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Form and meaning in Fulfulde: a morphophonological study of Maasinankoore

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Chapter one

Introduction

1.1 THE LANGUAGE AND ITS SPEAKERS

Fulfulde is the language of the Fulbe spelt **Fulbe** in the Fulfulde orthography. Like all generalizations this claim needs some modification because there is a variety of terms for the language (Arnott 1970a:1) and there is no clear definition for the people. The two language internal names for the language are Pulaar, which is used in Senegal and Mauritania, and Fulfulde, which is used in Mali and further eastwards. As the data of this thesis are mainly collected in Mali the term Fulfulde is used as a cover term for the whole dialect continuum (see section 1.2).

The main problem, however, lies in the fact that the concept of Fulbe is difficult to describe. There is no clear definition of the term Fulbe or its singular Pullo. The most readily provided definitions are circular: “Fulbe are people who call themselves Fulbe”, or “Fulbe are people who are called Fulbe”. Even with these definitions problems arise about whom to include, because it is not everybody who calls him or herself a Pullo who is considered to be a Pullo by others (see Nicolas 1981, Schilder 1994).

Language cannot be used as the sole criterion for defining the Fulbe because in some areas people who call themselves Fulbe and are generally referred to by others as Fulbe have been assimilated into other dominant groups (like the Bambara in Southern Mali, the Hausa in Nigeria) and they no longer speak Fulfulde. By contrast, Fulfulde must of course be said to be the property of all people for whom it is the mother tongue. Yet, there are a number of social and “ethnic” groups which have been assimilated into the Fulbe society and whose members are not considered to be Fulbe even though their mother tongue is Fulfulde, e.g. the **Sebbe** (also named Sorogo or Bozo). It is therefore more correct to say that Fulfulde is the language of the Fulbe society, or **pulaaku**.

1.1.1 PULAAKU

All Fulfulde speaking people use the terms Pullo, Fulbe, and **pulaaku** (or **pulaagu**). The meanings of the terms Pullo and Fulbe are hardly investigated, but it is difficult to find a study about the Fulbe which does not mention the word **pulaaku**. Different authors, however, use different translations, which might be related to regional differences or the fact that they performed their investigation amongst different social groups.

Linguistic literature

Noye (1989:125) describing the dialect of Jamaare (Diamaré) in Cameroon translates **pulaaku** as the physical appearance and the moral code of the Fulbe (“type physique peul; code moral peul”). For Nigeria, Taylor (1932:59) translates **pulaaku** as Fulaniry. Zoubko (1980:404) translates **pulaaku** as the total of characteristic qualities of the Fulbe (“ensemble de qualités caractéristiques des Peuls”). She does not indicate a particular

dialect as her source. Mohamadou (1985:87), describing Aadamaawa, translates **pulaaku** both as that which is characteristic of the Fulbe and as the Fulbe culture (“caractéristique de ce qui est peul”, “culture peule”). Fagerberg, in her language course of the Maasina dialect (1984, part II:52), translates **pulaaku** as “the Fulbe way, the characteristics and behaviour of Fulbe”.

Anthropological literature

In the anthropological literature, the term **pulaaku** has often been described as the (ideal) behaviour which is said to be typical of the Fulbe, or the ideology of the Fulbe. Such a description is given by Bocquené (1981:235) who describes **pulaaku** as a moral code of honour, and by Dupire (1962, 1970, 1981) who translates **pulaaku** as the way to behave in “Peul” (“la manière de se comporter en Peul”). She writes:

Le **pulaaku** c'est à la fois la coutume et un ensemble de qualités dont certains sont prônées par bien d'autres sociétés africaines — résignation (**munyal**), intelligence (**hakkillo**), courage (**cuusal**) — mais dont l'une semble à l'origine lié à un tempérament introverti et à des conditions de vie pastorale particuliers: la retenue ou la réserve (**semteende**). (Dupire 1970:189)*

Kirk-Greene (1986:41-42) decided to change Taylor's “uglier” term Fulaniry (which he wrongly quotes as Fulanity) to the more acceptable Fulaniness and describes **pulaaku** as “characteristics of the Fulbe”. Riesman (1977:128) writes “that the term has a meaning which obliges [us] to put the accent on the social: **pulaaku** means not only the qualities appropriate to a Fulani but also and at the same time the group of Fulani men possessing these qualities”. He thus emphasizes two aspects in the meaning of the word **pulaaku**: “the men and their manner of being”.

Both linguists and anthropologists seem to construe their own definition, whereby the linguists show a preference for occasional translation equivalents and the anthropologists make an effort to fill in the often artificial translations provided by the linguists. Recently, Fulbe identity has become a controversial topic in the anthropological literature. For example Bierschenk (1992:514) wonders whether it is possible to transpose explanations of terms related to the Fulbe culture like **pulaaku** which were formulated for a particular geographic, social and historical situation (e.g. North Benin) to another situation. He argues that this would imply that something which can be described as “Fulbe culture” exists independent of time, place and social circumstances, rendering individual empirical research of local “culture” superfluous. My investigation in Maasina where **pulaaku** is defined in a way different from the way in which it is defined in other Fulfulde speaking areas confirms this point.

* **Pulaaku** is at the same time the customs and the set of qualities some of which are also valued by several other African societies — resignation (**munyal**), intelligence (**hakkillo**), courage (**cuusal**) — but of which one of these seems to be primarily linked to an introverted temperament and to the particular conditions of pastoral life: restraint or reservedness (**semteende**).

Pulaaku in Maasina

The descriptions of **pulaaku** which I came across during my fieldwork in Maasina are different from the general understanding of the concept **pulaaku** in the literature. All suggestions of a meaning referring to a special behaviour, special appearance, or a moral code associated with the word **pulaaku** were categorically denied by Fulfulde speakers in Maasina, the majority of whom opt for a description of **pulaaku** as “the Fulbe society”. The definition provided by the Malian linguists working for MAPE (1983a:16): Fulbe community (“communauté peul”) summarizes the following descriptions which were given to me by members of different social groups within the Fulbe society in Maasina:

pullo baleejo:	Fulbe society (“société peul”)
jaawandɔ:	Fulbe ethnic group, the Fulbe milieu (“l’ethnie peul, le milieu peul”)
diimaajo:	all the Fulbe together (“l’ensemble de tous les peuls”)
pullo bodɛejo:	all those who speak Fulfulde, and in particular all the Fulbe (“les gens qui parlent peul en gros, en particulier les peuls”)

The term **pulaaku** clearly refers only to the Fulbe society. It is not used to refer to the moral codes or the value systems which exist within this society. These notions are indicated with other words like **ndimu** ‘nobility’, **teddeengal** ‘respect, honour’, **yaage** ‘restraint’, **gacce** ‘reservedness, shame’, **munyal** ‘patience’, **kulol** ‘fear, respect’, **semte** ‘embarrassment, shame’.

All descriptions of **pulaaku** in Maasina refer to the ‘Fulbe society’. However, a Fulfulde speaker’s definition of who the Fulbe are appears to be dependent on the social group to which he/she belongs. The different social categories of the Fulbe society are defined according to the occupations which are associated with these groups. The Fulfulde society in Maasina includes the following social groups (cf. Gallais 1984:127-137, GRÉFUL 1993):

moodibo / moodibaabe	clergy, Koran teachers
pullo baleejo / fulbe baleebe	elite, sedentary
pullo bodɛejo / fulbe wodɛebe	herdsmen, nomadic or semi-nomadic
jaawandɔ / jaawambe	tradesmen, diplomats
nyeenyo / nyeeɣbe	craftsmen, praise singers:
maabo / maabuube	weavers
sakke / sakkeɣbe	leather workers
baylo / waylube	blacksmiths
labbo / lawbe	wood workers
diimaajo / riimaybe	agricultural labourers
cedɔ / sebbe	fishermen (Sorogo)

The most strict definitions of Pullo or Fulbe are mostly given by the sedentary elite (**fulbe baleebe** ‘black Fulbe’) who consider themselves and the nomadic herdsmen (**fulbe wodɛebe** ‘red Fulbe’) to be the only true or pure Fulbe. They have tried to consolidate and appropriate the name Fulbe for themselves only, in order to emphasize their supremacy and their prominent leading role in the Fulbe society. A **pullo baleejo** provided the following

definition: a true Pullo is someone who belongs to the offspring of one of the four brothers who are the mythological forefathers of the Fulbe. The family name is an indication of such a bloodline. According to the story told by this informant, these brothers were born in Tokror. The eldest brother Iisa is the ancestor of the Jalluŋbe whose family name can be Jallo, Dikko, Jah, Kelli, and Jall. The second brother Yahaya is the forefather of the Wurūŋbe or Baaŋbe called Ba, Boli, or Jagayete. The third brother Ruuraba is the forefather of the Ferrooŋbe such as the Sow, and the Sidibe. The fourth brother Aneesu is the forefather of the Fittooŋbe who have family names like Bari and Sankare. The offspring of these families are called Fulbe (Gallais 1984:128-129).

According to this most rigid definition, **jaawand'o**, pl. **jaawamŋbe**, 'traders' are not Fulbe, as they are thought to be the off-spring of a half-brother of the four Fulbe brothers, fathered by a slave (see also Gallais 1984:132). But a **jaawand'o** informant translating **pulaaku** as Fulbe ethnic group ("ethnie peul") defined himself as belonging to the Fulbe. So in their self-definition the **jaawamŋbe** consider themselves to be Fulbe.

However, the mythologically defined rigid definition also makes groups such as the **jaawand'o**, pl. **jaawamŋbe**, the **nyeenyo**, pl. **nyeeyŋbe** (craftsmen, praise singers) and the **diimaajo**, pl. **riimayŋbe** (ex-slaves, protégés, labourers, farmers) to be people without an ethnic identity. In Maasina itself people belonging to these social groups will indeed say that they are **jaawand'o** or **nyeenyo** or **diimaajo**. Outside Maasina however, they will give Fulbe as their ethnic affiliation. Only the Sorogo (**ced'do**, pl. **seŋŋbe**, also known as Bozo) have their own ethnic affiliation. Although many of them have Fulfulde as their mother tongue, I have never heard a **ced'do** claim that he or she was a Pullo in ethnic origin, although some who have Fulfulde as their mother tongue did say that they were Pullo by culture.

Riesman (1977), describing the Jelgooji in Burkina Faso, equates Fulbe with **rimŋbe** 'noblemen'. The term **dimo**, pl. **rimŋbe** includes the **fulŋbe baleeŋbe** (Fulbe elite) **fulŋbe wod'eŋbe** (herdsmen), the **jaawamŋbe**, and the **nyeeyŋbe**. This definition excludes only the **riimayŋbe** from the Fulbe society. This view was denied by a **diimaajo** who considered anyone who spoke the Fulfulde language to be a Pullo. He reported that the only language he knew was Fulfulde, and so did his father, his grandfather and his forefathers as far as he knew. He thought of himself as being part of the Fulbe culture and society and his definition of **pulaaku** therefore read: "all the Fulbe together".

As all of the above mentioned social groups indicated that they spoke the same Fulfulde, this present study can be said to be researching the language of the **pulaaku**, i.e. Fulbe society, rather than the language of the Fulbe elite. Consultants came from all social groups.

Hypothesis: pulaaku in other dialects also refers to the people

The hypothesis is that careful semantic research into the concept of **pulaaku** will reveal the meaning 'Fulbe society' also in dialects other than Maasina. The existence of the expression **laawol pulaaku** 'way of the Fulbe' in the dialect of the Hausa States (Kirk-Greene 1986:42) seems to confirm this hypothesis (**laawol** literally means 'way'). It is unlikely that **laawol pulaaku** can mean 'way of the Fulbe' while **pulaaku** on its own would have the meaning 'characteristics of the Fulbe'.

Other indications pointing to this assumption can be found in the literature in places where researchers reproduce the words of their informants literally. For instance Ogawa (1993:131) quotes a person from the Jenngelbe in Senegal who says: “What I know about **pulaagu** is that **pulaagu** and the Fulbe are the same thing”. Another example can be found in Van Santen’s study of the relations between the Mafa and the Fulbe in Cameroon. She reports that most people (both Mafa and Fulbe) who she asked to explain the term **pulaaku** replied to her inquiries as follows: “**pulaaku** is somebody who is born Fulbe” (1993:49). Both quotations seem to indicate that the speakers utilize a definition of **pulaaku** which is void of any moral implications but merely refers to the people. Neither author, however, seems to have used the information in these quotes to depart from Dupire’s definition in their description of the meaning of the term **pulaaku**.

In Maasina the appropriate elitist Fulbe behaviour includes moral codes like not eating much, not having a big posture, speaking in a low voice, not telling lies, sharing your wealth with everybody (i.e. you should not refuse to help someone in need). The last act especially (sharing wealth) is an obligation for the elite. If someone does all these things the expression in Maasina is: **a pullo dimo** ‘you are a noble pullo’.

The statements of the Ringimaaji in Cameroon link an ideal moral behaviour to the term **pulaaku**: “**pulaaku** gives rules to man and wife in that you should treat your wife very kindly, e.g. you should not nag her in front of strangers. If there is anything wrong you settle it calmly, the two of you”.

It is not always clear whether the given definitions indicate a regional difference in meaning of the term **pulaaku**, or whether the researchers tried to find similarities between the concept of **pulaaku** in their research area and what had already been written about **pulaaku** in the literature. It is probable that different social and political developments in the many areas where Fulfulde is spoken have caused a semantic shift of the word **pulaaku**. The question is the following: is the interpretation of **pulaaku** as ‘appropriate Fulbe behaviour’ in other areas an extension of the “original” meaning ‘Fulbe society’ which can still be found in Maasina? Or has the term **pulaaku** in the Maasina dialect lost the meaning component of ‘appropriate Fulbe behaviour’?

1.1.2 FULFULDE LANGUAGE NAMES

In the literature, the Fulfulde language is known under several other names. The French name “peul” is derived from **pəl** which is the Wolof word for the Fulbe people in Senegal (Nussbaum 1970:V-28). In English the name Fulani, designating both the language and people, has been borrowed from the Hausa in Nigeria where the word **filàanii** is the name of the people (Ma Newman 1990:104). The term **fellata** comes from the Kanuri language, originally describing the Fulbe in Borno, it is now also used in Sudan for Fulbe and West Africans in general (Abu-Manga 1986:7). The German linguist August Klingenberg created the name “Ful” for this language on the basis of linguistic analysis of the stem **ful-** found in the name of the people Fulbe, its singular Pullo, and in the names of the language Pulaar, Pular, Fulaare, and Fulfulde which are found in the different dialects. As stated above, the term Pulaar is mostly used for the Fulfulde dialect spoken in Senegal and Mauritania (Fagerberg 1984). David W. Arnott, the most well-known British scholar who worked on this language, proposed the more euphonious name **fula**, a form which is used by the Mandinka and Susu in Gambia (Arnott 1970a:1). His proposal is widely used by

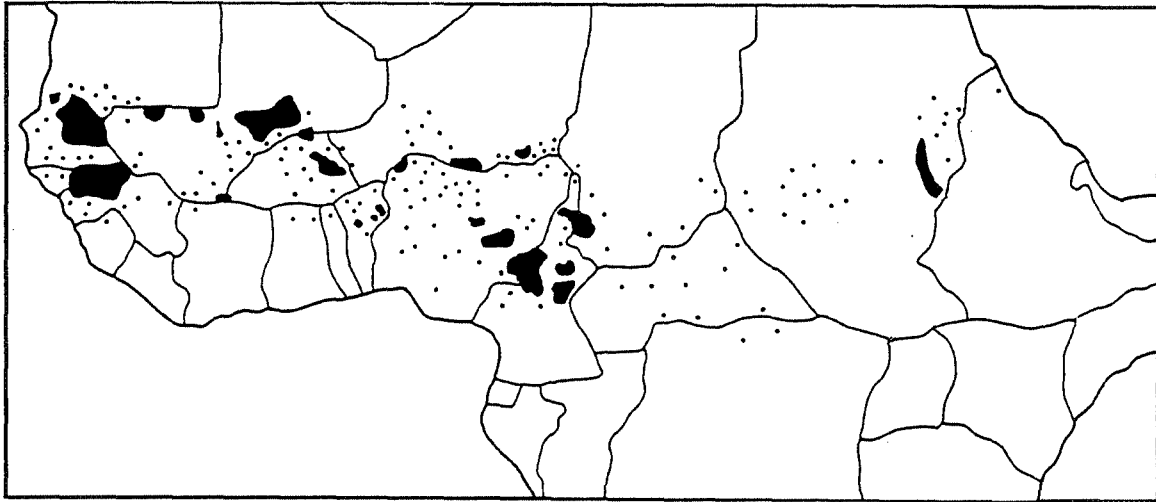
linguists in the English-speaking linguistic community. Presently, a number of linguists working on the language use the term “Fulfulde”, the language name used by its speakers in Futa Jallon (Diallo 1991) and in most dialects from Mali (Fagerberg-Diallo 1984) and eastwards (e.g. McIntosh 1984, Abu-Manga 1986).

Findings of the present study indicate that the language name Fulfulde is built on a reduplicated stem. The language name combines the stem **ful-**, with the class suffix **-re** of the NDE class. The stem **ful-** is used to indicate anything which refers to a Pullo or Fulbe. The NDE class suffix is used to form language names because of its association with the meaning of the word **daaⁿde** ‘throat; voice; speech; language’ (see section 7.2.4). The repetition of the verb root implies that the meaning expressed by the single verb root was not achieved and therefore the action of the verb has to be repeated. The reduplicated forms refer to an incompleteness or imperfection (see section 5.3.3). In Jamaare (Noye 1989:125) the meaning of incompleteness can be found in the word with the reduplicated stem in **pulfulo**, pl. **fulfulbe**, which is translated as a person who has become a Pullo by adoption, having acquired the language and the customs. So a **pulfulo** is then almost a Pullo, i.e. by language and culture, but not completely, i.e. not by birth. The hypothesis is that the same meaning of the reduplication of the stem **ful-** is present in the language name Fulfulde.

So the name Fulfulde expresses the fact that it is (also) the language of people who have integrated into the Fulbe society, having acquired the language and customs, implying that Fulfulde is not only the language of people who are (mythologically) blood-line related Fulbe. Without the reduplication the combination of the stem **ful-** and a class marker referring to language (NDE class) or word (KA class) would probably have had the meaning ‘Fulbe language’. Indeed, in Maasina there is actually another language name: **fulaare** which can be translated as ‘Fulbe language’. It is a very poetic name for the language.

1.2 FULFULDE DIALECTS

The Fulfulde language can be described as one continuing chain of dialects, spoken in the whole Sahelian and Sudanese climatic zone of West Africa. The Fulfulde dialects are mutually intelligible. From one village to the next the Fulfulde dialects are perfectly understandable, but when two people from the outer ends meet, they have more difficulties in understanding each other. A Malian Pullo visiting the Ringimaaji in Cameroon was given the nickname *Sesesese*, because all the time he had to urge the people to speak more slowly: *seese seese* ‘slowly, slowly’, otherwise he could not follow the Ringimaaji Fulfulde from Cameroon.



Areas where Fulfulde is spoken

There are still a number of Fulfulde dialects which have not been the subject of study, and therefore a true dialectal division of all the Fulfulde dialects cannot be given. In the literature a dichotomy has been created between the Eastern and the Western Fulfulde dialects. This division has been based on the comparison of the Fulfulde from Senegal (Pulaar) with the Fulfulde from Eastern Nigeria (Gombe) and Cameroon (Aadamaawa), which have received considerable attention. As it happens, these dialects are spoken at the two outer ends of the Fulfulde language continuum. However, studies of the dialects in-between show that it is not possible to place a clear boundary between the Fulfulde dialects. Some isoglosses distinguishing east from west have been mentioned in the literature, but the study of the geographically intermediate dialect of Maasina already shows the crudity of these isoglosses. Jungraithmayr and Abu-Manga (1989:xxi) give the different verbal conjugations for the completive middle voice as an isogloss for the distinction between western and eastern dialects. However, forms classified as both eastern and western do occur in Maasina.

western dialects	Maasina	eastern dialects
<u>-iima</u>	<u>-iima</u>	-ake
-ima	<u>-ike</u>	<u>-ike</u>
		-oke

It is of course characteristic for a dialect continuum that the linguistic boundaries between the different dialects should be vague. The distinction of the different dialect areas are based on sociological and geographical coherence. The following division of the Fulfulde dialect zones is taken from the work of a group of Malian researchers (MAPE 1983a: 13-14).

<i>Dialect region, dialect group:</i>	<i>Where spoken:</i>
1 Fuuta Jallon	Guinea, Sierra Leone
2 Fulakunda	Cassamance, Gambia, Guinea Bissau
3 Fuuta Tooro	Senegal, Mauritania, Western Mali
4 Maasina	West Maasina, East Maasina, Duwansa (Douentza), Seeno
5 Barani	Barani, Bobo-Dioulasso
6 Liptaako (Volta)	Burkina Faso: South-Tougan, Ouahigouya, Mossi-Gurma, Jelgooji-Liptaako-Gurma, Gaamoofe
7 Sokkoto	West Niger: Say, Wuro-Gelajajo, Dallol Basso, Sokkoto
8 Borgu	Benin
9 Wodaafe	Niger
10 Hausa states	Central Niger, East Niger, Central Nigeria, Northern Katsina, Southern Katsina, Central Kano, the Bororo of Kano and Zaria, Southern Zaria, Plateau, Bauchi, Bornu, Gombe, Eastern Wodaafe
11 Aadamaawa	'Yola, Maayo Ine, Maayo Faran, Hooseere, Benoue, Jamaare (Diamaré), Bagirmi, Bamenda (Eastern Nigeria and Cameroon)

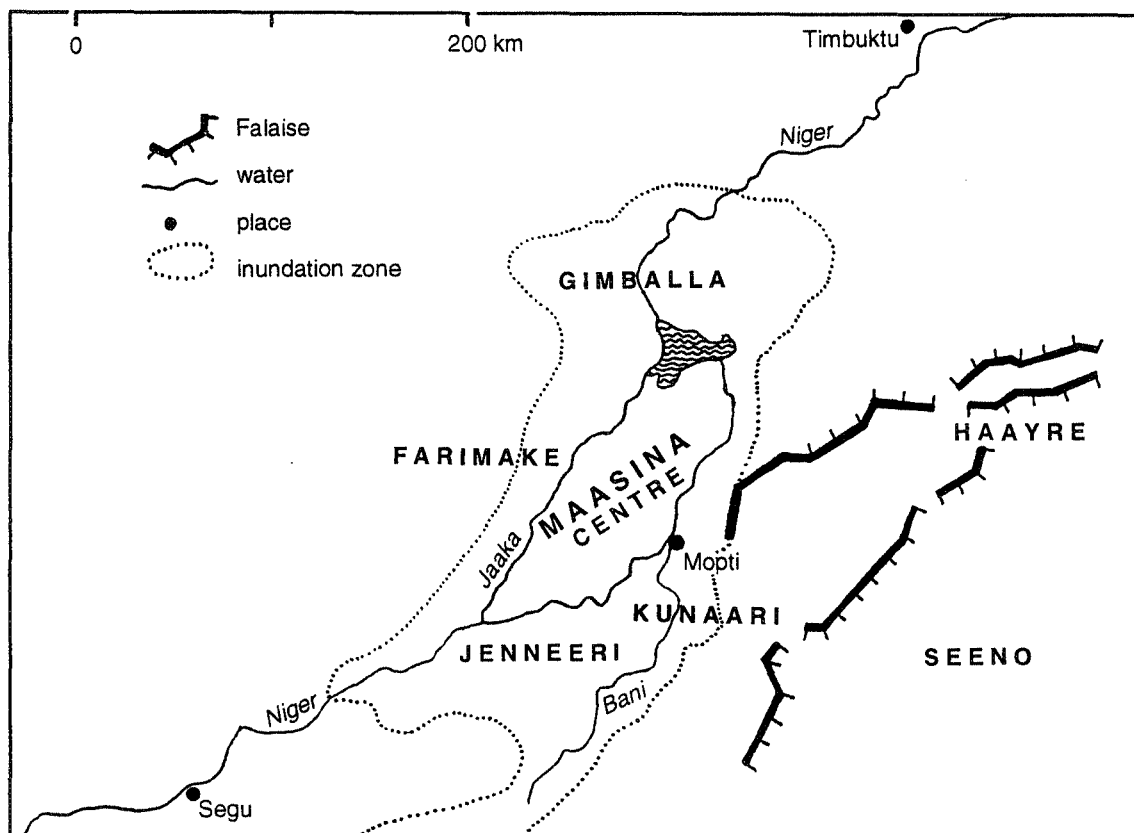
The division above does not include the Fulfulde which is spoken in Sudan, Ethiopia, Chad, Northern Togo, Northern Ghana, and in the Central African Republic. According to Abu-Manga (1986:33) the dominant form of Fulfulde spoken in Sudan is Gombe (Arnott 1970a), which means that the Fulfulde of Sudan would belong to the dialects of the Hausa states. Arnott (1970a:3) classifies Gombe as “central Fulfulde” which is here called the Fulfulde of the Hausa states.

Fulfulde dialect areas in Maasina

In order to establish the approximate boundaries of the Fulfulde dialects in Mali the MAPE research group (1983a:18-36) used a comparative word list of 200 basic words, with an additional list of cultural items, a sociolinguistic test, and small text samples. Because of the relative homogeneity of the Fulfulde variants, the intelligibility test is not a useful criterion for the determination of dialect boundaries (MAPE 1983a:285). The linguistic data were compared using the lexicostatistic method. The conclusion of the research verified to a large extent the initial hypothesis that the dialects would fall into three groups, in the same way as the historical and social division of the Fulbe in Mali falls into three groups: Fuuta, Maasina, and Seeno. The research also showed the existence of some additional enclaves with their individual dialects. The dialects of the Haayre are put between square brackets, this study groups them with Maasina.

Main Fulfulde dialects in Mali (MAPE 1983a:16):

- 1 Maasina: Gimballa, Kunaari, Farimake, Fakala, Jenneeri, Kareeri, Kurumaari
- 2 Seeno: Jalasagu, Wonkoro,
[Haayre: Duwansa, Booni]
- 3 Fuuta: Nyooro, Madiina, Geetema, Kayes
- 4 enclaves: Kenyeba, Nampaala, Falea, Dilli



Dialect areas in the Inner Niger-Delta

Maasina is often used to denote the areas over which the Maasina empire ruled, thus including Haayre and the Seeno. The present study defines Maasinankore as both the Maasina spoken in the Inner Niger Delta and in the Haayre, excluding the dialects spoken in Seeno and the Banyagara region. Booni and Duwansa are included in Seeno-Haayre by MAPE, these towns are located in the Haayre which is treated here as a separate region with a Fulfulde dialect which shows more resemblance to Maasinankore than to Seenonkoore. Seenonkoore is the Fulfulde spoken in Seeno. Prenasalized consonants in Maasina and Haayre have become fully nasalized, i.e. nasal, consonants in Seeno. The verb stem does show initial consonant alternation in Maasina and Haayre, but not in Seeno. The conclusion that the Fulfulde of Maasina and Haayre form one dialect group which is distinct from the Fulfulde spoken in the Seeno is arrived at by looking at the following data provided by the MAPE research:

Maasina	Haayre	Seeno	
"duŋ"gu	"duŋ"gu	nuuŋu	'rainy season'
naa"ge	naa"ge	naaŋe	'sun'
"doo"di	"doo"di	nooni	'ashes'
mi warii	mi warii	mi warii	'I have come'
ɓe "garii	ɓe "garii	ɓe warii	'they have come'
ma"de "garataa	"dey "garataa	mane wartaa	'when will you come?'
mi hokkii	mi hokkii	mi hokkii	'I have given'
ɓe kokkii	ɓe kokkii	ɓe hokkii	'they have given'

It must be noted that the research for this thesis did not take place on such a large scale and in such a vast area as the MAPE research. Fieldwork has been done on the Fulfulde of Gimballa, Kunaari, Jenneeri and in Tenenku and Toggere Kumba, which are included in Maasinankooɓe. Some work with speakers from the Haayre (Duwansa) has also been included, but when data from this region are used this is always explicitly mentioned.

1.2.1 MAASINA

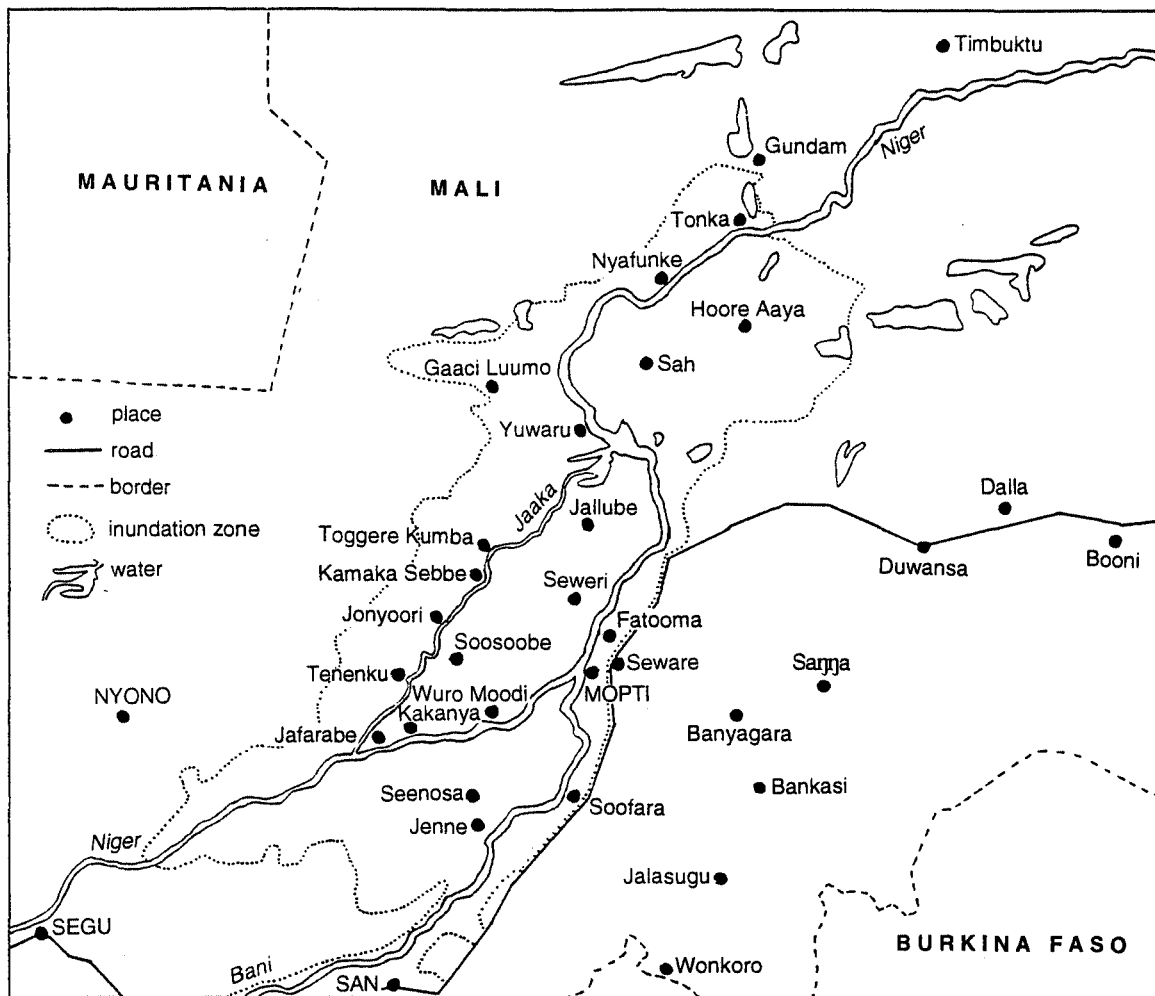
The subject of the present study is Maasinankooɓe, i.e. the variant of the Fulfulde language which is spoken by the people of Maasina, the Maasinankooɓe. It is also the second language of many people in the area. The exact number of Fulfulde speakers is unknown. In Mali the number of Fulbe is estimated to be 700,000 (MAPE 1983a:16). Another estimate indicates that there are 1,000,000 Fulfulde speakers in Mali (Fagerberg-Diallo 1984:92).

Fulfulde is the dominant language in Maasina. Other important languages are Sorogo (Bozo) and Soninke (Sarakollé, Marka). Songhay is especially important around Jenne. There are a number of other Malian languages which are spoken in Maasina. Bambara, Malinke, French, Tamashek, Dogon, and Maur (Hassanya Arabic) can also be heard in Maasina (DNAFLA 1980). Tioulenta (1991:50) also mentions the existence of a pidgin called “diakois” [French orthography] based on Soninke and Sorogo which is spoken in Ja and a few surrounding villages. A pidgin based on Fulfulde and Sorogo is spoken on the River Jaaka and is called Kaamaka Seɓɓe (Tioulenta 1991:66). In Mopti a special variant of Fulfulde exists where all the noun class concords are replaced by the concord of the 'O class (cf. Tioulenta 1991:201-202). The impression is that this is a speech form used to talk to foreigners and it is sometimes used as a lingua franca: a language used in trade by people (often Bambara) for whom Fulfulde is not the mother tongue. Statements about the sociological composition of its speakers needs further investigation. This variant is not considered to be Maasinankooɓe.

The study of Fulfulde dialects in Mali by a team of Malian researchers (MAPE 1983a), the language course by Sonja Fagerberg-Diallo (1984) and the sociolinguistic study on the integration of Bambara and French loan-words into Fulfulde by Témoré Tioulenta (1991) have been very useful for the present study. Detailed information about the history and sociology of the Maasina area can be found in a number of academic studies (Ba & Daget 1962, Brown 1969, Gallais 1984, Gardi 1985, Robinson 1985, Sanankoua 1990, Tioulenta 1991, De Bruijn & Van Dijk 1993, 1994, forthcoming), and in the Fulfulde oral literature which is collected in Maasina (Ba et al. 1974, Seydou 1972, 1976a, 1976b, 1991). More titles can be found in the “Bibliographie générale du monde peul” edited by Seydou (1977) and in the “Bulletin de liaison des études peules 2” (1991).

Some historical factors have to be mentioned because they are important for the definition of dialects in Mali. The Maasina empire ruled by Seeku Aamadu from 1818-1853 constituted a homogeneous society during which the status of Fulfulde was enhanced. The basis for the Fulbe hegemony over Maasina was probably already laid after the subjugation of the Soninke by Fulbe clans around the river Jaaka around the middle of the 16th century, at which time Fulfulde started to be the dominant language of the area (Tioulenta 1991). The war between the Maasinankooɓe and the Fuutankooɓe, which lasted from 1862-1893, is another socio-historical factor that enforced a demarcation between the two dialects:

Maasinankoore and Fuutankoore. Maasinankoore borders on Fuutankoore in the west and on Seenonkoore in the east and south east. The regions of Banyagara and Seeno (where Seenonkoore is spoken) were dominated by the Maasina empire, but remained relatively independent since strict control must have been impossible (De Bruijn & Van Dijk 1993).

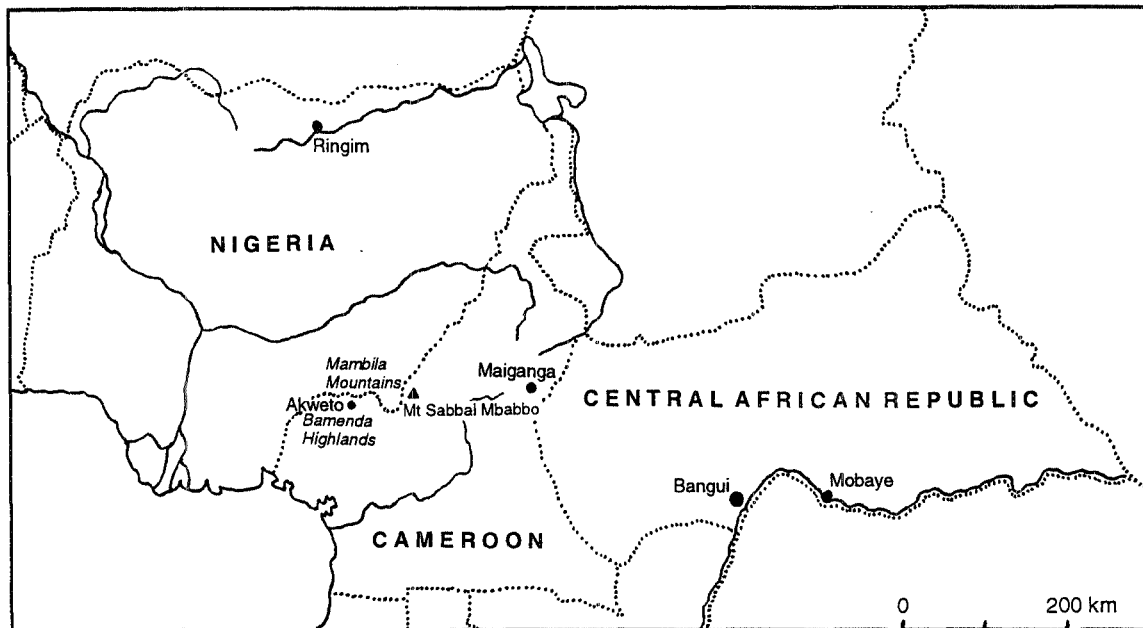


The Inner Niger-Delta

Fieldwork on Maasinankoore was done from November 1987 until May 1988 during which I stayed in Mopti, Jenne, and Seware. Visits were made to Seenosa, Fatooma, Sofara, Banyagara, and Bamako. In May 1989 and in May 1990 I did fieldwork in Paris with a speaker from Toggere Kumba in Mali. In January and February 1991 another period of fieldwork was spent in Toggere Kumba, with visits to Tenenku, Mopti, Duwansa, Dalla, and Bamako. In March 1992 I worked in Dortmund (Germany) with two Fulfulde speakers from Jonyoori and Siro (which is between Tenenku and Jonyoori). The three main consultants were a **pullo baleejo**, a **ced'do** whose mother tongue was Fulfulde, and a **jaawando**. Their utterances have been checked with speakers of other social groups.

1.2.2 RINGIMAAJI

The Fulbe in North West Province of Cameroon are part of the **lenyol** 'lineage' of sedentary Ringimaajiijo (pl. Ringimaaji'en) often abbreviated to Ringimaaji. They are better known by the name Mbororo (Bocquené 1981). In fact, the name Ringimaaji refers to the species of cows which are owned by the Ringimaaji'en. The forefathers of the Ringimaaji'en, or rather the initial breeding stock of their cows, originate from the place Ringim near Kano in Nigeria. The word Ringimaaji'en is made up of the stem **riŋ^hgim**, a plural formation **-aaji** referring to cows, and a class suffix **-²en** referring to people. The grandfather of the main Ringimaaji consultant had moved into the montane grassfields of the North West Province of Cameroon some seventy years before (information gathered in 1988) and had been taxable to the Laamiido of Ringim in Nigeria. Nowadays the people of the Ringimaaji live in the montane grassfields in Mambila in Nigeria and in the North West Province in Cameroon, some people live in Sabbal Mbabbo, some in Maiganga in Cameroon, and some people live around Mobaye in the Central African Republic. According to a Ringimaajiijo from Cameroon the people of Ringim in Nigeria have lost their language and only talk Hausa. He said that they therefore can no longer claim to be Ringimaaji'en.



Some locations of the Ringimaaji

The area in the montane grassfields is very fertile (volcanic sediment). Grazing occurs between 1500 and 2000 metres in the rainy season. In the dry season the cattle are taken into the valleys at about 800 meters (Frantz 1986:17). The lingua franca in Donga-Mantung is Weskos (Pidgin English). The Fulbe in Donga-Mantung were minimally involved with Fombina, Aadamaawa.

During a visit to Cameroon from May to July 1988 and in August 1994 some notes were made on the Fulfulde dialect of the Ringimaaji in Nkambe and Akweto. Some data from the Ringimaaji dialect are used to clarify the historical complications which occur in the initial consonant alternations (Chapter 3).

It is not clear which other Fulfulde dialects are most similar to the Fulfulde of the Ringimaaji. The Ringimaaji dialect shows a similarity with the Gombe dialect described by Arnott and with the Kaceccereere dialect described by McIntosh. Probably the Ringimaaji dialect has to be grouped together with what Arnott calls “central dialects”, here called Fulfulde of the Hausa states.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH TOPICS

This study is mainly based on data of a dialect of the Fulfulde language which is spoken in the Inner Niger Delta in Mali, in Maasina. This dialect (Maasinankoore) has so far received only little attention (Fagerberg-Diallo 1984, Tioulenta 1991) and this study is an effort to fill this linguistic gap in the study of Fulfulde. The description is limited to the morphophonology because an important aim of this research is to find explanations for the alternative forms of the Fulfulde noun class suffixes.

The description of the Fulfulde of Maasina is divided into two parts: phonology and word formation. The phonology has been studied to explore the possibility of phonological conditioning of the variant suffix forms (as suggested by Klingenheben 1941, Skousen 1972, and Anderson 1976). However, no phonological complementary distribution of the forms of the noun class suffixes can be found. Previous studies by Mohamadou (1985) and Paradis (1986) indicated that there is a correlation between types of word derivation and suffix forms. The research into this correlation is further elaborated in part II on word formation.

Part I: phonology

In the phonology part different chapters discuss the speech sounds, the consonant alternations, and the syllable.

Chapter two discusses issues such as the ATR vowel harmony, the occurrence of nasalized and laryngealized vowels, the phonetic nature of the laryngealized consonant {**ɓ**, **ɗ**, **ɟ**}, automatic prenasalization of voiced stops which follow a nasal consonant, the phonetic nature and the distribution of the labial approximants {**β**, **w**, **ɸ**}.

The phonological changes which occur word initially in verbs and nouns, without an apparent phonological context which conditions these changes, are further elaborated on in Chapter three. Comparison of Maasinankoore (Mali) with other dialects like Ringimaaji (Cameroon) and Pulaar (Mauritania and Senegal) shows that paradigm levelling is going on in words with the initial continuant consonants [**w**] and [**y**]. For example, in Maasina reanalysis is going on, replacing the alternation series **w** : **g** : ⁿ**g** with **w** : **b** : ^m**b** before the round vowels {**o**, **ɔ**, **u**} in productive derivations. This paradigm levelling occurs to regularize the word initial changes and it causes the occurrence of the following complicated consonant alternations in the stem **wɔf**- ‘to bark’.

verb: [w-b-mb]	noun: [w-g-ng]
rawaa ⁿ du ^ʔ ana wɔfa ‘the dog is barking’	wɔfaa ⁿ gɔ ‘(one sound of) barking’
dawaadi ^ʔ ana ^m ɓɔfa ‘the dogs are barking’	gɔfaali ‘(sounds of) barking’

Attention is also given to stem-final consonant alternations, especially to Klingenheben’s hamza assimilation in words like **debbɔ** / **rewwɛ**. ‘woman’. The assimilation of the

underlying stem final [w] to the underlying suffix initial consonant [ʔ] has resulted in the long plosive [bb]. The same process (merger of a glottal stop with a continuant consonant) is reconstructed in word initial positions where an initial plosive consonant occurs. Restrictions on the syllable structure are responsible for the shortening of an initial long plosive to a single plosive consonant in word initial (i.e. syllable initial) position.

The syllable plays an important role in the phonological changes attested in Fulfulde. The whole of Chapter four is therefore dedicated to the influence of the syllable on the possible length of vowels and consonants, the possible occurrence of epenthetic vowels, the possible sequence of segments according to their sonority, the metrical structure of words and their stress assignment rules and intonation patterns. The study of the syllable in Fulfulde is based on views expressed in studies by Clements & Keyser (1983), Hyman (1985), Hayes (1985), Schadeberg (1987), and Venneman (1988).

Part II: word formation

The part on word formation contains chapters on the verbal system and adverbials; the grade system (of the suffixes); the nominal classes; and the nominal modifiers and pronominals.

The structure of the verb is described in Chapter five. Many verbal markers which appear in the formation of verb forms reoccur in the formation of nouns and other nominals. It is therefore necessary to understand the structure of the verb stem and the verbal markers which occur in this verb stem, in order to understand the word formation of nominals in Fulfulde. An attempt is made to describe the semantic nature of the verbal extensions. Maasinankoore has about thirty verbal conjugational suffixes. These are analyzed as combinations of a more limited number of underlying elements, arrived at by looking for a one-to-one correspondence in form and meaning of the semantic categories of mood, voice, tense, aspect, polarity and discourse expressed in the different verbal conjugational suffixes.

The preceding description of the morphophonology of Fulfulde serves as the basis for explaining the problem discussed in Chapter six: how does one explain the different forms of the noun class suffixes in Fulfulde. The assumption has often been that the different suffix forms were allomorphs. The discovery of the phonological conditioning for this allomorphy was thought to be only a matter of time. However, the issue of the suffix grades has been discussed here from a new angle: the different forms of the noun class suffixes are taken to represent different meanings. The different suffix forms are used in different semantic types of word derivation. In this study I demonstrate that the different noun class suffixes, e.g. -ɔ, -wɔ, -gɔ, -"gɔ for the NGO class, are actually compound forms of a grade marker and a class marker. The grade markers carry derivational meanings. The grade B marker is cognate with the associative verbal extension, the grade C marker is cognate with the circumstantial verbal extension, and the grade D marker is cognate with the referential marker. Grade A is unmarked, its suffix form consists underlyingly only of the class marker. The meanings expressed in the grade markers combine with the underlying form of the class suffix, thus resulting in four different suffix forms which are not allomorphs, but which convey different (derivational) meanings.

When all the words which are formed with a suffix form of grade A are compared, an overwhelming tendency that they describe "objects" can be discovered, i.e. not only things

one can touch or see but also the cognate pivot of a verb, i.e. the cognate object or the unmarked object or the cognate state of a stative verb.

things to touch or see:	hin-ere ⁿ de	‘nose’		
	fad-ɔ ⁿ gɔ	‘sandal’		
cognate pivot of verb:	ʔuj-iri	‘castrate (bull)’	ʔuj-ude	‘to castrate’
	jim-ol ⁿ gol	‘song’	yim-ude	‘to sing’
	fij-ɔ ⁿ gɔ	‘game’	fij-ude	‘to play’
cognate state of verb:	ʔanⁿd-al ⁿ gal	‘knowledge’	ʔanⁿd-ude	‘to know’
	sey-ɔ ⁿ gɔ	‘happiness’	sey-aade	‘to be happy’
	mup-al ⁿ gal	‘patience’	mup-ude	‘to be patient’

The conclusion is that different meanings are associated with the different grades. The meaning generally present in grade A words is objective, an associative meaning is found in words derived with a suffix form of grade B, grade C nouns tend to have a circumstantial meaning, and grade D nouns have a subjective meaning.

In Chapter seven all noun classes are discussed. The hypotheses concerning the semantic difference between the different suffix grades are demonstrated for each class and semantic principles are searched for in the grouping of nouns within each particular class. The investigation of the semantics of the class suffix has been inspired by the studies of Corbett (1991), Craig (1986), Dixon (1982), Lakoff (1987), and Spitulnik (1987) and by discussions with Felix Ameka (Leiden University), David Wilkins (Max Planck Institute, Nijmegen), and Issa Diallo (University of Ouagadougou). A noun class is thought to combine concepts, either by means of a possible shared semantic feature of the nouns occurring in that class or by their occurrence in the same semantic field. Many associations are culture specific, as is shown in the networks representing the semantic linking of the different nouns. For example, in the NDI class the semantic field of capital (wealth which can be used to produce more wealth) links together a number of nouns like **jawdi** ‘wealth’, **ⁿgaari** ‘bull’ (used to get cows pregnant and produce more cattle), **ʔaawdi** ‘seed’ (used for sowing to produce more grain), and **leydi** ‘land’ (used for herding cattle and cultivation to produce more cattle and grain). The association of cattle, grain and land with wealth is culture specific to the Fulbe. Semantic associations proved very fruitful in the construction of the semantic networks which depict the semantic motivation within a noun class, i.e. why certain nouns are grouped in a certain noun class.

Chapter eight describes the other nominal word classes. The adjectives give some further evidence for the semantic distinction between the suffix grades. In the formation of the basic colour terms, red, black and white, another link can be found between the culture of the Fulbe and the Fulfulde language. These adjectival colour terms are formed on stems combining with grade B suffix forms. The stems are the names of cattle given according to their skin colour. In Maasina the grade A disyllabic words **wɔɗɗe**, **rane**, and **ɓale** exist as terms with which one calls a red, white, or black cow respectively. The vowel **-ɛ** of the NGE class, referring to cows can be found in the adjectives of colour, modifying nouns of all classes.

laana raneewa ka	'the white boat'
"gaari raneeri "di	'the white bull'
baafal baafewal "gal	'the red door'
nagge wadewe "ge	'the red cow'
rawaa"du faleeru "du	'the black dog'
seesi faleejo ʔ	'the black chair'

This merely indicates that the skin of cattle is an important domain in which colour is distinguished. Numerous etymologies discussed also make use of cultural information, these hypotheses will have to be verified in for example cognitive association tests with speakers of Fulfulde. The pronominals complete the description of the formation of words in Fulfulde.

This study moves from the phonology to the morphology of Fulfulde. Considering the fact that phonology is the study of speech sounds which distinguish meaning, and considering the fact that morphology is the study of the smallest units of speech which convey meaning, it follows that at each stage the study of meaning (semantics) plays an important role in the functioning of the elements in the system.

1.4 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PRELIMINARIES

This study is mainly based on spoken Fulfulde. The utterances were transcribed in a systematic phonetic transcription during several periods of fieldwork. The questionnaires provided by Bouquiaux and Thomas (1987) proved to be very useful in this respect. The lexical data thus collected have been compiled in a data base with rough translation equivalents. The computer facilitated the search, listing and comparison of words with certain consonant sequences, words within one grade, and words within one class. In the following paragraphs I outline the theoretical models used in the different parts of this study.

Part I Phonology

The model of Autosegmental phonology is used to describe the phonological processes (Goldsmith 1990). The concept of well-formedness conditions (WFC) and their associated automatic phonological rules (A-rules) is taken from Stewart (1983). The well-formedness conditions capture the phonemic patterns of the language (Stewart 1983:123). The well-formedness condition motivates the application of the associated A-rule. The A-rules show what happens where a well-formedness condition would otherwise be violated (Stewart 1983:116). The nature of the A-rules is the same as the concept of automatic alternation described by Hockett:

“Some alternations are such that if they did not take place, the phonemic pattern of language would be different from what in fact it is. Alternations of this kind are called *automatic*. One of the alternate shapes is the *base form*, and the other or others are said to replace the base form under specific conditions, where, otherwise, there would be an arrangement of phonemes contrary to the phonemic pattern of the language.”

(Hockett 1958:279-280)

Next to A-rules, I distinguish other phonological rules (P-rules) which are not automatic and often have exceptions. Unlike A-rules, the P-rules can be restricted to a morphological or lexical domain. Because of this P-rules are not exhaustive: a) the motivation for the application of a P-rule is not always clear, and b) the domain in which the P-rule applies is not always predictable.

The use of well-formedness conditions of the syllable structure to motivate certain phonological alternations made it impossible to strictly follow the theory of Autosegmental phonology, since the syllable does not play a role in this model. As a result, [vocalic], [consonantal] and [sonorant] are not described as binary features. I use the terms “vocalic” and “consonantal” to refer to the status of a time slot. The consonantal or vocalic status of a time slot follows from the combination of autosegmental features attached to this time slot. Sonority is treated as a multi-valued feature. Certain phonological constraints in the language show that some consonants are more sonorant than others. The importance of the degree of sonority of consonants for the phonological rules in Fulfulde has already been demonstrated by Paradis (1986, 1987b, 1992). In describing similar sonority constraints for the Fulfulde of Maasina, I have also tried to show the relation between these sonority constraints and the syllable structure.

The importance of rhythmic structures for the description of stress assignment (Hayes 1985) makes it necessary to expand the Autosegmental phonology with a metrical system. In this, I follow Goldsmith (1990) who expanded Autosegmental phonology with the arboreal metrical system.

Part II Word formation

Having been trained in morphology by the late Professor Jan Voorhoeve, the model of morphological analysis which I use to describe the processes of word formation in Fulfulde shows resemblance to the structuralist approach. Rather than being eclectic, the linguistic approach used to describe the Fulfulde of Maasina can be said to be ecumenical (Ameka 1991:14), preventing theoretical contradictions. My descriptions of word formation are based on the presumption of underlying basic units of meaning (morphemes) and the phonological changes which these morphemes undergo in context, i.e. in combination with other morphemes.

However, morphology is not the only level that studies meaning, in fact, all linguistic sub-disciplines are concerned with the interaction of form and meaning. Linguistic sub-disciplines such as phonology, morphology, and syntax cannot be practised without referring to semantics since their subjects of study are defined and distinguished by meaning (Wierzbicka 1988:1-3). Phonology studies speech sounds which distinguish meaning. Morphology studies units of speech sounds which encode units of meaning. Syntax studies phrase structures which convey meaning. Therefore, I consider meaning relevant to all linguistic sub-disciplines.

Much attention is given to the semantics of the categories expressed in Fulfulde. The analyses of the verbal conjugational suffixes, the suffix grades, and the nominal classes are based in semantics. To describe the semantic categories I have made use of Prototype theory (Rosch 1973, 1978, Wierzbicka 1985, Taylor 1989). Prototype theory proposes an alternative definition of categories which is different from the “classical theory” of categorization. The latter approach is called “classical” because it goes back to Aristotle’s

definition of categories and because this approach has dominated different disciplines (including structural and autosegmental approaches of linguistics) throughout most of the twentieth century (Taylor 1989:22). The following table provides a rough comparison of the two approaches of categorization (based on Arensen 1992:109, Dixon 1982, Lakoff 1987, Taylor 1989, Wierzbicka 1985).

Classical theory:	Prototype theory:
Categories are defined in terms of a conjunction of necessary and sufficient features	Categories may be defined by family membership, members of a category share some attributes with a prototypical member but not necessarily all attributes with all members
Features are binary	Members of a category may show gradience
Categories have clear boundaries	Categories typically have fuzzy edges and might even overlap
All members of a category have equal status	Members of a category may be more or less representative
Features are primitive	Members may be linked by association in the same domain of experience
Features are universal	Categories may be defined through a background framing, i.e. defined on the basis of human experience — physical, perceptual, cultural

Prototype theory provides motivations and explanations for category membership and it is an important innovation in the study of noun class systems. It enlarges the number of possible semantic principles which may underlie the categorization expressed by the noun classes. In Chapter seven I put forward hypotheses for the semantics of the Fulfulde noun classes. The recognition that noun class affixes express meaning which convey more than the mere marking of syntactic co-reference has led to another discovery: a semantic correlation between words formed with the same suffix grade (see Chapter six).