Gambian English
Syntactic Features of a West African Variety of the English Language

Diplomarbeit
Zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades
einer Magistra der Philosophie

an der
Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz

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Graz, August 2019
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor Ao.Univ.Prof. Mag. Dr.phil. Hermine Penz of the Institut für Anglistik at Karl- Franzens- University of Graz. The door to Prof. Penz’ office was always open whenever I had a question about my research or writing. She consistently allowed this paper to be my own work, but guided me whenever she thought I needed it.

I would also like to thank all informants from The Gambia who were involved in the field research for participating in this research project. Without their passionate participation and input, the field research could not have been successfully conducted.

Finally, I want thank my parents for supporting me throughout my years of studying and my husband who continuously encouraged me through the process of researching and writing this thesis. Without his support the accomplishment of writing this thesis would not have been possible. Thank you.

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Melissa Marong
List of Abbreviations

φ  zero
I  interviewer
SP  speaker
POSTP  postposition
D  default determiner
LOCCOP  locational copula
RP  Received Pronunciation
WAE  West African English(es)
WAPE  West African Pidgin English(es)
1 Introduction

Africa is a richly diverse continent that is made up of 54 different nation states. It is one of the most multilingual regions in the world with speakers of more than 1,300 languages. Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the world’s most complex linguistic areas (Wolf, 2001: 7) and African nations are typically highly multilingual. (...) It is essential to bear this linguistic complexity and diversity in mind in a discussion of English in Africa. Each nation presents its own unique sociolinguistic environment (Kirkpatrick 2007: 101).

The unique sociolinguistic environment of the West African country The Gambia is yet a very under-researched topic in the studies of sociolinguistics. In addition to this lack of research very few authors have published literature on English of The Gambia so far. This thesis on Gambian English with the focus on its syntactic features aims to shed some light on this West African variety of the English language. Furthermore, it serves as a first attempt to provide a general overview of the syntactic features of Gambian English, and thus can add some valuable new findings to the studies of World Englishes. The analysis will cover all different areas of syntax and provides an overview of the identified peculiarities. In general, morphosyntax and cross clausal syntax will both constitute the two major areas of the analysis without putting the focus on one particular field. A further main aim of this thesis is to counter overgeneralizations, which not only The Gambia but many West African nations are prone to, mostly due to the lack of linguistic literature regarding the African continent.

English in The Gambia, as well as other West African Englishes, have often been neglected in the discussion of World Englishes. According to Peter et al. (2003: 43), Gambian English is “one of the last white spots on the map of linguistic literature”. In fact, except studies on Nigerian English, not many detailed analyses of West African Englishes have been conducted yet. Regarding The Gambia, the existing literature is reduced to a sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia by Juffermanns & McGlynn (2009) and a description of its phonology and lexis by Peter et al. (2003). The only information on syntactic features of Gambian English that can be found in the existing literature is that the grammar of Gambian English shares many features with other West African Englishes and “does not appear to be different in that respect from other varieties of West African English” (Peter et al. 2003: 48). Thus these authors refer the reader to Hansen et al’s (1996: 182-188) summary of syntactic features of West African English. However, this analysis mainly provides a description of Nigerian English. Thus, many questions remain open, as neither a profound description of the common syntactic features of West African Englishes exists, nor do the authors specify their claims concerning Gambian English with much further explanation. Furthermore, the argument presented above
may lead to the assumption that there are no distinct syntactic properties of Gambian English which can distinguish this variety from other West African Englishes. Thus, it is important to conduct research on this English variety in order to prove that English in The Gambia is not simply West African English but shows distinct properties that result from the unique sociolinguistic and socio-cultural background of The Gambia.

Concerning the underlying methodological approach, it has to be noted that the basis of the analysis of the syntactic features of Gambian English is fieldwork that includes the recording of volunteers from The Gambia. In sum, ten speakers from The Gambia were interviewed and their spontaneous performances of spoken English during these recordings serve as the basis of the research on the syntactic features of Gambian English. In order to trigger the conversation, different speaking tasks, which are all somehow connected to The Gambia, were given to the participants. The participants were divided into three groups consisting of two to five people, and each group was interviewed separately. The interviews were conducted by a volunteer who grew up in The Gambia and who was informed in detail about the recording process.

The guiding research question of the analysis is which syntactic characteristics can be systematically found among the English of the interview participants, and thus are stabilized features of Gambian English. In order to answer the main research question, the similarities and differences regarding the syntax of the spoken English of the participants will be analyzed. Additionally, it will be investigated if correlations between the personal backgrounds of the speakers and the number of identified syntactic peculiarities can be made. Last but not least, another important question that shall be answered is which syntactic features of the spoken English of the interview participants are common features of New Englishes and West African Englishes in particular.

In general, this thesis is divided into two parts, namely the theory part and an analysis of the conducted fieldwork. In the theory part, relevant literature connected to The Gambia will be presented. The first chapter will briefly introduce the geographic, historical and linguistic background of The Gambia. The following chapter on Gambian English in the context of World Englishes attempts to classify this variety of English as an outer circle English, as well as a West African variety and present various similarities of these English varieties. Furthermore, widespread syntactic features of New Englishes and West African Englishes will be listed, which may be found in Gambian English as well. The third chapter of the
theory part offers a description of Gambian English concerning functions, phonology, and lexicon, as well as a short description of Creole and hybrid forms of English in The Gambia. The analysis is divided into four chapters, of which the first chapter includes a detailed description of the methodological framework. In the following chapter, the results of the analysis concerning the syntactic peculiarities of the noun and verb phrase, function words and cross-clausal structures of the speakers will be presented. In this chapter, examples, percentages, and possible explanations of these features will be provided. Furthermore, the main aim of this chapter is to answer the guiding research question. In the following chapter, a discussion of the derived research questions will follow, which will mainly focus on the similarities and differences of the syntactic peculiarities of the individual speakers, as well as similarities and differences to West African English and New English varieties. The last chapter serves as a conclusion of the most important findings of the analysis and an evaluation of the research. The syntactic features that were identified as peculiar to Gambian English will be summarized, and suggestions for future research on syntactic features of Gambian English will be presented.
Part I: Theory

2 General Information on The Gambia

This chapter aims to provide some general facts on The Gambia regarding the geographic, historical and linguistic background of the country. This information will be relevant for the description of the interview participants, as well as the results and discussion of the analysis. The use of English in The Gambia cannot be seen in isolation from the cultural and linguistic context in which Gambian English is embedded. Thus, it is important to understand the complex and diverse socio-cultural and sociolinguistic background of The Gambia, which influences the individual people living in the country.

2.1 Geographic Background of The Gambia

The Gambia, or sometimes simply referred to as Gambia, has been an independent country since 1965 when it became a constitutional monarchy of the British Commonwealth. Five years later in 1970, it was turned into a republic under the name The Federal Republic of The Gambia (CountryWatch 2018:2). The Gambia is a country in West Africa which is located on the Atlantic coast entirely surrounded by Senegal.

![Map of The Gambia and its Location in Africa](image-url)

Figure 1: Map of The Gambia and its Location in Africa

[Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 331), adapted from Jatreh and Saho (2006)]
The size of the land area is 11,295 km², and thus The Gambia is the smallest country on the African continent. The shape of the country follows roughly the river Gambia, from which also stems the name that the nation was given after independence.

The borders of the state were drawn completely artificially, meaning that natural landmarks and the distribution of ethnic groups were neglected in the process of demarcation. The reason for this is that the border lines were drawn by the imperial powers France and Great Britain in 1889 and only slightly modified later (Hughes & Perfect 2008:1).

The capital city of The Gambia is Banjul, which was named Bathurst under British rule. Even though Banjul is the administrative center of the country, the largest city in terms of size and population is Serekunda, which is also the “fastest growing urban- concentration” of The Gambia (Hughes& Perfect 2008: 15; 212). In general, most of the country’s inhabitants live in the Kombo district which stretches along the coastal belt at the south side of the Gambia River and is the most urbanized area of the country. The country can be divided into six administrative sectors as established by the British government. These sectors are the Greater Banjul and Kanifing, the Western Region, the North Bank Region, the Lower River Region, the Central River Region, and the Upper River Region. “These administrative sectors are further divided into smaller district areas and local government areas. Apart from this official, colonially inherited division, there is also a popular division of the country using the names of pre-colonial polities” and are mostly Mandinka, Serer, Wolof and Fula kingdoms or states that existed before colonial times (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 330).

Even though The Gambia is the smallest country on mainland African, it is rather densely populated for its small size (Wiese & Bloch 1995: 135). In the year 2012, the country’s population was estimated at 1,82 million inhabitants (CountryWatch 2018: 102). In general, the population of The Gambia is very young as in 2005 almost 49% was estimated to be less than 18 years old. Furthermore, life expectancy is rather low, at 54,5 years for women and 52,7 for men. The Gambian population is also growing very fast. Reasons for this development are the improvement of health care and an increasing birth rate of 2.78 percent per year according to data of the year 2007. Additionally, migration from other African countries like Senegal, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone and partly also non-African countries, particularly the Lebanon, have lead to an increase of the Gambian population. In sum, migrants are estimated to make up 13% of the Gambian population. Furthermore, these migration streams also add to the already multiethnic population consisting of a myriad of
different tribes and peoples from all over the world. Some of these ethnic groups are only minorities in the country, but even the majority of the Gambian population consists of eight different tribes. These tribes are Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, Jola, Sarahule, Serer, Aku, and Manjago, who each speak their own language and have distinct cultural backgrounds. According to CountryWatch (2018: 196), the different Gambian ethnic groups live alongside each other “with a minimum of inter-ethnic friction, each preserving its own traditions”. In contrast to other African countries, in The Gambia none of these ethnic groups constitute the majority of the country’s population. The three largest groups of The Gambia are Mandinka with 36 %, Fula with 22% and Wolof with 14%. All the other ethnic groups constitute less than 12 %; the exact numbers can be found in the table below. Each of the ethnic groups in The Gambia can be found all over the country; however, due to historical reasons each is concentrated in a different region (Hughes & Perfect 2008: 48).

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<tr>
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<td>19.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jola</td>
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</table>

**Table 1: Gambian Population by Ethnicity 1973-2003 in Percentages**
(Juffermanns & McGlynn 2009: 333)

The Gambia is an agricultural country, as around 70% of the population depends on agriculture and farming for food supply and financial income. Agriculture is also one of the primary incomes of the country, mainly the export of groundnuts. Apart from agriculture, tourism is an essential sector in The Gambia, whereas industry has less importance for the Gambian economy (Hughes & Perfect 2008: 2; 56). According to CountryWatch (2018: 95; 198) The Gambia is one of the poorest nations in the world and in the Human Development Index, which indicates the life quality of a particular nation, it is ranked in the category of low human development. However, in recent years, the Gambian economy has improved due to the growth of tourism and agriculture.
As school attendance is not obligatory in The Gambia, the literacy rates of the population are rather low. “Only about one-third of all primary-school-age children are enrolled. About 60 percent of the population is illiterate, according to recent estimates. The 40.1 percent average literacy rate, however, belies the wide gender divide in which illiteracy among women is rampant” (Countrywatch 2018: 194). Whereas 47.8 percent of all men in The Gambia are literate, the literacy rate for women counts only 32.8 percent (CountryWatch 2018: 194). According to the Gambian constitution “basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all” (RoTG 2002: 30(a)); however, school attendance is not provided for everyone in The Gambia. In general, the education system is divided into three parts, namely six years lower basic school, three years upper basic school, and three years of senior secondary schooling. Thus, the basic education cycle in The Gambia has a duration of nine years (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 343-344).

2.2 Historical Background of The Gambia

There is only little evidence when people first settled down in West Africa and how people lived at the time when they finally settled down. The first evidence of people living in the area of The Gambia is based on archeological discoveries of stone circles. It is estimated that these circles were constructed by ancestors of the Jola people between the 7th and 9th century. At the same time also migration streams of the Fula took place who settled down alongside the river Gambia. From the 13th century onwards until the 17th century, West Africa was divided into several kingdoms. Thus, the area which is today known as The Gambia consisted of several kingdoms of different tribes. Until the 15th century the Kingdom of Mali, which is also referred to as the Manding Empire, had gained hegemony in West Africa. This Empire comprised several kingdoms, like for example the Mandinka kingdom, which was the “westernmost extension of that empire” (Hughes & Perfect 2008: xix) stretching to the river Gambia. Alongside the spread of the Malian Empire to the West, an extensive conversion to the Muslim religion took place. From the 16th century onwards further kingdoms developed in the region of The Gambia. For instance, the Serer tribe established their kingdoms known as Sine and Saloum. Concurrently the Wolof built their own state in the area of Senegal, who later gained a strong influence on the Gambian people (Hughes & Perfect 2008: 9ff).

The first European explorers who arrived in The Gambia were from Portugal. In the year 1455, an exploration of the river Gambia led by Alvise da Cadamosto and Antoniotto Usidimare took place (Hughes & Perfect 2008: 9ff). From then on the Portuguese started
trading with the region and in 1588 “exclusive trade rights on the Gambia River” (Superintendent of Documents 2011) were sold to British traders and merchants by the Portuguese throne. Some years later, in 1618, a charter was granted to the Company of Adventures of London Trading into Africa by King James which granted the company rights to trade with the region of the River Gambia and the Gold Coast, which is today known as Ghana. Alongside the trading of goods between the United Kingdom and the River Gambia also came the trading of slaves (Superintendent of Documents 2011).

As many as 3 million slaves may have been taken from the region during the 3 centuries that the transatlantic slave trade operated. It is not known how many slaves were taken by Arab traders prior to and simultaneous with the transatlantic slave trade. (…) Slaves were initially sent to Europe to work as servants until the market for labor expanded in the West Indies and North America in the 18th century. In 1807, slave trading was abolished throughout the British Empire, and the British tried unsuccessfully to end the slave traffic in The Gambia. They established the military post of Bathurst (now Banjul) in 1816. In the ensuing years, Banjul was at times under the jurisdiction of the British governor general in Sierra Leone (Superintendent of Documents 2011).

After continuous struggles of England and France in the 17th and 18th centuries to gain supremacy of the region of The Gambia and Senegal, the United Kingdom succeeded and took over control in The Gambia. In 1765 the British government established the Province of Senegambia and took possession of The Gambia in 1783. France and England agreed that the region of Senegal and also the village Albreda lying at the river Gambia would stay under French rule. However, in 1857 the exclave Albreda was joined to the British territory (Hughes & Perfect. 2008: xx- xxii). In 1888 The Gambia had become a “separate colonial entity” (Superintendent of Documents 2011) under British rule, and one year later England and France agreed on the borders of the colony, which remained mostly the same until the present day. Due to administrative reasons, the British Crown Colony of The Gambia was divided into the colony of Bathurst (Banjul), including the surrounding area, and the protectorate, which comprised the remaining regions of The Gambia. The following years the colony gradually accomplished autonomy and established independent executive and legislative authorities (Superintendent of Documents. 2011).

After World War II, the pace of constitutional reform quickened. Following general elections in 1962, full internal self-government was granted in 1963. The Gambia achieved independence on February 18, 1965, as a constitutional monarchy within the British Commonwealth. Shortly thereafter, the government proposed conversion from a monarchy to a republic with an elected president replacing the British monarch as chief of state. The proposal failed to receive the two-thirds majority required to amend
the constitution, but the results won widespread attention abroad as testimony to The Gambia's observance of secret balloting, honest elections, and civil rights and liberties. On April 24, 1970, The Gambia became a republic following a referendum (Superintendent of Documents 2011).

The first elected president of The Gambia was Dawda Kairaba Jawara, who remained in his function for the following five legislative periods and managed to establish stability across the country. However, there had been some attempts to deprive president Jawara of his power. In 1981 a coup was initiated by Kukoi Samba Sanyang, which resulted in an outbreak of violence and bloodshed. Nevertheless, the coup remained unsuccessful as military forces from Senegal could defeat the rebels. As a further consequence, Senegal and The Gambia decided to strengthen their ties and “combine the armed forces of the two nations and to unify economies and currencies” (Superintendent of Documents 2011). In 1982 Senegal and The Gambia proclaimed the Senegambian Confederation, from which The Gambia resigned seven years later (Superintendent of Documents 2011).

In 1994 the peaceful era of president Jawara`s rule was ended by another coup that was launched by the military force named Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC), of which Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh was the chairman and announced himself head of state. An election was initiated by the AFPRC in 1996, in which Yahya Jammeh was elected for president. However, there have been doubts that the election was open to all the Gambian citizens and the election process proceeded under fair circumstances (Superintendent of Documents 2011).

President Jammeh remained in office for 20 years until 2016. His regime is often regarded as dictatorship. From 2004 onwards Jammeh ordered his private militia and the State Guard, the official border-patrol, to systematically assassinate his political opponents. Furthermore, press freedom in The Gambia under the rule of president Jammeh was limited. According to Hultin et al. (2017: 321-340) “many journalists were persecuted by the regime and the regime maintained an antagonistic and indeed hostile relationship with the press.” The consequences of Jammeh`rule were political repression, a collapse of the Gambian economy and an increased number of Gambian people who emigrated as migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, among them many journalists and political opponents. In the year 2016 Jammeh`s regime, which was somewhat between democracy and dictatorship, was ended when Adama Barrow was elected for president. The former president Yahya Jammeh announced to step down from his office and was driven into exile to Equatorial Guinea (Hultin et al. 2017: 321-340).
2.3 Linguistic Background of The Gambia

There are around ten major African languages spoken in The Gambia and several further languages and local dialects spoken by minorities. These languages each correspond to the respective ethnic group, usually referred to under the same name as the language. However, “there is no one-to-one relation language ethnicity. While individuals belong to only one ethnic group, they often speak several languages, and not necessarily the language of their ethnic group” (Juffermans 2015:34). It is important to remark that none of these languages are exclusively spoken in The Gambia but also at least in one of the neighboring nations (Juffermans 2015: 34). However, none of these African languages are the official language of the country, as this has been only English since the colonial period. Since then English has been the language of administration, legislation, media, and the school system in The Gambia (Peter et al. 2003: 58).

The African languages that are spoken in The Gambia fall into the category of the Niger-Congo languages and can be further separated into the Mande and Atlantic languages. The Mande languages spoken in the country are Mandinka, Bambara, Jahanke, and Serahule. The Atlantic languages of The Gambia consist of Wolof, Fula, and Serer belonging to the Senegambian branch of Atlantic languages, and Jola, Manjago, and Balanta which belong to the Bak branch of the Atlantic languages. The only major African language spoken in The Gambia that does not count as a Niger-Congo language is Krio, which is spoken by the Aku as well as the Krio tribe originating from Sierra Leone. Some minorities of the country that are worth mentioning are the Serer, the Karoninka and the Baroninka. As The Gambia is a very small country that is solely surrounded by francophone Senegal, the number of people speaking French as a second language has increased. Arabic is also widely spoken across the country as 95% of the country follows Islam, and Arabic is the language of the Quran (Hughes & Perfect 2008: 267-268).

2.3.1 Niger-Congo Languages

Niger-Congo has over 1,500 languages, more than any other language family in Africa. The Niger-Congo family is named after the Niger and Congo Rivers, but even the vast spread suggested by the distance between those two locations fails to do justice to the extent of the Niger-Congo languages, which range from the Central African Republic and Sudan in the north to the southern tip of South Africa (Lyovin 1997: 212).
In general, it can be said that around 70% of the languages that are spoken on the African continent belong to the phylum of the Niger-Congo languages. Almost all languages spoken in the West and South of Africa belong to this category (Frawley 2003: 152). The Gambian indigenous languages have some features in common as all except Aku belong to the same phylum of languages. The following features are peculiar to the Niger-Congo languages; however, these characteristics cannot be found in all the languages of this phylum or may also occur in different forms.

One main feature of Niger-Congo languages is the occurrence of tones, and almost all the families of this phylum are tonal languages (Childs 2003: 38). Tonal languages make use of tones that syllables can take on which differ from the usual intonation patterns such as rising or falling intonation. Thus, in tonal languages the tone in which a syllable is uttered determines the lexical property of the word. “The consonants and vowels in such words are identical, and the words differ from each other only in tone” (Welmers 1973: 116). As investigated by Creissels and Sambou (2013: 36), who conducted studies on the properties of Mandinka, there exist two contrasting lexical tones, namely the high and the low tone.

Depending on which tone is used for a syllable, identical words can be distinguished from each other. For instance, the prefix [i] which is attached to verbs in Mandinka and marks person and number of a verb, means you when it is produced with a high tone [i] and they if it is uttered as a low tone [i].
Another peculiarity of most Niger-Congo languages is the use of noun classes that occur in different forms in the subordinate branches, except the Mande branch.

Noun forms divide into subsets (noun classes) according to their behavior in agreement mechanisms (...); the forms involved in these agreement mechanisms (nouns, noun modifiers, pronouns, and verbs) include affixes (class markers) that determine their behavior as controllers or targets of agreement (Creissels 2014: Section 31.3).

For instance, in Wolof around ten noun classes exist, of which eight mark singular and two the plural. Noun classes can usually be distinguished by a noun class marker that “appears in the form of a single consonant on nominal dependents such as determiners and relative particles” (Mc Laughlin 1997: 2). In Wolof, the classification of a noun depends solely on the agreement with a determiner. In other language families of the Niger-Congo phylum, for example, the Atlantic language family not only noun class agreement exists, but also the nouns are “class-marked” by themselves (Babou & Loporcaro 2016: 3).

Apart from affixes being attached to nouns, the attachment of suffixes is also very common to verbs. These affixes usually convey a particular meaning as information about case, mode or person. In most of the Niger-Congo languages the structure of affixation to verbs is pronoun-construction marker- verb base- affix with verb base (Welmers 1973: 343). Concerning adjectives, it can be said that the use of this class is rather uncommon in Niger-Congo languages. “In almost all Niger-Congo languages which have a class of adjectives, the class is rather small, and many concepts expressed by adjectives in European languages are expressed by other kinds of constructions using nouns or verbs or both” (Welmers 1973: 250).

2.3.2 Mande Languages

The Mande branch of the Niger-Congo languages shows some features that differ from all the other branches of the same phylum, and at the same time, it lacks some features that are typical of the Niger-Congo languages. For example, Mande languages do not make use of a gender system, which is characteristic of the Niger-Congo phylum (Lyovin 1997: 212). Furthermore, the similarity between the different Mande languages is rather loose as they often share only a rather small number of cognates compared to other branches of languages (Frawley 2003: 157). According to Heine (1976: 40) some features of the Mande languages are the following:

- Most have SVO as basic order, although Manding has basic S(Aux)OV.
- Nominal qualifiers like adjective and numeral follow the noun.
- The adjective usually precedes the demonstrative and numeral.
- In most languages, the adverb follows the adjective and the verb.
- The subject pronoun precedes the tense/aspect markers, the verb, and the object pronoun.

As the **Mandinka** people are the largest ethnic group in The Gambia, Mandinka is a main language of the Gambia and most widely spoken as a first and second language. According to data from 2003, 35.9% of the population speak Mandinka as a first language, and apart from that, the language is given some prestige in the country. Furthermore, Mandinka also has the function of a lingua franca, particularly in rural areas and urban areas apart from Banjul and the Kanifing LGAs. Even though English is the official language of the country, Mandinka can also be found in radio and television broadcasting. It is also important to note that Mandinka is not taught at school, even though it is spoken by the majority of the Gambian population. Officially a standardized orthography exists for Mandinka. According to this, Mandinka is written in “Latin script with a strict phoneme-to-grapheme correlation” (Juffermans 2015: 35). Mandinka can also be written in Arabic script and Nko, which is a script developed particularly for Mande languages, which is not common in The Gambia, however. As the language is not taught at schools, people in The Gambia do not write Mandinka according to the official standard (2015: 35). Spelling in Mandinka as for all other native languages of The Gambia is an act of creativity, as “spellers are left in a normative vacuum” (Juffermans 2015: 137).

Apart from Mandinka, there are three other Mande languages in The Gambia that count as main languages. These languages are **Serahule, Bambara, and Jahanke**. “The Serahule, also known by the French name Soninké, are the descendants of the Ghana Empire (ninth-thirteenth centuries) in what is now Central Mali, where they are still more populous than in Senegambia” (Juffermanns & McGlynn 2009: 336-337; citing Sonko-Godwin 2003; Faal 1997:18f). Serahule is almost solely spoken as a first language, and it is rare to observe that people of other ethnic groups speak Serahule. The people of this ethnic group mostly communicate in Mandinka and partly also Wolof with people that have another first language. Another Mande language that is more closely related to Mandinka than Serahule is Bambara. The Bambara has its origins in southern Mali, where it is spoken as a national language and a lingua franca in the capital city Bamako. In The Gambia the Bambara are mostly migrants from Mali; however, there is a small number of native Bambara. Due to the strong similarities to the Mandinka language, many Bambaras can speak Mandinka. Similar to Bambara, the
The third main Mande language of The Gambia has strong linguistic connections to Mandinka. The cultural connections between the Jahankas and the Mandinkas is that close that some citizens reject the idea that these are two distinct ethnic groups and instead count them as one uniform group. In terms of linguistic differences between the languages, the similarities outweigh the differences, which are mainly limited to lexicon and inflection. As a further consequence, “communication between Jahankas and Mandinkas is often completed using a parallel diglossic code rather than either interlocutor switching codes” (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 334-339).

2.3.3 (North-) Atlantic Languages

The second branch of the Niger-Congo languages spoken in The Gambia consists of the (North-) Atlantic languages. This branch is mostly known for the languages Wolof and Fula, which are Senegambian languages. Some features of the Atlantic languages, of which the North-Atlantic languages are a sub-category are the following (Heine 1976:40):

- The subject precedes the verb, and the object follows the verb.
- The adposition precedes the noun (prepositions).
- The genitive follows its head noun, [and] nominal qualifiers follow the noun.
- The object pronoun follows the verb; the adverb follows the verb and the adjective; the adverbial phrase follows the object.
- The subject pronoun precedes the tense/aspect markers, negative particle, the verb, and the object pronoun.
- Tense/aspect markers precede the verb.

A sub-category of the North-Atlantic languages is the branch of the Senegambian languages, in which Fula and Wolof are included. Even though the Fula people constitute a larger ethnic group in The Gambia, the Wolof language is more widespread than Fula in the country. Apart from the 14.5% of the Gambian population who belong to the ethnic group of the Wolof, the language is also used as a second language by people with other ethnicities. Furthermore, Wolof functions as a lingua franca, particularly in the urban areas of The Gambia. For instance, “in Banjul and the Kanifing Municipality, children of multiethnic parents increasingly grow up speaking Wolof as a first language, and it is often also the preferred language of communication in ethnically mixed gatherings” (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 335). The process that Wolof is increasingly gaining importance in The Gambia is often referred to as Wolofisation. In The Gambia, this process mostly applies to the increased importance of Wolof as a second language and a lingua franca, whereas Wolofisation of ethnic identities is rare. Due to the tight connection to Senegal, it is also important to remark
that Gambian Wolof is also influenced by Senegalese Wolof. Apart from its communicative function for speakers of different first languages, Wolof plays also an essential role as a language regarding television and radio. Furthermore, Wolof is often preferred by the young generation, who increasingly speak Wolof as a second language. Similar to Mandinka, Wolof is neither taught at schools nor is it the language of communication in Gambian classrooms; and thus many Wolof people are not literate in their own language. Another similarity to Mandinka is that both Latin scripts and Arabic scripts exist. The Latin script is the official version, and a standardized orthography exists for this script. However, similar to Mandinka, the use of a standardized orthography is not widely used among Wolof speakers.

The **Fula** language, also referred to as Fulbe, Fulfulde, Fulani, Pulaar, Peul, or Poular, is widely spread in West Africa and spoken in numerous countries. The Fula people constitute a native group of the Gambian population; however, many of the Gambian Fulas migrated to the country from Guinea. In The Gambia, the Fulas comprise 21.9% of the Gambian population, and thus the language is, after Mandinka and Wolof, the third most widely spoken language of the country. Nevertheless, Fula does not function as a lingua franca, and only a few members of other ethnic groups can speak it fluently as a second language. One reason is that many Fulas are tenants or traders, and thus are exposed to multi-ethnic environments. As a further consequence, Fulas are often fluent in many other Gambian languages, and there is no necessity of acquiring language proficiency in Fula for people speaking another language as a first language. However, it cannot be neglected, that there are some areas in The Gambia where Fula is chosen as the language of communication between multi-ethnic speakers (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 334-335).

**Jola**, a further indigenous language of The Gambia, is often regarded as not being a language, but rather a family of languages (Ethnologue 2005). Jola is also the most widely spoken language of the Bak branch of languages in The Gambia. In general, the number of people speaking Jola has increased in the last few years, mainly due to migration streams from Casamance in Senegal and the Jammeh’s regime in favor of the Jolas. However, there are also many Gambian Jolas who grow up with different first languages than the language of their own ethnic group. Particularly in the city of Kombo many families of mixed ethnic backgrounds choose Mandinka, Wolof or both of these languages as the language for communication, and thus their children only acquire little or even no proficiency in Jola. Furthermore, “the domains in which Jola is used are minimal” (2009:336). Due to the lack of
functions and domains in which the language is used, the Jola people often grow up speaking several languages and are generally considered to be multilingual. On the contrary, the number of people speaking Jola as a second language is limited (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 335-336).

Apart from Jola, **Manjago and Balanta** are further languages of the category that are spoken in The Gambia. Both of these languages are not widely spoken in the country, as these two ethnic groups make up only a small number of the country’s population. Both ethnic groups have their origins in areas that are now in Guinea-Bissau. Manjago is almost entirely spoken as a first language. As the Manjago language is not widespread, only a few people of “other ethnic groups speak even a limited amount of Manjago”, while the Manjago people can speak several different Gambian languages (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 337-339).
3 Gambian English in the Context of World Englishes

Gambian English cannot be studied in isolation from other English varieties as it is “exposed and influenced by other varieties of English in the world. A more comprehensive empirical study would be necessary to understand the complexities of Gambian English in relation to Aku, other varieties of West African English, British and other international Englishes” (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 340).

British English has had the most influence over the last centuries on Gambian English. This influence even continued after the independence of the country from the United Kingdom. Today British English is still present in The Gambia through BBC radio broadcasts (Wolf & Juffermans 2008: 135) and learning materials for students at school, where still British English is considered as the standard that the students should achieve (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 339). Furthermore, Gambian English is also influenced by American English, for instance by CNN news that occurs in the national television channel GRTS (Gambia Radio& Television Service). There are also close connections between Gambian English and Sierra Leonean English; first because of the close historical connection during and after colonization, and second because of the many Sierra Leonean migrants, who often pursue a teaching profession in The Gambia nowadays. Nigerian English is another variety that is influential in The Gambia, mostly because of the Nigerian movies of Nollywood that are immensely popular in the Gambian population. Last but not least, the number of tourists arriving in The Gambia, most of them speaking English as a first or a second language, has an impact on the local variety of English in The Gambia (Wolf & Juffermans 2008: 135).

3.1 The Outer Circle: (West) African Englishes

Due to the historical context of The Gambia and intraregional developments in Africa, Gambian English should also not be seen in isolation from other English varieties in West Africa. For instance, Omoniyi (2009: 177) argues that

the point must be made that several languages in the region are transnational. This is achieved either through people moving in search of greater language capital or displacement caused by conflict as refugees search for safe havens, or the historical reason of reuniting with kinsfolk across the arbitrary boundaries put in place during the scramble for and partition of Africa in Berlin in 1884.

As a further consequence, the “sociolinguistic landscape” (2009: 177) of the West African countries has begun to converge, and thus the development of languages are affected across the national boundaries. In fact, there are some similarities that Gambian English shares with
countries such as Nigeria or Sierra Leone (Peter et al. 2003: 49). These similarities mostly stem from a similar historical context, similar functions of English in the individual countries, and similarities of how English is used by the citizens.

In order to understand the origin of Gambian English and how this variety is connected to other English varieties across the world, it is important to consider how English spread from Europe and America to the African continent. Jenkins (2009: 5-9) divides the spread of the English language into two phases, the spread to the first and the second diaspora. The first diaspora of English includes the spread of English to North America, Australia, and New Zealand due to migration from Great Britain. In these countries, English became the first language as the European settlers largely replaced the indigenous population. The second diaspora involves the spread of English to African and Asian countries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries due to colonization. In these countries, English functions as a second language today and has often achieved the status of an official language.

From a historical point of view, two distinct developments of English took place in Africa, and thus Englishes in East Africa differ from those in West Africa regarding their historical background. In East Africa, from the 1850s onwards, an extensive settlement of colonizers from Great Britain took place. Thus, in the countries Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe English became the primary language in public domains. After the independence of these countries, English remained as a second language and in most countries also as an official language. The development of English in West Africa differs from East Africa in that it was connected to the slave trade. (Jenkins 2009: 7)

From the late fifteenth century onwards, British traders travelled at different times to and from the various coastal territories of West Africa, primarily Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon. However, there was no major British settlement in the area and, instead, English was employed as a lingua franca both among the indigenous population (…) and the British traders (Jenkins 2009: 7).

As a further consequence, in many West African countries, English developed into pidgins and creoles, such as Krio or Cameroon Pidgin English. These languages which developed through the contact with British traders are still spoken today by many people in West African countries, particularly as a second language. Similar to East African countries, after independence English remained one of the official languages in all West African countries that were colonized before by the United Kingdom (Jenkins 2009: 6-7).
Omoniyi (2009: 172-174) claims that two phases of colonial development of English in West Africa took place. During the first phase, which already started around the year 1555, some people from West African countries were sent to Great Britain for receiving education in the English language. At this point of time the first forms of “broken language forms” developed, and later served as a lingua franca between the British traders and the African population in different coastal regions. Furthermore, the author argues that this development was the early beginning of the English pidgins and creoles in West Africa. In the second phase, missionary activities in West Africa and “Western intervention in the cultural lives of the peoples” (2009 174), which mostly took place through education, the colonial language was implanted as the main language of the region. This took place mostly during the twentieth century but also continued later. It is also important to remark that English also exists as a first language in Africa. Apart from Indian settlers in South Africa and Kenya, and white settlers in Zimbabwe and South Africa (Kirkpatrick 2007: 107ff), there are also people who speak English as their mother language in West Africa. In the nineteenth century, the United States of America and Great Britain settled freed black slaves in West African territories. From 1821 to 1847 the colony of Liberia “was established and developed by Americans” (Sherman 2011: 22) to give free black American slaves a place to live. Thus, the first language of those settlers has always been and still is English. For example, Standard Liberian English is a variety that was largely influenced by Black American English spoken in the south of the USA (Sherman 2011: 255ff). Similarly to the resettlement of former slaves in Liberia, in 1787 former slaves from Caribbean countries, the USA, Canada and also Europe were sent to the colony of Freetown, which is today part of Sierra Leone. The Krio language, which as the name already indicates is a Creole language, is the result of the fusion of English, Yoruba, and various other African languages (Dixon- Fyle & Cole 2006: 2). From Freetown, Krio spread to other parts of Sierra Leone and gradually to all other West African countries due to the strategic role of Sierra Leone as the base from which Britain spread its colonial administration. The British employed educated Krio and sent them as administrators to other West African colonies in the 19th century. Varieties of Krio are spoken today in the Gambia, Cameroon, Guinea, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, and (…) the Island of Bioko (Thomas 2006: 618).
A similar history, linked to the colonization of English-speaking countries, is one criterion of the Outer Circle Englishes, which Kachru (1985, cited from Bolton 2009: 292) described in his Three Circles model. In this model, Kachru divided the Englishes that are spoken worldwide into the Inner Circle (English spoken as a First Language), the Outer Circle (English spoken as a Second Language) and the Expanding Circle (English learned as a Foreign language). Englishes in West Africa are according to his classification, part of the Outer Circle Englishes. The criteria according to which he described the circles are, the “type of spread” of English, the “patterns of acquisition” and the “functional domains” (2009: 292) according to which English is used in a respective circle. The Outer Circle of Englishes refers to Anglophone postcolonial societies of the second diaspora of Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, in which English “has occurred largely as a result of colonization by English speaking nations” (McKay 2002: 10). How English spread to (West) African societies is linked to the introduction of English as a colonial language, as described in the previous paragraphs.

In terms of acquisition, English in (West) Africa is spoken as a Second Language. “Typically English is only one of the community languages in what are clearly multilingual societies; and English in such societies usually achieves some degree of official recognition as an official,
co-official, legal, or educational language” (2009: 292). As a further consequence, the functional domains in which English is used in Outer Circle varieties are usually public domains on an intranational, as well as international level (Bolton 2009: 292). According to Omoniyi (2009: 181), English as the official language of several West African countries, is now the language of “administration (…), examinations, university entrance, job interviews, civil service promotion tests, aptitude tests, education (…) [and] commerce”. An interesting point that Omoniyi makes is the link between English proficiency and success, which consequently results in English being regarded as a superior language compared to the indigenous languages of West Africa. Omoniyi (2009: 181) argues that “English has been the major gatekeeper in the attainment of access to higher socio-economic classes in sub-Saharan Africa.”

Brown (2006: 423) describes that one feature of Outer Circle Englishes is the development of English to an “institutionalized” or “nativized” language in an, as Kachru (1985, cited from Bolton 2009: 292) calls it, “un-English cultural context”. This means that Englishes of the Outer Circle share characteristics with varieties of the Inner Circle, but additionally exhibit features on the lexical, phonological, pragmatic and morpho-syntactic level, due to the different socio-cultural contexts from the Inner Circle.

The only description of West African English regarding syntactic features is the account of Hansen et al. (1996: 182-188). According to their research, the following syntactic features are common in West African English:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of West African English</th>
<th>(with particular focus on Nigerian English)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>use of plural forms for non-count nouns</td>
<td>advices, equipments, informations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deletion or replacement of articles</td>
<td>Aircraft is fully booked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peculiarities in terms of preposition use</td>
<td>Mr. Olu is the principal for our school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deletion or replacement of pronouns</td>
<td>They really love themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different forms which express the comparative</td>
<td>It is the youths who are skilful in performing tasks than the adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic Feature</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variability of tense and aspect</td>
<td><em>I have gone to Jos two years ago.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deletion of <em>to</em> in infinitives</td>
<td><em>They enabled him do it.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of invariant tags</td>
<td><em>Isn’t it?, not so?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Deviations from Standard English regarding the answers to negative yes/no questions | *Hasn’t he come yet?*  
  - *Yes, he hasn’t come.*  
  - *No, he has come.* |
| Use of resumptive pronouns                             | *A person who has no experience, can he be a good leader?*               |

Even though the description of syntactic features of West African Englishes above can already hint at possible features of Gambian English, this description by Hansen et al. (1996) is problematic. The authors mainly focus on Nigerian English and it is questionable if they have considered data from all other Anglophone West African countries in their analysis. Thus, it is not clear if the features they have identified are features of Nigerian English or common features found in West African Englishes. Furthermore, this summary may lead to the assumption that West African English consists primarily of Nigerian English and that the other West African Englishes do not have distinct features which are peculiar to the respective national variety. Furthermore, in terms of linguistic features, West African English (WAE) should not be seen as a “discrete entity”, but an idealized heading, which helps to draw general assumptions of tendencies of linguistic features that occur in the region of West Africa. As the name West African English already indicates, the main criterion for similarity is the criterion of geographical proximity (Bokamba & Todd 1992: 20).

Common linguistic features unique to this areal variety, however, may not be as immediately evident, if we consider a) that there is internal variation according to the speakers socioeconomic, educational, and ethnic background (Platt, Weber & Ho 1984 ch. 2, Hansen 1986), b) the functional and situational differentiation of the variety according to different social contexts (Hansen 1986) and c) the exceptional status of Liberian English (Wolf 2001: 29).

Indeed, one must be very careful to ascribe a certain feature as typical for West African English, as the region is extremely large and ethnically as well as culturally varied. For instance, Spencer (1971: 7) warns that one should be cautious about making generalizations.
that one particular feature occurs in all the countries of West Africa. Furthermore, features that are referred to as characteristic of West African English are generally often features of New Englishes (see chapter 3.2). One must also consider that even within one country there is what Kachru (1981: 26) refers to as a “cline of varieties,” or “variety within variety” which means that there exists a continuum of different forms of one variety ranging from Pidgin or Broken English to Standard-like English (Todd 1982: 284f).

3.2 Gambian English in the Context of New Englishes

According to Mesthrie & Bhatt (2008: 43-89) there is a tendency of the New Englishes to share some common features. New Englishes are national or regional varieties of the English language that are not spoken as a first language but as a second language and are sometimes linked to the status of an official language of that particular region or nation. New Englishes are usually English varieties of the outer circle or expanding circle and can also be referred to under the names *New Varieties of English* or *non-native varieties of English*. Jenkins (2009: 22-23) mentions four criteria of a New English variety:

1) It has developed through the education system. This means that it has been taught as a subject and, in many cases, also used as a medium of instruction in regions where languages other than English were the main languages.
2) It has developed in an area where a native variety of English was not the language spoken by most of the population.
3) It is used for a range of functions among those who speak or write it in the region where it is used.
4) It has become ‘localised’ or ‘nativised’ by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words, and expressions.

As Gambian English fulfills all the above-mentioned criteria, and thus can be regarded as a New English variety, it may be relevant for the analysis of the syntactic features of Gambian English to consider the characteristics that are shared by New Englishes. Taking into account the syntactic features of other New Englishes can already hint at distinctive features that can be expected to occur in Gambian English.

Concerning the noun phrase, there is the overall tendency of New Englishes to use articles in different ways from Standard English. The indefinite article *a* is often deleted or replaced by another word, for example by *one*. The same phenomenon applies to the definite article *the* which may be deleted or replaced by a non-sibilant fricative sound. Definite articles are also used for mass nouns or plural nouns, for which articles would usually not be used in inner circle varieties. Furthermore, pronouns tend to be used in different ways in New Englishes.
from all over the world. A general deletion of pronouns is quite common, of which the deletion of it in the phrase it is is the most widespread. The expression of possession is very often avoided or follows a different pattern in some New Englishes, for example, in West African Englishes (Mesthrie & Bhatt 2008: 43-89).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Possessive Pronoun in West African Englishes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mesthrie &amp; Bhatt 2008:56-57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrative + noun + possessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I met the teacher our new.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrative + possessive + noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That your brother, will he come?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the verb phrase, even more structural similarities can be found among New English varieties. One feature that is very widespread among New Englishes is how the third person is expressed in the present tense. As Mesthrie and Bhatt claim the present tense –s third person is “subject to variation”, (2008: 66)) for example, in Nigerian English the third person –s is substituted by zero forms. Another major feature concerns the past tense suffix –ed, which is either variable or replaced by zero marking. In varieties in which the past tense suffix is deleted, “the use of adverbials that establish past tense reference makes it unnecessary to mark tense on verbs” (2008: 59). Similar to the past tense, also the future tense is often expressed differently from Standard English. In many New Englishes the present tense substitutes the future. The aspect marker have in the present perfect tense is often replaced by other words that function as substitute markers. Possible aspect markers are already or finish(ed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense and Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mesthrie &amp; Bhatt 2008: 61-63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Tense:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deletion of third person -s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He go to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Philippine English; Gonzales 1983: 163)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Tense:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replacement of –ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverbial markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We stay there the whole afternoon and we catch one small fish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last time she come home on Thursday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Singaporean English; Platt et al. 1984: 69-70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overlap with the present tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take it later. (=I will take it later)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Perfect:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He already go home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The use of the static and dynamic aspect verbs differs from the use in native varieties of English. In many varieties the “distinction between stative and dynamic verbs is frequently overridden” (2008: 67); however, there is a strong tendency in New Englishes that static verbs are used in dynamic contexts, and thus can take on the –ing form. In the present tense, the use of be is avoided in many contexts, when be is used as a copular verb. Furthermore, it is also known that in some non-native varieties of English, but particularly in English dialects and Creole languages, the habitual aspect is marked by the use of an uninflected be, also known as habitual be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Phrases</th>
<th>(Mesthrie &amp; Bhatt 2008:67-70)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stative:</td>
<td>I am smelling something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of be + ing form</td>
<td>(Nigerian English; Jowitt 1991: 114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive:</td>
<td>The private school φ mostly run by religious orders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deletion of passive be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copular be:</td>
<td>The house φ very nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be is absent</td>
<td>(Singaporean English; Wee 2004: 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual be:</td>
<td>A lot of them be interested in football matches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Irish English; Filppula 1999:136)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A striking feature of New Englishes is the way verbs select phrasal and prepositional elements in ways that differ from [Standard English]. The distinction between phrasal and prepositional verbs hinges on whether they allow particle movement or not. Phrasal verbs allow particle movements in picked the paper up as an alternative to picked up the paper. Prepositional verbs do not (got up at nine, rather than *got at nine up) (Mesthrie & Bhatt 2008: 71).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrasal and Prepositional Verbs</th>
<th>(Platt et al. 1984: 81-85)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>phrasal verbs used without a particle</td>
<td>pick for pick up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
phrasal verbs used with a different particle from Standard English | throw out for throw up (ones hands) 
| put off for put out
| (Ghanaian English; Huber and Dako 2004: 854)

non phrasal verbs used with particle | voice out (one’s opinion) for voice 
| pick up a quarrel for pick a quarrel
| (East African Englishes)

prepositional verbs used without a preposition | apply for apply for (Indian English) 
| provide for provide with (East African Englishes)

prepositional verbs used with a different preposition | result into for result in (West African Englishes) 
| good in for good at (Indian English)

non-prepositional verbs used with preposition | discuss about for discuss (West African Englishes, Singaporean English, Indian South African English)

A further characteristic of New Englishes is the use of prepositions and conjunctions which highly deviate from their use in native varieties of English. In general, there is a variability of how prepositions are used; the widest variability can be found in African and American Indian varieties. Similar conjunctions occur in different contexts than in native varieties, and particularly the correlative so plays an important role. In general, there is “a tendency to use so with clauses having a causal or temporal relation at the beginning of both clauses” (2008: 74).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepositions and Conjunctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mesthrie &amp; Bhatt 2008: 73-74)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Prepositions: |
| wide variability of preposition use |
| He got fired of the church. |
| They were at fishing. |
| I get on in Head Start. |
| (American Indian Englishes; Leap 1993:74) |

| Correlative so: |
| So when I was a baby, so my father-an’them shifted to Sezela. |
| (Indian South African English; Mesthrie 1992: 198) |
Concerning the word order of New Englishes it can be said that they basically follow the SVO (subject-verb-object) order; however, it is also possible that the word order principles of the substrate languages can filter through if they differ from the SVO order. The most deviations from Standard English word order occur in questions. In general, how questions are formed in most of these varieties highly deviates from Standard English. Yes/no questions are often indicated by rising intonation instead of using the auxiliary _do_. In some varieties the _do_ support when asking a question is generally only optional. In many varieties, inversion, which is required in wh-questions in Standard English, does not occur. Furthermore, the wh-words in these questions are sometimes replaced by equivalents in some varieties and mainly English creoles. For instance, in Indian South African English _when_ is replaced by _what time_ or _why_ by _what_. A feature that can be found among all non-native English varieties is the use of invariant tag questions, where Standard English “has complex rules involving pronoun and auxiliary copying with negative reversal, and _do_ support if the main clause lacks an auxiliary” (2008: 86). An invariant tag that is very widespread among New Englishes is the phrase _isn’t it_. Regarding the answers to questions, it is particularly striking that in many varieties, particularly in South Asia and Africa responses to yes/no questions are usually formed in the negative. This negation also occurs when responding to statements that involve subordinate clauses with the verbs _hope_ or _wish_.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adapted from (Mesthrie &amp; Bhatt 2008: 86-88; 97-100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes/no – questions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do support is optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>She gave you the book?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(informal Indian English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wh- questions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no inversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What you would like to read?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Indian English; Kachru: 1982: 360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tag questions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invariant forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You are going tomorrow, isn’t it?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Indian English; Kachru 1982: 360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answers to yes/no questions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A: Didn’t you see anyone at the compound?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(East and West African Englishes; Bokamba 1992:132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>B: Yes, I didn’t see anyone at the compound.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarly:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A: I hope you won’t have any difficulties with your fees next term.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further features of New Englishes concern adverbs, relative clauses, and comparisons. The placement of adverbs in clauses is generally variable; however, the tendency is that adverbs occur in clause-final position. Relative pronouns in New Englishes are frequently replaced by resumptive pronouns, which do not occur in the same context in Standard English. “Adjectives which have irregular comparative forms may be particularly prone to innovations amongst New English speakers” (2008: 85). For example, in Indian English worst stands for worse, or more better for better. In New English there are also constructions, in which the superlative is formed by adding the suffix –er to the comparative, as in thougherer or biggerer. African Englishes also make use of constructions that express comparison in very different ways from other English varieties that often avoid comparative forms of the adjective at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Further Features:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mesthrie &amp; Bhatt 2008:82-90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position of adverbs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often clause-final position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have seen you already.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Philippine English; Gonzalez 1983, cited by Platt et al. 1984: 122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative clause:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resumptive pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The guests who I invited them have arrived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(West African and East African Englishes, Bokamba 1992: 131)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wide variability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My school was one of the radical schools that you can ever find (= the most radical…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(West African and East African Englishes,)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 English in The Gambia

As already mentioned before, none of the indigenous languages that are spoken in The Gambia are an official language of the country, as the status of the official language is solely given to English. English as a Second Language is mostly spoken among the young generation and in urban areas of the country. According to Peter et al. (2003: 46) what distinguishes The Gambia from other Anglophone countries in West Africa is that neither Gambian English nor an English pidgin or English based Creole are used as the language of communication in multiethnic environments. The function as a lingua franca is entirely given to Mandinka and Wolof (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 338), and Fula serves as an additional contact language (Peter et al. 2003: 47). English is only used as the language of public domains such as administration, education, politics, law, and media (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 343ff). Apart from these contexts, Gambian people usually do not communicate in English with each other even if they have different first languages. If English is used in a particular situation “depends on the participants involved in the activities as well as the purpose of the interaction” (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 339).

There are no accurate statistics of how many people speak English as a Second Language in The Gambia. However, since English is mostly acquired “through formal education, one can deduce the percentage of speakers with some degree of competence in English by correlating it with the literacy rate, estimated to be around 47.5%” (2003: 45). Apart from people who received formal school education, and who are as a further consequence literate in communicating in English, there are also some speakers who did not regularly attend school and did not receive training in English, but who can communicate in English in “limited functional contexts” (2003: 46). As those people are not formally trained on how to use English, their English strongly interferes with their native languages (Peter et al. 2003: 45-46).

4.1 The Role of English in The Gambia

English is the main language of education in The Gambia. Officially an English-only language policy has been implemented which demands that all the subjects in the classroom have to be taught in English. The only schools which are excused from this policy are the Islamic schools, where usually Arabic is the main language inside the classroom. The material that is used for English lessons at school is usually written in British English. As a further
consequence, British English, and not Gambian English, is the standard that is set for the students in examinations and assignments in English lessons. According to the DoSE (2004:35), there have been attempts to promote the use of native tongues such as Mandinka or Wolof as the language for education. However, as Juffermans & McGlynn (2009: 343) state, these attempts have not put into reality due to the lack of teaching material and necessary improvement of teaching skills. Nevertheless, teachers in The Gambia often have proficiency in various languages and can switch to another language in situations when it is appropriate. Students also can switch to their first language outside the classroom and usually the local language is spoken during breaks, on the playground and during pastoral care, not only by the students but also by the teachers. Which language is chosen for the communication in non-educational situations at schools mostly depends on what the dominant local language of the village is and also on which languages the teacher can speak.

In general, Arabic is the dominant language in religious domains in The Gambia, as 95% of the country’s inhabitants are Muslims. However, there is also a Christian minority of around 3 to 4%, who usually use English or their local language for religious practices or both. The sermons and prayers at Christian churches are given in English with a concurrent translation into a local language. Newborn congregations in urban Kombo receive many Nigerian and Sierra Leonean worshippers and are organised in English only. Christian radio and television programmes are also in English while Islamic broadcasts are in Arabic with accompanying clarifications in English and/or one or more local languages (2009: 345).

At school, Arabic is the preferred language for religious education of Muslim students, who are the majority. For Christian students, there are usually separate lessons in English offered. In The Gambia, there are also numerous Islamic schools. In these schools, Arabic is the primary language that is used inside the classroom, but also local languages are used in situations when the students cannot follow explanations in Arabic. The use of English at these schools is very rare and officially it is only spoken during English lessons (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 344f).

Similar to other post-colonial countries, English is the language of governance, law, and politics in The Gambia. The country’s constitution states that “the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in the English language or any other language prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly” (RoTG 2002:§105). According to research conducted by Juffermans & McGlynn (2009: 346) all political meetings, including their documentation, are
always conducted in English. Whereas English is the language of formal political domains, “informal discussions, greetings and general talk is conducted in local languages, however if the topic of the conversation becomes official in any way, the interlocutors switch to English” (2009: 346). Also at the court, judges speak mainly English. However, the Gambian constitution says that “[e]very person who is charged with a criminal offence – (b) shall be informed at the time he or she is charged, in a language which he or she understands and in detail, of the nature of the offence charged” and “shall be permitted to have without payment the assistance of an interpreter if he or she cannot understand the language used at the trial of the charge” (RoTG 2002:§24(3)). As English is spoken at the court, every charge has the right of assistance by a translator. Thus, there are translators present who can translate the ongoing process from the first language of the defendant to English to the judge.

In Gambian media, such as news on television, radio, and newspapers, several languages are used. Television programs in The Gambia are in general targeted to ordinary people, especially those living in urban areas. As in Gambian cities Wolof and English have much of influence, most of the programs and commercials on television are in Wolof or English or both. The daily news on TV is delivered in English, Mandinka, Wolof, and Fula and on alternate days also in the minor languages Jola and Serahule. Radio programs in The Gambia also make use of different languages. While on most urban radio stations, such as Radio Gambia and West Coast Radio, English and local languages are used, the programs of community stations, such as Radio Basse, are mostly in local languages. What is unique to Gambian radio broadcasting is that many different languages, including English, can be found in one program at the same time, especially when opinions of common people and listeners are involved. In The Gambia there are also several national newspapers, which are all “based in urban Kombo and their organised distribution is limited to the urban west” (2009: 347) of the country. All of the national newspapers are in Gambian English; however, some of the newspapers make occasionally use of French, Arabic, and local languages. For example, news bulletins are not only available in English, but occasionally also Mandinka, Fula, Wolof, and Jola (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 346-347).

In traditional and popular culture, the use of languages is rather diverse. Traditional celebrations, such as marriages, naming ceremonies, circumcision rituals are entirely conducted in the local language of the community. As Arabic is the language of religious domains, several phrases in such rituals and prayers are stated in Arabic instead of the local
language. English does not have any significance in these rituals. Popular culture, especially popular music, can be divided into African genres, (African) American and Caribbean genres. Lyrics of popular African music genres are mostly sung in the local language of the artist. Interpreters of non-African music genres such as reggae, hip-hop, and R&B, which are very popular in The Gambia, sing primarily in English (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 147-148).

As already mentioned in the first chapter, tourism plays a vital role in the Gambia. In general, the number of arriving tourists is increasing every year. In general, tourists visiting The Gambia can be divided into two categories. On the one hand, many tourists from European countries, especially the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Scandinavian countries, Germany, and Spain visit The Gambia. On the other hand, there are also tourists arriving from the USA and Canada (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 148).

Both Europeans and North Americans communicate primarily in English with Gambians, and although there are inevitable communication difficulties due to the differences between American, British, the various mainland European Englishes and Gambian English, gross communication breakdowns are rare. (…) In addition, a number of Gambians working in the tourist industry have obtained knowledge of many European languages to be able to greet or offer more extensive services to tourists in their own language (2009: 149).

Even if no empirical research is available on language use in health care, it can be assumed that English plays a vital role in this sector as most of the Gambian doctors and senior medical personnel are migrants from other countries, particularly Nigeria and Cuba. As a further consequence, communication at hospitals is rendered more difficult. Not only do doctors, apart from Nigerian doctors, often speak only limited English, but also their knowledge in the local languages is often restricted. Furthermore, patients from rural areas and children cannot communicate in English. Thus, communication at hospitals is often conducted in broken English with the help of other patients stepping in as translators if necessary. In the large urban hospitals, such as the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital in Banjul and the healthcare facilities in Bansang, Kombo, and Basse, Wolof and Mandinka are spoken as lingua francas, and Fula serves as a communication language at the hospitals (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 349).

Regarding public transport, markets, and communication in the streets, it is usually the local lingua franca that is spoken. English does not play an essential role in these domains, as usually people communicate in Mandinka or Wolof when they travel across the country, go shopping at the market or have a conversation in the streets. However, English is the
dominant language in terms of signboards and inscriptions. Not only instructions occurring in public transport, markets and the streets, but also commercials, advertising and slogans are mostly in English (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 349-350).

4.2 Features of Gambian English

Concerning the question if a standard of Gambian English already exists, a lot of contradicting literature can be found. For example, Peter et al. (2003: 91), who are the only authors that have conducted research on the linguistic properties of Gambian English so far, argue that Gambian Standard English does exist. They claim that there is already a national norm of English in The Gambia. On the contrary, according to Gut (2012: 226) “descriptions of the linguistic features and their acceptability in (...) the Gambia are so scarce that conclusions about standardization processes have to remain speculative”. As a further consequence, she prefers to ascribe an emerging standard of English to The Gambia. Nevertheless, Gambian English “is relatively homogeneous, except for the very small group of Aku people, who, owing to different linguistic and socio-cultural origin, have their own peculiarities. Mainstream Gambian English can thus be understood as, roughly, Gambian English excluding Aku English” (2003: 58). In terms of pronunciation and lexicon, some markers have been found that are exclusive to Gambian English. Many of these features are influenced by the native languages of the speakers, particularly Wolof and Mandinka. However, as Peter et al. argue, the way how people speak English in The Gambia is influenced by the national norm, regardless of their first languages (Peter et al. 2003: 58).

4.2.1 Phonological Features

4.2.1.1 Similarities with other West African Varieties

Gambian English shares some features with other West African countries. The most similarities can be found with Sierra Leonean English, some with Nigerian Englishes, particularly with English from Yorubaland, and few with Liberian English. Due to the similarities the term “the Krio connection” has been coined by Simo Bobda (2003), which refers to Englishes from The Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. The similarities between these Anglophone countries concern mostly the pronunciation of vowels.

In general, most of the West African Englishes share the replacement of the STRUT vowel /ʌ/, the <or, our, ur> NURSE /ə/ and post-tonic COMMA /ɒ/vowels with /ɔ/:
There are also some features that Gambian English shares particularly with Sierra Leonean English and Nigerian Englishes, for example, Yoruba English. “These features include the realization of the NURSE vowel for <er, ear, ir, yr> as /a/ and <ir> in some words as /ɔ/, contrasting with /ɛ, e/ elsewhere” (2003: 48). Thus, mercy is pronounced as [masi], learn as [lan], thirty as [tati] or myrrh as [ma]. Similarly, words such as first, bird or third become [fɔst, bɔd, tɔd]. Additionally to the pronunciation of the NURSE vowels as can be seen above, it is important to mention that the words person and girl are differently pronounced than in other West African varieties. In contrast to the Sierra Leonean and Nigerian Yoruba English [pɔrson], in The Gambia person is almost systematically pronounced as [parson] and girl as [gal] similarly to Jamaican Patois.

A further similarity of Gambian English with the other countries of the Krio connection is the pronunciation of the SQUARE vowel /ɛː/. This vowel is a diphthong which is usually realized as /ɛ/ in other West African countries like Ghana or Cameroon. In contrast, in Englishes of the Krio connection, these diphthongs are realized as [ea, eɛ, ia, iɛ], in many words. “While the alternation between /ɛ/ and /i/ in these diphthongal sequences may be in free variation or lexically conditioned, /a/ and /ɛ/ are generally determined by the level of speech, with /a/ generally occurring on the basilectal side and /ɛ/ on the acrolectal side of the continuum” (Peter et al. 2003: 48-49).

Finally, the Gambian realization of the NEAR vowel /a/ is similar to that of Sierra Leone and Nigeria: for /a, iɛ/ in Cameroon and Ghana, Gambians, like Sierra Leoneans and Nigerians, generally have /a/ for near, beer, fear, dear, especially in basilectal and mesolectal speech. (…) Even more specific is the occasional realization of the TRAP vowel as /ɛ/ in words like [ɛ]nimal and scrɛ[t]ch. The occurrence of /ɛ/ for RP /æ/, which in West Africa is normally associated only with Liberia, is quite surprising in Gambian English, which has no particular connection or resemblance with Liberian English, or the English of the countries of north-east, east and especially southern Africa where this feature occurs (Peter et al. 2003: 49).

4.2.1.2 Features peculiar to Gambian English

Apart from the features of Gambian English mentioned above, which are similar to other West African Englishes, there are also several characteristics that are peculiar to Gambian English. Regarding vowels, there is a differentiation between short and long vowels, which is
not the case in other West African varieties. An explanation for this phenomenon could be that the native languages that are spoken in The Gambia make use of “two sets of vowels set apart by quantity” (2003: 49). For example, the words put realized as [put] and good as [guːt] or sit pronounced as [sit] and leader as [ˈliːdə] by speakers of Gambian English, show that they can distinguish between short and long vowels. Also in long monophthongs as herbs [haːps] and hard [haːd], or monophthongized closing diphthongs like in ocean [ˈoːzən] the long form of the vowels are used by Gambian speakers. Apart from the distinction of long and short vowels, there is also the tendency of palatalization or fronting of the back vowels /u/. This means that in certain environments /u/ becomes /ɪl/, as for example in ed[i]cation (Peter et al. 2003: 49).

Concerning Gambian English consonants, an important feature of the articulatory setting is “fronting”, i.e. a number of consonants appear to be fronted in comparison with the corresponding RP sounds. Obviously, fronting is caused by the structure of the underlying native languages. It yields such striking results as apicalization and palatalization (...). This process particularly affects the realization of the broad spirants /ʃ/ and /ʒ/, the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, /r/, but also /s/. Consequently, RP /ʃ/ is replaced by /s/, which is by far the most distinctive feature of Gambian English. The substitution of /s/ for the /ʃ/ of European languages is not an uncommon feature in West Africa, for example, of the French of speakers of many northern and West Atlantic Niger-Congo languages. (...). But nowhere in Africa has the occurrence of /s/ for /ʃ/ acquired the status of a national norm as in The Gambia (Peter et al. 2003: 59-60).

The major reason for the replacement of /ʃ/ is the fact that the main Gambian languages, Mandinka and Wolof, do not include /ʃ/, /ʒ/, and /z/ in their pronunciation. As a further consequence, words like ship or shop are pronounced as [sip] and [sop], even by very educated speakers. Also the voiced variant /ʒ/ is uttered as [s] like, for example, in expand[s]ion, conclu[s]ion, divide[s]ion, and circumci[s]ion. In contrast to the overuse of [s] in different environments where palatal fricatives or palatals would be used in RP, there is also a phenomenon often occurring in The Gambia referred to as the ‘hypercorrect /ʃ/’. In this case [ʃ]oup, [ʃ]auce, [ʃ]ong mean ‘soup’, ‘sauce’, ‘song’. This phenomenon is mostly the “result of over-generalizing the foreign sound /ʃ/ as a result of intralingual interference in the acquisition of L2 English” (2003: 50). In this case, also the voiced /ʒ/ is pronounced as /z/, like in u[z]ual, mea[z]ure or [z]enre (Peter et al. 2003: 50).

Similar to the different pronunciation of palatal fricatives in Gambian English also the palatal affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are realized differently from RP pronunciation. In words like, for example, change or church it is likely that Gambian speakers will utter the sounds as /tʃ/ or
Some speakers; however, may also realize /tʃ/ as /dʒ/ and /dʒ/ as /j/. If the voiceless palatal affricate occurs in word-final position, like for example, in *scratch*, it is often pronounced as simply /t/ or /d/ in Gambian English. Particularly this phenomenon is not common in other West African varieties of the English language but is a specific feature of Gambian English. Furthermore, due to the lack of /v/ in the two major languages Mandinka and Wolof (Haust 1995:85;89), the sounds /fl/, /vl/, and /bl/ are often confused by Gambians when speaking English. Thus, the word *casaba* (African food) is likely to be realized as cassa[ʃ]a. It is also common that these sounds are replaced by the bilabial fricative /β/ which is also found in Spanish (Peter et al. 2003: 50-51).

Further sounds that are often pronounced differently from RP standard pronunciation are /tr/ and syllabic dark /l/. The post-alveolar sound /tr/ is uttered as an (apical) trill. This phenomenon can also be found “in the French and English speakers from Northern and West-Atlantic Niger-Congo languages; elsewhere in West Africa the prevailing pronunciation is an (apico-) alveolar fricative or frictionless continuant”( 2003: 50-51). The syllabic dark /l/ is changed to /ul/ as in “[pipul] people, [baisikul] bicycle, [travul] travel, (or) [skul] school” (2003: 51).

In other West African varieties of English, for example in Ghana, Nigeria or Cameroon word-final weak consonants are often produced as unvoiced strong consonants. However, this is not the case in Gambian English as there is usually a distinction between weak and strong consonants in word-final position. Thus, the /bl/ and /d/ as in *tribe* or *Chad* are preserved and similar to RP pronunciation uttered as [traib] and [tʃad]. In contrast to other West African Englishes, Gambian speakers tend to use the weak forms of consonants in word-final position even if in RP pronunciation the strong form is required.

In Gambian English a simplification of complex consonant clusters is very common, which is, in general, a feature of many West African varieties of the English language. However, in Gambian English, additional complex consonant clusters are affected by simplification processes. For instance, the simplification of the cluster /sk/ as in *scratch* to /k/ in Gambian English, cannot be found in other West African varieties (Peter et al. 2003: 51).

Concerning intonation, deviations from RP English stress patterns are frequent. For example, the words *mistake, occur, remember,* and *religion* are all stressed on the first syllable. It is also common that the pitch of Gambian speakers is rather high on all stressed syllables. Since
The Gambian native languages are tonal languages, one could assume that the intonation could be influenced by the tonal system, which is surprisingly only the case for the Aku people who live in the country. Apart from this small ethnic group, speakers of other first languages do not make use of tones when speaking English. In general, it can be said that even though intonation patterns differ from person to person, there are no significant differences between speakers of diverse ethnic groups (Peter et al. 2003: 51).

The following chart shows the main phonological features of Gambian English as presented by Wolf (2010: 207). Most of the features included below correlate to the peculiarities as found by the research conducted Peter et al. (2003). However, some further characteristics are mentioned, such as the deletion of /d/ in word-final consonant clusters or the different realization of marked forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature (RP reference form for vowels)</th>
<th>Realization</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>besides [ɛ], as [a]</td>
<td>[ali] (early), [gal] (girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ə/</td>
<td>occasionally as [ɛ]</td>
<td>[blek] (black), [fɛrmlɪ] (family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɛə/</td>
<td>as [ɛə], less frequently as [ia] and [ɪə]</td>
<td>[dra] (there), [wia] (where)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɛɪ, /ɛi/</td>
<td>often as [ɛ], respectively as [ɛ], and respective hypercorrection</td>
<td>[meza] (measure), [sɔp] (shop), [braʊza] (browser), [mɪʃ] (miss)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/dʒ/ and /dʒ/</td>
<td>transformed or simplified, especially to [dʒ], [dɛ] [d], [tɛ]</td>
<td>[dʒin] (join), [dʒənuəri] (January), [vɪld] (village), [tɛntʃ] (church)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/d/ in final Cd-clusters</td>
<td>often deleted</td>
<td>[fren] (friend), [stan] (stand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/l/ in word-final position</td>
<td>usually retained [bɔl] (ball), [ɔl] (all)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/</td>
<td>as apical trill</td>
<td>[raun] (round), [bridʒ] (bridge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/v/</td>
<td>occasionally as bilabial [β]</td>
<td>[rɪvə] (river), [sɛfən] (seven)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marked forms</td>
<td></td>
<td>[ɡɪv] (give), [ɡɪt] (get)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Features of Gambian English
(Wolf 2010: 207)

4.2.2 Lexical Features

It is widely accepted that the emergence of lexical peculiarities in a country where English is used as a second language in a non-occidental cultural situation, as in many West African countries, is primarily a result of indigenization. This process materializes in the adaptation of the English lexicon to the given local socio-cultural background (Peter et al. 2003: 52).
In Gambian English, a vast number of loan words exists which mostly originate from Mandinka and Wolof, and occasionally Aku. These borrowings from indigenous languages usually reflect the specific socio-cultural background of The Gambia, as they mostly denote concepts that are unfamiliar to speakers of other English varieties. Some examples of loan words borrowed from Mandinka are *kafo* (group of people forming an association or club), *mansa* (chief; traditional ruler) and *tiko* (headcloth worn by women). Borrowed from Wolof are, for instance, *butut* (subunit of the Gambian currency), *koriteh* (three-day Muslim feast of Eid al-fitr) and *hallam* (traditional guitar-like musical instrument). Apart from borrowings from Mandinka also words from other indigenous languages are sometimes added to the Gambian English lexicon, as *bour* (chief; traditional ruler) which is originally Jola or *olele* (traditional dish) from Aku. In some cases, even French words from the neighboring country Senegal are borrowed, such as *griot* (storyteller, poet, and musician) (Peter et al. 2003: 52-56).

Apart from direct borrowings from other languages, in Gambian English “also new word-formations or lexical phrases are coined, sometimes mixed with loan-words in hybrid structures” (2003: 52). Most of the coinages occur in the fields of politics, administration, government institutions, and education system. This reflects the role of English as the official language of the country and its use in public domains such as government and education. According to Peter et al. (2003: 52-56) some examples of Gambian coinages are the following:

- *gate-takings* = total amount of entrance or admission fees
- *Judicial Service Commission* = commission whose task it is to advise the Gambian President on appointment of judges and other personnel in the judiciary
- *traditional chief* = chief elected in the traditional way as opposed to those who are appointed by the government
- *bumster* = usually young man or boy who follows tourists pestering them to be guided by him for money
- *pushpush* = big hand-propelled two-wheeled cart carrying a load
- *Area Council* = local government
- *Basic Education Cycle* = schooling from grade one to grade nine

It is important to remark that there are significant differences in terms of lexicon between the English spoken by the Aku/ Krio people in The Gambia and English of speakers who are
influenced by a Mandinka- Wolof environment. The English lexicon of the Aku and Krio people shows more similarities to Sierra Leonean English, mainly the English of the Krio. A reason for this phenomenon is that the Aku people are descendants from the Sierra Leonean Krio people, and thus share the same “ethnic and linguistic background” (2003: 57) with that ethnic group from Sierra Leone and not with ethnic other groups of The Gambia. As a further consequence, there are certain words originating from the Aku or Krio languages, which are only used by English speakers of the same ethnic group and not by speakers of other Gambian languages. Examples for this, are wowo (ugly), cabaslot (large cover all dress worn by elderly Krio and Aku women), or ori butter (butter made from the seeds of the shea tree, used as food and for the production of soap) (Peter et al. 2003: 57).

4.3 Pidgins, Creoles and Hybrid Forms of English in The Gambia

When Peter et al. (2003) describe Gambian English they usually refer to Gambian Standard English or mainstream Gambian English. However, in many countries of the Outer Circle there is usually a wider range of English sub-varieties and dialects instead of only one standard variety. As described by Platt et al. (1984: 8) a continuum of English varieties often exists, which ranges from acrolect (similar to Standard English) to mesolect and basilect (strongly differing from Standard English). Even though this concept was originally applied to Creoles, it can also be used for describing Englishes in West Africa as many of these national varieties have gone through different degrees of decreolization processes and diverse sub-varieties developed. For example, in Nigeria, there is a scale of several English varieties ranging from Pidgin English to a variety that is very close to Standard British English (Kirckpatrick 2007: 102ff). Even though Peter et al. (2003) occasionally refer to the terms acrolectal, mesolectal or basilectal Gambian English in their studies, a precise description of Gambian sub-varieties of English has not been subject of investigation yet.

Apart from Gambian English as described by Peter et al. (2003) also Creole and Hybrid forms which are based on English exist in The Gambia. According to Peter & Wolf (2003: 119-126), West Africa is rich in Pidgin Englishes and Creoles, and thus the term WAPE (West African Pidgin English) has been introduced, which is a cover term for all pidgin and Creole varieties that exist in West Africa. In the case of The Gambia, much contradicting information exists on WAPE. What distinguished The Gambia from all other Anglophone West African countries is that there is no Pidgin English spoken. Sometimes Gambian people themselves use the term Pidgin English, by which they mean the Creole language Aku. Furthermore, the
term Broken English is also common in The Gambia. However, this term is used by Gambians to refer to a “range of forms from utterances of speakers with a limited competence of English to the L1 variety of Aku” (2003: 122-123).

Even though no Pidgin English exists in The Gambia, there are two Creoles spoken in the country, which are Aku and Krio. In fact, the two Creoles are related to each other, since the Aku are people who migrated to The Gambia in the middle of the 19th century, and thus are descendants of the Sierra Leonean Krio people. As already mentioned before the ancestors of the Krio and Aku were former slaves from America and Europe and “recaptives from various parts of Africa brought together by the British in the province of freedom (Freetown) after the abolition of slave trade” (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 338, citing Faal 1997: 20–23). As a further consequence, the Aku language, which is a Creole language based on English and various African languages particularly Yoruba, is closely related to the Sierra Leonean Krio (Juffermans & McGlynn 2009: 338). In The Gambia around 6, 600 people speak Krio (Grimes 1996: 272) and 5, 032 speak Aku (Haust 1995: 83) as a first language. The language Aku is mostly spoken in the capital city of Banjul (Peter& Wolf 2003:119-126).

Regarding linguistic features, Aku and Krio share some common characteristics. For example, both languages are tonal, making use of two sets of tones, namely the high and low tone. It is also likely that this has an influence on the pronunciation of English as a second language spoken by Akus and Krios. Furthermore, in both Creoles, there is a loss of /h/ in initial positions in words originating from English, such as in os [house] or op [hope]. In contrast to that, some words are pronounced with preceding /h/ where it is not “graphemically indicated”. One example of that phenomenon is the phrase some ha, which means [some are] in Aku and Krio. Another similarity concerning phonology is the set of seven monothongs that “by a set of rules to transpose the equivalents of Received Pronunciation (R.P.)” (2003: 123) According to that /ɔ/ is used for RP /ʌ/, which is a common trait in West Africa. One feature that is peculiar to Aku is that also /a/ is replaced by /ɔ/, as in the word Aku [ɔku] (Peter & Wolf 2003: 122-123).

In terms of syntax and morphology, Aku and Krio share standard features with other varieties of WAPE. Examples of these similarities are the use of dɔn and bin which express “temporal and cause-effect relations”, the use of pronouns or “occurrence of serial verb constructions SVC” (2003: 123) such as go pre (to Almighty God). Features that distinguish the Gambian Creoles from other varieties spoken in West Africa are, for example, the use of na, a preposition with “locative and directional function” (2003: 123), as in na mi os (in/into my
house). Similarly, the preposition *pan*, which means *upon*, can only be found in Aku and Krio (Peter & Wolf 2003: 123-125).

In general, Aku and Krio are closely related; however, there are some differences between the two languages. According to Holm (1989: 417) the two varieties differ from each other in terms of intonation. Unfortunately, an analysis or description of these differences does not exist yet. Dalphinis (1986: 232) claims that Krio is strongly influenced by Yoruba, Igbo and Akan (Twi) rhythm and word stress. This does not apply to Aku, which is more decreolized compared to the rather non-decreolized Krio. The reason for this is that Aku in the Gambia is not influenced by a Pidgin English. Another difference, as described by Dalphinis (1986: 233ff), is the realization of /t/. In Krio /t/ is realized as a velar fricative /ʁ/, while in Aku it is pronounced as alveolar /ɾ/ or /ɾ/. Therefore, *ready* would be pronounced as [ɾedi] or [redi] in Aku and [ɾedi] in Krio (Peter & Wolf 2003:124).

Regarding lexis, it can be said that in Aku several loan words borrowed from Wolof can be found, which does not occur in Krio. Some examples of loan words from Wolof are *dal* (moreover), *lici* (crumbs) or *saisai* (rascal) An interesting fact is that Mandinka, which is more widely spoken than Wolof, appears to have had no influence on the lexicon of Aku (Dalphinis 1986: 301).

Concerning the role of Aku in The Gambia, some linguists such as Todd (1984: 40-41), Crystal (2003:51), and McArthur (2003: 274) have claimed that Aku also functions as a lingua franca apart from its use as a first language in The Gambia. However, this concept has been challenged by other scholars, such as Peter and Wolf (2003: 125) and Juffermans & McGlynn (2009: 338), who claim that only Mandinka and Wolof serve as lingua francas for communication between Gambian speakers of different mother languages. Peter & Wolf (2003:125) conclude that the use of Aku “as a lingua franca simply does not reflect the sociolinguistic reality in this country”. Furthermore, they assume that the importance of Aku has declined since the independence of the country as the Aku have lost their administrative functions that were given to them during the colonial period. As a further consequence, there is no necessity to learn Aku as a second language anymore. Apart from that, the number of Aku people is decreasing in The Gambia and as Peter & Wolf (2003: 126) state ”it is unlikely that this language will play any major part in the sociolinguistic situation in the Gambia in near future”. Similarly to the development of Aku, also Krio is losing its importance in The Gambia. Dalby (1998: 678) claims that in some areas at the south bank of the river Gambia Krio is still used as a second language; however, it is replaced step by step by Wolof.
In The Gambia hybrid forms of English exist as well. Peter & Wolf (2003:120-121) state that observations show that the change of language choice may result in either the use of an indigenous language in one utterance and English in another one during the same conversation, or in the insertion of English expressions into a Wolof, Mandinka, etc. sentence, thus yielding a hybrid syntactic structure.

Some examples of code-switching in The Gambia are:

– the use of English numbers in sentences otherwise purely Wolof, Mandinka, etc., presumably because English is the medium of instruction in all subjects at school, resulting in a lack of knowledge in certain lexical fields of the native languages;

– conversational formulas such as *What do you mean?, Don’t be afraid or this time ... last time ...,* possibly preferred because of their shortness and/or directness;

– business-related utterances, for example for the purpose of hotel management, bookkeeping, etc., as in *five litres [of oil for cooking], I can give you that* (manager to cook), or *You have service three days* (manager to clerk) (Peter& Wolf 2003:120-121).

Moving on from the theoretical part of this thesis to part II, which comprises empirical research on the syntactic features of Gambian English, the topics of the last chapters shall be briefly summarized. In the previous chapters, the geographic, historical, and linguistic background of The Gambia was explained. The main purpose of these chapters was to explain the socio-cultural background in which English is embedded in The Gambia. In the next chapter, it was described how Gambian English is connected to and influenced by other West African Englishes and New English varieties. This chapter tried to show that Gambian English should not be seen in isolation from other varieties of New Englishes. The final chapter provided an overview of the role of English in The Gambia as well as its phonological and lexical features with reference to Gambian ‘Standard’ English, and Creole and hybrid forms of English that also exist in the country. The main aim was to show that distinctive phonological and lexical features of Gambian English exist which are mostly the results of the distinct sociolinguistic and socio-cultural context of The Gambia. In the following part of this thesis, empirical research based on fieldwork will be provided of which the main aim is to show which stabilized syntactic features exist in Gambian English.
Part II: Empirical Study

5 Methodology

5.1 Aims and Research Questions

The basis of the analysis of syntactic features of Gambian English is fieldwork based on spontaneous performances of spoken English by participants who were born and raised in The Gambia. For collecting the data for the analysis, interviews with participants were conducted. In these interviews, different speaking tasks were given to the participants, and their spontaneous performances were recorded and later analyzed in terms of their syntactic peculiarities.

As no research has been done on the syntax of Gambian English yet, the aim of this analysis is to provide a general overview of the syntactic features of the participants’ spoken English. As a further consequence, the analysis will cover all different areas of syntax and provides a brief overview of the peculiarities found in the recordings. In general, morpho-syntax and cross clausal syntax will both constitute the two major areas of the analysis without putting the focus on one particular field. Subjects of analysis will be the noun phrase as well as verb phrase, and the behavior of different word categories such as articles, nouns, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions in phrases. Furthermore, several linguistic processes that influence the behavior of these word classes in noun and verb phrases, as for example tense, aspect, and mood, will be analyzed. Word order also plays an important role, and one aim of the analysis is to investigate how word order changes in Gambian English in different types of clauses.

The above-presented aims and areas of analysis lead to the following guiding research question:

- Which syntactic characteristics can be systematically found among the English of the interview participants, and thus are stabilized features of Gambian English?

This main research question influences the following derived research questions:

- What are similarities and differences of the syntactic peculiarities of the interview participants?
- How do these results correlate to the personal backgrounds of the speakers?
• Which syntactic features of the English of the interview participants are common features of New Englishes or West African Englishes?

• Which features of the noun-phrase and verb-phrase as well as cross-clausal features of the English of the interview participants can be identified?

5.2 Biographical Data of the Participants

In general, the group of participants who were recorded in the interviews is a rather homogeneous group in terms of their biographical background. All of the speakers are male as unfortunately no woman volunteered to participate in the interviews. The age of the speakers ranges from around 18 up to around 45 years. All of them are emigrants from The Gambia who now live in either Italy or Austria, and some of them have even lived in Europe for more than ten years.

In general, the speakers come from different areas of The Gambia; however, the origin of the speakers or the parents of the speakers reoccur in the list of birthplaces. In sum, three of the participants are from Basse, two from Kiang and two from Alkali Kunda, and one speaker is each from Jarra, Kombo Sivo and Badibou. In sum, there is each at least one participant of each of all the different administrative divisions, except Banjul. This means that there is at least one speaker from the Lower River Region, the Central River Region, the Upper River Region, the North Bank Region, and the Western Region. Almost all the participants are from rural areas in The Gambia, and only one person is from a semi-urban village in Kombo, which is the most agglomerated area of The Gambia. Since there are many immigrants living in The Gambia, it is important to note that all the parents of the participants were born in The Gambia and are no immigrants to the country.

In terms of languages, it can be said that the majority of the participants speak Mandinka as their first language. In sum, seven speakers are of the ethnic group Mandinka, and three speakers are Fula and have Fula as their mother language. Of the ethnic group of the Wolof, which constitute the third largest ethnic group of The Gambia as well as of the minor ethnic groups no participants could be found for the recordings. All of the participants grew up monolingual having the language of their respective ethnic group as their mother language. Furthermore, all of them are extremely multilingual as they speak several African, Asian and European languages. Due to the multicultural background of The Gambia, all of the participants speak at least one additional African language, which serves either as a contact language or a lingua franca. All of the participants whose mother language is not Mandinka
can speak this language as a second language. In sum, eight participants speak Wolof as an additional language, and two people know how to use Fula as a contact language. Apart from the African languages, all of the participants also speak at least two European languages, which are English, Italian or German, and partly French. These European languages were mostly acquired by the participants due to migration to European countries. Furthermore, three of the participants additionally speak Arabic.

Even though literacy rates in The Gambia are rather low, all of the participants received at least basic school education. Exactly half of the participants attended high school, whereas three attended secondary school, and two could only receive education at a primary school level. In general, almost all the participants went to English schools, except one who attended only Arabic schools. Two of the participants went to English schools and additionally to Arabic schools. Furthermore, all of the participants mentioned that they learned English at school and only one participant said that he actually received some English training at primary school but mostly learned English when communicating with people in the streets. The people who know how to speak Arabic also learned the language at school, whereas the African languages were acquired by communicating with people from different ethnic groups.

As The Gambia is an agricultural country, the profession that was pursued by many participants is that of farming. In sum, four speakers mentioned that when they lived in The Gambia they were farmers, and one said he was a fisherman. Since two of the volunteers were still young, they did not pursue any career in The Gambia yet, which is why they said they were only students when they left their home country. Other professions of the participants include navy soldier, plumber, and businessman.

The interviewer, who was one participant that volunteered to conduct the interviews, is from The Gambia and represents an average Gambian citizen, except the migration background of one of his parents. The interviewer is around 35, male, born in Senegal but brought up in Alkali Kunda in The Gambia. Furthermore, he attended an Arabic secondary school and pursued a career as a farmer. His mother language is Mandinka, and he speaks Wolof, English, German, Italian, French and Arabic as additional languages.

5.3 The Recording

For collecting the data for the analysis of syntactic features of Gambian English, three interviews were set with participants from The Gambia. Two of the recordings of these interviews took place in Italy, in Trieste and Padua, and one in Graz, Austria. In each of the
recordings, a small group of two to five people joined to answer and discuss different interview questions. The interviews were conducted by a volunteer who grew up in The Gambia, who was informed in detail about the questions he should ask in the interviews.

The reason why the participants were interviewed as a group was to enable the speakers to discuss the interview questions with each other and talk about their different experiences. Furthermore, the aim was to stimulate a communicative situation that was as close as possible to a real-life conversation. Mostly it was the participant’s free choice which questions they wanted to answer, and only sometimes speakers were picked by the interviewer to talk about a particular question in order to keep the conversation alive. The choice of letting a volunteer from The Gambia conduct the interviews with the participants has several reasons. One advantage is that the interviewer shares a similar personal background and origin with the participants, and thus does not influence the participants’ English. As the analysis deals with the syntactic features of Gambian English, it was important that the participants spoke a kind of English in the interviews that is as close as possible to the English they would use in a Gambian environment. Letting an interviewer who speaks another variety of English conduct the interviews, could have influenced the word choice and structure of the participants’ speech, and thus falsify results of the analysis.

The speaking tasks were designed so that the participants could relate to the questions. Thus, all the questions were somehow connected to The Gambia. While one major part of the interview was talking about languages in The Gambia and how these languages are used, also talking about different areas of lifestyle in The Gambia was part of the conversation for the recordings. The first speaking task focused on the diverse languages of the Gambia. The participants were asked to describe which indigenous and exogenous languages exist in The Gambia and how they are used in different situations in everyday life in The Gambia. Furthermore, they were asked to talk about how these languages are acquired by Gambian people. In order to make people reflect on their own language use, the participants were also asked to explain which African, European, and Asian languages they speak by themselves and how they learned these languages. The second speaking task dealt with the school system in The Gambia, which is currently operated by the English-only policy, which states that English has to be the medium of instruction at Gambian schools. The participants were to discuss their personal experiences and opinions regarding the use of English at schools. They were asked to talk about which language(s) they preferred to be the medium of instruction and advantages and disadvantages of using English at schools. Similarly, they were to talk about which effect
they think it could have to use an African language or several local languages for teaching instead of only English. In the third speaking task, the participants were asked to each choose one picture showing one activity going on at a place in The Gambia. They were asked to describe the picture in terms of ongoing action, the people that could be seen in the picture and what the place looks like. Each of the pictures showed a common daily-life activity or important ritual from The Gambia which the participants could relate to.

During the interviews the participants were recorded while speaking and everything that was said was later transcribed. These transcriptions of the interviews can be found in the appendix. It is important to note that the transcriptions aim to be as close as possible to what was said during the interviews. Thus, all repetitions, exclamations, sounds, and mistakes the participants made are also included in the transcriptions. The transcripts of the spontaneous performance of the spoken English by all the participants, except the interviewer, functions as the basis of the analysis. In general, all the syntactic peculiarities of the speakers’ English are mentioned in the analysis. However, a clear line between individual traits and syntactic features that are shared by the majority of the participants is made. It is important to note that the results only are presented as features of Gambian English if they were either shared by all of the participants or could have been found systematically among the speech of most participants. Other peculiarities that were only found in the speech of individual speakers are also only presented as individual traits. Since the number of participants and the recordings is limited, in some cases there is not enough data available on one particular structure which could prove that a peculiarity of an individual speaker’s English is also a feature of Gambian English.
6 Analysis and Results

This chapter contains the analysis of the interviews that were conducted with the speakers from The Gambia. All the peculiarities and shared features regarding syntax of the individual speakers and Gambian English will be presented. Additionally, for each of the identified features there will be at least one example of a participant’s utterances be mentioned in order to illustrate and exemplify the peculiarity. It has to be noted that these examples are utterances taken out of their context, as only a small unit that presents the syntactic feature which it aims to illustrate will be shown. Furthermore, punctuation marks that are not included in the transcripts will be added to these examples in order to increase the readability of the utterances.

6.1 The Noun Phrase

6.1.1 Articles

It can be observed that in Gambian English articles are used in slightly different ways compared to Standard English. First, the indefinite article *a* is frequently omitted and replaced by zero ŋ marking.

Speaker 4: *Because of the system in The Gambia (...) they cannot find ŋ job.*
Speaker 5: *There is ŋ difference here.*
Speaker 6: *I see the woman under ŋ umbrella selling fruits.*
Speaker 8: *They put something like ŋ symbol on your neck.*

Concerning the omission of the indefinite article, it can be said that this feature could be found among the speech of many participants. In fact, 70% of the speakers from different biographical backgrounds deleted the indefinite article in some cases. Thus, it seems that there is unity concerning the use of the indefinite article in Gambian English. However, the indefinite article is not omitted in all contexts, but it seems that there are certain situations in which the indefinite article is not required in Gambian English. There is a tendency towards the deletion of *a* in situations where the speaker refers to non-specific contexts. In the examples above, *job*, *difference*, and *symbol* denote things and notions that are not specifically described by the speakers or are important for the context. There are exceptions to this tendency as *umbrella*, in the example above, is an item which can be seen on the picture that the participant is describing, and consequently is an item with a specific given context. So this example shows that the context in which the indefinite article is omitted depends on the
speaker’s choice. However, in most of the times the indefinite article *a* is used when talking about specific contexts in Gambian English.

Speaker 1: *There is a school in Gambia, where they teach these local languages.*

Speaker 9: *I can see here a woman trying to sell some fruits.*

Similarly to the frequent omission of the indefinite article, it can also be observed that the definite article was occasionally omitted by some speakers from The Gambia. In contrast to the omission of the indefinite article, which is rather common, the deletion of the definite article occurred only randomly in the interviews. As only two out of ten speakers deleted the definite article in some of their utterances, it seems like it is more a trait of the individual speakers than a stabilized feature of Gambian English.

Speaker 6: *If you are a Christian you want to study *φ* bible.*

Additionally, the definite article *the* is sometimes replaced by the pronoun *that*, in contexts in which speakers of Standard English would use the definite article. Similarly to the omission of the definite article, two speakers occasionally replaced the definite article with the pronouns *that* or *this*. As a further consequence, it again seems to be more an individual trait of some of the speakers from the recordings and not a feature of Gambian English itself.

Speaker 2: *They could even have that opportunity to go to school to learn their own language.*

Speaker 10: *Most of our people are not educated, so the only read this Arabic Quran.*

Speaker 6: *It will not take that time that they have for in their own culture.*

Another feature of Gambian English regarding articles is the use of *the* when referring to languages. The use of the definite article for languages does not occur in all contexts, but it seems to follow a particular structure. Among the utterances of many participants, it could be found that there is a tendency that the African languages or the local languages that exist in The Gambia are not joined with an article. On the contrary, in some of the participant’s speeches, languages that are exogenous in The Gambia and spoken as second or foreign languages are joined with a definite article.

Speaker 6: *We have the country language, which is called the English.*

Speaker 6: *I should explain that to you in Mandinka.*
Similarly to the use of the definite article, sometimes the pronoun *this* is used for languages that are not native to The Gambia.

**Speaker 2: This English language definitely is our official language.**

A generalization of this feature cannot be made since it seems to depend on the individual speakers, if a pronoun or article is used when referring to languages. Similarly, it seems to depend on the speaker’s personal choice or knowledge if the structure of Standard English is applied. There seems to be a tendency that speakers who received more formal education follow the Standard English pattern and do not use articles when referring to languages, whereas speakers who received less education in English, as they for example only attended primary school or an Arabic school, make more often use of *this* or *the* when referring to languages. In sum, of the eight people who talked about non-African languages during the interviews, four participants tended to join these languages with either an article or a pronoun.

### 6.1.2 Number

In terms of number, sometimes the singular is used in Gambian English in situations in which the plural would be used in Standard English. It is difficult to conclude what the exact reason behind this phenomenon is, but it seems that the singular is preferred for making general statements about an indefinite number of objects. In these contexts these objects are considered as an entity when the exact number of these objects is not relevant. As the omission of plural –s does not occur in other contexts as well, it is very likely that the choice of the singular as used in the contexts of the participants is not the result of avoiding a plural form but is more the result of the participants taking on a different point of view. Even though this structure did not occur very often during the interviews, it always followed the same pattern and was always used in the same context. However, it has to be said that not all participants stuck to this structure, and some did use the plural in the same context. In sum, 40% of the speakers avoided a plural form when talking about an indefinite number of objects which can be regarded as an entity.

**Speaker 3:** They have tomatoe, they have banana, they have mango.

**Speaker 7:** She have mango, banana, many things to sell.

In terms of noun plurals, it can be said that all the speakers from The Gambia formed their plurals of nouns by attaching the suffix –s; thus, following the structure of Standard English. Additionally, a general tendency towards an overgeneralization of the plural form –s can be
observed. This means that nouns that have zero plurals, or nouns that have exceptional forms of plurals as well as non-count nouns can take on a plural form, which is then mostly indicated with the suffix –s. The most striking example of this phenomenon is that in Gambian English, the plural forms *mans* (men) and *womans* (woman) seem to be very common. Furthermore, some uncountable nouns or mass nouns can take on plurals in Gambian English, and are thus treated as count nouns. One example is the word *stuff*, which does not take on a plural in Standard English as it refers to a group of objects, but can do so in Gambian English. Another example is the plural form *fishes*, which is an exception in Standard English, as the plural of *fish* is simply *fish*.

Speaker 6: *You can see the Gambian womans with their big pants and stuffs like that.*
Speaker 2: *There are fishermans and womans who are trying to be in the ships to get far into the river to try to get fishes.*
Speaker 10: *They used to teach womans about Mandinka.*

In sum, of the six people who used words that take on exceptional plural forms, mass nouns or uncountable nouns, all attached a plural –s to these words. This means that of the people who used words with exceptional or zero plural forms, 100% applied the plural –s rule also to these words. Interesting is also the use of *two person*, which was uttered by speaker 4 in the expression *I can see two person*. Even though *person* is not marked with a plural –s, in this context, it is obvious that it denotes a plural form. The plural of *person*, when referring to a group of human beings or human people in general is usually *people*. The plural form *persons*, is in Standard English usually only used in legal documents or legal contexts, while in Gambian English it could also be an acceptable plural form. However, there is not enough evidence available from the recordings to draw such a conclusion.

6.1.3 Pronouns
Concerning the use of pronouns, the most striking feature of Gambian English is the reduction of *it is* to simply *is* regardless of the context in which it is used. This reduction process was systematically found in the speech of almost all participants. In sum, eight of the nine people in the interviews reduced *it is* to simply *is* in most of the cases. Only one person did not delete the pronoun and used the whole phrase, and one person did not make use of the phrase while talking.

Speaker 4: *I told you earlier ϕ is not good for the country in my opinion.*
Speaker 2: *Yes, ϕ is possible for the government to do that for the children.*
Speaker 1: *Most of the time ɸ is the tourist who is to come to the site to buy those kind of fruits.*

Another feature of the English of the interview participants is the frequent use of *that* and *those*, which seemed to be interchangeably used for *this* and *these*. Even though the difference is very subtle in Standard English, it makes a difference which pronoun is used as they denote different aspects of distance. In Gambian English, it seems as if some speakers do not differentiate between the two meanings of these pronouns and use them in different contexts compared to Standard English. It cannot be said if it is the different point of view that the speakers take on, or if they are not aware of the distinct meanings of *this, these, that* and *those*. The following example is interesting regarding two different points. First, the speakers take on a point of view marked by distance when using *those fruits* when talking about the fruits that he can see in the picture in front of him. Second, a plural pronoun is used for a singular noun.

Speaker 1: *Most of the time is the tourist who is to come to the site to buy those kind of fruits.*

Speaker 2: *We have those kind of foreign teachers like Nigerians.*

In general, the construction *those kind* seems to be very common in Gambian English, which can be interchangeably used for the Standard English forms *those kinds* or *that kind*. This also shows that agreement between pronouns and nouns does not always happen in Gambian English and *that* and *those* are sometimes used interchangeably. Furthermore, it has to be noted that in Gambian English, there is often no phonological distinction between the pronunciation of *this* and *these*. As a further consequence, it cannot be said which form is used for singular or plural forms and if a distinction is even made between these two forms. In general, it can be said that six out of nine speakers who used demonstrative pronouns in their speech either used singular and plural forms interchangeably.

### 6.2 The Verb Phrase

#### 6.2.1 Tense

Concerning the use of tenses, major differences were found among the individual speakers. While some speakers used present, past and future tense according to Standard English norms, some of the participants substituted the past tense by the present tense or other constructions.
The following forms that convey past tense meaning were observed in the speech of the speakers in the interview.

**Past Tense Forms in Gambian English**

| Present Tense with Past Meaning:       | Speaker 6: The English *come* last. |
| Be (in Past Tense) + Verb (in Present Tense): | Speaker 2: They *was punish* you (…) that people know that you speak local languages. |
| Past Tense with Past Meaning:         | Speaker 1: The environment I *was* born in (…) we have mixed tribes. |

As not all participants talked about the past during the interviews, there is no data available for all of the participants. Of the seven people who referred to activities or events that happened in the past, five people used a different tense or even an innovative construction when talking about the past. Regarding the use of the future tense, there is not data available for all the speakers either. However, it can be said that unlike Mesthrie & Bhatt (2008), who said that in many New English varieties the future tense overlaps with the present tense, all of the people who referred to future events or activities made use of the will-future. Thus, it does not seem to be common in Gambian English to substitute the future tense with the present tense.

### 6.2.2 Aspect and Mood

In Gambian English, the present continuous which denotes the **progressive aspect** is rather often used. It is unlikely that in progressive contexts, one of the participants does not use the present or past continuous. Additionally, the present continuous was also sometimes used when making general statements. In sum, 50% of the speakers used the present or past continuous at least once in a situation that usually requires the present simple or past simple.

**Speaker 1:** We *were colonized by the British, and I think this is why we are speaking English.*

**Speaker 1:** We *are using our local languages at school, also in the offices and other places.*

**Speaker 8:** The people who *are speaking* this foreign language are very few.

Concerning the **perfective aspect**, it can be said that it depends on the individual speaker which form is used. Due to the topics of the speaking task, not many participants had to talk about situations that would require a present perfect tense in Standard English. In sum, four of
the participants talked about such situations. Interestingly, there is no unity concerning the use of tenses in perfective contexts. All of the four speakers used different tenses from the present perfect (continuous) when talking about perfective contexts. So in some cases, a speaker used the present perfect tense in perfective contexts as in Standard English, while in other sentences he substituted the present perfect tense with either the present or the past tense. This shows that it is likely that, in Gambian English the tenses used for the perfective aspect are variable. Furthermore, it was also observed that by some speakers, the present perfect is used in extended temporal contexts. This means that the perfect aspect is transferred to past contexts, for instance, when talking about an event or action that happened many years ago and is unconnected to the present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Perfective Aspect in Gambian English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present Perfect Tense for Perfective Meaning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Tense for Perfective Meaning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Tense for Perfective Meaning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Temporal Meaning of Present Perfect:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the conditional aspect, some variations of tense use can be observed. Most of the data is available on Conditional I, which was mostly used by the participants. Conditional III was rather randomly used in the interviews, and Conditional II did not occur. The first Conditional as it is used in Standard English is formed with the conjunction *if* and the present simple in the conditional clause and *will* or a modal verb plus verb. In Gambian English, this rule is not strictly applied since the speakers used different tenses when making predictions and hypothesis. While some speakers followed the Standard English rule and used the present simple tense in the conditional clause and will future in the main clause, other speakers chose the present simple or the present continuous in both clauses. In sum, seven people talked about hypothetical situations, and six of them used at least once a different tense than Standard English would require.
Speaker 4: If (...) there is a possibility that a teacher can explain something in their own local languages, I believe most of students will be able to understand what the teacher is actually trying to explain.

Speaker 1: If you can’t speak English, you have little chance to have a job opportunity in The Gambia,

Speaker 6: If I am going to meet somebody, we are going to speak the same language.

The Conditional III, which indicates regrets or comments about the past only occurred once in the interviews. As a further consequence, there is not enough data available to make conclusions about how this form is used in Gambian English. However, when considering the many different tenses that are used for the Conditional I, it can be assumed that the same phenomenon can be found in the past and future conditional forms as well. The following utterance made by a speaker in the interview shows that the past perfect tense in the conditional clause, and would + present perfect are substituted by present simple and will future.

Speaker 8: If our people, ɸ take us to independence, make sure that these languages are spoken, (...) there will be nothing like tribalism.

In terms of modality, there is not sufficient data available from the interviews to draw conclusions about how modal verbs are used in Gambian English. In general, it can be said that modal verbs were used by the participants when talking about past regrets, possibility, or suggestions, which shows that Standard English modals also occur in Gambian English. This use of modal verbs includes the words will, would, can, could, might, may and should.

Speaker 1: Since we have our independent, it would have been better for us to be using our local languages at schools.

Speaker 4: In term of language barrier or language problem, they might not be able to understand what the teacher is actually trying to explain.

Some utterances by the participants that involved the modal verb will, showed that it is likely that this modal verb is a possible substitute for Standard English would. In the following utterances will is used in contexts in which speakers of Standard English would more likely use the modal verb would, as they were talking about hypothetical situations or contexts that would require increased politeness in Standard English.

Speaker 2: I will be very happy to answer the questions.
Speaker 6: I will trying my best to speak Chinese. (*Talking about a hypothetical situation)

Similar to the replacement of would by will as in the examples above, there are also other examples which show that it depends on the speaker’s individual perspective, if a modal verb is used. For instance, one participant chose to use the phrase I could see when describing ongoing action on a picture.

Speaker 2: I could see maybe 11 or 10 of boats with full of people getting inside the river. What I could explain is that I think they are fishermens.

6.2.3 Number
In Gambian English, one widespread syntactic feature seems to be the variability of third person singular forms of verbs. Some differences could be found among the speech of the participants. While some of the speakers made use of the third-person –s, others used zero markings and the third-person –s was omitted. With verbs that have irregular third person singular forms, the exceptional form denoting the third person was often substituted by the base form of the verb; for instance, has was commonly replaced by have. In contrast, it was also observed that some speakers who deleted the third person –s of regular verbs used the exceptional form for third person singular of irregular verbs. So while a speaker may use come, the very same person will say has when referring to third-person singular. In sum, seven out of nine speakers who talked about people or objects in the third-person singular did not use a third-person –s in most of the cases, and only two people always used a third-person – s in any case.

Speaker 1: Each tribe have their own language.
Speaker 7: The fruit seller have many things to sell.

In terms of number, it can also be said that in some cases verb agreement with nouns did not occur. This means that the singular form of be is sometimes joined with plural objects. This particularly happened in the phrase there is, but also occurred in other contexts. In sum, 60% of all the speakers used be in the singular with a noun in the plural at least one time.

Speaker 1: There is apples, mangos, oranges, tomatoes, also banana.
Speaker 4: There is two taxis.
Speaker 8: It is the outside world who are coming in and fish in our water.
6.2.4 Forms of *be*

Among the speech of the participants, various constructions that involve forms of *be* were found that differ strongly from Standard English. For instance, in some cases, some forms of *be* are inserted in front of other verbs, which lead to multiple verb constructions. One possible reason for that maybe originates in verb constructions of Mandinka, which is the first language of most of the participants. In Mandinka, verbs are often formed with *bé +verb +lá*. According to some of the participants Mandinka, *bé* has a similar function as auxiliary *be* in English. The Mandinka verb construction including *bé* is illustrated in the following example.

```
Mùs-ọo bé mànì-túw-ọo lá.
woman D LOCCOP rice-pound-D POSTP.
```

Literal translation: ‘The woman is at the rice-pound(ing).’
Meaning: ‘The woman is pounding rice.’ (Creissels 2011: 11)

The Mandinka copula *bé* has a similar meaning as the auxiliary *be* in English. Thus, it is possible that this form of verb construction, which is prominent in Mandinka, is transferred to English by some of the speakers. Another reason for the occurrence of serial verb constructions that involve *be* could be that the speakers try to put emphasis on the action they are describing. Even though such constructions did not occur very often in the interviews in terms of number, it has to be noted that several speakers of different biographical backgrounds made use of it. In sum, 60% of all speakers made use of serial verb constructions that involved different forms of *be*.

*Speaker 6:* It is goes up to about 8 languages.

*Speaker 8:* We have to be make sure from the kindergarten we teach our people how to speak our own languages.

*Speaker 2:* When you are get to the high level at school sometimes you just choose this course to do it.

Another variant of verb constructions that involves *be* is the substitution of the present simple tense with *be* + verb + ing. This construction was particularly used in context in the phrase *can be* verb+ ing by some speakers. On first sight, it looks as if this construction was similar to the present continuous, but it is clearly used in contexts in which it can only replace the present simple. Compared to the examples above, this construction does not seem to be a general feature of Gambian English as only a limited number of speakers used this verb construction.
Speaker 8: *We can even be exporting it.*

Speaker 1: *It would have been better for us, to be using our local languages at schools.*

Speaker 6: *They can be studying like science, they can be studying like any other thing that they want to study*

### 6.2.5 Novel verb forms

Similar to the behavior of phrasal and prepositional phrases in other varieties of New Englishes, in the recordings, some variation of the particles and prepositions in these verb constructions were found. However, there is not enough evidence to prove that the constructions that occurred in the interviews are stabilized features of Gambian English, as most of these verbs were only used once in the recordings. Even if the particular constructions the participants used occurred mostly only once, and thus it is not clear if these constructions are normally used in Gambian English, it has to be said that variation of particle and preposition use in phrasal and prepositional verbs were systematically found among the majority of the speakers who made use of such verbs during the interviews. Thus, particles and prepositions in phrasal and prepositional verbs are subject to variation in Gambian English. In fact, of the six speakers who used phrasal or prepositional verbs, five speakers used these verbs differently from Standard English norms. One construction that occurred in the interviews is the use of a particle or preposition with non-phrasal and non-prepositional verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-phrasal verbs</th>
<th>Non-prepositional verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to add</td>
<td>to add on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaker 1: <em>I have something to add on it! (it= the discussion)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to get</td>
<td>to get about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaker 2: <em>We civilians we can just get about fighting that we want to learn our own mother’s language.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to take steps</td>
<td>to take step(s) on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: The government take step on that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to call</td>
<td>to call by</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally, in some cases, prepositional verbs or phrasal verbs were used without the particle or preposition by some speakers in the recordings. Similar to the omission of particles and prepositions, which was not very widespread in the speech of the participants, the use of different particles and prepositions in such words seems to be very common.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrasal verbs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to come into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to come in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 6: We come in the one situation that the cultures are all the same.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepositional verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to depend on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to depend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 6: It depends who the person is going to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to succeed in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to succeed on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 2: I don’t think so we can succeed on that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, it has to be said that, in terms of the use of phrasal and prepositional verbs in Gambian English, preserving particles and prepositions seems to be more widespread than deletion. In fact more speakers joined a non-phrasal or non-prepositional verb with a particle of preposition, or used a different particle or preposition from Standard English, instead of deleting it.

6.2.6 Adjectives

As already mentioned in chapter 2.3, the use of adjectives is rather uncommon in Niger-Congo languages. In many cases only a limited number of adjectives exist and there are different concepts that differ from those of European languages that replace the category of the adjective (Welmers 1973: 250). As the mother languages of the participants all fall under the category of the Niger-Congo phylum, it was assumed before the analysis that different word constructions will occur in the interviews that replace Standard English adjectives. Surprisingly, no deviations in terms of the use of adjectives were found among the utterances of the participants.
6.2.7 Negation
In some cases, a double negative was observed in the speech of the participants. In English, multiple negatives usually resolve to a positive, whereas in the examples found in the utterances of the participants, it is clear that the speaker means that something did not happen. Nevertheless, it is not clear if the double negative as used by the speakers is just an individual trait, the result of spontaneous spoken performance, or deliberately used for emphasizing the negation.

Speaker 6: You focus on your bible, but that doesn’t make you stop not to study.

6.2.8 Other Verb Constructions
Among the speakers who received limited language training in English, innovative verb constructions occur that replace the Standard English present simple. As already mentioned before some speakers occasionally used be + verb + ing in present simple contexts. Similarly, in some cases, it was also observed that the present participle replaces the present simple without the involvement of any form of be. However, this phenomenon does not seem to be widespread and could only be found in some of the participant’s utterances.

Speaker 5: The children, they normally communicating in the local language.
Speaker 1: Now it making us like we are even losing our own tongue.
Speaker 2: Everywhere, I seeing ships inside.

6.3 Function Words
6.3.1 Prepositions
In Gambian English prepositions are slightly differently used from Standard English prepositions. Two common phenomena are the omission of prepositions in particular contexts and the use of different prepositions. In general, it seems that there is a wide variability of preposition use in Gambian English. For instance, in school seems to be interchangeably used for at school, and both forms seem to be acceptable variants in Gambian English. A similar example is the variability of prepositions that are used for Standard English in the streets. Furthermore, many participants said on the picture instead of in the picture when describing pictures. There are also other examples, in which the participants used different prepositions from Standard English. However, in some cases, the data is not sufficient to say if it is a feature of Gambian English or an individual trait of one speaker. For example, by the help of something was used by one participant for Standard English with the help of something, but as
this structure occurred only once in the recording, there is no proof that this is an acceptable variant in Gambian English.

Speaker 9: English, French, and Arabic are also taught in schools.
Speaker 3: These languages are spoken (...) at street.
Speaker 3: On the picture I see a man selling a shoe.
Speaker 2: By the help of the government I think we can succeed.

Regarding prepositions, the use of different prepositions from Standard English seems to be very common in Gambian English. Up to 90% of all speakers used a preposition in a context in which in Standard English a different preposition would have been used. In contrast to the use of different prepositions compared to Standard English, in the speech of the participants in the interviews, omission of prepositions can be observed. This phenomenon seems to be rather common as at least 50% of the speakers deleted prepositions in contexts in which they would have been required in Standard English. One speaker also inserted prepositions in contexts in which Standard English would follow different structures. However, this does not seem to be a stabilized feature of Gambian English, but more the result of spontaneous performance or an individual trait of the speaker.

Speaker 3: I see \( \varphi \) the other place there is no shop seller.
Speaker 2: Even \( \varphi \) type of our school (...) if we speak these local language like Aku, Fula, you need to be punished.
Speaker 9: They are not good because \( \varphi \) that English language.
Speaker 2: You can see, I could say, maybe 11 or 10 of boats with full of people.

Some speakers also changed the whole structure of a sentence and used a preposition to include additional meaning to the sentence. Due to the infrequent use of such constructions by only two speakers, it can be assumed that this phenomenon is more an individual feature of some of the speakers. Nevertheless, the preposition from seems to convey additional meanings in Gambian English, as can be seen in the following chapter on conjunctions.

Speaker 4: That’s a good question from you.
Speaker 1: I speak Mandinka from home.
6.3.2 Conjunctions

Similar to the use of prepositions, also conjunctions are sometimes used differently in Gambian English. For example, several innovative constructions that express the idea of interdependences were used by some of the participants. In some cases, it is even difficult to say which conjunction would be used in Standard English as usually the whole structure of a sentence is changed to add additional meaning or express the correlation between two actions. Some speakers used the phrases from where, from there, whereby or from when explaining the reason why something is happening. It has to be noted that no underlying rule for the use of these constructions was found as only two speakers used such constructions. As these two speakers used such constructions frequently and partly also used identical phrases, it is still worth mentioning them as they could hint at the existence of innovative conjunctions in Gambian English. Unfortunately, the data from the recordings is not sufficient to draw any general conclusions.

   Speaker 1: We speak different languages, so from there I was able to speak all the languages.
   Speaker 6: You can meet with different people, whereby you can speak their languages.
   Speaker 6: You will see someone who was study English, from it will now how to ? English.

Similarly, in some cases, participants replaced prepositions or other conjunctions that would be used in the same context in Standard English. For instance, than seems to convey the meaning of instead of. Even if this structure was used in the interviews, there is not sufficient data to prove that this is a feature of Gambian English per se.

   Speaker 5: Most of the kids speak most of the local language than English. (= instead of)
   Speaker 6: Like I said Gambia is a cultural country. (=as)

Furthermore, the frequent omission of and in some contexts seems to be a common feature of Gambian English. In many cases and is omitted and objects and ideas are just stated after each other without any linking conjunction. This happens mainly when these objects and ideas are from the same semantic field. In sum, 60% of the speakers avoided the conjunction and at least once in a context in which it would usually be used in Standard English.
Speaker 2: *If we speak these local language, like Aku Fula, you are need to be punished.*

6.4 Cross-Clausal Syntax

In general, the utterances of the interview participants followed the SVO (Subject + Verb + Object) basic word order. Even though some of the African languages spoken in The Gambia follow a S(Aux)OV basic word order, no examples of different word order principles that could originate in the substrate languages were found. Nevertheless, some patterns of words and phrases that are moved to a different position in a sentence can be found in the spoken performance of the participants. These patterns fall into the category of topicalization and will be discussed in chapter 1.4.3. In the utterances of the interview participants, some minor changes in word order were found. However, these changes of word order do not seem to be a feature of Gambian English as no underlying pattern could be identified. It is likely that in these cases, the change of word order results in the spontaneity of the spoken output of the participants.

6.4.1 Declarative Clauses

The most striking feature concerning declarative clauses is the lacking linkage between ideas in some contexts. As already mentioned before, in Gambian English ideas and objects are sometimes not linked with each other by the use of conjunctions. This particularly happens when listing objects or ideas. In such contexts, the whole phrase is usually repeated again instead of summing the ideas up and linking them with a conjunction. This phenomenon seems to be very widespread as almost all the participants made use of this structure at least once in the interviews. In fact, seven out of nine speakers who listed objects preferred repeating a phrase instead of summing the ideas up in one sentence. Some of these speakers used a conjunction at the end of the list, while most of the participants avoided *and*, and thus did not link the ideas together.

Speaker 1: *We have the Mandinka. We have the Wolof. We have the Serers. We have the Fula. We have the Jolas. We have the Serahules. We have the Manjagos. We have the Akus, ecetera.*

Speaker 3: *They have tomatoe. They have banana. They have mango. They have orange.*
In Standard English, some verbs exist that can only be followed by a noun phrase. In case a verb should follow these verbs it has to occur in the gerund as it then functions as a noun. Some of these verbs are constituted by a phrasal verb and a preposition as in *look forward to*, while others are single-word verbs such as *imagine, need* or *like* which always require a following verb in the gerund or a noun. As such verbs were not used very often during the interviews, it is impossible to draw general conclusions about how such phrases behave in Gambian English. However, it can be said that in the very few contexts in which such verbs were uttered by the interview participants, the verb phrase was followed by a verb in the infinitive instead of the gerund form.

Speaker 4: *When it come to take a look at your own language at a school, not everybody /xx/ to understand the officials language of their own country.*

Speaker 8: *Some of them prefer to use English.*

6.4.2 Questions and Answers to Questions

In general, questions are particularly prone to changes in New Englishes. It can be assumed that there are also some features concerning questions and answers to questions in Gambian English. However, the speaking tasks for the recordings were not designed to encourage the participants to focus on uttering questions. As a further consequence, there is almost no data available from the recording, which would lead to conclusions that could help to find features of Gambian English in terms of questions. Furthermore, the questions asked by the interviewer cannot be used for the analysis since the interviewer had to stay neutral, and his utterances were thus excluded from the analysis. Nevertheless, from the very few examples from the interviews, it is possible to deduce that do-support in questions may not be obligatory in Gambian English.

Speaker 10: *The boy φ is having a paper is recording the number, number.....what φ they call it?*

Speaker 8: English is compulsory. *Why φ not our own language get compulsory?*

Furthermore, what can be said about questions in Gambian English is that the tag question *you know* is very widespread. In fact, this tag was used by all speakers systematically throughout the recordings, and not other tag occurred alongside.

Speaker 1: *The school is called Alias Franko, you know?!*

Speaker 8: *China, you know, is fishing it and taking it.*
Speaker 10: In Gambia you have to call the taxi, x of them or waving them, you know?!

6.4.3 Topicalization
In many varieties of New Englishes, topicalization phenomena are rather common and occur more frequently in additional contexts than in Standard English. In Gambian English topicalization processes also exist and are rather common. In sum, seven out of ten speakers topicalized a segment of a sentence at least once during the interviews. One subtype that could have been identified in the speech of some speakers is fronting. The following examples show how a Noun Phrase becomes fronted, which would normally function as the object of the sentence.

Speaker 2: In term(s) of school, we do learn those kind of languages.
Speaker 9: With these fruits, also Gambia they (...) can benefit from it.

Furthermore, left dislocation which ”preposes a topic and supplies a comment by way of a full S” (Mesthrie & Bhatt 2008: 101) can also be found in Gambian English. In contrast to fronting, which is not very widespread among the speech of the interview participants, left dislocation occurs frequently. In left dislocation, a resumptive pronoun occurs, which is usually a personal pronoun that refers to the subject that is introduced at the beginning of the clause. The use of resumptive pronouns in Gambian English seems to be rather common as 70% of all participants made frequently use of these pronouns in their speech.

Speaker 2: Many, they are not even going to school.
Speaker 6: Arabic, that is a nature in Gambia.
Speaker 4: We Africans, we were colonized by the European.
Speaker 8: Some, they use Wolof.

In some cases also clefting can be found, in which a whole noun and verb phrase become fronted. Similar to fronting, clefting does not seem to be very common in Gambian English and is only occasionally used.

Speaker 1: \( \phi \) is the tourist who is to come to the site to buy this kind of fruits.

6.4.4 Relative Clauses
In contrast to Mesthrie & Bhatt’s (2008) theory that in New Englishes resumptive pronouns are frequently used in relative clauses, this does not seem to be the case in Gambian English. Even though resumptive pronouns are common in Gambian English as can be seen in the
chapter above, they are surprisingly not used in relative clauses. Instead of the insertion of resumptive pronouns, the omission of pronouns in relative clauses seems to occur frequently in Gambian English. Even if these two phenomena somehow stand in contrast to each other as one involves insertion and the other omission of a pronoun and both are found in Gambian English, the omission of the relative pronoun is dominant in relative clauses. In fact, this phenomenon was found in the performance of 50% of the speakers. The fact that some of the speakers omitted the relative pronoun rendered understanding of such relative clauses increasingly difficult.

Speaker 4: *Some of the students, ϕ could not understand the official language of the country, might are going to understand what the teacher is going to say.*
Speaker 7: *You meet your friend, ϕ is another ethnic group.*
Speaker 2: *These are the languages I could record well, ϕ are spoken in Gambia.*
Speaker 8: *There are many people, ϕ prefer to use Wolof.*

6.4.5 Passive
In Gambian English, it seems as if passive forms are preferably avoided. Many times active forms were preferred over passives. In many cases in which the participants tried to express passive meaning, they created individual constructions that were to express that meaning. Interestingly, almost all participants had their individual ways of creating passive forms, and there is no unity in terms of passive use. Possible forms that occurred are the replacement of the passive with the present simple, present continuous or the will-future + be+ verb stem. In some cases, there were also forms of words created that do not exist in Standard English. One example of this is the form *spoken*, which occurred several times in the recordings, and thus seems to be an acceptable passive form for *is/ are spoken*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Passive in Gambian English</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>present simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will future + be + verb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 speakers of the eight participants who used passive constructions created an innovative passive form at least once during the recording. Interestingly, some of the participants who formed passives as in Standard English used a different form for the past participle of *speak*. In general, *spoken* seems to be an acceptable passive in Gambian English as this utterance was systematically found among the speech of many of the participants. It also occurred that even the very same speaker usually formed a Standard English passive, but still used *spoken* at the same time. A possible explanation for that could be that exceptional past participle forms are over-generalized in Gambian English similar to the common overgeneralization of exceptional plural forms. In contradiction to this theory, some speakers used other exceptional past participle forms such as *taught* in their speech. Unfortunately, there is not enough data available from the recordings to investigate how exceptional past participle forms behave in Gambian English.

6.4.6 Comparison

Even if there is not much data available on how comparisons are made in Gambian English from the recordings, it can be said that in most cases, where the speakers compared objects or ideas with each other, structures were applied that differ from Standard English. Unfortunately, comparisons were not mentioned often enough during the interviews to draw any conclusions on reoccurring patterns. The following examples show how the three participants who talked about similarity and contrast expressed their ideas.

- *to do something similar to something* becomes:
  
  Speaker 5: *Some Muslim do it like the same as this.*

- *instead of* is replaced by *than*:

  Speaker 5: *In government school you can see students (...) speak most of the local language than the English.*
- in different from the preposition is deleted:
  Speaker 5: Private schools are different from government schools.

- more is deleted when two objects are compared with each other:
  Speaker 5: I can say there are quality teachers than the government schools.

- non-temporal before used for comparison:
  Speaker 6: Arabic comes first before the English, so people go for Arabic before the English classes.

- word order of far more better:
  Speaker 9: It would be far more better if we speak in one of our ethnic languages.

Even though some speakers used different constructions when comparing objects or ideas with each other, the comparatives and superlatives of adjectives were always used in Standard English forms. In contrast to Mesthrie & Bhatt (2008) who suggested that in many New Englishes no over-generalized comparisons exist, no such adjective forms were found in the speech of the participants.

  Speaker 9: English, French and Arabic are also taught in schools, so it’s like they are more familiar.
  Speaker 1: When we talked our local languages at school, it will make understanding easier.

6.5 Further Observations

When analyzing the syntactic features of the English of the participants from The Gambia, some additional features were found that are not concerned with syntax. Since only one reliable analysis of Gambian English exists so far, and the features were found systematically among the speeches of the participants, a few notes on these characteristics shall be made.

Additionally to the phonological features of Gambian English as described by Peter et al. (2003), some characteristics were found that these authors did not mention. First, the sounds /θ/ and /ð/ were never pronounced as dental fricatives by any of the participants. The fact that these sounds were never pronounced as they would be pronounced in Standard English makes it difficult to understand why this feature was not included in the analysis of Peter et al. (2003). In most cases, the unvoiced and the voiced dental fricative were pronounced as /t/ as in /tɪŋk/ for think or /d/ as in /diː/ for the. In general, it has to be said that the definite article
the was systematically pronounced as /diː/ even in contexts in which in Standard English /ðə/ would be required. Furthermore, similarly to some English based Creoles such as Jamaican Patois /aːks/ seems to be a possible variant of ask.

In terms of intonation, the most striking feature of the English of the interview participants is that the majority of the speakers tended to break sentences down into small intonation units. Many times these short intonation units were divided by short breaks and change in pitch mostly marked by a rise-fall intonation. The following example shows an extreme case of dividing a sentence into small intonation units. The end of each intonation unit is marked with a slash (/), and the words marked by rise-fall intonation are marked as bold.

Speaker 3: *On the picture / I see a man / selling a shoe, / a tourist / with a friend / they are asking the woman / how much is the price of the apple/*.

Concerning the lexicon, some phrases that involve the verb make were found which do not exist in Standard English. Thus, make seems to be acceptable in additional contexts. For instance, the phrase we can make them future and to make (a) fishing seem to be acceptable in Gambian English.

Speaker 6: *I see (...) the Atlantic ocean of The Gambia whereby people used to go to make a fishing.*

With respect to the content of the interviews, there are also some important remarks that shall be made on the personal opinions connected to the current language situation of The Gambia. The majority, more precisely 90% of the participants, are not content with the current policy in The Gambia which specifies that only English should be used as a medium of instruction at Gambian schools. They seemed to agree that their local African languages should (also) be used as the language of communication or medium of instruction at Gambian schools.

Some of the participants argued that receiving education in their mother languages particularly in basic school education would be beneficial for the learning process in general but also for learning additional foreign languages. Some of the participants argue that using African languages inside the classroom could even have a positive effect on learning English as a second language. As a further consequence, some of the participants can imagine a dual model in which African languages are used for basic school education and English for higher education. Additionally, they argued that the use of local languages should be promoted at Gambian schools and not forbidden or even punished. Using African languages as additional
languages in the classroom could help students to overcome communication difficulties which mostly result from the student’s unfamiliarity with certain English words.

Some participants also explained that since African languages are neither medium of instruction nor subjects at Gambian schools the majority of the Gambian population is illiterate in their mother languages. This is clearly regarded as a disadvantage of the English-only policy by the interview participants. The majority of the informants expressed their wish to be literate in their mother languages and not only in English or Arabic.

Furthermore, most of the participants share the same opinion with Omoniyi (2009: 172-181), who argued that in many post-colonial African countries, English is seen as the language of success. All the participants seem to agree that in The Gambia, it is difficult or impossible to find a qualified job without speaking English. They argued that the higher the literacy level of English, the better the access to qualified jobs. As a further consequence, the majority of the participants recognize the importance of being proficient in English as a second language.
7 Discussion

The following chapter focuses on the research questions that were derived from the main research question as presented in the methodology chapter. The aim is to provide a discussion of the results that were presented in the previous chapter in order to answer these questions. The first derived research question dealt with the peculiarities of the Noun Phrase and the Verb Phrase, and the cross-clausal features that can be identified in the speech of the participants. As the answer to this question correlates to the results that were presented in the previous chapter, the identified features concerning noun and verb phrase, as well as cross-clausal syntax, shall be summarized only briefly. Concerning the noun phrase the features that were identified in the analysis dealt with the use of articles, pronouns, as well as singular and plural. Concerning the verb phrase features regarding the following categories were identified:

- tense
- aspect and mood
- number
- serial verb constructions
- phrasal and prepositional verbs

In the category of function words differences to Standard English were found in terms of the use of prepositions and conjunctions. Regarding cross-clausal syntax features concerning the use of passive, comparisons, relative clauses, and verb phrase complements were found.

7.1 Similarities and Differences of the Spoken English of the Participants

Two further research questions focused on the similarities and differences that are shared by the participants. When taking a look at the results, it can be seen that some of the identified syntactic characteristics of the English of the participants occurred more frequently than others. The following features were found in the speech of 50% of all the participants. As they systematically occurred among their utterances, it is likely that these characteristics are not only individual traits of the participants but also stabilized features of Gambian English.

- Omission of indefinite article
- no verb-noun agreement
- progressive tense used for general statements
- serial verb construction involving *be*
• different use of prepositions
• omission of prepositions

It has to be noted that for the features mentioned above, data was available of all participants. Apart from that, there are still other features that are very common among the speakers who used this particular construction. Due to missing information on how some of the participants would have dealt with particular words, phrases, and constructions, drawing conclusions is more difficult. The following features are shared by at least 50% of the speakers who made use of the particular construction.

• foreign language joined with article or pronoun
• pronoun deleted in the phrase *it is*
• confusion of demonstrative pronouns
• no third person verb form
• overgeneralization of plural forms
• past tense: different tenses used
• perfective aspect: different tense used
• conditional aspect: different tense used
• diverse constructions regarding phrasal and prepositional verbs
• omission of pronoun in relative clauses
• no linking when listing ideas or objects

In general, it has to be noted that even regarding the features that are shared by most of the participants, much variation occurred. It is rather rare that a Standard English form was only replaced by one particular construction by all the participants. Instead, most of the times, several different constructions occurred that expressed the same idea.

First, some of the features were differently realized by the participants. For example, when talking about past events or activities, the speakers used different tenses and, for instance, not only the present simple was used by all of them. Thus, in most of the cases, not only one construction that replaces a Standard English form was found, but several constructions occurred among the utterances of the speakers. This means that when talking about features of Gambian English, it can only be said that a particular construction differs from Standard English, whereas it is difficult to say that only the substitution by one single form or construction is a stabilized feature of Gambian English. In general, the most variations and substitution forms occurred regarding tense and aspect, also passive and verb constructions.
• different constructions substitute Standard English passive
• different tenses were used when talking about past events and activities
• perfective, progressive and conditional aspects are expressed with different tenses and aspects

Furthermore, in many cases, it also occurred that one speaker used different constructions for one Standard English form in the course of the interview. This shows that variation can be found even within the speech of one single person. One example of such variations in the speech of the very same speaker is the use of diverse passive forms. The following example illustrates that even regarding the English of one person unity cannot be found, and in some cases, the very same speaker used different constructions for the same grammatical form.

Speaker 8: *In The Gambia there are many different languages spoken. (…) Number one is Mandinka. Mandinka language is spoken. Wolof is spoken. Fula is spoken.*

7.2 Correlation of English Proficiency and Personal Background of the Informants

One further derived research question is if differences among the Englishes of several participants can be found that correlate to their level of education and other personal factors that might influence their performance in spontaneous language-output. The subject of interest is mainly if a correlation between the features of the English of the different participants and their biographical background can be found. Furthermore, it shall be analyzed if hints of social or regional dialects and norms can be found in the performance of the participants and if there are similarities and differences of the participants’ English that are connected to their personal backgrounds.

In terms of personal background such as origin, age, and mother languages no significant differences of the participants’ English can be found. In general, speakers under 25 talked less than the speakers who are older than 25. It is not clear if this is the reason why far less syntactic characteristics can be found among the utterances of the speakers younger than 25 years compared to speakers above 25. It seems as if the younger speakers preferred to stay on the safe side and only said something they were sure about. Thus, it can be expected that particular features that were found in their English hint at innovative constructions that are accepted in Gambian English.
One interesting question is also if there are regional Standards of Gambian English and if the English of the participants differs in relation to their origin. Unfortunately, no correlation between syntactic features of the participants’ English and the region in which they grew up can be found. It seems that other factors influence the characteristics of their English while region does not play a role. In contrast, it is also possible that there is not sufficient data available from the interviews to find reoccurring patterns or differences that could prove the existence of regional dialects of English in The Gambia.

It is possible to assume that the English of the participants could interfere with their mother languages. Thus, the question can be raised if the English of the participants with Mandinka and English of participants with Fula as their mother language differ significantly from each other. In general, all of the Fula speakers were extremely fluent in English and talked a lot during the interviews. As a further consequence, there is a lot of data available on the features of their English. In very few cases, features were found in their English that were not found in the utterances of speakers who are Mandinka. For example, the insertion of prepositions only occurred in the speech of speaker two, who is Fula. However, this feature could also be an individual trait, and thus no general conclusions can be made. Even though there are strong similarities of the Fula speakers two and six, it cannot be proved that this is the case due to the common mother language. The reason for this is that not enough common features to the other Fula speaker were identified and the similarities to the Mandinka speakers were too strong.

In contrast to the correlation of the syntactic features of the participants’ English and their personal background, some connections between the educational level of the speakers and how close their English is to the Standard can be found. The fact that all of the participants acquired English at school and some correlations were found seems to be enough evidence that the level of education and English training are crucial factors that influences the participants’ English. As a further consequence, some similarities among the features of the speakers were found that correspond to their educational level. In order to illustrate these similarities, the participants were divided into three groups depending on how many features of their English were found.

In the utterances of the first group, which consist of three speakers, at least twenty syntactic features that differ from Standard English were identified. The educational level of the speakers of this group is mostly restricted to basic school. Speaker two attended a primary English school, speaker six attended a secondary English school, and speaker eight went to a
secondary Arabic school. This shows that in most of the cases, their training of English was limited either due to the restriction of school attendance to primary school or due to the limited importance of English at Arabic schools. Among all the participants of this group, between 20 and 23 syntactic features of their English were identified. In fact, no participant who went to high school shared such a high number of syntactic peculiarities with them. Additionally, these three speakers with basic school education also dominate in the use of some features that are less frequently found in the English of people who went to high school. The following features were found in the utterances of all three participants with basic school education and were only less frequently found among speakers who went to high school or not even found at all:

- serial verb constructions involving *be*
- innovative passive constructions
- overgeneralization of plural exceptions
- different tenses used for past tense
- different use of prepositions including omission and insertion of prepositions

Furthermore, there was one feature that all three participants of this group shared with each other, while it could not be found in the English of the speakers who attended high school:

- modal verb *will* replaces *would*

The second group consists of five participants whose English showed between 10 to 19 features. Most of the speakers of this group attended high school, namely speaker one, four, nine, and ten, and only speaker five went to secondary school. The English of these speakers showed less difference to Standard English, but still strong differences between the individual speakers were found. In fact, within this group, more variation concerning syntactic features of their English occurred compared to the first group. For instance, the English of speakers ten and one is closer to the English of the first group. Nevertheless, some features that are shared by all members of this group were identified:

- no member of this group deleted the definite article
- no member of this group replace *will* with *would*
- all members of this group substitute *it is* with *is*
- all members of this group did not make use of third person –s or exceptional third person verb forms in most of the cases
The third group is a group of diverse educational backgrounds whose English only showed less than ten features. This group consists of speaker three and seven who attended either English high school or Arabic primary school. Even though only a few syntactic features could be identified in their utterances, no correlation could be found to their educational background as they did not talk much during the recordings and in many cases, there is no data available on which constructions they would use in particular contexts.

Last but not least, it was also analyzed if the English of the participants with similar professions shows any similarities. For example, it was expected that the English of speaker one who worked in public service in the Gambian navy, where English is the language of communication, is closer to Standard English compared to other speakers. However, no significant differences were found compared to the English of the other participants who attended high school.

7.3 Shared Features with West African Englishes and New Englishes

The last derived research question as presented in the methodology is if there are any features that Gambian English shares with other West African Englishes or New Englishes. The following chart summarizes the main syntactic features of West African Englishes, as already mentioned in chapters 3.1 and 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>West African Englishes (Mesthrie &amp; Bhatt 2008: 56-89)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possessive Pronoun</td>
<td>- demonstrative + noun + possessive or demonstrative + possessive + noun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Verbs                  | - third person –s is substituted by zero forms  
                          | - static verbs are used in dynamic contexts  
                          | - particles and prepositions in phrasal and prepositional verbs behave differently |
| Prepositions           | - variability of preposition use                     |
| Questions              | - do-support is optional  
                          | - no inversion  
                          | - wh- words are replaced |
In contrast to the constructions which express possession as presented by Mesthrie & Bhatt (2008), in the English of the participants from The Gambia, no such innovative forms were found. Thus, in Gambian English, the possessive seems to follow Standard English norms.

In general, Gambian English seems to share the above-presented features concerning verbs with other West African Englishes. In fact, the third person –s is often omitted, and some innovative constructions occur concerning prepositional and phrasal verbs. Similar to the fact that in many West African Englishes static verbs can be used in dynamic contexts, in Gambian English, it seems to be accepted to use the continuous form for static context.

Furthermore, the variability of preposition use that is common in West African Englishes occurs also frequently in Gambian English. Additionally, it was found that the omission of prepositions is also common in The Gambia, which Mesthrie & Bhatt (2008: 90-91) did not locate in West Africa, where preservation is common. Thus, Gambian English differs from other West African Englishes concerning this syntactic feature.

According to Mesthrie & Bhatt (2008) how questions are formed is one of the main features of West African Englishes. Unfortunately, there is not enough data available from the interviews on questions, and thus it cannot be said if Gambian English differs from other West African Englishes in terms of questions. However, few examples occurred during the interviews, which showed that it is likely that do-support and inversion also occur in Gambian English.

Regarding relative clauses the use of resumptive pronouns is the main characteristic of West African Englishes. Surprisingly, even though the use of resumptive pronouns is very widespread in topicalization processes, these pronouns are not used in relative clauses in Gambian English. Similarly to the use of prepositions, Gambian English is more similar to many Asian varieties of English regarding this feature, as the omission of the relative pronoun seems to be an acceptable alternative to the Standard English norm.
Similar to many other West African Englishes, also Gambian English shows a variability of constructions that express comparisons. These differences to Standard English reach from different word order to the omission of *more* when comparing two objects or ideas. Additionally, *than* in these clauses is frequently replaced or other words are used to express comparisons.

Regarding the features found by Hansen et al. (1996) there are two syntactic features that they listed in their account on West African English/ Nigerian English that are not mentioned in the analysis by Mesthrie & Bhatt (2003). One feature that is widespread in Nigerian English, namely the use of plural forms for non-count nouns, can also be found in Gambian English, in which a general overgeneralization of plurals can be systematically found. Similar to word constructions such as *advices, equipments* and *informations*, words such as *stuffs* or *fishes* can be found in Gambian English as well. Additionally, plural forms which involve the attachment of *–s* for words that take on exceptional plural forms can be found in Gambian English, whereas Hansen et al. (1996) did not include this feature in the description of West African/ Nigerian English. Concerning the other feature, which refers to the deletion of *to* in infinitives, no evidence was found in the recordings that could prove the existence of this peculiarity in Gambian English.

| Category      | New Englishes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(Mesthrie &amp; Bhatt 2008: 47-89)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite Article</td>
<td>- deleted or replaced by <em>one</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite Article</td>
<td>- used for plural nouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- deleted or replaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>- pronoun in the phrase <em>it is</em> deleted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>- past tense suffix <em>–ed</em> variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- present tense substitutes the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- aspect marker <em>have</em> in the present perfect tense is often replaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- deletion of copular <em>be</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- deletion of passive <em>be</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concerning the use of articles Mesthrie & Bhatt (2003) argued that there is a tendency of New Englishes to delete or replace these words and also use articles for plural nouns. In the utterances of the participants from The Gambia, there was no evidence found that articles were used for plural nouns. In contrast, the deletion of the indefinite article seems to be very widespread in Gambian English, whereas a substitution by words such as one did not occur in the interviews. The definite article is omitted or replaced in very few contexts; however, this does not seem to be a general feature of Gambian English.

One feature that Gambian English shares with many other New Englishes is the deletion of the pronoun in the phrase it is. Furthermore, many of the features of New Englishes as mentioned above also occur in Gambian English. For example, passive be is omitted in some cases, but there are additional constructions that replace Standard English passive forms. In contrast to the mentioned similarities, no evidence was found that the present tense substitutes the future tense in Gambian English as in the few cases that referred to future events the future tense was used by the participants. Another difference to the New English tendencies is that the deletion of copular be and the occurrence of a habitual be cannot be found in Gambian English.

Further differences to other New Englishes are that adverbs do not take on different positions in phrases and no different word order patterns were found. Conjunctions, on the other hand, are also used differently in Gambian English as in many other new varieties of English. Additionally to that feature, other words and innovative constructions replaced conjunctions in some cases. Concerning tag questions, you know was the only tag found in the utterances of the participants. Even though this tag was systematically used by all the participants, it is not clear if it functions as an invariant tag as the subject you is always given when two people talk to each other.
Apart from the features that Gambian English shares with other West African Englishes and New Englishes, there are also some features that seem to be peculiar to Gambian English as they are not common features of West African Englishes or New Englishes. The following features were identified in the performances of the participants from The Gambia:

- verb in singular used in plural context
- confusion of demonstrative pronouns
- different tenses used to express conditional aspect
- no verb-noun agreement
- serial verb constructions involving be
- will replaces would
- verbs that require gerund are followed by infinitive
8 Conclusion

In order to provide a general concluding statement, the results of the guiding research question will be summarized. The following syntactic features were systematically found in the speech of at least 50% of all the speakers:

- different use of prepositions (90%)
  
  *These languages are spoken (...) at street.*

- omission of the indefinite article, particularly when referring to non-specific contexts (70%)
  
  *I see the woman under φ umbrella selling fruits.*

- topicalization (70%)
  
  *Many, they are not even going to school.*

- no verb noun agreement concerning the phrase *there is/are.* (60%)
  
  *There is two taxi.*

- progressive tense used for general statements (50%)
  
  *We are using our local languages at school, also in the offices and other places.*

- serial verb construction involving be (50%)
  
  *It is goes up to about 8 languages.*

- omission of prepositions (50%)
  
  *I see φ the other place there is no shop seller.*

- omission of pronoun in relative clauses (50%)

It is important to note that the features presented above are only the results of which there is data available from all the participants. Additionally, there are also features that were used regularly, but there is not information available of all participants. The following features were shared by at least 75% of the speakers who made use of the particular construction.

- overgeneralization of exceptional plural forms and use of plurals for mass and uncountable nouns (100%)
  
  *There are fishermens and womans who are trying to be in the ships to get far into the river to try to get fishes.*

- perfective aspect: different tense used (100%)
  
  *I never see a person in Gambia, somebody finding a job speaking the local language.*
• deletion of the pronoun in the phrase *it is* (88.8%)
  
  *I told you earlier is not good for the country in my opinion.*

• conditional aspect: different tense used (85.7%)
  
  *If you can’t speak English, you have little chance to have a job opportunity in The Gambia.*

• diverse constructions regarding phrasal and prepositional verbs (83.3%)
  
  *I don’t think so we can succeed on that.*

• no third person verb form (77.8%)
  
  *The fruit seller have many things to sell.*

Concerning all the other features that were found in the analysis, there was either not enough data available to prove that they are stabilized features of Gambian English, or they seemed more to be individual traits of some speakers. Nevertheless, it is likely that some of the features that were identified among some of the participants are also features of Gambian English. For example, the occurrence of innovative passive constructions (62.5%), the replacement of the past tense with various other tenses (71.4%), or the joining of languages with articles or pronouns (50%), are according to Mesthrie & Bhatt (2008) features of many New Englishes or even West African Englishes. Thus, it is possible that these features also occur in Gambian English as stabilized features, but there is not enough evidence available from the interviews to prove that.

It is important to remark that all the features presented above should be regarded as tendencies. This means that if one construction stuck out as a feature of Gambian English, this construction was not always used in this way, and there was no underlying rule that all the participants followed. Individual speakers often used different constructions, or even different constructions occurred in the speech of the very same speaker. Thus, in most cases, it is only possible to say that Gambian English differed from Standard English regarding one point and many different forms exist in Gambian English that replace that particular Standard English form.

Similarly, if one construction occurred in the speech of one participant this did not necessarily mean that this speaker always used the same construction. For example, it occurred that the very same speaker used different forms of passive constructions, sometimes sticking to the Standard English form and sometimes using an innovative construction. This shows that the
results of this analysis should be seen as tendencies rather rules of Gambian English and that much variation exists in this variety of English.

As no research has been conducted yet on the syntactic features of Gambian English, this analysis should be regarded as a first attempt to identify features of this variety of the English language. Even if this research fulfilled its main aim to provide a general overview of the syntax of Gambian English, there are still some areas that were problematic and leave room for improvement. First, as already mentioned before, in some cases, there was not enough data available to draw conclusions about the question whether a particular construction was a personal trait or a feature of Gambian English. Second, there was much variation of forms and word constructions among the individual speakers, which rendered it difficult to draw general conclusions in some cases. Third, the interviewed participants all came from a relatively similar personal background in terms of ethnicity, gender, and profession. A particular problem is that all the speakers were male, and not a single female voice was included in the research. As a further consequence, the same research should be conducted again with more participants who come from a more diverse personal background. It is unlikely that this analysis covered all the syntactic features that exist in Gambian English and presented a very detailed picture of the syntax of Gambian English. Conducting this research again with a less homogenous group could provide a more in-depth analysis of Gambian English and shed some light upon reoccurring structures and help to systemize the tendencies that were identified in the research to hand.

Nevertheless, this research serves as a general overview of the syntactic features of Gambian English. As this analysis covered many different areas of syntax it can serve as a starting point for further investigations. Even if there are still areas open for further research, the identified results are conclusive as they clearly show the characteristics of the participants´ English. They provide an overview of the similarities and differences of the speakers’ English compared to Standard English. If the same research was conducted again with more participants, a more conclusive and generally valid answer to the question of syntactic features of Gambian English could be made. Gambian English is only one of the varieties of English around the world that have not been investigated in detail yet or are rather underresearched. Particularly African varieties of English have often been neglected in the studies of World Englishes. Thus, this analysis sheds some light on a West African variety of the English language and helps to counter overgeneralizations that are often made about West African Englishes mostly due to the lack of literature. If more research is conducted on
Gambian English in future, it will be possible to erase “one of the last white spots on the map of linguistic literature” as Peter et al. (2003: 43) referred to with regard to Gambian English. This thesis on the syntactic features of Gambian English should only be seen as the starting point in analyzing the sociolinguistic as well as socio-cultural richness and diversity of the often neglected West African nation The Gambia.
9 Bibliography


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TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of The Gambia and its location in Africa:

Figure 2: Genetic classification by ethnicity 1973-2003 in percentages:

Figure 3: The spread of English across the world:
70.

Table 1: Gambian population by ethnicity 1973-2003 in percentages:

Table 2: Features of Gambian English:
Wolf, H. G. (2010) ”East and West African Englishes: Differences and commalities”. In:

Interview Picture 1:
Unkown Author. (2018). https://www.google.com/search?q=the+gambia+market&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiJ6_XqvPiAhWfxMQBHQ8RB4EQ_AU1ESgC&biw=1280&bih=603&dpr=1.5#imgrc=8lhIzQYnBDuUiM
:[Online]. 18.06.2019

Interview Picture 2:

Interview Picture 3:
18.06.2019

Interview Picture 4:
[Online].18.06.2019
10 APPENDIX

10.1 Interview Questions

**Question 1: The Language Situation in The Gambia:**

1.1) Which African languages are spoken in The Gambia? Which European/ Arab/ Asian languages exist?

1.2) Which languages of those languages do you speak and how did you learn them?

1.3) In which situations are these languages used? For example:

   - at school
   - in politics and government
   - at the market
   - for advertisement
   - in the streets when people meet
   - on TV and for news

**Question 2: Discussion:**

2.1) Which language(s) should be used as the medium of instruction at Gambian schools? Why?

2.2) What do you think are advantages and disadvantages of the English-only policy which specifies that all subjects (except religion) have to be taught in English in The Gambia?

**Question 3: Pictures**

2.1) What do you see on the picture?

2.2) Who are these people? Where are they? And what are they doing?

2.3) What do you think these people are talking about?

**Picture 1:**
Interview 1: 20.04.2019 in Triest (Italy)

I: Ok.

So- we are going to talk about the situation in Gambia, how people live and uh- which languages are spoken in The Gambia. So the first question is going to be, which African languages are spoken in The Gambia. Speaker One.

SP1: Ok- Thank you.

Uhm uh- in Gambia we have different tribes, or ethnics, and uh each tribe have their own language. So- we have different languages in Gambia, like we have the Mandinka, we have the Wolof, we have the Serers, we have the Fula, we have the Jolas, we have the Serahules, we have the Manjagos, we have the Akus, and uh- etcetera etcetera, you know?

I: That is good! And then- from those languages,
did you speak any of those languages yourself?

SP1: Of course, I speak Wolof, I speak Mandinka, and uh I speak Fula.

I: Ok.
And uh- how did you learn those languages, Did you learn those languages from the street? or did you learn those languages from school?

SP1: Yeah uhm uh- my mother language is Mandinka, so- and uh- I I- spoke- I speak Mandinka from home, and uh- the other tribes- the other languages- sorry- I speak it in town, because uh, you know, sometimes it depends on the environment, like the environment I was born and brought up, we have mixed tribes. We speak different languages. So from there I was able to speak all these languages.

I: Ok ok.

Interesting.
And the second question is uh, which European or Asian languages are spoken in The Gambia.

Speaker Two.

SP2: Ok yeah- if I could uh- imagine or if I could record well, is we have uh speakers like French, and Dutch, and even Italian. And- yeah these are the language I could record well, that are spoken in Gambia. Yeah- definitely. Especial the French.

I: And uh- how did people- uh actually learn these languages? Did people learn these languages from the street? or did people learn this from school.

SP2: Yeah- in term of uh- school do we do learn those kind of languages, like espeicals uh- French. And this uh- yeah this French and this Italian. Because when you are get to the high level at school, sometimes you just choose this course to do it, especial like French. Uh- when you reach to the high
school.
Because some people do used to-
choose this course to do it,
this French.
<So> also we learn it on the street
when
communicating with people on the
street.
We can just say <it has> at school,
because we have the course there in-
in Gambia.

I: Ok ok.
Very good,
and uh- in which situation,
are these languages used,
for example maybe,
is going to be school,
or politic,
at the market,
or for advertisements,
so you just say what is your opinion.

SP3: Ok.
These language- these languages are
spoken,
mostly in schools,
in street,
uh- when you have a friend from
foreign countries,
they speak uh- English,
French,
Deutsch,
Italian,
yay.

I: Ok.

SP4: Well.
That’s a good question from you.
And- to my concern,
I think both are important.
Because when it come to take a look at
uhm uh your own language at a
school, for example like not
everybody /xx/ to understand the
officials language of their own
country.
So- if like- there is a possibility,
that a teacher can explain something in
their own local languages,
I believe uh most of students will be
able to understand what teacher is
actually trying to explain,
because maybe if the teacher speak in
the official language of that individual
country,
some of them in term of language
barrier or language problem, they might not be able to understand what the teacher is actually trying to explain. But in term of expressing in uhm uh local language, some of the students could not understand the official language of the country, might uhm uh are going to understand what the teacher is trying to say.

I: That is very good answer. And then- I am going to ask you the same question, what is your opinion on that too?

SP5: I my opinion on that, you know, is not about to speak local languages at school, because when it take a look at school, and like primary school, you know, like the children they normally communicating in the local language. You know. And then the school also are different, like private school and the government school, all the education level are- you know-different. They have different in terms of learn you know.

Ok. So like in government school, you can see students- most k-k-kids-speak most of the local language than the uh English. For French, you know, I can s- people do speak what in uh-maybe- uhm- in-I don’t know- uhm-private schools are different uh uh government schools. They are most- they are more complain than- government school. So private school, there are more- I can say there are quality teachers than the government schools. So there is difference here <no>. So in a private school they speak more English than the government school. But is important that the teacher as he said, you know, try to explain it in the local language, so that the kids can understand what is trying to explain in English. So is more important sometimes we speak our local language. What is important that we understand what we are learning in English.

I: Ok ok ok. Very good answer too, And then- I am going to ask you again,
speaker 1,
uhm- which language,
do you think should be used at school
in Gambia?
Is it only has to be English,
or do you think,
is not going to be fair,
if people only speak English?
Or is it going to be nice for Gambian
people,
if we learn our own languages,
or if we write our own languages at
school instead of- English?
Or instead of doing everything with
English,
is it going to be nice,
if we have your own way of writing,
instead of writing everything through
English,
what is your opinion on that?

SP1: Okay- my opinion on that- uhm uh I
preferred- like uh- all these languages
sh- should be taught at schools,
because uh- when we- when we uh-
when we talked uh our local languages
at school,
it will make understanding a lot easier,
than you know,
only learning English at school.
Also it has an uh- a disadvantage,
because- like before- like we were
colonized by the- British,
and I think this is why we are speaking
English,
and this why is our official language.
But then- since we have our
independent we should- it would have
been better for us,
to- be using our local languages at
schools.
Because now,
for example,
all the uhm uh- jobs- because if you
don’t learn English,
if you can’t speak English,
you have little chance to have a job
opportunity,
in The Gambia,
and- for me this is not good for us.
Because there are many people who
have never been to school,
you know,
and uh- is affecting them.
Maybe you can have the qualities like
practically,
but you can’t- due to your uhm uh
language barriers,
because you can’t speak English,
or you can’t read and write English,
then is is always a problem to get a job
in The Gambia.
So I prefer- ya I preferred them to
teach like local languages in schools
also. Because in Gambia I think,
we only have- one school,
which is not very popular,
like I can say,
many people don’t know it.
But there is a school in Gambia,
where they teach uhm uh- this local languages.
Also they teach French,
and other languages,
like they teach our own local languages like Wolof Mandinka,
and the school is called <Alias Franco>,
you know,
it’s a French school in Gambia.
So and I think is very good- is very helpful for us,
because <it’s> help many people.
Like is as I said,
many people have never been to school before,
so- but when we are using our uhm uh local languages at school,
also in the offices and other things- other places,
it would help a lot,
when it come to job and other things.

I: Very very uhm interesting.
and then- I agree with you,
uhm uh- the- only thing that I also don’t know about what you said is that we have a school,
where we can also learn our own languages,
is very intr- nice that I know it from now,

but I never know it before,
that we have a school where we can learn our own languages.
So is very very interesting.
So- I am also going to ask you the same question,
that what is your opinion on that,
do you think,
is nice for Gambian people,
if they learn their own language at school,
or if they write their own language at school,
instead of English?
Or do you think,
is ok- or- is nice if we do everything with English?

SP2: Ya- that’s a nice question.
I will uh- I am very happy to answer the questions,
as I actually I was a little bit in school.
And- for that being the case,
this English language,
definitely is our official language,
and we do learn it in the school.
I never actually /xx/ know,
where we learn local languages in school- in term of school.
Because <our> /xx/ problem is that,
our teachers,
the majority,
those not understand the local language.
Because we have those kind of foreign teachers, like Nigerians, and the others, and those who cannot speak any language different with the English language. So-and even in term of our school, when <we are- but I <say> most of the primary school, but also secondary school, if we speak these local language like Aku Fula, you are need to be punished. In term of school, even the teacher did just hear you speaking this kind of local language in the class, they usually punish you or the put something on your head, that people will know that you speak uh uh local language. So- I think is very important, in terms of school, this English language- will be speak. Because of why? Because you will see student, reach up to the high level of school and graduate, but he cannot even speak a correct English. And even when he get to the office to find job, there will be so many questions that will be questioned, and he could not answer it. And that will –that will be sure be a big problem to him, to have that job. And I never see a person, or in Gambia, somebody finding a job, speaking the local language, these official officials jobs, but maybe these kind of local jobs uhm like <finding markets> or stuff like that, or opening your own kind of business you can speak your own language, but this official jobs, are very good, to find a job, especially you could even be questioned in English, and you have to answer that. But the most important thing as I said, well- the English language shall be speak at school. Because that that the thing is that we are taught since we are kids, since we get to the high level of school, we never experience local language or teachers explain, or teaching us in term of uh- class local language, we only speak English. That’s my own opinion on this the
important thing is to speak English in terms of school. But when we get to the street, /xx/ or going home than we can speak our local language. After the school, I think so it is very important to speak the English language. That’s my own opinion on this question.

I: Ok ok ok ok. Very very interesting. I agree with you, uhm- for me my idea on that, is that- uhm is like everyone have your own opinion, uhm for my opinion is that we Gambian people or we African people, I think we have been forced to to be colonized by by European people, and that we have almost forced to speak their own language, or to learn their languages, so- I mean, is going to be difficult for us, to change that system, but for me my idea is, my opinion is, is also going to be nice, if we Gambian people or African people have our own way of writing, have our own way of speaking, like how it is in some countries in Asia, because of they they have their own languages, they have their own way of writing, and if you go to Arab countries they have their own language, they have their own way of writing, So but for us- the difficulty we are facing is that, uhm you- the first thing you have to do is to learn somebody’s language, and then after learning somebody’s language, from there then you can start being educated, no? This is this is my opinion. What is your opinion?

SP1: Uhm uh- I have something to add on it. Like as you are saying, okay- like is- like- we Africans, we were colonized, by the European, by the western, and those- and that was fast, and it was the colonialism period. But now we are independent. I think we would have- been able to initiate or to do something by our self, not dictated by the Europ- the Western or any other person else as we have
our independence.
And uh- for me this is- like- is a big
disadvantage for us,
because uh like in the ancient times,
like most of the- like most of our
grand grand grand parents have never
been at school,
they have never learned about English
or any other language apart from our
own local language,
and they communicate without- uh m
uh putting English or any other
language. But because of at school
everybody sp- we are learning only
English,
uhm uh French a bit like Arabic,
it’s even- it affected us,
because now it making us like we are
even losing our own tongue to speak
our own languages,
because you cannot speak five words
without putting other languages there. I:
And as I told you earlier,
is not good for the country in my own
opinion.
Because of /xx/ because people as
kids,
without going to school,
they can do things physically,
but because of the uh m uh system in in
in in Gambia- I will talk about
Gambia,
they cannot find job.
Because you cannot do an official job
without speaking English,
you cannot do a job without reading or
writing English,
which is a very big big disadvantage.
And I think is even a discrimination,
for those who don’t speak English and
those who have never been to school.
So- for me is very very important.
Not in school /xx/ we can do it maybe
other time/xx/, But we can put it uh into
considerations.
The government shsh- uh should do
something about it,
we can have schools available.
There is a school that- uh where they
teach this local languages.
And we can have schools like that.
And I think it will help when we
include it in our our /xx/

That’s that’s very very correct.
And then uh- and do you think,
in Gambia,
we really have people,
who can come and change that system.
Because,
I once heard from a uh national
assembly member,
which is Sidia Jatta <said>
in Gambia,
we have to learn our own languages,
but how are we going to do it,
he said,
because of in Gambia,
we have many different languages,
why not we do it like any other
countries in Europe like Swizzerland.
Is the same country but the whole
country spoken by three languages.
You have the area where they speak
only Deutsch,
and then you have area where the only
speak French,
and then you have a area where they
only speak Italian.
This is a very good country,
and they are very united,
still they didn’t see that.
Do you think in Gambia we have a
people,
who can arrange the system like that,
people can learn it from school.

SP2: Yes.
I will be very happy to answer the
questions.
Because /xx/.
We civilians do- we can just get about
fighting,
that we want to learn our own
mother’s language.
But by help- by the help of the
government,
I think we can succeed.
But without the help of the
government,
I don’t think so we can succeed on
that.
But I think when the government take
step on that,
that for us we civilians want learn our
mother’s language,
in term of school,
or to provide any school that we can
learn with our own language,
I think <it’ll> very important and
<it’ll> very good for us.
But as ([has]) you said right now that
/xx/ days,
that Sidia Jatta was talking about it,
that we should learn our own
language,
yes,
is possible,
for the government to do that for the
uh children /xx/,
but we know that many they are not
even going to school,
but they could even have that
opportunity to to go to school to learn
their own language,
we can make them future tomorrow to
get another opportunity of job,
which you know you not /xx/ even use
the English language but you can use
the local language to find that job.
Anyway that’s my own uh- opinion,
because /xx/ help of the government.

I: Thank you- thank you very much
because we are running out of the
time,
and then now I want to talk about the
pictures.
The pictures everyone can look the-
what you are having,
which one you are having,
and then the first question is going to
be- yours is that uh,
who are those people,
and where are they,
and what are they doing?

SP3: On the picture,
I see a man,
selling a shoe,
a tourist,
with a friend,
<but> they are asking the woman,
how much is the price of the apple?
But there are another fruits.
They have potatoe
they have banana,
they have mango,
they have orange,
yeah and a taxi,
at the road,
passing.
and a man who’ s uh crossing in the
middle of the uh- taxi,
both of the taxis,
I see the other place there is no seller,
there is only the fruits there,
but there is no man there.
So that’s what I see in the picture here.

I: Ok ok ok very clear.
Ok and then in your picture,
who do you think are those people,
and where are they,
and what are they doing?

SP4: Ok well,
there is a carriage where they parked
on taxis,
uhm uh trying to look for passengers
for- transporting services.
And I can see two person somehow
look talking to driver maybe aksens
about where the driver is heading to,
if possible they might get into the uhm
taxi and then go the uhm uh way they
want to go.
And from there I have people sittins
maybe like waiting for taxis,
some are busy doing other things,
and then I have a board here trying to
say,
transforming the Gambia into an
economic super power in the 21st
century. And from there at the back
we have a green farm empty land.

I: Very good thank you,
and then what do you see on your
picture.

SP2: Yeah- here I just see like something
like uhm I just call it a river but it can
also call as [(has)] a ocean, everywhere I seeing ships inside, meaning these people are trying to get something called fish, and they are fishermans and womans, who are trying to be in the ships, to get far into the river, to try to get uh fishes. And I could see four of them, trying to watch, to do so a selling the [di] fish, getting to them. Three of them but I could see three of them four of the but three are womans, and the one is man, and they are going to towards the river, and you can see I could see maybe 11 or 10 of boats with full of people getting inside the river. I think- my idea what /xx/ I could uh explain, is that I think they are fishermens, and this this they are at the sea.

I: Thank you very much, and then uh, what do you see on your picture?

SP1: Ok, on my picture uh is a picture of the market, I saw a woman selling uhm uh fruits, like there is apples, you know mangos, oranges, you know tomatoes, also banana you know, and uh there is a tourist woman, with a man, and uh there is a shoe shop, at the left, and there is two taxis, and a man is crossing in between the taxis, and is like uh the woman is- like the tourist is asking for the price of the apple, and uh this man is like is interpreting, like is doing translation uh between them. For sure the woman selling the uhm uh fruits, cannot speak uhm the language uh the tourist is speaking, and uh the tourist also cannot speak the language that woman is speaking, to my own understanding. So is like they have uh language barrier. So the man is trying to make the communication easy for them. Because he is the one translating you know. Yeah and uh- I saw another site, where there are only fruits and is like- because in the market is an open place where they sell different things in
Gambia,
for this site I am seeing where the fruits are,
we normally call them the tourist market,
cause- because most of the time, uh is the tourist who is to come to the site to buy this kind of fruits, because they are very expensive in the Gambia, sometimes, so usually tourist use to come to this area to buy some of this fruits you know, and uh I saw a girl [(gyal)], carrying something on his- her head, like yellow maybe is water, you know something like that.

I: Ok very good very good.
And then what do you think your picture, what do you think your picture they are doing?

SP5: Yeah- the picture shows that is wedding here, on the picture pronouncing the marriage between two couples, and they uh pastor is uhm the pastor is doing the ritual, and pronounce as [(has)] husband and wife.
Yeah and in Gambia there is different tribes uh different region, like this is like Christian region, and they are always uh like Muslim is different how we doing wedding you know, so I think this the Christian wedding, some Muslim do it like the same as this, but is not as this, I think this is the Christian, because I see the pastor with the bible and pronouncing them husband and wife, and there are people behind them you know listening to it, and the preacher uh pastor, yeah that’s what I saw.

I: Ok ok ok very very good.
And thank you for each and every one for participating in this video, uhm I think now this is the end of the video.
Interview 2: 21.04.2019 in Padua (Italy)

I: And the first question today is going to be which African languages are spoken in The Gambia?

SP6: Well we have uh local uh uh traditional language, whereby in Gambia we have like uh mother languages and then we have the country language which is called uh the English. But the English come last, but the languages we have much is like uh Mandinka, and then uh we have Wolof, and then we have Jola, Manjago, Balanta, and even some Freetownians ([Fritonians]) are also in The Gambia, but we have lot of uh this traditional language which we speak in different different aspects. But there are a lot of languages that even /xx/ themselves they cannot speak the language, but there are a lot of traditional languages in The Gambia, which is goes up to about 8 languages.

Yeah and then uh- that’s it, and then etcetera.

I: Ok ok very very interesting.

I: And then- did you also have some European languages, that you can learn in Gambia, or Asian language different from English?

SP6: Yeah we can uh- we we- you can- /xx/ like for example, like uh this Arab languages, and then we have French too in /xx/ in school, sometimes we can have French classes and then uh we can have these European languages as- such as Deutsch, is depend on what you want to learn, and Italian, and then for example now lot boys are in Italy, and uh the Italian culture also we are appealing to have the Italian culture in Gambia as well, because we speak Italian, like af- it’s an African nature that any country they are much in, like I am from Gambia but /xx/ for example I’m in Asia, like China, I will trying my best to speak like Chinese uh,
even if that is not that much but I am trying to speak that Chinese language. But in Gambia we have different /xx/ uh <accents> so you see somebody who was study Deutsch, form it you will know how to speak Deutsch, you see someone who was study English, from it you’ll know how to study English and then uh this is how it goes in terms of European languages and then the Asian languages, but Arabic languages that is a nature in Gambia, because for example, in Gambia sometimes before you start to uh go to school you start it with Arabic, like for example your father will tell you to go to something that we call Dara, we will go and start it- in Mandinka language they call it Dara, which is mean is a Arabic studies, You will study there like for example is close from school in the afternoon you can go and have an Arabic language course which is called Dara in the evening or in the afternoon or whatsoever.

This is how it goes in Gambia, but Arabic that one I can said because Gambia is called by Muslim country, so Arabic comes first before the English, so people go for Arabic before the English classes. So this is how it was in Gambia.

I: Very very good, and then I still have a uh uh question I want to add on that, is that uh do you think that people have a difficulty, for in this situation like both English and Arabic, like you are a Muslim your parents might be want you to first study Arabic before going to English school, do you think the kids are going to face some difficulty because then you have to learn English uh Arabic maybe first, and then from there then they will say you can do our things about religion, and then you can go to English school.

Do you think this is af- is going to affect the kids that are going to school in t- because of- they are going to be late, I mean to- before they finish school?
SP6: No, like I said, in any country we have our culture, yeah but like for example, my culture comes first before any other thing, this is how Gambians are known for. Their culture first before any other thing, because ever since we get our independent uh not long ago, but before the independence Gambians weren’t able to speak English because it was colonized by the English, so we weren’t speaking English and then uh this our Arabic this thing, that one is a culture and that one I can even say is a tradition, which is a tradition called which- wherby I admit it my grand fathers /xx/ my grand grand fathers /xx/ which is called the Muslim. We are all-we are Muslim. Gambia the population of Gambia is- if you say our population is not that much, we are a small country, which is called by uh people are saying 2 million people, and then which I believe 2 million people- with those 2 million people we have different <accents>, but we have different cultures. But if you say these cultures if you come in the one situation, the cultures are all the same. Gambian culture is all the same. Because if you talk about Wolof, if you talk about uh Mandinka, this Wolof and this Mandinka, if you check what the Wolof is talking about that what the same thing the Mandinka is talking about. So in terms of this Arabic also, the Arabic come first before the English, this is what we are born for, <we been to> Arabic. So I mean with that Arabic cannot stop you for what you want to be, like even the Europeans for them they can be studying like science, they can be studying like uh any other thing that they want to study, but it will not take that time that they have for in their own culture, like for example if you are a Christian you want to study bible for example, /xx/ Arabic and then English, is you want to study bible you focus on your bible but doesn’t make you stop not to study. So we have our timetable for all
this and then the kids also understand it.
That’s why sometimes if you are going to school in the afternoon in The Gambi if you go to school in the afternoon maybe now in the morning you go to Arabic school. After Arabic school you take your shower you take your lunch you go to afternoon school. After afternoon school, if you are there in the morning school, you come you shower you eat you go to Arabic school, but it will not disturb that one that you are doing for you to improve yourself in terms of English or something.
Because English is some country’s uh- another country’s language, is not our own language. But in terms of Arabic, that one is the one that is our <religional> (religious) language that we study about it how to perform your /xx/, how to pray and stuff like that. So this is uh how things are different in another <aspect> in /xx/.

I: Very very good answer ok and then the next question is going to be,
in which situation- in which situation are these languages used? I mean if I said in which situation are these languages spoken. Because we said in Gambia we have many af- uh local languages, fro- different from English. But these local languages, which situation people use to- use this languages. Is it people use this languages when they are at school, or is this is the languages that are using by the government, or is this is the language that people communicate at the market, so- or whatsoever, just say what is your opinion on that.

SP7: Well my opinion on that is- is that people speaking this language local language when they are doing their other things, like you said, at the market, at the- in our environment like in Gambia, when you are doing something different from government or fri- meeting friends /xx/, when you meet your friends, you can speak all these languages there.
It depends on uh which people you are facing.
Maybe you can be Mandinka you meet your friend is another ethnic group like Fula or Manjago.
Ya you can do- you can speak with him or her with these languages, different from government or other things like that.

I: Ok ok ok very very good ok.
And then in which language did people usually communicated with each other if they have different mother languages in The Gambia.

SP6: Yeah like I said,
Gambia is a cultural uh country,
whereby uh we are all the same people,
in a sense we are all the same people.
So in terms of languages,
the languages that you can use and then the languages I m gonna use its all the same.
As I said before is all the same.
Because we have all the same mum and dad.
That’s why we are uh- in a small country called- we are in a small country whereby we have about 2 million people.
So with this 2 million people,
there are different languages that you can use,
for you to communicate with other people that you are not in the same mother or same father tongue with, but it depends who the person is going to be.
For example I can meet an English friend,
I speak English with the person.
But that English it means that I learned the English at school, like for example I study English for me to understand.
That’s why we have English schools in The Gambia.
In terms of Arabic also Arabic that is is permanent in Gambia.
You can meet an Arab people, and then talk Arabic if you do want to speak Arabic.
So you can meet uh in dif- you can meet with different people, whereby you can speak their languages whilst you study.
But there are languages you cannot study.
That one is our own mother tongue.
So Gambia the people are all the same.
They all speak the same language, which I can- which- in sense we all speak the same language.
So if I am going to meet somebody
we are going to speak the same language.

I: Very very good.
And then uh my third question is going to be,
which language do you think should be used at school in The Gambia?
Do you think at the school people should only communicate through English, or do you think is also nice for Gambian people or African people, if they communicate through their own language or learn through their own language instead of English?

SP7: Yeah of course for me my opinion on that, uhm I believe with that we have to learn with another dif- in our local language, ya at school, and not only in English.
Because as I understand, that is affecting us, to speak only English at school. Ya we have big problem with that.
From my opinion, we have to least have our own language to learn, how to write- our own way to write our own language.

I: Very very good I agree with you, and I am going to ask you too, what is your opinion on that?

SP6: My opinion in terms of languages in school, is if you heard school, is not even our language school, school means to go and capture something, that will help you tomorrow or for you to help yourself.
So in terms of our own languages, you cannot leave your own language, because of you want to go and study a language in school.
No. Your language first, before any other languages.
Because I cannot speak my own language- I don’t think that I cannot a study a language for me to understand, so in school, you are going to learn- what you will to learn, it depends whether is Mandinka or any other- any local language in Gambia, we have to learn this at school. Ya that’s my opinion on that.
whatsoever in terms of language.
But all I know in Gambia, you cannot say ok I am going to school whilst you don’t even speak your own language.
You speak your language first for you to go to school and help yourself.
So in school you can use your language,
you can use English that you go and study,
because for example the school that you are going to is not like the European people or is not like the English are the people that are there for you,
the books are the English,
that books you are going to read those are the English people in that school. For example,
if I am with you in the same class and then I speak Mandinka and then you speak Mandinka,
your English is not good,
so for you to understand you what is in the paper,
I should explain that to you better in Mandinka,
the language that we all speak.
I can explain it for you better to understand what is in that paper.
Tomorrow you also will understand,
what is it in English.
so we can use then our both languages,
we can use our mother language in school,
we can use our mother languages in our politic,
we don’t actually use English,
in terms of Gambian politic.
Because I can see in terms of politic also,
we use politic in our own way,
in our own culture.
Ya to go out to the poor and to tell them to things with us,
and then to work with us,
and then for us to motivate them,
because like in Gambia for example,
even your English is like uh you cannot even speak good English,
for example,
but if you are in a politic people see you as the head of English.
You understand?
But in terms of our politic in Gambia,
our politic in Gambia we use our mother language for us to co-convince the poor for them to vote for us.
Because you can’t speak- you can only speak in our own language,
like Mandinka or Wolof or whatsoever, but you can’t speak English to them to understand you, impossible. If you want their vote for you you better speak their language. So this is why I said, our own Mandinka language, our own Wolof language, is used in all part of our country.

I: Very very good very very good. This is very very good. And then now we are going to go through the pictures, and then I want to ask you you explain to us what did you see in your picture?

SP7: Well in my picture I saw- I see the woman under umbrella selling fruits. Ya and two people, the one I think is a tourism and one man- one boy. From my own understanding, I think that he is- she wanted to buy something. Ya because the fruit seller have many things to sell, ya. She have mango, banana, uh many things to sell- many fruits, ya. But the problem is between them- between them to speak the language. Ya for my understanding that the boy is there for- to help to help to help her to translate what she wanted to say. uh buy. Yeah that’<s> what I understand.

I: Very very good very very good. And then I also want to ask you what did you see on your picture.

SP6: In picture I see uh- there some sign of The Gambia and the Atlantic ocean of The Gambia, whereby people used to go and then uh fish- uh to make a fishing. Is like uh there are a lot of this our local boats, local boats that they used to take and make fishing. But is in the coastal area, whereby we have tou- tourism, and then here is /xx/ (name of village) I think. The picture that I see here is /xx/ (name of village). Ok. Here is a place- our fishing center, our fishing industry. Because which I can say, all the
fishes that we used to have in The Gambia, the most of them come from this tiny beach.
So this are the boats and this boat that we see it own by the <own/whole> country people, like uh Senegalese, they used to come and work with us, and we have Gambians also you can see the Gambian womans with their big <pants> and stuffs like that, uh waiting for the ship to come, and then for them to get the fish. So it’s a fishing centre here.

**Interview 3: 25.05.2019 in Graz (Austria)**

I: Ok.
So we are going to talk about uh the situation in Gambia, how people live, and how people speak also. So the first question is going to be which African languages are spoken in The Gambia.

Speaker One.

SP8: Ya in The Gambia there are many different languages spoken. /xx/ African language spoken in the Gambia.
Number one is Mandinka, Mandinka language is spoken, Wolof is spoken, Fula is spoken.

I: Very interesting.
So uh this languages- did you also speak some languages from?

SP8: Yeah I speak Mandinka, I speak some Wolof, and Fula a little bit, is like the local languages. Aku,
that one is normal that is English. I speak that one also.

I: Ok ok very very interesting. Ok ok ok.
And then which European languages are spoken in The Gambia?

Speaker Two.

SP9: Ok the European languages spoken in The Gambia are English, French, Arabic, and maybe some Italian and things like this may be spoken in the streets, but English, French and Arabic are also taught in schools, so it’s like they are more familiar.

I: Ok and then in which situation are these languages used?

SP10: In which situation?

I: Ya in situation like at school or politics, is uh at the street or only at home or only at school you know.

SP10: In the office people speak English, and uh the working places, especial in offices, in school. Arabic is still /xx/ in school, and some working places. But apart from that this other languages like the ethnic language, every tribe used to speak this one. And also sometimes speak another one- another language.

I: Ok ok ok very good. In which languages did people in usually communicating with each other if they have different mother languages, in The Gambia.

SP8: If they have different mother languages, some of them prefer to use English, some, they use Wolof, it depends on the person, it depends on the person the two people who are speaking. They can speak in English, if me I am Wolof the other person is a Fula, I don’t understand too much Fula, but you understand Mandinka, we can speak Mandinka if you understand.
And vice versa.

I: Ok ok ok. And what is your opinion on that, in which language did people usually communicating with each other, if like they have different mother languages, like some other one is Mandinka, other one is Wolof.

SP9: Yeah, as my friend have just said, it is normally like it depends on the two people who are speaking in the particular time, they decide in which language they understand each other, and they speak in that language. It could be Mandinka, it could be English, it could be Wolof, it could be Fula, and ecetera.

I: Ok very good. And then uh what local language did majority of the Gambian people speak? Local language Mandinka Wolof Fula or Jola which one did you think majority of the country speak.

SP10: Mandinka is the most populated ethnic in Gambia, but most people prefer speaking in Wolof. I: Ok ok ok, and uh your opinion on that, you think the people of the country the majority prefer to speak Wolof? Or did the majority prefer to speak Mandinka. It doesn’t always- only have to be the uh the capital-side, it also has to be countryside, because we are talking about the whole country here.

SP8: The whole country, Mandinka is the majority in the Gambia, <und> that is widely spoken across the country, but if you come to the urban areas, there are many people prefer to use Wolof, rather than Mandinka, and most of the people in the market, they prefer to use Wolof, because they see it as a commercial language, so they prefer it,
so I think that is the- what widely spoken is Mandinka.

I: Mandinka, ok ok. So- let’s go to another topic now, the the the the the life system of the school in the Gambia. Uh what language- or which language did people usually use in school?

SP8: School is official. In Gambia official is English.

I: Is English, so you have to?

SP8: English if you are in a school, during our times in The Gambia local languages are not allowed to be spoken. If you speak them, they put something like symbol on your neck, and this is embarrassing. They force people to speak foreign languages in the Gambia, yeah and me I don’t find that one very comfortable, because we don’t even speak our own language in the school, so it means from the go, they change us with their languages, and this is wrong.

I: Very wrong, and then uh which language do you think people should speak at school? Do you think it people is normal that we continue speaking in English? Or we have to speak or learn our own languages?

SP9: Yeah that that in my own point of view that has to be changed, because English is not our language, so if we even go to school we have to learn how to speak English how to write English how to read in English, so it would be more far better if we speak in one of our ethnic languages, would be more beneficial for the people of the Gambia, than still learning in English.

I: Ok very good. And your opinion on that, do you also think that we can-we should continue speaking only English at school or- is is also nice if we can speak our own language without being punished?
SP10: Well is nice to speak our own language, but the problem is we people are being colonized by British or other country members, like French in other part of Gambia, but most of our people are not educated, so the only uh read this Arabic Quran, and through colonialisation from British we are able to read and write, that’s why we using English as our official language. But it will be important if we can also use our own vernacular language in terms of school, that will be also important. Though they used to have that one, but that one they used to teach only the old people, like Mandinka language before they used to have this kind of organization, they used to teach women about Mandinka and so these language, but I don’t think that was far.

I: Ok ok ok very good-

SP8: I want to talk there. I see to it that one of our problem the problem of Africa, or one of our development is this question of language, understand? because we don’t speak our own language, the people who are speaking this foreign language are very few, and at the end of the day development goes to the people. The majority of the people. If you see- if you are all speaking our own local languages in our offices- in the office-or in the parliament, or on the papers, everybody will be- everybody will understand and know what is going on exactly, but now it is written in French or in English, people there in The Gambia they don’t even understand what is written there. So- we cannot develop, we cannot go forward, I see it as a hindrance, as a- as a stumbling plug of our development. We have to do away with this foreign language and impose bringing our own languages,
from way back.
Understand.
We have to be make sure that from the kindergarten we teach our people how to speak our own languages,
we have our own languages, as far as- the whole of West Africa like at Mandinka for example, if if our people take us to independence make sure that these languages are spoken,
just like in Kenya or in other places,
there will be no- there will be nothing like tribalism.
But if you go to school, they say Wolof, you have to do Wolof you have to do Mandinka you have to do Fula by force as compulsory, just like they make it in English, English is compulsory, why not our own language get compulsory?
We are definitely-
I: I I I I did agree with you…. ask you on the same point, what do you think is advantage of using only English at school. Do you think this is going to affect- in future this is going to affect our own languages?

SP9: Of course this is lost of future, then you have no future, if you if you can’t understand in schools because I have been to school so I see that you know, there are some people who be might called /xx/ they are stupid, or they are not good in school or whatever, is- it doesn’t mean that they are not good. They are not good because that English language, because some of the people find it hard to even speak or to read or to understand in English. So if that person might in his or her language, /xx/ understandable. The person can do something with this language. So it’s a lost of future, because is not productive.
I: Very good I agree with you on that you know. Uhm so now what we are going to do, is that we are going to talk about the picture. And everyone have to talk about the picture you have. Uh so I am going to ask you,
what do you see on your pictures?

SP8: Yeah me the picture I see is beachside.

I: Beachside?

SP8: Yeah.

There are boats,

people are moving somewhere in their boats,

like boats about to be docked by they are coming from fishing,

and the woman are moving with their pants to go and collect the fish.

So is a lot of activities going on in this picture that I am seeing now.

I: Ok ok ok so- so this fishing system in The Gambia,
do you think this is free for everyone who can do it,
or is it- you have to go somewheres and find some documents before doing it?

SP8: Yeah naturally you have to find fishing documents,
you have to find document for it,
go inside you have to have a document for this,
that one is license is normal,
but the problem there is,

these fishes- I don’t know,
is we are not legalizing it.
The Gambians are not using it.
Because this is Atlantic,
this is an ocean,
this is very big,
and you see many people who are going to this places,
they ya- they just go to bring to catch the small portion – that they can feed their family,
and I think we can expand on this,
and put it on a large-scale where we can even be exporting it,
or we finish making it as a finished product and selling it to the outside world,
and sending to outside world,
but instead it is the outside world,
who are coming in and fish in our water there,
and then take it back to their countries.
This is some /xx/ like China you know is fishing it and taking it
Giving it to the pigs and selling the pigs to people outside all over the world.
This is wrong.
When Gambian people are hungry.

I: Which is going to affect the country,
SP8: Naturally.

I: because this are some resource that we have in our country,

SP8: ya- but they are not using it. Our people- or let me say the government they are not legalizing our waters, instead of they are selling our waters our fish to other people, this is wrong.

I: This is very wrong. Thank you very much, and then now I am also going to ask you, what do you see on your pictures?

SP9: Ok I can see here- a woman trying to sell some fruits, and having some fruits, there are taxi droving on the street, there are shoe shops where they sell shoeses and things like this, this is a market anyway.

I: Mhhh is a market.

SP9: So you can see that people are trying to buy fruits from the woman trying to sell her fruit, So.

And the use of this fruits Gambia is very rich when you come in terms of fruits and things like this. Ok. So with this fruits also Gambia they can get- they can benefit good from it- from those fruits, if they put them into good uses. But we don’t have facilities, we don’t have materials to process these fruits to be something that we can export and even the people of the Gambia could live from those fruits. So I see that as a point of you know-observation you know, so it should be well observed.

I: Very very good very very good. Thank you so much you know, uh I am going to ask you, what do you see on your pictures too?

SP10: I see in this picture, a place where taxis are garaged, this taxis are used for transport. Most of them you see they stay at one place, that’s mean that you have to come to there and then hire it, and then go to one part of Gambia. Yeah and I can see a boy is like making recording,
any taxi come,
they have to follow a /xx/,
so the boy is having a paper
is recording the number – number-
number- what they call it?

I: Number plate.

SP10: Number plate.
why I didn’t say number plate.

Number plate,
and in the area you can see some womans selling some kind of small things,
which normally the taxi drivers or some passengers can be using it to take it uhm on the way.
It seems like is some part of Gambia,

I Ok very very good.

SP10: In Gambia you have to call the taxi,
/xx/ of them or waving them you know,
because otherwise they will not stop.

I: Ok very good.
Thank you for everyone for participating you know.
# 10.3 Detailed List of Features as Used by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>SP1</th>
<th>SP2</th>
<th>SP3</th>
<th>SP4</th>
<th>SP5</th>
<th>SP6</th>
<th>SP7</th>
<th>SP8</th>
<th>SP9</th>
<th>SP10</th>
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+ Feature occurred in the speech of the participant
- Feature did not occur in the speech of the participant
? No data as word/ clause no used by participant
### Biographical Data of the Participants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SP</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Origin of Parents</th>
<th>Mother Language</th>
<th>Additional Languages</th>
<th>School Attendance</th>
<th>Career</th>
<th>Type of acquisition of English</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Basse</td>
<td>Basse</td>
<td>Mandinka</td>
<td>Wolof, Fula, English, Italian</td>
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<td>Navy soldier</td>
<td>school</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Basse/Jarra</td>
<td>Fula</td>
<td>Mandinka, English, Italian</td>
<td>(English) primary school</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>school, in the streets</td>
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