

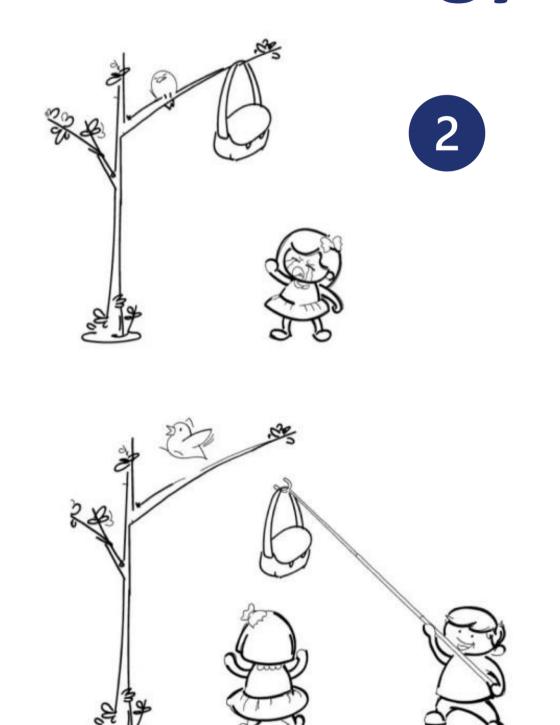
How gender affects immigrants' accent variation?

-- An acoustic study on Hunan immigrants in Beijing

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Methodology: "Elicited Production Test"







30 people in total (5 males + 5 females in each group)



	Group A	Group B	Group C
Age	20-40	20-40	20-40
Current Residence Location	Hunan	Beijing	Beijing
Hometown (born & raised)	Hunan	Hunan	Beijing
Length of residence in Beijing	Never	6-7years	All the time
Working Language	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin
Other dialect	Xiang dialect	Xiang dialect	No
Education Background	Bachelor or above	Bachelor or above	Bachelor or above

(Hz)

Research Background

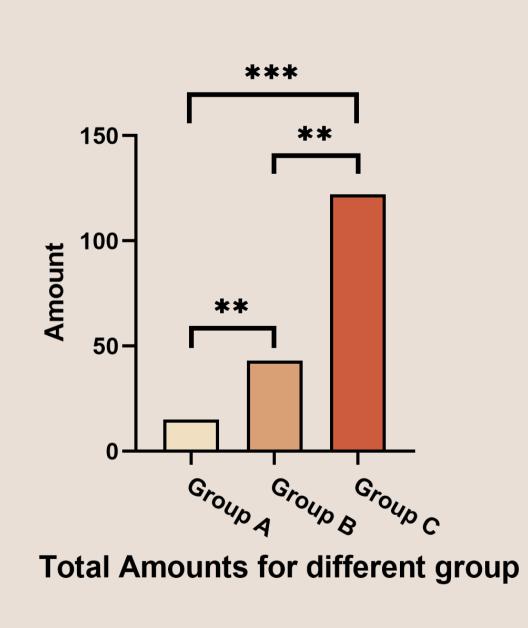
- Previous studies show that females are sensitive to the prestige form (Ronald Macaulay 1977,1978; Edina Eisikovits 1987,1988; Trudgill 1989).
- The long-term study conducted by Penelope Eckert (1990, 1995, 1998, 1999) about a high school in Detroit shows that females' usage is polarized than males', which indicated that females' self-identity matters.
- Duanmu (1990) argued that Mandarin does not hold the same prestige as British Received Pronunciation. However, achieving a standard Mandarin pronunciation is considered indicative of good education and high social status (P. Chen 1999).

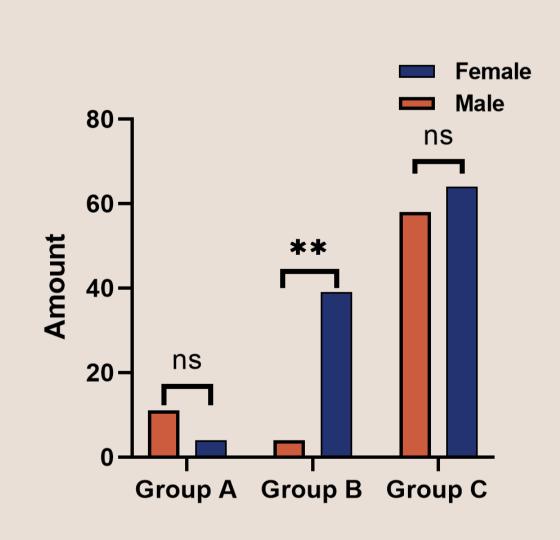
Research Questions

- Whether female immigrants would adopt the "prestige form" (i.e. Standard Mandarin) in their simultaneous speech or the Beijing Mandarin?
- Do female immigrants have the same acoustic characteristics in their speech as Beijing locals?

Results

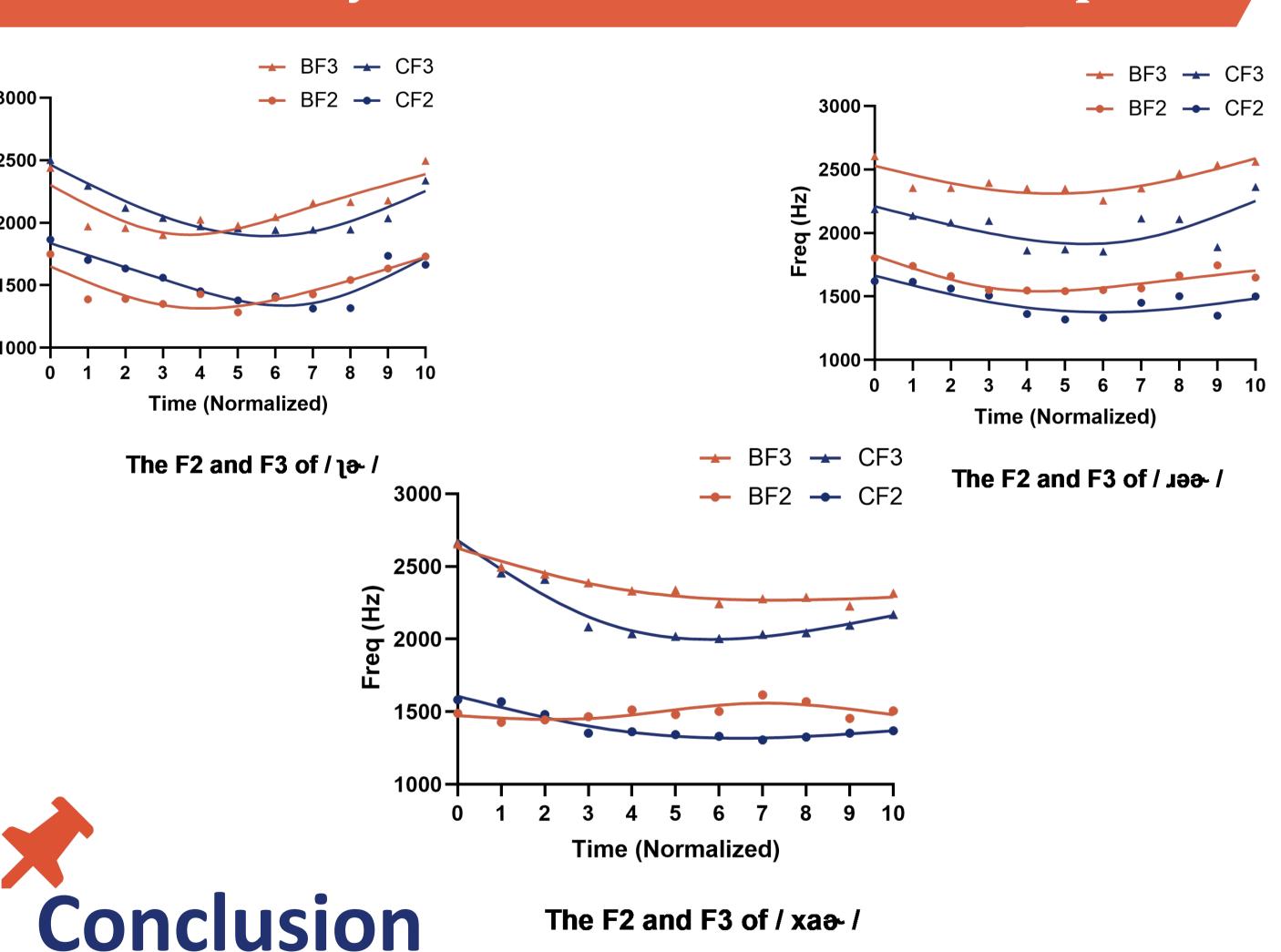
Amount of /er/ production





Gender difference among groups

Acoustic Analysis Between Females in Group B & C



Primary insights



Bourdieu (1975) Linguistics Market

- Every feature is equally involved in linguistics market.
- Culture background would input different values into different culture.

In this immigrants' society

- The local accent holds a higher value than standard mandarin accent.
- Masculine also has a greater value than feminine feature.

- The variation in immigrants' accents is a dynamically changing process.
- It is hard for female immigrants acquiring *er* suffixation by implicit learning through daily life talking since the huge acoustics difference exists between Group B&C's production.
- Native language has an impact on second language learning since it is harder for Hunan immigrants to produce consonants which don't exist in their native language inventory.
- This example from immigrant society broader the clarification that women, deprived of access to real power, must claim their social status using symbolic features.