

The Central African language cluster Ukhwejo: geographic localization and linguistic identification

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The presentation forms part of the project “The Central African language cluster Ukhwejo: geographic localization and linguistic identification” funded by the Swedish Research Council. Ukhwejo has recently been ‘discovered’ and it is for the first time mentioned in Ethnologue in 2005. In Ethnologue, Ukhwejo is suggested to consist of four dialects. It is spoken by approximately 2000 people living in villages scattered in the multilingual south-western Central African Republic. Data have been collected in field trips, sociolinguistic as well as linguistic. Preliminary results will locate the villages where the varieties are spoken. The varieties will be linguistically identified, here, in particular, with respect to their vocabularies, based on a Swadesh wordlist. A comparison between the vocabularies has been made by measuring the cognate strength of the word pairs. As a tool for the analysis, the free downloadable programme WordServ 6.0 has been used. There are some indications that all varieties are not dialects of the same language but rather distinct languages.