

# **Attitudes toward Speech Communities in Senegal: a Cross-Sectional Study**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Senegal is a multiethnic country where there are around 20 communities speaking 25 languages. The Wolof community is the largest (42.7%) and its language is the lingua franca in the country. However, fieldwork in Senegal found out perceptible signs of the corrosion of the attitudes of Senegalese people toward the Wolof speech community which are disturbingly less positive than one would expect. For instance, 27% of the respondents (N=404) rated the Wolof people as dishonest, 38% viewed them as insincere, 33% perceived them as lazy, and 43% rated them as unreliable.

This paper examines attitudes toward speech communities in Senegal, namely Wolof, the mother tongues, French and English. It argues that language policy in Senegal should focus on fostering positive attitudes if the Wolof language is to be given the status and the roles it aspires.

*Keywords:* attitudes, speech community, (dis)honest, (in)sincere, lazy, hardworking, (un)reliable.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In a multilingual context like in Senegal, before formulating strategic language planning it is important to understand attitudes towards languages and speech communities with regard to language choice, status and acquisition planning. If one looks at the current language situation in Senegal, it is essential, given the socio-linguistic context, to understand, on the one hand, the attitudes of the Senegalese people towards the Wolof language and the Wolof culture (the lingua franca and also one of the national languages and the dominant linguistic community) and French (the only official language) and, on the other hand, to understand the duality between the Wolof language and the other local languages (some of them have the status of national language while others do not). It is critical to analyse Wolof from this dual perspective, that is, Wolof in relation to local languages and in relation to international languages (French and English) and to determine what do non-native speakers of Wolof think about the Wolof language and the Wolof speech community. Moreover, understanding these features of language patterns in Senegal helps in language planning and language policy in Senegal regarding what is to be done in order to improve attitudes towards local languages (mainly Wolof) and French (partially eroded) (Diallo 2005; Akers and Matusse 1995). This paper presents the results of large

scale fieldwork conducted in Senegal in 2002 and 2007 analysing the attitudes towards languages in Senegal and indicates that, in spite of their socio linguistic and demographic domination (Wolof), there are clear signs of the corrosion of the positive attitudes of the Senegalese people towards the Wolof language and speech community.

## 2. LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

Senegal located in the western tip of Africa covers an area of 76,000 square miles roughly comparable to Jordan and the Czech Republic. The population is around 10,127,809 (Sud Quotidien 2004), roughly comparable with Hungaria or Tunisia. With an annual growth rate at 2.5%, the population is estimated to reach 12.2 million in 2010 (Direction de la Prévision et de la Statistique 'Bureau for Forecast and Statistics', 2000: 3). According to official sources (Prinz 1996; Gassama 2001; Dieye 2007) and the Bureau for Forecast and Statistics (1993: 24) there are around twenty ethnic communities in Senegal. The dominant communities are:

- Wolof (42.7%);
- Pulaar (23.7%);
- Serer (14.9%);
- Jola (5.3%).

Wolof is the lingua franca of the country and is spoken by more than 80% of the population (Bureau for Forecast and Statistics 1993: 24). It is spoken by 50% as their first language and 30% speak it as a second language.

The Pulaar language is the second most widespread language in the country. At the national level it is spoken by 22% as a first language (Bureau for Forecast and Statistics 1993: 26). However, in the South of the country (places like Tambacounda, Kolda, and Casamance) and the North East (in the natural region of Fuuta Toro), it is the dominant language and it is a second language for a large number of people.

French is the only official language and it was introduced officially in Senegal on 7 March 1817 (Gaucher 1968). It is spoken by only 1% of the population as a mother tongue, but as the official language, it is widely used in the education system, the judiciary, the media, and in the administration. In addition to French, there are currently another 17 national languages or "officially recognised languages" (Prinz 1996: 15), that is, languages that are codified, standardised and recognised by government decree and are thus eligible for use in the media, education, and courts. In December 2004, the national languages of Senegal were<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> This list of national languages is provided by the *Direction de l'Alphabétisation et des Langues Nationales* (DALN) [Directorate for literacy and national languages] at an interview

1. Wolof
2. Serer
3. Pulaar (Fulfulde)
4. Jola
5. Mandinka
6. Soninke
7. Balant
8. Mancagne (Mankanya)
9. Noon (Serer-Noon)
10. Mandjai (Manjaku)
11. Oniyan (Aka Basari)
12. Hassanya (spoken in the North and coincident with the language of the Moors - similar to Arabic)
13. Bedick (or Mbuck, spoken in Kédougou and similar to Oniyan) and
14. Saafi-Saafi (Aka Safeen spoken around Thiès region).

There are three other already codified languages but they need a decree signed by the President of the Republic to be granted the status of national languages. These languages are:

1. Laha (or Lehar or Laalaa),
2. Bainuk (or Guñuun and is spoken in Casamance), and
3. Kanjack (or Badjaranké).

Three other languages were on the codification stage when this research was underway in July 2007:

1. Dialonké (or Jalunka spoken in Kédougou and Fongalembi and belongs to the Mande group),
2. Ndut (Ndoute spoken in Mont Roland in Thiès region), and
3. Bayale (Bayot).

According to official sources, including government and others, 25 languages are identified and listed in Senegal (Bathily, 2007; Guéye, 2007a & 2007b; Gassama, 2001; Prinz, 1996).

In this plethora of languages scattered all over the country, the Wolof language has established itself as the lingua franca in most parts of the country and more than 70 per cent of Senegalese population speak and understand Wolof (Bureau for Forecast and Statistics, 1993: 24). According to the statistics, 49.2 per cent of the population speak Wolof as their first language (Bureau for Forecast and Statistics, 1993: 25). In places like Louga, Diourbel, Dakar, and Kaolack, the supremacy of Wolof is outstanding, i.e. 71.8 per cent, 71.5 per cent, 67.2 per cent, and 66.8 per cent respectively (1993: 25). Wolof is also spoken nationally as an important second language. Around 22 per cent of the

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in July 2007. Efforts were made so that both English and standard spellings used by the DALN were given wherever possible.

population speaks it as a second language. Wolof is the dominant second language in Fatick (44.2 per cent), Thiés (28.7 per cent), and Ziguinchor (28.2 per cent) (Bureau for Forecast and Statistics, 1993: 27).

The table below which summarises the distribution of the first six national languages spoken as a first language and as a second language in Dakar is provided as an example.

**Table 1.** *The six national languages spoken as first and second languages in Dakar.*

Language	Spoken as first language	Spoken as second language
Wolof	67.2	24.1
Pulaar	13.8	2.1
Serer	7.9	1.5
Jola	4.0	0.5
Mandinka	2.0	0.6
Soninke	1.0	–
Other languages	4.0 (1)	71(2)
<b>Sum</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Bureau for Forecast and Statistics, 1993: 26–27).

– indicates that % are negligible.

(1) People who speak other languages as their first language.

(2) Includes people who do not have a second language and people who have a second language, but other than those listed.

### 3. ATTITUDES TOWARD WOLOF

Because of its spread in the country, the native speakers of languages other than Wolof generally perceive Wolof as an "invading" language because its domains and spheres of use have expanded considerably and Wolof has penetrated hitherto the most conservative families and regions in Senegal (mostly by communities and localities known for their keen attachment to their languages and cultures). For example, since Wolof is the lingua franca in Senegal and it is the dominant language for communication in many sectors of life, there are increasing numbers of people who suggest that it should be the official language of Senegal but there are linguistic communities that oppose this view and advocate using local languages of wider scope than Wolof in terms of geographic space of usage (e.g. Pulaar is spoken in many parts of Senegal, it is a language spoken in all neighbouring countries, and it is also spoken in many west and central African countries while Wolof is only spoken in Senegal and by a tiny population in Gambia). Therefore, some of these communities resist - in a structured way or not - the rampant "Wolofisation" of the country due to the emergence of powerful Wolof speaking business classes and their hold over the (informal) business and the public administration (Tabouret-Keller, LePage, Gardner-Chloros, & Varro 1997). Also as noted by Prinz (1996: 25), Wolof has always played a major role in the country not only in relation to its expansion at the national level but mainly in the area of academic research. This *de facto*

imposition of Wolof in Senegal has been accelerated recently by the local media in Senegal, namely FM radio stations which have allocated to the Wolof language the lion's shares of their programmes. For example, on *Walf FM* (one of the most popular local FM radio stations), most of their programmes are in Wolof (more than 75% are in Wolof) and there is virtually no room for the other local languages. Besides, each and every news edition and bulletin in French is systematically followed by a Wolof version, thus giving it a greater function than the other national languages. As a result, there have been concerns about the Wolof language, the Wolof culture, and, to a certain extent, the Wolof people.

## 4. RESEARCH METHOD

### 4.1 SAMPLING

A set of four parallel questionnaires were constructed for data collection during fieldwork undertaken by the researcher in Senegal from January 2002 to July 2002. The sample (N=404) was subsumed under micro- and macro-levels of the society. The micro-level refers to the sampling of the population based on individual or personal levels, while the macro-level indicates that respondents were selected from the corporate and industrial sectors, i.e. the professional level. Taking into consideration the homogeneity of the population and the need to be representative, a variety of sampling techniques were adopted. Further details of the sampling are provided as follows.

### 4.2 MICRO-LEVEL

The micro-level population includes students at secondary school level, students at tertiary level, and the general population in Senegal. The students represented in this sample are drawn from “public” and “private” secondary schools at the *Terminale* level class in Senegal and include general as well as professional streams. The tertiary students are selected from university as well as vocational tertiary institutions. As for the general population, it is selected from a nationwide survey. The sample includes people from urban and rural areas based on their educational facilities and socio-economic situation. The sample was drawn from respondents based on their socio-economic background, such as lower, middle and upper classes. Table 2 below presents the micro-level group and identifies the sampling techniques.

**Table 2.** *Micro-level population and sampling techniques.*

<b>Target population</b>		<b>Sampling techniques</b>
Students at <i>Terminale</i> (standard XIII) from various high schools		Lists of registered schools were obtained the Ministry of Education and clusters were made based on standings of the schools.
Students at tertiary level	General university training	Random selection of students from <i>Université Cheikh Anta Diop</i> and <i>Université Gaston Berger</i> (including students from different faculties and departments).
	Vocational university-level training	Sample selected from the major tertiary national schools: ENAM, ENOA, ENSA, ENEA, ENS <sup>2</sup>
<b>General population</b>		Nationwide survey. Sample from urban and rural areas on the basis of educational facilities and socio-economic situation. The focus was on three socio-economic clusters (lower, middle and upper classes).

### 4.3 MACRO-LEVEL

The macro-level refers to respondents selected from the business sector, in particular, tourism, industrial, commercial, and banking sectors and people from the public and parapublic administration of Senegal. As outlined in Table 3, three groups of business categories were selected which may be generally described as being the most dynamic sectors in the economy and the administration of Senegal. Thus accounting for the largest part of the job market in the country. Table 3 below summarises the various population-categories identified for the data collection and the sampling techniques used.

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<sup>2</sup> ENAM (École Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature), ENOA (École Nationale des Officiers Actives de Thiés), ENSA (École Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie), ENEA (École Nationale d'Economie Appliquée), ENS (École Normale Supérieure) are generally known as “*Écoles Nationales*” with selective entrance examination and the graduates from these prestigious institutions are generally employed by the government.

**Table 3.** *Macro-level population and sampling procedures.*

<b>Target population</b>	<b>Sampling techniques</b>
Tourism	Stratified random sampling based on the lists of the registered hotels in Dakar as well as in other regions. Tourist units were grouped into small, medium, and large categories according to turnover, size (e.g. number of bedrooms) and prestige, among other criteria
Business and industry	Stratified random sampling based on the lists of the registered businesses in Dakar as well as in other regions <sup>3</sup> including travel agencies, banks, restaurants, and firms among others.
Public administration	Respondents selected from the <i>Présidence</i> or Ministry for Presidential Affairs, <i>Primature</i> <sup>4</sup> , the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Finances, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry for the Promotion of National Languages, and the Ministry of Armed Forces.

## 4.4 THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires submitted to the respondents besides the personal background including age, gender, and mother tongue sought information on the attitudes of the respondents towards Wolof, their mother tongue speech community, French and English speech communities based on personal quality of character.

## 4.5 ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires for students at *Terminale* (Standard 13)<sup>5</sup> level were administered in the normal classroom setting while questionnaires for students at the tertiary level were distributed to students through their director of studies, teachers or directly to students and the questionnaires were returned through the same channel. As for the data collection for the general population, it was conducted in the areas identified for the research by the research assistants and the present author.

To submit the questionnaire to the macro-level group, contacts were initiated by personal visits to the research sites explaining the purposes of the survey and to identifying potential respondents. In particular, respondents from the decision-making level, the training and in-service development units and marketing were preferred.

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<sup>3</sup> List obtained through the *Conseil National du Patronat* (CNP), *Union Nationale des Commerçants et Industriels du Sénégal* (UNACOIS), and *Rassemblement des Opérateurs Économiques du Sénégal* (ROES). These associations coordinate and manage their respective sectors and officiate as unions for their members.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Prime Minister

<sup>5</sup> In Senegal, like in many Francophone countries, the secondary school is seven years.

Seven research assistants were involved, especially to collect data in rural areas which required knowledge of the language and a longer stay in the areas. The research assistants were mostly teachers and students with university degrees with solid teaching and research experience.

#### 4.6 SOCIOLINGUISTIC BACKGROUND OF THE SAMPLE

The background of the sample is quite diverse. The respondents from the general population are about 43% while the students constitute 34%. The remaining respondents are made up of people from people in the business sector (18%) and people from the public administration. The age of the respondents ranges from 15 to more than 45 years and is made up of the following: 41% of the population is between 15 and 25 while 33% is between 26 and 35. The third largest group is between 36 and 45 and represents 14% of the total population of the research. The respondents over the age of 45 constitute only 12% of the total population. In the overall sample, 64% of the population are males and 36%

In total, 500 questionnaires were distributed as follows: 200 to the general population, 150 to the students, 115 to the business sector, and 35 to the respondents in public administration. The total responses ( $N=404$ ) consist of 174 respondents from the general public, 135 students, 74 business people, and 21 subjects from the public administration of Senegal representing 43%, 34%, 18%, and 5% respectively of the total population. The total return rate was high and was above 80%. See Table 4 below.

**Table 4.** *Population-categories represented in the sample and their age.*

Population-categories				Age				Gender	
General population	Students	Business section	Public administration	15–25	26–35	36–45	+45	Male	Female
43%	34%	18%	5%	41%	33%	14%	12%	64%	36%

The overall population in this survey is spread over several areas in Senegal. The fieldtrip was conducted in seven regions out of the 10 regions in 2002. In Senegal, regions are subdivided into *départments*. Each region has three *départments*, but Dakar, the capital, has four *départements*. *Départements* are further subdivided into *arrondissements* made up of *communautés rurales*, and *communautés rurales* are subdivided into villages (Bureau for Forecast and Statistics, 1998). In 2002, there were 92 *arrondissements*, 320 *communautés rurales* and around 20,000 villages in Senegal (Bureau for Forecast and Statistics, 1998). The seven regions included in the field research were Dakar, Thiés, Kaolack, Tambacounda, Saint Louis, Louga, and Diourbel and in five rural areas among them four *communnautés rurales* (Thiakhare, Ndolndole, Ndiaganio, and Sanaar), one *arrondissement* (Keur Momar Sarr). The largest part of the population, that is 69%, is from urban areas, namely Dakar (32%), Kaolack (including Kaffrine and Kounghoul) (16%), Tambacounda (10%),

Thiès (7%), and Saint Louis (4%). The population in the rural areas accounts for 31% of the total sample. They are from different parts of the country, namely 8% from Keur Momar Sarr (Louga region), 7% from Ndiagianioa (Thiès region), 6% from Ndolndole (Diourbel region), 5% from Thiakhare (Diourbel region), and 5% from Sanaar (Saint Louis region). To analyse the data collected, SPSS 10.0 and Excel were used and a standard code, which includes the four sets of questionnaires, was designed. Table 5 provides a summary of the geographic distribution of the sample.

**Table 5.** *Geographic distribution of the sample.*

Urban areas (69%)		Rural areas (31%)	
Dakar <sup>6</sup>	32%	Keur Momar Sarr (Louga region)	8%
Kaolack	16%	Diagianiao (Thiès region)	7%
Tambacounda	10%	Ndolndole (Diourbel region)	6%
Thiès	7%	Sanaar (Saint Louis region)	5%
Saint Louis	4%	Thiakhare (Diourbel region)	5%

The data also reveal the multilingual nature of the sample. The respondents speak the following languages as their mother tongues: Wolof (50%), Serer (18%), Pulaar (18%), Jola (5%), French (3%), Mandika (2%), Russian (1%), Mankagne (1%), and others languages (2%). The table below shows the languages spoken by the sample as their mother tongue.

**Table 6.** *Languages spoken by the respondents as mother tongues.*

Languages spoken as mother tongues							
Wolof	50%	Serer	18%	Pulaar	18%	Jola	5%
Mandinka	2%	French	3%	Mankagne	1%	Others	3%

*N=404*

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS

### 5.1 ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPEECH COMMUNITIES

In this section, the analysis focuses on the attitudes of the respondents towards their own mother tongue, Wolof, French, and the English speech communities. The respondents were asked to use their knowledge and experience with these speech communities mentioned elsewhere and to rate their personal qualities based on a semantic differential using pairs of adjectives ranging from the lowest rating (1) to the highest (7). The adjective pairs used for this purpose were: unreliable/reliable, lazy/hardworking, insincere/sincere, and dishonest/

<sup>6</sup> For the purpose of this research, Dakar and Thiès regions were grouped into one single research site.

honest. A rating of 4 was considered neutral while a rating from 1 to 3 was negative and 5 to 7 positive (see Appendix).

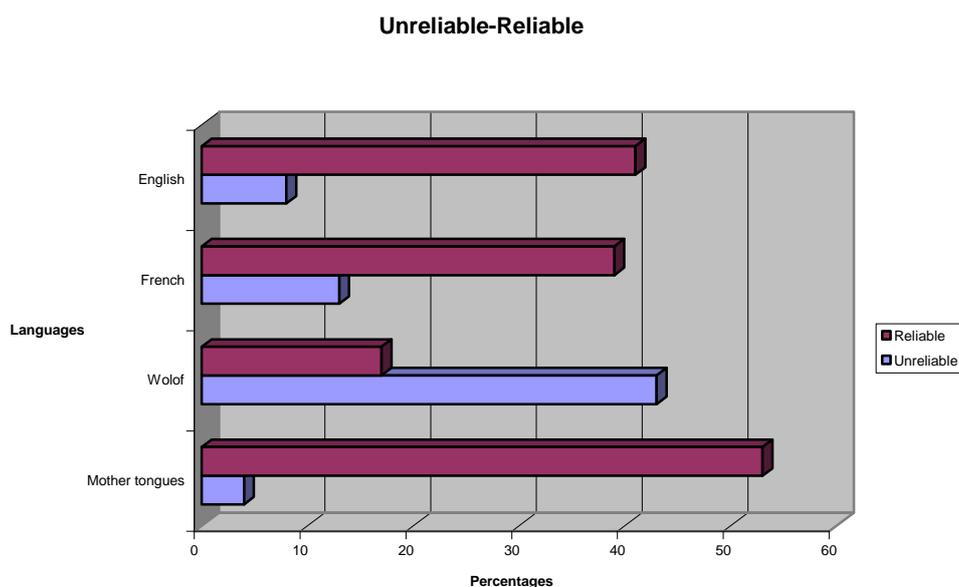
In this study, attitude refers mainly to feeling, perception or behaviour that is associated with a language, a culture or a group of people. A speech community indicates a community who speaks a language as native speaker and who embodies the language, the culture and the values as well. For example, the Wolof speech community refers to a group of people who are native speakers of Wolof and who embody the Wolof language, culture, and values. The French speech community means people who speak French as native speakers and who embody the French language, culture, and values (here this is restricted only to those born and reared in France). Similarly, the English speech community means people who speak English as native speakers and who embody English language, culture, and values (here this is restricted to the Americans and English). The concept of the English speech community or French speech community was preferred to the concept of the English or French speaking community to anticipate and avoid ambiguity and confusion with any of the other communities who might speak the English language or the French language but do not embody the English culture and values or the French culture and values, which is commonly seen in communities in India, Gambia, and Nigeria for English and Canada, Senegal and Martinique for French. A speech community is honest when its people are known for speaking their mind i.e. they always tell the truth and treat people fairly. A sincere speech community means a community whose people mean what they say and not try to mislead or deceive people, while a hardworking speech community is a community whose people are perceived as always carrying out their duties effectively and they are sincere in doing their task. Usually, they are known to perform challenging tasks without much delay, complaint or excuses. As for the reliable speech community, it refers to a community whose people are trustworthy and loyal because they can keep their words and they are honest. Respondents were provided with these meaning and examples (cases) so that they could respond knowing what each of these terms meant.

Wolof and mother tongue denotes two concepts that may not be used interchangeably in this research. Wolof refers to the language spoken by the Wolof speech community as their mother tongue or the mother tongue of the people who have shifted completely to Wolof, while mother tongues refer to any other languages, different from Wolof, spoken as mother tongues (e.g Pulaar, Mandinka etc.) (Wolof not included). However, as mentioned before, being the lingua franca, Wolof is also spoken by a large number of Senegalese people as a second language. For the purpose of this article, the separation of Wolof as a mother tongue distinct from the other mother tongues is important because of the need to find out how Senegalese people (namely speakers of other languages) feel about the Wolof speech community. Indeed, there are common stereotypical views about the Wolof speech community, namely on issues (as those highlighted in the questionnaires) such as reliable/reliability, honesty, hardworkingness and sincerity among others. Therefore, the questions are

framed in such a way that it is possible to capture how speakers of other mother tongues (or other speech communities) view the Wolof speech communities.

## 5.2 UNRELIABLE-RELIABLE

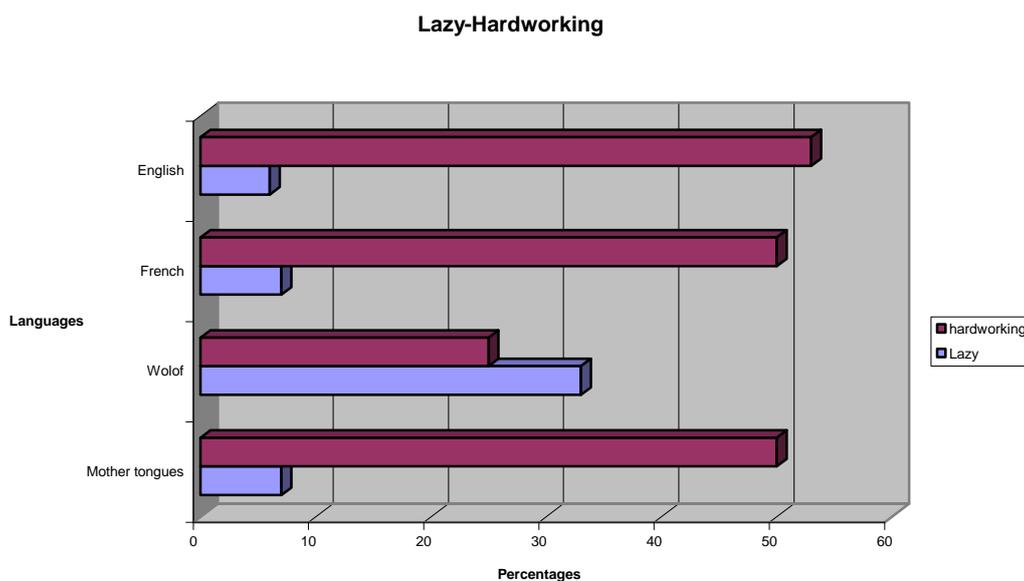
A close look at the unreliable-reliable comparison represented by Chart 1 below shows that respondents' positive percentage ratings for those who spoke their mother tongue to be more than 50% (53%). Similarly, respondents' positive ratings for both the English and the French speech communities were substantially positive (41% and 39% respectively). However, in comparison the positive percentage rating for the perceived reliability of the Wolof speech community is very low at only 17%. In keeping with these findings Chart 1 indicates also that perceptions of these groups' unreliability are lowest for the mother tongue speech community (only 4%), followed by the English speech community (8%) and French speech community (13%). Not surprisingly respondents' perceptions of the unreliability in relation to the Wolof speech community are much higher at 43%.



**Chart 1.** *Unreliable and reliable attributes.*

## 5.3 LAZY-HARDWORKING

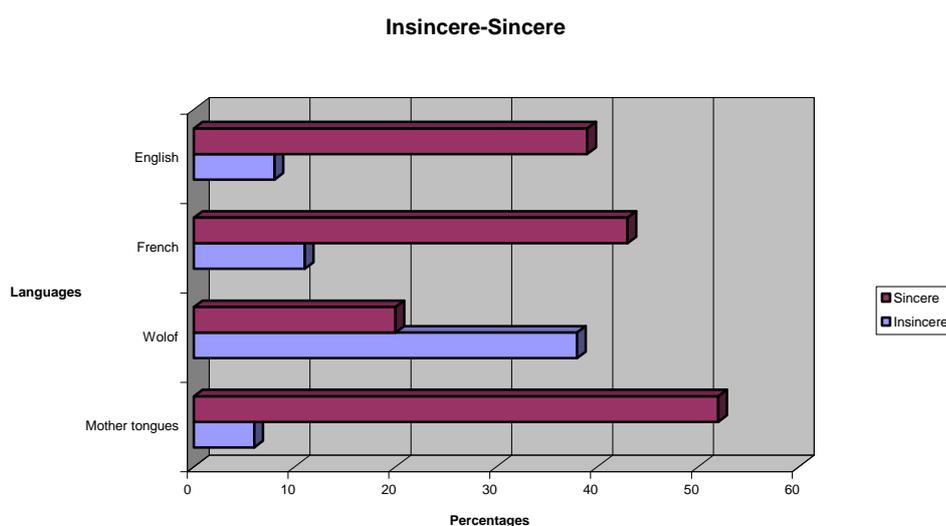
Chart 2 shows that the ratings for the lazy attribute. The attribute of laziness is the highest for the Wolof speech community. The Wolof speech community is rated at 33% while the ratings for the English speech community, the French speech community, and the mother tongue speech community are low, that is, 6% for mother tongue speech community and 7% for both English and French. The most hardworking speech community is the English speech community, which is rated at 53%, followed by the French speech community and the mother tongue speech community, which are rated at 50% each.



**Chart 2.** *Lazy and hardworking attributes.*

## 5.4 INSINCERE-SINCERE

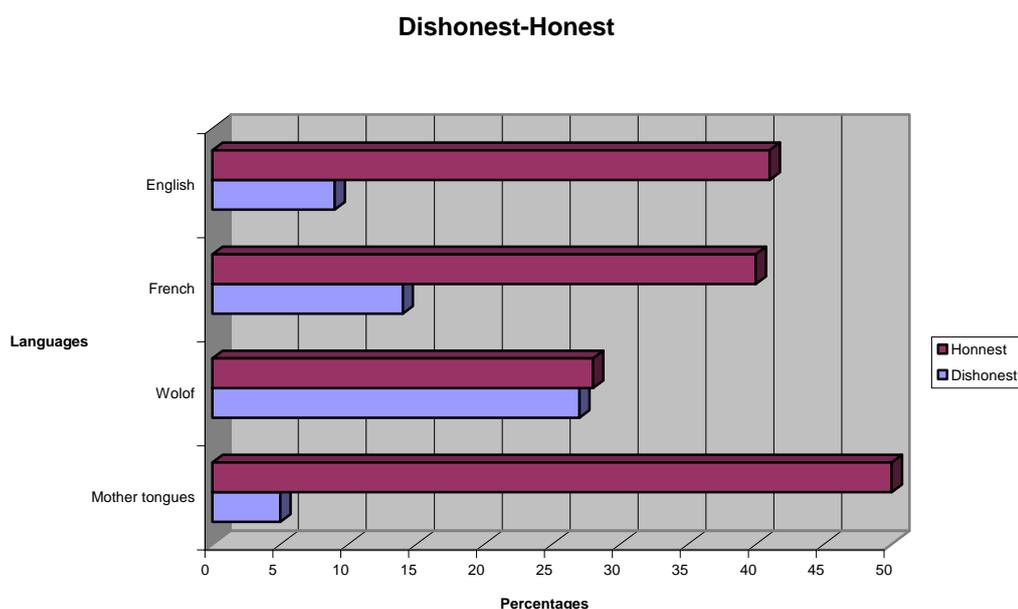
In regards to the sincerity attribute, the highest ratings are for the mother tongue speech community (53%), the French speech community (43%) and the English speech community (39%). However, the rating of the sincerity of the Wolof speech community is the lowest, that is, only 20%. As for the insincerity attribute, the Wolof speech community is rated as the highest. The Wolof speech community is rated at 38%, then followed by the French speech community (rated at 11%), the English speech community (rated at 8%), and the mother tongue speech community (rated at only 6%).



**Chart 3.** *Insincere and sincere attributes.*

## 5.5 DISHONEST-HONEST

Respondents' ratings on the continuum of dishonest-honest indicated that they perceived the Wolof community as the most dishonest (27%) followed by the French speech community (14%), the English speech community (9%), and the mother tongue speech community (5%). The highest rating for the attribute of honesty is given to the mother tongue speech community (50%). The ratings are 41% for the English speech community, and 40% for the French speech community but the Wolof speech community received the lowest rating (only 28%).



**Chart 4.** *Dishonest and honest attributes.*

## 6. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

When we look at the positive attributes, Wolof is rated as the lowest while the mother tongue, French, and English are highly rated. The mother tongues are the most highly rated. This shows the attachment of the respondents to their own mother tongue. The mother tongue speech community is the most reliable, the most sincere, the most honest, and the second most hardworking.

The attitudes towards the Wolof speech community are the lowest and literally negative. The ratings of Wolof negative regarding the negative attributes are very high and are above the 25% mark. For example, the Wolof speech community is rated as the least hardworking, the least reliable, the least sincere, and the least honest among the four speech communities reported here. As for the other speech community, the ratings for the negative attributes tested are quite low and are generally below the 10% mark. The French and English speech communities are also highly regarded by the respondents. The ratings are generally quite high for both languages. This shows the positive attitudes

towards these speech communities, namely the English speech community. Indeed, the English speech community is highly regarded by the respondents. For example, based on the overall ratings, the English speech community is more highly rated than the French speech community. In these instances, the scores conferred to the English speech community are slightly higher than the scores conferred to French speech community, especially hard working, reliable, and honesty. The high ratings for European languages could be understood in terms of their perceived social capital in Senegal (Bourdieu 1979, 1982) , especially as they are essential languages for jobs, professional mobility, national and international communication and for social prestige.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS

Based on the criteria used to analyse the attitudes of the speakers towards speech communities, it can be said that the respondents seem to admire greatly the English speech community even though all the respondents may not have had much exposure with this community as defined in this research. This positive attitude may be the results of experience and knowledge of the young generations derived from exposure to television and cinema, namely through American movies, (e.g. Dallas), American music (e.g. Michael Jackson) and sporting legends (Shaquille O'Neal, Michael Jordan, Carl Lewis etc.). Or, it may be also from stories and myths about the “America dream” that were abundantly told in the country and entertained by people who have returned from there, or by their relatives and acquaintances, or simply stories in newspapers about success stories of Senegalese people living in the US. However, despite the great admiration for the English speech community, the attitudes towards the French speech community, is high - though less than the attitudes towards the English speech community. This attitude towards the French speech community could be interpreted in some ways that at least the French language is seen in Senegal as separate from the French speech community as French is the only official language. It would appear that Senegalese people need to learn French for participation in Senegal itself, rather than for communication with France alone or assimilation with the French language or culture.

Despite being the lingua franca in most parts of the country, the attitudes towards the Wolof language and Wolof community remain significantly weak because these attitudes are overshadowed by the positive attitudes towards the French language, and, to a large extent, English mainly due to the social and economic opportunities they offer, including professional advantages, social mobility, travel and business interests. Therefore, there is a need to develop a systematic language policy that aims at fostering positive attitudes towards the Wolof language and Wolof speech community. Not only is Wolof the dominant ethnic group in the country but it is the dominant language, the dominant culture (through its music, arts, and media) and the *de facto* language of business

throughout the country and in some neighbouring countries (e.g. The Gambia and Mauritania). This could be effected through coherent, systematic and well-articulated language policy aimed primarily at changing social and psychological attitudes towards the Wolof language and the Wolof speech community. To this end, it is recommended that information campaigns be organised to initiate social changes in favour of the Wolof language, especially regarding the efficiency and validity of the argument regarding the benefits of developing and promoting a national link language for nationism (about how to govern) and nationalism (about developing nation identity) and for effective national communication (Fishman 1968). These information campaigns would target some sections of the society and some parents who are reluctant to accept the idea of giving more weight to national languages, namely the Wolof languages in the education system. The campaign may be supported and encouraged by opinion leaders, religious groups, and language and cultural associations who can lobby in favour of the national link language and of local languages-in-education policy programmes. The campaigns can be organised through public information sessions, discussions and debates on TV and radio, and advertising campaigns. These measures can be supported by initiatives aimed at enhancing concomitantly the prestige of all local languages, especially in the area of corpus planning and prestige planning.

The results of the analysis indicate that it is important to consider enhancing significantly the status and the role of the local languages in Senegal, namely the mother tongues. Efforts should be made towards giving the mother tongues greater importance (e.g. in the education system) because the data show that the respondents value their mother tongues (Wolof as a mother tongue included) and their positive attitudes towards their own languages and their own speech community substantiate this view.

This situation in which Wolof is the dominant language but the attitudes towards its speech community and the language are not high has an important significant socio-linguistic implication with regard to language policy issues in Senegal. In particular, it is interesting to know whether the Senegalese people are prepared to learn a language for which their attitudes towards the speech community are low and negative and the intensity to learn the language is at the lowest level. For example, if one analyses the situation of Wolof in Senegal, the question one might ask is whether Wolof can be promoted and given the status of an official language because it is the most common language for communication and it is dominant in business, arts, and in the media, in parallel with French, though the attitudes of the people and the intensity of the desire to learn it do not seem to be favourable and do not support it. Therefore, it is important to articulate a rigorous language-in-education policy in Senegal based on coherent frameworks. Senegal could, for example, adopt and implement a two-language formula for national languages. First, the national language policy formula would be based on the geographic distribution of languages in Senegal. For example, there might be four language zones. In Zone I, there would be the language(s) of the East ; Zone II, the language(s) of the West ; Zone III, the

language(s) of the North ; and Zone IV, the languages of the South. Second, the national language policy formula could state that, in each geographic area, Wolof and the dominant national language (s) would be offered as school subjects. Third, in Wolof dominated areas, learning national languages other than Wolof would be strongly encouraged. Wolof may serve as a national link language in Senegal, that is, a language that connects speakers of the different language zones. The national three-language formula has a certain number of advantages. First, it would clearly help avoid the promotion of a single culture or language in Senegal. Second, it would calm the growing concerns of many ethnic communities in Senegal who fear the absorption of their languages and cultures by Wolof. Third, Wolof is the lingua franca in Senegal; therefore, it is important to give an opportunity to every individual to learn the language wherever they are in the country. Fourth and last, speakers of national languages other than Wolof would be given the opportunity to learn their own language(s) or the languages of their choice wherever possible. Fifth, ultimately, this may result in positive attitudes towards the Wolof language and the Wolof speech community. People would not see the Wolof language as a competing language but rather as an additional language skill that is worth learning for intergroup communication, national solidarity and identity.

## 8. CONCLUSION

If language education policy is justified to serve speakers in a community, language policy-makers in Senegal should consider well-articulated, systematic and rigorous policy in order to meet the language demands and needs in Senegal, namely in English and French. In the context of the Senegalese education system and language-in-education planning marked by more than two centuries of French colonial domination and steady effort to impose it in the education system, the attitudes towards the English speech community can be described as more than satisfactory. To meet the needs in English, it is important to consider developing languages policies aimed at providing the Senegalese people with sufficient numbers of qualified English teachers, including systematic professional development schemes, policies and measures aiming at making English compulsory in all government controlled examinations, and efforts should be made towards making learning English more accessible by designing flexible and needs oriented language classes for people. Similarly, since the study shows a strong desire to learn French, though the attitudes towards the speech community are modest, the current status of French in the education system could be maintained and more options considered in order to offer French to all people as it is the only official language in Senegal. For example, campaigns such as "French for all" could assist people to learn French according to their needs and aspirations. The government would endorse such

efforts by providing opportunities for non formal schools such as Arabic and Quranic schools to include French classes, if they wish to do so.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

**Section A. Personal Background**

1. Age: ..... 2. Mother tongue: .....  
 3. Location: ..... 4. Gender: Male Female

**Section B. Attitudes towards speech communities**

Using your knowledge and experience with the people mentioned, please circle on the continuum for each pair to show where you rate them in relation to personal qualities of character.

1. **My mother tongue speech community**

Unreliable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Lazy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hardworking
Insincere	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sincere
Dishonest	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Friendly

2. **Wolof speech community (DO NOT answer this question in Wolof if your mother tongue)**

Unreliable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Lazy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hardworking
Insincere	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sincere
Dishonest	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest

3. **French speech community**

Unreliable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Lazy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hardworking
Insincere	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sincere
Dishonest	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest

4. **English speech community**

Unreliable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
Lazy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hardworking
Insincere	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sincere
Dishonest	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest