

Linguistic fieldwork in the Lower Congo Province (DRC): summer 2012

From 4 August until 14 September 2012 a team of four UGent researchers carried out linguistic fieldwork on Kikongo varieties in the Lower Congo.

Objectives

We took off for the DRC with the following objectives:

- Collect lexical and grammatical data on poorly known varieties of Kikongo, with a focus on the Eastern and Western extremities of the Lower Congo Province;
- Discover hitherto unknown varieties;
- Gather information on the geographical distribution of the Kikongo dialects.

Types of data collected

For each of the varieties studied, we tried to gather as much data as possible:

- Basic vocabulary (the Swadesh-100 list);
- Vocabulary to check sound correspondences;
- Culinary vocabulary;
- Basic grammatical information by means of a translation questionnaire with special attention to verbal derivation and tense/aspect;
- Information Structure by means of a dedicated questionnaire with special attention to focus;
- Text corpora (both oral and written).

Results

We succeeded in achieving the following results:

- **Discovery of four** Kikongo varieties which were hitherto (almost) unknown in the scientific literature: Cizali, Cimbala, Cilinji, and Cizobe;
- **Documentation of six more** poorly documented or undocumented Kikongo varieties: Kimbata, Kimbeko, Kinkanu, Kimpangu, Ciwoyo, and Kisolongo;
- Collection of hitherto **inaccessible text corpora** for several other Kikongo varieties.

Acknowledgments

- **Wilfried Ntunda Nzeza** (ISP Mbanza Ngungu) was of great help during our fieldwork on eastern Kikongo varieties in Ngidinga.
- **Zephyrin Pinzi** was a magnificent language assistant during our fieldwork in the western part of the Lower Congo Province (Boma and elsewhere).
- We also thank **all the informants** who were willing to work on their language with us.



The four of us in Boma....



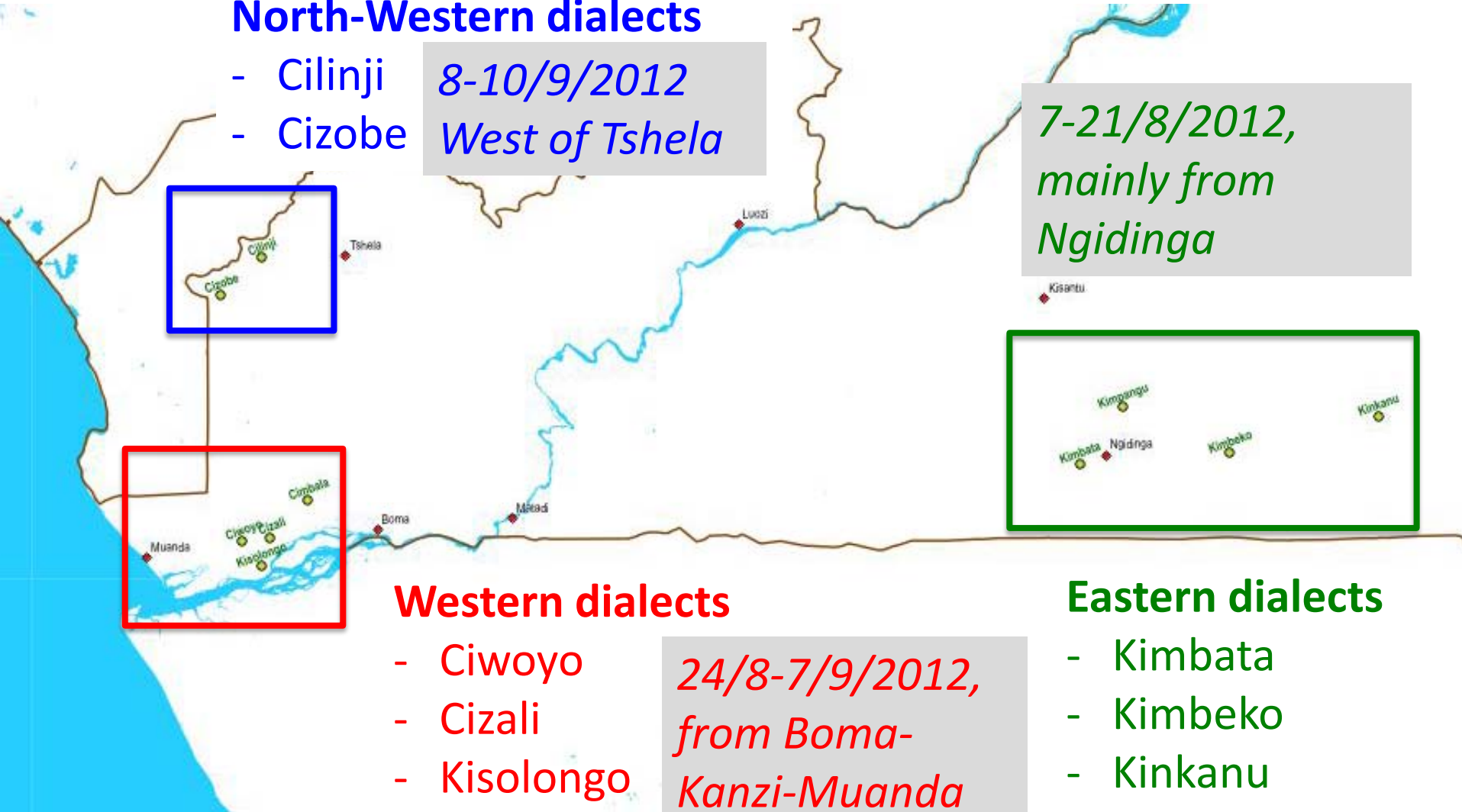
...working until late at night!

Location of the fieldwork

North-Western dialects

- Cilinji 8-10/9/2012
- Cizobe *West of Tshela*

7-21/8/2012,
mainly from
Ngidinga



Western dialects

- Ciwoyo 24/8-7/9/2012,
from Boma-
- Cizali *Kanzi-Muanda*
- Kisolongo
- Cimbala

Eastern dialects

- Kimbata
- Kimbeko
- Kinkanu
- Kimpangu

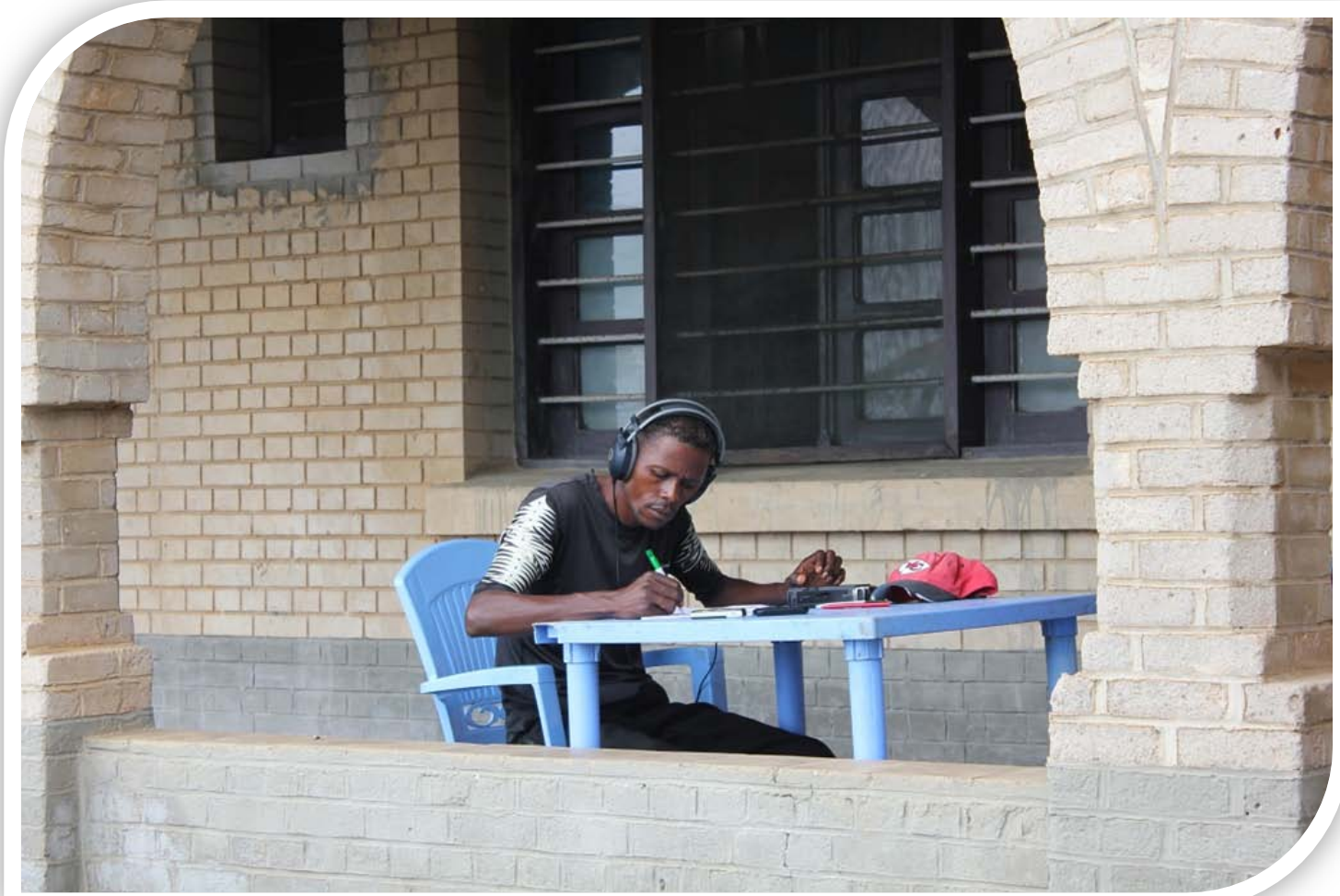
Corpus collection in Mbanza-Ngungu



Wilfried Ntunda Nzeza getting us to work on Kimpangu



Zephyrin Pinzi transcribing a mass (various Kikongo dialects)



Recording stories in Cilinji



Mapping Cizobe



In search of Kisolongo speakers



Documenting pottery making in Nsangi Binsu



Working on Kinkanu



Working on Cimbala



On the road ...

