THE CANADIAN SHORT VOWELS IN MOTION: REAL-TIME CHANGE AND REGIONAL DIFFUSION

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Notation used in this presentation

/ɛ/ = /e/ = BET

/ɪ/ = /i/ = BIT

/æ/ = /ae/ = BAT

/ɔ/ = /o/ = BOT=BOUGHT (merged low back vowel)

/ʌ/ = /u/ = BUT

What is the Canadian Shift?

Esling & Warkentyne (1993)

- Vancouver

- Based on data collected in 1979-1980

- Older group: pre-1920

- Middle group: 1920-1955

- Youngest group: 1956-1964

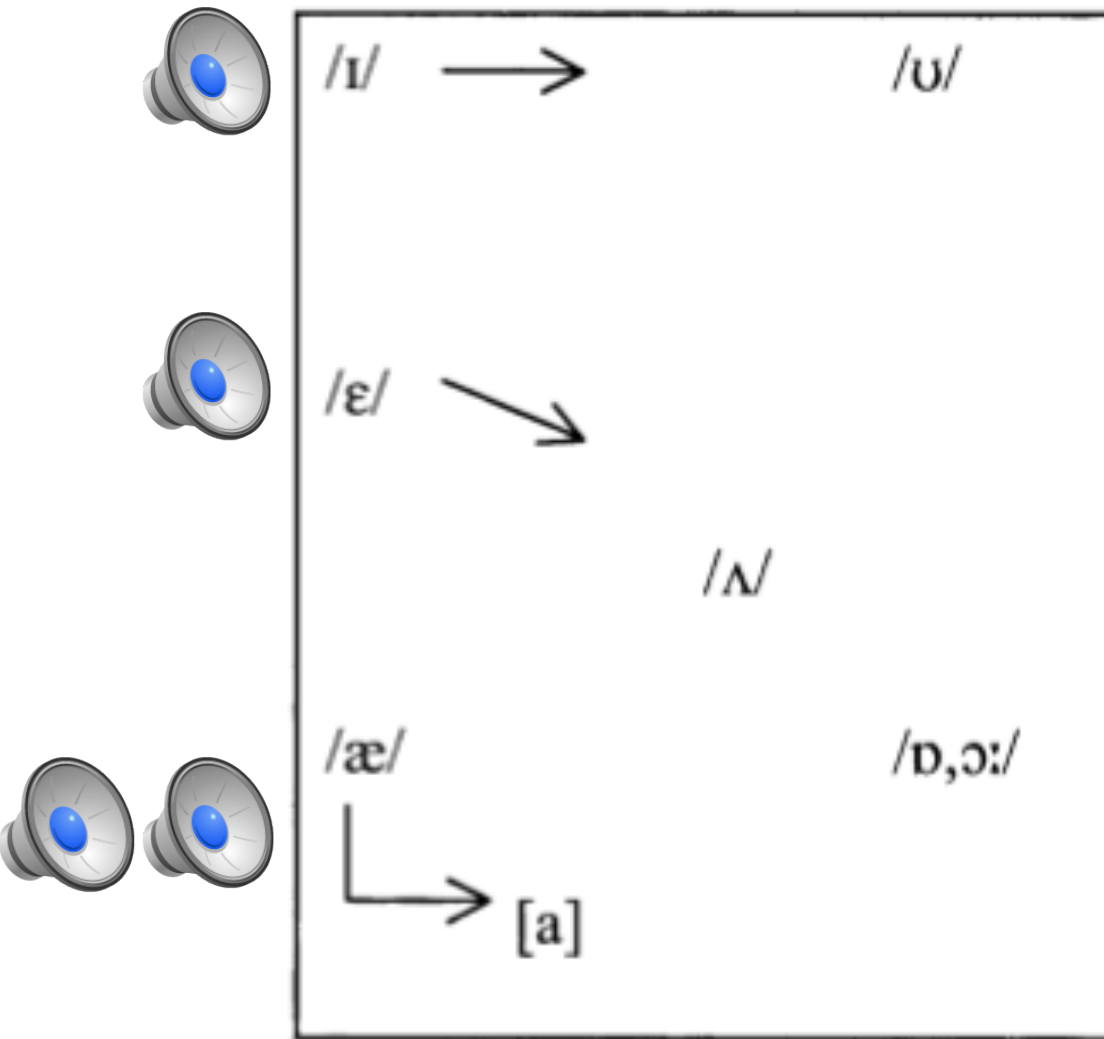- First mention of apparent-time /æ/ retraction in Canada

$$æ \longrightarrow [a]$$

Clarke, Elms and Youssef (1995)

/ɪ/

/ɛ/

/æ/

[a]

/ʌ/

/ɒ,ɔː/

- Ontario speech
- Impressionistic measurement
- Characterized it as a pull shift

Boberg (2005)

FIGURE 4. The Canadian Shift in Montreal.
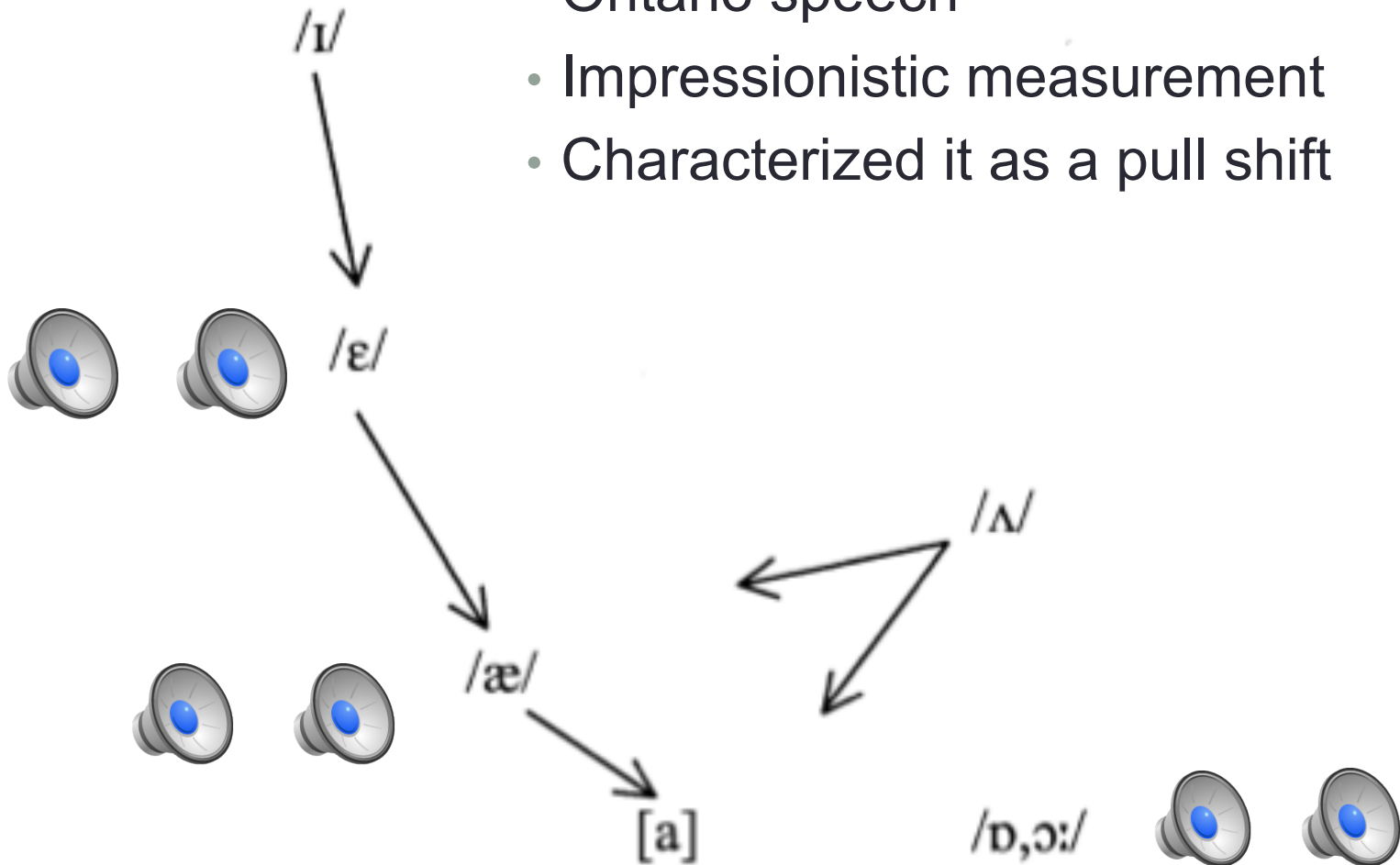
- Montreal
- Older group: 1919-1946
- Middle group: 1946-1965
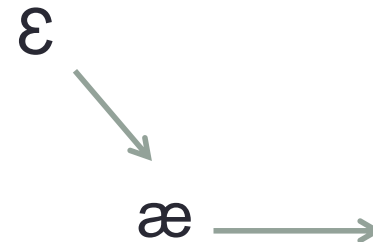- Younger group: 1965-1981

Hoffman (2010)

- Toronto
- Older group: 1930-1958
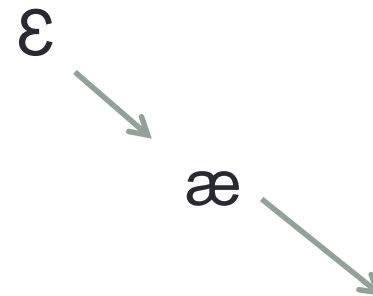- Younger group: 1983-1995

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Sadlier-Brown & Tamminga (2010)

- Older group: 1922-1972
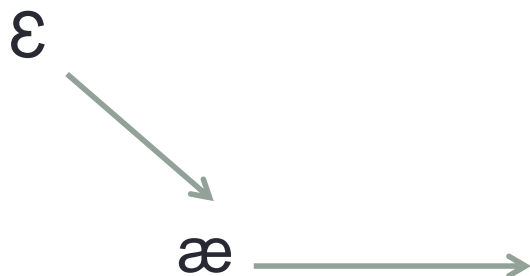- Younger group: 1981-1986
- Vancouver
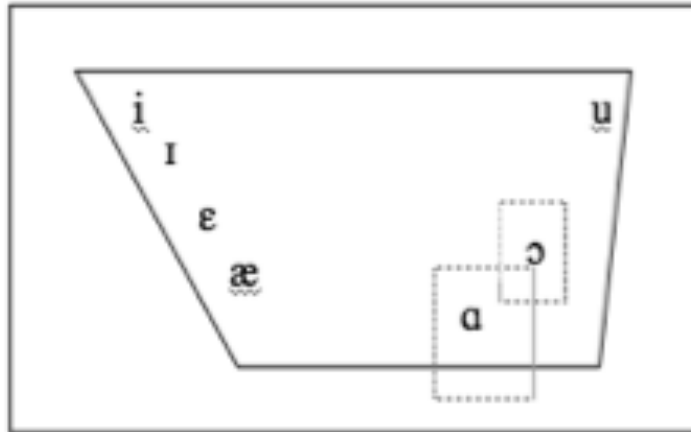
ɛ
↘
æ ⟶

- Halifax

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æ ↘

Roeder & Jarmasz (2009)

- Toronto
- Older group: 1920-1935
- Middle group: 1951-1965
- Younger group: 1966-1985
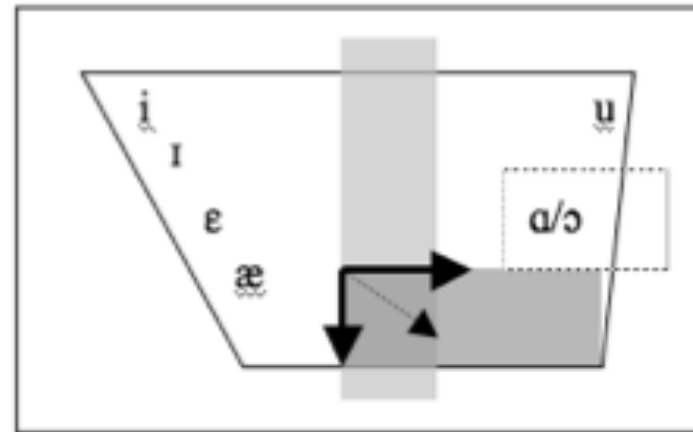- Middle and Younger groups pattern together: "Canadian Shift has not been active in Toronto since the WWII era"
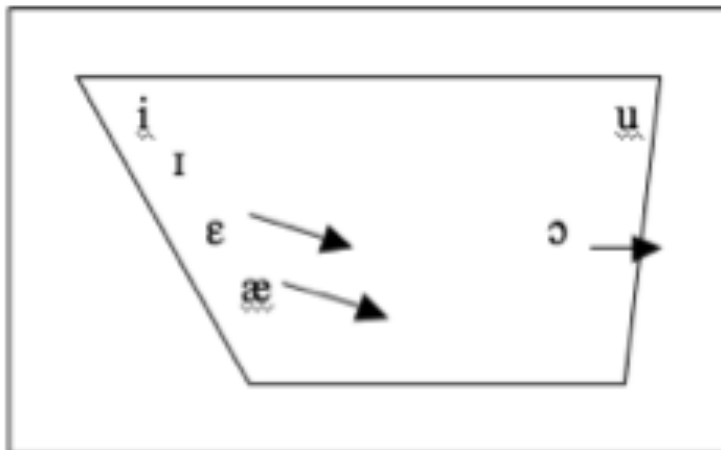
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Roeder and Jarmasz's (2010) proposal
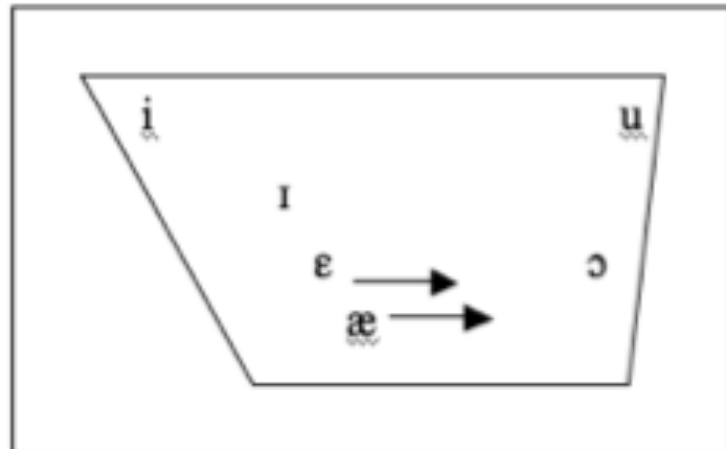
Research subjects

- Have at least one Jewish parent
- Grew up speaking English as a first or home language
- Grew up in Montreal

	Female	Male
Younger	1991	1995
	1989	1992
	1988	1992
	1988	1991
	1984	1989
		1988
		1987
Older	1961	1961
	1957	1960
	1952	1957
	1950	1953
	1937	1949
		1949
		1949
		1949
		1943
		1940

Methodology

- Classic sociophonetic experiment
- Participants read 44 sentences at their own pace
- Vowel formant information extracted for 44 'target' words in /ɛ, æ, ʌ, ɔ/ classes and from 'anchor vowels' elsewhere in the sentences
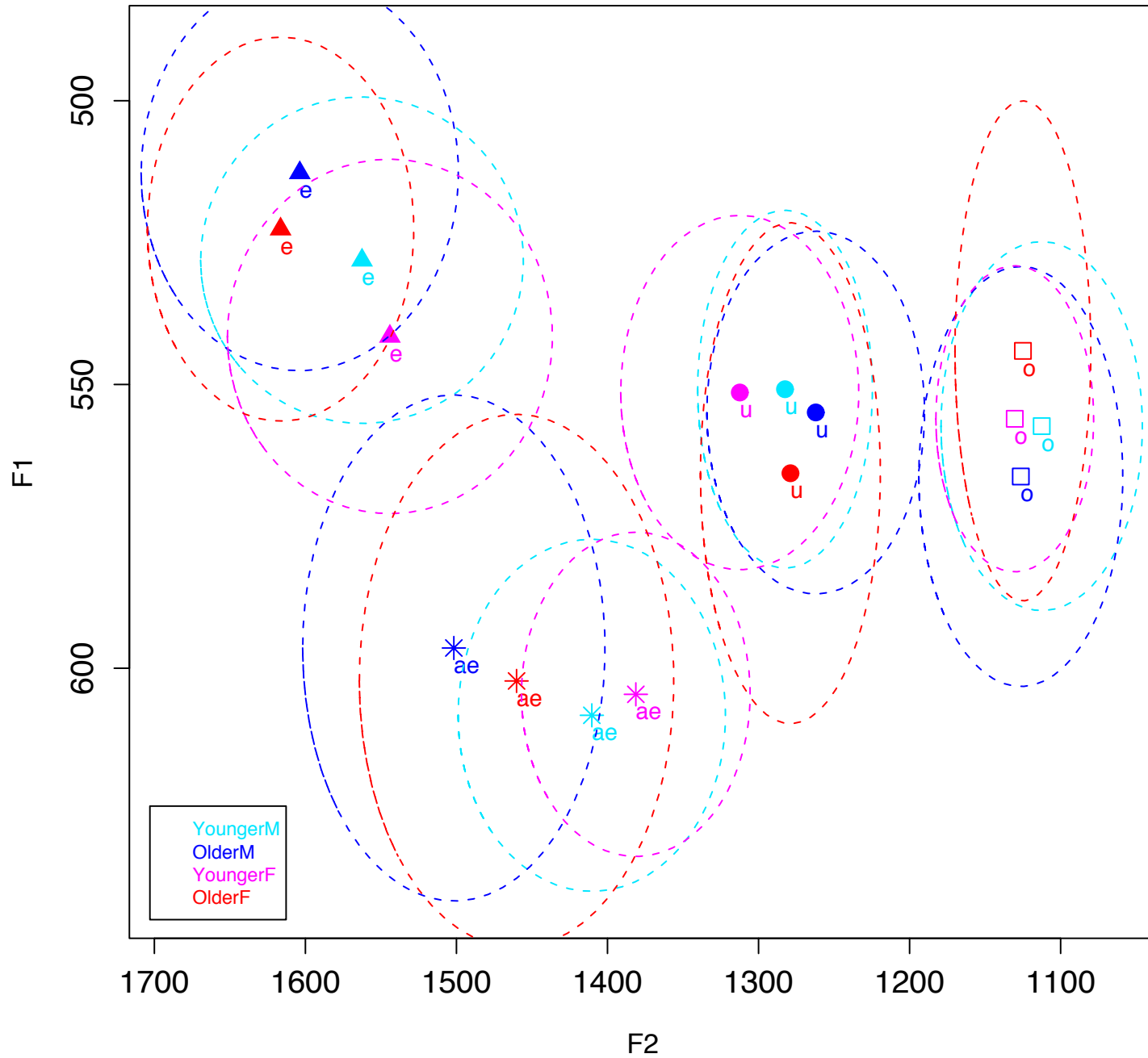
Individual means, normalized (Lobanov method)

Legend:
- M1995
- M1992b
- M1992a
- M1991
- M1989
- M1988
- M1987
- M1961
- M1960
- M1957
- M1953
- M1949e
- M1949d
- M1949c
- M1949b
- M1949a
- M1943
- M1940
- F1991
- F1989
- F1988b
- F1988a
- F1984
- F1961
- F1952
- F1950
- F1937
- F1957
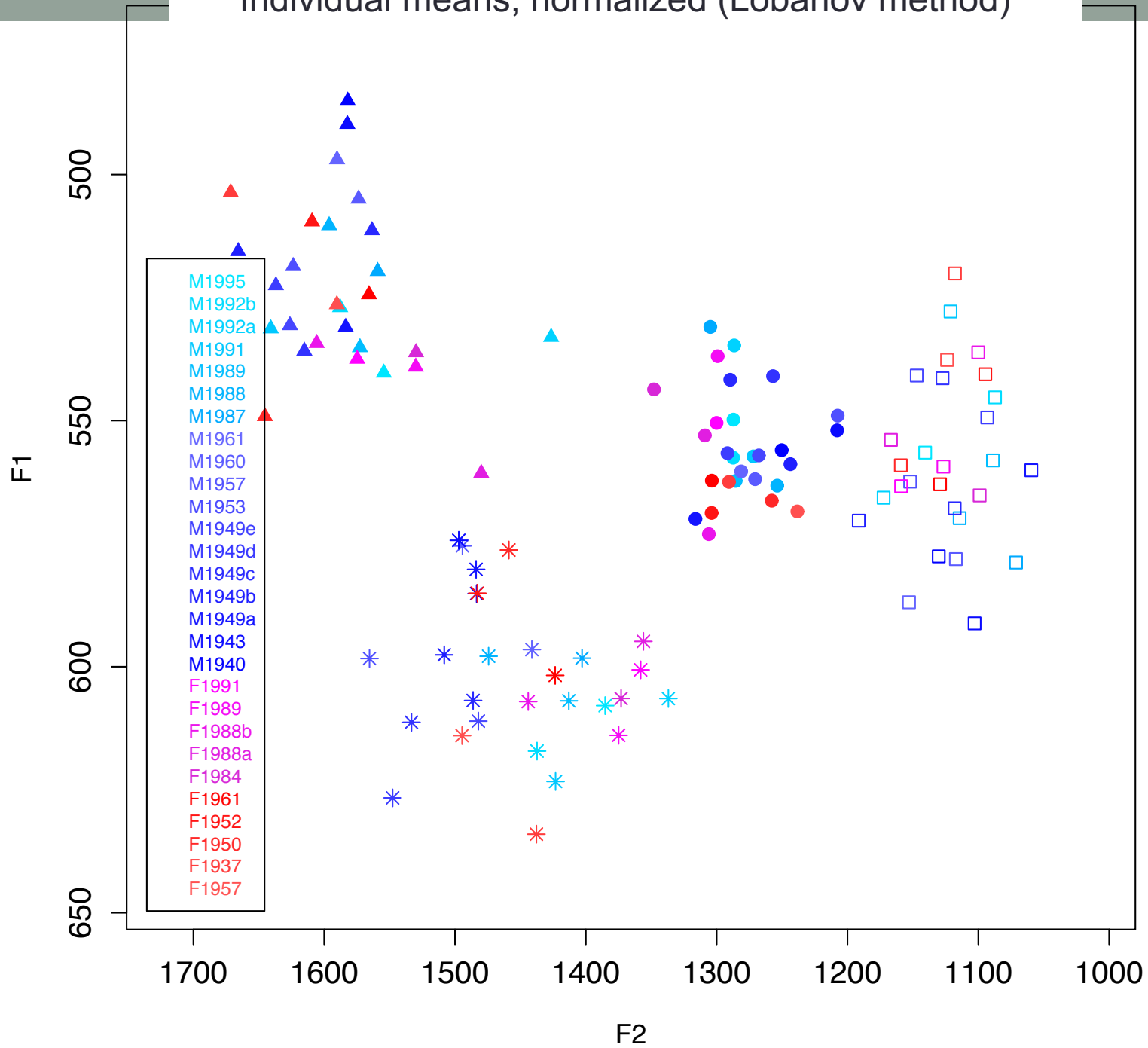
Group means, normalized (Lobanov method)

Boberg (2005)

- Studied Anglo Montrealers (Irish, Italian, and Jewish)
- Divided them into three generations by birth year:
  - 1919-1946 (group 1)
  - 1946-1965 (group 2)
  - 1965-1981 (group 3)

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Difference between groups 1 and 2
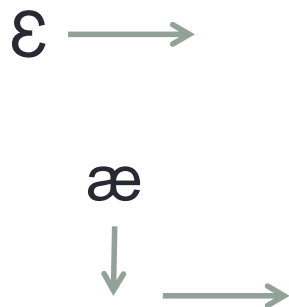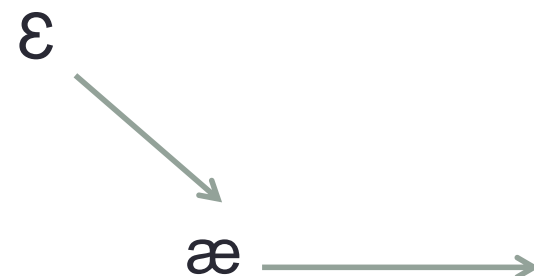
ɛ →

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Difference between groups 1 and 3

ɛ →

æ →

Difference between groups 2 and 3

Real-time change

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Boberg (2005):
overall picture of
movement

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Current study:
difference between
1937-1961 and
1984-1992 groups

Regional Diffusion

- Roeder and Jarmasz (2009): "Can these findings be reconciled in light of the situation in Toronto?"
  - CS is no longer active in Toronto, has not been for the past 60 years
  - In Montreal, however, Boberg's (2005) results indicate that CS only really took off in Montreal once it was over in Toronto
  - They point to Hagiwara (2006) as an example of how Winnipeg females are currently only showing retraction of /æ/ and incipient retraction of /ɛ/ - HOWEVER, this paper was NOT an apparent-time or sociolinguistic interview-based study, but a comparison of the Winnipeg vowel space with that reported as 'General American' by Peterson and Barney (1952)
    - As such, more research is needed in tertiary cities and rural areas throughout Canada to improve modeling of geographic spread

Possible Causes of /æ/ retraction

- Merger of /oh/ and /o/
  - Supported by: Labov, Ash, Boberg (2006); Boberg (2005, 2008); Roeder and Jarmasz (2010)
  - /æ/ retraction after /o/-/oh/ merger also occurring in California
- Social indexation of back /æ/ with 'classier' British English
  - Pros: mentioned by several participants
  - Cons: difficult to know whether backed /æ/ is due to media/social influence from California or from England
- French influence of /a/ on /æ/
  - Pros: nearly all Anglophones must use French on a daily basis, mentioned by several participants
  - Cons: seen in the rest of English Canada as well as California; presence of [a] and [ɑː] in Quebec French may not create as much