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Sous la direction du :

**Pr Gabriel C. BOKO &
Dr (MC) Innocent C. DATONDJI**



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La Revue Internationale de Recherche en Communication, Education et Développement (RIRCED), publiée par l'Institut Universitaire Panafricain (IUP), est une revue ouverte aux enseignants et chercheurs des universités, instituts, centres universitaires et grandes écoles.

L'objectif visé par la publication de cette revue dont nous sommes à la neuvième publication est de permettre aux collègues Enseignants-Chercheurs et Chercheurs de disposer d'une tribune pour faire connaître leurs travaux de recherche. Cette édition a connu une légère modification au niveau du comité de rédaction où le Professeur Titulaire Gabriel C. BOKO, devient le Directeur de Publication et le Professeur (Maître de Conférences), Innocent C. DATONDJI est le Rédacteur en Chef.

Le comité scientifique de lecture de la RIRCED est désormais présidé par le Professeur Médard Dominique BADA. Ce comité compte désormais huit membres qui sont tous des Professeurs Titulaires.

**Pr Gabriel C. BOKO &
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LANGUAGE AND OTHERNESS IN THE SENEGAMBIA FRANGLISH COMMUNITY AND THE WAY TO SUB-REGIONAL INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

The acculturation process triggered off by colonization and its assimilation aims, then the reconstruction of new identities, just after the independence of African countries, through the basic foundations of the Commonwealth on the one hand, and the French-speaking world on the other hand, seem to have overpowered the common fate shaped long before colonization and the ideal that Senegal and The Gambia strived towards in the framework of the Senegambia confederation. The two countries which naturally formed one and only sociocultural and geolinguistic unit once, are now divided, and the newly introduced foreign languages (French and English) along with some unfavorable

stereotypes further compound the sociolinguistic environment, reshape people's attitudes, and redefine the representation of the Other. Considerations other than one's land of birth or ethnic belonging seem to have come into play. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate that the political borders between Senegal and The Gambia are not but axes of symmetry with the same sociolinguistic realities on either side. This paper aims at proving that beyond the weight of foreign culture carried by colonial linguistic heritage, other criteria of differentiation based on language variation spring from local languages, even if they constitute the common roots of the two people. Last, we will try to draw guidelines that could be the mainspring for sub-regional integration and favor a successful partnership that would integrate local and foreign languages within the multilingual and multicultural context of The Gambia while valuing individual differences.

Key words: sociolinguistic – foreign/local language – otherness – integration – variation

RESUME

Le processus d'acculturation déclenché par la colonisation et ses visées assimilationnistes, puis la reconstruction de nouvelles identités juste après l'indépendance des pays africains, à travers les bases fondamentales du Commonwealth d'une part, et de la francophonie, d'autre part, semblent avoir pris le dessus sur le destin commun qui régnait bien avant la colonisation et l'idéal que le Sénégal et la Gambie s'étaient efforcés de bâtir, dans le cadre de la confédération de Sénégalie. Les deux pays qui formaient naturellement une et une seule entité socioculturelle et géolinguistique autrefois, sont maintenant divisés, et les langues étrangères nouvellement introduites (français et anglais) ainsi que quelques stéréotypes défavorables chamboulent l'environnement sociolinguistique, remodelent les attitudes des gens, et redéfinissent la représentation de l'autre. Des considérations autres que la terre de naissance ou l'appartenance ethnique semblent être entrées en jeu. L'objectif de cet article est de démontrer que les frontières politiques entre le Sénégal et la Gambie ne sont que des

axes de symétrie, avec les mêmes réalités sociolinguistiques de chaque côté. Cet article vise aussi à démontrer qu'au-delà du poids de la culture étrangère véhiculée par le patrimoine linguistique coloniale, d'autres critères de différenciation sur la base de la variation linguistique émanent des langues locales, même si elles constituent les racines communes des deux peuples. Enfin, nous allons essayer d'élaborer des lignes directrices qui pourraient être la cheville ouvrière de l'intégration sous-régionale et favoriser un partenariat fructueux qui permettrait d'intégrer les langues locales et étrangères dans le contexte multilingue et multiculturel de la Gambie, tout en valorisant les différences individuelles.

Mots clés: sociolinguistique – langue étrangère / langue locale - altérité - l'intégration - la variation

INTRODUCTION

The following contribution is a reflection on the role that languages and language varieties play in the way people in Senegal and the Gambia view each other and their willingness to get together as one people. Otherness is thus a keyword as speakers identify themselves with respect to a linguistic community and in opposition to other speech communities of their surroundings. The extent to which the latter hinders sub regional integration is further analyzed recalling the linguistic arguments set forward by informants. The work combines the library research and a fieldwork conducted at the town council of Sokone, the border area of Hamdalai and the upper Niumi distric of Nema-kunku. The qualitative data collected from the interviews and the participant observation were further related to book data to provide a sound analysis of the way people perceive each other in Senegambia with a view to constructing a solid integration of the two countries. The paper opens on the geolinguistic situation of the area, followed by the historical background of the two people and then the construct of identity and otherness in the Franglish community through language and language

varieties, border lines and gastronomy. The results show the survival of colonial stereotypes tucked away in language use and a strong will to re-unite.

1. THE GEOLINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

Historically, The Gambia and Senegal constitute the same people and no political decision can change that. Even though from 1889, following the Berlin conference, this zone has been split into two illusively different units, in terms of human community, the features have not changed that much. Moving from the one country to the other should not normally cause a feeling of strangeness because the people are basically the same, and so are the customs, the languages and several other identity markers inherited from their common origin. Indeed, wasn't it too risky to claim homogeneity in sociololinguistic matters, one could easily assume that, at least from a historical and socialcultural point of view, these people are the same. “*A l'exception des Aku de la Gambie, les mêmes ethnies se retrouvent de part et d'autre des frontières sénégalaise et*

gambienne. »¹ This assertion from Mbodj is undeniable. The same ethnic² groups and languages are found on either side of the borders, which is very meaningful. Let us recall, with a view to measuring the extent of the closeness of the two people, that an ethnic group is a group of people whose members identify with each other through a common heritage, consisting of a common culture, including a shared language or dialect. The main ethnic groups, then, are the Wolof, the Fula, the Seereer, the Diola and the Mandinka to which one will add the community of West Africans mainly from bordering countries (Nigerians, Ghanaian, Guineans, Malians, and Mauritians etc.) and the community of non Africans mainly composed of Europeans and Americans. These people have always strived for their unity and their existence as a nation which is best embodied by the Wolof

¹ Thiemo Soulèye Mbodj. *La confédération de la Sénégalie : réalités et perspectives*. 1985, p12

² Jean –Loup Amsell in his article entitled « de la déconstruction de l'ethnie au branchement des cultures : un itinéraire intellectuel » In *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales n°185*. pp.96-113 suggests the use of « connection » instead of ethnics to avoid considerations of purity.

phrase “*Senegal ak Gambia/a ñoo bokk/a ndey ak baay*”³, generally uttered to picture the sameness of the Senegambian community. As far as language is concerned, both countries share the same sociolinguistic setting, the only contrast being the status that specific languages have. For instance English is the official language in the Gambia, while in Senegal it is a foreign language with no further functional attributes but just a subject tough at school. Reversely, the same applies for French which is the official language of Senegal but remains a minority foreign language in the Gambia. As far as the local languages are concerned, we can talk about a reduplication of the linguistic environment, the same linguistic communities being scattered on both sides of the borders. In terms of language use, interlanguage phenomena operating on the vertical line are local languages and English base in the Gambia while in Senegal they are local language and French base.

³ The Senegalese and The Gambians are brothers and sisters.

2. A STEP BACK IN HISTORY

Many studies have tried to weep out the rich history of the black continent by exclusively dating every positive thing back to colonial times. The latter considered thus, that colonization was a turning point, a breaking between an uncivilized and a civilized world. Other prominent researchers like Joseph Ki-Zerbo have then battled to re-establish truth, bringing out the valuing withheld information about Africa. Their works have proven that contrary to what Western and Westernized thinkers vulgarized about the early history of the black continent, the latter presented more humane appearances and better aspects of civilization based on wisdom and traditional customs.

The common fate of West African countries can't be swept out, as it is not possible to brainwash the rooted Africans. Senegal, Mali, The Gambia, Guinea and several other countries have once been united in the great empires like Ghana, Songhai and Mali. These empires ruled the sub-region prior to European colonialism. Even some smaller kingdoms encompassed geographically spread

people in a multicultural community. By the way, Patience-Sonko Godwin reminds that at the time of monarchies, King Mansa Waly's kingdom stretched across Senegal and The Gambia: « *Sine and Saloum later extended their boundaries to a great extent, encompassing parts of the Wolof states of Baol and Kayor in Senegal and the Mandinka state of Niumi in The Gambia* »⁴. That geopolitical situation characterized by cultural diversity paved the way for commercial exchange: « *Since Sine and Saloum have large salt deposits, Seereer men and sometimes women traded this commodity in villages, towns and states where it was not available* »⁵. From that fact, one can see that the feeling of belonging to one and only sociopolitical unit may serve to meld different ethnic and cultural entities into nationhood even if the embedded outcome is a mere Macedonian nationhood.

Then, when colonization came, everything turned upside down, from people's identity to their social relationship. It generated a new otherness, no longer

⁴ Patience Sonko-Godwin. *Ethnic Groups of the Senegambia Region: A Brief History*. Banjul: Sunrise publishers Ltd. 2003, p.33.

⁵ Patience Sonko-Godwin. *Ibid.*, p.37.

identifiable from its ethnic or lineage or birth land but the colonial language it speaks, its affiliation to some French or English institution like Francophonie and Commonwealth, and later on, from the language variety it speaks. This new identification features got strengthened through assimilation policies implemented in the name of civilization, the superiority of some race over the others and a kind of divine duty to knock some sense into the heads of the colonised. From then Senegal and the Gambia, as separate entities, came to existence. That political split found an echo among their respective people. A difference fed by linguistic differences with reference to officialized foreign languages, trade barriers etc.

The historical unity between The Gambian and Senegal is undeniable : “*La thèse de la communauté culturelle originelle sénégalienne est un fait que les radicalistes sénégalais et les ouvrages historico-scientifiques considèrent comme une réalité en soi* »⁶. The division that was born from the Berlin Conference which

6 Thiemo Soulèye Mbodj.Op.cit.p.223.

traced the dividing lines between countries in 1889 might thus have been felt as a grief, the kind that Agueue felt when she lost her blood sister Jambogne⁷. But even if colonization kept them apart, by conferring them with new rival identities embodying the spirit of competition between their respective colonial mother countries, the call of the blood had overpowered the well grounded colonial ideologies. The will for a Senegambia confederation was different from the one England and France were longing for because the latter was meant to serve the interest of the colonial power while the former would meld the two people and give them enough strength to undertake the challenge of development and regional integration that were awaiting them in the aftermath of independence. The consciousness of Senegambian people about the benefits of uniting together could be explained by the fact that Senegalese and Gambian cultures share

⁷ The characters Agueue and Diambogne relate to the common origin of the Seereer and Diola ethnics. They were said to be two blood sisters that were separated from each other when their boat capsized. One of them was washed up in an island and while the other was beached onto the main land. The offspring of the former are the serer and those of the latter are the diola. From this story sprang the cousinship between the Seerer and the Diola people.

many similarities due to close proximity and the presence of the same ethnic groups in either countries. However, that general consciousness was delayed by the ideological formatting their people had just underwent (different masters, different reference languages, political systems etc.)

Par contre, les apports historiques britanniques instituant des types de gouvernement, de pensée politique, de langue, de méthode de travail, d'administration, bref de culture politique, ont entraîné un métissage culturel sensiblement différent de leur voisin francophone sénégalais héritier des apports français.

Nevertheless, this was soon overcome. Senegal gained its independence from France in 1960 and four years later, it was the turn of The Gambia to get independence from the United Kingdom. In December 17, 1981 negotiations between President Daouda Kairaba Diawara and President Abdou Diouf resulted in the signature of the treaty of the

confederation of Senegambia. This constituted a big step back to their “lost” integration.

3. THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY AND OTHERNESS

Identity is the sum of the individual’s peculiar features that make his uniqueness. Its construction may span in a long time and as all other social facts, it may be altered and reshaped when the individual finds himself in a network of social, political, geographical or linguistic variables. Identity is thus liable to changes and this is what Adjai Paulin Oloukpona-Yinnon tries to highlight in this passage : *“Il y a unicité du même, au sens où il n’existe pas deux êtres identiques, même si l’identité d’un être est plus un processus dynamique qu’une situation statique.”*⁸ The construction of identity goes through the comparison to the others, those that Jean-François Staszak calls the out-group by opposition to the in-group.⁹ This is all the more

⁸ Adjai Paulin Oloukpona-Yinnon. « Alterite : une ‘ theorie de recuperation’ » ? In *Ethiopes n° 74. Altérité et diversité culturelle* 1er semestre 2005.

⁹ Jean-François Staszak. “Other/Otherness” In *International Encyclopedia of human geography*. Elsevier, 2008. Pp1-7

understandable as Ronald David Laing, a British psychiatrist and writer, considers that the description of the individual can't leave to chance the social network in which he evolves, that is to say the context¹⁰.

The theme of otherness has been theorized in slightly different ways, especially in the field of literature, depending on the context in which it was applied. Edward Said (1935-2003), a leading professor in literary theory, in his approach to *Orientalism* uses it in power relationship between colonizers and colonized, where the former considers itself to be the centre and regards the latter as the periphery. For him, there is no doubt that the occlusion of otherness serves to support the idea that the Westerner is more important than the voiceless other. By the way, this Eurocentrism has a tendency towards excluding, marginalising and oppressing racial 'others'. This work is of paramount importance as it inaugurates post colonialism, which judges literature by a single, universal standard, regardless of cultural, regional or national differences. Otherness has also constituted a central theme

¹⁰ Ronald David Laing cited by Adjai Paulin Oloukpona-Yinnon. *Op.Cit.*

in African post colonial literature used by writers such as Chinua Achebe, Tsitsi Dagaremba and others. They all pose the problematic of alienation, though in different ways, and emphasize the agency of the African subject in (re)inventing postcolonial African society. Thus, the completely reject the ideological framework of African otherness and inferiority that served to implement and maintain European colonial rule:

J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, André Brink's *An Instant in the Wind*, David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon* and *An Imaginary Life*, Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, Patrick White's *Voss* and *A Fringe of Leaves*, or Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* are just a few examples of titles suitable for this kind of approach. Despite their literary, geographical and cultural diversity, these authors, like Conrad, emphasize the importance of constructing anti-imperialist attitudes within a personal, particular and culturally specific context – a process which involves

the experience of alien territory on home ground in order to question, analyse, negotiate and re-define assumptions about identity.¹¹

In any case, be it racial or cultural, otherness is always defined as what's beyond our own identity, that is to say the difference between I and You/He, or We and You/They. This leads us to discuss how colonization has brought separation within the Senegambia people and how it progressively reshaped the perception of otherness within this community.

3.1. Language and language varieties as building blocks

In the section, we discuss identity through the various elements that embody the strangeness of the Other. Among the issues to be dealt with, we have languages and language varieties, the frontiers and gastronomy.

¹¹ Karin Hansson. "Entering *Heart of Darkness* from a Post colonial Perspective: Teaching Notes" In *Research Report 5/98*. Ronneby: University of Karlskrona, 1998, p.2.

Language is a key identity marker. This is why Africa as a field of sociolinguistic investigation is often considered very complex due to its multilingual nature, made up by local African languages, foreign languages and the crossbred off springs resulting from contact situations (pidgins and creoles). The colonial history of Senegal and the Gambia being different, each has inherited a different European language (one Germanic and the other roman). This representation and the power relationship between those two entities have influenced the identity of their heirs and reshaped the way they perceive each other. As a matter of fact, one can assume that foreign languages (French and English) which were introduced in the sub region further compound the political situation.

Moreover, language contact gave way to language variation resulting from their daily interactions. The intakes modify the normalized way of speaking because it brings together bits of linguistic elements drawn from two or many languages. Thus, the variation within local languages which moreover constitutes the common ground of the Senegambia people deceives into another representation of otherness. In this trend, the Wolof

varieties spoken in these two countries, along with the varieties of English are often recalled in debates as to their correctness¹². One contrastive phonological feature about Wolof is that the Gambian speakers do not allow the germination of final consonants in syllable structures while the Senegalese speakers do. This often makes the Gambians the target of constant mockery from their Senegalese fellows who often identify them as “*mboka*” phonologically realized as /mboka/ highlighting the variation from the Senegalese form “*mbokk*”. Note that in Senegalese Wolof CVC construction, the syllable final consonant /k/ is geminated but in the Gambian form, we have a CVCV construction with an elision of the germination as a first change, and then the addition of the open front vowel /a/ to hold the vowel harmony system¹³. Another identification feature based on language variation now pertains to English and the Gambian regional accent. One of the features that is often recalled is the phonological realization of the word “brothers” realized as

¹² Codu Mbassy Njie (1982). *Description syntaxique du wolof de Gambie*. Dakar : Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines.

¹³ Dame Ndao. *L'harmonie vocalique dans les langues du Sénégal*. Lincom Language Research, 9, 2014.

[brHJBz] by Senegalese speakers of English, while the Gambians utter it as /brodaz/. The contrast between the two forms shows a change affecting the two vowels of the word. The first vowel /H/ and the second vowel /B/ in the Senegalese form contrast with the first vowel /o/ and second vowel /a/ of the Gambian form. This language variation is not understood by the mainstream population as an inherent phenomenon to all languages in the world but as a matter of competence or closeness to the root form of the language. The implication in intergroup relation is that both people (the Gambians and the Senegalese) consider each other as speaking a phonologically deviant form of Wolof and English, which further hinder the linguistic dimension of regional integration if public awareness is not favored.

3.2. Border lines and Gastronomy

Borders constitute one of the first elements of identification. When one crosses the borders, they willingly accept to take on a new identity; as such, they carry with them all legal documents (ID card, Laissez-passer, passport etc.) that could demonstrate, wherever

needed, who they are and who they are not. As Perret states, “*La frontière terrestre est la construction perceptive, la représentation mentale d'une césure posée dans l'espace géographique*”¹⁴. Thus, from the moment the Berlin Conference traced the dividing lines between countries in 1889, a new other was born from the split of the Senegambia self into the Senegalese self and the Gambian Otherness and vice versa. Such a situation will be strengthened by a series of policies implemented by colonial powers. Moving outside ones usual environment then, implies a mental representation of *elsewhereness* as Sophie Kyllesbech¹⁵ would say. From the linguistic perspectives, the border is both a breaking point and a continuum. This is due, on the one hand to the changing policies, and the other hand to the permanent movement of the people and the prolonged contact that blur normally the perceived differences.

¹⁴ Perret J.-M « Les frontières terrestres du Canada : Reflet ou vecteur d'altérité ? » In *Etudes canadiennes*. Andorre : AFEC, 1995, vol. 21, no 39, p. 83

¹⁵ Sophie Kyllesbech. “Second homes: ‘house lives’ across borders”.

Gastronomy is another important fact. Indeed from Senegal to the Gambia, food preferences are slightly different. This difference is not only with the recipe of the food itself but also with the name. The latter is meaningful in area of the study if we consider that the variation in question occurs within the same sociocultural community. In the Gambia gastronomic system, all main courses are divided according to whether all the ingredients are mixed-up in one cooking pot “*benn cin*” or in two “*ñaari cin*”. Then come the specific names of dishes. In Senegal, the two groupings “*benn cin*” and “*ñaari cin*” are rarely recalled. Instead, dishes are directly called by their specific names. This has finally come to be an identity marker in the area and a further element of differentiation between the members of the in-group and those of the out-group.

4. LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE USE IN THE CONSTRUCT OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Regional integration is a hot preoccupation in West Africa. Government have been longing for it. The WAEMU, ECOWAS, the African Union, the International Research on Regional Integration and Social Transformations branch of the West African Institute¹⁶, and several other attempts before that, fall in the framework of regional integration. The latter has various aspects, political, economic, and cultural, but the first two seem to focus attention more than the last one which is nevertheless very crucial as it does not spring from political decision but from the good will of the mainstream population. Despite these attempts, the theme of regional integration is still on the agenda. This section proposes some guidelines to achieve the objective of Integration. It

¹⁶ The general objective of the WAI is to advance knowledge on West African regional integration and to provide decision-makers with related policy options conducive to development, peace and the protection of human rights in the sub-region.

is intended for The Gambia, Senegal and other West African countries.

Valuing regional varieties Language matters have become hot issues that are much debated in scientific circles. Deconstruction theories on controversial notions such as the opposition between language and dialect, standard and non standard, vehicular and vernacular, dominant and minority have much contributed to ease human relationships as subjective ideas springing from old stereotypes are getting completely obsolete. People, at least in the intellectual domain are better prepared to talk of languages as communication tools which are equally good. Yet, for the mainstream population, those subjective old stereotypes still survive and constitute extra elements to the definition of the self and the other. During my field work in the Gambia, several interviewees recalled the debate of correctness between Senegalese and Gambian varieties of English (with reference to RP English) and Wolof. For example one of the informants found at Serrekunda market says the following:

*Senegalese ak Gambian fuñu waxee rek
nga xamee leen ndax bokuñ niño*

*pronounce because Senegalese budee wax English dafdee mispronounce yenna letta yi [...] man nangunaa ne Senegalese yi deeganañ English de wante niko Gambian yi di waxee moo genaa korek. Even Olof bi sax, xawma naka laalakoo waxee, Senegal seen wax defa diis daal [...].*¹⁷

It is a good thing that they be aware of the existence of those regional varieties, but the failure to tolerate them is a source of conflict between the self and the other

Sub regional integration can't be effective if French, English and Portuguese to a certain extent are not given an effective role as languages of wider communication in the area. The reason is simple, 9/16 countries that compose the sub-region of West Africa (namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo and Niger) are Francophone countries and only 5/16 speak English (The Gambia,

¹⁷ Data from the interview.

Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone). This data is very determining if we think about media integration. The latter being understood as “the provision to all persons, groups, nations of access to the variety of messages which they need in order to know and understand each other, to appreciate other's living conditions, viewpoints and aspirations”¹⁸ reveals to be the only means to access to the information society. This is all the more understandable as Karl Deutsch, Cantori and Spiegehe regard “regional integration as “the sum-total of flows and transactions within a region”¹⁹, which Ewumbue-Monono Churchill further clarifies in the following passage:

Such flows and transactions could be inter-personal (mails, telephones and telegraphs), mass media (newspaper, radio, TV and books), exchanges among the elites (intra-regional

¹⁸ Ewumbue-Monono Churchill. « The Mass Media and Regional Integration in Africa” In *Africa Media Review* Vol. 5 No. 1. 1991, p12.

¹⁹ Karl Deutsch, Cantori and Spiegel, cited by Ewumbue-Monono Churchill. Ibid. p.19

education, tourism, diplomatic visits) and transportation (roads, water, rail and air).²⁰

Most of these were taken in charge in the policy of the union but its subsequent failure to meet the expectations of the two countries led to dislocation in 1989 and brought the debate of sub-regional integration back on the agenda. The creation of “City Limits” and “Unique FM”²¹ in collaboration with the French Co-operation Project in support to French Language was a good step towards media integration but was hampered by their restrictive target as they mainly pointed towards students and teachers of French. It was not ambitious enough and could hardly meet the set objective of the French Co-operation Project for support of French Language which was to develop the francophone environment.

The multilingual context of the Senegambia area is an important factor as languages interact between them, vary and change in different ways. Phenomena such as code-switching and code-mixing spring from their daily

²⁰ Ewumbue-Monono Churchill. Ibid. p.19

²¹ City Limits and Unique FM are radio stations broadcasting in The Gambia.

coexistence. Scientific studies have shown for example that Senegalese variety of Wolof varies from the Gambian variety in many ways. For example, at the phonological level, Codu Mbassy Njie observes the following:

*Le système vocalique souffre d'un déséquilibre dû au fait que la voyelle ë n'a pas de partenaire phonologiquement long. Dans notre dialecte d'ailleurs [le dialecte wolof de Gambie], elle tend vers l'antériorisation (ë e) ou la postériorisation (ë o, u) selon son environnement*²².

These variations are often a reflection of language interactions because as Christine Deprez observes, no language is so hidden as to escape from the intake resulting from languages' coexistence in multilingual situations²³.

²² Njie, Codu Mbassy. *Description syntaxique du wolof de Gambie*.

Dakar : Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1982, p.23.

²³ Christine Deprez. « L'emprunt : la trace et la marque, le passage » In *Plurilinguisme n° 9-10 : les emprunts*. Paris : Revue du Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches en Planifications Linguistiques, juin-décembre 1995, p.1.

Coexistence also give way to communication strategies as code switching where speakers make choices from their multilingual linguistic repertoire to achieve some objectives. While code switching²⁴ in Senegal mainly involves French and some local languages, in The Gambia it combines English and some local languages. This is a reflection of the differences that exist in linguistic choices of their respective speakers. Those differences are further elements that come into play in the perception of the Other. Moreover, the theory of language conflict born from their functional distribution poisons the linguistic partnership that normally ought to prevail between French and English, Senegalese and Gambian varieties of Wolof. The attitudes of their respective speakers should be more tolerant. If they really advocate linguistic integration, they should better value peaceful coexistence between the languages they speak:

²⁴ Jean Dubois defines it as a communication strategy whereby an individual or a group of people uses in their speech or interaction, two different languages or language varieties whether they are highly proficient in or not in either of them. (Dubois, Jean. *et. al*, 2002, p.30).

Une approche plus critique de la diglossie a permis de mettre en exergue la complémentarité dans leur distribution fonctionnelle et a cassé ou atténué le débat autour du conflit linguistique pour valoriser celui du partenariat, moins sauvage et plus rationnel²⁵.

The promotion of linguistic partnership permits to recognize and value the role of each language in the communication scheme. Speakers would integrate language networks and depart from old monolingual stereotypes. The aim is to weaken the series of stumbling blocks, made up of linguistic and cultural barriers that further compound the economic and political barriers. In this trend, the *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights* says the following:

²⁵ Ibrahima Sarr. Le phénomène des langues en contact en Sénégal : analyse phonologique et sémantique des emprunts lexicaux d'origine mandingue en langue seereer. Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis, UFR de Lettres et Sciences Humaines. Thèse de doctorat, Mai 2012, pp.67-68.

Toutes les prédictions indiquent que pendant le XXI^e siècle peuvent disparaître 80% des langues du monde. Ceci implique un débat inévitable : que le plurilinguisme et la diversité doivent contribuer à la culture de la paix autant que celle-ci doit contribuer à préserver la diversité.

Cette relation de réciprocité peut être atteinte si le développement de la culture de la paix explore les valeurs que les langues offrent en tant qu'éléments d'intégration²⁶.

As it is stated in the preliminaries of that Universal declaration, it has been issued to remedy “the linguistic imbalances in order to guarantee the spreading of all languages and set the fair principles of linguistic peace in the world as a fundamental element to social coexistence.”²⁷

²⁶ *Déclaration universelle des droits linguistiques*. Institut d'Edicions de la Diputacio. de Barcelona, Comité d'accompagnement de la déclaration universelle des droits linguistiques, avril 1998 pdf. p.13

²⁷ *Déclaration universelle des droits linguistiques*. Ibid. p. 12.

CONCLUSION

All along this paper, we have tried to analyze how the perception of otherness has been perverted throughout history in the context of the Senegambia. The paper traces back the common history of these people which is a pretext to remind that although politically The Gambia and Senegal are two different countries, sociolinguistically they are the same. Then it recalls the separation of the two people triggered by colonization and its assimilation aims through its bureaucratic, political and linguistic machine. The ideological formatting they undertook has resulted in the redefinition of the criteria through which the other is perceived. New identification features as border lines, the language variety one speaks or the colonial language one uses, have come into play. If integration is to be achieved, the linguistic factor should be given a great attention because the other is often perceived via his/her language or language variety. Yet the knowledge of the other inevitably goes through the knowledge and diffusion of the code they use, hence the importance of media integration.

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