

SOGA

LANGUAGE & CULTURE

Lusoga is a Bantu language in the Niger-Congo classification. It is also sometimes referred to as Olusoga. Lusoga refers to the language itself whereas the term Soga is a general term that encompasses the people, language and culture. Some of the main dialects are Lutenga, Lulamogi, Lusiki, Lugabula. Like most Bantu languages, Lusoga is tonal.

Although the Basoga people are predominantly Christian in contemporary times, nuances from their traditional religion are still prevalent. Traditional Basoga religion is based on Lubaale, the Supreme Being and God. Humans were seen as messengers of Lubaale, ancestors, or deities. Some of the important Basoga deities are *Mukama* the creator deity, *Jingo* the public god who attended to the needs of the people and Bilungo, the god of plagues. Basoga traditionally relied heavily on Bachwezi, humans who served as mediums with the spirit world.

Basoga people regard music highly in their culture. Music is a key component of Kisoga (Soga culture and tradition). Two instruments are central to Basoga music—the Basoga Lyire and Akindinda. The Basoga Lyire is made of lizard skin, wood and strings. The *Akindada* is a type of xylophone. Its tradition dates back over 200 years. The keys are made of wood and are strung together with fiber.

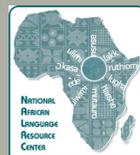
BASIC SOGA PHRASES

Balio	general greeting
Wasuze otyanno ssebo	morning greeting (to a man)
Wasuze otyanno nnyabo	morning greeting (to a woman)
Osiibye otyanno ssebo	afternoon and evening greeting (to a man)

Bulungi, nnyabo	reply to Wasuze otyanno and Osiibye otyanno (to a woman)
oliotya	How are you?
Tusangaire okukubona	You are welcome
Webale	Thank you
Nsangaire okukubona!	I am happy to see you!
báába	Daddy, Father
búkálámu	fine, well, good
okúbámbá	stretch
Inhábo/ isébo	madam/ sir

STUDYING SOGA IN THE UNITED STATES

Please contact the National African Language Resource Center, or check the NALRC web site at <http://www.nalrc.indiana.edu/>



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MAN AND WOMAN IN BUSOGA ATTIRE

NATIONAL AFRICAN LANGUAGE
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WHO SPEAKS SOGA

The Basoga people are believed to be the descendants of Bantu peoples who originated in present day Cameroon and left the area via a series of large-scale migrations several thousand years ago. When the descendants of the Soga people finally arrived in their present day location (Busoga) in the 14th century, they mingled with Batooro, Baganda, Bagisu, Langi and Iteso peoples. Many of these groups were also Bantu peoples who were the earliest inhabitants of the land. The Basoga people were also heavily influenced by the Luo people, as they migrated to Busoga land and ruled Bunyoro.

Traditionally, the Basoga people lived in a politically decentralized and diffuse region. They were not united under a single leader, but rather small clan units based on lineage and ruled by chiefs (Mutaka). The Mutakas were in charge of all of the clan's land, and every other clan member was a Mugiha, or tenant. The Basoga have always been agriculturalists. Men generally were responsible for cash crops such as coffee, cotton, peanuts and corn. They also

POSSESSIVE PREFIXES

mu - person (singular), e.g. musoga = native of Busoga land

bu - land, e.g. Busoga = land of the Soga

lu - language, e.g. Lusoga = language of the Soga

ba - people, e.g. Basoga = the Soga people

ki - customs or traditions, e.g. kisoga = describes religious tradition or culture common to the Soga people.

WHY STUDY SOGA?

Lusoga is a language spoken in Uganda by close to 2.1 million people. It is a major trade language within the Iganga, Kaliro, Kamuli, Mayuge, and Jinja districts in the central and southern regions of the country. Furthermore, the Basoga people are the fourth largest ethnic group in Uganda and comprise approximately 8% of the country's population.

Lusoga language is taught in educational institutions from the primary school to university level and can also be heard on several radio and television programs in the region. Students interested in the African languages and literature, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, international development, African art, non-governmental organization (NGO) work, government work, or African history will find Lusoga very worthwhile to study.



Showing financial clout: Gifts to the bride's family are a must in Busoga



Bigwala, gourd trumpet



Group of maids and bride presenting themselves before the groom



Traditional Beer, delivered traditionally at a marriage ceremony in Busoga.