Multilingual Families in a Digital Age

Mediational Repertoires and Transnational Practices

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During our first interviews, the Diagne couple complained about the communication with Oumou's sisters in Senegal. Since the sisters had not yet started using apps for internet-based communication, they still relied on phone cards to stay in touch. Often a conflict would arise because they did not have the time to explain things properly or finish a discussion before the phone card was exhausted. At a later meeting, Oumou presented WhatsApp messages from one of her sisters who had sent her a video of how the sea had risen into their neighbourhood and destroyed houses. The video came with a voice message explaining the incident. Several changes co-occurred since Oumou's sisters started using WhatsApp: (a) thanks to its message storage capacity, they communicated with less time pressure, and fewer timing-related conflicts occurred; (b) their interaction became multimodal, as they now could send text and voice messages, share videos, and make phone and video calls; (c) this came along with an increase in multilingual interaction, as text messages were written in French and spoken exchanges came in Wolof. The sisters' use of diverse semiotic resources thus became more extended as the timeframe and semiotic modalities at their disposal expanded as well.

Sustaining, maintaining, and negotiating family relationships online is the topic of this chapter. As pointed out in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, current research in family multilingualism is more concerned with how families construct themselves through linguistic practices than with the question of whether languages are maintained or not; doing family is in focus, and language is considered as a resource for this (cf. King & Lanza 2019). Studies of transnational family communication from sociological and anthropological perspectives view the creation of mediated co-presence as crucial for 'doing family' (cf. Baldassar 2008, Nedelcu & Wyss 2016, Greschke 2021). Combining these two approaches, we analyse the construction of family through digital language practices, drawing on theories of family interaction (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2007a, Tannen et al. 2007) and translocality in digital communication (Conradson & McKay 2007, Kytölä 2016). After a theoretical introduction to these frameworks (6.1), we examine how family members co-construct relationships with distant family members at different scales of (local, translocal, transnational)

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connectivity (6.2). We then focus on a common feature across different types of interactions, namely the expression of emotions (6.3), and discuss how the diversity of the families' linguistic repertoires becomes a resource for expressing affection.

6.1 Language, power, morality, and solidarity in the family

Recent studies of family multilingualism investigate meaning-making and language-mediated experiences of families where several languages are in use (cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3). These studies ask how families construct themselves through multilingual practices, and how language becomes a resource in family- and meaning-making (King & Lanza 2019). In understanding family-making in digital communication against this backdrop, we consider a number of points: how power and solidarity are negotiated in family talk (Tannen 1994, 2007); how morality is enacted and socialised (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2007a, 2007b); how family ties are indexed, and how interactional routines are constructed (Gordon 2009). Of particular interest across these topics is the deployment of linguistic repertoires in 'doing family', against an understanding of family as practised, not as a given, biological entity (Morgan 1996).

Tannen's (1994, 2007) theory of the ambiguity and polysemy of power in conversational interaction suggests viewing power as intertwined with the negotiation of solidarity and intimacy. As introduced in Section 2.2.3, 'power manoeuvres' are carried out in family communication to negotiate status and hierarchy, while 'connection manoeuvres' modify the degrees of intimacy and solidarity. In conversational interaction, power and connection manoeuvres are often accomplished in the same exchange or even the very same utterance. In this line of thought, speakers' utterances are complex interplays of both power and connection manoeuvres, 'to reinforce and not undermine the intimate connections that constitute their involvement with each other as a family' (Tannen 2007: 46). Through these manoeuvres, they discursively negotiate their identities as members of a family. Our analysis of transnational mediated interaction shows a large portfolio of family member identities that does not stop at the core family –'mothers' and 'fathers', 'daughters' and 'sons' – but also includes extended relatives such as 'uncles', 'aunts', 'cousins', and 'grandmothers'.

The co-construction of family roles can be considered as kinship-oriented behaviour, that is, a practice through which kinship relations are performed and regulated by shared reference to cultural models (cf. Agha 2007: 344). Looking at the digital family practices through these lenses is fruitful. For example, we consider the use of vocatives and terms of address that index kinship in mediated interaction. The norms regarding the use or avoidance of kinship terms are embedded 'in locale-specific metasemiotic formulations of what to do and not to do to belong to the kinship community in question' (Agha 2015: 414). Violating these norms is socially perilous, and perhaps even more risky in relationships

characterised by geographical distance, as migrated family members find themselves in places where kinship is directed by a different set of 'locale-specific metasemiotic formulations'. The lack of direct contact can lead to a greater emphasis on the few instances of kinship behaviour that are accomplished between spatially distant relatives. These encounters may also affect morality, as enacted and socialised through family interactions that are 'imbued with implicit and explicit messages about right and wrong, better and worse, rules, norms, obligations, duties, etiquette, moral reasoning, virtue, character, and other dimensions of how to lead a moral life' (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2007a: 5). With digital connectivity, the space in which these interactions take place can be expanded, and even family members outside the household may take part in the family practices of morality.

Critical kinship studies are applied by Wright (2020, 2022) to study family multilingualism. Instead of starting from language, Wright's point of departure is kinship as action and discourse, as a process of exclusion and inclusion. This implies an analysis of how family members talk about family and use kinship terms, how they engage in family routines, and how they negotiate roles and relationships. The vocational and referential uses of kinterms in family interaction contribute to the establishment of kinship, the construction and contestation of normativities, and the shaping of interactions and discourse (Wright 2022: 16). All the above can facilitate an understanding of multilingual language use (Wright 2020: 3). For example, Wright studies the daily routine of mother and daughter walking together to school as a way of cultivating the use of Russian as a heritage language in the family. Such cultivation can be found in digital family interaction, too, for example in repeated patterns of greetings and interactional routines in messaging exchanges and transnational phone calls.

In a different approach, Gordon (2009) emphasises intertextual repetition as a means of binding families together as it directs a hearer or reader back into their memory, affirming interlocutors' shared history and membership of the same group. Building on frame theory (e.g. Goffman 1986), Gordon (2009: 13) suggests that intertextual repetition is a fundamental means of constructing and laminating interactional frames. It both creates shared meanings and contributes to constructing the family as a group and can be understood by the notion of 'familylect'. This concept was first introduced by Søndergaard (1991) in analogy to other -lect terms (e.g. idiolect, sociolect) in a study of code-switching in a Danish family. The term was taken up by Gordon (2009) and later by van Mensel (2018), who discusses a 'multilingual familylect' as characterised by specific linguistic features and code-switching practices or language choice patterns that are shared by family members. A familylect in this sense is an ongoing process under constant interactional negotiation. Hiratsuka and Pennycook (2020: 253) agree with van Mensel in that family multilingualism is characterised by 'a set of shared multilingual practices

within the family that play a significant role in creating and maintaining family life', but choose a different epistemological approach. Instead of orienting to the structuralist underpinnings of a -lect paradigm, they advocate a practice perspective and prefer the notion of a translingual family repertoire. Focusing on how language regularities emerge from everyday social activities, Hiratsuka and Pennycook (2020: 253) seek to 'describe the particularity of the multilingual practices within the family, their importance in establishing family life, and their availability as a set of potential linguistic items that members of the family can use'. This approach also raises awareness of linguistic items that are *not* in use, even though they are available. Just as Gordon (2009) focuses on repetition and intertextuality in family interaction, Hiratsuka and Pennycook (2020) highlight the temporary stabilities afforded by language practices, focusing on the repeated use of specific linguistic items. As this chapter will show, a repeated use of specific linguistic items, in particular terms of endearment, is important in digital relationship building (cf. Section 6.3). Affection is closely related to children's moral development, in that morality entails both cognitive and affective competence (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2007a: 7). We will therefore also look at morality in relation to the multilingual expressions of emotions online.

To sum up, language use in the family implies a negotiation and re-negotiation of power and solidarity (Tannen 2007), an affirmation of group coherence by means of intertextuality (Gordon 2009), explicit reference to the moral frame for specific interactions (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2007a), and a use of the family repertoire as a resource (Hiratsuka & Pennycook 2020). Against this backdrop, we first examine how the Norwegian-Senegalese families make use of their linguistic repertoire to negotiate power and solidarity in family relationships characterised by different degrees of translocal presence (6.2), then turn to their use of terms of endearment in expressions of affection and morality practices in various family relationships (6.3).

6.2 Translocal connectivities

Territoriality and de-territoriality are reference points for communication, meaning-making, and identification (Leppänen et al. 2009). This comes to the fore in the families' digital interaction, which encompasses a wide range of translocal connectivities. The term 'translocal' is understood here with Kytölä (2016: 371) as 'a sense of *connectedness* between locales where both the local and the global are meaningful parameters for social and cultural activities' (original emphasis; cf. also Deumert 2014a). In our case, translocality in digital family communication stretches from household-internal interaction among the core family members in Norway to transnational exchange with relatives elsewhere in the world. At the same time, the frequency of interaction and degree of intimacy differ from one family relation to another. An additional parameter is

the frequency of physical contact. Family members who live in the same area or former members of the household, e.g. children who have moved out, often meet regularly. Some migrants go frequently to Senegal or to other countries where relatives live, e.g. for summer holidays, while other families cross geographical distance to see friends and family more rarely. Patterns of translocal connectivity are therefore best thought of as a continuum that extends from very local contacts among cohabiting family members (6.2.1) to interaction within the Norwegian context (6.2.2), and finally communication across national borders (6.2.3). Across these sections we discuss the impact of translocality on language choice and heteroglossia, i.e. 'the coexistence, combination, alternation and juxtaposition of ways of using the communicative and expressive resources language/s offer us' (Leppänen et al. 2009).

6.2.1 Mediated interaction in the household: Coordinating family issues

Interaction within the household sits at the very local end of the translocality continuum. It differs from transnational interaction in terms of its topics, often related to everyday household matters such as grocery shopping, picking up children, inquiries about whereabouts, and micro-coordination. The families in our study often used SMS here, sometimes Facebook Messenger as well (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.4). We start by looking at texting between parent and child. Excerpt 6.1 is an SMS exchange between father (Ousmane) and son (Momar) where household matters are discussed.

EXCERPT 6.1: MOMAR (SON) AND OUSMANE (FATHER) DIAGNE, SMS EXCHANGE[1]

1 Momar	Kommer dokker snart Are you coming soon
2 Ousmane	Hei! Hent [younger brother] kl 15. Hi! Pick up [younger brother] at 15.00
3 Momar	Ska møt mamma nå på obs Will meet mum now at [store name]
4 Ousmane	Henter han selv Will pick him up myself
5 Momar	Kommer hjem no snart Will be home soon

This excerpt is typical for mediated interaction between parents and children in all four families, including language choice, which is most often standard Norwegian (Bokmål) or a local dialect (cf. Chapter 3). The local dialect in the area of the Diagne family differs from Bokmål to the extent that text messages where dialect features appear are easy to distinguish.

Non-standard spelling representing Norwegian dialects is typically found among young texters (Strand 2019, Rotevatn 2014, see Chapter 3) and may explain why, even though both father and son used the local dialect when they spoke, only the son used it consistently in writing. In Excerpt 6.1, the words *dokker* ('you'), *ska* ('will'), *møt* ('meet'), and *no* ('now') are all specific to the local dialect. Similarly, in the first interview with the Coly family, Astou asked how her children wrote Norwegian, whether they used 'real words' or 'street words', and the son Ibou answered that he used 'Kebab-Norwegian on all of it', that is, based on spoken practices typical for urban, multilingual areas, as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2.

As Excerpt 6.2 shows, Marième Diagne, the younger daughter, used Bokmål to write text messages to her parents, unlike her older brother. Marième is six years younger than her brother and her parents said in the interview that she did not use her mobile phone much. If she ever did, she probably wrote like them and as learnt in school. Excerpt 6.2 is also an example of 'morality practice' (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2007a), as the mother seeks to promote specific routines in her daughter's behaviour.

EXCERPT 6.2: MARIÈME (DAUGHTER) AND OUMOU (MOTHER) DIAGNE, SMS EXCHANGE

1 Oumou	Hei! Hva gjør du etter skole? Du kan rydde rommet ditt for du koser deg. Klem mamma ☺ Hi! What are you doing after school? You can tidy up your room before you play. Hug, mum ☺
2 Marième	Nei jeg kan ikke rydde rommet [unreadable] for de jeg skal til [friend] No, I can't tidy up [my?] room, because I'm going to [friend]
3 Oumou	Du må spørre for du går hjem til fokk. Jeg liker ikke det. You have to ask before you go home to people. I don't like that
4 Marième	Pappa sa jeg fikk lov Dad said I could

Mother opened this exchange with a power manoeuvre aimed at making her daughter tidy up her room and she ended the very same message with a connection manoeuvre, i.e. *Klem* ('hug'), a common way of closing a text message. At the closing she indexed their mother–daughter relationship, and the concluding smiling emoji contextualises the preceding assertion as a friendly reminder rather than an order. However, when the daughter refused, explaining she had made other arrangements with a friend, a power manoeuvre took over in Oumou's second message. Her previous choice of modal verb, *kan* ('can'), is now replaced by *må* ('have to'), and Oumou explicitly disprefers her daughter's response. In her own

second message, Marième referred to another moral authority in the family, i.e. her father, and cited his permission to explain why she did not intend to do what her mother wanted her to do, thus claiming power over her mother's order. This strategy, reference to a different authority in the family in order to manage a power manoeuvre, was also used in other, non-local exchanges discussed below (cf. Excerpt 6.4). Examples like Excerpt 6.2 are documented for the other families as well. In an SMS exchange in the Bâ family, Sara urged her daughter to wash her hands and be thankful for the food she ate when while visiting a friend (cf. Excerpt 6.9). In the Sagna family, our data include a message sent by Felipe to his daughter, Rama, who was looking after her younger sister, reminding her to be responsible and answer him immediately. All these examples were in Norwegian and followed by connection manoeuvres.

We now look at an example of how language choice can be used for a connection manoeuvre. While Norwegian is the dominant language of parent–child texting in our data, there are some notable exceptions, such as Excerpt 6.3 between Astou Coly and her oldest daughter, Awa, who use French, English, and Arabic features in a span of two short messages each.

EXCERPT 6.3: ASTOU (MOTHER) AND AWA (DAUGHTER) COLY, SMS EXCHANGE

1 Astou	*Ok merci* Ok, thank you
2 Awa	*De rien* You're welcome
3 Astou	Nice Nice
4 Awa	***Alhamdulilah*** Thank God

Astou showed us these messages as examples of their interaction not always being in Norwegian. She seemed very happy about it, and the few words exchanged here appear to signal a strong solidarity between the two. The mother's use of French and her daughter's follow-up, then the mother's use of *Nice*, which is used both in Norwegian and Senegalese everyday informal talk, and the daughter's subsequent closing in Arabic, appear as mutual connection manoeuvres. Amidst the stream of micro-coordination messages, these short expressions of thankfulness stood out in terms of a language choice that appears highly symbolic.

6.2.2 Translocal household interaction: Making decisions and sharing

The composition of a household is dynamic: people move in, people move out. When children grow up, they leave for studies or for work,

to make their own households, and migrant families sometimes harbour newly arrived relatives or friends until they find their own place to live. Mobile phone communication sustains 'translocal family solidarity' (Lam 2013) between the household's former and current members. This was also the case in the Coly family, as Awa moved out to study, and the family created a chatgroup on Facebook Messenger in order to discuss household matters. Chatgroups afford multi-party coordination (Nag et al. 2016), and household members make up a manageable number of participants (Ling & Lai 2016). The Colys' chatgroup was called 'Weee Are Famiiily'. Ibou, the oldest son, originally created it to coordinate their summer holiday in Senegal, as they had to apply for visas and arrived on different flights. During the holiday, they used the chatgroup to share videos and pictures of events they found worth documenting, such as Senegalese children singing and dancing or a very young girl who could read parts of the Koran. After they had returned to Norway, the Colys revived their holiday memories through watching these videos and pictures again. The Colys thus used the affordances of a chatgroup to share 'significant moments' (cf. Androutsopoulos 2014a: 6), i.e. particular entextualisations of events that were important to the family itself. The audience for these shared moments is more limited in this case than in the social media contexts originally discussed by Androutsopoulos (2014a). While shared moments on a semi-public Facebook profile are interactively negotiated by an audience by means of likes, reactions, and user comments, the moments shared here in the Coly chatgroup were also discussed face-to-face, for example as the family members (re)watched and commented on these postings while sitting together in their living room, as they did during one of the interviews.

After the end of this holiday, the Coly family continued to use this chatgroup for more practical purposes. This coincided with important changes in family life. The oldest daughter, Awa, moved away from home to study and started using the chat to take part in family discussions. The remaining children still lived under their mother's roof but had now reached an age where they managed their activities on their own, and the time spent together was decreasing. These changing patterns of family life gave rise to new patterns of mediated connectivity. In particular, everyday micro-coordination was losing importance, while digital interaction started replacing physical discussions. This shift is well documented in the ways Awa made use of the chatgroup after leaving home. On one occasion, Awa sent a message to the group chat asking if mum was awake, instead of sending a message directly to her mother. On another, she sent a message to her mother without getting a reply, and then reached out to the rest of the household members to help her get in touch with her. On yet another occasion, Aida shared the picture of a cake she was selling to finance a school trip and asked if the mother could forward the offer to others.

In the following, we examine a chatgroup exchange where Astou, the mother, discusses a car purchase with her children. The exchange starts

with the mother's invitation to the children to take part in the decision-making (Excerpt 6.4).

EXCERPT 6.4: A COLY FAMILY GROUP CHAT ON FACEBOOK MESSENGER, FEATURING ASTOU (MOTHER), AWA (DAUGHTER), AIDA (DAUGHTER), ISSA (SON), AND IBOU (SON)

1 Astou	[Sends several pictures of a car]
2 Astou	Vil kjøpe den bilen Want to buy that car
3 Issa	👍
4 Issa	Nice
5 Aida	WOW
6 Issa	er det [uncle's] sin bil Is it [uncle's] car
7 Awa	spør [Ibou] Ask [Ibou]
8 Awa	Mamma spør [Ibou] hva han synes Mum, ask Ibou what he thinks
9 Awa	Mamma er bilen automat eller Manuel? Mum, is the car automatic or manual?
10 Astou	Det er ikke [uncle's] bil It's not [uncle's] car
11 Astou	Jeg sa d til han I told him
12 Ibou	Hmm… er det automat elr manuel Hmm… is it automatic or manual?
13 Ibou	Og kan du sende meg linken til annonsen? And can you send me the link to the advertisement?
14 Astou	D r ikke en annonce. Det er [uncle] som kjenner den som eier bilen It's not an advertisement. It's [uncle] who knows the person who owns the car
15 Ibou	Heftig Cool
16 Awa	@IBOU
17 Awa	Hva synes du What do you think
18 Awa	Skal mamma kjøpe den eller ikke? Should mum buy it or not?

19 Ibou	Vel. Mamma sa at onkel likte den Well. Mum said that uncle liked it
20 Ibou	Onkel har prøvd den Uncle has tested it
21 Ibou	Så ja So yes
22 Awa	Ojaaaaaaaa Oh yeeeeeaaaah

Astou, the mother, presented the issue, setting the frame of a family conversation and inviting everyone to take part in the decision-making. She sent several pictures of a car and then wrote that she intended to buy it (lines 1 and 2). Issa, the youngest son, was the first to react with a thumbs-up emoji (line 3) and a positive evaluation 'Nice' (line 4), an English word that is frequently used in Norwegian and in Senegalese multilingual discourse. The younger sister, Aida, was also positive, sending a text message with the word *wow*, a feature associated with multiple languages (line 5). Issa followed up, asking if it was their uncle's car (line 6), before the oldest, Awa, entered the discussion, telling her mother in a text message to ask her brother, Ibou (line 7), and repeating this in a more detailed follow-up message (line 8). Of course, Ibou was already part of the family chatgroup and therefore had access to his mother's question. Astou confirmed this ('I told him', line 11). Ibou then entered the discussion and repeated a question asked earlier by Awa (line 9) about the car's gear system (line 12), and asked about the advertisement (line 13). Astou added an explanation about who was selling the car (line 14), and Ibou replied positively (line 15). Awa did not seem happy about this answer and made use of the @ sign as an addressivity marker to put additional pressure on her brother to make up his mind about buying the car (line 16). Ibou finally did so, grounding his view on his uncle's authority: if his uncle likes the car (line 19) and has tested it (line 20), then his mother should buy it (line 21). Awa applauded this decision (line 22), positioning her brother's reasoning as relevant to the family's decision.

Astou's invitation to her children to take part in the choice of car was a connection manoeuvre where she initiated solidarity and framed the discussion as open for the sharing of opinions. Although she would pay for the car and make the transaction, she asked them what they thought about it. She did, however, not pose it as a question (e.g., 'Do you think I should buy this car?'), rather she said that she would like to buy it, signalling that the decision was not only up to the children. While the two youngest children reacted positively to their mother's suggested car purchase, Awa's stance was more ambiguous, and her turns can be considered as both power and connection manoeuvres. On the one hand, she empowered

her brother by urging him to answer and eventually giving him the last word. When Awa concluded the episode with *Ojaaaaaaaa*, simulating a cry of enjoyment and happiness (line 22), she signalled that the family had come to a good decision, together, enacting solidarity. On the other hand, Awa was not really *giving* Ibou the role of family decision-maker on this question, she rather repeatedly urged him to make up his mind and state his views, and then framed his answer as the final answer to the discussion. She used her own role in the family to make her brother responsible for the choice and to signal this to the rest of the family. She was able to do this thanks to the chatgroup, even though she lived away at that point. Ibou, now the oldest child at home, refuted some of this responsibility and referred in his reasoning to the authority of an uncle who had previously stayed with the Coly family after migrating to Norway and now lived nearby.

At the level of language choice, Astou initiated this discussion in Norwegian, her children's preferred language of family interaction and at the same time the dominant language in their digital written interaction. Astou aligned here with her children's language preference, and they aligned with her own preferred style in Norwegian, leaving out features from the multiethnolectal style that they often used (as described in Chapter 3, Sections 3.1.2 and 3.3.7). The children knew that their mother did not like it when people wrote 'slang' in digital interaction: 'My brother who lives in the homeland now, he writes slang, I don't like it' (Interview data 3.6, Chapter 3). The fact that the entire discussion took place in Norwegian is not unexpected, since Norwegian was predominant in the family's written exchanges, although Arabic and French features did appear as well (Excerpt 6.3). Had the discussion taken place around the dinner table, it would probably have been carried out in a mixture of Wolof and Norwegian, perhaps also with some multiethnolectal features by the children (Astou often talked in Wolof and Norwegian, while the children answered in Norwegian). Language choice in the Coly family was less easily predictable with voice messages, as these afforded the use of Wolof. The choice of writing for some digital conversations led to Norwegian being used as a language of both connection and power across a wide range of topics.

The translocal connectivity illustrated by Excerpt 6.4 also applied to other members of the extended Coly family, such as their uncle who lived with the Colys when he arrived in Norway from Spain and now stayed in touch through physical meetings and messages in Norwegian, Wolof, and Spanish. Aida saw these exchanges as an opportunity to improve her own Spanish language skills and her uncle's Norwegian skills.

Translocal connectivity within Norway was important to the Diagne family as well, for example in maintaining contact to a close family friend from Senegal who now lived in the same city with his own family. Oumou Diagne and the other mother used Wolof while speaking on WhatsApp (observation data), and SMS exchanges between the two fathers were

carried out in a mixture of Norwegian, Wolof, and French (interactional data). The fathers often opened these text messages by calling each other *jaambaar* ('brave person') in Wolof and then turned to Norwegian (including local dialect features) to make meeting plans, for instance to watch football. Ousmane Diagne preferred French, for instance to announce that a package he had bought from Senegal had arrived, and to instruct his friend how to watch football on Eurosport. Their language practices indexed their shared linguistic and cultural background as much as their shared country of residence, documenting once again the importance of Norwegian for Norwegian-Senegalese families.

6.2.3 Transnational family-making: Power, solidarity, and teasing

Transnational communication fulfils a wide range of purposes: keeping in touch with distant family members, discussing homeland news, exchanging festive greetings, sharing experiences. As Tsagarousianou (2016) shows for the case of European Muslims, experiences of remote others are woven into a narrative that constitutes frames through which to situate oneself. Even though Tsagourasianou focuses on mass media and a shared solidarity between Muslims living in Europe, the same dynamics can be observed in transnational family-making. Experiences are shared through interpersonal digital interaction and woven into the family narrative, which becomes a frame for situating oneself as a family member, as an immigrant, and so on.

Regarding the four families, their communication with extended family members extends beyond Senegal to several countries and continents. Figure 6.1 shows the parts of the world where members of

Figure 6.1 World map with locations of transnational interlocutors

the respective extended families were located. The Diagne family (red pins) interacted with relatives in China, Canada, France, Italy, Great Britain, Senegal, and Gabon; the Bâ family (blue pins) stayed in touch with family in Italy, France, and Senegal; the Sagna family (yellow pins) with family and friends in Spain, France, Italy, and Senegal, the Coly family (orange pins) with people in the USA, Germany, France, and Senegal.

Conradson and Mckay (2007) emphasise the emotional labour that comes with transnational migrants' feelings of fidelity and commitment towards family, friends, and community in particular locations (within nation-states) as a defining aspect of translocal subjectivity. The frequency of this contact varies greatly from relationship to relationship, and a balance must be sought between the desire to stay in touch on the one hand, and the material demands that may be expressed by relatives and friends in Senegal on the other. Conradson and Mckay (2007) argue that a 'migrant sense of self' is related to specific localities, but we also find it is related to specific relationships within the extended family. Being an uncle or aunt, a niece or a nephew brought with it specific obligations and rights for the Senegalese migrants, including an obligation to stay in touch and maintain a certain frequency of contact. We will now discuss examples of significant relationships, especially among siblings and between uncle and niece.

An important type of relationship in Senegal is that between a niece/nephew and their maternal uncle, *nijaay* in Wolof, who is traditionally considered to have high moral authority towards his nephew, in particular (Diop 1985: 56). Ousmane Diagne communicated with several of his nieces and nephews, and together with his wife, Oumou, they even acted as mediators in the marriage-related conflicts of their nephews. In Excerpt 6.5 (from Facebook Messenger), Ousmane acts both as an authority and a support to his niece. The excerpt consists of two distinct interactional episodes. The first episode opened with a simple greeting, *salut*, by the niece (line 1). Ousmane Diagne immediately policed her language style, reminding her that she was addressing her uncle and therefore should use the vocative kin term *tonton* in the greeting, before he replied to the greeting, in the same turn (line 2). The niece would not accept his accusation of 'having a problem' saying '*tonton*', so she explained that she had sent this *salut* out to several contacts to check if Messenger worked. Then she returned to the polite greetings, asking about the uncle's wife and children (line 3). Ousmane expressed that he did not believe her explanation, and then continued the stream of greetings, mostly about the wellbeing of other family members (line 4). The niece insisted on her story (line 5), and the uncle closed the episode quite dryly: *ca marche, oui*, 'it works, yes' (line 6). We observe here a negotiation of power between uncle and niece. Both agreed on the premise that the niece should have used *tonton* if it had

been a greeting addressed to the uncle only. However, when the uncle policed her, instead of inclining and excusing herself, she insisted on her explanation, that it wasn't a greeting only addressed to the uncle. The uncle insisted on his version of the story, i.e. that his niece forgot or did not bother addressing him properly. Their difference in language use accentuated the disagreement: Ousmane used only French, his niece both French and Wolof. Ousmane's exclusive use of French can be viewed as an attempt to emphasise his moral authority, an attempt resisted by his niece though.

EXCERPT 6.5: OUSMANE DIAGNE AND HIS NIECE, FACEBOOK MESSENGER

First episode:

1 Niece	*Salut* Hi
2 Ousmane	*Qu est ce cela veut dire salut ? Tu parles a ton oncle meme si t a un probleme pr dire tonton. J esper q tt le monde va bien. A plus.* What do you mean by hi? You talk to your uncle even though you have a problem saying uncle. I hope everyone is well. Talk to you later.
3 Niece	*Je voudrais vérifier si le messenger marche c pourquoi j'ai envoyé beaucoup de salut a différent numéro pour voir si il yaura des réponses car je viens de linstalle* **naka**. [Your wife] *et les enfants j'espère que* **nieup ngissi diam** I wanted to check if Messenger works, that's why I sent many hi to different numbers to see if there were answers cause I just installed it. How is your wife and the children I hope all are well
4 Ousmane	Ser ga, *depuis q le messenger existe tu viens de l installer.* [My wife] *va bien et les enfants aussi. Salut* [your husband] *et ta mere* (spelling error?) You installed Messenger at the time it came into being. [My wife] is fine and the children too. Greet [your husband] and your mother
5 Niece	*J'avais plus de portable pour me connecter je viens d'avoir un* téléphone **mo tax** *hier* **la si donne def** *applications* **mo tax ma donne** *vérifier est ce que ça marche* I didn't have a mobile phone to connect, I just got a phone that's why yesterday I downloaded apps that's why I checked if it works
6 Ousmane	*Ca marche oui.* It works, yes

Second episode:

7 Niece	*Salut tonton et la famille j'espère que tout le monde va bien je salut* [your wife] *et je voudrais te dire que j'ai réussi à mon CAP écrit* **nianalma** *pratique* **yombe** Hi uncle and the family, I hope everyone is fine, I greet [your wife] and I wanted to tell you that I passed my written CAP (teaching exam) pray for me that the practical part will be easy
8 Ousmane	***Alhamdou* sant yalla**. *N oublie pas q t a l enseignement ds le sang et ca ira in chaallah*. [My wife] *et* [my son] *te saluent. Salut ta mere, (ton mari) et les enfants* 👍 Thank God, I give prayers to God. Don't forget that you have teaching in your blood and it will be fine, by the will of God. [My wife] and [my son] greet you. Greet your mother, [your husband] and the children 👍
9 Niece	*Merci tonton* Thank you, uncle

In the second episode, the two interlocutors signal solidarity and support. Their tone and language choices are different. The niece opened with *salut tonton* (line 7), which, in the light of the preceding episode, can be seen as a connection manoeuvre. She went on to tell her uncle she made it through the theoretical exam and asked him to pray for her practical part to be easy. This part, *nianalma pratique yombe*, is mainly in Wolof, not French. Ousmane replied referring to their shared relatives, many of them teachers, and used Arabic, *Alhamdou*, as he would in a prayer, and the Wolof words *sant Yalla*, confirming he would pray as she asked him to. At the same time, he referred to the family supporting his niece, and even added a thumbs-up emoji (line 8). The niece again used *tonton* to thank him (line 9). Here, we observe connection manoeuvres with reference to family solidarity. Since Ousmane rarely used Wolof, we can interpret his choice here as an extra effort to support his niece, while the Wolof words refer to the moral dimension of family unity and thus underscore solidarity. Similar examples of co-construction of family solidarity between uncles/aunts and nephews/nieces were found across all families.

The importance of kinship words such as *tonton* in Excerpt 6.5 is also playfully evidenced in Rama Sagna's interaction with her uncle in Senegal. When Rama was in Senegal and met her uncle, she would refuse to call him *tonton*, and he would try to make her say it. Their Facebook Messenger interaction re-enacted this playful teasing.

EXCERPT 6.6: RAMA SAGNA AND HER UNCLE, FACEBOOK MESSENGER

1 Uncle	*Ma fille coma tu vas* My daughter, how are you doing
2 Rama	*Ça va bien toi ça fait longtemps* I am fine, you, it's been a while
3 Rama	[uncle's name] hahahahahahaha
4 Rama	😂 ☺
5 Uncle	*Oui tres lontan et a l'ecole* Yes, a long time and how is school
6 Rama	*Ça va un peu difficile* It's ok, a little difficult
7 Rama	😣 *mais je suis okay* 😊 😣 but I am okay 😊
8 Uncle	*Et ton papa* And your father
9 Rama	*Il va bien* ☺ He's fine ☺
10 Uncle	*Dit lui k son grand le salut* Tell him that his older brother greets him
11 Rama	*Tu n'ait pas son grand* You're not his older brother
12 Rama	Hqhhqhq1
13 Uncle	*Si je suis son grand* Yes, I am the oldest
14 Rama	*Tu es le premier née?* Were you first born?
15 Uncle	*Oui* Yes
16 Rama	*Qoiiii* Whaaat?
17 Uncle	*Tu lui demande* Ask him
18 Uncle	*Je suis don [son] grand* I am older than him
19 Rama	*Dacord "tonton"* ☺ Okay, "tonton" ☺
20 Uncle	*Merci ma fille* Thank you, my daughter

The episode started when the uncle sent a text message asking Rama how she was, calling her his daughter (line 1). Rama first answered politely (line 2), then called her uncle by his name only, on purpose, followed by a laughter expression (line 3) and face with tears of joy and smiling face emoji (line 4). After some exchanges, in line 8, the uncle asked about Rama's father and then told her to greet him from his *grand* ('elder'). In her answer, she said that this was not true, again followed by laughter written out in text. But the uncle maintained that he was older than her father, indirectly signalling that she Rama should therefore call him *tonton*. When Rama finally did so, she placed the term in quotation marks (line 19). Uncle thanked her, calling her *ma fille* ('my daughter'), the kinship term he used earlier in opening this exchange in accordance with their relationship: an uncle on the father's side is also called *baay-bu-ndaw* ('little dad') in Wolof. The use of kinship terms is a connection manoeuvre here, even though Rama playfully downplayed her part in this ritual by using quotation marks. Kinship words are a kind of intertextual reference, indexing past situations of physical co-presence and signalling intimacy.

Not all family relationships allow for playfulness. According to Wolof tradition, relations between sisters and brothers should be close, but avoid joking (Diop 1985: 58). Our example here is the exchange between Ousmane Diagne and his younger sister who also had migrated to the North and lived in Canada. Their travels to Senegal were not coordinated, and the two of them did not meet often. However, Ousmane's daughter, Marième, was named after this sister, and with this honour came a responsibility for following up as the child grows up. The sister followed up on this duty mainly online and mostly via Ousmane, and often enquired about her *tuurandoo*, 'name sister', always making use of this kinship term, rather than the girl's own name, when asking for pictures of her and sending pictures of herself. She also sent gifts, and Marième expressed thanks for these through her father. In Excerpt 6.7, the sister expresses irritation that she has not yet heard from Ousmane after she texted him to announce she gave birth to a boy.

EXCERPT 6.7: OUSMANE DIAGNE AND HIS SISTER IN CANADA, FACEBOOK MESSENGER

1 Sister	*Allo tu dors* Hello, do you sleep
2 Sister	*J'espère que* **yagui ci diam** *car depuis* **ma** ***accouché*** **degoumala nouyoulma Sama tourodo** I hope you are well cause since I gave birth I have not heard from you. Say hello to my 'name sister'
3 Sister	Missed call
4 Sister	Voice message (7 secs)

5 Ousmane	*J etais meme au courant alors q t a mon telefon num. Un simple message gratuit par messenger ou viber et je suis au courant…* I was [not] even informed, even though you have my phone number. A simple, free message on Messenger or viber and I am informed…
6 Sister	Missed call (23.58)
7 Sister	*On a tout fait [my husband] ta envoyé un message alors que j'étais en salle d'accouchement* We did everything, my husband sent you a message while I was in the delivery room
8 Sister	*Moi aussi* **envoyela sms wola messenger mais dou dem khawma lou takh** And me too I sent you SMS or Messenger, but it didn't go out I don't know why
9 Ousmane	*En tt cas c est ma mere juste avant mon arrivee ici a ma grde surprise. Il faut pas oublier que je vis pas au Senegal. Felicitations a vous deux* ☺ ☺ In fact it was my mother (who told me) just before my arrival here to my surprise. You must not forget that I don't live in Senegal. Congratulations to both of you ☺ ☺
10 Sister	*Merci* **Yagui senegal gani** *tu es dejA en vacance* Thank you. You are in Senegal as a guest, you're already on holiday

Ousmane's sister sent two messages (lines 1 and 2), tried to call once (line 3) and sent a voice message (line 4) before she eventually heard back from her brother. In line 5, Ousmane answered quite harshly that he didn't know about the baby and accused his sister of not informing him properly, all in French. The sister tried to call him again (line 6) and then replied, also in French, explaining that her husband had sent Ousmane a text message (line 7). Then (line 8), she continued to explain in Wolof that she, too, had texted him. Ousmane answered, again in French, that their mother had informed him just before he came to Senegal for the summer holiday. He also pointed out that he did not live in Senegal and therefore did not know everything that happened (line 9). His wording here, *faut pas oublier* ('you must not forget'), can be interpreted as either an order or a friendly reminder, and the two smileys at the end of this message contextualise it as more of a connection than a power manoeuvre. Ousmane thus ended up by congratulating his sister and her husband, and she thanked back and remarked he was already in Senegal for his summer holiday (line 10).

Ousmane's sister wrote in a mix of French and Wolof, and Ousmane did not mirror her language use, but stuck to French (with only one exception in his 32 messages to his sister in our corpus). The difference

in the way that they pattern their messages seems to create an asymmetry that signals distance between the two, a distance also indexed in the content of their messages. Norms of banter relate to degrees of intimacy in an almost schematic sense in Senegal, and the lack of Ousmane and his sister's adapting to each other's language use can be interpreted as adhering to the prescribed distance between an older brother and a younger sister in adulthood (Diop 1985). The siblings also address each other politely – later in the same exchange we find: *Bonjour petite soeur* ('Good morning little sister'), *Merci Grand Frere* ('Thank you, big brother') – instead of using informal nicknames like the ones we find in the exchange between Ousman Diagne and his cousin (cf. Excerpt 6.11). These are linguistic resources for negotiating the culturally expected degree of distance in this particular kin relationship, characterised by politeness and respect, as well as by the absence of banter.

In view of the status of French in Senegal, the use of French as related to authority and power in the relationship could be viewed as part of a power manoeuvre. However, Ousmane Diagne also used mainly French in his interaction with his younger and older brothers, where he was not supposed to be the authority. In Excerpts 6.5 and 6.7, we see that non-reciprocal language choices contribute to maintaining interpersonal distance. Ousmane did not adapt to his sister's or his niece's mixing French and Wolof, neither did they adapt to his nearly exclusive use of French. By contrast, symmetrical language choice characterised his interactions with his brothers, who also preferred French, and reciprocal bilingual choice of both Wolof and French was observed in Ousmane's exchange with a female cousin (see Section 6.3.3). We thus see how different choices from the shared pool of resources serve to maintain an interpersonal relationship in accordance with cultural norms for specific kinship patterns despite geographical distance.

6.3 Multilingual expressions of affection

An important aspect of the discussion so far is the expression of affection. One of the most significant effects of polymedia is the ability to manage how emotional stances are expressed in interpersonal communication (Madianou & Miller 2012a: 132). Expressing love, in particular, is closely related to the choice of a communication channel (Madianou & Miller 2012a: 91–121). In some parent–child relationships, for example, SMS messages were the only means used for declarations of love, whereas others preferred phone calls for the emotional depth gained through access to the voice channel. Email was considered too impersonal for this purpose, and webcam sessions were not as successful an environment for the expression of love, being felt as less private and more prone to distraction. Madianou and Miller (2012a) claim that:

> the very nature of each individual medium is radically changed by the wider environment of polymedia, since it now exists in a state

> of contrast, but also synergy, with all the others (…) in a given context these contrasts become an idiom through which people express distinctions in the form and purpose of communication itself (…) we use polymedia to explore significant differences that are exploited to enact and control the expression of emotions themselves
> (Madianou & Miller 2012a: 125)

Following this premise, we see here an opportunity to bring insights from polymedia research into the field of multilingualism and emotion. For a long time, research in this field took it for granted that L1 serves as 'language of intimacy' and L2 serves as 'language of distance'. However, questionnaire studies by Pavlenko (2005) and Dewaele (2004, 2010), nuanced the picture. These authors found a preference for L1 to express emotions even among individuals who were undergoing L1 attrition processes, especially in cases where a later-acquired language had become dominant (Pavlenko 2005: 133). However, they also found that the expression of emotions is related to the process of affective socialisation and may result in the development of distinct affective styles in the respective languages (Pavlenko 2005: 231). This insight fits well the Senegalese context, where French romantic vocabulary is considered very different from that of Wolof, and this difference is exploited by texters to distinguish various aspects of love through choice of language (cf. Lexander 2013). Joining insights from multilingualism and emotion research with our interests in mediated multilingualism and polymedia, we examine how affection is expressed in digital communication across the continuum of translocality laid out earlier in this chapter. We start with exchanges between husband and wife (6.3.1), then turn to parents and children (6.3.2), and finally to communication with the extended family (6.3.3).

6.3.1 Wife and husband

As already discussed (cf. Section 6.2.1), most SMS messages collected with the Diagne family related to household matters revolving around daily commitments, such as picking up kids and doing the groceries, and were cast in various registers of Norwegian. Ousmane, the father, claimed that the choice of Norwegian was intentional and aimed at improving the Norwegian skills of his wife. Indeed, he corrected both her and his daughter when they made spelling mistakes (cf. Lexander 2020a). However, this did not stop Oumou from using French words of endearment in these messages, and her husband followed her in this practice (Excerpt 6.8).

EXCERPT 6.8: OUMOU AND OUSMANE DIAGNE,[2] SMS MESSAGES

1 Oumou	Hei! Kan du hente [youngest son] pappa *cheri* Hi! Can you pick up [youngest son] dear 'papa'
2 Ousmane	Ok *ma chere* kona Ok, my dear wife

3 Ousmane	Henter [youngest son] i dag Am picking up [youngest son] today
4 Oumou	Ok ☺ pappa *cheri* Ok ☺ dear 'papa'
5 Ousmane	*Chou* kan hente [youngest son] Dear, I can pick up [youngest son]

This pattern was iterated throughout their exchanges, and their reciprocity in the use of French words of endearment can be seen as a repeated connection manoeuvre that underscored solidarity in the couple's relationship. Oumou writes here, *pappa cheri*, and Ousmane replies, *ma chere kona*, making use of both Norwegian and French features. The use of *pappa* 'dad' is particularly interesting here. Its spelling follows Norwegian orthography, but the usage is Senegalese (Wolof: *pàppa*), based on a French borrowing (French: *papa*), to address the father of one's children. The husband, too, follows a similar pattern when writing 'dear' in French and 'wife' in Norwegian. Such fluid use of Norwegian and French was also found in other messages where Oumou expressed affection for her husband, such as: *Du er flink manen min. Je t aime for* ('You are good, my husband. I love you very much') or: *pappa cheri je t aime tu es mon plus for je t adore klem* ('dear papa, I love you, you are my strongest, I adore you, hug'). The Diagne parents drew on French to sustain their romantic relationship through everyday digital interaction, and this use of French is consonant with earlier findings about romantic texting in Senegal (Lexander 2013), thus alluding to their shared history as a couple in Senegal and through the time of separation when Ousmane lived in Norway and Oumou still lived in Senegal. Their texting practices, then, recreated 'couple-centred frames' (Kendall 2006: 424) which defined and maintained their relationship (Gordon 2009: 65). Strikingly, they had also agreed to write in Norwegian to improve Oumou's competence in the language. This resulted in a divergent, polycentric orientation (cf. Chapter 7) that is contingent to the couple's language socialisation and migration history.

There is a parallel between this story and the texting practices of the Bâ parents, Cheikh and Sara Bâ, who themselves brought up in the interview the topic of interpersonal language choice before and after the birth of their children. During their first time together they mostly spoke Wolof, and the very fact they could use this language together was part of their mutual affection. French entered the picture when they started discussing practical details, especially when becoming parents. Later, the need felt by Cheikh to learn Norwegian showed up in his wish to use the language in texting, while Sara often answered in French. They both used Norwegian with their children.

6.3.2 Parents and children

If French was associated with affection in the Diagne couple's interaction, parents in the Bâ and Sagna families expressed fondness for their children in Norwegian and English. In the following examples from the Bâ family (Excerpt 6.9), Cheikh uses Norwegian to express love to his daughter, Nabou, while Sara switches to English to do the same.

EXCERPT 6.9: CHEIKH/SARA AND NABOU BÂ, SMS MESSAGES

Cheikh and Nabou:

1 Cheikh Hei! Hvordan går det med dagen! Gikk det bra med tanta i dag tidelig? Glade i deg elsker deg ♥ 😘
Hi! How is your day? Did it go well with your aunt this morning? Love you, love you ♥ 😘

2 Nabou Bra
Good

Cheikh and Nabou:

1 Cheikh Må sove nå. Elsker deg :) ♥♥♥♥
Have to sleep now. Love you :) ♥♥♥♥

2 Nabou OK
OK

Sara to Nabou:

1 Sara Kose deg hos [friend] jenta mi! 😘 😘 😘 Husk å vaske hender og si takk for måten og sånn 😘 💥 Vet jo at du er flink og gjør det da 😀 ☺ 👍 ♥
Have fun at [friend's] my girl! 😘 😘 😘 Remember to wash your hands and say thanks for your meal and all that. 😘 💥
I know for sure that you are good and will do it 😀 ☺ 👍 ♥

2 Sara Love u 😘

Cheikh's messages feature several declarations of love in Norwegian. Sara's SMS reminds her daughter of etiquette while visiting friends. Especially saying 'thank you' after a meal is an important norm for children in Norway. Sara's message shows that she knows Nabou is aware of this norm, thus indexing trust in her daughter. This is followed by a second message, a brief expression of love in English, which frames their mother–daughter relationship and the mother's guidance into moral lifeworlds (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2007a: 5) as characterised by love and trust. The intertwining of affection and morality is perhaps depicted by the emoji that follow up on Sara's admonition: a kissing face emoji and a glowing star emoji. It is remarkable that declarations of love in the parent–child relationship of these families draw on English and Norwegian but

make no use of French. This could be an outcome of the enregisterment of French as 'romantic language', which is valid in Norway as much as in Senegal (and elsewhere in the world), but the avoidance of French in parent–child interaction could also relate to the children's lack of competence in French. Even Rama's mother, who lived in Senegal and arranged for Rama a French-only day every week, switched from French to English to express affection to her daughter (Excerpt 6.10).

EXCERPT 6.10: RAMA SAGNA AND HER MOTHER (WHATSAPP) AND FATHER (MESSENGER)

Mother and daughter:

1 Mother	*Bonne nuit ma Cherie* Good night my dear
2 Mother	I love you my baby. Good night
3 Rama	Good night mom love u too 😘 😘 😘 ☺ and say good night to everyone
4 Mother	*Salut princesse* Hi princess
5 Rama	*Salut maman* Hi mum

Daughter and father:[3]

1 Rama	papap eg ei på vei hjem nå Dad, I'm on my way home now
2 Felipe	ok:) sees snart 🙂 Ok, see you soon 🙂
3 Rama	so don't worrie So don't worry
4 Rama	worry Worry
5 Felipe	☺ ok, i happy that you let me know 🙂 Ok, I'm happy that you let me know 🙂
6 Felipe	Glad i deg 🙂, vi sees snart Love you 🙂 see you soon

In the second part of Exerpt 6.10, Felipe switched from English to Norwegian to tell his daughter he loves her. In this exchange Rama presents herself as a daughter who cares about her father through caring about his feelings, and as a person of good morals. She let Felipe know about her whereabouts and even corrected her own spelling error in English (lines 3 and 4). Felipe in turn adopted her use of English in line 5 and positively sanctioned Rama's previous message before turning to

Norwegian to express affection. Again, we see how affection and morality are entangled in digital family practices.

Another notable feature of the messages between parents and children in Excerpts 6.9 and 6.10 is the use of emoji (pictorial signs) and emoticons (combinations of keyboard signs) to underline feelings that are also expressed lexically in the messages between parents and children, especially hearts and face emoji. Research suggests that both face emoji and object emoji convey affect (Riordan 2017), and that individuals attribute greater emotionality to a message when paired with an emoticon (Lo 2008). A relational function of emoji is to promote feelings of intimacy within a relationship (Kelly & Watts 2015). Dresner and Herring (2010) argue that emoticons can also indicate illocutionary force, for instance contextualise an utterance as a joke (e.g. with a winking eye) or mitigate a face threat. In Excerpts 6.9 and 6.10 above, emoji convey affect and intimacy. Both parents in the Bâ family and daughter and father in the Sagna family drew on smileys and sometimes on hearts and kissing face emoji to strengthen their directly preceding affective expressions. An example for emoji use that seems to mitigate a face threat is in Sara's message to Nabou (Excerpt 6.9), where a sequence of emoji, lexical expressions and more emoji signals Sara's trust in her daughter.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, research on multilingualism and emotions highlights the role of L1 as a 'language of affection', but also shows that the picture is more complex. In the written digital exchanges of the four families in this study, first languages are actually not used for declarations of love. Recall that Pavlenko (2004) and Dewaele's (2010) findings about L1 as a preferred language for expressing emotions are limited to spoken interaction. However, as already posited by research on networked multilingualism (cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.3), modality of language is an important dimension of linguistic repertoires in mediated communication, inasmuch as spoken and written language skills do not always map together. This holds true in the Senegalese context, where none of the adult participants had learnt to read and write in Wolof, Joola, or Peul, their respective first languages. Their first written language, or language of written language socialisation, was French, replaced by Norwegian for their children. Although it is possible to text 'I love you' in Wolof, Senegalese texters use the 'linguistic means of affect performance' (Pavlenko 2004: 183) offered by Wolof less, especially in the context of romantic relations (Lexander 2013) and also directed to their children. Interestingly, the use of English 'I love you' was used in addressing daughters both by the mother in Senegal (Sagna) and the Norwegian born mother (Bâ). 'I love you' is a particularly popular choice among speakers of different languages (Pavlenko 2012: 461). As discussed in Deumert & Lexander (2013: 538), the concomitant possibility of multilingualism to establish meaningful linguistic contrasts can be used strategically to communicate different forms of attachment. Thus, a clichéd declaration of love in a text message can acquire gravity

through the preceding text being in a different language (*ibid.*), like in Sara's 'Love u' to her daughter (Excerpt 6.9), which followed a message in Norwegian where she expressed trust in her daughter's good behaviour. Or, 'Love u' can be used exactly for the reason of being a clichéd coda, having less emotional impact on the daughter than the Norwegian equivalent, which may feel too intrusive in this case. The point is that language modality, and the extent to which different media afford language modalities, are crucially important for the expression of affection in digital communication.

6.3.3 Extended family and beyond

Finding the right balance between respect and playfulness is an important dimension of social relations in Senegal. As mentioned above (cf. Section 6.2.3), joking is viewed as not adequate for certain kinship relationships. But in others, teasing is part of what confirms the intimacy of the relationship, and this is especially the case for cross-cousins (Diop 1985: 61). In this regard, it is revealing to compare Ousmane Diagne's exchanges with his sister and niece, discussed earlier in this chapter (cf. Section 6.2.3) to his exchange with a female cousin who is also married to his brother (cf. Excerpt 6.11). Both of these kinship relationships, cross-cousins and sibling-in-law, are supposed to be close and playful by Senegalese custom.

EXCERPT 6.11: OUSMANE DIAGNE AND COUSIN/SISTER-IN-LAW, FACEBOOK MESSENGER

1 Cousin	*Slt* TYSON **naka wa keurgui mba lep diam** Hi TYSON, how is the family, I hope everyone is well
2 Ousmane	*Madama [Diagne]* **naga dėf?** *Ca va ici* **khana nam Senegal ak mbokyi**. *Et [your husband]? J espere* **migilay topoto bu bakh.** Mrs [Diagne] how are you? We are well, but miss Senegal and our relatives. How is [your husband]? I hope he takes good care of you.
3 Cousin	**Kokou fakman** *la et la petite famille* Hello runaway, how is your little family?
4 Ousmane	*Ca va bien, [Oumou] te salut. Et la mama et mon oncle ? J espere qu ils vt bien* We are well, [Oumou] says hi. And your mother and my uncle? I hope they are ok
5 Cousin	*Gros bisou a [Oumou]* **neko namnako pa ak mere** *ils vont bien dieu merci* Big kiss to [Oumou] tell her I miss her. Dad and mother are well, thank God

6 Ousmane	*Salut a tt le monde et soit plus exigeant avec [your husband], tu le merite et il est chanceux de t avoir comme epouse chere cousine* Greet everyone and be more demanding with [your husband], you deserve it and he is lucky to have you as wife dear cousin

Ousmane's cousin opened the episode, calling her brother-in-law by the name of a famous Senegalese wrestler, 'Tyson' (line 1). This is a game between the two, her calling him 'Tyson', him calling her by the nickname of another famous Senegalese wrestler, 'Yékini', or by other playful names such as *Madama* (line 2) followed their family name.[4] She then called him *fakman* (line 3), i.e. Wolof *fàqmaan* 'runaway', meant as a playful term. After exchanging family news for a couple of messages, they ended the conversation.

In our interviews, Ousmane reported his general preference for writing French, reserving Wolof just for specific purposes. These playful messages to his cousin are such a specific purpose, with the choice of Wolof underlining the intimate solidarity of their relationship and echoing the status of Wolof as language of playfulness in Senegalese texting (cf. Lexander 2011). However, the pragmatic effect of their language choices depends on the content of their messages as much as on lexical choice. Their connection manoeuvres are carried out both in Wolof and French, for instance when Ousmane calls his cross-cousin *chere cousine* or, in a later message, *chere cousine et epouse* ('dear cousin and wife'), 'wife' being a label that a man can use towards his (older) brother's wife in the levirate tradition (Diop 1985: 71). The available data for this dyad (39 text messages, two voice messages) consist of such bonding, as Ousmane sends compliments in French and Wolof ('I hope he takes good care of you', 'you should be more demanding with your husband', 'he is lucky to have you as his wife') and there is intertextual repetition through mutual labelling with the same or similar terms, in Wolof and French ('madame', 'runaway'). Exchange of important information is rare here, unlike Ousmane's messages with his sister (cf. 6.2.3). In our interview, Ousmane also underlined the special relationship with this cross-cousin when compared to other sisters-in-law and referred to the *kàll* tradition, according to which specific relationships, within or outside the family, should be characterised by playful teasing. For cross-cousins, teasing is even more systematic than in other relationships and a duty (Diop 1985: 60–61). The child of the maternal uncle (the cousin) has the status of *sang* ('master'), and the child of the paternal aunt (Ousmane) is called *jaam* ('slave') and the teasing plays on these roles (Diop 1985: 60). As a consequence of this, the cousin was allowed and expected to say even more impolite things to Ousmane than vice-versa, as Ousmane also explained in the interview. We can consider the asymmetry in the compliments as related to this. Through their interaction, they contributed to the social reproduction of their family

(see Yount-André 2018 for a discussion of other aspects of transnational cross-cousin relations in the Senegalese context).

A similar pattern was found in Felipe Sagna's Facebook Messenger communication with a friend from childhood in Senegal. They opened each of their exchanges with a specific playful insult in Joola, i.e. *coucouli* ('your balls'), and then carried on their conversation in Wolof and French. Adopting a practice from spoken face-to-face interaction to transnational written communication, this *kukoli* game (Lexander & Watson 2022) signalled a strong emotional attachment through repetition at both the level of lexical choice and the sequential position of the ritual insult at the beginning of the interaction. Again, these mutual insults are an important connection manoeuvre playfully disguised as a power manoeuvre, and the use of Joola for this purpose was crucial.

These transnational multilingual expressions of affection went beyond the family. In a WhatsApp group where Astou Coly chatted with her old classmates (examples discussed in Chapter 7), kinship terms were used to co-construct solidarity and intimacy. In the interview, Astou explained that the participants in this chatgroup sent each other messages very often, and that she really enjoyed their conversations. Their community of schoolmates, another social formation of particular importance in Senegal, was revived through these message threads where they teased each other, discussed emotional matters, and called each other by various sorts of names. Some of these were playful names. Astou, for instance, was called 'Oslo', indexing her country of residence, and when she solved a mathematical puzzle posed by another group member, this member called her *La mathématicienne disciple de Mr [Name]*, probably referring to their former maths teacher. Other names referred to kinship. Astou herself addressed her schoolmates as 'sisters' and 'brothers', while other members talked about the group as *toute la Famille* ('the whole family'), and one took it all in: *Bonjour à vous toutes et tous mes chéries épouses, mes chéris époux, mes soeurs, mes frères, mes enfants nationaux et internationaux, Bonjour mes amis*. ('Greetings to all of you, all my dear wives, my dear husbands, my sisters, my brothers, my national and international children. Greetings my friends'). Kinship terms were used repeatedly to confirm the participants' close relations and other terms were used to index aspects of their life trajectories, such as their professions and locations of residence.

The discussion topics also underlined the solidarity of this group. For example, in a long episode that unfolded in 71 messages in the course of half a day, several group members started discussing whether the first love is eternal and ended up contemplating about how life does not always go as expected but is still worth living. Here we observe a process of transnational peer solidarity that resembles the family exchanges mainly discussed in this chapter in its intimacy and in indexing closeness through the use of kinship terms. Even though French is here, too, the main language of discussion, the frequent integration of Wolof

expressions and proverbs contributes to the group's informal, playful, and sincere atmosphere. Interestingly, this conversation contains one of the rare examples of Astou writing in Wolof (cf. discussion of examples in Chapter 7). Just like Ousmane Diagne, Astou Coly seems to reserve written Wolof for particular settings and purposes, notably relations of intimacy.

Examples of Wolof for expressing affection through the spoken modality are also found in the data, even for romantic purposes. Awa Coly received a voice message where a young Senegalese performed a love song in Wolof dedicated to her, telling her *ku ma bëgge du dul yow* ('there's no one else I love but you') and *suma xol yow rekk yaa ci nekk* ('you're the only one in my heart'). It is also interesting how this personal message was shared with the siblings, who again shared it with the researcher, as they fetched a loudspeaker and put it on so that we could enjoy and discuss it together.

Overall, we observe a range of playful interaction patterns in transnational interaction with the extended family to express solidarity and affection. The participants use digital media affordances to create a space for multimodal and multilingual practices that sustain their relationships in accordance with culture-specific norms for kinship behaviour (Agha 2007, 2015).

6.4 Conclusions

This chapter examined how the family members carry out digital interaction to co-construct their relationships with family members near and far, with family members whom they meet regularly or rarely. The continuous accessibility afforded by mobile phones keeps family and peers more tightly connected, but may also feel overwhelming and imprisoning for this very reason (Baym 2010: 139). We aimed to assess how this situation, at times contradictory, is managed through language use. We also wanted to delve into shared elements across different types of translocal interaction, namely the expression of affection and morality on the one hand, and the management of the families' linguistic repertoires on the other. Our findings suggest that language choice is an important contextualisation cue in transnational family communication, and that many different degrees of translocal connectivity are afforded by digital media. Some of the examples we discussed are settings of temporary dispersion, children who move out but nonetheless stay in touch (e.g. the Coly family's Facebook group); others serve to maintain links to extended family and peers (e.g. Astou Coly's former classmates chatgroup). The interactional patterns in these exchanges are quite predictable in some cases, less so in others, and the same holds true for the balance between playfulness and distance. Playful nicknames and terms of endearment (e.g. *fakman*, *Tyson*, *Yékini*, *chere cousine et epouse*, *ma chere kona*) and teasing banter (e.g. *coucouli*) are repeated and to some extent ritualised, contributing to

family and peer bonds (cf. Gordon 2009). To this aim, the written use of Senegalese languages, in particular Wolof and Joola, is crucial.

Doing family digitally is a thus a complex multimodal and multilingual process. Our analysis reconstructed a continuum from very 'local' digital exchanges within a household (see also Stæhr & Nørreby 2021) to transnational exchanges and revealed variation in the use of 'local' and 'global' linguistic resources. Norwegian is the main choice within written communication in the home, and other linguistic resources figure in extra-household and transnational interaction. We analysed several examples of kinship behaviour with and without the use of kinship terms, with reference to culture-specific norms of kinship behaviour in Senegal and in Norway. In these exchanges, terms of address and endearment are intertextually repeated and become transnationally shared symbols of a translingual family repertoire (Hiratsaku & Pennycook 2020). Emoji are part of morality practices (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik 2007a) and connection manoeuvres (Tannen 2007), used in combination with various linguistic features. Our analysis has focused on written family practices, and on how modality affects language practices. This was particularly evident in the analysis of multilingual expressions of affection, in declarations of love as well as more indirect signs of emotion. Family members find a variety of ways of confirming their intimate relationships in online interaction, choosing from a variety of resources to do so. Understanding this digital 'doing' of family is essential if we want to fully comprehend the dynamic and situated nature of family relationships.

Notes

1 In all data extracts, Norwegian is underlined, **Wolof appears in bold**, *French in italics*, English in regular font, ***Arabic in bold italics***, **Peul in bold underlined**, ***Joola in bold italics underlined***. Proper names, anonymised throughout, come in small capitals. Text inserted by the analysts is marked with brackets. Transcripts include original typos.

2 Example from Lexander (2020a: 12)

3 Example from Lexander (2020a: 14).

4 As common in Senegal, this cousin has not taken her husband's family name. Married Senegalese women may however still be addressed with *madame* + husband's name.