Statement of Research

Marsden Grant for PhD Research:
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1 Background

2 Research

Proposal Title: *Word Formation, Productivity, and the Construction of Neologistic and Idiomatic Forms Across Varieties of English*

<div align="center">DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL</div>

- Use any and all avialable corpora for varieties of English (New Zealand, American, British, Australian; possibly older forms of English: old English, Chaucerian, Shakesperian).

- Using successful models of word formation to compare possible with actual tokens/types of idiomatic and neologistic form.

- Applying current techniques for measuring productivity to get some perspective on the productivity of general word formation in English varieties and, specifically, those types of word formation that produce idiomatic and neologistic forms.

- Use these results to propose possible applications to predicting idiomatic or neologistic forms, increase precision in morpholgical parsing of new forms, and general development for other tasks relevant to computation and/or processing of idiomatic and neologistic forms.

Example 1. Given the $P - value$[1] of a morpheme we might be able to predict its probable use for a new idiomatic form. Plag (2004) demonstrates the P value for *-wise*, showing that it is comparatively higher than other forms such as *-tion*. Based on this, we might expect a new idiom or neologism to be formed from *-wise* rather than *-tion*, suggesting a prediction for (1) over (2). We might even predict (1) over (3), but this case is far from being even suggestively clear.

(1)   She walked into the room *front-wise*.

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[1] $P = \frac{n_1{}^{aff}}{N^{aff}}$, where P equals the number of hapaxes n_1 with a given affix *aff* divided by total number of tokens N with affix *aff*.

(2)   She walked into the room with alot of *frontion*.

(3)   She walked into the room *frontishly*.

In other words, we might predict, dependent on $P - value$, an adverbial formation over the nominal formation in this case. Clearly things are more complicated than I have demonstrated, but Example (1) illustrates the general idea.

References

Plag, Ingo. 2004. Productivity. In Bas Aarts & April McMahon (eds.), *Handbook of english linguistics*, Chapter 23. Oxford: Blackwell.