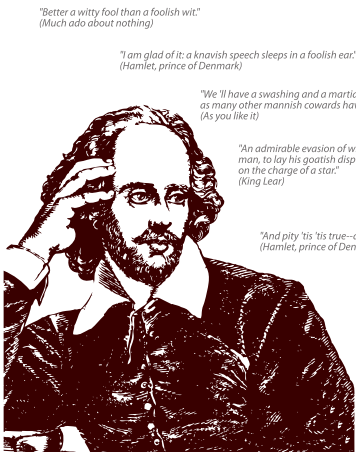


To ish or not to ish

the influence of author characteristics on the use of the suffix *-ish*

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Indicates approximation, alikeness

Applied to nouns, adjectives, adverbs, names, numerals ...

-ish

One of the most productive suffixes
(Plag, 2006: 544-546)

English suffix

Not a new phenomenon (Shakespeare used it)

(Neuhaus & Spevack 1975)

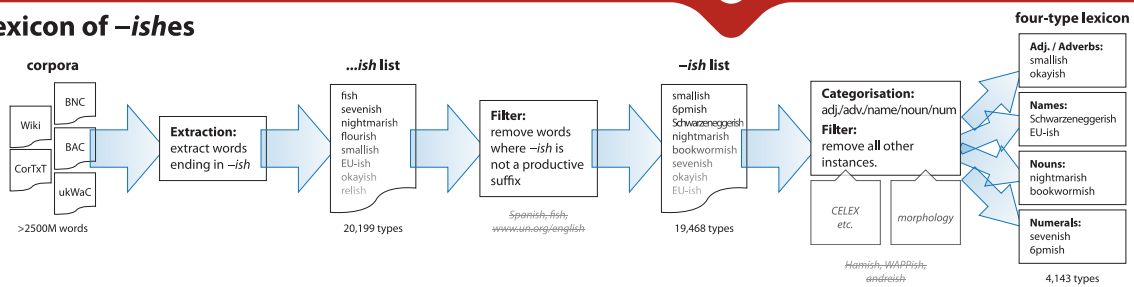
Research Question

Is the degree of presence of the suffix *-ish* significantly influenced by author characteristics, e.g. author's gender, age and writing style?
(And if so, what characteristics and how?)

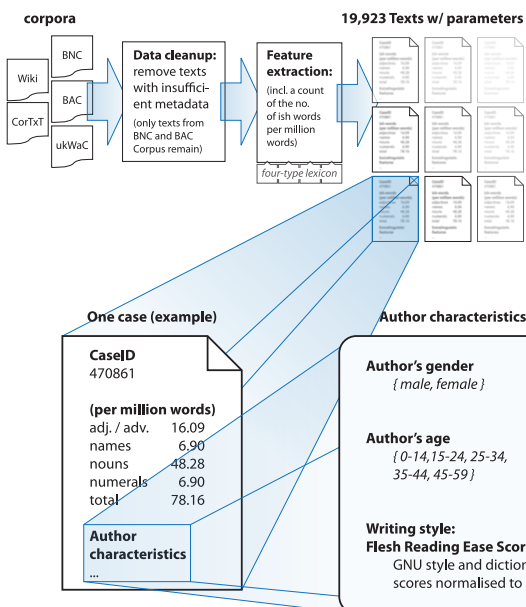
Corpus Study

We studied the use of *-ish* in the following corpora: British National Corpus (BNC), Wikipedia XML Corpus 2006, Blog Authorship Corpus (BAC), Caroline Tagg's Txt Msg Corpus (CorTxt), and Web-as-Corpus UK (ukWaC).

A Lexicon of *-ishes*



Collection of Cases

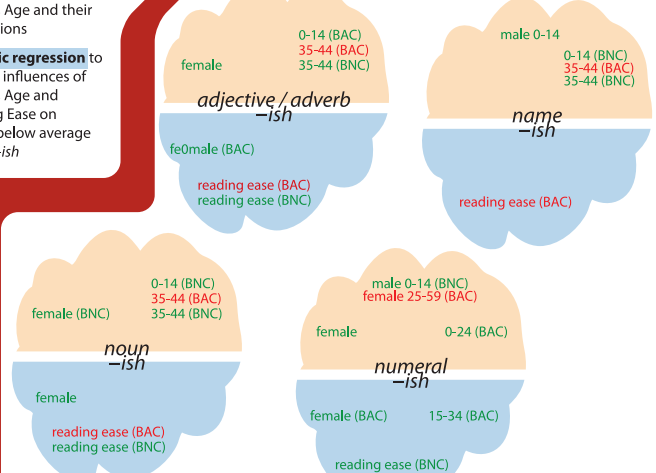


Statistical Analyses

- **log-odds ratio** to compare use of *-ish* for specific values of Gender, Age and their interactions
- **logistic regression** to identify influences of Gender, Age and Reading Ease on above/below average use of *-ish*

Results

A selection of the most influential characteristics:
In **green**: characteristics that have a **positive** influence on the use of *-ish*
In **red**: characteristics that have a **negative** influence on the use of *-ish*



General conclusion: Various author characteristics do indeed influence the degree of presence of *-ish*. However, the exact nature of the influences is as yet far from clear.