

Ecolinguistic considerations around the semantics of water in Wolof

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Abstract. This contribution takes an ecolinguistics approach to studying the semantic field of water in Wolof, the lingua franca of Senegal. Our study highlights the rich vocabulary related to water in Wolof and the ways in which it encourages ecological reflections. Our focus is on the cultural and environmental context and history of the Wolof semantic field of water and its significance for ecolinguistics. Our examples illustrate the impact of environmental changes (mainly linked to industrialization) on the lexicon. This paper is part of a collaborative research project examining Wolof words for water, employing lexicographic tools. In the compilation of the semantic field, we rely on dictionaries, earlier versions of specialized lexicon in academic papers, and interviews conducted between 2021 and 2023. In the analysis of the corpus, we draw on the ecological and socio-cultural context and contrast the Wolof lexicon with English and German expression. These explorations lay the groundwork for a holistic appreciation of the semantics of water in Wolof and its subsequent translation into English. The paper is divided into three sections. The first part deals with sustaining the human body through washing. The second considers the semantics of preserving human life by cleaning the environment and practicing agriculture and fishing. The third part studies the liquid environments as distinguished in the Wolof language, i.e., water in its different forms of appearance.

Keywords: Semantics, ecolinguistics, water, Wolof, Senegal.

INTRODUCTION

This contribution takes an ecolinguistics approach to studying the semantic field of water in Wolof, the lingua franca of Senegal. Taking an ecolinguistic approach highlights the interrelations between language and ecology. Since its emergence as a discipline in the 1990s, ecolinguistics has served as an umbrella term subsuming works that use ecological terminology metaphorically to describe languages in new ways and studies interested in the ecological impact of language (Do Couto, 2014: 125). During the last decade, this second aspect has gained importance, especially through the work of Arran Stibbe, the first professor of Ecological Linguistics. Stibbe (2015: 9) has put an emphasis on studying the impact of language on the “relationships among humans, other organisms and the physical environment” with the means of critical discourse analysis. Recently, the European bias of ecolinguistics, especially concerning its underlying philosophical frameworks, its theoretical assumptions and its methods, has been criticized by

scholars working in non-European contexts (Steffensen, 2024: 32-33). A seminal work in this regard is the volume *Ecolinguistics, Social Justice and Sustainability: Voices from the Global South* (Mliless et al., 2025).

In Senegal, the first symposium on ecolinguistic research was held in 2023. It aimed at investigating the co-construction of ecolinguistic knowledge – so far, an underexplored topic in the Senegalese academia (Ly and Rohmer, 2024). In this context, Sall and Diouf (2024) presented a paper on the orientation and spatial conceptualization of fishers and Rohmer (2024) a preliminary analysis of categorizations of water in French and in Wolof. The present study expands this work and provides a review of terminology related to fishing and other water-related fields that calls for ecolinguistic attention.

Water provision has been a challenge for decades in Senegal. In 2018, Action Against Hunger claimed that the third drought in six years left 245,000 people food insecure. The study further drew attention to the fact that in the district of Podor, North of Senegal, seasonal rains decreased by 66% compared to the previous year. Already a decade earlier, Senegal experienced significantly less rainfall. In 2007, a decrease in precipitation of up to 36% led to an inflation of food insecurity (Sall et al., n.d.). Patterns of drought and excess rainfall are increasing the rate of soil erosion and the destruction of critical infrastructure (Action Against Hunger, 2018). While there are studies in other disciplines on the access to drinking water (Faye et al., 2021; Gomez-Temesio, 2019) or sanitation (Thiam and Fall, 2022; Tounkara and Sene, 2020), in these studies, language and linguistic differences are often overlooked. However, as Ly et al. (2023) have shown in studying the translation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the understanding of water can be dissimilar when it emanates from languages embedded in different cultures.

This paper develops further our joint research on Wolof words for water through lexicographic tools (Diagne and Rohmer, 2024). In this contribution, we focus on the cultural and environmental context of the Wolof semantic field of water and its significance for ecolinguistics. In our endeavor, we expand upon an earlier paper studying irrigation-related vocabulary in Wolof (Kamara and Sy, 2021). Further, we draw on dictionaries (Diouf, 2003; Fal et al., 1990) and interviews conducted from 2021 to 2023 in Dakar¹. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part deals with sustaining the human body through washing. The second considers the semantics of maintaining human life through cleaning its environment and practicing agriculture and fishing. The third part studies the liquid environments as distinguished in the Wolof language, i.e. water in its different forms of appearance.

¹ Monika Christine Rohmer conducted twelve semi-structured interviews in December 2021 and fourteen picture-based interviews in March 2023.

1. SUSTAINING THE HUMAN BODY

This section presents lexemes in the lexical field of cleaning or washing the human body. In displaying and explaining the groups of words, we distinguish water in the mouth from water and other parts of the body.

Water in the mouth

(1) <i>Naan</i>		to drink
(2) <i>Galaxndiku</i>	(ak) <i>ndox</i>	to rinse one's mouth out
(3) <i>Guux</i>		to sip
(4) <i>Muucu</i>		to suck up
(5) <i>Dětēm</i>	Ø	to drink by sucking with your lips as an animal

The co-occurrence of *ndox* (water) with the first four verbs makes it a complement. They include a 'liquid' semantics that is not exclusive to water. While *naan* (to drink) is closely associated with water, next to *naan ndox* (to drink water), one can think of formulations such as *naan meew* (to drink milk). In this respect, English and Wolof are similar.

The verb *galaxndiku* (to rinse one's mouth out) can have a religious connotation. Ninety percent (90%) of the Senegalese population are Muslims (CIA, n.d.). In the ritual washing before praying, Muslims clean the mouth three times. Here, the Wolof speaker would use *galaxndiku*. In English, one would either refer to rinsing one's mouth or use the Arabic *al-wuḍū'* or *wudu* (ablution). The steps of the ablution include a) washing the hands, b) rinsing the mouth and nose, c) washing the face, d) washing the forearms, e) wiping the head and the ears and f) washing the feet (see also *jàpp* below).

The lexeme *dětēm* is not very recurrent. It carries the very precise meaning of drinking by sucking with your lips like an animal. In this case, the complement *ndox* is not required or found; it is implicit in the verb. *Dětēm* can be seen as a subform of *muucu* (to suck up). In German, for humans the word *trinken* is used, while for animals, it is *saufen*. When used for humans, *saufen* has a derogatory meaning pointing to too much, too rapid drinking, and drinking in an 'animal-manner'. It is most used in the context of drinking alcohol. Since *dětēm* is used rarely by contemporary Wolof speakers, any evaluation of a potential derogatory meaning would be mere speculation. Further studies would be necessary to clarify this specific aspect. Not all languages make a distinction between the way humans and animals drink. In English, one encounters several verbs for drinking alcohol such as *imbibe* (formal) or *booze* (informal) (Collins English Dictionary, n.d.). This discussion shows that the semantic distinction between types of water-related activities is socio-culturally distinguished, highlighting aspects of religious belief or the cultural importance of alcoholic drinks. The word *naan* can be completely linked to the

consumption of alcoholic beverages. It thus adds a pejorative connotation to its basic neutral meaning (to drink). Indeed, in the mainly Islamized Wolof-speaking community, the word will be used more to prohibit *bàyyil naan* (stop drinking), or to emphasize its harmfulness *naan baaxul* (drinking alcohol is not good).

Water and other parts of the body

(6) <i>Fiiru</i>	to discharge water through the nostrils
(7) <i>Jàpp</i>	to perform ablution
(8) <i>Jàngu</i>	to wash one's legs
(9) <i>Laabu</i>	to wash after defecation
(10) <i>Raxasu</i>	to wash one's hands
(11) <i>Sangu</i>	to shower
(12) <i>Sangu-set</i>	to perform full ablution
(13) <i>Saraxndiku</i>	to breath in and discharge water through the nostrils
(14) <i>Sělmũ</i>	to wash one's face
(15) <i>Wisũ</i>	to wash the intimate body parts
(16) <i>Xěppu</i>	to take a quick shower

All these lexemes with which *ndox* is combined relate to hygienic activities. While one can specify *sangoók ndox* (wash with water) by using the preposition *ak* (with), this is not mandatory. There are several words referring to the washing of specific body parts as *raxasu* (to wash one's hands), which is performed before and after eating.

The verb for the religious purification mentioned above is *jàpp*, corresponding the Arabic *al-wuḍū'*, introduced above. *Jàpp* is practiced by Senegalese Muslims before each of the five daily prayers. While *sělmũ* (to wash one's face), *fiiru* (to discharge water through the nostrils), and *jàngu* (to wash one's legs) are part of *jàpp*, the use of these lexemes is not restricted to the religious realm. *Sangu-set* refers to the full ablution required more seldomly.

It is remarkable that most of these verbs are not derived from *sangu* (to wash). To some extent, Wolof speakers distinguish between hygienic washing and spiritual purification. In this sense, although *wisũ* (to wash the intimate body parts) involves washing the physical body, the removal of impurity is equally important. While *wisũ* is practiced after urination or sexual intercourse, *laabu* is to wash oneself after defecation. In a forthcoming article, Diagne (2026) underlines that the manner in which actions are performed is highly lexicalized in Wolof, as evidenced by these examples of pronominal forms for the use of water on parts of the body.

In recent years, other words for thorough cleaning such as *to decontaminate*, *to sanitize* and *to disinfect*, became more popular in the English language. Ecolinguists have studied how political responses to the Covid-19 pandemic have been justified and have been translated into a very particular image of cleanliness

and society (Alexander, 2020; Benzi and Novarese, 2022). Aligning with these studies, we advocate that it is necessary to pay attention to the semantics of washing the human body: lexical choices may unconsciously refer to concepts often discussed as harmful in relation to ecolinguistic discourse analysis, including divisions of mind and body or distinctions between humans and non-humans.

2. MAINTAINING HUMAN LIFE

In addition to basic uses as an indispensable beverage and for personal hygiene, humans use water in a range of activities. The maintenance of human life includes practices of cleaning the immediate surroundings. We further include the practices of agriculture and fishing, as they are directly linked to the maintenance of human life in providing nutrition. Water in these activities has varied purposes and influences, shapes the environment and interacts with objects and agents in different ways.

Cleaning and maintenance

(17) <i>Bomb</i>	to rub, to scrub
(18) <i>Fóot</i>	to do laundry, to wash clothes
(19) <i>Bàcc, sumb, gupp</i> <i>tooyal, xay</i>	different stages and ways of doing laundry
(20) <i>Fomp</i>	to wipe
(21) <i>Fobeere</i>	to mop the floor
(22) <i>Lavandi</i>	to scrub, clean quickly utensils
(23) <i>Lenqali</i>	to rinse
(24) <i>Raxas</i>	to clean
(25) <i>Segg / xent</i>	to filter to make pure or less turbid
(26) <i>Tutti</i>	to pre-rinse dishes

In Senegal, cleaning the house is an activity largely performed by women. Therefore, Senegalese women use lexemes that are often unknown to men. An example are the different stages and ways of doing laundry. While *fóot* (to do laundry) is known to all Wolof speakers, *bàcc* (to wash a small quantity of cloths), *sumb*, *gupp*, or *tooyal* (to sprinkle water on a cloth) or *xay* (wash a garment quickly to remove dirt) are mainly known and used by women.

The lexeme *fobeere* (to mop the floor) shows how a change in the living environment has effects on language use. It is a lexeme which refers specifically to mopping a tiled floor or concrete floor. It is important to note that houses traditionally had sandy floors. For the activity of mopping the floor, the Senegalese used the term *fobeere*, an activity not possible when they clean (*bale*) sandy floors. *Fobeere* has been initially borrowed from French, more precisely the term *fauber*, a

specific kind of mop. While it is well integrated into Wolof and continuous to be used today, the word has fallen into disuse in French. The linguistic phenomenon of the survival of Old French in certain African languages has been illustrated for Wolof by Amadou Dialo (1990). As the list of Wolof lexemes shows, speakers adapt terminology to their surroundings as well as to their daily tasks. In a context where women are underrepresented in applied linguistic research, there can be a risk of overlooking important aspects of the lexicon as well as dimensions of socio-cultural knowledge.

Cooking and food preparation

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| (26) <i>Cay</i> | to dampen |
| (27) <i>Faral</i> | to make a liquid preparation viscous |
| (28) <i>Gajafal</i> | to moisten |
| (29) <i>Kaas</i> | to lightly moisten couscous or bran |
| (30) <i>Njar</i> | to make a preparation thinner |
| (31) <i>Ñulug</i> | to add water during food preparation |
| (32) <i>Sebet</i> | to rinse cereal |
| (33) <i>Siim</i> | to moisten the couscous with a hot liquid |
| (34) <i>Sóor</i> | put a cereal-type food in water (or a liquid solution) |
| (35) <i>Xóoyal</i> | to mix a substance with a liquid |
| (36) <i>Yaag</i> | to rinse cereals to remove sand or small stones |

Water is crucial in food preparation, and the lexicon for food preparation is vast. However, as with other household chores, these words are often only known by women or professional cooks. As the above list shows, the Wolof language distinguishes lexically a variety of actions of using water in the kitchen. Some of these words have not been recorded in dictionaries (Diouf, 2003; Fal et al., 1990). There are entangled explanations for this fact such as the high regional variance concerning the use of terms or the fact that some studies may have included more male informants, who are not always involved in these household chores or familiar with the terminology.

When we speak of couscous in this context, we mean a millet couscous traditionally prepared by various groups living in contemporary Senegal. It is called *cere* in Wolof, *lacciri* in Pulaar, and *saay'* in Sereer (Chastanet 2010). Prior to colonization, millet was one of the main staple foods in most of the West African region. Even though *ceebu jën* (rice and fish) is today the most famous dish of Senegal, rice was introduced only in the period of French colonization.

As a noun, *sebet* points to the water in which cereals have been washed. This used water is seen as valuable in the Wolof culture. It contains nutrients that are valuable in watering plants and animals. *Sebet* points to a value given to used water which is useful in contemporary debates on the sustainable use of water in times of

increasing water scarcity. As shown in a previous paper (Diagne and Rohmer, 2024), there are three forms denoting the reasonable use of water in Wolof, *yaxanal ndox* (to use water sparingly), *sàmm ndox* (to make good use of water) and *fonk ndox* (to use water carefully, emphasizing the relational aspect).

Agriculture and fishing

(37) <i>Baawunaan</i>	ritual at the end of dry season, prayer for rain
(38) <i>Mbaalaaw</i>	to fish by encircling
(39) <i>Nàndal (ak)</i>	to water (so. /sth.)
(40) <i>Napp</i>	to fish
(41) <i>Roose (ak)</i>	to water plants
(42) <i>Suuxat</i>	to water plants, to take care of (so. /sth.)
(43) <i>Wëgg (-)</i>	to water an animal
(44) <i>Xëcc</i>	to irrigate

Kamara and Sy (2021) presented selected words of vocabulary related to irrigation along the Senegal River. These include lexemes not morphologically related to *ndox*, as *wëgg* (to water an animal), which is only used in the context of watering animals or plants. As mentioned above, there are different ways of interpreting this fact from an ecolinguistic perspective. Systematic studies of the similarities and differences in the way animalhood and personhood are conceptualized in African and European languages would undoubtedly provide valuable insights. For example, one could consider drawing connections between Gail Presbey's (2022) work on Maasai herders and Leonie Cornips' (2022, 2024) research on dairy cows. A comparative study could investigate whether there is a link between the way cows are spoken about and how these animals are treated individually and collectively.

Roose (to water plants) is a loan from French, derived from *arroser* (to water plants). Another form to express watering plants in Wolof is *suuxat*. This verb can also be used for children (raising, taking care of them). Thus, one could water and take care of a plant or a child (in a very metaphorical way). In this lies an ecological potential to be explored further, which directly translates into a responsibility of care for our human and non-human surroundings.

3. LIQUID ENVIRONMENTS

Prior to putting water to the various uses described and listed above, water has to be obtained. This is a task usually performed by women, no matter which type of water is concerned, in its more traditional forms as well water or recent water forms as bottled water.

Obtaining water

(45) <i>Jukki</i>		to draw water from a well
(46) <i>Manq</i>		to suck in water
(47) <i>Root (i)</i>		to go searching or drawing water
(48) <i>Tanq</i>	<i>ndox</i>	to draw water
(49) <i>Utt (i)</i>		to search for water
(50) <i>Xëcc /Duggal</i>		to install water

Note that *ndox* with these verbs appears as a complement. Further, *tanq*, *manq*, *root* and *jukki* have an implicit semantic meaning of ‘liquid’, while *root* and *jukki* are associated with *ndox* almost systematically.

The units *xëcc* and *duggal* denote a more specific or even specialized semantics. They denote the installation of modern infrastructure, meaning water pipes for agricultural use or irrigation, *xëcc*, and water pipes for household use or tap water, *duggal*. An important aspect is the water connection, which is often associated with the installation of electricity (*kuraŋ*). Here, again, a change in the living environment brings upon a change in language and makes necessary the introduction of new terms and concepts.

Interrelated with the question of different uses of water are questions of origin, place, and water sources. Where do you find a certain type of water? What are the qualities of this water? In what kind of activity is a certain type of water useful?

Origin of water

(51) <i>Baxru</i>	ocean
(52) <i>Dex</i>	river
(53) <i>Déeg</i>	stagnant water
(54) <i>Fooraas</i>	borehole
(55) <i>Géej</i>	sea
(56) <i>Góor</i>	sperm
(57) <i>Joor</i>	water on a sandy plain
(58) <i>Mbeex</i>	seawater
(59) <i>Mbàmbulaan</i>	ocean
(60) <i>Robine</i>	tap
(61) <i>Sayaan</i>	less profound well close to a natural water source
(62) <i>Sam-sam</i>	zam-zam, holy well
(63) <i>Taw</i>	rain
(64) <i>Teen</i>	well

Note that the above forms can all appear with the liquid class (-*m*) attached to the connective (-*u*) which expresses the origin, the link. A typical example would be *ndoxum joor* (water on a sandy plain).

For most English speakers, the sea is an important source of water. In Wolof, there is a specific lexeme for seawater, *mbeex* (*ndoxu gééj*), which is morphologically unrelated to *ndox* (water). In contemporary urban Wolof, the lexeme *mbeex* (seawater) is seldomly used and can sound unfamiliar to many speakers. It is mostly those actively engaging with the sea, especially the fishers, who use the word. For the fishers, *gééj* (sea) is distinct from all other stretches of water. In an interview, a fisher even described a rivalry between *taw* (rain) and *gééj* (sea). Speakers observe that, whenever it rains, ‘*dafa taw ci gééj gi*’ (it rains into the sea) or ‘*taw ci gééj lay ëpp*’ (it rains a lot into the sea). After and during this *taw* (rain), the *gééj* (sea) is agitated. This is explained by the speakers in terms of rainwater being rejected by the sea, as in ‘*ndoxu taw du des ci gééj gi*’ (rainwater does not stay in the sea) and ‘*suy taw su tawee ba pare, gééj gi da koy génnewaat, waaw, da koy génnewaat*’ (when it rains once it stops, the sea returns it, yes it returns it again). Further studies could examine the cosmological worldview of Senegalese fishers in more detail, building up on the initial work of Mbaye et al. (2020).

Sall and Diouf (2024) conducted an interview-based study examining the spatial orientation of fishers in Saint-Louis in the north of Senegal. The fishermen distinguish between two states of the sea: *gééj gu gannax* (agitated sea with waves of two meters or more) and *gééj gu tàlli* (flat sea). They then adapt their equipment accordingly. In preparation of their journey, they also identify three entry points linked to different levels of the sea and the wind direction. Before the introduction of GPS, fishermen relied on the sun, shadows, stars, waves, swell, and the coastal silhouettes in sight for orientation.

The terms *teen* and *sayaan* both designate wells. Today, however, most Senegalese people in rural areas access water through boreholes, for which the term *fooraas* is used, derived from the French word *forage*. The first boreholes in contemporary Senegal were built by the French colonial administration in the 1930s (Gomez-Temesio, 2016: 656). Thus, as with the example of *fobeere*, language also testifies to a history of speakers and changes in their living environment. It was only after independence that the population gained access to borehole water for personal use. While boreholes are presented as a technical solution by politicians in Senegal, this covers fundamental problems of the use of deep well technology in Senegal, including poor water quality. This brings us to our next point, quality distinctions of water.

Above, we discussed the importance of spiritually cleansing concerning the terminology of washing humans. This also shows in the ways water is qualified. Even though in Wolof media texts drinkable water is often rendered as *ndox mu sell te set* (pure and clean water), the semantics of water quality is more refined.

Quality and change in the appearance of water

	(65) <i>laab</i>	drinkable
	(66) <i>lëmbaajo</i>	brackish, briny
<i>Ndox mu</i>	(67) <i>neex</i>	fresh
Lex Cls+Relat	(68) <i>nëx</i>	brackish (opposite of <i>neex</i>)
	(69) <i>nugg</i>	lukewarm
	(70) <i>sedd</i>	cold
	(71) <i>sell</i>	pure, without any impurity
	(72) <i>set</i>	clean
	(73) <i>tàng</i>	hot

Ndox mu laab simply means drinkable water. *Ndox mu sell te set* is water of the highest quality, fit not only for drinking, but also for spiritual purification. The juxtaposition of *ndox mu neex* (fresh water) and *ndox mu nëx* (brackish water) is mainly encountered in rural contexts today. *Ndox mu nëx* refers to water that has become brackish because it has been stored for a long time or has become undrinkable. It primarily refers to the visual quality of the water, a change of color compared to good-quality spring water (*ndox mu neex*).

While it is challenging to translate the different types of good-quality water from Wolof into English, it is equally challenging to translate the different types of poor-quality water from English into Wolof. Distinctions of blackwater, greywater, and industrial wastewater are not yet encoded in the Wolof lexicon. The introduction of new lexemes into the Wolof language might be necessary to distinguish between processes of industrial pollution and household wastewater. As industrialization in Senegal advances, new categories of used water will emerge, and concerted efforts to reuse and filter these waters should also become part of the professional lexicon of water. So far, journalists are using the expression *ndox yu salte yi* (dirty waters, wastewater), which encompasses residually and industrially used water.

For now, thinking from and with the Wolof language, we propose classifying *sebet* in a category we term residual semantics of water, meaning remaining water or used water. The following words belong to this category:

Residual semantics of water

(74) <i>Poti²</i>	water used for laundry
(75) <i>Poto-poto</i>	stagnant water, mixed with dirt
(76) <i>Sebet</i>	water used for rinsing cereal
(77) <i>Taa-taa</i>	stagnant water, water puddle

The conceptualization of stagnating and used water differs significantly between Wolof and English semantics. It is one of the most important differences

² The spelling variant *póotit* is also in use.

observed in our research on water. In Wolof, these terms and concepts tend to convey positive connotations, whereas in English they are generally associated with negative meanings. For linguists with ecological perspectives, this represents an important insight and a valuable starting point for examining how humans interact with water. Indeed, the way in which the quality and appearance of water are categorized suggests that people in the Global South may conceptualize water differently, often regarding it as a blessing rather than taking it for granted. Thus, water is never truly lost, with the exception of wastewater (*ndox mu salte*). A large portion of water residues can be reused, returning this precious liquid to a new cycle of use. *Potit* may eventually be used for toilets, while *sebet* can be used to water plants or as livestock beverage. Even water that does not look good (*nëx*) can be left to settle before being reused. This point is linked to the difficulties of accessing water, which is a reality in Senegal. This has led to the development of a certain form of unconscious ecological approach that is completely integrated into consumption habits.

OUTLOOK

In this final section, we want to utter three invitations for further research. First, we invite ecolinguistic scholars to reconsider the socio-cultural and environmental history encoded in languages. In the beginning of the history of ecolinguistics as a discipline, Alwin Fill (1993: 4) formulated the need to combine synchronic and diachronic perspectives on language. While contemporary ecolinguistics puts emphasis on synchronic analysis and discourse analysis, examples such as *fobeere* (to mop the floor), *foraas* (borehole) or *xëcc* (to install water) show how the history of industrialization is inscribed into the Wolof language. Historical ecolinguistic studies would undoubtedly not only provide valuable insights into the semantics of Wolof, but also into other languages.

Second, we perceive translation as a tool to protect lexical diversity. From an ecolinguistic perspective, Wilhelm Trampe (1996: 71) argues that the loss of creativity and diversity in language can be hostile to nature and to life. With our study we want to draw attention to the rich lexicon of water in Wolof and in what ways it invites for ecological reflections. We argue that working between different languages and translating is a means to (re-)introduce creativity and diversity in language. As mentioned in an example, while in the Wolof lexicon there is an emphasis on good-quality water, in the English lexicon there is an emphasis on poor-quality water.

Finally, as evidenced in our corpus, Wolof offers a rich variety of lexemes regarding household use. We gathered a wide range of specialized language regarding cooking and cleaning. We assume that this is linked to the gender of the researchers. The study lead to hypothesize that women bring a distinct point of view

on household matters. Being a female, in the current context, has surely an impact on words we know and collect and on informants we speak to. This extralinguistic factor of researcher's gender needs to be taken into account and the lexicon of women has to be acknowledged in research. Women, who in many cultural contexts carry the greater part of household-related activities need to occupy a pivotal role in speaking on matters of water.

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