

# Wolof Grammar Manual

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## Wolof Grammar Notes: Stative versus Active Verbs

Wolof does not have adjectives and few adverbs of manner. Instead verbs and verb phrases are used to modify nouns and verbs. Thus there are two kinds of verbs in Wolof.

Active verbs are those which indicate an action or process.

e.g. lekk to eat

Stative verbs are usually verbs which indicate being in a particular state or static condition.

e.g. baax to be good

A small number of verbs can take either sense depending on the context. In the case where a verb carries both an active and a passive sense, the “di” indicates the active incomplete sense.

e.g. toog to sit down (active), to be seated (stative)

Mu ngi toog.

He is sitting down.

Mu ngiy toog.

He is in the process of sitting down.

Maa ngi toog.

I am seated.

Maa ngiy toog.

I am in the process of sitting down.

The difference in meaning can sometimes be subtle. For instance: “xalaat” means to think about, ponder, an active process of an active verb. Whereas “foog” means to think, or believe, a state of being of a stative verb.

One of the most concrete differences between these two kinds of Wolof verbs has to do with the use of the presentative -angi. Active verbs can be modified by -angi, while stative verbs ordinarily cannot. This provides the quickest way to tell where a Wolof verb is active or stative: Simply ask a native speaker whether one can say “Mu ngi x” where “x” is the verb in question.

### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 39, 49
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 213, 2150
PhD Thesis of Eric Church:	pp 26
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 4-6
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 33

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: General Comments on the Wolof Verb

- Often it is only the context (verbal pronouns or articles) which permits one to distinguish between a verb and a noun.  
e.g. the word *liggéey* could be a verb or a noun.  

Damay liggéey.	I am working.
Liggéey bi metti na.	The work is hard.
- The Wolof verbal system is more concerned with aspect than time. Even if one can distinguish the past, present or future, the verbal structures work around completed or uncompleted actions. It reveals whether an action is momentaneous or habitual; at its start or at its end; single or multiple; recent or far away; accomplished or unaccomplished.
- There are three voices in Wolof: active; semi-active; passive.
  - The passive and semi-active are formed by adding the suffix -u.  
e.g. Aali tëj na bunt ba. Ali closed the door.  
Bunt bi tëju na. The door is closed.  
Aali gaañu na. Ali is injured.
  - The passive can also be formed by using the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural form with an active form. In this case it indicates the equivalent of the English structure “one ...”.  
e.g. Ñoo ngi may gis One has seen me. OR I have been seen.
  - The passive can also be indicated by the structure -ees/-eef.

See Samb p 109-113 for more details.

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Imperative

### Formation:

Singular:	Verb + -al (if verb ends in consonant e.g. <i>waxal</i> ) [+/- object pronouns]
	Verb + -l (if verb ends in i, u or a long vowel e.g. <i>noppil</i> )
	Verb + -vowel + -l (if verb ends in any other vowel e.g. <i>booleel</i> )
	Verb + -wal (if verb is monosyllabic ending in a vowel e.g. <i>jiwal</i> )
Plural	Verb + -leen (e.g. <i>waxleen, noppileen, booleleen</i> ) [+/- object pronouns]

### Notes:

- When the imperative singular is followed by an object pronoun, the mark -al/-l is dropped. The plural form does not change when followed by a pronoun.
 

e.g.	Nuyul!	Greet!
c.f.	Nuyu ma! and Nuyuleen ma!	Greet me!
- The suffix -al also can have the meaning “to do for someone else”.
 

e.g.	Nuyul ma ko!	Greet him for me!
c.f.	Nuyu ma!	Greet me!
- When two commands are given one after another, only the first one takes the imperative suffix.
 

e.g.	Demal toog!	Go and sit down!
	Too gal te noppi!	Sit down and be quiet!
- In a series of commands numbering greater than two verbs, the third verb will often be in the form of the minimum verb construction.
 

e.g.	Ñëwal, toog te nga wax ak man!	Come, sit and talk with me!
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- Exceptions** to rule:
 

Kaay!	Come here!
Am!	Here, have this!
Indi!	Bring!
- The imperative also exists in a continuous form with “di” giving the sense of a commandment which one is to do continuously or habitually. In this case an object pronoun precedes the main verb, and the “l” of *deel* is dropped.
 

deel/deeleen/dee [+/- object pronoun] + verb	
Affirmative	Negative
Deel jàng	Bul di jàng
Deeleen jàng	Buleen di jàng

e.g.	Deeleen ñaan ci xeeti ñaan yépp ci kàttanu Xel mu Sell mi (Eph 6:18)
	Dee ko jox buy Have the habit of giving him monkey bread.

The optative form (*na nga dem*) is also a form of imperative, as is the negative interrogative (*doo dem?*). All these imperative forms only have one negative form: *bul*.

## 10. Negative

2<sup>nd</sup> person singular is formed by bul [+/- object pronoun] + verb

e.g. Bul wax! Don't speak!

The "l" of "bul" is dropped before a pronoun object, fi or ci

e.g. Bu ko wax! Don't say it!

2<sup>nd</sup> person plural is formed by buleen [+/- object pronoun] + verb

e.g. Buleen wax! Don't speak!

In Wolof, a negative imperative structure also exists for 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons as a subjunctive negative.

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	buma [+/- object pronoun] + verb	bunu/buñu [+/- object pronoun] + verb
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	bu(l) [+/- object pronoun] + verb	buleen [+/- object pronoun] + verb
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	bumu + verb bu +[+/- object pronoun] + subject + verb	buñu [+/- object pronoun] + verb

e.g. Buma ko gis!	May I not see it!
Buñu wax!	Let them not speak!
Bu Moodu ñëw!	Let Moodu not come!
Bu xaj bi dugg!	May the dog not enter!
Bu ko ñépp xam!	May everyone know it!
Bu ma kenn tooñ!	May no-one do me wrong!

In a series of negative verbs, the second is not marked. When the negative imperative is followed by a positive command then, the imperative mark appears.

e.g. Bul yéeg toog!	Do not climb up and sit down!
Bul dëféenu, jaaxaanal!	Do not lie on your stomach, lie on your back!

### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 50, 76, 169, 176
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 20
Baptist course:	pp 8f, 46
PhD Thesis of Eric Church:	pp 76, 162-168, 173-177
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart):	pp 25-27
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 99-100
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 6
Xam sa làkk:	pp 68, 73

### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 24, 33-36, 180
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## Wolof Grammar Notes: Present Continuous/Presentative (Mu ngi)

### Formation:

Noun or subject pronoun + a ngi/a nga [+/- object pronouns] [+/- di] [+/-verb] [+/-object]

e.g. Maa ngi koy jàng

I am studying it

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	maa ngi	nu ngi/ ñu ngi
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	yaa ngi	yeen a ngi
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	mu ngi /mi ngi	ñu ngi

### Notes:

1. Some regions distinguish between “nu” (1<sup>st</sup> person plural) and ñu (3<sup>rd</sup> person plural). Other regions make no such distinction using ñu for both cases. This is true for all the subject and object pronouns of all modes.

### 2. Usage:

a. When used with either a nominal subject or a subject pronoun with a verb, it indicates someone or something performing an action which is going on at the time of speaking. It is approximately equivalent to the English present continuous tense.

e.g. Job a ngi wax. Diop is speaking.

b. When used with either a nominal subject or a subject pronoun without a verb it indicates something or someone which exists at the time of speaking i.e. “Here is/there is”.

e.g. Kër a ngi. Here is a house.

Maa ngi. Here I am.

### 3. When used with nouns as subject:

a. When the definite article follows the noun, the “a” of “angi” is doubled and added to the noun class consonant.

e.g. Kër gaa ngi. Here is the house.

b. In the absence of the definite article the noun is indefinite. An indefinite plural subject is indicated by “ay” preceding the subject.

e.g. Kër a ngi. Here is a house.

Ay kër a ngi. Here are some houses.

c. When the noun without article ends in a non-geminated final consonant, then the consonant before the “a” of “angi”, is pronounced as it would be when the possessive -u is added.

e.g. Xaj a ngi baw. Here is a dog which is barking.

d. When the noun without article ends in a vowel the “a” of “angi” is fused onto the noun following the normal Wolof phonetical rules.

e.g. Kaalaa ngi. Here is a turban. (kaala)

Gunee ngi fo. Here is a child who is playing. (gune)

Sa jaaro o ngi lang. Your earring is falling. (jaaru)

4. The base -ang- has several suffixes which give **spatio-temporal definition**, often in combination with the f- and n- class auxiliaries. A doubling of the vowel or addition of the suffix -le indicates insistence; f- indicates non-visibility; n- indicates visibility.

a. -i indicates proximity to the speaker.

e.g. Maa ngi bey.

The range of possibilities is: angi; angii; angi fi; an gi fii; angi ni; an gi nii

Normally the mark of incompleteness, di, disappears when -i is used, but may be used when one wants to emphasize the difference between the completed and uncompleted.

e.g. Maa ngi liggéey oto. I am a mechanic.

Maa ngiy liggéey oto. Here I am repairing a car.

Mu ngi too g. He is sitting.

Mu ngiy too g. He is in the process of sitting down.

- b. -a indicates that the action is remote. then the form a nga + di (or its variant y) is used. By definition, the remote form can only be used with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular or plural, as first and second persons cannot be remote.

e.g. Job a ngay wax. Diop is speaking (over there).

The range of possibilities is: anga; angale; angee; anga fa; anga fale; anga fee; anga nale; anga nee;

- c. -u indicates an indeterminate position. This may be an imprecise location or somewhere between close and far away especially if there is a doubling of the u

e.g. Mu ngu fu. He is there somewhere (but I am not really interested).

Mu ngu nuu. Here it is (par example a village situated a kilometre away or a needle found some way away).

The range of possibilities is: angu; anguu; angu fu; angu fuu;

- d. -oog indicates the resumption of a subject about which one has already spoken

e.g. Job a ngooguley dem. Here is Diop (about whom we spoke) who is going.

Maa ngoog. Here I am (Now you know who I am).

Mungoog! Exactly!

The range of possibilities is: angoog; angoogu; angoogule; angoogale; angoogee

5. When there is an object pronoun one is required to use di (or its variant y)

e.g. Ñu ngi lay nuyu They are greeting you.

Maa ngi leen di tàggu. I am bidding you (pl) farewell.

6. The presentative is only used with active verbs, not with stative verbs (although there are some exceptions, mainly being verbs which have both an active and a stative sense).

For verbs which can be both active or passive:

the accomplished indicates the passive sense

the unaccomplished indicates the active sense.

e.g. Mu ngi too g. He is seated.

Mu ngiy too g. He is in the process of sitting down.

7. In its **negative** form the presentative only ever uses the -ul series suffixes on the verb.

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	-uma	-unu /uñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	-uloo	-uleen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	-ul	-uñu

e.g. Maa ngi wax. I am speaking.  
Waxuma. I am not speaking.

#### References:

Peace Corps Course: pp 7f, 29, 49  
J'Apprends le Wolof: pp 21f, 78.1, 212  
Baptist course: pp 2, 82  
PhD Thesis of Eric Church: pp 71, 115-125  
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart) pp 1f  
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb): pp 88  
Grammaire Wolof (Dial) pp 5, 12  
Xam sa làkk: pp 64

#### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof: pp 24-26, 37f, 59-63, 80  
Baptist Course: pp 22

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Completion Marker (Na)

**Formation:** [+/-nominal subject] + verb + na [+/- object pronouns] [+/- nominal object]

Usual form		
	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> person	naa	nanu/nënu /nañu
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	nga	ngeen
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	na/në	nañu/nëñu

Elongated form		
	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> person	naa/ namaa	nanoo /nañoo
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	ngaa	ngeena
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	naa	nañoo

**Impersonal:** -ees na

e.g. jaayees na, jaayeesoon na

One sold it

### Notes:

#### 1. With Stative Verbs

It represents a state or condition which exists at the time of speaking. It indicates literally that the coming into being of the state or condition has been completed. In a looser sense however, it can be considered as simply a present tense marker for stative verbs.

e.g. Ceeb bi neex na    The rice is good

#### 2. With Active Verbs

It represents an action completed; achieved either in past or present. Sometimes this aspect denotes what would seem to be present action or a state of being but this has come to be a condition because of a completed action in the past. It is approximately equivalent to the English present perfect tense, but the idea has more of a sense of completeness than that of past/present distinction. In relation to the speaker the action could have been completed today or 100 years ago without changing the structure of the mode.

e.g. Wax naa.    I have spoken.  
Lekk nga.    You have eaten.

#### 3. Elongated form is used in double verb constructions when subject pronoun is last syllable before second verb.

e.g. War ngaa dem.    You must go.

#### 4. When usage causes ambiguity (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural; 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular elongated) the sentence may be restructured using independent pronoun + completed object predicator (see Wolof Grammar Notes: Object Pronouns [2.b](#))

#### 5. Negative: Conjugated Negative Suffix -ul/-wul (See negation notes: Section A)

### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 9, 30, 49f
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 42, 212
Baptist course:	pp 31, 43
PhD Thesis of Eric Church:	pp 67f, 142-146
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 6-8, 50
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 59, 62
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 4, 13
Xam sa làkk:	pp 64

### Exercises:

Baptist Course    pp 32

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Complement & Object Predicator (La)

**Formation:** Noun/noun clause/independent question word/adverb/number + la [+/- verb]

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	laa	lanu/lënu/lañu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	nga/n gë	ngeen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	la/lë	lañu/lëñu

**Impersonal:** lees (rare)

e.g. Fii lees ko gise

It is here that one saw it

**Notes:**

1. **Function:**

- To predicate the noun, pronoun or question word. That is, to make the noun, pronoun or question words complement of the subject - "to be" in English.
- Emphasize the object of a verb. It is the structure used in response to questions like:  
Lan ngay def? Foo jóge? etc..

2. **Usage:**

a. **As complement predicator**

[+/-nominal subject/pronoun], nominal object/noun clause/independent question word/adverb/number + predicator

- e.g. Man, Ameriken laa. Me, I am American.  
Lii, cin la. This, it is a cauldron.  
Ñan lañu? Who are they?  
Fii la. It is here.  
Benn la. It's one; it's one and the same.

b. **As object predicator**

nominal subject/pronoun , + nominal object/independent pronoun + predicator (conjugated) [+/- di] + main verb

- e.g. Amerik laa jóge. It is from America that I come  
Cin laa bëgg. It is a cauldron that I want  
Ñan lañu dem Dakar? Who are they who are going to Dakar?  
Moom la gis. It is him that he has seen.  
Xale yi, ay tângal lañu bëgg. The children, it is lollies that they want.

When the nominal subject is placed in front of the phrase as in the last example, then there is a short pause in speech between the subject and the complement.

or nominal object/pronoun + predicator (unconjugated) [+/- di] + nominal subject/pronoun + main verb

When the subject appears directly before the verb, the neutral form "la" (i.e. unconjugated) is used.

- e.g. Ay tângal la xale yi bëgg. It is lollies that the children want.  
Ben n sagar la jigéen ji fòote bool yi. It is with a cloth that the woman has washed the dishes.

3. When '**di**' is used with main verb it is attached to object predicator in form '-y'. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural (ngeen) 'di' is used. Di cannot be used when it is acting as a complement predicator (i.e. no verb). When "di" is present, it indicates that the action is not yet accomplished (an action occurring at the time of speaking or about to happen in the near future). When "di" is not present then the action has been completed at the time of speaking.

- e.g. Tefes laay dem It is to the beach I will go/am going  
Tefes ngeen di dem It is to the beach that you (pl) will go/are going

4. When the complement is preceded by an indefinite article, then the phrase is more precise.

- e.g. Nit laa. I am human.  
Ak nit laa. I am a human.



5. **Negative**

a. When acting as a **complement predictor** (i.e. no verb) the “du” negative form is used (see negation notes).

e.g. Lii téere la                   ⇒           Lii du téere  
       This is a book                        This is not a book

This form is incompatible with the -ul negative form.

b. When acting as an **object predictor** (i.e. includes verb) the -ul/-wul negative suffix, non conjugated is used, with the rest of construction remaining unaltered (see negation notes).

e.g. Moom laa gis                   ⇒           Moom laa gisul  
       It is him I have seen                It's not him that I have seen

Also 'du' can be used before the complement.

e.g. Du moom laa gis                I haven't seen him

**References:**

Peace Corps Course:                   pp 30, 51  
 J'Apprends le Wolof:                   pp 30, 42f, 213  
 Baptist course:                         pp 12, 23f  
 PhD Thesis of Eric Church:           pp 69, 126-132  
 Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)   pp 11-14, 31  
 Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb): pp 60, 63  
 Grammaire Wolof (Dial)               pp 5, 11  
 Xam sa làkk:                           pp 64

**Exercises:**

J'Apprends le Wolof:                   pp 36f, 44f, 89  
 Baptist Course:                         pp 21

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Explicative (Dafa)

**Formation:** [+/-Nominal Subject] + Dafa [+/- object pronoun] [+/-di] + verb [+/- nominal object]

Usual Form			Elongated Form		
	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	dama	danu/dañu	<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	damaa	danoo/dañoo
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	danga	dangeen	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	dangaa	dangeena
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	dafa	dañu	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	dafa/daa	dañoo

### 1. With Stative Verbs

a. Used to describe a state of being: character, color, weather etc..

e.g. Dafa tang. It is hot.

Dafa do f. He is crazy.

b. Used to give the explicative or causal sense. Often both functions b) and c) are present together. Hence it often is the appropriate response to a particular situation or question.

e.g. A asks B: "Doo génn tey?" Aren't you going out today?

B replies: "Deedeet, dafa tang." No, (because) it is hot.

cf. A greets B and remarks "Tang na lool tey" It is very hot today.  
Y asks X why he has stopped in the middle of his work.

X replies "Damaa sonn." (Because) I am tired.

cf. X walks into the house and flops down in a chair "Sonn naa lool" I am very tired.

For a small number of verbs dafa sometimes indicates a state which has always existed contrasting with the completive mode (na) which indicates a process which has been completed. However, often there is no distinction between dafa and na.

e.g. Dafa gumba. He is blind (from birth).

cf. Gumba na. He is blind (has become blind).

c. Used to emphasize verb.

### 2. With Active Verbs

a. Used to emphasize verb

e.g. Damay liggéey I am working (not playing) or What I am doing is working.

This is proper form to use after the question: "Looy def?"

b. Used to give the explicative or causal sense

c. Used in conjunction with 'di' to indicate an action practiced habitually in the present, including professions, an action happening at the time or in the near future.

e.g. damay xëy I go to work (every day)

### 3. Use with Di

Di indicates the action is not yet accomplished. It appears as -y except after dangeen, where it appears as "di". The absence of "di" indicates an event which has been completed or a present state.

a. When used with active verbs can indicate:

-an action in process of occurring

-an action just about to occur

-an action occurring habitually

e.g. damay dem I am in the process of leaving

I will leave

I am in a habit of leaving

Only context enables one to distinguish between the three. Note that "damay dem" can only indicate a habitual action.

b. When used without a verb indicates "to be" with an explicative value

e.g. Damay tuurist. It is that I am a tourist ⇒ explanation of something

cf. Tuurist laa. I am a tourist ⇒ statement

#### 4. Elongated form

The elongated form is created by the addition of the suffix -a, which is a variant of “di” and indicates the action is not accomplished. If there is a pronoun object between the pronoun subject and the main verb, then the -a is added to the object pronoun which elongates. When dafa appears directly before an active verb, the elongated form above is used.

e.g. Damaa liggéey I am working.

#### 5. Contractions

dafay may be contracted to day or daf di (day used but not daf di in Mbane)

e.g. Dafay nelaw } He is sleeping  
 = Day nelaw } It's because he is sleeping  
 = Daf di nelaw } He sleeps habitually

Dañuy may be contracted to dañ (not used in Mbane)

6. In rapid speech, when followed by object pronouns, the following contractions may occur (used in Mbane):

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	dam	dan
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	dan	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	daf	dañ

e.g. Dam ko def (dama ko def)  
 Dan ko def (danga ko def)

#### 7. Negative

a. negative of verb if accomplished

e.g. dama jangul It's because I haven't studied

b. negative of di if unaccomplished

e.g. dama duljang It's because I am not studying

#### References:

Peace Corps Course: pp 76, 93, 195  
 J'Apprends le Wolof: pp 31, 78, 85, 150, 213  
 Baptist course: pp 27, 32  
 PhD Thesis of Eric Church: pp 67, 132-142  
 Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart) pp 2-4  
 Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb): pp 86  
 Grammaire Wolof (Dial) pp 5, 12  
 Xam sa làkk: pp 64

#### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof: pp 80

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Future Tense (Dina)

**Formation:** di + completive aspect pronoun [+/-object pronoun] + verb [+/-complement]

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	dinaa	dinanu/dinañu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	dinga	dingeen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	dina	dinañu

e.g. Dina ko dégg	He will hear it
Du ko dégg	He won't hear of it
Dinaa ko def	I will do it
Dinga dem dëkk ba:	You are going to the village
Dinanu fanaan Ndakaaru	We will pass the day in Dakar

### Notes:

- Dina + di/y indicates an habitual action.  
 e.g. Ellég dinaa seeti Abdu Tomorrow I will go see Abdu  
 Dinaay seeti Abdu I go see Abdu habitually  
 cf. Ellég damay seeti Abdu Tomorrow I am going to see Abdu
- Dina without a second di/y can indicate an habitual action or a future action  
 e.g. Dina lekk He (usually ) eats / He will eat
- Negative** (see negation notes)  
 The negative of dina always take the “du” form of negation.

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	duma	dunu/duñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	doo	dungeen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	du	duñu

### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 162
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 57f, 212
Baptist course:	pp 7
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 9f
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 4

### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 150, 163
Baptist Course:	pp 22

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Subject Emphasis Pronouns (Moo)

**Formation:** [subject nominal + a] or [subject pronoun] [+/- object pronoun] [+/-di] [+/- verb] [+/- object nominal]

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	maa	noo/ñoo
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	yaa	yeen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	moo	ñoo

**Notes:**

1. **Functions:**

- a. The function of this structure is to emphasis the subject (as English speakers would do by stressing the subject: "**He** did it").
- b. Thus it is the appropriate structure to respond to open questions which enquire about the subject.  
e.g. Ku dem? Who has left?  
Sama xarit a dem. It is my friend who left.
- c. Also used for forming open questions which relate to the subject [cf. la (complement/object predicator) which is used to form open questions relating to a complement or object].  
e.g. Kan moo koy jaay? Who is it that is selling this?  
Kan mooy jaay batik? Who is it that is selling batik? [Question about subject]  
Kan moo ko def? Who is it that made it? [Question about subject]  
cf Kan ngay seeti? Who are you seeking? [Question about object]  
cf Lan lay def? What is he doing? [Question about object]

NB "Kan moo" can contract to "Ku"  
"Ñan ñoo" can contract to "Ñu"  
"Lan moo" can contract to "Lu" etc

e.g. Ku ko def = Kan moo ko def Who made it?

Note: With open questions concerning the subject only 3<sup>rd</sup> person is possible

i.e. Kan moo(y) or Ñan ñoo(y)

d. The subject emphasis pronoun followed by a stative verb can be exclamative.

e.g. Yaa siiw! How you are famous!

e. It is used with certain structures such as:

moo tax

loolu moo tax

looloo tax

aka Nekk milioneer, aka neex!

2. The subject emphasis pronouns may serve alone as subject

e.g. Maa ko ñaw It is I who sewed it.

Yaa ma ko wax. It's you who said it to me.

3. They may be emphasised by an independent pronoun

e.g. Man, maa ko ñaw Me, it's I who sewed it.

Yaw, mi goor, yaa wara dem ci këram. You, who are a man, it is you who should go to his house.

4. The element "-a" can be reinforced by the element "ka".

e.g. Beñe bi moo ka funki! How the beignet has swollen up!

5. With 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular or plural when subject is stated and:

a. If the subject ends in a consonant or a long vowel

moo/ñoo is usually contracted to "a" (rarely in Mbane)

e.g. Kan a ma woo? = Kan moo ma woo? Who calls me?

Kan a ko ko defaral = Kan moo ko ko defaral? Who made it for her?

Cey kii a rafet! Why how he is beautiful!

b. If the subject ends in a vowel, moo/ñoo is contracted to elongation of vowel

a + a ⇒ aa

e,i + a ⇒ ee

o,u + a ⇒ oo

e.g. Faatoo ubbi bunt bi = Faatu moo ubbi bunt bi It was Faatu who opened the door.

Xale yee dugg = Xale yi ñoo dugg. It is the children who entered.

6. When pronoun objects are used they follow the subject emphasis pronoun.

e.g. Yaa ko ñaw? Is it **you** who sewed it?

7. Subject emphasis pronouns are often used with the **particle “di”** (-y). The absence of “di” indicates that the action has been completed or the state acquired. When “di” is present it indicates that the action of the verb is incomplete or occurring in the near future. When followed by a noun and not accompanied by another verb, the “di” stands for the verb “to be”. “di” usually appears in the contracted form “y”.

e.g. Yaa di sa mbindaanu boop? You are your own housegirl?  
Maa di togkat ci sunu kër. I am the cook at our house.

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	maay	nooy/ñooy
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	yaay	yeenay or yeena di
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	mooy	ñooy

e.g. Maay Moussa I am Moussa

(yeenay used more commonly in Mbane)

8. **Negative**

a. The negative of the subject emphasis pronouns without di: The verb remains invariable with the addition of -ul while the subject pronouns changes as normal according to person and number.

e.g. Maa demul Dakar It is I who did not go to Dakar.

b. The negative of the subject emphasis pronouns with di: The di is negated (dul)

Maa dul dem Dakar It is I who will not go to Dakar.

9. When the subject is nominal it precedes the verb, and is followed by an emphatic marker “a” (usually for 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural & singular but can be found with the other persons plural)

e.g. Gàtt-geen, gàtt-geen a koy fey It is with the goat that one must pay the goat.

Feebar a tax mu bàyyi liggéeyam The sickness made him quit his work.

Man ak waa Waakam a àndoon nàppi I and the inhabitants of Ouakam went together to fish.

10. The subject can be:

a noun simple or complex	e.g.	Njaay a ko def	It is Njaay who did it.
an infinitive functioning like a noun		Noppee ko gën	To be quiet is better.
pronoun		Yaa di guy	It is you who are a baobab.
independent pronoun separated by “rekk,		Moom rekk a ko man def	It is only him who can do it.
noun followed by independent pronoun.		Guy moom moo di....	The baobab, he it is that.... kenn”

### References:

Peace Corps Course: pp 130f  
 J'Apprends le Wolof: pp 95, 214  
 Baptist course: pp 37f  
 PhD Thesis of Eric Church: pp 70, 107-115  
 Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart) pp 14-16, 23  
 Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb): pp 59, 61  
 Grammaire Wolof (Dial) pp 4, 11  
 Xam sa làkk: pp 64

### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof: pp 97f, 100, 13, 190-193  
 Baptist Course: pp 39, 44

Revised 9 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Minimum Verb Construction Pronouns (Mu)

**Formation:** MVC pronoun or nominal subject + verb [+/- object pronoun or noun]

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	ma	nu/ñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	nga	ngeen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	mu	ñu

### Notes:

1. Contains no verbal markers therefore gives no information on mode or time. Therefore it occurs in positions or situations in which such information has already been given in the preceding sentences, or can be inferred from the context. It is the most common mode used in practice. It is basically only used with active verbs. Its value lies in the fact that it is non-emphatic therefore contrasts the emphatic modes, and also neutral allowing use when an imprecision is necessary.

### 2. Used in following situations:

a. **Narration** (stories, historical accounts, fables, instructions)

Appropriate information regarding time setting is given in early sentences then subsequent verbal constructions use MVC pronouns. Usually in this case, it indicates short term events. May use many verbs in quick succession.

e.g. Benn bis, dama demoon lekool. Ma dugg, ma toog, ma jàng ba pare, ma ñibbi

One day I went to school. I went in, I sat down, I studied until I finished (and then) I went home.

### b. Subordinate Clauses

#### i. relative clauses

e.g. Xale bi *nga* indi..... The child whom you have brought.....

#### ii. temporal /conditional clauses

(1) temporal clause with bi/ba also laata/bala naka (as soon as) etc...

e.g. Bi *mu* deeyee.... After he had died/when he died..

e.g. Naka mu ñëw, ne ci sama kaw kilib. As soon as he arrived he came suddenly upon me.

note: object pronouns occur before verb in this structure

(2) post temporal clause with bi/ba

e.g. Ba ma waxee *ñu* dem After I had spoken, they left

note: can also use object predicator or dafa

(3) post temporal clause with bu as conditioned

e.g. Bu ma waxee *nu* déglu. If I speak they will listen

(4) clauses describing manner (ni)

e.g. Deful liggéey bi na *mu* ko waree def. He did not do the work as he should have.

#### iii. lu (even though, however + adjective)

e.g. lu say luupi ndey laxlax, ca ngay toog However skinny are the thighs of your mother, you must sit there.

### c. Subjunctive Clauses

#### i. Certain conjunctions

#### ngir, ndax = in order to

e.g. Jox na ma téere bi ngir *ma* man koo jàng. He gave me the book so that I could read it

Note: When ndax has the sense of because then it uses the completive form

e.g. Ñëw naa ndax am naa liggéey I have come because I have work

Ñëw naa ndax ma am liggéey I have come in order to have work

#### ba (until)

e.g. Xaaral ba ma jox ko ko

ii. **Completive clauses with verbs of wishing, prohibiting, fearing, causing etc...**

- e.g. Bëgg naa *nga* dem jëndal ma mburu I want you to buy me bread  
 Tere naa ko *mu* ñëw I forbade him from coming  
 Ragal naa *mu* ñëw I fear he is coming  
 Ne na *nga* ñëw He said for you to come

iii. **With fâww (must)** This verb only indicates present/future. Always uses MCV pronouns.

- e.g. Fâww *nga* teewe ndaje ma It is absolutely necessary for you to attend the meeting

iv. **As imperative (with future overtones)**

Has the idea of let me/let us.

- e.g. *Ma* ñawal la benn? Shall I sew one for you?  
*Ma* xaar la? Shall I wait for you?  
*Mu* ñëw suba! Let him come tomorrow!

d. **Neutral conjugation**

- e.g. *Ma* ñëw I am coming

The form “*maa ngi ñëw*” insists too much on the duration of the action. “*ma ñëw*” is more one off. It is almost like the completive of an answered verb.

- ie *Xaaral ma* ñëw Wait I am coming

e. **In exclamative phrases**

- e.g. *Li ma* la xalaal! How I have been thing of you!

f. **In combination with relative pronouns used as question word**

= relative pronoun + MVC + verb

- e.g. *Foo* dëkk? Where do you live?  
*Nu mu* tudd? What is he called?  
*Fu may* dem? Where am I going?

Note: Contractions & 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular

	FU + MVC	NU + MVC	DU + MVC
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Person Singular</b>	fu ma	nu ma	du ma
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Person Singular</b>	foo (=fu nga)	noo (=nu nga)	doo (=du nga)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Person Singular</b>	fù (=fu mu)	nu mu (not “nu”)	du (not “du mu”)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Person Plural</b>	fu nu /fù ñu	nu nu /nu ñu	du nu/ du ñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Person Plural</b>	fù ngeen	nu ngeen	du ngeen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Person Plural</b>	fù ñu	nu ñu	du ñu

g. **after phrase introduced by an adverb**

- e.g. *Léegi ma* gis ko. Now I will see it/him.  
*Tuu ti ma* gis ko. I almost saw him.

h. **Consecutive verbs**

- e.g. *Soowam dafa* lamb, *mu maye* ko. Her milk was unsold (so) she gave it.  
*Waxaat ko*, *ma dégg*. Say it again, I am listening

i. **Proverbs**

- e.g. *Ku muñ*, *muuñ*

3. **With a nominal subject the pronoun subject is dropped, ie mu/ñu**

- e.g. *Lëg dem*. The hare has gone.



4. **Place of Object Pronouns with the MVC.**

narrative subjunctive imperative ngir, ndax fàww verbs of wishing etc ba until	object pronoun(s) follows verb e.g. ma indil ko ndékki
temporal bi/ba/bu conditional clauses li (even though) relative clauses	object pronoun(s) precede verb e.g. ndékki li ma ko indil nominal object follows verb e.g. bi mu beyee tool bi

5. The absence of the mark “**di**” indicates that the action of the verb has been completed. When “**di**” is present it indicates that the action is in presently occurring or soon to occur.

e.g. Bu wowie, nga góob ko. When it is dry, you harvest it.

Bu wowie nga di ko góob. When it is dry, you harvest it.

The first is completed because the action is being considered in its totality. The latter is being considered in its outworking.

When used with conjugation with “**di**” the object pronoun is displaced before the verb.

“**di**” may precede or follow the object pronoun. A nominal object remains after the verb.

e.g. Mu di ko def cf. Mu def ko

Mu koy def

Muy def liggéey bi

6. **Negative**

In relative clauses the MVC is negated by adding the suffix -ul to the verb, the rest of the structure remaining unchanged. For the other structures, anticipated or hypothetical events are negated with du conjugated, and simple negative construction when there is a reference to past or completed events.

e.g. Xale bi nu indiwl. The child whom he has not brought.

Bu ma waxee, duñu déglu. If I speak they will not listen.

Bi ma waxee, déglu wuñu. When I spoke they did not listen.

Benn bés, dama demoon lekool. Waaye duggu ma, jàngu ma.

One day I went to school but I didn't go in, and I didn't study.

**References:**

Peace Corps Course:	pp 177
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 94, 120, 202
Baptist course:	pp 10, 38, 58, 67
PhD Thesis of Eric Church:	pp 67, 146-161
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 16-18
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 59, 62
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 4, 13
Xam sa làkk:	pp 64

**Exercises:**

Baptist course: pp 67

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7. **Contractions which exist before an object pronoun**

1 <sup>st</sup> plural	nan
2 <sup>nd</sup> sing	naŋ
3 <sup>rd</sup> plural	nañ

8. **Negation** (see negation notes)

bu + object pronoun + nominal subject + verb

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	bu ma	bu nu/ bu ñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	bul	buleen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	bu mu	bu ñu

If subject is stated mu is dropped

e.g. Bu Faal bey tool bi  
Goor yi, buleen ko def

That Fall won't cultivate the field  
Men, don't do it continually

**References:**

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 108
Baptist course:	pp 54
PhD Thesis of Eric Church:	pp 76, 168-173
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 27f
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 102
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 6, 12
Xam sa làkk:	pp 68

**Exercises:**

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 181
Baptist Course:	pp 54

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Negation

### A. Negative: “-ul”

#### Formation:

[+/- nominal subject] + verb + negative suffix [+/- object pronoun]

Usual form

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	-uma/-umë	-unu/ -uñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	-ulóo	-uleen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	-ul	-uñu

Elongated for double verb constitutions

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	-umaa	-unoo/ -uñoo
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	-uloo	-uleena
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	-ula	-uñoo

#### Impersonal form -eesul

e.g. Amuma santu Wolof  
Demuma }

I don't have a Wolof name  
I did not go  
I am not going  
I will not go  
I do not want to go

#### Notes:

- With active verbs** it indicates the negative of a completed action.  
e.g. Ñëwul He did not come

**With stative verbs** it indicates the negative of the present tense.  
e.g. Saful It is not spicy
- This form usually carries the sense that an action has not occurred or a state does not exist without emphasising subject, noun or verb. This is the usual way of negating most verb modes except dina. Hence all the following usually have the same negative form:

Moo fa dem (Subject emphasis)	}	Dem u fa
Mu nga fa dem (Presentative)		
Fa la dem (Object predicator)		
Dafa dem (Explicative)		
Mu dem fa (Minimal verb construction)		
Dem na fa (Completed)		
- However, each of these verb modes can be expressed in the negative to guard its distinctive by adding -ul as an invariable suffix (unconjugated) to the verb stem, leaving the rest of the construction the same as the positive form.

Hence:

West bi moo ko <i>neexul</i> .	It is the vest which he was not pleased about.
Moom laa <i>xamul</i> .	It was that which I did not know.
Yëfu tribunaal dafa <i>gaawul</i> .	It is that the affaires of the tribunal are not fast.
Muñ gu <i>àndul</i> ak jooytu ji.	Patience not accompanied by complaining.
Loolu moo tax mu <i>indiwul</i> am xar	That is why he did not bring a sheep.
- ul is used to indicate the negative in a subordinate conditional clause marking opposition with -ee  
e.g. Bu ñëwul, na nga ma ko wax! If he does not come, please tell me!

5. Before the object pronoun, *ci* or *fi*, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular negative drops the “l”  
 i.e. -ul ⇒ -u  
 e.g. nekk to be  
 nekkul he/she/it is not  
 nekku fi he/she/it is not here
6. If a verb ends in a vowel, a “w” is added to the negative forms.  
 ie. -wuma -wunu  
 -wuloo/-woo -wuleen  
 -wul -wuñu
7. When the negated verb is the last syllable before a second verb in a double verb construction, the elongated form of the negative is used.  
 e.g. mēnumaa dem
8. man (to be able), mas (to have ever) change stem in negative  
 man ⇒ mēn e.g. mēnumaa dem  
 mas ⇒ mus e.g. musumaa dem  
 “amuma” is contracted to “awma” I don't have  
 “xamuma” is contracted to “xawma” I don't know

9. Geographical variations in usage.  
 i) 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular: -ula / -wula  
 e.g. gisula dara you have not seen anything  
 -oo / -woo  
 e.g. yaw tabewoo, amoo njariñ, faroo baax..... you are not generous or useful, nor good  
 dajalewoo ko = dajalewulo ko  
 ii) 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (especially Gambia & Cayer): -ut  
 e.g. demut He has not gone

When added to an auxiliary verb the “u” of -ut tends to disappear, thus  
 ku mēnta ñēw = ku mēnula ñēw He who cannot come

10. **-agul**  
 Indicates not yet, opposite of -agum (to have already done).

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	-aguma	-agunu /-aguñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	-aguloo/-agoo	-aguleen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	-agul	-aguñu

- e.g. Pareeguma dee. I am not ready to die yet.  
 Amagul jëkkër She does not yet have a husband.

As for -ul, the “l” of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (-agul) is dropped before an object pronoun, *ci* or *fi*.  
 e.g. Waxagu ko ko. He has not yet told it to him.

11. **-atul**  
 Indicates no longer. It is the negative of -ati (to be still doing/being or repetition)

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	-atuma	-atunu /-atuñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	-atuloo/-atoo	-atuleen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	-atul	-atuñu

- e.g. Amatul sama caabi. He no longer has my key.  
 c.f. Amati na sama caabi. He still has my key.

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	dootuma	dootunu/ dootuñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	dootuloo /dootoo/dootul a	dootuleen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	dootul	dootuñu

- e.g. Dootuma ko gis. I will no longer see him.  
 Astu dootul janq. Astou is no longer a young girl.

## B. Negative: Du

**Formation:** du (conjugated) [+/- object pronoun] + verb/noun

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	duma	dunu /duñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	doo	du ngeen /doo leen*
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	du	duñu

\*dooleen is commonly heard only in Dakar

e.g. Lii téere lë.	This is a book.
Lii du téere.	This is not a book.
Kii sama baay lë.	He's my father.
Kii du sama baay.	He is not my father.

### Notes:

#### 1. Usage:

a. It is used as the negative form of the complement predicator (negative of la) in which case it precedes the noun or noun clause

e.g. Lii simis lë.	This is a shirt.
Lii du simis.	This is not a shirt.
Man Australian la	I am Australian
Man duma Australian	I am not Australian

b. It is used as the negative form of non completed actions ie. negative of dafay/dina

Hence, in this case it is used to deny an action in process of happening, or a future action

c. It is used to deny an habitual action used in combination with di/y or sometimes ci

e.g. Duma xiif suba	I will not be hungry tomorrow
Dumay xiif suba/ci suba	I am not hungry in the mornings

d. When expressed as a question, it is a polite way of asking for something (indicated by intonation). In this case it is not a negative but expresses an affirmative in the same way that "Is it not Joe?" does in English. It is functionally equivalent to "please". In other words, the intonation changes the sense of the phrase to the opposite.

e.g. Du dëgg.	It's not true
Du dëgg?	Is that not true?
Doo dem?	Will you not go?

e. It can also be used to express a question in the negative which begs a positive response. In this case "du" precedes the phrase in any mode in much the same way as "ndax" is used.

e.g. Du xam nga sama jabar?	Do you not know my wife?
Du moo wax ne kenn nekku fi?	Is it not he who said there is no-one here?
Du mi ngi dem Ndar suba?	Will he not go to St Louis tomorrow?
Du fii laa ko gis?	Is it not here that I saw him?
Du dangaa feebar?	(But) are you not sick?

2. The full **negative form "dul"** can occur when a negated di has the function of a verbal particle (and not an auxiliary verb as in duma). It is relatively rare apart from with the MVC form.

e.g. Moo dul wax.	It is he who won't speak (negative of Mooy wax) [Subject emphasis]
Dara laa dul ràbb.	I will not weave anything [Complement predicator]
Duma nangu nit ku dul liggéey.	I will not accept a man who does not work. [MVC]

3. Take note of the overlap in meaning between the two negative forms

e.g. duma dem	I am not going, I won't be going
demuma	I am not going, I haven't gone

4. Du is sometimes used in a proverbial, or absolute sense with no article attached to the noun

e.g. proverbial -	Gumba du jiite yoon	A blind man doesn't lead the way
absolute -	Mbonaat du jar muk 500cfa	A turtle doesn't ever cost 500CFA

## C. Negative: Bañ

To distinguish between the negative of a completed action (na) and negative of presentative (angi) the verb *bañ* (to refuse to) can be used as an auxiliary verb before the main verb.

lekk nga	⇒	bañ ngaa lekk
You have eaten		You, have not eaten / You have refused to eat

maa ngi lekk	⇒	maa ngi bañ a lekk
I am eating		I am not eating / I have refused to eat

One may use MVC pronouns + verb + -ul (negative) only in relative temporal clauses. In other expressions using MVC pronouns (ie narrative & subjunctive) must use other structures, e.g. *bañ*

#### D. Suffix -adi

When added to a noun or a verb this indicates a limitation so severe to be equivalent of being without, i.e. denies a state or an action.

e.g. jekkadi	to be unacceptable (c.f. jekk - to be acceptable)
xamadi	ignorance, to be ignorant (c.f. xam - to know)
déggadi	to be stubborn (c.f. dégg - to hear, to obey)
teddadi	to not be worthy of respect (c.f. tedd - to be worthy of respect)

#### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 20, 30, 50, 74
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 42, 78, 84f, 121, 178, 214
Baptist course:	pp 12, 49f, 53f, 82f
PhD Thesis of Eric Church:	pp 238-251
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 18-25
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 103-108
Xam sa làkk:	pp 70

#### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 43, 88, 179f
Baptist course:	pp 50f, 55f, 68

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Past Time Marker

### -oon

#### 1. Formation:

- a. In **non-negated sentences without “di”** the past time marker is suffixed as “-oon” if the verb ends in a consonant, and “-woon” if the verb ends in a vowel. The structure otherwise remains unchanged. It represents a simple past or past perfect with active verbs, and the imperfect with stative verbs. In general -oon is the last of the suffixes added to a word. In double verb structures -oon is attached to the first verb.

e.g.	waxoon naa	I spoke/I had spoken (completive)
cf	wax naa	I spoke/ I have spoken
	moom lañu indiwoon	We/they (had) brought it (object emphasis)
cf	moom lañu indi	We/they have brought it
	dafa woyoon	What he did was sing (Explicative)
cf	dafa woy	What I am doing is singing
	maa waxoon	I spoke/I had spoken (Subject emphasis)
cf	maa wax	I have spoken
	Bëggoon naa koo gis	I wanted to see them.

- b. In **negated sentences without “di”**, woon as independent form is added after the negation.

e.g.	<b>Non-negated</b>	<b>Negated</b>
completive	Demoon naa Dakar	Demuma woon Dakar
object emphasis	Dakar laa demoon	Dakar laa demul woon
Explicative	Dama demoon Dakar	Dama demul woon Dakar
subject emphasis	(Man) Maa demoon Dakar	Maa demul woon Dakar

Any object pronouns are placed before “woon”.

- e.g. Sa rakk waxul ko woon                      Your brother had not said it

- c. In **non-negated verbal construction with “di”**

di + woon = doon

If there is more than one 'di', the past marker combines with the first, the rest of the sentence remaining unchanged. It is roughly equivalent to “was/were...ing” or “used to...”. In Dakar Wolof “doon” is rarely used.

e.g.	Doon naa wax	I was speaking/I used to speak
cf.	Dinaa wax	I (will) speak
	Doon nanuy jàng.	We/they used to study
cf.	Dinanuy jàng	We/they study habitually
	Loolu lañu doon lekk	That is what they were eating; That is what they used to eat
cf.	Loolu lañuy lekk	That is what they/we eat

- d. **Negated verbal construction with di**

di + woon + -ul = doonul (conjugated)

Doonul is shortened to “doonu” before a subject or object pronoun. negative habitual action in the past

e.g.	Doonu ma wax	I wasn't speaking/I didn't used to speak
	Doonul liggéey	He/she wasn't working
	Doonu ko dimbali	He /she wasn't helping him/He /she didn't used to help him

- e. **Structures without a verb** use the independent form “woon”

e.g.	Mu nga fa woon demb	He was there yesterday (Presentative)
	Sama xarit la woon	He was my friend (Complement predicator)
	Fa lanu woon	It was there that we were (Complement predicator)
	Benn janq la woon bu rafet lool	There was a young woman who was very beautiful
	Moo doon buur	It was he who was King (Di + Subject emphasis)
	Du fa woon buur	He was not King there (Negative)



- f. Relative clauses (articles which act as connectives)  
 e.g. Lat Joor, buur ba woon.... Lat Dior, who was king.....  
 Ñàkk xam xam googule woon.... This lack of knowledge which existed.....  
 Noonu la jàppe kangam, ya woon ca réew me mépp.  
 It was thus that he caught all the chiefs, throughout all the country.

When the noun is modified by a verb, -oon may be attached to the verb or woon may follow the structure

- e.g. Lat Joor, buur bu mag ba woon....  
 or Lat Joor, buur bu magoon ba...

## 2. Functions:

- a. Anteriority either temporal or to indicate an action or state irrevocably separated from the present  
 e.g. Nga xolli sa rënd, rënd wi nga jëndoon marse.  
 You peel your vegetables, vegetables that you have bought (previously) at the market  
 Dafa amoon ñaari beykat ñu bokk genn kër. There were 2 farmers who shared one house.  
 Ma daldi jóg, dem fû mu ma joxoñoon. I got up and went where he had indicated

Note: When the anteriority has a value of separation from the present, it expresses an action whose consequences have no role in the present or a state which no longer exists.

- ie. Dem na Ndar He went to St Louis (and is still there)  
 Demoon na Ndar He went to St Louis (and has returned)

The time interval is less important than the fact that the action continues or not.

- e.g. Demoon naa Ndar tey si suba I went to St Louis this morning (and have returned)  
 Dem na Ndar; booba ak tey juróom fukki at la He went to St Louis (to live) 50 years ago  
 Dafa baaxoon He was good (but is not anymore)
- b. A situation not realized, i.e. a rupture between the intention and its realisation; or hypothetical (past conditioned).  
 e.g. Mu ne mbooloo ma waroona àndal. He said to the crowd that he should have accompanied them  
 Bu ñu defoon ni seen ndey daan def. If they had done like their mother used to do.....  
 Su ma amoon xaalis, dinaa dem Kaolack. If I had had money, I would have gone to Koalack.
- c. As a form of politeness for a request in the present, when the expression of a desire seems too direct. In this case it does not actually refer to past time but rather a lack of immediacy.  
 e.g. Damaa bëggoon nga dimbali ma. I would like you to help me  
 Loo bëggoon? What is it you would like?  
 Dama la nuyusi woon I have come to greet you (if you have the time to receive me).  
 Boo jógoon, nu man koo gis If you would care to get up, we would see you.

## 3. Dafa + woon

dafa + stative verb + (w)oon

dafa + doon + active verb

- e.g. damaa feebaroon I was sick  
 dama doon liggéey I was working

- Negative Doonul lekk He was not eating (from Du lekk)  
 Dafa duloon lekk He was not in the process of eating (from Dafa dul lekk)

## 4. In the Cayor -oon/woon appears as the variant -an/wan

“newoon” may be contracted to “noon” (he said) [ne + woon] or in the Cayor to “neen” [ne + an]

- e.g. Aman na ci sunu dëkk. There used to be some in our village.  
 Bàyyiwan na ko. He had left it.

**-aan****1. Formation:**

-aa/-aan after a consonant or negative marker -ul

-waa/-waan after a vowel or negative marker -ul

di + aan = daan (negative is daanul)

- e.g. Bu gerte ñorulaa, kenn du ko deqi If the peanuts were not ripe, no one would harvest them.  
 Bu fowaan... When he was playing...  
 Su beyulwaa.... If he did not cultivate the land...

Daan is used as a dependent and independent syntagm (all modes indicative).

- e.g. Sama baay mu ngi daa bey booba. My father had the habit of cultivating the land at that time.  
 Koc daa na fexe ba àttey téere yi dëppook yu jamano ji.  
 Kothie tried to adapt the judgements of the books to the current times.

-aan is only found in dependent syntagm, and is never used in nonverbal structures.

- i.e. Mu nga fa woon. but never Mu nga fa waan.

**2. Functions:**

- a. To indicate the distant past, daan is often used once to situate event then doon appears. It is rarely used in conversation but is not uncommon in recitation.
- b. To indicate an imprecise time. Often the epoch is not stated and if stated, it is stated only in general terms.
- c. To indicate a habitual action. It is used of an action repeated to the point of habit and not of a habitual state. It is not used with stative verbs, except to indicate a state which recurs frequently.
- i.e. Dafa rafetoon, but not Dafa daan rafet He was handsome
- e.g. Bu masaa sol mbubb mu xonq, *daa* na rafet Each time that I wore his red robe he was handsome  
 Dafa daan xiif He was often hungry (not he was always hungry)  
 Ku bëggaan dem Indicates repeated action of wanting to go, not a continued state of wanting.  
 Daan naa rawante fas I used to do horse racing (way back then)  
 Dama daan jàng gi bés bu nekk I used to go to school every day

3. Daan may appear as daawoon and negative as daawul (conjugated)

- e.g. Man, daawuma lekk kaani I didn't use to eat hot peppers

(daan, daanul, daawul, are all used in Mbane with daawoon & daawul being used more commonly)

**4. Contrast -aan / daan**

Both can indicate a repetitive action in the past

- e.g. bu ma beyaan / bu ma daan bey When I cultivated.....

In the first case the action is repeated by seen as being accomplished. i.e Each time I had cultivated...

In the second case the event is again repeated but is seen as being progressive i.e. Each time I was in the process of cultivating.....

**5. Contrast daan / doon**

In the context of situation of habitude, daan indicates repetitive events and doon indicates progressive events in the past.

**References:**

- Peace Corps Course: pp 138, 144f, 183, 193  
 J'Apprends le Wolof: pp 130, 168, 178, 217-219  
 Baptist course: pp 42, 85-87  
 PhD Thesis of Eric Church: pp 195-215  
 Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart) pp 29-31  
 Grammaire Wolof (Dial) pp 8  
 Xam sa làkk: pp 74

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Di

It is an auxiliary verb with no meaning of its own. Usually appears as -y, and is usually placed directly before the verb.

### Notes:

#### 1. Functions

- a. To indicate that an action referred to by the verb is incomplete or progressive
- e.g. Ba ma demee ca kër seriñ ba di ko seet... When I went to the Marabout's house looking for him.  
 Mu nga ca jumaa ja di julli ajuma. He is at the Friday mosque praying the Friday prayer.  
 Fekk naa xudbakat ba di xudba. I found the preacher preaching.  
 Nu nga doon waaja julli. They were preparing to pray.  
 Ñu koy tekki ci Wolof They were in the process of explaining it in Wolof.  
 Dama doon bey te jaan matt ma. I was in the process of cultivating when the snake bit me.

In the case where a verb carries both an active and a passive sense. The “di” indicates the active incomplete sense.

- e.g. Maa ngi to og. I am seated.  
 Maa ngiy too g. I am in the process of sitting down.

- b. “to be”, when combined with subject emphasis pronouns with a verb. This same function also exists for all the other verb modes, although rarely used with them.

- e.g. Maay Moussa I am Moussa  
 Fu mu mana dem, muy tur wu rafet ci Senegaal. Everywhere he went it will be a lovely name in Senegal.
- Léegi, dinaa buur. Now I will be king.  
 Damay góor. It is that I am a man.  
 Kale ñaanal ma, te maa ngi ni di boroom barke He prayed for me, and now I am a blessed.  
 Yàlla naa di ku jub That I could be a righteous man.

- c. To indicate a habitual action, especially when appearing two or more times. The concept of habitual action can be a permanent state of continual action, continual repetitive actions or occasional repetitions.

- e.g. Xaj, làmmiñ lay naane. It is with the tongue that a dog drinks. (permanent)  
 Dinaa ko gis bés bu nekk. I will see him everyday. (repetition)  
 Dees na ko fiy gis. One sees him here occasionally. (occasional)

- d. When the action is not situated in the present, then the marker “di” serves to indicate that the action is being considered in its totality, whether it be situated in the past or the future.

- e.g. Dama doon bey daaw. I was cultivating the land last year.  
 cf. Dama beyoon daaw. I cultivated the land last year.

The latter indicates an action completed at a point in time. The former indicates a process which continues over a certain time, and is being envisaged from that perspective.

- e. It can also have been an intensive when the marker “di” is repeated.

- e.g. Nit ki di dem, di dem rekk. The man left, only just.

#### 2. “di” may be shorted to “-y” or after consonants to “a”

- e.g. Balaa nawet bi di jot... }  
 Balaa nawet biy jot... } All equivalent: Before the wet season arrived ....  
 Balaa nawet di jot... }  
 Balaa nawet a jot... }

Normally: 'di' after a consonant at end of word

'-y' after a vowel at end of word, but optionally “di” may appear.

'-a' In St Louis with dama e.g. Damaa liggéey  
 In Saloum and among the Lebou with presentative Maa ngeey dem

3. Generally “di” (in form of y) is attached to the subject or object pronouns immediately preceding the verb.

“Di” is placed immediately before the verb, except when:

with dina.

minimal verb construction when optionally it may be placed before the object pronoun (s) attached to 'dal' => daldi (to begin to do something).

e.g. Mu daldi ko def. He is beginning to do it.  
Mu di ko door. He is hitting him.

May be used in association with any verb mode.

e.g. Fii ak fukki fan lañuy dellusi Ndakaaru In 10 days we will return to Dakar.  
Ñaari fan lañu fay am I have two days there.  
Ñu ngiy tàggu Aliw We are bidding Aliou farewell.  
Ñu ngi koy tàggu We are bidding him farewell.  
Deel liggéey! Continue to have the habit of working.

4. “di” + ees (impersonal) = dees (negative: deesul)

“di” + oon (past) = doon

“di” + aan (habitual past) = daan

e.g. Guy, deesu ca wacc dara. The baobab, one does not let anything be wasted.

5. “di” (in form of -y) placed before the verb indicates that the action referred to by the verb is incomplete.

Functionally this indicates that the action is happening at the time or indicates the close future

e.g. Dakar laay dem I am going to Dakar  
Lu may wax? What am I about to say, or in process of saying?  
cf. Lu ma wax? What have I just said?

6. When there is an object pronoun in the presentative mode one is required to use di (or its variant y)

e.g. Ñu ngi lay nuyu They are greeting you.  
Maa ngi leen di tàggu. I am bidding you (pl) farewell.

#### References:

Peace Corps Course: pp 73f  
Baptist course: pp 8, 74  
PhD Thesis of Eric Church: pp 178-194  
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart) pp 9f  
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb): pp 87

#### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof: pp 59, 63  
Baptist course: pp 68

Revised 23 March, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Object Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	ma/më (maa)	nu/ñu (noo/ñoo)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	la/lë (laa)	leen (leena)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	ko (koo)	leen (leena)

### Notes:

#### 1. Order of Pronouns

a. When two objects are present (ie direct & indirect)

1<sup>st</sup> person precedes 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> person

2<sup>nd</sup> person precedes 3<sup>rd</sup>

singular present plural except that ko is always last.

e.g. Maamam a *ma ko* wax                      His grandmother said it to me  
 Maamam a *la ko* wax                      His grandmother said it to you  
 Doo *ma ko* may                      Can you not give it to me?  
 Maa ngi *leen ko* jox                      I gave them to him / I gave it to them

b. A pronoun in relation to the beneficiary suffix -al precedes any others except if the pronoun is ko

e.g. Joxal na *la ma ko*                      He gave it to me for you  
 Joxal na *ko ko ko*                      He gave it to him for her

To avoid putting 'ko' in front, one uses 'ndax moom'

e.g. Joxal nga *ma leen ndax moom*                      You gave it to me for him  
 (not Joxal nga *ko ma leen*)

c. "Fa" normally follows the object pronoun. If there is no object pronoun, fa normally stands where the object pronoun would have stood. fi & ci are not placed together and would appear to be mutually exclusive. Instead the adverb of location is after the verb radical with a long vowel of insistence.

e.g. Dina *la ci jox fii*                      He will give of it to you here.  
 (not Dina *la ci fi jox*)

Stewart represents it thus:

Non- 3rd Person				3rd Person		Non-personal	
Singular		Plural		Plural	Singular	Partitive	Locative
1st	2nd	1st	2nd	leen	ko	ci/ca	fi/fa
ma	la	nu	leen				

Eric Church presents the following scheme.

-al (beneficiary)	ma	nu	ko	c-
ma	la	leen		f-
la		leen		
nu				
leen				
leen				

## 2. Ambiguity

- a. When use of object pronoun leads to ambiguity, the pronoun can be replaced with independent pronoun + complement/object predicator
- e.g. *Gis na leen* He has seen you (pl) or He has seen them  
 ⇒ *Ñoom la gis* They, it is (that) he has seen  
 or *Yeen la gis* You, it is (that) he has seen
- b. When use of the subject pronoun leads to ambiguity
- e.g. *Xam nañu leen* We know you / They know you / We know them / They know them  
 ⇒ *Nun, yeen lañu xam* We know you  
*Ñoom, yeen lañu xam* They know you  
*Nun, ñoom lañu xam* We know them  
*Ñoom, ñoom lanu xam* They know them

## 3. Elongated form is used

- a. in double verb constructions when the object pronoun is the final syllable before the second verb
- e.g. *Bëgg na maa dimbali* He wants to help me.
- b. with explicative
- e.g. *Dama koo gis*

## 4. Position of Pronouns

Pronoun objects precede nominal objects

Completive (na) MVC (narrative/subjective) Negative (-ul) Imperative	pronoun objects/noun objects follow verb	<i>Gis naa ko</i> <i>Ma gis ko</i> <i>Gisuma ko</i> <i>Xool ko</i>
Presentative (an gi) Explicative (dafa) Negative (du) Future (dina) Subject emphasis (moo) Obligative (na) Negative imperative (bu mu) Object predicator (la) MVC - relative clause (bu) temporal clause lu (even though)	pronoun objects precede verb noun objects follow verb	<i>maa n gi koy gis</i> <i>dama koy gis</i> <i>duma ko gis</i> <i>dinaa ko gis</i> <i>maa ko gis</i> <i>naa ko gis</i> <i>bu ma ko gis</i> <i>Thies laa ko gis</i> <i>ku ko gëm...</i> <i>bu ma ko giséé...</i> <i>lu ma ko gis</i>

In the following cases when the subject is a noun, the pronoun object precedes the nominal subject

- Negative subjunctive *Bu ko keneen laal* (Let no one touch it)
- Optative (na) *Na leen seen boroom fey* (let their Lord pay them)
- La Object Predicator *Fan la ma sama baay di tere?* (When is my father returning me?)
- MVC temporal clause *Bi ma sama baay laata gis....* (Before my father saw me...)
- Lu (even though) *Lu ko sama yaay setal .....* (Even though my mother cleaned it...)

## 5. Double Verb Constructions

- a. Object pronouns come between the two verbs (elongated form)
- MVC subjunctive ...ngir ma man *koo gis*
- Completive (na) *Bëgg naa koo gis*
- Negative (-ul) *Bëgguma koo gis*
- b. Object pronouns comes before both verbs
- Explicative (dama) *Dama koo mana gis*
- Future (dina) *Dinaa ko mana gis*
- Negative (du) *Duma ko mana gis*
- Presentative *Maa n gi koy joga gis*
- Subjective emphasis (moo) *Maa ko jëkka gis*
- bi/bu (temporal) *bi ñu ko manee gis...*

## c. Exception to above

Verbs ending in suffix *-si* & *-i* when doubled with either *ñew/dem*. In this case the object pronouns follow the verb with suffix.

e.g.	<i>ngir ma ñew seetsi ko</i>	cf.	<i>ngir ma seetsi ko</i>
	<i>ngir ma man ñew seetsi ko</i>		<i>ngir ma man koo seetsi</i>
	<i>maa ñew seetsi ko</i>		<i>maa ko seetsi</i>
	<i>bëgg naa ñew seetsi ko</i>		<i>bëgg naa koo seetsi</i>
	<i>duma ñew seetsi ko</i>		<i>duma ko seetsi</i>

**References:**

Peace Corps Course:	pp 74f
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 32,
Baptist course:	pp 43, 106-108
PhD Thesis of Eric Church:	pp 93-95
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 51-54
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 64f
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 11
Xam sa làkk:	pp 78-80

**Exercises:**

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 47, 59-63
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Revised 9 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Independent Subject Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	man	nun/ñun
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	yow	yeen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	moom	ñoom

### Notes:

#### 1. Functions:

- a. Used independently to answer questions, regardless of whether the context demands a subject or an object.  
 e.g. Kan moo ko def? ... Moom Who did it? ...He (did)  
 Kan nga gis? ... Moom Who did you see? .... Him.
- b. Used independently as the object with the complement predicator with or without a verb.  
 e.g. Yow la It's you
- c. Used as the subject with subject emphasis structure without verb.
- d. After prepositions  
 ag - and  
 ci - in/at  
 ba - to  
 ngir - because of  
 pur - for
- e. To mark emphasis or clarify the person reference of certain pronouns when ambiguous. It is usual to place a comma between the independent subject pronoun and the pronoun of the subject emphasis verb mode.  
 e.g. Nun, American lañu Us, we are American  
 Ñoom, American lañu Them, they are American  
 Ñoom ñii la ko jox. It was those they he gave them to.  
 Man, maay dem. Me, it is I who am going.  
 Xoolleen ko moom male Look at him, that person over there.
- f. Ñoom Pierre Duman Those who are with Pierre Duman + Pierre Duman

#### 2. May be combined with a demonstrative adjective (mi, mii, male, ñi, ñii, ñale, yi, yii, yale etc) or replaced by a demonstrative pronoun.

- e.g. Ñoom ñooñu laa gis. It is them over there that I see.  
 Man mii la gis. It is I whom he saw.  
 Yooyu la yóbbu. It is those things which he took away.

### Demonstrative Pronouns

kooku	this person in question	(from kan = who?)
foofu	this place in question	(from fan = where?)
loolu	this thing in question	(from lan = what?)
noonu	this manner in question	(from nan = how?)
yooyu	those things in question	

### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 29
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 31
Baptist course:	pp 20
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 65
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 46,59,60, 64

### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 80
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Revised 9 August, 1999



## Wolof Grammar Notes: Auxiliary verbs and double verb construction

Wolof has a number of auxiliary verbs which serve to modify the verb which follows them.

bañ	to refuse	jot	to have begun to do
bëgg	to want, desire	mas	to have ever done
ragal	to be afraid of doing	mujj	to be last to, have done finally
mën	to be able	nar	to have the intention of doing
war	to be obliged to do	soog	to have just done
		tàmbali	to have begun to do
daan	to have used to have done	teel	to be early in doing
dóor	to have just done	xas	to be too involved in an action to stop
faf	to finish (by doing)	xaw	almost
faral	to do often	yàgg	to be or do for a long time
fàtte	to forget to do	yeex	to do slowly
gaaw	to do quickly		
gëj	to not have done for a long time	dàq	to be better
guddi	to be late in doing	gën	to be more or better
jëkk	to do for the first time		

When two verbs are used to form a compound tense, there is a lengthening of the last syllable before the final verb. That is to say an “-a” is added to the word (auxiliary verb, subject or object pronoun, or nominal object) which precedes the second verb.

e.g.	War ngaa dem.	You must go.
	War nga koo def.	You must do it.
	Maa ngi sooga dellusi.	I have just returned.

The elongated forms of the subject pronouns are:

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	naa/ namaa	nanoo /nañoo
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	ngaa	ngeena
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	naa	nañoo

The ambiguity between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons singular is resolved by context or use of independent pronouns.

e.g.	Bëgg ngaa dem.	I want you to go.
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The elongated forms of the object pronouns are:

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	maa	noo/ñoo
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	laa	leena
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	koo	leena

There are two exceptions to use of the elongated forms: ñëw, dem do not take the “-a”

e.g.	Dinaa dem seeti samay mbokk.	I am going to look for my relatives.
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**When markers are present** they are attached to the auxillary (or first) verb in double verb constructions. They can carry the marks of person, mode, aspect, past time and negation, as for any verb.

e.g. Wutleen Aji Sax ji, léegi bi ñu ko manee gis Seek the Lord while he may be found.

### Position of object pronouns in double verb constructions

a. Object pronouns come between the two verbs (elongated form)

MVC subjunctive ...ngir ma man *koo* gis

Completive (na) Bëgg naa *koo* gis

Negative (-ul) Bëgguma *koo* gis

b. Object pronouns comes before both verbs

Explicative (dama) Dama *koo* mana gis

Future (dina) Dinaa *ko* mana gis

Negative (du) Duma *ko* mana gis

Presentative Maa ngi *koy* joga gis

Subjective emphasis (moo) Maa *ko* jëkka gis

bi/bu (temporal) bi ñu *ko* manee gis...

c. Exception to above

Verbs ending in suffix -si & -i when doubled with either ñëw/dem. In this case the object pronouns follow the verb with suffix.

e.g.	ngir ma ñëw seetsi <i>ko</i>	cf.	ngir ma seetsi <i>ko</i>
	ngir ma man ñëw seetsi <i>ko</i>		ngir ma man <i>koo</i> seetsi
	maa ñëw seetsi <i>ko</i>		maa <i>ko</i> seetsi
	bëgg naa ñëw seetsi <i>ko</i>		bëgg naa <i>koo</i> seetsi
	duma ñëw seetsi <i>ko</i>		duma <i>ko</i> seetsi

### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 114, 169
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 215
Baptist course:	pp 42, 106-108
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 31
Xam sa làkk:	pp 60-63

### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 144-145
Baptist course:	pp 44

Revised 9 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Possession

### A. Suffix “-u”/ “-i”

1. When two nouns stand in a genitive relationship ('of', often showing possession), the marker has two forms: -u and -i. Although some speakers use them indiscriminately, most preserve the distinction in which -u indicates that the noun it follows is singular, while -i indicates it is plural.

e.g. xaritu	Tapha	Tapha's friend
doomu	seef fi	The chief's son; son of the chief
bunti	kër	The doors of the house

Optionally the marker for nouns ending in a vowel is the addition of the class indicator of the first noun. If the class indicator is j-, the marker of choice is -y.

e.g. kàddug	Yàlla	the Word of God
téereb	yoon wi	the book of the way
e.g. yàllay	jamano ji	'the god of this world'

In the past, the addition of the class indicator was used even with nouns ending in consonants. This usage is becoming archaic. It is useful when a noun has several senses which are differentiated by the class indicator.

e.g. bésub	àtte ba ≈ bésu	àtte ba	the day of judgement
dundub	fukki	fan	ten days' food (dund bi 'fo od')
dundug	nit		a person's life (dund gi 'life)
mbégtég	ndaw		ndaw gi 'youth' (cf. ndaw si 'young woman')

Alternatively, if the word of more than one syllable ending in a vowel no particle is added

e.g. loxo	Samba	Samba's arm
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A word with only one syllable ending in a vowel has a -w added before the -i or the -u

e.g. powu	xale	the toy of the child
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2. Modified nouns are generally taken as being definite

e.g. Buntu	kër gi	The door of the house
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It is indicated as non-specific with benn/ab (sing) or ay (plural)

e.g. Benn	buntu	kër gi	A door of the house
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3. The expression may take either the article of the modified noun or the modifier. Thus one could hear:

Këru	buur	gii	This house of the King
Këru	buur	bi	The house of this King

4. “one of the” is indicated by benn ci

e.g. Benn	ci	bunti	kër gi	One of the doors of the house
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5. If the second noun is modified by a possessive adjective, the possessive adjective usually goes before both nouns.

e.g. Sama	doomu	xarit	The son of my friend (my friend's son)
Sama	doomi	xarit	The sons of my friend

This never indicates “my son of the friend.” The number with respect to the noun modified is ambiguous. Sama doomu xarit could mean either “the son of my friend” or “the son of my friends”. The “-u” marks the son as singular. When it is necessary to remove this ambiguity, the appropriate noun determiner can be added.

e.g. Sama	doomu	xarit	bi	The son of my friend
Sama	doomu	xarit	yi	The son of my friends
Samay	doomu	xarit		The sons of my friends

6. -u is optional and rarely used after certain words including:

Kër; baay; yaay; boroom; biir; waa; bés;		
e.g. Kër	goor gi	the man's house

except when these are followed by a noun modified by a possessive adjective, or one wishes to express the plural.

e.g. Sama	këru	xarit	My friend's house
Këri	goor	gi	The houses of the man.

7. The particle “-u” can also indicate:

- a. nouns modified by another noun

e.g. jaaykatu	jën	The seller of fish / fish seller
këru	tabax	The house (made) of masonry

- a) quantity

e.g. liibëru	mburu	a pound of bread
paketu	cere	a packet of cous-cous

- b) after numbers “-i” is used

e.g. ñeenti	xaal	4 melons
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### B. Possessive adjectives

**SINGULAR OBJECTS**

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	sama/suma	sunu/suñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	sa	seen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	noun + -am	seen

**PLURAL OBJECTS**

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	samay/sumay	sunuy/suñuy
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	say	seeni
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	ay noun + -am	seeni

**Notes:**

1. With the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular “-am” is suffixed to the noun. If the noun ends in a vowel, the vowel is elongated and m is added.

a + am = aam

e + am = eem

é, i, ë, + am = éem

o + am = oom

ó, u + am = óom

e.g. loxo ⇒ loxoom                      his hand  
téere ⇒ téereem                      his book

2. With 3<sup>rd</sup> person if more than one object  
ay jabaram (indefinite)  
i jabaram (definite article)

3. Use of the possessive adjective does not exclude use of the article.

e.g. sama néeg bi                      My room  
sama néeg yii                      My rooms  
sama baag yale                      Our rings over there

**C. Possessive Pronouns****SINGULAR OBJECTS**

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	sama bos (mine)	sunu bos (ours)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	sa bos (yours)	seen bos (yours)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	bosam (his)	seen bos (theirs)

**PLURAL OBJECTS**

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	sama yos	sunu yos
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	sa yos	seen yos
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	yosam	seen yos

**References:**

Peace Corps Course:

pp 10, 95

J'Apprends le Wolof:

pp 22, 30, 31, 42, 178

Baptist course:

pp 37, 41

Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)

pp 61-64

Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):

pp 54,70-72

Grammaire Wolof (Dial)

pp 14f

Xam sa làkk:

pp 82

**Exercises:**

J'Apprends le Wolof:

pp 46

Baptist Course:

pp 39, 47

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Comparison

### 1. To express equality

- a. Subject emphasis pronoun + certain stative verb such as *tolloo*, *maase*, *niroo* etc.  
 e.g. John ag Nancy ñoo *tolloo*. John and Nancy, they are the same height.  
 Sama rakk ag sa mag ñoo *maase*. My younger brother & your older brother have the same age.  
 Ndakaaru ak Abijan ñoo *tollo o rafetaay*. Daker and Abijan are the same in beauty.
- b. Benn + object predicator  
 Téere yi benn *lañu* These books are one/are the same.  
 Bii ag bale benn *lañu* This one & that one are the same.
- c. Use of the following words:  
 ni like  
 mel similar to  
 mel ni equal to, the same as  
 saamandaay to resemble  
 e.g. Dafa tàng ni safàra. It is as hot as a fire.  
 Dàn saamandaay jant. As evident as the sun.
- d. Verbal suffix “-e” attached to a stative verb followed by “ni”  
 e.g. Dafa baaxe ni Moodu. He is as good as Modou.  
 Dañoo neme ni gaynde. They are as brave as a lion.

### 2. To express superiority

- a. Subject emphasis pronoun + *gëna* (to be more) + verb  
 e.g. Justine moo *gëna* njool Pat Justine is taller than Pat.  
 Tool yi ñoo *gëna* yaatu to ol yii These fields are wider than these fields.  
 Man, maa ko *gëna* gätt I am shorter than he.  
 Yow, yaa ma *gëna* rafet oto. Your car is more beautiful than mine.  
 (Lit. - You are more beautiful than me in cars.)  
 Yow, yaa ma *gëna* rafetle. Yours is more beautiful than mine.  
 Rafet plus suffix “-le”: the pronominal substitute indicating a thing that is beautiful.
- b. Subject emphasis pronoun [+ object pronoun] + *ëpp* (to have more) + noun [+/-nominal object]  
 e.g. Kumba moo *ëpp* xel Awa Coumba is smarter (has more brains) than Awa.  
 Yaw, yaa *ëpp* wërsëg Musaa You have more luck than Moussa.  
 Maa la *ëpp* xaalis I have more money than you.  
 Yeen ñu *ëpp* ay xarit. You have more friends than them.  
 Yaa ma *ëpp* ay lam You have more bracelets than me.  
 Yaa ma *ëpp*le. You have more (of it) than me.

When one wishes to express “more of some quality than” the structure is “A *ëpp* quality B”.

When one wishes to express “more [in quantity] things than” the structure is “A *ëpp* ay things B”.

When B is reduced to a pronoun it precedes the verb *ëpp*.

The verbal suffix “-le” has the value of a pronominal substitute. *ëpp*le (more of it).

- c. Subject emphasis pronoun + *dàqa* (to be better) [+/- verb (active verbs only)] [+/- nominal object]  
 e.g. Seex moo *dàqa* liggéey Bala. Seex works better than Bala.

Note: *dàqa* can be used without a principal verb in which case the meaning depends on context

- e.g. Abi moo *dàqa* Ana. Abi is prettier than Ana.  
 Ceebu jën moo *dàqa* maafe. Ceebu jën is tastier than mafe.  
 Senegal moo *dàqa* Amerik. Senegal is better than America.

- d. Use of the verb “tane” (better than).

Tane means better but is not used in the same way *dàqa* is. It is the opposite of *yées* and indicates a general superiority.

Tane is used in the existence of some negative aspect of a description.

- e.g. Siis bii baaxul, siis bii itam baaxul, wànte bii moo tane bii.

### 3. To express inferiority

- a. Subject + negative of stative verb (suffix “-ul”) + ni + nominal object  
 e.g. Penda rafetul ni Aminata. Penda is not as beautiful as Aminata.  
 Kawlax tàngul ni Tamba. Kaolack is not as hot as Tamba.
- b. Verbal suffix “-e” attached to a stative verb followed by the negative suffix “-wul” then followed by “ni”.  
 e.g. Aali sewewul ni man. Ali is not as skinny as me.  
 Faatu rafetewul ni Penda. Fatou is not as beautiful as Penda.
- c. Verb day (to be equal to) with negative suffix “-ul” followed by ni  
 e.g. Baaxaayam dayul ni fitam. He is not as good as he is courageous.

- d. Subject emphasis pronoun + gëna (to be more) + diminutive verb

Note: Inferiority may be expressed with this structure, but the Wolof are more likely to make a positive comparison than a negative. That is they are more likely to say “Penda is more beautiful than Awa.” rather than “Awa is uglier than Penda.” “Less than” does not exist in Wolof. Thus the Wolof would say “This house is prettier than that house” not “This house is less pretty than that house.”

- e.g. Bii moo gën tuuti boobu This is smaller than that one.

- e. Yées (worse than).  
 e.g. Yoon wi moo yées. This road is worse.

#### 4. To express difference

- a. wuute (to be different)  
 e.g. Bii ag bale wuute nañu. This one and that one are different.
- b. duñu benn (not the same one)  
 e.g. Senegal ag Amerik duñu benn Senegal and America are not the same.
- c. bokkuñu (do not share)  
 e.g. Ñoom ñaar bokkuñu Those two are not related/not the same.

#### 5. To express the superlative and make comparisons

- a. Use of structures with “gën” or “dàq” plus “ci”  
 e.g. Omar moo dàqa bind ci xale yi. Omar is he who writes the best from among the children.  
 Xale yépp, Duudu moo ci gëna baax. Of all the children, Doudou is the best.  
 Xale yi, Omar moo ci dàqa bind. Of the children it is Omar who writes the best.  
 Omar moo dàqa bind ci Mbane. It is Omar who is the best writer in Mbane  
 Moo fi dàqa bind. He is the best writer here.
- b. Class marker or relative pronoun plus “gën”.  
 Duudu moo xale bu gën. Doudou is the best child.  
 Gis naa taybaas bu gëna xonq. I saw the most red blouse.

#### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 152-155
Baptist course:	pp 44
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 77-79
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 41f

#### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 189, 194-209
Baptist Course:	pp 45

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Questions

1.  $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{fu (where)} \\ \text{ku/ñu (who)} \\ \text{lu/yu (what)} \\ \text{nu (how)} \end{array} \right\} + \text{MVC} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ma nu} \\ \text{nga ngeen} \\ \text{mu ñu} \end{array} \right] + \text{main verb}$

fu + nga	=	foo	=	fan + nga
ku + nga	=	koo	=	kan + nga
ñu + nga	=	ño	=	ñan + nga
yu + nga	=	yoo	=	yan + nga
lu + nga	=	loo	=	lan + nga
nu + nga	=	noo	=	nan + nga
fu + ngeen may sometimes appear as fooleen				

Also:

- a. May be used to form questions, or as relative pronouns  
e.g. Fu mu nekk?  
Wax ma fu mu dëkk. Tell me where he lives.
  - b. Response takes the object predicator mode  
e.g. Fu mu jóge?  $\Rightarrow$  Amerik la jóge
  - c. ku/ñu/lu/yu when refer to the subject is actually the contraction of kan moo and hence mu is not used.  
e.g. Ku wax? = Kan mo o wax? Who spoke?
2. Independent question words
- a. May be used in one word questions (therefore called independent question words)  
e.g. Lan? (What?) Lan la?(What is it?) Lan la def?(What is he doing?)  
Kan? (Who?) Kan la? (Who is it?) Kay lay seet? (Who is he seeking?)  
Mbokki fan? (Where do you belong?)
  - b. When the question refers to the object the response takes the object predicator mode
- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{fan (where)} \\ \text{kan/ñan (who)} \\ \text{lan/yan (what)} \\ \text{nan/naka (how)} \\ \text{kañ (when)} \\ \text{ñaata (how much)} \end{array} \right\}$ | $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{complement} \\ + \text{ object} \\ \text{predicator} \end{array} \right\}$ | $\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{laa lanu} \\ \text{nga ngeen} \\ \text{la lañu} \end{array} \right] + \text{main verb}$ |
|---|---|--|
- e.g. Fan la jóge?  $\Rightarrow$  Amerik la jóge. Where does he come from? It is from America that he comes.  
Ñaata lay jar? How much does it cost?

Note: The two structures above are equivalent and interchangeable. Thus:

Foo dëkk?	=	Fan nga dëkk?	Where do you live?
Looy wax?	=	Lan ngay wax?	What are you saying?
Noo tudd?	=	Naka nga tudd?	What is your name?
Koo gis?	=	Kan nga gis?	Who did you see?
Nu mu tudd?	=	Naka la tudd?	How is he named?
Lu ñu bëgg?	=	Lan lañu bëgg?	What do they want?

3. Kan/ñan/lan/yan + 3<sup>rd</sup> person subject emphasis pronoun [moo/ñoo] + main verb  
When lan/kan refer to the subject of the sentence the response takes the subject predicator (moo) mode.  
Kan moo may be shortened to Ku  
Lan moo may be shortened to Lu

e.g. Ku ko seeti? Who is it who went to see him?  
cf Ku mu seeti? Who is it he went to see?

4. Questions regarding place (ie where) can also be formed with “Ana” without a verb.  
e.g. Ana Duudu? Where is Duudu?

Hence all the following are equivalent:

$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Fan la kuddu yi nekk?} \\ \text{Kuddu yi, fan lañu nekk?} \\ \text{Fu kuddu yi nekk?} \\ \text{Kuddu yi, fu ñu nekk?} \\ \text{Ana kuddu yi?} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \\ \\ \\ \\ \end{array} \right\}$	Where are the spoons
--	--	----------------------

Note: When the subject appears directly before the verb, the neutral form “la” (i.e. unconjugated) is used.

5. Most verbs after fan/fu, naka/nu/nan take suffix -e, the marker of instrumentation, place, manner or time.

e.g. Foo jände sa fas?	Where did you buy your horse? (place)
Naka mu defe lu mel nii?	How could he do such a thing? (manner)
Lan laay lekke?	With what did you eat? (instrument)
Fan lañuy jaare?	Where did they pass? (direction)

Note: There are a number of verbs which do not take the -e place/manner suffix such as mel, nekk, fete, bayyi, joge, dem, dekk, jem, fekk, teg. Note that for most of these position or direction is inherent in the meaning of the verb.

6. Interrogative adjective -which

Formation: class indicator + "an" placed either before the noun or after

e.g. Ban waxtu?	Which hour?
Wan fas?	Which horse?
Yan tool?	Which fields?
Weer wan lañu nekk?	Which month are we in?

Ban may be used in place of the class indicator for all singular class indicator

e.g. Ban fas? = Wan fas?

When the question concerns the subject then the subject emphasis structure (moo) is used.

e.g. Man muus a ko xosi? Which cat scratched him?

7. Interrogative pronouns

These are the interrogative adjectives without the noun.

e.g. Jan nga gis?	Which (snake) did you see?
Muus xosi na la. Man?	A cat scratched you. Which one?

8. Yes/no questions.

a. ndax (is it)

When placed at the head of a phrase, it turns the phrase into a question which expects a yes/no answer.

e.g. Ndax Wolof la? Is he a Wolof?

b. Intonation

A phrase can also be turned into a yes/no question by the use of an interrogative intonation. The main characteristic of this interrogative intonation is a high start. That is, the sentence is begun with a much higher pitch than is normally used for declarative sentences. Note that this is quite different from the corresponding English interrogative intonation, which usually involves a rise in pitch at the end of the sentence. In fact, Wolof declarative sentences often have a high finish, and may accordingly be mistaken for questions by English speakers.

c. xanaa (is it not apparently, as it appears)

It is used in questions which occur to the questioner because he has gotten some idea from the situation. Usually uses either object predicator, subject emphasis or verb emphasis. Xanaa can also have a tense non interrogative & explicative "it is that..." It can mark the effect of surprise, concern or astonishment. It is usually used with either the complement predicator (la), subject emphasis (moo) or the explicative (dafa) as by the context there will be an emphasis on a particular part of the sentence.

e.g. Xanaa Wolof la?	That means he's Wolof?
Xanaa gëj laa gis	It is that I have not seen you for a long time.
d. mbaa (I hope that is ...)	

This structure expects agreement with question asked (yes to an affirmative question; no to a negative one)

e.g. Mbaa kenn feebarul? ⇒ Déédéet! No one is sick, are they?

An example in practice. The situation. Alhadji may na Fa Der ab mango

Kan la Alhadji may mango?	Who did Alhadyi give the mango to
Kan mooy may Fa Der mango?	Who gave the mango to Fa Der
Ku ko ko may?	Who gave it to him/her
Kan moo ko def/Ku ko def?	Who did it?

### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 8f, 20, 52, 63-65
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 42, 57, 96, 120, 150, 178
Baptist course:	pp 6, 19, 26
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 74-76, 82
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 52f, 114-115
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 43-45

### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 48-51, 70f, 80, 99, 101-103, 179
Baptist Course:	pp 22



## Wolof Grammar Notes: Articles

Wolof is a language of classes. Each of the 8 singular noun classes and 2 plural classes is marked by a consonant which serves as the base for a collection of determinants and noun substitutes which approximate in function the English simple and demonstrative articles. Wolof does not distinguish between male and female either in determinants or pronouns.

### 1. Definite Article

**Formation:** class indicator + vowel

follows noun or relative verb phrase

singular	b-; g-; j-; l-; m-; s-; w-; k-;	-i = near
plural	y-; ñ-;	-a/-ë = distant
e.g.	dëkk bi	the town
	xale bu njool bi	the tall child
		-u = neutral

Note: the neutral -u is increasingly being replaced by -i, carrying the same neutral function. It is also used to reinforce the pejorative nuance of the diminutive s

e.g.	Mbaay si lay jooyal di	He cries for his small father.
	Mbaay su lay jooyal di	He cries for his self said small father.

For pronouns and proper nouns m- is used for the article and determinants

e.g.	Yeesu mi	this Jesus
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The plural article marker ñ is used with the following words:

- nit (person)
- jigéen (woman)
- góor (man)
- gaa (the people)
- mag/màggat (elderly)

### 2. Indefinite article

There are two ways of expressing the indefinite article in Wolof.

a. ab

**Formation:** a + class indicator

a + y if plural

e.g.	ab dëkk	a town
	ay dëkk	some towns

precedes noun

The class markers j-, l- and ñ- are not used in this form. They are replaced with “ab”. Similarly, “as” is only used to mark the diminutive, and is often accompanied by a prenasalisation of the first consonant of the noun. A noun with the class marker s- in a non diminutive sense takes “ab”.

e.g.	as ngilém	a small camel
	as ngarab	a bush, small tree
cf	ag gilém	a camel
	ag garab	a tree

This form indicates an object not identified an object which stands for a prototype, or used with a proper name it indicates a characteristic which the individual considers to be shared with a social type.

e.g.	Ab xale dafay déggal sēriñam.	A disciple should obey his marabout.
	Ab Baay Moor laa doon jaay. Jëndul dara.	I bargained with a Baay Moor. He bought nothing.

b. benn

**Formation:** class marker + -enn

e.g.	genn kër	a house
	benn xale	a child
	Jenn jiiit fettu ko	No scorpion has stung him.
	Benn jigéen toggul	Not one of the women has cooked.
cf.	benn ci doomi goor gi	one of the sons of the man
	benn doomu goor gi	a son of the man

This can carry the sense of the number one or of the indefinite article a/an

There is a tendency for all class markers to be reduced to the b form, benn, especially in Dakar e.g. benn kër.

c.	With relative verb phrase in stative verbs (adjectival) absence of the definite article indicates indefinite.	
e.g.	xale bu njool bi	the tall child
	xale bu njool	a tall child

### 3. Demonstratives

The Wolof system of determinants is systematic for all classes.

The system is based on :

- the class indicator;
- the distance which separates the speaker and the listener;
- and the position of the object with respect to the speaker and the listener.

Accordingly the determination can be simple (no special emphasis or focus); emphatic (with special focus on the referent); or associative (when the speaker associates the referent in some way with the person spoken to).

Also by an alteration of the vowel pattern of the determiner, the speaker can indicate whether the referent of the noun is close or remote.

Furthermore to further attract attention one can add the suffix -le to the demonstrative adjective. The general effect of this suffix is to make the determiners more specific in their reference. It is rarely used in Dakar Wolof. This can also mark surprise, warning, or exclamation. When used to address humans it indicates either the second person, or exclamation in the third person.

- |                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| e.g. Jigéen ñile, jógleen! | You ladies, stand up.        |
| Gone gile, yemal!          | Eh! Child, calm down.        |
| Xale bile moo sob!         | How that child is turbulent. |

Bii and bee are often used to stress the existence or identity of the referent, approximately equivalent in English to this and that.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| e.g. Ginaar bii walla bee laa bëgga jënd. | I want to buy this or that chicken (while pointing them out). |
|---|---|

Boobu and booba are used when there is some kind of association between the person being spoken to and the referent. This may be physical as when the referent is near to or in the hands of the person spoken to, or it may be one of acquaintance as when the speaker feels that the referent is known or familiar to the person spoken to.

The demonstrative adjectives (except those containing the suffix -le) can be placed before or after the noun. It is normally placed after. Placement before the noun creates an effect of insistence.

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| e.g. Ñaqlloo alal jii. | You did not earn this money honestly.     |
| Ñaqlloo jii alal.      | This money, you did not earn it honestly. |

#### 4. Qualifiers

##### a. Bépp (all, each)

**Formation:** class marker + -épp

Bépp if placed before the noun means “each”.

if placed after the noun mean “all” or “all of the”

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| e.g. wépp fas | each horse       |
| fas wépp      | all of the horse |

The class markers k-, g-, j-, are replaced by b-. Hence one says bépp garab not gépp garab.

##### b. Beneen (another)

**Formation:** class marker + -eneen (other)

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| e.g. weneen fas | another horse |
|-----------------|---------------|

##### c. Bu ne/bu nekk (every, each)

**Formation:** class marker + -u ne

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| e.g. Loxo bu ne laal na ko | He touched each and every hand. |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|

Note: Although in theory, these are constructed with the class markers, in practice especially in urban areas only the b is used. Hence bépp; benn; beneen tend to replace everything.

##### d. Indefinites

###### i. Sàngam (Adj. Such-and-such a)

- |                                |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| e.g. Maa ngi jëm béréb sàngam. | I am going to such-and-such a place. |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|

###### ii. Nàngam li (noun. Indeterminant thing. Such-and-such a thing)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| e.g. Mënuloo wax ni nàngam lii moo la naqadi. | You cannot say that you are complaining about such and such a thing. |
|---|--|


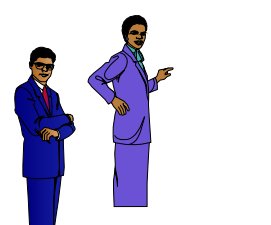




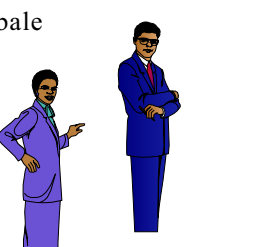
###### iii. Nàngum ak nàngam. (and so forth, etc.)

###### iv. Diw mi (noun. indeterminate person. So-and-so)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| e.g. Demuloo fo, noo mën a waxe ne diw ñew na, diw ñewul? | You did not go there so how can you say that so-and-so came while so-and-so did not? |
|---|--|

	Indefinite article		Simple article		Demonstrative Adjectives						Interrogative	All, Each	Another
					Emphatic			Associative					
	a	one, a	close	far	close (this one here)		remote (that one there)		close (that one there close to you)				
<b>Singular noun classes</b>	ab ag ak am as aw	benn genn jenn kenn lenn menn senn wenn	bi gi ji ki li mi si wi	ba ga ja ka la ma sa wa	bii gii jii kii lii mii sii wii	bile gile jile kile lile mile sile wile	bee gee jee kee lee mee see wee	bale gale jale kale lale male sale wale	boobu googu jooju kooku loolu moomu soosu woolu	booba(le) googa(le) jooja(le) kooka(le) looka(le) mooma(le) soosa(le) woowa(le)	ban gan jan kan lan man san wan	bépp gépp jépp képp lépp mépp sépp wépp	beneen geneen jeneen keneen leneen meneen seneen weneen
<b>Plural noun classes</b>	ay	ñenn*	yi ñi	ya ña	yii ñii	yile ñile	yee ñee	yale ñale	yooyu ñoonu	yooya(le) ñoona(le)	yan ñan	yépp ñépp	yeneen ñeneen*
<b>Non visible in place</b>			fi	fa	fii	file	fee	fale	foofu	foofa(le)	fan	fépp	feneen
<b>Manner or visible in place</b>			ni	na	nii	nile	nee	nale	noonu	noona(le)	nan		

\* ñenn and ñeneen can only be used with nit where it indicates a party of the people or another party of the people.

	Close		Far		
<b>Emphatic</b>	bii		bale		 Speaker  Listener  Object in question
<b>Associative</b>	boobu		boobale		

## 5. Demonstrative pronouns

Lépp	all	Beneen	another (non human)	Benn	a, one
Yépp	everything	Leneen	something else	Lenn	something
Képp	anybody	Yeneen	others (non humans)	Kenn	someone/no-one
Ñépp	all people, everybody	Keneen	somebody else	Ñenn	some people
Fépp	everywhere	Ñeneen	other people, others	Fenn	somewhere/nowhere
		Feneen	somewhere else	Dara	nothing
		Neneen	some other manner		

also ku nekk (everyone, each person, anyone)  
 lu nekk (everything, each thing, anything)  
 lu mu man doon (anything)  
 lu mu man nekk (anything)  
 fii mu nekk (now in this place)  
 li ci des (the rest)  
 ñi ci des (the others which remain)

	Demonstrative Pronouns				Interrogative				
	Emphatic		Associative						
	close (this one here)	remote (that one there)	close (that one there close to you)						
Singular noun classes	bii kii lii	bile kile lile	bee kee lee	bale kale lale	boobu kooku loolu	ban kan lan	benn kenn lenn	beneen keneen leneen	képp lépp
Plural noun classes	yii ñii	yile ñile	yee ñee	yale ñale	yooyu ñoõñu	yan ñan		yeneen ñeneen	yépp ñépp
Place	fii	file	fee	fale	foofu	fan	fenn	feneen	fépp

## 6. Indefinite pronouns

ku/ñu to replace humans

bu/yu to replace all non human objects

The expression Some..., others is expressed using the demonstrative pronouns:

Ñii, ñee, ñale (for humans)

Yii, yee, yale (for animals and things)

e.g. Ñii toog, ñee jog, ñale tëdd.

Yii toj, yee xëm, yale fënëx.

Some were seated, others standing and still others lying.

Some were broken, others burnt and still others worm eaten.

## 7. Negative demonstrative pronouns

These are expressed with the pronouns kenn (no-one) and dara (nothing)

e.g. Ku ñëw? Kenn.

Who has come? No-one.

Loo def? Dara.

What are you doing? Nothing.

## 8. Other adverbs of insistence

dëgg

doŋŋ (only)

kepp (only, exactly)

kese (only)

kott (only, unique)

rekk (only)

## References:

La détermination Nominale en Wolof

Peace Corps Course:

pp 53

J'Apprends le Wolof:

pp 57, 68-70

Baptist course:

pp 2f, 13

Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)

pp 55-61

Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):

pp 23-35, 56-58

Grammaire Wolof (Dial)

pp 9f, 46-48, 50f

Xam sa làkk:

pp 45-50

## Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof:

pp 72f

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Relative Pronouns

**Formation:** class marker + u (independent article) or i (definite article) = which

- e.g. relative pronoun for   kër = gu  
   jigéen = ju  
   piis = bu

u indicates that the referent is either non specific or hypothetical

- fu = where/the place  
 ku = who/person  
 lu = which/thing

### 1. Adjectival clauses

**Formation:** Noun + class marker + -u + modifying noun or verb [+/- article]

- a. Wolof has no adjectives. Adjectival clauses are formed by creating a relative clause with the noun connected to a modifying verb or noun by a relative pronoun.  
 e.g.   kër gu rëy                                    a house that is big / the big house  
       tool bu mag                                a field that is big / a big field  
       fas wu góor                                a male horse
- b. If the qualifier is a noun only -u can be used. If the qualifier is a verb any of the simple or demonstrative article forms can be used as the relative pronoun.  
 e.g.   xale yi rafet                                the beautiful children  
       xale ba rafetoon                         the child who was beautiful  
       xale bii rafet lool                        this very attractive child  
       xale bale rafet lool                      that beautiful child over there
- c. The definite article when present comes after the relative verb phrase.  
 e.g.   xale bu njool bi                         the tall child  
       ndox mu sedd mooma nga doon naan    the said cold water which you were drinking

If the relative verb phrase is followed by another noun + determiner the determiner of adjectival clause is not used.

- e.g.   Xale bu njool bu nekk ci biir kër gi...    The child who is inside the house...
- d. adjectival phrases can be accumulated with or without a relative pronoun connector, and with or without use a connector such as “te”. The following are all equivalent.  
 e.g.   Mbër mu njool, rëy, am doole  
       Mbër mu njool, mu rëy, mu am doole  
       Mbër mu njool, mu rëy, te am doole
- e. The negatives formed by use of negative suffix “-ul”  
 e.g.   xale bu baaxul bi                         the child who is not good

### 2. Relative clauses

**Formation:** noun + class indicator +  $\left. \begin{array}{l} -i \text{ (indicates referent is specific or established)} \\ -a(\text{ë}) \text{ (indicates referent is specific but further away)} \\ -u \text{ (indicates referent is non specific or hypothetical)} \end{array} \right\} + \text{ modifying clause}$

- a. When the modified noun is the object of the phrase the object relative pronoun is followed by subject & verb. When the subject is a pronoun, the MVC pronouns (mu) are used before the verb.  
 e.g.   kër gi Ablaye jënd...                        the house which Ablaye bought...  
       nit ki nga gis...                            the person you saw...  
       kër ga mu jënd..                            the house he bought...  
       jaaykat *bu* mu fa xaritool...            A seller with whom he has ties of friendship...  
       Ñu ngi ci ja *ju* ñu naan marse Kermel...    They are in a market which one calls “Kermel”...
- b. Use of class marker + u vs class marker + i/a  
       jaaykat *bu* mu fa xaritool...            *A* seller with whom he have ties of friendship...  
       jaaykat *bi* mu fa xaritool...            *The* seller with whom he has ties of friendship...
- c. Note that for active verbs, the particle “di” attached to the relative pronoun indicates an habitual action. The absence of “di” indicates that the action is completed. It is placed immediately before the verb.  
 e.g.   jigéen juy liggéey ci dëkk ba...        a woman that works in town...  
 cf.    jigéen ju liggéey ci dëkk ba...        a woman that has worked in the town...  
       piis bë muy jënd...                        the material he is buying...
- d. The negative if formed by adding negative suffix to verb ie -ul / -wul (not conjugated)  
 e.g.   xale bi mu indiwul...                    the child he has not brought...

- xale yi mu indi wul... the children he has not brought...
- e. If the relative clause applies to a pronoun or proper noun, the class marker forming the relative pronoun introducing the clause is 'm-'.  
 e.g. Yaw mi ñeme... You who are courageous...  
 Paul mi baax... Paul who is loud...

Compare: xale bi sama xarit indi... The child whom my friend brought... (dependent clause)  
 xale bi la sama xarit indi. It's the child (that) my friend has brought. (independent phrase)  
 sama xarit indi na xale bi. My friend has brought the child. (independent phrase)

### 3. Independent relative pronouns

Formed on the basis of their referent

if place	f	} +u (indicates referent is non specific or hypothetical) or +i (indicates referent is specific or established) +a
if manner	n	
if person	k, ñ	
if thing	l, y	
e.g. ku muñ, muuñ		He who is patient will smile.
ki agsi leégi, Americain lë		The person who just arrived is American.
Fu Seydu dem?		Where ever did Seydou go?
Fi nga jóge sore na		Where you are coming from is far.

Note: -u being hypothetical has a incomplete connotation even without 'di' whereas -i has a complete connotation.

e.g. Ku fi ñëw lañu wax	They talk(ed) about whoever comes here.
cf Ki fi ñëw lañu wax	They talk(ed) about him/her who has come here.
Nu ñu defare bunt yi lañu may won	They're showing me how they repair the doors.
cf Ni ñu defare bunt yi la ñu may won	They're showing me how they fixed the doors.

#### References:

Peace Corps Course:	pp 77, 94, 114
J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 130
Baptist course:	pp 63
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 36-41
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 48
La Determination Nominale en Wolof	pp 50-55

#### Exercises:

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 133-135
Baptist course:	pp 66-68

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Temporal & Hypothetical Clauses

### I. Bu/Su + (conjugation MVC) [+/- object pronouns] + verb + -ee/oo/aa

Su is interchangeable with bu.

#### 1. Formation

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	bu ma	bu ñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	boo	bu ngeen /boo leen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	bu	bu ñu

bu ngeen used in Mbane

- a. Indicates an action or state that the time referred to is either anticipated (future) or hypothetical ie when or if; It can also indicate an habitual action in the present. (Church sees the distinction between bu and bi as being non-determined/determined rather than temporal see Church p227).

#### b. Suffix attached to verb

- i. if the verb ends in a consonant  $\Rightarrow$  -ee  
 e.g. bu ma waxee... when/if I speak...  
 ii. if the verb ends in a long vowel  $\Rightarrow$  no marker  
 e.g. bu ñu xuloo... when/if they fight...  
 iii. If the verb is monosyllabic and ends in a vowel the suffix depends on the preference of the speaker. It may be -?ee/?ée (ee preceded by glottal stop) or -yee or -wee.  
 a, à, e, o  $\Rightarrow$  attach -ee after the vowel preceded by a glottal stop  
 é, i ó, u ë  $\Rightarrow$  attach -ée after the vowel preceded by a glottal stop  
 e.g. bu leen foee.... [fɔʔɛ:] when/if we/they play....

This is the case for:

ba	to leave	woo	to call
dee	to die	luu	to be mute
ju	to sow	të	to be impossible

Note two exceptions:

- di to be  $\Rightarrow$  bu dee If it is that...  
 ne to speak  $\Rightarrow$  bu nee If he said...  
 iv. polysyllabic verb ending in e, é, i (short front vowels)  $\Rightarrow$  replace final vowel with -ee/ée  
 e.g. bu ma ko teree... if/when I prohibit it...  
 bu ko indee... when if he brings it...  
 v. polysyllabic verb ending in a, ä (short central vowels)  $\Rightarrow$  replace final vowel with -aa  
 e.g. bu ma dumaa xale bi... when/if I spank the child  
 vi. polysyllabic verb ending in o, ó, u (short back vowels)  $\Rightarrow$  replace final vowel with -oo/-óo  
 e.g. bu ma ko soxloo... when/if I need it...

- c. **If the verb is negative**, the temporal suffix is not used, but the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular negative suffix -ul/-wul or dul (for di) is .

- e.g. bu ma waxul... if I don't speak [negative of bu ma waxee]  
 bu ma dul wax... if/when I am not speaking [negative of bu may wax]

- d. **If the verb is marked by di**, the temporal suffix is not used and di/y comes between subject pronoun & verb, indicating a conditional present or a future progressive

- e.g. bu may wax... if/when I am speaking  
 buy liggéey... if/when he is working

- e. To indicate a **hypothetical action in the past**, the temporal suffix is also not used. The past marker -oon/-woon is added. The hypothetical action can be unaccomplished indicated by doon.
- e.g. bu ma waxoon... if I had spoken  
 bu deewoon... if he had died  
 Bu ma ko doon gis, dina a ko wax dëgg. If I had seen him regularly, I would have told him the truth.

When stringing two past conditions together, the second bu + -oon are optional

- e.g. Bu ma doon liggéey walla (bu) ma am(oon) sama këru bopp, dootuma naqarlu.  
 If I were working or had my own house, I would no longer be distressed.

f. **Special construction “bu dee”** (if it turns out....)

- e.g. bu dee baax nañu if it turns out that they are good  
 bu dee dëgg la if it turns out that it is the truth

2. The temporal clause does not distinguish between the future and hypothetical possibilities (when and if). The structure of the post temporal clause can remove this ambiguity.

- ii. When a future event is anticipated (i.e. when), the subordinate clause uses conjugation of dina
- e.g. Bu ma waxee dinañu déglu When I speak they will listen
- ii. When a future hypothetical or conditional event is envisaged (i.e. if), the subordinate clause uses the MVC pronouns
- e.g. Bu ma waxee ñu deglu If I speak they will listen

Note that the post temporal clause can take any of the Wolof modal forms.

3. Special constructions for avoiding MVC conjugation

- a. **“bu fekkee ne.../ bu fekkeente ne...”** (if it happens that, if..) followed by a phrase with its normally modal conjugation.
- e.g. Su fekkee ne gisoon naa ko, kon waxoon naa la ko. If I had seen her, I would have said it to her.
- b. **“boo xamee ne/bi nga xamee ne”** (when you know that, when...)
- e.g. Bés boo xamee ne, dinga liggéey na nga ma ko wax The day you will work, tell me

4. Temporal clauses commencing with a time word use a relative pronoun based on class marker

- e.g. Bés bu ma sama baay joxee sama xaaalis, dinaa ci jënd dàll.  
 The day my father gives me my money, I will buy sandals with it  
 Waxtu wu ma ko gisee dinaa ko jàpp The hour I see it, I'll catch it  
 Saa su ñu demee, dinaa ko wax The moment they come I will tell you

5. bu + noun (time) + -ee is used to form adverbial clauses

- e.g. Bu Tabaskee, dinaa ñëw. At the Tabaski (when it's Tabaski) I will come.  
 Bu subaa, dinaa ko indil añ. Tomorrow (when it's tomorrow) I will bring lunch for him.

6. **Contrary to fact condition**

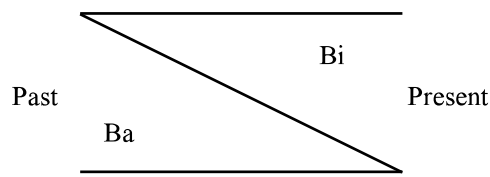
- a. **Affirmative** su/bu (conjugated) + verb + -oon , du/dina.....
- e.g. Su ngeen ma xamoon, dingeen xam Baay bi itam  
 If you had known me, you would have known the Father also.
- b. **Negative** su/bu (conjugated) + verb + -ul + woon, du/dina....
- e.g. Su nu amul woon bët, du nu gis If we had no eyes, we would not see.
- c. **“su fekkoon”** (equivalent to su fekkee ne)
- e.g. su fekkoon loolu amul, дума leen ko wax If I were not so, I would not have told you.
- d. **di + oon (doon) without verb**
- e.g. su ma doon yaw ... If I were you.
- e. The progressive form is indicated by **di + oon (doon) with verb**
- e.g. bu ñu doon liggéey, dinañu ko noppi If they were working, they would be quiet.
- f. bu + -ee contrasts with **bu + -aa** which indicates an habitual action or a state situated in the past.
- e.g. Nu ñu góobaa, ñu di ci maye. When they used to harvest, they had the habit of distributing from it.



## II. Bi / Ba + MVC [+/- object pronoun] [+/- y/di] + verb + -ee/oo/aa

Indicates both clauses are situated in the past and the subordinate clause precedes the principle action, ie when or after.

- 'ba' indicates the action occurred in the more distant past than 'bi'. It is more often than not used interchangeably with "bi". But on the whole the closer to the present the event has occurred the more likely bi is to be chosen. The further in time from the present the event has occurred the more likely "ba" is to be used. This can be represented by the following diagram.
- When "di" is not action or state referred clause is completed, When di is used this occurring (the past bi/ba cannot be hypothetical situated
- bi/ba cannot be hypothetical situated
- Suffix follows same rule as for bu (see I)



present bi + -ee indicates that the to by the verb in the temporal thus indicating when or after. indicates that the action is progressive) i.e. when.. was...ing combined with -oon. The in the past is formed with bu.

	Singular	Plural
<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	bi ma	bi ñu
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	bo o/ bi n ga	bi ngeen /boo leen
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	bi mu	bi ñu

- e.g. bi ngay liggéey                      When you were working.  
 ba ngeen ñēwee                      When/after you had come.  
 bi mu deeee                              When/after he had died.  
 bi ma waxul                              When I hadn't spoken  
 bi ma dul wax                            When I wasn't speaking

### e. Post temporal clause

Normally consists of MVC + verb +/- nominal object

- e.g. Ba ma waxee ñu dem              When/after I had spoken, they left.

But may also take the complement predicator mode.

- e.g. Bi ma waxee lañu dem            It was after I had spoken that they left.

Or may also be conjugated with da fa

- e.g. Bi ma jógee kër g, dama duggwoto ba Dakar      After I left the house, I took the bus to Dakar.

- f. When the subject is stated the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun mu/ñu is dropped; and the object pronouns precede the subject

- e.g. bi ko Fall beyee...                      When/after Fall cultivated it...

## III. BA + MVC + verb without suffix

indicates until

- e.g. ba ma ñēw.....                      until I arrived  
 cf. ba ma ñēwee...                      when/after I arrived

## IV BA + verb

expresses the consequences or results of an action

- e.g. Lekk na ba noppi.                      He has already eaten/he has finished eating.  
 Xaar naa leen ba sonn.                      I waited for you until tired. ie. I have waited a long time for you.  
 Damaa ree ba sonn.                      I laughed until I was tired of laughing.  
 Liggéey na ba bēgga dee.                      I worked until I was dead tired.  
 Rafet na ba bēgga dee.                      She is killingly beautiful.

Note: Do not confuse the temporal/conditional clauses with the negative of the obligative  
 bu (conjugated) + object pronoun + verb

bu ma	bu ñu	
bu l	bu leen	
bu mu	bu ñu	
e.g. bu ma ko	gis	let me see it

#### V **Koon, kon, kon te**

In the past another structure existed to express the conditional, but it has all but disappeared from use now. Koon was suffixed to the verb to indicate the hypothetical in the past.

e.g. defkoon naa ko    If I had done it...

Cey am koon naa jabar, bu sama coro deewul woon. I would have had a wife if my fiance hadn't died.

This is related to the current word “kon” or “konte” at the start of a phrase which indicates “therefore”.

e.g. Fey naa la ba mu jeex, kon danga war far sama tur. I have finished paying you, therefore you must remove my name.

#### **References:**

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 57, 108-110
Baptist course:	pp 70, 73f, 77, 81, 88, 109f
PhD Thesis of Eric Church:	pp 216-237
Notes on Wolof Grammar (Stewart)	pp 41-46
Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb):	pp 100
Grammaire Wolof (Dial)	pp 6

#### **Exercises:**

J'Apprends le Wolof:	pp 64, 112-115
Baptist course:	pp 71f, 75, 88f

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Expression of Time & Duration

1.    bu yàgg       since a long time  
       bu yàggul   not been long since  
       lu yàgg       for a long time  
       e.g. Dem na bu yàgg.                   He left ages ago.  
           Dem na lu yàgg.                   He has been gone for a long time.  
           Yàgg naa sey                       I have been married for a long time  
           Yàgguñoo jënd kër gi             It has not been long since we bought the house

NB Double verb construction

2.    gēj            It has been a long time since I have not....I have not.... for a long time  
       gējul         It has not been long since....  
       e.g. gēj naa koo gis                   I have not seen him for a long time  
           gējuma koo gis                   It has not been long since I saw him

NB Double verb construction

3.    Since (date of origin)  
       Date + object predicator + verb of time + principle verb  
       verbs of time       e.g.           tàmbari, door, gēj, mujj  
       e.g. Daaw laa tàmbalee tux           I have smoked since last year (It is last year that I started to smoke).  
           14 Novembre la door njàng mi     He commenced her apprenticeship on 14 Novembre.  
           Bésu sambaraax ba lañu gēja dem tefes   We have not been to the beach since the day of the storm.  
           Bi ma noppee jàng lañu mujjee dem sinema   We have not been to the cinema since I finished my studies

Questions may be formed in a similar way

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Kañ nga tàmbalee tux?        | (Since)When did you begin to smoke?     |
| Kañ la door jàng mi?         | When did you begin your apprenticeship? |
| Kañ lañu gēja dem tefes?     | When did you last go to the beach?      |
| Kañ ngeen mujjee dem cinema? | When did you last go to the cinema?     |

4.    Expression of duration in relation to the moment when speaking.  
       Kañ nga tàmbalee tux?               When did you begin to smoke?  
       a. am na + expression of duration (i.e x fan/ayu-bés/weer/at etc)  
       e.g. Bi ma tàmbalee tux ak léegi am na ñaari at.           I have been smoking for 2 years.  
       [lit. Since the moment I began to smoke and now there are 2 years]

- b. Ñaari at a ngi may tux.               It's been 2 years that I have smoked.

5.    Expression of duration not related to the moment when speaking  
       Ban diir nga tux?                   How long have you smoked?  
       a. Tux naa lu tollook ñaari weer     I have smoked for 2 months  
       b. Tux naa diiru ñaari weer         I have smoked for 2 months

6.    ci/ca + temporal clause (bi/ba/bu + temporal marker)       during, while  
       ba + temporal clause (bi/ba/bu + temporal marker)       until  
       e.g. Xaaroon naa *ba ba* mu ñëwee     I waited until he arrived.  
           Dinaa xaar *ba bu* génnee         I will wait until he leaves  
           Ku sàcc jagal bi yit, *ci bi* muy taw biig ci guddi.     He who stole the ram, it was while it was raining last night  
           Cere, *ca bu* muy tàng lañu koy laaloo.           It is while it is hot that one adds the baobab leaves.

## 7. Before

### a. Before in past time laata

bi/ba....laata

There is no elongation with this construction

i. bi/ba + MVC [+/- object pronoun] + laata + verb

e.g. Bi nga laata ñëw tey, jàng naa lu bari Before you came today, I studied much.

Bi ma ko laata gis, xam na xebaar bii Before I saw him he knew the news.

ii. Can also be used with a noun or an expression without a verb

e.g. Bi ñu laata Tabaski, dem na

Bi ñu laata ak Tabaski, dem na } Before Tabaski, he went

cf Bi Tabaski di laata ñëw, dem na }

iii. Laata may also be used alone with elongation of the pronoun or di/y

e.g. Def naa ko laata ngay ñëw I did it before you came

Waajaloon nañu ay yére laata moo juddu They prepared clothes before he was bom.

[moo = mu elongated]

iv. The verb suffix -agul may have same sense as laata.

e.g. Defnaa ko, fekk na ñëwagul I did it, you hadn't come yet

= Def naa ko laata ngay ñëw I did it before you came

### b. Before in future time bala

i. balaa + noun designating time

e.g. Balaa Tabaski, dinaa la jëndal yére yu bees Before Tabaski, I will buy you new clothes.

Bëgg naa laa gis, balaa dibeer I want to see you before Sunday

ii. balaa + nominal subject + di + verb

e.g. Balaa Tabaski di ñëw, dinaa la jëndal yére yu bees. Before Tabaski, I will buy you new clothes.

Balaa nawet di jot..... Before the wet season comes..

iii. bala + MVC [+/-object pronoun] [+/-di] + verb

e.g. Bala ma la koo jox..... Before I give it to you

Bala ma la koy jox.... Before I give it to you

iv. bala may also be combined with laata => before in future time (rare)

e.g. Dinaa ko def bala ngay laata ñëw I will do it before you come

### c. Before in future time soga

e.g. Baleel néeg bi, nga soga dem Sweep the bedroom before you go.

= Baleel néeg bi, balaa nga dem }

## 8. Léegi

### a. Near future Léegi + MVC + verb

e.g. Léegi mu ñëw. She is coming right now.

Léegi mu taw. It is going to rain now.

### b. Near past Completive + léegi

e.g. Wàcc na léegi. He has just quit work.

Taw na léegi. It has just rained.

## 9. After

### a. After in past time

i. bi/ba + temporal clause

This can mean when or after in past time

ii. Gannaaw/ginnaaw + temporal clause with bi/ba

Emphasizes the idea of after.

e.g. Gannaaw ba mu fa jóge , demoon na dëkk ba. After he got up from there, he went to town.

Gannaaw ba mu demee, doomam ñëw. After he had left, his child came.

### b. After in future time

i. bu/su + future temporal clause

This can indicate if, when or after.

ii. Gannaaw/ginnaaw + bu + future temporal clause

Emphasizes the idea of after.

e.g. Gannaaw bu ñëwee, dinaa ko def. After he comes, I will do it.

10. **After that**  
 bu looluee  
 bu loolu amee  
 bu ko defee  
 bu mu weesu fo ofu

11. **As soon as**

A conditional present progressive clause (bu + future temporal clause with di), followed by another clause beginning with di. The subject must be identical for both clauses.

- e.g. bu may egg, di la ko yégal.      As soon as I arrive, I will tell you.  
 Buy egg, di la ko yégal              As soon as he arrives, he will tell you.

12. **Anticipated event in the future**      **fi ak**

- e.g. Dinaa jóge Senegaal fi ak ñaari at.      I will leave Senegal in 2 years.  
 Fi ak many be said as feek

13. **Duration of event in the future**

- e.g. Dinaa jóge Senegaal ñaari at.      I will leave Senegal for 2 years.

**References:**

- Peace Corps Course:                      pp 95f, 193  
 J'Apprends le Wolof:                      p 58  
 Baptist course:                              pp 77f, 82

**Exercises:**

- Baptist course:                              pp 78f

Revised 6 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Conjunctions

### 1. Conjunctions of coordination

<b>ak</b>	joins two nouns, or two pronouns with the sense of “and”, or introduces an adverb of manner with the sense of “with”. When the preceding word ends in a vowel the “ak” is added to that word.	fas ak xar man ak yow Pentaak Faatu Faatook Penda daw ak doole	a horse and a sheep me and you Penda and Fatou Fatou and Penda Run strongly
<b>te</b>	joins two propositions, or two verbs	Toogal te xaar ko. Am na jom te am na xel.	Sit down and wait for him. He has a sense of honour and he is reasonable.
<b>di</b>	joins two verbal expressions		
<b>walla</b>	or	Biiram dafay daw, jox ko buy walla mbiskit.	He has diarrhea, give him monkey bread or a biscuit.
<b>mbaa</b>	or, or else, otherwise	Xaar ma nu ànd, mbaa nga jitu ma, boo yàkkamtee.	What for me so we can go together or else go on ahead if you are in a hurry.
<b>am</b>	or	Dangay dem, am dangay too g?	Are you going, or are you staying?
<b>koon/kon</b>	therefore, given that, in that case	Fey naa la ba nu jeex, kon danga wara far sama tur.	I have finished paying you, so you should remove my name.
<b>boonte/bon/boon</b>	therefore	Nee nga tey ngay dem, bon jox ma sama xalis!	You said you were going today, so give me my money!
<b>boog</b>	therefore, in that case	Boroom kër gi nekku fi, nañu ñib bi boog.	The head of the house is not here, so in that case let us go home.
<b>nag</b>	therefore, in that case	Jox ma nag li ma la abaloon!	Give me, then, what I loaned you.
<b>kon boog</b>	therefore		
<b>kon nag</b>	therefore		
<b>ndaxte</b>	because	Duma la dig ndaxte bëgguma laa fen.	I will not promise you because I do not want to lie to you.
<b>ngir</b>	for, because, in order to		
<b>ndax</b>	for, because, in order to. May indicate either goal or cause	Toppaatal ñaw bi ndax mu gëna dëgër! Dañu fomm sabar gi ndax taw bi.	Redo the sewing so that it will be more solid. The dance was put off because of the rain.
<b>nde</b>	in effect, since	Sikkuma la, nde li nga xalaat nga wax.	I do not hold a grudge against you since you said what you thought.
<b>ndegam</b>	given that	Ndegam saxaar gi raw na nu, nanu sàkk meneen peXe.	Given that we have missed the train, let us find another solution.
<b>maaxàllaa</b>	the reason is, it is that	Kenn jëndul jën yi, maaxàllaa dañu jafe.	No-one has bought the fish, because they are too expensive.

## 2. Conjunctions marking opposition

<b>moona/moon</b>	yet, however, even though	Wegu ma, moona nijaayam laa.	He does not respect me, even though I am his uncle.
<b>ndaxam</b>	however, nevertheless	Ndaxam yedd naa lo ba tàyyi de.	Nevertheless, I often gave him advice.
<b>wànte/waaye</b>	but, however	Kër gi sotti na, waaye kenn dëkkagu ci.	The house is finished, but no-one is living in it yet.
<b>terewul/teewul</b>	however, yet		

## 3. Other Conjunctions

<b>maanaam</b>	that is to say	Warax, maanaam wann ñam woo saqamiwul, mën na jur metitu biir.	To swallow whole, that is to say, swallow food which has not been chewed, can give stomach aches
<b>naka jekk rawatina</b>	normally especially, in particular	Na nu ndaw ñépp wu yusi, rawatina ñi dëkk ci gox bi!	May all the youth answer our call, especially those from this suburb.
<b>ndare</b>	unless	Tey oto sañu l jaar ci koñ bi, ndare dafa am permi.	Today, the cars must not drive on this road, unless they have permission.
<b>ndeke/ndekete</b>	conjunction introducing a discovery, while in fact	Dañu foogoon ne xale bi dafa sibbiru, ndeke dafa ñas	We thought that the child had malaria, while in fact he had measles.
<b>amaana</b>	perhaps, without doubt	Amaana sa baay ñëw tey.	Perhaps your father will come today.
<b>daanaka</b>	approximately, about, so to speak	Daanaka loolu laa wax.	That was about what I said.
<b>gannaaw</b>	since, after	Baal ma gannaaw li ma la wax neexu la!	Forgive me since I what I said was not pleasing to you.

**References**

Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof (Samb): pp 123-124  
 Grammaire Wolof (Dial) pp 39-40

Revised 20 July, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Exclamatives

### 1. Interjections.

Astafurlaa!	Blasphemy!
Axakay!	Certainly!
Ayca! Aywa!	Let's go!/Go!/Do it!
Ayóo!	Heave!
Bajo!	Bravo! Not bad!
Billaay!	I swear by the name of God!
Cam!/Cem!/Cim!/Cum!	Pooh! Bah! (Repugnance or indignation)/ Oh ah! (Admiration)
Cëy Yàlla!	Oh my God (sign of pity)
Cëy / Céy	Oh! (admiration or surprise)
Cëy waay!	Oh dear!
Cipiri! Bah! Phoney!	
Dëggit!	Absolutely, certainly!
Duul!	Blast! Bloody hell! Shit! Dash!
Ée	Hey! (For calling someone a long way away, to threaten or to warn)
Ëpëpëpëp!	Oh la la! Fantastic!
Èskey	Bravo! (Surprise, admiration)
Ëy followed by a noun preceded by its possessive adjective and followed by its article! (Expresses commiseration)	
e.g. Ëy sama ndey ja!	Oh, my poor mother!
Iii!	Hey! (Surprise, indignation)
Iiya!	Ouch!
Kaar!	(Protection against evil eye)
Laay!	I say! (Surprise)
Laaylaaylalaa!	Oh my God!
Maaradey taa li!	Certainly not!
Massa!	Take courage! Console yourself!
Mbas!	Go to hell! I have had enough! Damn!
Miig!/Muut!/Cell!	Silence! Shut up!
Moo! Looy xulli?	But! Why are you looking at me like that?
Moo!	But! I say!
Ndeysaan! / Andaysaan	Oh dear! (Sign of pity)
Ndokk!	So much the better!
Ngal la +(noun/pronoun)!	Woe to
e.g. Ngalla yaw!	Woe to you!
Ñaw!	Well done! Bad luck! That will teach you!
Pupp!	Pooh! (Disgust)
Saay!	Oh! (Admiration)
Sàllaaw!	Agreed! Understood!
Sas!	Oh! (Used to emphasize something, admiration, gratitude)
Séttétététét!	Oh la la!
Tasaa	Never! Certainly not!
Tuug!	Don't do that!
Uf! Wuf!	Bah! Phooey! So what!
Us!	Ouch! (To express pain)
Waawaaw!	Of course, yes!
Waay! Look here! Isay!	(Surprise and ?indignation)
Wey walooy!	Help!
Wëy man!/wëy yaay!	Help
Wooy/Wuy sama ndey!	Ouch
Xuux!	Boo! (To frighten)
Yàlla tere!	God forbid!
Yée!	Oh! (Surprise or forgetfulness)
Yóo!	Oh no! Oh, oh! (Mistrust, fear, surprise)



2. To call for help one add's the siffix -eey

e.g. Sacceey!	Help, thief!
Lakkeey!	Fire!
Jaanceey!	Help, a snake!

3. Sentence beginning with li

e.g. Xalaat naa la lool.	Li ma la xalaat!
I thought a lot about you.	How I have thought about you!

Jàmbat nañu leen lool.	Li ñu leen jàmbat!
They complained about them a lot.	How they have complained about them!

4. Optative

e.g. Nga dem!	Leave!
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### References

**SAMB**, Amar *Initiation à la Grammaire Wolof* IFAN 1983 p125-128

**DIALO**, Amadou *Elements Expressifs du Wolof Contemporain* 1985 p42-44f

Revised 9 August, 1999

## Wolof Grammar Notes: Adverbs

1. General adverbs
  - a. **Lool** very  
e.g. Baax na lool. It is very good.
  - b. **Ba ëpp** too  
e.g. Ñor na ba ëpp. It is too ripe,
  - c. **Ba dee** very, reinforces the idea of the verb  
e.g. Dafa bon ba dee. He is very wicked.  
Dafa ñaaw ba dee. She is very ugly.  
Liggéey naa ba dee I worked very hard.  
Baax na ba dee He is very good.  
Daw na ba dee. he ran until breathless, ran fast.
  - d. **Torop** Very (deformation of the French *trop*)  
e.g. Dafa tang torop. It is very hot.
  - e. **Fuuf** adverb of comparison; by far  
e.g. Maa la man fuuf. I am better than you by far.
  
2. Temporal adverbs
  - a. **Similaak-saala** in the blink of an eye.  
e.g. Similaak-saala, dugub ji nekk sun guf. In the blink of an eye the millet was transformed into flour.
  
3. Adverbs of intensity/ superlatives
  - a. Idiomatic with verbs
 

bees tàq/pull/peq	to be completely new
dëgër këñ/këcc	to be very solid or hard
diis gann	to be very heavy
dijj fëtëj	to be very plump
doy sëkk	to be completely sufficient
duuf ba ne futt	to be very fat
far nip	to be very syrupy, very concentrated
fatt taraj	to be totally blocked
fees dell	completely full
fés cinn	very evident
fey kamaj	to go out suddenly
forox toll	to be very sour, acid
gudd coleet/ba ne loos	very long
janoo màkk/ñàkk	to be completely face to face
jeex tàkk	to be completely finished, used up
jub xocc	to be completely straight, square or honest
leer nàññ	to be crystal clear, very bright
léj witt	to be completely twisted together
léjal witt	to harass energetically
lëndëm këruus/kuruus	to be completely dark
lew domm	to be completely honestly acquired
lewet domm to have no taste	
mat sëkk	to be totally complete
mokk rumbux/rumbax/rup	to be completely assimilated or learnt; to be completely milled or plucked or crushed
ñaaj ñàpp	to open the mouth completely
niin mbott/batt	to be very oily or fatty
nooy nepp	to be very soft or spongy
ñor xomm	to be thoroughly cooked, completely ripe or very aged
ñuul kukk/kurum	totally black
pes téll	to slap with all one's might
rattax bāndañ/bareet	very slippery
saf sàp	to be full of flavour
sedd guyy	cold as ice

see y xorom	to be completely dissolved
sēs rēkk	to be placed completely against something or just next to something
set wecc	to be clean as snow
sew nuuc/ruuj	to be very skinny, to be very fine
siin̄ fāŋŋ	to smile showing well all the teeth
suba cuuy	very early
suur kēll	to be completely full (from eating), stuffed
tākk jēreet	to suddenly flare out or blaze
tālli n̄add/n̄areet/n̄àrr	to be very tight or stretched
tang jér/jépp	to be very hot
taq ripp	to be completely stained or spotted or very dirty
tas tasar	to be completely scattered
taxaw temm	to be completely resolute, to stop suddenly
taxaw jonn	to be totally vigilant
tē ticc	to be completely rebellious, disobedient
teeŋ n̄add	to be stretched to the limit
tooy xipp/xépp	to be completely soaked
ub ràpp	close energetically
ubbi ba ne n̄all/n̄àyy/n̄àyeet	to open wide brutally
way denn	well curdled, well understood
wéet wéyēŋ	totally deserted
weex tāll/durr	white as snow
wér céŋŋ/péŋŋ	to be completely certain, completely healed
wex xàtt	to be very bitter
wow koŋŋ	to be completely dry
woyof toyy	to be very light or easy
xam xéll	to be certain of, to know certainly
xàppit n̄àpp/n̄àll	
xasaw xunn	to stink
xees pecc	to have a very pale complexion
xonq curr/coyy	very red
yaa n̄àpp/yàmbalaŋ	to be vast, spacious and clear
yàq yaxeeet	to be totally destroyed, worn out or used
yem kepp	to be just right, equal

b. Idiomatic with nouns

kaata riit	a painful pinch on the ears with fingernails
kurpeñ tuyy	a hard punch
rēkk dill	a hard punch on the back
talaata fuuf	a violent slap
wéx tēyy	a hard kick backwards
xēt faac	a violent whack
yet/yat wérr/dérr	a hard blow with a staff/stick

c. Intensity can also be expressed by a doubling of stative verb.

e.g. n̄uula n̄uul	Very black
weexa weex	Very white
dawa daw	Run very fast.

## d. Co-verbs using ne

A certain group of co-verbs are accompanied by *ne* and usually express intensity. In this structure *ne* functions as the verb and the other part of the co-verb follows the normal conjugation structure. It is not a double verb construction in that there is no elongation of the vowel preceding the “second” verb. Some examples are given below. Other examples can be found in DIALO 1985 Elements Expressifs du Wolof Contemporain, pp 47-57

ne cell	to be silent, calm	Mu ngi ne cell ci ruqam.	He is quiet in his corner
ne cocc	to be completely recovered, to be unscathed, unhurt	Sófoor baa nga ne cocc; ñi mu yeboon a am ñu gaañu.	The chauffeur was unhurt; it was among the passengers that there were injuries
ne fãññ	to be visible, to be apparent	kenn di werante kunte gi; weer waa ngi ne fãññ. Amul dara luy kumpa lu ñu dul siiwal bés, walla lu làqu lu ñu dul feeñal, ba mu ne fãññ. (Lk 8:17)	No one will argue about the start of Ramadan as the moon was well visible. For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.
ne fuuf	to eat gluttonously	Niiru na ku xiifoon; dañu ko jox añ bi, mu ne ko fuuf.	It appears that he is hungry; they gave him lunch and he scoffed it down gluttonously.
ne gâññ	to be in abundance	Nawet bi baax na; dugub jaa ngi ne gâññ.	The wet season was good; there is an abundance of millet.
ne jadd	to be completely stiff	Dama xëy saam loos ne jadd.	I woke up with a completely stiff neck.
ne jàkk	to lool with a fixed gaze, to stare	Dama ko ne jàkk, mu tiit.	I stared at him and he got frightened.
ne jaas	to arrive suddenly	Fëggul; dafa ne jaas ca biir néeg bi.	He did not knock; he just suddenly entered the room.
ne jëppét	to blaze up suddenly	Ñax mi ne jëppét, xale yi daw.	The grass suddenly caught fire and the children ran away.
ne jodd	to be completely vertical	Mu ngi ne jodd ci ëtt bi.	He is standing straight in the the courtyard.
ne jonn	with vigilance, attentively	Taxawleen jonn ba kenn baña yàq seen liggéey.	Be careful so hat no-one will ruin your work.
ne làcc	to be flaccid, spiritless, dog tired, exhausted	Sunuy bàkkaar a tax mu gaañu, ne làcc ndax sunuy tooñ. (Isa 53:5)	But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities;
ne làdd	to be in great abundance	Gerte gaa ngi ne làdd.	The peanuts are in abundance.
ne làññ	to be gaping, wide open	Bunt baa nga ne làññ.	The door is wide open.
ne mes	to disappear suddenly as if by magic	Dun yépp daldi ne mes, te kenn gisatul tund ya. (Rev 16:20) Bi mu defee loolu, lépp leer ci seeni bët, ñu daldi ko xàmme. Waaye Yeesu ne mes, gisatuñu ko. (Lk 24:31)	Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight.
ne mëll	to appear suddenly	Kenn foogul woon ne dana ñëw ca ndaje ma, moo tax ba mu ne mëll, ñépp a bég. Moo tax keroog àtte ba ñi bon ne dàll, ñiy bàkkaar ne mëll ci mbooloom ñi jub.	No one thought he would come to the meeting which is why when he appeared suddenly everyone was delighted. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous
ne mërr	to disappear completely, furtively	Ceeb bu sew dara ne mërr; kenn gisatu ko ci bitig yi.	The broken rice has disappeared. No one sees it any longer in the shops.
ne miig	to become silent	ni lay nekke kéemaan ci xeet yu bare; fu mu teew buur yi ne miig ci gis lu ñu musul a gis, xam lu ñu musul a xam. (Isa 52:15)	So will many nations marvel at him, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard they will understand.

ne muut	to be saturated/ to be silent	Poos baa ngi me muut ak xaa is.	The pocket is full of money.
ne mbàpp	to fall heavily, to fall flat on the ground.	Dafa ko puus, mu ne mbàpp daanu.	He pushed him and the other fell flat on the ground.
ne nërëm	prostrate at full length	Mu dugal loxo ba ci mboxosam, jël ca aw xeer, te mu sànni ko ak mbaqam, mu dal waayi Filisti ji ca jë ba, te xeer wa nuur ca biir jë bu waayi Filisti ji. Mu ne nërëm, dëpp kanam gi ci suuf. (1 Sam 17:49)	Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.
ne ñu mm	to be whole, complete.	Mburu mu ne ñu mm la indi.	He brought a whole loaf of bread.
ne ñalañ	to collapse at full length	Coono bee tax mu agsi ne ñalañ ci basaŋ gi.	Tiredness was the reason he spread out full length on the mat.
ne ñàpp	to be very vast	Néeg baa ngi ne ñàpp, beneen la xaj na fi.	The room is vast; one can put another bed in here.
ne patt	to stay silent	Nii laa janook mo om, ma woo ko mu ne patt.	I was right in front of him, I called him but he said nothing.
ne pàcc	to cut into 2 equal halves.	Neel pàcc mburu mi jox ko wàllam.	Cut the bread exactly in two and give him his share.
ne pëll	to exit like a whirlwind.	Dafa ne pëll, ne ma jàkk.	He left like a whirlwind and stared at me.
ne poset	to leave suddenly	Dafa ne poset, digg ci oto bi ko doon xaar.	He suddenly left and entered the car which was waiting for him.
ne racc/raŋj	to be too tight	Dama mujj simmi taybaas bi, dafa ne racc ci ndigg li.	I was obliged to remove the blouse as it was too tight at the waist.
ne ràww	to throw into prison	Àtte nañu ko ba ne ko ràww ci kaso bi.	He was judged and thrown into prison.
ne remm/ rëmm	to be calm, still (for water, sea)	Géej gaa ngi ne remm.	The ocean is very calm.
ne réll	to explode with a dry sound.	Bal bi nee na réll.	The bullet resounded.
ne rodd	to stand up straight without moving	Mu ngi ne rodd ci bopp koñ bi, di xaar xaritam.	He stood without moving on the corner waiting for his friend.
ne secc	to drink in one gulp	Waroon naa mar, dafa ne secc bisaab bi.	He must have been thirsty. He drank the bisaap juice in one gulp.
ne selaw	to be without a sound, completely silent	Mbote ma dindi na juróom-ñaareelu tayu ga, asamaan si ne selaw lu mat genn-wàllu waxtu. (Rev 8:1)	Then he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.
ne seef	to arrive unexpectedly	Dafa jékki-jékki ne seef.	He arrived unexpectedly.
ne taraj	to be completely closed, blocked, sealed.	Fatt nañu pax mi ba mu ne taraj.	They sealed the hole completely.
ne tasar	to be completely dispersed, scattered	Caq bi deg na, per yi ne tasar.	The necklace broke and the pearls scattered everywhere.
ne tëll	to appear suddenly	Bés boobu ca ngoon sa, taalibe yaa nga daje woon ca genn kër, tëju ca biir ndax ragal Yawut yi. Yeesu ne tëll ci seen biir. (Jn 20:19)	On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them...
ne tembe	exactly, precisely	Ni Obaja nekke ci kaw yoon, ne tembe Ilias daje ak moom. (1 Kings 18:7)	As Obadiah was walking along, Elijah met him.
ne tipp	to sever or cut cleanly	Buum gi dafa ne tipp.	The rope was cut cleanly.
ne walbit	to return suddenly	Dafa dégg bàkk wi rekk ne walbit.	As soon as he heard the watchword, he returned suddenly.

ne wéyën	to be completely empty of occupants or furniture	Kër gaa ngi ne wéyën.	The house is totally empty.
ne xàmm	to be completely lost in one's thoughts	Déggul dara, mu n gi ne xàmm.	He can't hear anything. He is totally lost in his thoughts.
ne xés	to collide violently	Woto bi dafa ne xés ca kaw garab gi.	The car collided violently with the tree.
ne yagg	to have a guilty look	Xale baa ngi ne yagg ndax li mu saw tubéyam.	The child has guilty look because he has wet his pants.

### References

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Revised 6 August, 1999