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Are non-European creole languages structurally distinct from European creoles?

Robust empirical research in recent years has shown that creoles are typologically distinct from non-creoles (Szmrecsany & Kortmann for English creoles, McWhorter 2005, Bakker et al 2011 for creoles in general). A number of objections have been raised against this claim, and one of them was the underrepresentation of non-European-based creoles in Bakker et al.'s worldwide samples. It is indeed the case that fewer than a handful non-European creoles were included in that study.

In this paper we will look at a number of languages of which it has been claimed that they are creoles based on non-European languages. We will evaluate the claims, to the extent that information was retrievable, about a selection of them, including: Rao, a possibly creolized Papuan language of the Sepik region; Yilan Creole Japanese of Taiwan; Grand Ronde Chinook Wawa, a nativized form of Chinook Jargon. We will compare the structural properties of these creoles with those often associated with creoles, and with a sample of the languages of the world. We will focus on a number of unusual features of these languages, such as pronominal case and SOV constituent order in Rao, negative affixation and verb-final order in Yilan creole. Such non-European creoles shed light on typological properties of creoles: they deviate from Atlantic and Pacific types of creoles, but share a significant part of properties with them as well.

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McWhorter, John H. 2005. *Defining Creole*. New York/Oxford:Oxford University Press.
Szmrecsanyi, Benedikt & Bernd Kortmann. 2009. The morphosyntax of varieties of English worldwide: a quantitative perspective. *Lingua* 119(11): 1643-1663.