Structure of the talk
- Introduction to Bainouk
- A funky phenomenon: literal alliterative concord (LAC)
- The importance of LAC for the nominal classification system of Bainouk
- The role of contact for LAC and Bainouk in general
- Outline of a research paradigm

Although the task focuses on a particular language, it is hoped that it will be of general relevance for the question of what knowledge to document in multilingual settings.

Introduction to Bainouk

West Africa

Casamance
- Casamance is a hotspot of linguistic diversity (and language endangerment) in Senegal
- Around 20 languages are spoken in the area.
- Their number is likely to be downplayed because of lumping tendencies dominant so far.
- A civil war made research impossible in the past.
**The Bainouk**
- Are the first known inhabitants of the Casamance region of Southern Senegal (de Lespinay 1987, 1996, Bühnen 1994)
- Occupy a number of isolated villages scattered throughout Casamance.
- Group their language into three main varieties, Gunyaamolo, Gubaher and Gujaher.
- Live in a complex multilingual context, where they speak between 3 and 6 languages on a daily basis.

**Not the language, a way of life is threatened**
- People don’t give up Bainouk because of:
  - Multilingualism
  - Confinement of Bainouk to the oral sphere
  - The role of the official language French
  - Lack of transmission to children

The villages themselves are disappearing due to massive rural exodus, and with them the sole context of use of Bainouk. People adopt a different pattern of multilingualism in towns.

**Domains of multilingualism**
- At home: Bainouk (and Wolof)
- In the fields: Bainouk, Joola, and Mandinka
- On the way to town: Joola, Mandinka, Wolof and French
At the market: Joola, Mandinka, Wolof, and French

Far-reaching convergences due to contact

Baïnouk: sideeno

Joola: busaana

Literal alliterative concord (LAC) in Baïnouk

Mainly in French

Writing:

... and to a very limited extent in Baïnouk
The Baïnouk noun class system

Ca. 20 classes are organised in singular-plural pairings typical for Atlantic and Niger-Congo languages. All eligible nouns combine with diminutive and augmentative class markers.

Prefixless nouns in Baïnouk

According to Sauvageot (1967), ca 30% of the nominal lexicon are prefixless nouns with a suffixed plural that only occur with diminutive and augmentative prefixes.

Concord (agreement) in Baïnouk

A subset of prefixless nouns copies the first syllable of the stem onto agreeing elements.

Literal alliterative concord (LAC) in Baïnouk

However, LAC is not unconstrained. Only a subset prefixless nouns exhibits it, the others take the agreement suffixes –n and –Vŋ.

The role of contact in LAC

Hypothesis: prefixless nouns are loanwords

According to Sauvageot (1967), the majority of prefixless nouns are loanwords, mainly from Mandinka, a Mande language without noun classes.

However, suffixed plurals are also attested in the related language Buy (Doneux 1991), which has been less in contact with Mandinka. Suffixed class markers are attested in several Atlantic languages alongside or instead of prefixes.
Prefixes that are not quite prefixes

fajamen > Joola e-jamen (Sg.)/si-jamen (Pl.)

Where does fa come from?

febi ‘goat’ in Bainouk Gubaher and archaic form in Gunyaamolo

fa- NC prefix in other Atlantic languages, among them the closely related Buy (Doneux 1991)

Hypothesis: LAC comes about through the combination of etymological knowledge and borrowing.

Outline of a research paradigm

It’s a lot of work!

- Inclusion of data from all three varieties of Bainouk.
- Establishment of an inventory of nouns with agreement properties in all Bainouk varieties and the contact languages.
- Combination of sociolinguistic data with linguistic data in order to determine plausibility and direction of borrowing.

Combining sociolinguistic and linguistic data to corroborate assumptions on borrowing

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bainouk</th>
<th>Joola</th>
<th>Mandinka</th>
<th>Wolof</th>
<th>French</th>
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<td>Under 18</td>
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Definition/classification/word creation tasks

- Is a bugusu
  - a) an instrument for cutting
  - b) a fruit
  - c) a body part?
- Kamun means ‘steering wheel’. How do you say ‘this steering wheel’?
- Invent a Bainouk word for ‘window’.

More ideas?