

## Language Use in Senegalese Markets: The Cases of Sor and Ndar Toute in Saint-Louis

Dr. Daouda Ndiaye<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Laboratoire Recherches Sociolinguistiques et Didactiques, Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis, Senegal

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Daouda Ndiaye

Laboratoire Recherches Sociolinguistiques et Didactiques, Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis, Senegal

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**Abstract:** This article explores the dynamics of languages in markets in Senegal. Using the examples of Sor and Ndar Toute markets in Saint-Louis, this study highlights the multiple factors influencing language use. In fact, being a place of trade, Saint-Louis' central and district markets are frequented everyday by people coming from different places, not sharing the same beliefs and culturally different. This sociolinguistic situation has many consequences on language use. In this project, I try to investigate into language use in the market areas of Sor and Ndar Toute in Saint-Louis. It will be concerned about reflecting on the living experiences of traders and customers in these markets and show how this fact is determinant to languages that are most representative there, just to say how each language influence the other. This work finally highlights the crucial role played by sellers and buyers in the promotion of languages particularly the local ones.

**Keywords:** Language use, Markets, Sociolinguistic, Promotion, Local languages.

## INTRODUCTION

Languages in contact are a phenomenon that no one can deny in past recent years. In fact, language is moving, changing, getting in and giving, and, mobility explains, naturally, such a situation. But a question that one might ask himself is what can result from that cohabitation of languages. For instance, language contact has effects on the way language is used by people. In any society, if we talk about language in contact it is particularly on the side of young people that we should look. Of course, young people are those who act well with the language. It is nearly impossible to attend young people debates without snatching words from different languages.

Saint-Louis is an area where people from different origins and linguistic backgrounds meet. In addition to its sociolinguistic situation, Saint-Louis is an area of economic attraction. For instance, the surrounding villages often conduct their business in the town.

Being a place of trade, Saint-Louis' central and district markets are frequented everyday by people coming from different places, not sharing the same beliefs and culturally different. This sociolinguistic situation has many consequences on language use. In this project, I try to investigate into language use in the market areas of Sor and Ndar Toute in Saint-Louis. In this sense, the research article proposes an explanation on the way people communicate in a public place like the market. It will be concerned about reflecting on the living experiences of traders and customers in these markets and show how this fact is determinant to languages that are most representative there, just to say how each language influence the other.

The first objective is to show languages that are most representative in the markets of Sor and of Ndar Toute. The second and main purpose of this paper is to explore the way languages are used in respectively the markets of Sor and that of Ndar Toute in Saint-Louis and the groups of people involved. So, questionnaires, participant observations and interviews will be needed. What are the spoken languages? How often are they spoken? Who speak them? And how are they spoken?

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These are some questions to which we will try to bring answers. Finally, in that multilingual context, it will be useful to know about the communication strategies used by markets' actors to be in a mutual understanding.

In dealing with this work, first I can expect that Wolof will be the language of wider communication followed by Pulaar in respectively the markets of Sor and Ndar Toute in Saint-Louis. Secondly, I can presume that Urban Wolof will be the language variety most used by buyers and sellers, above all by the young people who seem to be more creative. Thirdly, I expect that the products for sale can be a deciding element of language use. Finally, it will be interesting to presume that the use of a given language may be a tool to attract the clientele.

This work is divided into three main points: the first consists of the theoretical framework and experimental design. The second one focuses on data analysis and an interpretation of the results. And finally, I proceed to the reporting of the findings.

## **THEORETICAL APPROACH AND EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN**

**Theoretical Approach:** In this chapter, I will deal with the different theories conveyed by scientists concerning the topic.

In Senegalese societies, languages are numerous and most of the time in contact. In addition to local languages, there are foreign ones that are taught at school. Thus, languages cohabitation leads necessary to some effects on the way they are used. We are going to enumerate some phenomena resulting from language contact.

### **Multilingualism**

Multilingualism is a complex phenomenon resulting from language contact. According to David Crystal, the term multilingualism refers to: "a situation where a speech community (or an individual) makes use of several languages..." [1]. For him, the term may subsume bilingualism (strictly the use of two languages), but is often contrasted with it by emphasizing the use of more than two languages. Crystal depicts the phenomenon as the following:

"There are no official statistics, but with around 5,000 languages, coexisting in fewer than 200 countries it is obvious that an enormous amount of language contact must take place; and the inevitable result of languages in contact is multilingualism, which is most commonly found in an individual speaker as bilingual" [2].

Still according to Crystal, multilingualism can be understood through three main forms: individual, societal and state levels. Individual multilingualism is the use of two or more languages at different levels by the individual. Societal multilingualism occurs when people speak different mother tongues and live in the same geographical environment. In this case, one linguistic group learns the language of the other group. As for state multilingualism, it enables the different linguistic group present in one country to speak their own, leaving to the state the responsibility of bilingualism. However, state multilingualism may vary from one state to another because official multilingualism may be symbolic or just unbalanced or egalitarian.

Appel René and Pieter Muysken discuss among other issues, language contact in relation to bilingualism. They argue that: "Languages are social phenomena or social institutions, and the division of a society into social groups is often reflected in linguistic divisions. Linguistic behaviour and attitudes towards languages in a bilingual society often give further insight into social norms and values" [3].

This implies what happens to the structure of languages when they are in contact. According to them, the more languages you speak, the greater they impact each other. If this is the case then multilingualism may result in a mixed group identity.

**Diglossia:** Diglossia can be understood as the use of two varieties of a language throughout a speech community, each with a distinct set of social functions.

The term is said to be first used by the sociolinguist Charles Ferguson to refer to "a situation in which we have one variety of a language called the High variety (H), and another variety of the same language called Low variety (L). The High variety identified as the standard is prestigious and has no native speakers rather than the Low one" [4]. This definition shows that even in a multilingual situation, it is possible to talk about diglossia in the sense that the High and Low varieties do not belong to the same language. The High variety is here the prestigious language which is taught at school while the Low variety or varieties consist of the local languages which are natively spoken.

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<sup>1</sup>Crystal, D. (1994). *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages*, London: Peguin, p.259.

<sup>2</sup>Crystal, D. Op.cit; p.62.

<sup>3</sup>Appel, R., & Muysken, P. (1987). *Language contact and Bilingualism*, London: Arnold, p.8.

<sup>4</sup>Trudgill, P. (1989). *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Group, p.27.

In situations like these, the tendency is to give more prestige to some languages; i.e. to reserve them for important functions like governments, education etc. (these are High languages not in terms of linguistic value but in terms of social function) and thus contriving the others to serve for casual and informal domains like the home, the market etc. (these are Low or minority languages). A language playing a low role is typically acquired at home as a mother tongue. Higher ones, on the other hand are learnt through schooling. In this case there are dominant and dominated languages.

Dominant languages (those that have been promoted by government and sometimes those that have naturally spread) serve as *lingua francas* meaning languages “used to serve for routine communication between groups of people who speak different native languages” [5].

Dominated languages instead, that is, those that “are usually the first languages learnt by people... often used for communication in the home and with close friends” [6] are vernacular ones.

However, the necessity and convenience to speak at least one language of wider communication in multilingual communities obviously lead to code switching and/or code mixing.

### Code switching

Code switching can be defined as a shift from one language to another in the same utterance or conversation. As for Muysken, this can be reversed as rapid succession of many and distinct languages in a particular occasion. In a conversational strategy, code switching refers to the fact that people move from one language to another under the consideration of their discussers. In this sense, it is the inevitable consequence of bilingualism and multilingualism. Anyone who can speak more than one language chooses the language according to the circumstances in which the language will be comprehensible to the person addressed.

The phenomenon occurs whether through utterances used by a speaker and his listener or it takes place within a distinct speaker’s speech. Therefore code switching occurs between sentences (inter-sententially). According to Trudgill “speakers can use switching for their own purposes: to influence or to define the situation as they wish, and to convey nuances of meaning and personal intentions” [7].

### Code mixing

As for code mixing, it happens when speakers tend to mix their utterances because there is not any exact expression in their language, so it required applying terms from other languages. In this view, code mixing can be understood as a phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse. That is to say, people move from one language to another during the process of their conversation. Code mixing then, occurs when speakers alter from a given language to the other in the center of their discussion. In an article published in *An Encyclopedia of Language* and entitled “Language in Society: Sociolinguistics”, James and Lesley Milroy define code mixing as a speech “where speakers alternate between one language and the other within the same conversation, and even within the same utterance” [8].

The term code mixing is used to refer to all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence. Code mixing denotes now to a mixture of a number of codes without an alteration in a given subject. It occurs most of the time within one sentence; that is, when two elements of different languages are used.

Briefly speaking, the term code can refer to any language or language variety. Individuals use it once they need to stress the uses of a language in a particular community. When people want to talk to each other, they have to choose a particular code to express their feeling. Thus, code can be considered as a tool that people employ for their daily interactions or communications to their discussers.

### Pidgins and Creoles

Pidgins and creoles have a remarkable amount in common even if they display many obvious differences in sounds, grammar, and vocabulary.

**Pidgins:** Pidgin is a language with a reduced range of structure and use, with no native speakers. In fact, according to Hadumod Bussman [9], the term ‘pidgin’ is probably a corruption of the English word business, as pronounced by the

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<sup>5</sup>Crystal, D. Op.cit; p.230

<sup>6</sup>Spolsky, B. (2004). *Sociolinguistics*, New York: Oxford University Press, p.62.

<sup>7</sup>Trudgill, P. Op.cit; p.223

<sup>8</sup>Collinge, N. E. (1990). *An Encyclopedia of Language*, London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, p280.

<sup>9</sup>Bussmann, H. (1996). *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, Translated and edited by Gregory P. Trauth and Kerstin Kazzazi, Universities of California and Munich, p366.

indigenous Chinese, and designates a mixed language that arises in situations where speakers of different languages are unable to understand each other's native language and, therefore, need to develop a common means of communication. He carries on saying that in such situations, the structure and vocabulary of the individual native languages are reduced over time, in order to bring about general, mutual understanding. Gradually, a functional mixed language develops from the rudimentary contact language and is learned along with one's native language.

As for Crystal [<sup>10</sup>], a pidgin is a system of communication which has grown up among people who do not share a common language, but who want to talk to each other, for trading or other reasons. Pidgins have been variously called 'makeshift', 'marginal', or 'mixed' languages.

Linguistically speaking, pidgins are characterized by limited vocabulary, a reduced grammatical structure, and a much narrower range of functions, compared to the languages which gave rise to them. Pidgins that develop into full-fledged native languages are called creoles.

**Creoles:** Creole is a pidgin that has become the mother tongue of a speech community (through the process of creolization).

Hadumod Bussman defines creoles as "former pidgins whose functional and grammatical limitations and simplification have been eliminated and which now function as full-fledged, standardized native languages" [<sup>11</sup>].

According to David Crystal [<sup>12</sup>] a creole is a pidgin language which has become the mother tongue of a community, a definition which emphasizes that, pidgins and creoles are two stages in a single process of linguistic development. First, within a community, increasing numbers of people begin to use pidgin as their principal means of communication. As a consequence, their children hear it more than any other language, and gradually it takes on the status of a mother tongue for them. Within a generation or two, native language use becomes consolidated and widespread. The result is a creole or 'creolized' language.

From a linguistic point of view, creoles are characterized by a considerably expanded and altered grammar and vocabulary.

### **Experimental Design Area of Investigation**

The island of Saint-Louis has a history mainly marked by colonial presence and occupation. It was founded in 1659 by Thomas Lambert and was the capital of Senegal, now called "capital du Nord" (northern capital). Being an area of economic attraction because of its geographical position (North of the country and also its situation toward the river); explain the fact that colonizers accorded much importance to it. It is composed of two main parts separated by the bridge named Faidherbe. The part situated at the west of the bridge and called "ville" by the inhabitants is almost composed of buildings made in colonial period which still shows its aspect of colonialism. The surrounding villages often conduct their business there because of its status of an area of economic attraction.

Saint-Louis is a center of research which participated in the training of many people in the past. Not only coranic studies are led but scientific branches are also taught. In fact, due to its experience of colonialism, Saint-Louis is among the biggest centers of foreign studies of the country with its numerous primary and secondary schools and its big public high schools. Foreign languages are taught at school and have a great impact on language use mainly by the youth. Thus, this impact can be explained by the multilingual nature of the town which is, let us recall it, an area of international economic attraction; people coming from different places and having different beliefs and cultures meet there and communication is then done in a mixture of foreign and local languages, mainly Wolof.

Trade holds an important place in the town's activities. It is mostly practised at the two central markets (Sor and Ndar Toute) and the three district markets (Pikine, Eaux Claires and Goxu Mbacc). Markets, especially the two central ones are frequented everyday by people coming from different places, not sharing the same beliefs and culturally different. This sociolinguistic situation has many consequences on language use.

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<sup>10</sup>Crystal, D. (1997). *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language*, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, New York, p336.

<sup>11</sup> Bussmann, H. Op.cit; p.107.

<sup>12</sup> Crystal, D. Op.cit; p.338.



The bridge Faidherbe, the Island, and the Langue de Barbarie

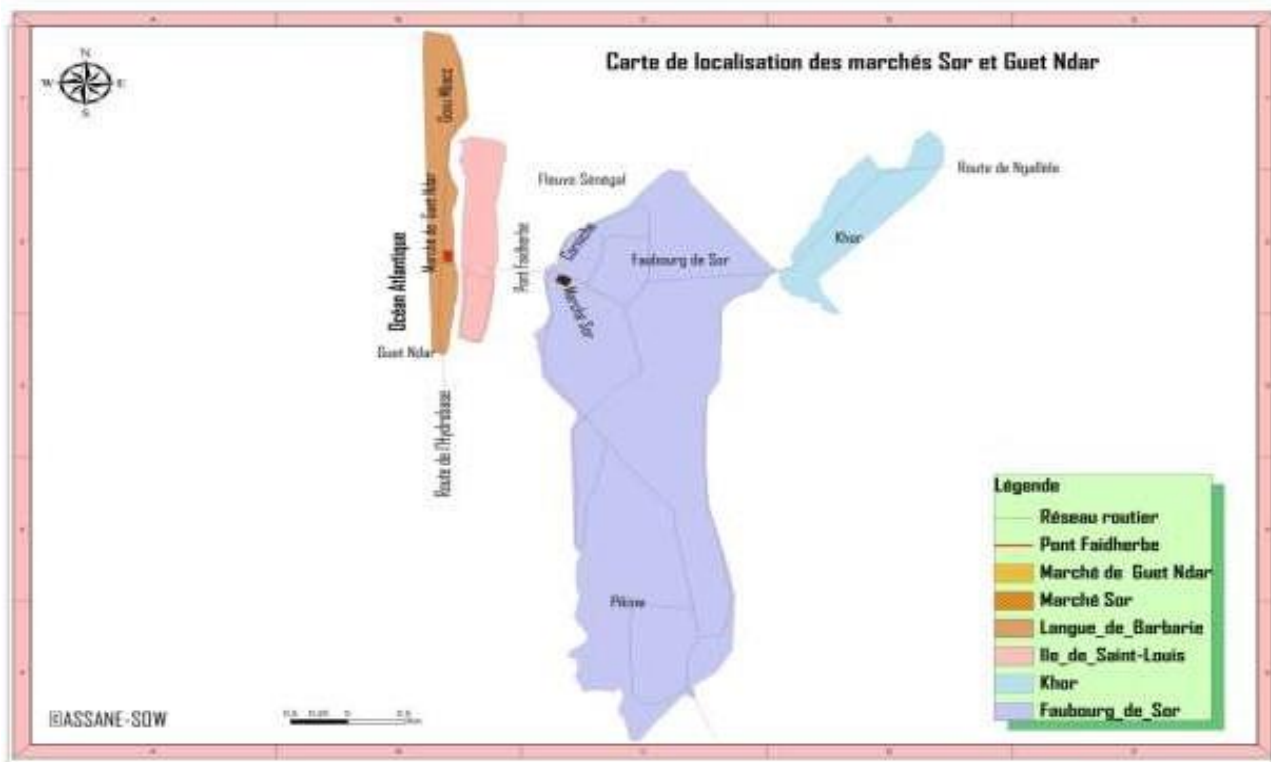
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**Research Population:** To do such a job, I have selected the two central markets of Saint-Louis. They are the markets of Sor and Ndar Toute.

Their choice was not done at random. In fact, Sor and Ndar Toute are the central markets of the town council. Transactions and small businesses are important there. Then, they happen to be places of meetings and convergence of different ethnic groups; hence the importance of the interactions held there.

In the city, the fieldwork was carried out in the following districts, where we met our informants; the first location is the market of Sor also called Tenjiguen (General Degaule Boulevard), and the second one is the district of Ndar Toute (Next to the river) where the main activity is trade.

Thus, stress was put on the sellers and the suppliers as well as the buyers of these two markets.



**Sample:** Concerning sampling, 100 informants are involved in this study. They are composed of 25 sellers and 25 buyers respectively in the market of Sor and of Ndar Toute. This gives 50 sellers and 50 buyers in total. These persons composed the accessible population. In other words, they constituted the sample. Concerning the sellers, they were divided in 6 suppliers, 8 shopkeepers, 8 storekeepers, 16 sellers on the ground and 12 (street) pedlars. The age group of the informants was distributed as follow: (0-35 years) for young, (36-60 years) for adult and (61 years and plus) for old people. They were 52 young, 36 adults and 12 old people in total. In fact, the percentage of young is more important because of the fact that they are more numerous in markets. Adults represent the following age group, the reason why I choose 36 among them. As for old people, their presence in markets is not so important. The sample falls under two headings: 24 women and 76 men.

In so doing, I was sure to touch all the categories of the target population.

**Tools of Investigation**

To achieve the goal, I used three tools. First, I used questionnaires written in French and translated into Wolof and submit them to 100 of the regular sellers and buyers in the markets. Secondly, systematic observations of interactions between sellers and customers were done. Thirdly, an interview of 4 sellers had to help in determining the language habits in these markets.

The choice of questionnaires is important for it helps gather the maximum information by asking informants to speak freely under the guide of a series of questions.

The participant observation allowed me to compare informant declarations (answers in questionnaires) and their linguistic practices.

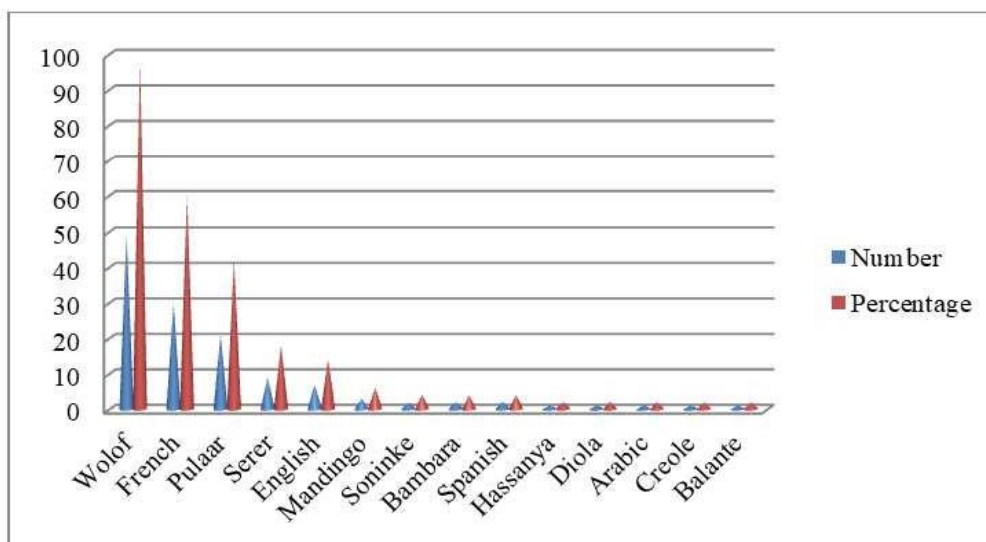
The interview is also relevant in the sense that it consisted of the view of the people who share a living experience in the subject of talk.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS**

In this chapter, I present the results of questionnaires, interviews and observations. This study employed a quantitative and qualitative analyses to examine language use in the market areas of Sor and Ndar Toute in Saint-Louis. In fact, this research aims to understand both the social and the linguistic aspects of language use.

**The Questionnaires:** The collected data from questionnaires are represented by charts and are followed by a brief interpretation.

**IN THE MARKET AREA OF SOR**



**Chart 1: Languages background of the respondents**

As it is shown on chart 1, the first language with the greatest number of speakers is Wolof with 98% of the total population, thereafter French with 60%, Pulaar with 42%, Serer with 18% and then English with 14%. The other languages are not well represented.

It is obvious that the informants use more Wolof because it is a language of wider communication. That is to say that it is used everywhere in every place in the country.

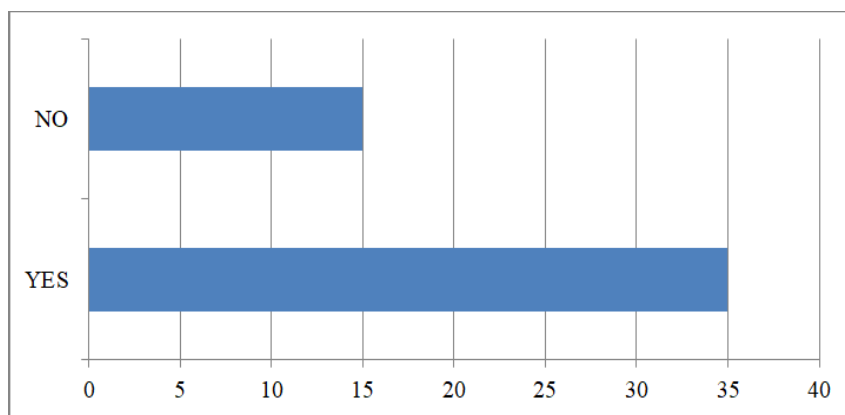
As for French, it is the official language of the country; it is almost used in all domains. This explains the reason why it comes in the second position.

Concerning Pulaar, it is the national language which comes to be the most used after Wolof. Another reason is that Pulaar speakers are very representative in the North West part of the country. In fact, like the Wolof language, the Pulaar one is almost used in every domain thanks to the commitment of its speakers.

As far as Serer is concerned, it is the third national language used by the informants. Its importance is not to be neglected in this part of the town council. For emphasis, Serer is strengthened and promoted through cultural associations.

As for English, it is particularly used by schoolboys and girls and mainly by students and professionals.

The other languages for their parts, do not have a great impact in language use in this area even if some people use them. It is the case of Mandingo, Soninke, Bambara, Spanish, Hassanya, Joola, Arabic, Creole, and Balante.

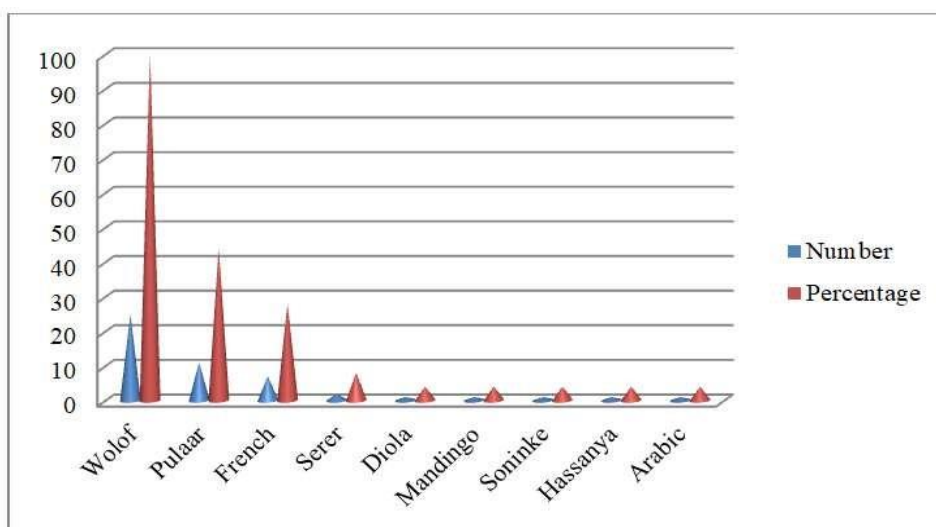


**Chart 2: Schools as the place where French is learnt**

The study reveals that 35 respondents out of 50 altogether admit to have learnt French at school and 15 informants do not.

The 35 people represent those who underwent formal schooling. Among them, some have a beginner level (primary school), others an intermediary (secondary school) and the other an advance level (those who completed secondary school).

The 15 persons represent the illiterate ones. They have never been at school. They haven't any basic knowledge in French.



**Chart 3: Languages spoken in front of the customer**

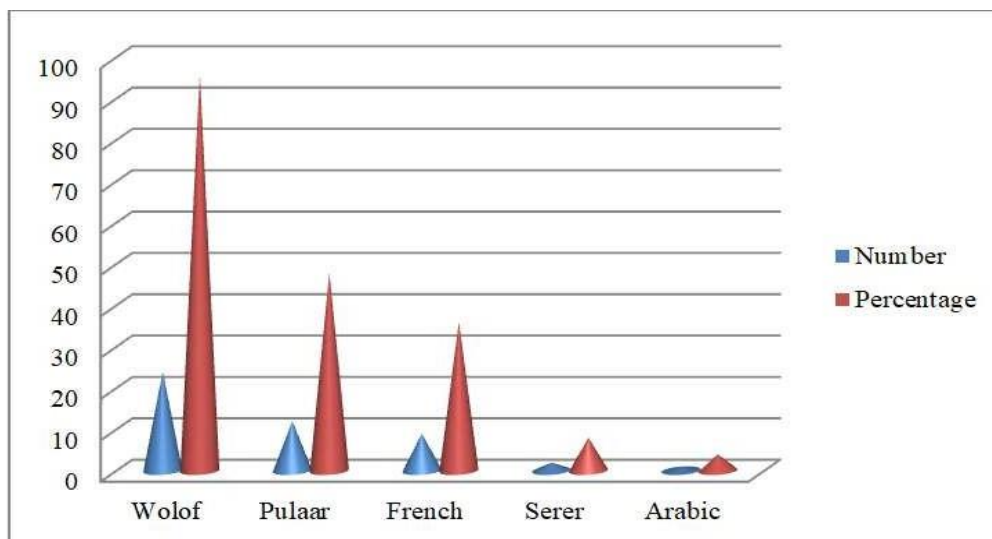
As it is shown on chart 3, 100% of the sellers altogether speak Wolof. In fact, buyers are obliged to speak Wolof even if it is not their mother tongue or the language they prefer. This because they are aware of the importance Wolof holds in the town especially in markets.

Those who represent the 44% frequently speak Pulaar in front of the customer. The explanation of such a fact lies on the way that Pulaar constitutes the second language of the market. Indeed, as stated above, Pulaar people are very present in this part of the country. The villages surrounding Saint-Louis are dominated by Pulaar speakers and the latter often come there for business activities.

For French, we can count 28%. The presence of French can be explained by the fact that it is Senegalese official language. There are also sellers who have been at school and sometimes feel the need to speak it for many foreigners only use French once in markets.

Serer, the language that follows with 8% is not very used. In fact, its usage in this market is not so important. The phenomenon of Wolofisation has been observed, and is often perceived as a threat to the development and survival of linguistic minorities. This redefines the ratio between the number of speakers of the language and the total number of the ethnic group. For example, speaking of the Serer, Brigitte Rasoloniaina notes: “*Par ailleurs, il apparait qu’il y a une perte (environ 13%) dans la transmission de la langue* [13].”

The other languages, Joola, Mandingo, Soninke, Hassanya and Arabic only represent 4% each.



**Chart 4: Languages spoken in front of the seller**

On chart 4, one can notice that Wolof is represented by 96%, followed by Pulaar 48%, French 36%, Serer 8% and Arabic 4%.

The overwhelming part of people is exposed to Wolof in public places such as markets for it constitutes the dominant national language.

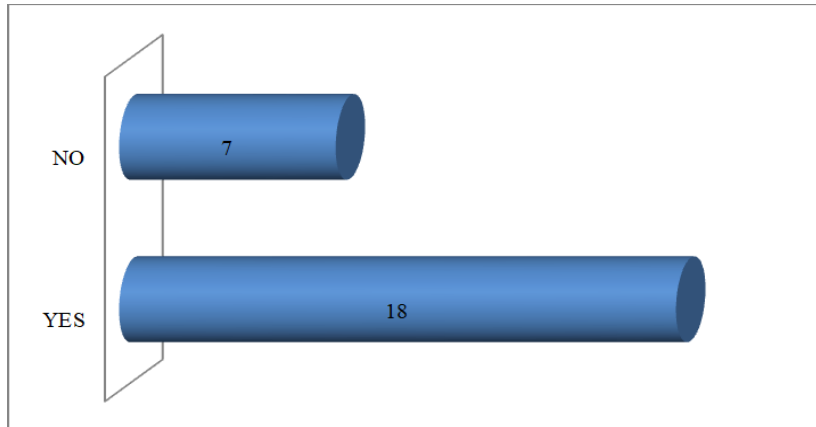
Pulaar is the second language used by buyers during their transactions thank to the importance of its speakers in Saint-Louis.

It is followed by French which is the language used by educated people and foreigners during their transactions in markets.

As far as Serer and Arabic are concerned, they are not well represented in the chart what means that they are rarely used.

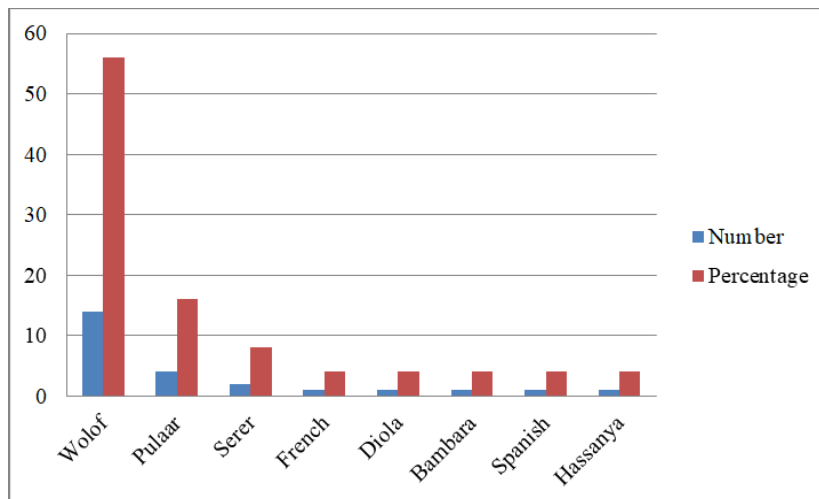
<sup>13</sup>Rasoloniaina, B. (2000). *Etude des représentations linguistiques des sereer*, Paris: L’Harmattan, p.102.





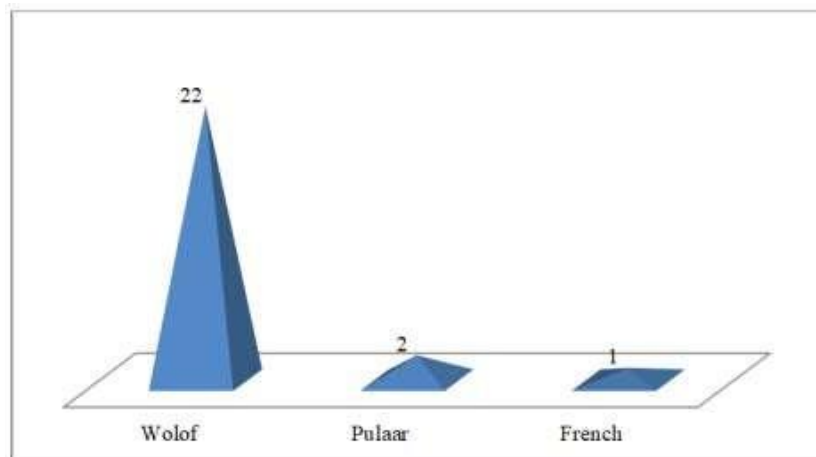
**Chart 5.1: Is there a preference?**

For those who have a preference or not among languages, we can mention 18 sellers who have preferences and 7 who have not.



**Chart 5.2: Preferences of sellers towards languages**

As the chart 5.2 shows, Wolof is represented by 56%. In other words, the respondents prefer Wolof to other languages. This indicates that Wolof is widely used in markets. 16% of the respondents prefer Pulaar. All of them are Pulaar speakers. For Serer, we only mark 8%. This confirms the point that Serer use in markets is not so important in this part of the country. The other languages mentioned with only 4% are French, Joola, Bambara, Spanish and Hassanya. They are very rarely used.



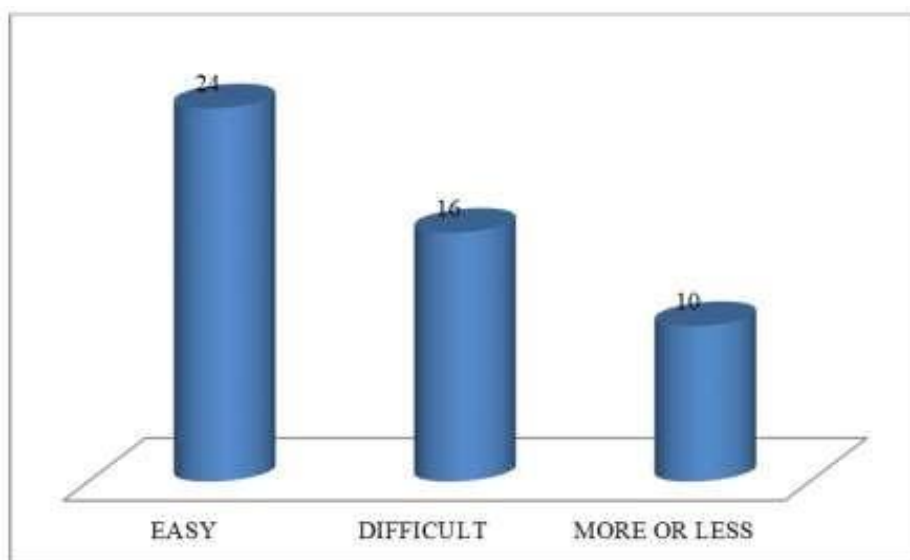
**Chart 6: Languages used during the first contact**

Concerning language use during the first face to face with the seller, we depict that 22 out of 25 buyers use Wolof, 2 Pulaar and only 1 French.

The majority use Wolof because it constitutes firstly; the mother tongue of most of them, secondly; it is the most used language in the market, thirdly the most important part of our informants understand Wolof and finally Wolof is viewed as the national language of business.

Only 2 buyers mention Pulaar during their first contact with the seller for it constitutes first their mother tongue and secondly they defend the idea that they use it to first present themselves in their mother tongue; if the seller respond in Pulaar, they continue if not they use the Wolof language. They are proud to use their language for no one has anything more important than it, they argue.

There is the mention of French because during the fieldwork I have encountered a French speaker who was obliged to use French during his transactions because he did not master the Wolof language.



**Chart 7: Status of the communication in Sor**

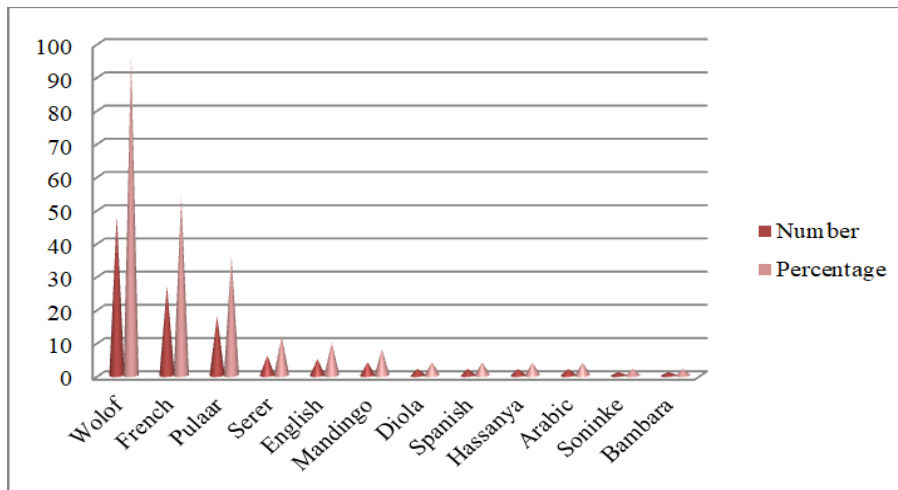
Within a total of 50 respondents, 24 answer that the communication in Sor is easy, 16 say that it is difficult and 10 of them support that it is more or less easy.

24 informants presume that the communication in the market of Sor is easy. For instance, they inform that there is not a misunderstanding between the different actors. Some of them state that there is a familiarity between sellers and buyers. That is the reason why there is no linguistic gap during communication. Others sustain the idea that the communication is easy for Wolof is the language used when interacting and it is spoken by almost all the interlocutors.

16 of them put forward the idea that communication in the area of Sor is not something easy. According to this group of people, communication is difficult because not only it can be sometimes frustrating but also there is possible misunderstanding during interactions. It is indispensable to mention that the misunderstanding is not frequently noted through the language used but through the mood or temper of the different interlocutors.

As for the 10, they sustain that the communication is more or less easy in this market. Indeed, as mention by almost all the respondents the communication can be easy as it can be difficult. For emphasis, communication is not something easy even if there is a mutual understanding. This because, communication includes many social factors such as stammering, mood, tempers and so for.

**IN THE MARKET AREA OF NDAR TOUTE**



**Chart 1: Languages background of the respondents**

With an overall percentage reaching 96%, surveyed people have strongly mentioned Wolof, thereafter French with 54%, Pulaar with 36%, Serer with 12%, and English with 10% and then Mandingo with 8%. The other languages do not occupy an important place in language use.

The informants use more Wolof because it is a language of wider communication. That is to say that it is used everywhere in every place in the country.

As for French, it is the official language; it is almost used in all domains. This explains the reason why it comes in the second position.

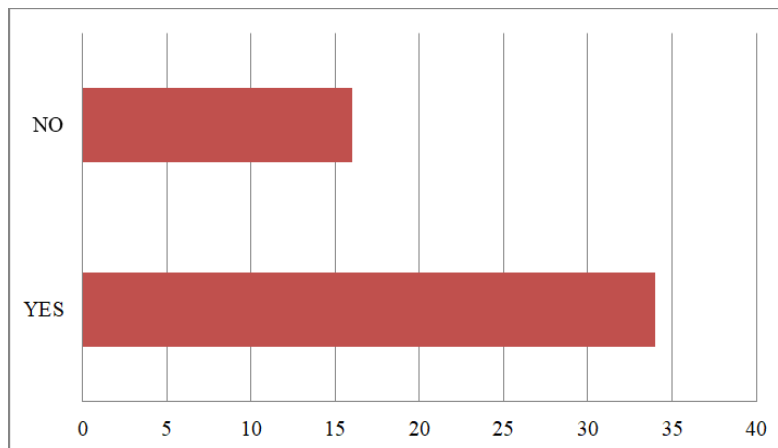
Concerning Pulaar, it is the national language which comes to be more used after Wolof in the country. Another reason is that Pulaar speakers are very representative in the Northern capital. In fact, like the Wolof language, the Pulaar one is almost used in every domain thanks to the commitment of its speakers.

As far as Serer is concerned, it is the third national language used by the informants. For emphasis, Serer is strengthened and promoted through cultural associations.

As for English, it is particularly used by schoolboys and girls and mainly by students and professionals.

Mandingo is not well represented on the chart. It has not a great impact on language use in Ndar Toute. I found that those who use it are almost native speakers.

The remaining languages are very insignificantly represented in the town city of Saint-Louis.

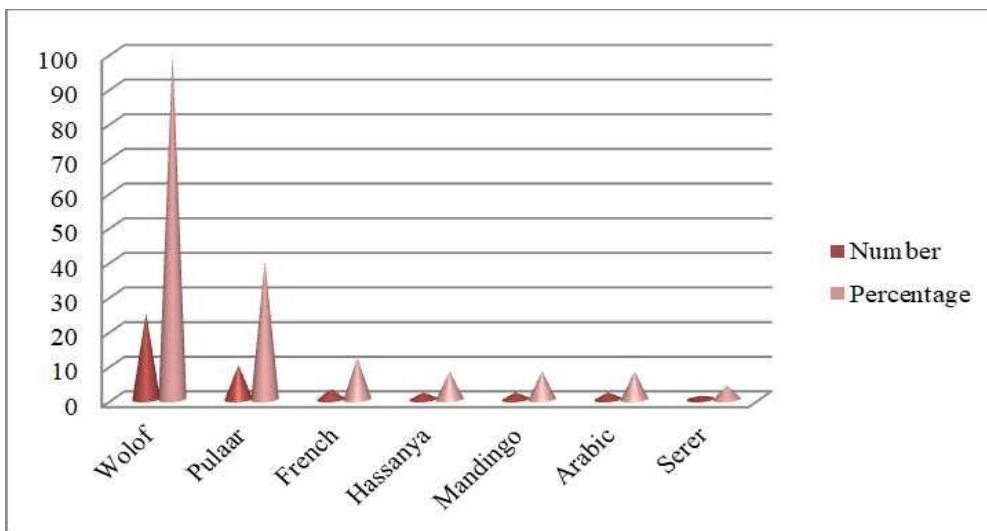


**Chart 2: Schools as the place where French is learnt**

The study reveals that 34 persons of the total informants altogether admit to have learnt French at school and 16 do not.

The 34 people represent those who have been at school. Among those who underwent formal schooling, some have a beginner level, others an intermediary and the other ones an advance level.

The 16 persons represent the illiterate people. They have never been at school. They can't even produce a correct sentence in French.



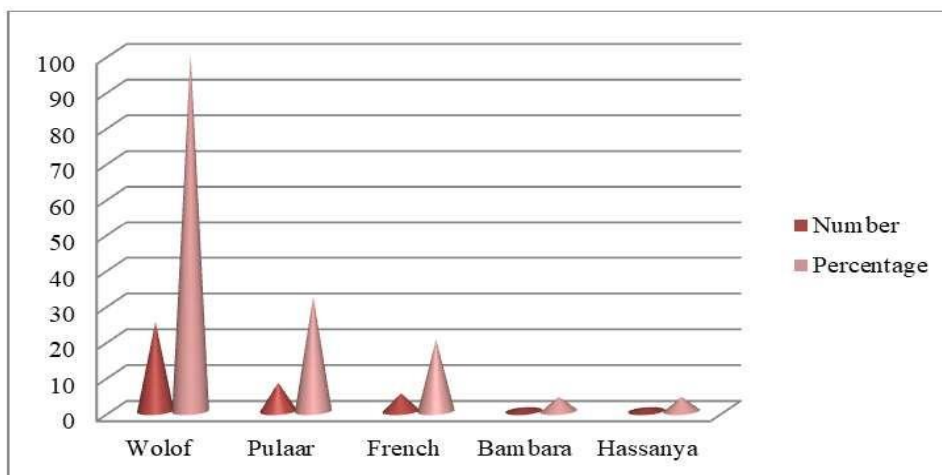
**Chart 3: Languages spoken in front of the customer**

As the results clearly present on chart 3, 100% of the sellers altogether speak Wolof. In fact, buyers are obliged to speak Wolof even if it is not their mother tongue or the language they prefer. This because they are aware of the importance Wolof holds in the market of Ndar Toute.

40% is given to Pulaar in front of the customer. The explanation of such a fact lies on the way that Pulaar constitutes the second language of the market. Indeed, as stated above, Pulaar people are very present in this part of the country. The villages surrounding Saint-Louis are dominated by Pulaar speakers and the latter often come there for business activities.

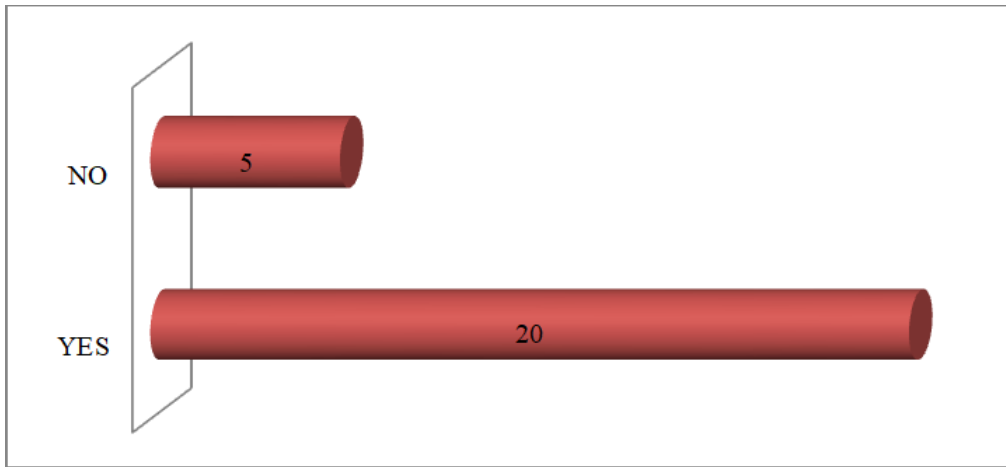
French represents 12%. The presence of French can be explained by the fact that it is the official language. There are also sellers who have been at school and sometimes feel the need to speak it for many foreigners only use French in the market.

Hassanya, Mandingo and Arabic, the languages that follow represent 8% each. In fact, their usages in this market are not important. The same thing happens with Serer 4%.



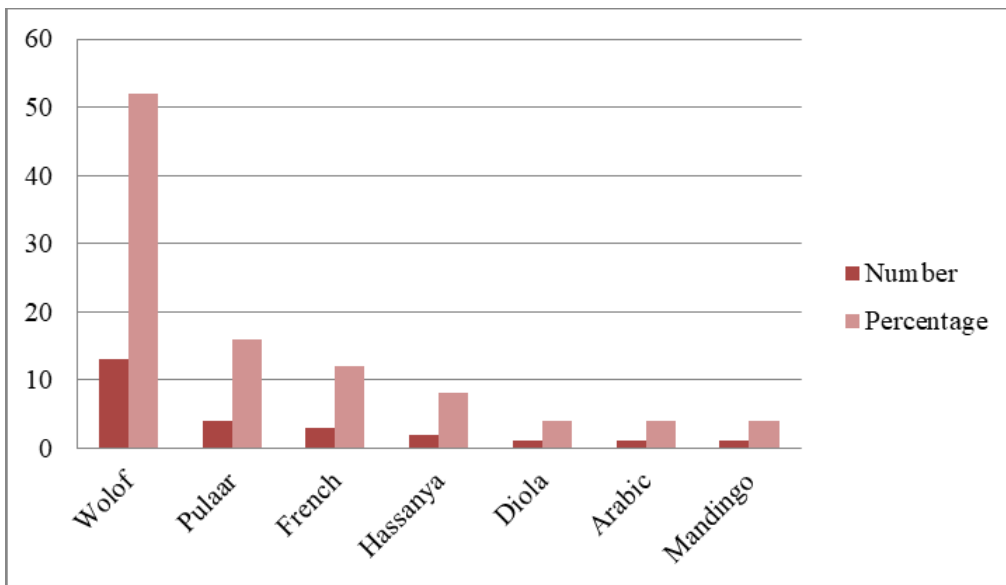
**Chart 4: Languages spoken in front of the seller**

Chart 4 shows that the overwhelming part of people is exposed to Wolof 100% in public places such as markets for it constitutes the dominant national language of the country. Pulaar 32% is the second language used by buyers during their transactions thank to the importance of its speakers in the city. It is followed by French 20%. As stated above, French is the language used by educated people and foreigners during their transactions in markets. As far as Bambara and Hassanya are concerned, we only identify 4% for each of them.



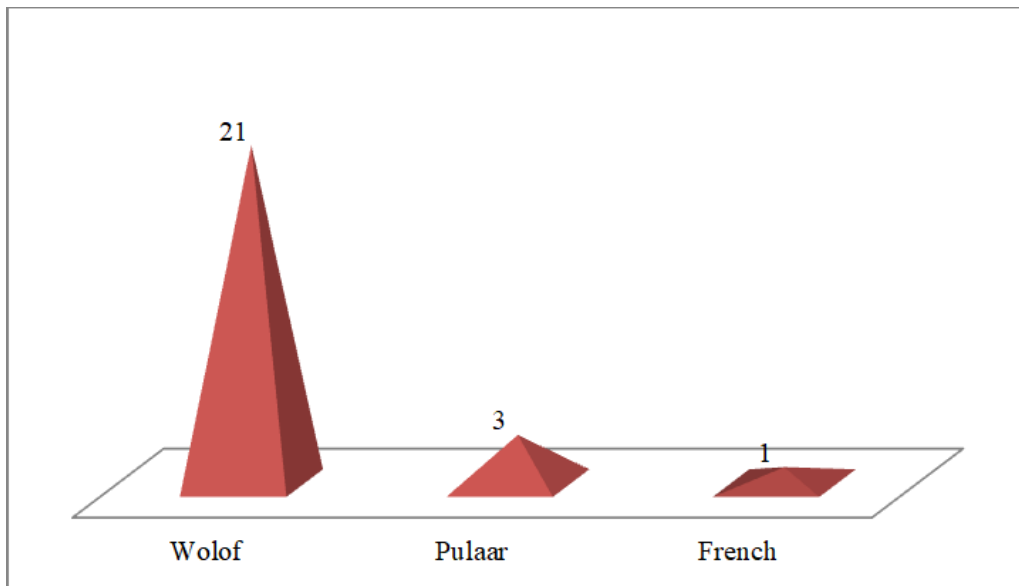
**Chart 5.1: Is there a preference?**

For those who have a preference or not among languages, we can mention 20 who have and 5 who have not.



**Chart 5.2: Preferences of sellers towards languages**

As this chart shows 52% is attributed to the Wolof language. This indicates that Wolof is widely used in markets. For Pulaar, I noted 16%. All of them are Pulaar speakers. French has 12%. This underlines that French is used in markets. One can notice that the Hassanya people 8% are present in Saint-Louis' markets. This situation can be explained by the fact that the region of Saint- Louis is near to the border of Mauritania. Most of them are meat sellers. The others languages mentioned with 4% are Joola, Arabic and Mandingo.



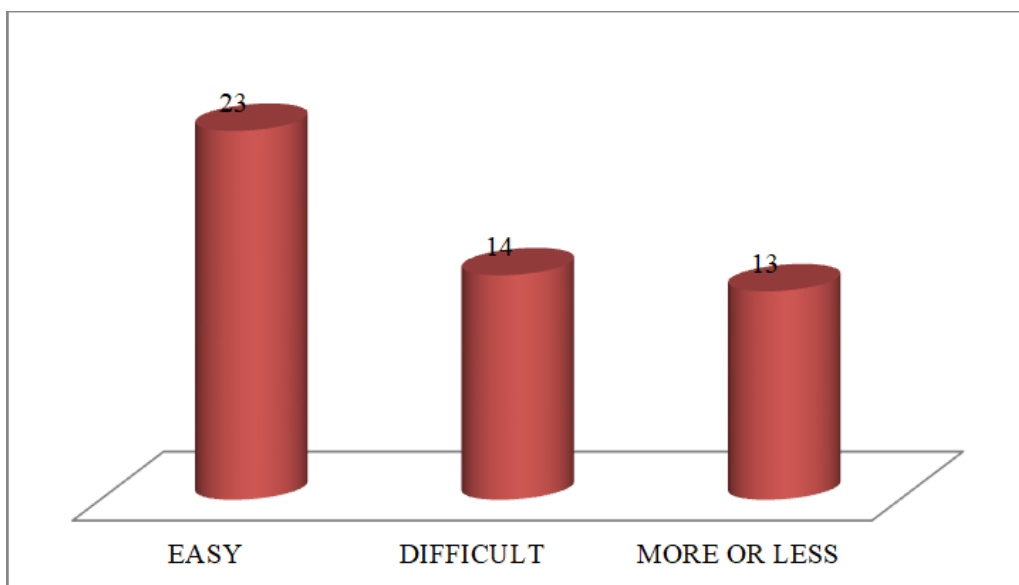
**Chart 6: Languages used during the first contact**

Talking about languages used during the first face to face with the seller, I depict that 21 out of 25 buyers use Wolof, 3 Pulaar and only 1 French.

The majority use Wolof because most of the informants have Wolof as a mother tongue and it is the most used language in the market. Finally Wolof is seen as the national language of business.

In the market area of Ndar Toute, 3 buyers mention Pulaar during their first contact with the seller for it constitutes first their mother tongue and secondly they defend the idea that they feel at ease to speak their language for no one has anything more important than it.

1 is in favour of French. For instance, I met someone who reveals that he is obliged to use French during his transactions because it is only the language he speaks.



**Chart 7: Status of the communication in Ndar Toute**

Dealing with the status of the communication in Ndar Toute, 23 out of 50, answer that the communication in Ndar Toute is easy, 14 say that it is difficult and 13 of them support the idea that it is more or less difficult.

These informants presume that the communication in the market of Ndar Toute is easy for there is intercomprehension between the different actors. Some of them state that there is a familiarity between sellers and buyers.

That is the reason why there is no linguistic gap during communication. Others think that the communication is easy for Wolof is the language use when interacting and it is spoken by almost all the interlocutors.

14 of them put forward the idea that communication in the area of Ndar Toute is difficult. According to this group of people, communication is difficult because not only it can be sometimes frustrating but also there is possible misunderstanding during interactions. Besides, sometimes people who can't communicate are found. It is indispensable to mention that the misunderstanding is not frequently noted through the language but through the mood or temper of the different interlocutors.

As for the last 13 ones, they defend the idea that the communication is more or less difficult in Ndar Toute. Indeed, as mention by almost all the respondents the communication can be easy as it can be difficult. For emphasis, communication includes many social factors such as stammering, mood, tempers and so for.

### THE INTERVIEWS REVELATIONS

Interviewed about spoken languages, the 4 interviewees altogether mentioned Wolof, 3 of them mentioned French and two Pulaar. The other languages were not evoked. As far as language use in Saint-Louis' markets are concerned, Wolof comes first, followed by Pulaar and French. In other words, Wolof represents the language of trade in the country. For emphasis, it is very rare to see someone in the markets of Saint-Louis who can't speak Wolof. As the study shows, even other ethnic groups are obliged to use Wolof during their transactions. It is therefore to show the preponderance of Wolof in Senegalese interactions of the Senegalese that Makhtar Diouf writes: "*Le Wolof est reconnu par tout le monde au Sénégal comme lingua Franca au plan national ; depuis de nombreuses décennies, le Wolof est la langue de communication dans le pays...*" [14]. Only Pulaar represents the other language whose use is frequent in the markets of Sor and Ndar Toute. This is due to the strong presence of Pulaar speakers in this region.

Dealing with the mixture of languages during communication in Saint-Louis' markets, all the interviewees do agree that they do it. To explain such a fact, they evoke schools, youth and parents as the main reasons. In fact, many of them state that it is on the diapason, it has become a habit to mix languages. Some of them say that it is impossible to see someone who speaks "pure" Wolof. No one escape in these times being to this fact. Others confessed that many Wolof words are ignored because most of people learnt their equivalence in French. Schoolboys and girls are those who participate a lot to the expansion of mixed languages. Language and education is about the speakers' status and level of education. The impact of school appears clearly on the way intellectuals use language. In fact, their speeches are mainly influenced by the French, English, and Spanish they learnt at school. To show a difference between them and illiterate people, they are used to use foreign words in their speeches. Youth are under the yoke of modernity and globalization. Now, Wolof is also mixed with national languages such as Pulaar. Indeed, it has become a fashion to mix national and foreign languages. Here are two examples of sentences given by two of the interviewees:

The first one: "*Boy ce soir nga niuw sama galé*" (English: Come to home tonight). The second one: "*Boy fayma prix ma deal la shoes yi, yaye boroom dé!*" (English: "Propose me a handsome price for these shoes, it suits you!")

In the first example, there are the English word 'boy', the French word 'ce soir' and the Pulaar word 'galé'. In the second one, there are the English words 'boy', 'deal', 'shoes' and the French word 'prix'.

The explanation given by the interviewees is that they do it to look like to the trendy boys and girls. It seems to be a pleasure to mix languages. Even some old people begin to do so.

This has advantages as well as disadvantages. For example to deal with the advantages, we can note that it can be enriching for a language to borrow from another. Because languages are expected to grow and change, using words from different languages can enrich a language, gives it a charm and be appreciated by a large number of speakers. The mixture of different languages in the long run can impact negatively the language. The fact of using many words from different languages can weaken a language. Now it is difficult to see someone who speaks Wolof without mixing it with other languages. The excess of mixture of languages can also lead to language death.

As far as the language which is most used in the markets of Sor and that of Ndar Toute is concerned, the same answer is shared; Wolof represents the most used language. Indeed knowing that almost all traders and buyers speak Wolof, it becomes evident that Wolof be the most used language. Besides, it is almost the only language used in these markets. Pulaar represents apart from Wolof the sole language whose number of speakers is important in Sor and Ndar Toute.

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<sup>14</sup>Diouf, M. (1998). *Les ethnies et la nation*, Dakar : Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines du Sénégal, p.79.

The weight of Wolof in the market areas of Tenjiguen and Ndar Toute explains the reason why there is almost no competition. In fact, Wolof dominates all the languages in the domain of use. Apart from Wolof, only Pulaar tries to oppose resistance. This because Pulaar people are proud of their culture, they are deeply rooted on their culture. They value their culture wherever they are. In fact, they are always ready to promote their language. For example when a Pulaar speaker sees his fellow, they only speak Pulaar. This is not true for the Serer or Joola speaker. Then, it becomes obvious that Pulaar oppose resistance to Wolof in these markets even if its resistance is not strong because of the status Wolof holds.

Numerous are factors that subtend the on-going multilingualism we witnessed in Saint-Louis' two central markets. As a fact, markets are a surge zone favouring the acquisition of languages. For emphasis, many interviewees confided us that they learnt a language at the market even if their knowledge of that language might not be so deep. Thus, markets sometimes play the role of schools.

## THE OBSERVATIONS

Given the observations held in the market areas of Sor and Ndar Toute; Wolof, Pulaar and French are the languages mostly used.

Wolof is the language of trade in the country. In fact, people of different linguistic backgrounds need to speak a particular language when they meet. Therefore, Wolof seems to be the much appropriate language. This can be explained by the role played by the "Baol Baol" in the domain of trade in Senegal. For instance, "Baol Baols" are great traders usually from Diourbel and Diourbel is the region of Wolof people where the language originated. As great traders, they early left their country for business activities. Little by little, they implemented their language throughout the country. Such a fact is the reason why Wolof is present everywhere in Senegal. So, Wolof may also be the language of wider communication in other Senegalese central markets.

Pulaar is a language whose importance in Saint-Louis' markets can't be denied. Indeed, the strong presence of the Pulaar speakers in this part of the region is very important. That is the reason why it is strongly used in Saint-Louis' central markets. Many Pulaar speakers are present and conduct their business activities in the region. Their attitudes toward Pulaar are very significant. In fact, they are used to speak Pulaar wherever they are.

French presence in the market areas of Sor and Ndar Toute is obvious. Even if many of the informants deny the fact of using it in markets, one can notice that French is really present. The observations show that the French use in Sor and Ndar Toute is meaningful. Indeed, it is a mixture of Wolof and French where Wolof largely dominates. It is called the Urban Wolof. Sellers and buyers seem to be attracted by this language. They feel at ease to use it during communication. Young preference of English mainly French is not random. In fact, it is a reflection of the boys' and girls' will to assert their modernity while not denying their attachment to their local languages with the use of Wolof as the basis of their speech. For instance, the presence of foreigners during the colonial conquest has left some linguistic consequences. This can be more understood through the following statement: "Senegal was under British domination and this has left some cultural and linguistic consequences. Many English words are now deeply rooted in the Wolof language" [15]. Another remark is that when dealing with money or price, it is very rare to see someone who uses Wolof or Pulaar. In fact, they all use French to speak about money or price. Many are those who do not know how to count in Wolof as far as money is concerned. Even some old people are lost when you speak about money in Wolof. French colonisation also has left after-effects. Next to these reasons, we can mention the presence of foreigners in the country. These are among other reasons why French is used in the market areas of Saint-Louis.

I noted through the observations that most local languages spoken by people are used for very limited purposes. For example, they are used for approaching customers or bargaining. So speaking a given language is a way to attract clientele to sell off its products.

A very important remark is that the product of sale can be determining in identifying a belonging of someone. As a fact, the product can show up the ethnic belonging of the seller but not its first language. For example, almost all the milk sellers in the two markets originated from Fulani people. Most of them are either Peul or Haal Pulaar. The majority speak Pulaar, the language they commonly shared. The same observation was done within the meat sellers. The majority we got in touch with are Hassanya people. It happens also with the fish sellers. Most of them are "Lébous" in other words Wolof speakers. Such a thing can be explained by the fact that job activity is a cultural heritage. This is really true but with time by, people tend to loose customs and have another way of viewing the world. Despite this, some of them keep their habits.

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<sup>15</sup>Ndiaye, D. (2023). "The use of English in non English speaking countries: the case of Senegal", *International Journal of Current Research*, 15(1), p.23347.



Let me precise that the fact of belonging to an ethnic group does not mean to speak the language of the group. That's why the product of sale can determine the ethnic group of the person but not its first language. As I am dealing with language use, this criterion seems not to be appropriate then.

In sum, the observations were of a great help in the sense that it helped me to determine the linguistic attitudes and practices of sellers and buyers in Saint-Louis's two central markets.

## REPORTING OF THE FINDINGS

I report and comment on the most notable results obtained in the study.

As stated early, the main purpose of this research article was to investigate the use made of languages in the market areas of Sor and Ndar Toute. Thanks to the data provided by the questionnaire and interviews, and the observations, I made some noteworthy findings on the framework.

After a comparative study of the use made of languages on the market areas of Sor and Ndar Toute, I found that Wolof is the most spoken language, followed by Pulaar. Next to them, there is French which is very used even if it is not mentioned by a great number of the informants. This may be because of the fact that the spoken French is mixed with Wolof which largely dominates. The coexistence of Wolof with other national and foreign languages explains the way the Wolof spoken in the town is very much influenced. This may be more understood through this assertion of Pierre Dumont and Bruno Maurer when they state that: "*L'idée d'une francophonie essentiellement culturelle fondée sur une certaine idée de rapport entre le français et les langues nationales, faite de symbiose et de complémentarité a longtemps dominé la linguistique du Sénégal*" [16].

I noticed that sellers and buyers young people above all are constantly in contact with foreign words and cannot help using them. Some of them use it because they do not master their mother tongue as they should. Others use it for a social integration. They do it because they want to enjoy modernism and globalization. Most of them use foreign words in their speech to show off. I also depicted that the other local languages are found in the market but not very used. They are only used for very limited purposes such as attracting clientele or bargaining. The conflict of languages in Saint-Louis's two central markets results in the striking domination of Wolof over the others. It is the language favoured in most communicative spheres. Only Pulaar tries to oppose resistance to Wolof.

I discovered that Saint-Louis's two central markets are like schools. In fact, they are places where languages are learnt. Another finding is that when dealing with money or price, it is very rare to see someone who uses Wolof in Tenjiguen as in Ndar Toute. In fact, sellers and buyers all use French to speak about money or price. Many are those who do not know how to count in Wolof. Even some old people are lost when you speak about money in Wolof.

Coming to my initial hypothesis, Wolof will be the language of wider communication followed by Pulaar in respectively the markets of Sor and Ndar Toute in Saint-Louis was proved. For emphasis, Wolof represents the language of trade in Senegal and in Saint-Louis in particular. That is the reason why its weight in relation to other languages in Senegalese central markets is not to be denied.

As for the second hypothesis, the investigation in the market of Sor and Ndar Toute reveals that the Urban Wolof is the most used language by sellers and buyers, above all by young people. Indeed, they feel at ease to speak it and are very pleased by the language. For them, to resemble to the trendy, you have to speak it. Then, there is a competition between the choice of a pleasant language and the choice of a language which identify someone within a particular group. In this view, Ralph Fasold states that: "There seems to be a potential conflict between choosing a language that is most comfortable for the speaker that allows him to 'be himself' and choosing a language that identifies him with one or another of the societies' sociocultural groups" [17].

To deal with the third hypothesis that is that the products for sale can be a deciding element of language use was invalidated. In fact, the study shows that the product of sale can give information about the ethnic belonging of the seller but not its language use. Thus, this criterion is not appropriate here.

As far as the last hypothesis is concerned, it was proved. Indeed, many sellers have the tendency to use the language of the buyer to be passing just to attract him thanks to his physical traits. Most of the time, many of them only knows some words and expressions in that language for example how to greet, to tease or the product's name. They use it to please the customers and influence them to buy their products.

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<sup>16</sup>Dumont, P., & Maurer, B. (1995). *Sociolinguistique du Français en Afrique Francophone*, Vanves: EDICEF, p77.

<sup>17</sup>Fasold, R. (1990). *The Sociolinguistics of Society*, Cambridge: Basic Blackwell, p.88.

**APPENDICES**  
**Appendix 1**



**Picture 1: The Market of Sor in view of outside**

**Appendix 2**



**Picture 2: The Market of Ndar Toute in view of the interior**

**Appendix 3: People interviewed**

N°	NAMES	AGE	SEX	ETHNIC GROUP	FIRST LANGUAGE	PROFESSION/ LOCATION
1	Mamadou G. SOW	35	M	Toucouleur	Wolof	Hairdresser/ SOR
2	Alioune SAMB	41	M	Wolof	Wolof	Storekeeper/ SOR
3	Moussa SOW	54	M	Toucouleur	Pulaar	Shopkeeper/ N. TOUTE
4	Ousmane KANE	42	M	Wolof	Wolof	Cloth supplier/N. TOUTE

## CONCLUSION

Language allows us to exchange with others. Its use is often a reflection of the environment we live in. Studying language use in the market areas of Sor (Tanjiguen) and Ndar Toute in Saint-Louis has been of a great contribution in my knowledge. So, the questionnaires, the interviews and the observations were the best tools used in bringing light about this study.

“The linguist task is to present facts”, writes Ladefoged (cited by Edwards 1994: 208) and also by (Mbaya 2005: 201). I have tried in this work to enumerate all the factors that accompany language use in the market areas of Sor and Ndar Toute. A comparative study of the use made of languages in the market areas of Sor and Ndar Toute have shown that Wolof is the most spoken language, followed by Pulaar and French. I noticed that sellers and buyers young people above all are constantly in contact with foreign words and cannot help using them. Most of them do it for a social integration. The place Wolof holds in the two Saint-Louis central markets explains the reason why languages do not compete. Pulaar is the sole language which tries to oppose resistance to Wolof. I discovered that Saint-Louis’s two central markets are places where languages are learnt. I have also noticed that when dealing with money or price, it is very rare to see someone who uses Wolof or Pulaar. In fact, almost all sellers and buyers speak about money in French to bargain or to pay somebody. I also found that the other local languages are present in the markets but not very much used. They are only used for very limited purposes such as attracting clientele or bargaining. The lack of use of Senegalese local languages in public places such as markets makes us wonder about their future. For emphasis, they are endangered and likely to disappear if nothing is done.

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