This paper discusses the sources of bound inflectional (and also some bound derivational) morphology in Present-Day Standard English and thirteen other languages. Evidence suggests that the correlation between borrowing basic vocabulary and the incorporation of items of borrowed morphology into the borrowing language's structure (where it can be used with inherited as well as with other stems) is weak, with some languages which have borrowed a lot of basic vocabulary acquiring little if any inflectional morphology from their model languages, although derivational morphology is more likely to be transferred than inflectional morphology. Transfer of patterns from one language to another using morphemes which are already part of the basic language's inventory is a fairly common practice.

1 Introduction

This paper discusses the sources of bound inflectional (and also some bound derivational) morphology in Present-Day Standard English and a number of other languages. I am attempting to test the extent to which inflectional and productive derivational morphological strata in a language are more immune to borrowing than the lexicon is. To this end I compare patterns and levels of copying of bound morphological items in English with those patterns of morphemic borrowing found in a sample of 13 other 'heavy copying' languages from around the world. These languages were selected because they have each replaced a large proportion of their pre-existing basic vocabulary with copies from other languages. The quest is to see whether heavy lexical copying of this kind correlates

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1 Thanks to Peter Bakker, Éva Á. Csató, Lars Johanson, Babs Richardson, Martine Robbeets and Nikki van de Pol for comments.
with heavy morphological copying, and if so, then to see to what extent these coexist. Features from one speech tradition which find their way into another can be classified as being transfers of fabric or transfers of pattern (Grant 1999, 2002). The two categories are not mutually exclusive; a feature may belong to both.

These languages all fall to a greater or lesser degree into the category of “fusion languages” proposed in Weinreich (1973, 1: 32–38), in which elements of various origins can combine freely with one another despite their multifarious origins. This is a scalar rather than an absolute category since all languages are more or less fusional, as all those for which we have sufficient data to ascertain this have at least absorbed some loanwords. I explore here the consequences of relative degrees of what we may call the gradience of fusion. At word level, some languages blend elements of different origins into a single word more fully than others.

Before I explore this matter further, a caveat is in order. Not all languages which show a high degree of borrowing of basic lexicon are ‘fusion languages’ in the same way. There are stable mixed languages such as Michif which have absorbed complete sets of morphological forms for use with items from a particular form-class from one of their component languages (Bakker and Mous 1994). There is also the typologically unique case of Berbice Dutch which has taken all its bound morphology (and a high proportion of its basic and less basic vocabulary) from Eastern Ijo while also using many free morphemes from Dutch, Lokono/Arawak and latterly Guyanese Creole English (Kouwenberg 1994). Other languages have absorbed many exogenous patterns rather than exogenous morphemes. The Oceanic language Takia (Ross 1996, 2009) remodelled much of its morphosyntactic structure on nearby Papuan languages such as Waskia but borrowed very little lexically and nothing morphologically from them.

There are also creoles such as Mauritian Creole French which have developed their own sets of morphological forms through the subsequent grammaticalisation of items which were previously only lexical forms (Grant and Baker 2007). But the fourteen fusion languages which are sur-

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2 Fusion languages are not be confused with fusional morphology, in which several structural features can be combined into a single unanalyzable morph, as happens in Latin conjugations and inflections.

3 Lexical borrowing seems to have prevailed in the opposite direction, from Oceanic languages to Waskia, but Takia has borrowed lexicon from other languages such as Bargam, Gedaged, German and especially Tok Pisin.