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Multilingualism triangulated: A systematic method for analysing multilingual contexts[1]

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ABSTRACT

In this article we outline a methodology for researching multilingual contexts - the *triangulation of analyses*. The key point of the methodology is to triangulate analyses carried out by different parties. It is a systematic way of incorporating different perspectives of the same documented communicative event in order to attempt a more holistic understanding of multilingual practices. We propose that the method can be useful to any researcher of multilingualism and applicable in any setting the world over. We describe the method illustrating step-by-step how we use it to investigate multilingual language use in the Casamance, Senegal with examples from our respective research. We conclude discussing how the triangulation method goes hand-in-hand with reflective practice, and thus offer insights into our changed thinking on how to study multilingualism using sociolinguistic, ethnographic-based methods, but most importantly incorporating different points of view.

Keywords: multilingualism, methodology, triangulation, collaborative research, perspectives, repertoires

INTRODUCTION

Living in a multilingual world, which is in most domains preoccupied by monolingual idealisations, is a challenge to the modern researcher. Multilingual speakers practise language rather freely, applying it to their social environment, momentary needs, emotional state and aims, with varying degrees of conscious awareness. Moreover, when integrating fine-grained perspectives

that go beyond standardised language forms, all conversational interactions can to some point be described as multilingual, which is nowadays widely accepted as a fundamental part of conversational practice in linguistic research (see e.g. Lüdi 2006; Auer & Li Wei 2007; Li Wei & Moyer 2008).

Yet, to analyse such situations, the sole perspective of a researcher who is always somehow in an external position, cannot cover the complexity of social interactions and often also language(s) involved. In this paper, we present a methodology for systematically studying the differences inherent in multilingual settings. The methodology, simply put, triangulates analyses from different parties including a critical self-reflection of the researchers themselves and is a method which is grounded in the incorporation of different perspectives.[2] In this, we align with Kasperowski, Kullenberg & Rohden (2020) who view research as a collective enterprise, even if carried out by a lone researcher. Collective or collaborative research that involves others facilitates access to a wide range of data and a variety of perspectives (Adami et al. 2020: 14). Collaboration in all stages is central to our methodology: in how we understand what research is, how we carry it out and in the recognition that systematic ways of including a variety of perspectives are necessary to attempt to understand any given phenomenon that we wish to research.

Our methodology follows a triangulation of perspectives, allowing such research to strive for a deep, or thick description (Geertz 1973), including an interdisciplinary view on not only the language(s) used, but also the social and environmental influences in the documented situation. Taking into account varying perspectives and scales of analysis (Gal 2016; Irvine 2016) allows for a more nuanced view of the phenomenon studied. In our research we attach high value on knowing as much as possible about people's (self interpretations of their) linguistic repertoires and its use. Following Busch (2015) as well as Blommaert & Backus (2013), we understand (linguistic) repertoires as a collection of all (meta)linguistic resources of repertoire users including lects, styles, registers, gestures, bodily expressions but also experiences and emotions connected to any linguistic form of expression. Throughout an individuals' life, these repertoires can enlarge, but parts of it can also diminish, receiving a new meaning or, take on a new role. Repertoires, whether they be individual, group, or spatial vary according to the situations with which individuals are confronted and the practices that they engage in, in particular spaces (Ducos 1983; Pennycook & Otsuji 2015). Therefore, we also follow Blommaert (2010: 105) in not only explaining the repertoire from an individual biographical perspective, but also related to the wider societal and historical dimensions of where people have lived.[3] In the same vein, we understand 'language' in a holistic manner, going far beyond the notion of clearly defined and delimited standard languages.

The method presented here was developed during research in the Casamance, southern Senegal. People there live vivid societal and individual multilingualisms, and may use several languages on a daily basis (Weidl 2022). As a former French colony, French is still the only official language of the institutional sector (Johnson 2005), Arabic plays a role in religious contexts, being a language of Islam which over 90% of the Senegalese population adheres to (Ngom 2003; Lüpke & Bao-Diop 2014). Yet, even in official contexts broadly used languages of wider communication like Wolof, Sereer, Pulaar, Mandinka, Joola and regionally smaller languages, play important roles in verbal communication in all sectors (Goodchild 2018; Ngom 1999; Sall 2009; Weidl 2018). Both authors conducted a qualitative study broadly situated in sociolinguistics; our fieldwork was heavily based on linguistic-ethnographic methods (Goodchild 2018; Weidl 2018) and foregrounded the individualised experiences of multilingualism by participants, strongly contributing to the development of the triangulation approach.[4] Therefore, the method we present below, aligns with other (team) studies on multilingualism in linguistic ethnography and encourages critical reflexivity on positionality, methods, the researcher and multilingual practices used in research (e.g. Blackledge & Creese 2010; Martin-Jones, Andrews & Martin 2017).

To follow our methodology a wide variety of data sources are preferable, however, it is not only the data which are triangulated, but significantly the analyses of these data by different parties. The method-

ology is applicable for short and long-term research and allows for close attention to people's different experiences of their linguistic practices, considering a multiplicity of meanings according to time and context. In the latter parts of the paper, we demonstrate how to bring together the resulting different perspectives using a data example taken from our research, which highlights the intricacies of multilingual settings and their interpretations. It is important to be aware that a full reflection of the complexities of realities cannot be reached, thus we further explore how a multi-perspective analysis also presents its own complexities in its implementation. Moreover, we discuss how by engaging in such a method, an ongoing awareness of the potential for changing perspectives is needed, as the research process itself may change the researchers' and participants' understandings.

Below we detail various stages of research, using examples from our own experiences. We start by demonstrating how to prepare the stages of research. Subsequently, we demonstrate how to apply the triangulation method to the analysis of data. How to present the method and analyses in the dissemination stages of the research process is dealt with below. We conclude by emphasising the simplicity and systematicity of the triangulation of analyses which widens the diversity of perspectives when studying multilingual practices.

MULTILINGUALISM TRIANGULATED IN PRACTICE: PREPARATION AND DATA COLLECTION

We firstly present an overview of the triangulation method, before detailing various considerations and steps the researcher may wish to take in order to prepare and collect appropriate data. Although we recognise that data collection and analysis is not always a linear process, particularly when using the methodology presented here, various tasks are divided for better comprehension.

The triangulation method

Our integrated approach to examining multilingual settings has as its aim the triangulation of analyses of different types of data in order to account for complexities of multilingual settings. We have jointly adapted and developed the triangulation methods approach (Angouri 2010; Almashy 2016). Denzin (1972: 472) outlines four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theoretical and methodological. To this we add triangulation of analyses from different perspectives (note that this is distinct from investigator, as the analyses do not necessarily come from trained researchers). We found that more traditional approaches to analysis, i.e. conducted only by the researcher from one scientific discipline, often engage with conceptual frameworks that were not contextualised for all societies. Often issues are determined by Northern academic perspectives, failing to account for the levels of fluidity and complexity present in the highly multilingual and multicultural settings encountered in many parts of the world (Ndhlovu & Makalela 2021). In order to mitigate this, our approach, which is driven by the researcher, still brings together various perspectives (Gal 2016; Irvine 2016) and is inclusive of participants' and observers' analyses on the setting.

The triangulation in itself includes using a multi-method approach, to incorporate a wide range of data. The method combines what we refer to as the repertoire users' report[5], which presents how participants perceive and analyse the situation and their own language use; the observers' report, which presents how transcribers or research assistants perceive the situations, linguistic practices and language(s) used in the data; and the researcher's report, which has a traditional analysis as its basis but goes beyond that by including the repertoire users' and observer's analysis. Figure(1) below visually represents the triangulation method, each point of the triangle incorporates a different perspective. The middle of the triangle represents the analysis incorporating all of the points, in addition to considering how attitudes, emotions, etc., can influence these analyses. The arrows between the points of the triangle demonstrate how researchers, observers and repertoire users may influence each other. We assume that there is less influence between the repertoire user and observer, hence the lighter shade of arrow.

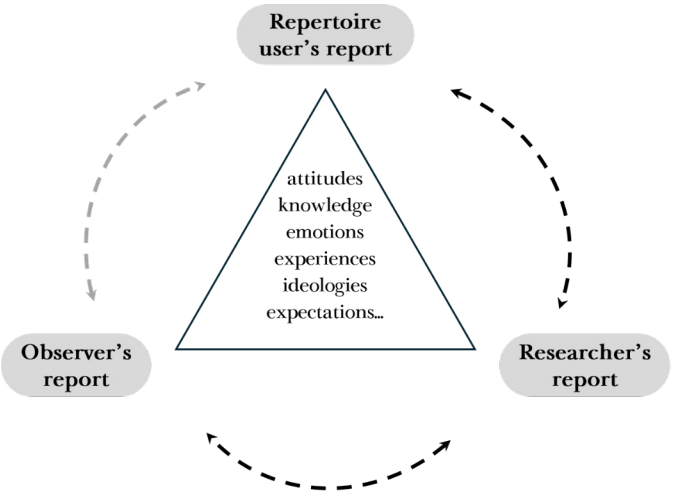

Figure 1: Triangulation method

In a research setting where various viewpoints are taken into consideration, all participants can swap roles and both the researcher and the observer can take the repertoire user's place in the same way as the repertoire users are considered as observers in certain situations. As Heller et al. (2018: 10) point out '*there is nothing intrinsically and fundamentally different between the perceptions and accounts of our research participants and those of our own as academics*'. There are rather wider issues at play, such as ethics and power and therefore, a cornerstone of the triangulation methodology involves that the researcher critically reflects on their presence in the field, taking into account all stages of the research process from planning through data analysis to dissemination, as this inevitably has far-reaching effects on the analyses of the multilingual situations under study.

Preparations

As a researcher, when developing and engaging in a research project, the most obvious step before encountering the field is to acquire as much topic relevant knowledge as possible. While it might sound superfluous to mention, one must consider how the researcher's preparations influence their way of thinking, which makes introspection inevitable (Copland & Creese 2018; Heinrichtsmeier 2015; Rampton 2007). A critical reflection on the self is a source of input during the whole process of investigation, possible expectations towards the research and outcomes must be consciously perceived. Research plans must be subject to modification that allow adaptability on all levels, integrating observers' and repertoire users' views as equivalent and guiding.

Furthermore, we think that a critical self-reflection as researchers is obligatory. In our case we both are highly multilingual white, European researchers, funded from European Institutions, educated in European academic settings. This influences our research, our expectations and the way we understand social interactions, but also the attitudes and expectations people have of us. In our work we are aware of the general problematic nature of research(ers) coming from the Global North; however, in our research we promote clear ethical research practices, have close and equal collaborations with local students, researchers and activists and engage in highly participatory approaches that involve local communities. In line with the decolonisation of multilingualism (Ndhlovu & Makalela 2021), we engage in a respectful culturally sensitive and inclusive research practice to contribute to a positive change (see e.g. Alim et al. (2016) and Flores & Rosa (2015)), which ultimately aligns with the transparency of

practices we hope to encourage using the triangulation method by including different perspectives.

A reflection on our preparations, and related to our linguistic biographies, we take as an example from our research how we dealt with Wolof, the *de-facto* most widely spoken and understood language in Senegal (see Goodchild 2016: 86–87; 2018: 140–141). For Goodchild, it seemed necessary to learn Wolof, to facilitate research and to communicate in a variety of situations. This expectation was based on previous research (e.g. Cobbinah 2012; Keese 2016; Lüpke & Storch 2013; Sagna 2008). But once in Essyl, the reality was rather different, Wolof was used very infrequently. Many participants disliked using Wolof, and its use was only appropriate in limited contexts. This tallied with a trend of observed practices but was contrary to informed expectations. The situation ultimately reflected one among many perspectives on the data and helped in guiding the early stages of the research regarding language repertoires and use.

Weidl's experience with using Wolof in Djibonker varied widely. There, Wolof is a broadly accepted language for communication with foreigners and among inhabitants. Speaking a variety of Wolof close to that of Dakar and having previously lived in Wolof dominated areas where scientific papers on the preeminence of Wolof prove true, Weidl on the one hand expected her interlocutors to be able to comprehend her Wolof perfectly, which was an intimidating situation for certain people. On the other hand, Weidl presumed Wolofisation (a view that Wolof is a threat for other languages and cultures, see e.g. Johnson 2005; Mc Laughlin 1995), existed in some way all over the country. She caused confusion with questions about the dominance of Wolof, which does not exist as such on a small-scale in Djibonker, and therefore was not experienced by the main research participants, although Wolofisation might still exist on a broader-scale. However, questions that were asked in previous interviews triggered answers that would have led to false results in a shorter period of research but could have been prevented if Weidl would have scrutinised her expectations *ab initio*. Although every research situation is unique, these examples emphasise that research is unpredictable and we, as researchers, have to align our investigation to the situation and not vice versa.

Research assistants & facilitators

Supplementary views and general support of research assistants (RAs) and facilitators in applying triangulation during all steps of data collection and analysis is highly valuable. Facilitators are seen as people who are essential in establishing connections, assisting with upcoming issues in everyday life and aid with culturally appropriate adjustment. RAs can participate in data collection, transcriptions and help with clarifications, analysis and regular feedback. Their individual perspectives and expectations must be taken into account as their decisions and choices are based on personal knowledge, experiences and interest (Alzouebi 2012). RAs are needed to engage in the research to a different level: in situations where the researcher comes from the outside in to better grasp the multifaceted settings of language use. But advantages also arise for investigations in familiar environments (from the inside out) since the familiarity and habitualness might distort the researcher's view in a similar, albeit opposed manner. We employed RAs[6] during our work to transcribe, annotate and translate data in ELAN[7] who also discussed data and their transcriptions with the researchers. They, therefore, functioned as observers when triangulating the analyses and they were able to fill gaps in the capability of the researchers themselves, broaden perspectives and counteract bias.

Data collection

When encountering the field of interest, we constantly collect data and simultaneously analyse and make inferences. From the researcher's view, data on social structures, behavioural patterns, individual characters, etc., can already be gathered and compared to knowledge previously gained, while getting in first contact with the people and place of interest.

Following strict work ethics and the best intentions (Iphofen 2011), the people involved in the research need to be informed to an optimum, customised to their individual backgrounds. In our area of interest, consent involved different steps starting with the approval of the head of the

village who organised a village meeting in which we answered questions and requested a general permission for the research. We then briefed the participants of our research individually and mainly recorded their oral informed consent since many participants are not regular users of literacy. All participants are always in the right to ask for more explanations, to withdraw shared information and request for data to be deleted without reason.

Finding participants who show an intrinsic motivation to be part of the research is beneficial and we stress that the development of mutual confidence of the maximum number of people included is fundamental and increases the chance for a more in-depth study. In our research, the data collection consisted of observations, recorded interviews (ethnographic, including life histories and language biographies) with individuals or in focus groups, photographs of the linguistic landscape, language use diaries, field notes and participatory videography data (Weidl 2018: 108). Our multilingual data collection started with visiting our participants as well as public spaces of gathering regularly to observe, study the environment and interactions, and speak to people, while taking notes. In all of our research we use video recording as default with participants' consent. Having a visual representation of multimodal language use enables the interpretation of body language, facial expression, movement and interactions and spatial-settings and furthermore facilitates and enriches analysis (of language use) in a multifaceted way (Blackledge & Creese 2017). It furthermore proved to be useful for RAs and repertoire users to interpret the situation, since, interpretations of only audio or transcriptions after some time has elapsed, has a high potential for misinterpretation.

During all data collection, we include everybody present as potential 'repertoire users', including the participants, researchers, and RAs, as everyone present can influence linguistic practices. At this point, we however need to challenge the often recited 'observer's paradox' (see Labov 1978) as we argue that the researcher is not more paradoxical than any other possible participant and counteract the belief that only the researcher unwillingly influences the given situation. Conditions differ and cannot be predicted and any event might influence the whole conversational setting and linguistic behaviour. We acknowledge the researcher, as everybody else, as a potential influence, and believe that no unconstrained situation can be to a greater or lesser extent 'natural' in itself.

In our research, after data collection we routinely verified everybody's consent and collected missing metadata as well as ethnographic background information of all of the people present. Parts of the videos were given to our RAs who annotated, transcribed and translated them to French. We then discussed the videos and transcription with the RAs and subsequently went back to the repertoire users, to ask for their views on selected multilingual situations.

When triangulating data, it is not always possible to draw clear lines between the stages of data collection and the analysis. We recognise the method can be time consuming, however it proved to be expedient. The process of data analysis is discussed in the following section.

MULTILINGUALISM TRIANGULATED IN ANALYSIS

Miller (2005: 151) reminds us '*[i]l faut constamment garder à l'esprit qu'il existe une pluralité des normes*' 'you must constantly keep in mind that there are multiple norms'[8]. This is particularly pertinent when using the triangulation method as it incorporates myriad norms. Researchers must remember that all norms are underpinned by a variety of personal experiences, ideologies, emotional responses (Busch 2015) and historical precedents. This includes what the researchers themselves consider to be the norms for language use and which in turn might influence their perception of the data. The same goes for participants and observers: norms could change according to the situation and people present. We propose that following the triangulation method can reveal the plurality of language use and norms in multilingual settings. In the following, we demonstrate how to triangulate the analyses on an excerpt of audio data (not all participants consented to video), Table 1.

The context briefly, was a meeting of the Catholic Women's Association of Mof Avvi, where women come together to form prayer groups, organise and carry out fundraising activities. In this meeting, the participants are organising a date for a

xawaare (see also Weidl 2018: 153), an all-day celebration to raise funds for the association.

We start the analyses with the repertoire users' view, yet it is possible to begin from any angle or juxtapose them, but here, we would like participants' and observers' analyses to come to the fore. Firstly, we focus in detail on the view of one repertoire user (DS4) and provide an overview of the others' repertoires to then turn to the observers' analysis and finally the researchers' analysis and triangulate that with the repertoire users' and observers' views.

Table 1: Example of a speech event

[1]	PB2	*wala fin mai*
		'or the end of May'
[2]	RB4	*premiére semaine du moi de juin*
		'first week of the month of June'
[3]	MM1	*nusereyal sere*
		'we are all tight [on time]'
[4]	DS4	*taŋ key kubaje communion*
		'so who is meant to do the first communion'
[5]		*yax edat yololal yay* […]
		'our famous date'
[6]		*Xaware yay pan egëli*
		'the *xawaare* will bypass [you]'

[KEM060316SG]

Repertoire users' analysis

The repertoire user's analysis is crucial in understanding how participants perceive their own and others' linguistic practices. Although participants are routinely asked about their language use in research projects, it is often not recognised that they are already engaging in a form of analysis aligned with individual language ideologies and metalinguistic awareness (Mertz & Yovel 2003), irrespective of whether they are familiar with concepts as researchers might understand it. Participants may be able to describe their linguistic practices, whether using named languages, or other descriptive terms. However, not all people will be familiar with having to describe how they use language. In asking participants to engage with the reasons behind these descriptions or practices, we are asking for their analysis of the situation. This part of the method does not require any particular expertise from the participants, but it is important to remember in the analysis stage not to remove the repertoire users' data and analyses from the wider context. For example, if an interview was conducted, then the researcher's or RA's questions and comments should also be analysed, to take account for any effects (Goodchild 2018: 136; see also De Fina & Perrino 2011).

Below in Table 2 we present an overview of repertoire information for each participant featured in the excerpt analysed. Below the table we present a more detailed description of how DS4, the main speaker, analyses her linguistic practices. The language names given are English transliterations of the participants' descriptions. It is important to remember that the language practices during data collection can affect the data collection itself. For example, different information might be given if the repertoire users prefer French, Joola Banjal, Wolof or a variety of linguistic practices.

DS4 described her linguistic repertoire as featuring Joola Fogny, Joola, Joola Banjal, French and Wolof. The data in this instance was collected through an interview conducted in French. Her analysis of her linguistic practices comes from life history interviews and informal conversations over the course of fieldwork. She stated that she is unable to speak Joola Banjal or Joola Fogny without mixing them together. Although she speaks Wolof, she doesn't like to at all. This is due to myriad reasons, but can be related to her childhood in Ziguinchor, where although Wolof was frequently spoken in the schoolyard (and other settings), her uncle with whom she was staying forbade its use in the compound. In addition, DS4 prefers to speak Joola and/or

Table 2: Repertoire users' basic biographical information

Participant	Male/ female	Year born	Age when finished education	Repertoire: named languages, alphabetical order
PB2	Female	1977	11	French; Joola Banjal; Joola Fogny; Wolof
RB4	Female	1974	16	English; French; Joola Banjal; Joola Fogny; Sose; Spanish; Wolof
MM1	Female	1959	Information not given	Joola; Joola Fogny; Wolof
DS4	Female	1967	13	French; Joola; Joola Banjal; Joola Fogny; Wolof

French as she perceives that using Wolof may precipitate language and identity shift away from the former two languages/identities (Goodchild 2018: 266-267). Here it is worth noting that DS4 was the president of the Catholic Women's association (the setting for the data example) at the time of research and stated these language preferences in response to a question of Goodchild's about whether in meetings it would be easier to speak Wolof. Therefore, DS4's analysis of her practices in this context for Table(1) is: she avoids use of Wolof, prefers Joola and if using Joola will likely mix Joola Fogny and Joola Banjal. Additionally, she reports that she may use French for administrative tasks in the organisation (Goodchild 2018: 233-234). However, DS4 tries not to orient to French, as she analyses that many of the groups' members have not been to school and this would necessitate translation into Joola. Thereby, DS4 shows awareness of wider macro-societal issues which can influence the micro-interactional settings and is providing her own analysis on expected language use and norms in the context of the Women's Catholic Association of Mof Avvi meetings.

Observers' analysis

Observers, or research assistants, participated in the research in different ways, including acting as facilitators, interpreters, interviewers and transcribers. Therefore, the data for this part of the analysis process may also come from various different sources or contexts. For example, when research assistants were transcribing and translating data recordings, they provided their analysis of the language practices present. The first stage of this was to incorporate a tier in the transcription programme where the observer described the language practices. They used various different language names per segment of text or section of speech, as appropriate. Below, Table(3) illustrates one observer's analysis of the same linguistic practices given above in Table(1), resulting from their transcription. The text is repeated and their analysis is the language names given in square brackets.

The observer analysed each line as belonging to one named language and has chosen to use the term Banjal, rather than Joola Banjal. In addition to transcribing the texts, they also translated the content to French, which we as researchers then translated into English, referring back as well to the original recording. In line [6] the term xawaare has different orthographic representations. As the observer analysed xaware as part of Banjal, they wrote it following the orthography they use for Banjal. In their French translation of line [6] they rendered this as xawaré following French sound-letter correspondence conventions.

Therefore, an important further step in this stage of the analysis process is a discussion or review between the observer and the researcher in order to investigate why they have interpreted the data in this way. In this instance, the observer who analysed the excerpt (ACB) was not the regular transcriber (DS) of Goodchild's data, but ACB had a similar repertoire to the regular transcriber. The observer stated that they had analysed line [4] '*taŋ key kubaje communion*' as Joola Fogny due to the use of /k/

rather than /g/ in *kubaje*. The voiced velar plosive is emblematic of Joola Banjal, whereas other Joola varieties use the unvoiced velar plosive, thus the observer associated it with Joola Fogny. It is further important to incorporate the reasons behind the interpretation, i.e. factors such as the observer's linguistic biography and repertoire, which language varieties they have had previous contact with, their general and metapragmatic knowledge, e.g. about other Joola varieties, and importantly their knowledge of the participants in the recording and whether they are aware of the participant's repertoire and biography (Goodchild 2018: 344-345). The observer in this instance, ACB, did not know DS4 and this resulted in a different analysis to that of the regular transcriber, DS, who knew DS4 and her background and regularly analysed her linguistic practices as more mixed with regards to use of Joola Banjal and Joola Fogny.

In sum, the observer analysed the example as predominantly (Joola) Banjal, with one utterance of French and one of Joola Fogny, with little mixing. The broad tendencies of language use in the context that DS4 alluded to, are generally followed, therefore there is some agreement between repertoire user and observer regarding language use in that context, but not regarding DS4's own patterns of language use.

Table 3: Observer's analysis

[1]	PB2	*wala fin mai* 'or the end of May'	[Banjal]
[2]	RB4	*premiére semaine du moi de juin* 'first week of the month of June'	[French]
[3]	MM1	*nusereyal sere* 'we are all tight [on time]'	[Banjal]
[4]	DS4	*taŋ key kubaje communion* 'so who is meant to do the first communion'	[Joola Fogny]
[5]		*yax edat yololal yay* […] 'our famous date'	[Banjal]
[6]		*Xaware yay pan egëli* 'the *xawaare* will bypass [you]'	[Banjal]

[KEM060316SG]

Researcher's analysis

At this stage it is also important to reflect on the researcher's background, both personal and academic, as this inevitably has an effect on how they may approach and analyse the data. Not all researchers, even those working closely together, will analyse the data in the same way because of individual differences, yet this can also make for rich analyses. For the example that follows, it is worth noting that Goodchild had training in language documentation and description, as well as sociolinguistics (see also Goodchild 2016, 2018).

Below in Table 4 is the researcher's analysis of the same excerpt of data given to the left of the dividing line. The text which is <u>underlined</u> is analysed as Wolof, **bold** text is analysed as French, and *italics* text is analysed as Joola. The observer's analysis is given to the right of the dividing line for comparison.

As a learner of Joola Banjal and other languages in the research area, Goodchild was (in this excerpt) unable to differentiate between different varieties of Joola. Furthermore, as Goodchild had studied French and had been taking Wolof language classes, items which the researcher associates with their perception of these languages were readily identified in the excerpt, for example in line [6] the observer reports *xaware* as Banjal. For the researcher this is a Wolof word and is represented as such in the English translation following Wolof orthographic conventions. This results in quite a different analysis to that given by the repertoire user and also by the observer.

Fusion of perspectives

In the interpretation of linguistic practices, there was both agreement and divergence between the repertoire user and observer. Both agree that there is a tendency to use Joola or (Joola) Banjal. As for disagreements, the observer had analysed line [2] as French. DS4 stated that in meetings French was avoided due to reasons of inclusivity and non-familiarity of French among some members, hence her analysis may be influenced by her ideologies. According to the observer this is the only instance of French in this short excerpt. Furthermore, it is not uttered by DS4, but rather by another participant (RB4, who has one of the highest levels of schooling among the participants, see Table(2)). Another interesting point of divergence concerns DS4's description of her linguistic practices. She stated that she is unable to speak Joola Banjal or Joola Fogny without mixing them together. Yet, the observer only analysed one segment of DS4's as belonging to Joola Fogny and the rest to Banjal (in fact, this was the case for the whole recording of 30 minutes), apparently without any instances of mixing.

Line [1] is analysed by the researcher as Wolof and French, by the observer as Banjal, whilst the repertoire user states that Wolof and French tend to be avoided and Joola preferred in this context. There is agreement between observer and researcher regarding analysing line [2] as French, however, other instances of French that the researcher identifies are analysed by the observer as belonging to (Joola) Banjal in lines [3] and [5] and to Joola Fogny in line [4]. Although the repertoire user's analysis was that French is generally avoided, she also stated that it may be used for administrative tasks and would recognise this instance as belonging to that genre. This concurs with the researcher's identification of the context, i.e. the organisation of a date. From the researcher's perspective, it is common in the Casamance to use French for numbers, payments, and dates. There is a local 6-day week calendar (see Sagna & Bassène 2016: 45), but there are no terms in languages of the area, e.g. Joola Eegimaa/Banjal, for days of the week or months of the Gregorian calendar. It is highly dependent on the individual, but many people will not perceive such uses as French anymore, as evidenced in the observer's analysis of line [1]. The different analyses illuminated by incorporating different perspectives on the same data excerpt challenge the view of starting analysis with *a priori* defined codes, or named languages, that a researcher may look for in the data. Moreover, this challenges the assumption of preferencing the researcher's perspective in the analysis. In the next section we discuss how to incorporate all of the analyses gained from the triangulation method in order to aim for a more holistic understanding of the multilingual context studied.

Table 4: Researcher's analysis

[1]	PB2	wala **fin mai** 'or the end of May'	[Banjal]
[2]	RB4	**premiére semaine du moi de juin** 'first week of the month of June'	[French]
[3]	MM1	*nu***sere***yal* **sere** 'we are all tight [on time]'	[Banjal]
[4]	DS4	*taŋ key kubaje* **communion** 'so who is meant to do the first communion'	[Joola Fogny]
[5]		*yax e***dat** *yololal yay* […] 'our famous date'	[Banjal]
[6]		Xaware *yay pan egëli* 'the *xawaare* will bypass [you]'	[Banjal]

[KEM060316SG]

COMPLEXITY OF IMPLEMENTATION

A challenge for the researcher applying the triangulation method is how to adequately represent the various viewpoints in order to present a coherent analysis. Largely following an integrative strategy, the researcher is often solely responsible for the analysis and publication. Even though repertoire users and RAs should be mentioned as co-authors or co-analysts, preparing and finalising a publication often happens outside the field, probably at a university's office desk. Multilingual language use should be supported throughout the whole process, yet multilingual publications are rare, often unwanted and difficult to access for many readers (Márquey & Porras 2020).

Here, several Senegalese languages as well as French and some English were used during data collection and analysis, however we mainly publish in English, involving several translations. Often in our data there is a linguistic practice which is associated with various named languages, and we put forward that it is not only up to the researcher to determine how to assign a lexical item to any given named language, as a plurality of norms might exist. We believe that incorporating other's perspectives is a key point of reflection and dissemination which is intrinsic to the triangulation method, and one which could be emulated even if data was gathered and analysed before following the method proposed in this paper.

The multiple ways of labelling linguistic practices and analyses came about as a result of engaging in reflective discussion with observers and repertoire users (see Goodchild 2018: 347-349) as presented above. Informed discussions along with knowledge on the observer's personal history and linguistic repertoires can illuminate the reasons behind the differences in interpretations. Ultimately, the most important aspect of presenting the data and analyses resulting from using the triangulation method is not to treat each aspect in isolation, but to critically reflect on how each point may have influenced the other, including researcher effects at all points in the process, and to acknowledge this in the researcher's writing and discussion.

Changing/changed perspectives

We, as trained linguists and researchers, go through the world while observing and analysing our and others' linguistic behaviour, having established a certain way to portray linguistic repertoires and reflect on self-identification through language and society. This often leads to the assumption that others are also willing and able to critically reflect upon their linguistic and social behaviour. Yet, e.g. people in the Casamance conceive the adaptation of their identity to current situations and moving fluidly through languages as commonplace and since this represents their daily reality, people do not necessarily reflect on their own behaviour. Researchers' questions can therefore be perceived as challenging, maybe even pointless or confusing. Beforehand participants may not have considered their language use in-depth, (e.g. in terms of named languages, self-representation) and people's thinking may be inevitably changed by the research process.

During Weidl's research, one of her main participants initially found it challenging to answer questions about her family's language use. Even though she was keen on participating, her statements lacked details. Yet, after some time had passed the participant approached Weidl to inform her that she had done research and thought more thoroughly of her language use. Then, her personal analysis and reflection was far more detailed and in-depth than expected. She further mentioned that she is pleased that a personal thinking process was triggered; she found out more about her family and herself, knowledge that she would like to pass on to her children. Lexander & Androutsopolous (2019: 15) also found that the mere process of taking part in linguistic research can alter the way participants perceive their language use. One of their Norwegian-Senegalese participants stated that '*he had never thought of his language practices as made up of different languages until he participated in [their] project*'. Therefore it is important to reflect on how the current research project may change participants' perceptions.

On the other hand, participants have implicit assumptions and expectations towards the research and the researcher(s). A

participant of Weidl's research changed the way he described his own linguistic repertoire and practice in conjunction with his interpretation of what the researcher could comprehend. Therefore, he initially referred to his paternal identity language as '*lakk bu Djibonker*' in Wolof ('language of Djibonker') knowing that Weidl speaks Wolof, using the official name '*Djibonker*', which was introduced by the French administration. Later on when he assumed that Weidl had learned more about areal linguistic and cultural settings, he began naming the language '*Bainounk*' which is however still a simplification and used as a collective term for Bainounk languages. Only after months of working together he began using the terms (Bainounk) Gubëher to refer to the language, Jibëher to refer to the village and Ubëher (sg.) and Ñambëher (pl.) to refer to its inhabitants, using the respective noun class markers.

One could consider that research participants already had expectations as to what constitutes research on language(s), likely influenced by previous research on language documentation concerning named languages conducted in both Djibonker (e.g. Cobbinah 2012) and Essyl (e.g. Bassène 2006; Tendeng 2007; Sagna 2008; Bassene 2012). Therefore, the researcher in any given project must be prepared to reflect on how previous external influences might have affected participants and what expectations they have as to what constitutes research on language(s) by scholars (see also Goodchild 2016).

CONCLUSION

The advantages of using the triangulation method to investigate multilingual linguistic practices are manifold; most obvious is the depth and variety of perspectives obtained on data, for which an analysis carried out only from the perspective of the researcher would differ. From a sole perspective, nuances of different interpretations on language use cannot be obtained, and the researcher's view would persist in labelling certain expressions in a trained way. Although not incorrect, this would overlook the intricacies of linguistic practices and local metalinguistic knowledge. Observers and repertoire users might consider linguistic practices as belonging to different (local) languages. Yet at the same time, they retain an awareness of the macro-level societal issues affecting language use, such as having French as the ex-colonial official language.

Another advantage to the method is in its simplicity. Although multilingual settings are highly complex and in our case, much of the research was carried out as a team, the method can be effectively used in much smaller projects. This merely requires a reorientation of perspective from the researcher, so for example, not all participants will be in passive roles. This, essentially, is the crux of the triangulation method: the researcher constructs a project in such a way to incorporate different viewpoints into the analysis of any given multilingual setting.

Often, multilingual settings are even more complex than a high number of named languages begins to suggest (see also Goodchild & Weidl 2019). The motivation for an alternative method of analysis came about to meet a need. In dealing with empirical data of a complex nature, one-sided methods of analysis were not sufficient for our aims in documenting sociolinguistic diversity. However, it was even more important to consider various methods of analysis, incorporating researcher effects and views, observers' reports and repertoire users' own interpretation and experiences of their linguistic practices. This integrated approach requires that researchers recognise and reflect on their position and the influence they have on all aspects of the research, even when reviewing literature, and what expectations they may take with them in the field through to the dissemination of the research.

Furthermore, it is also important to remember that the research described only counts for a particular snapshot in time, which will inevitably change according to whether the researcher is present or not, but will also change if any other repertoire user supervenes. The complexity of ephemeral multilingual communicative events can only be understood by incorporating varying perspectives into the analysis. The triangulation method proposed in this article is a systematic way to distribute the complex tasks involved in research and thus contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the myriad multilingual settings the world over.

NOTES

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2 First presented as Goodchild & Weidl (2016) and developed in Goodchild (2018) and Weidl (2018).

3 For further details on the linguistic biography in our contexts, see e.g. Goodchild 2018; Goodchild, to appear 2025; Weidl 2018

4 An in-depth reflection on our individual positioning and how people involved perceived us, as white European researchers (and how that changed over time and space) can be found in our respective PhD theses Weidl (2018) and Goodchild (2018).

5 In Goodchild & Weidl (2016), Goodchild (2018), Weidl (2018) we used the term 'speaker's report', as we studied spoken language; we now use 'repertoire user' to be more inclusive of e.g. spoken, signed, semiotic and spatial repertoires.

6 RAs were trained in the crossroads project, see https://soascrossroads.org/ and Lüpke et al. (2021) and Weidl et al. (2022)

7 https://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/ (Wittenburg et al. 2006)

8 Translation: Goodchild.

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