



*The Atlas of North American English:
Phonetics, Phonology and Sound Change*

William Labov, Sharon Ash and Charles Boberg

Mouton/de Gruyter, 2005!

Some evidence of chain shifts in progress and increasing dialect diversity, drawn from experiments
Cross-Dialectal Comprehension, 1986-89

Please write the word, phrase or sentence that you hear (1)

Word

Phrase

Sentence

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



Please write the word, phrase or sentence that you hear (2)

Word



Phrase



Sentence



1. ___black

___ living on one black/block

Senior citizens living on one block



2.

3.



4.



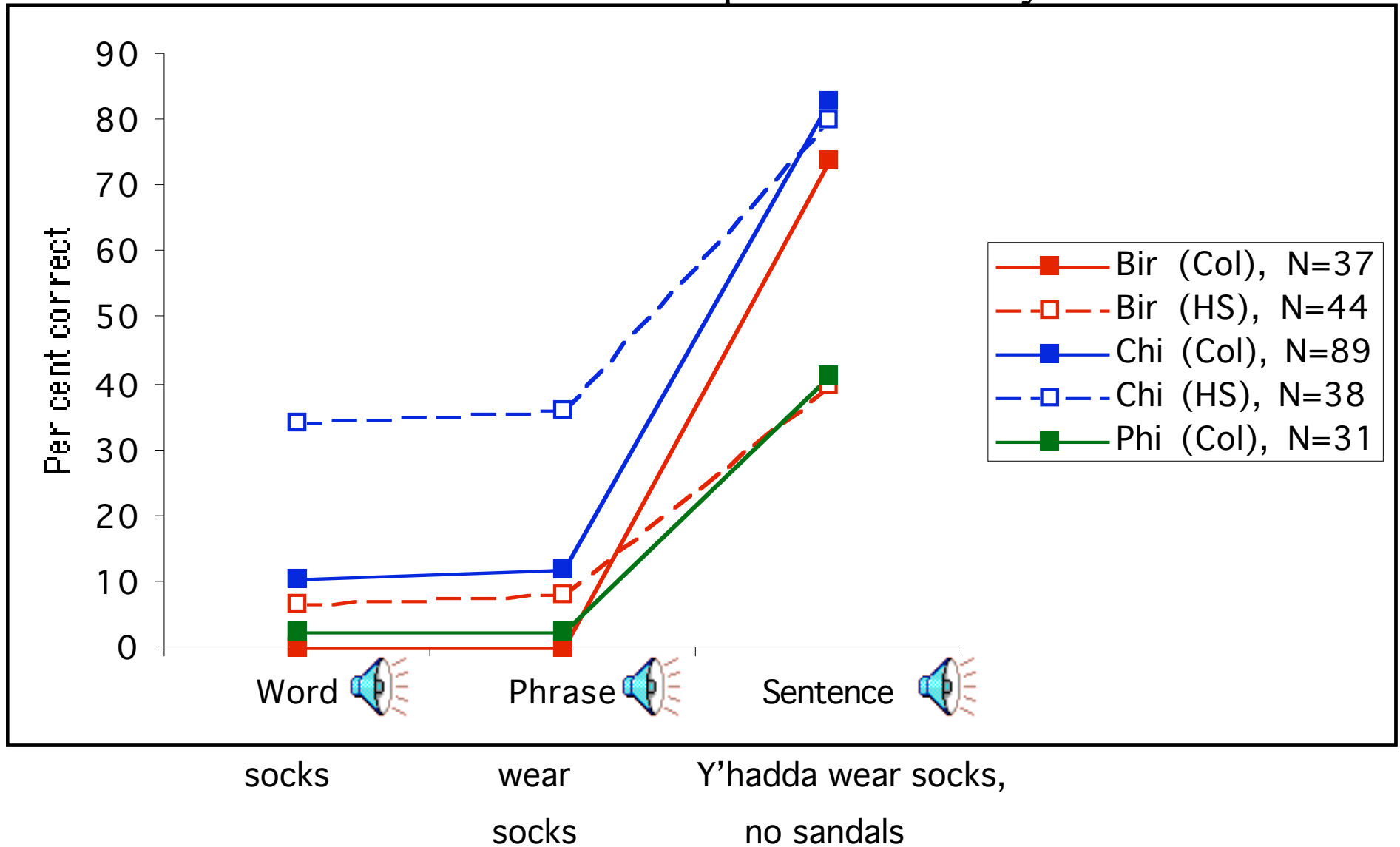
5.



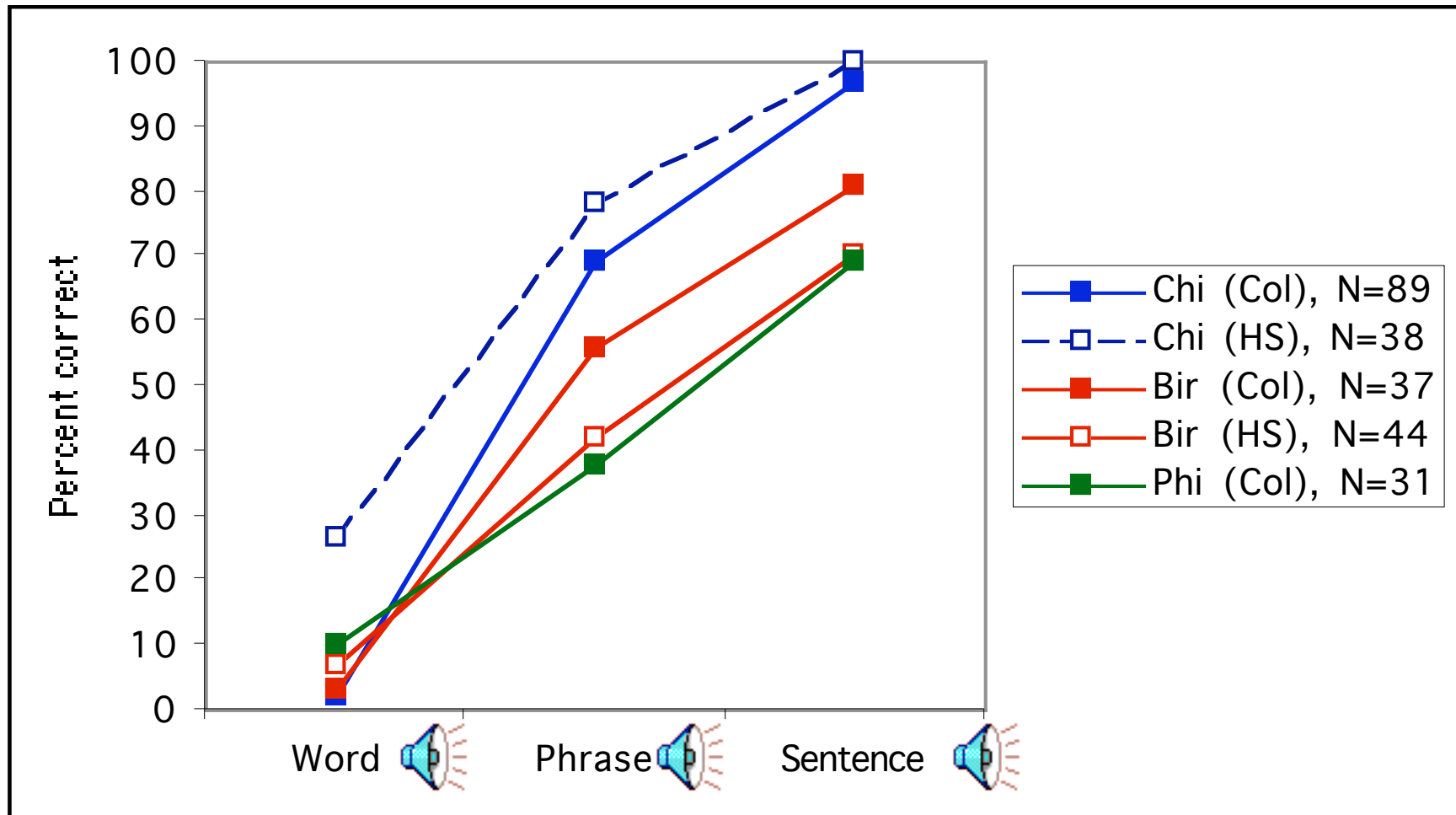
6.



Percent correct in Gating Experiments by city and educational level in Cross Dialectal Comprehension study: *socks*



Percent correct in Gating Experiments by city and educational level in Cross Dialectal Comprehension study: *block*



block

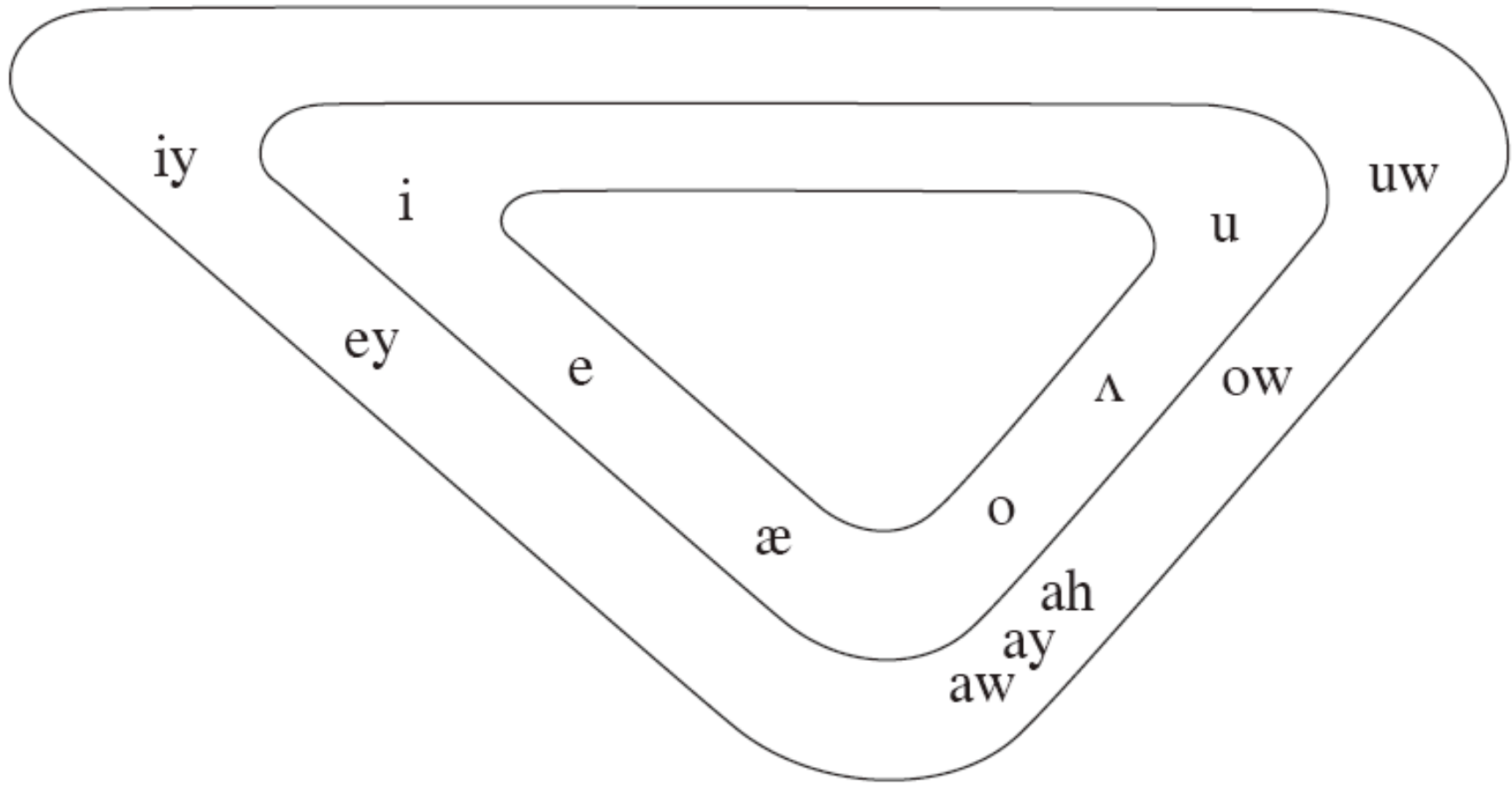
living on

Senior citizens

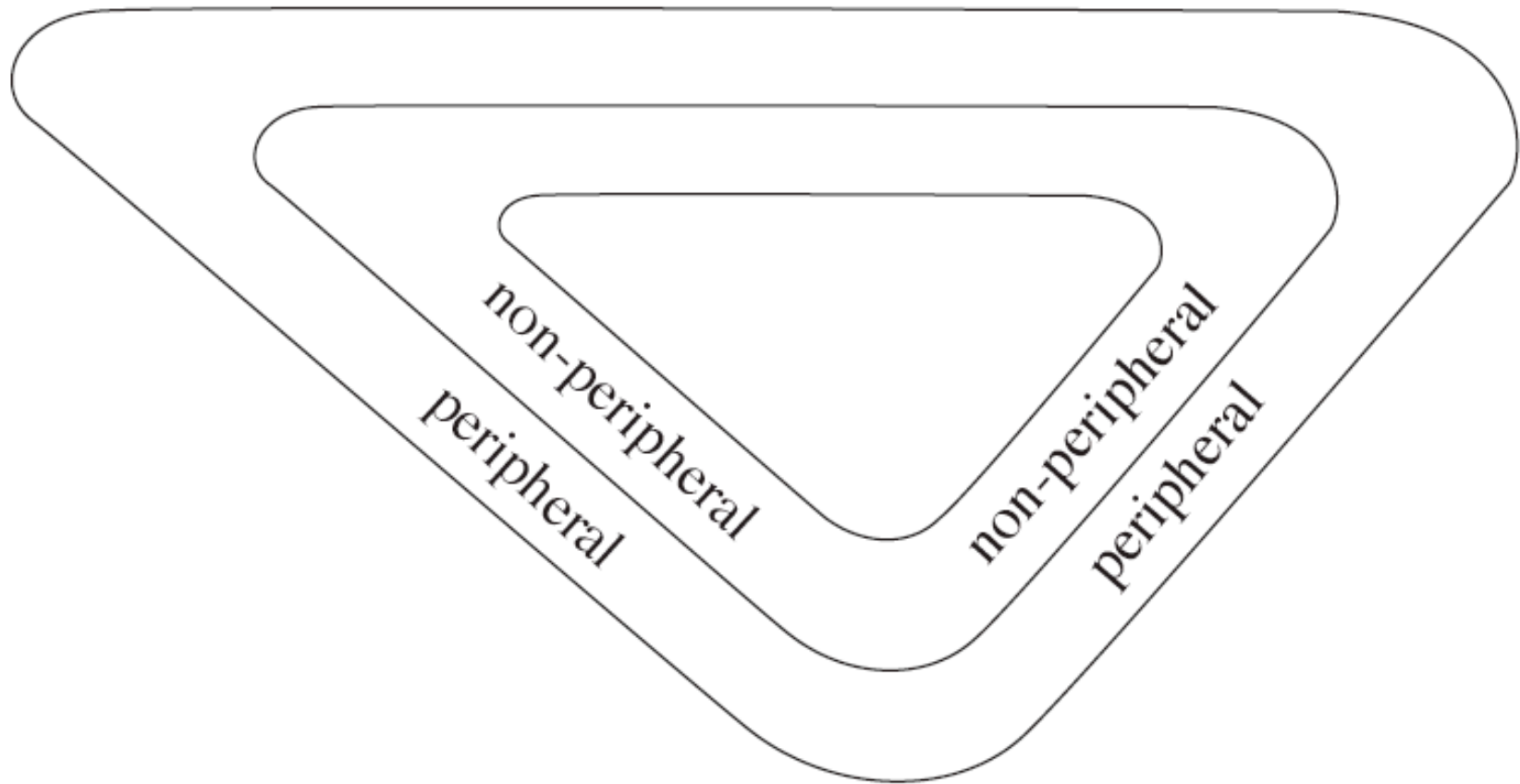
one block

living on one block

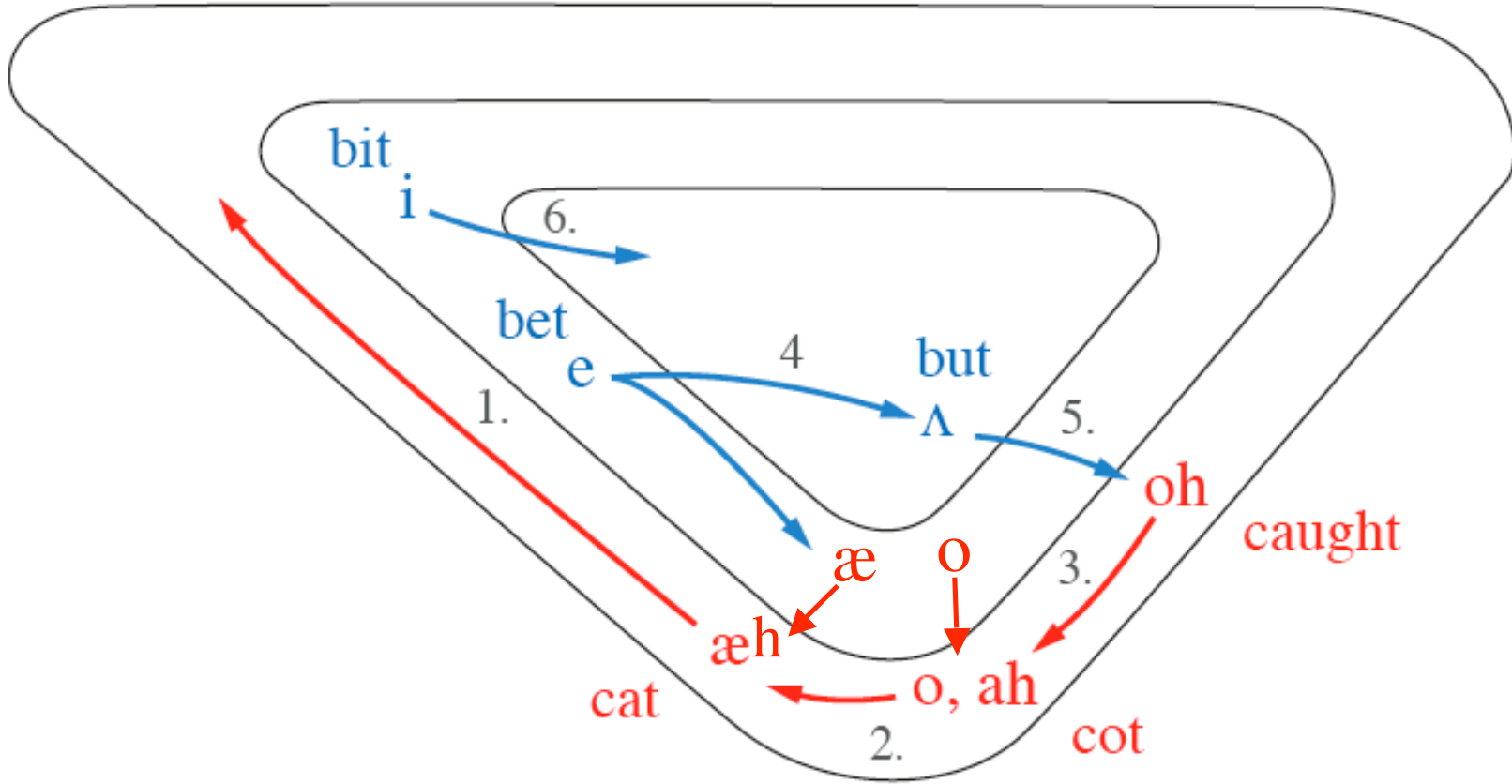
Location of initial position vowels in phonological space



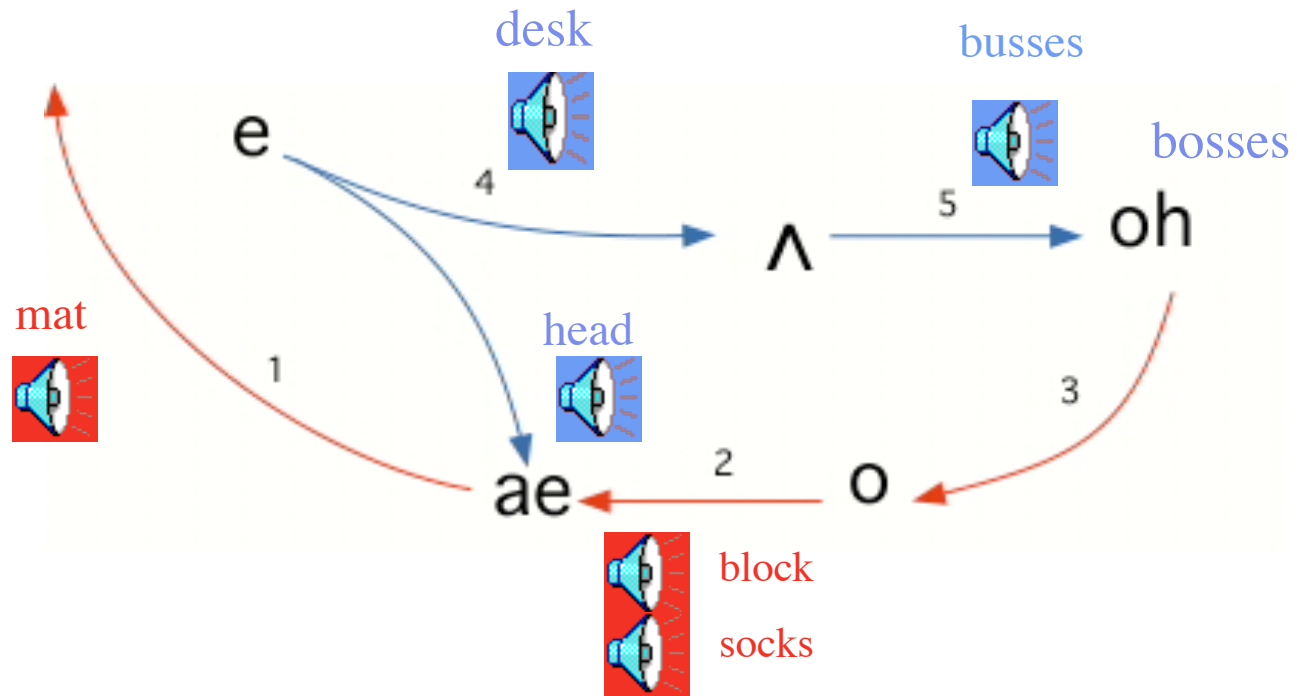
Peripheral and nonperipheral tracks in West
Germanic phonological space



The Northern Cities Shift



The Northern Cities Shift



Two of the changes involved in the Northern Cities Shift

1. *General AE raising*-- mat, black, cap
mad, lab
man, lamb
2. Merged O/AH fronting-- pop, bother, block, socks

Labov's idea:

1. AE raising was first,
2. AE raising created a “vacuum” in the vowel space
3. AH/O came next, to “fill the vacuum”

= a “pull” chain shift

An alternative view:

1. AH/O fronting was first
2. It created a “crowded” vowel space with AE
3. General AE raising took place to create more perceptual difference between the vowels

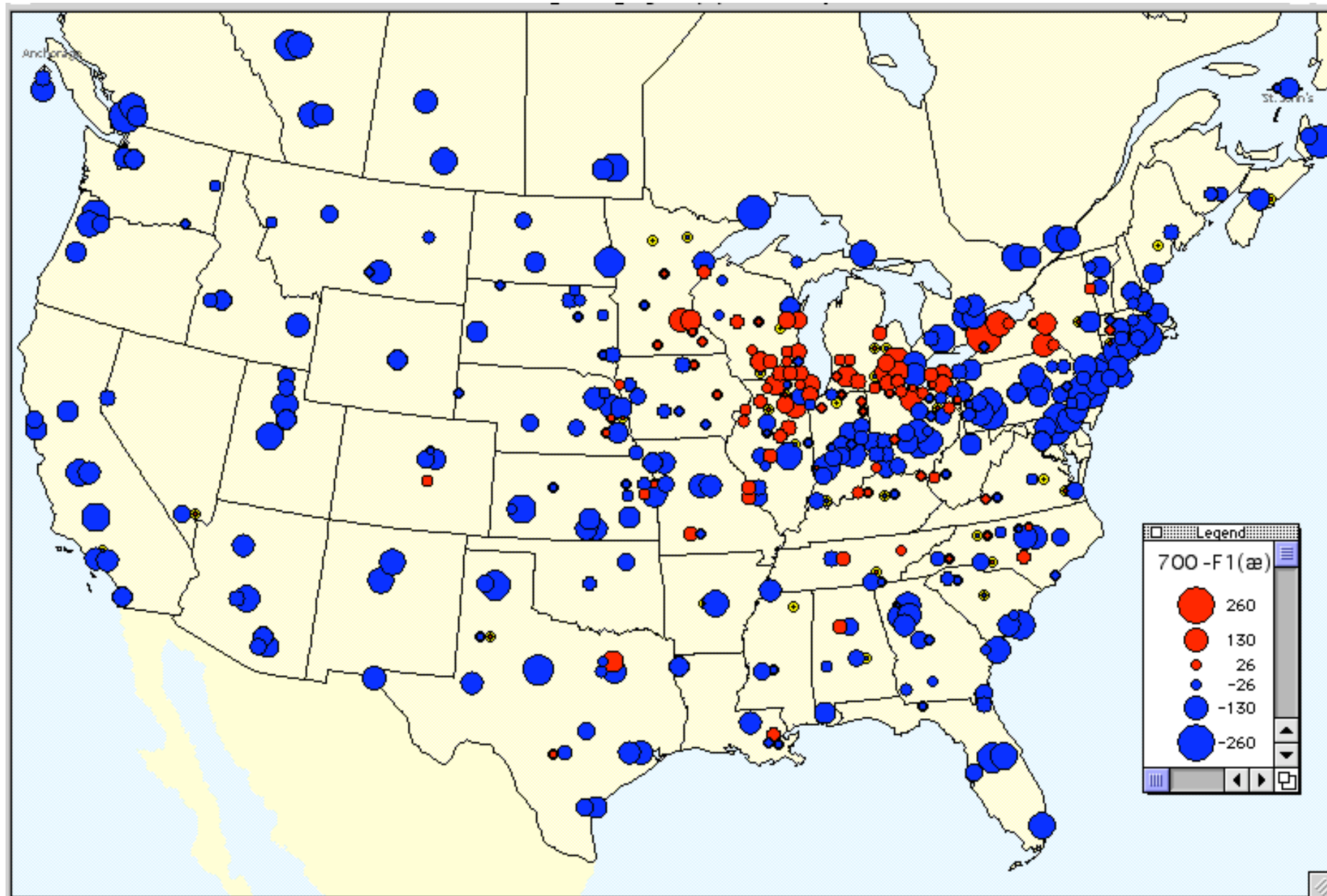
= a “push” chain shift

We need evidence in order to
decide between these two
hypotheses

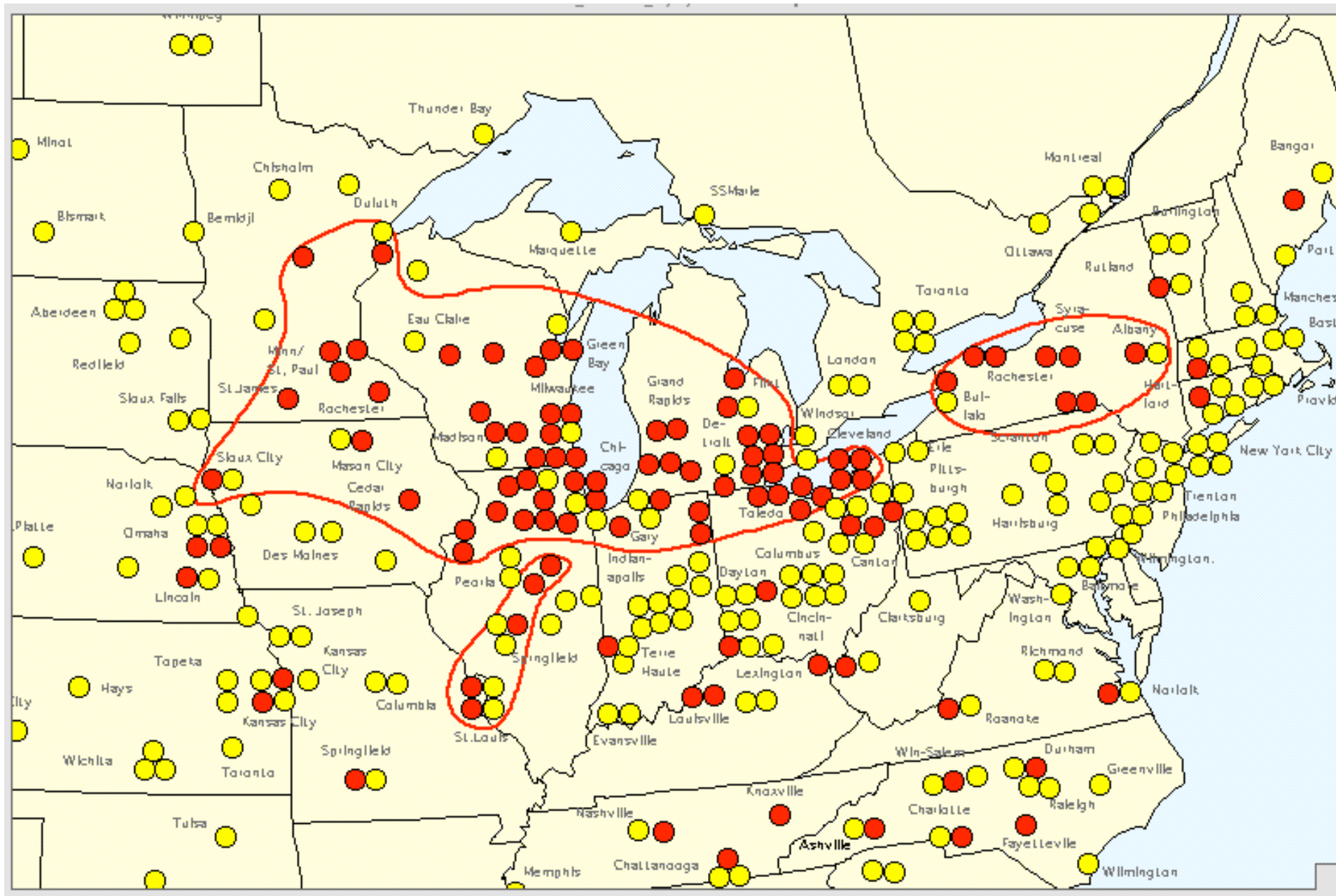
What sort of evidence might
that be?

Speakers with AH/O fronting
who lack AE raising

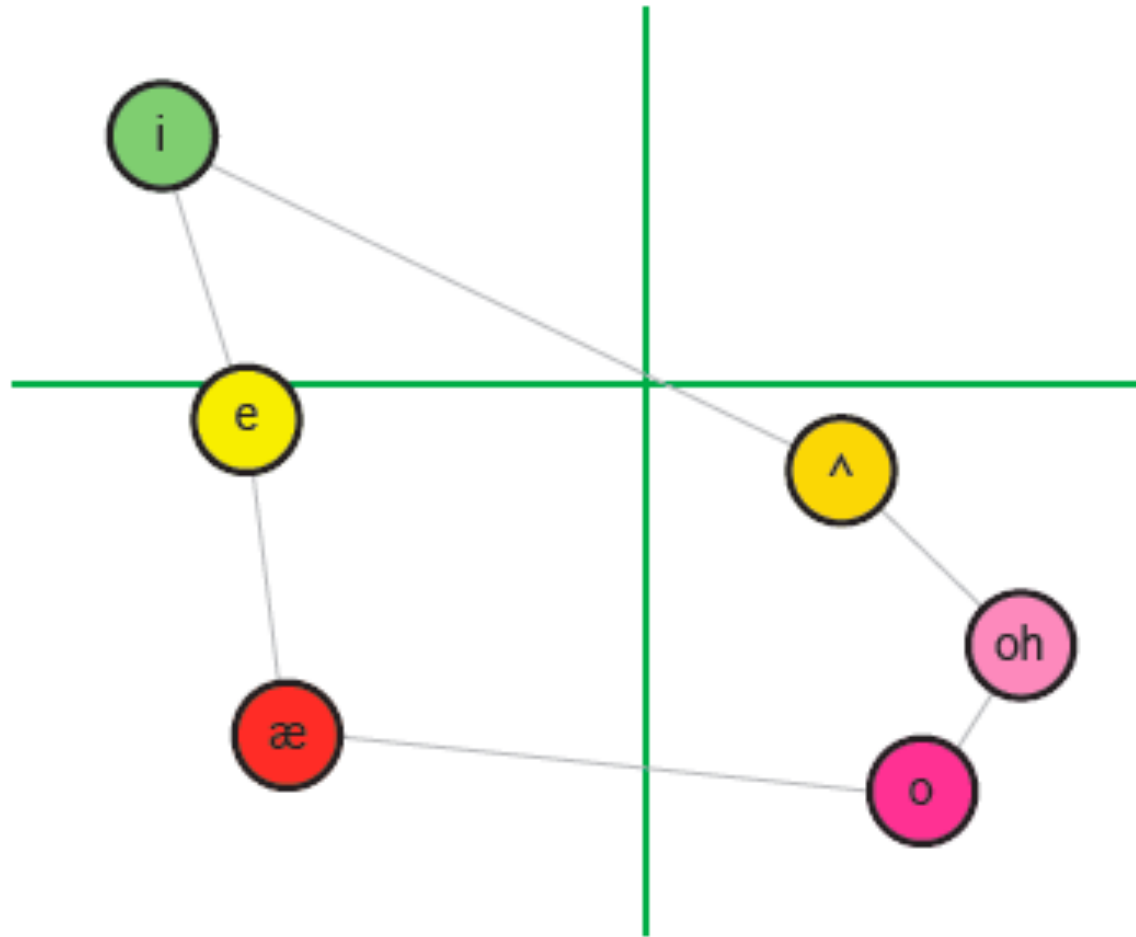
M14.4 Raising of /æ/ (not before nasals) in North America: F1(ae) < 700 Hz



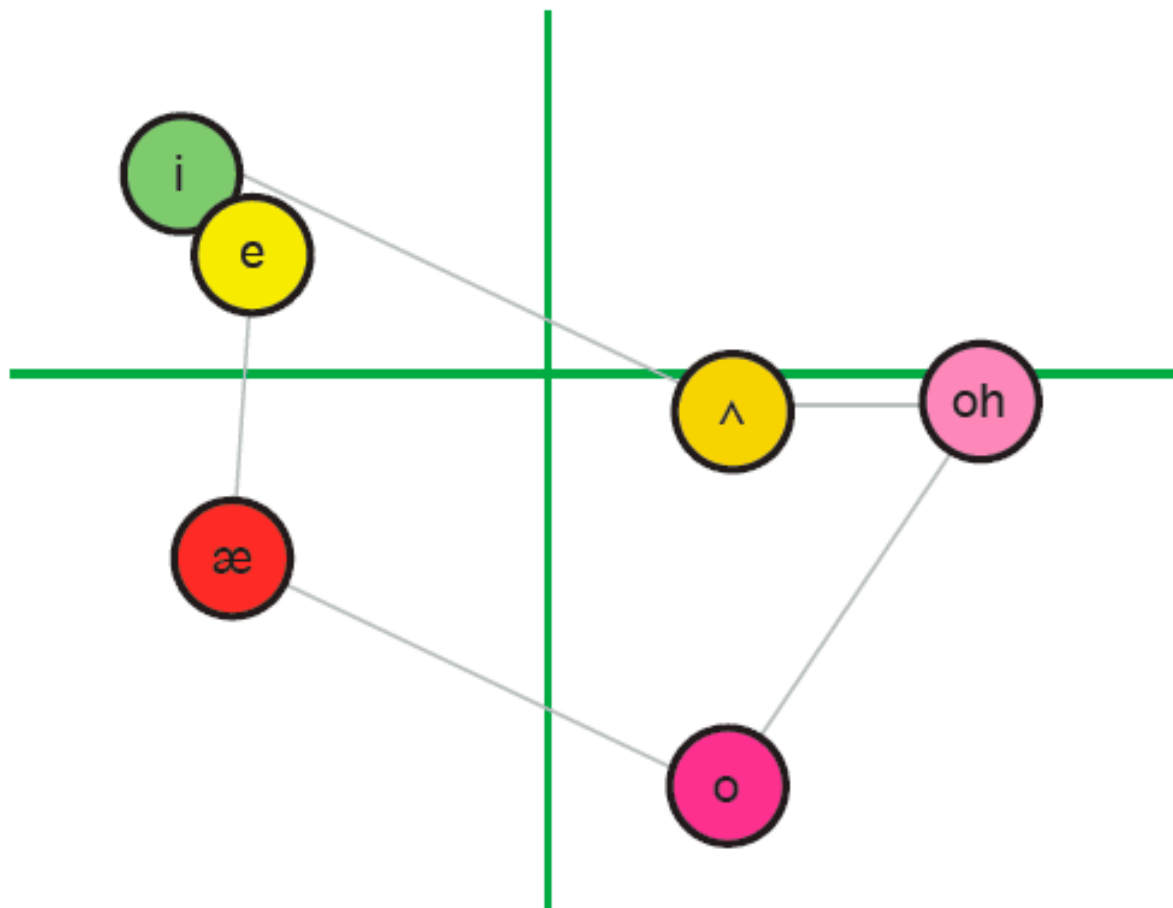
M14.4. Raising of /æ/ in the Inland North [F1(æ) < 700 Hz]



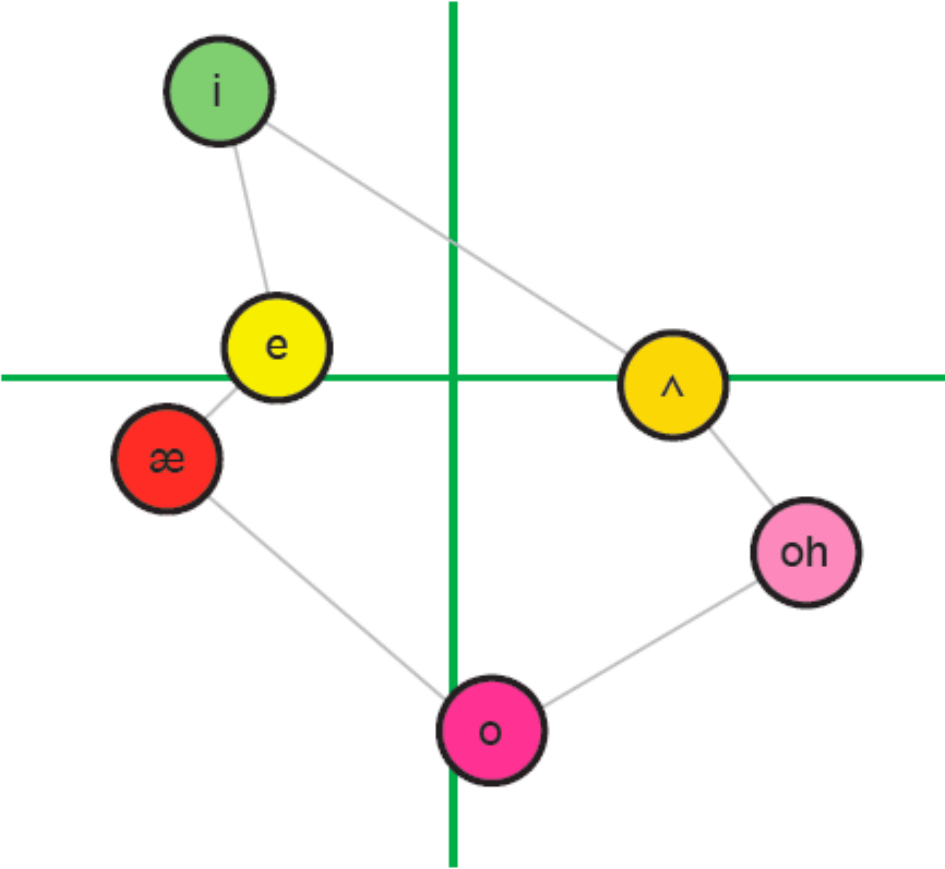
Mean NCS Vowels for a Midland speaker, Beatrice S., 62, Williamsport, PA



Mean NCS Vowels for the oldest Chicago speaker TS 55, James W., 78

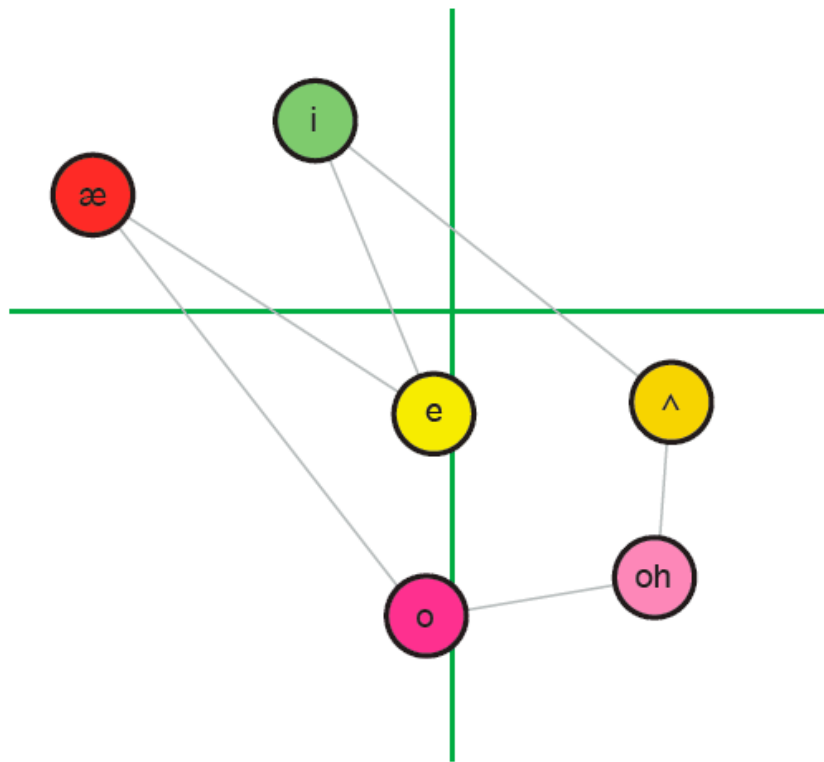


Mean NCS vowels for a speaker from a small NCS city, Steve A., 43, Ann Arbor, MI

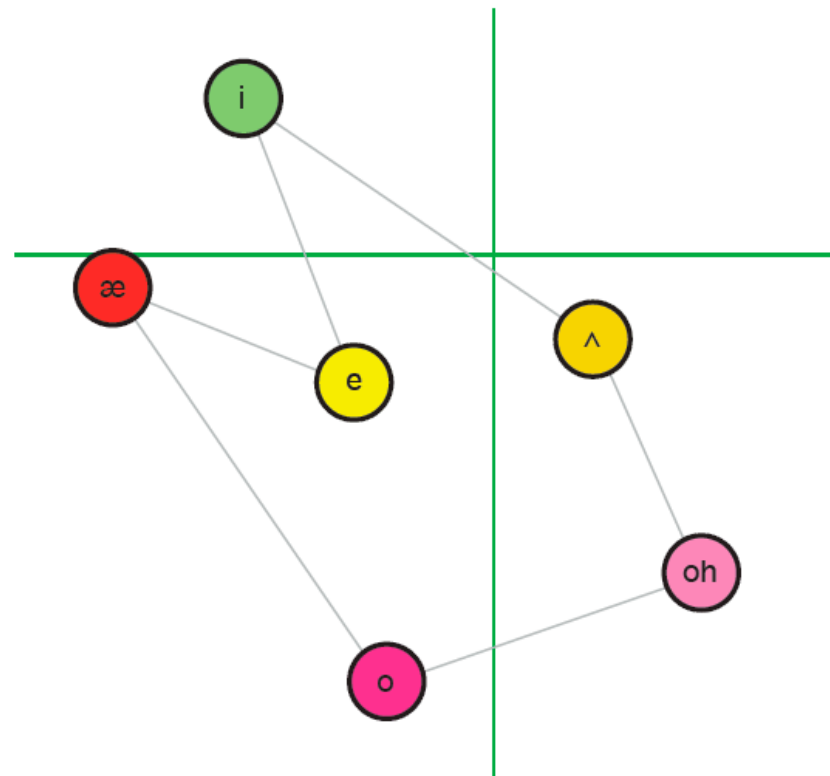


Mean NCS vowels for two speakers from large Inland North cities

TS 359, Sharon K., 35, Rochester, NY



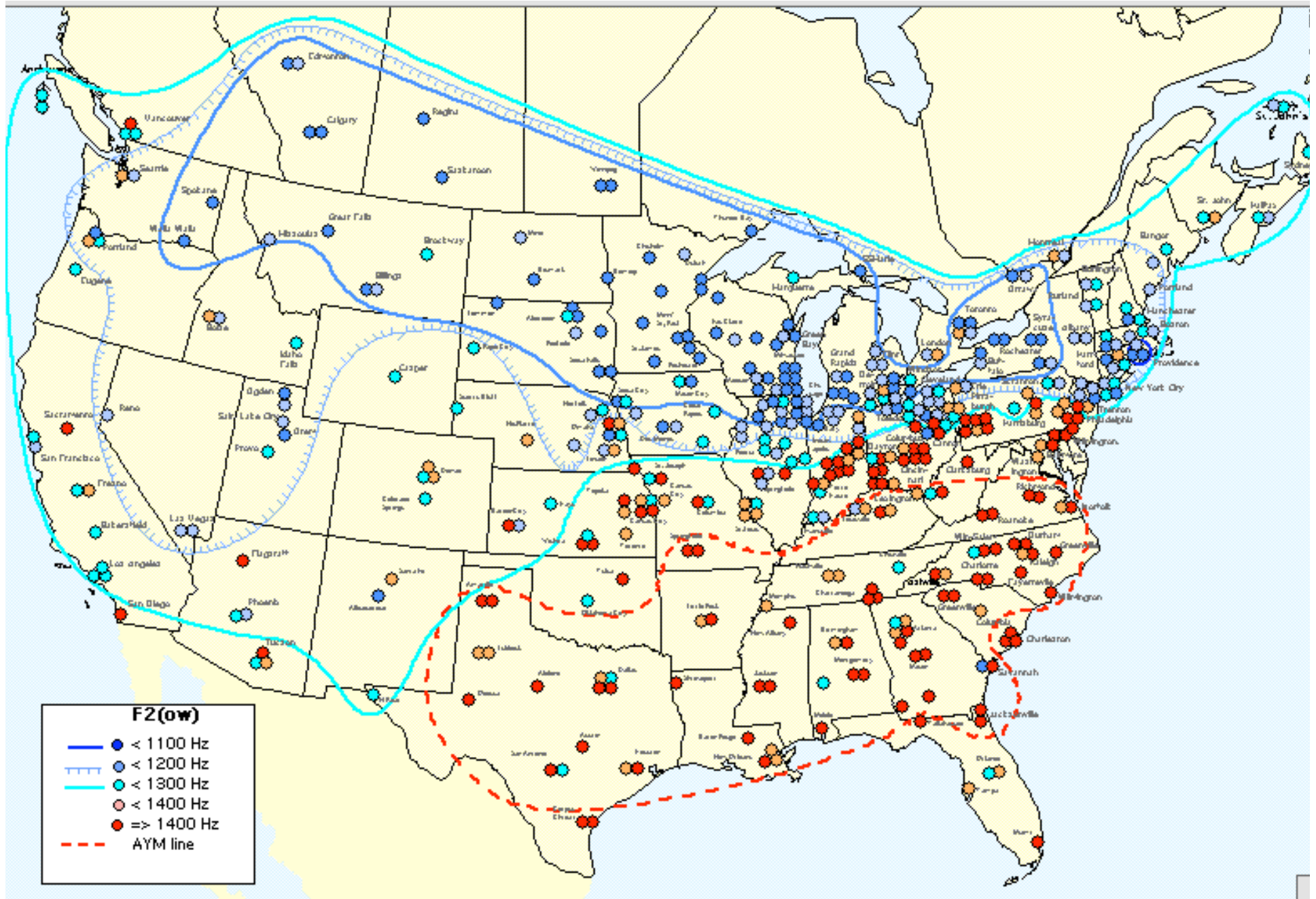
TS 3, Martha F., Kenosha, WI



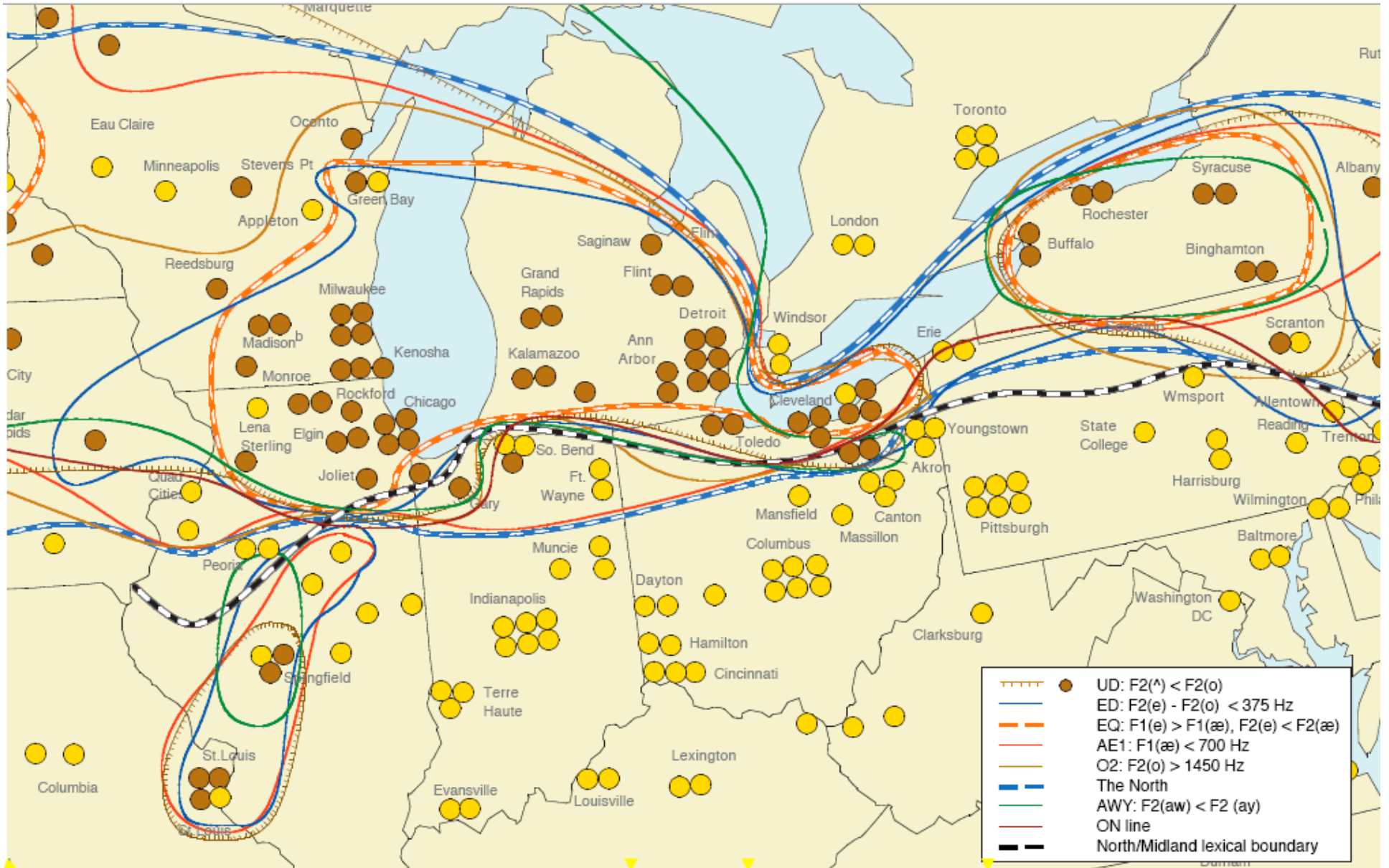
Another aspect of the
Midland-North divide:
OW fronting, as in *go slow*

Chomsky's speech...

Map 12.4 Fronting of /ow/ in North America/

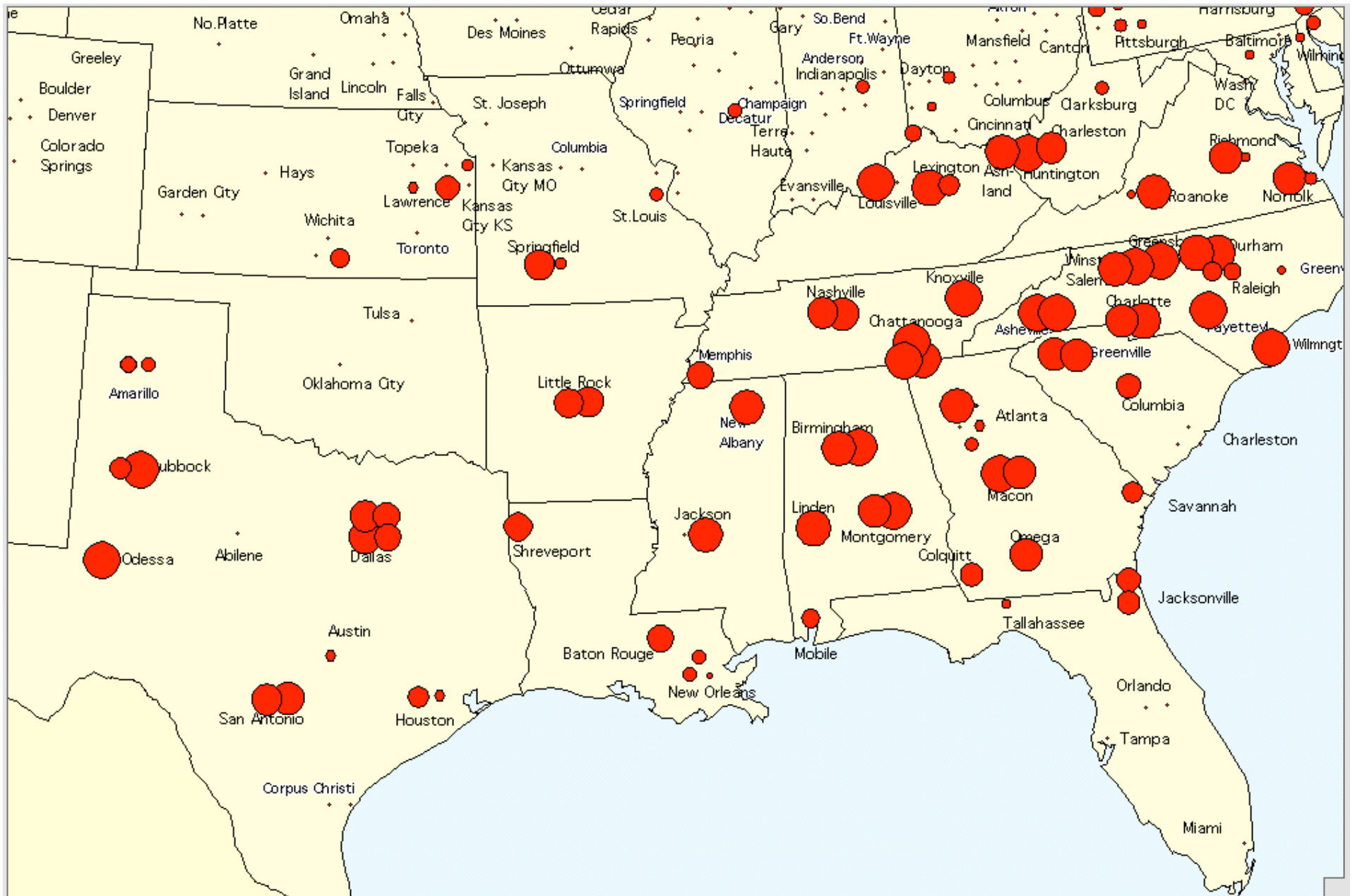


M14.11. The North/Midland isogloss bundle

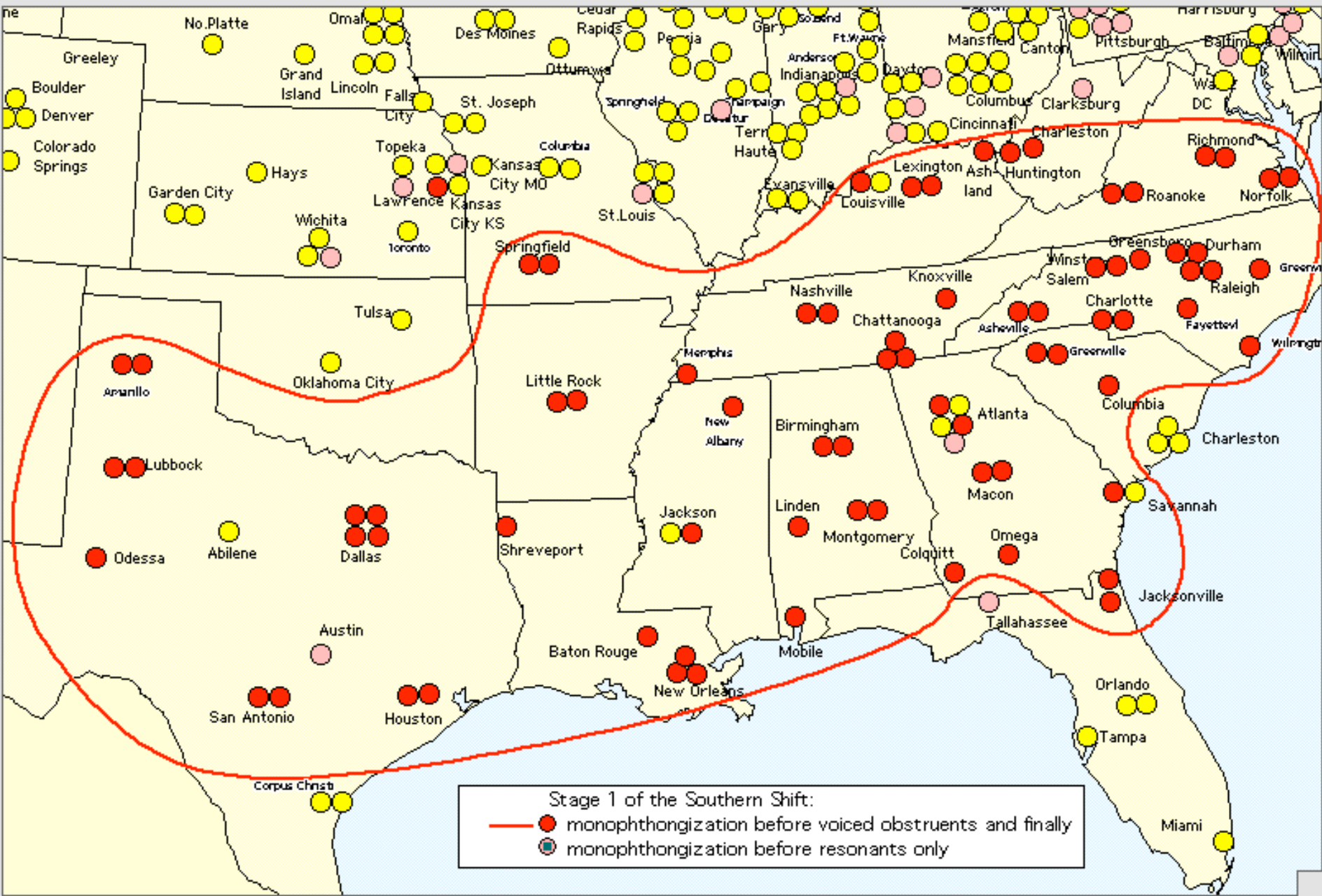


Turning to the South

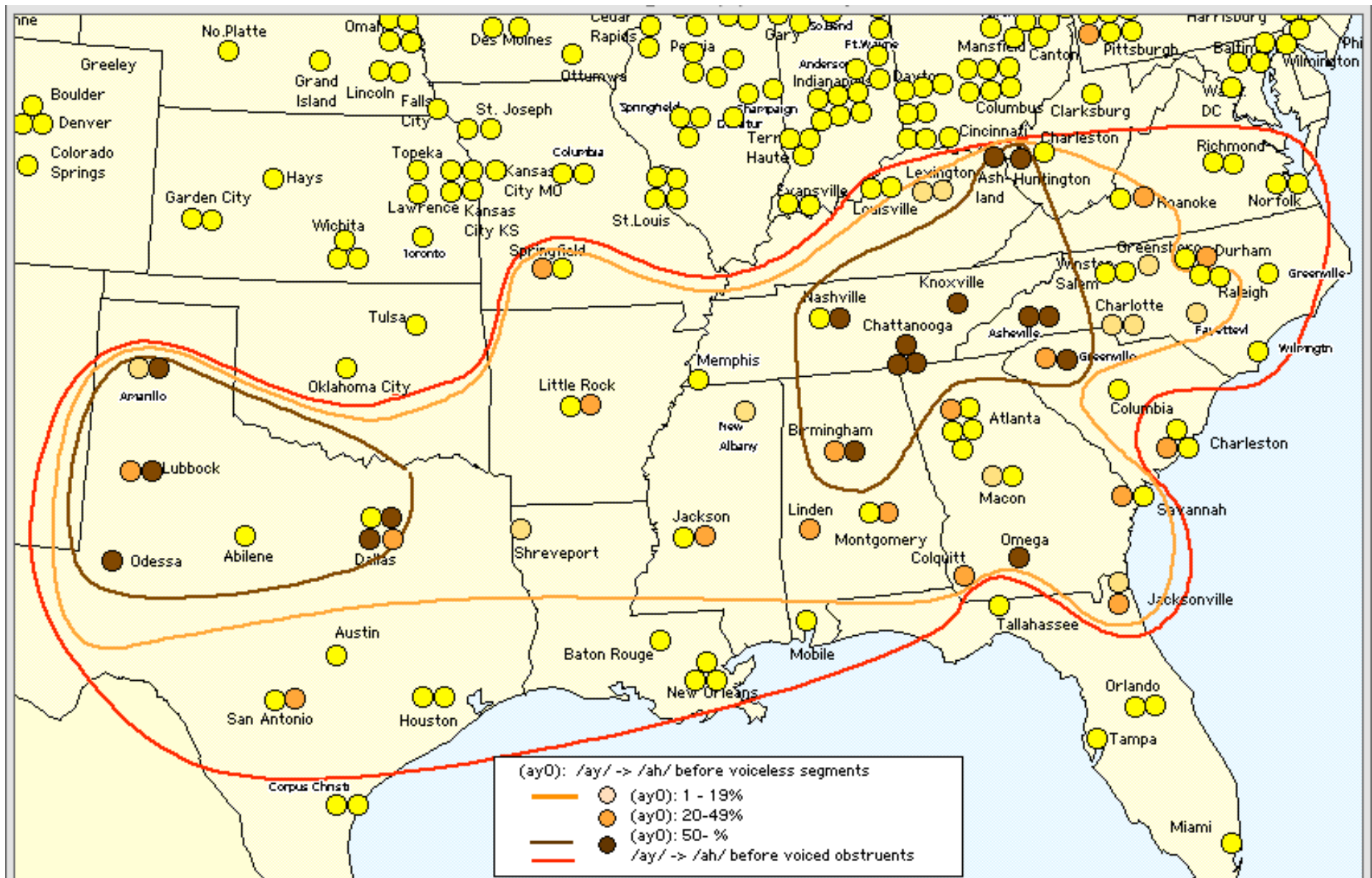
Monophthongization of /ay/: thematic map



Map 11.2. Monophthongization of /ay/ before obstruents and finally



Map 11.5. Monophthongization of /ay/ before voiceless consonants

































Project on Cross-Dialectal Comprehension: Gating Experiment 3

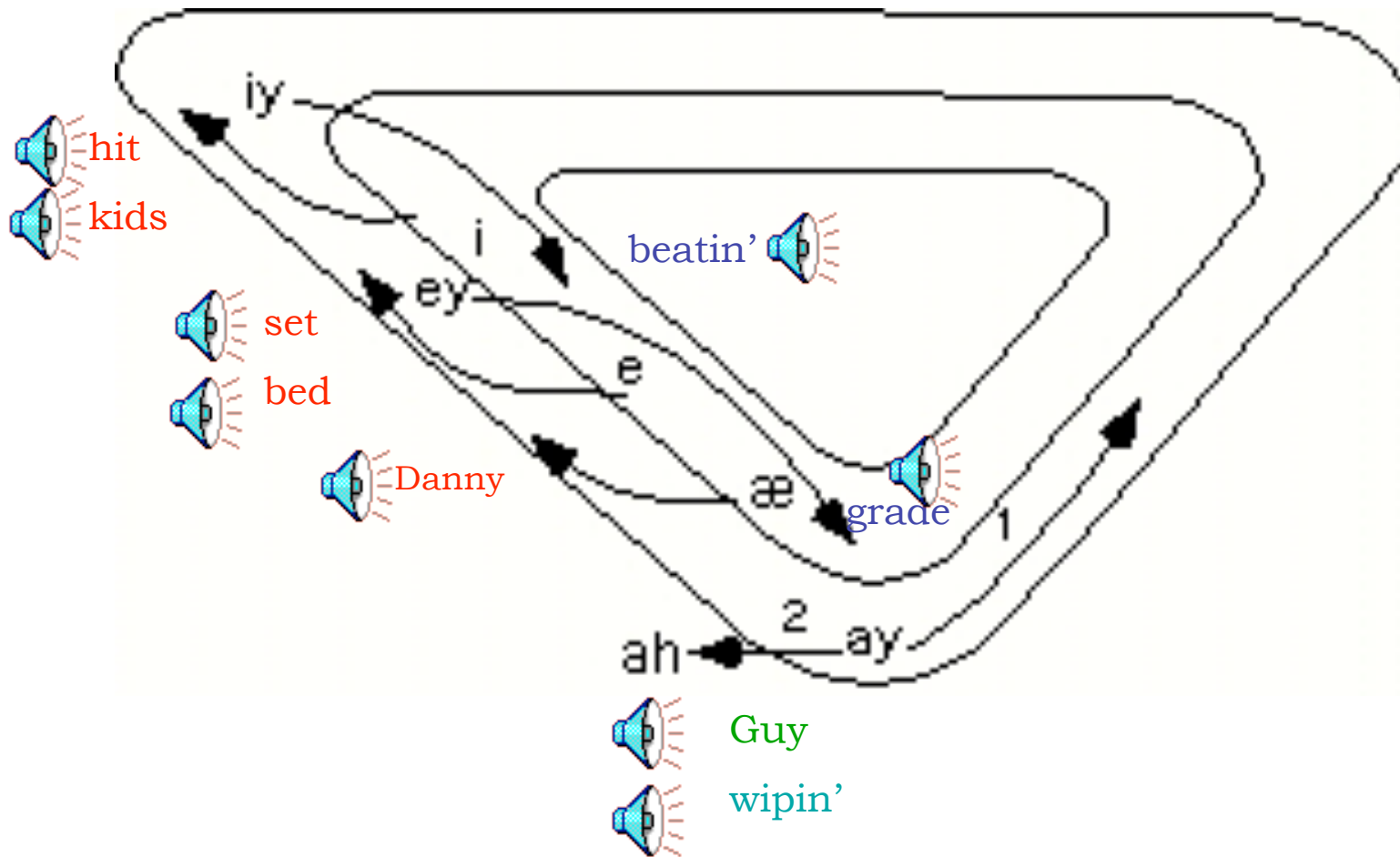
Word

Phrase

Sentence

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 1. |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |
| 6. |  |  |  |
| 7. |  |  |  |
| 8. |  |  |  |
| 9. |  |  |  |
| 10. |  |  |  |

The Southern Shift



Map 11.3. Stages 2 and 3 of the Southern Shift

