La prononciatione* for *la pronuncia*. Possible interference from French: *prononciation*

Perche, ‘difficile’ hai visto ‘difficile’. Si scrive uguale in francese pero si legge /diffisil/. E /si/. Italiano è /tʃi/. E molto più relaxo in francese.<sup>136</sup> Il problema è questo. Francese, devi attaccare questo, italiano, uno per uno...

M: Qualcuno ha mai notato il tuo accento in italiano?

A: Sì, quando parlo, mi dicono, sei francese, parli francese.

M: E tu?

N: Ogni tanto, in francese abbiamo l’erre moscia. (Anta/Ngoné 3.7.10)

Anta remarks how in Italian, each syllable is pronounced compared to what she considers the more relaxed nature of French. Ngoné, meanwhile, singles out the French uvular R as being particularly problematic. People even identify her as a French woman because of this telling sign. It is unclear whether she means an actual French person or a French speaking person as the ‘parli francese’ could be a clarification of the utterance ‘sei francese’. I make this distinction because of the notion of language being tied to race and nationality that comes up in certain interviews.

Ngoné also nominates pronunciation as one of the most difficult aspects of learning Italian:

(14) M: Nella lingua italiana, quali sono le cose più difficile da dire? La grammatica, il vocabolario, la pronuncia?

N: La pronuncia, sì. Ho questa difficoltà. Se parli francese, io uso sempre francese. Ci stanno altre parole che le dico veramente in italiano. Pero la pronunsazione io dico sempre in francese.<sup>137</sup> E quello fa ridere.

M: Qualcuno ha mai notato il tuo accento?

N: Sì.

M: Cosa dicono?

N: Tu devi dimenticare quello di francese per usare un po’ italiano.

(Anta/Ngoné 3.7.10)

She finds herself constantly pronouncing Italian with a French accent, a habit that is difficult to shake and that elicits laughter from interlocutors who implore her to forget French when she speaks Italian.

However, the influences of pronunciation can work both ways. There is evidence of Italian pronunciation affecting everything from French to Wolof. Ibou notes how his French accent, for example, has changed: “In Francia mi hanno detto che parlo un francese *littéraire*. Dicono ‘ah, mi piace quando Ibou parla.’ Parlo *un français littéraire*. ‘*C’est clair, il parle bien français.*’ *Mais j’ai des amis français qui me disent ‘mais tu as un accent italien maintenant’*” (Ibou 2.19.10). Ibou takes pride in his ability to speak not just French, but a literary French; however, he has noticed that his accent recently has taken on an Italian flair. As he relates this information he switches from Italian to French, perhaps because he is quoting the words of someone else. I ask him a question in Italian directly after this citation so it is unclear in what language he would have continued without my dictating conversation. While he realizes that Italian has influenced his French, he does not mention the effect Italian has had on Wolof.

<sup>136</sup> *Relaxo* could indicate possible interference from English.

<sup>137</sup> *La pronunsazione* for *la pronuncia*. Again, possible interference from French: *prononciation*

However, while Binta, my overarching informant, was helping me to transcribe and translate a phone call Ibou had in Wolof, she turned to me and asked how long he had been in Italy because there was something about his accent that was influenced by Italian. It is as if the hint of an Italian accent in Wolof is a marker of place and time, indicating how long someone has been away from the homeland. Perhaps, many of the informants do not realize just how pervasive Italian has become in their multilingual repertoire.

### 5.2.3 Gendered identity in language learning

Gender is a well-researched identity marker in second language acquisition and its relationship to language learning has been substantiated by my interviews and conversations. Before conducting my research, I was told that there were not a lot of Senegalese women in Rome because the majority of Senegalese immigration to that part of the country was economic migration, as opposed to the north, where the trend of family reunification was growing. However, sheer numbers do not explain the phenomenon of visibility.<sup>138</sup> Senegalese women exist in Rome, but they are relatively invisible because of their lack of access to public space. From one male's perspective, men are more visible because women are more closed, meaning less likely to interact outside the Senegalese community: "M: Gli uomini sono più visibili. / K: Sì, le donne senegalesi sono un po' chiuse" (Karim 3.2.10). However, the women I interviewed had different views on why this invisibility exists. As the sisters Anta (A) and Ngoné (N) have noted, women are less visible because of fear of being reproached; both by the community in Rome and by family and friends back home:

(15) M: Il n'y a pas beaucoup de femmes sénégalaises ici en Italie.

A: Il y en a.

N: Il y en a.

M: A Rome?

A: Si, il y en a beaucoup à Rome mais tu ne les vois presque pas.

M: C'est mon problème parce que je trouve toujours les hommes.

A: Les hommes sont partout. L'homme sénégalais, il est terrible. Il fait tous les trucs. Il fait beaucoup de dégâts mais la femme, si tu le fais ((claps her hands)), tu fais chier. On parle mal de toi. Tu sais, les Sénégalais, la plupart sont mariés avec des Italiennes, non? Tu as vu la majeure partie sont mariés avec des Italiennes. Parce que nous, on préfère se marier que de vivre ensemble. D'être en concubinage, c'est un péché. Il faut se marier. Et l'homme sénégalais peut avoir une femme blanche. Il n'y a pas de problème. Mais une femme sénégalaise qui se marie avec un homme blanc, on va dire ahhh, c'est une pute. Sì, ils vont dire du mal.

M: Huh.

A: Sì. Ils font des trucs *peggior di te* e ils vont te *giudicare*. Ils te jugent. C'est pas bien de juger des gens. C'est pourquoi nous les femmes sénégalaises ont peur parce qu'ils appellent au pays et disent 'Elle est avec des Blancs. Elle fait ceci,

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<sup>138</sup> Visibility here refers to a social state. Just as Miller (2003) from a social capital perspective uses audibility to describe the ability to be heard or the right to speak, I am using visibility to refer to the ability to be seen. However, the term already existed in other fields. Clifford (1963) in the field of child development defined visibility as "the position and individual occupies within a group as it is perceived by other members of the group" (p. 799).

cela.' Eux, ils font encore *peggio ma* ils ne le disent pas. C'est pourquoi on fait attention, les filles sénégalaises.<sup>139</sup> (Anta/Ngoné 3.7.10)

Two different systems operate with regard to gender when it comes to dating. Most of the men I interviewed were either currently in a relationship with Italian women or had had relationships in the past with Italians. Out of the eight interviews I conducted with Senegalese women, only two had mentioned ever dating an Italian man, relationships which did not last long due to a perceived stigma. Many issues emerge in the above conversation. First, Senegalese immigration is varied. There are differences between the people of a specific community who immigrate, and the starkest of these differences concerns gender, leading many researchers to focus on gendered identity (see Norton 2000). While gendered identity is not the central focus of my research, I recognize that I cannot do justice to the topic of immigration without turning my attention to gender. In using a holistic approach, I follow Norton's example when she wrote: "I take the position that ethnicity, gender and class are not experiences as a series of discrete background variables, but are all, in complex and interconnected ways, implicated in the construction of identity and the possibilities of speech" (p. 13).<sup>140</sup>

Unlike ethnicity/race and class, however, the disparities seen through gender are perpetuated by both the dominant culture and the marginalized community. With variables such as race or ethnicity, the whole marginalized community participates in a shared experience where because of their physical appearance, they are often marked as outsiders by the dominant culture. The same proves true with regard to class for the particular community I am studying because all of the informants are recent immigrants who occupy a low socio-economic status. In addition, they are also classed as immigrants, marked with the negative connotations that the term "immigrant" implies. Conversely, gender is an identity marker that is experienced differently by members of the marginalized community. Gendered identity is dictated by the different roles that the informants tend to occupy based on their sex. The perpetuation of these gender roles do not only come from the dominant culture but from the marginalized community as well. In the above conversation, the informants place the onus on the community itself. Anta and Ngoné blame the Senegalese men for calling them whores (*putes*), imposing a negative image on women if they date Italian men. These same Senegalese men even transport that image back to Senegal, increasing the societal pressure placed on women to be chaste. The hypocrisy of the situation is underlined by the simple use of code-switching.

While this part of the interview is in French, Anta chooses to use Italian for the words *peggio/peggior* and *giudicare*. I had been interviewing the sisters for the majority of the time in Italian. Anta has lived in Italy for five years and feels as comfortable in French as in Italian. She has an education of Bac+3.<sup>141</sup> Meanwhile, her sister has been in Italy for only two years, has only a secondary education, and preferred not to speak in Italian.<sup>142</sup> The previous excerpt comes near the end of the interview with both of them and so Anta is now speaking in French. As is evident

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<sup>139</sup> For this excerpt, French is standard print and *Italian* is in italics.

<sup>140</sup> While gender may play a role for Senegalese immigrants in France, the topic was not discussed in the data from Paris.

<sup>141</sup> In the French educational system, higher education level is measured by the number of years after the high school diploma. Bac+3 means three years of study after the diploma.

<sup>142</sup> When I had tried to interview them at the same time, Ngoné did not really want to participate. I decided to try another approach and began to re-ask her the questions in French after I had finished asking Anta all the questions. This language change allowed Ngoné to open up a little and she was able to complete the interview.



in this excerpt, Anta has a strong command of French. The question must be asked: why did she choose to utter those specific words in Italian? Whether conscious or not, in my opinion she switched to Italian for emphasis. She wanted to draw attention to her disapproval of the practice and its implicit hypocrisy. This switch is not an instance of failing to recall the word in French because as seen with *giudicare*, she follows directly with *ils te jugent*. By translating in French what she has just said in Italian further adds weight to the idea that judging is wrong. Using two languages here is effective in drawing my attention to the concept, and I would argue that this was her intended outcome.

In the conversation with Anta and Ngoné, it is evident that pressure from the Senegalese community impedes intercultural/interracial relationships. On the other hand, in an interview with Naza (N), it is the perceived fear by Italian men as well as a cultural disconnect that limits relationships between Senegalese women and Italian men:

(16) M: È difficile conoscere gli uomini qua?

N: Perché loro sempre hanno paura. Gli uomini vogliono conoscere le ragazze di colore però hanno sempre paura. Per me non è facile—non è difficile perché ho avuto anche un ragazzo italiano, sì.

M: Parlavi sempre in italiano con lui?

N: Sì.

M: Era difficile avere una relazione con un Italiano?

N: Per me non è facile, è facile. Alcune cose che perche io sono straniera. Ho le mie culture. Ho le mie cose diverse da loro. Quello anche, non è facile. (Naza 3.13.10)

This excerpt demonstrates that the lack of interaction between the Senegalese women and Italians does not spring solely from the gendered hypocrisy in the Senegalese community towards dating outside the community. There are preconceptions at work in the Italian community as well. She states a generality, that Italian men are afraid to get involved with Senegalese women even though they want to know women of color, while, in her case, it has not been a problem because she has dated an Italian before. However, the actual ease of the experience is hard to gauge because she corrects her value judgment mid-utterance: “Per me non è facile—non è difficile.” While this could be a simple misspeak, the fact that she makes the same correction a few turns later suggests hesitation: “Per me non è facile, è facile.” In addition, her concluding line is: “Quello anche, non è facile,” when talking about understanding each other’s cultures. It seems as if relationships between Senegalese women and Italian men are rare and, when they do occur, are complicated. The complications could mainly be a factor of the relationship itself, but I would argue that the rarity of these relationships stem from the culture clash and more importantly the negativity by the Senegalese community around these types of relationships.

I bring up the lack of opportunities for Senegalese women to have relationships with Italians because this seems to be a good environment for language acquisition among my Senegalese male informants. Since the women tend to date other Senegalese, and since Wolof, or another Senegalese language, is what one speaks in these households, chances to speak Italian are limited to outside the home. However, if women in many instances are relegated to the home sphere, like many seem to be, the opportunity to speak Italian does not arrive often. When asking Naza where the Senegalese women are after she assures me that they exist, she says: “Ci stanno.

Ma sai, da noi le donne non sono come gli uomini. Stanno a casa. Fanno le cose a lavorare. Alcuni uomini, uomini non lavorano. Sono sempre in giro a fare la ((laughs))” (Naza 3.13.10).

The very issues I raise here are the crux of Norton’s (2000) argument about immigrant women and language learning:

In theorizing the gendered nature of the immigrant language learner’s experience, I am concerned not only with the silencing that women experience within the context of larger patriarchal structures in society, by also with the gendered access to the public world that immigrant women, in particular, experience. It is in the public world that language learners have the opportunity to interact with members of the target language community, but it is the public world that is not easily accessible to immigrant women. (Norton, 2000, p. 12)

The larger patriarchal structures are evidenced by the double standard facing women in fraternizing with the locals. They could also include lack of job opportunities for women, but my own research does not really support this argument in this particular case. Many Senegalese men and women lack proper work permits and are limited to under-the-table jobs. However, it is true that these jobs are separated in terms of gender. Women usually have positions as nannies and other care-givers. Men are usually selling merchandise on the streets or putting up the giant posters that one sees all over the city. Nonetheless, it is hard to argue which of these jobs allow more opportunities to speak Italian. In the end, from my own experiences in Rome and from the anecdotal evidence from the informants, women are less visible than men for the Senegalese community in Rome. While it is true that there are fewer women to begin with, mainly due to the high-stake risks involved in economic clandestine immigration, the women that do live in Rome are relegated to the home sphere more often than men, making their voice more difficult to hear.

While gendered identity mainly focuses on the sex of the person, one has to also look at what corollaries accompany this identity. As mentioned earlier, an issue that comes up is the relative lack of education that Senegalese women have compared to men. Some women, like some men, cannot use French as a crutch when learning Italian. Others, mainly the older generation, may be illiterate. Ondine speaks of this but at the same time she mentions how female artists occupy a singular space. Being an artist opens doors to which many other women do not have access:

(17) ...Alcuni parlano francese, alcuni no. Ci sono tante donne qui che no hanno studiato. Non parlano francese bene. Anche l’italiano non parlano bene. È molto difficile parlare con loro. Ci conosciamo bene noi donne. Noi artisti ci conosciamo ma quelli che non sono musicisti o artisti noi non conosciamo. Ci conosciamo tra di noi.

M: E più facile per gli artisti conoscere le persone?

O: Sì sì, è più facile se tu sei artista, conoscere gli artisti. Tu vai in giro con gli artisti. Io non conosco i Senegalesi, soli gli artisti. Ma tanti mi conoscono che non conosco. (Ondine 3.11.10)

Out of the eight women I interviewed in Rome, four of them were artists, either dancers or singers. While this small sample size does not adequately reflect the general population of Senegalese women (although I have no statistics to tell me what percentage actually are artists), I

must note that for a female clandestine immigrant, being a musical artist is one of the easiest ways to get into the country. There are many traveling groups of musicians that enter Italy legally and then overstay their visas. There are no physical dangers as with being a stowaway on a ship or as through the other methods of crossing the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, I have to admit that the high percentage of musical artists I interviewed is mainly due to access. As artists, they were visible and so I was able to track them down. As artists they were also more likely to speak Italian and so I was able to approach them as well. In reflecting on my role as a researcher, I mentioned that one of my shortcomings was not being fluent in Wolof. This inability was most recognizable in dealing with female informants since I was limited to those who had enough command of one of my languages, or to those who were willing to be interviewed with a family member present that could help in the translation if need be. Having a better snapshot of the female voices would make any argument on gendered identity that much stronger, but I should see my lack of voices as telling as well. An excerpt from my field notes reiterates this point:

...What was even more extraordinary was who this last woman was. Turns out that she was the woman who had refused to do an interview with me about a month ago when I had contacted her by phone. Idi took me to his friend Keita's place so that I could interview Keita, who was a wonderful informant. He really enjoyed the process and was eager to speak. Afterwards, he asked his wife, Goundo, if she would participate. I had already asked her that day when she had entered the room earlier and her answer was ambiguous. She said she didn't want to and he told me it was because she was not confident in her ability to speak. After some light coaxing by him, she agreed, and we had a short interview. I could tell she was getting tired and flustered so I made sure to keep it short. While I have much less material on women, even the material I don't have speaks volumes. Perhaps I can tie in societal constructs to my inability to get a large sample of women. (Field notes 4.23.10)

Goundo is a prime example of my difficulties in reaching the female community, for whom speaking in either French or Italian was often an issue. Contrary to her own perceptions of her language abilities which are worse than her actual ability, I found her quite easy to understand. She preferred speaking in Italian even though she ranked her ability in both Italian and French the same: *poco poco*. When I think of how some women I approached rejected me because of their language ability, I am further convinced that gendered identity must be taken into account in any discussion on language policy and second language acquisition among immigrant populations.

### **5.3 Language ideologies**

As in Paris, my research in Rome has uncovered ideas and attitudes about the acquisition and use of Italian and about multilingualism. In particular, two concepts, motivation and investment, have emerged.<sup>143</sup> Therefore, in this section I will approach language ideologies primarily through these concepts.

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<sup>143</sup> As stated in the literature review, *investment* was proposed by Norton (2000) to reflect the dynamic nature of motivation, which changes depending on the social setting. However, I find that both terms are valuable in capturing how the informants view language and their relation to it.

### 5.3.1 The Italian language

Motivation in SLA research looks at the attitudes of L2 learners and how they affect the amount of effort made by the learners. Different types of motivation have been recognized such as instrumental, integrative, resultative, and intrinsic (see Ellis 2004). Out of the aforementioned types of motivation, instrumental motivation appears to be the driving factor for most of the people I interviewed: learners want to learn an L2 for functional reasons in order to carry out day to day activities.<sup>144</sup> Ondine subscribes to the idea that instrumental motivation often drives a person's desire to learn a new language when she says: "una persona, quando vai in un paese, devi imparare prima la lingua. Se non sai parlare italiano bene, è difficile trovare un lavoro" (Ondine 3.11.10). This sentiment is echoed by others who see learning Italian beneficial for working and living in Italy.

However, many of the informants are motivated to learn Italian for intrinsic reasons. For instance, an overwhelming majority of them commented on the beauty of the language. Alfa describes it as such: "È una bella lingua. A me piace tanto perche se uno lo parla bene, è bello. È divertente. Sembra che uno canta. Poi con i gesti tutti quanti è una bella lingua" (Alfa 2.25.10). Anta agrees, "L'italiano, mi piace perche è una lingua cantata. Quando lo parli sempre tu stai cantando" (Anta/Ngoné 3.7.10); and so does Ousseynou "... L'italiano è una lingua bellissima. Ma proprio il suono, no, sentirla, è una lingua molto bella" (Ousseynou 4.17.10). Very rarely in my interviews did someone not like the language for linguistic reasons, although the occasional dissent exists. Balla disapproves of Italian because it sounds too effeminate for him; therefore, he has to reconcile this distaste for the language with the positive instrumental motivating factor of being useful for finding work:

(18) B: Yah. Because, Italian language I don't like very much.

M: No?

B: Because you know, it is necessary for me to know it. Because I'm here. If you want to work. If you want to do many things. You must know the language. If you don't know very well, you can have problems.

M: Right.

B: That's why it is important for me, but I don't like the language. Because, it is a language that, uh, I s--, I see that, it seems a language of, I'm sorry for for telling that, for girl...I'm not going to say it because Italian language is not, mmm ehh, you know, it is without a character.

M: Ok.

B: You know what I am telling you? It is, you know, not seem like the others. That's why when, you know, if you see the Italian speaking, the manner they are doing, it is not a manner of a man who is speaking. (Balla 3.28.10)

While Balla argues that Italian is not a masculine-sounding language, this attitude toward the language does not impede him from learning or using Italian. He expresses his opinion of Italian in a joking manner, laughing as he explains his issues with the language. Meanwhile, there are other active influences that negatively affect the acquisition of Italian, influences so complicated that I feel Norton's notion of investment is more apropos. Norton's definition highlights the ambivalent desire that language learners often experience. While they understand the need to

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<sup>144</sup> Ellis (2004) notes that this type of motivation is often the major force determining L2 acquisition.

learn another language, there is a slew of competing forces that might nullify any drive to accomplish this goal. In Norton's *investment*, the target language and the social identity engage in a seemingly symbiotic relationship where the society that a target language represents directly influences a learner's desire to acquire the language. At the same time, the social identity of the learner, with its multiple aspects, helps decide how welcoming or closed the society of that target language is toward the learner. This relationship and every aspect involved is dynamic, relying on the myriad of social and historical events to help mold the relationship between the learner, the society, and the target language.

The following example underlines the multiple desires that can influence a linguistic being. When I ask Ablaay, who describes Italian as a language he speaks fluently, what languages he would want his children to learn, he goes out of his way to indicate all languages but Italian. This is a strong statement for someone who lives in Italy and does not know when he will return to Senegal:

- (19) M: Se tu hai bambini, quale lingua vuoi che parlino?  
A: Voglio che parlino tutti essetto l'italiano.<sup>145</sup>  
M: Eccetto l'italiano?  
A: L'italiano si parla solo qua. La lingua internazionale, se parli, si può lavorare. L'italiano è una lingua che solo si parla dentro questo paese. E poi, sai che il Black no può trovare il lavoro che vuole qua. Perché a quelle persone che vedi lavorare qua, tutte quelle che sono venute qua hanno cambiato professione.  
(Ablaay 3.8.10)

This citation shows how the lack of global prominence of Italian influences informants' opinions of it as a language, a topic that will be revisited later. However, at this point I am more interested in the connection between language and the ability to work that he highlights, arguing that this ability to work in Italy is severely stifled not for linguistic reasons but for racial ones. In his mind, the instrumental motivation to learn Italian is weakened by his skin color, a factor that holds more weight than language. At the same time, however, Ablaay did decide it was in his best interest to learn Italian. Perhaps he will decide that his children should learn Italian as well.

While Ablaay mentions how his racial identity limits opportunities to find work in Italy, Abi shows how her racial experiences in different countries influence her opinions of those countries that, in turn, affect her desire to learn the language. She juxtaposes a predominantly negative experience in Italy with a positive connection to the USA and Spain. When looking at Abi's interview through the lens of investment, I find several notable ideas. The first aspect focuses on the type of conditions that create an affinity for a particular group or country. Abi makes it very clear throughout her interview that she dislikes Italy because of what she views as racist treatment. Meanwhile, Abi does not speak of the US in terms of racism, but more as a feeling of belonging:

- (20) Etats-Unis, il est meilleur. Parce que j'aime les Américains. J'aime les danses. J'aime le blues. J'aime tout, quoi. Franchement. Franchement. Parce que souvent quand je pars aux Etats-Unis on me demande, 'tu es américaine?' 'Pourquoi vous me demandez si je suis américaine?' Si je dis 'non, je suis sénégalaise,' on me

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<sup>145</sup> *Essetto* for *eccetto*.

dit, ‘non, tu n’es pas d’origine sénégalaise.’ Je dis ‘pourquoi?’ ‘Tu as un peu le teint clair là, plus qu’un teint sénégalais.’ Bon, j’ai vu des Sénégalaises aussi de teint clair mais un peu de produit. C’est ça...Ma grand-mère, elle était marocaine. C’est normal...l’Italie c’est un peu difficile. Il y a du racisme, trop. (Abi 3.28.10)

While I have to note that my own identity as an American may have influenced how she spoke of America with me, I also believe that her experiences there affected her view of America regardless of my nationality. Abi expresses that she enjoys how she is often taken for an American, pinning this ability to integrate visually on her skin tone, which is lighter than the average Senegalese person. She also finds cultural reasons to identify with the US, such as the dances and the blues. For a dancer like herself, a connection with music adds to the sense of belonging. However, what makes the feeling of belonging so crucial to the discussion of language acquisition is how these attitudes towards the societies that speak these target languages influence the desire and the ability to learn these languages. The fact that she was seen as a possible American made her want to speak English, and while her language was limited, she did in fact speak English: “Quand j’étais aux Etats-Unis, franchement je parlais anglais” (Abi 3.28.10). Abi also shows an affinity for the English language itself, although it is unclear how much of her love for English is based on the actual language, and how much is based on her experience in an English-speaking country:

(21) Parce que, la langue, je ne sais pas qu’est-ce que je veux dire mais c’est beau et puis c’est engraisant. Grasse. Comme tu dis, how are you, fine. Yes, I’m good here. What’s she name? Where she go? Si! Ça me plait! Parce que je parle de mon cœur. (Abi 3.28.10)

There are other incidents that indicate how her opinions of a place influence her attitudes about language. She has a similar relationship with Spain and Spanish. She had a positive time in Spain, which would account for the high volume of Spanish used throughout her interview. She felt that there was no sort of hierarchy between her and the Spaniards when living there, seen in the following excerpt:

(22) A:...Nous sommes *equal*, des Espagnols, des Sénégalais.  
M: Et pour ça tu aimes, tu préfères la langue espagnole.  
A: Oui, à cause de ça, franchement.  
M: C’est intéressant.  
A: Et puis, je ne vois pas là-bas le racisme. Même s’il y en a. (Abi 3.28.10)

Norton frames investment in terms of the right to speak, and this right to speak is based on power relations. Abi indicates her perceived position in the hierarchy of power relations by uttering the line “nous sommes equal” with *equal* seeming to be a mix of the uninflected forms of the French *égal* and the Spanish *igual*. She admits to the link between this equality and her love of the Spanish language, an admission that is consistent with Norton’s discussion of investment. Through the wording of the last line in this excerpt, she also highlights the fact that this is her experience, not necessarily the experience of others. She does not suggest that Spain is void of racism, just that she did not experience it. A person’s experience is very particular, which is why

some of the best evidence one can gather is the candid personal experience of an individual which can then be mapped on a greater framework.<sup>146</sup>

In the end, Abi comes to her own conclusion that her inability to speak Italian is related to her feelings about her current country of residence. She does so by comparing the American experience, the English language, and her ability to speak it to her Italian experience and all that it entails. At one point she claims not to know why the discrepancy between the languages exists, by stating, “Io vivo con *italien* dieci mesi e non parlo bene italiana.<sup>147</sup> Non lo so POR QUÉ.” Meanwhile, in another instant she makes the connection:

(23) A: ...Parce que moi, j’ai fait Amérique, trois mois. Mais je parle l’anglais plus qu’italien. Je sais pas. Oui. Parce que j’aime, quoi.

M: La langue italienne, tu n’aimes pas?

A: Non. Franchement, je parle comme ça mais. (Abi 3.28.10)

Abi represents the most extreme case in my research when looking at the importance of keeping investment in mind when looking at language acquisition. However, she is not the only one.

Ngoné (N) is another person whose negative feelings towards her country of residence could be related to language:

(24) M: Quelles sont les choses les plus difficiles en italien pour apprendre?

N: En italien, tout est difficile.

A: ((laughs))

M: Pourquoi?

N: Rien est vraiment facile en italien. Parce que les Italiens sont des ignorants.

M: Donc c’est difficile de pratiquer l’italien?

N: *Si*.

M: D’accord. C’est difficile de trouver quelqu’un avec qui tu peux parler?

N: *Si*.

M: Est-ce qu’il y a des bons Italiens aussi?

N: Ici? *Bop*.

M: Tu n’as pas encore trouvé?

N: Non.<sup>148</sup> (Anta/Ngoné 3.7.10)

She equates her difficulty in learning Italian to the ignorance of the Italian people. This exchange, albeit driven by my questioning, also shows the importance of environment with regard to being able to speak and practice. If one does not feel comfortable in a country because of the people, there is less desire and opportunity to speak. Swain’s (1985) notion of comprehensible output is appropriate because it suggests that a person learns to speak through speaking (p. 248). If a learner has no chance to speak, language acquisition cannot fully take

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<sup>146</sup> Kinginger (2004) uses the personal story of a single language learner to “elucidate the importance of personal history, imagination, and desire in the organization of lived experience related to foreign language learning” (p. 219). She argues that the story brought into focus “the significance of access to social networks, or of marginality within social networks, in the process of negotiating and (re)constructing a coherent and satisfying identity” (p. 219).

<sup>147</sup> *Biene* is possibly a mix between the Italian ‘bene’ and the Spanish ‘bien’.

<sup>148</sup> For this excerpt, French is in standard print and *Italian* is in italics.

place. In another work, Swain (2000) adds the term collaborative dialogue to the discussion, defining it as something that constructs linguistic knowledge: “It is what allows performance to outstrip confidence. It is where language use and language learning can co-occur. It is language use mediating language learning. It is cognitive activity and it is social activity” (p. 97). Collaborative dialogue is thus the bridge between the more learner-based comprehensible output and the social-based right to speak that investment embodies.

### 5.3.1.1 Non-standard Italian

Usually, when one speaks of immigrants acquiring the language of their host country, one is referring to a standard national language. However, I am also interested in how the informants regard learning Italian in relation to other dialects that are available in Italy. I hypothesized that from a practical standpoint, it would make sense to focus on learning standard Italian, especially because many of the informants and others in their situation have lived in different parts of Italy depending on the job opportunities. Thus, a language spoken nationally, unlike a regional variant, would prove more beneficial for those who are not restricted to one regional context. While my hypothesis was generally accurate, it is useful to dissect the views that different informants hold regarding standard language and dialect as they offer some intriguing perspectives on how people approach language acquisition.

Although the vast majority of Italians are able to speak standard Italian, many also speak a regional variant.<sup>149</sup> This varied linguistic profile is not lost on the informants who detail the complications of living in a country where mutual comprehension between the dialects of the north and those of the south can sometimes be difficult. For those informants who do not study Italian in a language classroom, what they learn on the street or through friends can vary greatly from standard Italian. Ndour, one of the few informants who actually took classes to learn Italian, has found this to be the case:

- (25) N: È quindi io, quando stavo studiando i primi tempi parlavo in un modo che quando sono arrivato lì mi hanno detto che questo non è un buon modo. In generale dicono che gli Italiani non parlano bene l'italiano. ‘Tutto quello che tu hai imparato fuori, lascialo e tu vieni qua per imparare.’ E quindi ho imparato a parlare un italiano molto corretto per non dire veramente l'italiano accademico.  
M: È importante per te parlare—  
N: Sì sì sì. Veramente perché io no, ognuno è fatto in un modo. Non sono uno che per esempio vieni e mi accontento di poco. Voglio, quando veramente faccio le cose, le faccio nel modo più perfetto. (Ndour 2.27.10)

Ndour had to practically relearn the language he thought he was learning because he was exposed to the language of the street on a regular basis, a context in which interlocutors often do not focus on using the standard language. While what he had learned in natural settings had not inhibited him from communicating effectively, his own notions of perfection made him an ideal candidate for a language class that would instill pride in a standard national language. Keita

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<sup>149</sup> According to the Doxa surveys (1000 interviews in 1974 and 1988, 2000 in 1982), found in Tosi (2001), 40% of adult Italians speak dialect with everyone at home compared to 34% speaking Italian at home with everyone. With friends and colleagues, 23% always speak in dialect with 31% always speaking in Italian.



details a similar experience in Italy, one where Italians, in his opinion, do not speak the standard language very well:

(26) K:...Anche gli Italiani non parlano l'italiano bene. Quindi alla fine, perche ogni paese di loro che sia Lazio *ou* Toscana *ou* Lombardia qualcosa, hanno ognuno i loro dialetti. No lo so se esiste in America o qualcosa?

M: Un po'. No come qua.

K: Qua ci stanno parecchi dialetti.<sup>150</sup> Io adesso che sto parlando, sto parlando italiano e la gente qua, gli Italiani, mi dicono, parli benissimo, sei bravo, pero se vado in un altro paese, secondo me, sono già indietro, nel senso, no è che sono indietro perche io parlo italiano normale, capito? No cerco di prendere l'accento romanaccio *ou* 'a fa' o qualcosa là.<sup>151</sup> Se devo dirti come—cosa stai a fa, preferisco dirti in italiano, che cosa stai facendo. E più italiano, capito?

M: Perche preferisci parlare quest—

K: No è che io lo preferisco. Il problema è che *si* non riesco, *si* non parlo italiano vero, perche italiano vero, dovunque vai, l'italiano vero, la gente ti capisce.

Anche se dopo c'hanno i loro dialetti o qualcosa del genere.<sup>152</sup> Pero sanno che sto parlando italiano normale...Se vai a Napoli...quello proprio non è italiano...

M: Quindi è più facile per te se impari l'italiano—

K: Normale. Poi anche per bisogno è un po' complicato perché anche loro ti dicono guarda anche noi Italiani non parliamo bene italiano. Si sbagliano sempre. Italiano puro, vero, è troppo difficile. Anche giornalisti. Per uno che è straniero, già è cosa grande. (Keita 4.23.10)

Keita expresses different aspects of a similar situation. His ability to master the standard language evokes praise from the native population, which is one of the greatest compliments a person can receive when speaking a target language. As Keita travels to other parts of Italy and is confronted by the various varieties, he recognizes that his inability to speak those varieties puts him at a disadvantage. However, at the same time, he is content only speaking standard Italian. He also seems to treat standard Italian as a language of mediation, a different view to Ndour's conceptualization of standard 'academic' Italian as something to almost be placed on a pedestal. For practical reasons, standard Italian is understood wherever one goes. For a population that travels, it is most useful to learn the language of the largest number of people, in this case, what Keita calls "l'italiano vero."

Anta and Ngoné have similar feelings about the standard/dialect distinction where Italian as a language of mediation:

(27) M: Gli Italiani parlano altre lingue?

N: Solo inglese e italiano.<sup>153</sup>

A: E i dialetti. Ci stanno altri dialetti qui.

N: Come napolitano e romano.

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<sup>150</sup> *Parecchi* is Roman dialect for *tanti*.

<sup>151</sup> He pronounces *accento* /lafento/.

<sup>152</sup> *C'hanno* is common in Roman dialect.

<sup>153</sup> *Inglese* pronounced /inglefe/.

M: Voi avete imparato gli altri dialetti?

A: Forse romano, un po' perché abitiamo a Roma. Quando vado io nelle altre città per fare spettacolo, quando parlo con loro dicono 'eh, tu tu sei romano.'  
((laughs))...

M: Preferisci l'italiano standard o l'italiano romano?

A: L'italiano standard è meglio, così. Puoi parlare con tutti. È la lingua giusta.  
(Anta/Ngoné 3.7.10)

The adjective *giusta*, denoting, 'just right' and the inclusive nature of 'puoi parlare con tutti' validates standard Italian. However, although they prefer standard Italian for practical purposes, the way that Anta laughs when people in other towns call her Roman suggests a certain attachment to this regional identity that the dialect affords her. She has taken on aspects of the local culture that she has essentially adopted and which has adopted her.

In the previous excerpt, Keita expressively demonstrates the difference between standard Italian and the Roman dialect when he says "cosa stai a fa, cerco di dirti in italiano, che cosa stai facendo."<sup>154</sup> Using the preposition *a* with a truncated infinitive is a phenomenon found in Roman dialect that replaces the present progressive.<sup>155</sup> Keita recognizes the differences and achieves a level of competence in both varieties to be able to use them in their respective contexts. In fact, it is not unusual for the informants and others in the Senegalese community to make these distinctions. When I asked in the interviews if they spoke standard Italian, Roman dialect, or other variations, most people answered that they mainly spoke in standard Italian although they would approximate their speech to the variety of their interlocutor. For instance, Alfa treats the variations in this way:

(28) A: Anche, gli Italiani, non è che loro parlano l'italiano cento per cento perfetto.

M: Tu parli l'italiano standard, l'italiano romano, o?

A: Un po' di italiano standard, un po' di italiano romano oppure. Siamo a Roma.

M: Tu sai la differenza?

A: Sì sì.

M: Cosa preferisci parlare?

A: Io cerco di parlare l'italiano perfettamente. Però se sei a Roma e tu parli con una persona romana, subito tu parli romano. (Alfa 2.25.10)

Echoing the sentiment that Italians as a people do not speak Italian in all situations, he finds himself speaking Roman dialect. In addition, the need for perfection is a noteworthy concept that occurs in many of the interviews. There is a very noticeable trend where everyone yearns for linguistic perfection. For some, it is a sense of pride that is at stake. We saw this view in the statements of Adbul and Ndour. Others are motivated more by external pressures such as job opportunities or other career considerations:

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<sup>154</sup> According to Pratt (1966), the Roman dialect, also known as Romanesco, is found most in the neighborhood of Trastevere, and is characterized by a more open and slower pronunciation. The prevalence of shortened forms of words is noted (p. 168). According to Loporcaro and Bertinetto (2005), deaffrication of intervocalic /tʃ/ is also prevalent (p. 135).

<sup>155</sup> Borrelli (2002) speaks briefly about apocope of infinitives in Roman dialect (p. 28). In addition, a website devoted to the Roman dialect discusses this phenomenon: <http://roma.andreapollett.com/S8/dialect5.htm>. My native speaker informant, who has spent his whole life in Rome, corroborates the use of this feature in Roman dialect.

- (29) M: Tu parli un italiano standard o un dialetto romano? Com'è il tuo italiano?  
 O: Non è tanto romano. Io parlo come forse come faccio la drammatica in italiano.<sup>156</sup> Voglio sempre parlarlo correntemente senza fare delle, alcuni, non lo so—  
 M: Errore?  
 O: Errore, sì.  
 M: È importante parlarlo perfettamente?  
 O: Sì, è molto importante. Se no lo parlo perfettamente come l'italiano di fuori che lo parla così, perché l'italiano deve imparare a parlare l'italiano bene perché quando hai il lavoro molto importante e no sai parlare bene, loro no ti prendono. Io faccio teatro e serve parlare italiano bene. Devi pronunciare le parole bene. Nel lavoro, devi pronunciare l'italiano bene. (Ondine 3.11.10)

Whatever the reason for wanting to speak standard Italian, the overwhelming majority have found that this variety of Italian plays a key role in their lives. This fact, however, does not mean that the Roman accent and other aspects of the Roman dialect do not often find a way to creep into their standard Italian conversations.

In the interviews I conducted, the most tell-tale sign of the Roman dialect is the use of /ʃ/ for /tʃ/. We see this example again when Keita says *ascento* for *accento*.<sup>157</sup> He also uses the post-alveolar fricative often in the word *diciamo*, an occurrence that strikes the speech of other informants as well: “L’italiano ho imparato nella strada, *disciamo*” (Keita 4.23.10). Another common occurrence is *amisci*, where the speech of someone like Ablaay is riddled with the word: “Ma i miei *meilleur amisci* che ho conosciuto in Senegal stanno al Nord” (Ablaay 3.8.10). Another common example of Roman dialect, which we saw in the background chapter on Italy, is the truncation of final syllables. The shortening of *fare* to *fa* is the quintessential example, and Ngoné does it as naturally as any native Italian speaker when she says: “No piace tanto ma che devi fa?”<sup>158</sup> (Anta and Ngoné 3.7.10).

The notion of competence that I discuss in the opening chapter is particularly of interest when we analyze the relation the informants have to standard Italian and Italian dialects. The idealized speech community that was once the staple of SLA studies is further deconstructed and found inadequate to describe the reality of those learning a new language, especially a standard language in a context where regional varieties play a role. Therefore, the achievement it takes for an outsider to navigate the complicated linguistic landscape is no small feat. They often not only need to learn the standard language for reasons of prestige and practicality, they might also want or need to learn the variety of their specific geographical location and perhaps the social variety of the people with whom they come in the most contact. Multilingual competence must take into account the regional and social varieties that many people learn alongside the standard national language. However, as we have seen from previous excerpts, many of the informants find the whole task daunting, opting to center most of their focus on learning the standard variety. In Naza’s case, trying to understand the Roman dialect can be quite difficult: “Con il romano per me è un po’, non mi piace tanto. Perché tagliono le frasi. Andiamo, annamo. Non è chiaro per

<sup>156</sup> She uses the word *drammatica* instead of *teatro*.

<sup>157</sup> Because the post-alveolar fricative in Italian is represented in written script as –sc-, I will use this orthography instead of the IPA to denote non-standard Italian pronunciation of this phoneme.

<sup>158</sup> Roman dialect for *che devi fare*.

me” (Naza 3.13.10). She shows how the verb *andiamo* is reduced to /annamo/, and for a language learner, this transformation is not evident, especially when one must internalize the different forms offered by competing varieties to communicate on a daily basis.

### 5.3.2 Multilingualism

One of my hypotheses about language learning in the Senegalese community, based on my intuition, was that because they come from a country where almost everyone speaks at least two languages, multilingualism and language acquisition of the host nation’s language would be valued.<sup>159</sup> During my interviews in Italy I asked about their feelings regarding speaking various languages as well as their thoughts on how Italians viewed multilingualism. Here is an example of how the questioning could evolve throughout an interview:

(30) M: Pensi che gli Italiani pensano che parlare diverse lingue è importante?

I: Penso che è poco valorizzato il multiculturalismo o di essere polyglota. Penso che da un lato, sì, ma nella realtà, non è valorizzato.

M: In Senegal, per i senegalesi?

I: In Senegal, penso che è una necessità, e anche un fattore di coesione. Perché tanti senegalesi, più di 80% parlano wolof. Abbiamo il francese che è lingua ufficiale. In più, wolof fa da ponte. Ma ci sono le regioni, per esempio nel Sud, il pulaar fa più ponte. Sì, parlare più lingue penso che è positivo...Farli crescere per diventare uno sport della nostra cultura. È una crescita per il nostro sviluppo. (Ibou 2.19.10)

There are a lot of different ideas in this short excerpt with Ibou. First, he associates multiculturalism with being a polyglot, suggesting that language is closely tied to culture. We then see how the notion of multilingualism is heavily contrasted between these two countries. According to Ibou, multilingualism is not necessarily valued in Italy while it is a necessity in Senegal. He even equates the act of speaking several languages to a cultural sport that enhances development. This attitude that speaking different languages in a conversation is a game could explain why there is evidence of language play throughout my research.<sup>160</sup> Ndour echoes this sentiment in the following excerpt when I asked him if he uses one language or various languages in a conversation:

(31) In generale veramente una lingua solo. Solo quando con te o se qualcuno parla diverse lingue, succede. Per esempio, con i senegalesi che incontro qua. Quando ci vediamo, non è che parliamo wolof. Parliamo in italiano. Io ho un amico con cui lavoro, tante volte parliamo wolof ma tante volte anche se possiamo parlare wolof, parliamo italiano perche ci piace parlare in italiano. Scherziamo un po’.  
(Ndour 2.27.10)

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<sup>159</sup> Cenoz (2006) mentions immigrants as a group for which third language acquisition is common. However, he argues that even though third language acquisition is a common phenomenon throughout the world, relatively little research has been produced. Out of this research, no one has really focused on the language ideologies of the immigrant groups learning the languages nor what value they place on third language acquisition.

<sup>160</sup> Crystal (1998) demonstrates how the ludic (or playful) function of language is important for language appreciation. According to him, we play with language by manipulating it, making it do what it normally does not do, for our amusement or for the amusement of others.

The phrase *scherziamo un po'* means to joke or to play around, conveying a similar meaning as the word 'sport'. Even if he is more comfortable speaking Wolof, he sometimes speaks Italian for the joy of speaking it. His friend and he have more than one language at their disposal and so they can choose what language to speak at any given time. However, if Ndour is conversing with a monolingual, out of respect, he will only use the language of the interlocutor.

The interview questions yield various responses along similar lines. Most notably, the answers show that the informants give value to multilingual competence and see a cultural connection to languages. Concerning this cultural connection to language, Karim talks about his son who lives in France with his French mother. They chose a Senegalese baby-sitter so that the child would be exposed to Karim's mother tongue: "...la baby-sitter è senegalese e gli parla wolof. Poi, lui, no è che parla ma capisce perché la baby-sitter sta con lui da 4 anni. Magari capisce, se tu gli parli. Non voglio che lui non conosca i suoi *racines* come tanti in Francia che non sanno più di dove sono.<sup>161</sup> La *rassina* è molto importante perché devi sempre sapere nella vita chi sei..." (Karim 3.2.10). As one sees here, Karim fears that if his son does not know Wolof, he will not know where he comes from, something that according to him happens a lot in France and in other foreign countries as well. Many see the home as the only place to guard this cultural affiliation in countries where the call for integration seems to want to eradicate languages other than the national language. The interviews show that many people feel that value is not placed on multilingualism in Europe these days so it is up to the parents to carry the type of multilingualism that was instilled in them while growing up in Senegal. We catch glimpses of multilingualism in this excerpt as Karim uses the French word *racines* for 'roots' instead of the Italian word *radici*. While this could be an attempt to highlight the concept, his later Italianizing of the French word with 'rassina' suggests that one language is influencing another. The conversation was not long enough to know whether 'rassina' always substitutes *radice* or if the earlier use of *racine* triggered a one-time mistake.

Other responses demonstrate that many Senegalese people are not only keen on conserving cultural heritage through language but are also interested in international languages because of the opportunities they offer. English is normally hailed as the most important language to learn. The following citation demonstrates the value of English: "Le lingue servono. Soprattutto l'inglese. Voi siete fortunati perché con l'inglese, si comunica dappertutto. Comunque vai in Africa. L'italiano, solo qua. Il francese, un po', sì. L'espagnole, c'è" (Karim 3.2.10). A recurring theme is that everyone sees Italian as only being useful in Italy. Additionally, many suspect French is losing its dominance and thus its importance on the global stage. However, Italian's restricted usage on a global scale does not dissuade Senegalese immigrants from learning Italian if they plan to live in Italy. As Ablaay points out: "Quando vai in un paese, deve imparare a parlare questa lingua. Lei deve farmi piacere almeno di dire 'buongiorno,' 'buona sera' tutto quanto. Questo è essenziale per farlo già, per impararlo già" (Ablaay 3.8.10). Biondo sums up, albeit paradoxically, a prominent opinion of the Italian language in terms of usefulness: "Una lingua è sempre utile ma non serve a niente la lingua italiana" (Biondo 4.10.10). This quote shows the high value of multilingualism but the limited value of a specific language.

The informants discuss the importance of multilingualism while expressing disbelief in why Italians seem hesitant to learn other languages. They have various theories about the

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<sup>161</sup> *I suoi racines for le sue radici.*

linguistic practices of Italians, and while these theories stereotype Italians immensely, they serve to show how the majority of Senegalese people view what they see as professed monolingualism. For example, Ablaay argues, “gli Italiani non vogliono altre lingue eccetto l’inglese. Pero è gia difficile per loro. Perche loro sono, hanno la *paressa* di studiare. Quelli che lo studiano hanno altre opportunita. Lo sai che gli Italiani piaciono festeggiare” (Ablaay 3.8.10). He sees the Italian attitude toward multilingualism as lazy. In expressing this idea, he uses an Italianized version of the French *paresse* instead of the Italian *pigrizia*. Vestiges of French also appear in his pronunciation of *difficile* which he pronounces /difi’sile/.

Ndiaga portrays the Italians in an even more negative light when he contends that “gli Italiani in questo senso, io, come la vedo, sono un po’ razzisti perche loro tengono solo *leur* lingua...Le altre lingue non gli interessano tanto. Forse l’inglese. Per me *les* italiani tengono molto *leur* lingua. Per esempio, *si* tu cerchi di parlare con un italiano francese, lascia perdere” (Ndiaga 2.14.10). In his opinion, their indifference to learning other languages stems from an inherent racism. There is the occasional insertion of French into his Italian. Here he uses the French third person plural possessive pronoun *leur* instead of saying *la loro lingua*. He also uses the article *les* instead of *gli*. The *gli* does not occur often in Ndiaga’s interview and we see him use the Italian article consistently at the beginning of this excerpt. The *les*, however, is a regular occurrence. While I do not know why he uses *leur*, as it could be an error or it could be intentional, the effect that it has on his meaning warrants attention. Through this code-switching, Ndiaga highlights the possessive pronoun ‘their.’ This accent on the personal deictic denotes ownership perhaps suggesting a feeling that Italian belongs to Italians, not to him.

Meanwhile, Keita’s words convey how the perceived negative attitude by Italians towards multilingualism clashes with his own conceptualization of multilingualism and multiculturalism: “La cosa brutta è che non cercano di di di tipo parlare un’altra lingua...Cercano sempre di mettere al primo posto la loro lingua...Mia nonna mi diceva una volta, guarda, per essere propio uomo, bisogna di uscire da casa tua, e andare in un’altra parte, di di capire che il mondo è talmente grande que non è che conta solo la mia” (Keita 4.23.10). He links learning different languages to knowing the world around you and to recognizing that one perception is not the only one that counts. He implicitly suggests that being a monolingual prevents one from knowing all there is to know and this closed view of the world limits you. Therefore, it is not so much the importance of a particular language in terms of a global outlook but the act of learning a language, numerous languages, which should be lauded. However, what I find interesting about this view of Italians and their monolingualism is that no one mentions the various dialects in the context of multilingualism even though dialectal features are discussed in detail in the interviews. The use of dialect seems to be a different type of multilingualism that does not warrant the same consideration for my Senegalese informants.

One possible reason why the informants treat Italian dialectal variation differently than the multilingualism found in Senegal is that dialects in popular opinion are often not considered as important as languages. If this is the case then the informants might not ever stop to think that dialectal variation could be considered a form of multilingualism. Another possible explanation is related to how each country conceptualizes languages/dialects. Gambarota (2011) speaks of Italy’s “general concern for monolingualism” where “multilingualism and multiculturalism challenge the traditional definitions of the nation” (p. 4). While many Italians do speak an Italian dialect, as seen in the informants’ commentary on learning standard Italian, importance is still placed on a national language shared by all, which also translates into a shared national identity. Meanwhile, in Senegal, the national languages seem to occupy a different status than the

officially recognized minority languages of Italy.<sup>162</sup> Speaking multiple languages does not make one less Senegalese. In fact, the way Senegalese speak about their languages, it is a very important aspect of Senegalese identity. It is possible that the informants in this study pick up on the monolingual bent in Italian national discourse and therefore view dialectal multilingualism in Italy in a different light than multilingualism in Senegal.

### 5.3.2.1 Multilingual usage

While the interviews are a good source of data for understanding language ideologies related to multilingualism, the recorded natural conversations provide insight into how people consciously or unconsciously use language. There are instances in the data where informants use Italian in almost a theatrical way, seemingly emphasizing a brand of Italian-ness. Bakhtin (1986) used the notion of heteroglossia to argue that words are historically embedded, conveying previous meanings and associations. He also contended that speakers transmit an evaluative attitude through their words. While heteroglossia occurs in monolingual as well as multilingual speech, code-switching can highlight the heteroglossic nature of words in multilingual speech. In the following excerpt I feel that Moustapha presents a prime example of how the voice of someone else can be appropriated. In taking a bite of his meal, he dramatically declares: “Buonissimo. Buonissimo. Come gli italiani. Mamma mia, che buo:::no. Come, come hai fatto per prepararlo così, eh?” (Moustapha 3.28.10). In his mind, he is behaving like an Italian and signals this evocation of the Italian spirit by saying “come gli italiani.” He exaggerates the words by extending the vowel in *buono*, by repeating the superlative, which in turn emphasizes its weight, and by using a phrase that the Senegalese have adopted with vigor, *mamma mia*. He is performing his version of an Italian who enjoys his meal and uses phrases that he assumes an Italian would use.

In another situation, with a different cast of characters, Biondo (B) and Kollo (K) are watching a video of two well-known West African artists, Youssou Ndour from Senegal and Rokia Traore from Mali. In this excerpt they are midway through their conversation, which is almost entirely in Wolof:

(32) K: ...**Wa ji booko xoolé.**<sup>163</sup>

B: Oh che bella, mamma mia, guarda gli occhi. Che belli.

K: **Gisoo ki ànd ak ki toog (gis nu). Xam nga, ñoom, bu ñu àndee ak Afrikan ba dugg si biir Afrik yi, dañuy bég. Mungi bég xam nga di ree rekk.**<sup>164</sup>

((watch video)) (Senegalese Restaurant 4.10.10)

As Kollo is discussing something with Biondo in Wolof, he momentarily switches to Italian when Rokia Traore appears. He starts fawning over her beauty. The question is, why does he do so in Italian? He speaks in exaggerated tones, which suggest that the language switch signifies a voicing of what he might see as the prototypical Italian male who is notorious for being quite forward when a beautiful woman walks by. He uses the seemingly prerequisite *mamma mia* and points out a body part, the eyes. He repeats the word *bello* to highlight her beauty. Again, this

<sup>162</sup> Even the term “minoranze linguistiche” denotes lesser value.

<sup>163</sup> ...ce gars-là, si tu le regardes bien.

<sup>164</sup> Regarde celui-là. Tu sais, eux, quand s’ils sont accompagnés des Africains, parmi les Africains, ils sont contents. Il est tellement content, tu sais, qu’il rit sans cesse..

voicing of Italian seems to create a performance of an Italian identity, at least his conceptualization of a male Italian identity.

Code-switching and voicing in these examples are arguably deliberate. While I admit that I do not know the specific intentions of my interlocutors when they code-switch, by looking at different elements in the conversation, I can suggest what a code-switch seems to accomplish. The following excerpt also takes places at the Senegalese restaurant, with several people participating in the conversation at once. In the excerpt below Kolle (K) and Biondo (B) have been arguing about Biondo's behavior. Barbara (V) is also present:

(33) K: **Waaw, baax na.** Hai sentito? **Baax na. Moytul rekk.** *Comme que dangay tas rekk, negal ba nga dem sa kër, nga def ko fa. Probleme nga ma naral indil. Bàyyil li ngay def.*<sup>165</sup>

B: *Est-ce que am nga assurance? Est-ce que am nga sécurité bu wér?* ((Kolle is mad and doesn't respond anymore))...**Baax.**<sup>166</sup> Allora, che dici? Tutto a posto?

V: Ma sìi.

B: **Ana waa kër ga?**<sup>167</sup>

V: Bene. Hai visto la neve?

B: Mamma mia. (Senegalese restaurant 2.12.10)

We enter the scene with Kolle, whose raised tone of voice, appears to be scolding Biondo for how he is behaving. She says rather sarcastically: “**Waaw, baax na.** Hai sentito, **baax na?**” (Yes, it's fine. You hear, it's fine). This whole section of the conversation is in Wolof so the contrast with the Italian is quite stark. It is as if she is highlighting her sarcasm by bracketing it with Italian. To say ‘you hear’ in Italian gives voice to her words by drawing attention to the sense of hearing through the use of a different language. Meanwhile, Biondo does his own highlighting in his response: “*Est-ce que am nga assurance? Est-ce que am nga sécurité bu wér?*” He uses question markers in both French and Wolof when ‘am nga’ (do you have?) was sufficient by itself. He could have just as easily said “*Est-ce que tu as de l'assurance?*” but that would have constituted a rupture with the Wolof speaking conversation. The presence of French words *assurance* and *sécurité* is not surprising because these are French borrowings in Wolof. However, the French question marker is unnecessary because “am nga” already indicates that a question is being asked. This redundancy succeeds in emphasizing either the joking nature of his questions or the questions themselves.

After Kolle refuses to speak to him any further, Biondo turns his attention to Barbara. He signals a conclusion to the previous conversation with a forceful *baax* (fine) and changes language to show that he has changed interlocutors. However, he has not finished with Wolof. After greeting Barbara in Italian ‘tutto a posto’ he mirrors that greeting with a standard one in Wolof ‘*Ana waa kër ga?*’ (How is your family?). Barbara is married to a Senegalese man and can understand some Wolof. As this line is almost always used in the ritual Wolof greeting, it is safe to assume she would know the answer, yet she chooses to respond in Italian. Biondo might have spoken to her in Wolof to get her to practice especially since they know each other quite well. Perhaps her responding in Italian was a display of bowing out of the lesson. She moves the

<sup>165</sup> **Oui, c'est bon.** Hai sentito, **c'est bon. Fais attention. Comme tu le casse, attends d'arriver chez toi pour le faire là-bas. Ne me crée pas de problèmes. Arrête ce que tu fais.**

<sup>166</sup> *Est-ce tu as une assurance? Est-ce que tu as une bonne sécurité...Bon.*

<sup>167</sup> **Comment va ta famille?** [Literally: how are the people of your house]



conversation to the topic of the day, the unprecedented snowfall in Rome, and Biondo continues the topic in Italian.

Meanwhile, the next two excerpts are spoken by Ndour, in which code-switching seems to indicate emphasis.<sup>168</sup> In the first example he says, “Era una persona molto *antipatique*” (Ndour 2.27.10). What makes this word choice interesting is the fact that the word is the same in Italian as in French except for the ending and the placement of the stress. Does an adjective come across more strongly if it is said in another language? Could the fact that French is his more competent language add to the weight of the word? Or does making the switch simply signal an emphasis on the operative word? If he wanted to highlight this person’s mean characteristics, a language switch is a viable option and definitely made me take note. In the second example, he goes a step further by opting to use English instead of his strongest foreign language, French: “Sì sì. Lei ha imparato il francese a scuola. Due anni fa ha fatto la scuola francese. Ma stava pregnant e ha lasciato senza avere la diploma” (Ndour 2.27.10). He was referring to his wife. *Incinta* (pregnant) is a word he would have been exposed to just for the simple fact that he went through a pregnancy with his wife while living in Italy. Why then would he choose to use the English word? One could argue that it was for my benefit, but he did not throw out random words in English at other parts of the interview. It could have also been a momentarily inability to recall the Italian, or just as in the previous excerpt, he could arguably be using English for emphasis, to foreground the fact that she was pregnant. As we see from these examples, CS and voicing give a person different discursive options. The following section will look at how these linguistic and discursive decisions shed light on conceptualizations of identity.

#### **5.4 Construction of identities and negotiation of boundaries**

By looking at language ideologies, I can explore language acquisition and multilingual use in the Senegalese immigrant community. The attitudes that emerge from the interviews and the natural recordings provide insight into a variety of topics, which all converge on an overarching question about identity: what is the relationship between immigrants’ and host-country speakers’ notions of identity? More specifically, what desire for inclusion exists for Senegalese immigrants living in Italy based on how they conceive of their own identities in relation to their understanding of the surrounding environment? While the interview questions are linguistic in nature, discussions about belonging emerge, highlighting the fact that any language policy seeking linguistic integration must also address social integration. My data show how the informants conceptualize the notion of boundaries and how these boundaries shape identities. There are several identity markers that position these Senegalese immigrants as outsiders in mainstream Italian culture, most notably, nationality and race. In this section, I look at how the use of code-switching signals certain formulations of identity by showing that people express their understanding of inclusion/exclusion through more than just the content of their words. Using discourse analysis, I demonstrate that the way they use different languages illustrate boundaries and I argue that these multilingual strategies are as important as the meaning of the words themselves.

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<sup>168</sup> Ndour has one of the best commands of Italian out of all of the informants, and the following examples are words that would have arguably been known to him.

### 5.4.1 Desire for Inclusion

Mathews (2000), in his research on identity, posits the existence of a cultural supermarket which allows for the creation of a market identity. Contrary to national or ethnic identity, which are tied to place, a market identity “is based on belonging to no particular place, but rather to the market in both its material and cultural forms—in market-based identity, one’s home is all the world” (p. 9). While Mathews’s research verifies that a global market-based identity can exist for many people, it also shows that many people, especially immigrants, are tied to the identities that are attached to their homeland. Searching to reconcile their new lives with their old lives, “Immigrants may find themselves asking, ‘Who am I? Where, really, is my home? This new place where I live: can this be my home? Or will my home always be the place I’ve left behind?’” (p. 24). The concept of home is constantly evoked because it is hard to separate our life stories from the settings in which they happen. This idea of home is something that everyone shares even though ‘home’ means different things to different people. Moreover, Kramsch (1993) also uses home as a metaphor with regard to foreign language learning. She argues that through awareness of different contexts and perspectives, foreign language learners “make themselves at home in a culture ‘of a third kind’” (p. 235). However, this ‘third kind,’ also known as ‘third space’ or ‘third place,’ is constantly negotiated and changing. The instability means that conceptualizations of home are in flux.<sup>169</sup>

The following excerpt underlines the importance of home as Biondo (B) and his friend (G) discuss returning to Senegal. This excerpt displays nationality as the highlighted identity marker:

- (34) M: ...Pensate di tornare in Senegal?  
B: Ooooooh, hai mai visto un senegalese che non vuole tornare ((laughs))?  
M: Sì, esatto.  
B: Non esiste proprio. Dovunque sia. Australia, America, Europa.  
M: Sempre, casa è casa.  
B: Casa. Casa è casa. Basta. **Bëggoo dellu Senegal?**<sup>170</sup>  
G: Eh?  
B: **Bëggoo dellu Senegal?**  
G: Sì, chiaro.  
B: Non esiste un senegalese che non vuole tornare a casa.  
G: Senegal è il paese più bello del mondo.  
(Biondo 4.10.10)

This excerpt displays the boundaries Biondo erects surrounding his conceptualization of home. Living in Italy, he is far away from his home country, Senegal. However, this boundary exists not because of what Italy is but for what it is not. By mentioning other places (Australia, America, Europe), he creates an ‘us vs. them’ schism in which ‘us’ is Senegal and ‘them’ is the rest of the world.

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<sup>169</sup> According to Kramsch (1993), language study should be seen as a point of entry into social practice that borrows from two or more cultures, creating a ‘third place’. In this third place “what is at stake is the creation, in and through the classroom, of a social, linguistic reality that is born from the L1 speech environment of the learners and the social environment of the L2 native speakers, but is a third culture in its own right” (p. 9). Kramsch is mainly concerned with the language classroom but I argue that this metaphor extends to learning outside the classroom.

<sup>170</sup> **Tu ne veux pas rentrer au Sénégal?**

The content of this conversation indicates a notion of displacement, of being far from home, but an analysis of the actual language use also demonstrates the existence of boundaries. The language of the conversation is Italian; therefore, why does he choose to direct a question to his friend in Wolof? One possible pragmatic explanation, which is substantiated by the code-switching literature and falls under the rubric of situational code-switching, is that Biondo switches to Wolof to indicate a different interlocutor.<sup>171</sup> In this instance, Biondo turns his attention from me to his Senegalese friend. Switching languages helps to signal this change. However, one can use other perspectives to explain the switch to Wolof, such as Myers-Scotton's (1993a) Markedness Model, which details social motivations for code-switching. Myers-Scotton contends that code-switching can be used in the negotiation of interpersonal relationships and the signaling of group membership (p. 478). Perhaps Biondo switches languages to create a sense of 'us' by highlighting the linguistic connection between himself and his friend. The Italian language bestows a particular identity on the country in which he now lives that contrasts with his identity as a Wolof speaker. By speaking in Wolof, he further emphasizes an identity that is not Italian, but Senegalese. This decision reinforces the boundary between him and his environment and the link between himself and other Wolof-speaking Senegalese people.

Gardner-Chloros (2009) applies the Markedness Model to the conceptualization of home. She argues that "in any given social circumstances, a particular variety is the expected or 'unmarked' – i.e. the unremarkable – one. So, for example, switching to the local vernacular to talk about home/family is 'unmarked,' whereas switching to the local vernacular in a public speech is a 'marked' choice" (p. 69). What I find particularly interesting is that when Biondo code-switches into Wolof, after having ruminated on the word *home* in the line "Casa. Casa è casa," he does not use the word *home* in Wolof. Maybe the very action of uttering this question in Wolof means that *home* is implied in the word 'Senegal'.

The next code-switch occurs when his friend responds in Italian to his question in Wolof. One possible explanation is that since I have limited ability in speaking Wolof, he wanted to return the conversation to a common language. Zentella (1997) has found in her research that "the most important of the spot observables that guided children's language choices were the linguistic proficiency of the person to whom they were speaking (also called 'hearer,' 'addressee,' or 'interlocutor'), and the language requirements of the setting" (p. 83). In this particular excerpt, if the friend's intent was to return to a language that all of us could speak well, it had the desired effect because Biondo's next turn was in Italian.

Biondo speaks in absolutes when he talks about how 'a Senegalese who doesn't want to return home doesn't exist,' a strong statement as he channels the voice of a whole people. Biondo accentuates the schism between 'us' and 'them' by taking isolated instances and attributing a generalization to them. Meanwhile, in another example, Professore (P) uses intertextuality to answer the question of whether he thinks he will return to Senegal one day:

- (35) P: *C'est mon souhait, quoi.*  
N: **Inch'allah.**  
P: E il mio sogno. I have a dream. ((smiles))  
M: ((laugh)) OK.  
P: That's my dream." (Professore 4.24.10)

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<sup>171</sup> Situational code-switching is associated with changes in interlocutor, context or topic.

While the conversation with Professore is in Italian, French, and English, depending on what Professore feels at a particular moment, at the point of this citation, French has been spoken for a while. In the first turn he speaks in French. After Ndiaga inserts the Wolof/Arabic set phrase “God willing,” Professore repeats his original thought in Italian. He then quotes Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech. What makes it obvious that this is a reference to that speech and not simply a translation of what he has said previously is that in the following turn he offers a more exact translation to his original “c’est mon souhait”: “That’s my dream.” By intertextualizing the words of Martin Luther King, he infuses the conversation with a hint of gravitas under the guise of humor (he smiled when he said it, eliciting a laugh from me). By evoking the voice of one of the best-known civil rights leaders in history, he aptly conveys just how much he yearns to return to Senegal and the seriousness of his sustained exodus from his homeland.

While these excerpts show how both the use of code-switching and intertextuality can express feelings of being outside of one’s home country and can signal the existence of boundaries, the next section looks at the principles of inclusion and exclusion to see the effects of boundaries in the construction of identity. Race and skin color are identity markers that can contribute to the establishment and maintenance of boundaries for African immigrants in Europe.

#### 5.4.2 Race, nationality, citizenship and the formation of identities

The following excerpt is from the same interview with Professore (P). For part of his interview his friend Ndiaga (N), who has already been interviewed, is present. The interview switches between Italian and French, but at this point in the interview the dominant language is French. This excerpt shares a similar trait to the previous ones in that the use of code-switching conveys a complex sense of identity:

(36) P: *La demande, c’était?*

M: *Tes pensées ici en Italie?*

P: Va be—

N: --*Tu as, tu as* ((trails off))

P: *Les--*

N: *Tu as vu, vu le film Co, Col, Color Viola.*

M: *Non. Oh, The Color Purple.*

N: *Color Viola.*

M: *The Color, Oui.*

N: *Tu [l’as vu?*

P: [*Color Purple.*

M: *Oui. Oui. C’est, [c’est fort.*

N: [*Je suis noir, je suis nero, je suis brutto, ma, je suis vivo.*

M: *Esatto.*

N: *È bellissima.*

(Ndiaga (N) from Professore’s (P) interview 4.24.10)

I had asked Professore to tell me about his thoughts on living in Italy. However, it was Ndiaga who responded and directed the conversation towards race. In another noteworthy display of

intertextuality and code-switching, similar to Professore's reference to Martin Luther King's famous speech, he quotes a line from the iconic film based on Alice Walker's book *The Color Purple*, where the character Celie responds to Albert's taunt: "I'm poor, black, I might even be ugly, but dear God, I'm here. I'm here."<sup>172</sup> Ndiaga saw the movie in Italian, and according to an online movie database, Celie says in the Italian version, "Io sono povera, sono negra, sono anche brutta, ma buon Dio sono viva: sono viva!!!"<sup>173</sup> Ndiaga's version of this quotation is particularly interesting. He begins in French, the language that we are currently speaking, and yet he inserts Italian for the adjectives. He switches mid utterance when correcting himself from "je suis noir" to "je suis nero." He then continues this pattern with *brutto* and *vivo*. Does the 'I am' remain in French because after Wolof, French is the language he best expresses himself, thus the language that most closely reflects his identity "I"? Are the adjectives in Italian simply because he saw the movie in Italian or because those may be the adjectives that he perceives the Italians would use to describe him? Does he use the word *nero* instead of *negro*, because the word *negro* is taboo and seldom used in my data, even in reported speech; or does he use *nero* because that is how he remembered the line from the movie? My reading of this instance of code-switching is just conjecture but any of these interpretations is reasonable.

A possible explanation for code-switching in this example is to apply the notion of metaphorical code-switching, where switching languages "enriches a situation, allowing for allusion to more than one social relationship within the situation" (Blom & Gumperz, 1972, p. 408).<sup>174</sup> From an open-ended question such as "what are your thoughts on living in Italy?" Ndiaga directs the conversation towards the topic of race. He appropriates the voice of a fictional character that has been abused and controlled to illustrate his marginalized position in society. By using the adjectives 'nero' 'brutto' and 'vivo' in Italian, he has voiced the speech of someone else.<sup>175</sup> By switching to Italian for the operative words *nero*, *brutto*, and *vivo* and by changing the content of the conversation to focus on race, Ndiaga imposes the notion of exclusion in order to position himself as an outsider in his social environment.

Professore reinforces this sense of exclusion in his response to the question a few turns-of-talk later:

- (37) P: ...en Afrique ça va être différent parce que là on ne parlera pas de, euhh, Blacks. Non. Tu as vu? Mais bon. Je sais que tu, tu dois comprendre un peu ce que je suis en train de dire.  
 M: Oui. Bien sûr.  
 P: Voilà. Je ne veux pas trop rentrer dans les détails.  
 (Professore 4.24.10)

It is important to point out that while my interview questions do not specifically raise the question of race, it was discussed in the majority of my interviews. Professore's formulation of

<sup>172</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0088939/quotes>

<sup>173</sup> <http://www.mymovies.it/battute/?id=5753>

<sup>174</sup> As mentioned in chapter 4, unlike situational code-switching, where the interlocutor or context drives the language choice, metaphorical code-switching conjures what Gardner-Chloros (2009) called "the metaphorical 'world' of the variety" (p. 59).

<sup>175</sup> According to Pavlenko (2007), "*Voicing* refers to rendering the speech of others, directly or indirectly, and *double-voicing* involves instances in which the writer or speaker imposes her or his own meaning on the words of others..." (p. 179).

race is similar to what Ibrahim (1999) argues about his own experiences of becoming black in response to his social environment signaling him as black. Ibrahim introduced the concept of a *social imaginary* when discussing the process by which these black youth come into their Blackness. The social imaginary is “a discursive space or a representation in which they are already constructed, imagined, and positioned and thus are treated by the hegemonic discourses and dominant groups, respectively as Blacks” (p. 353). Professore implies that he was constructed as Black when he left Africa for Europe. I would argue that Professore has been affected by ‘the social processes of racism’ based on the way he refuses to discuss the matter in detail. Secondly, he chooses to use *Black* instead of *Noir*. The word *black* may be preferred here for various reasons. For instance, talking about a racial feature in a foreign language can lessen the impact of the word. One of the informants in France explained that people have started saying *black* for *noir*: “Ils ne peuvent pas utiliser le mot ‘noir’ parce que le mot ‘noir’ est tabou” (Ajuma 12.13.2009). Just as Zentella (1997) notes cases where those in her study switched languages to avoid a taboo word, using descriptive terms concerning race in a foreign language serves the same purpose. By using a word borrowed from English, one avoids the connotations attached to the French word.

Another explanation is that the use of the word *black* could signal the Diaspora, evoking those of African descent living in the English-speaking world. This is a viable argument because of how Professore has included me in the conversation. I view this exchange as evidence of an implicit understanding in which he sees me as a fellow black person. In the methodology section of my dissertation, I speak about how my black American female identity had some bearing on my interactions, and this is a key moment in which my identity matters. I do not broach the subject because he ‘prefers to not go into detail.’ He assumes that because of who I am, I ‘must understand.’ I verify that I do and the *voilà* puts an end to the discussion as if there is no need to say more. By including me directly in this discussion of race, he creates the boundary of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ in which I have become part of the ‘us.’ The racial identity that he has assigned to me and that I have accepted separates us from the identity that he has given to the Italian people.

While I do not know the specific experiences that have shaped Professore’s perception, I have data from other informants that give me an idea of the types of racially charged experiences that happen in Italy. As detailed earlier, Abi has had a difficult time during her stay in Italy. The following excerpt further demonstrates not only the schism between ‘us’ and ‘them’ but how language expresses this schism:

(38) Moi, un jour, où j’ai prends le bus, et je rentre et je fais, j’ai le VI quatre Italiens.  
 Mais les enfants. Mais, elles m’ont fait, quelque chose. Ça me mal jusqu’à  
 aujourd’hui. Je ne pas oublier ça...Regarde le *nero*, là, là le *ner::*. Quand je parle  
 au téléphone ils criaient ‘oua oua oua oua oua’. J’obligeais de dire, je le dis ‘mais  
 si te plaît’. On dit ‘Ici c’est italien. C’est chez nous. Vous êtes des *ner::*.  
*Mamma mia*, ça me blesse. Ça me mal. Ça me mal... (Abi 3.28.10)

In the incident on the bus with the Italian youths, several points stand out. The first is the blatant signaling of her color *nero*. The youths position her as “the Other” by highlighting her skin which contrasts with their view of Italian society. This word has a tremendous effect on Abi as it is the only content word in this excerpt that is in Italian. (I will treat *mamma mia* as a discourse practice separately). The word *nero* is directed at her in a discriminatory manner, and she, in turn, keeps it in its original form. By revoicing it in Italian, Abi conveys the original

hatred behind the word and the effect it has on her. She also emphasizes the word through repetition and through elongation of the ‘R’ sound. Referring to a study on Jamaican English in London, Gardner-Chloros (2009) has written “that code-switching is used...to ‘animate’ the narrative by providing different ‘voices’ for the participants in the incident which is described” (p. 3). By choosing to voice a key word in Italian, Abi highlights the word’s effect on her.

Butler (1997) discusses the injurious nature of language. According to her, “to be called a name is one of the first forms of linguistic injury that one learns” (p. 2). It is only fitting then that Abi would internalize this word with its specific connotation in Italian, when she has limited command of the Italian language. I must point out that the word *nero*, in referring to a person, is not necessarily an insult in Italian. The closest thing Italian has to a word like the ‘N-word’ in English is *negro*, but the word *nero* can be construed as an insult in certain contexts. Judging from Abi’s retelling, *nero* is closer to the ‘N-word’ than it is to ‘black person’ in her mind. Butler asks, “Why should a merely linguistic address produce such a response of fear?” (p. 5). She answers this question, in part, with the following:

One comes to ‘exist’ by virtue of this fundamental dependency on the address of the Other. One ‘exists’ not only by virtue of being recognized, but, in a prior sense, by being *recognizable*. The terms that facilitate recognition are themselves conventional, the effects and instruments of a social ritual that decide, often through exclusion and violence, the linguistic conditions of survivable subjects. (Butler, 1997, p. 5)

Abi exists because she is recognizable as “the Other,” an identity that is not welcomed by those who are taunting her. Her skin color, *nero*, is what separates her, excludes her, and it is this appellation that stays etched in her mind, resurfacing in its Italian form in a discussion that is predominantly in French. The simple act of labeling by skin color is not necessarily injurious by itself. However, because people use skin color as an excuse to exclude others economically and socially, a simple word becomes injurious.

Abi’s skin color is not the only part of her identity that the youths attack. Upon hearing her speaking in Wolof, they imitate her with ‘wawawawawa’ to the point that she cannot concentrate on her phone call. She recalls their reasoning as: “Ici c’est italien. C’est chez nous.” Those who taunt her are further positioning her as the Other by drawing attention to her language. They create a boundary in which those who speak Italian can enter. The *we* is an Italian speaking *we*. As bad as the racial insult is, it is the linguistic insult that she enunciates as a major injurious act: “*Mamma mia*, ça me blesse. Ça me mal.” She is wounded because of the attack on her mother tongue and because of her continued exclusion from the society in which she now lives. *Mamma mia* is an exclamation that has been picked up by several of the informants and is often used to express emotion. While Abi seldom employs Italian words throughout the interview, perhaps she feels that this phrase best describes her injury.

Abi feels like an outsider in Italy and has expressed this ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ sentiment through different discourse strategies, conveying a bleak and disheartening picture. However, not all discussions of race and nationality among the informants were negative or disconcerting. There were also examples of humorous discussions of nationality and the destruction of boundaries and borders. In the following excerpt we see questions of identity being evoked consciously in natural conversation and in a manner that plays on words and languages in a creative way. In the

following conversation, Idi (I), a friend (G) and Bachir (B) joke about being Senegalese over a meal at the Senegalese restaurant:

- (39) I: No mi piaciono i senegalesi, e per questo io ho tornato italiano adesso.<sup>176</sup>  
Capito? ((everyone laughs)) I senegalesi parlano troppo, capito. Hai visto questo? Come non?  
G: Chi è italiano? Sei italiano?  
I: Sì.  
G: Meno male.  
M: ((laugh))  
G: **Boy, yow yaa doon naan fii.**<sup>177</sup>  
I: No è male che cosa?  
G: Perché sei italiano adesso. Noi siamo dei senegalese, capito?  
B: *Je suis fier d'être sénégalais.*  
G: **Wax ko si italien.**<sup>178</sup>  
I: Ecco, io, grazie a tutti--  
G: **Jox ko si ndox mi mu naan si italien.**<sup>179</sup>  
I: **Bokkul si italien.**<sup>180</sup>  
G: **Waaye benn la.**<sup>181</sup>  
I: **Asstaf four la.**<sup>182</sup> (Senegalese Restaurant 2.12.10)

While the conversations at the restaurant are normally in Wolof unless a non-Wolof speaker is being addressed, it would make sense for Idi to begin this topic in Italian, as he is discarding his Senegalese identity. Because he has decided he does not want to be Senegalese because they talk too much, he claims an Italian identity. The friend (G) challenges Idi by suggesting he is drunk for saying such a thing, using the word *boy* to address him, a word taken from English but appropriated in Wolof. He also jokingly says something to the effect of ‘Thank goodness’ when he says *meno male*. This phrase in context could also mean good riddance. However, either through a misinterpretation or a play on words, Idi transforms *meno male* into *no è male* in his next turn. The other person’s response seems to suggest an ‘us’ vs. ‘him.’ *Noi* includes all the Senegalese but Idi who has now defected, which is not necessarily a bad thing in the friend’s mind. While this exchange is obviously in jest as there is laughing in the background and a lack of gravity in their voices, Bachir’s interruption “*je suis fier d'être sénégalais*” conveys a need to voice this pride in his identity. The language choice is worth noting. It is the only phrase that is said in French in the whole exchange. Why would Bachir use French when he is professing his Senegalese heritage and Wolof had been used a couple of turns earlier by G? It might have been for my benefit or it might have been completely subconscious. The use of French is particularly important because of G’s immediate response in Wolof telling him to say it in Italian. In fact, when I read the transcript, I wonder if G is calling for Idi to say the equivalent

<sup>176</sup> In standard Italian it would be *io sono diventato italiano*.

<sup>177</sup> **Garçon, ce n'était pas toi qui buvais ici?**

<sup>178</sup> **Dit-ça en italien.**

<sup>179</sup> **Donne-lui de l'eau pour qu'il boive ça en italien.**

<sup>180</sup> **Ça fait pas partie de la langue italienne.**

<sup>181</sup> C'est la même chose.

<sup>182</sup> Arabic for **Pardon à dieu** (c'est pas vrai).



in Italian about his pride to be a new Italian: *sono fiero di essere italiano*. I venture to guess that G is engaging Idi throughout because he then tells him to ‘drink the water in Italian.’ Being Italian has transformed from being simply an identity marked by the language spoken to being an identity that encompass every aspect of living, including drinking water. Idi retorts by arguing that drinking is not included in the Italian language, an argument that G dismisses. As if this exchange and the languages used are not interesting enough, Idi gets the last word, electing to use Arabic to do so. While a translation according to my translator is ‘Forgiveness from God,’ she gives a more context specific translation as ‘it’s not true.’ In other words, Idi decides to negate G’s words once more.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

My research in Rome is similar to traditional SLA research on language acquisition among immigrants in that I focus on a group that had little to no prior knowledge of the national language of the host country before migrating. None of the informants had studied Italian in Senegal and very few of them (3 out of 25) took Italian language classes after migrating. There are practical reasons for the lack of language instruction. Ibou has noted that most immigrants have no time to take courses because there are more pressing matters that take precedence, such as finding a job. There are also reasons that related to attitudes on immigration and integration. Riccio (2002) suggests that the Senegalese do not see Italy as a long-term home and are therefore not fully invested in doing things that would help them integrate fully in society, such as taking language classes.

However, while the Senegalese have a reputation for not enrolling in language classes, they are somewhat paradoxically known for learning Italian better than many other immigrant groups. There are several reasons expressed in my research for why the Senegalese have a relatively easy time learning Italian. For one, they come from an environment where multilingualism is respected. Informants have mentioned that they are comfortable with learning language in natural settings because that is how language is learned in Senegal. Secondly, many of the informants have acknowledged using French and other languages to facilitate their Italian language acquisition. They discuss the similarities between the two languages. Alfa, for instance, has said that with a French-Italian dictionary, access to a television, and participation in Italian language conversations, he was able to speak Italian in about a month. It is true that relying on French does not always prove useful. Ndiaga’s anecdote about failing to buy eggs or water because these words in French sound nothing like their equivalents in Italian demonstrates the dangers of using French as a crutch. However, for the most part, French facilitates rather than hinders communication and language acquisition.

Some informants have also noted how knowledge of other Romance languages, such as Spanish, facilitates Italian language acquisition.<sup>183</sup> Still others have argued that Wolof is useful in the acquisition process. For instance, Ndour mentions how Wolof is a difficult language to pronounce because of its wide range of sounds. If one can produce Wolof sounds, one can produce Italian sounds. In addition, Ibou highlights the fact that national languages of Senegal

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<sup>183</sup> There is literature to support this observation. For example, in looking at child SLA, Otto (2006) notes, “the ways in which aspects of language knowledge are similar or different between the two languages influences second language acquisition. Children who are attempting to learn a language from a different language family will find it more difficult than if they were attempting to learn another language from the same language family” (p. 73).

are written with the Latin alphabet and words are pronounced as they are spelled. If one can read a language such as Wolof, one has an easier time reading Italian.

My research has also uncovered reasons why people do or do not feel motivated or invested in learning Italian. Some of these reasons relate directly to the language itself. In general, Italian is described as a beautiful language; therefore the informants express interest in speaking it. Many informants argue that the Italian language lacks global importance. However, most informants contend that lack of global prominence is no reason to avoid learning a language.

In fact, what I have found in Italy is that opinions about language itself never negatively influence a person's desire to learn the language. Instead, it is the personal experiences with Italian speakers that may demotivate informants from learning Italian. For instance, Abi expresses the significance of personal experience when she demonstrates positive feelings toward English and Spanish because of her experiences in the United States and Spain. Meanwhile, she has had several instances of negative, racialized experiences in Italy that cause her to want as little to do with Italian people and Italian language as possible.

Gendered identity is another factor that influences access to and acquisition of the Italian language. My research in Rome reflects other findings in SLA research, most notably those of Norton (2000). Norton argues that women often undergo alienating experiences because of their inability to position themselves as legitimate speakers. They are often denied access to social networks in which meaningful discussions in the target language take place. I have found that one of the most productive environments for language acquisition is between a Senegalese and an Italian in a romantic relationship. The men in my study often date Italian women and mention how these interactions give them access to the Italian language. However, the same does not hold true for the female informants. Due mainly to cultural constraints, the women in my study seldom have relationships with Italian men, which eliminates access to one possible language learning environment. In addition, women in the Senegalese community in Rome are also less visible than their male counterparts. Many of them are relegated to the home sphere, limiting their opportunities to interact with Italian-speaking individuals.

The presence of non-standard Italian also complicates attitudes on and the acquisition of the Italian language. Research on immigrant language acquisition normally assumes that immigrants learn the standard variety. Notable exceptions include Goldstein (1987) and Ibrahim (1999). In my research, I hypothesized that the informants would be most interested in learning standard Italian. While my findings generally support this hypothesis, the attitudes that the informants display offer insight into language acquisition. Some informants muse how they thought they were learning standard Italian and later found out they had actually been learning a dialect of Italian. Ndour, one of the few informants to take a language course, notices that what he has been learning in natural settings differs from what he was taught in the course. Keita demonstrates a desire to learn standard Italian because speaking a Roman dialect is not very useful when traveling around Italy. Many informants suggest that Italians do not speak the standard very well. Through the informants' attitudes, I realize that the idealized speech community, which for so long has been the crux of SLA research, does not represent the reality of those learning a new language in a place such as Italy.

My research also sheds light on language ideologies related to multilingualism. The overwhelming majority of the informants argue that multilingual competence is valuable. They prefer the multilingual environment found in Senegal to the monolingual setting that most European countries seem to endorse. Many informants underline the pleasure involved in

speaking and switching between several languages. They talk about the joys of language play and the freedom that knowledge of numerous languages allow. However, they are quick to note that the context is very important. Informants try to remain monolingual if their interlocutor is monolingual. However, with other Senegalese, multilingual conversations are the norm.

Many informants express a cultural connection to language as well. Karim, for instance, worries that if his son fails to learn Wolof, he will not know and understand his origins. Others highlight the practical application of speaking many languages. For example, learning English is important, especially for people who see themselves as migrants who could end up in any country. While the informants emphasize the positives of multilingualism, they also note the negative opinions that Italians seem to harbor toward multilingualism. Many informants express disappointment with these negative opinions. What I found interesting, however, is that none of the informants recognize the dialectal variation that they describe in Italy as a form of multilingualism. I argue that the failure to recognize this variation as multilingualism could be influenced by the monolingual emphasis that Italian national discourse seems to place on monolingualism or the idea that dialects are often not granted the same status as languages and therefore the informants might not consider dialectal variation as multilingualism.

My data include ample examples of multilingualism in action. The positive attitudes toward multilingualism that the informants conveyed in their language ideologies is evident in their actual language use. Codeswitching is a multilingual practice used for many different functions. In some instances, informants use Italian in a theatrical manner. In the example where Moustapha is eating, for instance, he seems to voice the speech of a stereotypical Italian by using expressions such as *mamma mia* and exaggerating words such as *buono*. In saying “come gli italiani” he specifically marks this as Italian speech. Biondo is another example of someone seemingly performing an Italian identity, this time a specifically male identity, when he comments on a woman he was watching on TV. Throughout the chapter I have analyzed various types of CS and have proposed different reasons why the speakers use CS in these instances. One of the most important arguments I have made, however, is that CS sheds light on formulations of identity; specifically that the way in which the informants switched between languages illustrates boundaries formed through understandings of inclusion and exclusion.

The excerpts in section 5.4 demonstrate how conceptualizations of identity can be expressed through multilingual practices. These understandings of identity, in turn, establish and reestablish boundaries that lead to feelings of exclusion. Boundaries are not only created by the dominant culture, they are also reinforced by those affected by this exclusion. The first excerpts show how a desire to return home could accentuate the ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ schism. The content of the conversation highlights nationality as an identity marker and the code-switching to Wolof demarcated a linguistic boundary. A discussion of race in the subsequent excerpts underlines a sense of exclusion. Expressing ideas about race through various languages with the words *noir*, *nero*, and *black*, the informants demonstrate how code-switching is used as a tool to emphasize feelings of exclusion. Meanwhile, the final excerpt shows that a person’s understanding of social markers such as nationality is dynamic and exists through sites of negotiation. While Idi jokes about changing nationalities, he constructs this new-found nationality through language. The multilingual language use in these vignettes reveals something of the speakers’ perceptions of the surrounding world, and specifically how these Senegalese informants perceive and engage with the social and geographic boundaries in their own lives.

# CHAPTER 6: Comparison

In the introduction, I argued that a comparative study allows one to gain a nuanced perspective of the role identity markers play in language acquisition and use. Unlike studies that focus on one setting, a comparison highlights the specific features that exist between an immigrant group and its host country, underlining how immigrants from a single country behave in different contexts. By focusing on the relationship between a specific group and the surrounding environment, more attention can be placed on the historical, cultural, and societal features that mark this relationship. In the previous two chapters, I analyzed the two individual sites, Paris and Rome, looking specifically at Senegalese immigrants' language acquisition and use, language ideologies, and identity construction. In this chapter, I will explore these themes through direct comparison of the two sites.

## ***6.1 Language acquisition and use***

### **6.1.1 Language learning contexts**

My two sites have proven to be quite different as language learning contexts. Language learning in France can be characterized by four distinct language scenarios: 1) the informant learned French in France, with little French exposure while in Senegal, 2) the informant acquired French in an educational setting in Senegal and in a natural language setting in France, 3) the informant acquired French in natural settings in both France and Senegal, and 4) the informant was born and raised in France and therefore acquired French in only one setting. While most informants underwent two stages of French language acquisition, both in Senegal and in France, all the Rome informants underwent only one stage of Italian language acquisition. None of them were exposed to Italian before migrating to Italy, and the majority of these immigrants acquired Italian in strictly natural settings, opting not to take language classes once in Italy.

The historical relationship between the country of origin and the host country is the main reason why these two immigrant community profiles are so different. The case of Italy represents a prime example of contemporary economic immigration where migrants land in a country because of logistical considerations and expected access to job opportunities. Acquisition and use of the national language seem to be a secondary concern compared to securing a job and sending money back to the home country. Meanwhile, the case of France is more nuanced. While a subset of the Senegalese immigrant population is in France for economic reasons, there is also a wide variety of other motivations for living in France. Reasons for acquiring and use of the French language cannot be represented in any concise way, and the fact that this variety of scenarios exists is directly related to colonialism. In the Paris data, I noted that the majority of the informants had experienced French in a primarily educational setting in Senegal and in a natural setting once they moved to France. This scenario is conditioned by the post-colonial relationship between France and Senegal, where half a century after independence, the colonial language, French, is still the official language. The Paris data also differs from the Rome data with regard to access to educational contexts. In Italy, I did not interview students in higher education settings. While Senegalese students exist in Italian universities, the majority of

Senegalese do not migrate to Italy to continue their studies.<sup>184</sup> By comparison, 10 out of my 27 informants in France moved there for this purpose. Knowledge of the French language and scholarship programs that encourage students from Francophone nations to study in France are motivating factors; therefore, once again this type of migratory phenomenon and the accompanying linguistic features are influenced by the post-colonial context.

### **6.1.2 Language ideologies**

In chapters 4 and 5 I focused my attention on two types of language ideologies: attitudes about the national language and attitudes about multilingualism in France and Italy respectively. These language ideologies, in turn, affect the motivation and investment the informants show toward the learning and use of their languages as well as the competence they hope to achieve.

#### **6.1.2.1 Motivation and investment**

In both France and Italy, the Senegalese informants seem to take pride in speaking the national language; however, their reasons for their learning and using the language as well as their perceptions about speaking it are quite different in the two countries. In Italy, my informants see learning Italian simply as adding one more language to a linguistic repertoire. Previous research on language use in Senegal shows extensive multilingual usage, and this multilingualism persists when Senegalese immigrants migrate to Italy: native languages continue to be spoken and new languages are acquired.<sup>185</sup> The general consensus is that if a person decides to move to a foreign country, s/he should learn the language. At the same time, Italian is seen by the vast majority of the informants as extremely limited and useful only there. Since most of the informants assume that they are only going to live in Italy for a short time, they argue that Italian will have little use for them after they return to Senegal. However, according to them, Italian is worth learning because it opens doors to job opportunities and makes daily life in Italy much easier. This instrumental motivation for learning and using the national language also exists in France. However, I had also assumed that French would be perceived as more useful because of its global presence. While some informants mention the international nature of French and note its usefulness when communicating with other West Africans and French-speakers in general, most informants in both France and Italy highlight the waning importance of the French language on the global stage. In other words, not only is the local context important, these informants pay attention and have opinions on language in a global context.

A major question arises concerning whether the differences I have observed with regard to motivating factors for learning French and Italian will be short-lived in the post-colonial context. With the waning global importance of French, would motivation to learn it decrease? I argue that as long as Francophone African countries continue to use French as the language of government and education, they will be firmly entrenched in the post-colonial context. As shown in chapter 3, there are many political reasons why French remains the official language of Senegal. In addition, France is highly invested in ensuring the global presence of French. For example, in 1984 François Mitterrand created the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie, followed by the establishment of the summit meetings of Francophone Heads of State in 1986, which occurs

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<sup>184</sup> Schmidt di Friedberg (1993) suggests that there were Senegalese students in Italy as early as the 1980's.

<sup>185</sup> McLaughlin, 1995, 2001; Cruise O'Brien, 1998; Swigart, 1994.

biannually in different francophone cities around the globe.<sup>186</sup> While this is a global initiative, France seems to focus its attention on Francophone Africa in order to secure the French language as a relevant world language. For instance, McNamara (1989) suggests:

The resources and energy that the French continue to put into reinforcing and spreading their culture may be the most potent long-term investment in maintaining the close ties between France and her African ex-colonies. Clearly it is France's position at the center of a linguistic bloc of countries that preserves her special position in the world as a near-great power. (McNamara, 1989, p. 128)

However, future research should go a step beyond merely exploring the post-colonial context. Research needs to concentrate on the global context and the role that the English language plays vis-à-vis the French language. The majority of the informants express positive attitudes toward English as an international language and discuss motivating factors that contribute to their wanting to learn English. As English increasingly becomes the lingua franca throughout the world, future research needs to take into account learners' motivations for learning English and how these motivations contrast with the learning of post-colonial languages.<sup>187</sup>

Another type of motivation relates to "a desire to be accepted as a member of the new linguistic community" (Gardner and Lambert, 1959, p. 271). While the desire for social acceptance will be discussed more thoroughly in the section on desire for inclusion, it is important to note two important discoveries here: 1) the informants in Italy are less likely than those in France to show desire to be a member of the host country community, and 2) even though there is less desire to be included in the host community, the desire of the informants in Italy to learn Italian is just as strong as the desire of the informants in France to speak French. Again, I argue, these similar goals for language acquisition result from an appreciation for multilingualism. However, I am more interested in exploring what factors would dissuade an informant from learning or using the host country's language because the informants have generally emphasized these negative factors over positive factors in their interviews.

In both sites, there is evidence of negative experiences that affect speakers' investment in the host country's language. In Italy, some informants remark that negative experiences based on race make them less invested in learning Italian. Abi and Ablaay are good examples of this. As seen in chapter 5, Ablaay questions the worth of learning Italian if the jobs that require Italian are not available for black people. Moreover, Abi's negative race-based experiences in Italy have contributed to her lack of desire to learn Italian. In France, racialized experiences are present in the data, but these experiences do not seem to affect as severely the desire or ability to learn the language, partly because the language has already been acquired in most instances. However, in France, there is an added layer. Negative associations with the French language are not due solely to complications from race/ethnicity but to the complicated colonial relationship that the language evokes. For instance, Karafa's and Oumou's discussions of French and its linguistic dominance demonstrate an ambivalence toward the French language, which is seen as a useful

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<sup>186</sup> Ball (1997) notes that in these summits there is "an emphasis on the world-wide dissemination of the French language, and the belief that there are special links between the language and certain important cultural and political values" (p. 17). Information on the Francophone summits can be found at [http://www.international.gc.ca/franco/francophonie\\_summits-sommets.aspx?view=d](http://www.international.gc.ca/franco/francophonie_summits-sommets.aspx?view=d).

<sup>187</sup> It would be useful to compare this type of research with studies in which English represents both the former colonial language and the global lingua franca, such as in India.

language but also as harmful with regard to Senegalese identity. In Section 3.2.2, I cited Fanon (1967) to show a post-colonial perspective on language and race from the point of view of the colonized. Fanon cautioned that while learning the colonizer's language gave a person access to power, it also meant the "death and burial of its local cultural originality" (p. 18). Fanon spoke of the existence of "an inferiority complex," a phenomenon that exists in the post-colonial context because part of the colonial strategy was to psychologically force its subjects into submission by arguing their inferiority with relation to language and culture.

What I have come to realize is that language ideologies in Italy are mainly based on the personal experiences that the informants have while living in Italy, whereas in France, language ideologies are based on personal experience but also on a historically-situated cultural perception. The data from France demonstrate that assumptions about the French language are in some way related to how the French language is conceptualized in Senegal or in a collective Senegalese mindset. The French language cannot be taken out of context or divorced from the shared historical past between the two countries, nor can it be simply seen as a second language in the same way that Italian is.

### **6.1.2.2 Language ownership**

The Italian language does not have the same historical significance as the French language for the Senegalese informants, and this profound difference has implications for the notion of language ownership. Both Italian and French are European languages and in each setting there are examples from my data where informants indicate a sense of detachment from these languages. In chapter 4, I cited Oumou who laments, "C'est pas ma langue. Je suis africaine" (Oumou 10.04.09), while in chapter 5 Ngoné exclaims in French, "les Italiens sont des ignorants" when discussing how she has been treated and why she does not like to speak in Italian (Anta/Ngoné 3.7.10). In both sites, the informants either position themselves as "the Other" or they feel that they are positioned by the host country as "the Other." However, I argue that the situation is more problematic for the informants in France because they demonstrate a greater desire to be regarded as part of the in-group.

Much of this desire is related to language ownership. There is no historical reason for the Senegalese informants to lay claim to the Italian language and the data contain no examples of informants talking about Italian in such a manner. The case is very different when looking at the data from Paris. In chapter 4, I argued for the existence of a Center vs. Periphery divide with regard to the French language. Some informants align their Senegalese variety of French with standard Parisian French by detailing the language's illustrious history in Senegal (i.e. Senghor's positive influence on French language acquisition in Senegal or the Four Communes' role in providing access to French) and by positioning it above other West African varieties in a linguistic hierarchy. Others align themselves with the Center by contending that the way they speak French is in fact better than the way the majority of French people speak. However, while the informants in France are more likely to call attention to their linguistic competence, they are also more likely to demonstrate frustration and disappointment with how they are viewed as speakers of their host country's language.

### **6.1.2.3 Competence**

Most of the previous research on identity and language learning looks at situations similar to those the informants of my study experienced in Rome—an immigrant group with no

prior knowledge of the host country's language attempts to learn the national language (e.g. Norton 2000, Bremer *et al* 1996). Comparing the situations of Italy and France highlights the influence of a post-colonial relationship in language acquisition. The quest to be a legitimate speaker, which is a central theme in Norton's (2000) work, is an important part of the language learning process, and it manifests itself quite differently in each setting. Norton has written the following about the legitimate speaker in her study: "Drawing on Bourdieu, I take the position that the women's experiences of natural language learning were generally alienating ones because they could not command the attention of their listeners; nor were they regarded as worthy to speak" (p. 133). The notion of the legitimate speaker is tied to a definition of communicative competence and includes 'the right to speak.' Becoming a legitimate speaker is something that the informants in both sites strive to achieve.

What differs between the two sites is how the concept of legitimate speaker is formulated. In the data from Rome, some of the informants, especially the female informants, talk of experiences similar to those described in Norton's study (2000). They feel alienated or unable to claim the right to speak. However, Norton notes that despite feeling marginalized, the women in her study argue that it is important to learn English because it would help to eliminate the immigrant label. While the informants do not necessarily succeed in escaping the immigrant label, many of them put themselves in positions where they are listened to and respected. As I indicated in chapter 5, many of the Rome informants are artists, including musicians, dancers, and singers. Through teaching classes or performing concerts, they gain a legitimate voice by sharing a skill that is sought after and respected. Nevertheless, other informants, such as Abi, have such negative experiences in Italy that acquiring the language and a legitimate voice does not happen. Norton sees this outcome as well. In discussing the family of one of her subjects, she remarks, "I suggest that the reason why Mai's extended family was populated by monolingual speakers, when a process of rich bilingualism might have taken place, is partly because Mai's extended family was caught up in a discourse of racism in Canadian society..." (Norton, 2000, p. 118). In my study, because of her experiences of racism in Italy, Abi is caught up in a discourse of racism, which negatively affects her desire to learn Italian. While she is not monolingual, her acquisition of Italian is hindered.<sup>188</sup>

The desire for and achievement of legitimacy is very different in France. While being a competent speaker of Italian is important primarily for access to jobs and for making life in Italy a more pleasant experience, in France, there is more focus on being seen by society at large as a competent speaker simply for the sake of demonstrating competence. For example, Jean-Paul expresses annoyance when a French colleague critiques him for using high-level vocabulary: "I'm not going to be like uneducated people just so they can feel better" (Jean-Paul 11.23.09). He explains that the "they" to which he refers are white French people. He is frustrated because while he demonstrates a high competence as well as a nuanced understanding of the French language, he is not respected for this ability. In fact, he is criticized. Meanwhile, Lucie shows the pain that she feels for being labeled incompetent for a mistake in her performance of French: "Et je pense que si je n'avais pas fait cette faute de langage, elle n'aurait pas eu l'opportunité—pour moi j'ai analysé plusieurs fois cette faute-là—donc je pense que si je n'avais pas fait cette faute de langage elle n'aurait pas eu l'opportunité de me parler comme ça" (Lucie 11.27.09). She

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<sup>188</sup> The fact that she is not monolingual helps make the case that being affected by a discourse of racism can hinder language acquisition. Abi was much more invested in learning Spanish and English and argued that the positive feelings toward these languages influenced her desire to learn these languages.



admits to replaying this moment over and over again in her head. It is obvious that this incident has scarred her. What I find interesting is that the informants in France tend to be more competent speakers of French than the informants in Italy were speakers of Italian.<sup>189</sup> However, the data from Rome have more examples in which informants relate experiences of being praised for their language abilities. Meanwhile, the data from Paris contains more evidence of negative experiences with regard to perceived language competence. This suggests that the notion of competence is context-dependent.

In the data from Rome, the informants enjoy receiving accolades about how well they speak Italian, but it has little bearing on how much they feel a part of society. In other words, they are happy to learn the language, but they do not intend to settle down in Italy; therefore, many of them do not try to integrate in other ways. On the other hand, for the informants in Paris, French competence and being perceived as legitimate speakers is significantly tied to the desire for inclusion. Most of them see France as their home and French as one of their languages. They feel that the receiving community's inability to see them as legitimate members of society is a hindrance to their integration into that society. They hold more expectations with regard to language and its relation to inclusion and show more disappointment when these expectations are not met. For most of the informants in Rome, the opinions of native Italians on their language competence meet their expectations, which seem to be lower than those in France, resulting in more positive feelings about language. I posit that the same level of language competence is not expected in Italy as in France because of the lack of historical relationship between Italy and Senegal, which heavily influences linguistic relationships. For one thing, the informants in Rome have undergone only one stage of language acquisition. They also have had less time to learn Italian than the informants in Paris have had to learn French. In addition, no informants speak Italian as a native language while several informants in Paris consider French their native language. Therefore, when a Senegalese person speaks Italian, these abilities are more noteworthy. Overall, being positioned as competent and legitimate speakers seems to be desired more by the Paris informants.<sup>190</sup> In other words, in a post-colonial context, one has greater expectations with regard to claiming the right to speak.

#### 6.1.2.4 Linguistic repertoire

The notion of linguistic competence proves to be a central concern in my study because the informants stress the importance of acquiring the language of the host country. However, discussions about competence are not limited to the acquisition of French and Italian. In my data, I have uncovered an interesting phenomenon in France that does not seem to exist in Italy: improvement of Wolof after migrating to Europe. Sébastien, who is part of the 10% of the Senegalese population whose primary language is French, is a perfect example of someone whose ability to speak Wolof has improved after moving to France.<sup>191</sup> Because he constantly meets other Senegalese while in France, he finds himself in situations where Wolof is spoken even when French is an option. Even in situations where French is the expected language, Wolof is often chosen. As you may recall, he remarks, “Même avec ma famille, je parle plus en wolof

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<sup>189</sup> I am measuring competence by the informants' linguistic profiles, their self-evaluation, my evaluation of them, and the comments by native speakers of French and Italian who analyzed my transcriptions.

<sup>190</sup> Something that needs to be researched is whether the post-colonial context would stop people from complimenting Senegalese immigrants on their linguistic abilities, which could be seen as face-threatening. This sort of compliment could be taken as patronizing.

<sup>191</sup> See Cisse, 2005 for more information on languages in Senegal.

dès que je suis venu en France. Ça renforce un lien culturel” (Sébastien 11.08.09). Sébastien describes a cultural reason for using Wolof, indicating a need to signal in-group affiliation, even though his family has traditionally spoken to each other in French. While he has always been more comfortable speaking to other Senegalese people in French because of a perceived lack of competence in Wolof, being in France has transformed his opinion about Wolof. He now sees it as a way to connect to his culture, something that was taken for granted when he was in Senegal. Sébastien is not alone in this; Salif also reports an increased appreciation of Senegalese language and culture. What I find most interesting is that the data from Rome are devoid of these types of examples. The fact that some informants report an improvement of Wolof in France seems to be site-specific, and much more research needs to be done on this topic. I argue, however, that the tenuous relationship between Wolof and French in Senegal, the implications that this relationship has on Wolof/French speakers’ identity conceptualization, and how this relationship is reimagined by *émigrés* when not in Senegal, are at the center of this phenomenon.

As previous research has shown (Cruise O’Brien, 1998; Swigart, 1994), language choice and use in Senegal is imbued with different ideas about identity. If you use too much French, you are marked as elite. If you use too little French, you are seen as uneducated. For those Senegalese who describe French as their primary language, positioning themselves as a competent speaker of Wolof and therefore a true Senegalese can be difficult: “C’est vrai quand on se moque de toi, tu as la tendance de dire je ne peux pas être assez sénégalais...” (Salif 12.07.09). The question thus arises, how does the relationship between Wolof and French change on French soil? As we have seen with Sébastien and Salif, there is a new-found desire to use Wolof even if this might seem paradoxical considering that using the host country’s language is a key factor in demonstrating integration. And while there is a wide range of French language competence and various types of French language acquisition for the Senegalese in France, there is also a wide range of Wolof language competence and acquisition in France. At one end of the spectrum, there are those Senegalese immigrants who prefer to speak Wolof at all times and at the other end, there are those French citizens of Senegalese origin whose families never taught them to speak Wolof. Therefore, while one may not be judged as negatively for an inability to speak Wolof in France as they would be in Senegal, there is still a desire to demonstrate one’s cultural connection to Wolof and to a Senegalese identity.

The situation is different in Italy. Wolof is readily spoken among the informants. In addition, people display favorable opinions about Wolof and deem it as important a language as Italian or French or any other language in their repertoires. However, none of the informants note any improvement in their Wolof-speaking abilities nor have they shown evidence of consciously working toward improving their Wolof since arriving in Italy. One reason for the difference between the data from Paris and Rome is demographical. The presence of French citizens of Senegalese origin who have grown up in families where Wolof (or another Senegalese national language) is not spoken means that it is sensible to expect people such as Lucie to seek Wolof classes to feel more connected to her culture. Meanwhile, all the informants in Italy moved there for economic reasons, and Wolof improvement is not a concern. However, while the current generation of Senegalese immigrants in Italy lives there for economic reasons, the next generation will be Italian-born. Just as people such as Lucie have grown up in France not speaking Wolof and not really knowing their ancestors’ country, there will soon be a generation of Senegalese-Italians with similar experiences. This new demographic may have linguistic repertoires and conceptualizations of identity that are wholly different from those of the present Senegalese immigrant in Italy. They could have similar characteristics to those French people of

Senegalese origin that are currently in France now. We will have to wait until there is data on second and third generation Italians of Senegalese origin for whom Wolof is a heritage language to have any understanding of the relationship between Italian and Wolof. However, I hypothesize that because of the complicated relationship between French and Wolof that exists in Senegal, identity issues with regard to the French language will be more problematic than issues that could arise with Italian, at least until the memory of colonialism and its legacy subsides.

### 6.1.2.5 Code-switching

The majority of the data concerns language ideologies and explores reflections on and attitudes about multilingual practices, but my data are also important for displaying actual multilingual usage. I have more multilingual data from Italy than from France, which is not something that I expected before conducting my research. The difference in the amount of code-switching is particularly noticeable in the interviews. I have identified several reasons for why code-switching would be more common in the data from Rome. The first reason concerns the number of shared languages between the interviewer and the interviewee. At the outset of each interview, I instructed the informants to speak in whatever languages they preferred. I also informed them of the languages I could speak and indicated that I had a working knowledge of Wolof. In France, I normally shared French, Wolof, and maybe English with the informants. In Italy, however, our shared languages were normally Italian, French, Wolof, and maybe English. The added shared language in Italy meant that informants had an extra language to access in their linguistic repertoire. Because some informants mentioned that they did not mind using different languages in conversation if they knew that their interlocutor understood them, it should not be surprising that these different languages appeared in the interviews. This being said, having shared languages did not necessarily mean that the informants always chose to use them. In France, for instance, my interviews remained surprisingly monolingual.

I contend that another reason for having more code-switching data in Italy is because most of the informants have two related languages in their repertoire.<sup>192</sup> There are multiple examples in the interviews where a French word appears intra-sententially in Italian speech. For instance, Keita replaces the Italian conjunction with the French equivalent: “ogni paese di loro che sia Lazio *ou* Toscana *ou* Lombardia” (Keita 4.23.10). Another example is Ablaay who uses the French superlative while speaking Italian: “Ma i miei *meilleurs* amici” (Ablaay 3.8.10). And finally, Ndiaga substitutes several Italian words for French ones: “Per me *les* italiani tengono molto *leur* lingua. Per esempio, *si* tu cerchi di parlare con un italiano francese, lascia perdere” (Ndiaga 2.14.10). It is hard to tell whether these switches are performance errors, pronunciation errors (in the case of *ou* or *si*), or simply a conscious choice by a highly competent bilingual (see Romaine 1995). These types of examples seem to be similar to what Oesch-Serra (1999) has found in her data or what Franceschini (2000) characterized as “a non-conscious way of using

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<sup>192</sup> Harris and Campbell (1995) offer the ‘structural compatibility proposal’ to imply that it is easier to borrow constructions that are similar in both languages. While they were primarily interested in borrowing, code-switching is another language contact phenomenon that is related to borrowing. As we saw in section 4.3.2, it has been posited that borrowing and code-switching are on opposite ends of a continuum. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that switching between two related languages would be easier than between two unrelated languages. The relative ease may mean that switching between related languages is also more likely. However, I found evidence in my data of switching between related and unrelated languages, and it is unclear whether one type is actually easier for the informants than other.

French and Italian” (p. 2).<sup>193</sup> Perhaps, having similar words in the French and Italian languages increases the likelihood of these types of switches occurring.

However, there are also examples of informants speaking in Italian and switching momentarily to a non-related language such as English. For example, Ndour says “*Ma stava pregnant e ha lasciato senza fare la diploma*” (Ndour 2.27.10). As I mentioned in chapter 5, there are several possible reasons, both conscious and subconscious, for this switch (a momentary inability to recall the Italian; to emphasize the word and what it means for the story he retells; a realization that he is in a context where code-switching is acceptable and so he does because he can). The fact that the data from France is not as rich in code-switching as the data from Italy could indicate that competence is a factor: there was a tendency for the informants in Rome to have a lower level of competence in Italian than the informants in Paris have in French. Perhaps, then, the informants in Italy are using French as a linguistic crutch. This line of reasoning is controversial, however, because it implies the notion of semi-lingualism, which Martin-Jones and Romaine (1986) debunk as “a half-baked theory of communicative competence” (p. 36). Nevertheless, it offers one valid explanation of why CS is more prevalent in the data from Rome. On the other hand, as I already demonstrated in Section 5.3.2, there are various sociolinguistic reasons for code-switching that have nothing to do with target language competence. An example of this is the valuing of multilingual competence, which includes an emphasis on language play. Furthermore, in Section 5.4, I showed how the switching between languages could be used to signal social boundaries.

There are other possibilities for why the informants in Italy show a greater propensity for code-switching and voicing, not just in their interviews but in the natural conversation data as well. The wealth of code-switching in Italy may be a result of my having access to settings where multilingual conversations thrive. The Senegalese restaurant in Rome proved to be a rich source of this type of data. I was able to record many different people speaking, in a variety of group dynamics. The data reflect instances where only Senegalese people are conversing, other instances where there are Senegalese and Italian people present, and other instances where I am made part of the conversations. These conversations tend to be in Wolof, Italian, and French, even when only Senegalese people are speaking to each other. In France, the Senegalese restaurant was also a good source for natural conversation material; however, there were usually the same three people present, Ndella, Boubacar, and myself. They tended to speak primarily in Wolof between the two of them and in French and Wolof when speaking to me. The other sources of natural conversation data in France included Abdu’s jam session and Sébastien’s dinner party. In both of these situations, there were French and Senegalese people present but only French was spoken.

The fact that in my data only French is spoken in mixed company is significant. For Abdu’s jam session, several factors might have made French the language of choice. For instance, the majority of their music is in French so conversations about the music would be in French, too. In addition, this was a work environment and perhaps French had been established

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<sup>193</sup> Oesch-Serra (1999) looks at code-switching practices of Italian migrants in French-speaking Switzerland and found that words with the same structural and argumentative properties such as the Italian *ma* and the French *mais* were used interchangeably within a primarily Italian discourse. Franceschini’s (2000) data include a German-speaking shop assistant in Switzerland whose L2 is French and L3 is Italian. Some of her arguments for why unconscious code-switching between French and Italian may occur in this instance is because a) the speaker is in a context where code-switching is highly accepted and b) “second and third languages are more closely tied to each other than L1 is to the other languages” (p. 5).

as the language of communication. These reasons could be enough to ensure that the conversations remained in French. At Sébastien's dinner party, there were times when Senegalese people were speaking amongst themselves, and yet the conversation remained in French. These were all university students who had moved to France to continue their studies. One could argue that this demographic would be more likely to use French in more domains than say an immigrant who migrated for work. These students might have viewed my research project as a more academic exercise than other informants, especially more than the majority of those in Italy. If this is the case, they might have been more likely to use one language in my presence just as they would do in a school setting. It is interesting to note that under the colonial government, speaking languages other than French at school was prohibited, even on the playground.<sup>194</sup> Since decolonization, speaking languages other than French is still discouraged. For instance, Djibril reflects on his language usage at school: "Avec des potes, parfois on parle en sinoukhé ou on **dégg na** wolof."<sup>195</sup> Quand on est dehors on parle les langues nationales. Quand on est en classe, les profs ne veulent pas entendre les langues nationales" (Djibril 10.18.09). Another possibility, however, could be related to the types of host country people that were present in the mixed groups. In France, when I recorded natural conversations, the French people present were fellow students or colleagues. The informants were probably used to speaking with them only in French.

Meanwhile, in the data from Italy, when Senegalese and Italians were engaged in conversation, either at the Senegalese restaurant or attending West African dance classes, the Italians were consciously placing themselves in predominantly Senegalese domains. These were Italians who showed great affinity toward Senegalese culture and some were even learning Wolof. It is, therefore, not surprising that Wolof would be mixed in with Italian. It is also pertinent to note, however, the considerably frequency and diversity of code-switching examples in situations where only Senegalese were present. In these instances, I assumed the informants would prefer to speak in only Wolof, especially since all of them noted greater competence in Wolof than in Italian. While Wolof was often the language of choice, there is ample data to suggest that multilingual conversations happen relatively frequently. For instance, Biondo exclaims, "Oh che bella, mamma mia, guarda gli occhi. Che belli" while Kolle is speaking to him in Wolof (Senegalese Restaurant 4.10.10). This is similar to when Moustapha says, "Buonissimo. Buonissimo. Come gli italiani. Mamma mia, che buo:::no" (Abi and company 3.28.10). I argued in chapter 5 that these are prime examples of voicing a language and performing an identity. Interestingly, this type of voicing does not exist in the data from Paris.

The wealth of multilingual data from Italy could be an artifact of my data collection in that the locale I chose happened to be one where people were more likely to display code-switching. However, I contend that there are other factors present to explain the higher percentage of multilingual data in Italy. A common thread throughout my dissertation has been the identity issues tied to language use and acquisition. The informants have shown a relationship to the French language that is affected by historical factors, and I argue that this relationship could influence the likelihood of multilingual practices, particularly in mixed company. There seems to be more motivation to position oneself as a competent speaker of

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<sup>194</sup> As Cisse (2005) notes, "En 1928, était promulgué un arrêté qui stipulait que le français est la seule langue en usage dans les écoles. Il est interdit aux maîtres d'utiliser des idiomes du pays entre eux ou avec les élèves, en classe ou en récréation" (p. 109).

<sup>195</sup> On **parle** wolof.

French than as a competent speaker of Italian. This motivation is related to the desire to prove oneself as a rightful speaker and owner of French. These motivating factors to speak French perfectly may impede conscious decisions to code-switch if one assumes he or she will be labeled as less competent for his or her multilingualism. There is much research to suggest that people worry about how others view their language abilities when they choose to code-switch (see Kachru 1978, Grosjean 1982); therefore, this could be a consideration for the informants when deciding in which languages to engage an interlocutor.<sup>196</sup> In the data from Rome, the informants are less likely to criticize CS. If they were with monolingual Italians, most informants would try to speak only Italian out of respect for their interlocutor, but they did not convey the sense that CS was a negative phenomenon. In the following section, I will explore these reflections on and examples of language use from the perspective of identity formation.

## **6.2 Construction of identities and negotiation of boundaries**

I ended Chapters 4 and 5 with a section on the construction of identities and the negotiation of boundaries that the informants undergo as they acquire and use language. In this section, I will look at the comparisons that the informants make about France and also depict a general picture of how these two sites compare based on the data I collected. I argue that participants' social knowledge about ethnic groups and their interrelationships relate to how they express desire for inclusion, a desire that depends on the specific immigrant group and its relation to the host country.

As I have shown, a major difference between the Senegalese immigrant population in France and in Italy concerns the demographics of each group. In the previous section, I introduced Norton's (2000) discussion of the immigrant label that many of the informants acknowledge. It is important to dissect the term "immigrant." Throughout this dissertation, I have labeled this group simply as the "the Senegalese immigrant community." However, in a place such as France, this label subsumes those who are immigrants in the traditional sense, i.e. migrating from another country and settling into the host country, as well as those who have come to France for their studies and have the intention of returning to Senegal upon completion. Furthermore, it subsumes those whose ancestors were immigrants: they themselves are still perceived as immigrants, even with a French passport to prove otherwise.<sup>197</sup> This community is also extremely diverse with regard to social class. In Italy where immigration is more recent and tends to be motivated by economic factors, the word 'immigrant' embodies more traditional connotations, where in addition to being a status related to citizenship, it also suggests a low socio-economic status.

### **6.2.1 Race/Ethnicity**

While during many of my interviews informants discuss issues concerning immigration directly, my interview with Kati, a French journalist of Senegalese origin who moved to Italy to be with her Italian boyfriend, is particularly focused on immigration since it is one of her main topics of research. In responding to my question about immigration problems she automatically

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<sup>196</sup> Montes-Alcalá (2000) has written that code-switching "has been socially stigmatized by monolinguals and bilinguals alike, and...is often attributed to illiteracy, lack of formal education, or lack of proficiency in one or both languages" (p. 218).

<sup>197</sup> As mentioned in section 2.4, I have chosen to include French citizens of Senegalese origin under the immigrant label mainly because of their stories of how they are constantly positioned as such.

volunteers a comparison with France, arguing that the immigrant community in Rome is more marginalized than in France because they have had less time to integrate:

- (1) Alors, contrairement à la France, l'immigration ici est vraiment plus marginalisée. Ça veut dire que les immigrés sont plus à l'extérieur même. On a l'impression que la société, on ne les voit pas. Dans la rue, même à Rome, la capitale, quand je croise un immigré, je parle des Africains, j'ai l'impression qu'ils ne font pas partie en fait de la société. Ensuite, le rapport entre les Italiens et les immigrés sont beaucoup plus tendus. Peut-être parce que les Italiens ne connaissent pas assez l'Afrique contrairement à la France qui a une histoire importante avec l'Afrique. Mon impression est que c'est encore plus ghettoïsé ici. Et là, quand je vois ce qui s'est passé à Rosarno—à Rosarno il y avait des Africains au début de janvier qui étaient chassés d'une ville par la population... Oui, en France il y a du racisme. Il y a beaucoup de discrimination. Mais ils sont hypocrites. (Kati 2.10.10)

Kati speaks specifically about African immigrants, not all immigrants. Perhaps this distinction is made since she is more familiar with the plight of Africans because of her focus as a journalist or perhaps because African immigrants seem to be the most visible. In any case, the word 'immigration' evokes notions of racism and how these notions in the two countries are practiced differently: in France, Kati considers racism to be more institutionalized and covert. This is corroborated by the informants interviewed in Paris. In Italy, racial issues are more overt. She mentions Rosarno, the Italian city in Calabria whose residents chased out the African seasonal workers by firing on them and terrorizing them through other violent actions (Hooper, 2010).

Historical factors affect the access that immigrants have to the job market. According to the literature, Italy has undergone a relatively short period of immigration and is a country that is better known in most of its modern history as one of emigration; therefore, non-Italians are only just beginning to access the job market. The informants validate this argument:

- (2) La differenza è che la Francia è più come si chiama, più sviluppato sul lato immigrazione. In Italia, non. C'è in Francia, l'immigrazione dura da tanto tempo quindi loro vivono con gli stranieri tranquillamente. Pero qua non. Qua ancora l'immigrazione non ha, non ha quello livello li come in Francia perche è iniziato da poco in Italia. Per esempio, in Francia non guardano la persona che è di colore nero, bianco così. Dentro l'autobus, lo guida una persona nera. Qua in Italia non ho mai visto una cosa dal genere...Poliziotti neri in Francia, c'è tutto. (Alfa 2.25.10)

While some informants would disagree with Alfa's statement that skin color is not noticed in France, I contend that his point has some merit. In France, Senegalese immigrants, and African immigrants in general, have had a few generations to allow for more profound integration, meaning that there are black bus drivers, and even black police officers. There is a sense that more options are available for people of color in France, even if many have questioned what they see as discriminatory practices that impede integration. Karim mirrors these sentiments: "In Francia se vedi la polizia, vedi polizia black. Se vai al muniscipio, vedi un sindacato. Se vai al aeroporto, vedi un pilota black. Dovunque vai. Qua, non c'è un polizio black. Non c'è un barman

black. Non c'è lo aperti. In Francia non ci pensi neanche... ma qua tu vedi per strada la gente che vende i CD” (Karim 3.2.10). First of all, Karim indicates an implied notion of class that accompanies the status of immigrant. He portrays the positioning of the immigrant as an obstacle, which relegates them to undesirable jobs with low social capital like CD vendors and hinders their access to positions that garner respect. Karim seems to depict a sense of belonging that is contingent upon the roles a given community occupies in a society. This is made obvious by Karim’s juxtaposing the respected professions of police officer, mayor, and pilot to which Africans have access in France, with the eschewed profession of street vending, one of the few job options available to African immigrants who enter Italy without papers. It is important to note that the question of being legally allowed to work is of central concern as well. The reason why Senegalese immigrants in France can work there legally is because of the colonial past and its relationship to historical immigration and its influence on the labor market. Along these same lines, at the time of immigration, Senegalese immigrants are more likely to speak the national language of France than the national language of Italy, opening up doors to possible jobs.

However, there is an underlying racial component that Karim highlights and that is evident in many of the informants’ discussions about integration. Because there are racial and ethnic connotations attached to the word “immigrant,” even citizens of France who happen to be of Senegalese origin are often positioned as immigrants.<sup>198</sup> Being identified as an immigrant hurts those who want to be seen as French citizens and who see France as their home. In fact, although the data show that race presents more of a barrier in Italy, the emotional consequences appear to be more dire in France. The understanding of race is more problematic for many of the informants in France than in Italy because of how France conceptualizes race as a non-entity. For instance, the topic of race is avoided in the census because the idea is that everyone is equal and therefore race should be inconsequential.<sup>199</sup> Although this stance represents how race is theorized in France, the reality is that for many of the informants race does matter and is flagged on a daily basis.

In addition, the two sites differ in how the informants identify with the dominant culture. The Senegalese do not view themselves as Italian nor do they think they have the possibility to be seen as Italian. Therefore, they are less concerned with the racial component being tied to their immigrant status. In other words, while race influences the desire for inclusion in both places, in Italy race with regard to acceptance is not as problematic an issue at the moment because of the lack of a Senegalese-Italian consciousness. There are no instances in my data of Italian citizens being mistaken for immigrants because there are no examples of Italians of Senegalese origin. Follow-up research would need to be done in the future once there is a Senegalese-Italian presence in order to see how Italians of Senegalese origin conceptualize their identity and how this understanding differs from that of Senegalese immigrants. This is a

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<sup>198</sup> It is important to note that the *Français de souche* are not the only ones that can position people such as the informants as immigrants or outsiders based on race. In section 4.4.2 I showed how Karafa uses similar racialized logic to explain why he refused to become a French citizen because as he puts it: “j’aime bien la couleur de ma peau” (Karafa 11.26.09). Even I made a conscious decision as a researcher to include French citizens of Senegalese origin in my data on Senegalese immigrants.

<sup>199</sup> It is illegal to collect data based on race (see Oppenheimer 2008). Many people believe that racial classifications are discriminatory. *The Economist* (2009), for example, interviewed people who likened the use of racial categories to practices that happened under the Vichy government: “Classifying people by race would also encourage discrimination, not prevent it, and reduce identity to ‘criteria from another era, that of colonial France, or Vichy’.” Fadela Amara, a government minister of Algerian origin, went further. “Our republic must not become a mosaic of communities,” she said. “Nobody must have to wear the yellow star again.”



valuable research avenue because we would be able to compare how hybrid identity functions in two sites. Presently, examples of a Senegalese-French consciousness appear in France and have bearing on identity formation. In particular, the French informants of Senegalese origin whom I interviewed recognize a hybrid identity. As I showed in chapter 4, even for those informants who are not French citizens, the centuries-long connection between Senegal and France and the shared language create a hybrid consciousness.

### 6.2.2 Sense of belonging and home

The topic of integration often emerges in research about notions of language and identity in immigrant populations because language acquisition is a key factor in integration. Host countries expect some level of integration from their immigrants, and many immigrants see the value in integrating. I have found, however, that there is a correlation between the level of integration people hope to achieve and how at home they feel in their new environment. The concept of home is something that is highlighted in the data from Rome because most people assume they will return to Senegal and see Italy as a stepping stone. In the data from Paris, only the students who have traveled to France for their studies plan to return to Senegal. Almost everyone else views France as their home, even if they do not always feel welcome. In the section on language ideologies, we saw the ways in which this conceptualization of home affects how they talk about each setting as well as their motivations for learning and using the national language.

In the discussions about where home is, the data from France and Italy differ significantly. Through their reflections on language ideologies and on personal experiences, the informants in Paris express a view where France is depicted as their home and a place in which they belong. For instance, they cite the shared history between France and Senegal, which includes the long immigrant tradition, the use of the French language, and the fact that France used the Senegalese for their own gains, such as with the case of the *tirailleurs sénégalais*. They also express a desire to be acknowledged in this shared history through history books, educational curricula, and national discourse. For instance, in section 4.1.1 we saw where Faatu felt this lack of acknowledgement: “On ne fait pas trop allusion à l’esclavage ou au colonialisme. Vraiment, c’est un sujet absent, en fait. On trouve ça dommage” (Faatu, 12.03.09). There is an inherent cultural connection that informants bring up. In the data from Rome, a cultural connection exists as well, but this connection is based on perceived similarities in lifestyles. The following excerpt provides insight into the connections that may be felt with both France and Italy. Ibou discusses the positive aspects he sees in both countries. However, he has spent 12 years in Italy even though he would be in the position to move to France if he wanted to:

(3) M: Dove ti senti più in casa tua, in Francia o in Italia?

I: [laughs]. Tutti i due. Al livello culturale, strutturale, mentalità, sto molto meglio in Francia perché sono abituato al sistema sociale, culturale, la lingua. Ho amici. In Italia, conosco molto bene l’Italia e vedo la mia dimensione africana più in Italia. Forse io, da Senegalese o Francofono, la dimensione occidentale, in Italia è il mio punto di equilibrio. Nel senso della famiglia, colore humano, l’improvvisazione un po’, la nozione del tempo è più vicino a Africa spesso, anche il sole e il clima. Ho più i miei dimensioni africani in Italia. (Ibou 2.19.10)

Ibou's reasons for feeling more at home in France are related to how accustomed he is to France's social and cultural system, and the French language. He was an instructor in Senegal and has excellent skills in French.<sup>200</sup> However, this command of the language or affinity towards certain social structures is not enough to sway his overall feeling of comfort in Italy. He sees the values placed on family, the slower pace, and the climate as some of the factors that bring out his African dimension, factors that are indispensable for him. Many of the informants in Italy mention similar reasons for feeling a connection with Italy. However, what is interesting about Ibou is that he is the only one who talks about remaining in Italy. His Senegalese wife and child live with him outside Rome, and he does not discuss the prospect of returning to Senegal. Meanwhile, for the other informants, the connection they feel for Italy does not translate into a desire to make Italy their home. For many of the informants, Italy's relationship to Senegal has no past and has little future. This lack of shared common history contributes to the feeling of marginalization that the immigrant community in Rome expresses. However, as we have seen in this section, while Senegalese immigrants in Italy may feel more marginalized on the surface, Senegalese immigrants in France appear to have greater expectations of inclusion and express feelings of marginalization as well. It will be important to research how second and third generation Italians of Senegalese descent will conceptualize their marginalization. Will it be similar to the case in France or does the colonial history make the relationship between Senegal and the host country always more complex in France?

### **6.3 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate how similar immigrant communities, the Senegalese in Paris and the Senegalese in Rome, behave in different contexts.<sup>201</sup> I have argued that the acquisition and use of language as well as the construction of identity are different in each site because of the historical, cultural and societal features that mark the relationship between host country and immigrant community. From a demographics perspective, there are different immigrant profiles in each site. Senegalese immigration in France is more nuanced than in Italy, with a wider variety of reasons for and timelines of migration. These differences are directly related to colonization. For one, the colonial relationship between France and Senegal allowed for immigration to begin centuries ago. The colonial relationship also influences the linguistic profile. Because French is still the official language of Senegal, most informants in Paris have undergone two stages of French language acquisition compared to one stage of Italian language acquisition in Rome. In addition, there is the existence of a post-migration educational context in France where Senegalese students migrate to France to continue their studies. Immigration to France cannot be discussed without highlighting this post-colonial relationship because, as we have seen, this relationship has major implications for both language ideologies and identity construction.

I have approached the concept of language ideologies by looking at what kind of motivation and investment the informants have in learning and using the national language. The general attitude in both sites is that everyone should learn and be able to speak the language of the host country. The informants deem French more useful than Italian, but contrary to my

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<sup>200</sup> I base this language assessment on his own opinions about his language competence and on my own personal experience speaking with him.

<sup>201</sup> While I have spent the chapter demonstrating how in fact these two communities are actually very different, I am using the word "similar" in the sense that each group originates from the same country: Senegal.

expectation, French is not depicted as a language that one must know outside of France even though it has been historically seen as an international language with a global presence. The learning of English is often mentioned as essential. In future research, it would be worthwhile to compare the attitudes about and acquisition of English with former colonial languages in order to question how long the post-colonial context will be relevant. In other words, we should compare the post-colonial context with the global context. However, I argue that even though my data highlight the waning importance of the French language on the global stage, as long as countries such as France push French language acquisition in the former colonies and as long as students in Senegal go specifically to France to continue their studies, French and the post-colonial context will remain relevant.

I have also been particularly interested in comparing each site with relation to the desire of the informants to be accepted members of their adopted countries. Data from both France and Italy show evidence of racial experiences affecting investment in the national language, but opinions about the French language are further complicated by its association with colonialism. Language ideologies are based primarily on personal experiences in Italy whereas in France they are not only based on these experiences but also on a historically-situated cultural perception of the language. I cited Fanon who argued that the imposition of French language and culture at the expense of local language and culture is a remnant of colonialism that helps to create an inferiority complex and a distrust of the French language. My data support this argument. At the same time, although some informants are wary of the French language because it symbolizes linguistic and cultural domination, many informants portray a certain desire to be seen as rightful owners of the French language. While informants position themselves as “the Other” in both France and Italy, they show a greater desire to be in the in-group in France.

Through attitudes about linguistic competence, informants demonstrate a desire to be accepted members of a linguistic community. In France, the informants are more likely to call attention to their linguistic competence and demonstrate frustration with how they are viewed as speakers. They emphasize a desire to be seen as legitimate speakers. Norton’s (2000) central focus in her research concerns the ability to claim the right to speak. While informants in both France and Italy indicate a desire to claim the right to speak, informants in Paris often highlight a historical claim on the French language that does not exist for the informants in Rome. The informants often position themselves as better speakers of French than other francophone West Africans. They also sometimes position themselves as better speakers than *les Français de souche* in order to show how they deserve to be respected as French speakers. There are occasional examples of informants in Italy positioning themselves as better speakers of standard Italian than native Italian speakers as well. In these instances, they claim that many Italian speakers are primarily dialect speakers and therefore have difficulties speaking standard Italian. While competence is obviously something that informants take seriously in both sites, informants seem to differ on why they want to be competent speakers. In Italy, more emphasis is placed on the ability to find a job and live comfortably. In France, informants seem to want to be labeled as competent speakers for the sake of demonstrating competence. They seek validation as competent speakers as part of a desire to be accepted and included in society. Therefore, understandings of competence depend on the linguistic situation as well as the attitudes about language by both the immigrants and the host country members.

The discussion of competence does not only center around the standard national language of the host countries. One unexpected finding in my research is the increased usage and proficiency of Wolof that some informants noticed in Paris that did not exist in Rome. A few of

the informants in Paris who view French as their principal mother tongue note that their Wolof has improved in Paris. They indicate cultural reasons for this improvement. Being competent speakers of Wolof allows for easier access to the Senegalese community. It signals an in-group affiliation that they did not see as important when living in Senegal. This improvement of Wolof in Paris also highlights that the tenuous relationship between Wolof and French in Senegal is at the heart of this phenomenon. The extent to which one uses each language in Senegal implies how the speaker is aligning him/herself with a certain identity. Speaking too much French in a conversation marks a speaker as elite, speaking too little marks him/her as uneducated. The amount of each language used is negotiated in conversation. The nature of these constraints seem to change on French soil, with different considerations dictating how much or how little of each language one wants to use and for which purposes. Whereas in Senegal one might best prove competence and therefore earn acceptance through multilingual practices, in France, competence and acceptance are often achieved by avoiding multilingual usage. In this same vein, multilingual practices such as CS occur more readily in the data from Italy than in that from France. I argue that this is because multilingual practices affect the perceived linguistic competence of the informants less in Italy than in France.

Focusing on language ideologies and practices also yields interesting reflection on the construction of identity that immigrants undergo in their new environment. In France, informants who are legally French citizens express frustration for constantly being labeled as immigrant, while other informants are tired of their immigrant identity always being highlighted. Most informants, regardless of their legal status, feel that their racialized identity is the main reason for being labeled as immigrants even though national language competence is often depicted as the most important factor for gaining acceptance in French society. In Italy, informants are well aware of their immigrant identity and the inability to be seen as something more than an immigrant. Just as in France, race is a key factor. However, the informants in Italy do not seem as bothered by this because they, themselves, identify with being an immigrant. The vast majority of them see their stay in Italy as temporary, as an opportunity to make money to send back to Senegal. They are not too concerned with integrating into Italian society nor do they conceptualize Italy as their home.

In addition, there is no evidence in the data from Rome of a Senegalese-Italian consciousness where a person feels that he or she is both Senegalese and Italian. One reason for this lack of hybrid identity is the relative newness of Senegalese immigration to Italy. There has not been enough time for this type of identity to form. Hybrid identities are more likely in second generation immigrants or first generation immigrants who have spent decades in a place. There are also no examples of Italians of Senegalese origin in my data. Having Italian citizenship could foster a sense of being Italian. I have also argued that cultural factors are partially responsible for the differences in how hybrid identity is understood in each site. Many informants in Paris highlight how because of colonialism, the French culture is heavily ingrained in Senegalese identity. For instance, in referring to how inhabitants of the Four Communes were French citizens, Nyambi muses, “on est très français, les Sénégalais” (10.08.09). Nyambi and others cite the connection to language as well as to culture, which are due to historical circumstances, for this feeling of Frenchness. Without colonization, this connection would not exist.

Nevertheless, this is not to say that a cultural connection does not exist for the Senegalese in Italy. Italy’s geographic proximity to Senegal is cited as a reason why some Senegalese prefer Italy to France. In section 3.2.2 I showed how some Italians from the north equate southern Italy with Africa. Several informants also see similarities between Italy and Senegal. While Rome is

not technically in the south, the climate and various aspects of daily life remind informants of their experience in Senegal. As we see, Ibou argues, “nel senso della famiglia, colore humano, l’improvvisazione un po’, la nozione del tempo è più vicino a Africa spesso, anche il sole e il clima. Ho più i miei dimensioni africani in Italia” (Ibou 2.19.10). Of all the informants in Rome, Ibou speaks the most favorably of Italy and its similarities with Senegal. He is also the only one who considers Italy as a long-term home. Overall, however, the informants in Rome are less likely than those in Paris to insist on the importance of being seen as a member of the host country community. This being said, they still have just as strong a desire to learn and use the national language. In the end, I would argue that the multilingual situation in Senegal and the positive opinions of multilingualism there contribute greatly to my informants’ language acquisition and use. However, the site-specific factors (i.e. immigrant community demographics, expectations with regard to language and integration by both the migrant community and the receiving community), which are deeply influenced by the socio-historical relationship between immigrant community and host-country, are what really determine of how these informants relate to their various languages and how they conceptualize their identities as multilingual beings.

# CONCLUSION

In this dissertation on language acquisition and use among Senegalese immigrants in Europe, I have sought to show how identity is understood and constructed. Previous identity research in SLA has argued that identity is a dynamic and mutable concept. The ways in which individuals conceptualize and express their identity is contingent upon their relationship to their social environments. While I agree with this understanding of identity with regard to social environment, I contend that by comparing how immigrants from one country function differently in two different host settings, SLA research can better demonstrate the importance of the relationship between individuals and society. The comparative approach employed in my research has allowed for a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the relationship between host country and migrant community, which can easily be overlooked when language use in immigrant populations focuses on a single geographic site. By choosing France and Italy as my two research sites, I have compared the experiences of Senegalese immigrants in a country with a strong colonial tie to those in a country with no such relationship but with high levels of current immigration. In doing so, I have found unequivocal evidence to suggest that identity construction with regard to language use is context-dependent and that the socio-historical relationship between host country and migrant community has major implications for language ideologies and language use.

Through the course of this study, I have explored three basic questions: 1) How do immigrants conceptualize identity in relation to dominant ideologies in the host country? 2) How do notions of identity affect language learning, and more generally, language use, and 3) How do immigrants express identity through their use of multiple languages? By conducting ethnographic fieldwork, I have shown how two groups, Senegalese in Paris and Senegalese in Rome, conceptualize their identities through multilingual practices. Based on the discourse analytic approach adopted in the study, it is not only *what* they say that conveys certain understandings of self and environment. It is also *how* they speak—the ways in which they switch between languages and structure their discourse—that contributes to their expression of identity. Knowing how immigrant groups acquire language and integrate differently depending on the context is important to SLA research and to language and immigration policy making as well.

## ***Findings and Significance***

For my first research question, which concerns identity construction vis-à-vis dominant ideologies in the host country, I hypothesized that the colonial history between France and Senegal would have implications for the relationship between the French population and Senegalese immigrants that would not exist for the informants in Italy. I approached this question by focusing on degrees of desire for inclusion that emerged from historical, social and linguistic factors. I indeed found that the informants in France demonstrated a stronger desire and expectation to feel included in their host country than did the informants in Italy. The immigrants in Paris cited several reasons, including the long shared history due to colonialism, the existence of French citizens of Senegalese descent, and a French-speaking tradition in Senegal. Many of the informants in Italy indicated an expectation to be cast as outsiders and were not surprised when they were positioned as “the Other.”

The long shared history between France and Senegal was an important factor in the identity construction of both the informants and the members of the host country. Fanon (1967) warned that the formerly colonized cannot escape an inferiority complex rooted in the vestiges of colonialism, in which French language and culture had been imposed to the detriment of local language and culture. In the current study, I found that identity was tied to the post-colonial context for the informants in my study. Some informants, such as Nyambi, underlined the difficulties that immigrants have in maintaining a “*pied d’égalité*,” which would allow their voices to be heard when interacting with French people. Meanwhile, others, such as Oumou, expressed frustration over the inability for law-abiding immigrants to earn residency, even after everything that Senegal has historically done for France, such as fighting in their wars. In calling attention to the historical relationship between Senegal and France, she highlighted the importance of this specific context that does not exist in a country such as Italy. Oumou and others felt that what the Senegalese have given France should be taken into account in present-day interactions between the two groups and should have some bearing on how the French conceive of and treat Senegalese immigrants. In addition, I found that there was often a disconnect between host country and immigrant views of the past that had repercussions for how each group conceived of itself in the present. The understanding of historical events displayed by many of the informants sometimes clashed with the official record taught in the French educational system or in general French discourse. Madibbo (2006) stresses that recorded history, written from the point of view of the dominant people, often excludes the voices of the marginalized. Indeed, some informants corroborated Madibbo’s point by noting the reticence of educators to discuss topics such as slavery in class or by describing how politicians continue to claim that Africa has not sufficiently entered history.<sup>202</sup>

The historical connection between Senegal and France proved to be central to how identity is constructed for the informants in France, a situation quite different from that of Italy, where no such historical connection exists. In both sites, the informants either positioned themselves as “the Other” or they felt that they were positioned by the host country as “the Other.” However, I found this “othering” to be more problematic for the informants in France because they demonstrated a greater desire to be regarded as part of the in-group. The historical France-Senegal connection contributed to a cultural connection with many informants championing the cultural values that are often associated with a French identity. As Nyambi noted, “*on est très français, les Sénégalais*.” It was this cultural-historical connection that led to a strong desire to be included in the dominant society. This desire to belong was compounded by the fact that some of the informants were actually French citizens. While all informants in Paris disliked being seen as “the Other,” the French citizens of Senegalese origin were particularly resentful of this label. They believed that they were marked as immigrants primarily because of their skin color. They demonstrated that being French entailed a racial component. Informants used the term *français de souche* to describe the traditional model of a French person and juxtaposed this term with *français d’origine...*, which is often employed in France to describe someone that does not “look” French, primarily based on racial classification. Informants viewed the term *français d’origine...* negatively because of the implied in-group/out-group dichotomy. Meanwhile, in Italy, race was a primary marker in the construction of identity, but informants expected to be seen as outsiders because of the lack of shared history. Therefore, while the data

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<sup>202</sup> See Sarkozy’s speech in Dakar in 2007, an excerpt of which was reproduced in chapter 4.

showed that race actually presented more of a barrier in Italy, the emotional consequences appeared to be more dire in France.

Informants in France seemed to want to conceptualize their identity as hybrid, as a Senegalese-French identity, but this type of identity clashed with the French Republican model that seeks to avoid any evidence of communitarianism. Many informants appeared to be caught in what Bhabha (1994) has described as the *in between* space, where the meaning of culture is constantly being negotiated. However, they found that their surrounding environment was not conducive to the negotiation of a French identity. In Italy, the Senegalese did not identify with being Italian primarily because they had no historical claim on Italian-ness. They did mention cultural similarities between Senegal and Italy, such as the warm climate, the focus on family, and the relaxed attitudes. These similarities helped ease the post-migration transition but had little bearing on identity construction. I found no data to support the existence of a Senegalese-Italian consciousness. This lack of a hybrid identity was partly due to the fact that Senegalese immigration to Italy was recent, and hybrid identities tend to begin to take root most notably by the second generation.

For my second research question, which looks at how notions of identity affect language learning, and more generally, language use, I hypothesized that despite the colonial relationship between France and Senegal and the negative feelings that could exist because of this relationship, many immigrants would prefer to migrate to France and would experience greater ease in using French in their daily lives because of their prior familiarity with the language. My findings suggest that this hypothesis is primarily incorrect: having to learn Italian did not dissuade these Senegalese immigrants from migrating to Italy, nor did the majority of them have difficulties learning Italian because they used their knowledge of French to facilitate the process of acquisition. The informants also pointed out that the multilingual context to which they were accustomed in Senegal created motivation to learn another language such as Italian. In addition, informants in Rome were more likely to be commended for their language competence than those in Paris even if the informants in Paris were actually more competent speakers of the national language.

First of all, immigration in any context is often dictated more by logistical than linguistic concerns; therefore, the fact that most Senegalese had at least some knowledge of French did not really influence where the informants settled. Since Italy is a more accessible country due to its geographic location and to its more relaxed enforcement of immigration laws, it (along with Spain) is the current primary destination for West Africans emigrating to Europe according to the informants and to previous research.<sup>203</sup> Inability to speak Italian upon arrival was not a deterrent for the informants, and the majority of them learned enough Italian to communicate on a daily basis. Interestingly, language acquisition occurred almost entirely in natural settings. Very few informants chose to attend language classes, and they provided a number of reasons for this decision. For many, it was more important to find work. They neither had the time nor the money to spend on courses. Because the vast majority of informants did not see Italy as their long-term home, they were not compelled to invest in language classes. In addition, most informants found natural settings to be a sufficient environment for learning Italian. They cited their multilingual background as a good foundation for Italian language acquisition, using their knowledge of French but also their knowledge of other languages to help learn Italian.

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<sup>203</sup> Riccio (2008) discusses reasons for West African migration to Italy. In addition, see BBC News's factsheet on Africa to Europe migration: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6228236.stm>.



In my study, gender differences played a role in language acquisition, but only in Rome. Both Norton (2000) and Ng (1981) have argued that immigrant women have a harder time accessing and interacting with the target language community. My research reflects this tendency to a certain extent. One of the most productive environments for language acquisition among the informants in Rome was within Senegalese-Italian romantic relationships. However, because of cultural constraints, Senegalese women were less likely to be involved with Italian men than Senegalese men with Italian women. Meanwhile, other researchers, such as Hill (1987), have shown that women often have a lack of access to job opportunities and that this inaccessibility hinders language acquisition. My own research, however, does not support this argument. These Senegalese women had just as much access as men to jobs in which they speak Italian, although they tended to have access to different jobs than the men. The women were primarily nannies and care-givers while the men were street merchants. Not having work permits limited both men and women equally but both groups were always able to find some sort of job. Meanwhile, in Paris only a few of the informants were prohibited from working legally. The informants that I interviewed were quite diverse with regard to how long they had been in the country and to their legal status and so there was a wider range of job opportunities and more access to French language environments. In addition, the topic of dating non-Senegalese did not come up in these interviews. Overall, there was no marked difference in male and female informants' access to the target population and to conversations in standard French.

Acquisition of the standard language was another phenomenon that played out differently in the two settings. In chapter 3, I discussed how France has the reputation of being a place where the standard national language is extremely important to the concept of nationhood while Italy is often seen as a place where a national identity is not as tied to a standard national language. I therefore wondered what the implications of these understandings of language and nationhood would be for the immigrant population in each respective site. While both Rome and Paris are national capitals and international cities, they are very different with regard to the standard national language. The data from Rome include use of and discussions about regional variation while the data from Paris does not. With regard to Rome, I hypothesized that while host country language attitudes could influence immigrants' language acquisition, learning standard Italian would be most beneficial from a practical standpoint. The informants did indeed think learning standard Italian was more important than learning the Roman dialect. However, the reality was that many informants picked up certain regionalisms. For those who had only learned Italian in natural settings, what they learned on the street or through friends often differed from standard Italian. Carter (1993) has reported Senegalese immigrants having difficulty learning standard Italian because many Italians prefer to speak their regional varieties. However, most of the informants in my study were not overly concerned with competing dialects that could impede standard language acquisition. Informants mentioned that they could recognize the differences and use both varieties depending on the context.

Concerning other non-standard language usage, neither of my sites yielded much data. For instance, I have no examples of marginalized sociolects in Paris or Rome. Although much research has been written on the use of *verlan* among Parisian youth (see Doran 2007, Mela 2000), young informants from the banlieue spoke to me in standard French when interviewed. It is important to note that because of the lack of informants who fit into this category, my data are not representative of the larger banlieue youth population. However, it should also be understood that *verlan* is used largely to establish and maintain an in-group identity. It is therefore not

surprising that no one spoke *verlan* to me because I was not part of this in-group. In addition, I did not record natural conversation in a context in which *verlan* might be commonly used.

In tackling the question of identity formation and language use, I have focused on the language ideologies of the informants: what are their attitudes toward speaking the national language and toward multilingualism, and how are these attitudes formed? Norton (1997) introduced the term *investment*, which includes both investment in the target language and in the social identity of the language learner. She has highlighted the dynamic nature of investment as something that changes across time and space. In both sites, the informants were invested in the national language because of their upbringing in a multilingual society. Most informants spoke fondly and proudly of the various languages they use in Senegal. Language is for communication, and therefore it is never a bad idea to learn another language even if it is only spoken in a very limited space, such as Italian. However, just because the informants saw language acquisition as a positive thing to accomplish did not mean that everything about their relationship with the languages they learned was cast in a positive light. Speaking a language was integrally tied to how the informants conceived their identity.

One of the biggest revelations from my research is that language ideologies in Italy are mainly formulated from personal experiences while living in Rome, whereas language ideologies in France form out of personal experiences as well as out of historically-situated cultural perception. In Rome, some informants expressed negative feelings toward Italian because of unpleasant experiences with Italians, usually due to racialized interactions. However, in Paris, while there were instances of negative associations to French because of racial experiences, the complicated post-colonial relationship the informants had with the French language also posed problems. For instance, Italian did not have the same historical significance as French and this difference influenced speakers' understandings of language ownership. Informants in France tended to highlight their linguistic competence more than those in Italy. They were also more sensitive to not being respected for their French language abilities. In Norton's (2000) work, she has found that those in her study lack the ability to claim the right to speak. Norton links this right to speak to communicative competence. Many informants in my study not only suggested a similar inability to claim the right to speak, they also implied an inability to claim the right to own the French language, regardless of their language speaking abilities. Informants compared themselves to other Francophone West Africans, arguing that their French is closer to standard French in order to establish a competence hierarchy. Some informants even argued superior abilities to the *français de souche*. I read these comparisons against the backdrop of Center vs. Periphery, in which I attempted to argue that notions of Center vs. Periphery need to be reconceptualized to show how members of the Periphery, such as the Senegalese, appear to reposition themselves as members of the Center. By placing themselves atop the linguistic hierarchy, these informants underscored a claim to French language ownership even if they felt that their claim was not often validated by the host country.

Although they often talked about strong language competence, the informants in Paris shared more negative experiences relating to this competence, even if their national language competence was much better than that of their counterparts in Italy. The informants I interviewed in Rome seemed to demonstrate a level of competence that often surprised native Italian speakers. This was particularly surprising since the majority of them had not explicitly studied Italian nor did they learn Italian for any reason other than basic communication. The difference found in the two sites suggests that competence is context-dependent and based on expectations by both the host country community and the target language learners. In France, the informants

saw language competence as a pathway to social inclusion. This link between competence and social acceptance is in line with France's language policy, which requires a certain level of French language competence in order to promote integration. However, the various anecdotes provided by informants in this study showed that language competence was not the only factor, nor was it the primary factor, in being accepted by the dominant population. Just as Lippi-Green (1997) has demonstrated that evaluating language competence is a way for the dominant group to discriminate against marginalized groups in places where judging other identity markers such as race is unacceptable, various informants in my data from Paris corroborated Lippi-Green's argument.

The notion of legitimacy is central to the concerns of the informants in France. Kubota (2009), in describing accessibility to native speaker status, contends that one must appear to be a legitimate speaker in addition to speaking like a native speaker. Kramsch (1997) argues that acceptance is dictated by those who create the native-nonnative distinction. Many informants, particularly those who were born in France of Senegalese origin, were quick to point out that although they were native speakers of French, society at large did not view them as such, mainly because of their skin color. Therefore, while informants in Paris held more expectations than informants in Rome with regard to language and its relation to inclusion because of a strong historical relationship between France and Senegal, they showed more disappointment when these expectations were not met. Previous research in Identity Studies and SLA has not explored how members of a former colony compare their language competence to that of speakers with no colonial relationship. As my research has uncovered, this colonial relationship greatly influences understandings of and attitudes about identity and language.

For the third research question, which analyzes how learners express identity through multilingual language use, I hypothesized that because switching between languages on a regular basis is quite normal in Senegal, I would find similar language practices in France and Italy. This hypothesis appears to be somewhat correct: for instance, I found in Italy that even when all speakers in a conversation were Senegalese, Italian was often spoken alongside Wolof and French. Many informants expressed a desire to use multiple languages in creative ways, which implies that being multilingual is a valued aspect of their identity. However, multilingual practices such as code-switching were more common in the data from Rome, which was surprising. I suggested that increased CS could be due to the fact that there are two related languages present there: French and Italian. The larger amount of CS data could also be due to methodological factors. For one, I had greater access to multilingual settings in Rome. Secondly, all the informants in Rome grew up in Senegal while a few of the informants in Paris had never lived in Senegal. However, I also argued that multilingualism was more common in the data from Rome because multilingual practices such as code-switching did not seem to affect their perceived linguistic competence as much.

As I mentioned earlier, informants in both sites described Senegal as a multilingual setting, in which switching between languages was the norm. This depiction of Senegal and language use has been thoroughly documented in the literature (McLaughlin, 1995, 2001; Cruise O'Brien, 1998; Swigart, 1994). Informants also commented on how both France and Italy were overwhelmingly monolingual. It appeared that these monolingual settings in the host country had an effect on the multilingual immigrants that moved to these settings. Because informants in Paris seemed more concerned with proving their French linguistic competence and because CS was often seen by monolinguals as a reflection of linguistic incompetence, there was more motivation for the Senegalese to only speak French in France than for them to only speak Italian

in Italy. This being said, there was a curious and unexpected phenomenon concerning the use of Wolof that occurred in France that did not happen in Italy. Two informants who grew up as native speakers of French in Senegal noticed an improvement in their Wolof upon migrating to France. In Senegal, particularly in urban centers, CS represents unmarked language usage in which achieving an acceptable amount of Wolof and French in any particular conversation is part of an intricate balancing act. As Lo (1999) demonstrates, CS also signals identity. For the native French speakers in my study who did not speak any of the national languages of Senegal as a mother tongue, they could be seen as embodying an out-group identity. However, these same people saw languages such as Wolof as a link to their Senegalese identity. In order to access this cultural connection, these informants made a concerted effort to use more Wolof in France than that which they have used in Senegal.

Focusing on the relationship between multilingualism and identity also yielded other interesting results. Some informants indicated compartmentalized identities in which they identified different aspects of the self with each language. For instance, Abdu attributed his use of Wolof to his relationship with the world. He saw himself as Wolof. His French usage was primarily in the context of his music, as something that allowed him to reach a larger audience. Other informants argued that using multiple languages was an essential part of their identity. They conveyed the idea that being monolingual limits one's worldview. Switching languages also highlighted a performative aspect of their identity in which CS was like a game. Others seemed to use CS in a theatrical way. In Italy in particular, there was evidence of voicing, in which speaking Italian in an exaggerated manner was a way to comment on Italian identity. The informants in Italy and France also conveyed an overwhelming sense of pride in being able to use different languages. These findings are similar to what Zentella (1997) describes in her research. CS among her informants, just as among mine, was a strategy used to express different meanings and to flag affiliations with members of different groups. My findings support her claim that CS should not be viewed as a lack of linguistic competence but as a mark of multilingual competence.

Informants not only displayed multilingual competence with their ability to move between languages, they also learned to move between varieties of the same language. As mentioned above, the fact that informants in Rome showed awareness of linguistic variation and ability to switch between linguistic varieties indicates that discussions of multilingual competence should not just focus on national languages but should also take into account the regional varieties that immigrants may learn alongside the standard national language. Therefore, the idealized speech community that SLA studies tend to set as a benchmark does not always reflect the reality of individuals learning a new language, especially a standard language in a context where regional varieties exist.

## ***Implications and Future Research***

My research not only corroborates previous studies that argue for the importance of identity markers such as race/ethnicity in second language learning environments; I have also contextualized these identity markers by specifically analyzing their relationship with the surrounding environment. In showing how Senegalese immigrants in France have a different relationship to the host country than Senegalese immigrants in Italy because of historical and social factors that influence how they relate to the language as well as to the L2 culture, this dissertation demonstrates how language ideologies and the identities that are constructed within them are context-dependent. My study builds on groundwork laid by scholars such as Norton

(1997, 2000) and calls for future researchers to continue uncovering the relationship between identity construction and language use from a perspective that prioritizes the individual's interaction with the social environment.

Pertaining to my general question on identity, which highlights identity construction in relation to dominant ideologies in the host country, several questions have come to the surface. For one, how does this specific moment in time, the six month period in 2009-2010 in which I conducted my research, influence the comparison between immigrants' experiences in Paris and Rome? One of the major themes I have examined is centered around the desire of inclusion experienced by the informants in their host country. To what degree do they want to be included in their adopted society? Do they achieve a sense of inclusion? The length of the specific immigration history plays a major role in the development of this desire. Senegalese immigration to France has existed for centuries, but for only the last two decades in Italy. French citizens of Senegalese origin are the group most likely to claim and desire French identity, or at least a Senegalese-French identity. Because of the relative newness of immigration to Italy, there were no informants who were Italian citizens of Senegalese origin. As a Senegalese-Italian consciousness begins to emerge, it would be worthwhile to compare identity construction of Italians of Senegalese origin with Senegalese immigrants and then look at how these understandings compare with the different formulations of a Senegalese-French consciousness that I found in France. Would the two sites produce similar discussions of hybrid identity or would the vestiges of colonialism have repercussions for Senegalese identity in France that would never be experienced in Italy?

Emphasis on this colonial link between Senegal and France should also be further explored in future research. Only a half a century has passed since colonialism officially ended, and for many, relics of this colonial history still exist. For the next generation of immigrants, will this colonial relationship be as visible as it was in my research or will time lessen the influence of the past? Seeing how racialized power relations have remained in the United States a century and a half after the abolition of American slavery, I hypothesize that the colonial past will still matter in France as well. To truly understand the relationship between an individual and the social environment, subsequent comparative studies in France and Italy would be required.

Questions have also arisen with regard to how notions of identity affect language ideologies. For instance, future research could reevaluate how we conceive of traditional understandings of Center vs. Periphery. While Center status is commonly reserved for members of the West and Periphery status denotes those coming from former colonies, my data indicated that some members of the Periphery speak of their language use in similar ways to members of the Center. They mentioned how Senegalese French has conserved features from *l'ancien français*, and how it is more similar to standard French from France than the other West-African French varieties are. More studies on how members of former colonies display Center-like qualities could further develop and problematize our understandings of Center and Periphery. In addition, most studies on Center vs. Periphery take place in either the English language context (see Canagarajah 1999; Sridhar, 1994; Kachru 1986) or the Spanish language context (see Lipski, 2008; Pountain, 2003; Penny, 2002; Hidalgo, 1990).

However, future research should not be limited to understanding the use and acquisition of language in the post-colonial context. My research has shown that the global context and the role of English are of paramount importance. Research needs to explicitly compare attitudes about English and its acquisition with those related to other former colonial languages such as French and Spanish. While I touched on the motivation of learning English because of its global

prominence or the investment in English because of a cultural attachment to African-American culture, I did not conduct a full-scale project with the aim of comparing the post-colonial context with the global context. For instance, a comparative project could look at Senegalese immigrants in New York City to explore in greater depth the fascination with the United States that informants in Italy and France displayed. What is the diasporic link between Africans and African-Americans and what does this link mean for language acquisition and use?

Finally, future studies should turn their attention back to Senegal as a research site. Brown (2000) notes a sparse amount of research on L2 acquisition in official language settings. My research shows that the distinction between official language settings, majority language settings, and institutional language settings in Senegal are not neatly demarcated. I did not primarily focus on language acquisition in Senegal; however, I have demonstrated that the ways in which Senegalese acquire languages in their home country and the relationship that they have with individual languages influence how languages are learned and used in France and Italy. It would be useful for the field to engage in more studies on language acquisition in former colonies, such as Senegal. Comparative work among former Francophone countries or between Francophone and Anglophone countries in Africa, for example, which looks at the various language ideologies and methods of acquisition, could further the discussion on language settings.

While the findings in this dissertation have both corroborated previous studies and have paved the way for other possible research avenues in the fields of second language acquisition and identity studies, my research also has potential implications for language policy. It is true that there are limitations to the scope and influence of my project because language policy must be written in general terms, and I am concerned with specific relationships between communities and host countries. However, this type of study can give both host nations and immigrants a new perspective in approaching a number of issues related to language policy and integration. Policy-makers who are made aware that the highly specific nature of each immigrant community-host nation relationship affects integration are more likely to write policy that reflects this understanding. Moreover, agencies that work on the ground level with immigrants can be informed about what sort of context-dependent factors affect second language acquisition among the specific immigrants with whom they work. Just the short conversation I had with the immigration lawyer in Rome showed that different people charged with the integration of foreign populations are looking for any information that can make their jobs easier. Providing both immigrants and host country members with detailed reflections on immigration and language attitudes is one step forward in easing tensions and promoting intercultural awareness.

### ***Closing Remarks***

The time I spent interviewing and observing my informants has yielded valuable data for the field of Identity Studies in SLA. What they say and how they speak offer meaningful insight into the relationship between self, social context, and language use. Looking at identity markers in the specific social and historical contexts of each site further problematizes our understanding of identity construction and boundary negotiation vis-à-vis language acquisition and use. Comparative studies should become a central part of SLA research because they put into relief many concepts that are not as accessible in research on single sites or single groups. While the turn in SLA to focus on the individual in social context has been eye-opening and rewarding, my research has shown that there is much more to be done in our investigations of the contextualized nature of identity formation through language.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

The following have been recorded unless specified, in which case only notes were taken:

### Senegalese Informants in Paris

No.	Name	Age	Date	Sex	LM	Additional Languages Spoken	Education	Yrs in France
1	Duudu*	54	10/2/09	M	Pulaar	French, Wolof, Arab	Bac+2	18
2	Oumou	45	10/4/09	F	Wolof	French	Secondaire	25
3	Nyambi	50s	10/8/09	M	Wolof	French, ~English	Secondaire	26
4	Nafi	50s	10/17/09	F	Pulaar	Wolof, French	Primaire	18
5	Djibril	25	10/18/09	M	Soninke	French, Pulaar, Wolof	2eme	7
6	Latif	27	19/20/09	M	Pulaar	Malinke, Wolof, French, ~English	Maitrise	1
7	Yasirah	22	10/30/09	F	Wolof	French, ~English, ~German, ~Chinese	In Uni	2
8	Ndella	45	11/3/09	F	Wolof	French, ~English	4eme	19
9	Sébastien*	28	11/8/09	M	French	Wolof, Spanish, English, ~German	Licence	8
10	Dib	27	11/8/09	M	Wolof/French	~English, ~German	Licence	3 wks
11	Ngirin w/ Sandrine	38	11/21/09	M	Wolof	French, ~English	Bac	7
12	Vera	22	11/23/09	F	Diola	Wolof, French	In Uni	2 mos
13	Jean-Paul	32	11/23/09	M	French	English, Wolof, ~German	Maitrise	11
14	Abdu*	31	11/25/09	M	French	Wolof, ~English	Bac	7
15	Karafa	50s	11/26/09	M	Wolof	French, Maninka, Pulaar, Diola, Portuguese~Spanish, ~English	Licence	30
16	Lucie	31	11/27/09	F	Wolof/French		Licence	Born
17	Soulou (notes)	22	11/30/09	M	Mandinka	French, Wolof, ~English	Secondaire	Born
18	Riquet Student	22	12/01/09	M				
19	Tambo (notes)	27	12/02/09	M	Malinke	~French	Primaire	8
20	Faatu	28	12/03/09	F	Diola	French, ~English, ~Spanish	Licence	Born
21	Salif	23	12/07/09	M	Wolof	French, English, ~Arabic, ~Spanish, ~German	Bac+4	4
22	Yasmina	27	12/08/09	F	Wolof	French, German	Licence	Born
23	Hakim	35	12/08/09	M	Wolof	French, English, Spanish	Licence	2
24	Ali	25	12/08/09	M	Wolof/French	English, ~German	Licence	8
25	Chantal	25	12/12/09	F	French	English, ~Chinese, ~Spanish, ~German, ~Wolof	Licence	Born
26	Ajuma (b. Niger)	27	12/13/09	M	Zarma, French	Wolof, English, ~Hausa	Maitrise	
27	Momar (notes)	30s	12/14/09	M	Pulaar	French, Wolof	No formal	15+

\* indicates principal informant

### **Language Instructors**

1. Thérèse interview	10-30-09
2. Anastasie interview	11-04-09
3. Anouk interview	11-27-09
4. Dorothée interview	12-02-09
5. Louise interview (notes)	12-10-09

### **Public servants**

1. Huong (secours populaires francais)	12-04-09 and 12-10-09
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### **Miscellaneous**

1. AESGE conference	10-24-09
2. wolof class (beginning and intermediate)	11-14-09
3. class on race at EHESS with the Fassin brothers and Pap Ndiaye	11-18-09
4. forum sénégalais	11-21-09
5. films et foyers	11-24-09
6. espace riquet class	12-01-09
7. conférence francais langue immigrant	12-09-09

### **Demographic breakdown of informants**

18 males, 9 females

aged 22-54

mean age: 31

14 in their twenties, 6 in their thirties, 3 in their forties, 4 in their fifties

maternal languages spoken: French, Wolof, Pulaar, Sereer, Diola, Maninka, Malinke, Soninke



Category 1

Oumou	45	F	Wolof	French	Secondaire	25
Nafi	50s	F	Pulaar	Wolof, French	Primaire	18
Momar (notes)	30a	M	Pulaar	French, Wolof	No formal	15+
Tambo (notes)	27	M	Malinke	~French	Primaire	8

Category 2

Duudu	54	M	Pulaar	French, Wolof, Arabic	Bac+2	18
Latif	27	M	Pulaar	Malinke, Wolof, French, ~English	Maitrise	1
Yasirah	22	F	Wolof	French, ~English, ~German, ~Chinese	In Uni	2
Ngirin	38	M	Wolof	French, ~English	Bac	7
Vera	22	F	Diola	Wolof, French	Uni	2 mos
Karafa	50s	M	Wolof	French, Maninka, Pulaar	Licence	30
Djibril	25	M	Soninke	French, Pulaar, Wolof	Secondaire	7
Hakim	35	M	Wolof	French, English, Spanish	Licence	2
Nyambi	50s	M	Wolof	French, ~English	Secondaire	26

Category 3

Sébastien	28	M	French	Wolof, Spanish, English, ~German	Licence	8
Jean-Paul	32	M	French	English, Wolof, ~German	Maitrise	11
Abdu	31	M	French	Wolof, ~English	Bac	7
Dib	27	M	Wolof, French	~English, ~German	Licence	3 wks
Salif	23	M	Wolof	French, English, ~Arabic, ~Spanish, ~German	Bac+4	4
Ajuma (Niger)	27	M	Zarma, French	Wolof, English, ~Hausa	Maitrise	
Ali	25	M	Wolof, French	English, ~German	Licence	8

Category 4

Lucie	31	F	Wolof, French		Licence	Born
Faatu	28	F	Diola	French, ~English, ~Spanish	Licence	Born
Yasmina	27	F	Wolof	French, German	Licence	Born
Chantal	25	F	French	English, ~Chinese, ~Spanish, ~German, ~Wolof	Licence	Born
Soudou (notes)	22	M	Mandinka	French, Wolof, ~English	Secondaire	Born

## Appendix 2

### Senegalese Informants in Rome

No.	Name	Age	Date	Sex	LM	Additional Languages Spoken	Education	Yrs in Italy
1	Kati	27	2/10/10	F	Pulaar, French	English, Italian	Bac	6 mos
2	Bachir	30	2/12/10	M	Wolof	French, Italian, ~Latin		
3	Ndiaga*	36	2/14/10	M	Pulaar	Wolof, French, Italian, English	Liceo	8
4	Ibou*	42	2/19/10	M	Pulaar	Wolof, French, English, Italian, ~Russian	Bac	12
5	Alfa	39	2/25/10	M	Wolof	Italian, French, ~English	Bac+2	11
6	Ndour	36	2/27/10	M	Wolof, Pulaar	Sereer, French, Italian, English, ~Spanish	J.D.	10
7	Karim	32	3/2/10	M	Sereer, Wolof	French, English, Italian, Spanish	Bac	3 (4 in France)
8	Anta	26	3/7/10	F	Wolof	French, Italian	Bac+3	5
9	Ngoné	23	3/7/10	F	Wolof	French, ~Italian	Secondaire	2
10	Ablaay	40	3/8/10	M	Diola, Wolof	French, Italian	Bac	5
11	Ondine	26	3/11/10	F	Wolof, Mangiaque	French, Italian, ~English	Secondaire	5
12	Naza	36	3/13/10	F	Diola, Wolof	~Pulaar, French, Italian	Sem2	5
13	Balla	42	3/28/10	M	Wolof	French, Italian, English	Bac+2	5
14	Abi	35	3/28/10	F	Mandingue	Wolof, ~Bambara, French, ~Italian, ~Spanish	3eme	1
15	Badu	32	4/2/10	M	Wolof	Italian, ~French, ~English	Primaire	9
16	Kolle	32	4/10/10	F	Wolof	French, Italian	Sem2	7
17	Ndao	35	4/10/10	M	Pulaar	Wolof, French, Italian, ~English	Secondaire	10
18	Idi*	33	4/10/10	M	Wolof	Italian, ~French	Primaire	6
19	Biondo	34	4/10/10	M	Wolof	Pulaar, English, French, Italian		5
20	Ousseynou	32	4/17/10	M	Wolof	Pulaar, Portuguese, French, Italian, English	Bac	
21	Alasaan	30s	4/23/10	M	Wolof	French, Italian, ~English		3
22	Keita	33	4/23/10	M	Wolof, Bambara	French, Italian, English, ~Spanish	Primaire	10
23	Goundo	27	4/23/10	F	Wolof, Mandingue	~French, ~Italian		4
24	Amath	35	4/23/10	M	Wolof	Italian		11
25	Professore	40	4/24/10	M	Wolof	French, Italian, English, Spanish	Maitrise	5

\* indicates principal informant

## **Language Instructors and Public Servants**

- |                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Speranza interview    | 2-16-10         |
| 2. Arietta (sociologist) | 4-28-10 (notes) |
| 3. Silvia (lawyer)       | 4-29-10         |

## **Miscellaneous including conversations for analysis**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 1. dance class with Idi   | 2-11-10 |
| 2. conversations at hidden restaurant                               | 2-12-10 |
| 3. italian classe media   | 2-16-10 |
| 4. elementary italian class   | 2-17-10 |
|   | 2-24-10 |
|   | 3-03-10 |
|   | 3-10-10 |
|   | 3-17-10 |
|   | 4-07-10 |
|   | 4-14-10 |
|   | 4-21-10 |
|   | 4-28-10 |
| 5. dance class with Karim   | 2-24-10 |
| 6. dance performance at Baobab with Idi (part 1 and 2)              | 2-26-10 |
| 7. day of the immigrant manifestation                               | 3-01-10 |
| 8. conversation between Karim and friends during interview          | 3-02-10 |
| 9. conversation (Ablaay's house) between Bachir, Ablaay, and friend | 3-02-10 |
| 10. senegalese dance performance at locanda                         | 3-23-10 |
| 11. conversations at hidden restaurant                              | 3-26-10 |
| 12. conversations at house of Abi (part 1 and 2)                    | 3-28-10 |
| 13. conversation with Ibou and French couple                        | 3-31-10 |
| 14. conversations at hidden restaurant                              | 4-06-10 |
| 15. conversations at hidden restaurant                              | 4-10-10 |
| 16. language instruction for immigrants                             | 4-13-10 |
| 17. conversations at hidden restaurant                              | 4-16-10 |
| 18. conversations with Ndiaga                                       | 4-17-10 |
| 19. drumming performance at 'Sans Papiers'                          | 4-17-10 |

## **Demographic breakdown of Senegalese informants**

17 males, 8 females

Aged 23-42

Mean age: 33

Five in their 20s, sixteen in their 30s, four in their 40s

Maternal languages spoken: Wolof, Pulaar, French, Diola, Bambara, Mandingue, Mangianque, Sereer

## Appendix 3

### Transcription conventions:

- . The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence
- ? The question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
- , The comma indicates ‘continuing’ intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
- ::: Colons indicate stretching of the preceding sound, proportional to the number of colons
- A Hyphen after a word or a part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption.
- (( )) Double parentheses enclose descriptions of conduct
- (word) When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber’s part
- ( ) Empty parentheses indicate an inaudible stretch of talk.
- [ Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate onset of a point of conversational overlap
- // Words between back-slashes are transcribed with the phonetic alphabet for instances in which a language’s conventional writing conventions are inadequate.

### Chapter 4 language key:

French, **Wolof**, English, SPANISH. If only one language is used in the excerpt, standard print is used. For words that appear to be hybrid forms of more than one language, italics and underlining is used simultaneously: *Hybrid*.

### Chapter 5 language key:

Italian, *French*, **Wolof**, English, SPANISH. If only one language is used in the excerpt, standard print is used. For words that appear to be hybrid forms of more than one language, italics and underlining is used simultaneously: *Hybrid*.