MEITS Workshop Youth languages. The age of maturity?
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Demography vs. identity in the formation of new urban youth varieties

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Youth varieties as language change

- Youth varieties are the product of particular kinds of change processes
  - Language contact
  - Multilingualism
  - Language shift
  - Dialect contact
  - Youth style, youth identity

Demography and language change

- Demography:
  - Increase/decrease in population size
  - Driven by natural change (births and deaths) and by migration (in-migration and out-migration)
- Start from Trudgill's 2004 premise:
  - Dialects are formed as a function of
    - population sizes
    - frequencies of occurrence of dialect features in contact
    - face-to-face accommodation

'Identity'

- Cover term for all subjective orientations:

  - language attitudes

  - language ideologies

  - beliefs about different social groups

- Studies of indexicality and enregisterment show that these may affect the direction and rate of linguistic change.

- What is the balance between demography and identity in language change?

  ➢ Are youth languages more susceptible to identity factors in this regard?

Dialect formation and youth varieties

- Youth varieties are often described as 'new', arising from large-scale immigration starting at a particular point in time

- Focus on 2nd generation migrants

- Can we perform a post hoc analysis of the origins of features of these varieties?

Taking a leaf out of dialect history: the British Industrial Revolution

Northern cities in the 19th century

CITY	18th Cent.	1801	1831	1851	1901
Glasgow	12K (1725)	77,000	200,000	320,000	762,000
Newcastle	20K (c1750)	33,322	48,950	80,184	246,905
Leeds	16K (1771)	94,421	183,015	249,992	552,479
Hull	7.5K (1700)	21,280	40,902	57,484	236,772
Manchester	43K (1774)	88,577	205,561	339,483	642,027
Liverpool	30K (1766)	82,430	180,222	320,513	711,030
Sheffield	7K (1736)	60,095	112,408	161,475	451,195

Sources: http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk, Wikipedia, local councils

Taking a leaf out of dialect history: the British Industrial Revolution

Northern cities in the 19th century

- Are these population changes enough to lead to new dialect formation (koineisation → koines)?

- In the absence of contemporary quantitative linguistic data, can we use demographics to find out?

- Mufwene's Founder Effect, based on the Founder Principle in populations genetics, can help us:

  - Idea that the initial population disproportionately influences the outcomes for later generations, even with large-scale migration

  - Mufwene doesn't tell us about actual numbers, or the role of children in transmission.

Testing (or at least exploring) the Founder Effect

Hypothesis:

- Let us assume that, for a dialect to be changed, there needs to be, *at a given point in time*, a minimum proportion of in-migrant people who have not acquired the local dialect. In the absence of detailed information, we can set this number at 50%.

- This means that the population must increase by 100% for a certain length of time. We can set this at 10-12 years.

Blackburn and Middlesbrough: population growth

Population Figures	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871
Black-burn	11,980	15,083	21,940	27,091	36,629	46,536	63,126	76,339
Middle-s-brough	n/a	n/a	40	154	5,463	7,631	18,892	39,284

- No evidence that a new dialect formed in Blackburn
- Evidence that koineisation took place in Middlesbrough, founded in 1830. High immigration from Ireland

Back to youth varieties: 'Multiethnolects'

➢ Alternative term, which we prefer: **Urban contact variety**

- Shared across minorities, but also by members of majority groups
- Non-ethnic in its indexicality (in principle)
  - Partly true in the community in which it is spoken
  - Outside its own community it may sound distinctly 'ethnic'
- It is variably **vernacularised:**

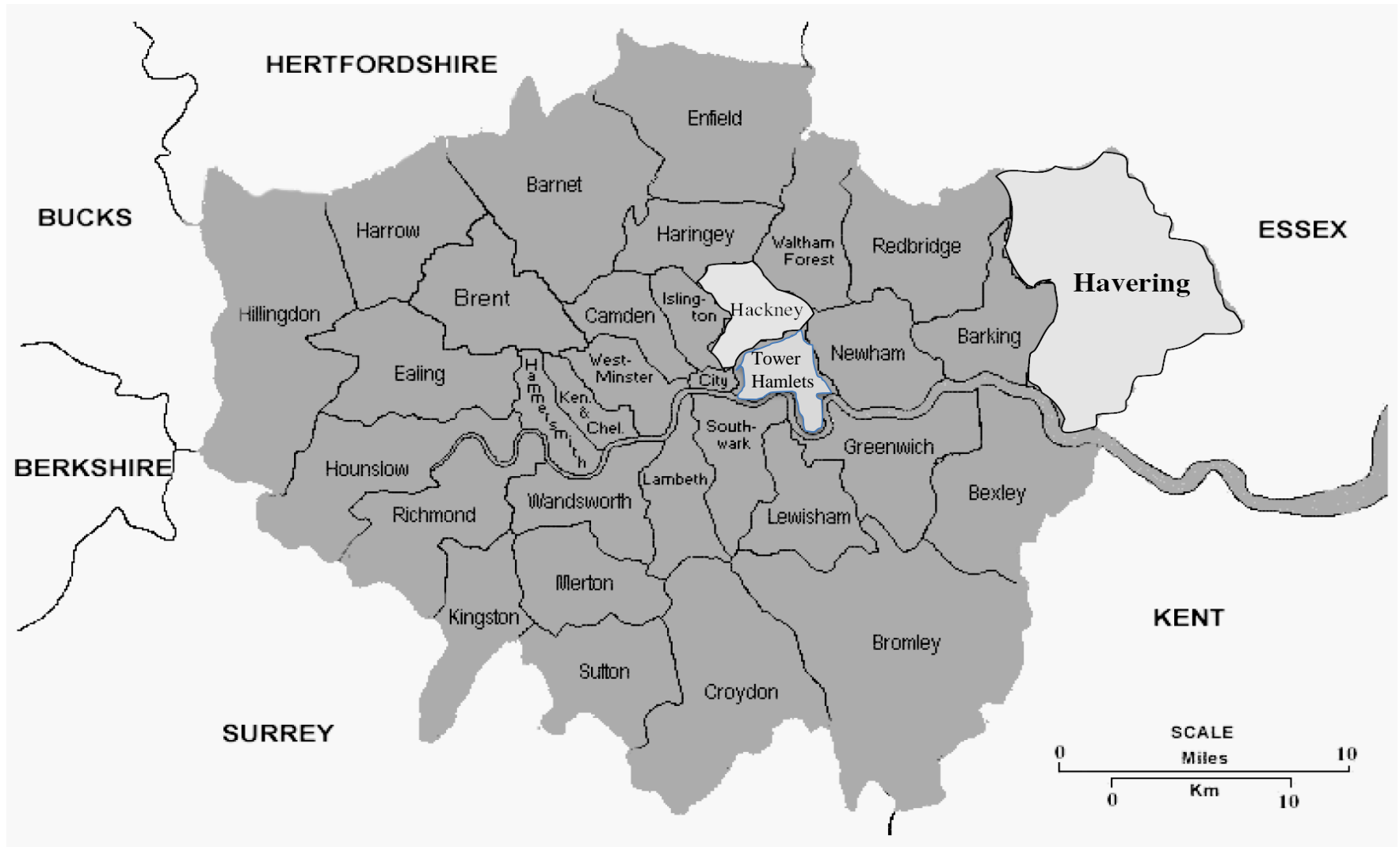Youth style ←————————————————→ Vernacular variety

What we'll cover today

1. Demography, and identity in the formation of youth varieties

2. Multicultural London English (MLE) features

3. When did MLE start?

4. Demographic explanations: post-World War II immigration to inner-city London

5. Alternative explanations

6. A special place for African Caribbeans in the development of MLE?
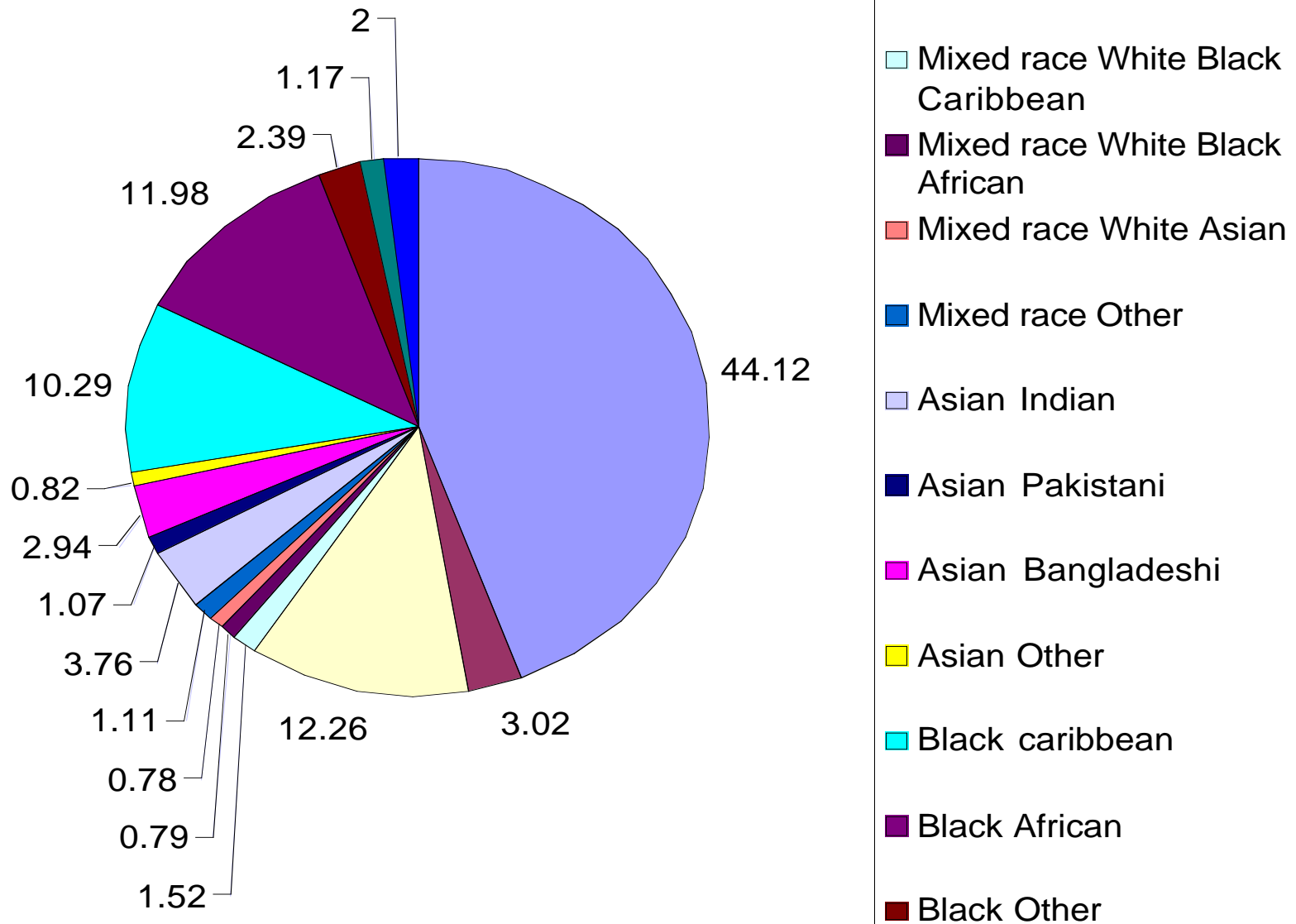
7. Summing up

The London projects 2004–10

- *Linguistic Innovators: the English of Adolescents in London* (2004–7)

- *Multicultural London English: the emergence, acquisition and diffusion of a new variety* (2007–10)

- Jenny Cheshire, Paul Kerswill, Sue Fox, Eivind Torgersen, Arfaan Khan

E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC
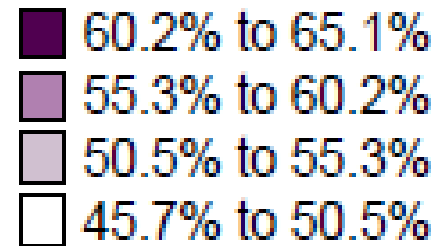& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL

London boroughs

Hackney ethnic group percentages

Legend:
- White British
- White Irish
- White Other
- Mixed race White Black Caribbean
- Mixed race White Black African
- Mixed race White Asian
- Mixed race Other
- Asian Indian
- Asian Pakistani
- Asian Bangladeshi
- Asian Other
- Black caribbean
- Black African
- Black Other

Values shown on chart: 2, 1.17, 2.39, 11.98, 10.29, 0.82, 2.94, 1.07, 3.76, 1.11, 0.78, 0.79, 1.52, 12.26, 3.02, 44.12

Percentage of Ward Populations who are NOT White British

- 60.2% to 65.1%
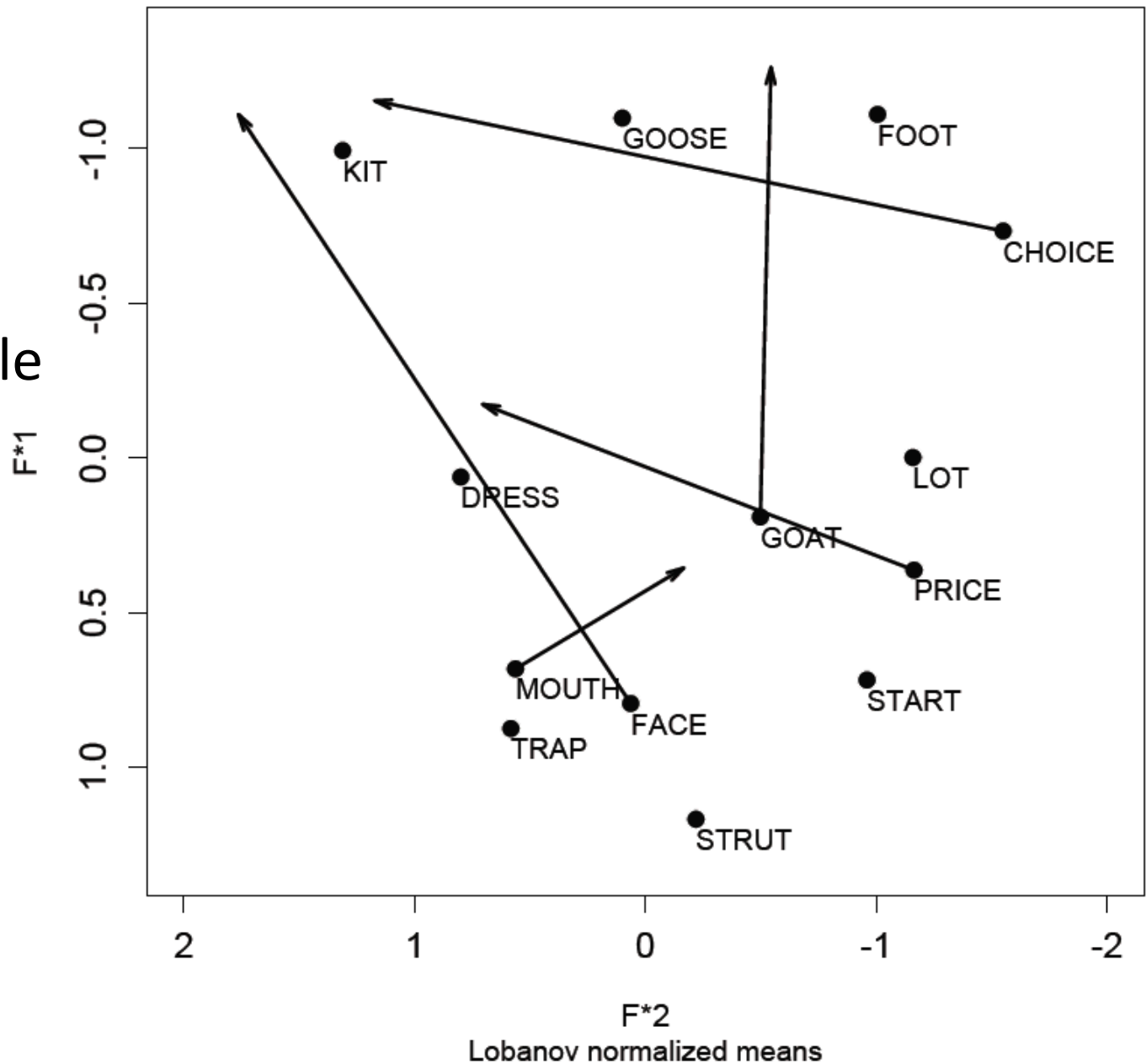- 55.3% to 60.2%
- 50.5% to 55.3%
- 45.7% to 50.5%

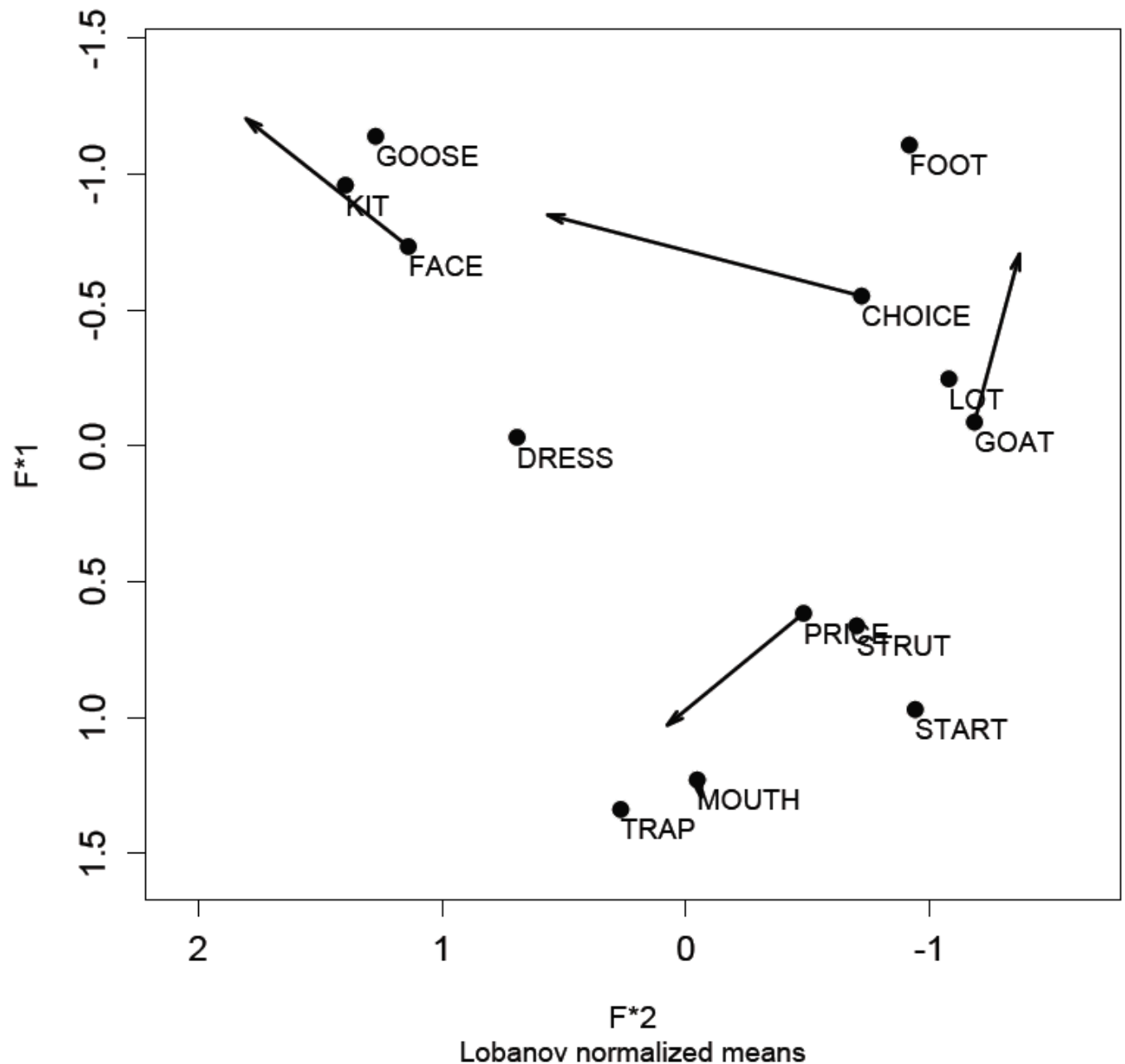In 2011, 54 % of primary school and 44 % of secondary school children had English as an additional language

Hackney, 2001

2. MLE features

Diphthong system of elderly male Anglo speaker from Hackney born 1918

Diphthong system of young male from Hackney, Afro-Caribbean origin, born 1989

Reversal of /h/-dropping

/h/ is pronounced in e.g. *hole*

th-stopping and fronting

- Merger of initial /ð/ in function words with /d/

  - Example: *there*

- Variably, /θ/ is merged with /f/ as in most

  nonstandard British varieties, but also with /t/

  - Example: *thing*

/k/-backing

/k/ is backed to [q] before nonhigh back vowels:

– *car, cousin, college*

A study of rhythm in London: Is syllable-timing a feature of Multicultural London English?

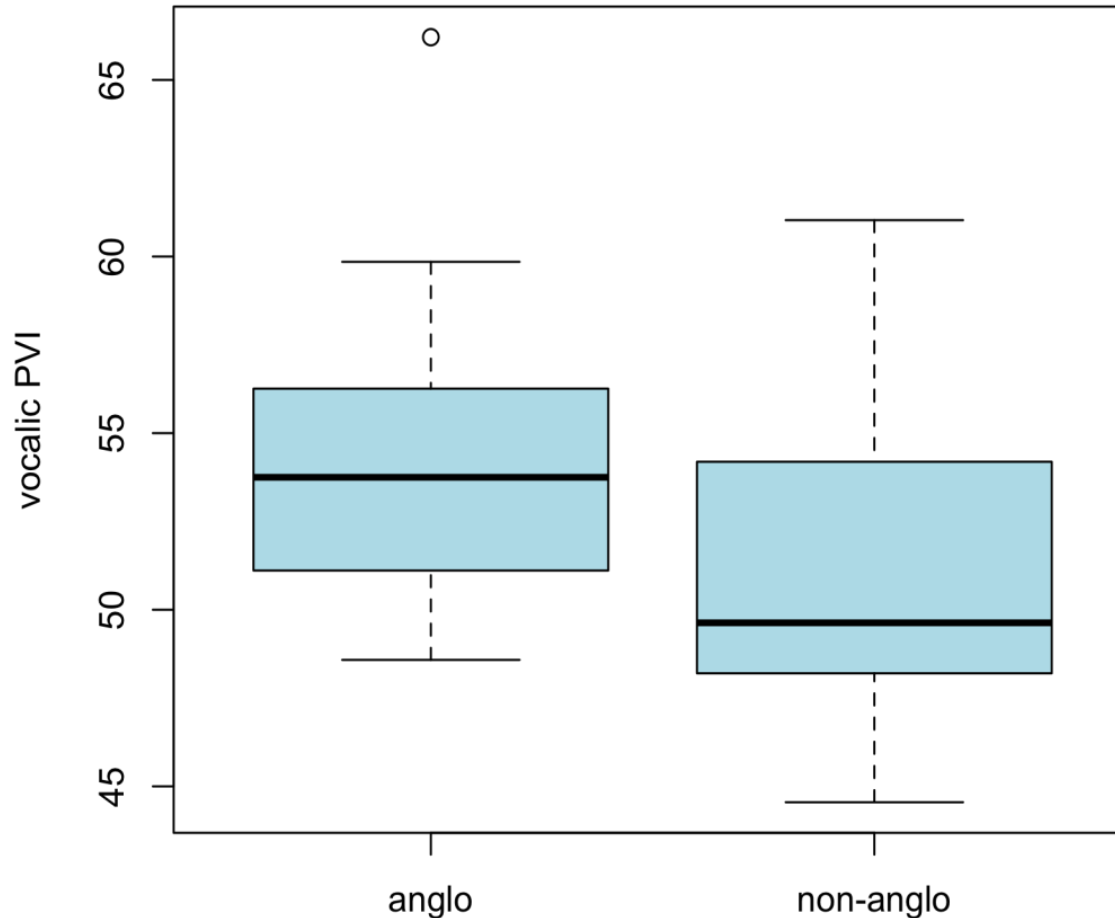Eivind Torgersen
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Anita Szakay
Macquarie University

Vocalic PVI: ethnicity
(Torgersen & Szakay 2012)

non-anglo group is more syllable-timed

Wilcoxon-test: W=488.5, p=0.012

Grammaticalisation processes

New pronoun *man*

*I don't really mind how . how my girl looks if she looks decent yeah and there's one bit of her face that just looks mashed yeah I don't care it's her personality **man's** looking at . I'm not even looking at the girl proper like* (Cheshire 2013)

A new quotative

this is me "don't be funny" (Cheshire et al 2011, Fox 2010)

Analogical forms

why *you doing that **fo**r?*   (cf. *what you doing that for?*
where are you going to?)

Forms 'latent' in English (cf. Wiese 2013, on Kiezdeutsch)

e.g. bare NPs with verbs of motion

they go skating rinks

I used to go Stratford on Avon

Alex, aged 17

I mean I literally walked past two thugs that I didn't not knew but they just grabbed me by the hood swang me in a alley and had me at **knife**point. and I couldn't do nothing but I said . and they said "where you from?" I said "east london that's where I'm from" **this is them** "**don't** be funny" cos they're . I was right in a bit of east London so they said "don't be funny with me like that cos I'll stab you" and I said "I'm not trying to be funny" **this is them** "what area are you from . what part?" **this is me** "I'm from Haggerston . Fields" and then like they just said "oh yeh I don't like that area reh reh reh" and then like some hero. thank god there is some typical heros who. and it's like if you're short don't even bother come **ov**er because you're just gonna get stabbed yourself like .

3. When did MLE start?

- 1950s on: Anglos (white British) and Afro-Caribbeans (mainly from Jamaica) formed the most numerous groups

- Their linguistic repertoires differed (Sebba, Hewitt):

	London vernacular ('Cockney')	**London Jamaican ('Patois')**
Anglos	✓	
Afro-Caribbeans	✓	✓

The view from academe, c. 1984

- Sebba and Hewitt additionally noted an intermediate 'Black Cockney' or 'multiethnic/multiracial vernacular'

  - Apparently for use in *adolescent peer groups only*
  - So not actually a native dialect, but more a style

- Seeds of MLE visible in these comments

A criminologist speaks

- Criminologist John Pitts notes the start of a new youth language among young <u>black</u> people in the East End in the early 1980s, when their deteriorating social position was preventing them from living up to their parents' expectations

  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gd3SJ6qakyY (29 minutes in)

- Pitts argues that the new dialect reflects a 'resistance identity'.

4. Demographic explanations: post-World War II immigration to inner-city London

- Mufwene's Founder Effect:
  - Founding populations set the feature base-line for a speech community
  - A very large number of incomers is needed to swamp the base-line dialect

- A rule of thumb for the lasting effect of migration on existing language use (as mentioned):
  - At any one time, at least 50% of the population should have migrated to the community *post-adolescence*, and this situation should remain for at least 10 years

The London borough of Tower Hamlets

- Fox, Susan (2015). *The New Cockney. New Ethnicities and Adolescent Speech in the Traditional East End of London*. London: Palgrave.
  - Bangladeshi immigration in the London borough of Tower Hamlets
  - Fox provides a summary of London migrations

Immigration to London post-WWII

- Caribbean immigration, 1950s on

- Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigration from early 1970s

- Other ethnic groups from 1980s

- EU accession states from 2004
  - Especially Poland

Just how big were these streams?

Major immigration groups in three London boroughs:

- Croydon:
  - 8.6% Black Caribbean
  - 8% Black African
  - 6.8% Indian
- Hackney:
  - 7.8% Black Caribbean
  - 11.4% Black African
  - 3.1% Indian
- Tower Hamlets:
  - 32% Bangladeshi
  - 2.1% Black Caribbean
  - 3.7% Black African
  - 2.7% Indian

- In London, no single ethnicity except White British (Anglo) comes remotely near to dominating any borough

- But some parts of some boroughs do have a majority of non-British born, non-English speaking inhabitants.
  - Begs the question of how these minority areas can exert sufficient influence

- This means that *demography alone* does not allow us to claim a single origin for any of the features
  - Multiple origins?

5. Alternative explanations

- FACE and GOAT vowels
- GOOSE vowel
- Reinstatement of /h/
- Stopping of /ð/ in function words with /d/ and /θ/ with /t/
- Syllable timing
- New [q] allophone of /k/

- Stormzy (2015):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqQGUJK7Na4,

0:50 ba<u>ck</u>up dancer

0:54 ba<u>ck</u>up

0:55 <u>c</u>omes everywhere

0:56 <u>c</u>an't rumble

New pronoun *man*

- As with [q], we are moving towards a different kind of explanation that cuts across demography: the attractiveness of a cultural style stereotypically associated with a particular group of young people

- Very much in line with Potts's idea of a resistance identity directly signalled through linguistic choices

THIS IS + speaker

- Güldemann (2012): "A still poorly-analyzed quotative strategy without overt reference to a speech event is the use of thetic non-verbal identificational and presentational **clauses that focus on the identity of the speaker as the source of the reported discourse**."

Syllable timing:

- Cf contact varieties, including Maori English, Singapore English
  - Probably West African English too

6. A special place for African Caribbeans in the development of MLE?

- Cultural dominance of this group in post-war London music scene
- Signalled today by Jamaican slang in MLE
- MLE felt by some to be 'fake Jamaican' or 'Jafaican' – i.e. 'foreign'
- Racial discrimination
- Resistance identity

➢ We can begin to look for a Jamaican origin for some parts of the vowel system by looking at the speech of the early post-WWII Jamaican migrants:

Male, Born 1944, from Kingston, Jamaica
(mesolectal speaker; courtesy of Peter Patrick; recorded in 1989)
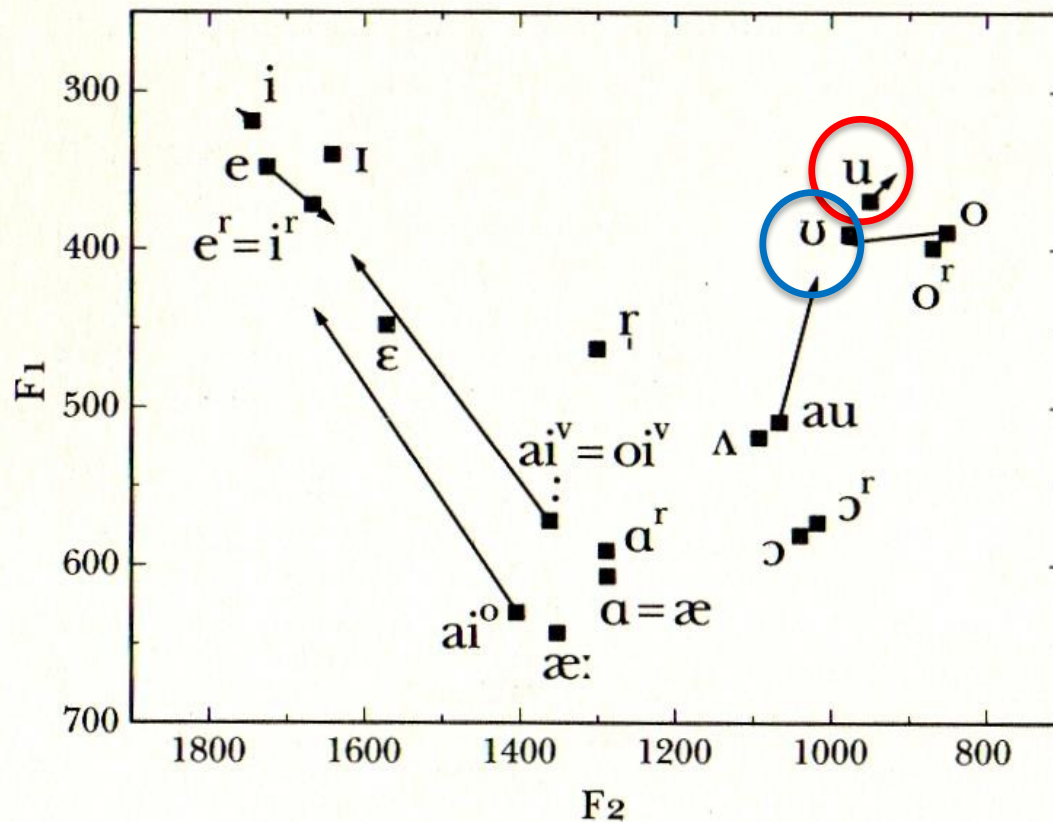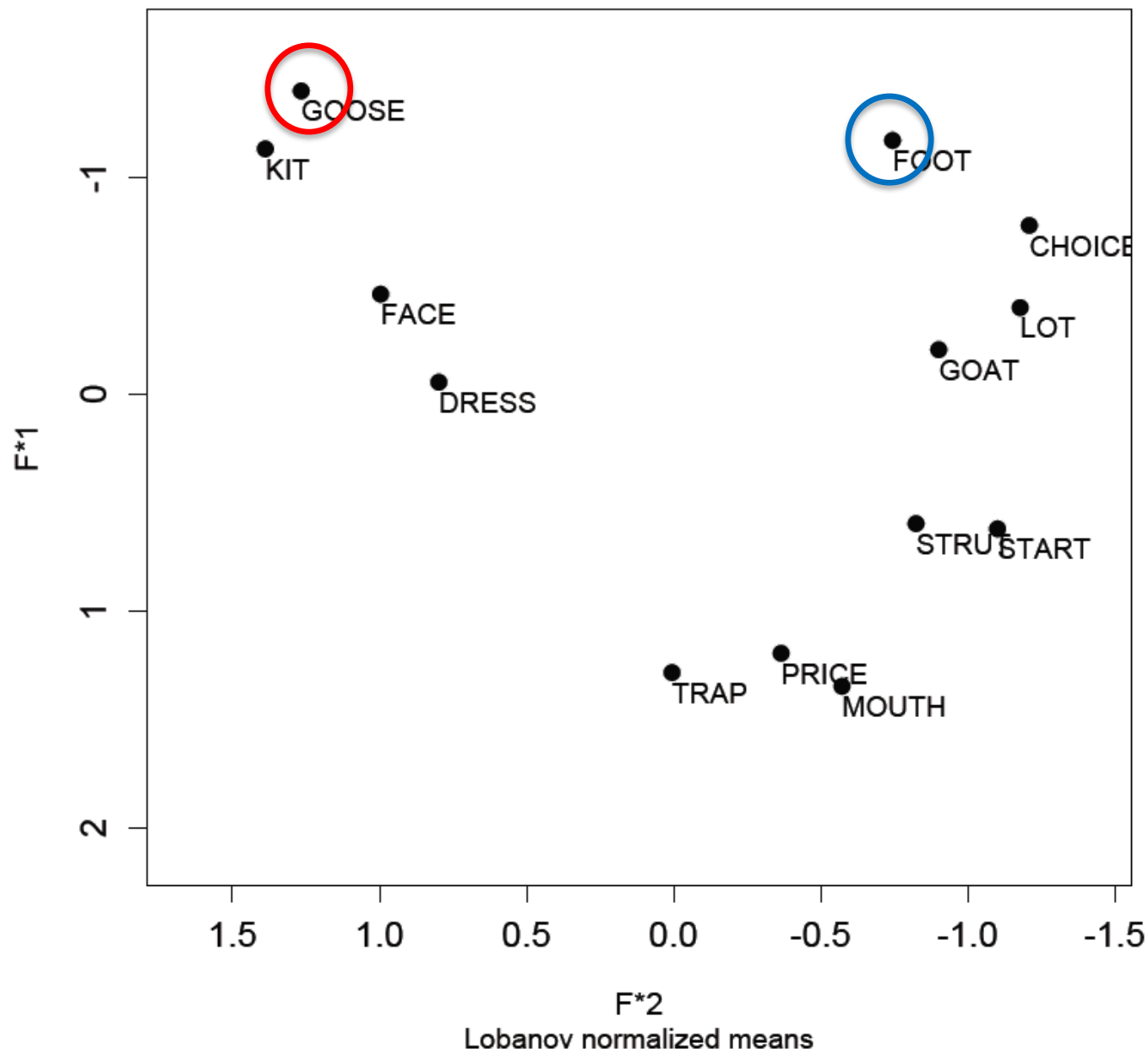

(Thomas 2001)

NOTE: He shows a typical Jamaican vowel configuration, with ingliding /e/ and /o/. His stressed syllabic /r/ is usually *r*-ful; otherwise he is mostly *r*-less. (conversation; NCSU)
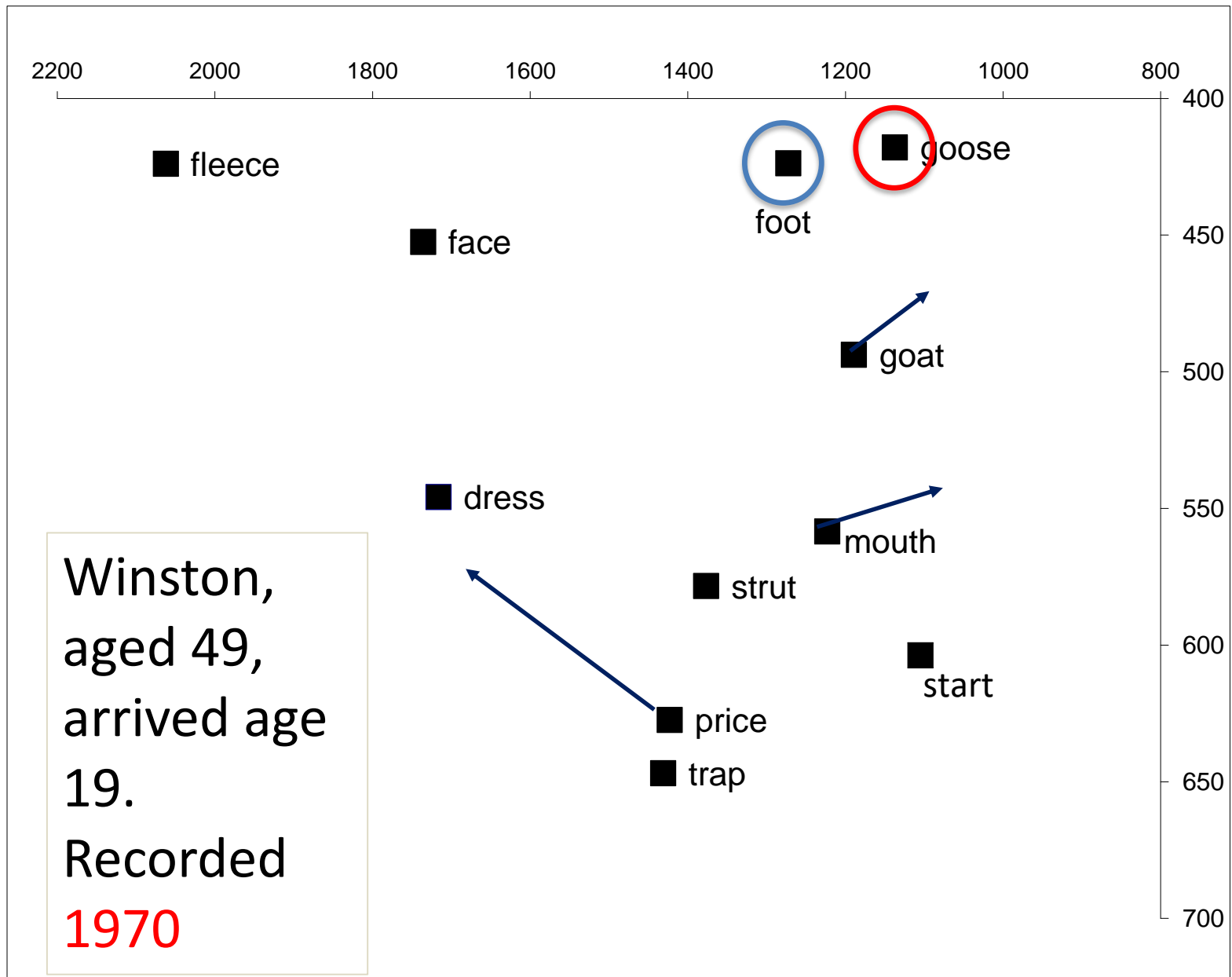
Adolescent speakers (aged 16–19) of Afro-Caribbean origin, born c1989.
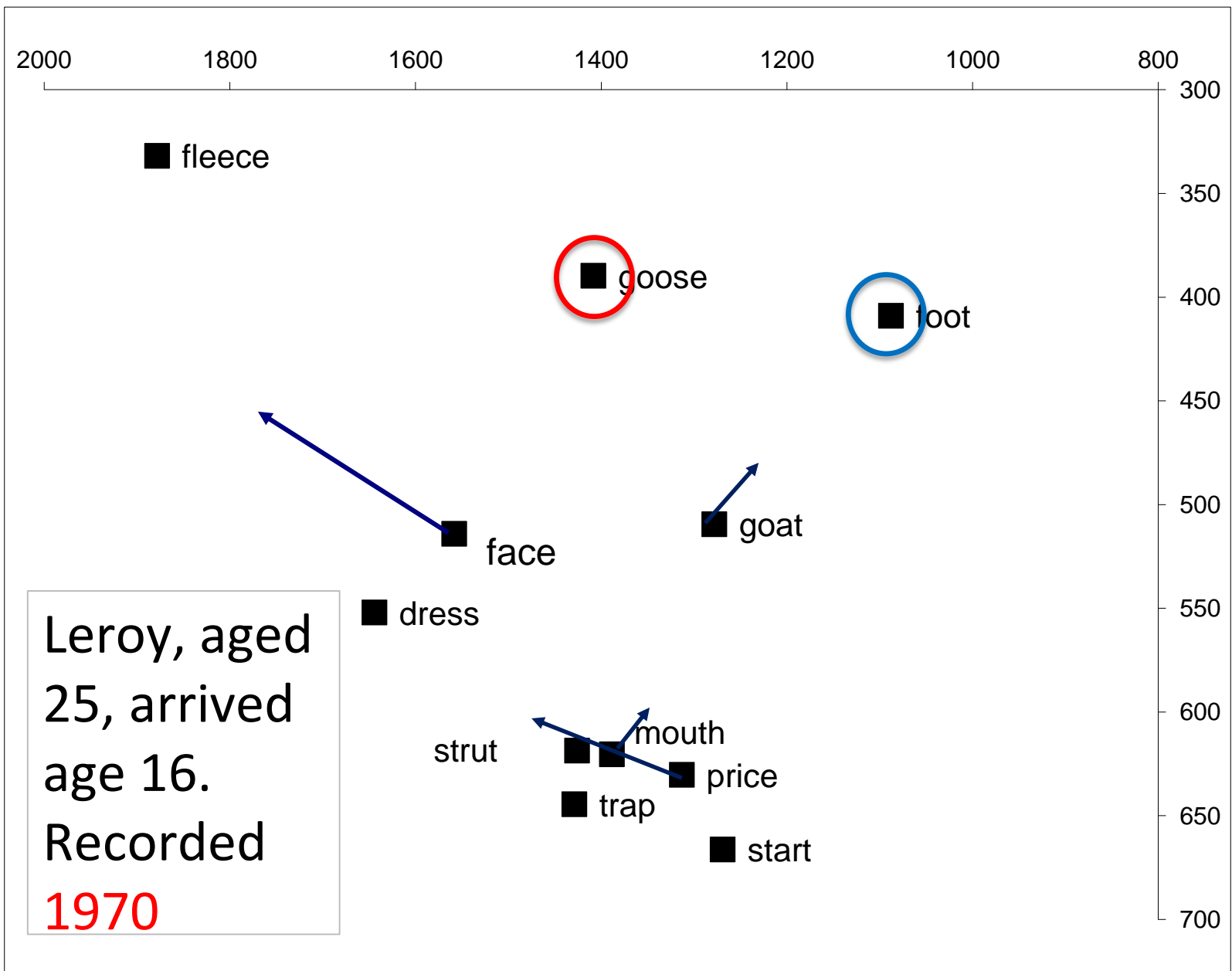
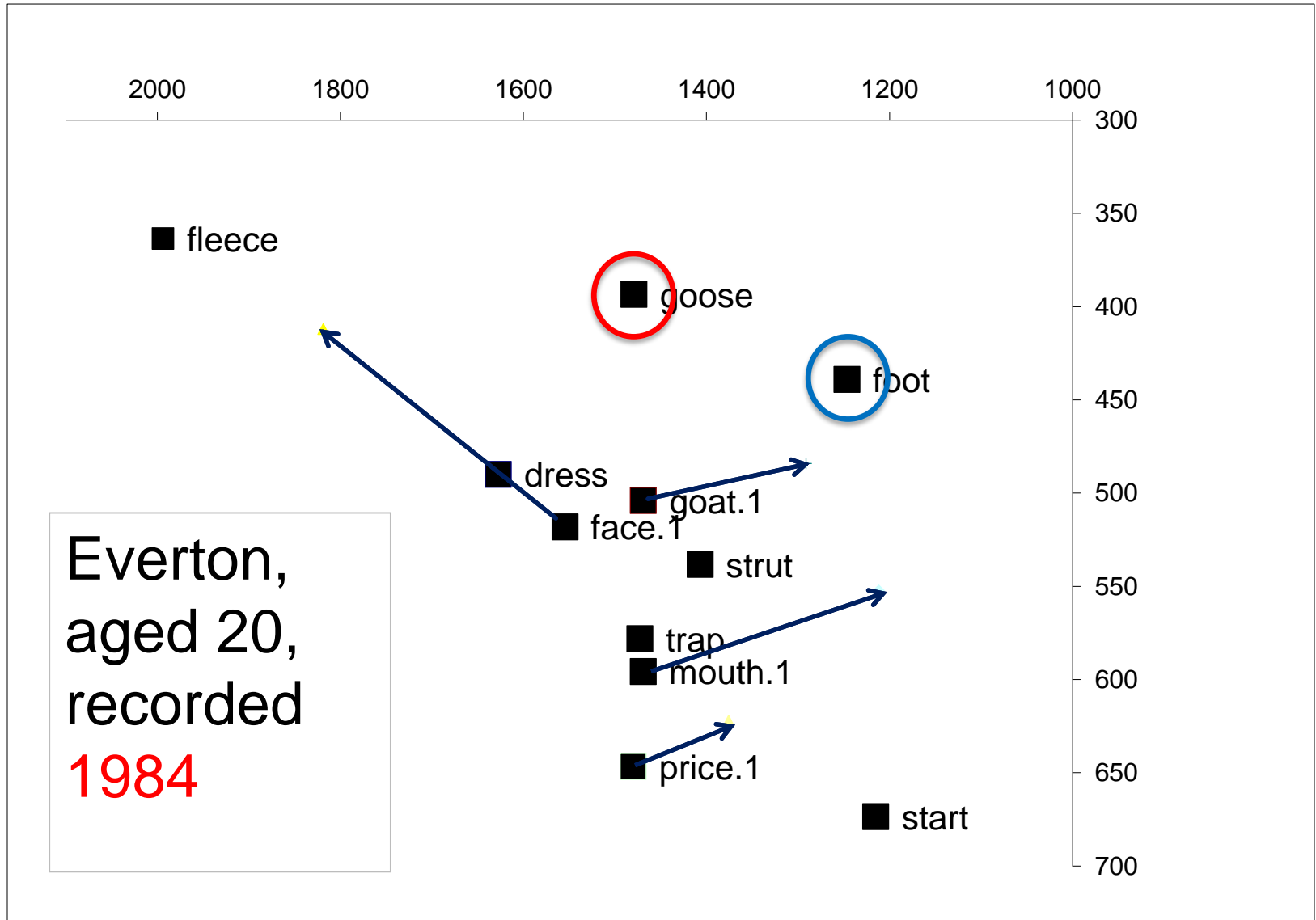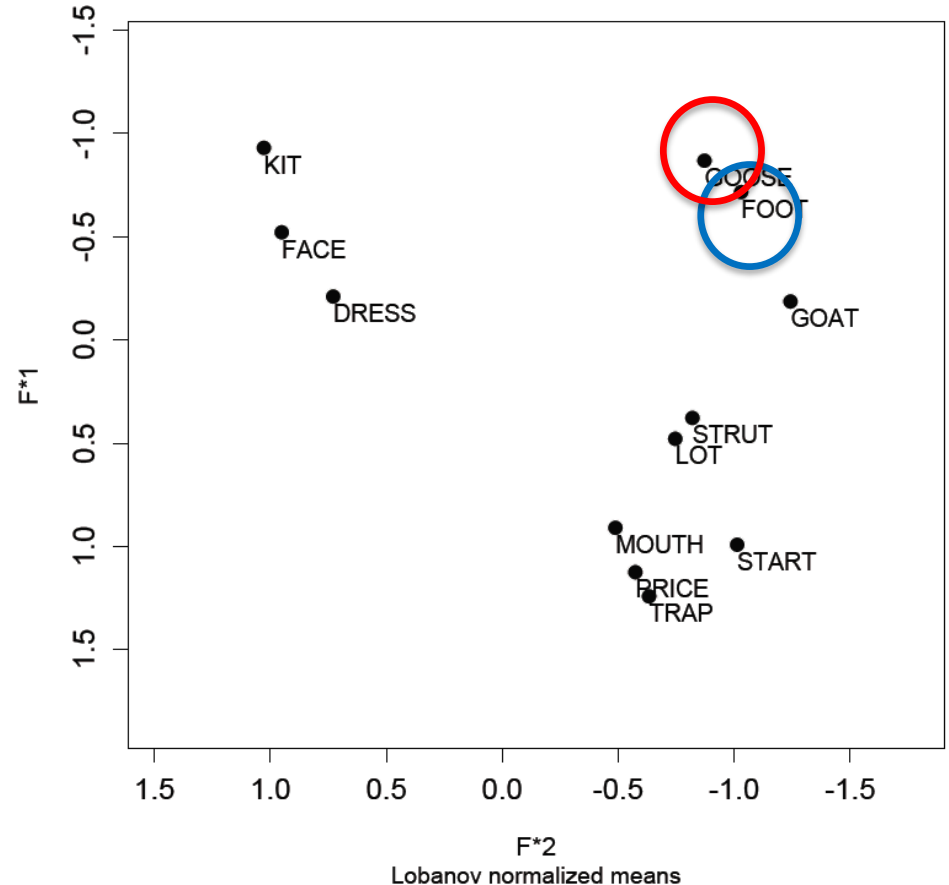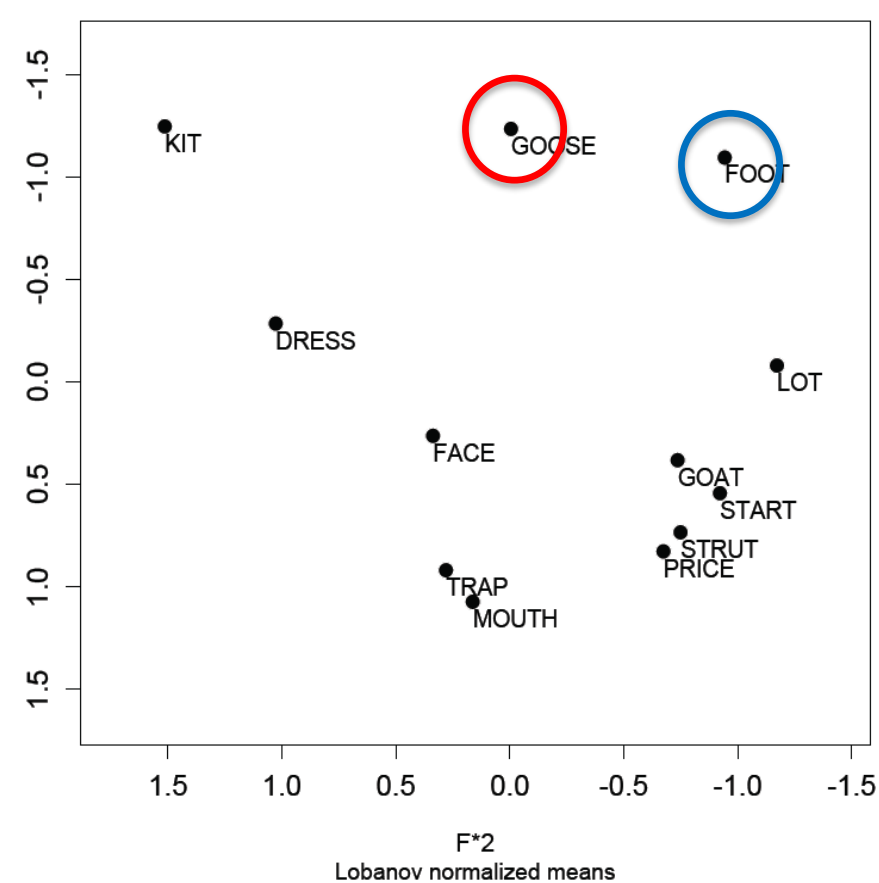(For diphthongs, only onsets are shown.)

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Changing London Jamaican repertoires 1970–2010

- Recordings:

  - Jamaican immigrants recorded by John Wells in 1970

  - London-born Jamaicans recorded by Mark Sebba in 1984

Winston, aged 49, arrived age 19. Recorded 1970

2000   1800   1600   1400   1200   1000   800

300

■ fleece

■ goose

■ foot

face

■ goat

■ dress

Leroy, aged 25, arrived age 16. Recorded 1970

strut   mouth

■ price

■ trap

■ start

350

400

450

500

550

600

650

700

Everton, aged 20, recorded 1984

Interview style with white fieldworker

'Patois' style with no fieldworker

Composite vowel systems of 11 adolescent London-born Jamaicans recorded in 1984 (For diphthongs, only onsets are shown.)

Conclusions – 1st and 2nd generations of Jamaicans in London

- 1st generation (immigrants, 1960s)
  - Different island creoles + Caribbean English + speech accommodated to London English

- 2nd generation (1980s)
  - Expanded repertoire with London Vernacular (Cockney), plus London Jamaican and (incipient) MLE
  - Code-switching

- 3rd generation (2000s)
  - Restriction of repertoire (for some)
    - Loss of London Jamaican
    - Loss of Cockney
    - MLE dominates – FACE, GOAT aligned with 'Patois' style

There is no unique origin for multiethnolect features

- Founder effect relates to the first large migration strand
  - May account for prevalence of Jamaican slang, but doesn't account for African American slang
- Frequency has some impact
- Strong indexicality effects for some features
  - Needs investigation
  - Internally-motivated change which gains indexical meaning ([q] for /k/)
- Some global features are adopted
  - But why these and not others?
- The combination of features in MLE is not entirely predictable, but contingent on a rapidly changing demography and inter-group relations

7. Summing up

- So far, used Trudgill's determinism model of new-dialect formation (2004)

- But doesn't work well:
  - We're dealing with language shift involving 'group second-language acquisition' (Winford 2003)
  - Speakers choose from a 'feature pool' (Mufwene)

- Why GOOSE-fronting but not FOOT-fronting?
  - *Global* change – cf also SPEAKER + BE LIKE quotative

- MLE vowels and THIS IS + SPEAKER are *local* changes

- From the early days of MLE, identity factors have played a powerful role.
  - Comments by Pitts, Sebba, Hewitt

- That's it!

References

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Güldemann, T. (2012). Thetic speaker-instantiating quotative indexes as a cross-linguistic type. In I. Buchstaller, & I. van Alphen (Eds.), *Quotatives: Cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary perspectives* (pp. 117-142). Amsterdam: Benjamins.