

Some advice about studying
indexicality

Penelope Eckert

Stanford University

<http://www.stanford.edu/~eckert/>

French	76 years	60 years	43 years	Gloss
vulgaire			bylgari	vulgar
biographi e			biografi o	biography
Antarctique			antartiko	Antarctic
ébène			ebenu	ebony
ambre		ambre	ambre	amber
écluse		eklyzo	eklyzo	canal lock
écran		ekran	ekran	screen
fleuve		flobo/flobe	flobe	mainstem
emphysème	amfizemu	amfizemu	amfizemu	emphysema
pronostic	pronostik	prunustik	prunustik	prognosis
suppositoire	sypozitwar	sypozitwar	sypozitwer	suppository
humeur	maw karatj	ymu	ymu	(bad) mood
salaire	pago	salari	salari	salary
crémeux	ka yn hlok de pinto	kremus	kremus	creamy
itinéraire	kami	itinerari	itinerari	itinerary
supérieur	ke defyi de nuzauti	syperiyr	syperiyr	superior
accueil	pla resebytj	bun akyʌ	akyʌ	welcome
ancêtres	bieʌ	bieʌ	ansetros	ancestors
épineux	k'espigon	epinus	epinus	spiny
populeux	puplatj	pupylu s	pupylu s	populous
chaise	kadiero	kadiero	kadiero	chair

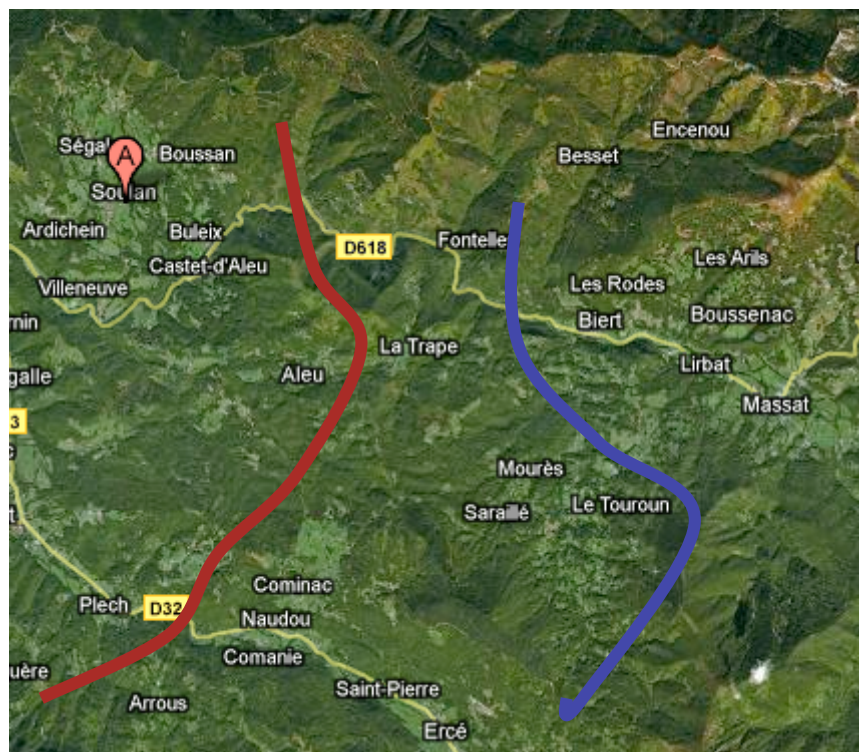
Meto't ets pes eshus era
shezo (cadiero)

pejoration

pejot	'rag'	tʃifun	<fr. chiffon
pigoto	'chicken pox'	bariselo	<fr. varicelle
bordo	'barn'	grandʒo	<fr. grange

why do people pick up new pronunciations?

i.e. what are the social motivations in the spread of change?



hiw de herr
en kazaw

fil de fer
en kazal

fiw de ferr en
kazaw

Symbol (pure convention)



Icon (resemblance)



Index (contiguity)



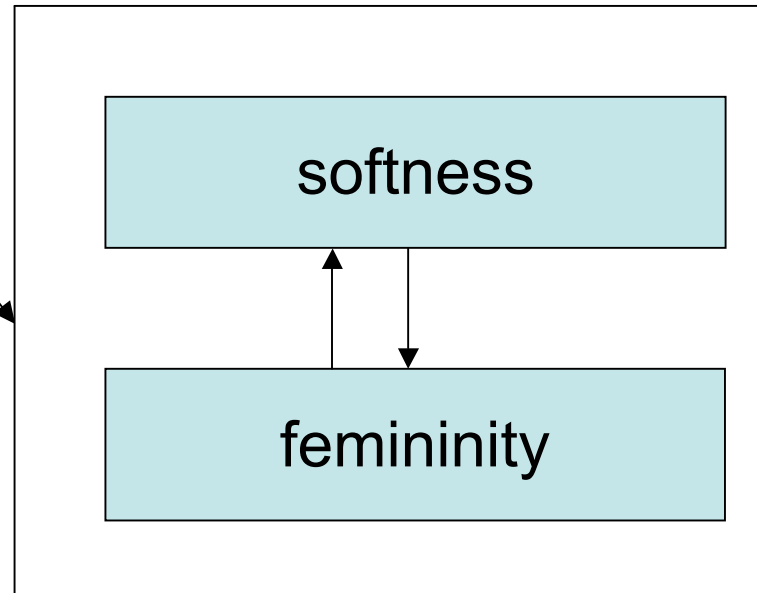
Semiotic processes of linguistic differentiation

Irvine and Gal (2000:37-39)

- *Iconization*: “Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group’s inherent nature or essence.”
- *Fractal Recursivity*: “involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level.”
- *Erasure*: “the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible.”

Dialectics of Indexical Order

language ideology



n^{th} order of indexicality

$n+1^{\text{st}}$ order of indexicality

“Women use ‘wa’ **because** it sound gentle and soft.”

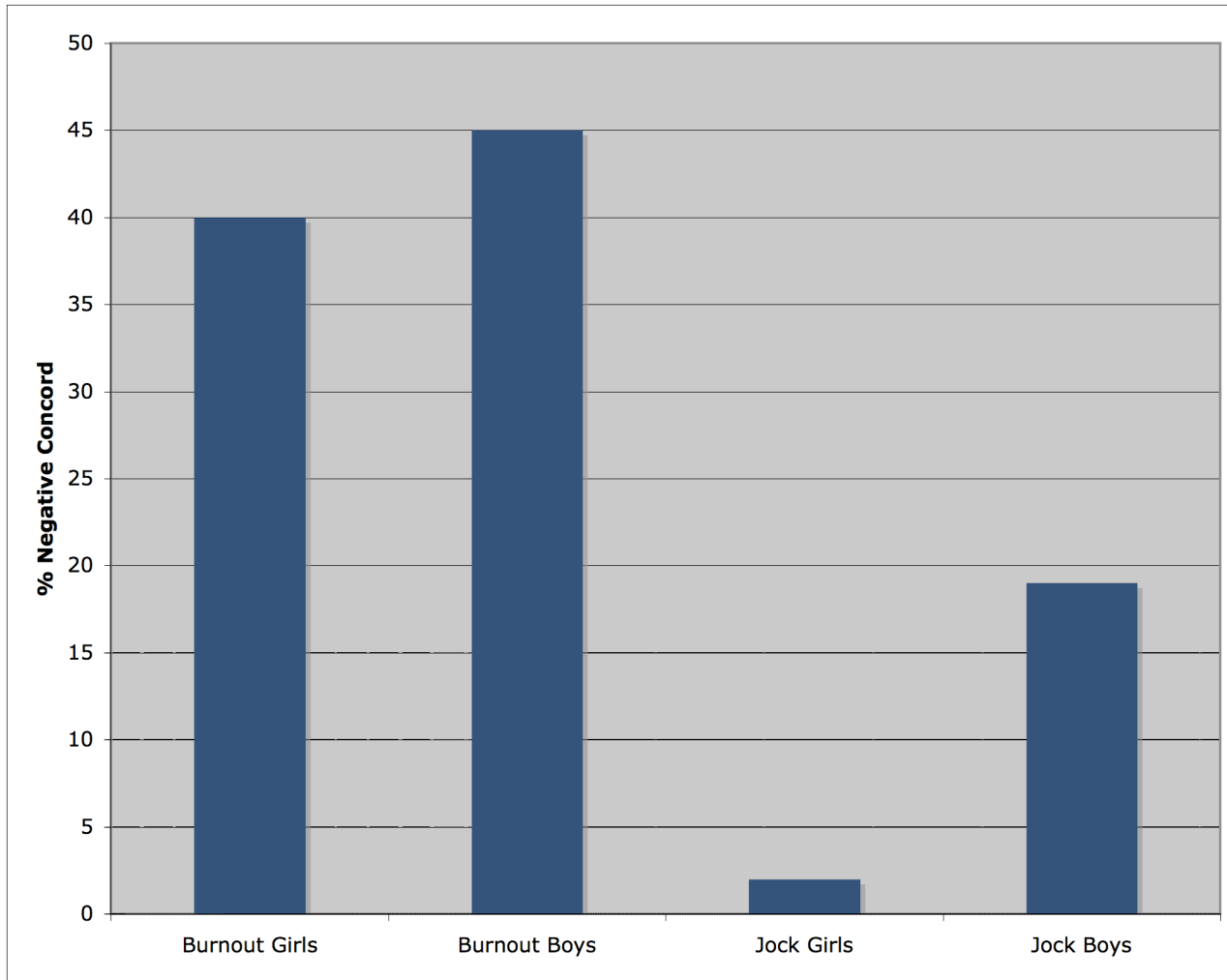
“‘Wa’ sounds gentle and soft **because** women use it”

Indexicality

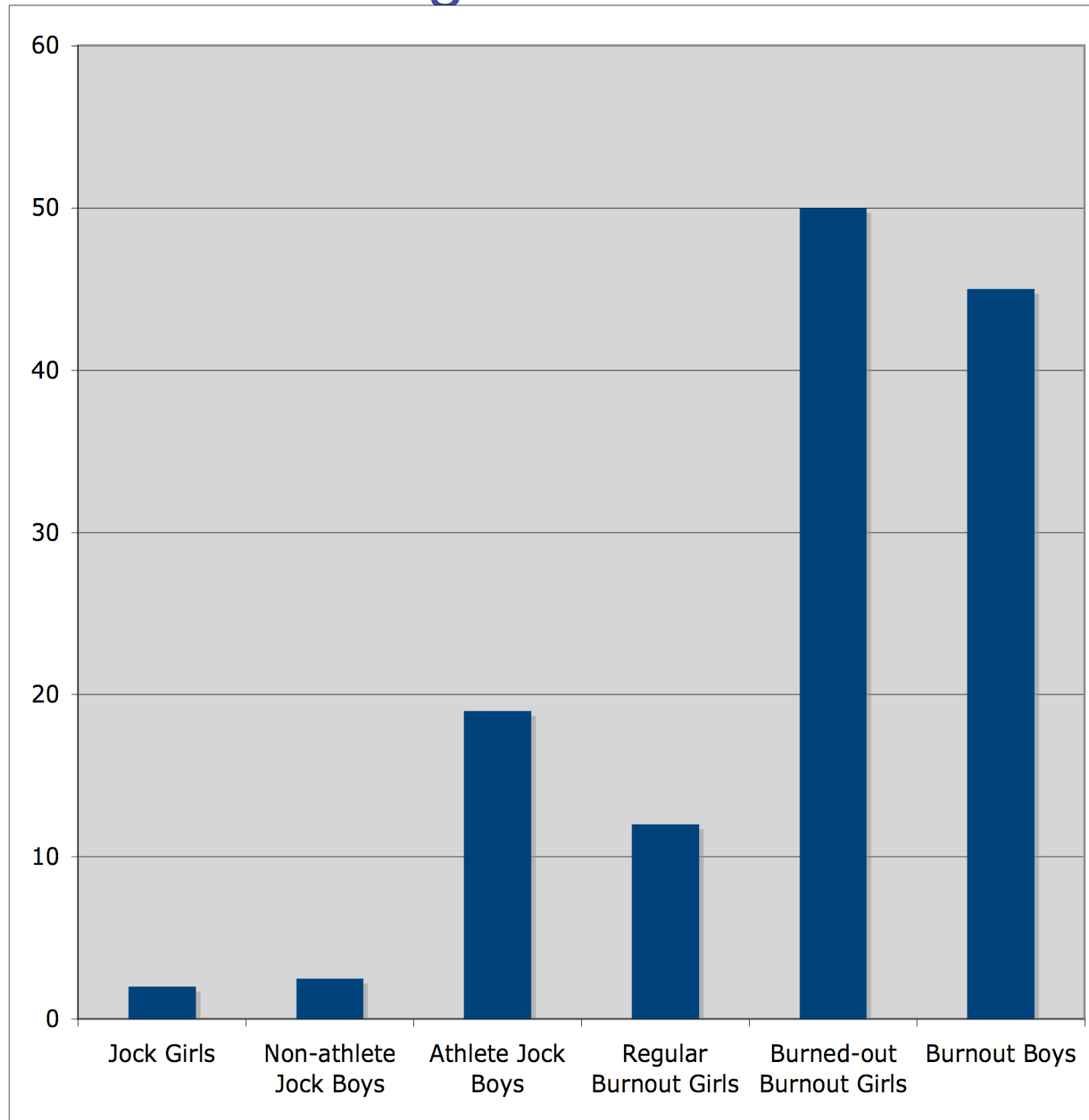
- Language leaves us non-distinctive material to put to social-indexical use.
 - language choice
 - voice quality
 - prosody
 - subphonemic space
 - Lexical and morpho-syntactic variability
 - etc.
- Distinctions are created in this material through their situational use.

- While the linguistic variability might be unconscious, the social meanings that it indexes probably aren't.
- Variation takes on meaning in discourse constructing the social types.
- The linguist studying the indexical value of variation must attend to the full range of discourses.
 - An interest in ethnicity, or class, or gender, or ... cannot be approached as if it were the only thing going on.

% Negative Concord



% Negative Concord





“Why can’t she talk normal?”

California white girl speech

Cuz he knows my brother  

Features of the Chicano 'ethnolect'

- Light //
- Lowered *so*, *no*  And then we're all "if you **leave** we're never gonna be your friends again and you can't be in the club" and **so**...
- /th/ stopping
- Raising of /ɪ/ and /e/ before nasals
- ...  And they **think** they're perfect and every**thing**

Valley Girl Features

- Fronting of /u/ and /ow/
- Backing/Lowering of /ae/ before non-nasals
- "open" /r/
- ...

Nasal split

iy

I

U

uw

ey

ow

e

^

ae

o



**Cuz a lot of the kids try to hang out
with these boys and try to act the
coolest...**



Nasal split

iy

I

U

uw

ey

ow

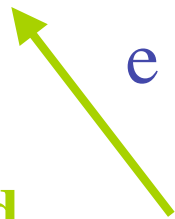
e

^

stand

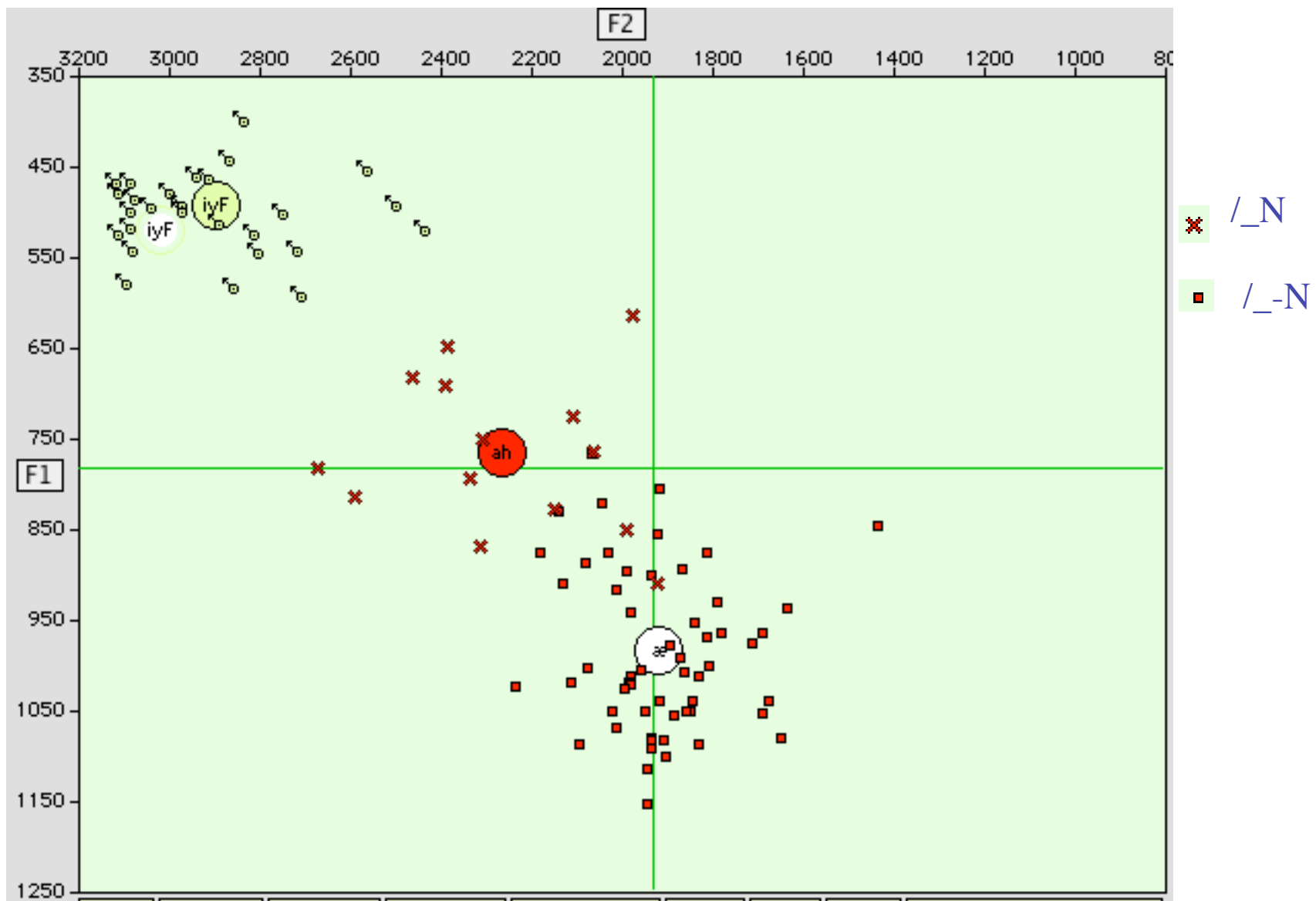
ae

o

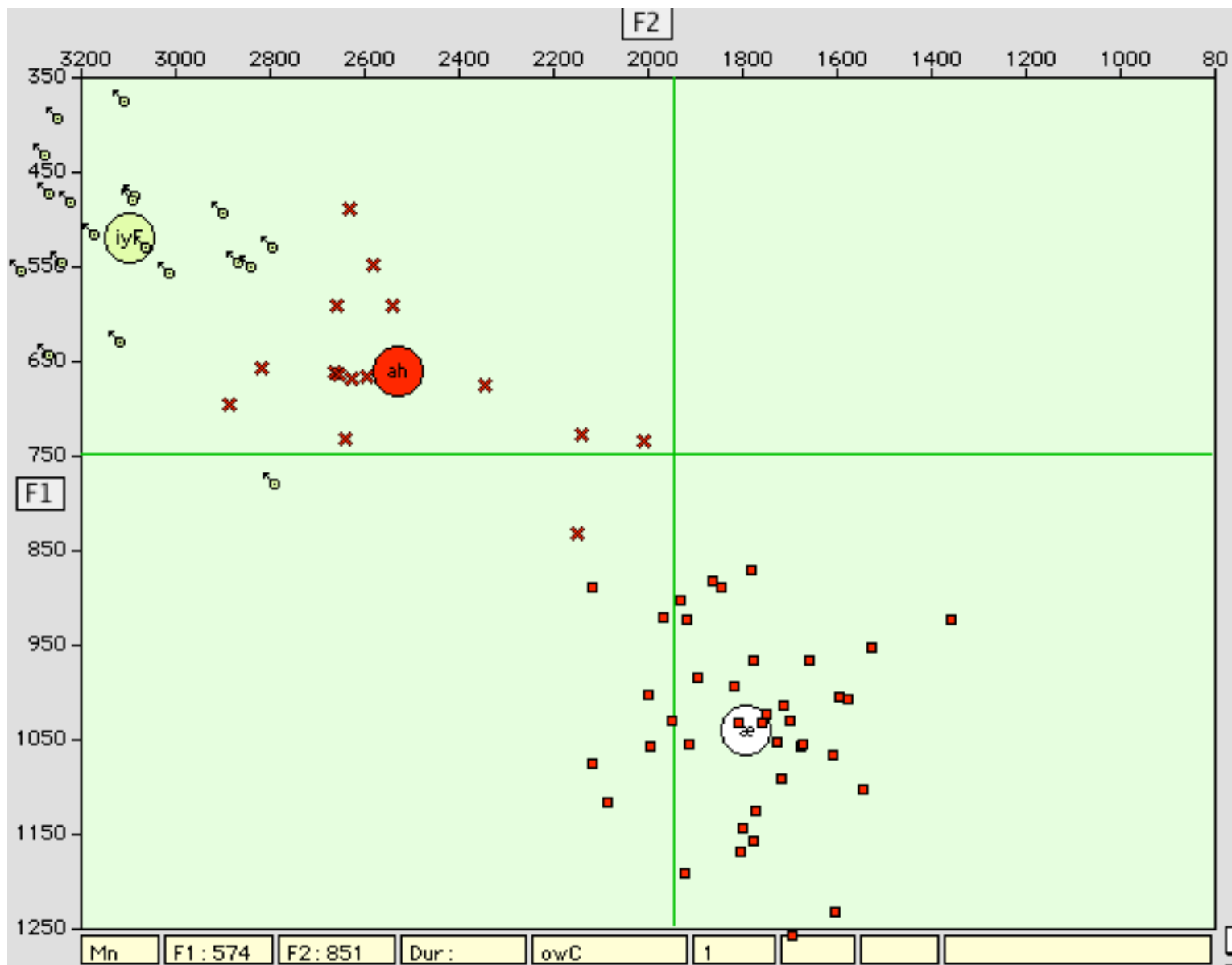


Candice

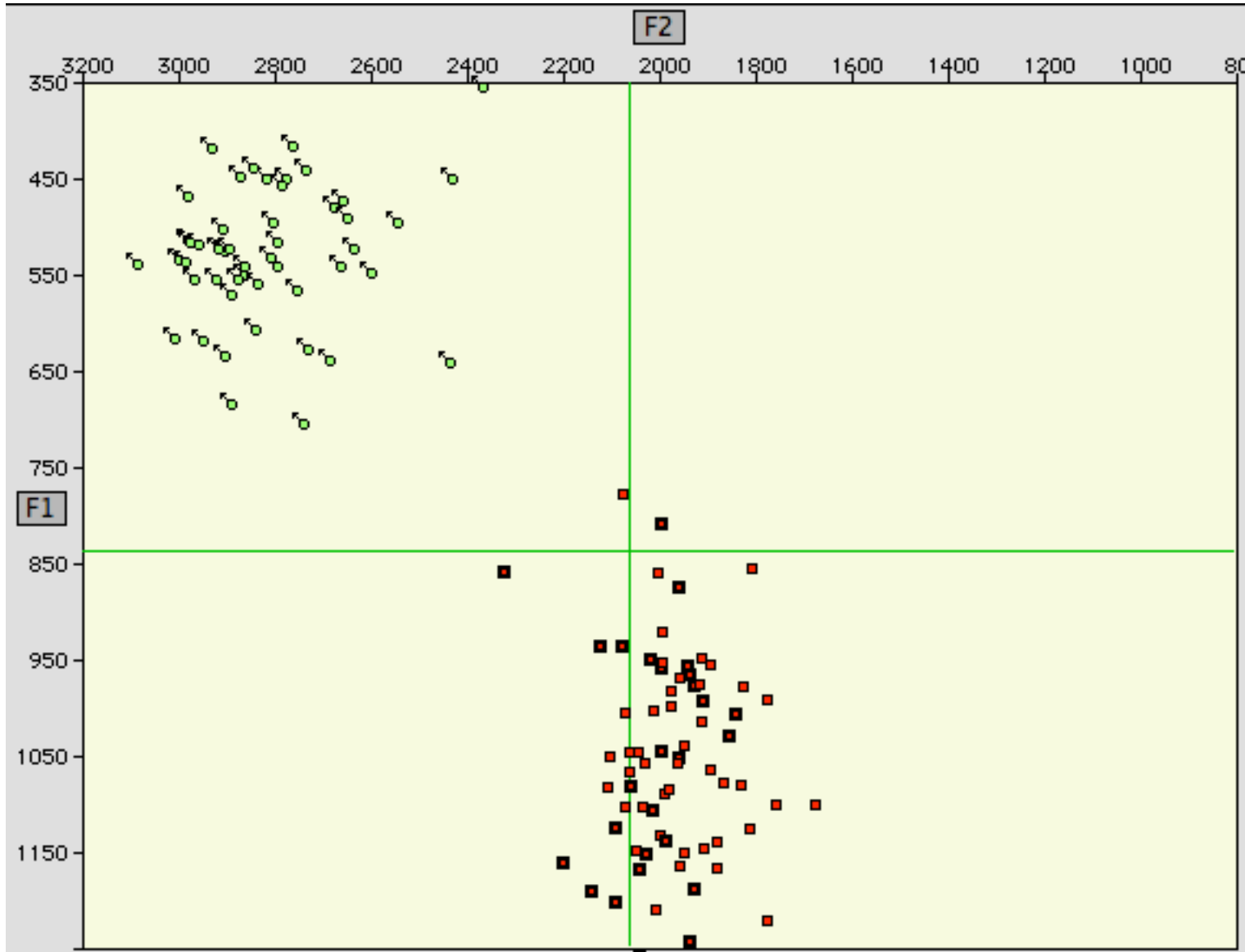
Elmira's /ae/



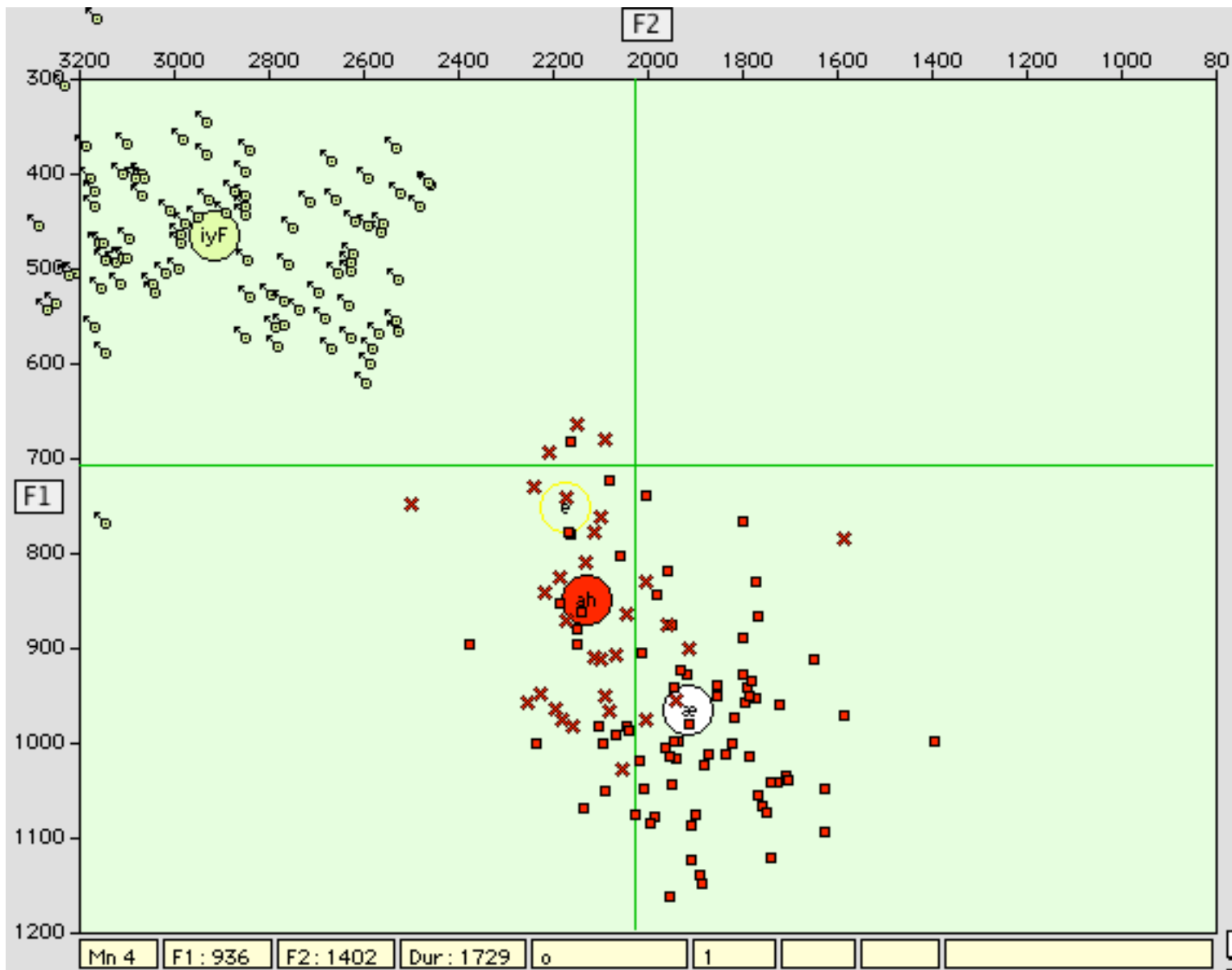
Rachel's /ae/



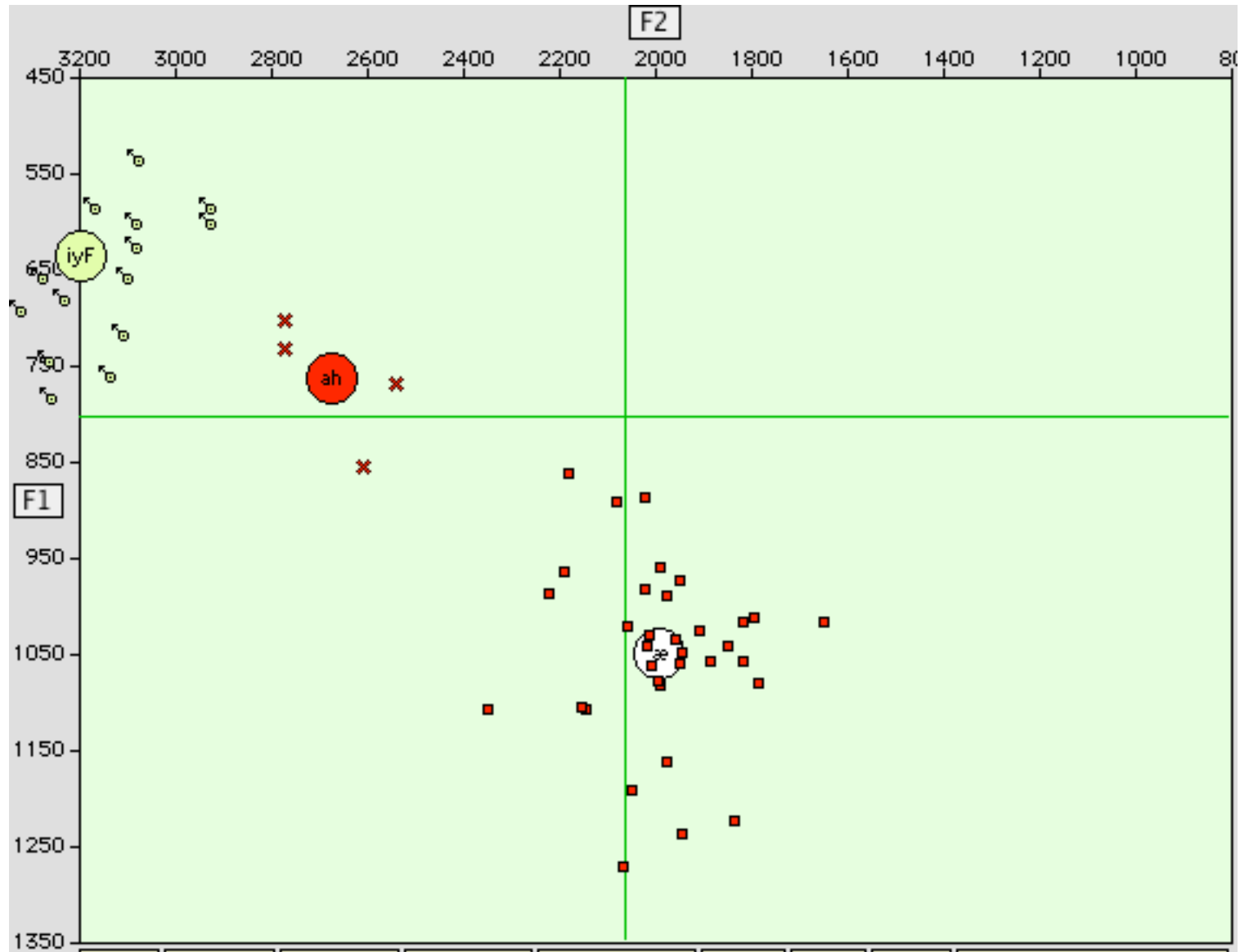
Selena's /ae/



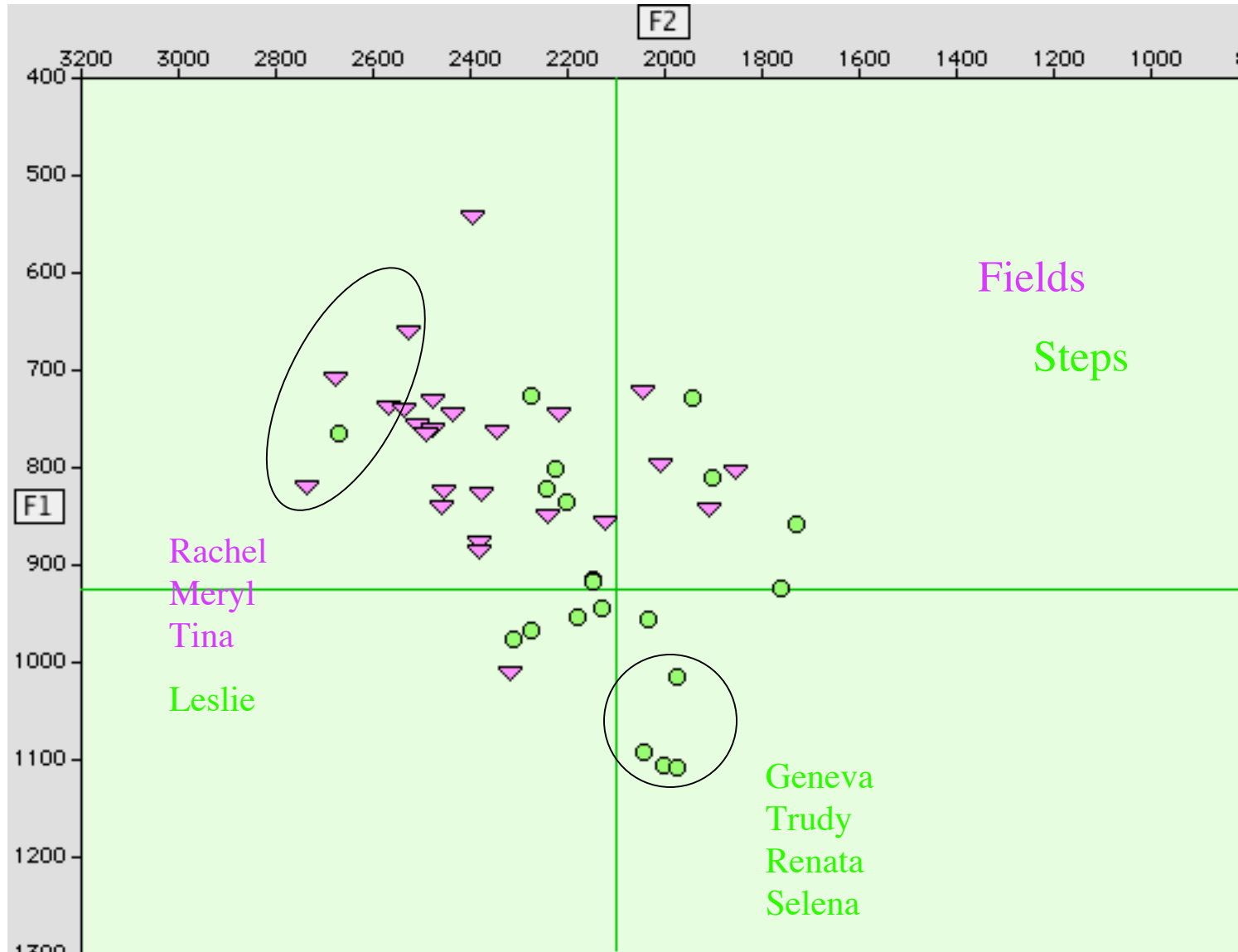
Merilee's /ae/



Leslie's /ae/

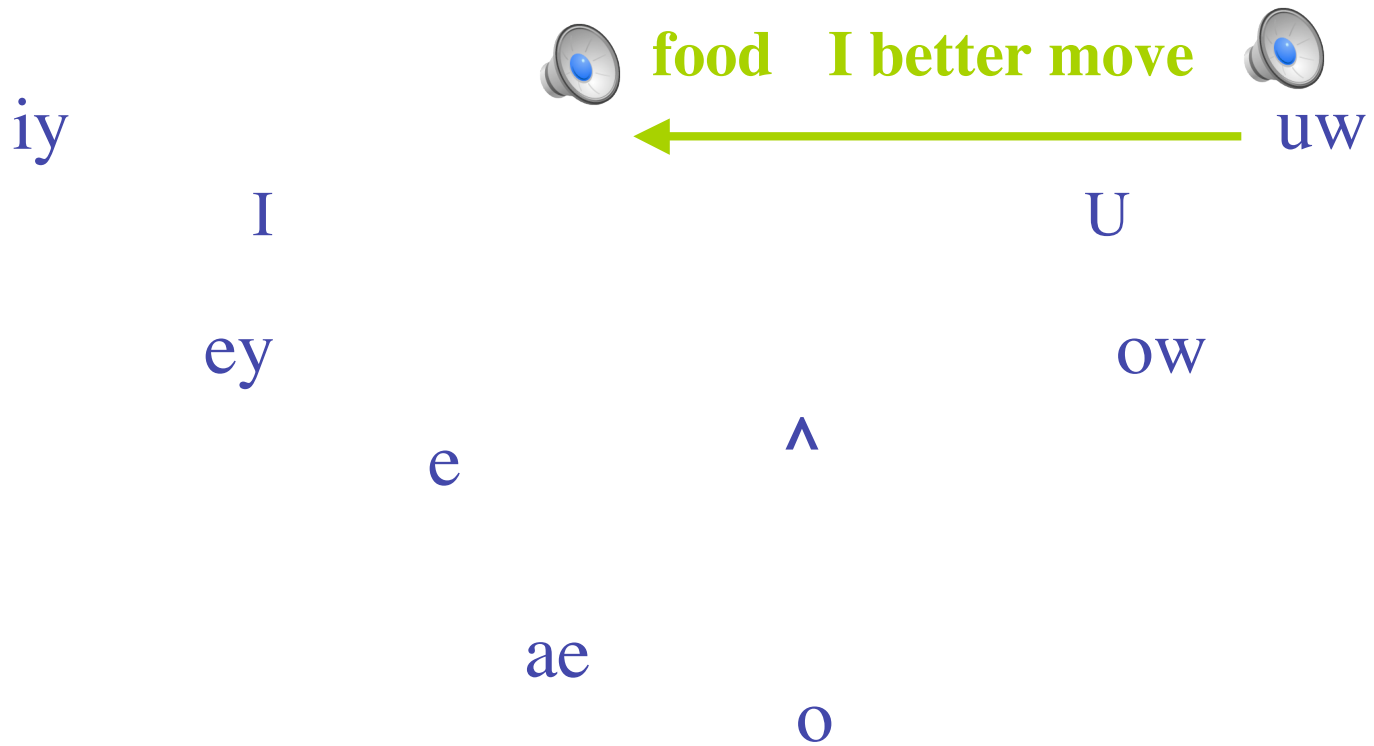


/ae/ before nasals



		Sp.bilingual	crowd member	F1 Diff. Hz.	sig.
Manny	Chicano	yes	yes	-26	n.s.
Selena	Chicana	yes	yes	-20	n.s.
Carlos	Chicano	yes	yes	1	n.s.
Renata	Chicana	yes	yes	14	n.s.
Randolph	European American	no	yes	35	n.s.
Geneva	Chicana	no	yes	39	n.s.
Marisol	Chicana	yes	yes	47	n.s.
Merilee	African American	yes	no	54	n.s.
Trudy	Asian American	yes	yes	57	n.s.
Arthur	Indian American	yes	no	106	.05
Winifred	European American	no	no	107	.025
Purnima	Indian American	yes	no	187	.025
Adam	European American	yes	no	97	.005
Carolyn	Chicana	no	no	260	.005
Leslie	European American	no	no	284	.005
Kenneth	European American	no	no	216	.001
Judi	Asian American	yes	no	210	.001
Katya	European American	yes	no	192	.001
Jocelyn	European American	no	no	158	.001
Belinda	Chicana	no	no	169	.001

Fronting in the Northern California Shift



Fronting in the Northern California Shift

iy

I

U

uw

ey

goes



ow



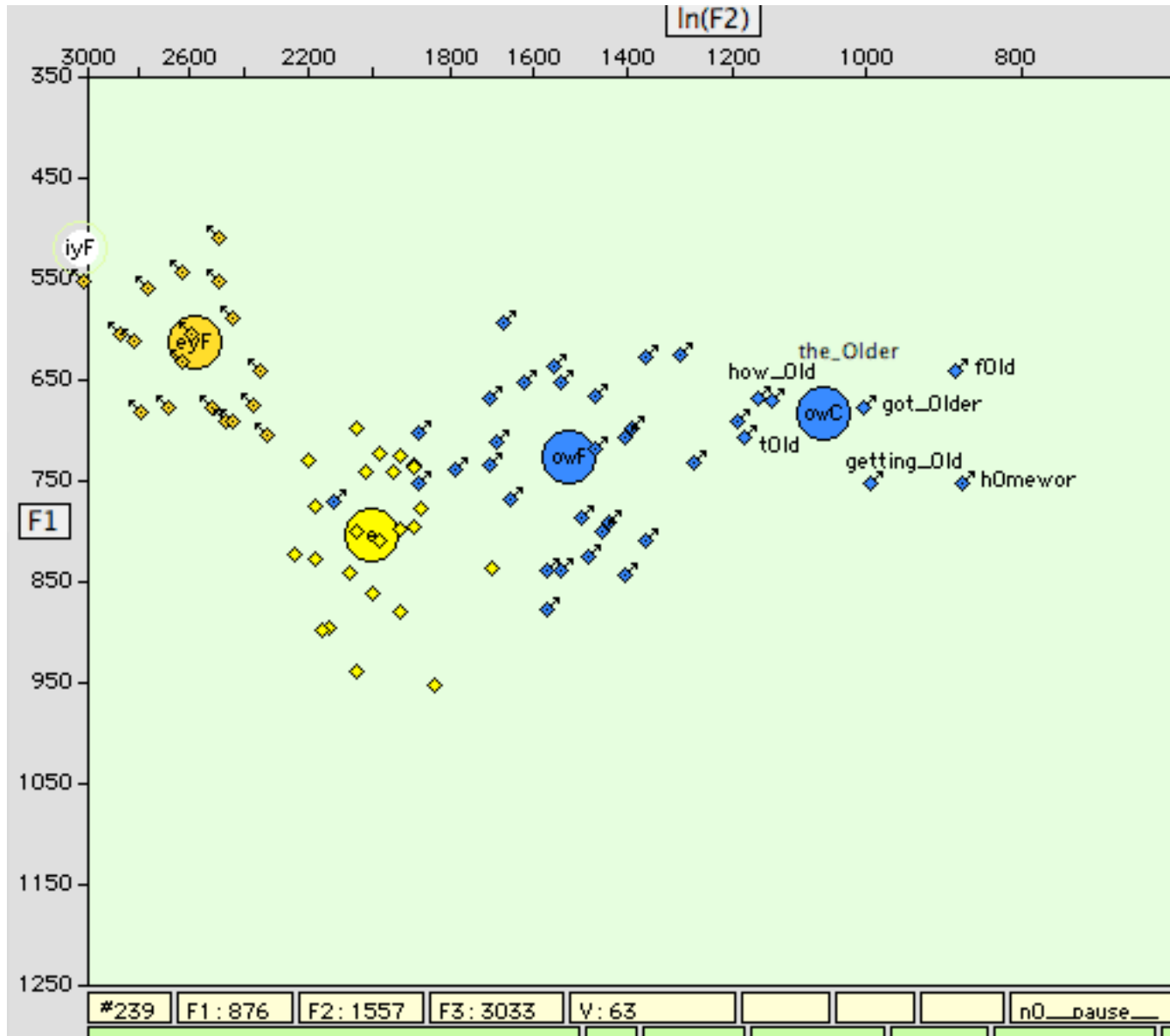
e

ʌ

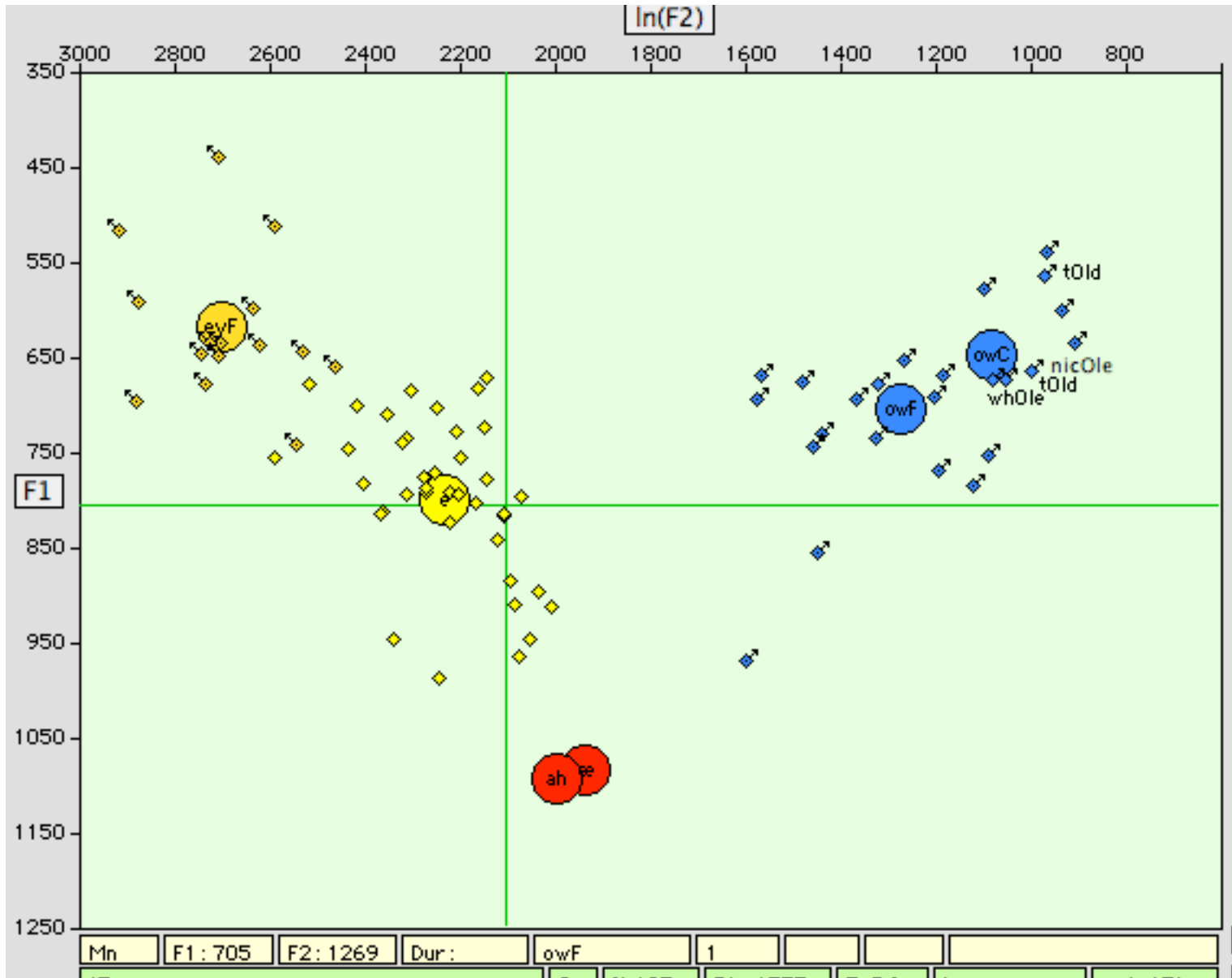
ae

o

Elmira's /ow/



Selena's /ow/



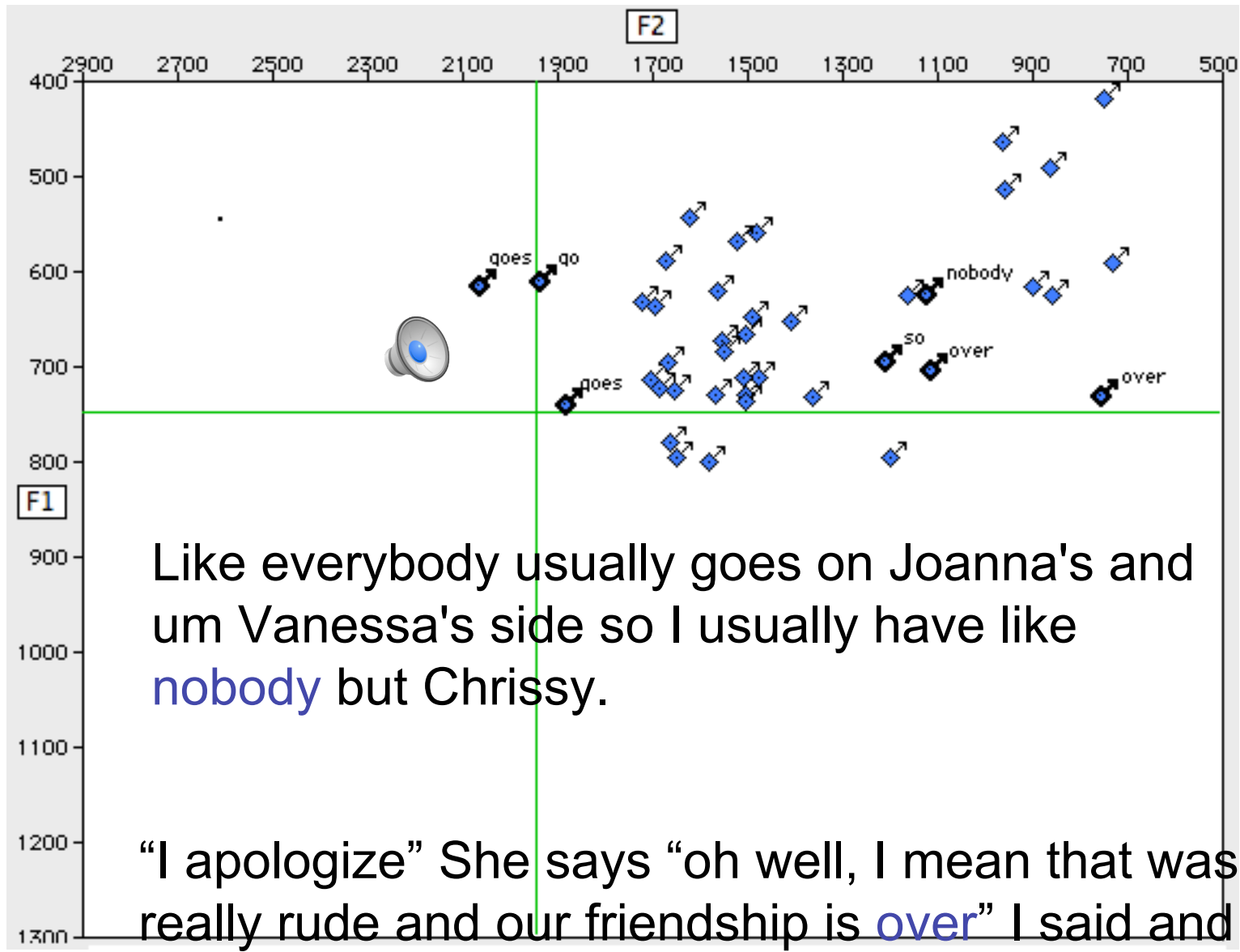
Nicole



Selena



Rachel



Like everybody usually goes on Joanna's and um Vanessa's side so I usually have like **nobody** but Chrissy.

“I apologize” She says “oh well, I mean that was really rude and our friendship is **over**” I said and I got **so** mad when she says that so I said “Fine. Our friendship’s **over**.”



What are the limits of social meaning?

- What do we consider social?
- What does it mean to separate parameters?
- What does it mean to not separate resources?