

what language is spoken in liberia

what language is spoken in liberia is a question that often arises for those interested in the history, culture, and communication dynamics of this unique West African nation. Liberia boasts a rich tapestry of languages reflecting its diverse ethnic groups and historical influences. This article provides an in-depth look into the official language, the multitude of indigenous languages, and the role of English in Liberian society. Also explored are the influences from Liberia's colonial past, the function of Liberian English and pidgin, and how language shapes education, government, and daily life. Whether you are a traveler, researcher, or simply curious, this guide will clarify everything you need to know about the languages spoken in Liberia.

- Overview of the Official Language in Liberia
- Indigenous Languages in Liberia
- Liberian English and Local Variants
- Historical and Colonial Language Influences
- The Role of Language in Education and Government
- Language Usage in Daily Liberian Life
- Summary of Key Languages Spoken in Liberia

Overview of the Official Language in Liberia

English is the official language of Liberia. Established as the national language since the country's founding in the 19th century, English is used in government, education, and formal communication. Liberia was founded by freed African-Americans and free-born Blacks from the United States, which explains the adoption of English as the official language. Today, English serves as the lingua franca that connects Liberia's many ethnic groups and is the primary medium for legislation, public administration, and national media.

Indigenous Languages in Liberia

While English holds official status, Liberia is home to more than 20 indigenous languages. These languages belong mainly to the Mande, Kru, and Mel language families, each associated with different ethnic groups throughout the country. The widespread use of indigenous languages highlights Liberia's cultural diversity and the importance of native tongues in daily interactions.

Major Indigenous Language Groups

The most prominent indigenous languages are spoken by large ethnic populations. The following list covers several of the most significant language groups:

- Kpelle: Spoken by the Kpelle people, the largest ethnic group in Liberia.
- Bassa: Used by the Bassa community, mainly along the coast and in central counties.
- Gio (Dan): Common among the Gio people, primarily in the northern regions.
- Kru: The language of the Kru people, prevalent in the southeastern parts.
- Loma: Spoken in the northwest, especially in Lofa County.
- Grebo: Used along the southeastern coast.
- Mano: Spoken by the Mano ethnic group in the north.

Lesser-Known Indigenous Languages

Apart from the major languages, Liberia is home to several lesser-known indigenous tongues, including Vai, Gola, Kissi, Belle, and Mende. These languages are vital for local identity and cultural traditions, and some, like Vai, have their own unique writing systems.

Liberian English and Local Variants

Liberian English refers to the varieties of English spoken throughout the country. While standard English is used in formal settings, various forms of Liberian English are spoken in everyday life, reflecting local accents, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. These variants can be quite distinct from international standard English, shaped by indigenous languages and historical factors.

Pidgin English and Kreyol

Pidgin English, also known as Liberian Kreyol, is widely spoken in informal settings and urban areas. It serves as a bridge language among different ethnic groups and is especially common in Monrovia, the capital. Liberian Kreyol incorporates elements from English and various indigenous languages, making it a dynamic and evolving means of communication.

Historical and Colonial Language Influences

Liberia's unique history as Africa's first and oldest modern republic, founded by formerly enslaved people from the United States, has significantly influenced its linguistic landscape. Unlike neighboring countries colonized by European powers, Liberia's official use of English stems from its American connections. However, indigenous languages have remained resilient, coexisting alongside English and shaping the way Liberians communicate.

The Role of Language in Education and Government

English is the primary language of instruction in Liberian schools, from elementary through higher education. All official documents, laws, and government proceedings are conducted in English. However, indigenous languages play an important role in early childhood education and community-based programs, especially in rural areas where English proficiency may be limited.

Language Barriers and Literacy

While English is widespread in urban centers, language barriers can exist in rural communities where indigenous languages dominate. Literacy campaigns in Liberia often focus on both English and local languages to promote inclusive education and increase literacy rates across the country.

Language Usage in Daily Liberian Life

Language use in Liberia is highly context-dependent. In formal settings, such as schools, government offices, and the media, English is the norm. In markets, neighborhoods, and within families, indigenous

languages and Liberian English variants are commonly spoken. This multilingual environment fosters a rich cultural exchange and allows Liberians to switch languages fluidly depending on their audience and purpose.

Summary of Key Languages Spoken in Liberia

To answer the question, "what language is spoken in Liberia," it is essential to recognize both the dominance of English as the official language and the enduring importance of Liberia's many indigenous languages. The country's linguistic diversity reflects its complex history, ethnic mosaic, and the resilience of traditional cultures. From government offices to rural villages, the interplay between English, local dialects, and Liberian Kreyol continues to shape Liberia's national identity and day-to-day interactions.

Q: What is the official language spoken in Liberia?

A: The official language spoken in Liberia is English. It is used in government, education, and formal communications across the country.

Q: How many indigenous languages are spoken in Liberia?

A: Liberia is home to more than 20 indigenous languages, reflecting the country's diverse ethnic groups and cultures.

Q: Are indigenous languages used in Liberian schools?

A: While English is the main language of instruction in schools, indigenous languages are sometimes used in early education and community programs, especially in rural areas.

Q: What are the most widely spoken indigenous languages in Liberia?

A: Some of the most widely spoken indigenous languages in Liberia include Kpelle, Bassa, Gio (Dan), Kru, Loma, Grebo, and Mano.

Q: What is Liberian English?

A: Liberian English refers to the various dialects and accents of English spoken in Liberia, including both standard English and local variants influenced by indigenous languages.

Q: What is Liberian Kreyol or Pidgin English?

A: Liberian Kreyol, also known as Pidgin English, is an informal language that blends English with elements from indigenous languages and is widely spoken in urban areas and among different ethnic groups.

Q: Does every Liberian speak English fluently?

A: While English is widely spoken, fluency levels vary, especially in rural communities where indigenous languages may be the primary language spoken at home.

Q: Is there a unique writing system used for any Liberian language?

A: Yes, the Vai language has its own indigenous writing system, known as the Vai script, which is unique to Liberia.

Q: How does language affect communication among Liberia's ethnic groups?

A: Language serves as both a unifying and distinguishing factor among Liberia's ethnic groups, with English used for interethnic communication and indigenous languages fostering community identity.

Q: Why did Liberia adopt English as its official language?

A: Liberia adopted English as its official language due to its founding by freed African-Americans and free-born Blacks from the United States, who brought English as their primary language.

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What Language is Spoken in Liberia? A Comprehensive

Guide

Liberia, a West African nation rich in history and culture, boasts a fascinating linguistic landscape. While English holds official status, understanding the true picture of language in Liberia requires delving deeper than a simple one-sentence answer. This comprehensive guide will explore the official language, prevalent dialects, and the intricate interplay of languages within Liberian society. We'll unravel the complexities, providing you with a thorough understanding of communication in this vibrant country.

The Official Language: English - A Legacy of Colonization

The official language of Liberia is English. This stems directly from its history as a republic founded by freed American slaves in the 19th century. These settlers brought with them the English language, which became the language of administration, education, and commerce. However, it's crucial to understand that this English is not identical to the English spoken in the United States or the United Kingdom. It's a unique variety, often referred to as Liberian English, incorporating elements of local dialects and pronunciation variations. It's an English that has evolved and adapted within its own specific context.

Beyond English: The Rich Tapestry of Liberian Languages

While English holds official status, it's far from the only language spoken in Liberia. The country is home to a diverse array of indigenous languages, collectively referred to as Niger-Congo languages. These languages are further subdivided into numerous distinct ethnic groups, each with its own unique linguistic heritage. The dominance of English in formal settings doesn't diminish the vital role these indigenous languages play in daily life, community cohesion, and cultural preservation.

Major Indigenous Language Groups:

Kru Languages: Spoken primarily in the south-eastern regions of Liberia, the Kru languages comprise a significant portion of the indigenous linguistic landscape. These languages exhibit considerable internal diversity, with several distinct dialects and sub-groups.

Mande Languages: Predominantly found in the north-western regions, Mande languages constitute another major linguistic family in Liberia. Similar to the Kru languages, the Mande family branches into multiple distinct languages, each with its own unique characteristics.

Go Languages: Primarily spoken in the central and eastern parts of the country, Go languages represent a further significant component of Liberia's linguistic diversity.

Mel Languages: These languages are spoken in the western part of the country.

The Linguistic Landscape in Practice: Code-Switching and Language Use

Liberians frequently engage in code-switching, seamlessly transitioning between English and their native languages depending on the context. In formal settings like schools, government offices, and businesses, English typically prevails. However, in informal settings, within families and communities, the use of indigenous languages is dominant. This linguistic flexibility reflects the dynamic nature of language use in Liberia and highlights the importance of both English and the various indigenous languages in daily life.

Language and Education: Challenges and Opportunities

The prevalence of English in education presents both challenges and opportunities. While providing access to a globally recognized language, it can also lead to difficulties for students whose first language is not English. Efforts to improve bilingual education programs, integrating indigenous languages into the early years of schooling, are crucial to fostering literacy and preserving linguistic heritage.

The Future of Language in Liberia

The future of language in Liberia hinges on a delicate balance between maintaining linguistic diversity and embracing the global significance of English. Preserving and promoting the rich heritage of indigenous languages is paramount, not just for cultural preservation but also for cognitive development and social cohesion. Continued investment in multilingual education programs and initiatives that support the use and documentation of indigenous languages will be key in ensuring a vibrant and diverse linguistic future for Liberia.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while English serves as the official language of Liberia, the linguistic reality is far richer and more complex. A multitude of indigenous languages, belonging to various language families, play a vital role in the daily lives of Liberians. Understanding this diverse linguistic landscape is crucial for anyone seeking a deeper appreciation of Liberian culture and society. The ongoing challenge is to navigate the balance between the global relevance of English and the vital preservation of Liberia's unique linguistic heritage.

FAQs

1. Is it difficult for foreigners to communicate in Liberia? While English is the official language, proficiency levels vary. Learning basic phrases in a common indigenous language can significantly enhance communication in rural areas.
2. Which indigenous language is most widely spoken in Liberia? There isn't one single most widely spoken indigenous language. The Kru, Mande, and Go language families each encompass numerous languages spoken by significant populations.
3. Are there any efforts to preserve indigenous languages? Yes, various organizations and initiatives work to document, preserve, and promote indigenous languages through educational programs and community engagement.
4. How does the use of English affect the indigenous languages? While English's dominance poses a potential threat to the longevity of indigenous languages, the reality is more nuanced. Code-switching and the continued use within communities show resilience.
5. Can I find resources to learn Liberian languages? While resources might be limited compared to more widely studied languages, online resources and potentially local language learning centers may exist, depending on the specific language you wish to learn.

what language is spoken in liberia: An Introduction to Liberian English John Victor Singler, 1981

what language is spoken in liberia: The Mouton World Atlas of Variation in English Bernd Kortmann, Kerstin Lunkenheimer, 2012 The Mouton World Atlas of Variation in English (WAVE) presents grammatical variation in spontaneous spoken English, mapping 235 features in 48 varieties of English (traditional dialects, high-contact mother tongue Englishes, and indiginized second-language Englishes) and 26 English-based Pidgins and Creoles in eight Anglophone world regions (Africa, Asia, Australia, British Isles, the Caribbean, North America, the Pacific, and the South Atlantic). The analyses of the 74 varieties are based on descriptive materials, naturalistic corpus data, and native speaker knowledge.

what language is spoken in liberia: The Languages of the World Kenneth Katzner, Kirk Miller, 2002-09-11 This third edition of Kenneth Katzner's best-selling guide to languages is essential reading for language enthusiasts everywhere. Written with the non-specialist in mind, its user-friendly style and layout, delightful original passages, and exotic scripts, will continue to fascinate the reader. This new edition has been thoroughly revised to include more languages, more countries, and up-to-date data on populations. Features include: *information on nearly 600 languages *individual descriptions of 200 languages, with sample passages and English translations *concise notes on where each language is spoken, its history, alphabet and pronunciation *coverage of every country in the world, its main language and speaker numbers *an introduction to language families

what language is spoken in liberia: Tense/aspect and the Development of Auxiliaries in Kru Languages Lynell Marchese, Lynell Zogbo, 1986

what language is spoken in liberia: Linguistics Student's Handbook Professor Laurie Bauer, 2007 The book that tells you all the things you felt you were expected to know about linguistics, but were afraid to ask about.*What do you know about Burushaski and Miwok?*What's the difference between paradigmatic and syntagmatic?*What is E-language?*What is a

language?*Do parenthetical and non-restrictive mean the same thing?*How do you write a bibliographic entry for a work you have not seen?Every student who has asked these questions needs this book. A compendium of useful things for linguistics students to know, from the IPA chart to the Saussurean dichotomies, this book will be the constant companion of anyone undertaking studies of linguistics. Part reference work, part revision guide, and with tables providing summary information on some 280 languages, the book provides a new learning tool as a supplement to the usual textbooks and glossaries.

what language is spoken in liberia: Language and Development in Africa Ekkehard Wolff, 2016-05-26 This volume explores the central role of language across all aspects of public and private life in Africa.

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what language is spoken in liberia: The Cambridge Handbook of African Linguistics H. Ekkehard Wolff, 2019-05-16 This book provides an in-depth and comprehensive state-of-the-art study of 'African languages' and 'language in Africa' since its beginnings as a 'colonial science' at the turn of the twentieth century in Europe. Compiled by 56 internationally renowned scholars, this ground breaking study looks at past and current research on 'African languages' and 'language in Africa' under the impact of paradigmatic changes from 'colonial' to 'postcolonial' perspectives. It addresses current trends in the study of the role and functions of language, African and other, in pre- and postcolonial African societies. Highlighting the central role that the 'language factor' plays in postcolonial transformation processes of sociocultural modernization and economic development, it also addresses more recent, particularly urban, patterns of communication, and outlines applied dimensions of digitalization and human language technology.

what language is spoken in liberia: State-Building and Multilingual Education in Africa Ericka A. Albaugh, 2014-04-24 How do governments in Africa make decisions about language? What does language have to do with state-building, and what impact might it have on democracy? This manuscript provides a longue durée explanation for policies toward language in Africa, taking the reader through colonial, independence, and contemporary periods. It explains the growing trend toward the use of multiple languages in education as a result of new opportunities and incentives. The opportunities incorporate ideational relationships with former colonizers as well as the work of language NGOs on the ground. The incentives relate to the current requirements of democratic institutions, and the strategies leaders devise to win elections within these constraints. By contrasting the environment faced by African leaders with that faced by European state-builders, it explains the weakness of education and limited spread of standard languages on the continent. The work combines constructivist understanding about changing preferences with realist insights about the strategies leaders employ to maintain power.

what language is spoken in liberia: Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect Lorenzo Dow Turner, 2002 A unique creole language spoken on the coastal islands and adjacent mainland of South Carolina and Georgia, Gullah existed as an isolated and largely ignored linguistic phenomenon until the publication of Lorenzo Dow Turner's landmark volume *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*. In his classic treatise, Turner, the first professionally trained African American linguist, focused on a people whose language had long been misunderstood, lifted a shroud that had obscured the true history of Gullah, and demonstrated that it drew important linguistic features directly from the languages of West Africa. Initially published in 1949, this groundbreaking work of Afrocentric scholarship opened American minds to a little-known culture while initiating a means for the Gullah people to reclaim and value their past. The book presents a reference point for today's discussions about ever-present language varieties, Ebonics, and education, offering important reminders about the subtleties and power of racial and cultural prejudice. In their introduction to the volume, Katherine Wylie Mille and Michael B. Montgomery set the text in its sociolinguistic context, explore recent developments in the celebratio

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what language is spoken in liberia: The Story of Spanish Jean-Benoît Nadeau, Julie Barlow, 2013-05-07 The authors of *The Story of French* are back with a new linguistic history of the Spanish language and its progress around the globe. Just how did a dialect spoken by a handful of shepherds in Northern Spain become the world's second most spoken language, the official language of twenty-one countries on two continents, and the unofficial second language of the United States? Jean-Benoît Nadeau and Julie Barlow, the husband-and-wife team who chronicled the history of the French language in *The Story of French*, now look at the roots and spread of modern Spanish. Full of surprises and honed in Nadeau and Barlow's trademark style, combining personal anecdote, reflections, and deep research, *The Story of Spanish* is the first full biography of a language that shaped the world we know, and the only global language with two names—Spanish and Castilian. The story starts when the ancient Phoenicians set their sights on The Land of the Rabbits, Spain's original name, which the Romans pronounced as Hispania. The Spanish language would pick up bits of Germanic culture, a lot of Arabic, and even some French on its way to taking modern form just as it was about to colonize a New World. Through characters like Queen Isabella, Christopher Columbus, Cervantes, and Goya, *The Story of Spanish* shows how Spain's Golden Age, the Mexican Miracle, and the Latin American Boom helped shape the destiny of the language. Other, more somber episodes, also contributed, like the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion of Spain's Jews, the destruction of native cultures, the political instability in Latin America, and the dictatorship of Franco. *The Story of Spanish* shows there is much more to Spanish than tacos, flamenco, and bullfighting. It explains how the United States developed its Hispanic personality from the time of the Spanish conquistadors to Latin American immigration and telenovelas. It also makes clear how fundamentally Spanish many American cultural artifacts and customs actually are, including the dollar sign, barbecues, ranching, and cowboy culture. The authors give us a passionate and intriguing chronicle of a vibrant language that thrived through conquests and setbacks to become the tongue of Pedro Almodóvar and Gabriel García Márquez, of tango and ballroom dancing, of millions of Americans and hundreds of millions of people throughout the world.

what language is spoken in liberia: A History of the United Methodist Church in Liberia Levi C. Williams, 2014-09-14 Rev. Dr. Levi C. Williams was ordained in 1980 in the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. This rich history of the United Methodist Church in Liberia documents the powerful role the church as and can continue to play in shaping civil society.

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what language is spoken in liberia: Madame President Helene Cooper, 2017-03-07 BEST BOOKS of 2017 SELECTION by * THE WASHINGTON POST * NEW YORK POST * The harrowing, but triumphant story of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, leader of the Liberian women's movement, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, and the first democratically elected female president in African history. When Ellen Johnson Sirleaf won the 2005 Liberian presidential election, she demolished a barrier few thought possible, obliterating centuries of patriarchal rule to become the first female elected head of state in Africa's history. *Madame President* is the inspiring, often heartbreaking story of Sirleaf's evolution from an ordinary Liberian mother of four boys to international banking executive, from a victim of domestic violence to a political icon, from a post-war president to a Nobel Peace Prize

winner. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and bestselling author Helene Cooper deftly weaves Sirleaf's personal story into the larger narrative of the coming of age of Liberian women. The highs and lows of Sirleaf's life are filled with indelible images; from imprisonment in a jail cell for standing up to Liberia's military government to addressing the United States Congress, from reeling under the onslaught of the Ebola pandemic to signing a deal with Hillary Clinton when she was still Secretary of State that enshrined American support for Liberia's future. Sirleaf's personality shines throughout this riveting biography. Ultimately, *Madame President* is the story of Liberia's greatest daughter, and the universal lessons we can all learn from this "Oracle" of African women.

what language is spoken in liberia: English as a Global Language David Crystal, 2012-03-29 Written in a detailed and fascinating manner, this book is ideal for general readers interested in the English language.

what language is spoken in liberia: Beyond the Mango Tree Amy Bronwen Zemser, 2000-04-05 I am here, in the rain, tied to the mango tree. The water leve rises, above my naked feet, past my ankles. I wait ... It has been this way since Sarina's family moved to Liberia from Boston eight months ago. Her mother ties her to the mango tree in their front yard, terrified of losing her. It's never for long, and Sarina knows her mother doesn't mean to hurt her. But things just seem to get harder the longer her family stays in this country so far from home. On good days, when Sarina's mother is feeling better, she sets her daughter free. On bad days, Sarina dangles her feet in the puddles and mud until dusk, waiting for someone to rescue her, wishing for the one thing her mother fears most: a friend. Then one day Sarina meets Boima, a Liberian boy, and he becomes Sarina's cherished secret. He takes her to places outside her dirty yard, and shows her the ocean, the trees, and the people of Liberia. Together they discover what friendship really means ... and that there is a world of joy, hunger, and hope waiting just beyond the mango tree. 2000-2001 Georgia's Picture Storybook Award & Georgia's Children's Book Award Masterlist

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what language is spoken in liberia: Cantonese: Since the 19th Century Hung-nin Samuel Cheung, ONE OF THE MOST SPOKEN DIALECTS in China, Southeast Asia, and globally, Cantonese was nevertheless deemed a local dialect enjoying little prestige among the intellectuals. Not much was recorded in official documents or gazetteers about the early history of Hong Kong. The Cantonese language and its origin remained much of a mystery until the mid-20th century when scholars started to accord it with increasing attention. Thanks to dedicated efforts of early missionaries, pedagogues, and linguists, we can now trace back the evolution of modern Cantonese since the 19th century— how differences in sounds, words, and grammar distinguish the old from contemporary speech today. In this book, Hung-nin Samuel Cheung, an acclaimed scholar on the study of Cantonese, offers profound insights to various firsthand century-old materials including language manuals, Bible translations, and maps of Hong Kong, with findings that will be useful for ongoing efforts to study the development of the Cantonese language that has gone through many rounds of incredible and, at times, dramatic changes during the last two hundred years.

what language is spoken in liberia: The Language Warrior's Manifesto Anton Treuer, 2020-02 A clarion call to action, incorporating powerful stories of failure and success, that points the way for all who seek to preserve indigenous languages.

what language is spoken in liberia: Official Language Designation Sujit Choudhry and Erin C. Houlihan, 2021-04-29 Modern constitutions typically contain a variety of provisions on language. They may designate one or more official languages, each with a different kind of legal status. Constitutions may also create language rights, usually held by minority-language speakers, granting groups and individuals the right to communicate with, and receive services from, the

government in their native tongue. In systems of multi-level governance, constitutions may vest the authority to designate official language(s) for each order of government. This Primer addresses the role of language in constitutional design, and the key considerations, implications and potential challenges that arise in multilingual states. It discusses the range of claims around language as a constitutional issue, and the potential consequences of successfully addressing these claims—or failing to do so.

what language is spoken in liberia: The Fall of Language in the Age of English Minae Mizumura, 2015-01-06 Winner of the Kobayashi Hideo Award, *The Fall of Language in the Age of English* lays bare the struggle to retain the brilliance of one's own language in this period of English-language dominance. Born in Tokyo but raised and educated in the United States, Minae Mizumura acknowledges the value of a universal language in the pursuit of knowledge yet also embraces the different ways of understanding offered by multiple tongues. She warns against losing this precious diversity. Universal languages have always played a pivotal role in advancing human societies, Mizumura shows, but in the globalized world of the Internet, English is fast becoming the sole common language of humanity. The process is unstoppable, and striving for total language equality is delusional—and yet, particular kinds of knowledge can be gained only through writings in specific languages. Mizumura calls these writings texts and their ultimate form literature. Only through literature and, more fundamentally, through the diverse languages that give birth to a variety of literatures, can we nurture and enrich humanity. Incorporating her own experiences as a writer and a lover of language and embedding a parallel history of Japanese, Mizumura offers an intimate look at the phenomena of individual and national expression.

what language is spoken in liberia: Multilingualism John C. Maher, 2017 John C. Maher explains why societies everywhere have become more multilingual, despite the disappearance of hundreds of the world languages. He considers our notion of language as national or cultural identities, and discusses why nations cluster and survive around particular languages even as some territories pursue autonomy or nationhood.

what language is spoken in liberia: Tamil David Shulman, 2016-09-26 Spoken by eighty million people in South Asia and a diaspora that stretches across the globe, Tamil is one of the great world languages, and one of the few ancient languages that survives as a mother tongue for so many speakers. David Shulman presents a comprehensive cultural history of Tamil—language, literature, and civilization—emphasizing how Tamil speakers and poets have understood the unique features of their language over its long history. Impetuous, musical, whimsical, in constant flux, Tamil is a living entity, and this is its biography. Two stories animate Shulman's narrative. The first concerns the evolution of Tamil's distinctive modes of speaking, thinking, and singing. The second describes Tamil's major expressive themes, the stunning poems of love and war known as Sangam poetry, and Tamil's influence as a shaping force within Hinduism. Shulman tracks Tamil from its earliest traces at the end of the first millennium BCE through the classical period, 850 to 1200 CE, when Tamil-speaking rulers held sway over southern India, and into late-medieval and modern times, including the deeply contentious politics that overshadow Tamil today. Tamil is more than a language, Shulman says. It is a body of knowledge, much of it intrinsic to an ancient culture and sensibility. "Tamil" can mean both "knowing how to love"—in the manner of classical love poetry—and "being a civilized person." It is thus a kind of grammar, not merely of the language in its spoken and written forms but of the creative potential of its speakers.

what language is spoken in liberia: Liberia Patricia Levy, Michael Spilling, Brett Griffin, 2018-04-15 The country of Liberia boasts a rich history and a vibrant culture. Founded as a home for former slaves and free blacks from the United States and the Caribbean, Liberia is unique among its African neighbors as the political, economic, and social structures of the country are derived from both American and African traditions. Detailed photographs and insightful sidebars accompany the text and allow the reader to learn about the challenges facing Liberia today, as well as the customs, cuisine, and artistic contributions of the Liberian people.

what language is spoken in liberia: Liberia , 1957

what language is spoken in liberia: *Ama, a Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade* Manu Herbstein, 2018-01-05 I am a human being; I am a woman; I am a black woman; I am an African. Once I was free; then I was captured and became a slave; but inside me, here and here, I am still a free woman. During a period of four hundred years, European slave traders ferried some 12 million enslaved Africans across the Atlantic. In the Americas, teaching a slave to read and write was a criminal offense. When the last slaves gained their freedom in Brazil, barely a thousand of them were literate. Hardly any stories of the enslaved and transported Africans have survived. This novel is an attempt to recreate just one of those stories, one story of a possible 12 million or more. Lawrence Hill created another in *The Book of Negroes* (Someone Knows my Name in the U.S.) and, more recently, Yaa Gyasi has done the same in *Homegoing*. Ama occupies center stage throughout this novel. As the story opens, she is sixteen. Distant drums announce the death of her grandfather. Her family departs to attend the funeral, leaving her alone to tend her ailing baby brother. It is 1775. Asante has conquered its northern neighbor and exacted an annual tribute of 500 slaves. The ruler of Dagbon dispatches a raiding party into the lands of the neighboring Bekpokpam. They capture Ama. That night, her lover, Itsho, leads an attack on the raiders' camp. The rescue bid fails. Sent to collect water from a stream, Ama comes across Itsho's mangled corpse. For the rest of her life she will call upon his spirit in time of need. In Kumase, the Asante capital, Ama is given as a gift to the Queen-mother. When the adolescent monarch, Osei Kwame, conceives a passion for her, the regents dispatch her to the coast for sale to the Dutch at Elmina Castle. There the governor, Pieter de Bruyn, selects her as his concubine, dressing her in the elegant clothes of his late Dutch wife and instructing the obese chaplain to teach her to read and write English. De Bruyn plans to marry Ama and take her with him to Europe. He makes a last trip to the Dutch coastal outstations and returns infected with yellow fever. On his death, his successor rapes Ama and sends her back to the female dungeon. Traumatized, her mind goes blank. She comes to her senses in the canoe which takes her and other women out to the slave ship, *The Love of Liberty*. Before the ship leaves the coast of Africa, Ama instigates a slave rebellion. It fails and a brutal whipping leaves her blind in one eye. The ship is becalmed in mid-Atlantic. Then a fierce storm cripples it and drives it into the port of Salvador, capital of Brazil. Ama finds herself working in the fields and the mill on a sugar estate. She is absorbed into slave society and begins to adapt, learning Portuguese. Years pass. Ama is now totally blind. Clutching the cloth which is her only material link with Africa, she reminisces, dozes, falls asleep. A short epilogue brings the story up to date. The consequences of the slave trade and slavery are still with us. Brazilians of African descent remain entrenched in the lower reaches of society, enmeshed in poverty. "This is story telling on a grand scale," writes Tony Simões da Silva. "In *Ama*, Herbstein creates a work of literature that celebrates the resilience of human beings while denouncing the inscrutable nature of their cruelty. By focusing on the brutalization of Ama's body, and on the psychological scars of her experiences, Herbstein dramatizes the collective trauma of slavery through the story of a single African woman. Ama echoes the views of writers, historians and philosophers of the African diaspora who have argued that the phenomenon of slavery is inextricable from the deepest foundations of contemporary western civilization." *Ama, a Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, won the 2002 Commonwealth Writers Prize for the Best First Book.

what language is spoken in liberia: *Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea* C. Patrick Burrowes, 2016-12-09 *Between the Kola Forest and the Salty Sea* reveals the long-hidden story of those who lived in the region before Liberia was created. It draws on oral traditions, archaeological digs, historical linguistics, studies of cultural patterns embedded in material culture, regional and continental histories, and biological anthropology.

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speaking a foreign language. If learning a language in high school left you bruised, with a sense that there was no way you can learn another language, *How to Learn a Foreign Language* will restore your sense of hope. In simple, straightforward terms, Dr. Pimsleur will help you learn grammar (seamlessly), vocabulary, and how to practice pronunciation (and come out sounding like a native). The key is the simplicity and directness of Pimsleur's approach to a daunting subject, breaking it down piece by piece, demystifying the process along the way. Dr. Pimsleur draws on his own language learning trials and tribulations offering practical advice for overcoming the obstacles so many of us face. Originally published in 1980, *How to Learn a Foreign Language* is now available on the 50th anniversary of Dr. Pimsleur's publication of the first of his first audio courses that embodied the concepts and methods found here. It's a fascinating glimpse into the inner workings of the mind of this amazing pioneer of language learning.

what language is spoken in liberia: *Race and Reunion* David W. BLIGHT, 2009-06-30 No historical event has left as deep an imprint on America's collective memory as the Civil War. In the war's aftermath, Americans had to embrace and cast off a traumatic past. David Blight explores the perilous path of remembering and forgetting, and reveals its tragic costs to race relations and America's national reunion.

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what language is spoken in liberia: *Memory Speaks* Julie Sedivy, 2021-10-12 From an award-winning writer and linguist, a scientific and personal meditation on the phenomenon of language loss and the possibility of renewal. As a child Julie Sedivy left Czechoslovakia for Canada, and English soon took over her life. By early adulthood she spoke Czech rarely and badly, and when her father died unexpectedly, she lost not only a beloved parent but also her firmest point of connection to her native language. As Sedivy realized, more is at stake here than the loss of language: there is also the loss of identity. Language is an important part of adaptation to a new culture, and immigrants everywhere face pressure to assimilate. Recognizing this tension, Sedivy set out to understand the science of language loss and the potential for renewal. In *Memory Speaks*, she takes on the psychological and social world of multilingualism, exploring the human brain's capacity to learn—and forget—languages at various stages of life. But while studies of multilingual experience provide resources for the teaching and preservation of languages, Sedivy finds that the challenges facing multilingual people are largely political. Countering the widespread view that linguistic pluralism splinters loyalties and communities, Sedivy argues that the struggle to remain connected to an ancestral language and culture is a site of common ground, as people from all backgrounds can recognize the crucial role of language in forming a sense of self. Distinctive and timely, *Memory Speaks* combines a rich body of psychological research with a moving story at once personal and universally resonant. As citizens debate the merits of bilingual education, as the world's less dominant languages are driven to extinction, and as many people confront the pain of language loss, this is badly needed wisdom.

what language is spoken in liberia: *The River Is Rising* Patricia Jabbeh Wesley, 2023-08-15 Patricia Jabbeh Wesley and her family fled their native country after suffering tremendous privations and violence during the bloody Liberian Civil War at the end of the 20th Century. These poems are more than the story of one woman who carried her children over dead bodies in the streets where she lived, who fled bombs and constant gunfire, who was locked with her daughters in an internment camp where she witnessed every kind of crime against women. Wesley did more than survive. She helped other women. She wrote. *The River Is Rising* is more than a collection of poems, it is a story of family, customs, struggle, survival, witness, and love. Originally published by Autumn House Press in 2007, Press 53 returns this important book to print as part of its Silver CONcho Poetry Series, edited by Pamela Uschuk and William Pitt Root.

what language is spoken in liberia: *Language Decline and Death in Africa* Herman Batibo, 2005-01-01 The aim of this book is to inform both scholars and the public about the nature and extent of the problem of language decline and death in Africa. It resourcefully traces the main

causes and circumstances of language endangerment, the processes and extent of language shift and death, and the consequences of language loss to the continent's rich linguistic and cultural heritage. The book outlines some of the challenges that have emerged out of the situation.

what language is spoken in liberia: Mighty Be Our Powers Leymah Gbowee, 2011 Mighty be their Powers chronicles the unthinkable violence Leymah Gbowee has faced throughout her life and the peace she has helped to broker by empowering her country women and others around the world to take action and change History.

what language is spoken in liberia: *Cracking the Code* John Mark Sheppard, 2013-05-22 *Cracking the Code: The Confused Traveler's Guide to Liberian English* is the brainchild of John Mark Sheppard, who moved with his family from the United States to Liberia when he was just three years old. He learned Liberian English as a second language as he spent his childhood and teen years immersed in the Liberian culture. After college in the United States, John Mark returned to Liberia and began a more formal study of Liberia's history, customs and languages. In this truly fascinating book, John Mark combines his training in linguistics with an extensive knowledge of the language he has grown to love. Besides the more than one thousand helpful explanations of specific words or phrases, *Cracking the Code: The Confused Traveler's Guide to Liberian English* includes a fascinating history of the people groups and languages of the region, a pronunciation guide, a list of Liberian proverbs and practical, how-to-avoid-embarrassing-yourself advice for Westerners.

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