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Towards a typology of morphological MAT borrowing

To date, there is no comprehensive work on the wide range of phenomena which occur under the heading of contact-induced morphological change, such as the borrowing of derivational and inflectional formatives. Numerous instances of both phenomena have become known during the last few decades, but they are scattered in myriad publications mostly from a single-language perspective. While inflectional borrowing has recently received some detailed coverage (Gardani 2008, 2012), the crosslinguistic study of derivational borrowing has been quite neglected, despite the widespread belief that it is not infrequent. The present paper aims to provide a first systematic survey of instances of borrowed derivational formatives and to test whether some types of derivation are predictably more accessible to borrowing than other types. Drawing upon Bauer's (2004) view of morphology as encompassing six classes of morphology (contextual, inherent, valency-changing, transpositional, evaluative, lexicon-expanding) and focusing on the 'derivational' classes among them, the hypothesis is made that lexicon-expanding derivation, such as agent noun formatives, is more prone to borrowing than evaluative morphology, such as diminutives, and that the latter is more prone to borrowing than transpositional derivation, such as action noun formatives. The hypothesis is tested against data drawn from 20 typologically diverse recipient languages, from South and North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, Austronesia and Oceania. The analysis shows that adjectivizers, diminutives, and nominalizers (especially, to form agent nouns) rank highest in terms of borrowing frequency.

References

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