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Creole Languages in a World-Wide Perspective

SUSANNE MICHAELIS

Max-Planck-Institut für evolutionäre Anthropologie & Universität Gießen
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1. Adnominal possessive constructions (Features 2, 37, 38, 39)

- Here, I do not consider *predicative* possessive constructions (cf. Features 77-78), but only *adnominal* possessive constructions ("genitive constructions").

Feature 2: Order of Possessor and Possessum

- This feature concerns the word order within an attributive possessive construction, i.e. the order of the **possessor** noun phrase with respect to the head noun (or **possessum**): *Peter's house* vs. *the roof of the house*. The marking of the possessor is

disregarded here (see Features 37 and 38).

value 1: Possessor – Possessum (only):

- English/Dutch-based languages, except for Tok Pisin and Bislama

(1) Berbice Dutch Creole (D, Guiana; Kouwenberg 2012)

di jɛrma papa

the woman father

'the woman's father'

- Asian languages like Chinese Pidgin English, Pidgin Hindustani, Sri Lankan Malay

(2) Pidgin Hindustani (Hindi, Pacific; Siegel 2012)

Daya ke kuta

Daya POSS dog

'Daya's dog'

- North American languages (Eskimo Pidgin, Chinuk Wawa, Michif)

(3) Chinuk Wawa (Amerindian, North America; Grant 2012)

man yáka kánim

man 3SG canoe 'the man's canoe'

value 2: Possessum – Possessor (only):

- French-based languages
- Portuguese/Spanish-based languages

(4) Angolar (P, Gulf of Guinea; Maurer 2012b)

mulu kai

wall house 'the wall of the house'

- African languages like Sango, Lingala, Fanakalo, Mbugu/Ma'a, Kinubi, Juba Arabic

(5) Lingala (Bantu, Africa; Meeuwis 2012)

ndáko ya mobáli

house of man 'the house of the man'

values 1/2: Both orders allowed:

- many English/Dutch-based languages

(6) Gullah/Geechee (E, North America; Klein 2012)

- a. *God work* 'God's work'
- b. *de foot ob de tree* 'the root of the trees'

(7) Early Sranan (E, Surinam; Bruyn & van den Berg 2012)

- a. *da man nem* 'that man's name'
- b. *slotelen fo jarri* 'the key of the garden'

- Mauritian Creole, Seychelles Creole

(8) Seychelles Creole (F, Indian Ocean; Michaelis & Rosalie 2012)

- a. *Marcel son lakaz*
Marcel his house 'Marcel's house'
- b. *lakaz Marcel*
house Marcel 'Marcel's house'

- Asian Portuguese-based languages: Batavia Creole, Diu Indo-Portuguese, Korlai,

Papia Kristang, Sri Lanka Portuguese (plus Zamboanga Chabacano)

(9) Batavia Creole (P, Indonesia; Mauer 2012c)

chang di sua moler su pai
land of [[POSS.3SG wife] POSS.3SG father]
'the property of his wife's father'

- Ambon Malay, Singapore Bazaar Malay

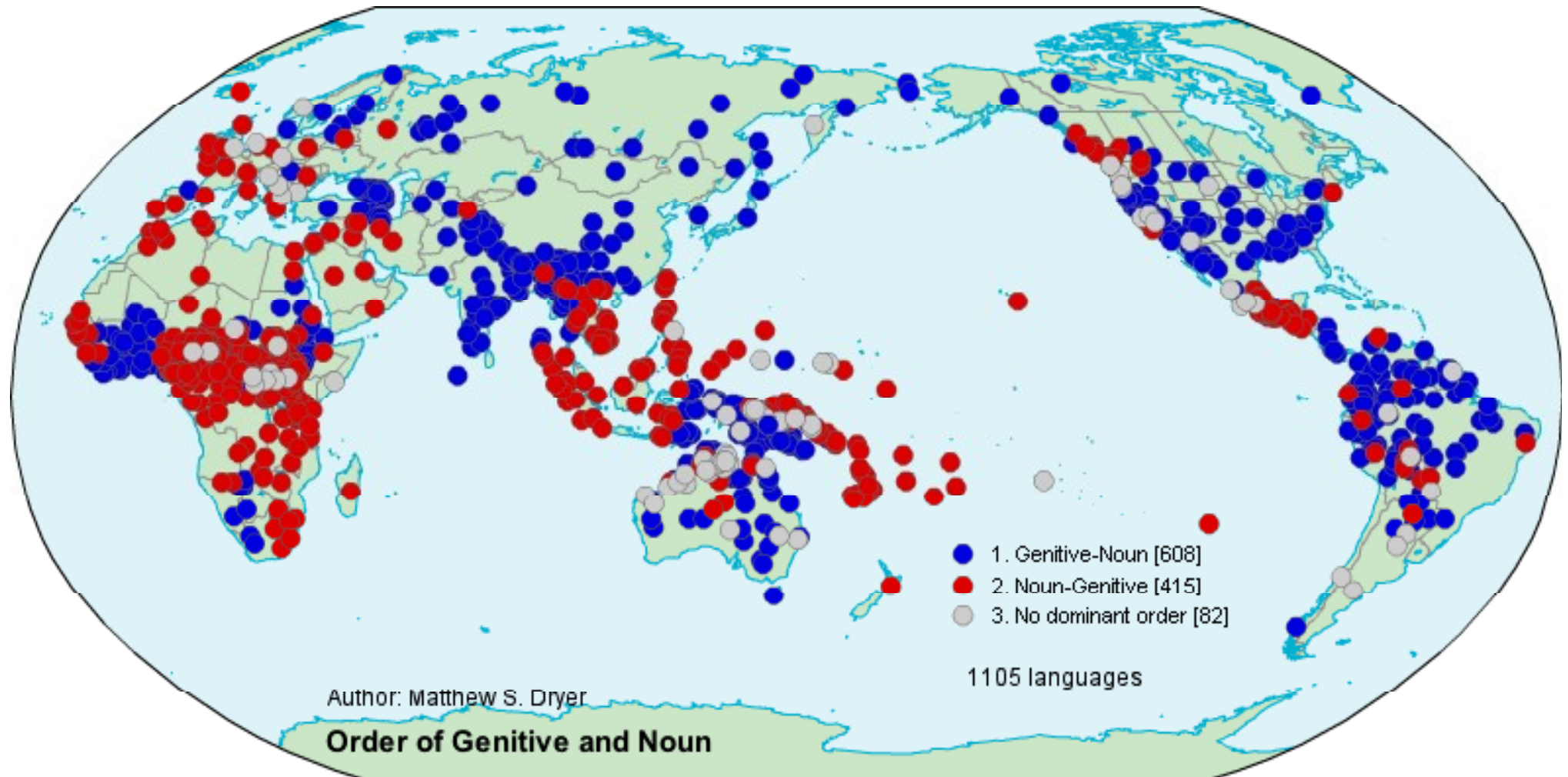
(10) Ambon Malay (M, Indonesia; Paauw 2012)

- a. *katon pung ruma~ruma*
1PL POSS PL~house 'our houses'
- b. *tampa tinggal antua*
place live 3SG.FORMAL 'her residence'

- Gurindji Kriol, Yimas-Arafundi Pidgin

Feature 2: Order of Possessor and Possesum

Comparison with *WALS* map (Dryer 2005)



Feature 38: Marking of Possessor Noun Phrases

- Here the question is **how** the possessor noun phrase is marked in an adnominal possessive construction ('the man's house', 'the roof **of my** house').
- Often pronominal possessors are treated differently from full noun phrases. Here we only look at (non-pronominal) full noun phrases. (For pronominal possessors, see Feature 37)
- Note that we ignore word order here. (For word order, see Feature 2.)
- In possessive constructions such as 'the man's house', the possessed noun ('house') is head and the possessor ('man') is dependent.

value 2: Possessor is marked by an adposition or case (dependent-marked)

(A) from lexifier 'of' (*of/van/de*, etc.)

Afrikaans *van*, Cape Verdean Creole *de*, Guinea-Bissau Kriyol *di*, Hawai'i Creole/

Singlish 's, Ternate/Zamboanga Chabacano *di/de*, Pidgin Hindustani *ke* (cf. ex. 2),
Ma'a/Mbugu *-a*

(B) from lexifier 'belong' or other adposition

Melanesian Pidgin *b(i)long*, Kriol *blanga*, Juba Arabic *ta*, Guadeloupe/Haitian Creole *a*, Tayo *pu*, Saramaccan *u* (< *for*)

(10) Kriol (E, Australia; Schultze-Berndt 2012)

blanga men kantri

POSS man country

'the man's country'

(11) Sranan (E, Surinam; Winford & Plag 2012)

a plan fu a Masra

DET plan of DET Master 'the Lord's plan'

(C) from lexifier 'his'

Korlai *su*, Sri Lanka Portuguese *-su*, Papia Kristang *sa*, Afrikaans *se*

(12) Korlai (P, India; Clements 2012)

pay su kadz
father GEN house 'father's house' (~ *kadz pay su*);
(earlier possessive pronoun was reanalyzed as genitive postposition)

(D) unclear origin

Ambon Malay *pung* (10a), Fanakalo *ga*, Lingala *ya* (5), Sango *ti*, Sri Lankan Malay
-pe

value 4: Possessor has no marking

• widespread in Atlantic English-based and French-based languages (cf. examples 1, 4, 6a, 7a, 8b)

(13) Bahamian Creole (E, Caribbean; Hackert 2012)

the boy uncle 'the boy's uncle'

(14) Guyanais (F, French Guiana; Pfänder 2012)

liv Cyril a

book Cyril DEF 'Cyril's book'

- widespread in pidgins

(15) Chinese Pidgin English (E, China; Matthews & Li & Baker 2012)

Deer sinew makee cook proper.

deer sinew make cook proper

'Boil the deer's sinew thoroughly.'

value 1: Possessor is marked by indexing on the head noun

- The possessed noun (the head, e.g. 'house') agrees in person and number with the possessor noun (e.g. possessive pronoun 'his'), this is the most common pattern for head-marked noun phrases.

- A number of Atlantic English/Dutch-based languages, plus French-based languages of the Indian Ocean (cf. Seychelles Creole, ex. 8a).

(16) Krio (E, West Africa; Finney 2012)

di man ã os

DET man POSS house 'the man's house'

(17) Negerhollands (D, Caribbean; van Sluijs et al. 2012)

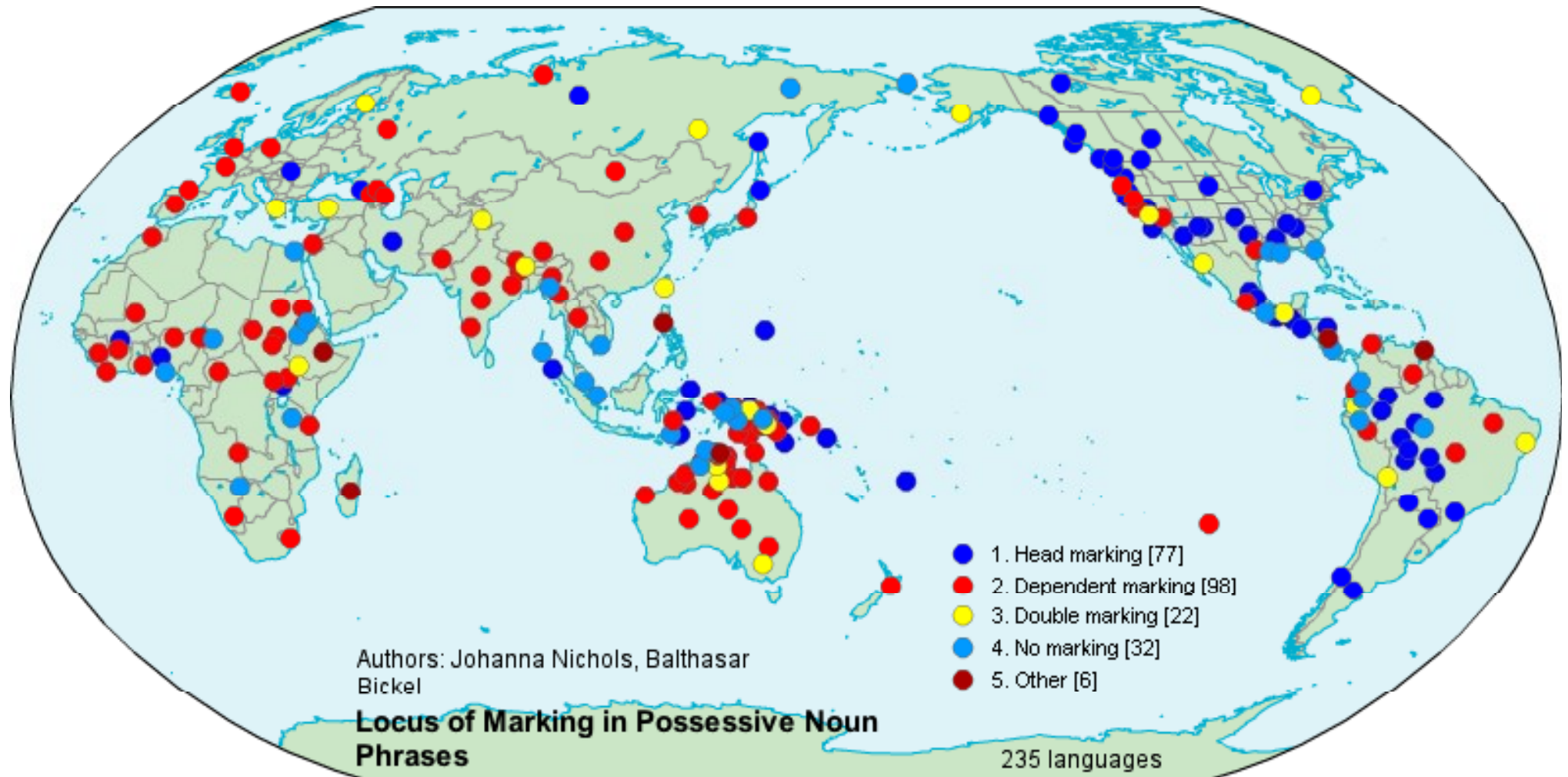
di mēnshi shi hā

DET girl 3.POSS hair 'the girl's hair'

- Also in Chinuk Wawa (cf. ex. 3) and Batavia Creole (cf. ex. 9). But distinguishing indexing from postposition may sometimes be difficult (compare ex. 9 with 12).

Feature 38: Marking of Possessor Noun Phrases

Comparison with *WALS* (Nichols & Bickel 2005)



Feature 37: Marking of Pronominal Possessors

- This feature concerns the expression of adnominal possession when the **possessor** is a (non-focused, non-contrastive) **personal pronoun** (e.g. 'my book', 'her mother', 'your hair').
- Personal pronouns expressing possessors are typically called possessive pronouns. They may be separate words (preceding or following the possessum, values 1-2), or affixes (prefixes or suffixes) on the possessum (values 3-4). Another possibility is that pronominal possessors are linked to the possessum by an adposition, with the adpositional phrase preceding or following the possessum (values 5-6).

value 1: Preceding word

- most Atlantic creoles of English, French and Portuguese origin

(18) Guinea-Bissau Kriyol (P, West Africa; Holm, Intumbo and Inverno 2012)

nha fidju

my child

'my children' (< *minha* + *filho*)

value 2: Following word

- Martinican/Haitian Creole, Principense/Angolar/Fa d'Ambô, Kriol

(19) Martinican Creole (F, Caribbean; Ludwig & Colot 2012b)

yich mwèn

child my

'my children'

(20) Kriol (E, Australia; Schultze-Berndt 2012)

bijilai main

fishingline my

'my fishing-line'

- also Juba Arabic, Mbugu, and others

value 5: Adpositional marking, preceding the possessum

- some Caribbean English-based creoles:

(21) Belizean Creole (E, Caribbean; Escure 2012)

fu dem mone
 for them money 'their money'

(22) Ternate Chabacano (S, Philippines; Sippola 2012)

kel di mótru pamílya
 that of 1PL family 'our family'

value 6: Adpositional marking, following the possessum

- some Caribbean English-based creoles:

(23) Nengee (E, Surinam/French Guiana; Migge 2012)

den baala fu mi
 DET.PL brother POSS me 'my brothers'

- some other languages:

(24) Santome (P, Africa; Hagemeyer 2012)

ke d=ê

house of=3SG.POSS

'his house'

(25) Guadeloupe Creole (F, Caribbean; Ludwig & Colot 2012a)

timoun an mwen

child of me

'my child(ren)'

- this feature is not covered by *WALS*

Feature 37: Marking of Pronominal Possessors

Feature 39: Independent Pronominal Possessor

- Here we ask how a possessor is expressed when it occurs independently, i.e. when the possessum noun is not present because it can be inferred from the context, e.g.

Whose book is this? **Mine.** (elliptical answer)
Or: This book is **yours.** (predicative use)
Or: Your book is cheaper than **hers.** (anaphoric use)

• We are in particular interested in the relation of the independent pronominal possessor to the dependent pronominal possessor, e.g.

mine vs. *my* (book)

yours vs. *your* (book)

hers vs. *her* (book)

value 1: Identical to dependent pronominal possessor

• a diverse set of languages:

(26) Bislama (E, Pacific; Meyerhoff 2012)

Ol loli ia blong mi o blong yu?

PL lolly DEF POSS 1SG or POSS 2SG

'Are those sweets mine or yours?'

(27) Zamboango Chabacano (S, Philippines; Steinkrüger 2012)

Di kyen éste líbro? Dimíyo.

of who this book mine
'Whose book is this? Mine.'

value 2: Special adposition plus pronoun

(28) Guinea-Bissau Kriyol (Holm, Intumbo and Inverno 2012)

E livru i di kin? I di mi.

DEM book COP of who? COP of 1SG.OBJ

'Whose book is this? It is mine.'

(cf. example 18)

(29) Jamaican (Farquharson 2012)

Di fuud ina di pat a fi-mi.

DET food in DET pot COP for-1SG

'The food in the pot is mine.'

value 3: Other word plus dependent pronominal possessor

- Atlantic English-based languages: 'own' (also Ghanaian Pidgin English, Krio, Pichi, Gullah/Geechee, etc.):

(30) Cameroon Pidgin English (E, West Africa; Schröder 2012)

Di pusi na ma on.

DEM cat COP 1SG.POSS OWN

'This cat is mine.'

(31) Creolese (E, Caribbean; Devonish & Thompson 2012)

mi wan 'mine', *(fo) yuu oon* 'yours'

- French-based creoles *pa* ('part'), *ta* (< *(c'es)t à* ...)

(32) Martinican Creole (F, Caribbean; Ludwig & Colot 2012b)

Sé ta yo.

it.is of they

'It's theirs.'

- Portuguese-based creoles *ka, ki*

(33) Principense (P, Gulf of Guinea; Maurer 2012a)

Kax sê ki tê.

house DEM POSS POSS.2SG 'This house is yours.'

value 4: Special form for independent pronominal possessor

- especially in Caribbean English-based creoles:

(34) Vincentian Creole (E, Caribbean; Prescod 2012)

mainz, yuhz, hiz, huhz, owaz, deiz

'mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs'

vs.

fomi moni OR *mi moni*

for.1sg money OR 1sg money 'my money'

(35) Afrikaans (D, Africa; den Besten & Biberauer 2012)

myne / joune / syne / hare

'mine/ yours/ his/hers'

vs.

my boeke, julle huise

'my books, your (2PL) houses'

- in Juba Arabic the independent pronominal possessor is a conservative (unreduced) form as well:

(36) Juba Arabic (A, Africa; Manfredi & Petrollino 2012)

kitáb de ta munú? de bitai

book DEM.PROX POSS who DEM.PROX POSS1.SG

'Whose book is this? this is mine.' (cf. *kitab tai* 'my book')

Feature 39: Independent Pronominal Possessor

2. Feature 51: Unmarked stative and dynamic verbs

- In many languages, the distinction between **stative** and **dynamic** (non-stative) verbs is relevant for their temporal reference, because if both can be unmarked, they tend to have a different temporal interpretation:

stative verbs ('stay', 'love', 'want') tend to have present-time reference, whereas **dynamic verbs** ('run', 'give', 'eat', 'hit') tend to have past-time (usually past perfective) reference:

I ∅ stay --> 'I stay' vs. *I ∅ run* --> 'I ran'

- one of Bickerton's typical creole features (Bickerton 1981ff.)
- deviation from this pattern has been interpreted as a form of "decreolization", i.e. a development which made the creole lose its typical feature while acquiring features from its coexisting base-/superstrate language (e.g. English-based creoles in the Caribbean)

Feature 51: Unmarked stative and dynamic verbs

value 3: Unmarked stative verbs have present reference, unmarked dynamic verbs have past (perfective) reference

- typical Bickertonian creole languages are e.g. Haitian Creole and Sranan:

stative verb 'love'

Haitian Creole (F, Caribbean; Fattier 2012)

(37) *Bouki renmen chat la.*

Bouki love cat DEF

'Bouki loves the cat.'

dynamic verb 'sell'

Haitian Creole (F, Caribbean; Fattier 2012)

(38) *Bouki vann chat la.*

Bouki sell cat DEF

'Bouki sold the cat.'

stative verb 'want'

Sranan (E, Surinam; Plag & Winford 2012)

(39) *A pikin wani go sribi.*
the child want go sleep

'The child wants to go and sleep.'

dynamic verb 'sell'

Sranan (E, Surinam; Plag & Winford 2012)

(40) *A kamra kowru bikaa me opo a fensre.*
the room cold because I open the window

'The room is cold because I opened the window.'

- all creoles and other contact languages with this feature value are found in North America, the Caribbean and the Atlantic/Africa

value 2: Unmarked stative and dynamic verbs have the same temporal interpretation

stative verb 'know'

Tok Pisin (E, Papua New Guinea; Siegel & Smith 2012)

(41) *Em i save long Tok Pisin.*

3SG PM know PREP Tok Pisin

'He knows Tok Pisin.'

dynamic verb 'chase'

Tok Pisin (E, Papua New Guinea; Siegel & Smith 2012)

(42) *Em i ronim pik.*

3SG PM chase pig

'He is chasing the pig.'

stative verb 'have'

Negerhollands (D, Caribbean, extinct; van Sluijs et al. 2012)

(43) *Am ha twē hogo liki alga fulə̃k.*

3SG have two eye like all people

'She has two eyes like everybody.'

dynamic verb 'run'

Negerhollands (D, Caribbean, extinct; van Sluijs et al. 2012)

(44) *Ki hoso sini kurí.*
look how 3PL run
'Look how they run.'

- many contact languages with this feature value are found in the Indian Ocean, India, Asia, and the Pacific

stative verb 'love'

Hawai'i Creole (E, Pacific; Velupillai 2012)

(45) *aɪ lav dɔg-s*
1SG love dog-PL
'I love dogs.'

dynamic verb 'chip'

Hawai'i Creole (E, Pacific; Velupillai 2012)

(46) *sɔ ju tʃip dat pɔʃin af*

so 2SG chip DEM portion off
'So you chip that portion off.'

- Hawai'i Creole is one of Bickerton's languages which he referred to as displaying the Language Bioprogram (s. value 1). But Velupillai 2012 provides counter-evidence to this view.
- there are no creoles east of Africa which display the Bickertonian feature value 3 (yellow). This is clear counter-evidence to Bickerton's claim about the role of unmarked verbs and their interpretation within the language bioprogram hypothesis.

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