



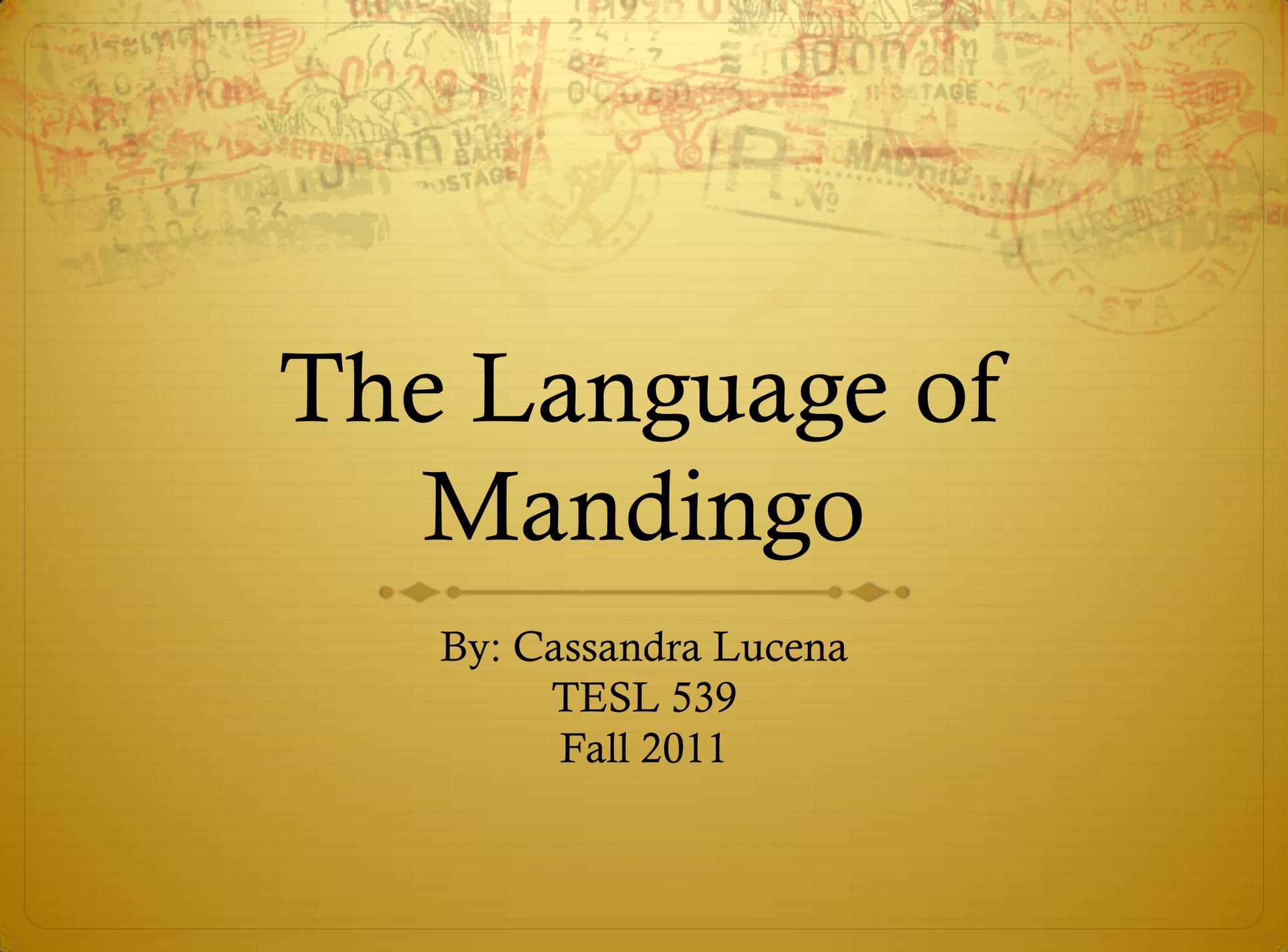
RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

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

Language Group: Mandingo
Author: Cassandra Lucena

Program Contact Person: Nancy Cloud (ncloud@ric.edu)



The Language of Mandingo

By: Cassandra Lucena
TESL 539
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History

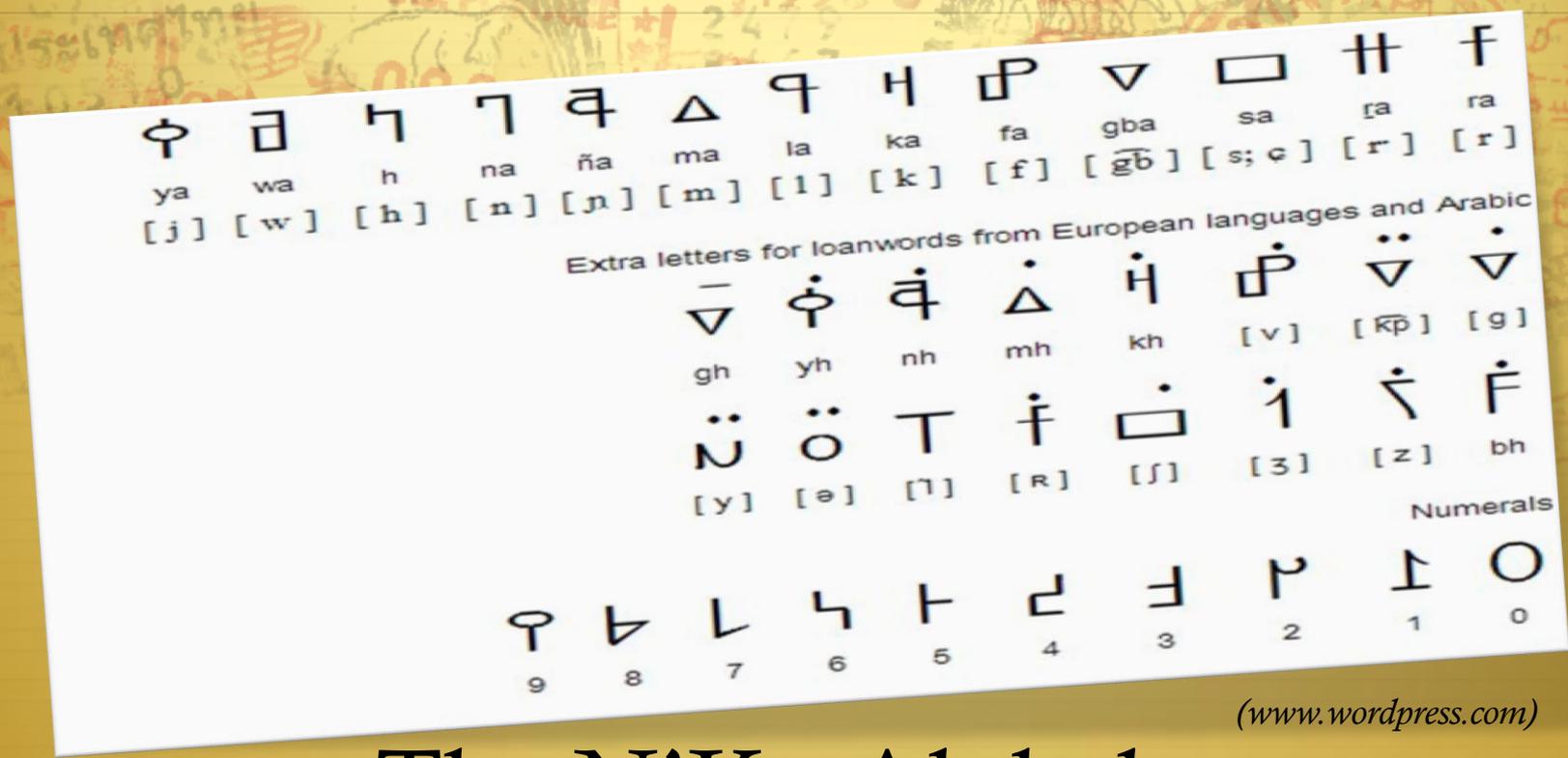
- Mandingo (also known as Mandinka) is spoken by almost two million people in parts of Senegal, Gambia, Chad, Mali, and Guinea.
- The Mandinka people form one of the largest groups in Africa. They are descendants of the Empire of Mali (1230-1600), which rose to power under the rule of the great Mandinka King, Sundiata Keita.
- 99% of Mandinka people are Muslim.



History (cont'd)



- ✦ The Mandinka people maintain a rural existence, living in family-related compounds within villages. Many villagers never travel more than five miles from their homes.
- ✦ The Mandinka language is in the Mande branch of the Niger-Congo language family. It has several variations, but is most closely related to the Malinke language of West Africa.
- ✦ Mandinka is a tonal language in which changes in pitch are used to distinguish between words, phrases, and complete utterances that are otherwise identically constructed.

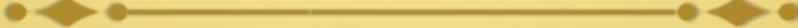


(www.wordpress.com)

The N'Ko Alphabet

- Mandinka society is mostly oral, where much of their history and traditions are passed down by being sung or spoken.
- Although only 1% of their society is literate an alphabet was invented in 1949 that mixes Latin and Arabic together. This alphabet is not widely used.

Learning English



- ✦ The letters V, X, Z, and Q are not used in Mandingo. A native Mandinka speaker may have trouble learning to pronounce and use those letters in English.
- ✦ Vowels are always doubled in Mandingo, so a person learning English will need a lot of practice learning how to use vowels within English words.
- ✦ Mandingo's written language is scripted from right to left so when learning English native speakers will struggle learning to write left to right.

Common Mistakes



- ✦ “He” and “She” are often mistakenly used interchangeably with Mandinka people who are not fluent in English because in the Mandinka language the same pronoun is used for both sexes.
- ✦ Within noun phrases, possessives come before the noun and adjectives and plural markers come after. Mistakes can be made in English since the possessive comes after the noun and adjectives before the noun.



(No photographer, www.africaimports.com)

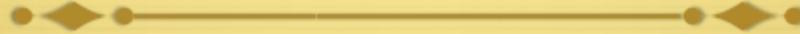


(No photographer, www.freewebs.com)

Communication Style

- Handshakes are common among groups of friends but not for someone older than you.
- When greeting an elder you bow or nod your head in acknowledgement.

Mandingo Greetings



- ✦ Pointing at someone or using your left hand during conversation is considered vulgar.
- ✦ The “thumbs up” sign used commonly in English is considered a form of swearing in Mandingo and is highly offensive.
- ✦ If seated when speaking do not allow the soles of the foot to point at another. Sit with your feet flat on the ground. Soles of the feet are considered to be the dirtiest part of the body and exposing them to another is considered very disrespectful.

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Maps

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Images

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M.Ed. in TESL Program
Nancy Cloud, Director
Educational Studies Department
Rhode Island College, HBS 206 #5
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
Phone (401) 456-8789
Fax (401) 456-8284
ncloud@ric.edu

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