

DGfS-CNRS Summer School on Linguistic Typology  
Leipzig 15 August–3 September 2010

# Creole Languages in a World-Wide Perspective

SUSANNE MICHAELIS

Max-Planck-Institut für evolutionäre Anthropologie & Universität Gießen  
Class 3, 25 August 2010

## 1. Comparison between *APiCS* and *WALS*

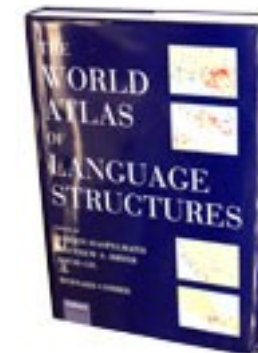
### 1.1 A brief introduction to:

*The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS)*

*edited by*

Martin Haspelmath, Matthew S. Dryer, David Gil, and Bernard  
Comrie

*Interactive Reference Tool by*



Hans-Jörg Bibiko

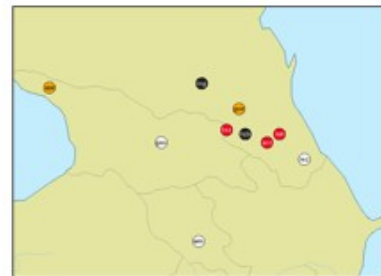
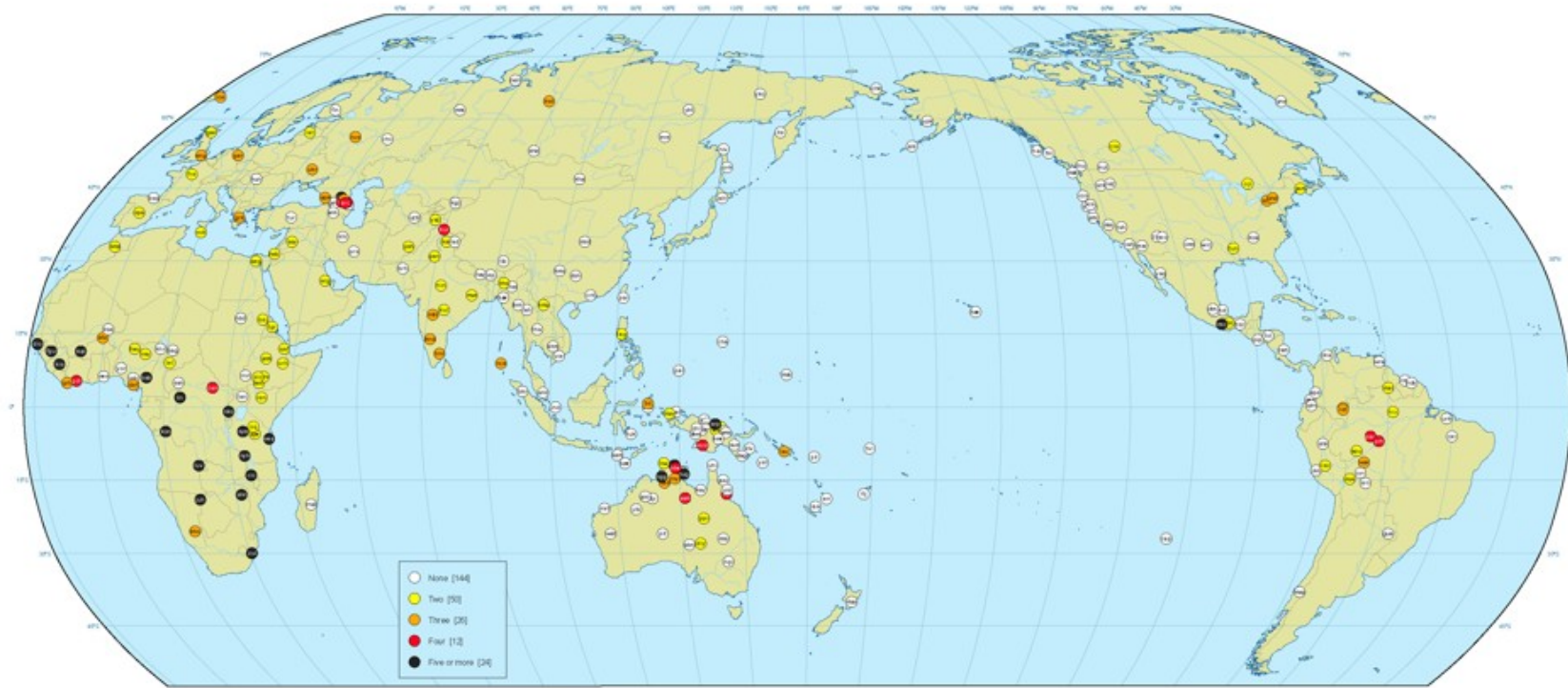
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005

## 1.2 What is *WALS*?

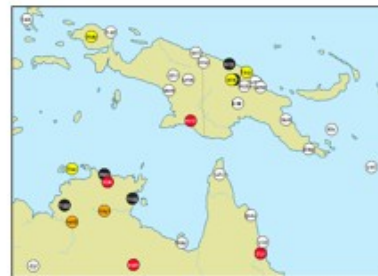
- a book: an atlas with 142 world maps, showing languages as dots
- an interactive electronic database and map-generating tool (on CD-ROM)
- an indispensable reference tool for comparative linguistics
- a visualization of what we know about the structural diversity of the world's languages, comprehensible to anyone who can read maps

# 30 Number of Genders

Greville G. Corbett



Caucasus



New Guinea and northern Australia



southern Mexico and Central America



northwestern South America

## 1.3 What do you find in *WALS* ?

- 142 features/maps/chapters:

Phonology	19	(e.g. Ian Maddieson, Harry van der Hulst)
Morphology	10	(e.g. Johanna Nichols)
Nominal Categories	28	(e.g. Grev Corbett, M. Cysouw, M. Dryer)
Nominal Syntax	7	(e.g. Johanna Nichols, David Gil)
Verbal Categories	16	(e.g. Östen Dahl, J. van der Auwera)
Word Order	17	(Matthew Dryer)
Simple Clauses	24	(e.g. B. Comrie, A. Siewierska, M. Polinsky)
Complex Sentences	7	(e.g. Bernard Comrie, Sonia Cristofaro)
Lexicon	10	(e.g. Cecil Brown, Paul Kay, J. Nichols)
Others	4	(Ulrike Zeshan, Bernard Comrie, D. Gil)

- each chapter was contributed by a single author (or team of authors)

- data primarily based on published descriptions
- 2560 different languages
- on average, 398 languages per map (minimum: 35, maximum: 1370)
- *creole languages are seriously underrepresented!*
- altogether about 58.000 data points
- 6700 bibliographical references
  - > *WALS's Interactive Reference Tool*
- *WALS* is freely available online as of 2008 (<http://wals.info>)

### 3. How *APiCS* is different from *WALS*

- mode of collaboration:

*APiCS* --> each specialist fills in the feature questionnaire for one language of her/his expertise

*WALS* --> each typologist provides data for 200-500 languages with respect to one structural feature

- *APiCS* aims to replicate *WALS* features, with the goal of allowing comparison between creole languages and the world's languages
- 57 *WALS* features are also found in *APiCS* (often with finer distinctions)
- this also allows users to compare a pidgin/creole to its superstrate(s) and possible substrate(s);

- *APiCS* will give examples with interlinear glossing that illustrate the abstract value and make the selection why a particular value is chosen more transparent
- map projection: Atlantic-centered (not Pacific-centered like *WALS*) and equal-area projection
- blow-up maps for regions with high density of pidgins and creoles (Caribbean and West Africa; not yet available)
- in *WALS* interesting variation is often lumped under value 'other': *APiCS* tries to catch as much of the variation (within different languages) as possible, no forced choices --> multi-value features
- *WALS* lacks some features that are important for pidgins and creoles, e.g. focussing constructions

- Is expert-based typology an impossible task? No!

**Georg von der Gabelentz.** 1894. "Typologie der Sprachen, eine neue Aufgabe der Linguistik." *Indogermanische Forschungen* 4: 1-7:

Die Arbeit verlangt eine Kommission, und die Kommission verlangt ein bis ins Einzelste ausgearbeitetes Programm, und dies Programm verlangt mehr selbstentsagenden Gehorsam, als man von der Mehrzahl der Gelehrten erwarten darf. Doch solche Schwierigkeiten sind zu überwinden.

Unter dem Programme aber denke ich mir eine Art Fragebogen, der kategorienweise alle grammatischen Möglichkeiten erschöpft, so dass jede



Frage mit einem Ja oder Nein beantwortet ist. Eine solche Fragestellung ist schwierig für den Fragesteller selbst, manchmal auch für den Beantworter; aber Unmögliches wird keinem der Beteiligten zugemutet. (Gabelentz 1894:6)

The work needs a committee, and the committee needs a programme attending to every single particular, and this programme needs more self-denying obedience than can be expected from the majority of scholars. But such difficulties have to be overcome. I conceive of the programme as a kind of questionnaire which covers all grammatical possibilities category by category, with each question answerable by a yes or no. Framing such questions is difficult for those asking them and probably also those answering them; but nothing impossible will be asked of them.

#### **4. Ditransitive constructions: *APiCS* Feature 60, *WALS* Feature 105**

## 4.1 Ditransitive construction types (cf. Michaelis & Haspelmath 2003)

- constructions with verbs of transfer like 'give', 'send', and 'show' which require two objects, a Recipient (or receiver) and a Theme (or patient)
- class of ditransitive verbs does not comprise verbs like 'put', 'fill' or 'load', which in addition to a Theme role also have a Location role.
- three major constructions for expressing the Recipient and Theme of ditransitive verbs in creole languages.

**(i) Double-Object Construction** (Recipient and Theme are equally zero-marked)

(1) *Lea gave Teresa a mango.*

**(ii) Indirect-Object Construction** (Recipient is marked by a special preposition)

(2) *Lea gave the mango to Teresa.*

**(iii) Serial Verb Construction** (Recipient is preceded by a "serial verb")

(3) Nigerian Pidgin (Faraclas 1996: 75)

À      *tek*      *nayf*      *giv*      *yù.*  
1SG.SBJ   take   knife   give   2 SG.OBJ  
'I gave you the knife.'

## 4.2 Ditransitives in creoles

- in spontaneous spoken texts of creole and non-creole languages one has to look hard to find constructions with *two* overtly expressed objects
- most frequently only *one* overtly expressed object argument, the other object is topical and can be inferred from the context.

- serial verb construction: the three-place event ('give') is split up into two two-place subparts ('take', 'give'), every verb has just one object argument (see ex. 3):

(3) Seychelles Creole (Bollée & Rosalie 1994, Text 2)

<i>Mon</i>	<i>pran</i>	<i>en lit</i>	<i>mon</i>	<i>donn</i>	<i>Napoleon.</i>
1SG.SBJ	take	one liter	1SG.SBJ	give	Napoleon

'I took one liter and gave (it) to Napoleon.'

(second pronoun *mon* has to be repeated, single intonation contour)

#### 4.2.1 Double-Object Construction in creoles (DOC)

- neither Recipient nor Theme are marked

Seychelles Creole (F) (Bollée & Rosalie 1994, T,1)

(4) *Mon 'n donn Marcel en mang.*  
1SG.SBJ COMPL give Marcel a mango  
'I gave Marcel a mango.'

(5) (...) *ou donn li morso disik.*  
2SG.SBJ give 3SG.OBJ piece sugar  
'You gave him a piece of sugar.'

Angolar (P) (Maurer 1995:113)

(6) *Ê ra Têtêuga ãa kiba palaxu (...)*  
3SG give Tortue a piece palast  
'He gave a piece of his palast to Tortue.'

Fa d'Ambu (P) (Post to appear, cited after Bruyn et al. 1999:330)

(7) *Malía da pe-d'eli tabaku*  
Maria give father-3SG tobacco  
'Maria gave (the) tobacco to her father.'

St Lucia Creole (F) (Carrington 1984:102)

(8) *nu te baj zot kat gud*  
1PL PST give 2 PL four dollars  
'We had given you four dollars.'

Berbice Dutch Creole (D) (Kouwenberg 1994:394)

(9) *en kɛnɛ pi eni en gutu ka*  
one person give 3PL one thing NEG  
'Nobody gives them anything.'

Nigerian Pidgin (E) (Faraclas 1996:59)

(10) *A giv di man nyam.*  
1SG give the man yam  
'I gave the man yams.'

Ndyuka (E) (Huttar & Huttar 1994:158)

(11) *Meke mi gi en a goni.*

make 1SG give 3SG the gun  
'Let me give him the gun.'

## 4.2.2 Indirect-Object Construction in creoles (IOC)

- recipient is marked (e.g. preposition)

Tok Pisin (E) (Verhaar 1995:299)

(14) *boi i mas soim tupela han long em*  
boy AGR must show two hand to him  
'The boy must show his two hands to him.'

Papia Kristang (P) (Baxter 2012)

(15) *eli sa tiu ja bendé aké prau ku yo*  
3SG GEN uncle PFV sell that boat DAT 1SG  
'His uncle sold the boat to me'

### 4.2.3 Serial Verb Constructions in creoles

Nigerian Pidgin (E) (Faraclas 1996:58)

(16) *Im tek somting send mi.*  
3SG take something send me  
'(S)he gave something to me.'

Haitian Creole (F) (Lefebvre 1998:291)

(17) *Mwen pran liv bay Pòl.*  
1SG take book give Paul  
'I gave the book to Paul.'

- only one example in which the verb 'give' itself is part of a SVC:

Fa d'Ambu (P) (cited after Bruyn et al. 1999:331)

(18) *Amu da wan kuzu da bo.*  
1SG give ART thing give 2SG  
'I gave you something.'



What generalizations can be made over creole languages?

- (19) (a) "Most if not all creoles have 'dative-shift', that is, constructions in which an indirect-object Goal NP precedes a direct-object Theme NP."  
Bickerton 1995:1453
- (b) "The DOC is almost universally present" (339) in "creoles in general"  
(355) Bruyn et al. 1999

modified:

- (20) "The DOC is universally present in Atlantic and Indian Ocean creoles."  
Michaelis & Haspelmath 2003

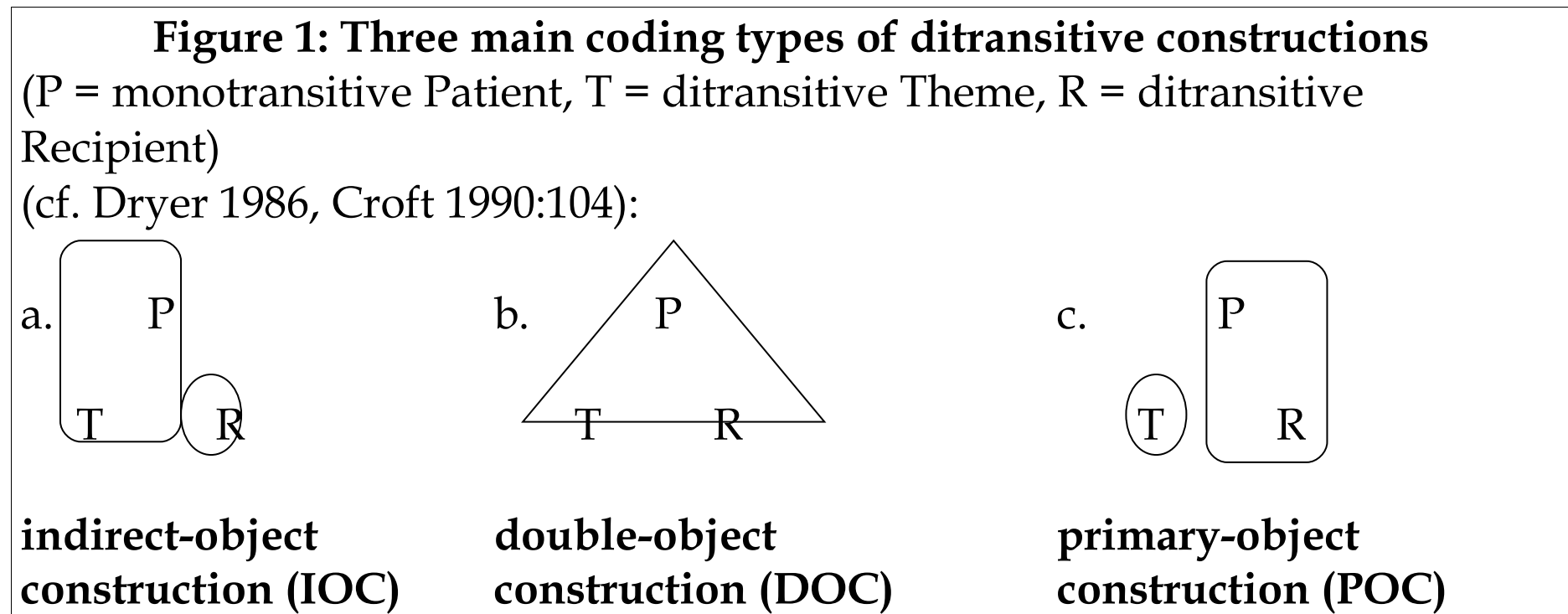
## *APiCS* Feature 60: Ditransitive Constructions

### 5. An innatist explanation

- Bruyn et al.: "DOCs are the unmarked option in Universal Grammar" (creolization scenario similar to Bickerton's Bioprogram Hypothesis)
- In Sranan and Negerhollands, DOCs are attested earlier than IOCs
- language acquisition data from English, Dutch, and French: DOCs are the default option for children acquiring these languages

## 6. Ditransitive constructions in the world's languages

- if DOC is "unmarked", it should be predominant in the world's languages by standard markedness criteria (cf. Greenberg 1966, Croft 1990, Ludwig 2001:8)
- ditransitive constructions in *WALS* (Haspelmath 2005)



- only flagging (= case-marking and adpositional marking) and indexing ( $\approx$  agreement) is taken into account, word order is disregarded

## 6.1 Indirect-Object Construction

(21) Korean (R & T flagged; T=P)

*Yong-i Mia-eykey kong-ul cwu-n-ta.*  
 Yong-NOM Mia-DAT ball-ACC give-PRES-DECL

'Yong gives a ball to Mia.'

(22) Jeli (Mande; Tröbs 1998:109) (only R flagged; T&P zero)

*yi kumaro soŋ na munu*  
 water cold give me to

'Give the cold water to me!'

## 6.2 Double-Object Construction

(23) Fyem (Niger-Congo, Nigeria; Nettle 1998:24) (R&T&P zero)

*taa ní Usmán borám*

3SG.PF give Usman maize

'He gave Usman maize.'

(24) Martuthunira (Australia) (R&T&P flagged)

*ngayu yungku-lha nganaju-u muyi-i murla-a*

I-NOM give-PST my-ACC dog-ACC meat-ACC

'I gave my dog meat.'

## 6.3 Primary-Object Construction (= POC) (cf. Dryer 1986)

(25) Chamorro (W. Austronesian, Guam) (R & T flagged; R=P)

*Ha na'i i patgon ni leche.*

he.ERG give ABS child OBL milk

'He gave the milk to the child.'

(26) Tok Pisin (Verhaar 1995:33) (only T flagged; R&P zero)

*God i soim yu long samting em i laik mekim*

God AGR show you PREP something 3SG AGR FUT do

'God has shown you what he is going to do.'

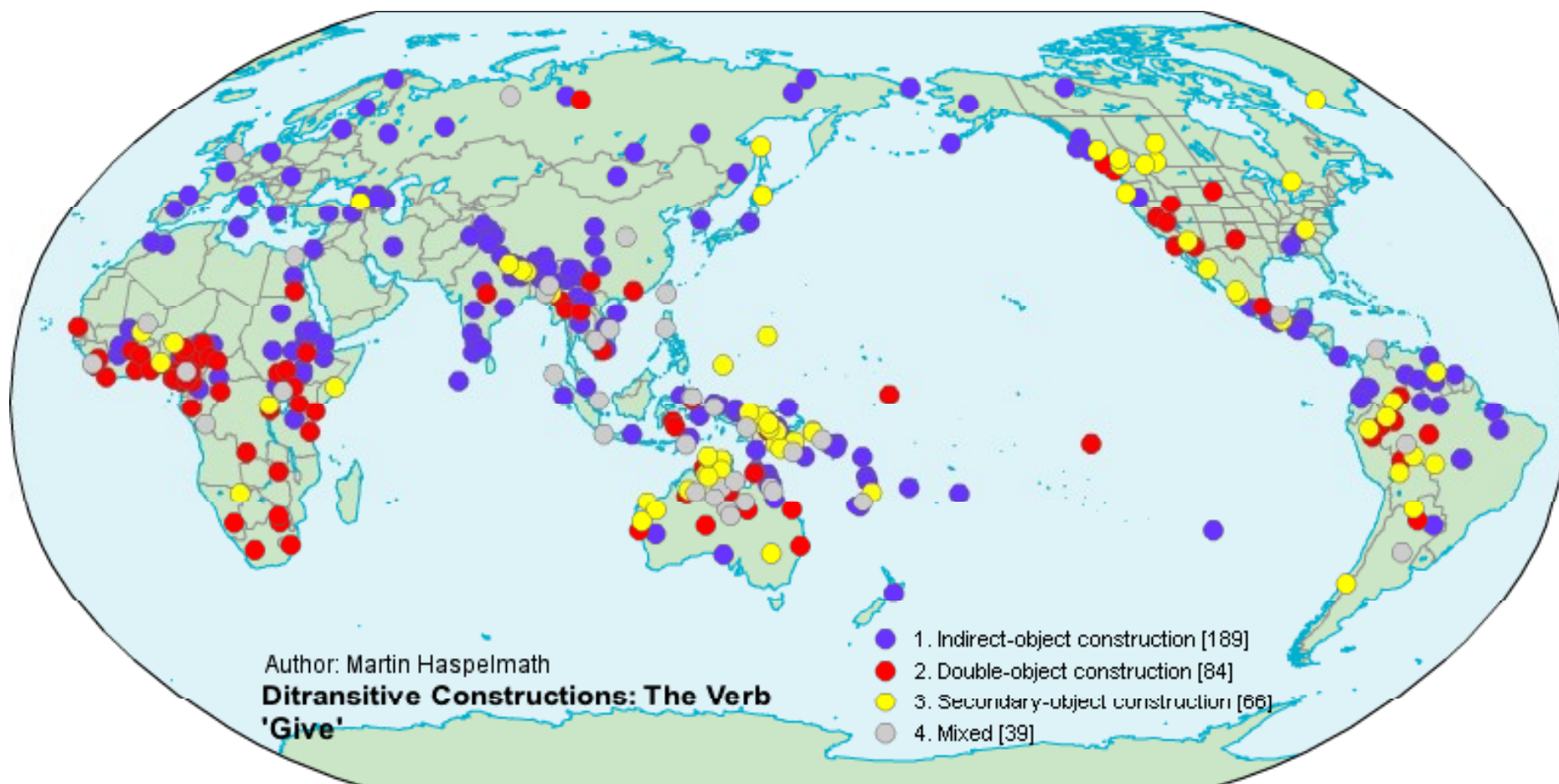
two further limitations:

- only the verb 'give' (because different verbs often behave differently)
- only constructions with full NPs (personal pronouns often have a different construction)

- 1. Indirect-object construction [189]
- 2. Double-object construction [84]
- 3. Secondary-object construction [66]
- 4. Mixed [39]

secondary-object construction = primary object construction

**WALS map "Ditransitive constructions", Haspelmath 2005**

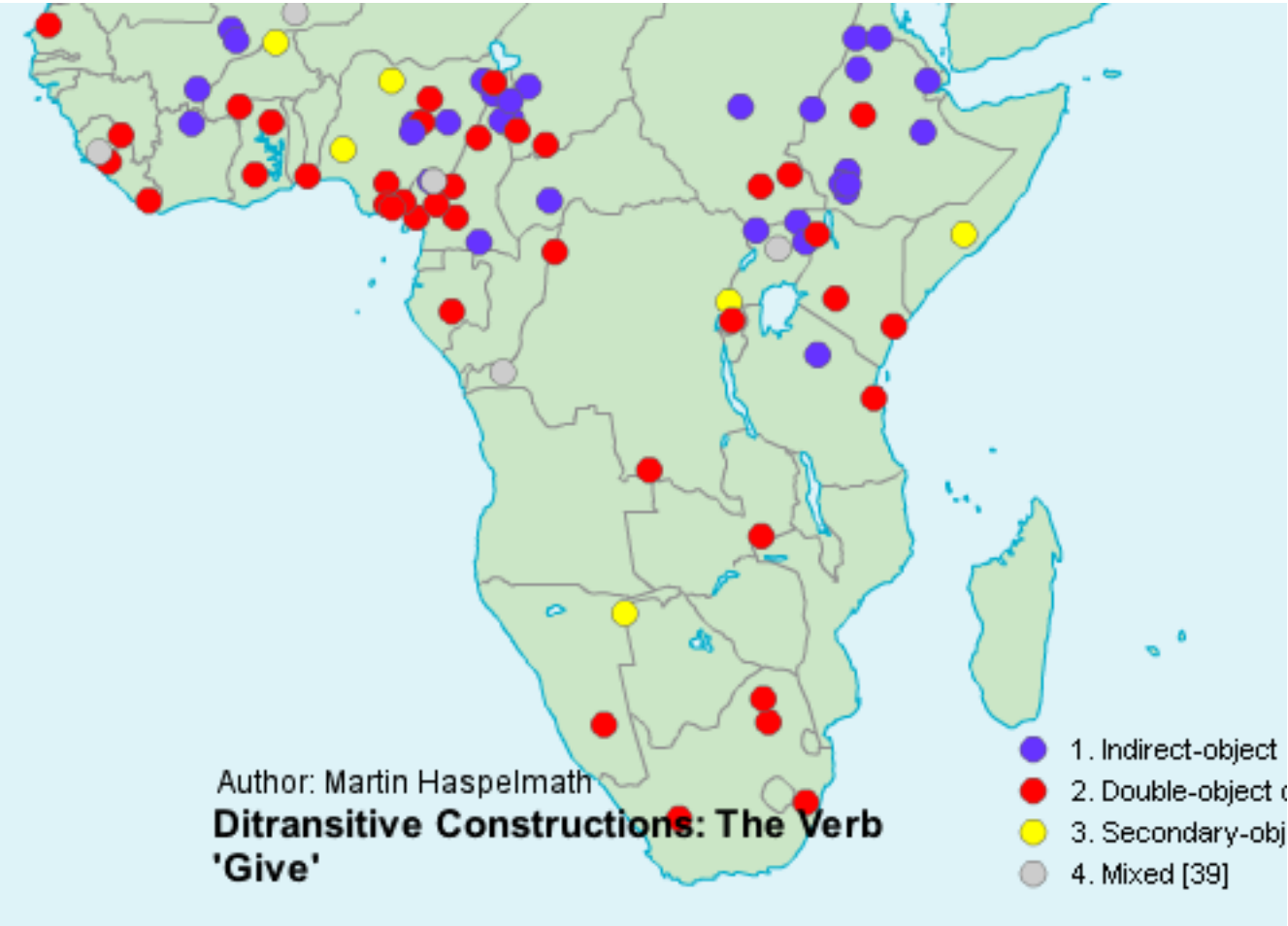


**Results:**

- IOC and DOC are very common; POC and Mixed occur sporadically
- if DOC and POC are lumped together, significant world-wide areal patterns emerge:
  - IOC: Eurasia (except Mainland South-East Asia),  
parts of Central and South America
  - DOC/POC: Australia, North America, most of sub-Saharan Africa
- striking new evidence for the view that there are continent-sized **large linguistic areas** (Dryer 1989)



# 7. Ditransitive constructions in African languages



## Results:

- in sub-Saharan Africa the clear majority of languages show the DOC
- only three areas where the IOC construction is predominant, and mostly restricted to a single language family

Ethiopia: Semitic & Cushitic

NE Nigeria & Cameroon: Chadic

Mali: Mande

- IOCs only in interior regions; coastal regions exclusively have DOCs

## 8. A tentative substratist explanation

- counterexamples to Bruyn et al.'s generalization: Indo-Portuguese, Malayo-Portuguese
- larger pattern:

**Table 1: Existence of DOCs in various creoles**

	Germanic lexifier creoles (English and Dutch)	Romance lexifier creoles (Portuguese/Spanish and French)
Atlantic	yes	yes
Indian Ocean		yes
Indonesia/Malaysia		no
India		no
Melanesia	no (yes)	no

African substrate languages: DOCs  
 Malay: IOC  
 Indian languages: IOC  
 Melanesian languages: largely IOC => **substrate explanation?**  
 Earlier: Koopman (1986) and Lefebvre (1998) for Haitian, Kihm (1995) for Tayo

## **8.1 Malayo-Portuguese and Indo-Portuguese, which do not have DOCs:**

### **IOC**

Malayo-Portuguese:

Malacca Portuguese Creole (Hancock 1975:211-236, cited after Bruyn et al. 337)  
 (= Papiamentu)

(27) *Yo da ku eli*  
 1sg give with him  
 'I give him.'

Batavia Creole (Malayo-Portuguese Creole; Maurer 2012)

(28) *Kantu kere da akel ondra kum yo*

if        want   give   the   honor   with   me  
'If you want to give the honor to me.'

Tugu Creole (P) (Java, cited after Bruyn et al. 337)

(29) *Iste figura yo bende ku ele*  
this picture 1SG sell with him  
'This picture I sold to him.'

Malay substrate:

Colloquial Malay (Riau Indonesian; David Gil, p.c.)

(30) *Kenapa David tak kasi ikan sama dia*  
why David NEG give fish with him/her  
'Why didn't you (David) give her the fish?'

Sri Lanka Portuguese Creole (Batticaloa Portuguese, cited after Bruyn et al. 1999:337)

(31) *E:w eli-p' diñe:ru ja:-dá:.*  
1SG 3SG.DAT money PST-give

'I gave money to him.'

Tamil substrate:

Batticaloa Tamil (cited after Bruyn et al. 1999:337)

(32) *Na:n avan-ukka calli-ya kuṭu-tt-an.*  
1SG 3SG-DAT money-ACC give-PST-CNC  
'I gave money to him.'

Diu Indo-Portuguese (Cardoso 2012)

(33) *Yo a da kriãs pə tɛtɛ.*  
1SG IRR.NPST give.INF child DAT aunt  
'I will give the children to (my) aunt.'

(Indo-Aryan substrate also has dative marking)

## 8.2 Melanesian Creoles, which do not have DOCs

## IOC

Tayo (F) (New Caledonia; Ehrhart 1993:169)

(34) *sola done fam pu lja*  
3PL give wife to him  
'They gave him a wife.'

(35) *i fo done lacheferi a vje-la*  
it have.to give chieftancy to old-this  
'You have to give the chieftancy to this old man.'

possible substrates for Tayo:

Nráa Drùbea (Melanesian; cited after Kihm 1995:248)

(36) *Kó pá nrè xì-re wââtu yò nrí*  
1SG ASS FUT give.ACT cloth to him/her  
'I will give her cloth.'

Tinrin (Melanesian; Osumi 1995:79)

- (37) *u hwari nrî ei rri*  
1SG sell 3SG DAT 3PL  
'I sold it to them.'

Solomon Islands Pijin (E) (Simon & Young 1978: 49; Angela Terrill, p.c.)

- (38) *Yu givim kaikai long hem*  
2SG give-TR food PREP him  
'Give him some food.'

possible substrate Solomon Islands Pijin:

Kwaio (Melanesian; Keesing 1985:30; cf. also Keesing 1988)

- (39) '*emeru meru kwate-aboo ba'ita fa-na*  
we 1PL give-3SG pig bigto-3SG  
'We gave him a big pig.'



Bislama (E) (Vanuatu; Tryon 1987:48)

(40) *Mi givim buk ia long Pita.*  
I give book this to Peter  
'I gave Peter that book.'

## 7. Conclusion

- a good case can be made for a substrate explanation of ditransitive constructions in creole languages
- the strongest evidence for substrate influence comes from features that are not only absent in the superstrate, but also rare in the world's languages. The DOC is in fact very common in the world's languages, but the IOC is about equally common. Still, the areal distribution of both constructions seems to be significant with respect to creole languages.

## References

- APiCS = Michaelis, Susanne & Maurer, Philippe & Haspelmath, Martin & Huber, Magnus (2012+), *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures (APiCS)*, Oxford: OUP.
- Bickerton, Derek (1995), "The syntax of creole languages", in: Jacobs, Joachim & von Stechow, Arnim & Sternefeld, Wolfgang & Vennemann, Theo (eds.) *Syntax: An international handbook of contemporary research*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1451-62.
- Bollée, Annegret & Rosalie, Marcel (1994), *Parol ek memwar. Récits de vie des Seychelles*, Hamburg: Buske.
- Bruyn, Adrienne & Muysken, Pieter & Verrips, Maaike (1999), "Double-Object Constructions in the Creole Languages: Development and Acquisition", in: DeGraff, Michel (ed.), *Language creation and language change*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 329-373.
- Carrington, Laurence D. (1984), *St. Lucia Creole. A descriptive analysis of its phonology and morpho-syntax*, Hamburg: Buske.
- Chaudenson, Robert (1974), *Le lexique du parler créole de la Réunion*, 2 vols., Paris: Champion.
- Croft, William (1990), *Typology and universals*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dryer, Matthew S. (1986), "Primary objects, secondary objects, and antidative," in: *Language* 62: 808-845.
- Dryer, Matthew (1989), "Large linguistic areas and language sampling", in: *Studies in Language* 13:257-92.

- Ehrhart, Sabine (1993), *Le créole français de St-Louis (le tayo) en Nouvelle-Calédonie*, Hamburg: Buske.
- Faraclas, Nicolas G. (1996), *Nigerian Pidgin*, London/New York: Routledge.
- Greenberg, Joseph H. (1966), *Language universals*, The Hague: Mouton.
- Haspelmath, Martin & Dryer, Matthew & Gil, David & Comrie, Bernard (Eds.) (2005), *The World Atlas of Language Structures*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Huttar, George L. & Huttar, Mary L. (1994), *Ndyka*, London/New York: Routledge.
- Keesing, Roger M. (1985), *Kwaio grammar*. (PL-B, 88.) Canberra: Australian National University.
- Keesing, Roger M. (1988), *Melanesian Pidgin and the Oceanic substrate*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Kihm, Alain (1995), "Tayo, the strange bird from New Caledonia: determiners and tense-aspect in Tayo and their implications for creolization theories", in: *JPCL* 10:2, 225-252.
- Koopman, Hilda (1986), „The Genesis of Haitian“, in: Muysken, Pieter & Smith, Norval (eds.), *Substrata versus Universals in Creole Genesis*, Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: Benjamins, 231-258.
- Kouwenberg Silvia (1994), *A grammar of Berbice Dutch Creole*, Berlin/New York: de Gruyter
- Lefebvre, Claire (1998), *Creole genesis and the acquisition of grammar. The case of Haitian creole*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ludwig, Ralph (1996), *Kreolsprachen zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit*, Tübingen: Narr.
- Ludwig, Ralph (2001), "Markiertheit", in: Haspelmath, M. & König, E. & Oesterreicher, W. & Raible, W. (eds.) *Language typology and language universals: An international handbook*. Vol. I, 400-419. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Maurer, Philippe (1995), *L'angolar. Un créol eafro-portuguais parlé à São Tomé*, Hamburg: Buske.
- Michaelis, Susanne & Haspelmath, Martin (2003), "Ditransitive constructions: Creole languages in

- a cross-linguistic perspective." *Creolica* 2003-04-23 (www.creolica.net).
- Michaelis, Susanne & Maurer, Philippe & Haspelmath, Martin & Huber, Magnus (2012+), *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures (APiCS)*, Oxford: OUP.
- Nettle, Daniel (1998), *The Fyem language of northern Nigeria*. Munich: Lincom Europa.
- Osumi, Midori (1995), *Tinrin grammar*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Parkvall, Mikael (2000), *Out of Africa. African influences in Atlantic Creoles*, London: Battlebridge Publications.
- Siegel, Jeff (2001), "Koine formation and creole genesis", in: Smith, Norval & Veenstra, Tonjes (eds.), *Creolization and Contact*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 175-197.
- Simon, Linda & Young, Hugh (1978), *Pijin blong yumi. A Guide to Solomon Islands Pijin*, Honiara: Solomon Islands Christian Association.
- Tröbs, Holger. 1998. *Funktionale Sprachbeschreibung des Jeli (West-Mande)*. (Mande Languages and Linguistics; 3) Köln: Köppe.
- Veenstra, Tonjes (1996), "Grammaticalized verbs in Saramaccan: the interplay between syntax and semantics", in: Baker, Philip & Syea, Anand (eds.), *Changing meanings, changing functions. Papers relating to grammaticalization in contact languages*, London: University of Westminster Press, 95-112.
- Verhaar, John W. M. (1995), *Toward a Reference Grammar of Tok Pisin. An Experiment in Corpus Linguistics*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.