

"Fu[?] it is, dummy?": Becoming Baltimorean on TikTok

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Video 1: JDUGG



Hey, what's up, guys? It's my first day in Baltimore today. Uh, weirdest thing happened. I was walking up the street and, uh, somebody called me, "Doug," and I said, "Hey man, you got the wrong guy," like... It was just weird, you know, all the names like Doug? I don't really look like a Doug.

Fuck it is, stupid? It's a update for real. It's been like a month in Baltimore. Stupid wasn't calling me, "Doug," he was just calling me, "dog," for real. I get that now, you feel me? But I ain't feel him before, you know what I mean? But shit, Imma catch up with y'all later for real. It's been like a month here. I'm kinda fuckin' with it for real, I ain't gonna lie.

Fuck it is, stupid ass? Been up in this bitch for like a whole year now. Well, like shit, [real life more] crazy, swear to God. We was up on the avenue the other day, shots was gettin' fired and all that. I got up out of there. But anyways, you know Young Moose? Yeah, that's my old cousin, bro, swear to God.

Introduction

- What linguistic features do TikTok performers adopt as they “become Baltimorean”?
- Let’s watch silly videos and look at neat phonological features and stuff.

Performance and enregisterment

- **Enregisterment:** the processes by which a set of features become distinctive and socially meaningful (Agha 2003)
- Dialect performances link linguistic features to social meanings and contribute to the enregisterment of varieties (Johnstone 2011; Pratt & D'Onofrio 2017)
- Dialect performances also demonstrate speakers' knowledge of, ideologies about, and attitudes towards varieties (Preston 1996; Schilling-Estes 1998)

Distinctive Baltimore AAE features

Type	Feature	Spread	Salience	Source
Phonological	Low back merger to STRUT	Baltimore only	high	Jeremiah 2000
	Centralization of front vowels before /r/	Regional (DMV)	high	Blake & Shousterman 2010; Arnson & Farrington 2017
	Fronted GOOSE	Regional (DMV)	high	Jones 2020
	Raised THOUGHT	Regional (Mid-Atlantic/NYC)	low	Jones 2020; personal knowledge
	k-glottaling	Regional (DMV)*	low	Luelsdorff 1975; personal knowledge
Lexical	<i>dummy, stupid</i>	Baltimore only	high	personal knowledge
	<i>fuck it is</i>	Baltimore only?	medium	personal knowledge
	<i>yo</i>	Baltimore only	unclear	Stotko & Troyer 2007

Video statistics

Username	Display name	Date uploaded	N. likes (k)	N. comments	N. bookmarks (k)	N. shares (k)
@only1jdugg	JDUGG	2020-11-22	218.4	3,746	12.2	21.9
@trendsetter rrrrr	Carnell Nichols	2022-10-26	328.2	2,815	27.9	15.6
@bigkildot	BigKildot	2022-11-03	15.9	107	1.783	0.486

Methods

- Forced alignment using DARLA
- Transcripts were hand-corrected and resubmitted to DARLA for formant extraction

Video 2: Carnell Nichols



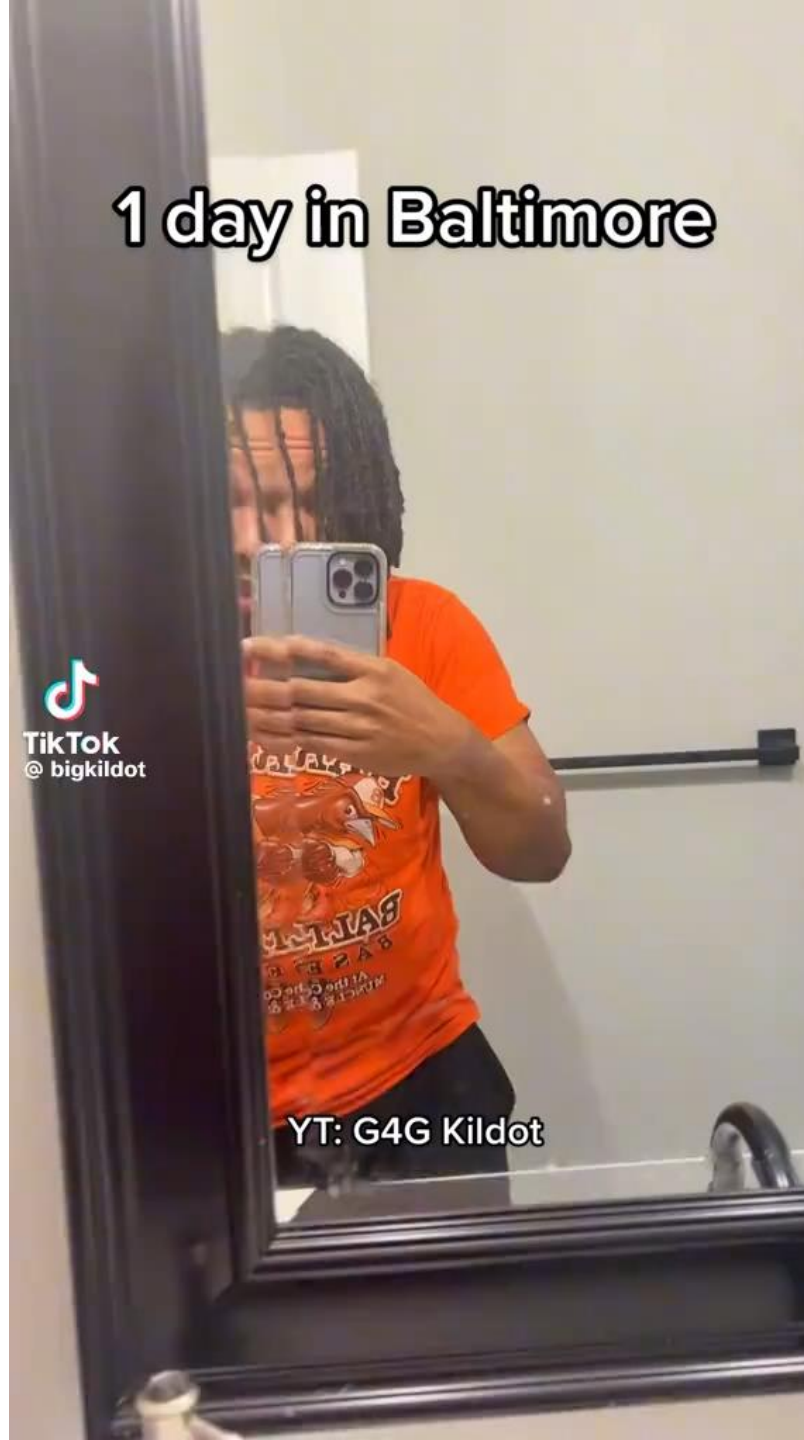
1st day in Baltimore :

Hey, what's up, guys? First day in Baltimore. Um... it's great, man. One thing I will say is, a guy said, "What's up, dummy?" I had to let him know that I'm very intelligent. But other than that I'm loving it here in Baltimore.

Woe, fuck it is, dummy? One month in Baltimore and it's lit, feel me? Oh, and by the way, yo that called me, he said, "What's up, dummy?" He wasn't even being smart, he said that was a sign of endearment. But anyway, I'm fuckin' with Baltimore. 'Bout to go to Stoko's, feel me? Get a chicken box and a sweet tea, we lit.

Woe, what it is, stupid? Nah mean? I been in Baltimore for a whole year now. You know what's up. I'm from East Baltimore. I was with Moose yesterday. He had the [shovel]. We out the mud with it. Don't ask me to say, "too," "you," none of that. I'm not sayin', "Aaron earned an iron," none of that, dog, you feel me? You know what's going on.

Video 3: BigKildot



What's going on, guys? First day in Baltimore. Somebody told me to get the blue crabs. Oh my God, the Old Bay seasoning is just delightful. I even went to the aquarium. What a great experience. I got this Baltimore Orioles shirt. I'm loving my first day here.

One month in Baltimore. They told me I had to cop some Under Armour. I ain't gonna lie, this shit comfortable as a bitch for real. They took me somewhere called Charm City Carry Out. I got a messy box. That shit was hitting.

Fuck it is, stupid? One year in Baltimore. Remember I had that little ass UA on? Check me out now: UA from head to toe. Fuck is you getting? Motherfuckers can't guard me. And I got that black Lamar, what y'all know about that, man? Rest in peace to Scooter. I just copped a Honda Accord with the cruddy tints. I'm really ready to be bipping on you hoes.

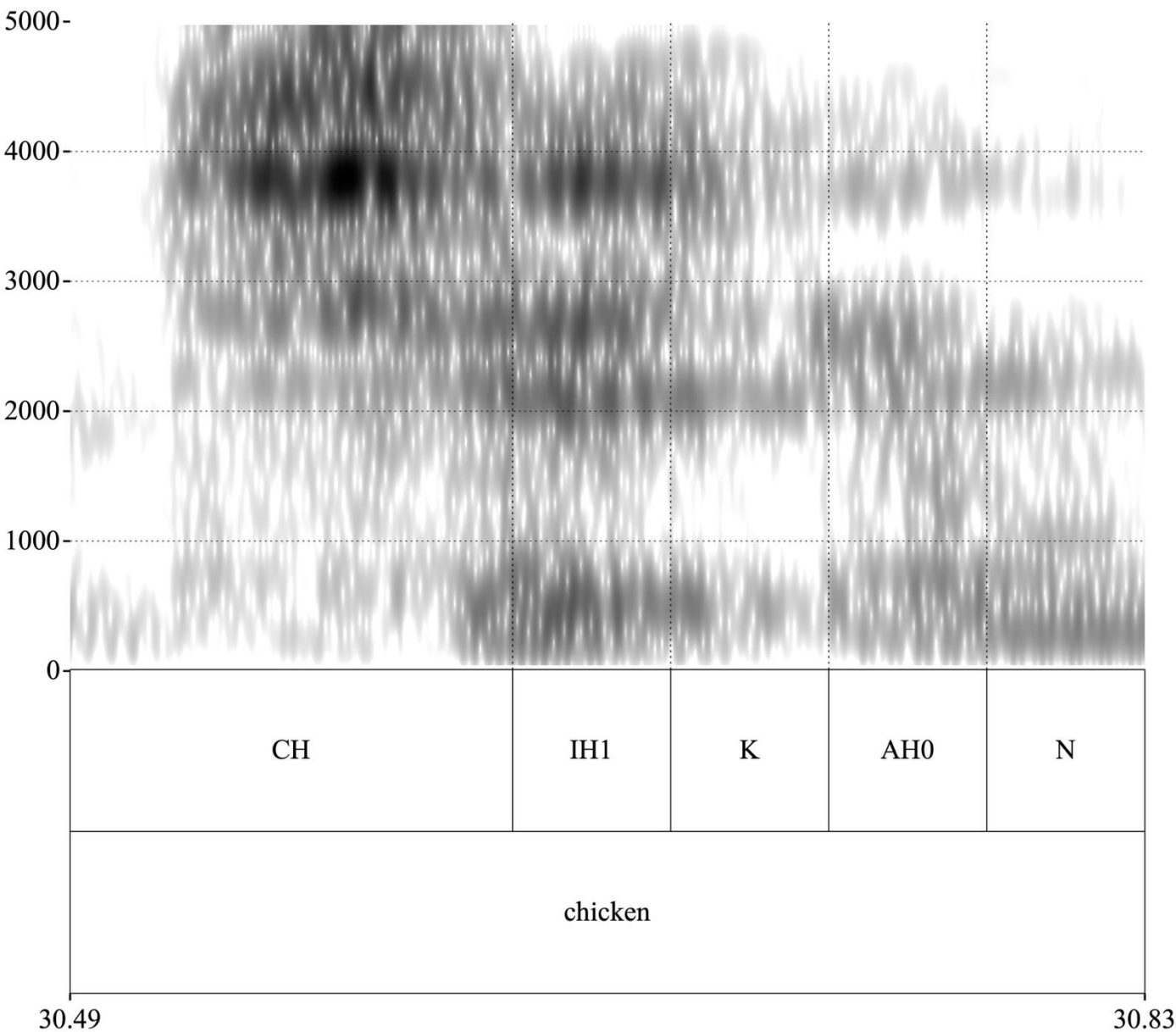
Common threads: Baltimore features

- All three performers draw on certain stereotypes of Baltimore AAVE
 - *dummy*, *stupid*, etc.
 - *Fuck it is* as greeting
- They reinforce and recirculate these features' associations with Baltimore AAVE
- JDUGG's humorous use of the merger to STRUT and Carnell Nichols's use of *dummy* in particular construct these features as not only distinctively Baltimorean, but incomprehensible to outsiders

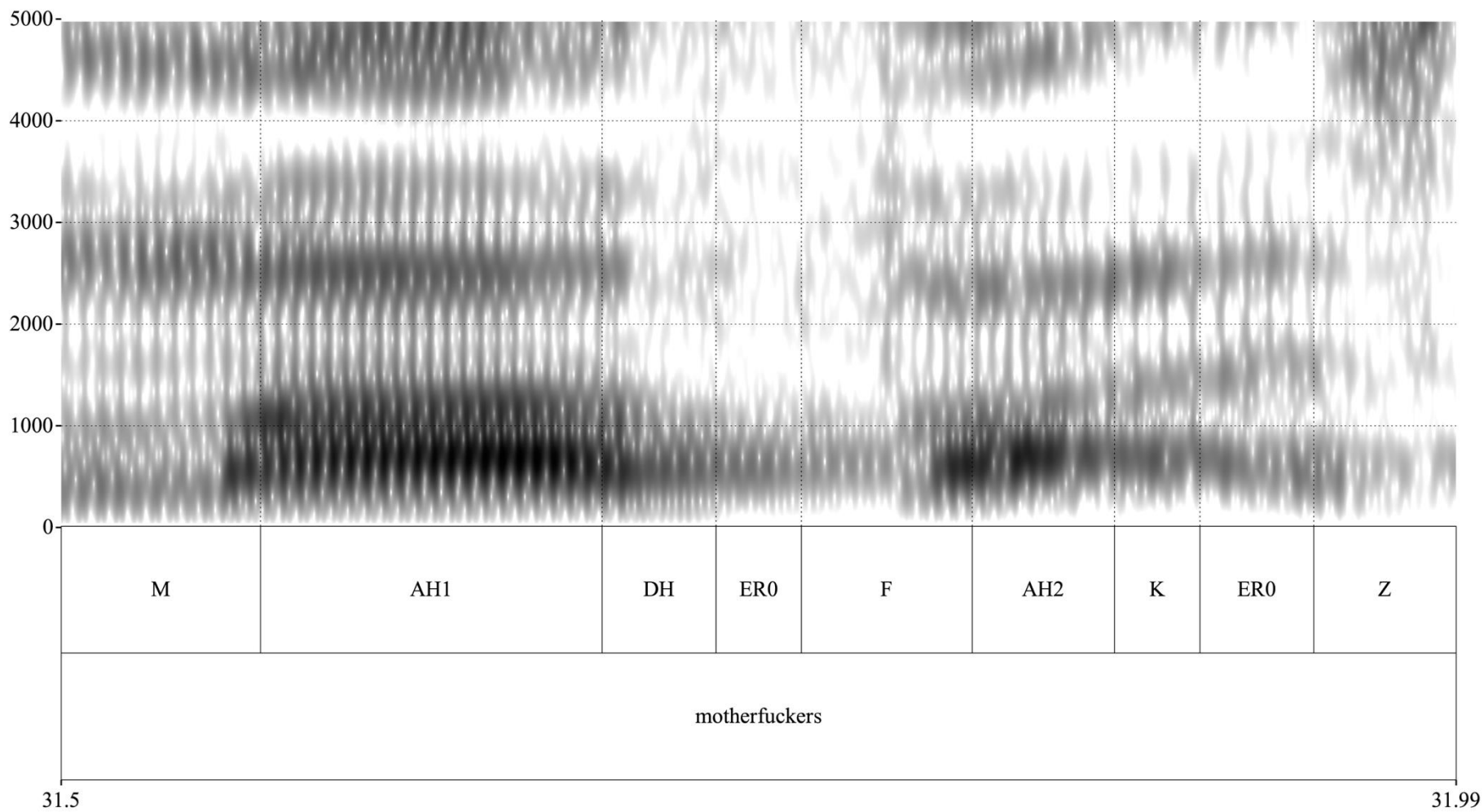
Common threads: Baltimore features

- They also use features with lower levels of social awareness
 - *k*-glottaling
 - *p*-flapping???
- *k*-glottaling is used frequently and in prominent positions (e.g., first word in guise)
- Contributions to the enregisterment of these features as Baltimorean

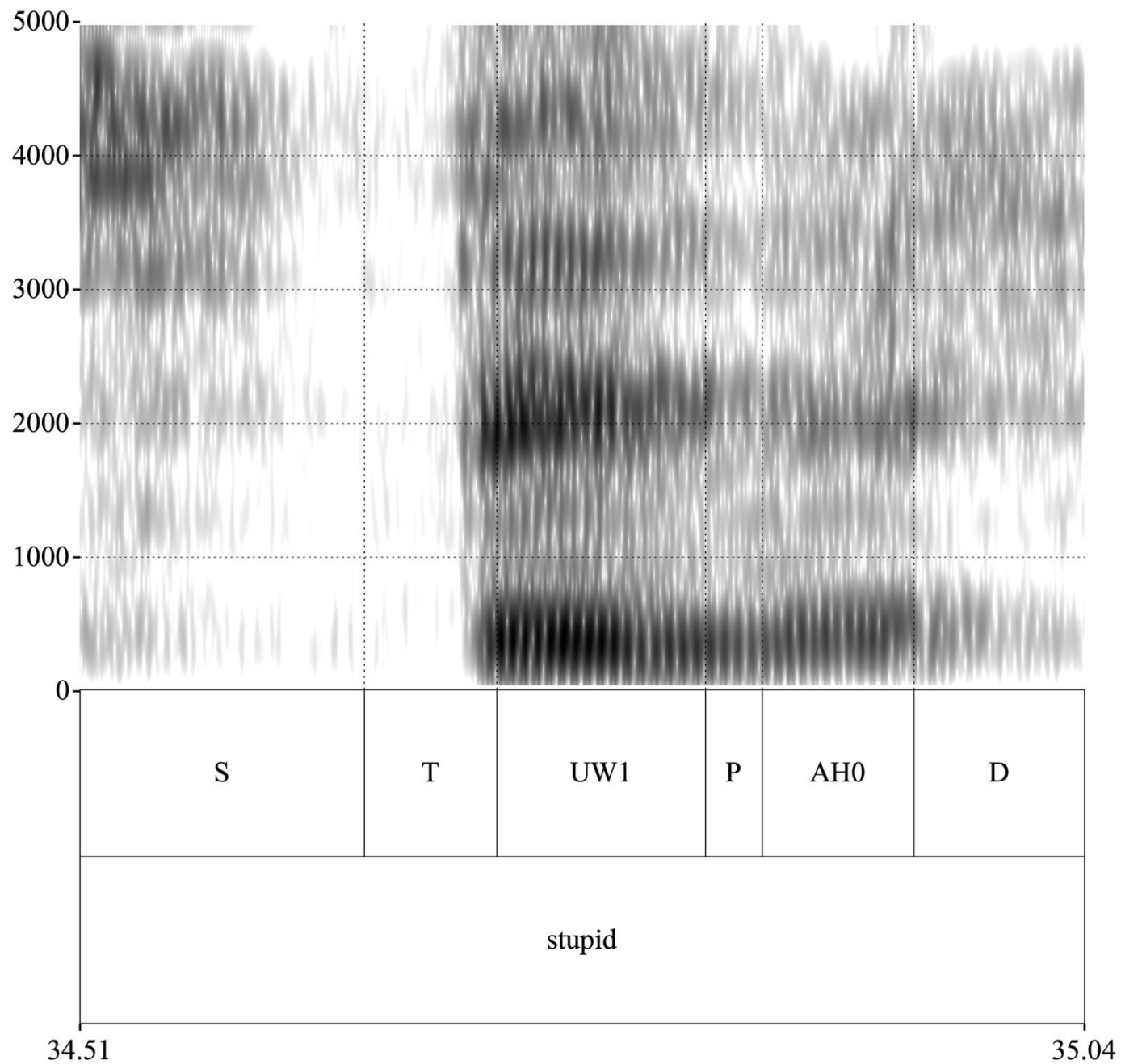
k-glottaling: [ʔ]



k-glottaling: creak



p-flapping



Common threads: Baltimore references

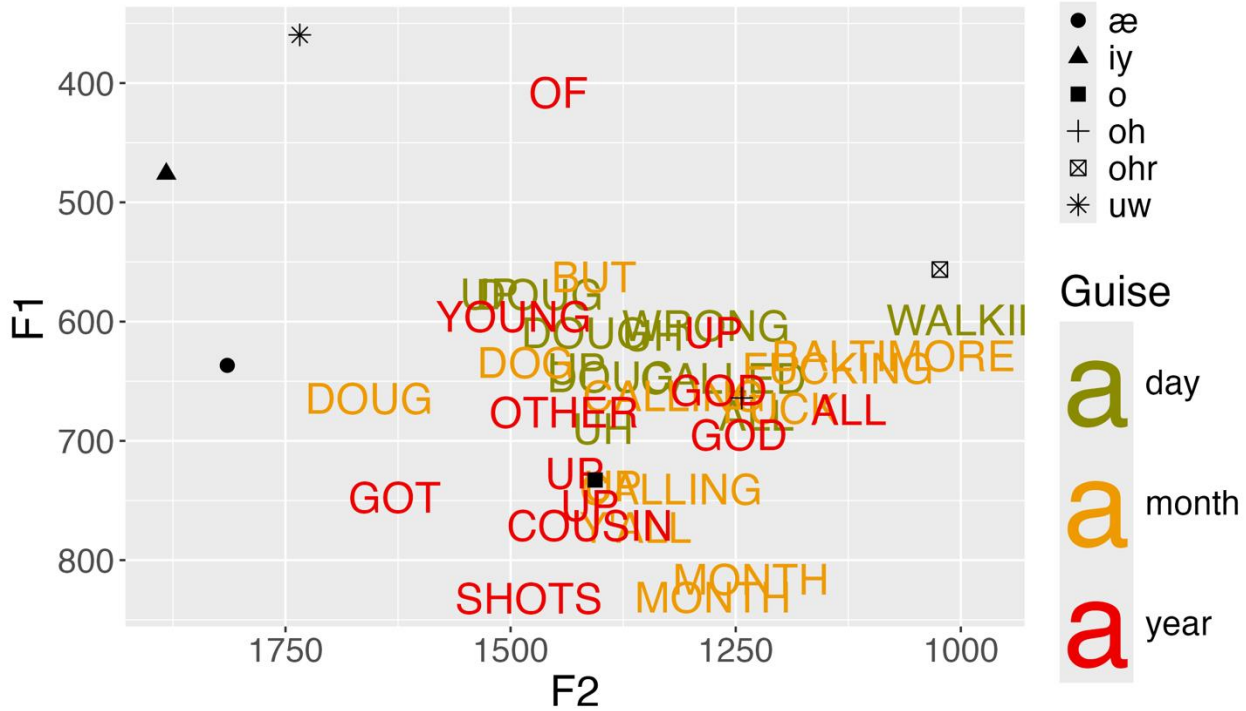
- They also strategically deploy local references
 - References to local rappers (Young Moose, Lor Scoota)
 - References to local food (e.g., chicken box, Charm City Carry Out)
- These references authenticate (Bucholtz & Hall 2004) the characters as Baltimorean

Common threads: AAVE features

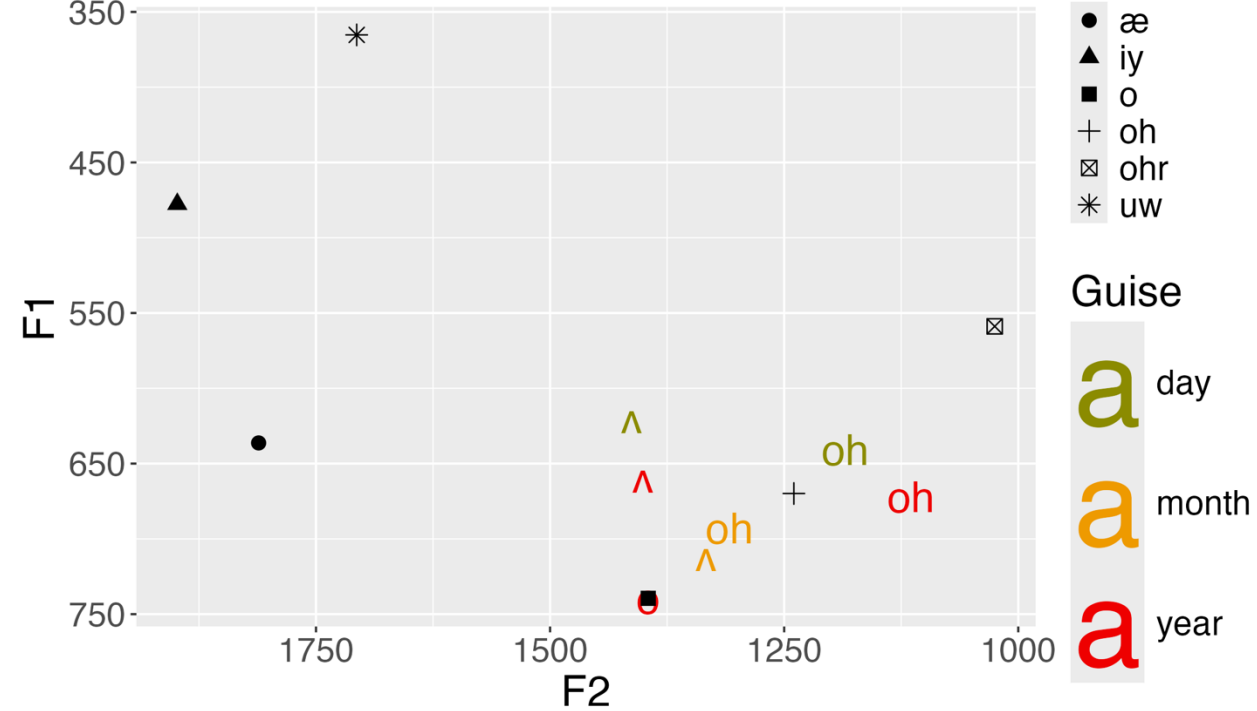
- The performers adopt general AAVE features in the month and year guises
 - *r*-lessness
 - coronal stop glottalization (Farrington 2019)
 - nasal deletion (VN -> \tilde{V} / __#)
- Supralocal features are used for local identity construction (Becker 2014, Grieser 2022)

Some features are performed inconsistently

JDUGG's low back vowels

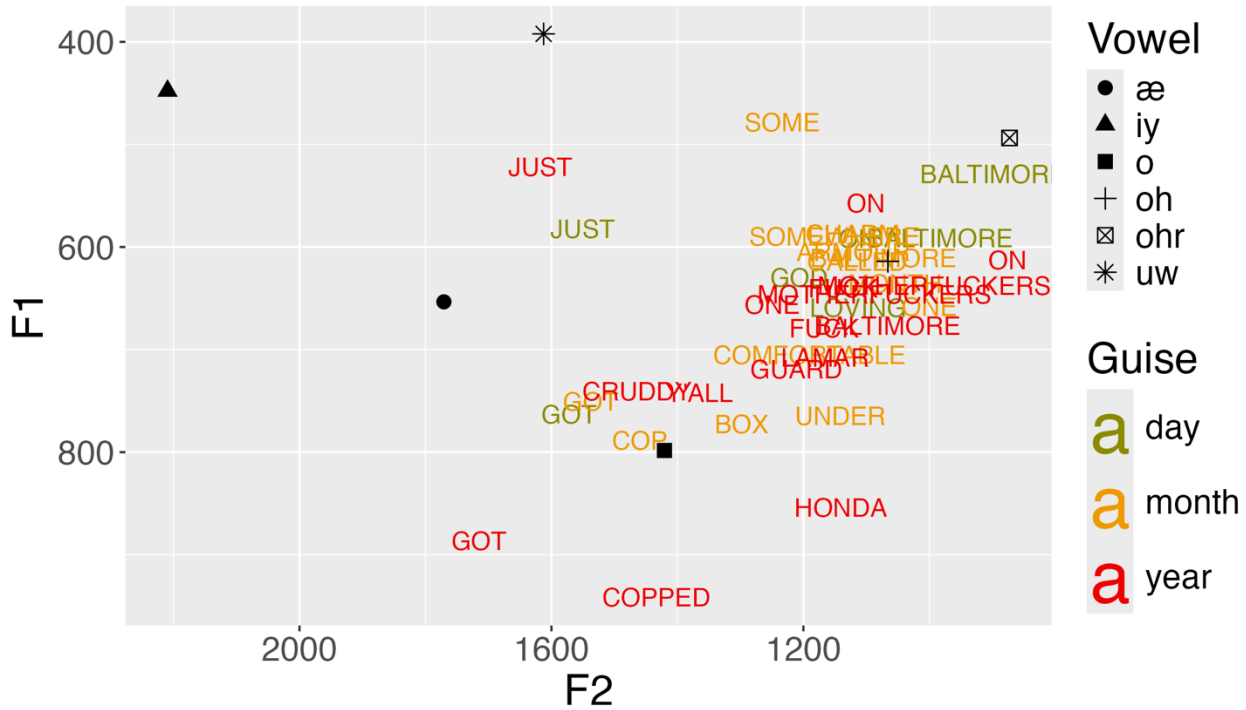


JDUGG's low back vowels (means)

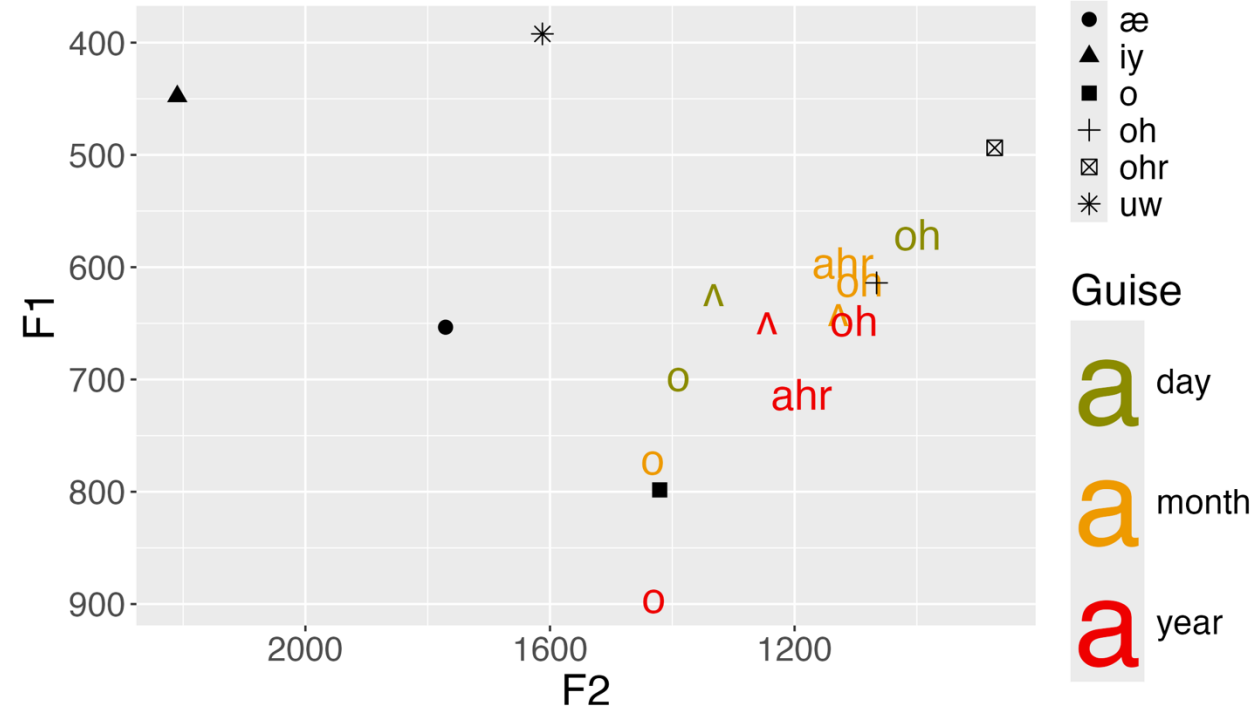


Some features are unmanipulated

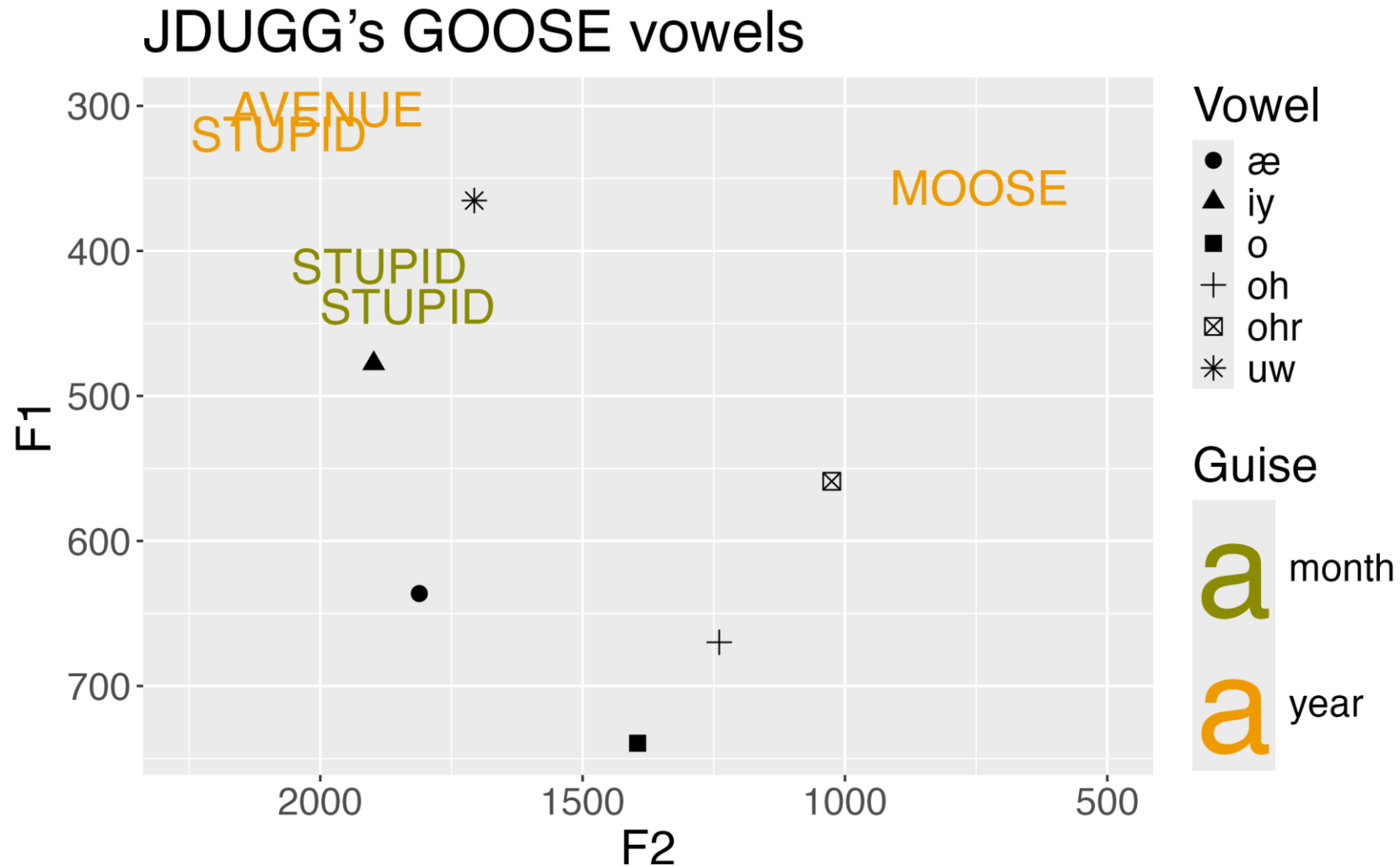
BigKildot's low back vowels



BigKildot's low back vowels (means)

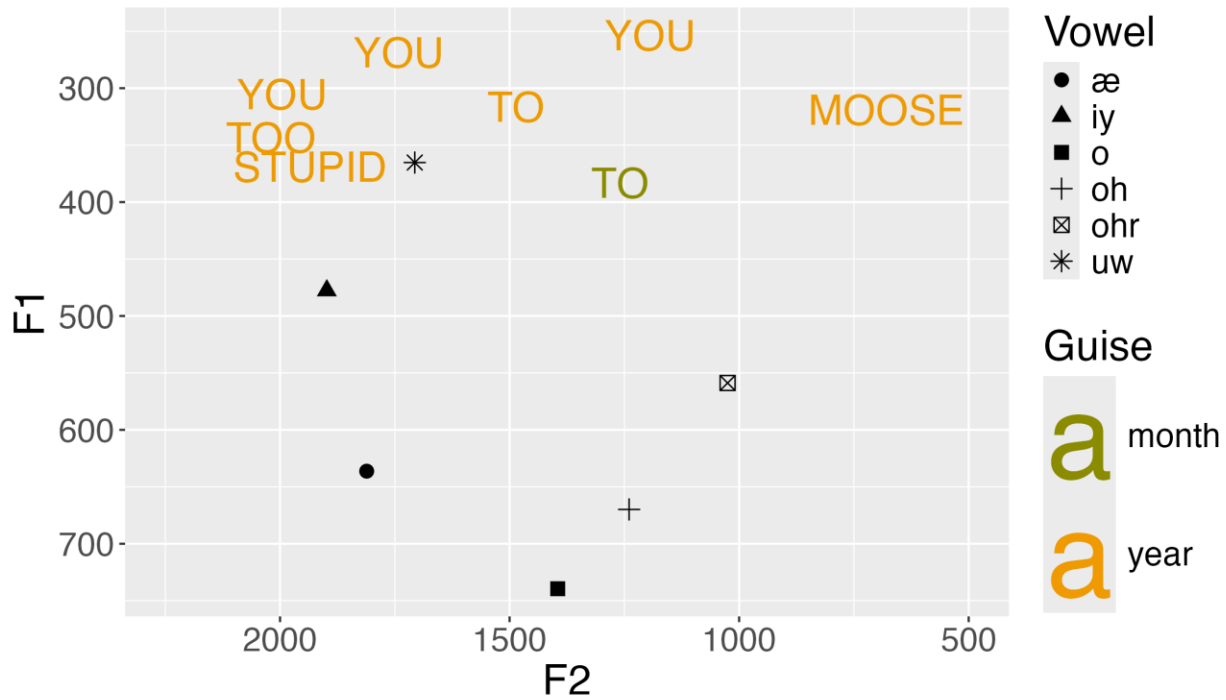


Other features are performed very consistently

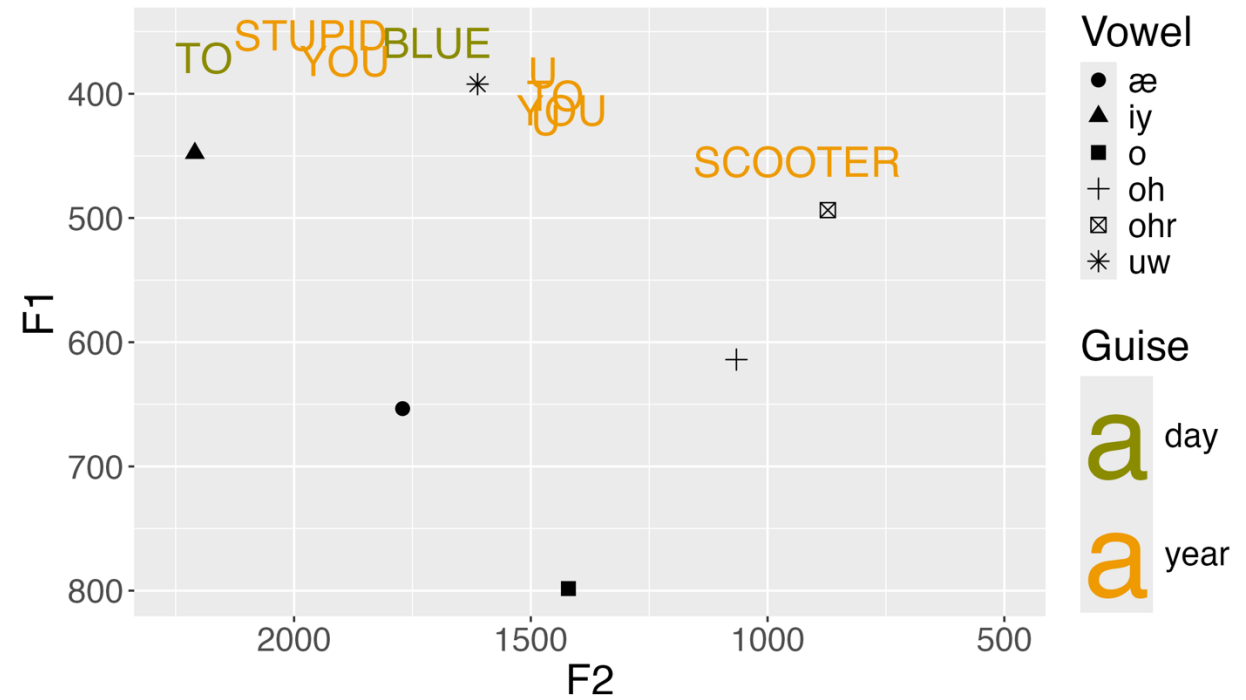


And demonstrate allophonic conditioning

Carnell Nichols's GOOSE vowels



BigKildot's GOOSE vowels



Conclusions

- These performance recirculate existing stereotypes (e.g., *dummy*) and contribute to the enregisterment of new features (e.g., *k-glottaling*)
- The performances demonstrate phonetic and allophonic variation:
 - [ʔ] vs. creak as realizations of *k-glottaling*
 - An extreme fronting effect of preceding coronals on /uw/
- The performances demonstrate the distribution of features:
 - Unlike in DC (Luelsdorff 1975), *k-glottaling* in Baltimore occurs medially and across word boundaries
- Performers use a combination of local and supralocal AAVE features to construct local, Baltimorean characters

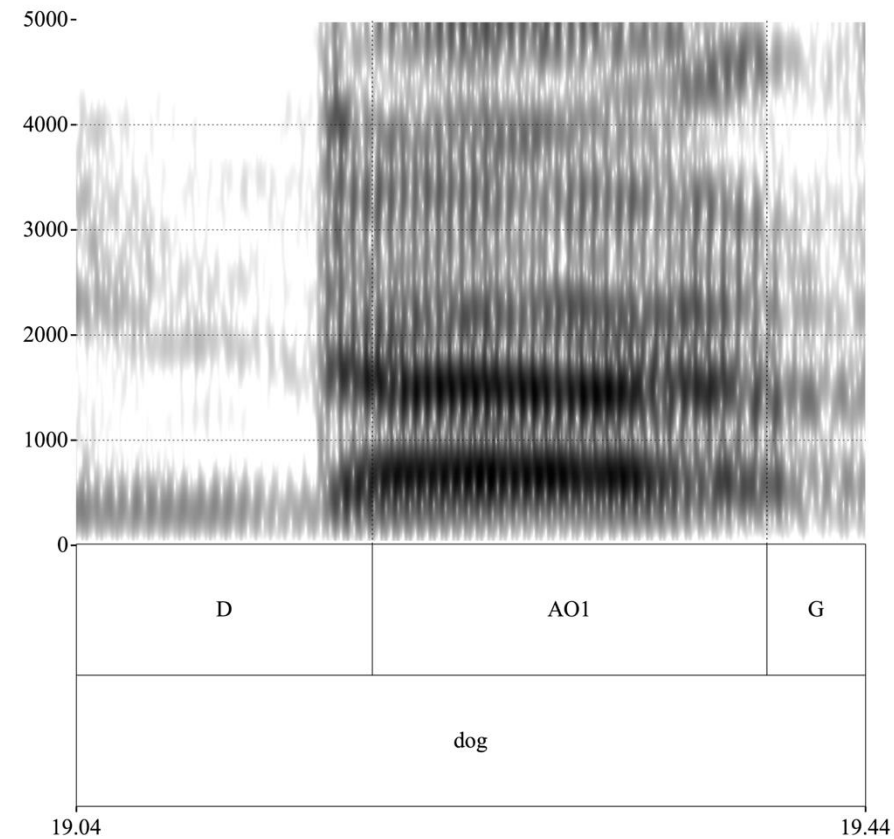
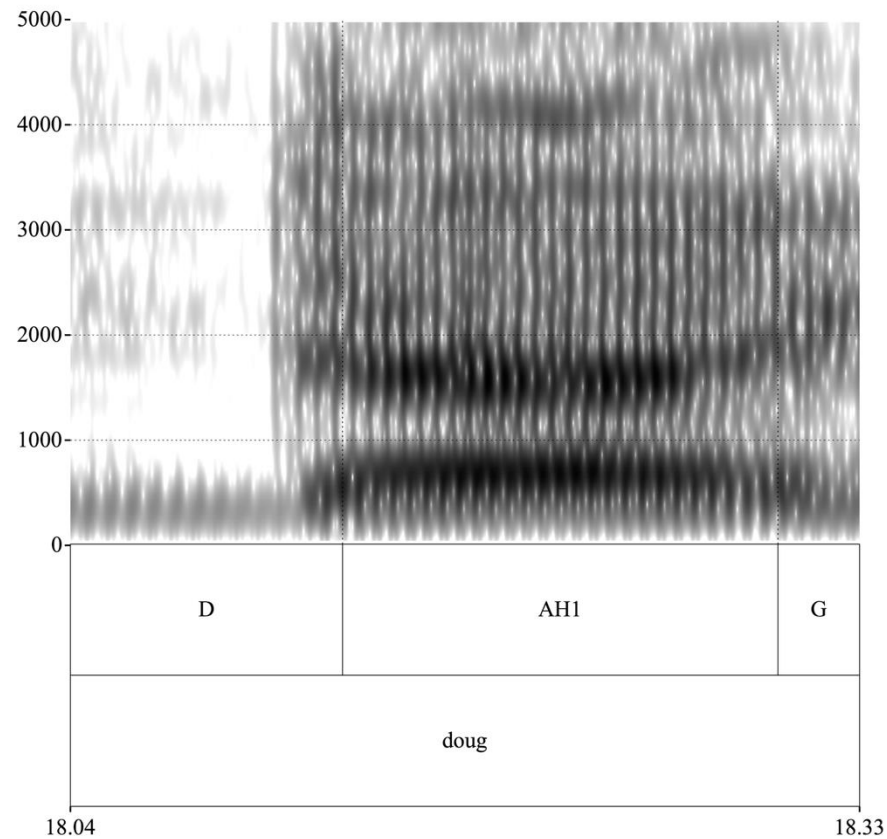
Future directions

- Analyze other semiotic features of videos (e.g., dress, gesture)
- Investigate understand the social meaning of these features/this register by:
 - analyzing discursive content of videos
 - analyzing comments on videos

Thanks

- Thank you to Tysean for helping with transcription!

Appendix A: JDUGG's low back merger



References

- Agha 2003
- Arnson & Farrington 2017
- Becker 2014
- Blake & Shousterman 2010
- Bucholtz & Hall 2004
- Farrington 2019
- Grieser 2022
- Jeremiah 2000
- Johnstone 2011
- Jones 2020
- Kiesling 2017
- Luelsdorff 1975
- Pratt & D'Onofrio 2017
- Preston 1996
- Schilling-Estes 1998