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Controlling for genetic bias and controlling for genesis bias in typological samples

This talk will discuss how Creole Languages are treated within mainstream world-wide typology of the WALS-type and argue that some problematic assumptions with regard to the genesis of Creole languages lead to an underrepresentation of these languages. Basically, Creole Languages end up in the category 'Others', together with e.g. sign languages. I will discuss alternatives ('substrate genealogy', 'superstrate genealogy', 'Radical Creole genealogy', 'monogenetic genealogy', 'polygenetic genealogy') and highlight the problems one encounters with these models when it comes to sampling. It appears that there is no suitable way to accommodate Creole languages under the current assumptions of sampling theory.

There is no doubt that Creole languages are very important for our understanding of how language works in general, possibly more so than non-Creoles. In order to give them pride of place, linguistic samples should be controlled for an additional variable next to a) language family and b) areas, namely c) contact in genesis. This variable is orthogonal to 'families' and 'areas' and distinguishes the degree of contact in the emergence of the language. As a working model, I distinguish 'very-low contact' (Icelandic), 'normal contact' (German), 'high contact' (Afrikaans), and 'extreme contact' (Jamaican). This makes it possible to have independent values for genealogy and genesis, disentangling the influence of the parents ('genetic bias') from the influence of the genesis scenario ('genesis bias'). While Kinubi might not be a very good example of Semitic, Bantu, or Creole, it is sure that no one would object to it being put in the pool of Semitic extreme contact languages. Analogous arguments can be made for Haitian, Sri Lanka Malay, Media Lengua and the like. All of these have in common that they do not fit in the model currently employed in linguistic sampling, but the proposed amendment will allow for them to be treated like any other language, a status they deserve as native languages of human speakers.