

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE:  
INVESTIGATING GAY MEN, OKLAHOMA  
DIALECTOLOGY, AND LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

By

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My final word on this is in remembrance of the lives lost on June 12, 2016 at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. That tragic day has stayed with me every time I return to this project, knowing well that gay people, and all members of the LGBTQ2 communities around the world must, like many others, face the threat of daily discrimination and hatred. While I hold strongly that it will get better and that the intrepid forward motion of social progress maintains momentum, I am compelled to acknowledge the loss we all suffered that day.

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Abstract: This thesis, unlike any previous research I am aware of, maps the vowel systems of gay men in Oklahoma, and in doing so, attempts to draw implications for stylistic variation across tasks in its comparison with other, non-gay Oklahomans. Through the use of acoustic measurements, it takes the production of speech, across different tasks, and compares the results with other previously collected data, and then again in congruence with the respondents own attitudinal data from interviews. The bigger picture this work attempts painting is the intricate and intimate relationships between language attitudes, ideas of gay people, and ideas of Oklahomans held by these gay men — and most crucially, how those interact with the variation in their own speech. What it found, then, was that gay Oklahomans often displayed more advanced characteristics of Oklahoman speech in situations/tasks (i.e. a word list, a reading passage, and a sociolinguistic interview) that, according to older research, might have expected more conservative speech, a pattern believed to be related to their beliefs about OK language, culture, and expectations for gender and for sexual minorities. After looking at the ways they described their experiences in OK, two things became clear: many of these gay men describe Oklahoman culture as one that praises a singular, strictly hyper-masculine model for men within the state; and secondly, that gay men are thought of as inherently less masculine — even in the minds of some of the respondents. What results from this is the recognition of unreal societal expectations for a masculine performance, which coincides with the fear of negative consequences for sounding “too gay” or “too feminine.” As this masculine expectation is often described in terms of Oklahoman identity, and thus embodied by Oklahoman speech, they are trapped. They are unable to fully participate in a masculine Oklahoman speech; and while other young people can participate in self-identification with peer groups, these gay men tell their stories of having to mask, hide, or monitor just how “gay” they sound.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis, unlike any previous research I am aware of, maps the vowels systems of gay men in Oklahoma, and in doing so, attempts to draw implications for stylistic variation across tasks in its comparison with other, non-gay Oklahomans. Through the use of acoustic measurements, it takes the production of speech, across different tasks, and compares the results with other previously collected data, and then again in congruence with the respondents own attitudinal data from interviews. The bigger picture this work attempts painting is the intricate and intimate relationships between language attitudes, ideas of gay people, and ideas of Oklahomans held by these gay men — and most crucially, how those interact with the variation in their own speech. What it found, then, was that gay Oklahomans often displayed more advanced characteristics of Oklahoman speech in situations/tasks (i.e. a word list, a reading passage, and a sociolinguistic interview) that, according to older research, might have expected more conservative speech, a pattern believed to be related to their beliefs about OK language, culture, and expectations for gender and for sexual minorities.

After looking at the ways they described their experiences in OK, two things became clear: many of these gay men describe Oklahoman culture as one that praises a singular, strictly hyper-masculine model for men within the state; and secondly, that gay men are thought of as inherently less masculine — even in the minds of some of the respondents. What results from this is the recognition of unreal societal expectations for a masculine performance, which coincides with the fear of negative consequences for sounding “too gay” or “too feminine.” As this masculine expectation is often described in terms of Oklahoman identity, and thus embodied by Oklahoman speech, they are trapped. They are unable to fully participate in a masculine Oklahoman speech; and while other young people can participate in self-identification with peer groups, these gay men tell their stories of having to mask, hide, or monitor just how “gay” they sound.

My second year at Oklahoma State, I took a course on Oklahoma Dialectology. I had always thought of the ways of speaking in Oklahoma as interesting, though not for the same (research-oriented) reasons I do today. I had also known for some time that my interest in gay linguistics contributed most apparently in my decision to pursue graduate studies in linguistics. What I did not know, however, was that the merging of these two arenas for a final project would expand into a bigger, more complex and complicated endeavor, that it would evolve into a study whose concerns for the empirical investigation of linguistic variation among gay men are matched by the initiative to understand their own beliefs about their place among other Oklahomans. The fruition of that merging has led to this project: what follows from here introduces the study, explains background and methodological approaches, reports on the findings and patterns emergent from the study, and finally, gives a glimpse into the lives of the respondents and the ways their

experiences have helped shape their image of their home state. First, though, I find it important to share how I came to be so passionately and personally involved in this research, and how it allowed me to rethink my own experiences as a gay man in Oklahoma.

### **1.1 A personal note**

My late paternal grandmother, Barbara McCleary (nee Gaskill) was born in Alva, OK, and like many other Oklahomans, eventually moved to California. My grandfather, not an Oklahoman, still lives near Bakersfield, but they raised my father and his siblings in Los Angeles. My dad visited family in Oklahoma often, and eventually met my mother here. A number of personal and professional motivations led to his moving here, joining a family-owned civil engineering firm, and starting a life on the Plains. Growing up, he was always the punch line of the joke for his noticeably “Okie” or “country” way of speaking, especially given that he had spent his whole childhood growing up as a (sometimes) self-described hippy kid from LA. Our cousins in CA pointed out our use of “y’all” when we visited and claimed that we sounded Southern. “You’re not as bad as your dad, though,” they often added.

Later on, especially after my dad started his own engineering firm, I had more opportunities to work in the field with him, to help him run more traditional surveying without digital equipment, meeting with city council members, talking to locals about their problems. Dad only worked for small towns which generally did not have enough money for most of the projects they needed done, oftentimes desperately. Even in the towns for which he was on retainer, he always promised to help write grants to help them get funding for the projects they needed — roads, drainage maintenance, bridges, water-

sewage treatment plants — that these towns would otherwise go without. The dedication he exhibits for these small towns is inspiring. His life's work and passion is to assist in bettering life for rural Oklahomans.

Despite the “Okie” shell my dad adopted in his working with small towns, a branding I propose comes from identification with, and respect for, Oklahoma identities, his identity still housed part of the hippy kid from LA, for my dad was the only member of my family in OK ever to respond positively to my coming out of the closet. He told me there is nothing wrong with it, no matter what the rest of the family might say. I respected him long before that, but his words in that moment made a difficult time more bearable. And yet, one day at Panera Bread on the NW Expressway in Oklahoma City, where we had been catching up over coffee, he caught me off guard with something. “Son,” he told me, “you know I don't care if you're gay, but please just don't start talking *like them*.” Surprised, I had no response. Another day, after he had come to see my presentation at a conference held at the University of Central Oklahoma, I asked him how I did. He mentioned that I had “done good” but that I had picked up a “gay lisp.” I knew that this experience had long-since motivated my interest in gay linguistics, in language attitudes and beliefs. It was not until this project, though, that I began to realize some of the more intimate details intertwined with his request and his comments.

Dad continues to speak in ways that very much align with our typical patterns of variation in Oklahoma, even after years of playful joking about him. He is used to stigmatization, maybe even recognizes it as a marker for a certain level of prestige held with such speech in rural OK. Still, he actively engaged in the diminishing of my own freedom of speech (patterns). Perhaps this is because he genuinely does not like the

sound of it; this study found even some gay men to hold such opinions. Or perhaps, he knows that there is a larger stigmatization of gay speech at work, especially in places known for staunch conservatism and strict religiosity, and his request might have been to protect me. If this is the case, then it could mean a great deal more than fatherly disapproval.

The stories we will see in Chapter 5 show that the participants of this study also have their own experiences, attitudes about gay speech, awareness of the broader socio-cultural ideas about gay speech, and ultimately, the consequences for such speech. Partially because of my own experiences, and partially because I do care about these participants, I hope this study captures well the apparent symbiotic relationship between the experience of being gay in OK and the production of speech and performances of these participants, of the unique ways that Oklahoman and gay speech interact, converge, and/or diverge for them.

## **1.2 Beginnings and goals**

This project draws from various studies, even different areas of linguistics. Ultimately, the ethnographic work takes the forefront, although there is work in acoustics, as well as the application of more general sociolinguistic methodology. The vast majority of research on dialects in OK centers around lexical variation, though later work in morpho-syntax and some isolated phonetic characteristics helped to mold a more expansive understanding of variation within the state. Until the Research on Dialects of English Oklahoma (RODEO) project, from which this study's data came, little to no work focused on systematic phonetic variation in Oklahoma. This focus is matched in the

goals of systematically mapping out the vowels of openly gay men in the state — as far I am aware, no other study has undertaken the vowel systems of gay men in any area of the US or elsewhere.

Recent research in acoustics tends to focus on the (stereo)typical tropes or ideas associated with gay speech (Gaudio, 1994; Levon, 2006; Campbell-Kibler, 2007), individual vowels or features under inspection (Podesva, 2007; 2011; 2011; Campbell-Kibler, 2006; 2007), and a heavy emphasis on perception and gay-correlates (Munson, 2006; 2007; Piccolo, 2008; Mann, 2012; 2012; forthcoming). This does not constitute the entirety of scholarship on gay identities and speech; indeed, more and more research is fortunately being done progressively. Much of the remainder of available research, though, centers on theoretical, epistemological, or otherwise philosophical approaches, sometimes aided by discourse analytic frameworks, while other studies rely on historical outlining to enter the discussion. This study maps actual acoustic data and vowel systems of gay men while capturing their attitudes and beliefs about their speech, their origins, and themselves.

In continuing work on Oklahoma phonetic variation, this project extends its inquiry to Oklahomans who openly identify as gay men. This study examines the ways in which gay men from Oklahoma fall in line with other Okies, and ways in which they diverge from the typically expected patterns of Oklahoman English.

Language attitudes and beliefs are also critical components of the broader RODEO project. Studies of dialects in the South show the awareness of stigmatization of Southern varieties by non-Southerners and Southerners alike (Preston, 2000) — and to some extent, the varieties markedly influenced by Southern varieties, like Oklahoman

dialects (Bakos, 2013). Perhaps most importantly, this thesis project is concerned with the implicated motivations for the apparent awareness of particular types of speech and beliefs about those particular types. A juxtaposition of the attitudes and ideas about Oklahoma Englishes, of both straight and gay RODEO participants, and the gay participants' own attitudes towards "talking gay" allow for a potentially enlightened understanding of the linguistic realities of sexual minorities on the Plains. Because of an apparent presence of linguistic insecurity and a complex language ideology, discussed in Chapter 5, this study shows that the typical phrase "to be out of the closet" might not be appropriate with regard to the participants' comfort, or lack thereof, in being openly perceived or indexed as gay in this setting; however, the participants at the time of the study did all identify themselves to me as "openly gay." The ideas and beliefs about the ways of speaking, more importantly of the ways of "speaking gay" and of "speaking Oklahoman" for these respondents, indicate some rather interesting implications for what it means for some men to grow up gay in the buckle of the Bible Belt. The believe that gay men are inherently more feminine, for example, often finds its way into conversation via description of stereotypical "gay speech," which nearly every respondent characterizes as "feminine," "effeminate," or "flamboyant," despite many who claim that gay men *can* be masculine. This, in turn, coincides with descriptions of highly regulated ideas of what makes one masculine; if one speaker holds both of these beliefs, it becomes more and more difficult for them to find themselves acceptable "passable" to broader society. If they are less "passable," as we will see later, some respondents conclude that they might be at risk of social discomfort, discrimination, or even violence. More of this is covered in detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

While this study is too limited to arrive at any conclusions about the constructions of identity categories and their relationships with regional features in general, it is able to highlight the apparent relationship between one stigmatized variety of English and the internalized beliefs about that variety by non-linguists, and their navigation of the varieties available to them in accordance with/response to their beliefs. That is, unlike recent research into regional features as they correspond to gay identity (Podesva 2011), this study takes into account the fact that the respondents are native speakers of a stigmatized variety of English (i.e. Oklahoman, or Southern-influenced speech), and that in places like Oklahoma, “talking gay” may have equally stigmatized ideologies attached to it. Such a doubly precarious environment has the potential for interesting stylistic navigation; that stylistic navigation has the potential for critical implications, like what motivates speakers to sound more or less Oklahoman, or more or less gay.

Building off of the RODEO research project and other research in Oklahoma dialectology, this research intends to bridge some of the gaps between the various findings and analyses. As much as previous research has contributed to a fuller understanding of linguistic patterns in Oklahoma, an entire group of Oklahomans, along with many of the communities comprising the broader LGBTQ2 community(ies) nationwide, remain essentially unexamined. In fact, gay communities in Oklahoma have gone with little or no reference or acknowledgement in OK dialect studies. That being said, the lack of research allows room for question, specifically whether gay identities result in similar or dissimilar patterns of variation with their heterosexual (and, in some cases, cisgender) counterparts.

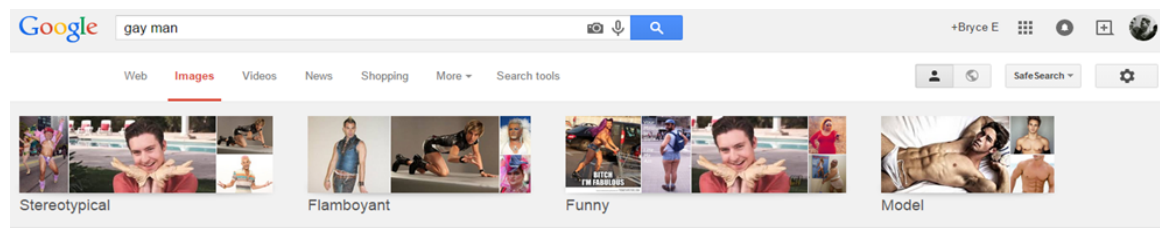


One of the more important gaps is that which involves the beliefs and attitudes about the ways of talking in Oklahoma. This study only focuses on nine European American gay men, eight of whom were a part of the acoustic analysis. This project, therefore, in no way assumes or implies extension to the rest of the communities under the LGBTQ2 umbrella, other gay men of different ethnic heritages, of different social statuses, etc., but it is assumed that where the results across participants are consistent there is a potential for a broader understanding of the ways that gay men in Oklahoma might navigate their social surroundings, whether or not those ways are different from other, non-gay Oklahomans. Attitudes towards talking gay in Oklahoma are likely to play a role in this navigation — and indeed they do — but this study focuses almost entirely on the attitudes of the participants themselves, which highlights the possibilities for multiple external factors playing a variety of roles in encouraging or discouraging “sounding gay.”

The development of this research began with an inspection of the stereotypes associated with “gay speech,” most notably the idea that gay men speak more standardly than others; Campbell-Kibler (2007) refers to “two diverging accents (Southern & gay),” a suggestive way of putting it. Mann (forthcoming) even references this in the title of his new chapter on perceptions of gayness and Southern-ness: “Rural ‘rednecks’ and urban ‘bluebloods’: The (in)compatibility of sounding gay and sounding southern.” Ultimately, it’s not that “gay speech” is imagined as a pseudo-standard form of an American dialect, but rather that the ideas of gay speech often go without attention or acknowledgment of regional and/or other influences.

A simple Google search of the phrase “gay man” shows the narrow scope within which stereotypes operate. The image search option that Google allows offers pre-made categories based on frequency and popularity of searches (this appears to be a function of Google’s web browser, Chrome, and not necessarily for other web browsers). The major results categories are: “Stereotypical;” “Flamboyant;” “Funny;” and “Model.” See Figure 1 below for a screenshot of these search results. Many of the sample images offered with the categories overlap, showing up across categories (one popular one is the image of the portrayal of a gay man by Sasha Baron Cohen from his movie, *Brüno*). The last category is the only one which differs from the others, but this shows men with mostly naked bodies in suggestive positions.

I remark on these because it shows that many of the common ideas and stereotypes in place for gay men rarely figure in regionality. Even the influence of the “Southern dandy” archetype, a more “effeminately” portrayed Southerner, appears to be practically nonexistent in these searches. The conversations about the ways gay men speak usually center around the gay “lisp” and pitch/pitch range. Again, this is not to say that gay men are stereotyped in ways that imagine them as Oxford scholars with a perfect prescriptive grammar, but rather that they are stereotyped in ways that do not account for, or ignore altogether, the possibilities of regional and social linguistic stylization outside of archetypal characterizations.



*Figure 1.* Suggested image results for “gay man” using Google’s Chrome browser.

Later, this popular culture examination took a back seat to the focus of the analysis, which arose out of the data. The acoustic results required interpretive approaches to help explain the realities discovered. This particular part of the project relied on the beliefs and ideas about speaking in Oklahoma held by the gay men themselves. This type of work is seldom found in the research which looks at gay men and their speech patterns. Understanding their attitudes, however, can lead to a better understanding of where and when they use stylistic navigation with regard to their Oklahoman and other ways of talking.

In combination with the ideas that these men hold with regard to sounding gay, the possibility of navigation through these ways of talking paves the way for future research in gay identity construction in areas where Southern influenced speech might play an important role. Mann (forthcoming) recently investigated the perceptions of gay and masculine identities in the South, addressing the intersections of other socio-cultural and economic “ideologies” as factors which make the whole business of identities far more complex. This complexity is not diminished or simplified by those holding the ideologies; Mann, in fact, shows that the complicated relationship among the factors may, indeed, contribute to the “incorrect assumption of the complete incompatibility of sounding gay and sounding southern” (forthcoming). This type of research, then, has the potential to open up the discussion of socio-cultural and -political environments as they correspond to beliefs about homosexuality — or, at the very least, the perception of such environments by gay speakers. This leads the project to examine the ways that style might be used to hide gayness.

Lastly, the use of acoustic analysis to inspect relationships of voice quality allow for new research approaches in RODEO, as well as Oklahoma dialectology thus far. As mentioned before, it is the only data specifically concerned with openly gay Oklahomans, the only sociolinguistic research undertaking the systematic analysis of gay men, and particularly such an analysis as it relates to local, (potentially) already-stigmatized varieties of English. This projects seeks to fill these gaps.

### **1.3 RODEO**

The Research on Dialects of Oklahoma (RODEO) project seeks the mapping out of Oklahoma dialects through various approaches. Other studies (Roarke, 1979; Southard, 1993) tracing the historic migration patterns with the opening up of the state allow for more insight on the unique and rich diversity even within Oklahoma's state lines. RODEO looks at these variations on multiple linguistic levels, and in line with that, this project set out with a parallel goal, but implements it by providing an account of representatives of a community of Oklahomans who grew up with Oklahoma dialects but who have been previously unstudied directly. In this particular study, the presence, or lack thereof, of regional markers for gay Oklahoman men is most thoroughly investigated, although this should not discount the importance of the investigation of the misguided idea that markedly gay features comprise the sounds of all of gay men's phonetic inventories — or that such a saliently shared phonetic inventory even exists among all gay men. It found that gay Oklahomans show, though often in different ways and patterns, vowel systems relatively similar to previously studies Oklahomans. It also found variation in this, which is where the qualitative investigation takes over in attempts to explain what factors may be involved in that variation, like beliefs about consequences

for being outted publically, ideas about how one should or should not be “masculine” or “feminine,” and general misconceptions about gay people believed to be held by many non-gay Oklahomans.

#### 1.4 Keys and codes

This study has two main avenues for analysis: acoustic and qualitative-interpretive. The acoustic data are displayed in figures and in plots to help demonstrate the relative positions of the vowels in question, corresponding to relative tongue position within the oral cavity, also to help visualize the dialectological variation in OK. Measuring these vowels is primarily done through the recording of formant values (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3), and the Wells (1982) label system shown below in Table 1 is used.

Table 1.

*Wells (1982) vowel coding*

<b>vowels</b>	<b>Wells code</b>		<b>vowels</b>
/i/	FLEECE	GOOSE	/u/
/ɪ/	KIT	FOOT	/ʊ/
/e/	FACE	GOAT	/o/
/ɛ/	DRESS	CLOTH	/ɔ/
/æ/	TRAP	LOT	/ɑ/
/ʌ/	STRUT	PRICE	/aɪ/
		MOUTH	/aʊ/

For the second part of the study, the interpretive schema is emergent and reliant on the

content; that is, the arguments, beliefs, attitudes, and understandings of ways of talking for (gay) Oklahomans, expressed by the participants themselves, allow for potential explanations for the resulting variation. More of this will come in the next chapter.

### **1.5 A look ahead**

This chapter has provided a look at this study's intentions, its beginnings, and its goals. Chapter 2 addresses and acknowledges the background literature regarding sound changes in Oklahoma and where that work is relevant here. Secondly, it will address some of the recent studies of "gay speech," or otherwise relatable linguistic phenomena related to gay people, to contextualize this particular study's scope.

Chapter 3 explains the methods of the study, describing the collection and organization as a subpart of the RODEO project, as well as the modifications implemented for further and more narrowed analysis in this study. Chapter 4 presents the acoustic results, showing overall patterns, comparisons with previous studies and typical Oklahoma vowel systems, as well as data from the individual respondents.

Chapter 5 turns towards the content of the interviews, going back to some of the discourse in the responses; in this chapter, some of the acoustic findings are coupled with the opinions and attitudes expressed by the participants. Finally, Chapter 6 offers some decontextualizing of the overall study and concludes by pointing out the gaps that remain, the gaps that have opened up because of this study, and the needs for future stylistic and dialectological research in Oklahoma and in various gay (and/or LGBTQ2) communities.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND

This chapter outlines previous research in Oklahoma dialectology, owing particular thanks to predecessors in the RODEO project, especially Bakos (2013), in their work with variation in Oklahoma and in filling the gaps of older research on Oklahoma dialects. The importance of previous research in establishing a synthesized understanding of Oklahoma dialects cannot be understated, as it lends this project a point of reference. This chapter functions as an overview of what we know about Oklahoma speech, keeping in mind that this project also branches out from there, looking at participants who belong to a minority group (openly gay men) who are also from Oklahoma.

Secondly, this chapter reviews some of the recent research in gay speech, paying critical attention to the role of stylistic variation. While this current project began primarily as an acoustic/vocalic investigation and a cross-comparison of gay men and their straight counterparts in Oklahoma, its scope was necessarily expanded in order to understand the data. Looking over the recent research on gay linguistics shows that the move towards style and indexicality will be critical in the studies of identities as they are linguistically manifested, particularly for a class of people whose group membership is simultaneously assigned and categorized for them — in potentially unfair ways — and

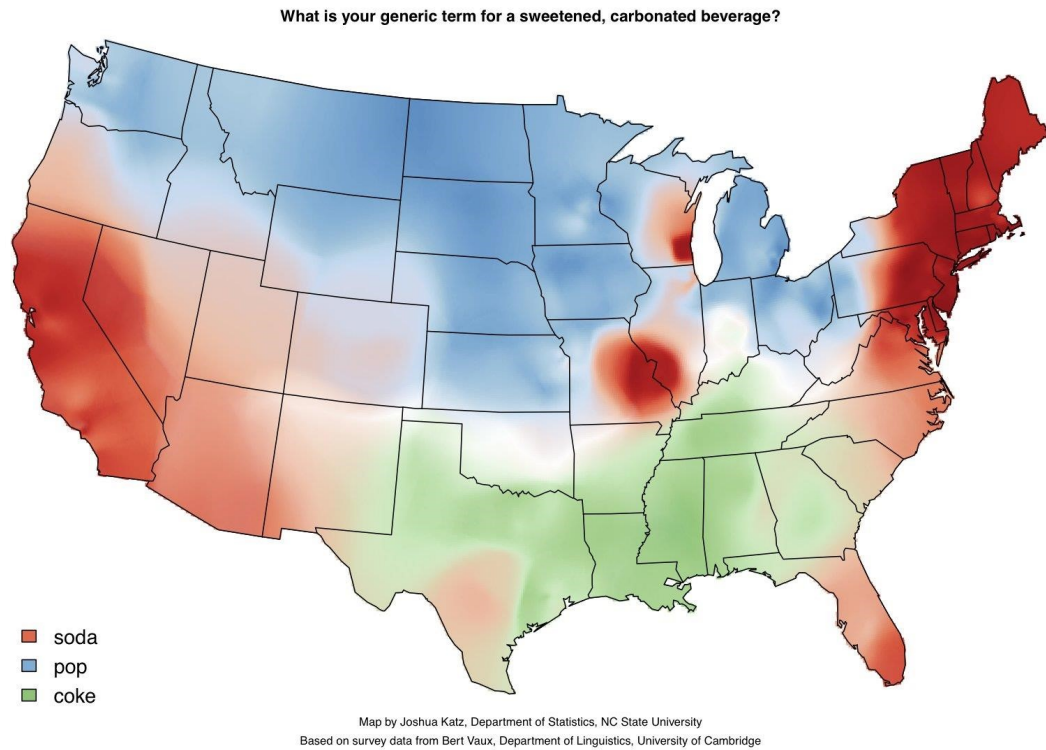
confirmed through the social and cultural interactions which reaffirm the connections and similarities across members.

Finally, this background information illuminates the role of perception in stylistic navigation. By and large, sociolinguists today do not resist the fact that language ideology, and non-linguists' attitudes towards language, play increasingly important roles in the mapping, predicting, and overall understanding of dialect variation. I add, however, that the stakes are higher when the questions of identity are at the forefront of investigation, when *what-people-think* simultaneously co-constructs and contributes to the performative linguistic identities alongside environmental influence, and unavoidably the accompanying beliefs about those environments. I believe that the most interesting findings to come will lie in the intersections of belief and environment, when identity is outlined through convergence and divergence, when the linguistic realities are situated among the socio-cultural goings-on that real people experience.

## **2.1 Introducing Oklahoma**

One of the best aids to introducing Oklahoma dialectology is with the support of the illustrated map displayed in Map 2.1 (see below), which shows the popular names for a carbonated beverage by region in the US. The colorful representation helps see the green (indicator for “coke”) established strongly within the American South, spreading pervasively all the way through Arkansas and into Texas. For Oklahoma, on the other hand, the “green” influence is certainly evident, but not nearly as saliently as her neighbors to the South and the East. This lack of uniformity of terms has interesting causes and important implications.





*Figure 2.* Map of Katz (2013) research on regional variation for names of carbonated beverage (from Bakos, 2013).

Oklahomans may recall the centennial celebration nearly a decade ago, recognizing the first 100 years of statehood, being only the 46<sup>th</sup> state to join the Union. Oklahoma's statehood in 1907 came 62 years after Texas' in 1845, and 71 years after Arkansas' in 1836. When people (Southerners in this particular context) migrated westward around the time these states were open, Oklahoma's borders were closed, with the exception of several land runs between 1889 and the turn of the century, as it was still designated Indian Territory. This limited access is likely influential in the trend displayed in Figure 2; that is, since Southerners were not as easily able to access the state, the influence of Southern speech was not spread as strongly, or as thoroughly, as in Texas and Arkansas.

With that in mind, it may be less surprising to see the rather weak presence of the typically Southern term “coke” in comparison to Oklahoma’s neighbors in Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when the state began opening up for land runs for settlers (not to ignore the horrendous relocation, acquisition, and manipulation of many Native American peoples), the surrounding areas had already been well established with regard to statehood and population. This alone cannot account for the diversity within OK; the origins of the settlers who came at the time of the land runs and at the opening of the state are also key to understanding the demographics of the state. The early migration patterns into this part of the country at statehood emphasize the varied sources of influence on Oklahoma life and culture.

Taking from William Van Riper’s work in the 1960s on the Linguistic Atlas of Oklahoma, which included over 50 interviews and investigations of letters from all over the state, and Michael Roark’s (1979) work in the early settlement and development of the state, Southard (1993) analyzed the patterns of migration and origins of the early settlers of Oklahoma. He identifies six categories: *Lower Midwest*, *Upper Midwest*, *Upper South*, *Texas and Lower South*, *Other*, and *Foreign*. The table below shows the states and/or parts of states considered to belong to each of the areas categorized by Southard (1993). Figure 3 displays the results of his analysis, showing that there is a heavy influence from the Lower Midwest, displaying percentages for the origins of the settlers on the y-axis and years of different land runs on the x-axis. The Upper South, however, shows similar numbers, relatively equal to the Lower Midwest in 1891 and 1892, and exceeding the Lower Midwest in the case of Greer County, a former Texas county that was later absorbed by Oklahoma.

Table 2.

*Southard's (1993) geographic categories of OK settlers*

<i>Lower Midwest</i>	Central/southern parts of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, along with Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and northern Missouri
Upper Midwest	Northern parts of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, along with Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota
Upper South	Kentucky, Tennessee, Southern Missouri, Arkansas, West Virginia, and North Carolina
Texas and Lower South	Texas and the remainder of the South

Much diversity existed at the time of land runs and settlement within the state, and those assorted influences on broader, statewide patterns is evident in many features. RODEO data, for example, shows consistent fronting of back vowels, which can be found in Southern speech, Midwestern speech, and even in the vowel shifting under way in California. This study also found the raising and fronting of the /aʊ/ diphthong (heard in the word “mouth”) to be salient across all speakers, a tendency most certainly associated with the Southern shift. Bakos (2013) reminds us that the early settlers of the state would not have features more recently emergent in the Southern Vowel Shift (citing Tillery & Bailey 2008), such as the aforementioned fronting of the “mouth” diphthong, but that “they nonetheless set the stage for Oklahoma’s close ties to (and arguable membership within) the South” (p. 11). This remark, though, should be tapered by acknowledging Oklahoman speech as different from Southern speech, showing differing heavy influence from the Midlands and less monophthongization than Southern varieties.

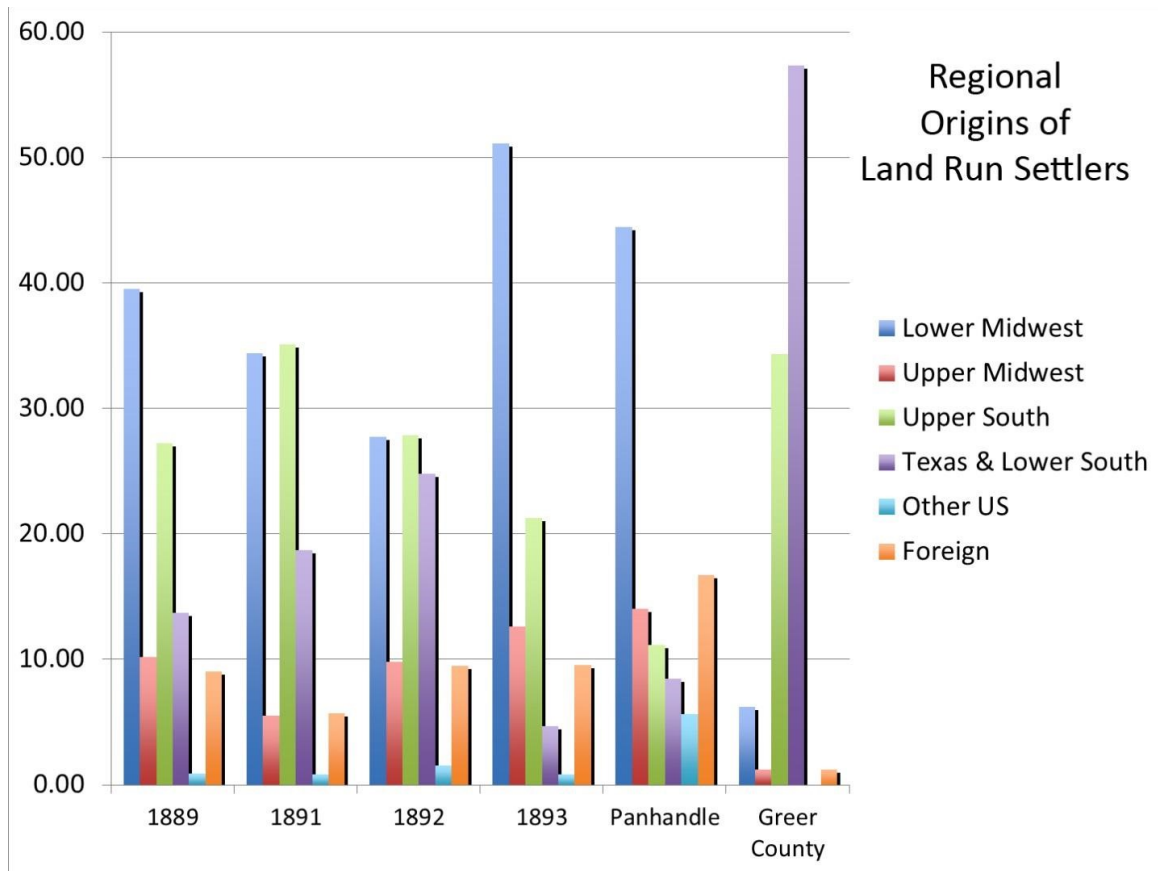


Figure 3. Southard’s (1993) origins of Land Run settlers (from Bakos, 2013).

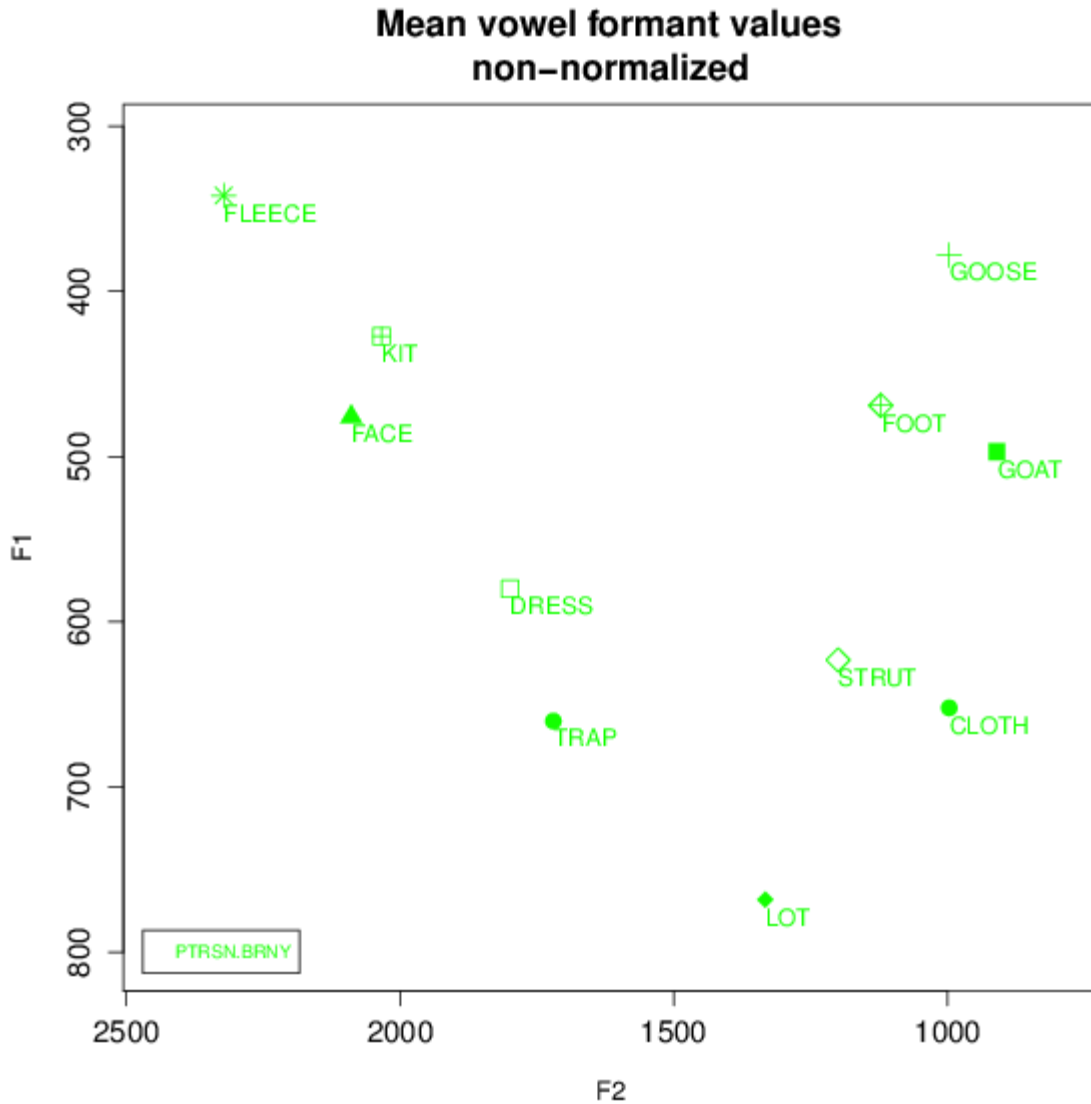
Bakos’ commentary on the potential importance of this relationship highlights the questionable status of Oklahoma — even by native Oklahomans themselves — as Southern or not. Luckily for this study, though, where this attitudinal and folk understanding becomes fuzzy from the outside, RODEO research has helped to produce data that shows what Oklahomans say, and what they think about what they say.

Expressly, we know of the prominent tendencies of back vowel fronting and raising of the diphthong in the word “mouth” (a trend found most saliently in the current project than previous RODEO studies), as well as the less ubiquitous, yet nonetheless apparent, trends of mid-front vowel reversal, or near-reversal, and scattered monophthongization of

the /ay/ diphthong. Bakos (2013) addresses the notion of Oklahoma speech as Southern, citing native Oklahomans who claim so; what often accompanies that is the notion of Southern speech as less-than, or even as “bad.” This finding was corroborated by many of the attitudes expressed by the gay men of this thesis project, discussed later in Chapter 5.

## **2.2 Relevant vowel research**

The data from many variationist and dialectological studies in the US the show apparent lack of a singular “standard” English here. Despite this, Peterson & Barney (1952) worked on describing what a “General American English” vowel system might look like at Bell Telephone Laboratories, recording 33 men, 28 women, and 15 children from various parts of the US (mostly in the mid-Atlantic area) to measure and record the acoustic properties of this “General American.” These results are displayed below in the vowel chart labeled Figure 4, with the frequencies (in Hertz) for F1 on the y-axis and F2 on the x-axis. By and large, the aforementioned contributions towards a more holistic understanding of American dialects has rendered this particular system solely useful as a point of comparison for other systems.



*Figure 4.* Peterson & Barney (1952) raw scores for “General American English” vowels.

Keeping the “shape” of this vowel system in mind aids the understanding of the movement of Oklahoman dialects and is, therefore, often referenced when describing the characteristic features of the Oklahoma vowel system. One example is the prevalence of the cot/caught merger in Oklahoma dialects; the corresponding vowels are represented above as LOT and CLOTH, respectively. In Figure 4, the Peterson & Barney scores show

LOT farther forward and lower than CLOTH, indicating a figurative “distance” between them, but as many of the plots from the RODEO data show (Bakos, 2013; Weirich, 2013), Oklahomans tend to produce these vowels in the same “space,” so much that the images of their vowel systems often show LOT and CLOTH on top of one another. It should be mentioned, though, that the figurativeness of the “distance” is also rather literal. The graphs axes are designed to correspond with relative tongue position within the oral cavity. That is, while the x-axis represents the F2 measurement, that same F2 frequency corresponds to where the tongue is at with regard to the front or back of the oral cavity. The F1 frequency and the y-axis similarly correspond to the height of the tongue in the oral cavity. In comparison to the above displayed Peterson & Barney scores, every respondent in the current study produced these vowels closer together in terms of the F1 and F2 scores (and therefore tongue position).

The Atlas of North American English (Labov, Ash, & Boberg), or ANAE, was a study driven to get a glimpse at country-wide vocalic variation by region. In their study, Labov et al. acoustically analyzed participant phone interviews. The two Oklahomans presented in their study are Ivy, 37 from Oklahoma City, and Trina, 32 from Tulsa. The data for these were provided on a disc from the ANAE (2006), which were then plotted using the University of Oregon’s NORM Vowel Suite online. Figure 5 plots Ivy and Trina’s vowel systems alongside each other.

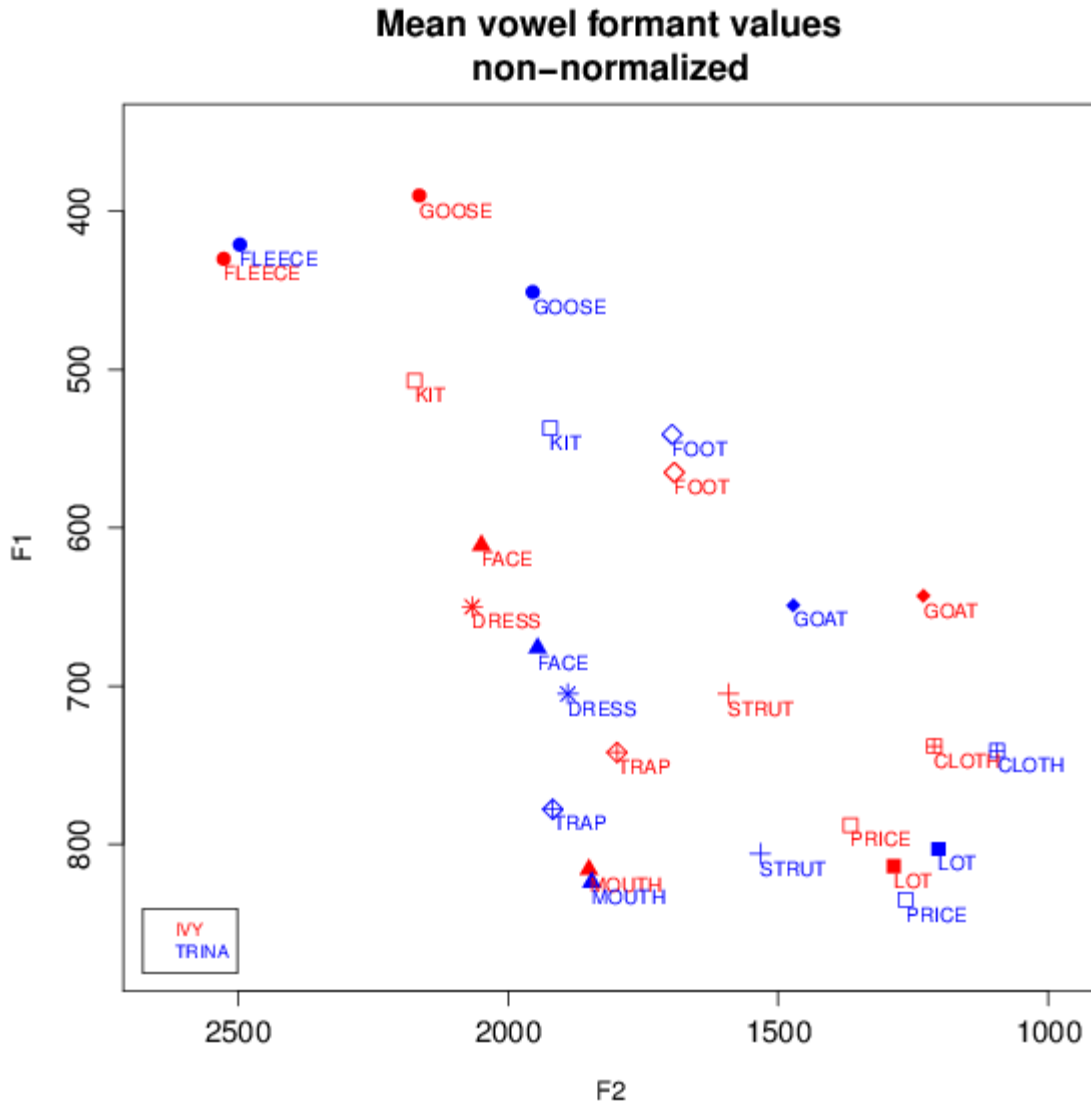


Figure 5. Trina and Ivy from ANAE data disc, non-normalized (Labov et al., 2006).

Trina and Ivy’s vowel systems clearly are not identical; where they are similar, however, we can at least take points for comparison with regard to mapping out Oklahoman linguistic tendencies. Keeping Figure 4 in mind, the Peterson & Barney (from here on referred to PB) values show the /o/ vowel, represented here as GOAT, with an F2 (x-axis) of less than 1000 Hz. Both Trina and Ivy show fronting of GOAT beyond 1000 Hz, with



Trina producing the vowel at around 1500 Hz, a higher frequency (and thus further forward) vowel than any of the PB back vowels. GOOSE vowels are much more fronted than the “General American,” as well as FOOT, though with relatively similar variation between the speakers. The LOT and CLOTH vowels have shifted towards each other, largely due to the backing and raising of LOT. The FACE and DRESS vowels are shifted (with lower and higher onsets, respectively) showing movement towards a reversal, which is only associated with the Southern shift. The onset of MOUTH is considerably raised and fronted, characteristically Southern. This is to say, then, that some of the more or less salient trends in Oklahoma dialectological research aligns with relation to the South, but this could hardly be said of *all* the trends. The LOT/CLOTH merger mentioned above is most certainly not Southern, for example.

Thomas (2001) presented work on 4 adult speakers from Yale, Oklahoma, two males and two females. In his study, he notes the interspeaker variation and the consistent trends. Most often, the discussion leads with GOOSE fronting, which Bakos (2013) says is “absolutely ubiquitous among the RODEO respondents.” Thomas (2001) notes that the respondents of his study would most often advance their GOOSE vowel into FLEECE territory. Both the ANAE respondents also exhibit this feature. FOOT and GOAT vowels are also fronted. Similar trends involved merging, or shifting towards merging the LOT/CLOTH vowels, and a number of other features identifiably Southern in their origin. Those Southern features of note are: 1) monophthongization of the PRICE diphthong; 2) the inverting of the FLEECE and KIT vowels so that KIT is raised above FLEECE; 3) a similar inversion of FACE and DRESS vowels; and 4) the fronting and raising of the MOUTH diphthong. Most of these Southern features, addressed more

thoroughly in Thomas (2001) than in the ANAE, were not exhibited by all RODEO respondents, or in some cases were not fully realized in the way that Southern speech does.

### **2.3 On Bakos' (2013) findings**

Bakos (2013) ultimately found that there was no “single, unified vowel system” among the RODEO participants he investigated. That sounds misleading, however, given there were clear patterns and tendencies with their vowels that were shared across speakers. His study investigated RODEO respondents across two tasks — first a reading passage and then a word list. His justification for this comes from a long-held set of practices in sociolinguistics that presumes that people adjust the “formality” or “casualness” of their speech based on context or situation. This generalization comes from Labov’s (1966) work in mapping out regional dialect variation, and is firmly planted in theory in his work on style (1972), often cited at the *attention-to-speech model*. With this in mind, the expectations for RODEO’s data would tend to put more “careful” speech in the word list and reading passage tasks and more “casual” speech in the interviews. While this model is older, and certainly much research has been done since then, using this theory as a starting point for comparison allowed for interesting avenues for inspection within this current project. Some of the results appeared to have what would be more “careful” speech, or at least less “Oklahoman-ness” with vowel productions in the interview section — the very opposite of what the aforementioned theory would otherwise predict. Here, I do not claim definitively that each task corresponds to more or less “formal” or “casual” speech, but rather that, with this in

mind, understanding the context of the interviews proves insightful for unexpected variation.

### 2.3.1 RODEO vowels

Ultimately, Bakoes (2013) finds that, while OK speech is not simply or uniformly Southern, there are certainly influences from Southern speech. Furthermore, there are also influences from the Midlands, such as the LOT/CLOTH merger, the merger of the vowels /I/ and /ɛ/ before nasals (Weirich, 2013; not discussed here), and possibly the fronting of some back vowels. While some Southern dialects also include back vowel fronting, it is now so present in Midland speech and even California dialects that this current project is unable to make any reliable claims as to the origin of this particular variation.

Much like the older studies mentioned above, Bakos (2013) addressed GOOSE first in his discussion of the trends in the RODEO respondents. He notes the complete absence of the Southern Shift's reversal of the FLEECE/KIT vowels, and the irregularity and/or incomplete reversal of the FACE/DRESS vowels. He found the latter shift to be most common in the reading passage task, something that would be more predictable, according to the *attention-to-speech* model of style (Labov, 1972). Additionally, Bakos (2013) comments that PRICE monophthongization was NOT widespread among the participants, noting that even some participants who raised DRESS (towards the FACE/DRESS shift) did not monophthongize PRICE. He emphasizes that this finding challenges the supposition that PRICE monophthongization is “a possible prerequisite for later stages of the Southern Shift” (Bakos, 2013; Thomas, 2001; ANAE, 2006). Lastly, MOUTH was most often fronted and not raised — even for one respondent, Hank, whom

Bakos refers to as the “most Southern-sounding RODEO speaker” (2013)— although the fronting of MOUTH, even without raising, is still identifiably Southern.

In addition to these, one of the other regional features present in Oklahoma is the LOT/CLOTH merger. Southern speakers traditionally distinguish these two vowels, but other Midland influences have given way to the merger’s presence in OK. Having said that, half of Bakos’ RODEO respondents showed at least one vowel which had not shifted towards the merger. One of his respondents, in fact, showed complete distinction between them; the rest, however, showed at least a little movement for one vowel or another.

Below in Figure 6, Bakos’ male respondents, all from various parts of OK, are plotted here with averages for the onset of their vowels (taken at the first 20% of the production) and then the trajectory of the vowel (measured at 80% of the production). Only male respondents are considered here for review because only male respondents were used for this study. Productions of GOOSE are fronted with coronal onsets (labeled here “GOOSEC”) and non-coronal onsets (“GOOSEK”), while the lateral-coda productions (“GOOSEL”) are considerably backed (i.e. like “General American”) in comparison. GOAT and FOOT are fronted, consistent with previous findings. MOUTH is, too, and it is raised as well. PRICE diphthongs do not appear to be monophthongized, even for PRIDE diphthongs, which *do not* occur before a voiceless segment, a common tendency for a majority of Southern speakers. The LOT and THOUGHT (what had previously been referred to as CLOTH) vowels are at least participating in the merger to an extent. Lastly, the front vowels show no sign of reversal for the FLEECE and KIT

vowels, and partial reversal (movement towards the reversal) for the FACE and DRESS vowels.

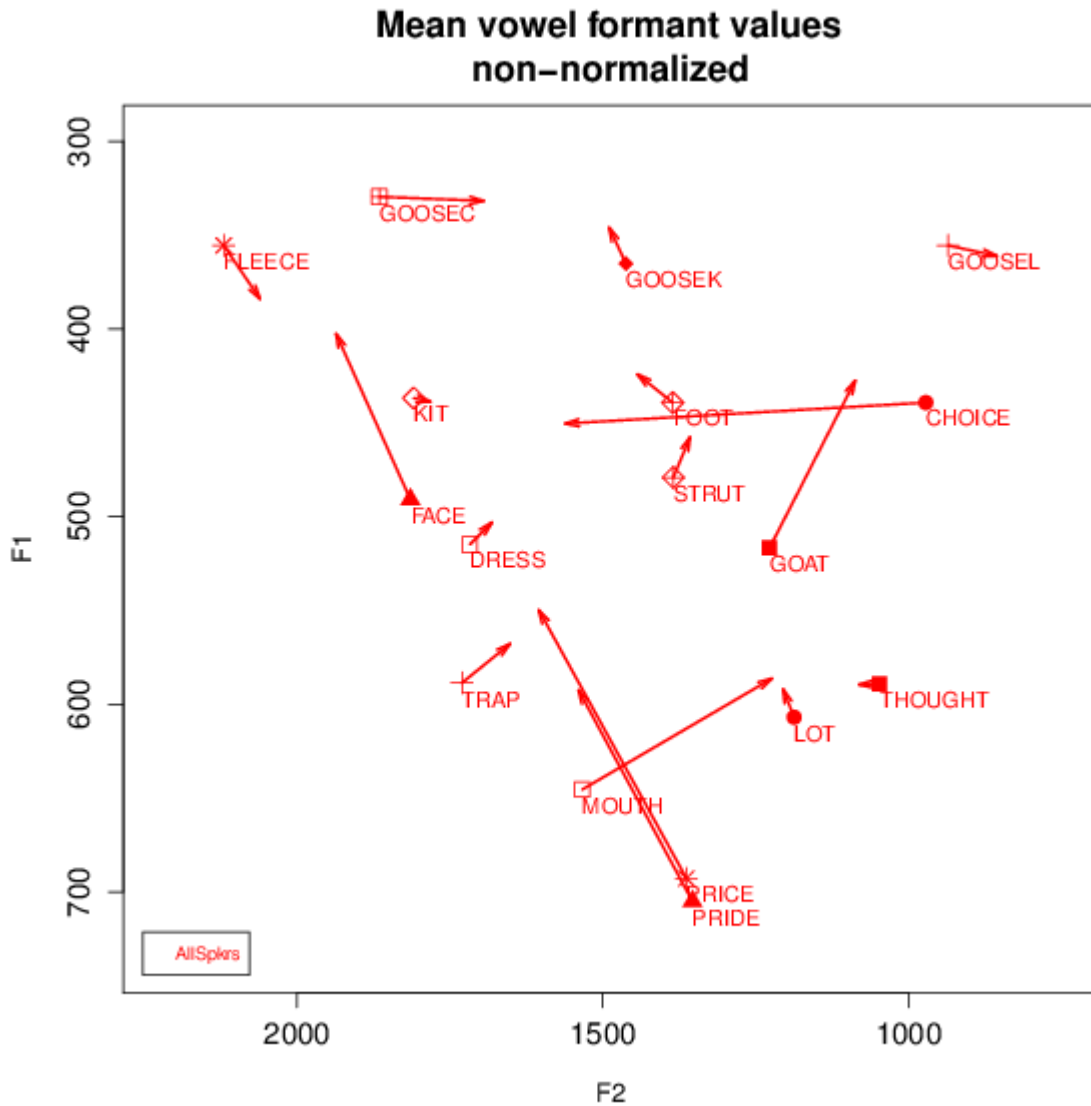


Figure 6. Bakos (2013) male RODEO respondents' raw vowel measurements averaged.

Ultimately, though there is no model vowel system that predicts with 100% accuracy what Oklahomans will sound like, the numerous respondents in Bakos' (2013) work, most of whom are from central northern/central and eastern OK, show the features

which can be used to guide the first attempts at *describing* tendencies for a pseudo-, possibly even proto-typical OK vowel system. This study relies heavily on the same guided description in its acoustic analysis to make for a better comparison of those respondents to the gay men who participated in my research with RODEO.

### 2.3.2 Attitudes

Bakos (2013), in addition to studying the vowels of his respondents, implemented qualitative analyses of Oklahoman beliefs about ways of speaking. He found interesting patterns among them. For one, nobody incorrectly self-reported or misreported their speech patterns; if they had strong tendencies aligning with the more unique, if not ubiquitous, patterns (GOOSE fronting, FACE/DRESS reversal, etc.), then they often identified themselves as sounding Oklahoman. This largely centers around features in their speech which are characteristic of the vowel systems reported on (i.e. sounding more “Southern” for those who displayed more Southern-like features; being aware of merging the vowels in KIT/DRESS before nasals (as in “pen” and “pin” etc.).

This does not summarize the whole of Oklahomans’ understanding of language in their state. For example, one respondent (Beth) offered to perform an imitation of a typical Oklahoma dialect, and an acoustic analysis of her imitation showed it to be virtually the same as her own with regard to acoustic properties (not necessarily along lexical and/or prosodic comparisons), despite her attempts to perform a “real, down-home Southern Oklahoma” dialect. Bakos claims that this is indicative of her being unaware of the sounds involved with her own dialect. This was also echoed in the behavior of the other respondents, who were largely unaware of their shifting FACE/DRESS vowels.

Along with this, many respondents in Bakos' pilot survey held beliefs that Oklahomans sound like people from the South. Many often characterize a "typical Oklahoman" with adjectives often used to describe Southern speech in popular media — with positive adjectives attributable to friendliness and courtesy ("friendly" and "laid-back") alongside more regional and, usually, negatively charged descriptors ("country," "redneck," and "hick"). I should note, though, that these do not comprise all of the adjectives reported in his study, but they are taken from the top 10 most frequently occurring words used for description. In the end, this shows that speakers are partially aware of Oklahoma dialects, at least enough to self-report relatively accurately, and yet unaware of some of the consistent acoustic patterns. They associate their speech with Southern varieties and use words that do not always portray it positively, the latter a trend in describing Southern speech in the US (Niedzielski & Preston, 2003). In their book *Folk Linguistics*, Niedzielski & Preston (2003) review some of the findings from hand-drawn map tasks, calling attention to the many pejorative descriptors used to characterize Southern speech by Northerners. They likewise point out that, while these are heavily present in maps from Northern speakers, "Northern pejorative trends in Southern maps are not universally absent" (Niedzielski & Preston, 2003, p. 61). Even some Southerners show derogatory or pejorative descriptors. This, among other trends, Niedzielski & Preston (2003) associate with linguistic insecurity:

Southerner's maps much more often than Northerners' dichotomize North and South on a valued dimension, but accompanying labels do not always make it clear that the evaluation is of the language variety... There is no doubt that pride in local cultural values allows many Southerners to escape the self-hate or intense "linguistic insecurity" (Niedzielski & Preston, 2003, p. 61).

This of course does not mean that only Southern varieties are subject to stigmatization, or even that Southern vowel features necessarily suffer the most stigmatization. Rather, it establishes that Southern speech, and those dialects which are influenced by Southern speech are a part of the popular cultural tendency to participate in Southern stereotyping, particularly with regard to non-linguists and their language attitudes.

The larger trend in stereotyping and stigmatization of Southern speech seems to be present in Oklahoma, too, and fairly present in their own talk about Oklahoma dialects. The current study also found that the gay respondents very often refer to Oklahoman dialects, gender expectations, and ideas about gay people in terms of Southern culture or Southern stereotypes. Remembering that some Oklahomans in Bakos (2013) study identify their own speech as Southern, the transferal of some of that stigma is unsurprising. As is also consistent with these findings, and as Niedzielski & Preston (2003) report, these attitudes can play a big role in the development of linguistic insecurities, in the evaluations speakers make of their speech and others, and ultimately in the potential influence on language variation overall. For example, Northern characterizations of Southern speech are so culturally prevalent in the States that Southerners are clearly familiar with them: "and some [Southerners] even seem to have incorporated such negative caricatures into their own folk linguistic belief" (63).



Internalization of this type of belief and linguistic discrimination seems bound for inevitable linguistic insecurity. Again, though, Southern speech is not the only variety or group in the States to have endured this type of cultural circumstance.

Oklahoman speech, especially for those who associate it with Southern varieties, seem bound to navigate their own linguistic insecurity in figuring out where they stand in the grand scheme of things — with regard to language attitudes. I emphasize the role of Southern speech in attitudes here because this thesis project found that many of the respondents refer to their experiences, of specific experiences as gay men in OK, in relation to cultural Southern ideas and stereotypes, even when their vowel systems show clear Midlands influences as well. Compounded with the added stereotypes of gay men, and remembering the apparent (albeit false) notion of incompatibility of gayness and Southern masculinity, Oklahoman respondents in this study are bound to show traces of such insecurities, and indeed they do.

#### **2.4 Linguistic research and “gay speech”**

Podesva (2011) presents an overview and analysis of three case studies of professionals, all gay men, in different parts of the country and their uses of specific linguistic features as indications of social meaning, which can be defined in his words as “the stances, personal characteristics, and personas indexed through the deployment of linguistic forms in interaction” (2011, p. 234). This multivariate approach allows for interesting implications about the ways variation can correlate with identity and style as influenced by such social meaning. Podesva’s account of the significant difference in the usage of declarative contours in different social environments is most important of all. For example, casual social situations which resulted in more cases of falling intonation

than the professional setting (for one speaker, Heath) point towards the possibility of looking beyond segmental phonological variation for meaning in a community already under-studied and with a likelihood of rich sociolinguistic data.

Podesva's other research on stylistic usage of falsetto and gay identity (2007), on the California Vowel Shift (CVS) and gay identity (2011), and most recently on voice quality and gay identity (2015) all contribute towards this research's methodological approach through acoustic analysis and the linkage of results to the social setting. In the case of the CVS and gay identity, the majority of his inspection revolved around the fronting of back vowels, more specifically still, GOOSE in particular. His findings were quite interesting.

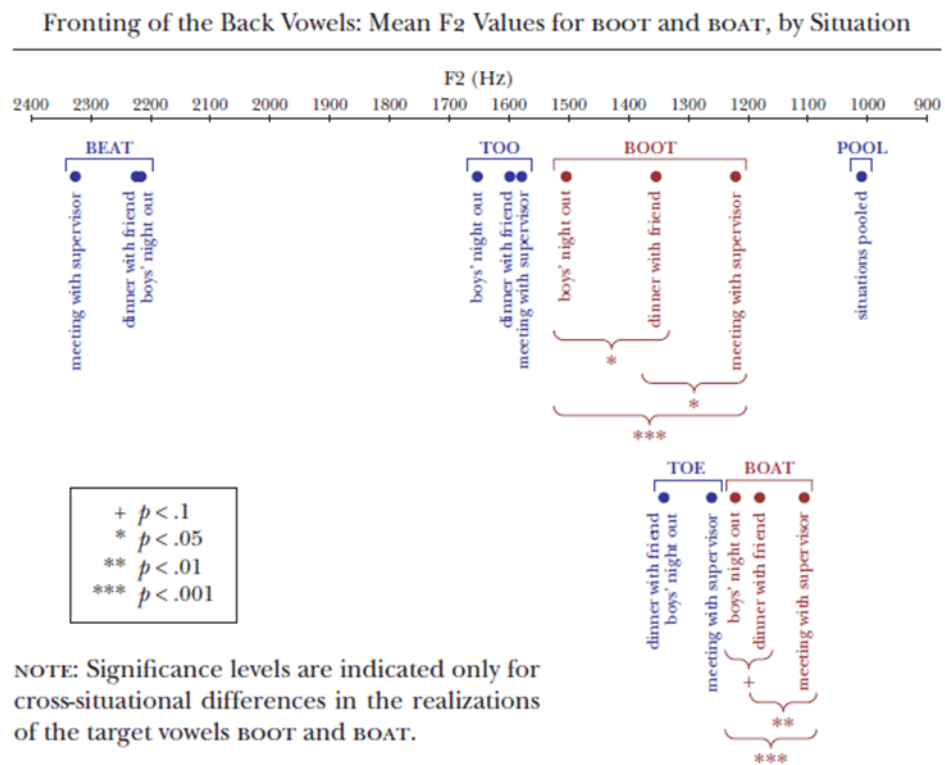


Figure 7. Podesva (2011, p. 37) findings for GOOSE fronting for his speaker, Regan, in three different social environments.

Podesva's respondent, Regan, was recorded on an outing with gay friends, referred to as "boys' night out," at dinner with a friend, and at a meeting with his supervisor at the company he works for. As displayed in Figure 7 above, the data showed more advanced fronting of GOOSE at the "boys' night out," followed consecutively by the dinner with a friend, and lastly the meeting with a supervisor. Podesva derives from this consistent patterning, along with contextualization of the data, the interpretation of fronting GOOSE as a component of persona construction, particularly as it corresponds to the uses, or degrees of uses of features of the California Vowel Shift in particular environments and situations. Given that the boys' night out is an event with a group of friends who are all gay, which involves a night out with drinking and dancing, the most advancement of fronted GOOSE is interpreted as carrying social meaning— meaning which indexes a type of personae, "partier" for example (Podesva, 2011, p. 47). The other environments, dinner with a friend and a meeting with a supervisor, are progressively more formal in nature than the "boys' night out." The corresponding decrease in F2 (less-advanced fronting) for these other environments is, as Podesva mentions, what would be expected according to Labov's (1972) attention-to-speech model of shifting style (2011, p. 42). That is, the "boy's night out" is the most casual environment, followed by the one-on-one dinner with a friend, and the more formal environment is the workplace meeting with Regan's boss.

The interpretive schema Podesva uses in reference to indexicality and persona clearly harkens to *speaker design* approaches to style-shifting (Schilling, 1998; Wolfram & Schilling, 2006), especially in the modes of constructing an image of oneself (the speaker) vis-à-vis linguistic performance. The Labovian model (1972), however, is still

referenced as an accurate predictor for the results of Podesva's data. Obviously, on some level attention to one's speech is required for the construction of a linguistic performance, especially one which indexes a particular persona associated with a particular group of people/speakers. These insights, while clearly important and instrumental in understanding the style shifting for Regan and the CVS, do not transfer smoothly to the Oklahoman study undertaking gay identity and regional variation. One caveat for the gay RODEO research is that the cross-task analysis allows for an enticing comparison to Podesva's, but the shifting across tasks is not necessarily equivalent to the shifting across social environments, however similar those different environments/tasks are in terms of formality. Nevertheless, the similar inspection of formality and casualness across tasks in the RODEO research *does* allow for a healthy comparison in terms of what shows up similarly and what does not. As we will see in the next chapter, the results did not always line up with more casual speech in tasks that would predict such. Similarly, while the study in California is able to take advantage of the "boys' night out" environment, which takes place in San Francisco, there is no equivalent place in Oklahoma (outside of the few small and segregated blocks in Northwest Oklahoma City known as the "gay strip"). Again, this project did not look at environments, so pointing out this difference may seem superfluous at first, but it highlights the differences in gay awareness, openness, and opportunity for socializing between the two states. As we will see in Chapter 6, gay Oklahoman's appear to be more aware of persona's which *hide* their gayness, also in relation to their Oklahoman-ness, rather than employ regionality as a component of a more indexable identity category.

Despite differences, this type of research is important for the field, for the visibility of smaller communities and sexual minorities in the field of sociolinguistics, and in this particular case, in the addition of comparable regional data as language change is documented in America. Nevertheless, despite the important methodological contributions by Podesva, the differences between the studies are worthy of note. For one, and this is an almost grotesque generalization, Oklahoma and Podesva's research sites, perhaps particularly California, are very different places. Where the biggest differences lie is in the attitudinal trends for Oklahomans, the simultaneous awareness/insecurity/stigmatization tied to the ways of speaking here, as expressed by the gay Oklahomans themselves. That is not to say that the acoustic features do not differ; they do — though there is back vowel fronting in both states. However, the socio-cultural environment in OK is different, especially for gay men. To leave that factor out of this discussion would do a great discredit to this study as a whole.

## **2.5 In summary**

Some of the most recent acoustic research in Oklahoma discussed here makes extensive use of vowel measurements and plotting. Those findings serve as the background for comparison to this study's speakers. That is, the vocalic analyses of other Oklahomans are the main source of measuring the degree of variation in the gay male speakers in this paper. Bakos also makes use of attitudinal factors to complement his acoustic analyses, mainly in pointing out a tendency for Oklahomans to recognize a typical way of speaking like an Oklahoman and yet claiming not to sound like a typical speaker (despite acoustic realities suggesting otherwise). This study will also rely on questions about talking like a typical Oklahoman and on stereotypical ideas about the

ways gay men speak to attempt a comparison of these qualitative data as well. The main factor that has been determined in such studies so far is the tension between the traditional “Southern-ness” of Oklahoma speech and a more recent drawing away from such forms, particularly in urban areas (e.g., Tillery and Bailey 2008:120). This tension will play an important role in the following analysis of the self-perception as well as the production of speech by gay men.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

This study is a part of the larger RODEO Project, which makes use of semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews, a map-drawing task, a reading passage, a word list, and a quiz on Oklahoma grammar and vocabulary. The data used in this study come from the reading passage, word list, and a subsection of the sociolinguistic interviews. That data was analyzed, looking at the production of vowels across different tasks, and compared against other results from previous studies looking at non-gay Oklahomans. All of the RODEO interviews for the gay Oklahomans were collected in the same span of a few months, and over the course of the next year, were all analyzed acoustically.

After the recordings of the participants were analyzed acoustically, their interview sections were consulted for contextualization of the content in order to better understand the participants' language attitudes, seeking to use them as explanations of any unpredicted acoustic results. It should be mentioned that one of the 9 participants was not included in the acoustic analysis due to limitations, but his qualitative data is included and discussed in Chapter 5.

The perceptual and folk data that came from the interview sections were ultimately used as a way to understand the acoustic results. That is, where the unexpected trends emerged — this is mostly with regard to the initial notion of *less* casual speech produced in tasks which would predict *less attention* to speech, but which later was not necessarily easily interpreted as such. Ultimately, this project seeks synthesis among the acoustic trends and the consistent patterns arising from an analysis of discourse. More specifics about each part of the study follow below. More specifics on the acoustic and qualitative methods are detailed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

### **3.1 Participants**

The 9 respondents for this study were all born and raised in Oklahoma, all European American (though a couple claimed distant Native American heritage), and all between the ages of 25 and 33 (see Table 3). I know all of them personally and have been at least acquaintances with each for more than a year (several years for some). In short, this study employed convenience sampling.

Two of the respondents are from the two biggest cities in Oklahoma (Tulsa and Oklahoma City); two are from towns less than 10 miles outside of Tulsa (Sand Springs and Owasso), and ONE other from a city about 70 miles southwest of Oklahoma City (Marlow). The other 4 respondents are all from towns east of Tulsa (which is already east of the centralized OKC): one from a town near the Missouri border (Quapaw), another on the Arkansas border (Westville), and finally, two from the southern border of the state (Idabel in the Southeast and Kingston at the TX border). All respondents have varying levels of college experience. At the time of recording the interviews, they were all either graduated from college with a Bachelor's degree (one participant had been to grad



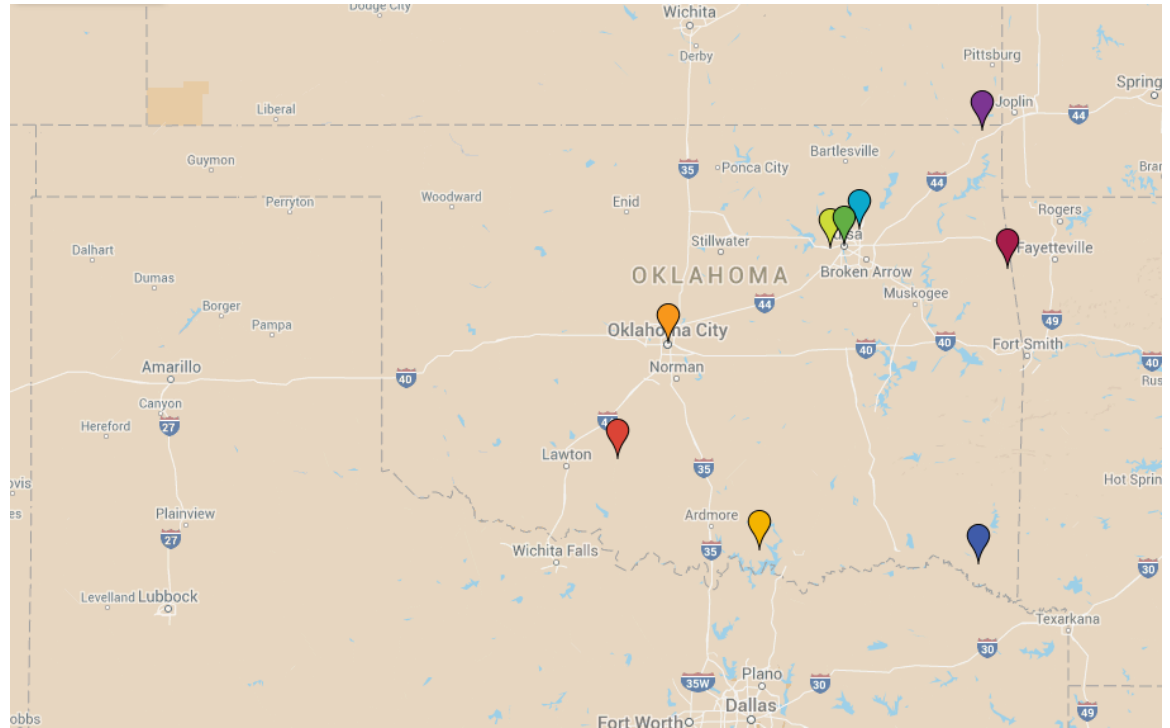
school), or were in the process of working on obtaining a degree. They all identify themselves as “out,” or openly gay, to their family and friends.

Table 3.

*Respondents, hometowns, and available task-based data*

Respondent	Hometown	Tasks		
		Word List	Reading Passage	Interview
Chance, 23	Idabel		✓	✓
Darren, 24	Owasso			✓
Ernest, 25,	OKC	✓	✓	✓
Francis, 28	Quapaw	✓	✓	✓
Jim, 24	Kingston	✓	✓	✓
Levi, 27	Tulsa		✓	✓
Marcus, 25	Marlow	✓	✓	✓
Patrick, 33	Sand Springs	✓	✓	✓
Pepper, 23	Westville	✓	✓	✓

The above table also displays the available data from each respondent as related to the tasks. Of the 9, Levi and Chance do not have any word list data, and Darren only has data from the interview. Because so much of the study depends on the comparison of vowel productions across tasks, Darren’s interview was not a part of the individual acoustic analyses, as he would have been the only participant not to have comparable vowel data from at least one other task. In Chapter 5, the qualitative-interpretive discussion, Darren’s interview is included in the reviewing of responses to certain questions, looking at his and the others’ attitudes towards, beliefs about, and experience with Oklahoma dialects.



*Figure 8.* Map of Oklahoma and adjacent states, markers for hometowns of the participants (created in Google My Maps online).

I will briefly address the points on this map for sake of understanding of the layout of the state represented in this study; the following subsections introduce the speakers and report on where they are from. From left to right (West to East), the above map shows the hometowns for the participants. The westernmost town, indicated with a red marker, is Marlow. Oklahoma City is in the center of the state, with a label of its own. East of there, and much farther South on the Texas border, is Kingston. The cluster of three pins to the Northeast represent Sand Springs (light green), Tulsa (green), and Owasso (light blue). In the far southeast corner of “little Dixie” is Idabel. In the far northeast corner of the state, nearest Missouri, is Quapaw. And lastly, just a hop, skip, and a jump away from Fayetteville, Arkansas is Westville.

### 3.1.1 Chance, 23, Idabel

Chance's hometown is in the southeast corner of the state, an area known colloquially in OK as "Little Dixie." It is an area often talked about as being more Southern by Oklahomans. He was born and raised there, referring to his growing up as very "small town," compared to Stillwater, where he currently resides. He studies Business and Marketing, works as a server and sales associate at two establishments in town, and has only spent his time in college outside of Idabel. This comes up in his interviews a couple times. He seems to be aware of the idea of his "more-Southern" area of the state. We have known each other a couple years now.

### 3.1.2 Darren, 24, Owasso

Darren's apparent pride in being from (near) Tulsa is revealed in the way he talks about Oklahoma. He openly expresses dislike for the Oklahoma dialect, and at times, he talks less appreciatively of the "gay accent." He was working on his degree in Counseling, specifically focusing on Family Counseling sciences. This plays a significant role in his participation in the study. He is able to give responses that are possibly more theory-based or at least informed by social science. With that said, though, he is not a linguist and shows very clear dichotomies in his understanding of language (masculine and feminine, gay and straight, etc.). At the time of the interview, he was working as a server at a popular chain restaurant while he finished up his degree.

### 3.1.3 Ernest, 25, OKC

Ernest, 25 and from Oklahoma City, has spent all of his life in Oklahoma, but he has traveled extensively. He has a degree from the University of Oklahoma, and I have known him for over five years. In that time, I have heard about his travels to Mexico,

Hawaii, Turkey, as well as other parts of the USA rather frequently. His mother is European American, but she spent part of her childhood in Panama, and therefore speaks Spanish. He claims to understand Spanish but not to be fluent. This does not affect much of Ernest's responses in talking and thinking about Oklahoma dialects, but his travels elsewhere do. They may, in fact, make him more aware of stereotypical ideas about Oklahomans, partly evidenced in an anecdote he gives about being in Turkey and being perceived as a Southerner (that is, as someone from the American South). In his interview, we met at an Oklahoma City library and used one of their study rooms for a recording.. He has been in a long-term relationship with his partner, who is also a part of this study, and who is referred to here as Francis. I have known Ernest for about 5 years prior to this study.

#### 3.1.4 Francis, 28, Quapaw

Francis describes his hometown with an interesting duality. He is aware of the rural nature of the town, of its vast distance from the bigger cities of OK, but he also talks appreciatively of it, of the kindness of locals and the parts of rural Oklahoma that he likes. Whereas many of the respondents refer to small-town life in less-than-flattering words, Francis talked the most positively about it. He graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma for Human Resource Management and currently works in the insurance field, living in Oklahoma City with his partner. He has also been a friend of mine for nearly 5 years.

#### 3.1.5 Jim, 24, Kingston

Jim was another respondent from a small town, his on the TX border, who had moved to Stillwater for college. He studied Hotel and Restaurant Administration, and, at

the time of the interview, had taken a break from classes and moved to Oklahoma City for a managerial position at a popular drive-in restaurant. He has since graduated, but his living in Oklahoma City was also important to him. His thoughts about his hometown are also telling, but not quite like Francis; he claims that there is no community for LGBTQ2 peoples in Kingston, that he had to “pretend” to be straight back at home, that he did not even know what it meant to be gay and around gay people until he moved to a bigger city. This, he says, is related to Southern culture, but his readiness to say this is likely related to his hometown’s proximity to the Texas border. He allowed me to record him at his home, with his partner and their dog. We had known each other for over a year before this interview.

#### 3.1.6 Levi, 27, Tulsa

Levi was 27 at the time of recording and lived in Tulsa until moving away for college. He had not graduated at the time of recording and was working as a server and bartender at a restaurant near the university. For his recording, he came into OSU's Linguistics Lab and allowed me to record the interview in the recording booth. He and I had been friends about two years at the time of recording, and perhaps because he knows that I am from Oklahoma City, much of his discussion on ways of talking in Oklahoma differentiated, for him, largely which of the biggest cities someone came from. More of this is discussed in the next chapter.

#### 3.1.7 Marcus, 25, Marlow

Marcus was also 25 at the time of recording and has spent his whole life near Oklahoma City. He has a degree in Education from the University of Central Oklahoma and currently works in administration at an Oklahoma City metro area middle school. He

and I have known each other about five years. Marcus invited me to his home to do the recording. Over the years, some of his friends have described him as shy and/or quiet. Interviewing at his home seemed to make him feel more relaxed, with the exception of his dogs making noise outside — noise which did not interfere much with the recording but which did seem to distract him a bit.

#### 3.1.8 Patrick, 33, Sand Springs

Patrick, the oldest of the group, was 33 at the time of recording and had been living in Oklahoma for all of his life, except for a few years spent in Ohio for graduate school. After receiving his Master's, he returned to work in Oklahoma. Of all the interviews, Patrick's was the only one to take place at his workplace — in his office on a lunch break. In the interview, we decided to close the door to his office for more privacy, but the location and situational relevance of the workplace as it relates to his responses is discussed with more consideration in the chapter on the results. He and I have been acquaintances for nearly three years.

#### 3.1.9 Pepper, 23, Westville

Pepper's talk about Oklahoma really centers on his views of his hometown. I should mention how eager he was to be a part of the study after being asked. We had to reschedule several times, but he continued to contact me to make sure he could still volunteer for the project. I believe this to be partly attributable to the fact that he associates a lot of stereotyping problems with rural, small town Oklahoma — where he's from. He had been studying Sociology, working towards his degree, at the time of interviewing, which also likely affects his answers to many of the questions.

## **3.2 Data collection**

As a part of the RODEO project, all participants were read a standard script informing them of the project, of the parts or sections of the interview and accompanying tasks, of the uses for the data, and with the reassurance that nobody's name or representation will be used to cause harm to or negative portrayals of the participants. Nearly all of the RODEO interviewees (not just those discussed in this project) were collected through convenience and/or snowball sampling. As mentioned above, the interviews were conducted mostly in homes or quiet public spaces (e.g. a library study room), with the exception of an office setting interview held during a respondent's lunch break. All interviews were recorded with a USBpre device linked to a Macbook and recorded into Praat speech analysis software using a head-mounted Audio-Technica 803b Mini Omni Lapel Miniature omni-directional condenser microphone. Separate .wav files were created for each respondent's reading passage, word list, and interview sections.

### **3.2.1 Interview**

The RODEO interviews were set up to elicit responses that would "break the ice," with varying options (i.e. "Can you remember a time when you were really angry?" Or "What's one of the most embarrassing things that has happened to you?"). From there, the questions shifted towards ways of speaking in Oklahoma, asking about the participant's first time realizing not everyone in the US sounds like they do in OK. From there, there are more specific questions about sounding Oklahoman and the ideas associated with them. This study, however, uses only a small section of the interview that includes two questions from the standard RODEO script and five supplemental questions specifically

related to ideas of the ways that gay men speak. See Table 4 below for the specific questions.

Table 4.

*Questions for subsection of sociolinguistic interview*

<p>RODEO questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Do men and women talk differently in Oklahoma?"</li><li>• "Do you talk like an Oklahoman?"</li></ul>
<p>Supplemental questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Can you tell if a man is gay based on how he talks?"</li><li>• "What does it mean to sound (stereotypically) gay?"</li><li>• "Do you talk this way?"</li><li>• "Can someone talk like a typical Oklahoman and stereotypically gay?"</li><li>• "How do you feel about these ways of talking?"</li></ul>

For the acoustic analyses, these questions are the only ones considered; that is, the respondents' answers to only these questions are subjected to acoustic analysis. In the discussion and contextualization of the results, however, there are other questions and sections of the interview to help explain the patterns in the data. These questions were added to attempt eliciting discussion of ideas of speaking stereotypically Oklahoman and gay. In conjunction with the already present questions of sounding Oklahoman and ideas about gender's role in speaking in Oklahoma, this particular part of the interview allowed for a less jarring switch to the discussion of talking gay — particularly for gay men who are from Oklahoma, all of whom identified as much (if not more) experience "sounding gay" than "sounding Oklahoman." Finally, these questions also bordered the end of the interview task and led to the reading passage task, so in terms of sequencing, it seemed easy to tack on these questions.



### 3.2.2 Reading passage and word list

The word list offers this study numerous examples of those target words related to the following Southern and/or Oklahoma local features: monophthongization of /ay/, back vowel fronting (primarily the GOOSE, GOAT, and FOOT vowels), low-back conflation, and (in line with the Southern Vowel Shift) the lowering of the onsets of the FLEECE and FACE vowels as well as the raising and diphthongization of the KIT and DRESS vowels. The data from the reading passage are contrasted with a subsection of the interview to provide a stylistic comparison. It also featured corresponding target words to which the word list productions can be compared (precisely what Bakos did).

### **3.3 Recording and organization**

All .wav files were annotated with textgrids identifying speakers and lexical items. The textgrids and sound files were then loaded into the FAVE-align software through the University of Pennsylvania, which sent back a new textgrid with segment boundaries aligned with each word previously identified by the boundaries in the original textgrid. This new file was then uploaded into the accompanying online suite FAVE-extract to analyze the individual vowel tokens. Each token's formant structure is given, averaged and at different stages of the vowel duration. Overall there were 1387 vowel tokens.

The NORM Vowel Suite was used to compare vowel production of respondents first to the Peterson and Barney (1952) formant values for American English. The raw vowel data from the PB scores for American males were used alongside the raw RODEO data (of all gay men); they were not normalized. This study's respondents were plotted against "typical" Oklahoma speakers (from Bakos 2013), followed by cross-comparisons of the individual speakers. Again, these data were also raw and all from male

Oklahomans, and therefore, they were not normalized. After plotting each speaker individually and comparing vowel placement across tasks, the most important patterns for this study were made note of: participation in the cot-caught merger, fronting of back vowels, and the reversals of FLEECE-KIT and FACE-DRESS. These patterns were considered to be most prominent because they occurred in data of the majority of the respondents.

Borrowing from Bakos (2013), I employed the use of a chart to account for the identification of features in question, characterizing them as “standard” or not. Below in Table 5 is Bakos’ (2013) table he used. The vowels are split up into various sections: obviously, the fronting of back vowels is included; the Southern Shift is accounted for, though primarily in the reversal of the front vowels; and lastly mergers and confluations. This study uses a modified version of this table. As it is not concerned with any mergers or vowel conflation other than the cot/caught merger, the other four rows were deleted.

Table 5.

*Feature chart for characterizing OK vowels (from Bakos, 2013)*

<b>Back Vowel Fronting</b>	<b>Fronted</b>	<b>Shifted</b>	<b>Backed</b>
a. GOOSE	fronted	partial fronting	back
b. FOOT	fronted	partial fronting	back
c. GOAT	fronted	partial fronting	back
d. MOUTH	fronted	partial fronting	back
<b>Southern Shift</b>	<b>Southern</b>	<b>Shifted</b>	<b>P&amp;B Like</b>
a. PRICE	[ai]	weak glide	[a:]
b. FLEECE/KIT	FLEECE above KIT	Parallel on F1	KIT above FLEECE
d. FACE/DRESS	FACE above DRESS	Parallel on F1	DRESS above FACE
<b>Mergers</b>	<b>Merged</b>	<b>Partial</b>	<b>Distinct</b>
Tense-lax conflation <u>/l/</u>			
a. /u/-/ʊ/	merged	partial	distinct
b. /i/-/ɪ/	merged	partial	distinct
c. /ɛ/-/e/	merged	partial	distinct
Pin/Pen Merger	merged	partial	distinct
Caught/Cot Merger	merged	partial	distinct

### 3.4 Qualitative analysis

Podesva (2011) extrapolates possible understanding of the results of his study on gay identity and the California Vowel Shift with regard to “linguistic, situational, and conversational contexts” drawing from older research (p. 41; Podesva & Chun, 2007). With that said, though, the geographical differences between California and Oklahoma mirror their social and political differences. This, in addition to the weight of this study’s ethnographic components and the direct interest in language attitudes, leads to a reliance on folk linguistic approaches. Content-based analyses, like that addressed in Preston (1994), serve critical roles in making the connections among speech production, perception, and underlying ideological bases pertaining to those processes. Drawing from

Schiffrin (1985), he notes that the content-based approach may take into account argument as it relates to the position taken by the speaker, calling attention to her use of *position*, *dispute*, and *support* as moves being made (293). This study borrows from this, in a modified way, to take a try and capture the argumentative structures of the respondents with regard to the nature of gay experience in OK.

For example, recall the first question of the supplemental interview questions, “Do men and women talk the same in OK?” A few respondents’ answers abruptly with a “yes” or a “no,” but the majority were more elaborate or asked to expand on their opinions. They made their position or claim, exerting their opinions that is, and then begin to explain them. At times, they address how this may be disputed, and at times, they go right into justification, or support, of their claim. This even results in sets of contradictory terms (i.e. men and women talk the same, but gay men talk more femininely). It is with this content-based approach that the qualitative data is used to corroborate the acoustic findings.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The overall results of the respondents' acoustics analysis show similarities to Bakos' (2013) RODEO participants. Below in Figure 9, their averaged vowels are plotted with the Peterson & Barney (1952) values for male speakers of "General American English." Later, the vowels are plotted with Bakos' (2013) data to portray a more holistic comparison. All of the data are raw, and therefore are not normalized. As coronal-fronted GOOSE vowels are known to be more fronted, the GOOSE token averages are separated and coded for tokens with coronal-onsets (C.GOOSE), tokens with lateral liquid in coda position (GOOSE.L), and all other tokens appear as GOOSE. Similarly, the PRICE diphthong is separated into those which come before voiceless consonants (PRICE) and those which occur before voiced consonants or with open codas (PRIDE), as the latter are known to be more commonly produced monophthongally in most Southern varieties. Because the trajectories are important for some features — particularly the diphthongs and the back vowels — all tokens were measured at 20% of the vowel and then again at 80% of the vowels, the former plotted the labels appear and the latter where the arrows end.

The plot shows the clear fronting of GOOSE productions, both coronal and non-coronal fronted productions, although the vowels with l-codas are backed almost to the PB scores. Though not plotted here, even the averaging of all these tokens results in a mean GOOSE F2 which is fronted much beyond that of the would-be “General American.” FOOT is fronted, and GOAT is fronted and lowered.

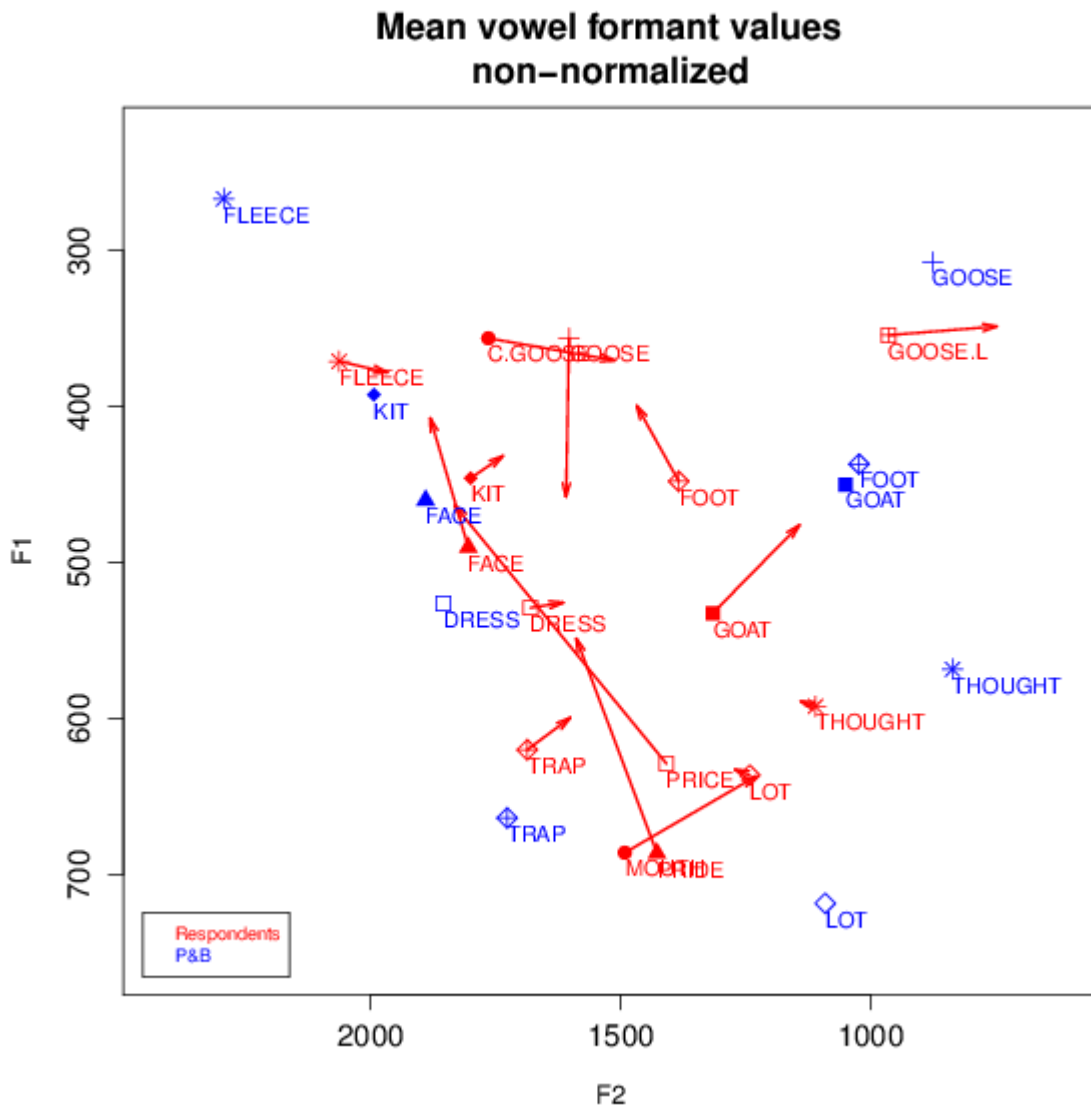


Figure 9. All respondents (red) plotted with PB vowels for comparison.

Midlands dialects actively merge the vowels LOT and THOUGHT, while traditionally, Southern dialects do distinguish between them. As evidenced in Figure 10 below, Bakos (2013) found that some Oklahomans participate in the merger of these two vowels. Here, the overall averages do show that both vowels in question appear to move towards each other, via the raising of LOT and lowering of THOUGHT. Similarly, the onsets for MOUTH and PRICE/PRIDE are fronted and raised from LOT, characteristically associated with the South, though the latter will be considered primarily for monophthongization. TRAP does show slight raising from the PB values, though the Southern fronting and diphthongization is not apparent in this plot.

Lastly, the front vowels are strikingly similar to other Oklahoma studies. FLEECE and KIT show some variation from the “General American,” but there is no Southern reversal of them; here, too, the FACE and DRESS vowels do not show completed reversal, but the FACE vowel does appear to have lowered slightly. As we will see next in Figure 10, this vowel system does line up well with other non-gay RODEO respondents; some of the variation, however, goes unaccounted for without comparing productions across tasks. The following sections, therefore, offer a look at each feature under examination, with example plots from respondents and compared with other Oklahomans (from RODEO data) who are chosen based on hometown proximity to the hometowns of the gay respondents.

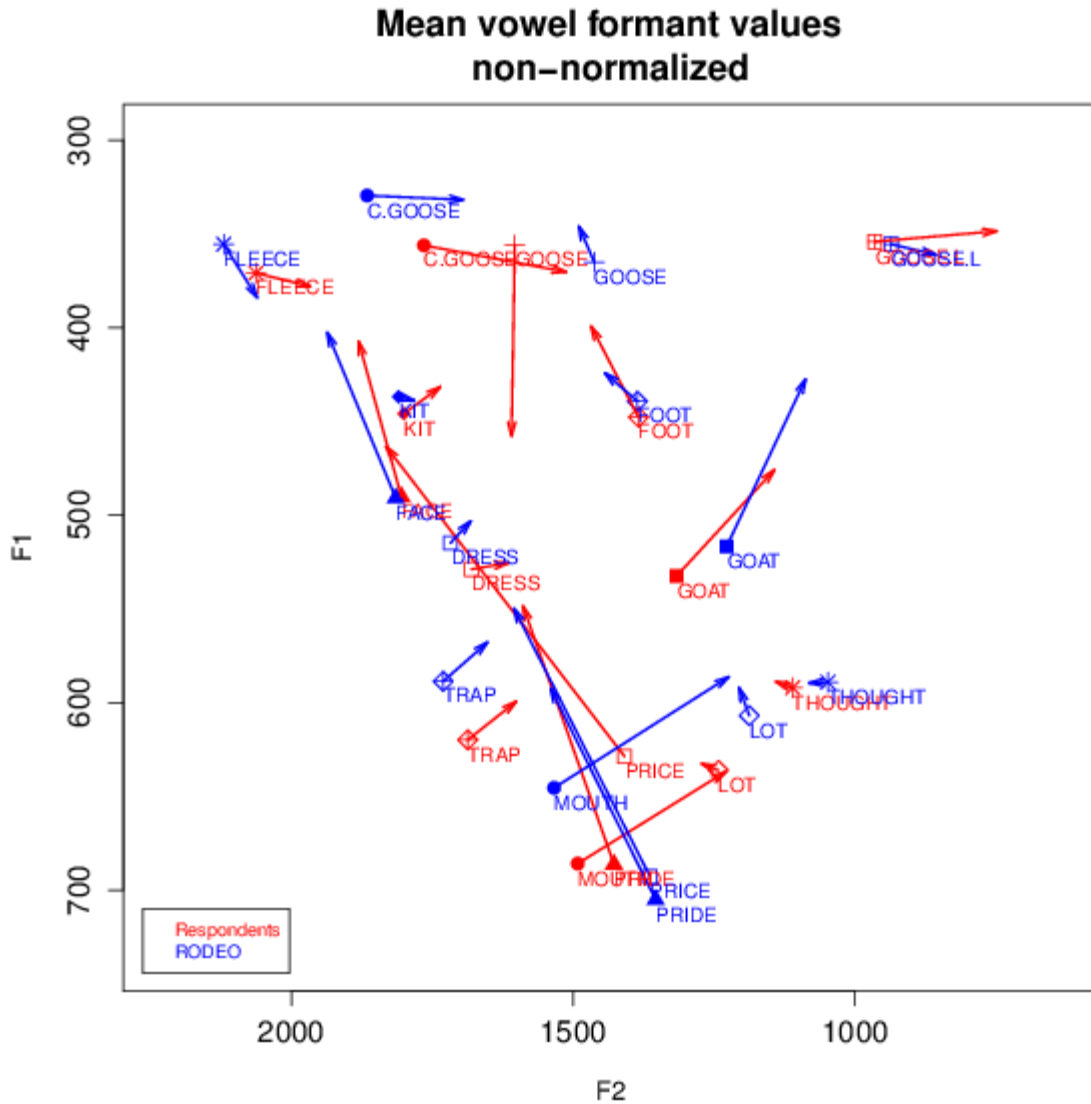


Figure 10. All gay respondents (red; n = 8) plotted with non-gay RODEO data for comparison (blue; n = 13).

Even though there is a little variation between the groups, the similarities are striking. The similarities, in fact, far outweigh the number of differences. GOOSE fronting is apparent for both, and with similar advancement towards FLEECE vowels. FOOT and GOAT are both fronted, the latter of which showing lowering slightly more for the participants' data than the RODEO data. The cot-caught merger appears to be



underway in both groups; the RODEO data (blue), though, shows a raised and backed LOT more than the gay respondents, participating with more advancement in the merger. Again, we will see that cross-task comparisons often show more telling variation, while the averaging of data altogether tends to leave out interesting patterns.

The front vowels show relatively no difference in their productions, with no reversal of the FLEECE/KIT vowels, but FACE/DRESS vowels show some movement away from the P&B scores in both groups. Lastly, the MOUTH onset OK tokens are relatively similar in positioning, considerably fronted from LOT, as is the onset of PRICE for all speakers. The MOUTH diphthong shows more raising in Bakos' RODEO data, while the gay respondents show more variation in PRICE/PRIDE productions. This overview of general vowel patterning allows for an easy comparison, with relatively consistent results: these gay Oklahomans talk very much like their non-gay counterparts. What's more interesting, though is the variation from task to task, which is discussed in the following subsections.

#### **4.1 Features under analysis**

A total of 3144 tokens were eventually used in the following analysis. Below, Table 5 shows the averages, number of tokens, and glide average (at 80% of the vowel) for all speakers. From here, all the features under analysis will be discussed individually, with a respondent example, trends over all responses, and comparison with non-gay RODEO respondents. Section 2.2 of the second chapter noted the four Southern features relevant to Bakos' (2013) research and to this study as well. The following subsections take these into account, along with the more apparent Midlands features in Oklahoma dialects, to arrive at an understanding of where these gay men locate themselves in terms

of the broader linguistic trends within the state. Again, where there appears to be an emphasis on whether or not such features are Southern, it is because of the frequent collocation of Oklahoman culture/identity and that of the South by the respondents — something given much more attention in the following chapter. Below Table 6 displays the respondents’ overall averages for F1, F2, and F3. For the first two frequencies, there are averages taken at 20% of the vowel (columns 4 and 5) and at 80% of the vowel (columns 7 and 8). The do not distinguish tokens across tasks.

Table 6.

*Overall vowel averages without task-based distinction*

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Vowel</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>F1</b>	<b>F2</b>	<b>F3</b>	<b>F1gl</b>	<b>F2gl</b>
Respondents	DRESS	318	528	1680	2541	525	1614
Respondents	FACE	262	490	1804	2531	407	1880
Respondents	FLEECE	439	370	2062	2740	378	1966
Respondents	FOOT	60	447	1383	2452	399	1467
Respondents	GOAT	288	532	1315	2356	475	1142
Respondents	GOOSE	37	352	1594	2311	457	1608
Respondents	C.GOOSE	86	358	1774	2427	374	1525
Respondents	GOOSE.L	7	340	942	2534	342	745
Respondents	KIT	310	445	1799	2573	431	1735
Respondents	LOT	189	637	1242	2377	635	1279
Respondents	MOUTH	111	685	1491	2471	636	1229
Respondents	PRICE	159	626	1408	2462	461	1835
Respondents	PRIDE	341	686	1427	2441	549	1588
Respondents	THOUGHT	175	592	1115	2333	588	1138
Respondents	TRAP	362	619	1686	2529	599	1600

4.1.1.1 GOOSE fronting

The general patterning for the GOOSE vowel is consistent with what we would expect of many native Oklahomans; all respondents show relatively advanced degrees of fronting, with F2 frequencies in the FLEECE territory. Francis, 28, from Quapaw in the far northeast corner of the state, for instance has respective maximum F2 values for coronal-onset GOOSE and non-coronal-onset GOOSE tokens at 2117 Hz and 2086 Hz, while the average F2 for FLEECE across all speakers is 2062 Hz. Below, he is plotted against a non-gay RODEO respondent for comparison. Most of the acoustic comparisons made here try to keep the respondents under inspection close to each other in terms of distance between hometowns. Kramer, 24, is from Broken Arrow, a suburb to the southeast of Tulsa. He was chosen for the comparison because Broken Arrow, although nearly 100 miles away from Quapaw, is the closest comparable city other than Tulsa. Given that Quapaw is a small town outside of the city, Broken Arrow, albeit much closer to a metropolitan area, is also a smaller town than Tulsa.

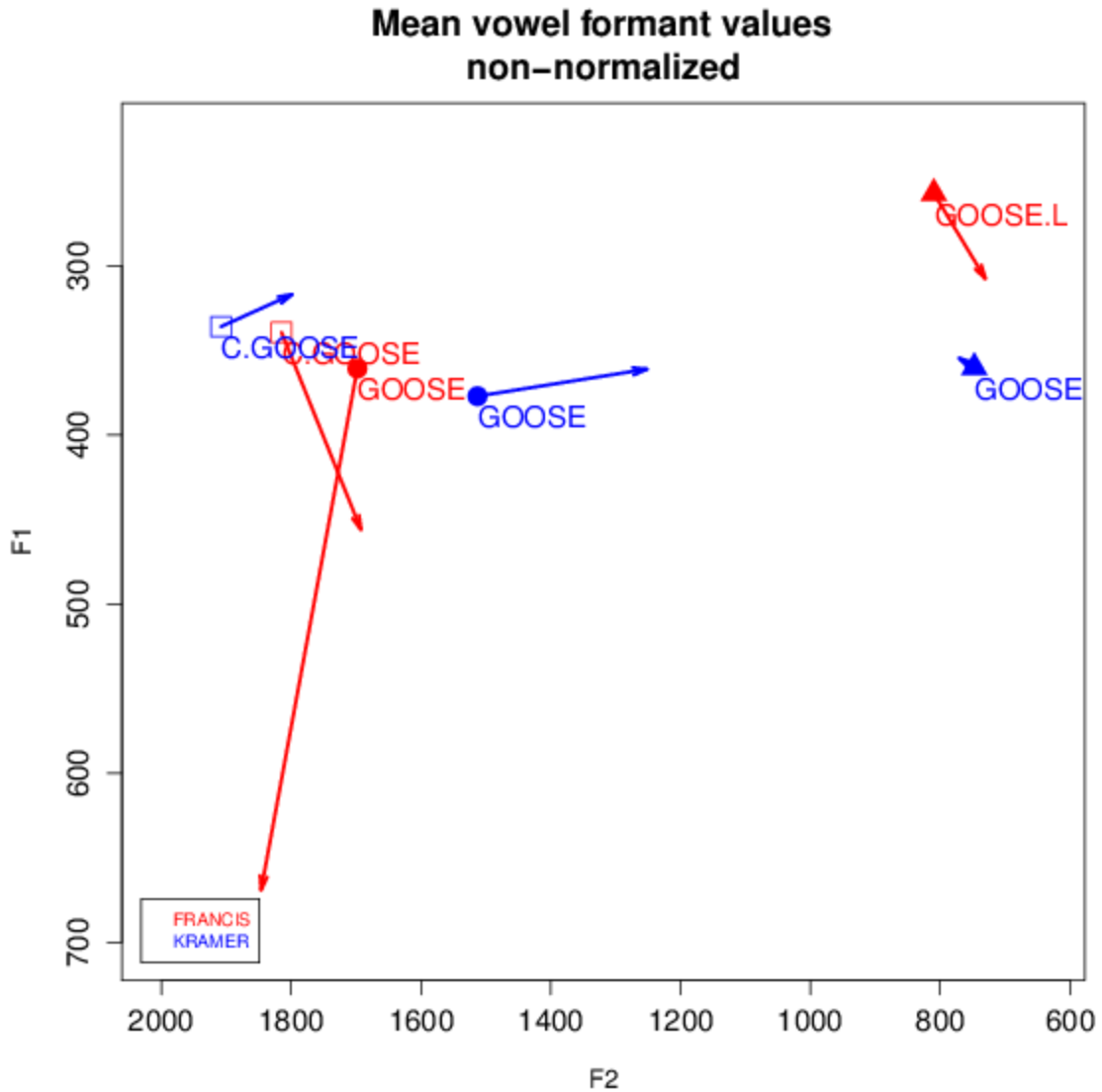


Figure 11. Francis, 28, Quapaw, GOOSE productions plotted with Kramer, 24, Broken Arrow

The range of interspeaker variation is not great here. Francis' coronal and non-coronal GOOSE tokens do have averages closer together in terms of F2, but the strange trajectory of his non-coronal productions might be resulting from a strange pronunciation. The following image, Figure 12, shows that his tokens from the word list task are likely influencing this. It is not uncommon to see non-coronal fronted GOOSE vowels produced with relatively similar F2 frequencies (that is, those corresponding to fronting or backing)

in Southern varieties of American English. Ultimately, differences here between Francis and Kramer are very great. Figure 12 represents Francis' GOOSE tokens, separated by coronal and liquid influence, and coded by task. IN (red) corresponds with data from the interview, RP (blue) with that from the reading passage, and WL (green) the word list.

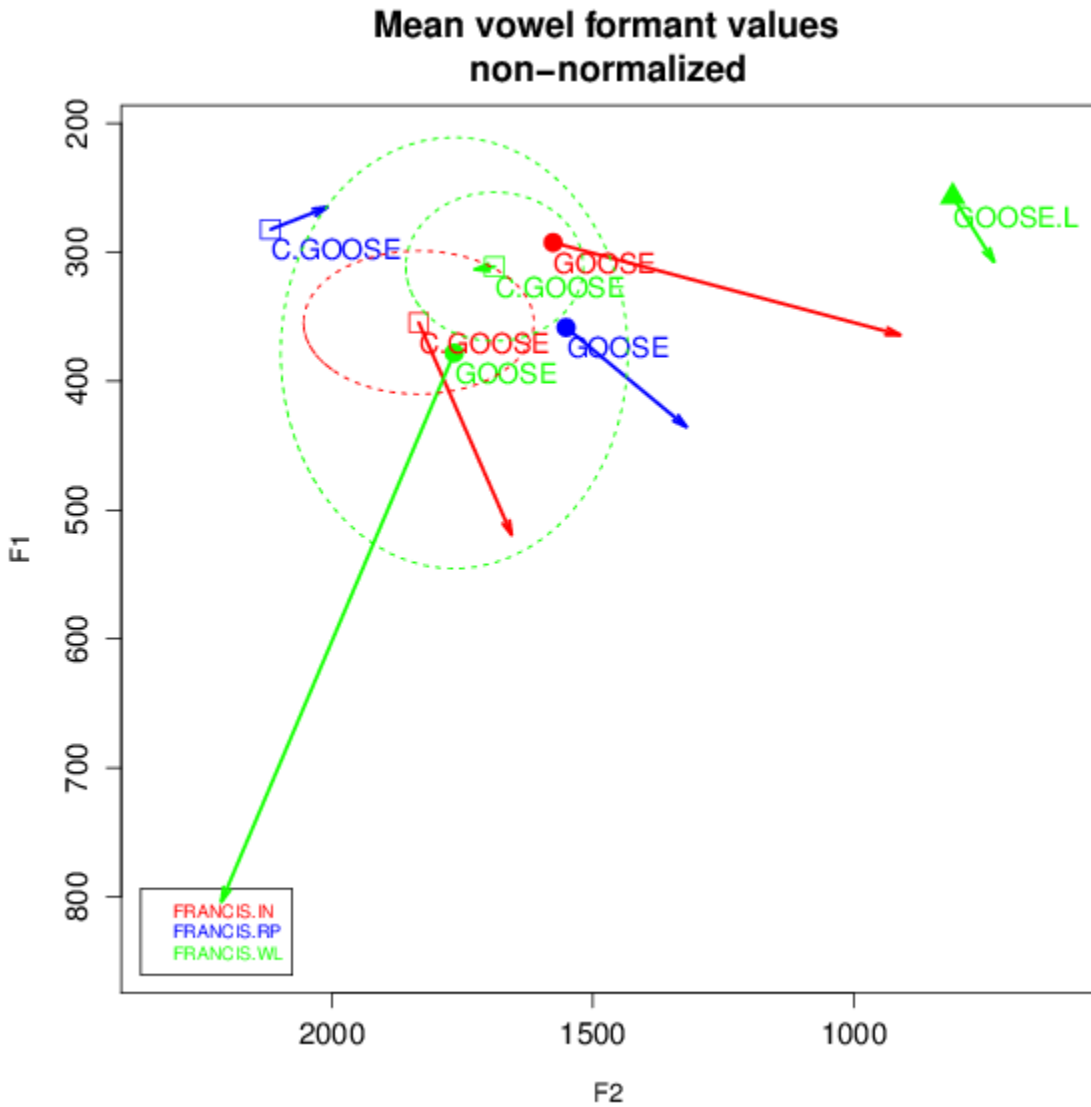


Figure 12. Francis, 28, Quapaw, GOOSE averages across tasks

The plot above shows potentially interesting patterns, but it appears a little confusing at first glance. I will, therefore, point out the things to note. First and foremost, older style models would predict to elicit less attention to speech, i.e. more casual speech, in the interview section under analysis. According to this, we ought to find the most fronted tokens in the interview task, followed by the reading passage, with the most attention to speech (*least* fronting) in the word list task. This is not the type of pattern the plot above depicts.

Of course F1 and F2 scores are relevant here, but because of the interest in the fronting of GOOSE, I will largely refer to the F2 scores here. For the coronal-onset GOOSE (C.GOOSE), the token with the smallest F2 reading actually came from the interview passage, while the highest reading (the most advanced fronting) came from the reading passage. This is complicated by the inequity of tokens across tasks, but it does not render the results obsolete. For example, there are many more tokens for the interview's C.GOOSE vowels than the other tasks (each of which only had one token). This could leave the results questionably anomalous; on the other hand, though, the ellipses representing the range of productions also show that C.GOOSE is produced relatively consistently within an area clearly behind the reading passage production, in terms of advanced fronting. Again, this is inconsistent with the style-shifting theory developed by Labov (1972), and is either potentially indicative of a potential trend or an anomaly.

With regard to the latter possibility, it seems unlikely. Of all the respondents, Francis was not the only one to exhibit this type of vocalic behavior. Jim and Patrick both fronted non-coronal GOOSE more in word list than even the interview, and both by

margins over 200 Hz. With regard to coronal-fronted GOOSE, Francis, Chance, Levi, and Patrick all showed *more advanced* fronting in the reading passage than the interview, and Marcus, Patrick, and Pepper actually exhibited the same trend in the word list. Every respondent but Ernest showed at least one instance of this “unpredictable” behavior, by Labovian standards. Keep in mind that, at this point, the alignment of each task with levels of casualness and formality are not as important as the emergent trend. Simply put, GOOSE fronting has been noted as “ubiquitous” among Oklahomans, and these Oklahomans show patterns of less fronting particularly in the interview task (Bakos, 2013). As the following subsections report, respondents not only tended to align themselves with this feature, but a number of others under analysis as well.

Across all tasks, there were only 37 tokens of GOOSE accounted for, while the number of C.GOOSE tokens was over double that (86 tokens). This is perhaps the reason more respondents participated in the apparent trend for coronal GOOSE than non-coronal GOOSE. The differences here in frequencies do vary, but 3 respondents show near or more than 300Hz difference between productions (Patrick, Pepper, and Francis). Chance does have the smallest difference at 49Hz, which may not actually make a difference in perception, but given the patterning of the others (and that Marcus and Levi both have differences over 100Hz), it is at least potentially in line with the trend here. With that said, 7 of the 8 respondents under acoustic analysis appeared to front GOOSE more in either the word list and/or reading passage than the interview, an interesting occurrence given this features saliency within Oklahoma dialects. Explanation and understanding for why this might be the case will come later.

#### 4.1.2 FOOT fronting

Like GOOSE, all respondents show fronting of the FOOT vowel, though in varying degrees and not in the same patterning as GOOSE. Though they consistently produce FOOT with higher F2 frequencies than the PB values predict, the variation across tasks does not pattern at all like GOOSE.

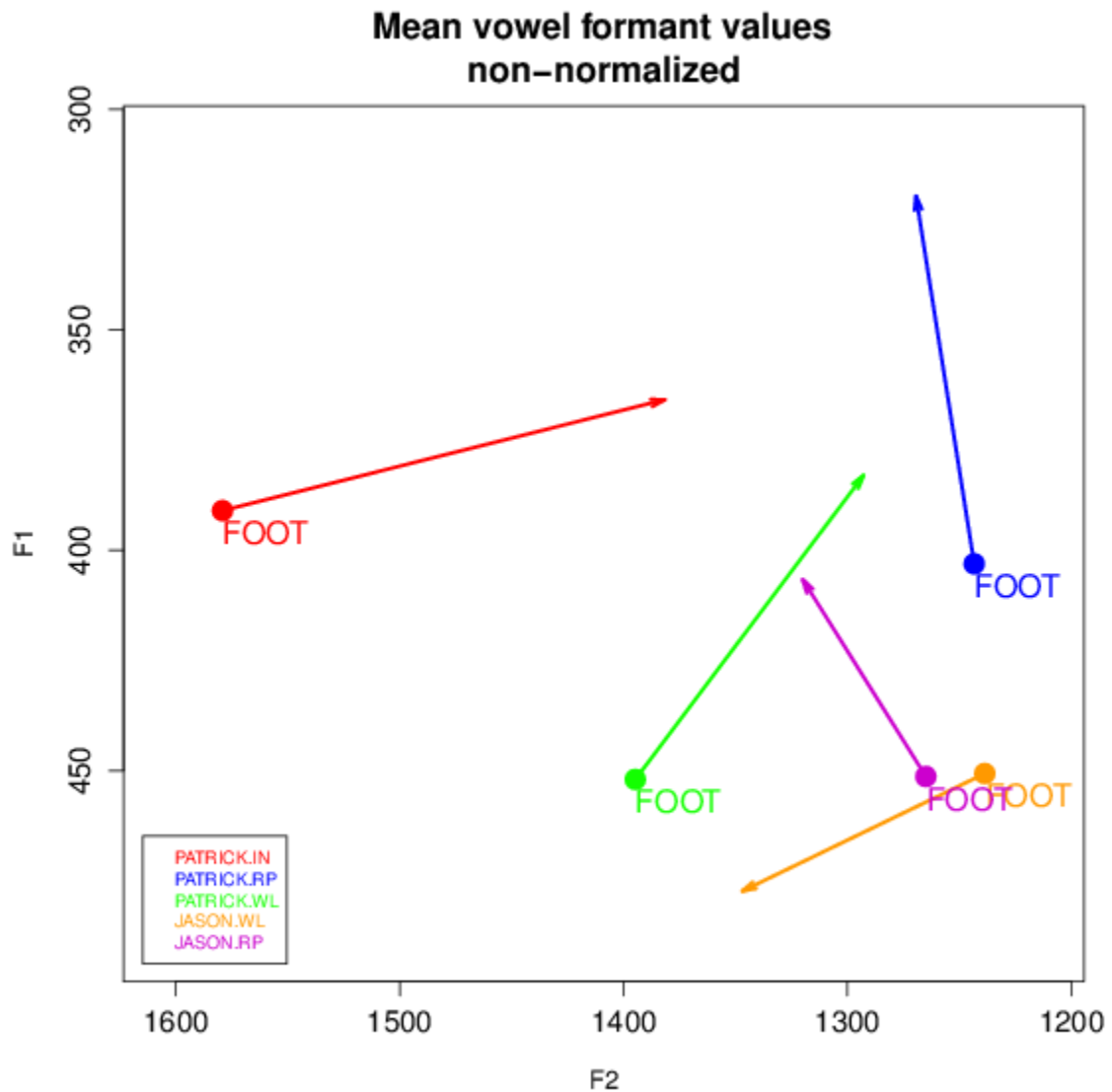


Figure 13. Patrick, 33, Sand Springs, FOOT vowel means plotted with Jason, 54, Tulsa



Above in Figure 13, Patrick (33 from Sand Springs) is plotted against Jason, 54 from Tulsa. In this pairing, there is obviously a gap in age which could potentially be a factor in potential variation, but Jason was chosen because of Tulsa's proximity to Sand Springs. Here, the aforementioned style theory, for the most part, would predict the results, at least that Patrick's interview resulted in more marked (i.e. non-standard; less-formal) features occurring in the interview. This is quite the opposite of what we saw in GOOSE fronting.

Patrick only had a total of 7 tokens for FOOT across tasks, and Jason only 6. Keeping that in mind, the pattern represented above, of course, cannot provide conclusive evidence for generalization, but in line with the other gay speakers, we might be able to draw conclusions about another potential trend in this current project. As it happens, a clear majority shows more fronting in the interview passage than in the other tasks, quite the opposite from what we saw before with GOOSE. Only Ernest shows more advancement in the word list than in the interview; this trend for him, though, is relatively consistent across his vowels and appears to be a situational or possibly idiolect pattern. Summaries of features and individual respondents are presented at the beginning of Chapter 5.

#### 4.1.3 GOAT fronting

The respondents were not as consistent in advancing GOAT more in one task than another, at least not to the degree that both FOOT and GOOSE appear to have been. That is, while GOOSE tended have more fronting in either the reading passage or word list tasks than the interview, and though FOOT was almost unanimously more fronted in the

interview, GOAT nearly splits the respondents down the middle in terms of their tendencies, based on tasks.

In terms of acoustic expectations, GOAT is also known to have a tendency to lower (i.e. be produced with a higher F1) along with its fronting. Having said that, there is little emphasis given to F1 scores or lowering of the vowel here, as it does not appear to play a role in relation to the fronting of the back vowels in this data set. The remainder of this subsection will focus on F2 measurements and trends relating to those frequencies.

Jim, 24 from the Kingston on the southern border of the state, is plotted in Figure 14; the mean frequencies for Ray, 39 from Ada, are also plotted for comparison. Here, again, the available comparable data is limited. The difference in age is potentially a factor in variation, as well as the location. While Ada is a town in the southern half of the state, just a bit east of the center, Kingston only 5 miles away from Lake Texoma, a lake shared (unsurprisingly) between Texas and Oklahoma. Ada and Kingston are roughly 66 miles apart, by comparison; it is suspected, then, that Ray is the best option of the available data for comparison with Jim.

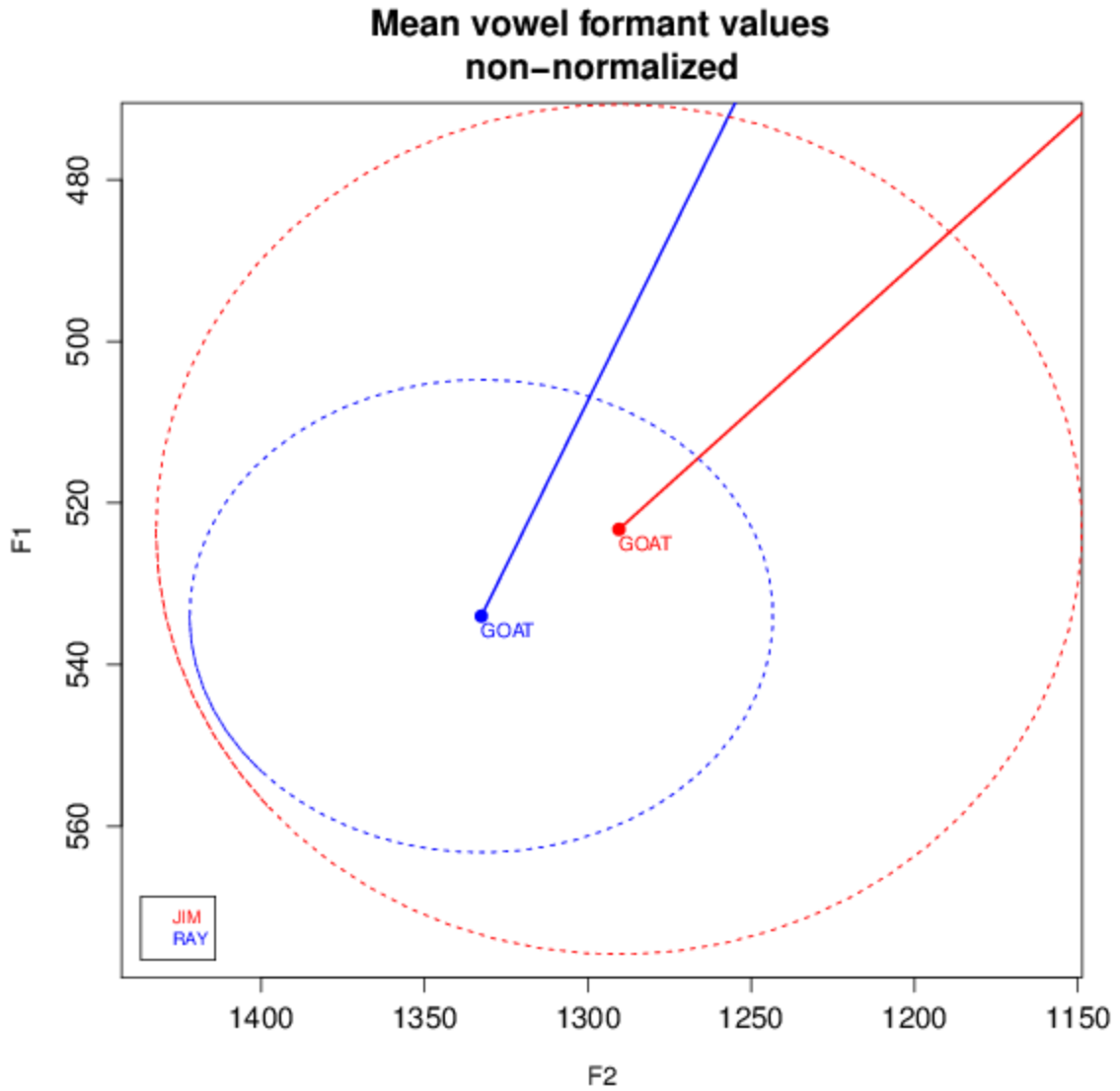


Figure 14. Jim, 24, Kinston, GOAT vowel means plotted with Ray, 39, Ada

Jim's total 35 tokens for GOAT show a great deal of variation. This is alluded to by the ellipses in Figure 14, demonstrating the range of productions based on that variation. While Ray only has 5 tokens to compare with, Jim's range of production for GOAT emulates the patterns across speakers—namely, that there is not clear or predictable outcome based on total results. Nevertheless, this plot does show that they

both participate in the fronting of the vowel. The PB average reports 910 Hz for F2, while both Jim and Ray's readings are around 1300 Hz.

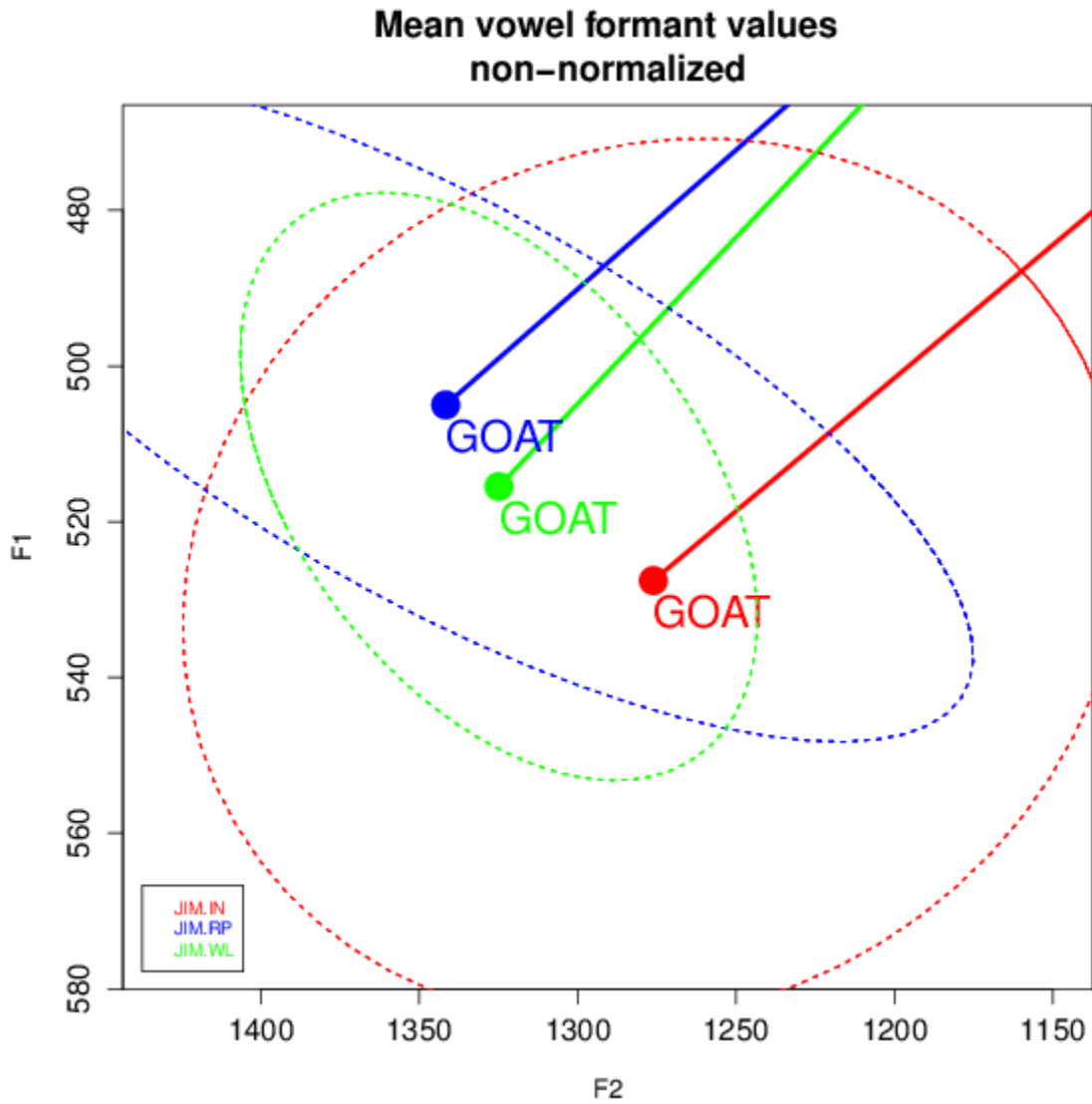


Figure 15. Jim, 24, Kingston, GOAT averages across tasks

Jim's variation across tasks seems similar to what we saw for some of the participants' productions of the GOOSE vowel. Namely, the interview's tokens appear to be less advanced in fronting than the other tasks. This, on the other hand, could also have to do with the disproportionate tokens across tasks; on the other hand, the other 4 four respondents who showed this pattern should be acknowledged as well (Chance, Ernest, Levi, and Pepper).

Of the 8, the other 3 who did not produce results like Jim tended to front GOAT most in interview passage (Francis, Marcus, and Patrick). For Marcus, though, the differences in mean scores are not as great as those for the other two (less than 100 Hz). In a sense, then, GOAT trends are in between GOOSE (which showed more advanced fronting outside of the interview) and FOOT (which showed more advanced fronting within the interview passage). It will take a bigger, more holistic understanding of the vowel systems and trends to make any claims about what this means, but it is surely a piece in the puzzle of stylistic goings-on here in this data set.

#### 4.1.4 FLEECE-KIT reversal

Overall, the respondents did not appear to engage in the FLEECE-KIT reversal, though their productions of the vowels were not necessarily like those of the PB dataset. Similarly, the variation from one task to another is relatively little. Ernest, 25 from Oklahoma City, happens to be one of the only participants who had a unique pattern in his production of these front vowels. Below in Figure 16, his vowels are plotted with against Tex, 31 from Edmond (a suburb of Oklahoma City). Although Ernest is from

Oklahoma City, he also went to college and lived in Edmond for a number of years, and difference in age is not as great as some of the other pairs that have been put together.

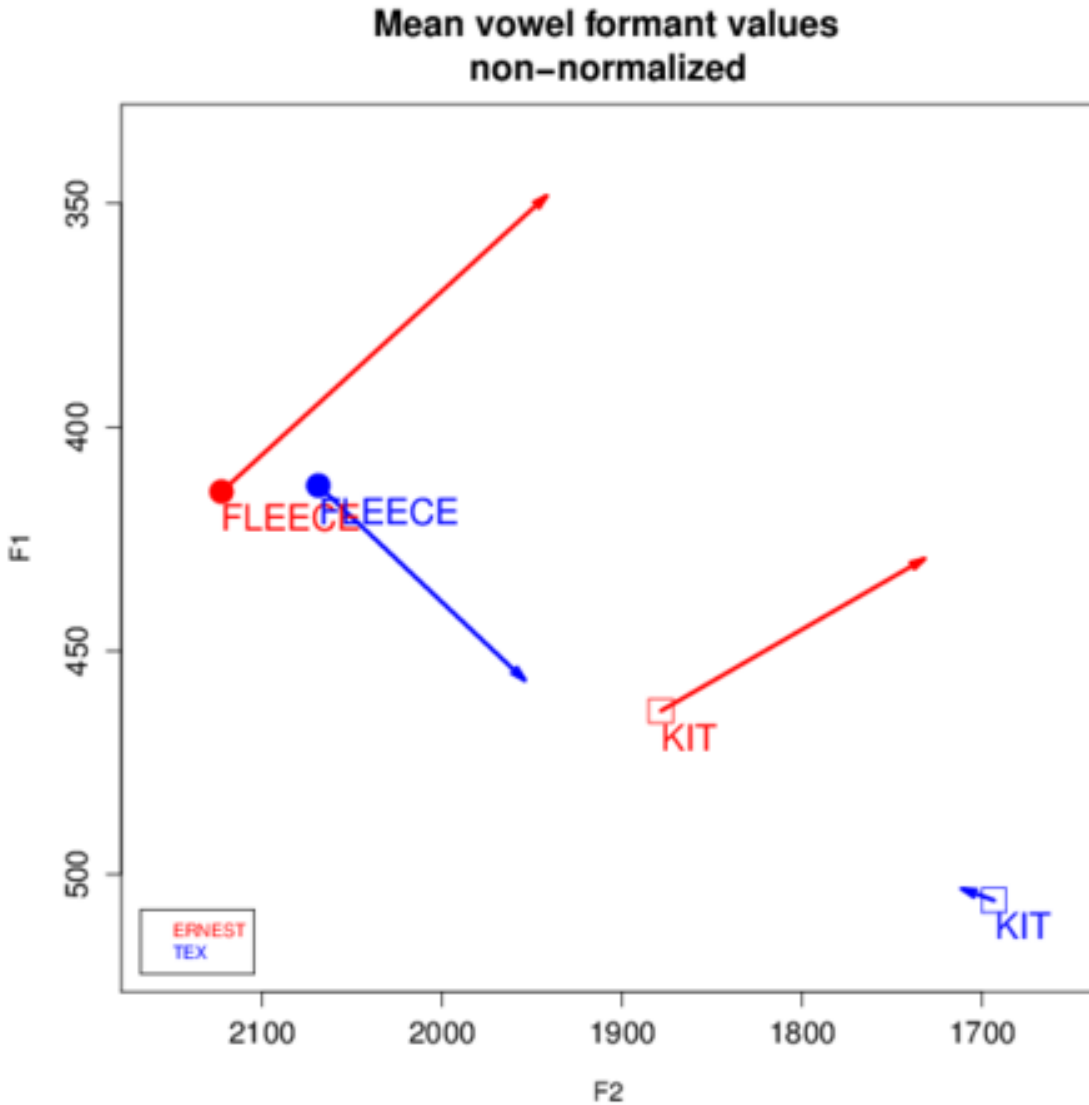


Figure 16. Ernest, 25, OKC, FLEECE and KIT averages, plotted with Tex, 31, Edmond

The biggest difference between speakers is that Ernest raises KIT more towards FLEECE than Tex. Other than that, though, there is not too much variation, and there is certainly

no completed reversal of the two vowels. In Ernest's cross-task analysis (see Figure 17), we see him clearly participating in the reversal (not to the degree of some Southern speakers, but noticeably still). Even more interesting, his reversal is most advanced in the word list task, which is certainly not what would be expected based on the attention-to-speech model but which is relatively consistent with Ernest's own variational patterning.

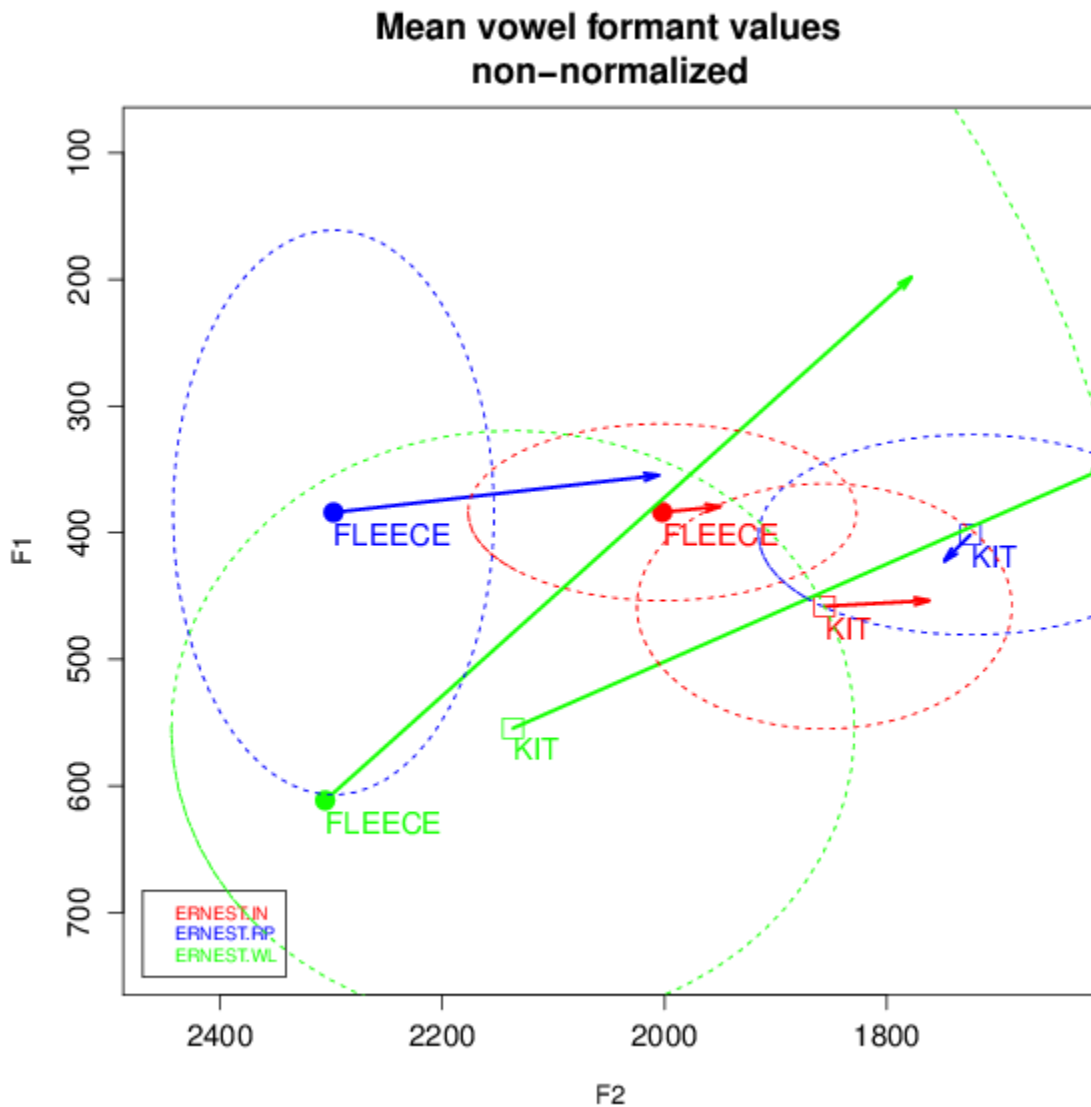


Figure 17. Ernest, 25, OKC, FLEECE and KIT averages across tasks

Ernest's word list pronunciations, across many different vowels, shows similar tendencies as here; largely, that they are often more markedly not "standard" than the reading passage vowel tokens, and often more than the interview, too. FLEECE and KIT provide an interesting example of this in Figure 19. Both reading passage and interview token averages show productions that are not quite like Peterson and Barney: for the interview averages, there is only 156 Hz difference in F2, and only 75 Hz difference in F1; there is a difference of 573 Hz for F2 frequencies between the reading passage averages, but they only differ in F1 by a mere 17 Hz. But what is most striking is the production of the two vowels in the word list task. Although they are not completely reversed like the Southern Shift predicts, they look as if they are partially engaged in that shifting. Both Marcus and Patrick show FLEECE and KIT vowels with ranges overlapping, and Pepper actually shows a similar partial shifting during the word list, but nothing quite as extreme as Ernest here. In the end, there are no consistent patterns for reversal, nor are there tendencies for pronunciations in one task compared to another. For this reason, there is no summary chart of trends in this subsection. These front vowels appear to be different from the back vowels already examined thus far, namely in that they do not appear to be as predictably consistent (or unpredictably consistent in some cases) as the others. This is not the case for all front vowels, as the next subsection explains.

#### 4.1.5 FACE-DRESS reversal

More respondents show signs of at least partially participating in the Southern-like reversal of the mid front vowels than do not. Bakos (2013) also comments on his RODEO respondents' being involved in this reversal, but it was hardly universal. This



particular dialectal feature stands out, too, in that it is most definitely Southern. That's not to say that other features are not Southern-like, or that they are not *likely* Southern, but whereas the fronting of back vowels occurs across the country in various regional variation, the reversal of the front vowels is most definitely Southern (Tillery & Bailey, 2008; Bakos, 2013). Below, Pepper's mean vowel tokens for FACE and DRESS are plotted with Ray, the RODEO respondent we have seen before, who is 39 and from Ada.

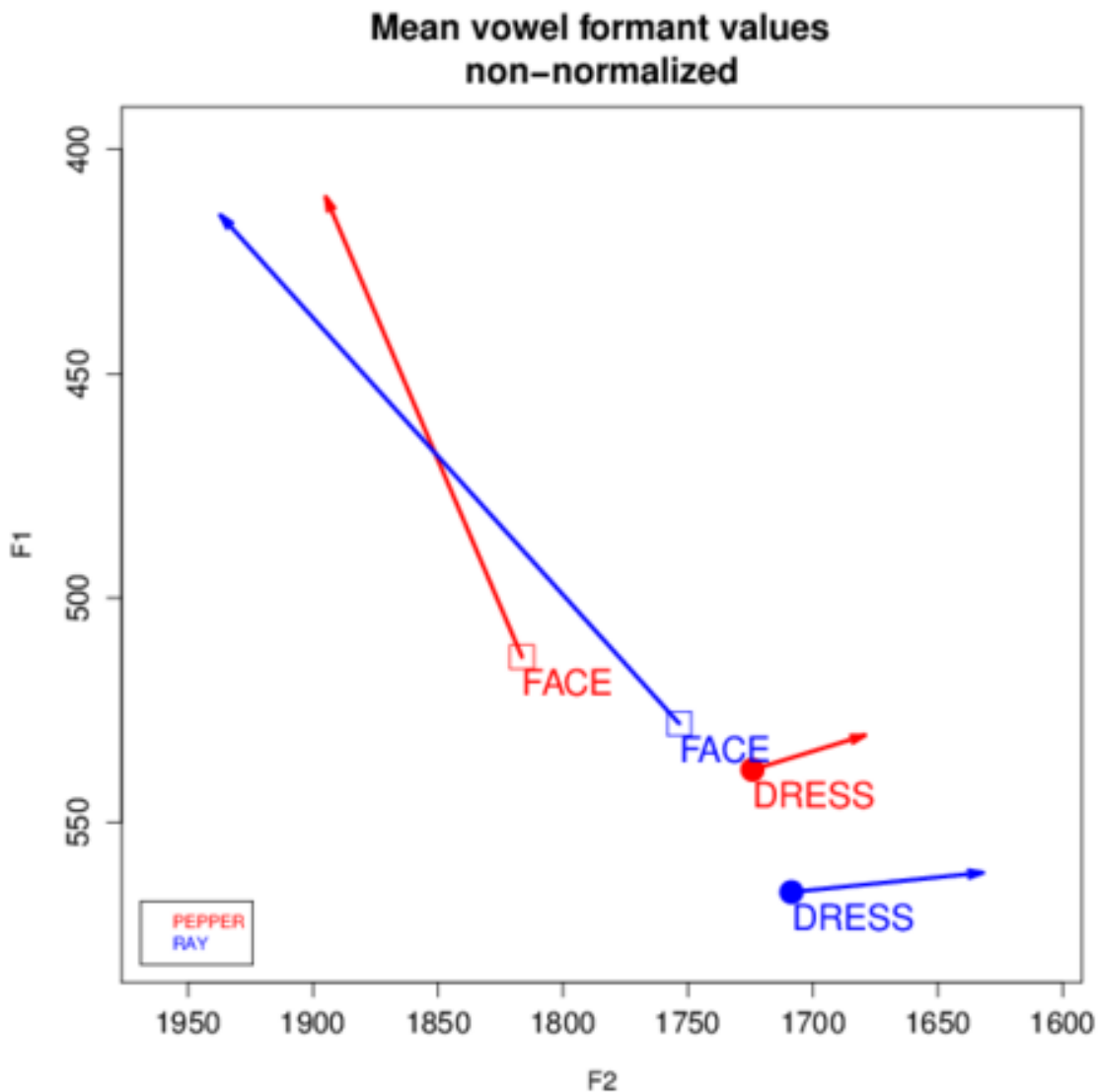


Figure 18. Pepper, 23, Westville, FACE and DRESS averages, plotted with Ray, 39, Ada

Again, the age gap here is not ideal for a comparative plot, but the rural status of the town, as well as its southern and slightly eastern location within the state allow for perhaps the best comparison with the given data set.

It's important to remember that Thomas (2001) notes on the lowering of the FACE vowel towards the DRESS, while Bakos (2013) claims that RODEO respondents seem to engage in partial reversal via the raising of DRESS rather than lowering FACE. Here, though, Pepper appears to have a higher DRESS, more than Ray, who correspondingly appears to lower the FACE vowel more than Pepper. Even still, note that the y-axis indications for frequency only span a range of 150 Hz, so Pepper's difference in F1 between FACE and FLEECE vowels is only 25 Hz. Conversely, Ray's 37 Hz appears to be much greater on the plot than the raw mean scores do. In terms of F2, on the other hand, Ray's vowels differ in 92 Hz, and Pepper in 45 Hz. These vowels are almost certainly still distinguishable from each other, but their relative positioning shows that Oklahomans at least appear to be involved in the partial reversal of the mid front vowels, especially in comparison to the high front vowels.

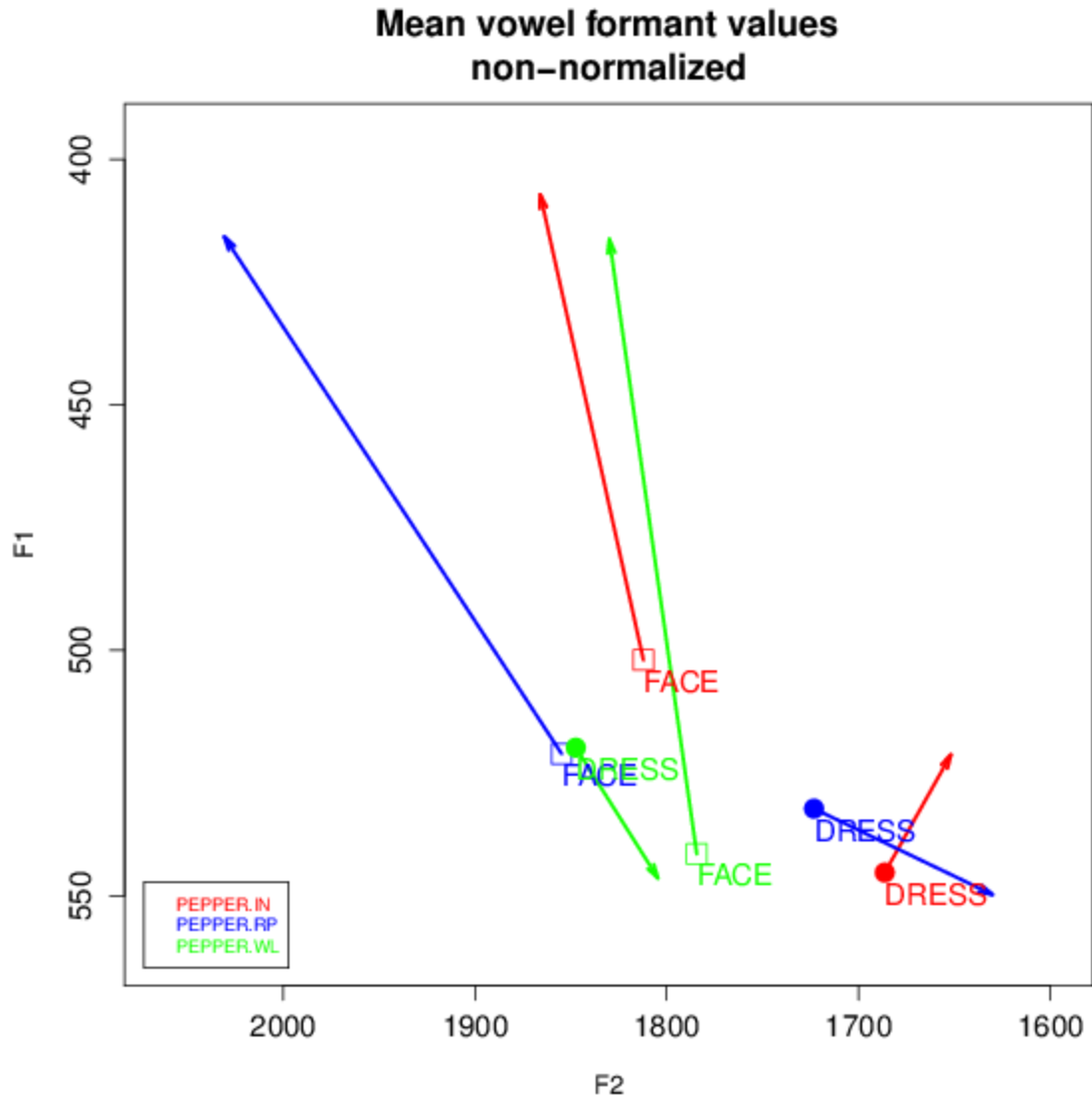


Figure 19. Pepper, 23, Westville, FACE and DRESS averages across tasks

Somewhat similar to the high front vowels, it is hard to make any claims based on the difference between the tasks and the mean differences for FACE and DRESS here. For example, the interview mean scores show an F1 difference of 44 Hz between FACE and DRESS vowels, while there is 126 Hz difference for F2, but the reading passage has differences of 11 Hz for F1 and 134 Hz for F2. The numbers are too small to make any

assumptions about movement or tendencies. The differences for the word list, however, are 22 Hz for F1 and 53 Hz for F2; while these are also too small to make much of a statement on their own, the plot shows that the DRESS vowel for the word list practically in the same place as the reading passage mean score for the FACE vowel in the reading passage. In line with that, the FACE vowel in the word list is lower than the reading list's DRESS and further back than the corresponding word list's FACE. This is all to say that, like Ernest's production of the high front vowels, Pepper's FACE and DRESS vowels appear to have nearly completed the reversal for the mid front vowels in the word list.

Much like the other reversal looked at in this project, it is difficult to have a summary table with regard to trends and tasks, so I will conclude this section with a description of some of the things to note with these vowels. First and foremost, all speakers show variation from PB values; in one task or another, FACE and DRESS show less distance between means for F1 and/or F2 frequencies than the "General American" model. Still, not everyone participates in the reversal of these vowels to the extent as Pepper. Chance actually shows considerably less variation across tasks (keeping in mind there is no data for him from the word list task), but his interview resulted in mean differences for FACE and DRESS of 61 Hz (F1) and 55 Hz (F2). His tokens from the reading passage averaged a greater difference for F1 (132 Hz) and a lesser difference for F2 (55 Hz).

Like Pepper, Francis' word list tokens show much more advanced reversal than the other tasks; his word list mean for FACE (F1=501; F2=1723 Hz) is in relatively the same place as the reading passage DRESS vowel (F1=504; F2=1647). That is, Francis shows near reversal, not quite to the extent as Pepper, in the word list. The other tasks

also show much closer productions than PB values, yet they are not quite as advanced in the reversal. Marcus produces the two vowels with the greatest F2 difference in the interview, with FACE at 1954 Hz and DRESS at 1712 Hz, but they also have the least difference in F1 than the other tasks: the interview mean F1 frequencies had a difference of 13 Hz, compared the reading passage (43 Hz) and the word list (45 Hz). Ernest and Levi show the least variation, though still with less distance between the vowels than PB values. Jim and Patrick actually produce their vowels with relative consistence with some of the other respondents. Jim, like Marcus, shows the greatest F2 difference in the interview task (though never by more than 21 Hz), and like Chance, the task with vowels means with the greatest difference in F1 show the least difference in F2, though for Patrick it's in the word list task and not the interview.

In summary, the variation across speakers across speakers does not allow for easily understood trends or predictable patterns like some of the other features in this chapter. Two speakers showed little to no variation across tasks, particularly with regard to relative mean difference scores between FACE and DRESS vowels (Ernest and Levi); the rest of the respondents did show somewhat consistent patterns, or potential patterns, of variation. For three respondents, the word list task resulted in the most variation from the other two (Pepper, Francis, and Patrick), while the interview was the task with the most variation for the remaining three participants (Chance, Marcus, and Jim). Ultimately, the patterns here are hard to solidify in that the resulting difference scores are very little, and in that the relative shared space for the vowels appears to be great.

#### 4.1.7 LOT-THOUGHT merger

The vowels of the cot/caught merger prove very interesting with regard to Oklahomans and the variation within the state. The same can be said of these participants, in that none of them produce the vowels distinguished like that of the PB scores. Much like FACE and DRESS, LOT and THOUGHT vowels appear to have more varied tendencies across speakers and tasks.

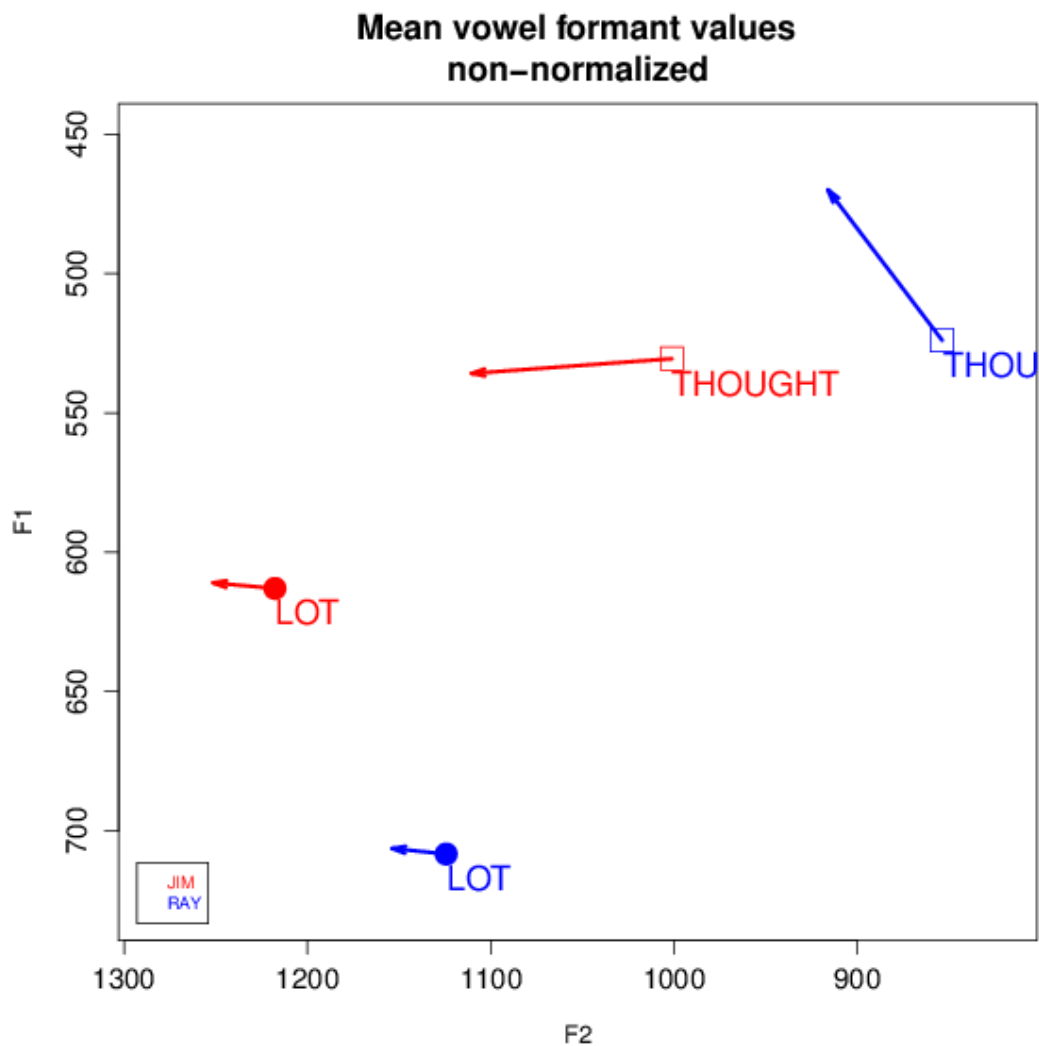


Figure 20. Jim, 24, Kingston, LOT/THOUGHT vowel means plotted with Ray, 39, Ada

Unlike the mid-front vowels, though, LOT and THOUGHT are rather partially merged for all speakers. In fact, some participants even display an inversion, or potential reversal, of the two vowels.

Jim is used here again as an example of some of the interesting things found with the LOT and THOUGHT vowels. Similarly, he is plotted again with Ray from Ada, OK in Figure 21. In the plot, Jim's LOT vowel is raised higher than that of Ray's, whose THOUGHT vowel is also backed more than Jim's. This is all to say that Jim appears to exhibit vowels with less "distance" between them than that of Ray's. Figure 21 below displays his variation across tasks, which is perhaps even more telling in that Jim appears to make the biggest distinction between the vowels in the interview, while the other tasks result in near merging or reversal by comparison.

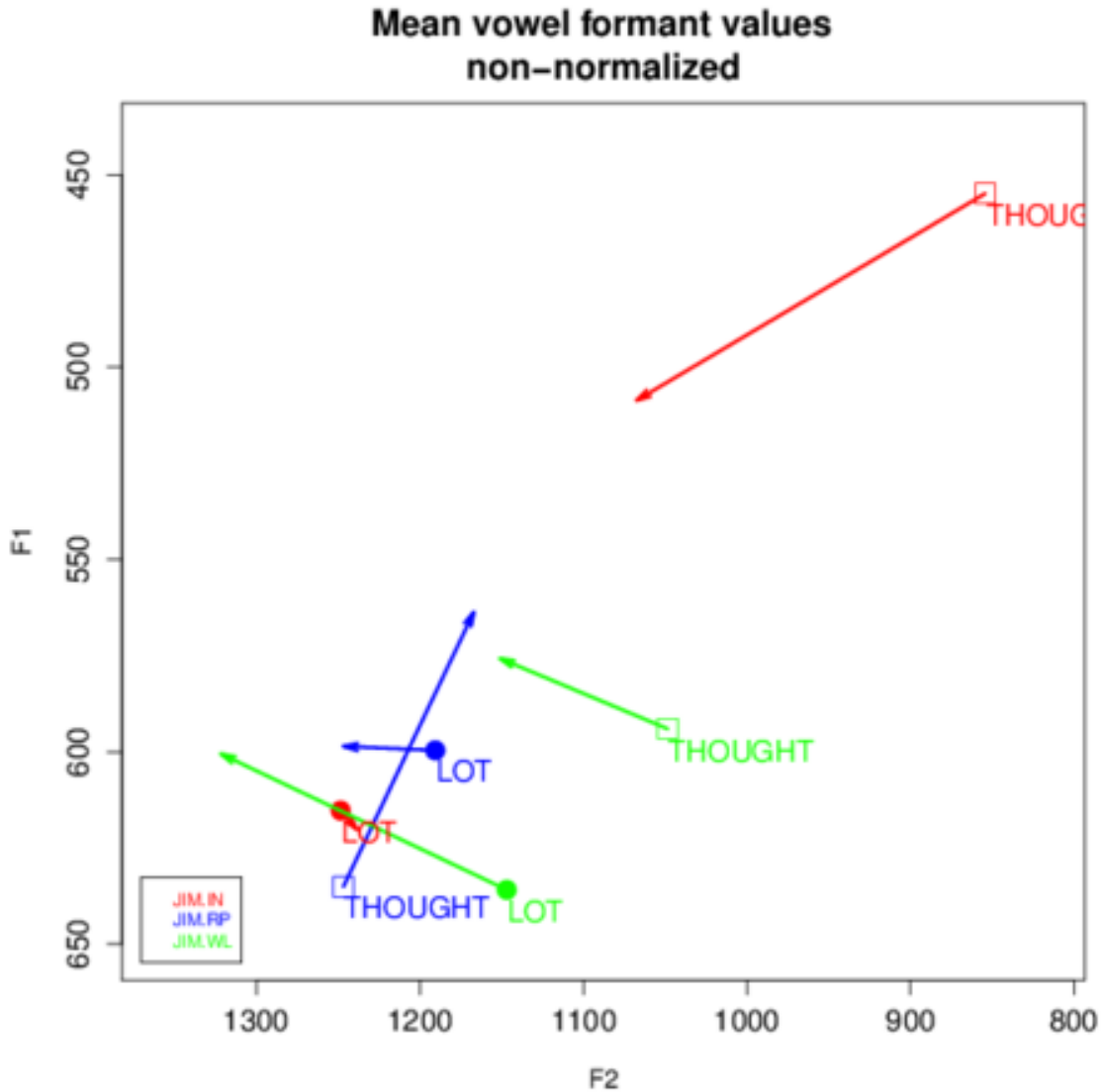


Figure 21. Jim LOT and THOUGHT averages across tasks

Here, it is important to remember that for Peterson & Barney-like vowel systems, THOUGHT is “higher” in the plot (which corresponds to a *lower* F1), giving the general relative difference between it and LOT’s F1 frequency a total of 150 Hz. Similarly, Peterson & Barney’s measurements for their difference in F2 is 254 Hz, with THOUGHT further back in the oral cavity than LOT.



Keeping that in mind, Jim's productions of these two vowels varies quite a bit. For example, his reading passage and word list tokens show average differences much less than the PB values, which essentially means that they are closer in proximity and, therefore, potentially participating in the merger. The interview, though, shows the biggest distinction between them. F1 distance between LOT and THOUGHT for that task is 161 Hz, pretty close to the PB 150 Hz. The F2 measurements, though, differ by 394 Hz, quite a bit more than the PB standards. Compare this to the word list pronunciations of the vowels, which are closer together, though still merging, and it almost appears to be a sort of hyper-distinction. Lastly, the reading passage actually shows the least difference scores between F1 (36 Hz) and F2 (54 Hz) frequencies, but that task actually produced an inversion of the vowels in questions, with THOUGHT fronted beyond LOT, and LOT raised higher than THOUGHT. Surely, this indicates that Jim can and likely does merge these vowels, but the inversion offers some interesting possibilities if the trends match up with him.

In short, the variation across all speakers allows for at least a couple statements: the first is that all participants merge these vowels, though to varying degrees; the second is that there appears to be a pattern, like Jim's, of being more conservative with the merging of the vowels in the interview section than in the reading passage and word list. For example, like Jim, Patrick and Marcus both show the biggest distinction between the vowels in the interview while showing them practically merged in the other two tasks. Finally, only Pepper showed consistent advancement of the merger during the interview. Levi and Chance showed little to no variation and were, therefore, left without any interpretive understanding of their trends. That does, however, leave the majority of the

participants exhibiting the aforementioned trend of conservative merging within the interview, not unlike the conservativeness in fronting the GOOSE vowel in the same task. The last vowels under inspection are the diphthongs, and there are actually some similarities between the trends seen thus far and what will be covered in the coming subsections.

#### 4.1.8 MOUTH fronting and raising

The MOUTH diphthong is one of the most interesting features this project analyzes, if nothing else than for the consistency with which these respondents exhibit Southern-like productions of it. All respondents engage in the fronting and raising of the MOUTH onset, a characteristically Southern pronunciation of it, and all of them show salient trends in the ways they produce it across tasks. Francis is again plotted in Figure 22 with Brian, 25 from Orlando, OK. Orlando is another small town, north in Oklahoma City and slightly east (not quite as far as Tulsa). He was chosen because of his closeness in age and the rural status of his hometown.

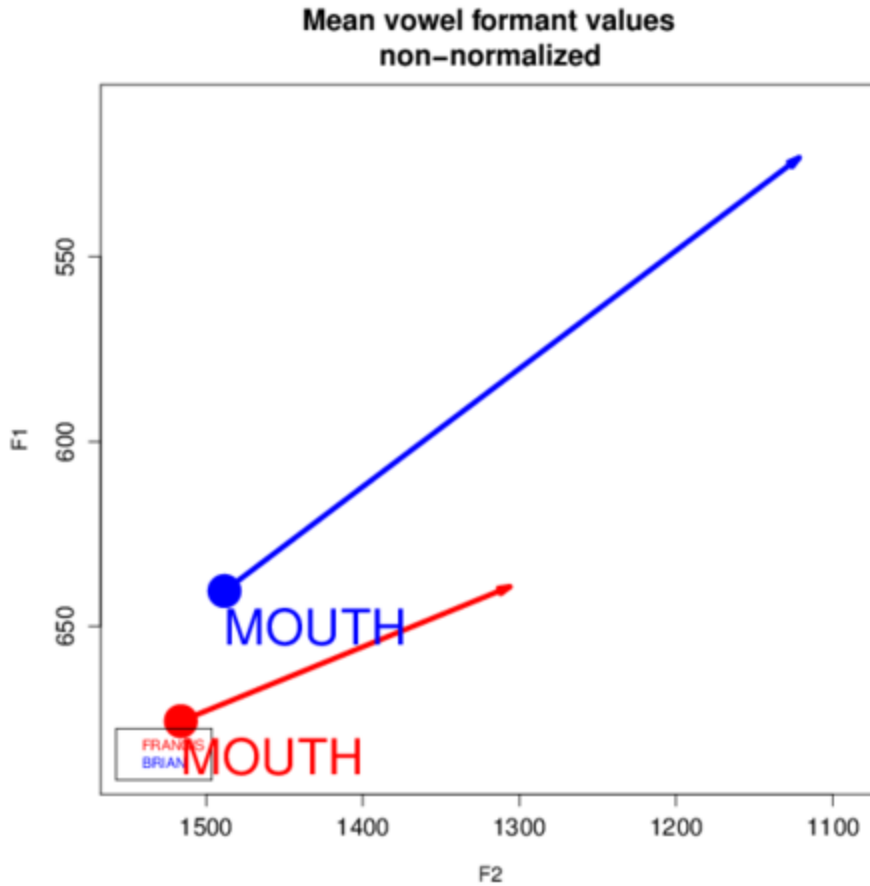


Figure 22. Francis, 28, Quapaw, MOUTH plotted with Brian, 25, Orlando, OK

At first glance, the plot shows some subtle differences. The onset of Brian's MOUTH diphthong is raised slightly more than Francis', but in the end, this difference is actually quite small. Like some other plots, the y-axis here actually only has indications spanning a total of 100 Hz. The difference between them is roughly 50 Hz (still an important difference, but certainly not as great as some of the others we have seen across gay and non-gay RODEO respondents). Secondly, Francis fronts the onset of his MOUTH vowel only slightly more than Brian (a meagre 28 Hz). The trajectories of their diphthongs also differ somewhat, with Francis' ending near the 1300 Hz marker and

Brian near the 1100 Hz indicator. This, though, does not tell us much. What we *can* take away from this plot is that Francis produces MOUTH almost identically to Brian.

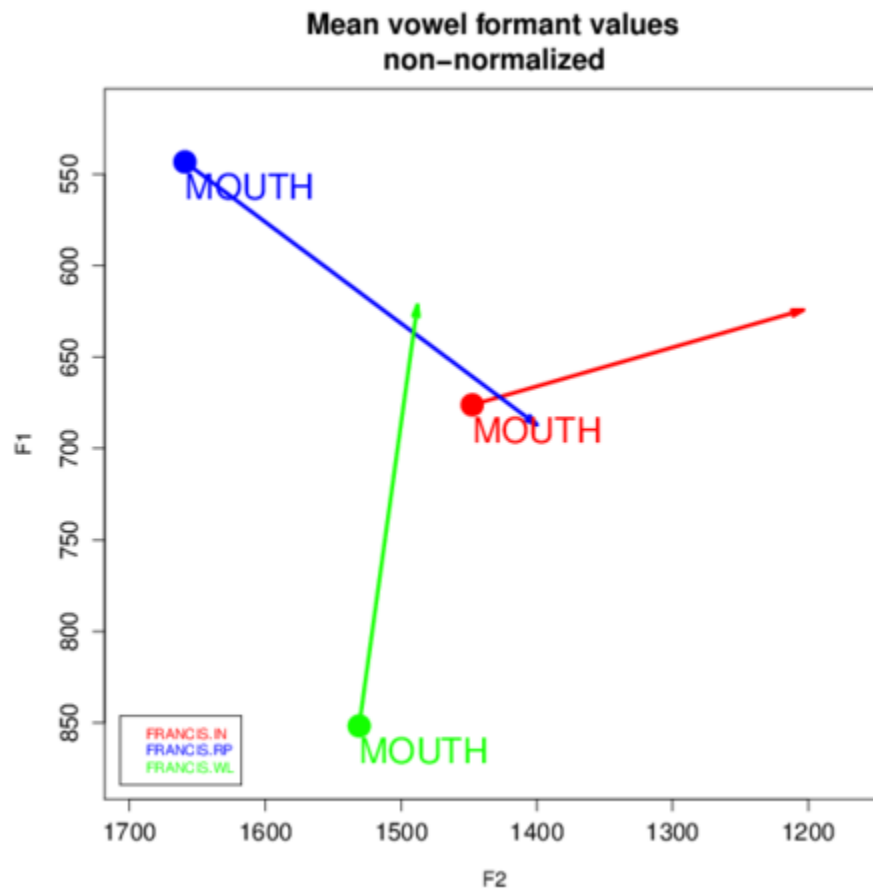


Figure 23. Francis, 28, Quapaw, MOUTH vowel productions across tasks

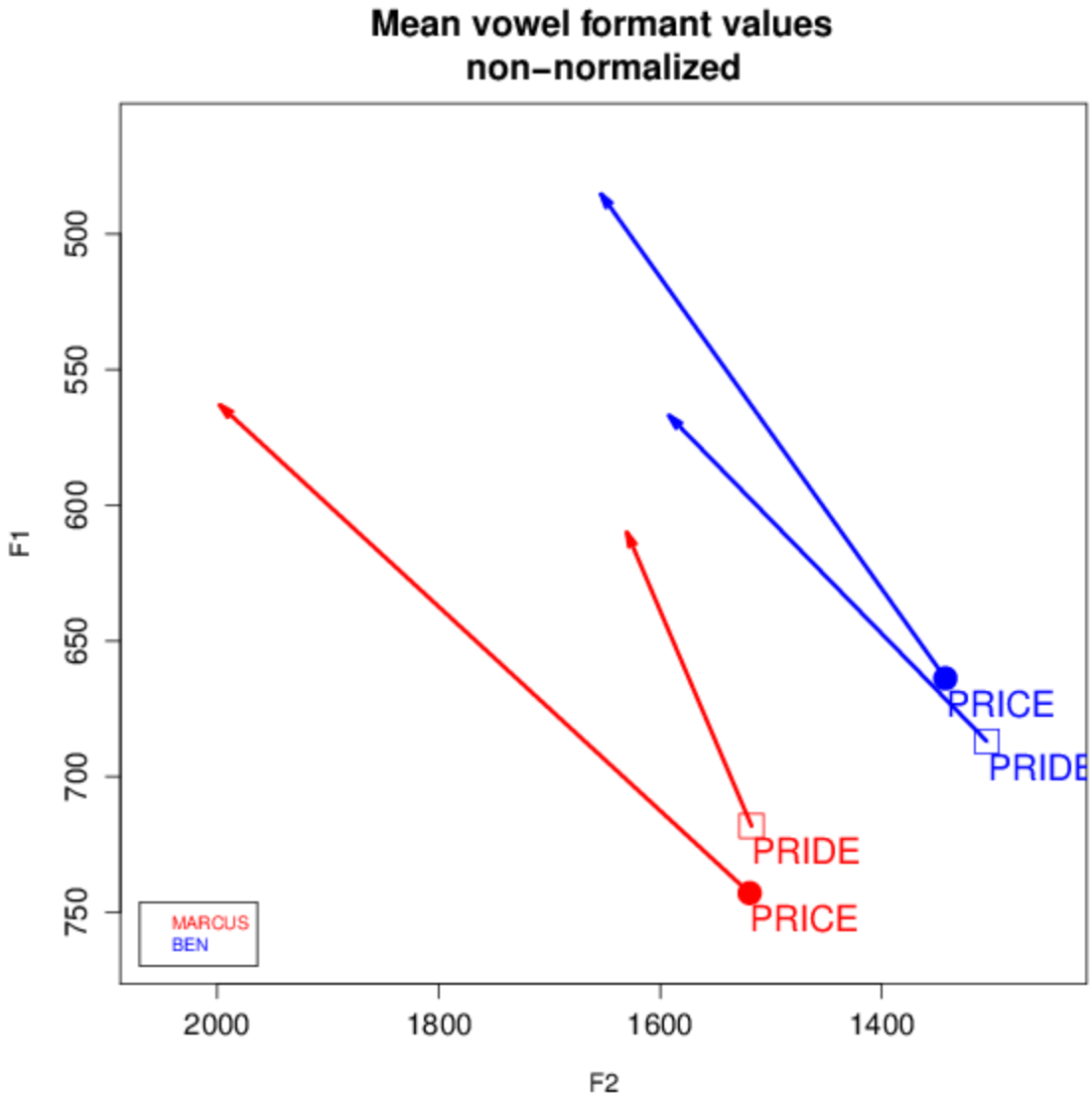
This plot shows that the pattern exhibited by Francis with regard to the more Southern-like productions of MOUTH, and how that actually lines up with some of the other patterns seen. That is, he shows more conservative productions of MOUTH in the interview (with regard to Southern-ness), a task which would predict the *most* Southern-like productions if we went by Labovian stylist theory. What's more, the word list task tokens averaged a higher F2 than those of the interview.

This is not unique in the set of data from the gay Oklahomans. Every single respondent showed more raising in the reading passage than they did in the interview task. All participants raised the MOUTH diphthong more in the reading passage than in the interview; all but one (Levi) fronted the MOUTH diphthong more in the reading passage than in the interview.

This is one of the more interesting features, probably because of the consistency with which the respondents show this, albeit surprisingly salient, behavior. For the most part, respondents tended to situate the interview task pronunciations between that of the word list and the reading passage. Some, though, showed variation even in this pattern. Francis, Marcus, and Pepper actually all showed more advanced fronting in the word list than in the interview, while the latter task still maintained more advanced raising. Once again, though, the reading passage resulted in the most characteristically Southern pronunciations.

#### 4.1.9 PRICE monophthongization

Across speakers, there is some variation in the onset's placement, usually fronted and raised from where the LOT vowel would be. The respondents do not show ubiquitous patterns here as they do for GOOSE or the MOUTH diphthong, but it is worth having a look at nonetheless. Figure 24 below shows Marcus, 25 from Marlow, and Ben, 45 from Edmond. There is some variation in their average tokens, but overall they look similar.



*Figure 24.* Marcus, 25, Marlow, PRICE/PRIDE plotted with Ben, 45, Edmond.

Overall, the vowels do show less diphthongization for PRIDE than for PRICE, which is to be expected. The difference, though, is not great. In terms of F1, the difference between the onset and the measurement at 80% of the vowel for PRICE is 179 Hz, and 108 Hz for PRIDE. A bigger difference does exist for F2, for which PRICE “travels” 478 Hz,

compared to a smaller 113 Hz for PRIDE. Ultimately, Marcus does not appear to be completely monophthongal, even with PRIDE.

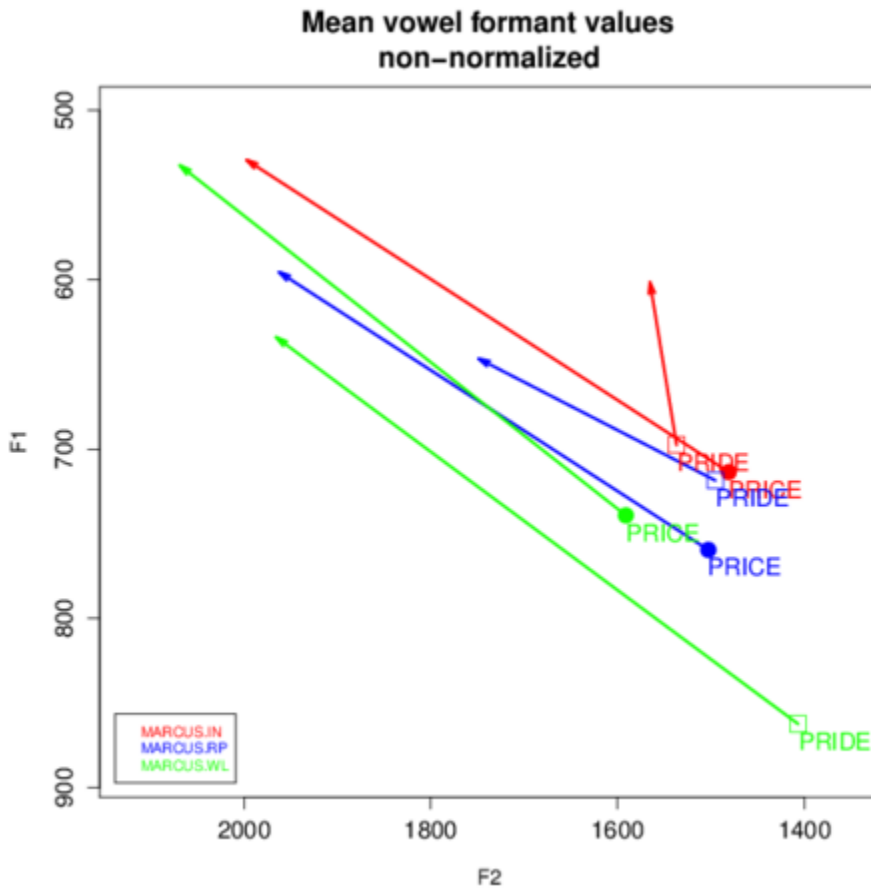


Figure 25. Marcus, 25, Marlow, PRICE/PRIDE averages across tasks.

The plot above shows Marcus' productions of PRICE and PRIDE across tasks, displaying the general pattern for many of the respondents. For the vowel with a voiceless coda, it consistently remains diphthongal. While PRIDE does not appear to be completely monophthongal, it actually shows smaller trajectories than many other vowels, vowels which are otherwise not treated here as strictly diphthongs (GOOSE, the front vowels, etc.). Unlike most of the other vowels, the min. and max. values do not help

to relate the general patterns for PRICE productions. Similarly, a table would not likely provide information for general trends either. So, I will briefly describe the tendencies for this particular feature.

It appears that most gay respondents do engage in at least approximating monophthongization of PRIDE, though primarily in the interview passage. All respondents except for Chance, in fact, showed shorter trajectories for PRIDE in the interview task. Interestingly enough, Ernest, Jim, Patrick, and Pepper also showed the longest trajectories overall in the word list task, with relatively equal length for both PRICE and PRIDE vowels. The seemingly anomalous Chance is actually not so different. His trajectories for both voiced/open and voiceless codas were also practically equal across both tasks. This could be to do with his having grown up in “Little Dixie,” where there is supposedly more Southern-like speech spoken. All in all, though, no respondents consistently diphthongized PRIDE productions in the interviews as much as they did the PRICE vowels.

#### **4.2 In summary**

The first point to make from pining over the data presented here is that these Oklahomans, regardless of sexual orientation/identity, look very much like other non-gay Oklahomans studied in the RODEO project and elsewhere. Where the study brings up areas ready for discussion lies in the variation, and patterns of variation, across tasks and individuals. Some of the trends that show up in the acoustic analysis could have been predicted, for the most part, given previous research and tendencies for cross-task style analysis; some, though, seem oddly contrary to stylistic expectations if “Southern-ness” is to be avoided in more careful styles (e.g. word list and reading passages compared to interviews). Some of the missing pieces of the plots (i.e. the tokens which were



unavailable in certain tasks, specific phonetic environments, etc.) leave room for further study of this possibility. Still, what we do have requires some mentioning.

In the case of the GOOSE vowel, for example, all respondents show fronting. This could have been predicted with past RODEO research, (Bakos 2013; Weirich 2013; Thomas 2001; Labov et al. 2006). What is surprising is that 4 of the 8 respondents showed more advanced fronting (higher F2s) in the word list task than in the interview; furthermore, 4 out of 8 also showed higher F2 measurements for the reading passage than the interview. The content of the interviews and the sequencing of the tasks is assumed to affect these results, and further discussion of this will come later. For now, it is important to note this particular trend as it is not the only one to show this type of patterning. That is, while all FOOT vowels showed up most fronted in the interview task — with the exception of Chance who did not have tokens for FOOT in the interview—GOAT's general variation WAS equally unprecedented. 6 of the 8 showed more fronting in the reading passage than in the interview, and 3 showed the most fronting in the word list.

This analysis saw some variation for FLEECE and KIT shifting, but ultimately, there were no speakers who showed complete inversions of them in ways that looked definitely Southern — with Ernest's exception, whose WL tokens often displayed more advancement in the variation under inspection in this study. In fact, none of Ernest's vowels in question were most “carefully” or “formally” articulated for the word list. The other front vowels being looked at, FACE and DRESS, showed more tendencies towards Southern Shifting, again not unlike other findings in OK dialectology studies. Francis, Chance, and Jim all showed Southern-looking productions of these vowels, the former in the WL task and the latter two in the IN task.

One of the most interestingly uniform trends found in this study were that all respondents participated in the raising and fronting of the onset of the MOUTH diphthong, which is also associated with Southern speech. More importantly, all respondents showed the most advanced raising (lower F1 scores) in the reading passage task than the interview. That is, every respondent in this study showed the most “informal” or regionally characteristic production of MOUTH in a task which would have predicted the opposite.

In the case of the PRICE diphthong, some additionally interesting patterns of raising appeared. For the most part, though, the IN task resulted in the lowest F1 measurements (5 of the 8 respondents); the other 3 either showed more advanced raising in the RP task (Pepper) or in the WL task (Patrick and Marcus). While Jim and Ernest showed higher placements of PRICE in the interview tasks, they also showed lower F1 scores for the WL task than the RP task. This trend, though, is not necessarily related to Southern-influenced speech. The priority in this study was to study the potential for monophthongization of PRICE, as this is indeed a marker of Southern speech. Most of the respondents show monophthongization or movement towards it in the interview task. Finally, as Bakos (2013) explored in his research, and to some extent Weirich (2013), the cot-caught merger is well underway in Oklahoma — and these respondents are no exception. All 8 respondents show at least nearly-complete merging of the vowels.

Table 7.

*Summary of features, trends, and findings*

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Trends</b>
<b>GOOSE</b>	All but one respondent show <b>less advanced fronting in the interview</b> than in either the reading passage (Francis, Chance, Levi, Patrick) or in the word list (Jim, Patrick, Marcus, Pepper)
<b>FOOT</b>	All but two respondents showed more advanced fronting in the interview than the other tasks
<b>GOAT</b>	5 respondents show <b>less fronting in the interview than the reading passage</b> (Chance, Ernest, Jim, Levi, Pepper); 5 respondents showed more fronting in the interview than the word list (Ernest, Francis, Marcus, Patrick, Pepper); 3 respondents showed more fronting in the interview than the reading passage (Francis, Marcus, Patrick)
<b>FLEECE-KIT</b>	Aside from the unique variation for Ernest, somewhat for Francis and Patrick, there appears to be no pattern of Southern reversal for these respondents with regard to the high front vowels.
<b>FACE-DRESS</b>	All respondents showed variation from Peterson and Barney; 2 respondents showed little to no variation across tasks (Ernest, Levi); 3 respondents showed <b>more advancement of the reversal in the word list</b> (Francis, Patrick, Pepper); 3 showed more advancement in the interview (Chance, Jim, Marcus)
<b>LOT-THOUGHT</b>	3 respondents showed <b>the most distinction between the two vowels in the interview</b> (Jim, Marcus, Patrick); one respondents show little-to-no variation across tasks (Levi); one respondent shows a clear merger in the interview (Pepper); the others' data was inconclusive in terms of patterning (Ernest, Francis, Chance)
<b>MOUTH</b>	<b>All respondents raise the vowel more in the reading passage than in the interview; all but one respondent front the vowel more in the reading passage than the interview;</b> 3 respondents show more advanced fronting in the word list than even the interview (Francis, Marcus, Pepper)
<b>PRICE</b>	All respondents but one show more monophthongization for PRIDE in the interview passage than for PRICE and in comparison to other tasks. Only one respondent showed similar trends across tasks and tokens (i.e. PRICE v. PRIDE; Chance)

The table above demonstrates some of the unique and interesting surprises that came out of this data. Bolded text represents findings and patterns that would otherwise be unpredictable according to traditional attention-to-speech style shifting (Labov, 1972). In short, the summary table emphasizes the features which appeared more conservative in terms of regional variation in a task that would have predicted less careful speech: (GOOSE fronting, GOAT fronting, to some extent FACE-DRESS reversal and the LOT-THOUGHT merger, and most notably, the fronting and raising of the MOUTH diphthong). These findings seem to suggest stylistic management of ways of talking in the interview, or at least they suggest something influencing their stylistic awareness for the interviews. Otherwise, they would likely behave much like they were expected to

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The previous chapter showed the acoustic realities of the subjects of this study, demonstrating their participation in some of the patterns of variation in Oklahoma. What that chapter also attempted to highlight, though, were the unpredictable ways that the participants did not produce results with regards to the style and register shifting across tasks that would have been in line with other studies of speech in Oklahoma. This chapter takes a look at the content of the interviews and the patterns that arose from them, allowing for possible interpretations for these unexpected acoustic results. Ultimately, this contextualization seeks understanding of the beliefs expressed by the speakers, their thoughts and attitudes towards language, towards Oklahoma dialects, and towards being and sounding gay in Oklahoma — if not in the American South at large. This understanding is expected to connect the more “unpredictable” results summarized in the previous chapter’s Table 17 to the beliefs and attitudes held by the participants; that connection, therefore, is expected to provide a further understanding of *why* those results might have occurred.

## **5.1 Brief participant summaries and “Oklahoman-ness”**

In the following section, the individuals involved in this study will be addressed shortly in terms of what trends they participated in, both expected and unexpected. It will also begin introducing some of the more discursual analytic analysis. After the introduction, I will turn to one of the first questions asked during the interview: “Do you speak like other Oklahomans?” This does two things: we will be able to compare the acoustic goings-on to self-perception, and we will enter nicely into the qualitative discussion of what is going on with these speakers. They are addressed in alphabetical order, hence their ordering ought not to be confused with any other system of categorization or ranking.

### **5.1.1 Chance, 23, Idabel**

Chance had no data available for the word list task, and is therefore a bit different in terms of interpretation (though not by much). Still, his vowel system is quite markedly Oklahoman. His hometown, again, is in the southeast corner of the state (“Little Dixie”), where popular opinion holds that statepeople sound more “Southern.” He is not so much more Southern-sounding than most of the other respondents, but he is consistently participatory in most of the variation underway here in OK. He fronts his GOOSE vowels into FLEECE territory, as well as his FOOT and GOAT vowels. For FOOT, Chance did not have any tokens for the interview task, and therefore was unable to be recognized as one of the respondents who advanced its fronting for that task. Given that 6 of the respondents did this, it is suspected that more data would likely align him with the others. Both his GOOSE and GOAT vowels showed more fronting in the interview task than in the reading passage, but when it comes to his front vowels, the opposite is the case.

Although he did not show much variation at all for FLEECE and KIT, he does show more advanced movement towards the reversal of FACE and DRESS in the interview than the other tasks. All participants showed the same relative pattern for MOUTH raising and fronting. Since only 3 men showed different results, this vowel will not be discussed in these summaries unless in reference to them. Lastly, where Chance differs slightly is in the LOT-THOUGHT merger and in the monophthongization PRICE. In the case of the former phenomena, he shows slight distinction in both tasks, but nearly reverses the vowels in the interview passage. He is also the only participant to show relatively similar trajectories (short ones at that) for both PRICE and PRIDE in both tasks. His response to the question of whether or not he sounded like an Oklahoma was one of the most brief and the most certain: “Yes.”

### **5.1.2 Ernest, 25, Oklahoma City**

Ernest is an interesting participant. He participates in most of the sound changes that the other respondents do, but he varies a bit as well. He is the only participant who did not show less fronting for GOOSE in the interview than in other tasks; nevertheless, his GOOSE vowels are consistently fronted into FLEECE territory. Interestingly, as the previous chapter demonstrated, he is the only participant to actively reverse his FLEECE and KIT vowels — and only in the word list task, strangely enough. His FOOT vowels were much like the other respondents, showing the most advanced fronting in the interview passage, while his GOAT vowels showed other tendencies. For Ernest, GOAT was most often less fronted in the interview than the reading passage, yet more fronted in the interview than in the word list. I will note that it's not surprising that the interview resulted in more advanced fronting than the word list, but rather that the interview

seemed to occupy a place in between the other two tasks with regard to advancement of variation. Unlike his high front vowels, Ernest did not show much variation in his mid-front vowels, though they were at least heading in the direction of reversal from the PB scores. Like Chance, though, his LOT-THOUGHT data showed clear signs of merger, but without any real determinable variation one way or another in across tasks. Lastly, he was like everyone else, showing less diphthongization for PRIDE tokens, particularly in the interview tasks. Since this was the case for all but Chance, who has already been introduced again, the remainder of these summaries will also leave out this vowel.

Ernest does not answer similarly to Chance in affirmation, but they are alike in terms of brevity: Ernest claims that he does not speak like an Oklahoman and that he has never even thought of himself as sounding Oklahoman. This is interesting for two reasons: the first, the above paragraph explains why and to what extent he *does* sound like an Oklahoman — very much so — and secondly, he gave an anecdote about being in Turkey and having friends comment on his sounding “Southern,” which he ultimately disagrees with. This, however, is not to say that he does not think of Oklahoman speech as Southern, to an extent. In fact, a number of times during the interview, he would use the terms “Southern” and “Oklahoman” synonymously.

### **5.1.3 Francis, 28, Quapaw**

Francis is Ernest’s partner of several years, as was mentioned before. Their interviews took place in the same room, and this is believed to have had a potential influence on the way they went; that being said, Francis does not differ greatly, or at all, from the other respondents. The influence just mentioned will be addressed later on.



Like the others, Francis does front GOOSE: he shows more advanced fronting in the reading passage than the interview, which in turn is more advanced than the word list tokens. This is the same pattern he exhibits for the fronting of GOAT. He also fronts FOOT most in the interview task. Like Ernest, he shows some variation in his high front vowels, though nothing so extreme; unlike his partner, on the other hand, Francis does show signs of the mid-front reversal, albeit particularly in the word list (more so than the interview). He is one of the few who also showed more advanced fronting of mouth in the word list than even the interview, somewhat of a pattern for him.

When asked about sounding Oklahoman, he also differs from Ernest:

*oh yeah / oh yeah definitely / uh / I don't hear it when I talk / but then there are times where I catch myself and I'm like / "oh my god, I did just- / I did do that" / I- I say words funny like / "milk" / well now I'm thinking about it but I usually say it like /milk/ or something*

He is one of the three respondents who say definitively that he does sound like an Oklahoman; unlike what we saw from Chance, though, he is not so brief. In fact, while we know that Francis' vowel system is much like the others, certainly like what has been summarized thus far in this chapter, his confession of sounding Okie seems tapered by the surprise that he feels when he realizes this. It is possible that, like some other RODEO respondents, he does not like Oklahoman ways of talking (Bakos, 2013). It may also be possible that Ernest's presence, and his responses before this influenced what Francis ultimately ended up expressed in response to this question.

#### **5.1.4 Jim, 24, Kingston**

Jim actually showed less advancement in GOOSE fronting in the interview than in the word list, and less GOAT fronting in the interview than in the reading passage. He fits in line with the others on the advancement of FOOT, further frontedness in the interview, which is also the task which produced the most advancement towards the reversal of the FACE and DRESS vowels. As Patrick is the only one left who showed any irregularity in the high front vowels, they will not be mentioned again until he is summarized. Jim's LOT and THOUGHT vowels actually showed the greatest distinction in the interview task, the greatest of all the participants actually, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter.

When asked about sounding Oklahoman, he aligned with the other respondent from southeast of Oklahoma City, answering positively and very shortly: "Yeah."

#### **5.1.5 Levi 27, Tulsa**

Levi, like Chance, had no data for the word list task, and thus is a little different with regards to how his trends patterned out. Still, he is not less Oklahoman-sounding, despite his reservations in answering so. He lined up with the rest on FOOT fronting, and he showed less advanced fronting in the interview than the reading passage for both GOOSE and GOAT vowels. Where his acoustic results differ is in the little-to-no variation seen across tasks for both FACE-DRESS reversal and in LOT-THOUGHT merging. With that said, though, he does not have PB-like pronunciations of these vowels; rather, he just does not fall in line with some of the others on their conservatism of reversal/merging.

Levi's response to sounding Oklahoman or not was wishy-washy. He says yes hesitantly, but then is able to commit more with a qualifier: "at least like other Tulsans." Popular beliefs about the great differences between Tulsa and Oklahoma City appear to be less grounded in acoustic realities than in attitudes, at least given the data set here. Many of the participants who did not fall in line with the majority or with other groups are rarely from the same part of the state.

#### **5.1.6 Marcus, 25, Marlow**

Like Jim, Marcus' GOOSE vowels tended to be less advanced in the interview than in the word list. Like Chance, he had no FOOT tokens available from the interview and therefore was unable to be compared against the reading passage, in which he does front the vowel considerably in line with the other. In addition, he is one of the 3 who fronted GOAT more advanced in the interview than in the reading passage. Also like Chance (and Jim), there was little variation across tasks for Marcus' FACE-DRESS inversion, though they were not like PB vowels either, and he also showed the most distinction between his merging LOT-THOUGHT vowels in the interview. Lastly, he was one of the other 3 who actually produced MOUTH in the interview with a lower F2 (less advanced fronting) than even the word list.

Marcus was one of the 3 respondents who were unsure of how affirmatively to respond. His response consisted of 2 words: "um probably." When I asked if he had ever thought about it before, he said, "I have." It is interesting, and interestingly consistent with some of the Oklahomans in this project, to be unable to identify assuredly with the idea of "all other Oklahomans," but while being very aware of having thought about it

before. As we will see, there are a great many ideas these men hold in terms of how Oklahomans talk and what those ways of talking might be perceived.

### **5.1.7 Patrick, 33, Sand Springs**

Patrick's vowels are no exception to the trends described above. His GOOSE vowels were less advanced in the interview than the word list, and his GOAT vowels tended to be less advanced than the reading passage while more advanced than the word list. His FOOT vowels fit in with the trends, and he is one of the 3 who showed slight advancement in the reversal of the high-front vowels. In addition, his reversal of the mid-front vowels actually appear to be most progressive in the word list, like Francis and Pepper.

Where Patrick differs leads us into a deeper discussion of sounding Oklahoman and how that may be related to sounding gay, or in this case, perhaps *not* sounding gay. Table 18 below is a transcript from the interview, showing the question and Patrick's response.

Table 8

*Transcript for Patrick responses to sounding Oklahoman*

Interviewer:	do you think that you talk like an Oklahoman?
Patrick:	I think sometimes / I definitely do= / bu=t (4s) / I don't think / that I sound like my family...yeah / I also think that there are reasons for that
Interviewer:	mhm / other than being-- / having been to- / to Ohio?
Patrick:	yeah I think / a- some of that / comes fro=m / being gay and / being in the closet / and (2s) / being (.) very very aware / of the way you speak
Interviewer:	Mhm
Patrick:	and trying to hide / things that might / out you / I guess

His initial discussion of sounding Oklahoman is already mingled with his ideas of sounding gay, and of the realities of being gay in Oklahoma — or more precisely, of *sounding* gay in Oklahoma. A later subsection focuses on gay speech, where Patrick’s insights play a role in connecting some of the other responses together. This is not the only instance of identity, language, and consequence in these responses for OK dialects, though.

**5.1.8 Pepper, 23, Westville**

Finally, Pepper shows fronting of GOOSE to be less advanced in the interview than the word list, while FOOT lines up with the rest of respondents. With regard to GOAT fronting, his interview task shows more advancement than the word list, yet not to the extent of the reading passage. His FACE-DRESS reversal appears more advanced in the word list, like Patrick and Francis, while the interview resulted in a clear, practically

complete merger of his LOT and THOUGHT vowels, more than his other tasks even; he is the only respondent for which this was the case. Finally, Pepper was the last of the three who actually showed more advanced fronting of the MOUTH onset even in the word list than in the interview.

For him, when asked about sounding Oklahoman, he responded with a resounding “no.” Much Like Ernest, he believes that he does not speak like an Oklahoman, has never thought that he has, and appears not to want to. In fact, his exact response was a claim that he has never met another person who talks like him. While I never wish to take away from personal identity or the self-image that he likely holds in conjunction with this, I have to point out that overall, most of these participants sound very much like Pepper with regard to vowel production.

## **5.2 Interview questions**

The interview questions did not always elicit equitable amounts of speech from each participant. Jim and Marcus, for example, were relatively sparse in their commentary. Some of the respondents needed no further prompting in the semi-structured interview to elaborate or explain their thoughts. Darren, the participant whose acoustic data was left out, came into the interview (for his second time) ready to talk about his thoughts on ways of speaking. Ultimately, though, much of the perceptually informed ideas about gay speech in OK begins with discussions of gender and sexuality. For this reason, the following discussions take place in the order of the questions asked in the interview, except when elaborations or later questions overlap with the content in particular discussion.

### 5.2.1 “Do men and women talk differently in OK?”

Out of the 9 respondents who were asked this question, only 5 were able to say “yes” with relative ease. Nearly half of the respondents believed that men and women talk the same — or at least mostly the same. Only 2 of those respondents, however (Patrick and Jim), were able to say definitively that men and women speak the same. Ernest and Francis, the others who answered “no,” qualified it in different ways. In Table 5.1, their responses are displayed. The initial responses, “no” here, are bolded, and the qualifications or conditioning for those responses are underlined.

Table 9

*Transcript for Ernest and Francis in response to language and gender*

Ernest:	men and women / um / I mean specific to gender / probably / <b>probably not</b> / I mean <u>cause I hear girls that have the accent</u> / the Oklahoma accent <u>just as much as the guys do</u>
Francis:	<b>I don't / no I don't</b> / I think / that uh / overall / <b>everybody talks the same</b> / I think / <u>the= speech</u> / is a little faster for women / <u>than I think it is for men</u> / but I- / I couldn't pinpoint why / I don't know if / it's because / you know men just think about what / uh / I don't even wanna say that / cause I know men don't think about what they say half the time so / I don't know / yeah <u>I think women talk faster</u> / yeah but / not / too much noticeably and then / <u>men are like "eh"</u> / a <u>little slower with it</u>

While Jim and Patrick's responses for this question were "no not really" and "no hm-mm," respectively, their full responses are relatively lengthy. Ernest says "probably not," not quite with the same conviction that Patrick and Jim respond. His justification for this, though, makes it more telling. That is, the fact that girls can have an "Oklahoma accent" suggests that they speak the same, particularly since Ernest says that they can have this accent "just as much as the guys do." Deborah Tannen's (1990) *You Just Don't Understand* difference theory with its cultural ramifications in comparison/reaction to deficiency models of understanding gender and language offers insight into Ernest's response. By the logic of his statement, men are the model for comparison, against which women either hold up (are just as Oklahoman-sounding and therefore do not speak differently) or not. This does not explicitly create a dichotomous view of these genders as separate cultures, but it could be related to that. It would not be fair, though, to identify Ernest's response as wholly uninfluenced by the question, which could already suggest such a dichotomy by referring so directly to men and women's speech.

Francis' response is a little different. He answers more assuredly than Ernest; that is, he says "I don't think...everybody talks the same," compared to Ernest's "probably not." Alternatively, though, Francis offers actual examples of how men and women *do* speak differently — examples apparently from his own experience. He says "women talk faster," though he does admit that their faster rate of speech isn't done "too much noticeably." He also claims that men do not think about what they say half the time, a response largely given as a joke and which resulted in laughter from both the interviewer and Ernest, who was also in the room. This brings me to some essential contextualization



to better understand why Francis might have incongruent responses, or incongruent parts to his response.

I mentioned in Chapter 3 that I have known both Ernest and Francis for some time now. I also noted that they have been partnered together for practically the entirety of the 5 or more years that I have known them, and they are planning to have a ceremony for their union now that it is legal to do so in the US. This worked out in my favor, since we were all relatively comfortable in the interviews and other tasks, but it also allows for some otherwise unaccounted for influences. Ernest volunteered to be recorded first, and thus, his answer that men and women “probably [do] not” speak the same came before Francis’. This is not to say that Francis does not have an opinion of his own, nor that Francis is lying about believing “everybody talks the same.” It could, nonetheless, explain the degree of certainty with which Francis responds that men and women speak the same, while being readily able to explain how they, in fact, do not. To him, though, rate of speech is apparently not so different.

This is not the only instance in which that particular feature (speech rate) is used to talk about differences in speech, though. Shifting to the affirmative answers will show some of the similarities. The 5 respondents who answered that men and women do speak differently had variation in their responses as well.

Table 10

*Transcript for Marcus in response to language and gender*

interviewer:	uh / do you think boys and girls / or men and women talk differently around here
Marcus:	u=m / um / I'd say <b>it's a little different...yeah</b> / I think generally they do
interviewer:	mhm / uh / what kinds of differences / do you think / stand out
Marcus:	um / there's a- / <u>less length in / the way men pronounce words / than women</u> / usually / uh / like if I have to read the announcements / they go by pretty quickly / whereas / if a female reads them / they tend to last a bit longer / though we read them about the same / the same pace / <u>I noticed that she carries out words / a little bit longer than I will</u>

Marcus agrees that men and women do talk differently, though only “a little;” this is exemplified by the ways that men and women differentiate the length of their words. His qualification that the anonymous “female” we can assume he works WITH reads at the same pace as he does shows similar tendencies to Francis’ response. That is, there is an attempt to connect the similarities of men and women while still pointing out some areas where they diverge, however slight they may be. Levi’s response represents the same kind of thinking. He says that men and women use “different tones...but I think for the most part they use the same words.” With the addition of Levi’s contribution, we see ideas about rate of speech, “length of words,” and “different tones” used to characterize the differences in male and female speech. The relative lack of concrete evidence, or of more solid examples, reoccurs in other questions — most notably that on the

characterizations of gay speech. The remaining three respondents, though, answered the question of men and women's speech a little differently, referring not only to actual speech, but to ideas about men and women that inform speech.

Table 11

*Transcript for Chance, Darren, and Pepper on language and gender*

Chance:	<b>yes</b> / or I / think that they have / <b><i>an expectation to</i></b>
interviewer:	oh really
Chance:	<b>Yeah</b>
interviewer:	can you elaborate
Chance:	um / I think that / <u>Oklahoma is still very set in the-</u> / men / and female gender roles / or <u>male and female gender roles</u> / um / <u>and their stereotypes</u> / and so I feel like / a lot a lot of people / <u>if you don't have a very deep voice</u> / for a man / they / think differently or / or if you don't have a <u>soft / female voice</u> / they're like / <Q <u>oh she's not very classy</u> Q> / or something / so

Pepper: um / I think / um / just because / like I said / it always goes back to my small town experiences / but um / I would say that women tend to not / have as much / of the stereotypical Oklahoma / but there's such like / ***this pressure*** / on Oklahoma men to just / be like / country an=d strong and / so / they kinda tend to fall / more into the / stereotypes

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Darren: I mean / uh / **they can** / I think it / also depends on like / social class and / like SES kinda stuff because / um / I just feel like / well / that's definitely the case / but like / low SES or / you know / low social class um / men I think are a- a lot more / coarse / of course I think the women are kind of too / over like / higher SES / but um / I feel like women are- / **have to be more expressive** / and the **men supposed to be** like / you know the quiet like / but they'll shoot you dead if you mess up / kinda thing / o=r piss them of kind of thing / um / but they're like a- / more vulgar / I think

These three respondents' sections of their interviews are grouped together for two reasons: first, they either address stereotypes explicitly (Chance and Pepper) or refer to stereotypical behavior (Darren), and second they all address expectations for men and/or woman, often as a result of those stereotypes. As in the tables before, the bold text show the initial answer to the question, while the underlined text highlights examples and explanations, but this table also uses bold-italics to highlight the different expectations for men and women referenced in the interview. Note that Chance explicitly states that men and women have "an expectation" to speak differently; Pepper references "this pressure" for men in Oklahoma to be "country and strong," presumably through their language; and Darren says women "have to be" one way (expressive) while men are "supposed to be" another (quiet and stern). Chance tells us Oklahoman men should have deep voices or face the risk of being thought of differently, and with the addition of Darren's characterization of "coarse" male speech and of "shoot[ing] you dead if you mess up," we have some insight into what Pepper's comment on men having to be "country and strong" refers to.

These last 3 respondents talk about Oklahoma in a way that raises questions with regard to being gay in Oklahoma. Keeping in mind that their responses reach more of a consensus than the others, we will see similar patterns in the review of the responses to come. Although the specific details and stories recollected/outlined in the previous chapter often show varying results and patterns, the talk about gay men and gay speech exhibits a tendency towards agreement, or at least towards parallel understandings of the perceived realities of living gay in OK.

### **5.2.2 A second look at “do you sound Oklahoman?”**

Almost all respondents gave answers for whether they thought they sounded gay and/or Oklahoman. These questions occurred in different places, but they are treated together here because of their tendencies to overlap and show attitudinal data for Oklahoma dialectology and gay speech studies. As seen above, a 3-way split arises from the data when looking at whether or not the respondents believe they sound like other Oklahomans. 3 participants believe they do not (Ernest, Pepper, and Darren); 3 respondents are sure that they do (Chance, Francis, and Jim); and the last 3 believe they do, but not all the time — or not like *all* Oklahomans (Levi, Marcus, and Patrick).

Ernest explains that he has been asked by other Oklahomans where he is from, reiterating that he has never thought of himself as sounding Oklahoman — not even after his time in Turkey, where he was frequently referred to as Southern. Similarly, Pepper’s response was “absolutely not, I don’t sound like any other Oklahoman that I know.” Finally, Darren claims to have been raised without talking that way; he professes that being from Tulsa, as opposed to Oklahoma City, and watching a lot of TV has influenced his speech.

While there is no acoustic data to represent Darren's speech, we can take a look at Pepper and Ernest's acoustic results to see that, despite their claims, they do indeed sound like many other Oklahomans. This is very interesting given that Bakos (2013) found that most young Oklahomans were able to identify whether or not they sounded like they were from the state. However, remembering that Pepper and Darren both had relatively lengthy responses describing the societal expectations for men and women in Oklahoma, and in conjunction with some of the potentially negative connotations (Darren: men's language is "coarse" and "more vulgar"; Pepper: men are under "pressure" to be "country and strong"), their views of OK speech are not presented in ways that show their identification with it. Similarly, Ernest's reasoning for why men and women talk the same here is that he has heard both men and women speak with "accents," perhaps indicating the degree to which he hears it without associating with it himself.

Levi, Marcus, and Patrick were all hesitant to admit that they sound like other Oklahomans. Levi, for instance, makes sure to emphasize that he sounds like "other Tulsans," as opposed to other areas of the state, a fact often shown in the map-drawing tasks of Oklahoma internal speech areas in the RODEO data; he also noted that "by the Texas border it's pretty bad," but did not elaborate further. This is interesting because the two respondents who answered with a definite "yes" are actually from near the Texas border. Perhaps the notion that they sound "bad" is widespread enough for them to know they cannot deny sounding like the rest of their peers. Marcus says he "probably" sounds like other Oklahomans, a weaker commitment than some of the others, but he does say that he has thought about it before. Finally, Patrick admits that he may sound Oklahoman — but only sometimes.

It was mentioned above that Patrick is not the only one to mention language, identity, and consequences together. For example, the 3 respondents who knew that they sound Oklahoman all had different perspectives to offer, and this is likely influenced by their rural backgrounds. Both Jim and Chance responded to the question of sounding Oklahoman with a one word answer: “yes.” These two are not from the central part of the state; in fact they are both from the near the southern state border — Chance from Idabel in the Southeast, and Jim from Kingston, a town practically on the beach of Lake Texoma. They are both closer to neighboring states than they are to Oklahoma City or Tulsa. This could, of course be a factor in the willingness to admit their dialectal identity. Francis elaborated a bit more though, saying that he will “catch” himself and remark “oh my god” in surprise. He also says that sometimes he will say “milk” like /miłk/, an acoustic fact that did not show up consistently in the production of his front vowels, but is likely related to the (partial) reversal of his front vowels. Francis is also from outside of Central OK, a town called Quapaw which is only 20 miles away from Joplin, MO, compared to the 100 miles that separate it from Tulsa, or the 200 between it and Oklahoma City. These rural towns are likely influential in informing the respondents of Oklahoma gender expectation and general attitudes towards Oklahoma speech. For example, Table 5.4 shows Chance and Jim’s responses to questions about their attitudes towards ways of speaking in Oklahoma.

Table 12

*Transcript for Chance and Jim on linguistic discrimination*

Chance:	um / I think it's / it's still <u>such a closed minded thing</u> in Oklahoma / um / to depict <u>someone's lifestyle / and the way they live / based off of their / you know / the way they talk</u> / that's such a- / such a / minuscule thing / about a person / and yeah that's / <u>upheld to be such a / a huge determination of / the person's character</u>
Jim:	it doesn't bother me either way...um not--I mean-- I think it's fine / whatever / the way people speak / I mean / I think that stereotypically Southern- / or <u>Oklahoma-Southern accents are-- / that people think you're more unintelligent / if you have a gayer accent or / you sound more feminine / then they think you're gay</u> / so that's the stereotype towards that / so that's what I would say

The two respondents from the southernmost part of the state are so very much aware of language attitudes that, when asked about their own feelings, they respond with their problems with others' attitudes towards Oklahoman and gay dialects. By now, we can imagine the ways that perceived expectations for gender in the state, combined with well-known stigmatization of Southern and and Southern-influenced Oklahoma speech, might be related to how these men think about a "gayer accent," to borrow Jim's words. That is, in a state which houses negative attitudes towards its own pervasive ways of speaking, linguistic insecurity seems inevitable. Compare their responses to Darren's, who proudly boasts that he is from the greater Tulsa area, and how he responds to his feelings towards ways of talking in OK.

Table 13



*Transcript for Darren on how he feels about ways of speaking in OK*

Darren:	um / I don't think / either one's wrong / I don't like / I don't really like to hear- / or / that's not / what I mean / <u>I don't really like / the Oklahoma accent / or dialect or / dialect or whatever / um / but I mean I'm not gonna like / not talk to someone because they have one / you know / uh / <u>and the same goes fo=r / like / the gay / dialect or / um / @@ growing up I called it a gay-cent / @@@ / but like / um / I don't know like I- / if I have one / I don't think it's very strong / and / I don't know / <u>I think it makes you-- / it can almost make you a target / because people do hear it / and I think / <u>well straight people hear it / and I think um / I don't-- / <u>sometimes I get a little uncomfortable</u> around it / if I- if I'm not / <u>feel like I'm not necessarily in a safe / place</u></u></u></u></u>
interviewer:	talking gay or Oklahoman
Darren:	the gay / uh

Darren's initial response seems to confirm the suspicions of both Chance and Jim. Darren makes no association, in this section, with Oklahoma speech and unintelligence, but he is readily able to admit he does not like it. And "the same goes for...gay dialect," to put it in his words. However, when it comes to sounding gay, Darren appears to disapprove of it. Being a "target" or not being in a "safe place" certainly seems to suggest potential ramifications for being gay, or sounding gay, in Oklahoma. This reasoning for not supporting a "gay dialect" is different from the framing of his remark on Oklahoma dialects. He does correct himself, but his initial utterance begins with not liking to hear

the Oklahoma accent. So, the response begins with aesthetics, but ends with issues seemingly related to safety and socio-cultural problems, though he does not necessarily blame the straight people who would be “targeting” gay-speakers.

Reviewing the responses, Chance, Jim, and Francis all know they sound Oklahoman; they also are all able to say, or imply, when that isn’t a good thing. For Chance, he knows that “miniscule things” about a person, like speech, are held up to determine their “character.” Jim is aware that Southern speech is associated with unintelligence. Francis, though not as explicit as the others, notes that he will “catch” himself sounding Oklahoman, remarking “oh my god,” as though he were actively trying *not* to sound such a way. These hint towards an awareness of attitudes towards Oklahoman speech. Compare this to Darren’s displeasure with OK dialects and Levi’s comments on “ugly” regional speech, and the hinting is even stronger. Noting Patrick’s intertwining of gay and OK speech being covered up or modified allows for an easy transition into the next section, where the study looks at their responses to whether or not they can tell if a man is gay based on how he speaks.

### **5.2.3 On linguistic “gaydar”**

This section focuses on the participants responses to whether or not they could tell if someone is gay based on their speech. This leads the way into their ideas on what gay speech is, or what speech might register as gay to the listener. Interestingly enough, all but one participant ultimately said that they would be able to, although 5 of them qualified or conditioned their response to address how that could be based on stereotypes and/or societal influence. 3 respondents were very confident in their ability to do so, while only Pepper denied being able to tell if someone is gay. He, like others when

prompted, did admit that there is a way for a gay man to speak that would make others assume he was — even if that assumption is based on stereotypes.

Darren, Marcus, and Patrick all claimed to be able to tell without any hesitation. Some of the respondents were quick to mention that guessing a sexual orientation or identity based on speech is dubious, and most of them were asked a follow up question — “Is there a way that someone could talk that would make other people think he’s gay?” For those hesitant to respond, even for Pepper who would not claim he could tell, all answered resoundingly, yes. Table 24 is similar to those that have been displayed above, but here the numbers (1 and 2) indicate the initial question (“can you tell...”) and the follow up (“is there a way...”).

Table 14

*Transcript, responses to “Can you tell is someone is gay based on how they talk?” and “Is there a way...”*

Chance:	1.
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	feminine / more of a feminine voice
Levi:	<p>1.</p> <p>uh <b>yeah</b> / <b>but not always like</b> / <u>it's the stereotypical / feminine / voice kind of thing / but / there's a lot of feminine straight men / so / that I've met in my life that I / that I thought they were gay / but they weren't</u></p> <p>2.</p> <p><b>yeah yeah</b> I mean / <u>but it's like having like a feminine voice / or like / kind of feminine mannerisms when you're speaking</u></p>
Pepper	<p>1. <b>um no</b> / I don't every like to judge a book by its cover / I don't ever assume / that someone's-- / <u>I don't care if I see a drag queen / I'm not gonna assume that he's gay until I hear it out of his mouth/ like straight from the horse's mouth /</u></p> <p>so</p> <p>2.</p> <p><b>oh yeah / absolutely</b> / the more um / the stereotypical / gay voices / the / feminine sounds and /you know people / um we're in a / <u>we live in a harsh society and so people / jump to those conclusions and make false assumptions</u></p>

Every one of the respondents hedges their answer. For the most part, they apparently do not want to be seen as people who make rash assumptions about people based on popular opinions and stereotypes. On the other hand, this hedging says a lot about their awareness of the world's readiness to make assumptions about them. Chance claims that the portrayal of gays in OK is limited to an idea of "flamboyant culture," and though Jim believes that speech can give away gender identity (rather unexpected, given

he was one of the few who thought there was no difference in the ways that men and women speak), he denies being able to tell sexual preference. Levi mentions stereotypes as the basis for these kinds of assumptions, but then he adds that a “feminine voice” is what causes people to make those assumption. And finally, Pepper reminds us of the “harsh society” we live in, one which is ready to make assumptions about people based on how they speak. Ernest and Francis’ answers were not dissimilar; Ernest says that he can’t “definitively” tell anything, but that there is something he can pick up on. Francis, similarly, says yes, but that he does not like to make SUCH assumptions.

What these respondent have to say is important. They believe what they say. More importantly than that, the believe they are a part of the groups they are discussing. When asked about the possibility of sounding stereotypically gay and stereotypically Oklahoman, some of them had very interesting responses. Chance said yes, “me 99% of the time.” Francis’ exact words were, “oh yeah, me.” And Marcus, when talking about the possibility of performing both ways of speaking, said “I’m both.” Ernest does not think he sounds Oklahoman, but when asked what gay speech sounds like, he told me, “just listen to this recording.” Levi admitted that he does too, “sure I get a lisp now and then.” Darren and Patrick claim to have actively modified their speech — which could account for their awareness of those same attitudes described in Table 23 Pepper did not comment on thinking he sounds gay, and Jim was the only one to claim not to sound gay.

Jim’s explanation for his speech is really telling. In one passage, he remarks that his small town had no LGBT community, that he felt he had to pretend to be straight (which suggests that he knew otherwise), that people where he is from sound “country,” and that he did not come out of the closet until he was already a young adult in college.

Sadly, this is not the first story like his to come out of Oklahoma. In the spirit of understanding the dynamics between culture and language attitudes, in gay communities and in Oklahoma at large, I turn my attention to the last thing that Jim says. In comparing his hometown, full of “country people,” to the gay people he hung out with in college, he claims to have been influenced by seeing “the two more extremes.” Given that the speech (i.e. “oh that’s how other people sound”) is the last thing referenced before this statement, it may be safe to assume that he is comparing “country” or small town Oklahoman speech/attitudes to that of more urban gay speech and attitudes. Remembering that the ideologies backing the rigorous rules men must follow in Oklahoma with regard to language, and the fact that nearly all gay speech has been described as feminine, Jim’s statement on these “extremes” may be more poignant than he would give himself credit for. Pretending to be straight in a country town, Pepper would say he felt the “pressure” of having to be “country and strong.” The ways that these men see themselves in relation to the culture around them, small town or otherwise, lies at the core of understanding their potential awareness of their language.

After reviewing the responses thus far, the picture is clearer. For the respondents who had ideas about the differences in men and women’s speech, much of the reasoning went back to societal expectations. More apparent were the attitudes and beliefs about Oklahoman speech. Finally, when we review general attitudes to “gay speech,” or of speech that leads listeners to assume gay identity, we see the connections being made from one realm to another. Oklahomans are aware of attitudes about Oklahoman dialects; part of the culture that is associated with those dialects, at least for some of these participants, is directly tied to the gender roles of that culture. Given that all descriptors

of gay speech above center around “flamboyant,” “effeminate,” and “feminine” speech, the strength of relations among these attitudes becomes apparent. The last section of this chapter turns to the description of gay speech.

Table 15

*Transcript, respondents characterizing gay speech*

Chance:	I don't know / <u>flamboyant voice</u> to me would sound / like something that's somewhat masculine / you know / definitely / <b>more of a tenor</b> voice / um / but with / <b>a very feminine uplifting / I don't know / tone to it</b>
Ernest:	just listen to this recording / @@@ / um= yeah just / I feel like it's <b>quicker speak</b> / and <b>gays talk a lot faster</b> / um= <b>and higher</b> ... I hate that that / that I have to say it / that I have to like gender-ize it / I mean / <u>make it less masculine</u> / but I mean that's what it is / that's what it sounds like
Francis:	very kind of like <u>flamboyant</u> / and <b>higher pitched</b> / um / but yeah / I mean I think you can tell / I mean / not only by voice but mannerisms but / by <u>tone of voice</u> / <b>certain phrases certain words</b> that / they choose / that- that's in the community /um that you- / you know you just hear / I think you can tell / We- we have it- / we call it <@ gay in the face @> / they have gay in the face / you can just tell by / their face and / what's going on that / their words and everything- / that they- / they are probably gay.
Jim:	<b>higher pitched</b> / or / yeah I think more / <b>just higher /high pitched</b> and / that's it I guess
Marcus:	the <u>effeminate</u> part of it / like <u>I've got it in my own voice too</u> ... um= / its



	<p><b>usually kinda higher pitched--</b> / there's uh / there's something in it that's different</p>
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Of the 5 respondents shown above in Table 5.8, 4 specifically correlate higher pitch to gay speech — most often as a way of describing what feminine or effeminate speech is, though that did not stop most of them from using those same words in their descriptions. Ernest’s addition of faster rates of speech and Francis’ inclusion of word choice show some variation in specifics, but the vast majority of these characterizations still heavily rely on oversimplified notions of gender-related descriptions without any real explication of what is meant. Darren, not included here, only added again that it’s just “a little bit more flamboyant” and “a little bit more effeminate.” Levi cited a popular pronunciation of “yes” as “yas,” but only after claiming this speech to be more feminine. And Pepper identifies the “feminine features that a man possesses” as the reasons for having gay labels put on him, usually based on assumption.

### **5.3 In summary**

Much of what these participants hold to be true about language in OK is demonstrated through their answering of the interview questions. We begin to see, then, that these men see gay speech as inherently feminine. Many of them also see masculinity as something routinely regulated and conditioned, rigorously maintained by straight men. The confluence of gender ideology as it relates to Oklahoman culture, and the belief that gay-associated speech *must* be effeminate renders the two conceptually incompatible. It’s no wonder these men must explain the role of stereotypes so much. Even in the defending of masculine gay men and effeminate straight men, the language used to describe

stereotypical, recognizable, and for many, native gay speech is drenched with notions of gender regulation and strictly binary modes of categorization.

I imagine that, much like Jim reminds us that Southern speech produces assumptions about the speakers lack of intelligence, gay speech (in this study) has proven to elicit assumptions of the speaker's lack of masculinity. That is, in the same ways that Southern speech is caricatured as “sounding dumb,” an iconic association of Southern people mapped onto the language that they use, the assumptions that gay men are naturally more feminine and therefore less masculine is equally mapped onto the language they use. In this way, masculinity becomes a target, albeit an unhittable one, for gay men.

All that exists around that target, then, is feminine, no matter how close to the objective their pronunciations, words, phrases, pitches, etc. land. These men see masculinity as the default way of talking for men and as the strictly governed standard for straight men, who are in turn governed by straight masculine culture — here, specifically, a straight masculine, “country” or Oklahoman culture. Their defense against assumptions made about them, and all speakers of gay speech, still refer to such language as feminine. Such a stressful position would clearly motivate these speakers to keep some level of awareness about how they speak, when and where they speak in certain ways, and the degree to which they can express themselves in these various ways. To illustrate this, I remind you of Patrick, who had a different response for being able to tell if someone is gay.

Remembering Table 17 at the end of Chapter IV, the most outstanding pieces of evidence that these interview questions/subjects/content has affected their speech productions — at

the very least their attention to their speech — is the fronting of GOOSE, GOAT, and MOUTH (which is primarily accompanied by raising). Of course, many other features examined in this project also showed unique and unexpected variation, but none to the extent as these 3. That they all involve fronting, and that all of the participants engaged in variation with them shows that these respondents were on some level aware of how they were speaking. The awareness with which they speak about life in OK for gay people, the confusing and ineffable rules underlying folk beliefs about gender and sexuality here are not conducive to expressing oneself with an alternative ideology or identity (being gay in particular), and in many cases these respondents talk about such a lifestyle as *oppositional* to Oklahoman society rather than merely alternative. It's no question that they all defend the right to be gay in OK, that they all condemn acts of assumption and stereotyping, but that does not change their needs to live life as regular humans with regular needs and regular fears. Not everyone expressed the explicit need to safeguard yourself from negative consequences for being gay; but everyone's contribution to this conversation aids in proving Patrick to be more believable. If he is right, then it appears most likely that such cultural awareness, such attitudes about Oklahoma and OK dialects, have directly affected the way that they talk — and most importantly, in ways that are characteristically and fundamentally different than “regular” style shifting. That is, what they believe about talking, about how they talk and how people receive the way they talk specifically as it corresponds to gayness, is a critical factor in their ability to be themselves, whether that be a self who is exhibiting more “Oklahoman” characteristics or “gay” characteristics. They are stuck between a rock and a hard place.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

All respondents show some degree of stylistic variation across many tasks, most saliently for back vowel fronting, FACE-DRESS reversal, LOT-THOUGHT merging, and MOUTH fronting and raising. That all of the respondents engage in inter- and intraspeaker variation, or some sort of moving back and forth of the back vowels, shows the rich diversity of speech styles here in the state. The trends mentioned at the ends of Chapters IV and V show the potential for capturing what an OK vowels system definitively looks like, particularly in comparison with the non-gay RODEO respondents; what's more important here, though, is the relationship between the content of the interviews and the acoustic variation assumed to be a result of it. While this is not the only goal of this project, it is a very central and important one. Showing that life in OK for gay men is tedious enough to drive them to explicitly admitting that they have to monitor their speech says a great deal about the communities they live in — more important, still, it says a great deal about their sense of belonging to those communities.

It could be that the subject matter of the interview sections (talking about gay speech) rendered them more aware of what they were saying. This could account for a move towards more “standard” pronunciations. However, if this is the case — and it certainly seems at least to be a possible explanation for some men — then the stereotype that gay men speak more standardly is actually a statement involving circular logic.

Remembering some of Bakos’ (2013) findings, many young people in Oklahoma do not think that they sound like other Oklahomans — and they do not want to. We see that these young gay men are not exceptions to this, especially given that they all state that they do not sound Oklahoman, or otherwise qualify the ways that they sound Oklahoman. Given what the respondents had to say about sounding gay in Oklahoma, however, provides a clue into understanding the variation seen in these vowel plots and data tables. Some respondents even acknowledged their susceptibility to sounding gay, which at least has the potential for “threatening” situations. (I borrow the word “threatening” from my interview with Patrick.)

If there is indeed cause for concern of being “out-ed” because of the way a person speaks in Oklahoma, then it makes sense that a gay man must be stylistically aware of the way he speaks, of the people who will hear him speak, and of the consequences for sounding the way he does. And if a young gay man from Oklahoma must pay attention to this, all the while sharing the attitudes of other young Oklahomans in not wanting to sound Oklahoman, then they are conceivably and linguistically stuck between a rock and a hard place. The combined effort not to “sound gay” along with the desire not to “sound Oklahoman” could potentially leave these gay men with nowhere to go (linguistically)

other than towards an American “standard.” That sort of proposal is almost impossible to prove given that these participants often showed Oklahoman tendencies that went “under the radar,” so to speak, in that they were not modified in the same situations as others. What can be said, though, is that standard or not, these respondents at least move away from Oklahoman patterns while at the same time trying to “filter” out, or “flatten” their speech enough to hide whatever indexes their gayness.

Movement towards standardization, or away from OK patterns, then, could actually be a preventative move so as not to be found out as gay, rather than some intrinsic quality of being gay. Moreover, the consistent acoustic variation across tasks could signify certain features which the speakers are aware of or have at the very least built in automatic stylistic responses to. Perhaps such respondents are “aware” of the LOT-THOUGHT distinction in some situations, or of the extreme frontedness of a given vowel. Different vowels showing different tendencies for individual speakers does not render this interpretation unusable. While there does not seem to be a universal system through which these men exhibit stylistic variation, most (if not all) of the variation tended to relate to Southern or Oklahoman ways of talking. Where the speech became more authentic, or at least more Oklahoman, in the interview section (despite the possible attention to speech on account of the subject matter), then the marked features might simply be under the radar of the particular speaker.

This study has shown some unique patterns among a group of gay men from different parts of the state, and the ways which they talk about themselves and their dialects sheds light on the possible reasons behind those strategies. Such strategies, in the end, say all too well what kinds of sociocultural environments must be at play to have

gay men feel they are so especially aware of how they are talking, and more importantly for them, how they are being perceived. After looking over their responses and seeing their consistent patterns with what Patrick describes in regards to having to be aware of how you sound, of workplace environment being unsafe for sounding too gay, of his trying to sound “flat,” we are given insight into just how stressful such worries could be. Darren claims that he has to filter himself around straight people; this is where the conversation around style changes its route. That is, where all communities engage in style shifting to some degree, the motivations for that shifting is greatly varied. Darren’s additional claim that he can be more of himself around gay people, that he does not have to filter himself, is not the same as a filter for formality. This filter is one born of intolerance, fear of judgment for being a minority, and from fear of being out-ed, in a sense. Of course, gay men in OK could hardly be said to be the only ones do deal with these issues; after all, most of these participants identify as cisgender (male) and white. It rarely does good to attempt quantifying or measuring social oppression, so that sort of conversation is left out here. Instead, I shift towards understanding the importance of recording this stage of Oklahoman variation, of life for gay men in OK today, and of general attitudes about gender, about people, and about life here on the Plains. It is bound to change; and it is bound to get better. Gay communities around the world have developed the habit of using this as a motto, for so many out there need to keep saying it so they believe it: “It will get better.”

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix A:** Respondent Information Form RODEO RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_

Data ID \_\_\_\_\_ (from the recording if the pseudonym is not used)

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (or other contact means) \_\_\_\_\_

Demographic Information:

Age \_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_ Group membership \_\_\_\_ (A-F from ETHNET)

Profession \_\_\_\_\_

Education \_\_\_\_\_

SS: Classification \_\_\_\_ (to be determined from Profession and Education)

Network Relations Part 1 (ETHNET):

What percentage of people from the following groups are your close friends and associates?

A. Rural and/or small town or city European-Americans \_\_\_\_\_

B. African-Americans \_\_\_\_\_

C. Native Americans \_\_\_\_\_

D. Mexican-Americans \_\_\_\_\_

E. Big City (e.g., Tulsa) European-Americans \_\_\_\_\_

F. Other \_\_\_\_\_

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Score Part One: \_\_\_\_\_

Assign score of 1-5 as follows:

100% respondent's own group = 5

75% - 99% respondent's own group = 4

50% - 74% respondent's own group = 3

25% - 49% respondent's own group = 2

1% - 24% respondent's own group = 1

0% respondent's own group = 0

Network Relations Part 2 (SOCNET):

Check each item that applies:

A: Membership in high-density territorially-based network: \_\_\_\_\_

B: Substantial kinship ties in neighborhood

(more than one household in addition to the respondent's own): \_\_\_\_\_

C: Work at the same place with at least two people from the  
neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_

D: Work at same place with at least two people from the  
neighborhood of the same sex as respondent \_\_\_\_\_

E: Associates extensively with people from place of work  
in leisure time activities \_\_\_\_\_

Score Part 2: \_\_\_\_\_

(score = one point for every item checked)

Overall Network Score: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: RODEO Interview Questions

### RODEO Interview Questions:

1. Residence: What's your hometown? How long have you lived there? Where is your mother from? Where is your father from? Are they both native speakers of English?

2. Age: Date of birth.

3. Sex, Group Membership (see list in #7 below; in this project we are doing only A's and E's)

4. Occupation: What do you do (or are you planning to do) for a living?

5. Education: What level of school did you finish?

6. Network 1 (SOCNET):

How many people who live in this neighborhood are related to you?

How many people that you work with live around here?

How many people of the same sex do you work with?

Do you hang out with people from work outside of work, then?

How many people do you live with?

7. Network 2 (ETHNET): This may be hard, but can you give me an estimate of your good friends' backgrounds? Around here, there are at least the following groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and European-Americans from both big cities like Tulsa and Oklahoma City and from smaller towns and rural areas. What percentages from those groups are your close friends and associates? For example, if half of your close friends and associates are African American, you would tell me half or 50%. If a fourth of your close friends and associates are Native Americans you would tell me a quarter or 25%. Please do the best you can (and let's try to make it not add up to more than 100%).

A. Rural and/or small town European-Americans \_\_\_\_\_

B. African-Americans \_\_\_\_\_

C. Native Americans \_\_\_\_\_

D. Mexican-Americans \_\_\_\_\_

E. Big City (e.g., Tulsa) European-Americans \_\_\_\_\_

F. Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Conversation starters:

What is the best thing about working/living around here?



What does the rest of your family think about the area/its schools/the weather/etc?

How did your family come to Oklahoma?

Have you ever done anything that was really dangerous? Can you tell me about it?

What's the funniest or most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you?

What kinds of games did you play around here as kids.

.....

#### 9. Folk linguistic Questions

How old were you when you found out that people from all over the US didn't sound like people from Oklahoma.

What do native Oklahomans sound like? What makes them different from people in surrounding states?

Has anybody ever made fun of you for the way you say things?

Do young people around here sound like Oklahomans when they speak English?

Do boys and girls/men and women talk differently around here?

Do you think you talk like (other) Oklahomans?

Do all the people in Oklahoma talk pretty much the same way, or are there regions in the state where people sound different? I'd like for you to draw those regions for me on this little map, and you can write in any kinds of identifiers you like on the map as well to illustrate the way people talk there or the kinds of people who live there who speak distinctively.

10. Reading Passage: I'm going to give you a short story to read. It's less than a page long. I'll give you a minute or two to look it over, then I'll have you read it out loud.

11. Word List: I'm going to show you some words on the computer. Just read the word on the screen, and I'll hit a button to have it move on to the next screen.

12. I'm going to give you a little Oklahoma grammar and vocabulary list. I'd very much like to know what you say and what others say about these things we're interested in?

13. You may hear people around here pronounce words like 'pin' and 'pen' with the same vowel. Do you? Have you ever heard other people pronounce it this way? Do you know of any groups or subgroups around here who do pronounce it that way (more than others)?

14. You may hear people around here use the phrase “fixin’ to” to mean that they are getting ready or about to do something. Do you say this? Have you ever heard other people say this? Do you know of any groups or subgroups around here who say this more than others?

## **Appendix C: Wordlist**

Tree Houston Cut Mat

Pig Floyd Shoot Hem

Day Seven Knife Fish

Every With Hook Wasn't

Jab Cloud Forty

Cob Steve Push

Saw Trade Out

Hoe Sand Brother

Good Thing Lied

Chew Measure Chewed

Duty Shop Then

How Tin Happy

Boy Hug Sang

Lie Heat Bet

Those Mesh Pawed

Ruth Thick Fail

Wash Strike Dim

Business Peel Ate

Garage Talker Cool

Soda Strength Where

Shrimp Loan Boat

## **Appendix D: Reading Passage**

Please read the following and then read it out loud so I can record it:

Mike was planning to throw a party on Tuesday night, and decided to check his list one more time before he went shopping. He already had plenty of stuff to drink, and he had enough plates and cups. His brother Dave was going to bring some fish he'd caught and maybe put them on the grill. Mike thought he should get some chips, pretzels, and a few other snacks to start the meal. He looked around to see if he had anything sweet, but then remembered that his friend Linda was baking a cake. When he looked in the cupboard, he saw that he was out of coffee. He wrote it down on his list and hoped it was on sale. Then he went to the garage, got in his truck, and went to the Wal-Mart.

## Appendix E: Total vowel data for speakers across tasks

Speaker	Vowel	N	F1	F2	F3	F1gl	F2gl
CHANCE.IN	DRESS	32	507.7	1653.7	2490	482.8	1612.5
CHANCE.IN	FACE	17	446.6	1708.9	2413.3	368.6	1778.7
CHANCE.IN	FLEECE	45	376	1995.6	2712.4	366.6	1875.1
CHANCE.IN	GOAT	40	481.8	1164.5	2195.3	406.8	1067.3
CHANCE.IN	C.GOOSE	6	408.5	1574	2296	400.7	1322.3
CHANCE.IN	GOOSE	3	299.1	1413.1	2149.2	314.2	1358.8
CHANCE.IN	KIT	31	425.5	1754.5	2658.9	417.3	1705.7
CHANCE.IN	LOT	6	593.6	1009.4	2365.5	607.1	1102.5
CHANCE.IN	MOUTH	5	644.1	1296.3	2543.1	584.4	1286.3
CHANCE.IN	PRIDE	30	695.1	1437.6	2324.1	547.2	1451.9
CHANCE.IN	PRICE	16	559.4	1243.9	2294.3	430.5	1665.5
CHANCE.IN	THOUGHT	20	536.4	1112.2	2236.3	540.9	1096.2
CHANCE.IN	TRAP	41	570.5	1601.2	2478.8	541.5	1538.6
ERNEST.IN	DRESS	19	509.2	1749.6	2692	521.2	1625.6
ERNEST.IN	FACE	18	481.6	2006.4	2837.8	372.6	1880.1
ERNEST.IN	FLEECE	31	383.7	2002	2823.8	379.3	1950.3
ERNEST.IN	FOOT	5	423.6	1284.6	2374.6	347.5	1356.4
ERNEST.IN	GOAT	21	530.9	1295.5	2430.7	495.8	1142.3
ERNEST.IN	C.GOOSE	5	412.7	1718.4	2437.6	416.2	1522.9
ERNEST.IN	GOOSE	2	402.3	1705.3	2180.2	300.1	1224.9
ERNEST.IN	KIT	26	458	1856.2	2568.6	453.5	1762.4
ERNEST.IN	LOT	19	625.2	1236.9	2431.3	671.7	1232.9
ERNEST.IN	MOUTH	7	673.8	1388.1	2394.4	620	1190.1
ERNEST.IN	PRIDE	41	702	1473.6	2480	540.2	1644.3
ERNEST.IN	PRICE	12	631.6	1468.6	2566.8	470.1	1872.9
ERNEST.IN	THOUGHT	9	684.3	1112.4	2362.7	670.7	1157.4
ERNEST.IN	TRAP	54	619.6	1724.2	2567.7	635.5	1663.6
ERNEST.RP	DRESS	8	554.9	1711.5	2545.2	543	1693.6
ERNEST.RP	FACE	8	473.3	1954.5	2704.1	443.2	2011
ERNEST.RP	FLEECE	14	384	2297.8	2953.5	354.6	2005.4
ERNEST.RP	FOOT	2	455.8	1262.5	2652.2	410.9	1341.3
ERNEST.RP	GOAT	3	566.8	1310.9	2500.3	436.4	900.3
ERNEST.RP	KIT	8	401.5	1724.9	2553.6	422.2	1748.3
ERNEST.RP	LOT	9	669.1	1269.1	2298.8	667.2	1287.8
ERNEST.RP	MOUTH	3	609.6	1562.8	2316	736.5	1306.3
ERNEST.RP	PRICE	4	730.5	1504.7	2574.5	544.7	2015.4
ERNEST.RP	PRIDE	2	576.9	1217.1	2239	709.6	1683.5

ERNEST.RP	THOUGHT	7	653.4	1245.3	2466.6	656.5	1243.9
ERNEST.RP	TRAP	6	696.5	1805.5	2584.5	605.6	1801.1
ERNEST.WL	DRESS	9	602.8	2018.6	2904.3	472.2	1811
ERNEST.WL	FACE	5	521.8	2095.3	2768.3	347.7	2260.7
ERNEST.WL	FLEECE	7	611.3	2305.4	2823.9	198.1	1777.9
ERNEST.WL	FOOT	3	417.6	1307.2	2712.7	563.3	1827
ERNEST.WL	GOAT	5	437.4	1061.3	2489.4	308	884.8
ERNEST.WL	C.GOOSE	4	293.6	1564.2	2377	235.5	997.8
ERNEST.WL	GOOSE	4	253.1	1603.5	2491.4	339.7	1838.8
ERNEST.WL	GOOSE.L	1	337.6	724.8	2657.9	157.3	500.1
ERNEST.WL	KIT	7	554.3	2136.4	2762.6	348.4	1602.3
ERNEST.WL	LOT	3	730.5	1107.8	2563.8	626.1	1392.3
ERNEST.WL	MOUTH	3	829.6	1323	2561.9	431.3	876.2
ERNEST.WL	PRIDE	2	830	1347.1	2655.8	642.1	2061.3
ERNEST.WL	PRICE	2	865.6	1608.2	2462	489.8	1722.4
ERNEST.WL	THOUGHT	4	629	969.4	2581.5	536.5	1279.8
ERNEST.WL	TRAP	5	816.7	1846	2721.6	616.5	1658.3
FRANCIS.IN	DRESS	32	546.7	1719.5	2453	535.7	1613.6
FRANCIS.IN	FACE	47	505.2	1823.5	2504.3	410.5	1868.4
FRANCIS.IN	FLEECE	50	358.9	2075	2669.6	357.4	2040.3
FRANCIS.IN	FOOT	1	499.3	1634.4	2489.1	404	1783.4
FRANCIS.IN	GOAT	46	576.4	1377.6	2340.7	526.9	1128.3
FRANCIS.IN	C.GOOSE	12	354.6	1833.5	2501.5	519.2	1655.4
FRANCIS.IN	GOOSE	1	292.6	1575.9	1602.7	364.2	910.9
FRANCIS.IN	KIT	41	435.2	1897.1	2566.5	427.2	1883.9
FRANCIS.IN	LOT	11	650.3	1385.4	2480.4	634.7	1472.3
FRANCIS.IN	MOUTH	9	676	1447.6	2331.7	624.1	1203.8
FRANCIS.IN	PRIDE	81	684.4	1406.5	2472.4	548	1642.7
FRANCIS.IN	PRICE	33	619.2	1471.4	2531.1	439.6	1975
FRANCIS.IN	THOUGHT	14	622.9	1108.8	2368.2	603.7	1111.4
FRANCIS.IN	TRAP	48	607.6	1736.9	2523.4	627.2	1677.7
JIM.IN	DRESS	24	495.9	1511.4	2492.1	511	1406.7
JIM.IN	FACE	16	491.3	1717.7	2455.8	411.5	1810.2
JIM.IN	FLEECE	28	367.5	2009.8	2764.3	357.7	1829.8
JIM.IN	FOOT	3	414.8	1455.2	2417.2	343	1453.8
JIM.IN	GOAT	26	527.6	1276	2521.8	471.2	1111.2
JIM.IN	GOOSE	3	425.3	1335.1	2295.9	417.8	1155
JIM.IN	GOOSE.L	1	414	997.7	2875.6	451.6	799.9
JIM.IN	C.GOOSE	5	343.1	1844.5	2519.7	329.7	1282.5
JIM.IN	KIT	27	459.8	1748.6	2581.4	416.1	1743.2
JIM.IN	LOT	18	615.3	1248.5	2397.2	620.2	1238.4
JIM.IN	MOUTH	12	679.9	1394.8	2434.9	635.6	1138.4
JIM.IN	PRIDE	33	648.4	1348.4	2507.7	545	1486.6

JIM.IN	PRICE	5	611.8	1290.6	2508.4	421.9	1636.5
JIM.IN	THOUGHT	13	454.8	854.2	2125.2	508.6	1067.4
JIM.IN	TRAP	29	619.6	1530.4	2432.5	578.5	1430.5
LEVI.IN	DRESS	20	489.6	1665.1	2570.2	462.1	1618.9
LEVI.IN	FACE	20	441.7	1754.3	2488	374.9	1796
LEVI.IN	FLEECE	15	311.1	1846.7	2684.5	310.3	1831.5
LEVI.IN	FOOT	3	434.6	1468	2378.7	365.8	1513.6
LEVI.IN	GOAT	12	523.4	1386.7	2316.2	482.1	1200.1
LEVI.IN	C.GOOSE	5	386.7	1640.5	2307.6	327.3	1429.4
LEVI.IN	GOOSE	1	348.1	1618.5	2315.4	282.1	1524.8
LEVI.IN	KIT	12	385.3	1740.3	2444.3	366.8	1717
LEVI.IN	LOT	7	612.8	1265	2341	538.8	1229
LEVI.IN	MOUTH	4	591.4	1443	2315.8	469	1252
LEVI.IN	PRIDE	26	578.5	1499.3	2381.1	459.5	1626
LEVI.IN	PRICE	17	502.8	1505.4	2427.2	390.6	1864.9
LEVI.IN	THOUGHT	9	607	1154.3	2297.1	564.1	1159.4
LEVI.IN	TRAP	16	558.6	1639.6	2425.4	536.6	1569
LEVI.RP	DRESS	8	463	1621.4	2550.6	453.7	1603.2
LEVI.RP	FACE	6	445.7	1747.7	2486.2	410.5	1819.5
LEVI.RP	FLEECE	10	346	1939.1	2822.3	353.4	1928.6
LEVI.RP	FOOT	2	423.3	1250.6	2328.2	312.5	1553.6
LEVI.RP	GOAT	5	490.2	1400.3	2192.5	458.1	1130.2
LEVI.RP	C.GOOSE	1	300.4	1801.9	2388.7	289.1	1754.8
LEVI.RP	KIT	7	415.4	1647.5	2444.8	417.7	1688
LEVI.RP	LOT	10	571.3	1321.6	2256.2	556.5	1349.5
LEVI.RP	MOUTH	3	508.8	1435.9	2108.2	559.5	1309.5
LEVI.RP	PRICE	5	573.4	1433.5	2427.5	453.1	1815.8
LEVI.RP	PRIDE	3	635	1575.1	2526.7	463.2	1632.2
LEVI.RP	THOUGHT	7	532.3	1237.2	2262	563.5	1264.8
LEVI.RP	TRAP	3	518.9	1595.9	2463.9	517.1	1694.2
MARCUS.IN	DRESS	15	509.8	1712.5	2708.4	547.4	1710
MARCUS.IN	FACE	12	496.8	1954.8	2714.3	411.4	2042.1
MARCUS.IN	FLEECE	26	411	2058.6	2823.1	402.1	2044.1
MARCUS.IN	GOAT	10	562.5	1447.9	2481.9	564	1332.3
MARCUS.IN	C.GOOSE	4	328.7	1911.8	2530	371.8	1686.4
MARCUS.IN	KIT	13	494.3	1915	2729.7	468.9	1821.8
MARCUS.IN	LOT	8	661.7	1349.9	2497.4	653.6	1313.4
MARCUS.IN	MOUTH	5	712.9	1571.2	2553.7	668.5	1236.1
MARCUS.IN	PRIDE	15	697.5	1536.6	2402.5	601.5	1565.1
MARCUS.IN	PRICE	2	713.6	1480.8	2762.8	529.2	1997.3
MARCUS.IN	THOUGHT	2	621.7	1060.9	2428	527.6	1069.1
MARCUS.IN	TRAP	15	607.2	1837.5	2669.5	652.7	1664
MARCUS.RP	DRESS	9	545.3	1713.5	2635.6	538	1661.4

MARCUS.RP	FACE	5	502.4	1800.8	2765.1	472.2	2233.7
MARCUS.RP	FLEECE	18	364.9	2314.6	2869.9	345.7	2238.6
MARCUS.RP	FOOT	3	494.9	1485.3	2589.9	392.7	1493.8
MARCUS.RP	GOAT	3	477.3	1401.4	2536.4	448.5	1066.6
MARCUS.RP	C.GOOSE	2	361.6	1940.7	2561.2	366.5	1924.1
MARCUS.RP	KIT	11	434.3	1895.9	2629.7	446.8	1828.3
MARCUS.RP	LOT	9	629	1311.8	2382.9	638.7	1283.6
MARCUS.RP	MOUTH	4	646.1	1651.2	2565.7	720.8	1405.9
MARCUS.RP	PRICE	4	759.5	1502.6	2640.8	595.4	1962.5
MARCUS.RP	PRIDE	2	718.6	1495	2643.8	646.6	1748.8
MARCUS.RP	THOUGHT	7	620.5	1227.7	2337.1	617	1169.1
MARCUS.RP	TRAP	7	650.5	1825.2	2719.9	557.1	1646.9
PATRICK.IN	DRESS	40	536.4	1617.6	2428.6	548.6	1540.5
PATRICK.IN	FACE	39	507.6	1721.5	2435.2	441.9	1848.5
PATRICK.IN	FLEECE	50	371.4	1949.1	2726.4	385	1958.7
PATRICK.IN	FOOT	3	391	1579.2	2172.2	365.9	1381.6
PATRICK.IN	GOAT	40	532.8	1400.1	2408.1	468.1	1265.9
PATRICK.IN	C.GOOSE	8	411.2	1634.6	2366.4	405.1	1366.2
PATRICK.IN	GOOSE	4	381.9	1447.8	2155.4	320.3	1104.8
PATRICK.IN	KIT	26	427.2	1787.3	2525.7	405.8	1776.1
PATRICK.IN	LOT	16	702.3	1287.6	2280.7	727.4	1311.4
PATRICK.IN	MOUTH	13	709.7	1530.2	2508.4	695.5	1285.1
PATRICK.IN	PRIDE	56	705.2	1455	2368.3	541.2	1526.3
PATRICK.IN	PRICE	15	656.7	1338.2	2298	534.1	1662.4
PATRICK.IN	THOUGHT	17	592.9	1167.7	2300.7	595	1104.6
PATRICK.IN	TRAP	52	622.6	1611.6	2487.4	616.8	1528.9
PATRICK.RP	DRESS	6	504.2	1722.4	2600	485.2	1647
PATRICK.RP	FACE	5	476.2	1793.4	2519.7	388.4	1869.4
PATRICK.RP	FLEECE	10	359.2	2019.4	2761.6	380.5	2028.3
PATRICK.RP	FOOT	1	403.1	1243.4	2080.8	319.7	1269.4
PATRICK.RP	GOAT	5	483.3	1195.1	2089.1	439.9	943.6
PATRICK.RP	C.GOOSE	1	298	1737.1	2387.9	259.8	1533.6
PATRICK.RP	KIT	7	461.2	1606	2492.1	449.6	1612.1
PATRICK.RP	LOT	8	602.7	1237.6	2235.9	575.4	1274.2
PATRICK.RP	MOUTH	4	593.6	1668.8	2604.4	653.8	1187.6
PATRICK.RP	PRICE	4	542.3	1111.8	2263.5	521	1363.1
PATRICK.RP	PRIDE	2	675	1366	2281.5	475.5	1229.1
PATRICK.RP	THOUGHT	6	585.8	1170	2118.9	605	1152
PATRICK.RP	TRAP	5	578	1712.7	2450	535.2	1546
PATRICK.WL	DRESS	9	582.9	1690.5	2620.9	552.9	1592.5
PATRICK.WL	FACE	5	481.6	1718.9	2412.7	410.6	1975
PATRICK.WL	FLEECE	9	309.3	2100	2771.8	581.4	2176.3
PATRICK.WL	FOOT	3	452	1394.8	2312.4	383	1292.8



PATRICK.WL	GOAT	5	528.5	1215.8	2336.3	337.5	951.1
PATRICK.WL	C.GOOSE	4	330.7	1973.2	2647.1	363.1	1851.3
PATRICK.WL	GOOSE	4	332.5	1728.9	2421.9	323.6	1738.3
PATRICK.WL	GOOSE.L	1	358.9	1095.7	2178.1	278.6	867.7
PATRICK.WL	KIT	6	431.4	1686.1	2547.3	368.9	1694.2
PATRICK.WL	LOT	4	736	1231.4	2309.5	611.6	1246.4
PATRICK.WL	MOUTH	3	828.7	1464.3	2633.3	666.3	1346.1
PATRICK.WL	PRIDE	2	802.8	1165.3	2382	517.3	1623.5
PATRICK.WL	PRICE	2	630.7	1109.2	2099	458.4	1576.7
PATRICK.WL	THOUGHT	6	634.2	1196.9	2349	580.2	1093.2
PATRICK.WL	TRAP	5	672.5	1685.5	2629.5	586.3	1555.6
PEPPER.IN	DRESS	26	545.3	1686.4	2434.2	521.2	1651.9
PEPPER.IN	FACE	17	501.9	1812.2	2421.8	407.1	1866
PEPPER.IN	FLEECE	32	392.6	2017.7	2494.8	397	1898.6
PEPPER.IN	FOOT	4	471	1479	2409.3	366.4	1523
PEPPER.IN	GOAT	29	574.8	1370.6	2295.8	547.2	1170.4
PEPPER.IN	C.GOOSE	6	381.9	1710.7	2287.4	397.4	1380.2
PEPPER.IN	GOOSE	1	397.6	1644.7	2201.2	380.6	1531.8
PEPPER.IN	KIT	14	447.4	1791.3	2341.9	434.6	1742.3
PEPPER.IN	LOT	10	636.2	1125.3	2335.2	683.6	1202.4
PEPPER.IN	MOUTH	8	713.1	1474.6	2368.5	658.7	1150.2
PEPPER.IN	PRIDE	30	740.8	1436.5	2446	629.2	1633.5
PEPPER.IN	PRICE	14	644	1416.9	2578.1	477.2	1847.5
PEPPER.IN	THOUGHT	11	647.3	1104.8	2482.6	635.1	1094
PEPPER.IN	TRAP	18	674.5	1619.8	2525.7	656.6	1530.1
CHANCE.RP	DRESS	4	578.8	1729.3	2585.7	472.3	1529.9
CHANCE.RP	FACE	5	446.8	1725.1	2554.7	361.3	1679.5
CHANCE.RP	FLEECE	11	334.6	2023.5	2756.4	332.3	1820
CHANCE.RP	FOOT	6	408.3	1228.6	2359.1	314	1328.8
CHANCE.RP	GOAT	4	446.2	1199.9	2084.2	422.1	1058.9
CHANCE.RP	C.GOOSE	1	370.8	1623.7	2344.5	313.9	1571.1
CHANCE.RP	KIT	8	397.4	1612	2452.5	382.5	1540.6
CHANCE.RP	LOT	7	562.4	1123	2160.2	545.3	1129.6
CHANCE.RP	MOUTH	4	567.1	1436.8	2498.7	546.1	1169.7
CHANCE.RP	PRICE	3	676.3	1271.5	2296	400.3	1652.4
CHANCE.RP	PRIDE	2	599.7	1256.3	2276.6	538.9	1444.2
CHANCE.RP	THOUGHT	7	505.1	1018.6	2275.5	509.8	1186.2
CHANCE.RP	TRAP	9	611.2	1940.8	2658.1	448.2	1602.9
FRANCIS.RP	DRESS	10	564.8	1647.8	2524.4	524.7	1596.9
FRANCIS.RP	FACE	6	486	1847.5	2679.4	408.4	2076.5
FRANCIS.RP	FLEECE	17	333	2212.8	2779.1	335.4	2039
FRANCIS.RP	FOOT	6	428.6	1452.4	2589.6	386.4	1541.9
FRANCIS.RP	GOAT	4	518.1	1255.2	2401.8	419.6	1018.5

FRANCIS.RP	C.GOOSE	1	282.5	2117.8	2683.8	265.2	2009.1
FRANCIS.RP	GOOSE	1	358.5	1550.9	2541.4	435.5	1320.5
FRANCIS.RP	KIT	14	442.2	1809.8	2615.6	466.3	1628.9
FRANCIS.RP	LOT	9	595.7	1291.4	2345.2	582.1	1237.4
FRANCIS.RP	MOUTH	4	543.1	1659.3	2826	686.9	1400
FRANCIS.RP	PRICE	5	716.9	1421.4	2603.7	443.2	2077.1
FRANCIS.RP	PRIDE	2	665.5	1148.9	2650.6	550.8	1632
FRANCIS.RP	THOUGHT	6	534.3	1045.7	2346.1	591.1	1086.3
FRANCIS.RP	TRAP	12	603.5	1797.1	2624.7	528.4	1749.2
FRANCIS.WL	DRESS	7	545.6	1876.4	2641.3	887.1	2017
FRANCIS.WL	FACE	5	501.7	1723.1	2549.6	501	1962.5
FRANCIS.WL	FLEECE	9	341	2178.7	2872.4	667.4	2072.5
FRANCIS.WL	FOOT	3	475.3	1359.7	2449.1	579.2	1562.5
FRANCIS.WL	GOAT	6	548.4	1193	2461.2	465.1	1162.1
FRANCIS.WL	C.GOOSE	4	311.3	1688.1	2309.5	313.4	1725.2
FRANCIS.WL	GOOSE	4	378.2	1765.5	2314.1	803.5	2211.6
FRANCIS.WL	GOOSE.L	1	257.1	809.8	2604.8	307.5	730.5
FRANCIS.WL	KIT	8	467.7	1894.5	2654.1	421.9	1785.3
FRANCIS.WL	LOT	4	773.9	1210.4	2681.5	523.6	1226.2
FRANCIS.WL	MOUTH	3	851.7	1530.9	2552.7	621.5	1488
FRANCIS.WL	PRIDE	2	790.4	1243	2630.1	683.8	1930.5
FRANCIS.WL	PRICE	2	661	1726.3	2673.1	538.9	2055.3
FRANCIS.WL	THOUGHT	4	622	1126.6	2407.7	603.8	1091.2
FRANCIS.WL	TRAP	6	678.7	1775.4	2618.1	673.1	1739.3
JIM.RP	DRESS	9	526.1	1476.5	2403.1	516.7	1417.4
JIM.RP	FACE	5	500.2	1668.5	2431.4	403.7	1871.2
JIM.RP	FLEECE	14	355.7	2001.8	2610.6	359.2	1835.5
JIM.RP	FOOT	3	458.8	1380.6	2525.7	379.8	1556.4
JIM.RP	GOAT	4	505	1341.6	2252.2	427.7	1125.1
JIM.RP	C.GOOSE	3	377.7	1793.3	2485.2	383.2	1557.2
JIM.RP	KIT	10	417	1620.3	2549.3	404.2	1439.5
JIM.RP	LOT	10	599.6	1190.6	2331.5	598.6	1246.6
JIM.RP	MOUTH	4	616.6	1543	2531.6	649.1	1309.7
JIM.RP	PRICE	4	659.4	1244.8	2489.8	421.2	1693.4
JIM.RP	PRIDE	2	559.6	1331.1	2564.2	449.8	1564.1
JIM.RP	THOUGHT	7	635.1	1246.8	2314.7	563.7	1167.1
JIM.RP	TRAP	7	585.6	1502.1	2526.8	519.8	1535.1
JIM.WL	DRESS	9	522.6	1558.2	2542.8	499.6	1525.6
JIM.WL	FACE	5	503.6	1675.6	2420.5	394.7	1597.9
JIM.WL	FLEECE	8	278.6	1994.3	3114.3	237.2	1862.8
JIM.WL	FOOT	2	496.1	1287.6	2568.7	444.8	1432.2
JIM.WL	GOAT	5	515.5	1324.8	2579.4	385.8	1021.7
JIM.WL	C.GOOSE	4	338.8	1869.7	2633.6	296.1	1559.2

JIM.WL	GOOSE	3	342	1572	2215.2	317.9	1511.2
JIM.WL	GOOSE.L	1	297.8	1105.3	2236.2	350	849.5
JIM.WL	KIT	8	503.1	1623.3	2695.9	384.1	1436.5
JIM.WL	LOT	4	635.9	1146.9	2591.2	600.6	1321.6
JIM.WL	MOUTH	3	717	1343.7	2447.9	489	907.9
JIM.WL	PRIDE	2	696.1	1237.9	2807.1	381.8	1364.7
JIM.WL	PRICE	2	679	1391.9	2280.6	414.6	1840.8
JIM.WL	THOUGHT	4	594	1048.6	2500.3	575.8	1150.9
JIM.WL	TRAP	5	624.2	1599.8	2439.8	605.4	1561.7
MARCUS.WL	DRESS	8	558.7	1825.2	2747.4	539.2	1777.5
MARCUS.WL	FACE	5	513.2	1937.4	2718.7	368	1922.3
MARCUS.WL	FLEECE	7	351	2285.9	2694.8	612.1	2481.2
MARCUS.WL	FOOT	3	496.8	1451.1	2509.9	502.5	1310.1
MARCUS.WL	GOAT	5	518.5	1359.3	2357.7	480.3	1145.8
MARCUS.WL	C.GOOSE	4	303.7	2019.7	2409	320.6	1727.5
MARCUS.WL	GOOSE	3	339.8	1693.4	2624.2	825.1	2302.8
MARCUS.WL	GOOSE.L	1	359.8	1097.3	2755.5	471.2	744.1
MARCUS.WL	KIT	9	463	1979	2789.3	530.9	1898.4
MARCUS.WL	LOT	3	715.3	1172.3	2275.7	715.9	1445
MARCUS.WL	MOUTH	3	863.1	1689.5	2524.9	795.2	1466.8
MARCUS.WL	PRIDE	2	862.3	1406.4	2771.4	633.9	1965.6
MARCUS.WL	PRICE	2	739.1	1591	2527.3	532.5	2068.7
MARCUS.WL	THOUGHT	5	686.3	1182.4	2438.9	660.5	1160.6
MARCUS.WL	TRAP	5	683.7	1929.2	2672.1	674.6	1727.9
PEPPER.RP	DRESS	6	532.2	1723.3	2695	549.8	1630.1
PEPPER.RP	FACE	6	521.1	1854.8	2629	415.7	2030.7
PEPPER.RP	FLEECE	20	372.7	2209.9	2745.1	428	1979.1
PEPPER.RP	FOOT	2	504.6	1430.6	2550.8	415.4	1570.4
PEPPER.RP	GOAT	5	538.1	1408	2351.3	487.2	1180.9
PEPPER.RP	C.GOOSE	2	360.9	1605.4	2066.6	275.7	1545.6
PEPPER.RP	KIT	8	501.8	1643.7	2456.2	481.6	1601.1
PEPPER.RP	LOT	10	620.1	1277.8	2380.8	655.7	1309.5
PEPPER.RP	MOUTH	4	688.3	1577.7	2502.1	714	1252.7
PEPPER.RP	PRICE	4	713.9	1412.3	2534.5	503.4	1866.8
PEPPER.RP	PRIDE	2	706.5	1359.8	2490.3	612.2	1626.9
PEPPER.RP	THOUGHT	6	626.9	1172.8	2431.1	639.7	1237.3
PEPPER.RP	TRAP	9	706.2	1774.1	2503.3	598.4	1674.5
PEPPER.WL	DRESS	8	519.8	1847.4	2534.4	546.4	1804.6
PEPPER.WL	FACE	5	541.5	1784.4	2331.7	416.2	1830
PEPPER.WL	FLEECE	8	464	2294.2	2659.8	289.9	1815.3
PEPPER.WL	FOOT	2	538.9	1310.7	2489.2	519.9	1477.4
PEPPER.WL	GOAT	5	588.4	1291.4	2441.4	571.4	1453.3
PEPPER.WL	C.GOOSE	4	349.6	1993.6	2459.4	350.5	1573.7

PEPPER.WL	GOOSE	3	415.3	1652.1	2370.3	694.7	1737.1
PEPPER.WL	GOOSE.L	1	356.9	765.5	2433.4	382.5	724.3
PEPPER.WL	KIT	9	484.2	1884.7	2505.4	604.7	1807.8
PEPPER.WL	LOT	4	757.7	1102.9	2900.3	891.9	1531.6
PEPPER.WL	MOUTH	3	950.9	1698.7	2557.1	627.7	1029.4
PEPPER.WL	PRIDE	2	839.3	1200.1	2881.3	555.8	1897.9
PEPPER.WL	PRICE	2	773.7	1423	2224.8	458.7	2120.1
PEPPER.WL	THOUGHT	4	637.5	1012	2610.1	684.8	1128.1
PEPPER.WL	TRAP	5	688.2	1786.7	2490	741.4	1608.2

VITA

Bryce Edward McCleary

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE: INVESTIGATING GAY MEN,  
OKLAHOMA DIALECTOLOGY, AND LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

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Completed the requirements for the Master of Science/Arts in your major at  
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