



Cross-chronotope alignment in Senegalese oral narrative

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Abstract

While oral self-narratives are often presumed to be deictically anchored as ‘past’ by default, speakers routinely create more complex and varied temporalization effects, including tropic effects that are this article’s focus. One of the most well-known tropic temporalization effects is the so-called ‘historical present’, where speakers use non-past deixis to frame ‘past’ events. This juxtaposition of temporalization effects can be used to align the spatio-temporal universe of the story (the denotational text) and the here-and-now storytelling event (the interactional text) as ‘coeval’, as if they were part of the same spatio-temporal or ‘chronotopic’ frame. This article examines a Senegalese oral narrative practice that tends to co-occur with the historical present, but which is even more striking in the way it aligns interactional and denotational texts as coeval. In this practice the narrator discursively recruits audience members to serve as denoted characters in the story, a process referred to as ‘participant transposition’. Drawing on Bakhtin and on Agha’s notion of ‘cross-chronotope alignment’, this article shows how participant transposition functions together with deictic transposition to align the story and storytelling event as coeval, and it examines how these forms of alignment are used to revise interactional history.

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Keywords: Textuality; Temporality; Chronotope; Narrative; Transposition; Senegal

1. Introduction: moving narratives

Encounters with effective narratives have long been said to involve a sense of ‘movement’ into the narrated event. Focusing on written narratives, Gerrig observes two

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recurrent metaphors: ‘readers are often described as *being transported* by a narrative by virtue of *performing* that narrative’ (1993, p. 2). Segal, similarly, writes that ‘[r]eaders get inside of stories and vicariously experience them’ (1995, p. 15). Gerrig, Segal, and others (see Duchan et al., 1995) study this sense of ‘being transported’ in terms of underlying cognitive processes. Segal, in particular, studies the movement into a story in terms of ‘deictic shift theory’, where the *origo*, the zero-point of deictic reckoning (Bühler, 1990), is transposed from the narrating event to the narrated event. Since they view transposition primarily as a cognitive achievement of the individual experiencer (prototypically, the reader), they spend less time examining the linguistic and discursive resources and procedures for creating or facilitating this movement (but see Zubin and Hewitt, 1995). Since they privilege text-artifacts (especially novels) and focus on the solitary reader, researchers like Segal (1995) also do not investigate the pragmatics of transport in multiparty interaction, how this movement affects interpretations of social action among co-present interlocutors, as well as the more general principle of recipient design (Ochs and Capps, 2001; Becker and Quasthoff, 2005, p. 2). In this article, in contrast, I consider how narrators attempt to ‘move’ addressees into their stories, and how this virtual movement helps alter the coherence, or textuality, of the interaction-in-progress. Focusing on oral narrative in Senegal, I examine, in particular, three interrelated facets of the event: (a) ‘participant transposition’ (Perrino, 2005), a Senegalese narrative practice in which the narrator addresses co-present audience members as if they were characters in the story; (b) deictic transposition, particularly the ‘historical present’; and (c) sketches of social types. I show how forms of transposition align chronotopes of story and storytelling event as coeval, creating the impression of space–time movement, and I consider how this movement involves struggles over the definition of self and other as social types in the encounter itself.

The sense of ‘transport’ and ‘vicarious experience’ mentioned by Gerrig (1993, p. 2) may at first seem remarkable since oral narratives are typically understood to be deictically anchored as ‘past’ by default (e.g., Labov and Waletzky, 1967). In the paradigmatic case, speakers use spatio-temporal deictics and other resources to frame the events described in the story (the ‘denotational text’; see below) as there-and-then, not to be confused with the here-and-now storytelling frame (the ‘interactional text’). To use Bakhtin’s terms, the two events are situated in separate ‘chronotopes’, a notion that Agha (this issue) has usefully defined as ‘semiotic representations of time and place peopled by certain social types’. Though the default expectation for a story is for it to be deictically anchored as there-and-then, there exist many tropic ways to align the two textual-chronotopes, including tropes of ‘coevalness’ (cf. Silverstein, 2005, pp. 17–18). Tropes of coevalness include the so-called ‘historical present’ in oral narrative, where speakers shift into non-past deixis [Jespersen’s (1924, p. 258) ‘dramatic present’] for events that are otherwise framed as, or presumed to be, past (Schiffrin, 1981; Wolfson, 1982). By juxtaposing non-congruent temporalization effects in this way, speakers can align the spatio-temporal chronotope of the story with the here-and-now storytelling event, or what I will refer to, following Silverstein (1997), as ‘denotational’ and ‘interactional’ texts. As Silverstein (1997) clarifies, ‘denotational text’ refers to coherence in terms of reference and predication about states of affairs. ‘Interactional text’ refers to the coherence that the interaction itself is felt to have, in terms of role inhabitation and actions performed (see Agha, 2006).

‘Movement’ or ‘transport’ into the denotational text may be achieved in an *ad hoc* manner, or it may itself be actively learned and cultivated. The Senegalese oral narrative practice under consideration here is, indeed, widespread and cross-cuts discourse genres. That it has also been an object of metadiscursive attention is attested by the fact that several of my informants bestowed a name on it, *démarche participative* (‘participatory move’). In interviews with Mr. Ndome, he used the verbs ‘transpose’ and ‘transport’ to gloss *démarche participative*: ‘la démarche participative, pour te faire rentrer dans ce contexte-là. C’est comme si je t’avais transposée, transportée dans mon histoire-là’ (‘the participatory move [is done] in order to make you enter that context. It is as if I had transposed [or] transported you inside my own story’). In terms of its stereotypic pragmatic effects, he suggested that participant transposition has ‘purely pedagogical’ functions (‘c’était purement pédagogique’). It illustrates and exemplifies the story’s denotational content; in practice, of course, the pragmatic effects of participant transposition are more variable than Mr. Ndome suggests (Perrino, 2005).

In the narrative data considered below, Mr. Ndome uses participant transposition together with deictic transposition in order to tropically align the two textual realms—the denotational and the interactional—as ‘coeval’, as if story and event existed in the same space–time, the same chronotope (cf. Wortham, 1994; Ochs et al., 1996; Ochs and Capps, 2001). In the following analysis, I examine two cases where tropes of coevalness are deployed. Drawing especially on Agha’s (this issue) discussion of ‘cross-chronotope alignment’, I show, in particular, how the construction and alignment of distinct spatio-temporal realms in oral narrative help (re)define social actors as social types in the here-and-now discursive interaction.

2. Case 1: cross-chronotope alignment in a tale about dysentery

In June 2000, I conducted an interview in Dakar, Senegal, with Mr. Marc Ndome, a Senegalese journalist, language instructor, and prime informant of mine who is now in his late 30s. Mr. Ndome, a Muslim, speaks Wolof,¹ French, Arabic, and some English. The interview was conducted in Wolof and French, a language combination typical for Dakar. I had been conducting preliminary research on Senegalese ethnomedicine at the time and asked Mr. Ndome if he would share some illness stories with me.² Among Mr. Ndome’s narratives in this interview was a story detailing a protracted case of dysentery. It was the longest narrative in the transcript, lasting slightly over 37 minutes (see Table 1 below), and in it he engaged in participant transposition four times. In this story, he recounted how he had once paid a visit to his older brother, but when he returned

¹ Wolof is spoken by roughly 80% of the Senegalese population. Since France’s colonization of Senegal in the 19th century, French has been used alongside Wolof.

² Of the two and a half hours that make up the interview, the first hour (which was followed by a lunch break) was selected for transcription and analysis. Four major narratives were told during the hour, the first three of which were illness narratives. Due to space constraints, I examine only two narratives, focusing specifically on participant transposition and on cross-chronotope alignment.

Table 1
Synoptic chart of Mr. Ndome's narratives

Start line	(1)	(45)	(159)	(223)a	(787)	(1044)
End line	(44)	(158)c	(222)	(786)t	(1043)b	(1111)d
Narrative phase	Pre-Narrative Conversation	“Bloody Nose” Narrative	Circumcision Interlude	“Diarrhea” Narrative	“Dangling Finger” Narrative	“Rice Dropping” Narrative
Duration	01:32:66	05:54:24	01:57:28	37:14:26	09:53:67	05:30:38
Total duration: 1 h, 2 min, 3.82 s						

The bold values and terms indicate the narratives analyzed in this article.

home, he urgently needed to go to the bathroom, and when he did, he experienced a severe bout of diarrhea. Mr. Ndome consulted his father, who had some biomedical training and worked as a nurse. His father handed him medicine, and Mr. Ndome went to sleep without dinner. When he awoke, however, he ran to the bathroom again, and this time there was

Table 2
Cross-chronotope alignment in lines (281)a–(283)c (duration: 35 seconds)

Line #	Relevant co-occurrence Patterns	Alignment (E ^s / E ⁿ)	Transcript
(281)a	Past tense; distal demonstrative (<i>boobu</i>).	Retrospective-displaced (Mr. Ndome reflects on distant, separate past).	Five times, do you see what kind of rhythm [I had] there?
(281)b	Nonpast deixis; direct report (no reporting clause); Sabina recruited to role of addressee in narrated event.	Coeval alignment through participant transposition and historical present	‘(1.4) ‘oh Sabina, excuse me, I am going to the bathroom’
(281)c	Past tense.	Retrospective-displaced.	‘(1.3) so, I didn’t even [have the time to] go:’
(281)d	Past tense.	Retrospective-displaced.	‘(1.6) [after] two minutes I: was finished’
(281)e	Non-past.	Coeval alignment through historical present.	‘(.) I go back squatting’
(283)a	Non-past; 3 rd -sg. ‘he’.	Coeval alignment through historical present (with impersonal perspective on past self’s behavior).	‘he talks, talks, talks’
(283)b	Direct report (with no reporting clause); Sabina recruited to role of addressee in narrated event.	Coeval alignment through participant transposition	‘Sabina, excuse me’ (1.1) um?’
(283)c	Past tense; repetition of verb (x 4).	Retrospective (but with ‘dramatic re-enactment’; see below).	‘(1.4) I- I went, I went, I went’
(283)d	Past tense.	Retrospective-displaced.	‘finally (.) I stop going to the bathroom’

(Shading indicates degrees of ‘likeness’ in cross-chronotope alignment. Darker shades of grey in particular indicate higher degrees of ‘coeval’-alignment between interactional and denotational texts.)

blood in his stool. The diarrhea with blood continued for 3 months with an average frequency of five episodes per day, Mr. Ndome explained. Participant transposition begins at line (281)b³ (see also Table 2 above).

P^s Line 1: Wolof Eⁿ

Line 2: Interlinear Gloss

Line 3: English Translation

M: (281)a =juróomiyoon gisnga ritmu boobu
 five time see you-AUX.SUBJ-PAST rhythm that-CLSF-SG-DIST
 ‘= five times, do you see what kind of rhythm [I had] there?’

(281)b (1.4)‘oh Sabina excuse-moi maa ngiy dem toilette’
 ‘oh Sabina excuse-me-FR I-AUX.SUBJ here-SIT go bathroom’
 ‘(1.4) ‘oh Sabina, excuse me, I am going to the bathroom’’

(281)c (1.3)donc dem naa mème pa::s
 so-FR go I-AUX.SUBJ-PAST even not-FR
 ‘(1.3) so, I didn’t even [have the time to really] go::’

(281)d (1.6)deux minutes pare naa::
 two minutes-FR finish I-AUX.SUBJ-PAST
 ‘(1.6) [after] two minutes I:: was finished’

(281)e (.) ma ñěw toog
 I-AUX.SUBJ come-back squat
 ‘(.) I go back squatting’

S: (282) [clears throat] =

³ Transcription symbols and abbreviations: [[= utterances starting simultaneously; [= overlapping utterances; ==latching, or contiguous utterances, with an interval of less than one-tenth of second between lines; (.) = micro-pause (less than one-tenth of a second). (0.0) = time intervals within and between utterances (length of pauses in seconds and tenths of seconds); :: = syllable lengthening; :::: = prolonged syllable lengthening; ° ° = these two symbols surround speech that is quieter than the surrounding talk; – = syllable cut-off; . = stopping fall in tone; ? = rising intonation; ! = animated tone; _____ = words with underline indicate stress; CAP = words in capitals indicate increased volume; (abc) = talk between parenthesis indicates the transcriber’s best guess at a stretch of discourse that is unclear on the original tape; (???) = question marks inside parenthesis indicate uncertain or unclear talk; [abc] = text between brackets indicates transcriber’s clarifications of transcript; [...] = three dots between square brackets indicate that some material of the original transcript has been omitted. {ABC} = the material in small capitals and inside curly brackets indicate speech participants’ kinesic behavior; [[abc]] = the material inside double square brackets indicate transcriber’s comments; AUX = auxiliary verb; AUX.EMPH = auxiliary verb; AUX.OBJ = auxiliary verb, the person indexed by which is an object; AUX.SUBJ = auxiliary verb, the person indexed by which is a subject; CLSF = classifier stem; CNTV = continuative suffix; DIST = distal deictic stem; FR = French word; GEN = genitive case; INT = interrogative pronoun; NEG = negative stem; PAST = past tense; PL = plural; PROX = proximal deictic stem; SG = singular; SIT = situative infix; WF = Wolof word (note that since Wolof is considered the default code, Wolof words are only indicated when they occur in predominantly French clauses or sentences).

M: (283)a =mu waxtaan waxtaan waxtaan nee::h
 he-AUX.SUBJ talk talk talk neeeh
 ‘= he talks, talks, talks nee::h’

(283)b ‘Sabina, excuse-moi’(1.1) um?
 ‘Sabina, excuse-me’ um? [French]
 ‘‘Sabina, excuse me’ (1.1) um?’

(283)c (1.4)man dem naa dem naa dem naa dem naa
 I-AUX.EMPH go I-AUX.SUBJ-PAST go I-AUX.SUBJ-PAST go I-AUX.SUBJ-PAST go I-AUX.SUBJ-PAST
 ‘(1.4) I really went, I went, I went, I went’

(283)d finalement (.) man dematuma toilette
 finally-FR I-AUX.EMPH go-I-AUX.SUBJ-NEG bathroom
 ‘finally (.) I stop going to the bathroom’

Immediately before the onset of participant transposition at line (281)a, Mr. Ndome asks whether I have understood what his past self underwent: ‘do you realize what kind of rhythm [I had]?’ He uses past-tense deictic anchoring together with the Wolof spatial-deictic distal demonstrative *boobu*, which puts his question in a ‘displaced’ (Chafe, 1994, p. 196) or one might say ‘displaced-retrospective’ perspective (‘retrospective’, because it is also deictically framed as ‘past’). The narrated event being denoted is hence framed as occurring in a chronotope distinct from the here-and-now space–time. Thus far, the trope of cross-chronotope coevalness has not yet been implemented. In line (281)a, however, Mr. Ndome shifts perspective. In his direct report of his past self’s speech at line (281)b, he recruits me to the role of addressee, initiating participant transposition and implementing the trope of coevalness. I become a witness who sees the terrible ‘rhythm’ of diarrhea in the past. Given the framing from the previous line, it is as if I am now transported into a specific, biographical past.

This movement into the past is not sustained, however. Instead, this discourse sequence is marked by rapid shifts that create the impression of back and forth space–time movement. In the next line, (281)c, Mr. Ndome resumes his retrospective perspective using past-tense deixis and maintains it in (281)d as well, but in (281)e, he shifts back into the non-past; he appears to no longer separate the denoted events of the story from the here-and-now interaction. Line (283)a maintains this cross-chronotope alignment but differs in another element: participant denotation in the auxiliary verb.⁴ After this moment, Mr. Ndome again initiates participant transposition, recruiting me again to the role of witness. At the end of this segment, Mr. Ndome returns to a displaced, retrospective perspective. Though our travels are now over, his repetition of ‘I went’ in line (283)c four times does create an emphatic effect that could be considered what Ochs (1994, p. 113) calls a ‘dramatic enactment’ of the past. That is, Mr. Ndome tries to iconically reinvoke the frequency of his diarrhea, bringing a measure of the past into the present. This sequence illustrates rapid shifts in cross-chronotope alignment, involving both participant transposition and deictic transposition. These forms of transposition, in turn, introduce shifts in cross-

⁴ In this line, Mr. Ndome introduces another non-congruent or tropic element, ‘he’. If the sequencing after this utterance is taken as a reference point then it would seem to suggest that Mr. Ndome is representing my thought, though my self as transposed into the character of a witness who observes the severity of his past self’s condition.

chronotope alignment—from displaced to coeval—that produce a sense of movement to and from the story.

Turning now to the question of what locally occasioned this phase of discourse involving coeval cross-chronotope alignment, and hence to what this alignment tries to accomplish, I will consider what transpired interactionally shortly before its onset. Immediately before this participant transposition, at line (281)a, Mr. Ndome asks whether I understand what his past self underwent, that is, ‘do you realize what kind of rhythm [I had]?’ (Mr. Ndome typically used this type of question immediately before the onset of participant transposition.) Moving further back in the transcript, before this question, one finds a moment in which I ask Mr. Ndome a question about his narrative that could be taken up as an affront. Mr. Ndome had been characterizing his past self as someone suffering from a severe illness, someone who was shocked by the blood that presumably had rushed out of him.

M: (259)a ma::: xěy ci ɛ̀llɛ̀g sa
 I-AUX.SUBJ wake-up in-CLSF-SG-PROX morning the-CLSF-SG-DIST
 ‘I::: wake up the next morning’

(259)b (1.6)ma dem encore (.) ci wanak ba
 I-AUX.SUBJ go again-FR in-CLSF-SG-PROX bathroom the-CLSF-SG-DIST
 ‘(1.6) I go again (.) to the bathroom’

(259)c (1.3)waayecette fois-ci(2.1)u:::h dɛ̀rɛ̀t la doon génne
 but this time-here-FR uh::: blood it-AUX.SUBJPAST-CNTV come-out
 ‘(1.3) but this time (2.1) u:::h blood was coming out’

(259)d (2.4)à la place des toilettes(1.5) je sortais du sang
 a the place of-the feces I come-out of-the blood [French]
 ‘(2.4) instead of feces (1.5), I had blood’

S: (260)(2.0) mmmm =
 mmmm
 ‘(2.0) mmmm =’

M: (261) = *dama doon génne dërët*
 I-AUX.EMPH PAST CNTV come-out blood
 ‘= blood was coming out [[of]] me’

S: (262)a [à la- au li- (.) au lieu de la diarrhée
 at the-instead- instead of the diarrhea [French]
 ‘at the- instead- (.) instead of the diarrhea’

(262)b (.) il y avait même le sang =
 it there had also the blood [French]
 ‘(.) There was blood too =’

M: (263) = *ily avait le sang*
 it there had the blood [French]
 ‘= there was blood’

S: (264) [oh mm hm (1.1) dërët bu bari?
 oh: mm hm blood the-CLSF-SG-DIST much?
 ‘oh mm hm (1.1) a lot of blood?’

M: (265) *tuuti dërët =*
 a-little-ADV blood
 ‘a little blood =’

S: (266) = *tuuti =*
 a-little-ADV
 ‘= a little [blood] =’

Mr. Ndome uses repetition to claim that blood appeared in his stool. At line (261), he states that ‘blood was coming out’, the Wolof particle *doon* marking the continuative aspect, suggesting that the blood was like a stream rather than a few drops. Mr. Ndome also uses the Wolof emphatic auxiliary *dama* (which in this context I glossed simply as ‘me’), suggesting a sense of shock and urgency. In short, Mr. Ndome characterizes his past self as someone suffering from a severe illness. Mr. Ndome seems to impose upon his past self a valiant voice, a type of person who can endure a violent illness.

Also evident in the transcribed segment, however, is my opposition toward this voice. I overlap with Mr. Ndome and suggest that the blood in his stool is not as abundant as he implied. At line (262)b above, I suggest that there is blood in addition to diarrhea, not blood *instead* of diarrhea. At line (264), I ask Mr. Ndome whether there is ‘a lot of blood’, which could be construed as a suggestion that Mr. Ndome may be exaggerating about the severity of his symptoms, and could insinuate that, as a narrator, he is being hyperbolic. It is revealing that immediately after my question, he characterizes the illness as if it were a menacing, external force. At line (267)b, Mr. Ndome states, ‘it attacked me’, suggesting a battle between two participants, the diarrhea and Mr. Ndome’s past self. By making the diarrhea the agent of this transitive verb and himself as the patient, Mr. Ndome characterizes his past self as an embattled figure in an epic struggle. It is in this context that

Mr. Ndome then goes into graphic details about the frequency and nature of his diarrhea. Finally, he asks me: ‘Do you realize what kind of rhythm [I had]?’ This last question leaves open the possibility that I might *not* have realized the severity of his illness, and it is exactly at this juncture that he moves me into his story through the forms of transposition transcribed above. Through participant transposition in conjunction with deictic transposition, he transforms me into a friend who witnessed the way his past self had to run off to the bathroom. By making me into a witness in the narrated-event chronotope, the denotational text, Mr. Ndome continues his implicit counter-claim made just prior to the participant transposition, namely, that he is not a hyperbolic narrator, as I had insinuated. This case illustrates how shifts in cross-chronotope alignment are used to alter the coherence of the interaction, the interactional text.

3. Case 2: cross-chronotope alignment in a tale about dining etiquette

After a 10 min break in our interview, I asked Mr. Ndome to share a story that his father once told him, a story that Mr. Ndome had mentioned briefly during the break. The story concerned a traditional healer named El’Hadji Malick. This healer found it irritating when people would allow rice to fall from their hands while eating (Senegalese traditionally eat with their hands, not with utensils). When children would drop rice, El’Hadji Malick would beat them. The complicating action occurs when El’Hadji Malick has a guest over who is notorious for dropping rice. Since he is a guest, it would be inappropriate to scold him, so El’Hadji Malick hands him a stick and authorizes him to beat anyone who drops rice. Not a single grain was dropped! Mr. Ndome concludes by praising El’Hadji Malick’s skilful way of educating his guest without offending him.

M: (1047)a mu ne: ‘El’Hadji Malick’
 he-AUX.SUBJ say ‘El’Hadji Malick’
 ‘he [i.e., my father] say:s ‘El’Hadji Malick’

(1047)b (1.0)El’Hadji Malick sërñ bu mag la =
 El’Hadji Malick healer very-CLSF-SG-DIST old he-AUX.OBJ
 ‘(1.0) El’Hadji Malick is a great traditional healer’⁵=

S: (1048) = waaw =
 yes
 ‘= yes =’

M: (1049) = ci Tivaawan =
 in-CLSF-SG-PROX Tivavouane
 ‘= in Tivavouane⁶=’

⁵ According to my informant, Mamadou Sow, the term *mag* (‘old’) is likely used metaphorically to refer to the healer’s high status.

⁶ Tivavouane is a town where an annual Islamic ritual, the *Gamou*, takes place. Together with Touba, the town of Tivavouane is renowned for drawing in the most important traditional healers of Senegal.

S: (1050) = waaw
 yes
 ‘= right’

M: (1051)a (1.4)El’Hadji Malick bëggëwoon (1.0) kuy lekk
 El’Hadji Malick want-AUX.SUBJ-NEG-PAST someone-CLSF-SG-DIST-CNTV eat
 ‘(1.4) El’Hadji Malick didn’t want (1.0) anyone to be eating’

(1051)b (1.0)di tuur (0.2) ceeb =
 CNTV drop rice
 ‘(1.0) [and] dropping (0.2) rice [on the ground]’

S: (1052) = waaw
 yes
 ‘= right’

[. . .]

After the story’s first iteration, Mr. Ndome moves me into the story:

(1107)r tu comprends? =
 you understand? [French]
 ‘do you understand? =’

S: (1108) = mm hm
 mm hm
 ‘= mm hm’

M: (1109)a(0.8)au lieu de vexer (.) l’ individu il lui dit
 instead of offend the individual he himsays [French]
 ‘(0.8) instead of offendi::ng (.) the individual, he says to him’

(1109)b(.) ‘bon maintenant c’ est toi qui surveilles’
 ‘well now it is you that watch’ [French]
 ‘(.) ‘well, now it is you that watch [the kids]’

(1109)c(1.9) imagine! u:h Sabina est là elle fume la::- le tabac u:h
 imagine-FR-IMP-WF uh Sabina is there she smokes the- the tobacco uh [French]
 ‘(1.9) imagine u:h Sabina is there, she smokes the::- the tobacco u:h’

- (1109)d (.) je sais que Sabina est une grande fumeuse
I know that Sabina is a big smoker [French]
'(.) I know that Sabina is a serious smoker'
- (1109)e (1.1)elle vient chez moi: (1.4) u::h je dis
she comes by me uh I say [French]
'(1.1) she comes to my: place (1.4) u::h I say'
- (1109)f (.) 'chez moi (2.0) les enfants je ne veux que personne fume'
'by me the children I not want that nobody smokes' [French]
'(.) 'kids, in my place (2.0), I don't want anybody to smoke''
- (1109)g (1.9)bon, et d'ailleurs je- je vais confie::r la surveillance à Sabina
good and despite-that I-I go give the control to Sabina [French]
'(1.9) good, and despite that, I- I gi::ve the control to Sabina'
- (1109)h (0.8)'Sabina tu surveilles ici (.) il faut pas que personne fume!'
'Sabina you control here it needs not that nobody smokes [French]!'
'(0.8) 'Sabina, you are in control here (.) nobody can smoke!''
- (1109)i (1.5)pourtant Sabina est une grande fumeuse (1.0) elle sera gênée
however Sabina is a big smoker she will-be uncomfortable [French]
'(1.5) however, Sabina is a serious smoker (1.0) she will feel uncomfortable'
- (1109)j (1.8)elle aura envie de fumer mais hh hh hh [laughter]
she will-have willingness of to-smoke but hh hh hh [French]
'(1.8) she will want to smoke, but hh hh hh [laughter]
- (1109)k elle ne pourra pas parce que c' est elle qui surveille
she not will-be-able not because it is she who controls [French]
'she will not be able [to smoke], because it is she who is in control'
- S: (1110) (.) mm hm
mm hm
'(.) mm hm'
- [
- M: (1111)a les autres (.) c' est ça la sagesse (0.8)de l' éducation
the others it is that the wisdom of the education [French]
'[of] the other people (.), that is the wisdom (0.8) of education'
- (1111)b (2.2)donc u::h (.) c' était ça l' histoire eh?
so uh it was that the story eh? [French]
'(2.2) so u::h (.) that was the story, eh?'

In this version of the story, which parallels the first iteration, I become a smoker whose smoking disturbs my host, Mr. Ndome. Rather than discipline his guest (i.e., me) directly, Mr. Ndome acts like the wise healer El'Hadji Malick. I am to ensure that his children do

not smoke, which simultaneously ensures that I will not smoke either. In order to better understand the way he positions me here in the narrative, some remarks about the discourse history between Ndome and me should be mentioned. Muslims are forbidden to smoke, and non-Muslim foreigners are often stereotypically believed to be avid smokers. In fact, one of the first questions that Mr. Ndome asked when we first met was whether I smoked. When I told him that I didn't, he said he felt relieved, since he could not work with a smoker; however, he often jokingly portrayed me as a heavy smoker, following the stereotype that many Italians smoke. He also frequently joked about my addiction to coffee and threatened to call the police to report me. His transformation of me into a typical European smoker—a stereotypic and negatively valued social voice—thus drew on a longer discourse history.

In terms of what locally occasions this case of participant transposition, before the start of the participant example, at line (1107)r, Mr. Ndome asks whether I have understood his story. In fact, this moment belongs to a broader pattern of self-other positioning in the interview. Mr. Ndome frequently positioned himself as a teacher and me as a student, which is not surprising since he also served as my language instructor. However, he frequently positioned me as a particular social type, as a 'negligent' student who lacks an adequate comprehension of Wolof. Throughout the interview, for example, he would volunteer glosses of Wolof lexical items or probe my knowledge of them through questions:

M: (542) guddi mooy lan? =
 night it-AUX.SUBJ-CNTV what?
 'what is *guddi*? ='

S: (543) =la nuit =
 the night [French]
 '= night ='

M: (543)a =waaw! (.)très bien! hh hh [laughter]
 yes! very good! hh hh [French]
 '= yes! (.) very good! hh hh'

(543)b (0.6)du- fattewoo! =
 you-AUX.SUBJ-NEG- forget-AUX.SUBJ-NEG!
 '(0.6) you didn't- you didn't forget! ='

S: (544) =eh! [laughter]
 eh!
 '= eh!'

[. . .]

At line (542), Mr. Ndome's question is a kind of question that a language instructor might ask. His evaluative response at line (543)a, *très bien*, is also teacher-like. He applauds my performance but then follows with 'you didn't forget', implying that I am the type of student who is prone to forgetting Wolof words. I do not respond

to this negative voice, at least not here. In other places, however, there is evidence of tension. At one point in the interview, for instance, the issue of *saafara* comes up—that is, the consecrated water made by soaking pages of Qur’anic verses. Mr. Ndome says the following:

M: (624)n moom u:::h indil na ma benn saafara (2.4) saafara?
 he-AUX.EMPH uh give he-AUX.SUBJ-PAST me-dOBJ one blessed-water blessed-water?
 ‘he u:::h gave me some blessed water (2.4), [do you know the Wolof term] *saafara*?’

S: (625) (0.4) mm hm =
 mm hm
 ‘(0.4) mm hm =’

M: (626) =c’ est de l’ eau bénite
 it is of the water blessed [French]
 ‘= it is blessed water’

S: (627) (1.8) on l’a déjà vue =
 one it has already seen [French]
 ‘(1.8) we have already discussed it =’

M: (628)a =on l’a vue hier Sabina::
 we it have seen yesterday Sabina [French]
 ‘= we saw it yesterday, Sabina:::’

(628)b (.) on l’a vue avant-hier ou bien (2.1) hm?
 we it has seen the-day-before-yesterday or good hm? [French]
 ‘(.) we saw it the day before yesterday or so (2.1), hm?’

(628)c (.) saafara (1.0) souviens-toi (1.1)c’ est du Koran
 blessed-water remember-you it is of-the Qur’an [French]
 ‘(.) [the term] *saafara* (1.0), as you remember (1.1), is based on the Qur’an’

S: (629) (1.7)oui =
 yes
 ‘(1.7) right =’

[. . .]

After the vocabulary question, *saafara*? (‘blessed water?’) at line (624)n, I utter a minimal response, which would likely imply that I know the term. Yet Mr. Ndome goes on to define it in line (626). The fact that Mr. Ndome does not acknowledge my minimal response as a sign that I know the term might be taken up by me as an affront, as an implicit charge that I am a certain social type, a negligent student. That I take it up as an affront is evident from my response. After Mr. Ndome defines the term *saafara*, I immediately add that ‘we have already discussed it’ (line [627]), charging that it is Mr. Ndome who has been forgetful

and who is thus a negatively valued social type: a careless and inattentive teacher. In the next turn, Mr. Ndome appears irritated. He latches with my remark, saying:

S: (627) (1.8) on l'a déjà vue =
 one it has already seen [French]
 '(1.8) we have already discussed it ='

M: (628)a =on l'a vue hier Sabina::
 we it have seen yesterday Sabina [French]
 '= we saw it yesterday, Sabina::'

(628)b (.) on l'a vue avant-hier ou bien (2.1) hm?
 we it has seen the-day-before-yesterday or good hm? [French]
 '(.) we saw it the day before yesterday or so (2.1), hm?'

Mr. Ndome continues this tug of war by engaging in anti-parallelism, changing my 'already' to the more temporally specific term 'yesterday' and adding contrastive stress (*hier*). He claims, in effect, that his memory is the sharpest, and implicitly rejects the social type I ascribed to him.

A particularly striking case in which Mr. Ndome tries to cast me as a mediocre student is found near the phase in which he initiates participant transposition. After he recounts the narrative that his father had told him about El'Hadji Malick, in Wolof, he suddenly stops and says:

(1059)e je traduis en français ce que je viens de dire
 I translate in French what that I come of say [French]
 'I am going to translate into French what I have just said'

(1059)f (.) je sais que tu n'as rien compris dedans
 I know that you not have nothing understood inside [French]
 '(.) I know that you haven't understood anything in [the story]'

As Mr. Ndome positions himself here as a responsible teacher and me as a mediocre student, and as he proceeds to retell the narrative in French, interactional tension occurs, just as it often did earlier in the interview:

M:(1059)_g El'Hadji Malick c' est un marabout c' est un grand marabout =
 El'Hadji Malick it is a traditional-healer it is a great traditional-healer [French]
 'El'Hadji Malick is a traditional healer, he is a famous traditional healer ='

S: (1060) = oui de Touba- de Tivavouane =
 yes of Touba- of Tivavouane [French]
 '= yes, of Touba- of Tivavouane ='

M:(1061) = de Tivavouane =
 of-FR Tivavouane
 '= of Tivavouane ='

S: (1062) = waaw
 yes
 '= right'

M:(1063)_a(0.3)il n' amait pas qu' on mange (0.4) avec lui
 he not loved not that one eats with him [French]
 '(0.3) He didn't like people to eat (0.4) with him'

(1063)_b (0.5)et qu' on- qu' on uh
 and that one- that one uh [French]
 '(0.5) and that one- that one uh'

S: (1064) [mm hm
 mm hm
 'mm hm'

M:(1065) (1.5) qu' on fait tomber le riz (0.7) en bas =
 that one makes fall the rice in down [French]
 '(1.5) That one drops rice (0.7) on the ground ='

S: (1066) [mm hm =
 mm hm
 'mm hm ='

M:(1067) = par terre =
 on ground [French]
 '= on the ground ='

S: (1068) = waaw =
 yes
 '= right ='

Previous turns had lacked latching (turn-boundaries less than 1/10th of a second in duration), but at (1059)g I initiate latching as well as overlap with Mr. Ndome. These discourse-level patterns are then sustained over several turns. At line (1060), after Mr. Ndome started in French to re-introduce the character El'Hadji Malick, I latched onto his lines, adding 'yes, of Touba- of Tivavouane', as if to quickly demonstrate that I had understood the narrative. My overlapping minimal responses ('mm hm') appear to do the same.

In the second story, Mr. Ndome uses forms of transposition (participant transposition and deictic transposition) to move me into the denotational-textual chronotope, but it is a chronotope whose elements have been carefully re-arranged so that it resembles the interactional text that preceded it. Mr. Ndome casts me as a social type, specifically, a morally undisciplined guest who is subject to the more learned and disciplined Mr. Ndome-as-El'Hadji Malick. He adds as well the stereotypic voice of the European smoker. In terms of social types, he thus positions himself as a man of learning, wisdom, and moral discipline. These contrastive voicing patterns in the story seem to parallel the way Mr. Ndome frequently tried to position himself as a knowledgeable and responsible teacher during the storytelling event, and the way he often tried to cast me as a mediocre and undisciplined student. There is, therefore, a degree of parallelism here between the social type Mr. Ndome assigns me (in the narrated-event chronotope or 'denotational text') and the position that he frequently puts me in (in the narrating-event chronotope or 'interactional text') (cf. [Wortham, 1994, 2001](#)). The trope of coevalness implemented by the forms of transposition brings these two planes together. However, the parallelism is not a mere reflection of the preceding interactional text. The denoted social relations in the story do not include any signs of tension or contestation between the voices, though tension did, in fact, exist interactionally in the phases of discourse that his story resembles. By editing out signs of tension, Mr. Ndome tries to impose social types on our relationship, types that he was unsuccessful at establishing earlier, that is, of himself as the learned, superordinate figure, and me as the struggling, subordinate learner. The denotational text is parallel to the interactional text, but only selectively so. It does not represent my struggle with the social voice Mr. Ndome tried to assign me.

4. Discussion: presentist histories of discourse

Through forms of transposition, Mr. Ndome aligns as coeval the denotational- and interactional-textual chronotopes, whereby he 'moves' me into his stories. The first story, again, is an *irrealis*, quasi-biographical past, where Mr. Ndome suffered from dysentery and where I am recruited to serve as his witness. The second is an allegorical tale, where Mr. Ndome assumes by analogy the role of El'Hadji Malick and where I become his undisciplined guest. Though different, in both cases Mr. Ndome moves me into his stories through cross-chronotope alignment in an effort to strategically revise interactional history. He creates parallels or analogies between his stories and recent phases of interaction, but he carefully edits out signs of interactional tension and conflict, and recruits me to roles in an effort to impose certain voices upon me.

Studies of the 'natural histories of discourse' ([Silverstein and Urban, 1996](#)) have focused on entextualization and contextualization as processes involving the production, circulation, and movement of 'texts' across time and space. I have focused here on smaller scale processes of entextualization (cf. [Perrino, 2002](#)), where the creation of denotational 'texts'

that represent the past (i.e., stories) simultaneously rework the present, specifically, the real-time, in-progress coherence of the interaction. Mr. Ndome designs a detachable denotational text that parallels the felt but unspoken interactional text. Because it parallels the past interaction, and because *démarche participative* is believed to exemplify by its very nature, it can therefore be said to ‘represent’ the prior phase of interaction that is its object, but it does not try to be a faithful and accurate representation. It distorts the recent interactional past, not to speak of Mr. Ndome’s own past. The instances of *démarche participative* attempt to ‘map’ (Irvine, 1997; Silverstein, 1997) denoted role relations onto the interactional surround (Wortham, 2001). In this sense, *démarche participative* does not merely reflect or parallel a previously sedimented interactional text; rather, it tries to creatively re-order and re-compose it for certain ends. To borrow from the language of historical criticism, one might compare Mr. Ndome to the presentist historian, in that his concern with the past is matched by a concern with the interactional present. Mr. Ndome’s presentism is not an *ad hoc* method for aligning story and storytelling event, for bringing together denotational-textual and interactional-textual chronotopes as coeval. It is, instead, a learned procedure with a social distribution, the study of which sheds light on cultural practices for aligning denotational and interactional planes of textuality, for not only bringing different chronotopes into being, but for bringing them into relation for pragmatic ends.

Acknowledgements

For their comments, I thank Asif Agha, Richard Parmentier, and Stanton Wortham. I am also very grateful to Marc Ndome for sharing his stories with me, without which this article could have never been conceived. My thanks go also to Mamadou Sow and Marc Ndome for patiently proofreading my Wolof transcription and Michael Lempert for his editorial suggestions. Of course, any remaining mistakes are my own.

This article is based on data that I collected in Senegal during pre-dissertation research in the summer of 2000 and of 2001, which was funded by the Department of Anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania, and during dissertation fieldwork conducted in 2002–2004 and funded by a Wenner-Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant (# 6957), and a Penfield Scholarship in Diplomacy, International Affairs, and *Belles Lettres*. I used the following four sources of orthographic conventions to transcribe Wolof in this article: Fal et al.’s *Dictionnaire Wolof-Français suivi d’un Index Français-Wolof* (1990), N’Diaye’s *Dizionario Wolof-Italiano* (1995), Munro and Gaye *Ay Baati Wolof: A Wolof Dictionary* (1997), and Diouf’s *Dictionnaire Wolof: Wolof-Français, Français-Wolof* (2001). Translations from Wolof into French, and from Wolof and French into English, as well the interlinear grammatical glosses, are my own.

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