Before the rise of *um*

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DiPVaC4

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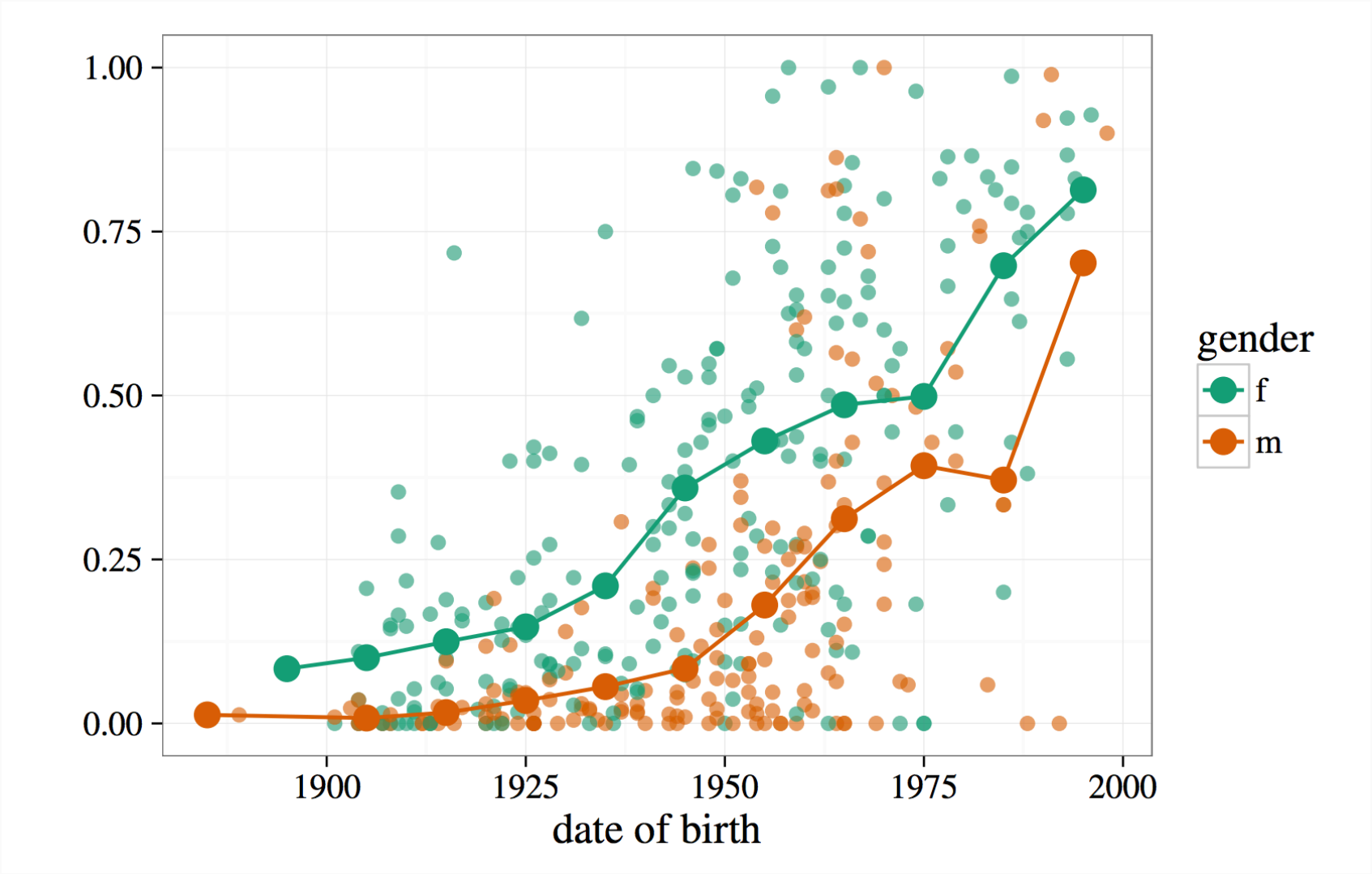
Introduction

“A textbook language change in progress”



(Fruehwald, 2016: 43)

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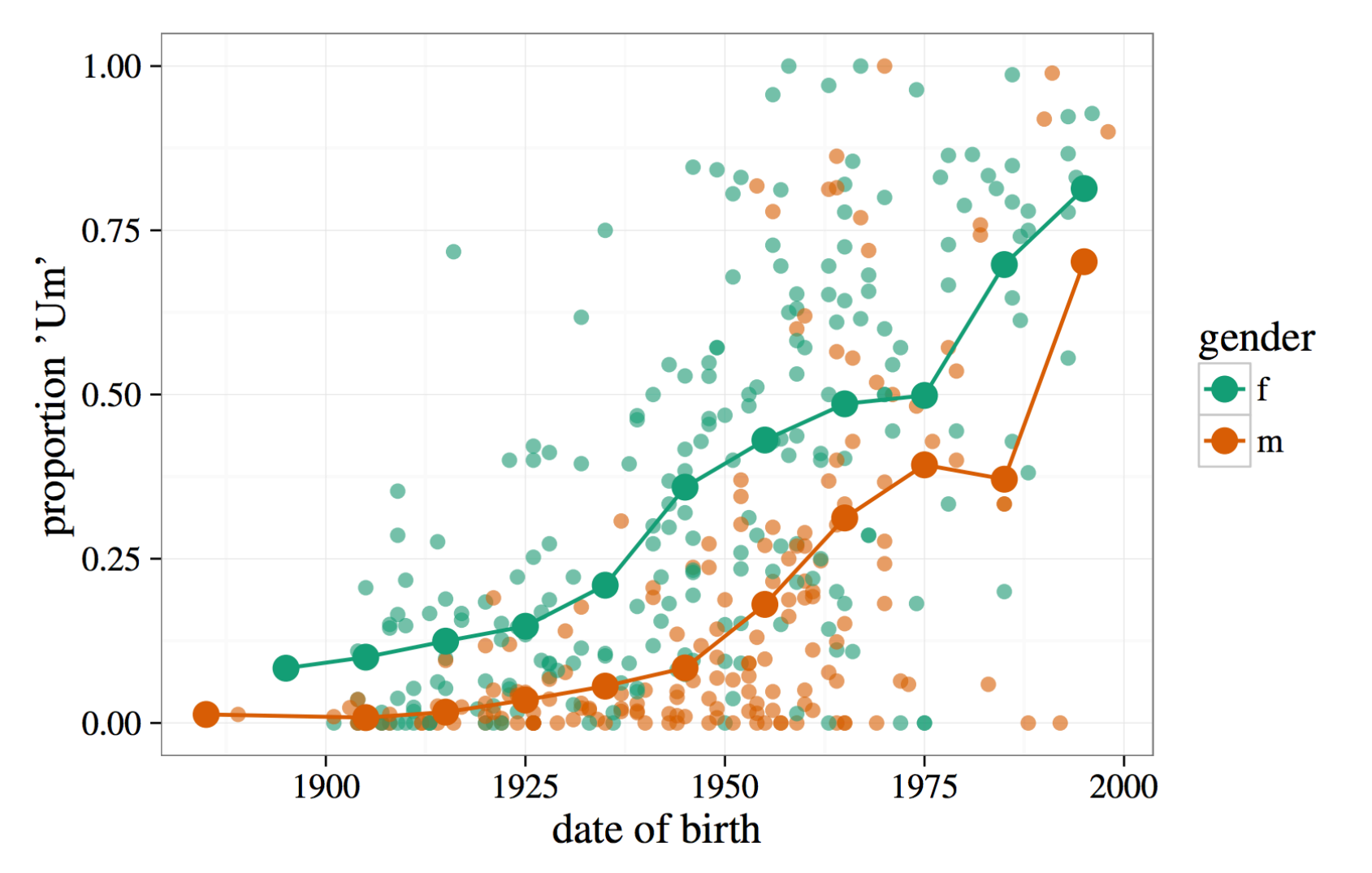

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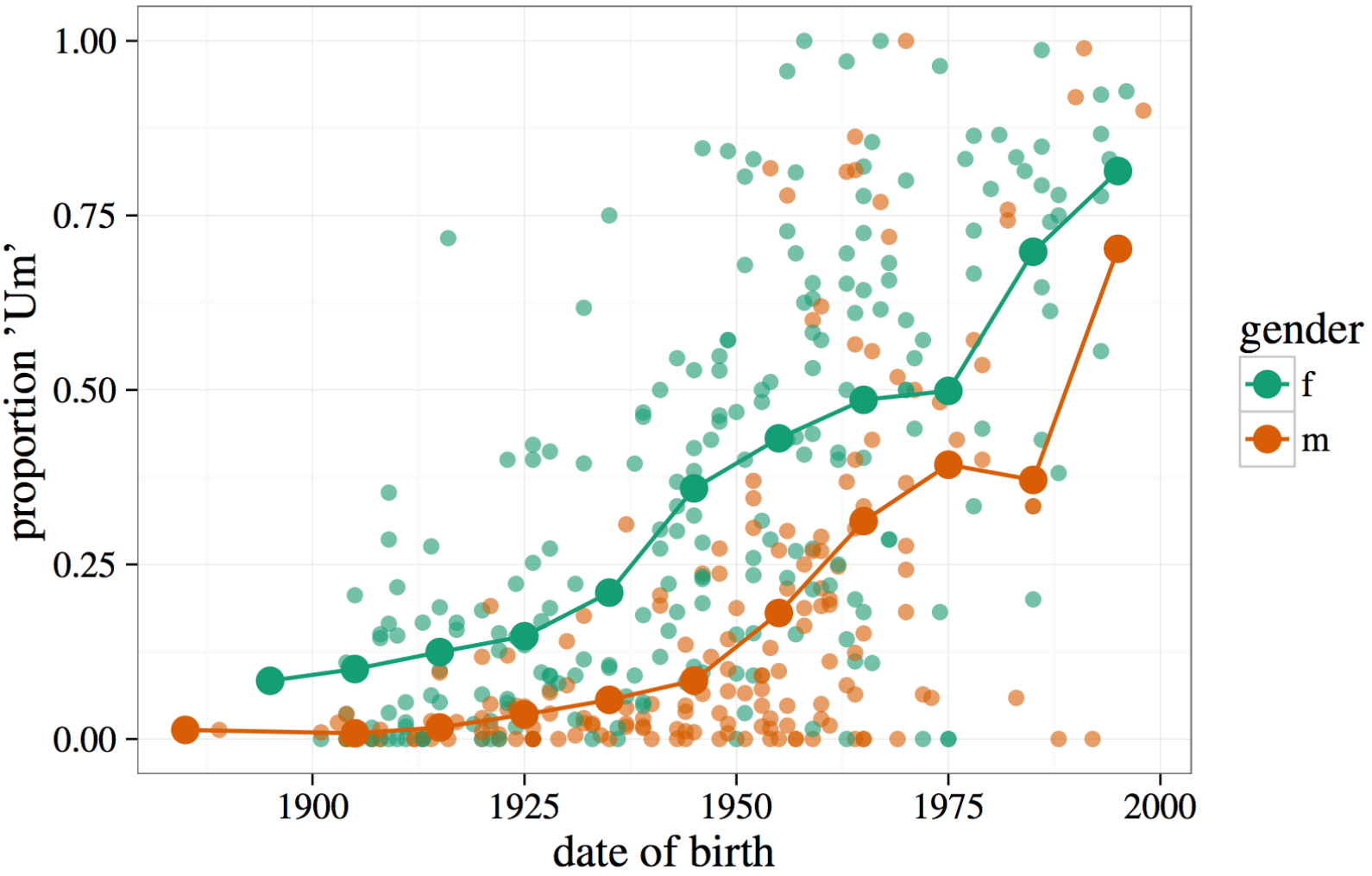

(UHM): *“undergoing a language change just like any other” (p. 46)*

(Fruehwald, 2016: 43)

Previous views on (UHM)

Psycholinguistic/processing: ‘filled pauses’/‘disfluencies’

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- Clark and Fox Tree (2002): (UHM) signals an incoming delay in speech; *uh* signals a short delay while *um* signals a long one.

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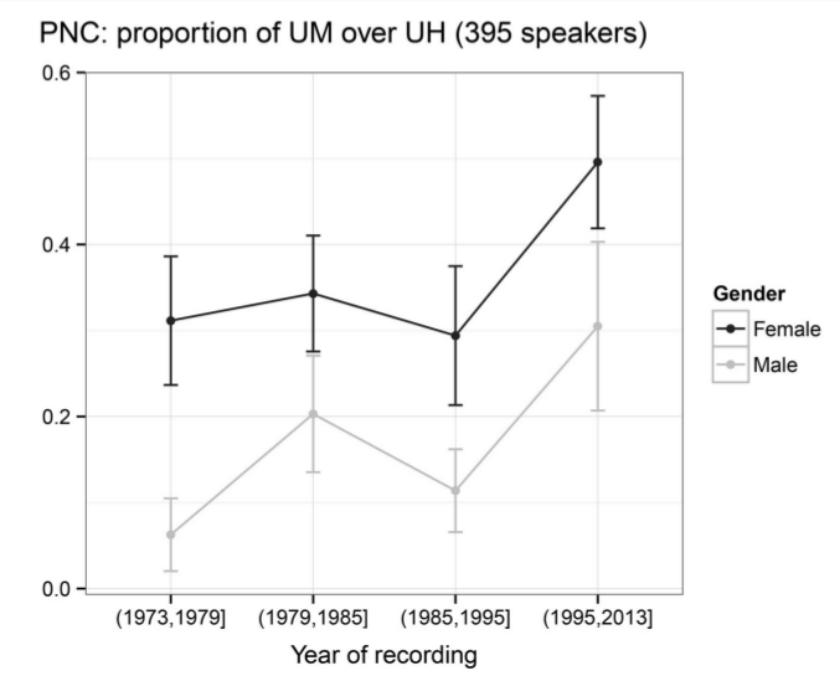
Pragmatic/interpersonal: 'pragmatic marker'

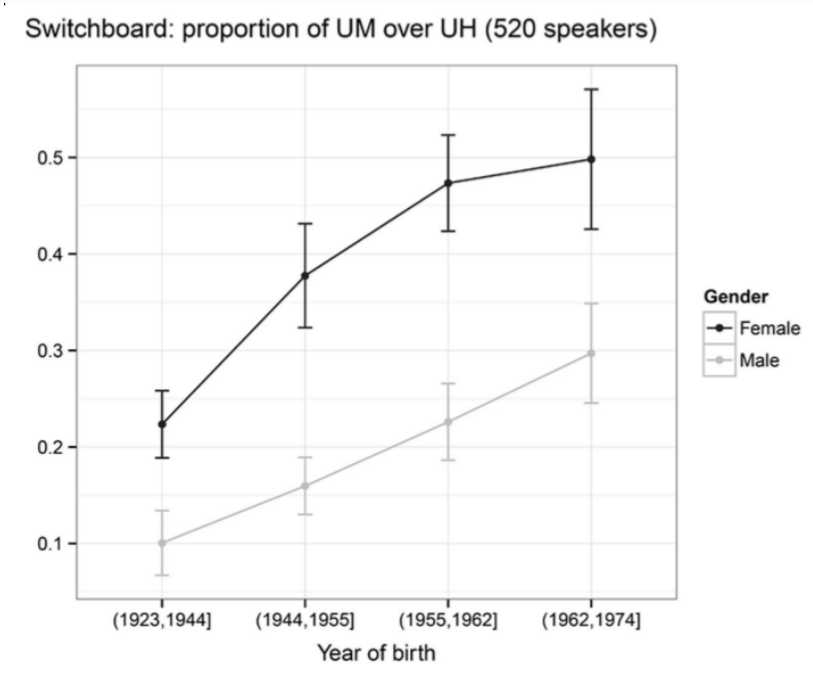
- Tottie (2016): (UHM) is a pragmatic marker indicating speaker planning ('planners'; 'I'm thinking').
- Tottie (2017): (UHM) in writing function as stance adverbs.
  - *Uh*, that's hogwash. (p. 15)
  - A sudden bear made a huge crash in the forest. One guy, *um*, taking care of business, came running back into camp.
- Gadanidis (2018): (UHM) in CMC has a range of sociopragmatic meanings.

Change in progress

There's also a clear change in progress underway in real-time and apparent-time.

- Fruehwald (2016): Women and young people more likely to use *um* than *uh*
- Wieling et al. (2016): Same trend across five other Germanic languages[1]





[1] Dutch, German, Norwegian, Danish, Faroese

Our talk

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    - **Hypothesis**: a new function of (UHM) led to the rise of *um*.
    - We test functional expansion *cum* positional differences: “turn initial *um* may be the best candidate for a new discourse function coming into use” (Fruehwald 2016: 46).

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    - We test functional expansion *cum* positional differences: "turn initial *um* may be the best candidate for a new discourse function coming into use" (Fruehwald 2016: 46).
- A (modified) variationist approach:
  - First, we consider the relative proportions of *um* and *uh*; a traditional linguistic variable.
  - Second, we consider the relative frequency of the (UHM) variable itself to help interpret the patterns we find with the proportions.

Data, methods

Farm Work and Farm Life Since 1890 Oral Histories

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- Oral histories “are a vestige of an earlier vernacular, its structure, its features, its grammar, its sounds” (Denis, 2016).

Extraction and coding

- Extracted every instance of `'uh'` or `'um'` from transcripts
  - Transcription protocol emphasised faithful reproduction of *uh* and *um*
  - Unrelated uses like `'uh oh'` were excluded
- Also extracted data from interviewers, which we analyze separately
- Coded for the following factors:
  - Social factors (year of birth, gender, region)
  - Utterance position (initial or non-initial)
    - e.g. "Uh as a rule they harrowed it before they um drilled it."
    - Including initial collocations with other discourse-pragmatic markers like `'well'`, and cliticized `'and-uh'`, etc.
    - So utterance-initial does not have to be turn-initial (c.f. Fruehwald, 2016; Wieling et al., 2016)
  - Cliticization, e.g. `'and-uh' 'but-uh'` (following Tottie, 2017)

Results

Cross-community comparison

Community	Raw N *uh*	Raw N *um*	% *um*	Mean *uh* /1000	Mean *um*/1000	Mean UHM/1000
Niagara	1864	357	16.1	21.3	4.1	25.4
E. Ont.	1563	168	9.7	22.6	2.4	25.0
F-INT	321	318	49.8	12.4	12.3	24.7
M-INT	255	51	16.7	13.2	2.6	15.8
S. Board	—	—	28.3	22.1	7.5	29.6
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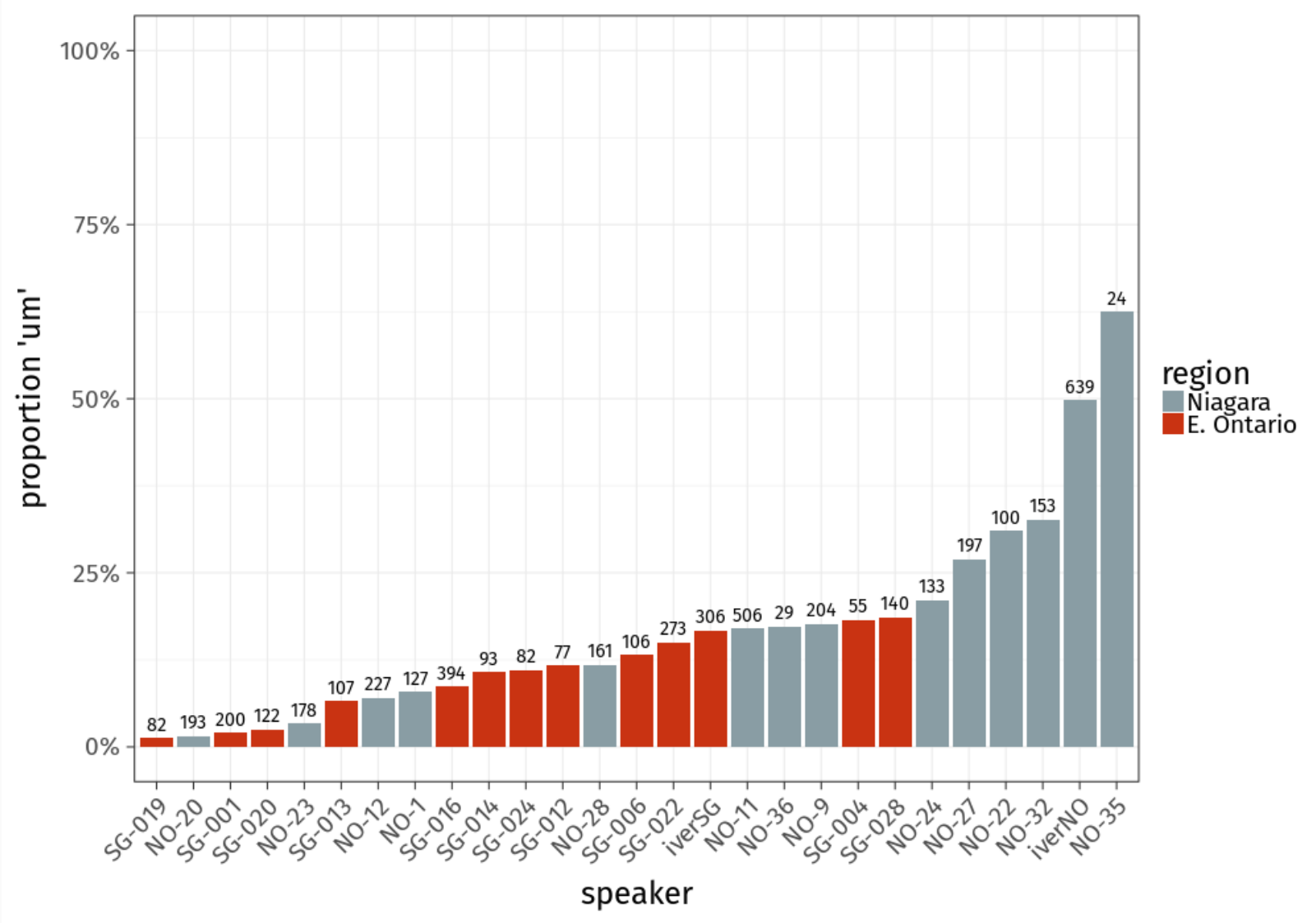
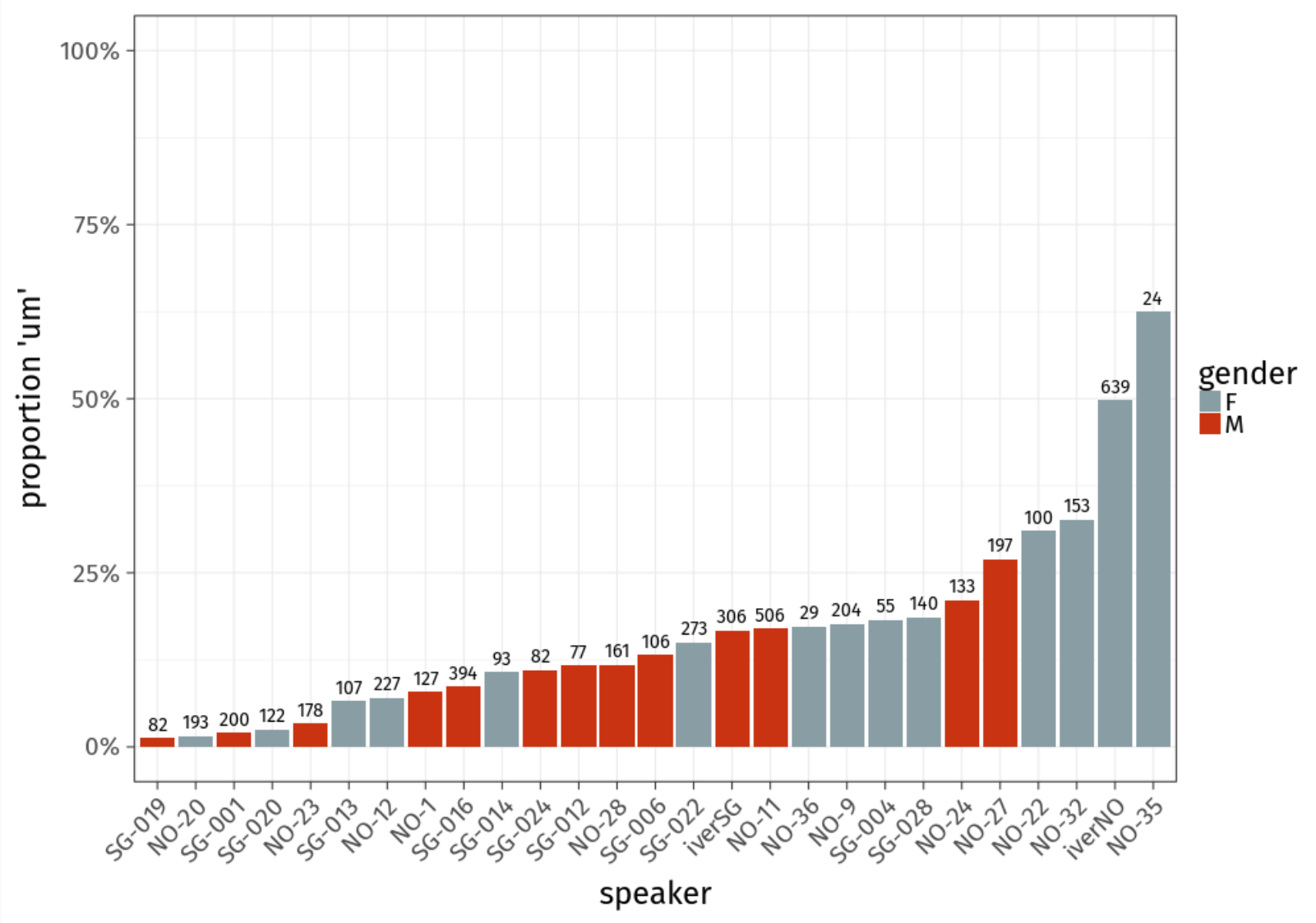
- Our data have low proportion of *um* compared to other corpora.
  - But female interviewer is substantially more *um*-full
- Relative frequency of the UHM variable in our data is on par with other corpora **but** ...
  - We are very cautious about making this comparison due to extremely different methods of data collection and transcription (c.f. Pichler, 2010).

Proportion per speaker by region



- All speakers are variable; most range between 5-30% *um*
- No clear pattern by region

Proportion per speaker by gender



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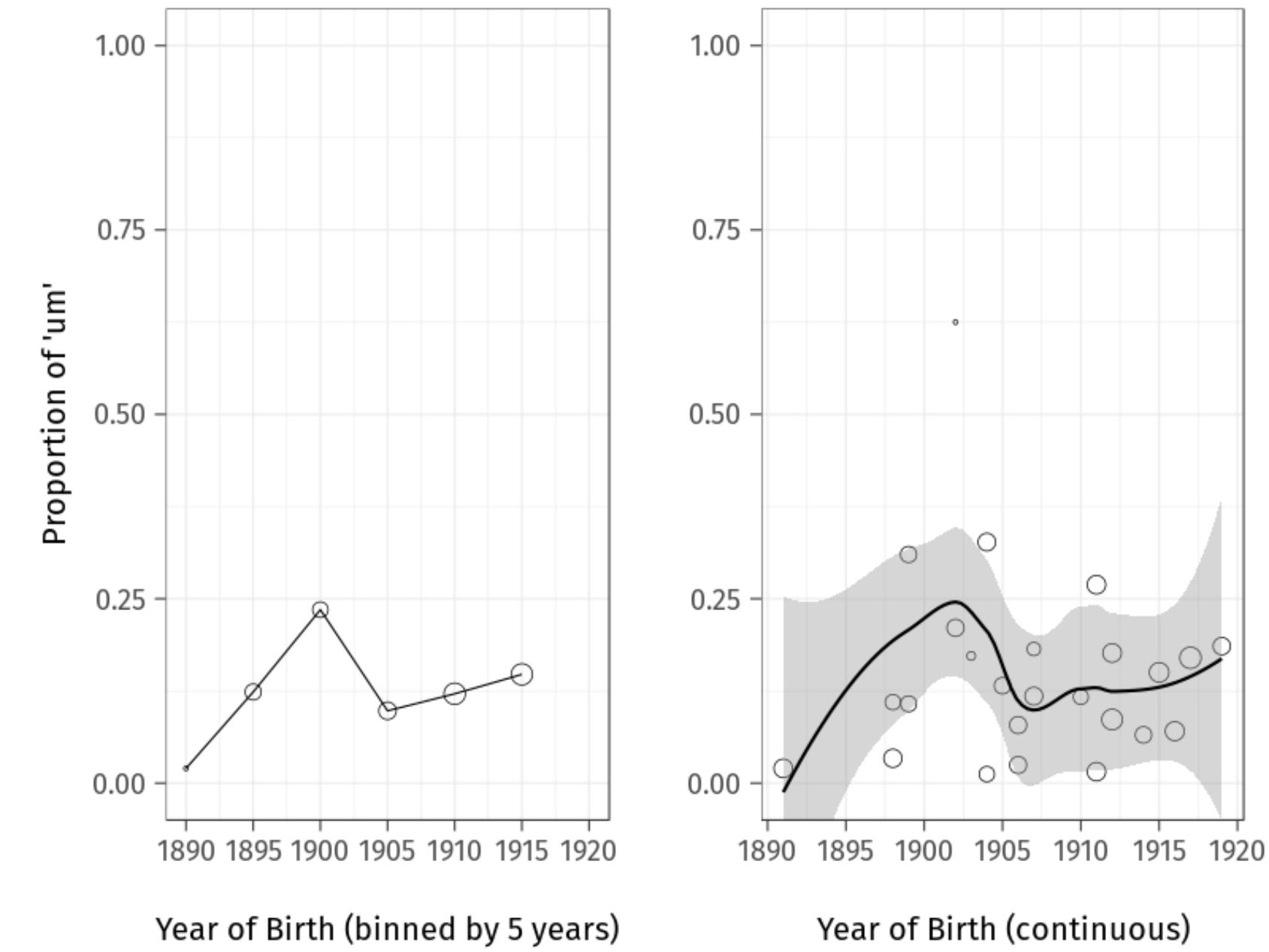
Proportional frequency in apparent time



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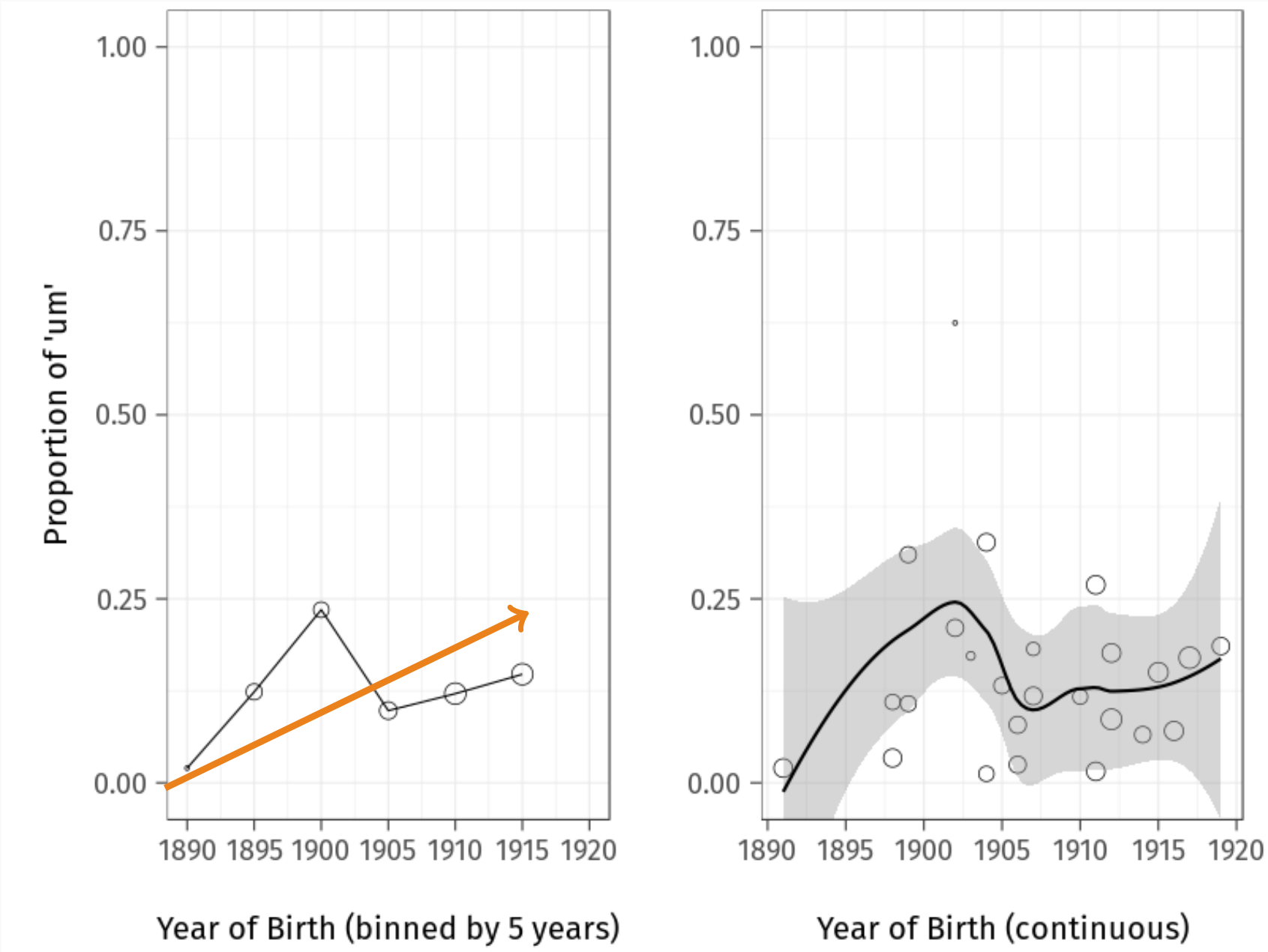
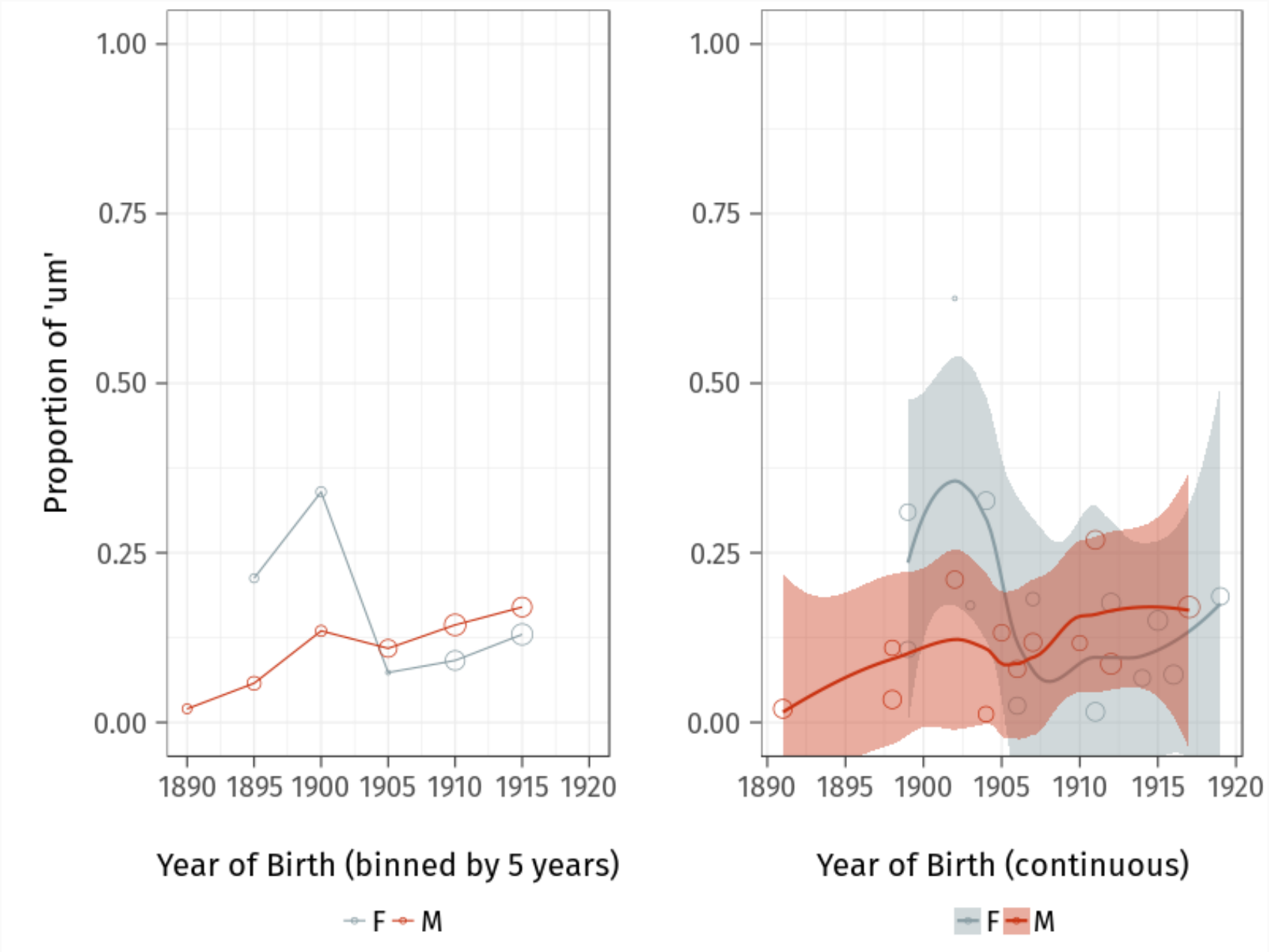
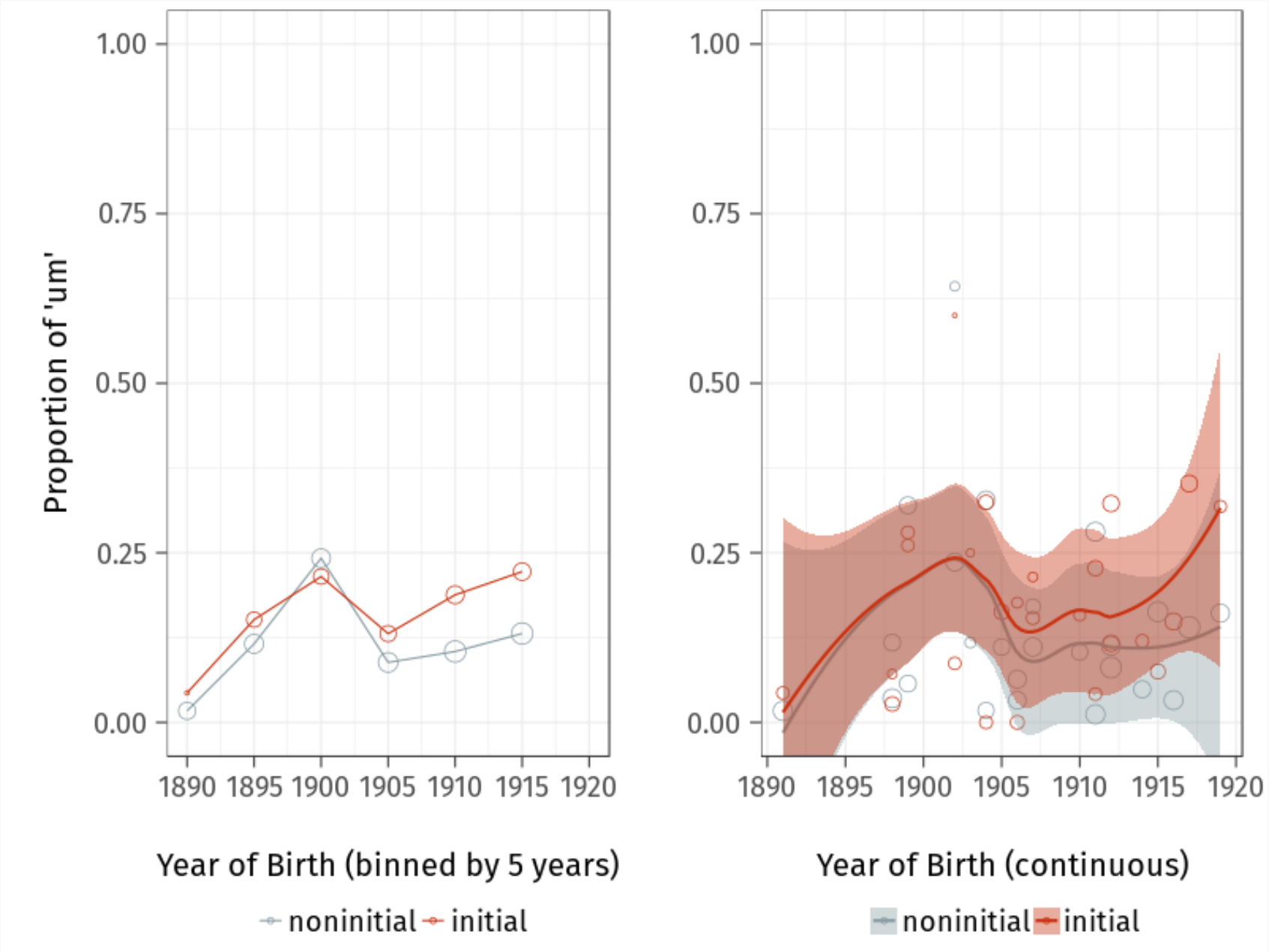


Proportional frequency in apparent time by gender



Proportional frequency in apparent time by position



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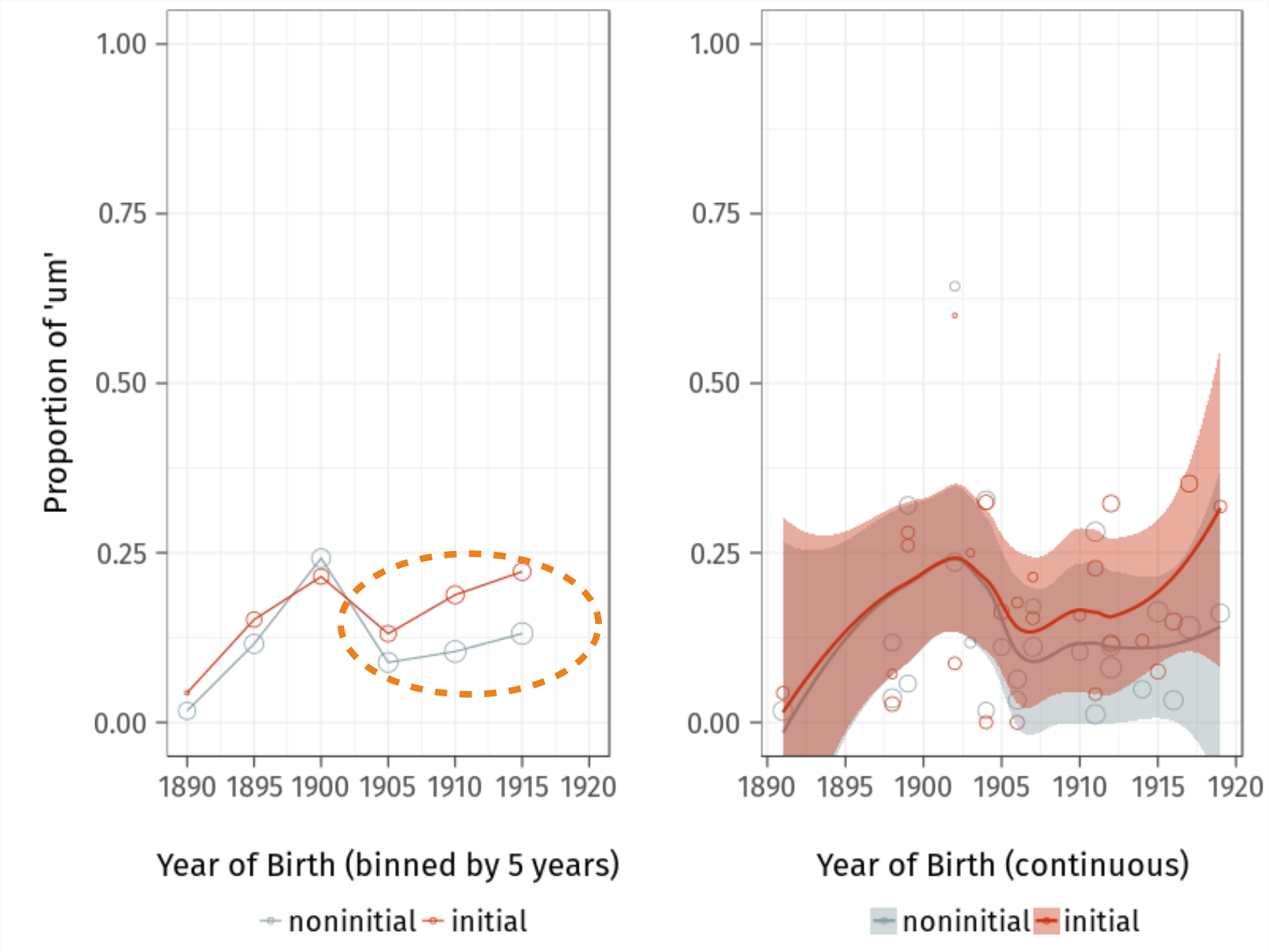
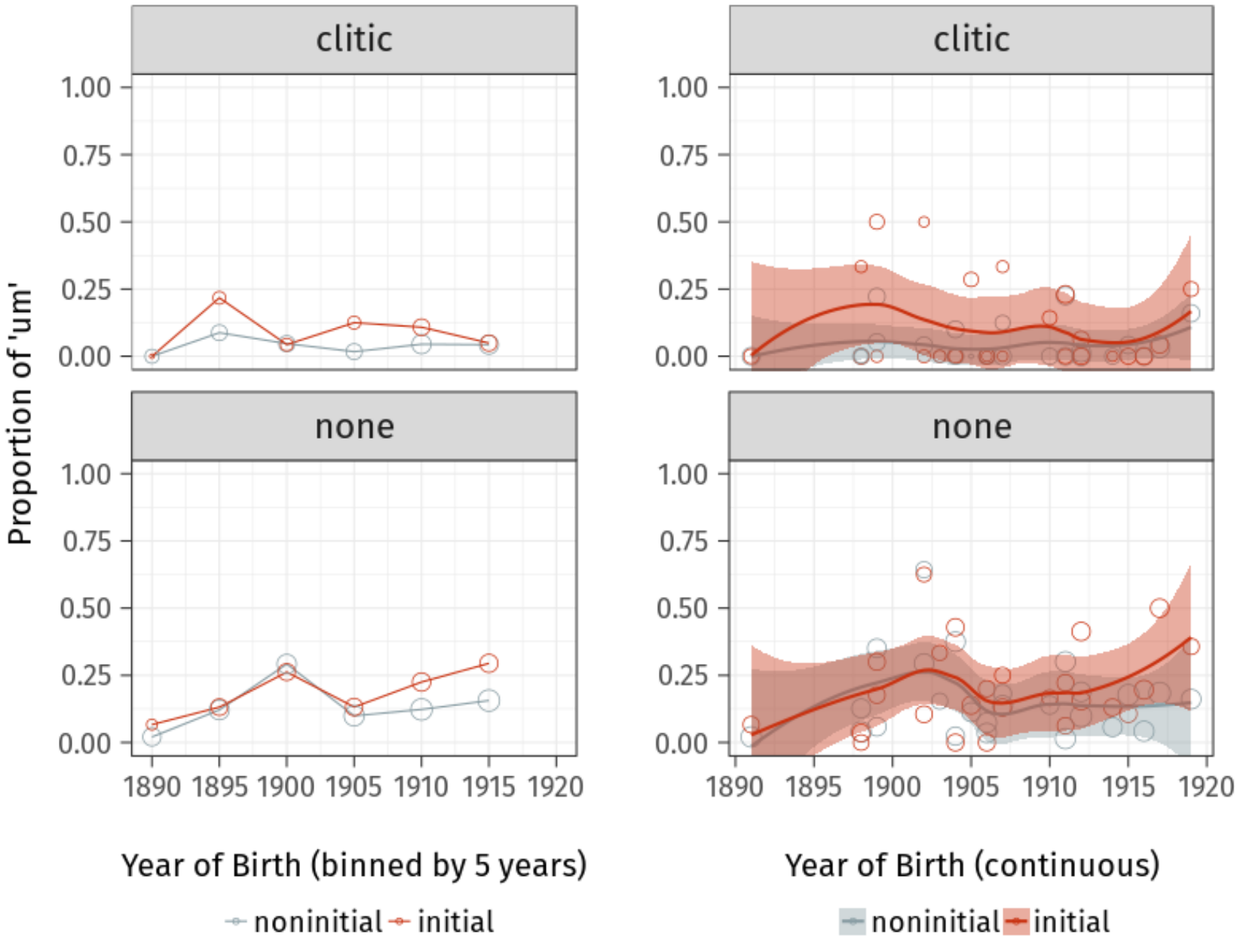


Proportional frequency in apparent time by position and clitic



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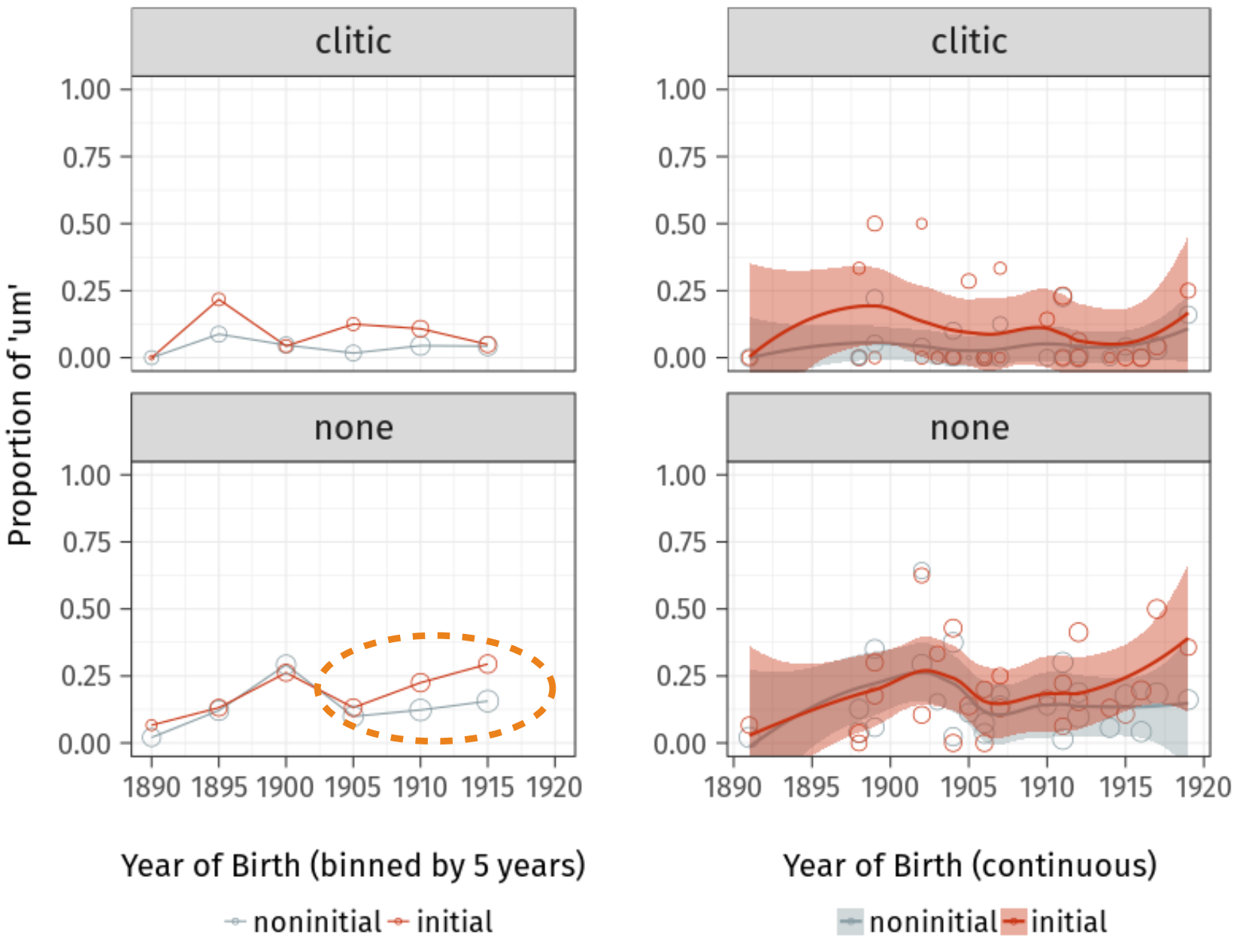
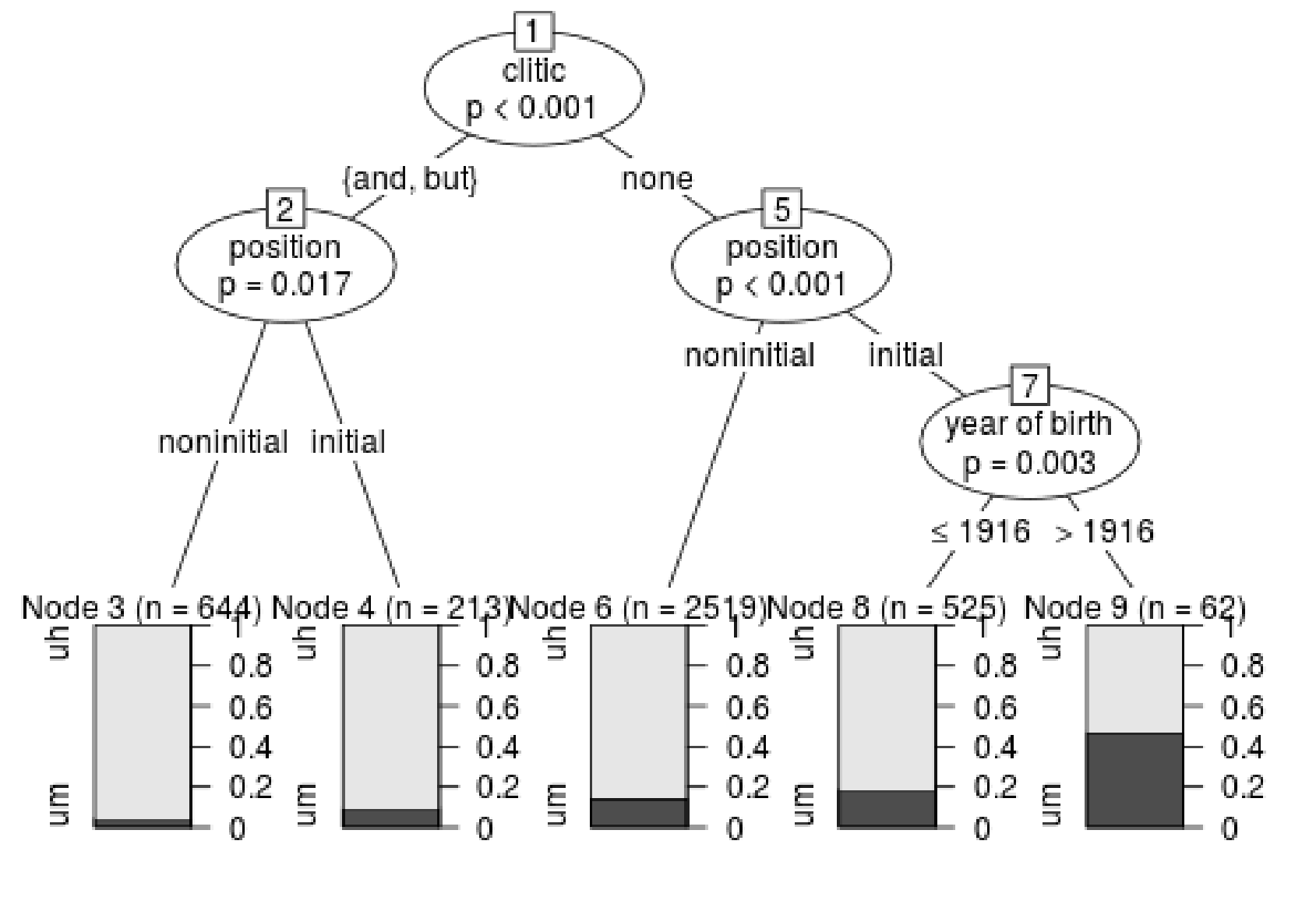


Conditional inference tree: farmers



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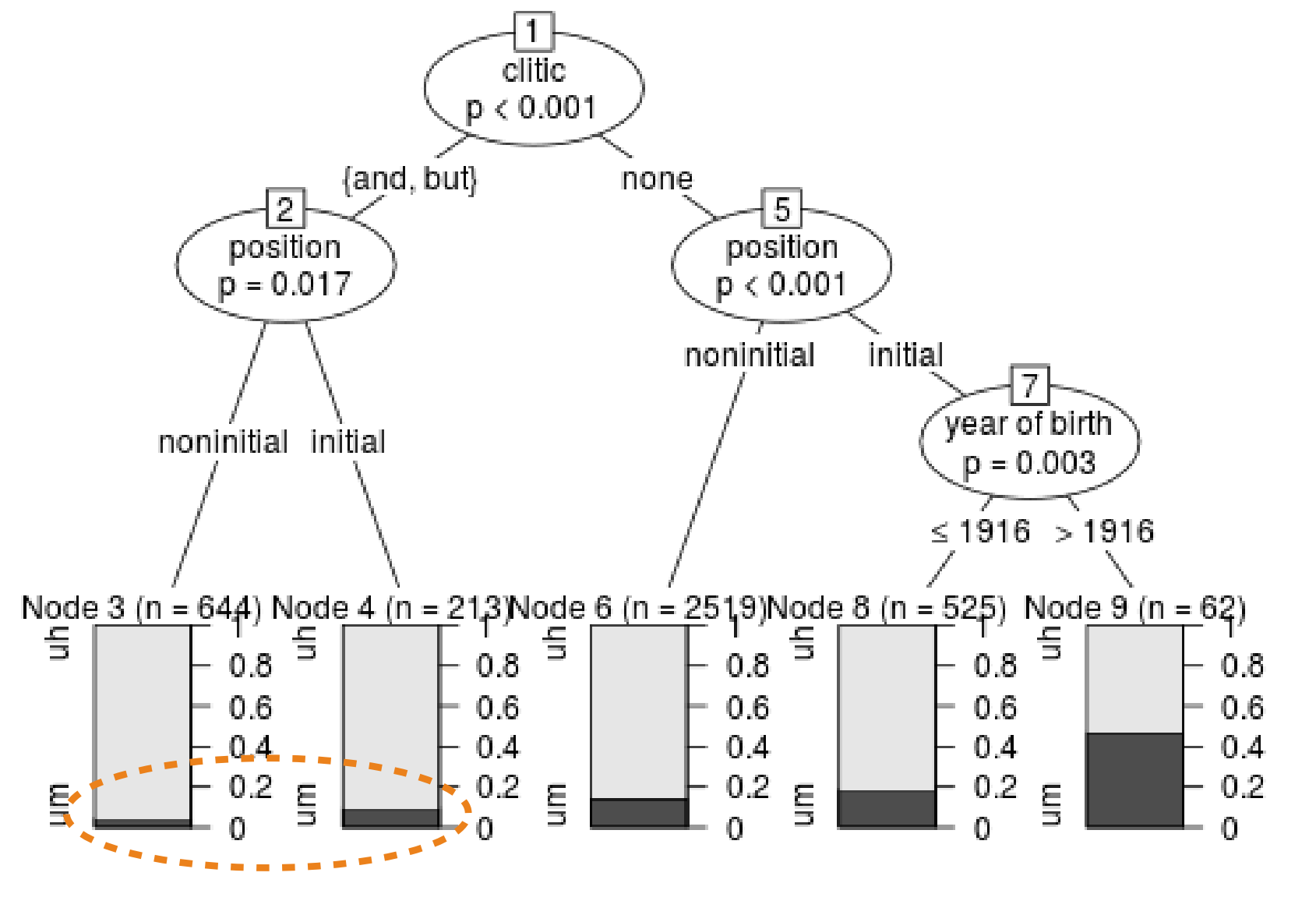

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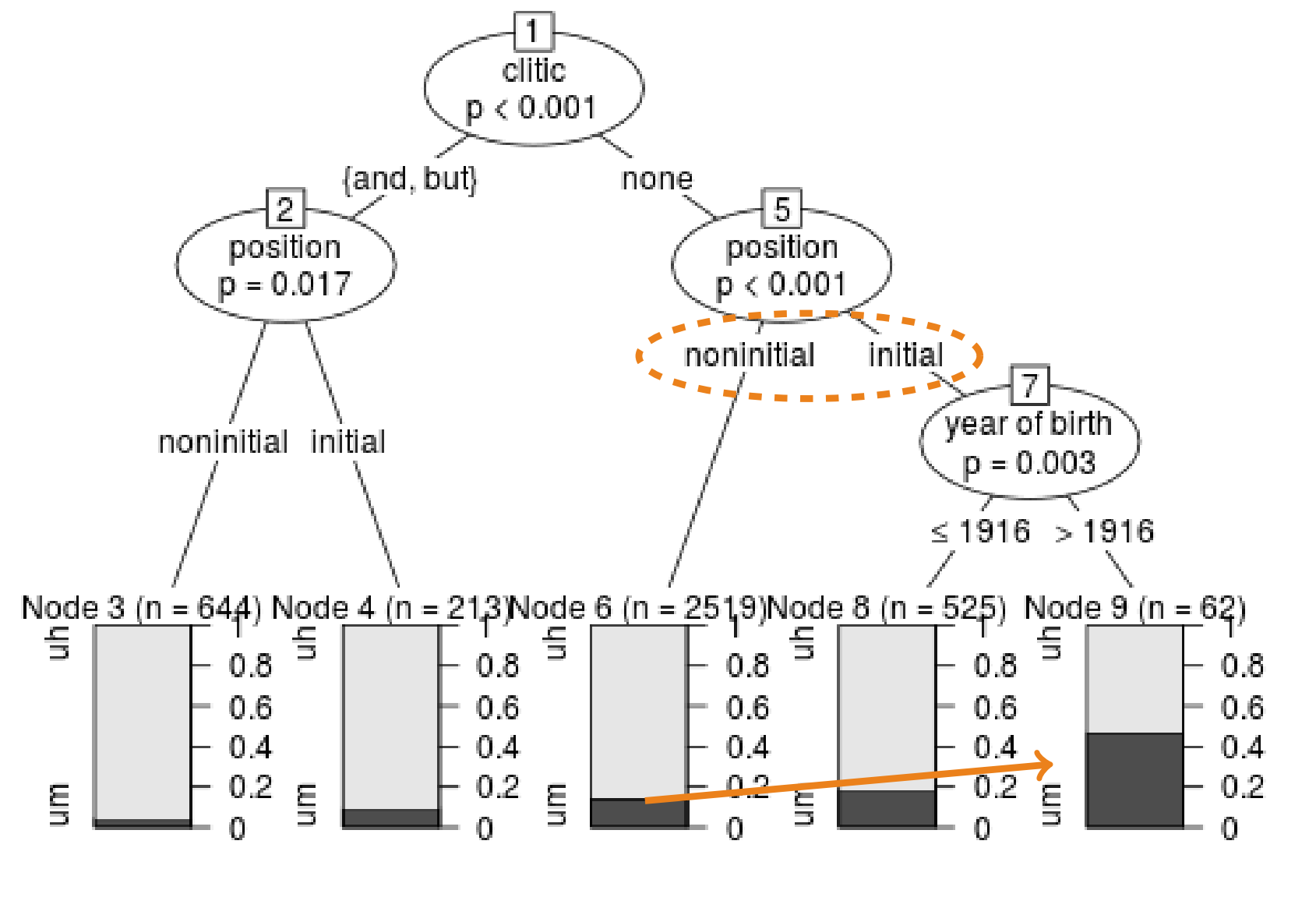

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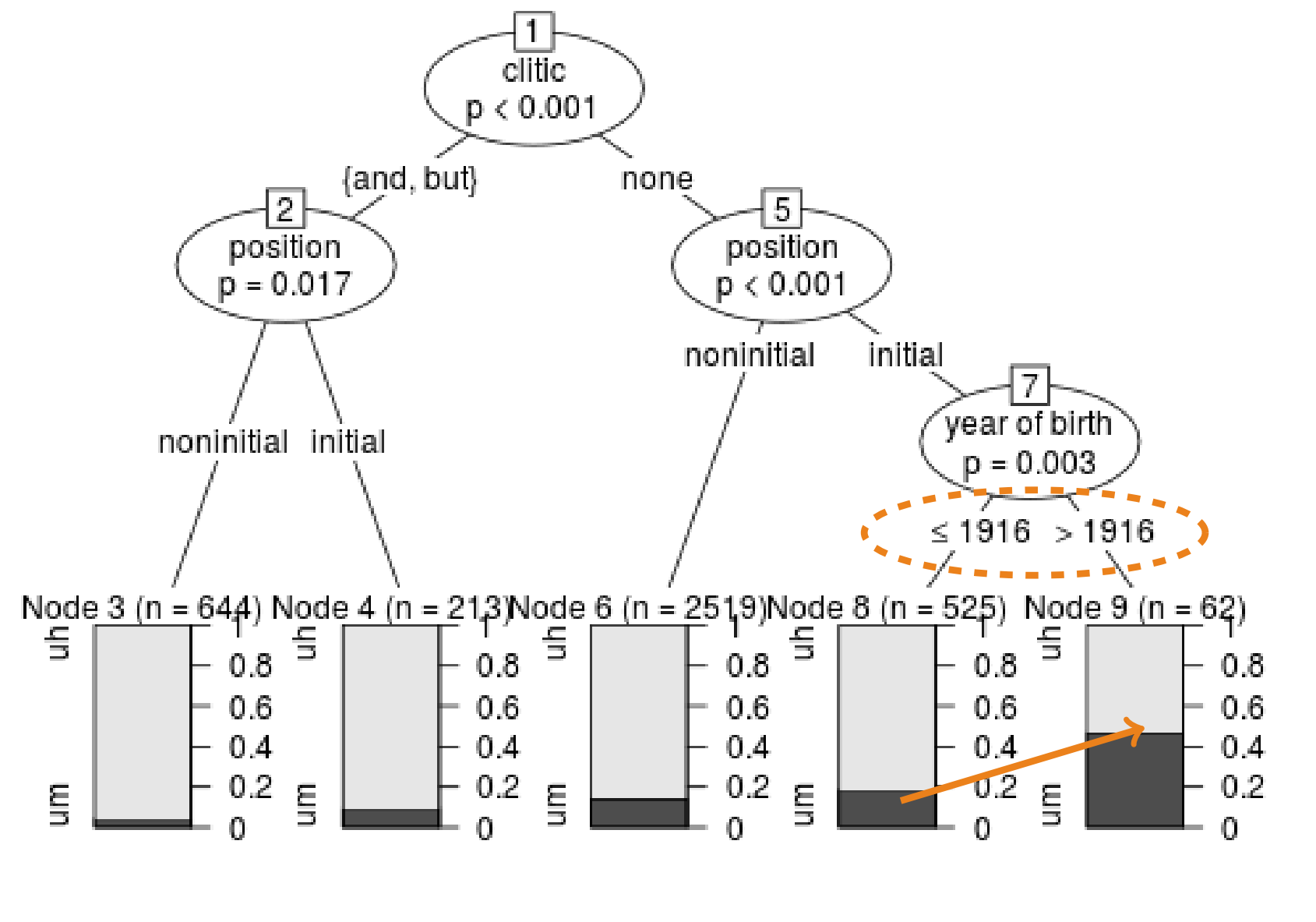

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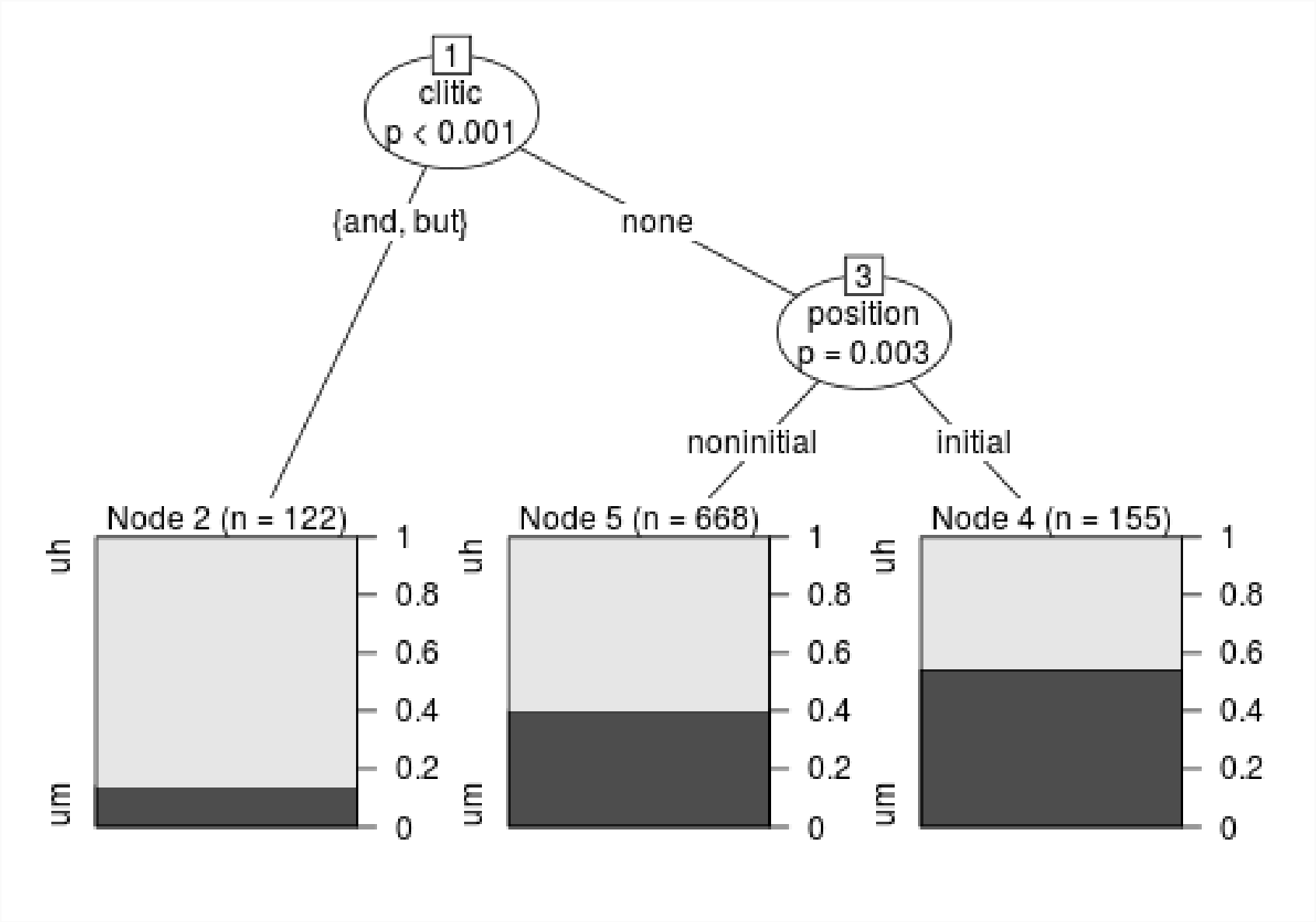

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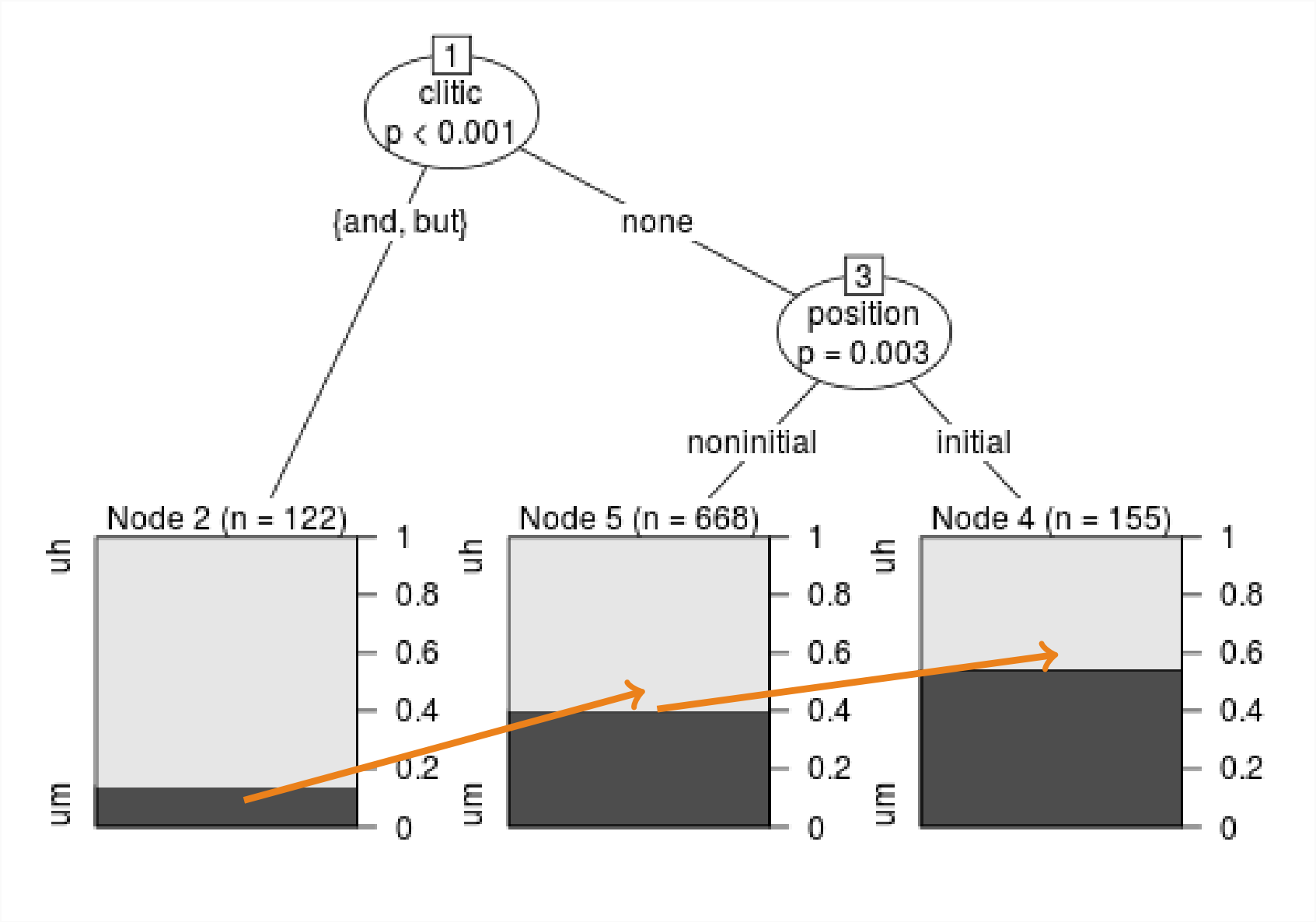

Interim summary

- We see the beginning of the S-curve of change toward *um* in apparent time.
  - While other work has shown that women lead this change, in our data, older women actually use more *um* than the younger women.
  - (more on this later)
- Looking at the internal factors:
  - Cliticized forms favour *uh*
  - Some evidence of positional divergence (possibly consistent with a new utterance-initial discourse function that favours *um*, Fruehwald, 2016)
- Conditional inference trees confirm that internal constraints persist with the younger interviewers (though the baseline rate of *um* is higher).

Assessing functional expansion

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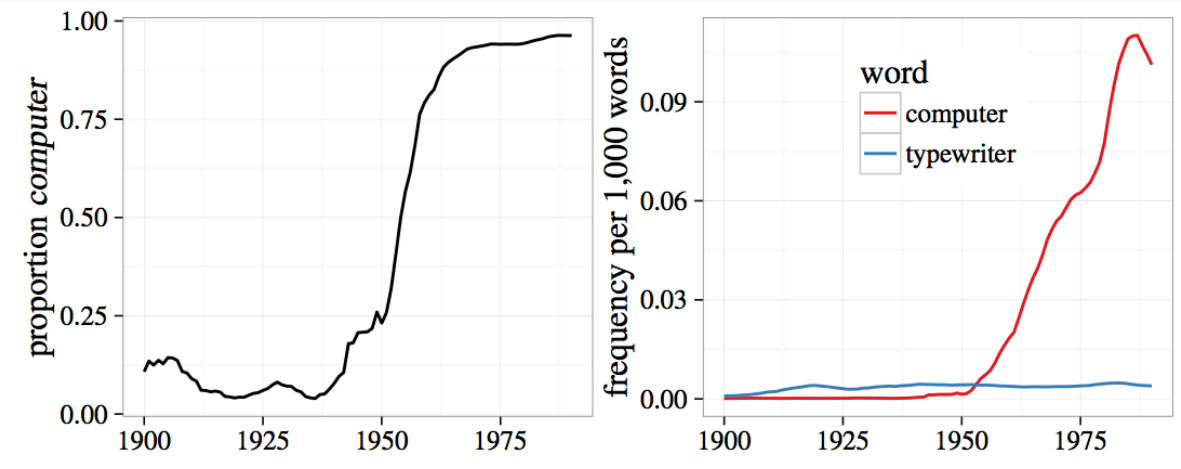
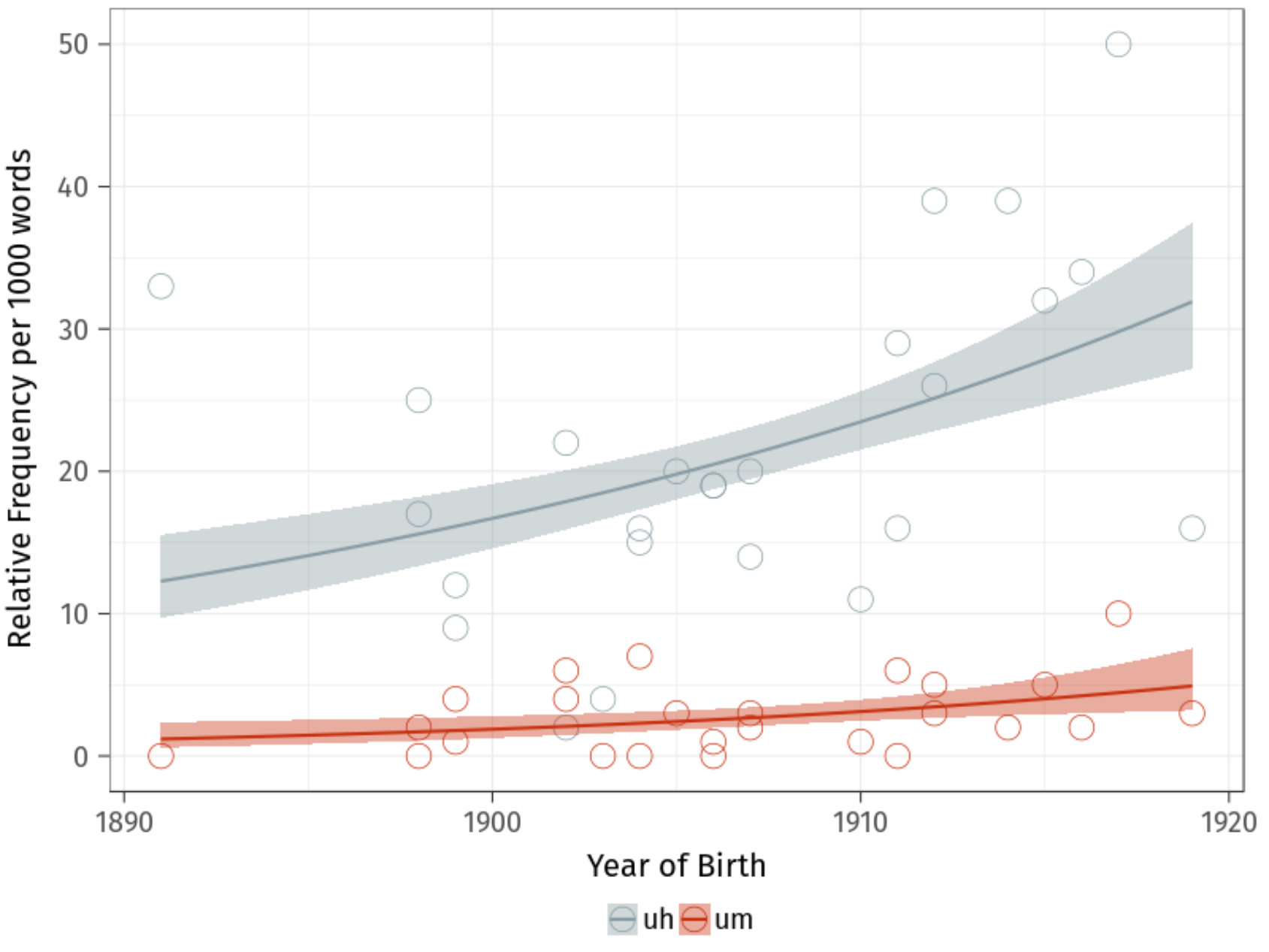
  - New discourse-pragmatic functions should be additive on the relative frequency.
  - If the new function is restricted to one variant, the relative frequency of one variant is expected to rise.
  - Expect a **fishtail pattern** as with *computer* and *typewriter* over time: once *computer* gained its contemporary meaning, its relative frequency grew additively as that meaning became more frequent.



Relative frequency



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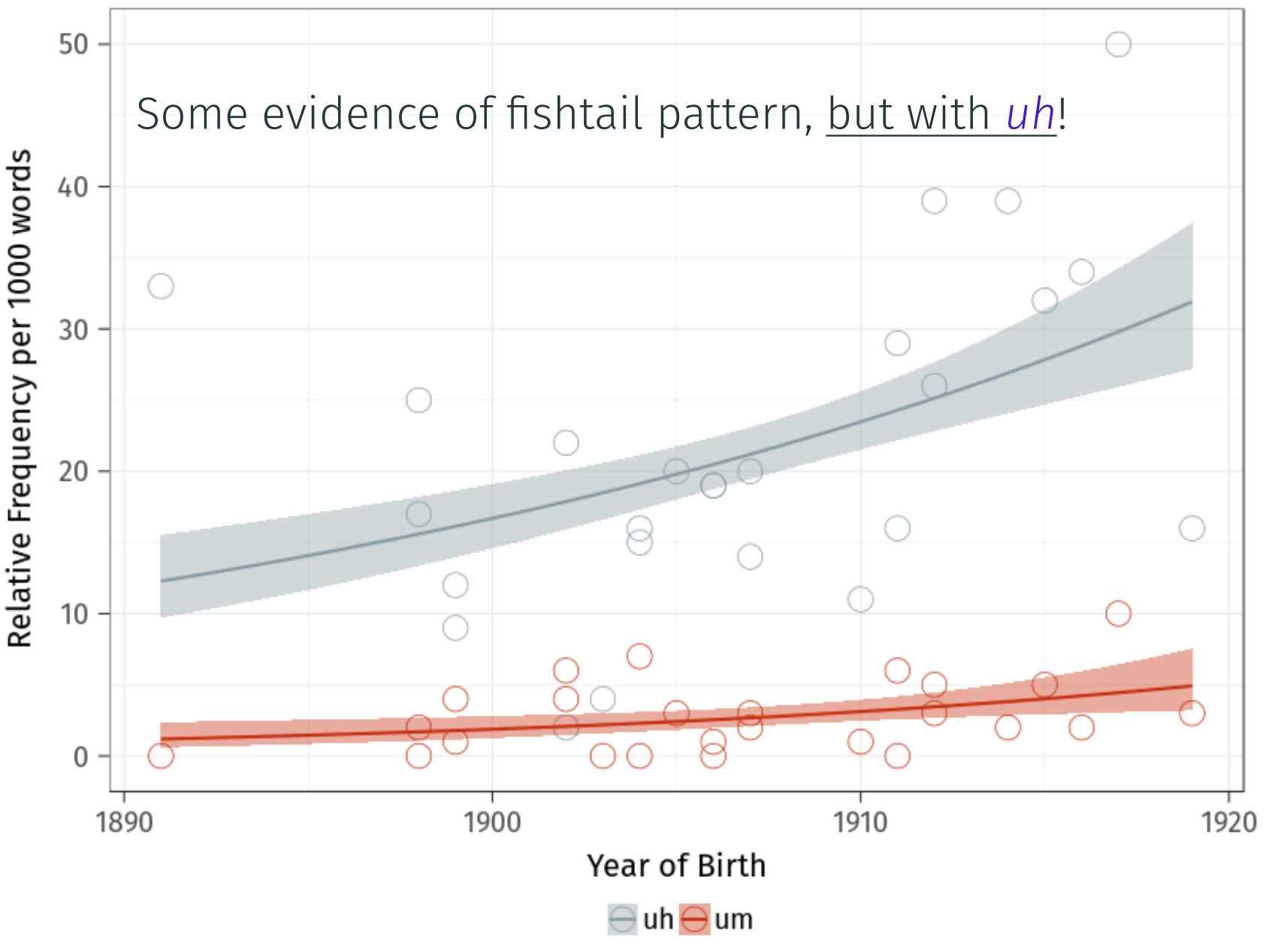
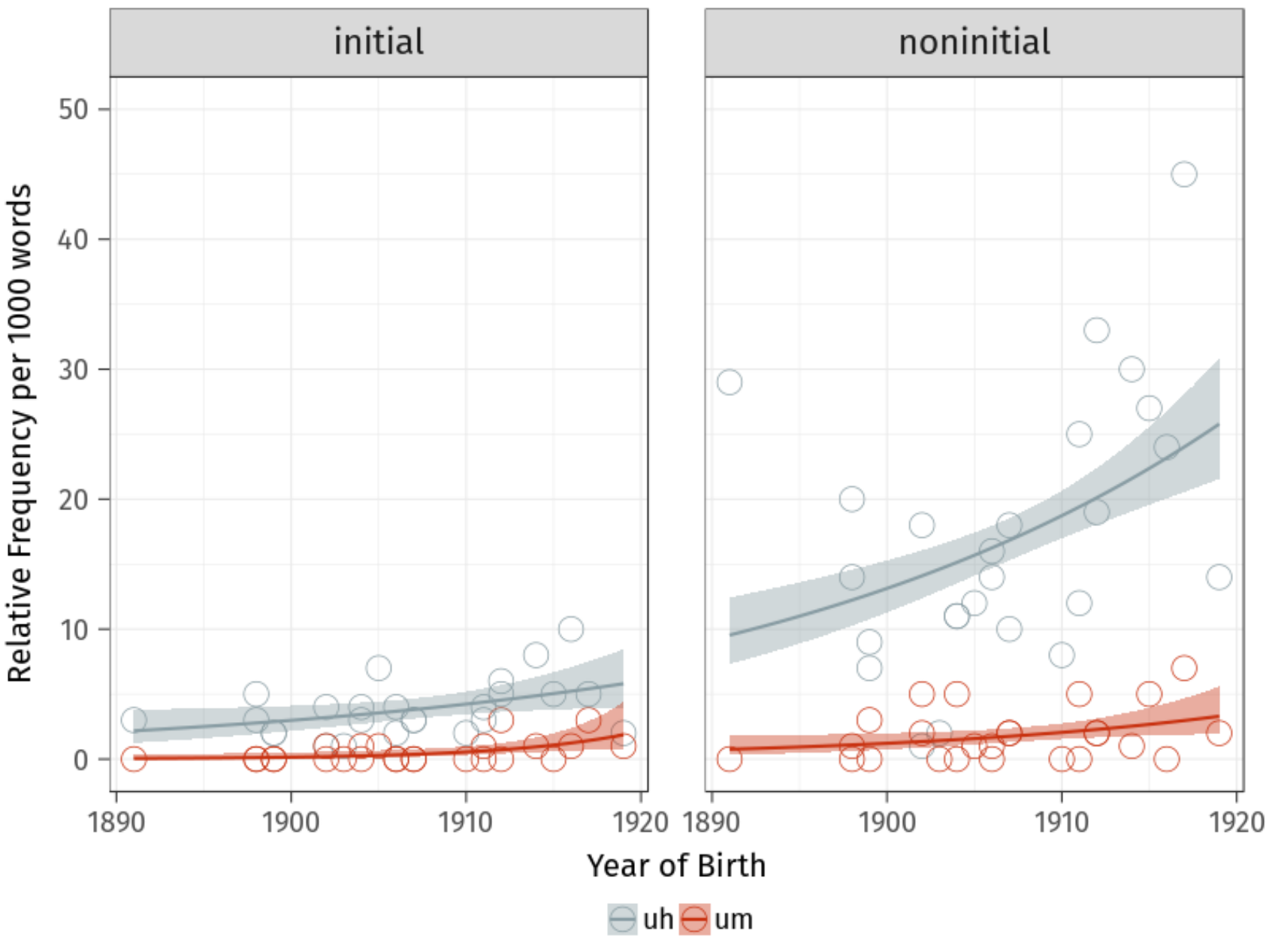


Relative frequency by position



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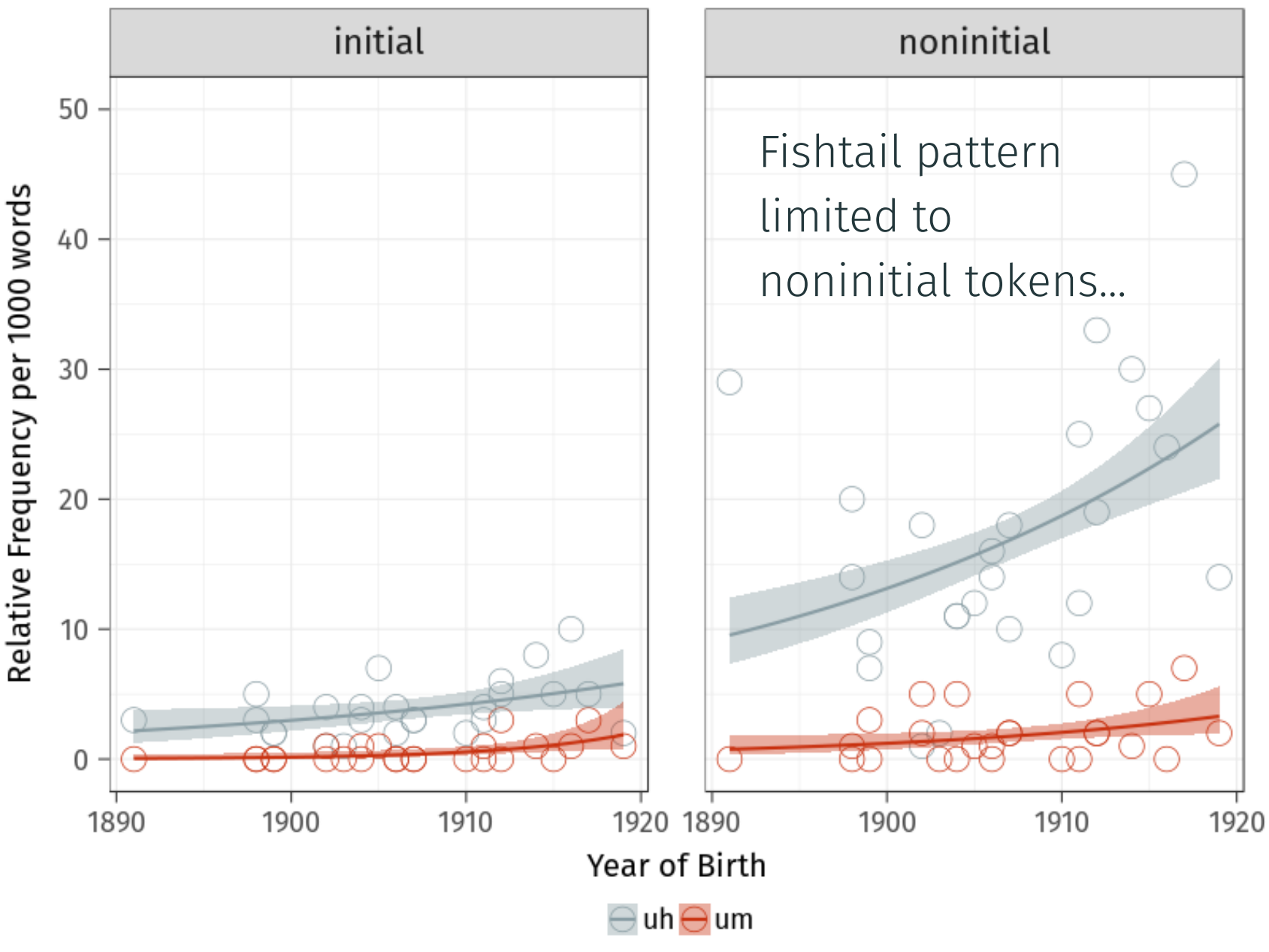
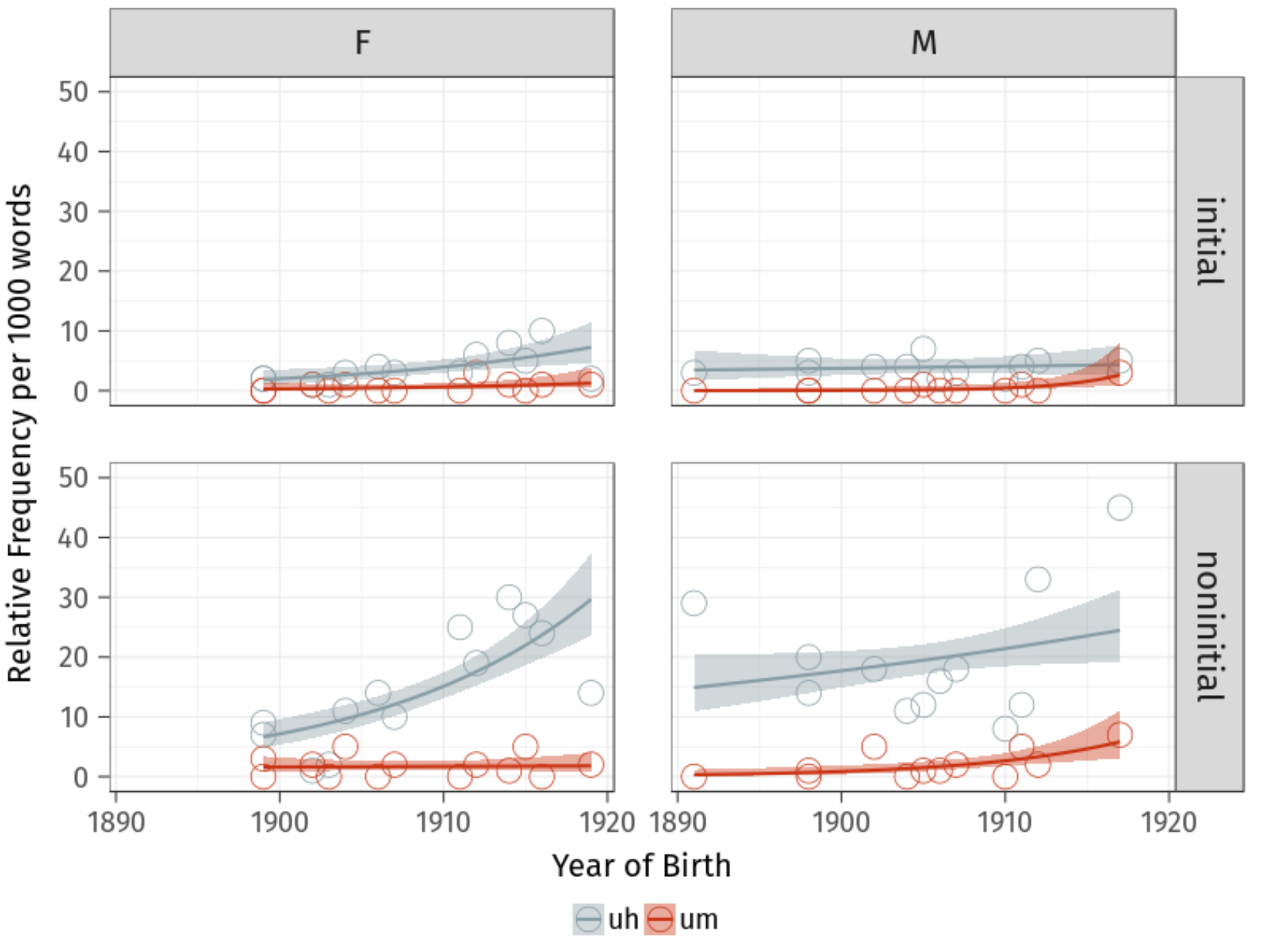


Relative frequency by gender and position



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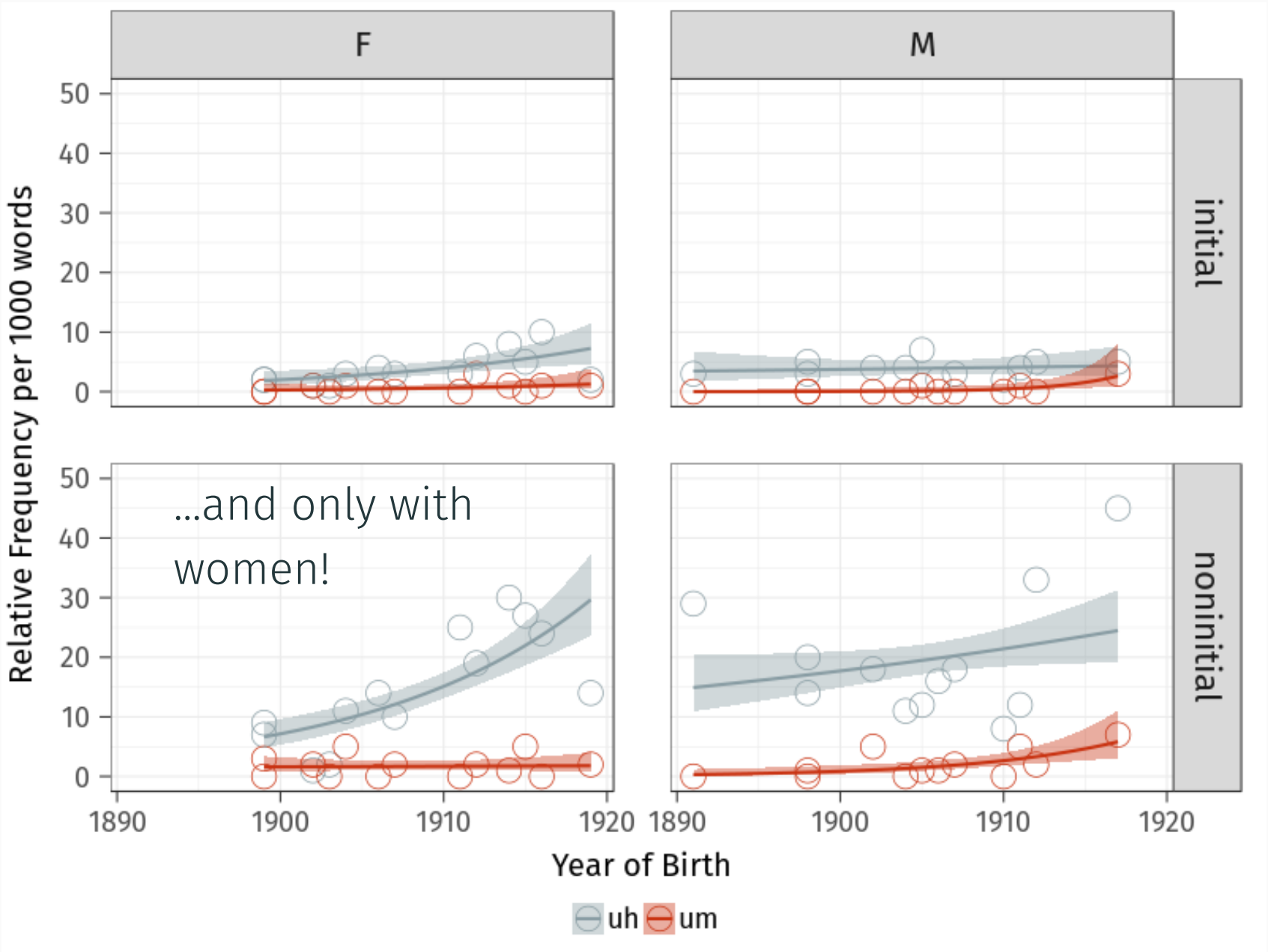

Contrasting two speakers

High UHM user (b. 1917)

INT: And what types of fruit . did you grow?

NO-11: Well the uh . originally uh when they came- uh grandfather bought the property in nineteen hundred and uh . um . to begin with there was very- there were very few fruit trees on it and they planted .uh . our orchard of uh . peaches. And uh waiting- while they waited for the peaches to come into bearing, they planted raspberries between the rows, so it started out as principally a raspberry farm I suppose but . it evolved into a farm that uh principally grew peaches and cherries mainly sweet cherries.

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Low UHM user (b. 1903)

INT: Okay. And how much . older was the very oldest?

NO-36: The oldest was born … in eighteen ninety two … and then my sister Lianne, eighteen ninety four … Greg, eighteen ninety eight . Sally nineteen hundred and one … I was born nineteen hundred and three . and that's it.

INT: Okay, and how old was your dad when you were born? At-

NO-36: … I- … how old was my dad when I was born? Oh.

INT: I think we had figured out that he was probably somewhere around forty five.

NO-36: Oh yes.

INT: And your mom was?

NO-36: Thirty . five?

INT: Thirty- oh-

NO-36: Is that it?

INT: Yup. Good.

Conclusion

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- Importance of looking at discourse-pragmatic variation from multiple quantitative angles.
  - Conflicting views on functional expansion.
- Exploring data from before the rise of *um* hasn't offered us an explanation for its dramatic rise.
  - Fruehwald (2016) didn't find an effect of position either.
  - The actuation problem remains elusive!
- But when we do find suggestive evidence of a different change—seems to be a change from unfilled pauses to filled pauses, *most of which are being filled by* uh
- Something for future investigation!

References I

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