

Original Paper

Descriptive Grammar: The Study of Nouns in Wolof and English

Mariama Soda Ndao¹

¹ English Department, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal

Received: October 22, 2022 Accepted: November 11, 2022 Online Published: November 17, 2022

doi:10.22158/sss.v3n4p119

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sss.v3n4p119>

Abstract

The experience of a second language teacher in English allows for building academic relationships between foreign and local language learning. In fact, this topic is a descriptive study of nouns in Wolof and English. It outlines the characteristics of variable and invariable nouns and paints out their descriptive aspects. Indeed, the grammatical rules of nouns mainly consider the determiners which vary. In Wolof for example, the determiners are set from marks of classes as basic roots. The number is marked from these class roots to rule. As for English, is marked within the analysis that nouns behave thanks to grammatical occurrences of the determiners. We have made the distinction of the number between the variable and invariable nouns according to the determiner and the nouns' morphology. This topic aims at providing wider strategies in language teaching and learning to achieve academic goals.

Keywords

description, noun, wolof, English

1. Introduction

Grammar is an important part of linguistic studies that particularly deals with the rules and principles that regulate the use of languages, as well as the organization of words within a sentence (Note 1). With regard to descriptive Grammar, this topic aims at providing analyses and explanations of nouns in English and Wolof languages (Note 2). The topic considers the standard of written and spoken languages, while describing grammatical constructions in such languages to examine the principles and use of nouns.

“When we study the structure and context of non-standard language, it allows us to illuminate and enrich traditional forms of language and make policy decisions based on an informed engagement.” (Battistella, 2005, p. 25)

Accordingly, traditional grammar does not suggest particular rules in the use of the concerned language, but rather dissociates their nominal functions into two different lexicons. Thus, the descriptive study of languages holds a prominent role in the research enrichment of language relationships.

2. Method

The study is set from written and spoken data within lectures, interviews, and discussions for qualitative analysis. The research works on the characteristics of the nominal class systems, particularly based on the nouns' typology and classification as descriptive elements. Grammar thus becomes a language analysis based on observed facts. We consider two different linguistic aspects with regards to Wolof widely spoken through academic limits, and English as a second language learning to assess similar comprehensive levels for learners and those interested in language issues.

Accordingly, the description performs into two steps. The first proceeds to identify and characterize the nouns in the noun system. The second step mainly interests in the grammatical behavior of the nouns' structures to compare descriptive patterns.

2.1 The Problem

Linguists or grammarians have addressed the descriptive issues of the languages that study how people create and use languages. This leads to widening thoughts and perspectives in the description. In fact, the course establishes descriptive relationships between two languages of different contexts. The study particularly concerns Wolof as a native and daily spoken language that tends to enhance teaching methods for academic purposes, and English as a foreign language learning with regards to the rules it implements. In this descriptive analysis, the characteristics of the nouns are grammatically patterned, putting academic relations between nouns, while referring to the classification systems.

2.2 The Literary Review

Thanks to the standard rules, the study of nouns in Wolof and English highly considers the writing system. This attests that in Wolof nouns function grammatically based on the system of classes to mark the determination. The same occurs in English with particular characteristics of the noun system that the study takes into account. Some authors give views on the nominal systems of both the Wolof and English languages.

2.2.1 The Wolof Writing System

Wolof can be written using two different scripts: Arabic or Latin. The Arabic-based script is the language's first script, predating the introduction of the Latin system of writing. This Arabic system is commonly known as "ajami" which refers to the use of the Arabic alphabet as "wolofal" (2013, p. 13) (Note 3).

However, as the official script of Senegal, Latin is widely used in formal contexts (Note 4). Thanks to the writing system of Latin, are associated Latin characters for the API usage, which makes the Wolof alphabet quite similar to the French one in which some rules are specified (Note 5).

2.2.1.1 The Wolof Noun System

There are ten noun classes in Wolof, eight singulars and two plurals. With the singular noun classes, one serves a second function as a diminutive class. A noun may thus belong to as many as three classes: singular, plural, and diminutive singular (Note 6).

Indeed, the authors interested in the Wolof language have shown its characteristics as being a class

language.

“The nominal category is a system of nouns classification of a language, generally based on semantic criteria, and is morpho-syntactically marked.” (Gu érin, 2011, p. 97; 2021, pp. 121-144).

“The Wolof system attests various changes of nominal classes which distinguishes it from other Atlantic languages, and sometimes make it a particular language typologically. Because of the varieties of class prefixes, Wolof constitutes a singular language in which, the class agreement subsists without being marked at the level of lexemes: the nouns. Classification becomes a lexical property that is only shown in the forms of its determiners.” (Pozdniakov, 2015, pp. 567-655).

Pozdniakov’s ideas confirm the separation between the consonant classes and the lexemes to mark the determiners.

“When I say that the Niger-Congo nominal classes belong to the notion of ‘gender’ conceived as a specific morphosyntactic type of nominal classification, I refer to the definition of a gender system in which, nouns govern the mechanisms of agreement that is not only related to the expression of categories such as number, whose description implies to recognize the characteristics of all the nominal lexemes into subsets, but also a handful of rules in the grammatical categories.” (Creissels, 2001, pp. 157-166).

Creissels (2001) points out the typology of class languages whose rules are widely linked to wider aspects of syntax structures.

“Nominal categorization is quite dependent on normality while pointing out the distinction between a noun as opposed to a verb’. There is a limited number of nominal categorization systems across languages, however, it does not appear to be a clear consensus on the typology of these systems.” (Kihm, 2003, pp. 39-55)

Grinevald (1999) *proposes a typology of nominal classification systems in which, the main issue is to distinguish the particular usage of a subsystem as “classifiers”.*

The typological analyses of Gu érin (2011), Pozdniakov (2015), Creissels (2001), and Grinevald, in the same language family, allow marking the typology of Wolof as a class language in which, the classification system governs the grammatical rules. These previous views attest that the rules of classes hold prominent roles in Wolof. Indeed, the rules of separation, syntax, alternation, and noun classification are related to the class system.

2.2.2 The English Writing System

English is a western Germanic language of the Indo-European family that emerges from the dialects and vocabulary of the Germanic peoples. English is today a language in evolution that has been influenced by a plethora of cultures and different languages, such as Latin, French, Dutch, and Afrikaans (Note 7).

The Latin alphabet is the standard writing system of English and most European languages. These characteristics of the Latin Alphabet added to the API system reveal similar writing to the Niger-Congo

family: Wolof. The nominal aspect of the descriptive study constitutes some similarities in the nouns' systems of both languages while differing from the typological characteristics.

“Considering the English typological characteristics, two evolution times are set: the ancient and the modern English. The grammar of ancient English is quite different from the modern one because is much more inflexible.” (Otto, 1919).

Considering grammatical features, the major change between Old and Present-Day English is the shift from “synthesis” to “analysis” in expressing grammatical relations. In Old English, these relationships are expressed too much extent by special endings attached to words as inflections.

“The Old English inflexional system means that word order can be much more flexible than that of its descendant. Likewise, Old English has a nominal system quite complex with three (3) genders (masculine, feminine and neutral), and five cases (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, and instrumental).” (Smith, 2018, pp. 8-28)

However, in Present-Day English, the relationships between phrases are largely expressed by word order. This evolution between Old and present-day English changes the system of the nominal class. Indeed, this complex system has been greatly simplified. The cases were reduced to nominative and genitive, while the grammatical gender was suppressed. Additionally, Old English has a variety of plural types similar to modern German. Their number has steadily declined over centuries, and the nominal inflections of the plural have decreased rapidly.

2.2.2.1 The English Noun System

Modern English expresses noun classes through the third person singular, personal pronouns “he” (male), “she” (female), it (object, abstraction, or animal), and their other inflected forms (Note 8).

“Nouns are words of a language we name as: home, team, idea, arrival, confusion, Canada, etc. But, these words are associated with other words of different grammatical categories, to form determiners or adjectives”. (Michael, 1984, pp. 182-183)

Swam (1984) goes further when he emphasizes the structure of determiners and adjectives in the use of nouns to categorize them.

In the English noun system, Hornby (1974) underlines difficult nominal characteristics for most bilingual learners according to their classification types.

Nouns, noun phrases, and quantifiers/quantification have very specific positions and functions in a language that allows us to refer to things in both the real and abstract worlds. (Carmen Pérez Vidal, Sonia López-Serrano, Jennifer Ament & Dakota J. Thomas-Wilhelm (eds.). (2018).

From these basic characteristics of Wolof and English related to the Latin language, we bring a descriptive contribution with the noun. Thus, the study considers the link between the English standard writing and the Wolof class structures systems to treat descriptive rules of nouns.

3. Result

Whether the nouns are singular or plural, definite or indefinite, they follow rules and structures in English and Wolof. The characteristics of nouns in English and Wolof are noted thanks to the noun systems. Indeed, scientific elements of a description mark the evidence of the nouns systems rules in which, each category of the noun is described.

3.1 The Wolof Nouns Characteristics

As previously mentioned, Wolof nouns build determiners with class markers, and vowels stand as bound morphemes. These marks of classes with vowel structures rule the classification system. Indeed, the number of nouns are marked thanks to class markers which are: b-, g-, j-, k-, l-, m-, s-, and w-.

Apart from the number, are marked the definite and indefinite aspects thanks to such class markers structures. Vowels are bound to the class markers and vary according to such aspects.

3.1.1 The Variables

Wolof nouns are set from variables singulars and plural which hold both definite and indefinite rules. In fact, Wolof nouns are variable when the rules vary in number to dissociate the singular from the plural. To mark the determiners, one should mark the number as a descriptive element. Below are a set of tables that illustrate the number and the aspects as characteristics.

3.1.1.1 The Singulars

The Wolof singular nouns occur with the class markers structures. The vowel morpheme is bound to the class marker to characterize the definite or indefinite determiner. Such vowels vary between **-i**, **-a**, **-ee**, **-ile** and **-ale**. Singular nouns occur with singular class markers bound to the corresponding vowel, the same as plural nouns.

3.1.1.1.a. The Definites Singulars

Table 1. The Definite Singulars

Definite Singular Determiners	Nouns	Examples/Translation
DSCM b- + Def vowel -i → bi (the)	Xale	Xale bi “the child”
SCM g- + Def vowel -i → gi (the)	Kër	Kër gi “the house”
SCL k- + Def vowel -i → ki (the)	Nit	Nit ki “the person”

The definite nouns occur with the definite vowel **-i** bound to the definite singular class marker (SCM) to build definite articles. The same as the plurals which vary only with class markers.

3.1.1.1.b. The Indefinites Singulars

Considering the marks of classes, the indefinite singular nouns are similar to the definite singulars. However, the aspect varies thanks to the definite morpheme **-i** which varies to the indefinite morpheme **-a**.

Table 2. The Indefinite Singulars

Indefinite Singular Determiners	Nouns	Examples/Translation	
SCM b- + Indef vowel -a → ba (the)	Xale	Xale ba	“that child”
SCM g- + Indef vowel -a → ga (the)	K ɛ̃	K ɛ̃ ga	“that house”
SCM k- + Indef vowel -a → ka (the)	Nit	Nit ka	“that person”

3.1.1.2 The Plurals

The plural determiners are set with the plural marks of classes **y-** and **ñ-**.

3.1.1.2.a The Definite Plurals

In the definite plural nouns constructs, the bound vowels follow the same morphological rules to mark the definite aspects. In this process, the plural class-markers **y-** and **ñ-** are bound to the definite vowel **-i**.

Table 3. The Definite Plurals

Definite Plurals Determiners	Nouns	Examples	
PCM y- + Def vowel -i → yi (the)	Xale	Xale yi	“the children”
PCM y- + Def vowel -i → yi (the)	K ɛ̃	K ɛ̃ yi	“the houses”
PCM ñ- + Def vowel -a → ñi (the)	Nit	Nit ñi	“the persons”

3.1.1.2.b The Indefinite Plurals

In the same process of marking the indefinite plurals nouns, the plural class-markers **y-** and **ñ-** are bound to the indefinite vowel **-a**.

Table 4. The Indefinite Plurals

Indefinite Plurals Determiners (IPD)	Nouns	Examples	
PCM y- + Indef vowel -a → ya (those)	Xale	Xale ya	“those children”
PCM y- + Indef vowel -a → ya (those)	K ɛ̃	K ɛ̃ ya	“those houses”
PCM ñ- + Indef vowel -a → ña (those)	Nit	Nit ña	“those persons”

The determination characteristics of nouns, definite or indefinite, singular or plural consider the roots. Each singular class corresponds to its plural that the nouns obey with regard to the nominal determination rules. As such, the underlined characteristics of nouns have mainly considered the variable forms. However, the invariable nouns occur with different rules that the description outlines.

3.1.2 The Invariables

As opposed to variables, invariable nouns occur with different marks of classes. Wolof considers invariable nouns as nouns that do not vary the number. There is no distinction of the class roots between the singular and plural forms. The invariable nouns' classes are **j-**, **s-**, and **m-**. However, bound

vowels change to characterize the definite and the indefinite aspects.

3.1.2.a The Definites

Table 5. The Definite Invariables

Definite Invariable Determiners (DID) Structure	Nouns	Examples
DID j- + -i → ji	diwelin	diwelin ji “the oil”
DID j- + -i → ji	dugub	dugub ji “the millet”
DID m- + -i → mi	meew	meew mi “the milk”
DID s- + -i → si	suuf	suuf si “the sand”

3.1.2.b. The Indefinites

Table 6. The Indefinite Invariables

Indefinite Invariable Determiners (IID) Structure	Nouns	Examples
j- + -a → ja	diwelin	diwelin ja “that oil”
j- + -a → ja	dugub	dugub ja “that millet”
m- + -a → ma	meew	meew ma “that milk”
m- + -a → sa	suuf sa	suuf sa “that sand”

As noticed, the invariable nouns' determiners structures either vary in number, or in gender, but rather in meaning. These nouns mainly classify uncountable facts with regard to the nature of the things or matters as being unmeasurable. We count the weight of the fact or matter, but not the matter itself.

To sum up, the Wolof nouns are ruled by a classification system to build determiners and other words functions. Thus, the description of both variable and invariable nouns has mainly considered the class roots for the determiners' structures. Whether the nouns are definite or indefinite, singular or plural, variable or invariable, the class markers characterize them when added to vowel morphemes. As a result, the classification system holds an outstanding role in Wolof with nominal determination as well as grammatical rules.

3.2 The English Nouns Characteristics

Nouns in English are not generally distinguished by gender, but rather by number (Note 9). The grammatical characteristics of English nouns mainly use the number in the singular and the plural forms. Indeed, this number requires setting determiners depending on the noun types. Considering the classification in number, nouns are divided into variable and invariable forms (Note 10). The determiners set such different types of nouns from determiners in parallel for descriptive research perspectives.

3.2.1 Variable Nouns

In English, variable nouns refer to all those nouns in which some modification of number, gender, or person can be made. The descriptive lines consider the number and the person of countable, and uncountable variables.

3.2.1.1 The Countable

Countable nouns or count nouns can be considered as individual, separable items, which can be counted with numbers. We can have one, two, five, 15, 100, and so on. We can also use them with the indefinite articles (a) and (an) (which signify a single person or thing) or in their plural forms (Peter, 2016, p. 31).

Countable nouns like “chair” refer to countable items and mass-uncountable nouns like “water” denote non-countable items (Bruyne, 1995; Wheeler et al., 1999; Butt & Benjamin, 2004).

Some nouns stand as countable objects in English and have both singular and plural forms to express the number. The following table characterizes the singular countable in their different forms.

3.2.1.1.1 The Singulars

Table 7. The Singular Countable

Countable Singulars (CS)	Nouns	Examples/ Translation
(a)	chair	I have a chair to sel “am naa ab siis bu may jaay”
(the)	car	The car has left earlier “oto ba dem na ca teel”
(a)	person	A person is lost in the forest “am na nit ku r éer ci all bi”
(the)	key	I have given the key to the vigil “jox naa caabi ji garjenj bi”
(an)	animal	An animal is walking along this corridor” ab mala a ngi dox ci x àll wii.”

3.2.1.1.2 The Plurals

The countable plural nouns set the plural mark (s) in the ending of the regular nouns.

Table 8. The Plural Countable

Countable Plurals (CP)	Nouns	Examples/Translation
Determiner (a few)	chair(s)	I have a few chairs to sell “am naa ay siis yu may jaay”
Card number	car(s)	three cars have left earlier “ñett oto yi dem na ñ ca teel”
Quantifier (some)	car(s)	some cars are parked in the station “am na ay oto yu ñu gaare ci gaaraas bi
Card number (two)	key (s)	two keys are given to the vigil “jox na ñu garjenj bi ñaari caabi”

3.2.1.2 The Uncountable

Nouns that cannot be counted as individual elements or separate parts are called uncountable nouns (also known as mass nouns or non-count nouns). These can be tangible objects (such as substances or collective categories of things), or intangible or abstract things, such as concepts or ideas (Peter, 2016, p. 37) (Note 11).

Uncountable nouns in English refer to substance or mass nouns that typically denote substances, and materials as liquids, ages, languages, school subjects, etc. (Jashar, 2000, p. 167).

These uncountable nouns are not used in the plural form and occur generally with bare determiners. The description considers the singular non count nouns in the following table.

3.2.1.2.1 The Singulars

Table 9. The Singular Uncountable

-count singulars	Nouns	Examples/Translation
Zero art	Butter	1. I spread little butter on my bread. “diw naa tuuti sokolaa ci sama mburu”
Zero art	Sugar	2. Let’s add sugar to the coffee. “nu dolli suukar ci kafe gi”
Zero art	Oil	3. Much oil is put in the meal. “diw gu bari la ñu def ci ñam wi”
Zero art	Milk	4. Let’s buy milk for drinking. “Nu jend meew ngir njar”
Zero art	Air	5. Some air is floating in the room. “ngelaw lu f éx moy upp ci n ég bi”

3.2.1.2.2 The Plurals

There are no plural forms with uncount nouns in English, but the plural meaning may occur in use. Let’s describe the uncount nouns with the plural meaning in the table below.

Table 10. The Plural UNcountable

-count	Nouns	Examples
Zero art./+quantifier (a lot of)	butter	1. Mum puts a lot of butter on my bread “Yaay diw na b äer bu bari ci sama mburu mi”
Zero art./+ quantifier (some)	sugar	2. Add much sugar to the coffee “Dollil suukar su bari ci kafe gi”
Zero art.	oil	3. No oil has been added to the soup. “dolliwunu benn diw ci suppu bi”
Zero art.	milk	4. I like hot milk for drinking. “B ägg naa meew mu t àng ci naan”
Zero art.	air	5. It is impossible to live without air “Dundu m ënul ñakk ngelaw”

Within uncountable nouns’ characteristics, is noted unmorphological marked number. The plural is intended in the context of use because no article occurs, but rather quantifiers with some cases. Thus, nouncount nouns are not measurable. We measure the weight of the matter, but not the matter itself.

3.2.2 Invariable Nouns

Invariable nouns do not change their number whether in singular or plural (Note 12). Some learners confuse the use of invariant nouns when taking them as nouns that never take the plural (s). Indeed, some nouns always occur in plural forms because never change into singular. This leads to distinguish singular and plural invariables.

3.2.2.1 The Singulars

Singular invariable nouns are always written in singular (Note 13). Below are some examples of invariable singular nouns.

Gold	Traffic
Furniture	Cattle
Music	Staff
Equipment	

It exists some singular invariable nouns that hold a plural meaning but no (s) is added. It is generally collective nouns such as police, people, staff, etc.

3.2.2.2 The Plurals

The plural invariable nouns occur only in the plural form with (s). They are seen as reflecting plural compositions or pairs of things. Below are some examples of plural invariable nouns.

Trousers	Goods
Spectacles	Jeans
Scissors	Remains

Nouns of the target languages are governed by grammatical rules and obey the principles of word formation and separation. From the descriptive features, we are interested in the nominal systems in each language that we compare for descriptive issues. Further lines treat the rules of the nouns in each language while considering the descriptive characteristics of the noun systems.

4. Discussion

The description of Wolof and English nouns shows the use of the determiners in the classification system for the marks of classes. The number has been taken to illustrate descriptive patterns. Indeed, the use of Wolof singular nouns as well as plural ones draws the structures of the marks of classes as roots. As such, the determiners are mainly considered.

Determiners' Structural Rules

In Wolof, the nominal roots are bound to the vowel morpheme with regard to the definite and the indefinite determiners. In the process of description, are characterized the use of class markers for nouns determination depends on the standard rules of the language. This is to say, each noun has each class category that obeys the determination rules, as well as the grammatical functions. The same class root determines its noun, adjective, relative pronoun, etc. for example the class b- determines the noun *xale* "child" as *xale bi* "the child", it qualifies the adjective as *xale bu jig éen* "the male child", its

relative, *xale boo xam ne du d égg* “the child who is stubborn”, etc. From this view, there is an harmony in class roots usage with the nouns category that wolof highly considers in the determination rules. The descriptive analysis has illustrated some examples, in which, are shown the occurrences of each class marker according to the noun it classifies.

Accordingly, most human nouns are characterized by the mark of the classes **b-**, **g-** and **j-** as:

S äi ñ bi	“the religious leader”
Xale bi	“the child”
Jeeg bi	“the married lady”
Jig éen ji	“the woman”
Jambaar ji	“the brave”
Njegemaar ji	“the girl”

Considering the natural objects, the nouns are generally determined by the **g-** class as:

Garab gi	“the tree”
Guy gi	“the baobab tree”
Gancax gi	“the vegetation”
Keppaar gi	“the shadow”

These singular classes vary the plural forms into **y-** and **ñ-**, giving two plural marks. They differ from the invariable noun classes which don't vary their respective classes into plural. As shown within description, the uncountable matter hold specific determiner as **j-**, **m-**, and **s-** for the definite **ji**, **mi** and **si**. The class **m-** generally mark the liquids that the following examples illustrate.

Ndox mi	“the water”
Meew mi	“the milk”
Soow mi	“the curdled milk”
Njar mi	“the milk juice”
Ñeex mi	“the couscous sauce”

The class **j-** with some uncount nouns determine generally measurable matters that the following examples illustrate:

Dugub ji	“the millet”
Dege ji	“the peanut butter”
Diwlin ji	“the oil”
Lejum ji	“the vegetables”

The class **s-** classify the noncount nouns as:

Suuf si	“the sand”
S ànqal si	“the broken millet”
Sunguf si	“the flour”
Safara si	“the fire”

Alternatively, English does not dissociate these nouns' determiners structure. As such, the nouns are divided into count and noncount forms thanks to the number through determiners. Indeed, all the various definite classes that build the definite articles of count nouns correspond to the determiner "the" as the translation shows.

However, the indefinite nouns are different from the determiner that varies between "the" and a/an according to the noun type. The determiners in the same examples illustrate the indefinite nouns in English as opposed to Wolof.

Ab S äri ñ	"a religious leader"
Ab Xale	"a child"
Ag garab	"a tree"
Ag guy	"a baobab tree"
Am Ndox	"a water"

The use of indefinite determiners in Wolof does not consider the class of s- because it mainly classifies those non-indefinite nouns. To mean the nouns of the whole matter that do not show singularity as *sunguf* "flower", *s àqal* "broken millet", *suuf* "sand", etc.

However, it appears that these nouns are determined by 'as', when it does not indicate the indefinite, but rather the small or enough quantity of the named matter as:

As sunguf	"a little flour"
As s àqal	"a little broken millet"
As suuf	"a little sand"

Thus, in the description of observed facts, is noted that wolof nouns are mainly determined by articles. The classification system highly includes characteristics of the number and the definite and indefinite aspects. All the given Wolof nouns within examples have been determined. These characteristics oppose English which uses articles or determiners in some particular cases. Generally with the plural context, English does not use articles, even if nouns are countable or uncountable. Accordingly, three (3) examples are cited in the following sentences to compare descriptive elements:

1. Cats and dogs are animals. "Muus **yeek** (Note 14) xaj **yi** ci jur **gi** la ñ bokk"

The grammar rules in English do not suggest any article. But, if we compare the translation into Wolof, it becomes:

Muus **yeek** (Note 14) xaj **yi** ci jur **gi** la ñ bokk

In fact, three noun determiners occur:

Muus yi	"cats"
Xaj yi	"dogs"
Jur gi	"animals"

Let's consider the following example:

2. Education is a right for children
"Yar yelleef la ci xale yi".

The definite article of the wolof noun ‘yi’ occurs as:

Xale yi “children”
(noun) + (plural class marker (y) + vowel (i))

The third examples occurs as:

3. Young people enjoy playing football.
“ndaw ñi b ègg na ñ poyum bal bi.”

The definite article “ñi” of the noun “ndaw” occurs as:

ndaw ñi “young people”
(noun) + plural class marker (ñ) + def. vowel (i)

As facts underline, the structures of determiners in Wolof and English vary. The characteristics of Wolof nouns whether count or noncount bear articles in their determination. These articles’ structures differ in the definite and indefinite aspects. Moreover, Wolof sets determines with almost all nouns in spite of their category. There are some particular cases in which Wolof nouns do not set articles in determination. Accordingly, such cases are mainly related to the context of use. However, English lacks to determine grammatically. Next to these structures rules, are noted other position changes.

The Determiners’ Setting Rules

In the descriptive facts between Wolof and English, are marked alternative positions between the nouns and the determiners. In Wolof, the definite articles are postpositive to the nouns. However, it occurs that some semantic rules set the definite article before the noun as regards the cases of instance *mim réw* “this country” that is currently *réw mi*. The following set of data underlines the position of occurrences of Wolof nouns with definite articles.

Xale	bi	“the child”
(noun) + (Def. article)		
G óor	gi	“the man”
(noun) + (Def. article)		
Jig éen	ji	“the lady”
(noun) + (Def. article)		
Suuf	si	“the sand”
(noun) + (Def. article)		

Oppositely, English sets the articles before the nouns as:

The child	The lady
(det.) + (noun)	(det. + (noun))
The man	The sand
(det. + noun)	(det. + (noun))

The descriptive study of the noun systems in Wolof and English has shown discrepancies and similarities. Indeed, English and Wolof nouns are classified thanks to determiners. Similarly, the determiners follow the rules of the class nouns to vary. The differences are mainly set with the

structural patterns of these determiners (the articles), and their position set. Thanks to the variable and invariable characteristics; are noted that wolof countable and uncountable nouns use articles with almost all nouns to give specific meaning in the speech set. Likewise, the definite articles are postpositive to the nouns for the position, whereas the opposed position occurs with indefinite rules. In addition, the class markers' structure is related to the meaning of the nouns thanks to the determination rules. Thus, these class rules hold the main role in the noun system, leading to rule Wolof as a class language.

Considering English, countable nouns set the articles before. Similarly, the rules of the number do not vary the structure of the articles, whereas the types vary. Variations mainly occur with noun structures for the rules and the meaning, compared to determiners.

The	child	“xale bi”
Art Sing.	Noun	
The	children	“xale yi”
Plur. Art	Noun	
The	man	“g ór gi”
Sing Art.	Noun	
Some	men	“ay g ór”
Quant.	Noun	

Thus, English has specific characteristics compared to Wolof because all the English nouns are not determined.

5. The Research Objectives and Limits

This research paper considers three main objectives. The first marks the similarities and differences between the noun systems of Wolof and English. The second establishes a didactic and scientific relationship between local and foreign languages for readers and researchers interested in language teaching and learning issues. As a result, this descriptive analysis highlights the linguistic and grammatical rules of two different family languages to assess the level of understanding of researchers and bilingual learners.

However, this research has limited sources in the local language because of the lack of ancient script. Indeed descriptions and language comparisons in Wolof are not widely elaborated because much data are taken from facts. This impact innovative research to wider local language teaching and learning. For instance, the characteristics of the old English are fully explained which lack to be performed in Wolof in which the old resources are based on informants and historians.

6. The Research Findings

This research contribution has set the rules of Wolof nouns as foreign languages. Otherwise, some lacking sources that avoid accessible learning materials in the research field will be overpassed. Within

a decade in the future, bilingual teachers and researchers will enormously contribute to the field of language description and comparison in foreign and local languages as well. Accessible learning materials will be considerably understood by all those interested in the field of linguistics.

7. Conclusion

As the descriptive characteristics outline, Wolof and English Grammar has mentioned the use of nouns. Both similarities and distinctions have been marked thanks to grammatical elements of the standard rules. Apart from the existing determiners in both languages, the noun systems hold particular descriptive characteristics in each language. Indeed, Wolof is fully distinguished by its class roots for determiners' structures and the grammar rules they implement. The nominal system of Wolof has followed a handful of rules related to the class roots because the basic structures of the determiners are such marks of class.

This wolof nominal system rules differently in English which, nouns are grammatically described based on determiners as well as word formation. Otherwise, both the forms and the determiners are meaningful in the rules of nouns. These grammatical characteristics have set the number to indicate the variable and invariable rules. Accordingly, bilingual learners generally difficult to understand such noun types in English. As a result, descriptive and comparative works between foreign and local languages are helpful to achieve learning goals.

Acknowledgments

I would express my gratitude and appreciation to all those who gave me the possibility to realize this research paper. Special thanks to my supervisor and colleagues Dr. Mame S énou Ndiaye and Dr. Jean Christophe Faye, who as senior writers and researchers implement their views in this research method. I address also special thanks to the laboratory staff of the English Department where I am teaching and assisting.

Special thanks to the former Head of the Department, the current Dean of the Faculty of Art and Humanities Pr. Alioune Badara Kandji who first gave me the opportunity to work in the English Laboratory as a Monitor and a vacant Teacher. This allows me to widen my experience in the field of Univerity and highly motivates me in the research field. The same to my Doctorate supervisor Pr Souleymane Faye for his research guidance.

I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation the help of L1 and L2 students for their impressive exchanges through data collection within lectures. The same to teachers for further information and directions.

References

- Battistella, Edwin L. (2005). *Bad Language: Are Some Words Better than Others?* Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195172485.001.0001>
- Creissels, Denis. (2001). Les systèmes de classes nominales des langues Niger-Congo: prototype et variations. *Linx. Revue des linguistes de l'université Paris X Nanterre*, 45, 157-166. <https://doi.org/10.4000/linx.837>
- Grinevald, Colette. (1999). Typologie des systèmes de classification nominale. *Faits de langues*, 7(14), 101-122. <https://doi.org/10.3406/flang.1999.1271>
- Guérin, Maximilien. (2021). Système de numération en wolof: description et comparaison avec les autres langues atlantiques. *Faits de langues*, 51(2), 121-144. <https://doi.org/10.1163/19589514-05102007>
- Hornby, Peter A. (1976). C. Wall, Predication: a study of its development. The Hague: Mouton, 1974. p. 258. *Journal of Child Language*, 3(1), 127-134. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305000900001367>
- Jespersen, Otto. (1919). *Growth and Structure of the English Language* (pp. 58-82). Leipzig, Germany: B. G. Teubner.
- Kihm, Alain. (2003). Parentheticals in Arabic construct state nominals and what they imply for the structure of the expression. *Languages and Linguistics*, 11, 39-55.
- Pérez Vidal, Carmen, et al. (2018). *Learning context effects: Study abroad, formal instruction and international immersion classrooms*.
- Pozdniakov, Konstantin, & Stéphane Robert. (2015). Les classes nominales en wolof. *Les classes nominales dans les langues atlantiques*, 567-655.
- Smith, Jeremy J. (2017). Middle English: Overview. *Volume 3 Middle English* (pp. 8-28). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110525328-002>
- Swan, Michael. (1984). *Basic English usage*. Oxford University Press.

Notes

Note 1. <https://englopedia.com/descriptive-grammar-and-its-characteristics/>

Note 2. <https://www.greelane.com/fr/sciences-humaines/anglais/what-is-descriptive-grammar-1690439>

Note 3. Geneviève N'Diaye-Correard (dir.), *Les mots du patrimoine: le S én égal*, Editions des archives contemporaines, 2006.

Note 4. <https://www.google.com/search?q=the+wolof+nouns+system>

Note 5. <https://jangileen.kalam-alami.net/lessons/prononciation>

Note 6. <https://www.google.com/search?q=the+wolof+nouns+system>

Note 7.

<https://cdn.britannica.com/s:1500x700,q:85/17/17017-004-7E588EE6/Map-use-language-English-countries-world.jpg>

Note 8. <https://www.google.com/search?q=the+english+noun+system>

Note 9. <https://www.lawlessenglish.com/apprendre-l-anglais/grammaire/noms/>

Note 10. <https://englopedia.com/variable-and-invariable-words-with-examples/>

Note 11. https://books.google.sn/books/about/Complete_English_Grammar_Rules

Note 12. <https://www.google.com/search?q=Advanced+Grammar+Invariable+nouns>

Note 13. <https://www.google.com/search?q=Plural+Invariable+Nouns+in+English>

Note 14. Dans l'article 19 qui régit la formation et la séparation des mots wolof, les éléments de forme contractée ne sont pas séparés, ils sont notés en une seule unité graphique. Cela dit que 'yi' and 'ak' have given a single unit "yeek".