

Akpafu-Lolobi Language Community (adapted from text by Andy Ring)

Siwu, the name of the language of Akpafu-Lolobi, belongs to the Kwa subgroup of the Niger-Congo subfamily and specifically to the Proto-Tano division (Stewart 1989). Siwu is related most closely to Lelele, Siwu, and Sekpele. These form part of an area grouping that has been called the Ghana-Togo Mountain Languages or Remnant Languages. More than 18,000¹ Siwu-speaking people live in the Hohoe District of Ghana's Volta Region, with an estimated total of as many as 25,000 if those living outside the traditional area are included.

The people of Akpafu-Lolobi are known internally as Mawu. The two represent different Traditional Councils areas within the Volta Region and they also represent two mutually intelligible dialect areas of Siwu. Mawu people live in the Hohoe District of Ghana's Volta Region, in seven towns, three along the Hohoe-Jasikan road (the Akpafu towns of Mempeasem, Todzi and Odomi) two on the road from Hohoe to Ayoma-Buem (Ashiambi and Kumasi), one between Kumasi and Likpe-Agbozome (Hunyasem), and one between Ayoma and Teteman-Buem (Adorkor). All seven Mawu towns lie within 7-15 miles north of Hohoe.

The boundaries of the Akpafu and Lolobi traditional lands include the mountains north of Santrokofi and the ridges up to the forest preserve east of Nkonya. They share a common boundary with Bowiri and Buem to the north, Likpe to the east and the Ewe (for Lolobi) and Santrokofi (for Akpafu) to the south. Siwu spoken in the two traditional areas, Akpafu and Lolobi, are mutually intelligible, though recognizable by speakers from the other towns. The major second language of the area is Ewe, a regional trade language, spoken to some extent (as in other related language communities) by about 75% of the population. There is also some knowledge of Akan (Akwapem Twi), especially among the older people of the community.

¹ Based on the last ethnic census of 1960 with a conservative growth rate of 2.6%. Andrew Ring, 1981. *Ewe as a second language: A sociolinguistic survey of Ghana's central Volta Region. Research Review 12&13;IAS, Legon.*