Annotated Swadesh wordlists for the Fula-Serer group (North Atlantic family).

Languages included: Serer [fse-ser].

DATA SOURCES

Serer


NOTES

1. General.

Serer

The default source of reference for the Serer language of Senegal is the enormous dictionary by L. Crétois. Unfortunately, despite containing a lot of information on the various dialects of the language, it cannot serve as a reliable source for dialectal lexicostatistics of the language; the current wordlist relies primarily on the "prestige" dialect of Serer (Serer-Sine), although some dialectal variants are occasionally adduced. In any case, judging from what could be deduced from the dictionary, it does not look as if the lexicostatistical variation between dialects could be significant.
As a control source, we also utilize the older dictionary [Ezanno & Greffier 1960], more condensed than Crétois' dictionary and useful in determining the primary basic lexical equivalent. However, Greffier's dictionary seems to be highly inaccurate in its treatment of Serer phonetics, with numerous discrepancies between him and Crétois on the issue of vowel length and vowel quality; Ezanno and Greffier also do not distinguish between plain voiced and implosive consonants.

Serer is a language with nominal classes and a complex system of consonantal gradation (typical of Atlantic languages). For possible needs of external comparison and reconstruction, we list class-related information for nouns in the notes section, indicating the class by listing the corresponding form of the correlated class pronoun rather than the class number (e. g. ol-class means Class III, where the definite form of the word is formed with the pronoun ol-e: bay 'hand' - o bay ol-e 'the (this) hand', etc.). Nouns are generally given in the singular number; plural forms are particularly important where they differ from singular forms through consonantal gradation, but are listed always, regardless of whether the initial consonant is "mutated" or stays the same.

Verbs are generally given as roots (taken directly from the main entry in Crétois' dictionary); adjectives, almost always derived from verbs, are also given as verbal roots, although sometimes the dictionary lists specific adjectival derivates (usually with the suffix -\textit{ui}), in which case they are selected for the main entry.

2. Transcription.

Serer

We preserve the transcriptional system used in [Crétois 1972] almost intact, with the following minimal changes: (a) long vowels, transcribed as digraphs (\textit{aa}, \textit{ee}, etc.), are converted to regular UTS \textit{aː}, \textit{eː}, etc.; (b) palatal affricates \textit{c, j, y'} are transcribed as \textit{ɕ, ż, ʕ} respectively; (c) palatal nasal \textit{n̥} is transcribed as \textit{n}.

The alphabet in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960] is a little more idiosyncratic: (1) Length is
transcribed with a circumflex (â, ê, etc.) and is converted to regular UTS a; e;, etc.; (2) Palatal affricates are marked as t̂, d̂ respectively, and are converted to ê, ʒ̂; (3) Velar nasal is either marked as g or as g with nasalization of the preceding vowel (e. g. lâg = laŋ); (4) Ezanno & Greffier distinguish between closed è and open ë, although external data show that this distinction is probably not phonemic. Just in case, we preserve this orthographic convention, converting Ezanno’s è to e and his ë to e. It should also be remembered that Ezanno & Greffier do not distinguish between voiced and implosive articulation, so any of their b, d, ʒ might actually be b̂, d̂, ʃ̂ (only comparison with the dictionary of Crétois helps determine the correct variant).

Database compiled and annotated by: G. Starostin (February 2015).
1. ALL
Serer *fop* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: II, 403; Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 44. Adverb. Cf. *tid ka fop* 'all the birds', etc.

2. ASHES
Serer *ndaw* (1).

References and notes:


3. BARK
Serer *xob #* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: VI, 338. *Ol*-class. Plural: *qob a...ak* (with consonantal gradation). Polysemy: 'leaf / empty vessel / certain types of bark'. In [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 63], quoted as *hob* in the meanings 'tree bark' and 'empty vase'. Not quite clear if this is really the default equivalent for generic 'bark', but no better candidate found so far.

4. BELLY
Serer *fud* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: II, 426. *Ol*-class. Plural: *pud a...ak* (with consonantal gradation). Quoted as *fud* in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 45].

5. BIG
Serer *magin* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: IV, 8. Verbal root: 'to be large, enormous, great, imposing, etc.'. Quoted as *magin* 'to be big' in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 84].

6. BIRD
Serer *ndiːd* (1).
7. BITE
Serer ɲat (1).

References and notes:


8. BLACK
Serer ɓaːl (1).

References and notes:


9. BLOOD
Serer foʔoːy (1).

References and notes:


10. BONE
Serer hiːf (1).

References and notes:


11. BREAST
Serer ɲgan (1).
References and notes:


12. BURN TR.
**Serer** *dox* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: II, 97. Transitive and intransitive use. Quoted as *doh* in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 20].

13. CLAW(NAIL)
**Serer** *mbambaɲ* (1).

References and notes:


14. CLOUD
**Serer** *eːl ~ yeːl* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: II, 222; Crétois 1972: VI, 447. *L*-class. Plural: *eːl a...ak*. Quoted as *el ~ yel* in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 34].

15. COLD

References and notes:

**Serer:** Not properly attested. The closest candidate is the verbal root *bub*, glossed in [Crétois 1972: I, 299] as ‘to be fresh: to cold (of weather)’. Contexts, however, show that it is mostly used in the meaning ‘fresh, cool’ rather than ‘(unpleasantly) cold’. In [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 10], it is glossed simply as *bub* ‘to be fresh’. Cf. also *əɡoɲ* ‘to be cold (of weather)’, *əɡoɲ-eːl* ‘to be cold (of smbd.)’ [Crétois 1972: III, 225], not eligible semantically. For the moment, we prefer to leave the issue unresolved and the slot empty.

16. COME
**Serer** *gar* (1).

References and notes:

17. DIE
Serer xon (1).

References and notes:

18. DOG
Serer bóx (1).

References and notes:

19. DRINK
Serer yer (1).

References and notes:

20. DRY
Serer wer-u (1).

References and notes:
Serer: Crétois 1972: VI, 234. Adjectival derivate from the verbal root wer 'to be dry'. Quoted as wer 'to be dry' in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 155].

21. EAR
Serer nof (1).

References and notes:
22. EARTH
Serer *lan* (1).

References and notes:


23. EAT
Serer *pam* (1).

References and notes:


24. EGG
Serer *bof* (1) / *gin* (2).

References and notes:


25. EYE
Serer *ŋgid* (1).

References and notes:


26. FAT N.
Serer *dar* (1).

References and notes:


27. FEATHER
Serer *laːl* (1).
References and notes:


28. FIRE
Serer fidɛl (1).

References and notes:


29. FISH
Serer liɓ (1).

References and notes:


30. FLY V.
Serer et (1).

References and notes:


31. FOOT
Serer ʒaf (1).

References and notes:


32. FULL
Serer may (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: IV, 42. Verbal root. Polysemy: ‘to be full / to be many / to be abundant’.
33. GIVE
Serer ɕi (1).

References and notes:


34. GOOD
Serer faːx (1).

References and notes:


35. GREEN

References and notes:

Serer: Not attested. Cf. the verbal root nep ‘to be full of sap; to be verdant’ and the derived nep-and ‘to make green, to paint green’ [Crétois 1972: IV, 348-349].

36. HAIR
Serer wiːl (1).

References and notes:


37. HAND
Serer bay (1).

References and notes:

38. HEAD
Serer xoːx (1).

References and notes:

39. HEAR
Serer nan (1).

References and notes:
Serer: Crétois 1972: IV, 303; Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 96. Polysemy: 'to hear / to understand'.

40. HEART
Serer xoŋ (1).

References and notes:
Serer: Crétois 1972: VI, 345. L-class. Plural: koŋ a...ak (with consonantal gradation). Quoted as hoŋ in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 64].

41. HORN
Serer ːan (1).

References and notes:

42. I
Serer mi (1).

References and notes:
Serer: Crétois 1972: IV, 99; Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 90. Used both as independent subject pronoun and as possessive adjective ('my').

43. KILL
Serer war (1).

References and notes:

44. KNEE
Serer ŋubay (1).

References and notes:


45. KNOW
Serer and (1).

References and notes:


46. LEAF
Serer xoɓ (1) / taːɗ (2).

References and notes:


47. LIE
Serer wond-nel (1).

References and notes:


48. LIVER
Serer xeɲ (1).

References and notes:

49. LONG
Serer ṣagid (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: III, 92. Plural: a ṣagida. Meaning glossed as 'to be long, to be big'. Verbal stem; the derived adjectival form is ṣagdu 'long' (with consonantal gradation). Dialectal variants: ṣagad (Palmarin), ṣahad (Petite-Côte). Cf. also the intensive form: ṣigid 'to be very long, very large' [Crétois 1972: III, 193]. Quoted as ṭagid = ṭigid in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 25].

50. LOUSE
Serer ṣaɬ (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: I, 235. Plural: ṣaɬ k-. Quoted as bal in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 4]. Also used as a verbal root: 'to delouse'.

51. MAN
Serer kor (1).

References and notes:


52. MANY
Serer bet (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: I, 148. Verbal root. Polysemy: 'to be many / to be excessive / to be extreme'. Quoted as bet in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 6]. Cf. also ṭak 'to be abundant, to be many, numerous' [Crétois 1972: III, 154]; fuʃ 'many, a lot' (intensive form) [Crétois 1972: II, 454]; may 'to be many, to abound, to be full' [Crétois 1972: IV, 72].

53. MEAT
Serer tegef (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: VI, 57. Plural form (with consonantal gradation) from regef (l-class) 'a piece of meat' [Crétois 1972: V, 374]. Quoted as tegɛf in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 142]. Should be kept distinct from nex 'muscle, flesh, piece of meat' [Crétois 1972: IV,
54. MOON
Serer *ngɔːl* (1).

References and notes:

*Serer*: Crétois 1972: IV, 610. *On s* class. Plural: *qɔːl a...ak* (with consonantal gradation). Polysemy: 'moon / month'. Cf. also the same form belonging to *ŋɔ* class: *n ɔːl*, pl. *n ɔːl fu...n* 'light'.

55. MOUNTAIN
Serer *pimb* (1).

References and notes:

*Serer*: Crétois 1972: V, 243; Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 114. *Al*-class. Plural: *pimb a...ak*. Polysemy: 'mountain / hill / elevation'. Cf. also *ndągor* [ Crétois 1972: IV, 417], plural: *tànggor k-* (with consonantal gradation). Polysemy: 'hill / mountain'. Quoted as *ndągor* 'hill, mountain' in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 97], where the word is marked as a borrowing from Wolof.

56. MOUTH
Serer *don* (1).

References and notes:


57. NAME
Serer *gon* (1).

References and notes:


58. NECK
Serer *fɔ̀f* (1) / *ɕok* (2).

References and notes:


352].
59. NEW
Serer xas (1).

References and notes:


60. NIGHT
Serer yeŋ (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: VI, 437. Ol-class. Plural: yeŋ a...ak. Also in the verbal meaning: 'to be night'. Quoted as yeŋ in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 160].

61. NOSE
Serer pis (1).

References and notes:


62. NOT
Serer =er (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: II, 215. Negative suffix that forms the negative active base of the verb (e. g. and 'to know', and-er 'not to know', 'he does not know'). Quoted as er in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: XVIII]. The corresponding suffix for the passive voice is -and (e. g. fex-er 'to be loved', fex-and 'not to be loved') [Crétois 1972: I, 36].

63. ONE
Serer len (1).

References and notes:


64. PERSON
Serer *ki:n* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: III, 403. *Ox*-class. Suppletive plural: *win* *w*. Quoted as *kin* in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 72].

65. RAIN
Serer *teɓ* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: VI, 52. *Al*-class. Plural: *teɓ a...ak*. Nominal derivative from the verbal root *deɓ 'to rain'* [Crétois 1972: II, 49], with consonantal gradation. Quoted as *teɓ 'rain', deɓ 'to rain'* in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 16].

66. RED
Serer *yaxg-u* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: VI, 411. Adjectival derivative from *yaxig 'to be red'*. Quoted as *yahig 'to be red', yag-u 'red'* in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 159].

67. ROAD
Serer *ɗat* (1).

References and notes:


68. ROOT
Serer *paŋ* (1).

References and notes:

**Serer:** Crétois 1972: V, 207. *Al*-class. Plural: *paŋ a...ak*. Quoted as *paŋ in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 112].

69. ROUND
References and notes:

Serer: Not properly attested. Cf., perhaps, moː 'to make a ball, make round', moːl-ox 'to be rounded' [Crétois 1972: IV, 137-138].

70. SAND
Serer fuːf (1).

References and notes:


71. SAY
Serer lay (1).

References and notes:


72. SEE
Serer ga ~ gi (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: II, 463, 532; Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 47, 50. Plural: a n=ga-a ~ a n=gi-a. The difference between the two stems seems to be dialectal (gi is marked as Petit-Côte in the source).

73. SEED
Serer ax (1).

References and notes:


74. SIT
Serer moːf (1).

References and notes:

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References and notes:


81. STONE
Serer bil (1).

References and notes:


82. SUN
Serer n3ef (1).

References and notes:


83. SWIM
Serer wef (1).

References and notes:


84. TAIL
Serer las (1).

References and notes:


85. THAT
Serer =n=a ~ =g=a (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: V, 164; Ezanno & Greffier 1960: XIV. These two, apparently more or less synonymous, bimorphic combinations (-n- and -g- are "semantically empty" pronominal formants, while the monovocalic morpheme =a expresses the idea of distance from the speaker) are usually appended to the various class forms of the definite article, e. g. o kin oxa-n-a 'that person', a koy ala-g-a 'that monkey'.
86. THIS
Serer =n=e ~ =k=e (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: V, 167; Ezanno & Greffier 1960: XIV. These two, apparently more or less synonymous, bimorphemic combinations (-n- and -k- are "semantically empty" pronominal formants, while the monovocalic morpheme =e expresses the idea of proximity to the speaker) are usually appended to the various class forms of the definite article, e. g. o kin oxe-n-e 'this person', a koy ale-k-e 'this monkey'.

87. THOU
Serer wo (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: VI, 241. Quoted as vo in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 156]. Used both as independent subject pronoun and as possessive adjective ('my').

88. TONGUE
Serer delem (1).

References and notes:


89. TOOTH
Serer ni:ni (1).

References and notes:


90. TREE
Serer ndaxar (1).

References and notes:

91. TWO
Serer *dik* (1).

References and notes:

*Serer*: Crétois 1972: II, 176. Quoted as *dik* in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 16]. Has the form *daq* when accompanied by the article *a* (‘those two’) [Crétois 1972: II, 138].

92. WALK (GO)
Serer *ret* (1).

References and notes:


93. WARM (HOT)
Serer *sum-u* (1).

References and notes:


94. WATER
Serer *fo:=fi* (1).

References and notes:


95. WE
Serer *in* (1).

References and notes:

*Serer*: Crétois 1972: III, 64; Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 67. Used both as independent subject pronoun and as possessive adjective (‘our’). No clusivity.
96. WHAT
Serer xar (1).

References and notes:


97. WHITE
Serer ran ~ rand (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: V, 354-355. Cf. the verbal stem: ran-ig ~ ran-g 'to be white' [Crétois 1972: V, 356-358]. Quoted as ran-ig 'to be white', ran-gu 'white', ndan 'white' (with consonantal gradation) in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 117].

98. WHO
Serer an (1).

References and notes:


99. WOMAN
Serer tew (1).

References and notes:


100. YELLOW
Serer xoylar (1).

References and notes:

Serer: Crétois 1972: VI, 357. Verbal stem: 'to be (become) yellow'. Quoted as xoylar in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 65].

101. FAR
Serer kod-u (1).
References and notes:

**Serer**: Crétois 1972: III, 412. Adverbial form, derived from the verbal stem goɗ ‘to be far away’ [Crétois 1972: II, 565]. Quoted as goɗ ‘to be far away’, kèd-a ‘far’ in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 52].

102. HEAVY

**Serer** med (1).

References and notes:

**Serer**: Crétois 1972: IV, 79. Verbal root, with polysemy: ‘to be heavy / to be important, serious’. Quoted as med in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 89].

103. NEAR

**Serer** mat (1).

References and notes:


104. SALT

**Serer** fo=ʓem (1).

References and notes:


105. SHORT

**Serer** rab (1).

References and notes:

**Serer**: Crétois 1972: V, 346. Quoted as rab in [Ezanno & Greffier 1960: 116].

106. SNAKE

**Serer** fa=ŋol (1).

References and notes:
107. THIN

Serer xoŋ (1).

References and notes:


108. WIND

Serer qeq (1).

References and notes:


109. WORM

References and notes:

Serer: Not attested.

110. YEAR

Serer hiːd (1).

References and notes: