The dictionary under review is “intended to serve as a basic resource both for linguists and for those interested in Saafi-Saafi”. It should certainly be able to serve both groups. People who want to learn Saafi-Saafi (sav), a Cangin language of the Atlantic branch of Niger-Congo, spoken in Senegal will find it a useful book, and it would be worthwhile investigating how that (small) market could be reached. As the introduction says, it gives much of the basic vocabulary, and with glosses and reverse indexes in both French and English, as well as some basic grammar, it should be able to serve most expatriate and Senegalese learners. Saafi speakers do not single out a “prestigious” or “most correct” dialect, so if some words and expressions are recognisably Sébiois, that should not be a problem.

Linguists should also be able to use it, but they should be aware of a few problems in the areas of spelling, grammar and culture.

**Spelling**

The book is not strong on consistent spelling. E.g. the word *ɓaah*, in its 3rd sense ‘share’, is also given as a sub-entry of *baah* ‘be good’. Also, sometimes words in example sentences do not agree with their entries in the list. In the example sentence for the same word *ɓaah* ‘share’, the word for ‘father’ is transcribed as *ɓap*, which normally means ‘nurse at the breast’ - it is in fact given that meaning in its own entry. The regular Saafi word for ‘father’ is *baab* - and indeed it is found in the lexicon with that form.

These inconsistencies are probably unproblematic for comparative lexical studies, but one should not jump to conclusions in the area of morphophonological processes. The word *aarra* ‘did quickly’ we find in the example sentence for *artuk* ‘hurry’ has not undergone a meaningful process of vowel lengthening for example. There is just some fluctuation and dialectal variation in the vowel length of this word.
Likewise, the word *baahid* ‘well’ we find in the example sentence for *baahi* ‘well’ has not received an extra suffix “-ɗ”; it has in fact the same suffix, written orthographically as “-ɗf”, but which for the dialect or ideolcet in question apparently fluctuates between [-i], [-ii] and [-iɗ]. I was at first inclined to suspect transcription errors in these forms, but the example sentence for the word “ñamid” (1) convinced me that the speaker indeed has no “ɗ” at the end of these words:

(1) A ńaamdisii so’ komaak ci.  
A ńam-ɗ-is-ii = so’ komaak = c-i  
3SG.NOM eat-BEN-REP-PRF = 1SG.ACC child = CLASS.PL-DEF.PROX.  
‘She fed the children for me again.’ (interlinear glosses added )

If the word was really “ńamdisid”, (the orthographical form), the 1st person singular pronoun would have been = to in partial assimilation to the final d, rather than = so, which is the form following a vowel.

**Grammar**

The claim in Appendix C, that the -a article primarily indicates indefinite specificity surprised me and started me on a search, for I had always considered it as a definite, combined with not-here-now deixis. Discussing Botne’s specific example (2) with my Saafi colleagues, they said this was limited to participant introduction in folk tales. A search through my data seemed to confirm this.

(2) Kuɓka nikee nga, a teekuusa Kumba.  
kuɓu-k-a nikee nga, a teek-uu-sa  
child-CLASS.SG-DET be-IPFV there, 3SG.NOM call-PASS-IPFV  
Kumba  
Kumba.  
‘A/the child was there, she was named Kumba’. (interlinear glosses added)

More regular usages would be as in (3) and (4):

(3) Booɓa mood’ jam e?  
ɓo’-ɓ-a mood’ jam e  
Person-CLASS.PL-DET have.peace peace Q  
‘Are the people OK?’
This is almost a standard greeting, except that the speaker here uses the rather
generic word “people” because he doesn’t know his conversation partner well
enough to be specific.

(4) Ny kadjang kahna.

η kadj-ang kahan-Ø-a
1SG go-PROG house-CLASS.SG-DEF.DIST
‘I am going home (litt. to the house).’

The house is definite, far deixis is imposed by the locomotion verb kadj ‘go’.

So yes, this article has a limited discourse usage as indefinite specificity, but
that is not its primary function.

Culture

In Appendix A, kinship terms are presented together, which is a good idea,
because it allows the system to stand out more clearly. The terms given are
correct, but note: The terms “payuum” ‘sibling’s spouse’ and “paayum” for ‘in-
law’ are the same word, member of a class of words which fluctuate between
Long-Short and Short-Long vowel patterns.

However, the appendix misses the opportunity to present the system from a
truly Saafi viewpoint in two areas: The matrilineal system and polygamy.

Words like yaay ‘mother’, taanum, ‘matrilineal uncle’ and tadmuhun, ‘matrilineal nephew’ are understood in the matrilineal system:

Every woman in one’s mother’s matrilineal line and of her generation is yaay.
Other women in one’s parents’ generation then require different words, like bajjen
‘father’s sister’ and yumpañ ‘parent’s brother’s wife’.
Every man in one’s mother’s maternal line and of her generation or earlier is taanum
Everyone who calls one taanum is one’s tadmuhun.

The taanum-tadmuhun relationship is of particular importance: Traditionally
(before Islam introduced a patrilineal system one or two generations ago),
inheritance went from taanum to tadmuhun, and even today, one’s taanum
has authority over one in many areas.

Though the word hundis for ‘co-wife’ is given, it does not appear in the
diagram (presumably because EGO is male), and no further consequences of
polygamy are indicated in the presentation. In actual fact, the high frequency of
polygamy influences the meaning of a word like taambdoh ‘sibling’. The dia-
gram suggests that EGO’s taambdoh has the same parents as EGO, while in
actual fact taambdoh-s only need to share one parent, and the fact of sharing two parents is often added as extra information with Bad baah yaay na baab. ‘They have mother and father in common’. The lexicon does have a sentence like that as an example of baah ‘share’, it just didn’t make it to this overview.

Polygamy also introduces an exception to the matrilineal system above, where one’s mother’s co-wife is also called yaay, whether she belongs to the same matrilineal line or not.

To conclude, this dictionary and its appendixes will certainly help learners of Saaafi-Saafi. Linguists should not pass on its claims without further verification, but can certainly use them as a starting point for further research.

### List of abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Third person</td>
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<td>Accusative</td>
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<td>BEN</td>
<td>Benefactive</td>
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<td>CLASS</td>
<td>Noun class marker</td>
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<td>Q</td>
<td>Question particle</td>
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<td>REP</td>
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