

The Sekpele language and people

Sekpele is spoken by the Likpe people of Ghana's Volta Region. Approximately 16-18,000 Likpe people live in the Hohoe District. The nine primary towns can be reached either by a road that leaves Hohoe going to Bakua or the road that leaves Hohoe going north to Ayoma-Buem. All nine towns lie within 7-15 miles northeast of Hohoe. The boundaries of the Likpe traditional land include the mountain ridge that makes up the Togo border to the east and the Lolobi and Hohoe peoples to the west. They share a common boundary with Buem to the north and the Ewe to the south. The language spoken is known either as Sekpele or Sekua and the people as Bakpele or Bakua. The Central Language Committee has agreed to refer to the language as Sekpele.

The major dialect differences within Sekpele are predictable. Sekua is spoken in the most southerly towns of Bakua and Todome and uses both voiced and voiceless consonants. Sekpele, with only voiceless consonants, is spoken by the seven northern towns. There are also minor but recognisable differences between the northern towns of Mate, Bala and the lowland towns around Agbozome.

The major second language of the area is Ewe, a regional trade language, spoken to some extent by about 75% of the population. There is also some knowledge of Akan (Akwapem Twi), especially among the older people of the community.