

**DE GRUYTER  
MOUTON**

*Francesco Gardani, Peter Arkadiev,  
Nino Amiridze (Eds.)*

# **BORROWED MORPHOLOGY**

**LANGUAGE CONTACT AND BILINGUALISM**

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# **Borrowed Morphology**

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Edited by  
Francesco Gardani  
Peter Arkadiev  
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ISBN 978-1-61451-556-2  
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-1-61451-320-9  
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-1-5015-0037-4  
ISSN 2190-698X

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data**

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

**Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2015 Walter de Gruyter, Inc., Berlin/Boston/Munich  
Typesetting: Compuscript Ltd., Shannon, Ireland  
Printing and binding: CPI Books GmbH, Leck  
♻️ Printed on acid-free paper  
Printed in Germany

[www.degruyter.com](http://www.degruyter.com)



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# Language Contact and Bilingualism

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Editor  
Yaron Matras

## Volume 8

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## Borrowed morphology: an overview

### 1 Introduction

Borrowing has traditionally occupied a prominent role in historical linguistics, as it has been viewed as one of the main sources of language change, besides sound change and analogy. While lexical borrowing has attracted particular interest, the borrowing of morphology has generally attracted less attention in the literature. There is no doubt that this can be explained in terms of the apparent relative infrequency of morphological borrowing.

At the turn of the 20th century, two schools of thought dominated this debate. On one hand, advocates of a retentionist view (Müller 1862; Meillet 1921; Sapir 1921; Jakobson 1938) claimed that the borrowing of inflectional morphemes is most unlikely. Most explicitly, Meillet maintained that “il n’y a pas d’exemple qu’une flexion comme celle de *j’aimais*, *nous aimions* ait passé d’une langue à une autre” (1921: 86). On the other hand, Schuchardt, one of the proponents of the opposed diffusionist view (to whom scholars such as Whitney 1881 and Trubetzkoy 1939 also belong), claimed that there are no completely unmixed languages and that morphological borrowing exists (Schuchardt 1884: 9).

The first analytical framework for the study of language contact in general, and borrowing in particular, was provided by Weinreich (1953), who observed that derivational affixes are more easily transferable from one language to another than inflectional affixes, while at the same time reporting instances of inflectional morphemes that were transferred from one language to another (Weinreich 1953: 31–33). Following Weinreich’s seminal work, and based on the apparent resistance of bound morphology to contact-induced change, linguists have interpreted the borrowing of morphology as a reflex of very strong social pressure that one language, the source language (SL), exerts over another, the recipient language (RL). In order to seize different degrees of borrowability, linguists have developed a number of borrowing scales (e.g. Whitney 1881: 19–20; Haugen 1950: 224; Moravcsik 1978: 110–113; Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 74–76; Field 2002: 36–37). All currently accepted hierarchies deem a high intensity of contact to be necessary for morphological borrowing to occur (Matras 2007; Matras 2009: 153–165 and Wohlgemuth 2009: 11–17, provide useful overviews).

The last decade has seen an increased interest in contact-induced morphological change, and several publications reflect this tendency, such as *Borrowing of inflectional morphemes in language contact* (Gardani 2008), *Copies versus cognates*



in *bound morphology* (Johanson and Robbeets 2012), and *Morphologies in contact* (Vanhove et al. 2012). All in all, a number of attempts have been made to put this field of research on both a theoretical and an empirical footing. Today, thanks to both the compilation of grammars of previously undescribed languages and the publication of studies on structural borrowing based on large cross-linguistic data (e.g. Matras and Sakel 2007a; Wohlgemuth 2009), a substantial number of instances of morphological borrowing are known, and useful comparative analyses – in terms of putatively universal tendencies – have been proposed. Thus, while progress has been made on the empirical side in terms of an extension of the number of attested instances of morphological borrowing, on the theoretical side things have proceeded more slowly. That is, despite the fact that linguists have recognized in their approaches the potential of contact-induced morphological change as a source of evidence for the structure of grammar (see, e.g. Myers-Scotton 2002, 2006; Gardani 2008, 2012; Meakins 2011a), more theoretically inspired work needs to be pursued in order to get deeper insights into the matter and be able to formulate more valid generalizations.

The present book presents advancements in research in morphological borrowing, addressing the need for improving the conceptual and methodological basis of this field of linguistics. The contributions to this volume reflect heterogeneous theoretical and methodological tools, based on the editors' belief that only a variety of approaches can help capture the array of diverse phenomena with which the data confront us.

In the sections that follow, we will sketch the state-of-the-art of current research in morphological borrowing and situate the volume's articles within the research landscape. Among the issues addressed in the volume, one fundamental question concerns the borrowability of morphology. Is morphological borrowing an infrequent phenomenon in cross-linguistic terms, or is it not as rare as is often purported in the literature? A scientific treatment of this question requires, first and foremost, an elaboration of several fundamental distinctions, such as the questions about what is borrowed in terms of matter versus pattern (Section 2), and which type of morphology, derivational or inflectional, is borrowed (Section 3). A further central query relates to the relationship (or distinction) between morphological borrowing *sensu stricto* and phenomena such as code-switching, creolization, and the genesis of mixed languages. Pursuing this last question requires a better understanding of the interplay between sociolinguistic and cognitive conditioning factors of interlinguistic transfer, on the one hand, and different degrees of borrowing, on the other. These issues are treated in Section 4. On the methodological side, the investigation of morphological borrowing is of great importance to historical-comparative linguistics, as correspondences between inflectional and derivational morphemes have often been taken

as strong indicators of, or even diagnostic evidence for, genetic relatedness (see, e.g. Meillet 1921; cf. the discussion in Ross and Durie 1996: 7) (Section 5). No less important are the understanding of cross-linguistic tendencies in morphological borrowing as well as its linguistic and social motivations for linguistic typology and the study of language universals, because morphological borrowing, especially pattern borrowing, is among the principal factors responsible for the diffusion of structural traits and the development of linguistic areas (see, e.g. Ross 1999 or Donohue 2012).

## 2 MAT-borrowing versus PAT-borrowing

Adopting the terminology of Sakel (2007) and Matras and Sakel (2007b), we distinguish between two types of borrowing: the borrowing of concrete phonological matter (MAT-borrowing); and the borrowing of functional and semantic morphological patterns (PAT-borrowing) from a SL into a RL. (Both types are compatible with borrowing derivation and borrowing inflection; on this, see Section 3.) This distinction is by no means new, and looks back at a rich terminological history. The first type has traditionally been referred to as “borrowing”, “direct transfer”, “direct diffusion”, “transfer of fabric”; the second type has often been called “replication”, “indirect transfer”, “indirect diffusion”, “loan-formation”, “calque”. See also Johanson’s (1999, 2008) terms of “global copying” (roughly corresponding to MAT-borrowing) vs. “selective copying” (roughly corresponding to PAT-borrowing).

Morphological PAT-borrowing implies that a RL rearranges its own inherited morphological structure in such a way that it becomes structurally closer to the SL. An instance of PAT-borrowing from derivational morphology is found in Basque, which replicates a Romance pattern to form deverbal verbs through a prefix expressing repetition. The Basque formative that replicates the Romance pattern expressed by *re-* (cf. Spanish *reproducir* ‘to reproduce’) is *bir-* (or its allomorph *berr-*), as in (1a), compared to the corresponding Spanish lexemes in (1b) (Basque data from Jendraschek 2006: 158–159).

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| (1) | Basque   | Spanish                                      |
| a.  | <i>aztertu</i><br>‘examine’<br><i>berr-aztertu</i><br>‘re-examine’ | b. <i>examinar</i><br><br><i>re-examinar</i> |

In nominal morphology, a pertinent example of PAT-borrowing is the use of the category of nominal past in Mawayana (Maipurean, Guyana), which has emerged

because of contact with the Cariban languages. In Mawayana, the form *-ba* is suffixed to a nominal element and replicates the Cariban obligatory marking of the nominal past, used to express former possession, deceased persons, gone objects, or pity (Carlin 2006: 322–325). See the use of the suffix to express a former possession in Mawayana, in (2a), and compare it to the Trio (Cariban) equivalents of the nominalized form, in (2b).

- (2) a. *nʒee*                      *katabi-ke-ba*                      *jimaada* (Mawayana)  
       human.being              catch-AG.NMLZ-PST              jaguar  
       ‘Jaguar used to catch people.’ (lit. jaguar was a catcher of people)
- b. *wītoto*                      *apëi-ne-npë*                      *teese* *kaikui* (Trio)  
       human.being              catch-AG.NMLZ-PST              he.was              jaguar  
       ‘Jaguar used to catch people.’

In this volume, Thomas Stolz provides a fascinating cross-linguistic study on PAT-borrowing, with a focus on NP-internal agreement (concord). Based on a wealth of cross-linguistic data, Stolz proposes and exemplifies three scenarios of change in adjective-noun agreement in contact situations: (1) loss of agreement (Armenian in contact with Turkic); (2) reshaping of agreement on the model of the SL (Nahuatl in contact with Spanish); and (3) rise of agreement (Baltic-Finnic in contact with Indo-European languages).

A subtype of PAT-borrowing is contact-induced grammaticalization or, in Heine and Kuteva’s (2003) terminology, “replica grammaticalization”, which, as they claim, involves the replication of a process of grammaticalization rather than of a fixed pattern. For a recent reassessment of contact-induced grammaticalization, see Wiemer et al. (2012) and in particular, Gast and van der Auwera (2012). For example, based on the model of neighboring Ewe, Likpe (both belong to different branches of the Kwa family in the Niger-Congo phylum, Ghana, Western Africa) has developed plural-marking on a subset of kin terms (the ego’s parents’ generation) and proper names (Ameka 2006: 126–127). The pluralizing suffix *-má*, in (3a), has the same form and meaning as the 3pl pronoun *má*, in (3b) (Ameka 2006: 130).

- (3) Likpe
- a. *éwú*                      *éwu-má*  
       grandmother              grandmother-PL
- b. *mə*              *lá*              *ntí*  
       3PL              LOC              midst  
       ‘among them’

The evolution from (3b) to (3a) parallels the Ewe patterns in (4). In Ewe, *wó* is both a plural clitic on nouns (4a) and a third person plural pronoun (4b).

## (4) Ewe

a. *ame* (eve *má=)***wó** *ko*  
 person two DEM=PL only  
 'only (those two) people'

b. *wó-dzo* (**wó**)  
 3PL-fly 3PL  
 'They flew (them).'

As we have already mentioned, MAT-borrowing concerns the concrete phonemic matter that an RL takes from an SL. An appropriate example of MAT-borrowing has been described by Breu (1991) for Bulgarian, Macedonian, and other Balkan languages. Throughout the Balkan Sprachbund, the formative *-s-* is productively used as a loanverb marker. It was borrowed from the Greek verbalizer *-iz-*, such as in *alat-íz-o* 'to salt' from *aláti* 'salt'. In Macedonian, for example, the Turkish verb *bit-mek* 'to finish' has been integrated as a composite stem *biti-s-*, to which the stem-building formative and the inflections apply (data from Breu 1991).

## (5) Macedonian

*biti-s-uv-a*  
 finish-LVM-SUFF-PRS.1SG  
 'I finish'

In our volume, the issue of borrowed loanverb formatives is taken up by Metin Bağrıaçık, Angela Ralli and Dimitra Melissaropoulou, who analyze it in areal terms. Two distinct Turkic suffixes borrowed into several typologically distinct languages are used to create "input forms" (Wohlgemuth 2009, Ch. 5) to accommodate loanverbs from Oghuz Turkic. The distribution pattern of the borrowed suffixes enables the authors to identify two separate linguistic areas. The perfect/inferential marker *-mİş* (accompanied by a light verb) is found in the area including Eastern Asia Minor, Transcaucasia, and Transoxiana, while the past marker *-D(I)* (with no light verb present) occurs in borrowed Turkic verbs in various languages of the area encompassing the Balkan peninsula and Western Asia Minor. Crucially, the paper shows that structural reasons are at hand for the selection of either formative: in the case of *-D(I)*, the selection is determined by the type of base that "is operative in the recipient language for word-formation purposes", whereas in the second area, the selection of *-mİş* is guided by the independent existence of both perfect grams and the use of a light verb strategy to create denominal verbs in the RLs.

The illustration of MAT-borrowing through example (5) suffices to fill the space of this brief overview, because nine out of ten papers of the volume focus

on MAT-borrowing. This preponderance has been the editors' explicit choice, not least because to date publications have been focusing on PAT-borrowing rather than on MAT-borrowing (see Mithun 2012, for a very recent paper, and many articles in Matras and Sakel 2007a; for contact-induced grammaticalization, see Grandi 2002; Heine and Kuteva 2003, 2005, 2006; Gast and van der Auwera 2012; Wiemer et al. 2012).

Another issue that we placed on the agenda of research on morphological borrowing and which is not systematically represented in the present volume (though cf. the contribution by Felicity Meakins, who investigates the functional development of the Gurindji ergative marker in Gurindji Kriol) is the question of the degree of semantic-functional matching between a borrowed morpheme in the RL and its counterpart in the SL. For example, the study of "relabelling" in creoles and mixed languages (Lefebvre 2008), that is, the process whereby phonetic strings drawn from the lexifier language replace original forms expressing the same concept in the substrate language(s), has shown that the new lexeme has the same semantic and syntactic properties of the original one, but its phonological representation is different. Conversely, lexical borrowing need not involve the transfer of the full polysemy of the SL's lexical items (see, e.g. Weinreich 1953: 55–56; Rohde et al. 1999). Finally, Heine (2012) claims that, in contact-induced grammaticalization, the replica element or construction in the RL almost invariably occupies a less advanced stage of functional-semantic development than its model in the SL. There is thus no reason to assume that MAT-borrowed grammatical morphemes in a RL take over the full gamut of functions of their sources, as is implied, e.g. in Johanson's notion of global copying. As has been repeatedly shown by different scholars (see Winford 2003: 91–92, for an overview), if interlinguistic transfer of morphemes occurs at all, it is the morphemes with a higher degree of functional transparency that are borrowed more frequently. From this, it follows that morphemes that are polyfunctional in the SL, are borrowed into the RL primarily with their more concrete and transparent functions. This claim is supported by studies on the borrowing of Slavic and Germanic verbal prefixes and particles into various contact languages, such as varieties of Romani (see, e.g. Rusakov 2001; Schrammel 2002) or Balkan Romance languages. For instance, in the varieties of Romanian spoken in Serbia, the prefix *do-* borrowed from Slavic denotes the attainment of the final point of motion or activity (Petrović Rignault 2008), as the following example shows.

- |     |                            |                    |
|-----|----------------------------|--------------------|
| (6) | Vlach Romanian             | Serbian            |
| a.  | <i>do-facu</i>             | b. <i>do-jesti</i> |
|     | PRV-do:PST.3SG             | PRV-eat:INF        |
|     | 'S/he finished doing sth.' | 'to finish eating' |

Importantly, however, in Vlach Romanian, the borrowed prefix does not have the perfectivizing role characteristic of the SL, Serbian, as well as of the Slavic verbal prefixes, in general. That means that the more abstract function realized by the morphemes of the SL, or even associated not just with particular morphemes but with the whole make-up of the verbal system, has not been introduced into Vlach Romanian. This example alone shows that the semantic aspect of morphological borrowing is *de facto* quite complex and deserves much more attention than, to our knowledge, it has received so far.

In addition to MAT-borrowing and PAT-borrowing, there seems to be a type of morphological transfer that lies in between. In our volume, Eleanor Coghill portrays a complex issue of verbal derivational patterns borrowed from Arabic by three distinct modern Aramaic languages. The distribution of phonological material in the Semitic verbal stem is organized by segmental morphology and more abstract structural templates. Coghill shows that Arabic loan derivations are first largely limited to Arabic loanverbs, but can subsequently spread to the inherited Aramaic lexical stock, giving rise, for example, to a new mediopassive category in Western Neo Aramaic.

### 3 Borrowability of morphology

It is common knowledge that morphology is a cover term for a rather wide range of phenomena, roughly including compounding, derivation, and inflection, which seem to be processed in different areas in grammar. Accordingly, claims have been made that different areas of morphology show different degrees of propensity for borrowing, which is reflected in the various borrowability scales mentioned above. Generally, it is assumed that derivation is borrowed more frequently than inflection: for example, Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 74–75) situate derivational borrowing (DER-borrowing) at level 3 of their borrowing scale, whereas inflectional borrowing (INF-borrowing) ranks at level 4, the highest level.

With respect to inflection, Gardani (2008, 2012) has shown that variance in the degree of borrowability of inflectional formatives correlates with their classification as realizing either inherent inflection or contextual inflection, according to Booij's (1994, 1996) famous dichotomy. In this connection, the borrowing of formatives that realize features of inherent inflection (i.e. context-autonomous inflection), such as nominal number or semantic case, verbal voice, tense, aspect, negation, mood, or evidentiality, largely outweigh the borrowing of formatives that realize contextual inflection (i.e. inflection induced by obligatory syntactic

government or agreement), such as nominal grammatical case or verbal person, number, and gender.<sup>1</sup>

As a prototypical value of inherent inflection, nominal plural has a higher-than-average borrowing rating (Gardani 2012). As a case in point, consider the case of Bolivian Quechua nouns ending in a vowel (the vast majority), which realize the plural via a suffix *-s* borrowed from the contact language, Spanish [data in (6a) from Muysken (2012: 33), based on Urioste (1964)].

(7)	Bolivian Quechua	Spanish
a.	<i>algu</i>	b. <i>perro</i>
	‘dog’	
	<i>algu-s</i>	<i>perro-s</i>
	‘dogs’	

An example of the rare cases of borrowed formatives that realize contextual inflection is found in Megleno-Romanian, a Balkan Romance language spoken in south-eastern Macedonia and northern Greece. In the Megleno-Romanian varieties spoken in the villages of Nănti, Ošinj, Luđzinj, and Kupă, some verbs, belonging to a specific theme vowel class (*-a-*) and ending in the consonant cluster *muta cum liquida*, display the formative *-ș*, for the 2sg of the indicative present, which is added to the corresponding native Romance formative *-i* on inherited Romance bases (*a antra* ‘to enter’ < Latin *intrare*) [data in (8a, b) from Capidan (1925: 159) and Atanasov (1990)].<sup>2</sup> The formative *-ș* has been borrowed from south-eastern Macedonian dialects. In (8), the verb form with borrowed formative (8a) is contrasted with the corresponding form both of the same verb in the standard variety of Megleno-Romanian (8b) and of the Macedonian verb *gali* ‘to caress’ (8c).

<sup>1</sup> There is no disguising the fact that the distinction between inflection and derivation is neither obvious nor uncontroversial, and so is the distinction between morphological compounding and formation of phrases in syntax (see, e.g. Booij 2005, 2010). Both dichotomies are to a large extent language-specific. Born out in linguistic studies focusing on Indo-European languages, the distinction between inflection and derivation has proved “particularly elusive” to capture (Laca 2001: 1215). Some scholars (e.g. Bybee 1985; Dressler 1989; Plank 1994) have advocated a non-discrete, gradual distinction along a continuum which matches that ranging from the syntax to the lexicon, while others, like Bauer (2004), have proposed a more refined typology of morphological processes with several, instead of just two or three, major types. Still others (e.g. Behrens 1996; Haspelmath 2013) challenge the validity of this distinction as a universally applicable comparative concept. See Laca (2001: 1215–1218), for an insightful discussion.

<sup>2</sup> While an explanation of the phenomenon in terms of an internal Romance development is conceivable, too, the explanation in terms of the influence of Macedonian on the Megleno-Romanian dialects cannot be ruled out completely (see Friedman 2012: 324–328).



- |     |                   |                 |                  |
|-----|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| (8) | Megleno-Romanian  |                 | Macedonian       |
|     | a. <i>antri-ş</i> | b. <i>antri</i> | c. <i>gal-iş</i> |
|     | enter:2SG-2SG     | enter:2SG       | caress-2SG       |
|     | 'you enter'       | 'you enter'     | 'you caress'     |

While there seems to be a consensus that inflectional borrowing is a relatively rare phenomenon (although its actual frequency in different contact situations is still to be determined in a world-wide typological study), derivational morphology seems to be more susceptible to borrowing. The amount of data collected in a wealth of publications indicate this tendency, although to date there has been no comprehensive survey of the great amount of borrowed derivational morphology in the world's languages. The general consensus about this claim rests ultimately on the abundance of derivational borrowings in the most studied language of the world – English – dating back to the time when (Middle) English extensively borrowed from French. Recent works, such as the papers collected in Matras and Sakel (2007a), Matras (2009: 209–212) and, especially, Seifart's (2013) newly published *A world-wide survey of affix borrowing (AfBo)* have provided a collection of numerous instances of derivational borrowing.

A superficial look at *AfBo* shows that adjectivizers, diminutives, and nominalizers rank highest among the borrowed derivational affixes. This conforms to the long-held opinion that categories which carry out “concrete” meaning are more prone to borrowing. We exemplify this with a case from Tetun Dili, an Austronesian language spoken in East Timor, which has borrowed the agentive suffix *-dór* (9a) from Portuguese (9b) and applies it to native roots, as in the following example from Hajek (2006: 172).

- |     |                              |                        |
|-----|------------------------------|------------------------|
| (9) | Tetun Dili                   | Portuguese             |
|     | a. <i>hemu-dór</i>           | b. <i>descobri-dór</i> |
|     | 'someone who likes to drink' | 'discoverer'           |

On the basis of the currently available evidence and the publications mentioned above, we propose the following tentative borrowability scale for morphology: derivation > inherent inflection > contextual inflection (an idea originally developed in Gardani, in press). Further empirical research and theoretical insights are certainly needed in order to test and refine this generalization and especially to provide a principled explanation for the “differential access” of different kinds of morphology to borrowing, grounded in identifiable cognitive factors rather than in the rather vague and elusive dichotomy between inflection and derivation (cf., e.g. Myers-Scotton's 4M-model as a possible approach to this issue, see Myers-Scotton 2002).

In this volume, the general issues of borrowability of morphology are addressed from different perspectives by two leading experts in the field of contact linguistics.



Sarah Thomason argues that inflectional borrowing is “considerably more common than one might guess from the general language contact literature” and shows that the borrowing of inflectional matter is especially common in situations characterized by intense contact and by close relatedness of languages and varieties of the same language. In contrast, Yaron Matras argues that cognitive, communicative, and sociocultural constraints inhibit the borrowing of morphological matter, especially inflectional morphology. He maintains that “[s]traightforward cases of borrowed inflectional morphemes are hard to find” and addresses the issue of the differential susceptibility of derivational vs. inflectional morphology to borrowing from the viewpoint of his “activity-oriented” approach (Matras 2009, 2012). Matras – in our view similarly to Myers-Scotton’s theory – considers inflection to be indicative of the language choice made by the bilingual speaker and related to their identity, whereas derivational morphology, because of its heavier semantic load, is in charge of constructing and modifying meanings. In Matras’ terms, “the purpose of borrowed derivational morphology is to replicate procedures of meaning derivation from the source language in the recipient language”, while “the purpose of borrowed inflectional morphology is to re-draw social boundaries”, and thus the borrowing of inflectional morphology, having considerably more far-reaching effects on both the language system and the social identity of the speakers, is “strongly dispreferred”.

In an attempt to reconcile Thomason’s and Matras’s proposals on the borrowability of inflectional morphology in situations of ordinary language contact (for extreme borrowing and language mixing, see Section 4), one might hypothesize that, given a disparity between linguistic communities in terms of prestige, speakers of the less prestigious language who strive for a higher social status may be more prone to borrowing inflectional matter the higher the degree of structural similarity between the languages is. Obviously, only the investigation of morphological borrowing based on the largest possible number of contact situations, diverging in terms of degree of genealogical relatedness, structural congruity of the languages involved, and sociolinguistic scenarios, will allow for robust generalizations and principled explanations of what are preferred and dispreferred types of morphological borrowing.

#### 4 Extreme borrowing and mixed language genesis

Different language contact situations can give rise to different linguistic processes and results. Thomason (2001: 60) proposes a three-fold outline, based on the structural effects induced by language contact, including contact-induced language change, extreme language mixture, and language death. With respect to morphological borrowing, some scholars (e.g. Thomason and Kaufman 1988) treat