



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program Language Group Specific Informational Reports

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

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KRU: A LANGUAGE OF LIBERIA

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KRU IS A MEMBER OF THE NIGER-CONGO A FAMILY OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES



- + AFRICAN LANGUAGES ARE BROKEN DOWN INTO SIX FAMILIES
- + FAMILIES ARE GROUPED ACCORDING TO SHARED STRUCTURES SUCH AS THE EMPLOYMENT OF CLICKS, PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES, OR OF A NOUN CLASS SYSTEM

N Liberia

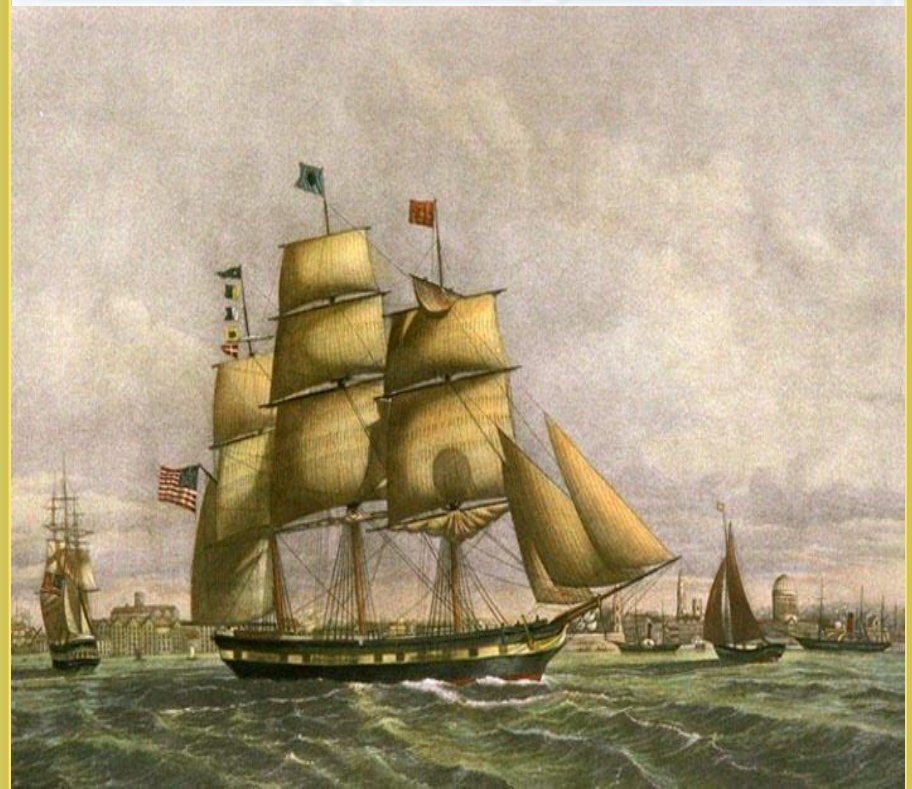


KRU or CREW ?

Liberia is a coastal country

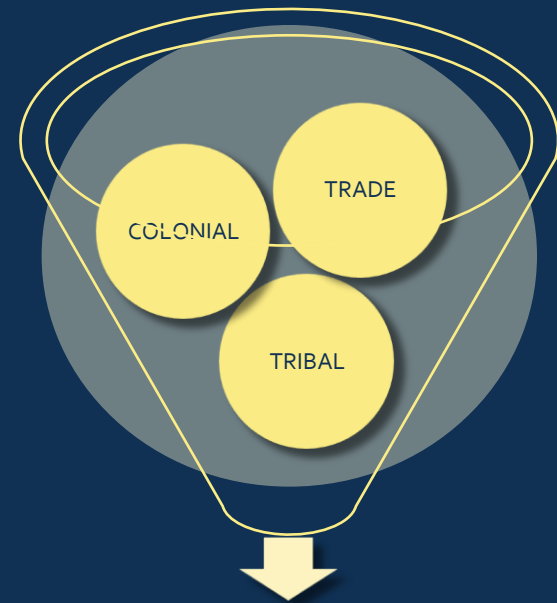
Coastal people “know the ropes”

Traders took advantage of the Liberian
people’s knowledge of the sea

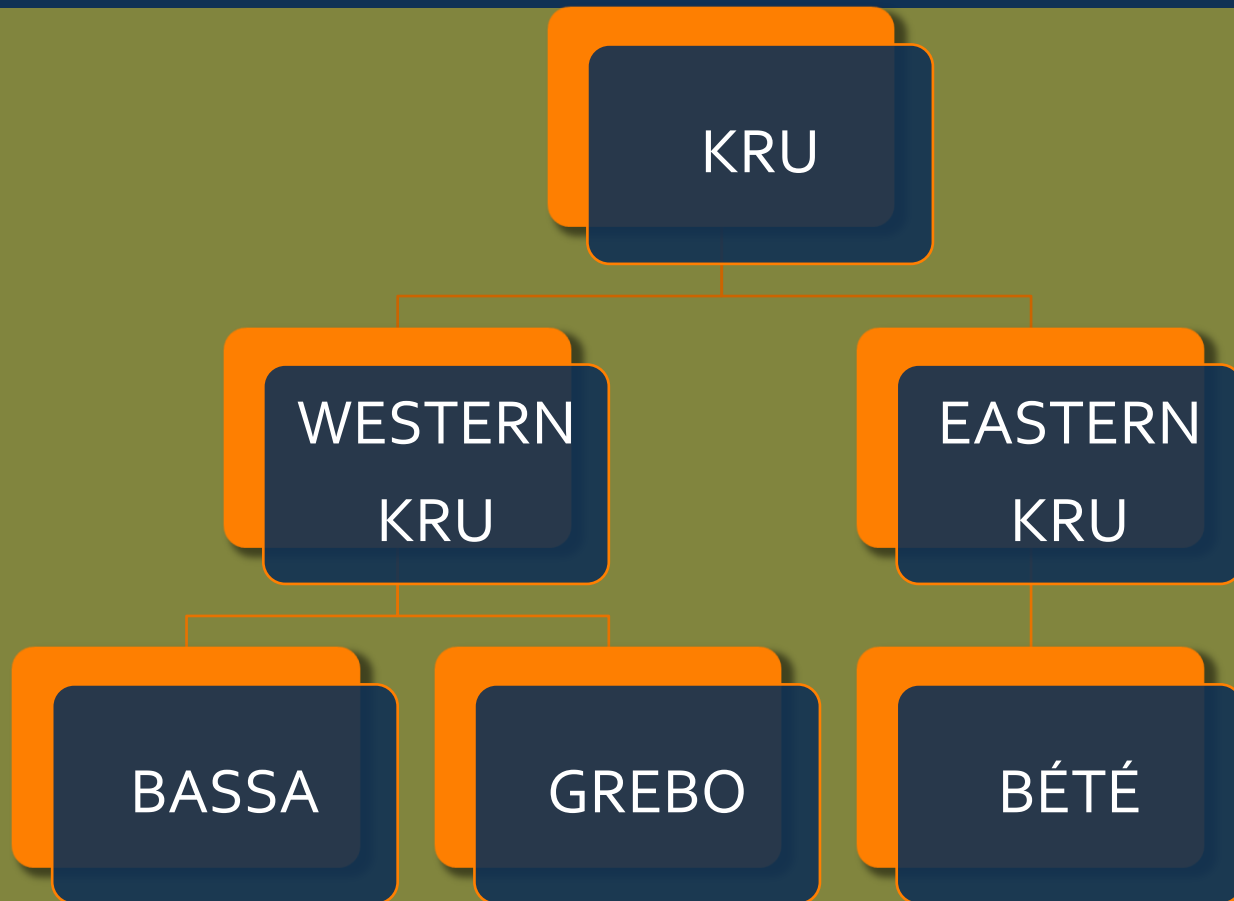


LANGUAGE IS EVER CHANGING

- KRU EVOLVED OUT OF CONTACT WITH AN IMMENSE VARIETY OF LANGUAGES SUCH AS THOSE OF COLONISTS, TRADERS AND AFRICAN TRIBES.
- THIS CONTACT LED TO THE EXPANSION AND SHIFTING OF LANGUAGES.



STIRRED
NOT
SHAKEN



SYNTACTIC PATTERNS

KRU IS A MIXED ORDER SYSTEM

- WORD ORDER DEPENDS OF THE TYPE OF SENTENCE
- BASIC WORD ORDER = SUBJECT/VERB/OBJECT/OTHER

SUFFIXING

- ALL KRU LANGUAGES ARE EXCLUSIVELY SUFFIXING
- TENSE IS REPRESENTED BY SUFFIXES
 - SUFFIXICATION MAY INDICATE RECENT PAST, FAR PAST, PRESENT, NEAR FUTURE, DISTANT FUTURE AND MORE SPECIFIC TENSES
- QUALITIES SUCH AS NUMBER AND DEFINITENESS MAY BE MARKED BY SUFFIXES
- MANY OF THE LANGUAGES USE A NOUN CLASS SYSTEM WHERE SUFFIXING IS USED

KRU ALPHABETS

KRU LANGUAGES HAVE BETWEEN 7 AND 9 VOWELS

MOST HAVE NASAL VOWELS

AVERAGE OF 25 CONSONANTS



KRU IS TONAL

- + TONES ARE ATTACHED TO VOWELS
- + 3 TONES MOST COMMONLY EMPLOYED:
 - + HIGH
 - + MID
 - + LOW
- + 5 TONES MAY BE EMPLOYED:
 - + HIGH
 - + MID-LOW
 - + DRAG
 - + GRAVE
 - + DOUBLE

ERRORS IN PHONOLOGY

/l/ phoneme lessened or omitted

ex. alright = a'right.

ex. fool = foo'.

f/voiced "th" substitution at end or middle of word

ex. teeth = teef

ex. nothing = nufin'

d/voiced "th" substitution at the beginning, middle of words

ex. this = dis

ex. brother = broder



POSSIBLE ERRORS IN SYNTAX

TENSE

- + SINCE TENSES ARE REPRESENTED BY SUFFIXES IN KRU, WORDS USED TO MARK TENSE MAY BE LEFT OUT OR MISUSED
- + URGE TO USE SUFFIXES TO CONVEY TENSE MAY CHANGE MEANING OF SPEECH

WORD ORDER

- + WORDS MAY BE MISORDERED IN ATTEMPTS TO CONVEY MEANING
- + OMITTING WORDS ESPECIALLY ARTICLES AND ADVERBS

EXAMPLES OF ERRORS IN SYNTAX

- Omission of 3rd person singular tense marker

He talks a lot. >>> He talk a lot.

- Omission of noun possessive

That's the woman's car. >>> That the woman car.

- A pronoun may be used to restate the subject

Sam surprised me. >>> Sam, he surprised me.

COMMUNICATION STYLES

People who speak the Kru languages generally reside in Liberia and the Ivory Coast. Therefore, the communication styles are similar to most people from West Africa:

- Children are not to maintain eye contact with adults since it is considered defiant to do so.
- Adults are expected to maintain eye contact since it is considered respectful unless one is speaking with his or her boss or teacher.
- Good oration is valued so people take their time getting their point across.
- One must always greet others on the street, especially once eye contact has been made. It is a taboo to ignore this cultural value.
- Greetings are made by a handshake with a finger snap (soft snap for women, harder snap for men).
- Maintain an arm's distance while communicating.
- It is not uncommon to touch another's leg if seated while communicating.

(www.culturecrossing.net)

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Images

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