

Voices of Empire

Literary Dialect & the Digital Archive

Dr. David Brown ♦ March 15, 2018 ♦ Lancaster University



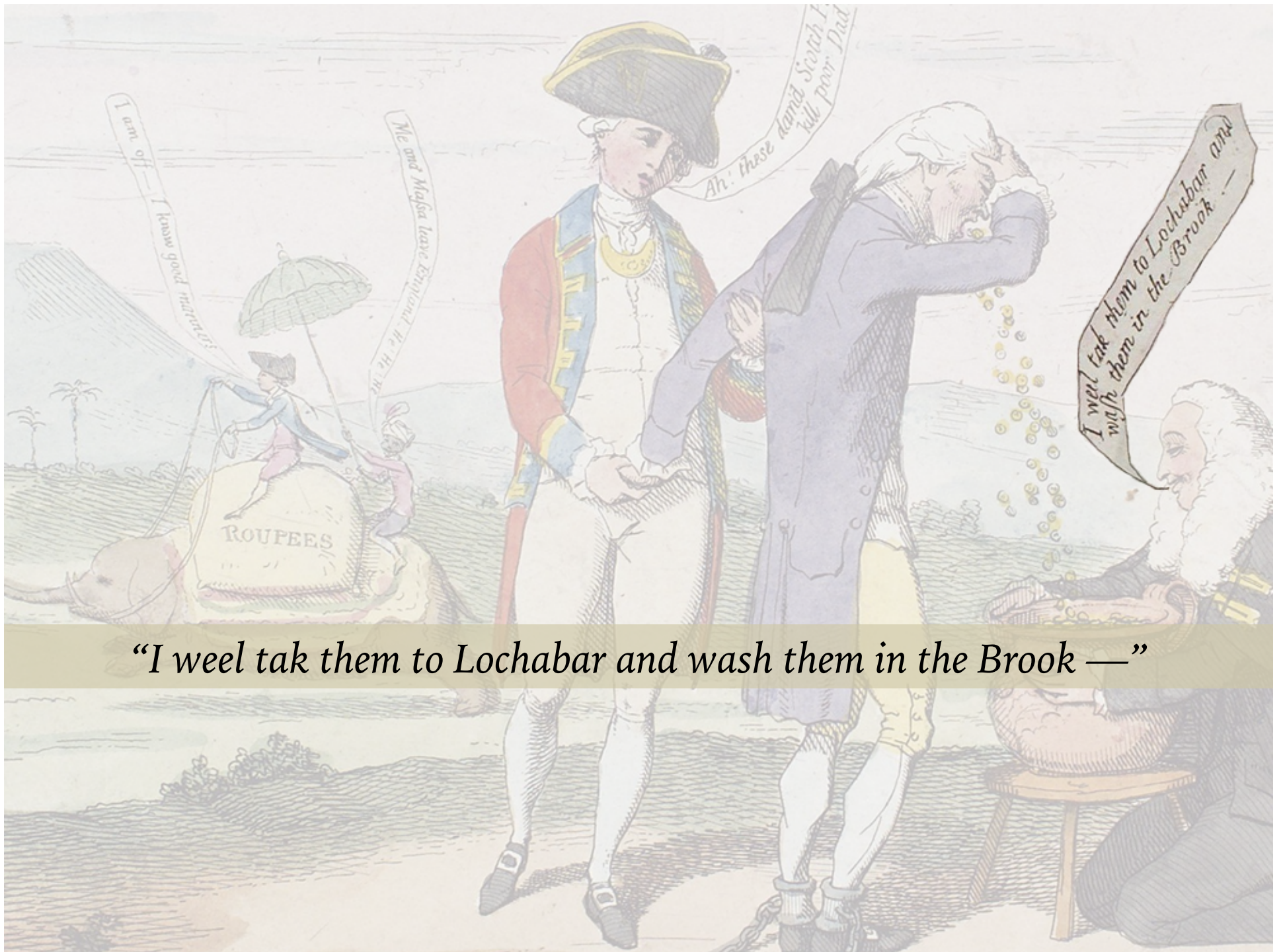
I am off - I know good natives

Me and Maysa leave England - He He He

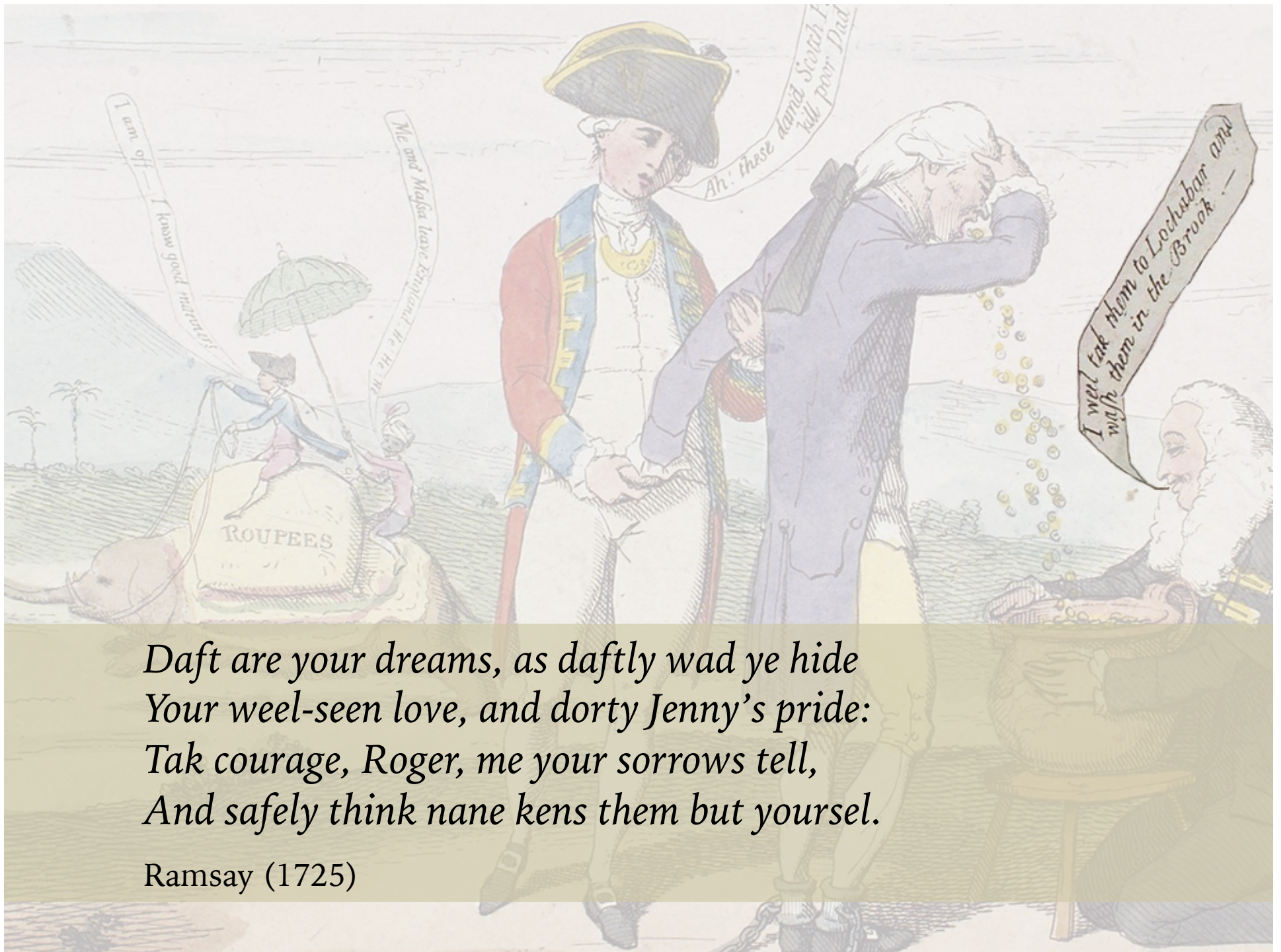
Ah! these damned Scotch I kill poor Dad

I will take them to Lochubar and wash them in the Brook

ROUPEES



"I weel tak them to Lochabar and wash them in the Brook —"

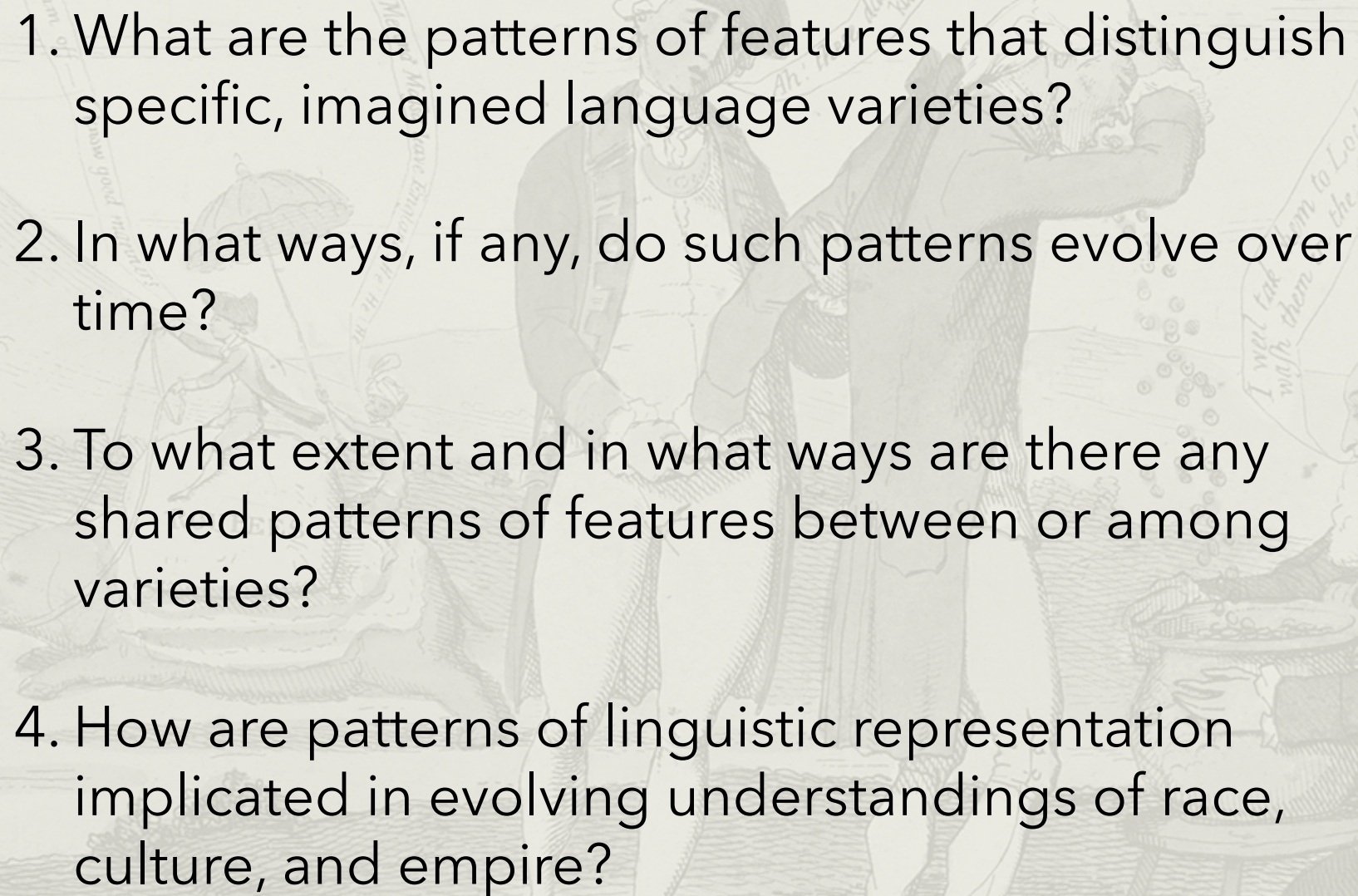


*Daft are your dreams, as daftly wad ye hide
Your weel-seen love, and dorty Jenny's pride:
Tak courage, Roger, me your sorrows tell,
And safely think nane kens them but yoursel.*

Ramsay (1725)



“Me and Massa leave England — He! He! He!”

- 
1. What are the patterns of features that distinguish specific, imagined language varieties?
 2. In what ways, if any, do such patterns evolve over time?
 3. To what extent and in what ways are there any shared patterns of features between or among varieties?
 4. How are patterns of linguistic representation implicated in evolving understandings of race, culture, and empire?

Composition of the Corpus

	Texts:	Words:
LITERARY DIALECT		
TOTAL	136	51,151
African diasporic	60	26,541
Chinese	39	7,971
Indian	37	16,639
SOURCE WORKS		
TOTAL	126	7,952,399

The Padlock (1768)
Isaac Bickerstaffe



The Monster Men (1929)
Edgar Rice Burroughs

Methods to Build and Parse the Corpus

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- **Coding**: Development of a taxonomy for identifying literary dialect features and protocols for assigning those codes.

1. Lexical: word usage including general vocabulary, forms of address, inserts, words conventionally belonging to one part-of-speech being used as another, and code-mixing.

Examples:

address: *Yes, missie, I make plenty barl-dresses ...*

neologism: *Missa Bella responsify, 'No matter 'bout de jelly...'*

functional shift: *Oh! it joy my heart to hear.*

code-mixing : *Judge sahib burra burra buhadoorkea!–ver' great man!*

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2. **Morphosyntactic**: word formation and grammatical patterns including the morphosyntax related to noun phrases, pronoun cases, verb tense marking, verb agreement, verb aspect, auxiliary verbs, adjectival and adverbial modification, and discourse organization.

Examples:

zero determiner: *Take care not fire [Ø] pistol.*

him as clausal subject: *Him very fine man.*

was/were generalization: *you nebber was cut out as a gentleman*

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3. **Orthographic**: unconventional spelling that approximates the spontaneous discourse of “standard” speakers but is used to mark difference (what is typically referred to as “eye-dialect”).

Examples:

eye dialect: *was* → *wuz*

eye dialect: *true* → *troo*

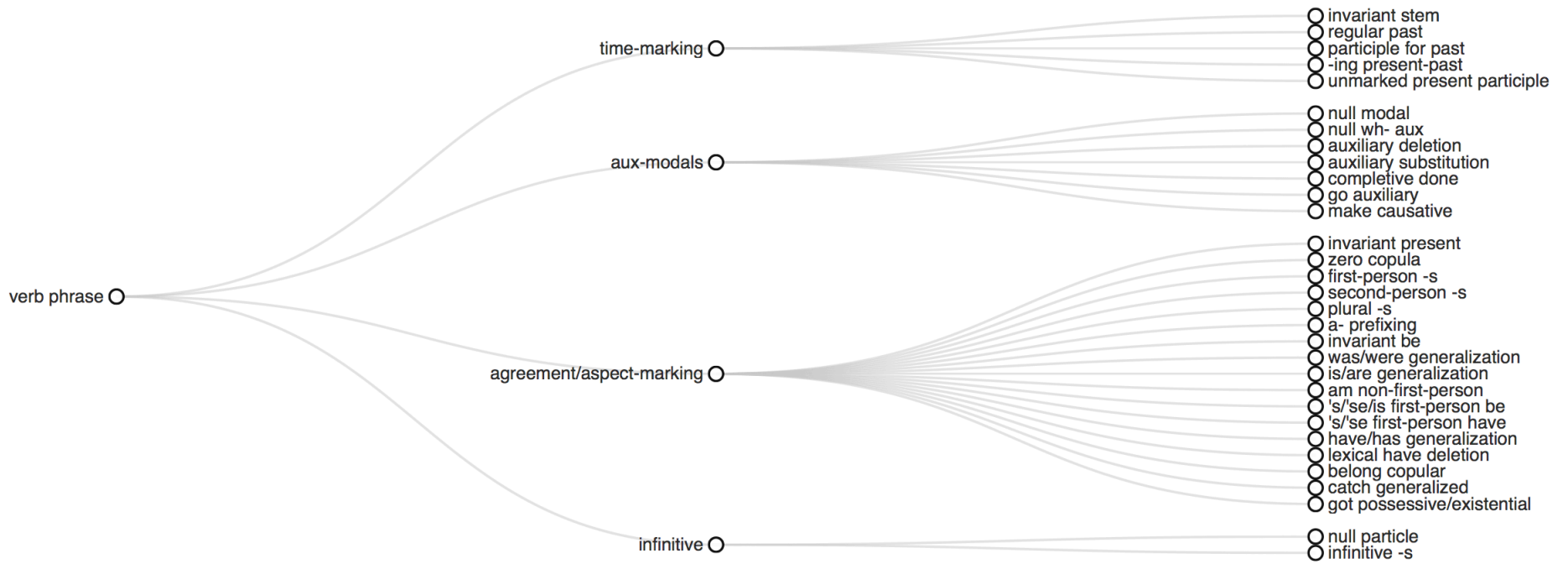
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4. **Phonological**: respellings used to approximate differences in phonology.

Examples:

t/d-for-th substitution: *that* → *dat*

n-for-ng substitution: *running* → *runnin*

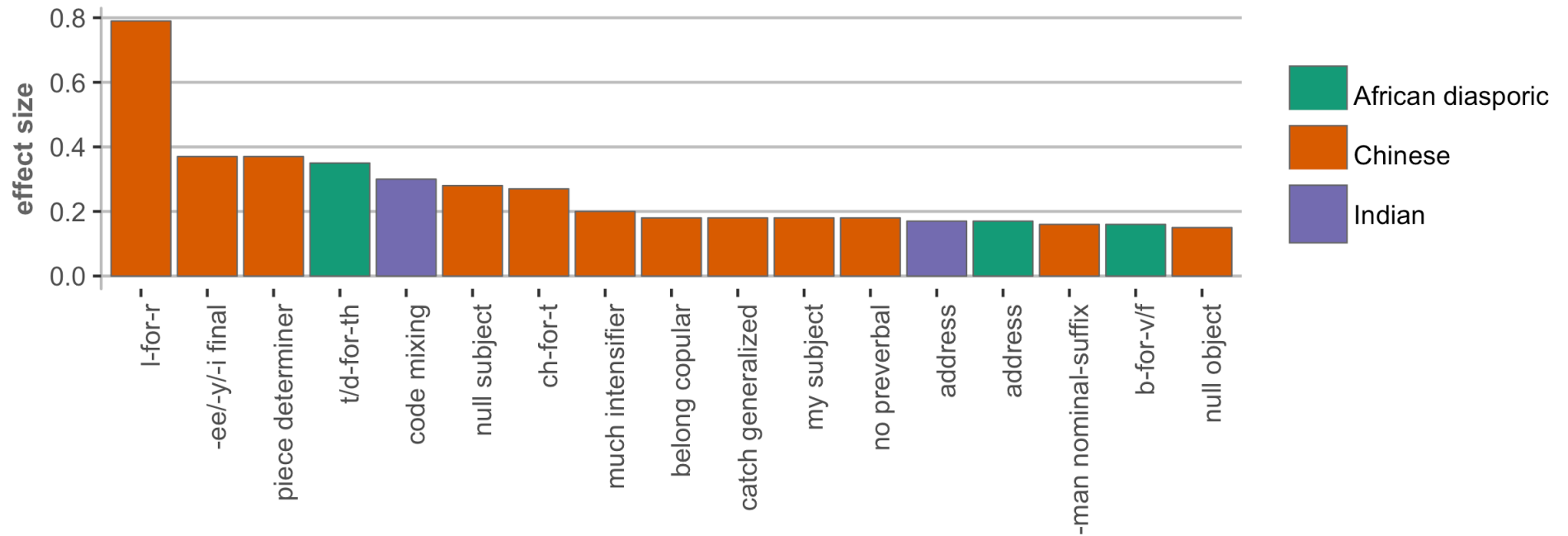
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Methods to Build and Parse the Corpus

- **Collection**: using digital archives to locate fictional works that contain African diasporic, Indian, or Chinese characters whose dialogue is rendered in literary dialect.
- **Preparation**: Formatting and assigning metadata to files.
- **Coding**: Development of a taxonomy for identifying literary dialect features and protocols for assigning those codes.
- **Analysis**: Application of appropriate statistical methods for explicating quantitative patterns in the data.

Effect sizes for features with Kruskal-Wallis test-statistics that are significantly attributable to speaker ($p < 0.001$).



Features that significantly distinguish Chinese from African diasporic and Indian dialogue

- *l-for-r* substitution (*run* → *lun*)
- *-ee/-y/-i* final insertion (*well* → *wellee*)
- *piece* as determiner (*black piecee hen*)
- null subject (*What can [∅] do*)
- *ch-for-t* substitution (*want* → *wanchee*)
- *much* as an intensifier (*much bad*)
- *belong* as a copular verb (*this belong very bad man*)
- generalized *catch* (*catchee shavee*)
- *my* as subject pronoun (*My fo'get one ting*)
- preverbal *no* (*no likee*)
- *-man* as a nominal suffix (*soldierman*)
- null object (*give [∅] hammock go to sleep*)

Features that significantly distinguish African diasporic from Chinese and Indian dialogue*

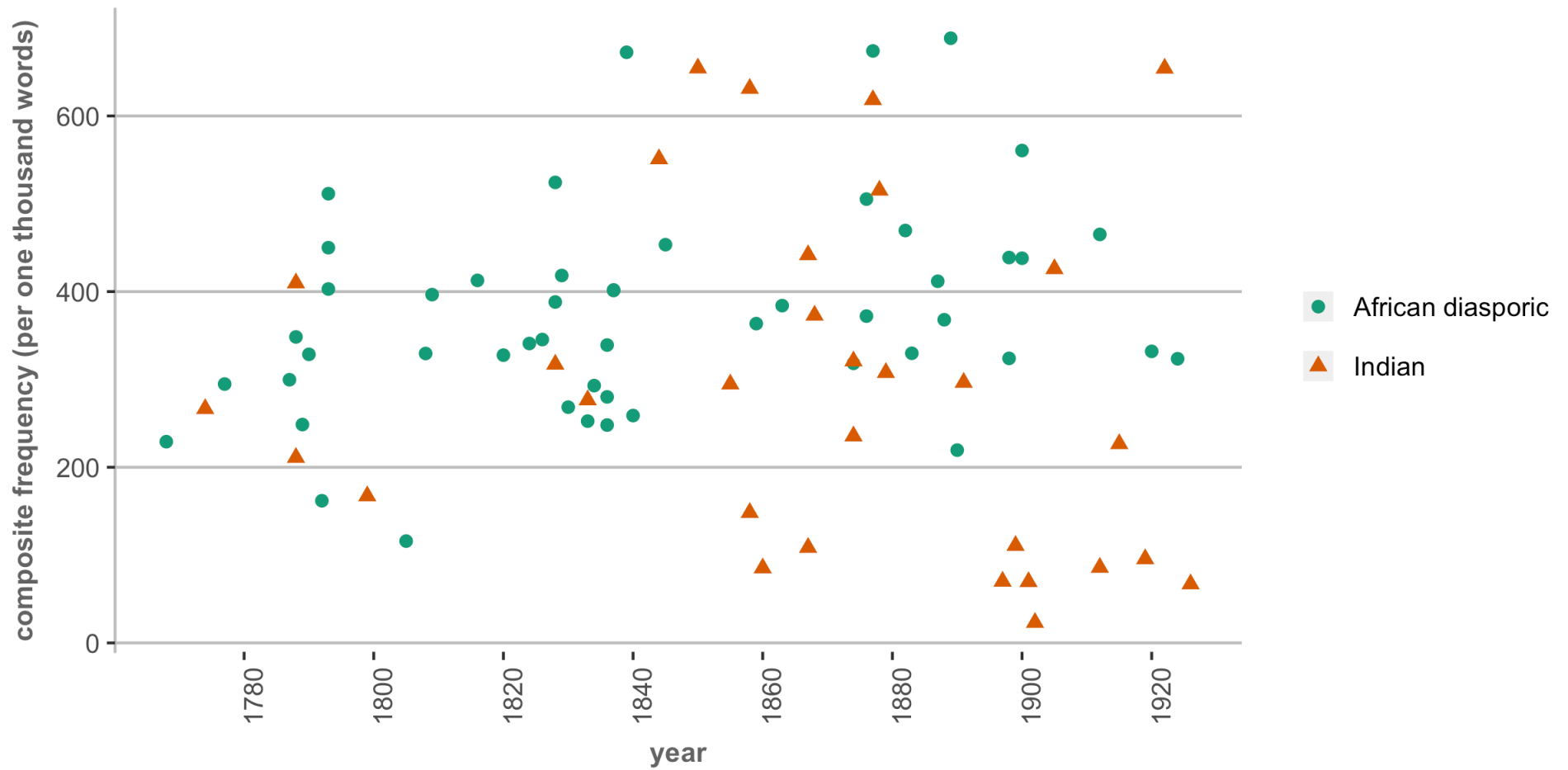
- *t/d-for-th* substitution (*think* → *tink*)
- *address* (*You wait till tomorrow, Massa Lucraft*)
- *b-for-v/f* substitution (*never* → *nebber*)

*address distinguishes African diasporic from Chinese dialogue but not from Indian dialogue

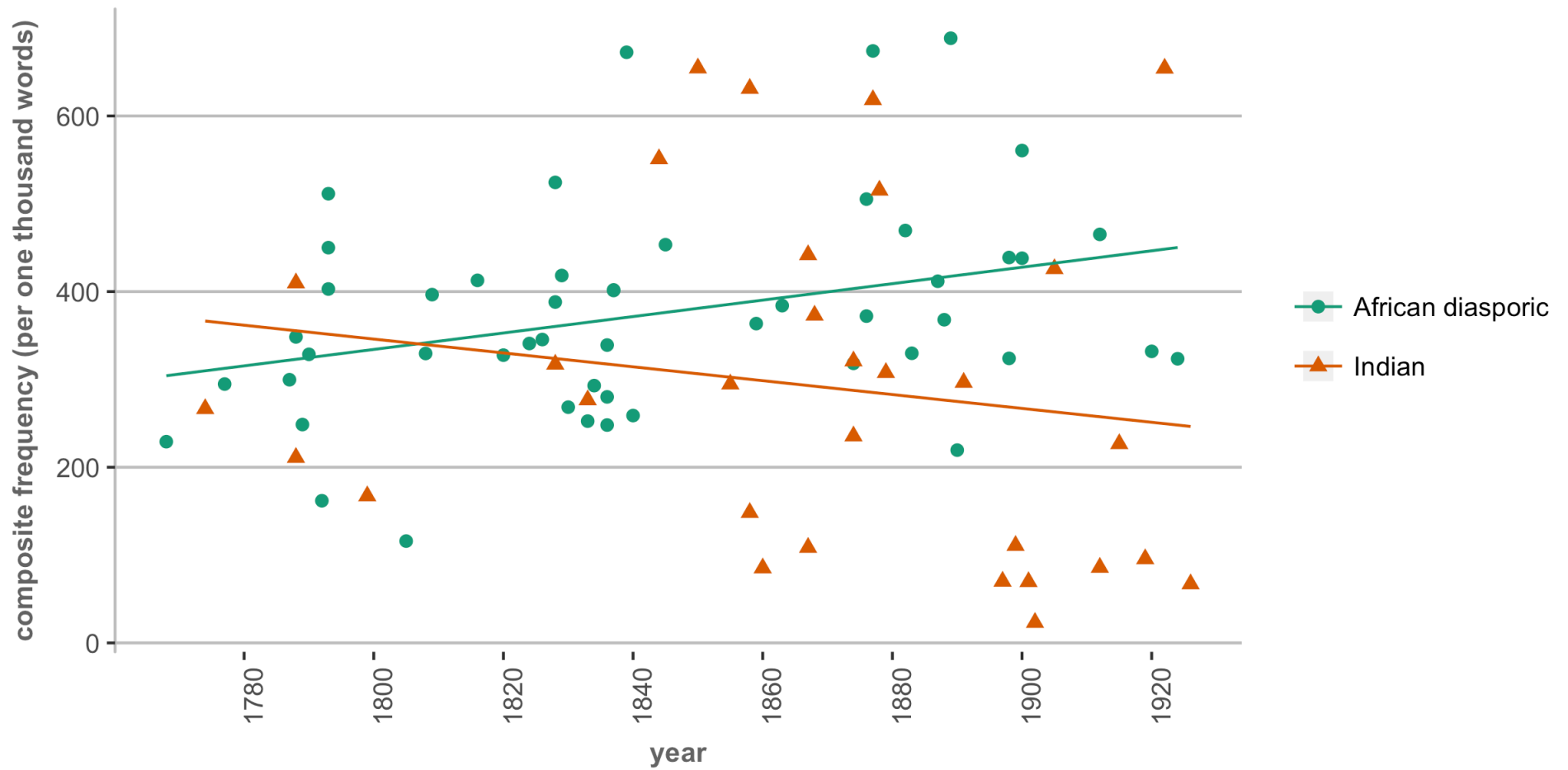
Features that significantly distinguish Indian from Chinese and African diasporic dialogue*

- code mixing (*Gora-wallahs got no sense*)
- address (*Yes, Sahib*)

*address distinguishes Indian from Chinese dialogue but not from African diasporic dialogue

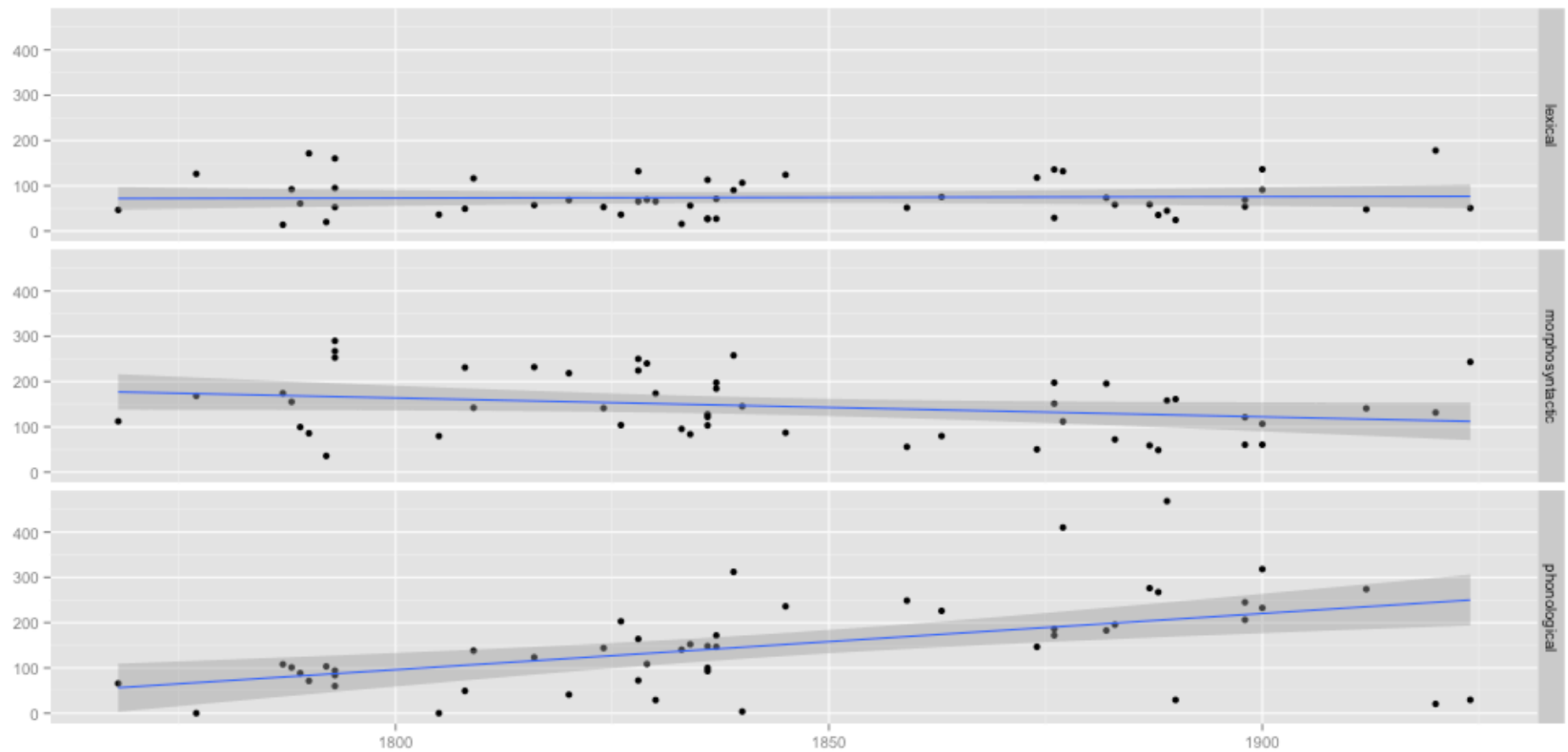


frequency of literary dialect features in the dialogue of African diasporic and Indian characters

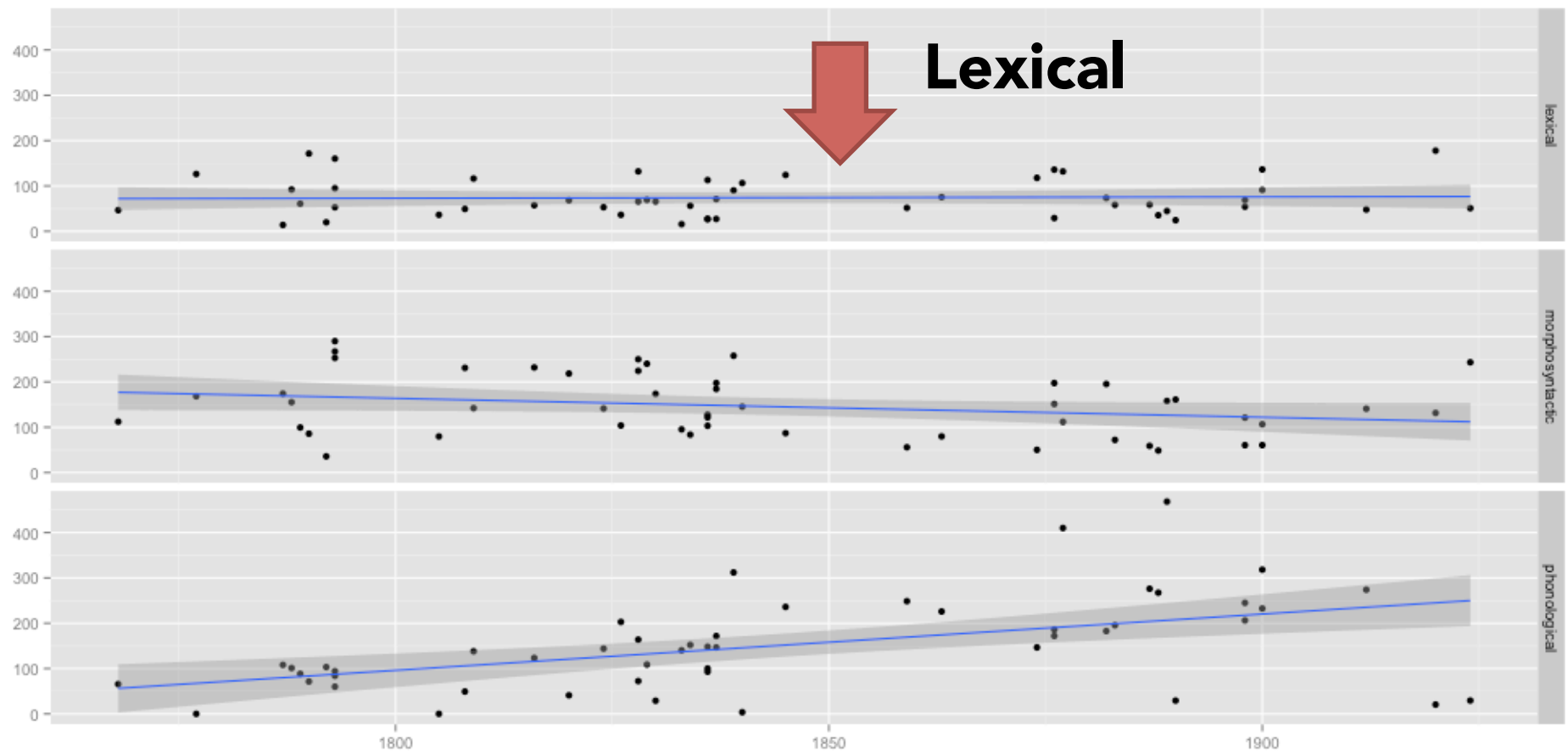


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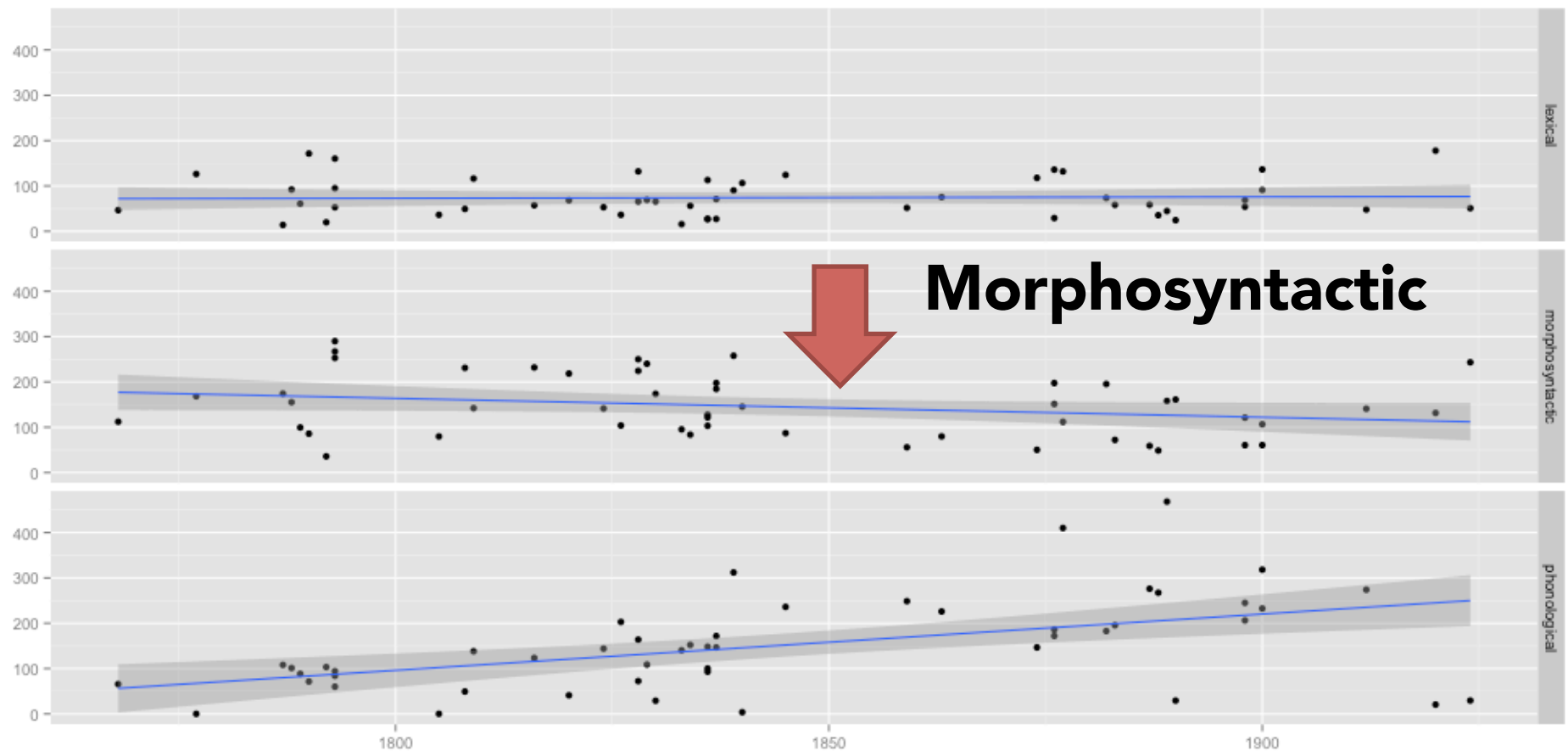
Scatter plots showing linear trends in frequency for the lexical, morphosyntactic, and phonological categories for African diasporic dialogue. The grey areas indicate the 95% confidence intervals.



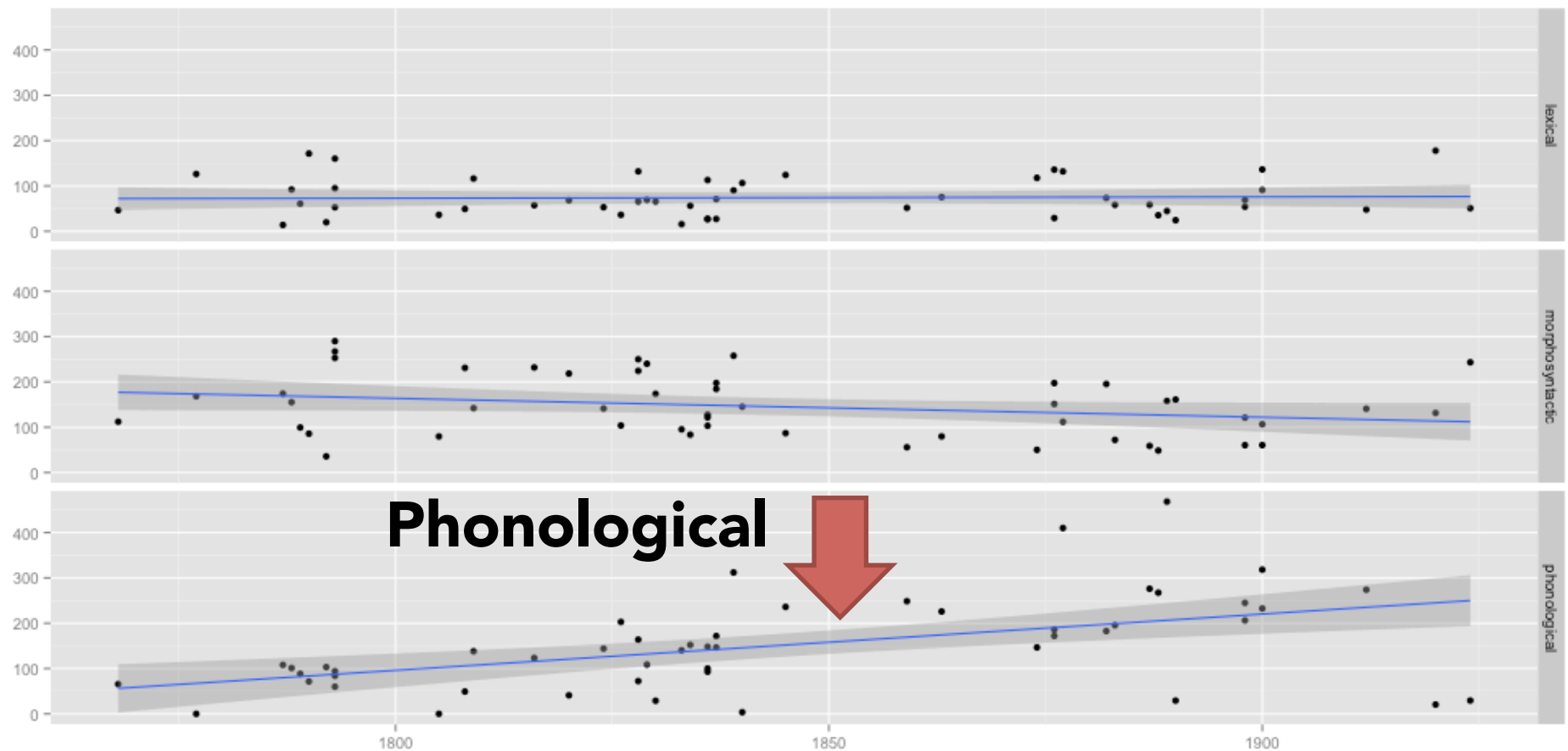
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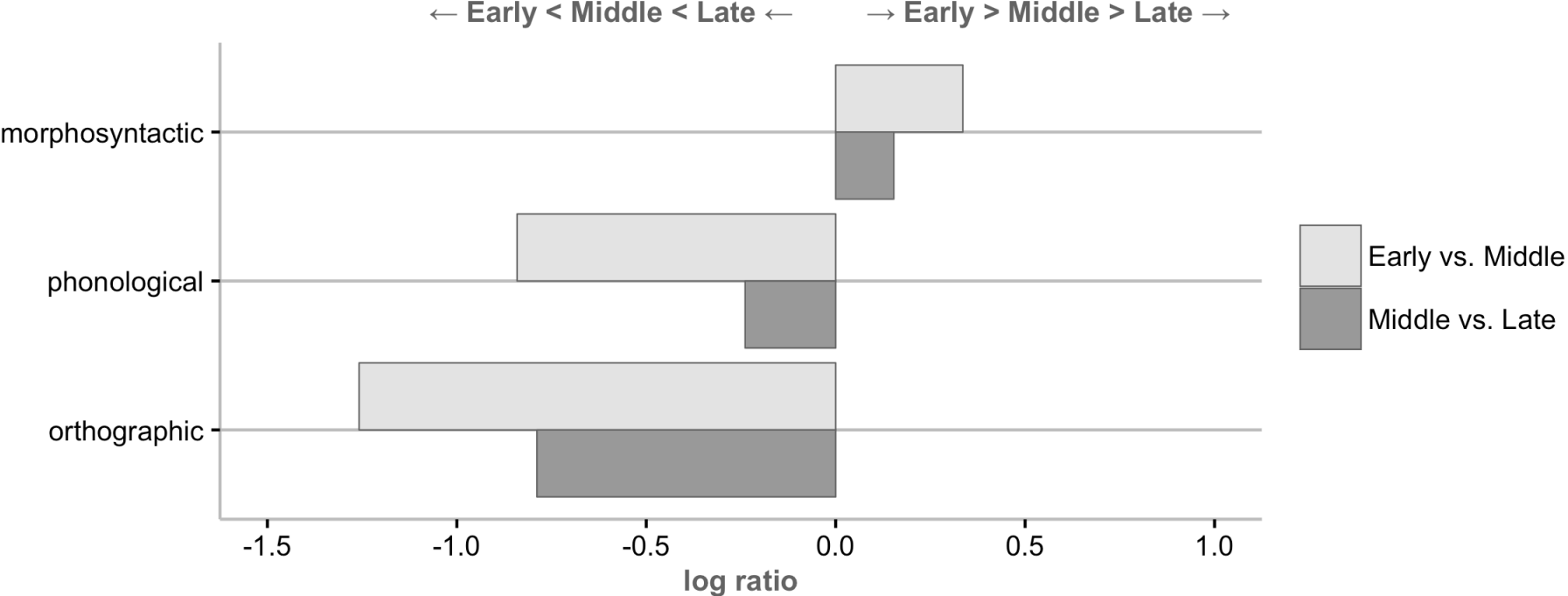
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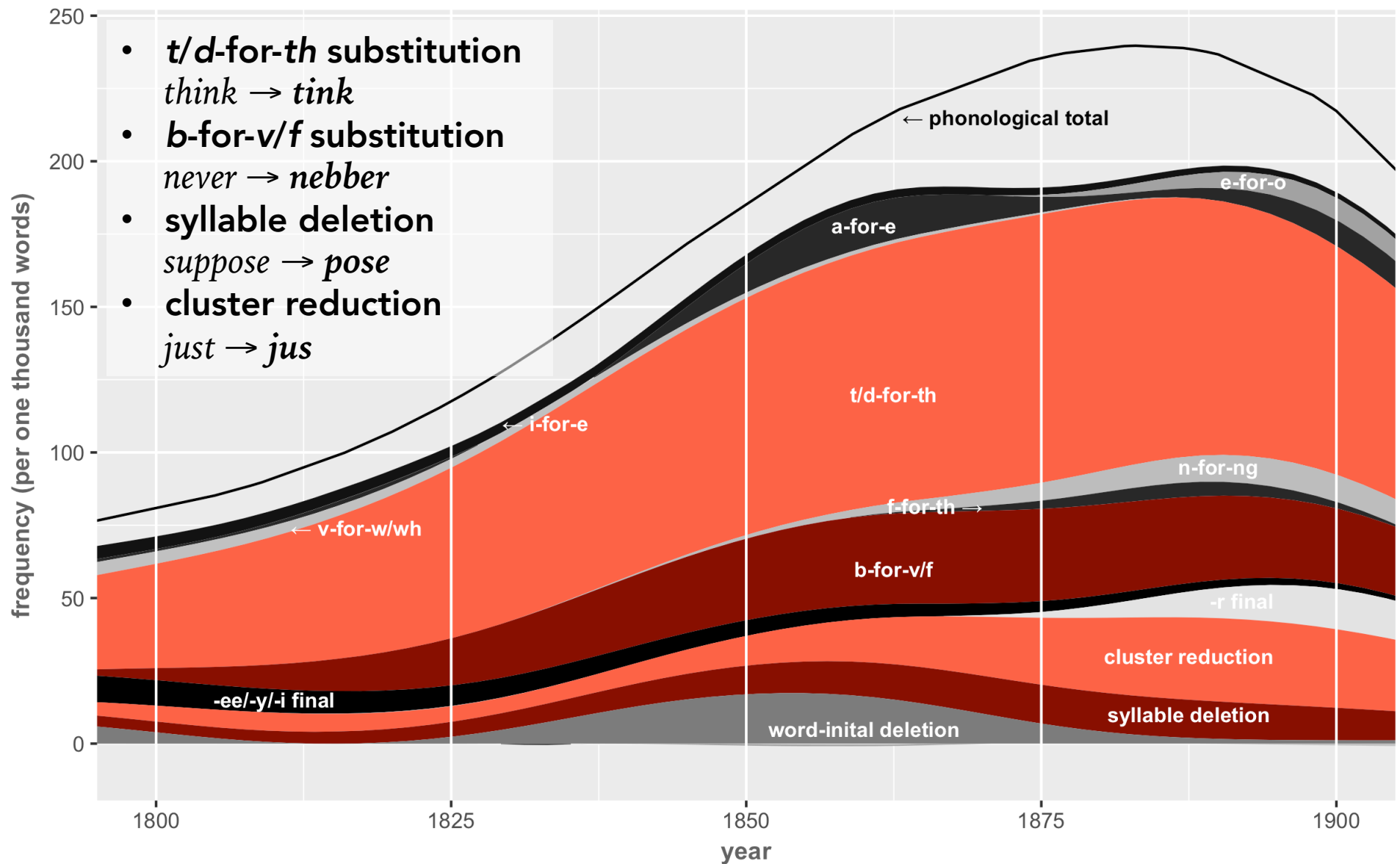
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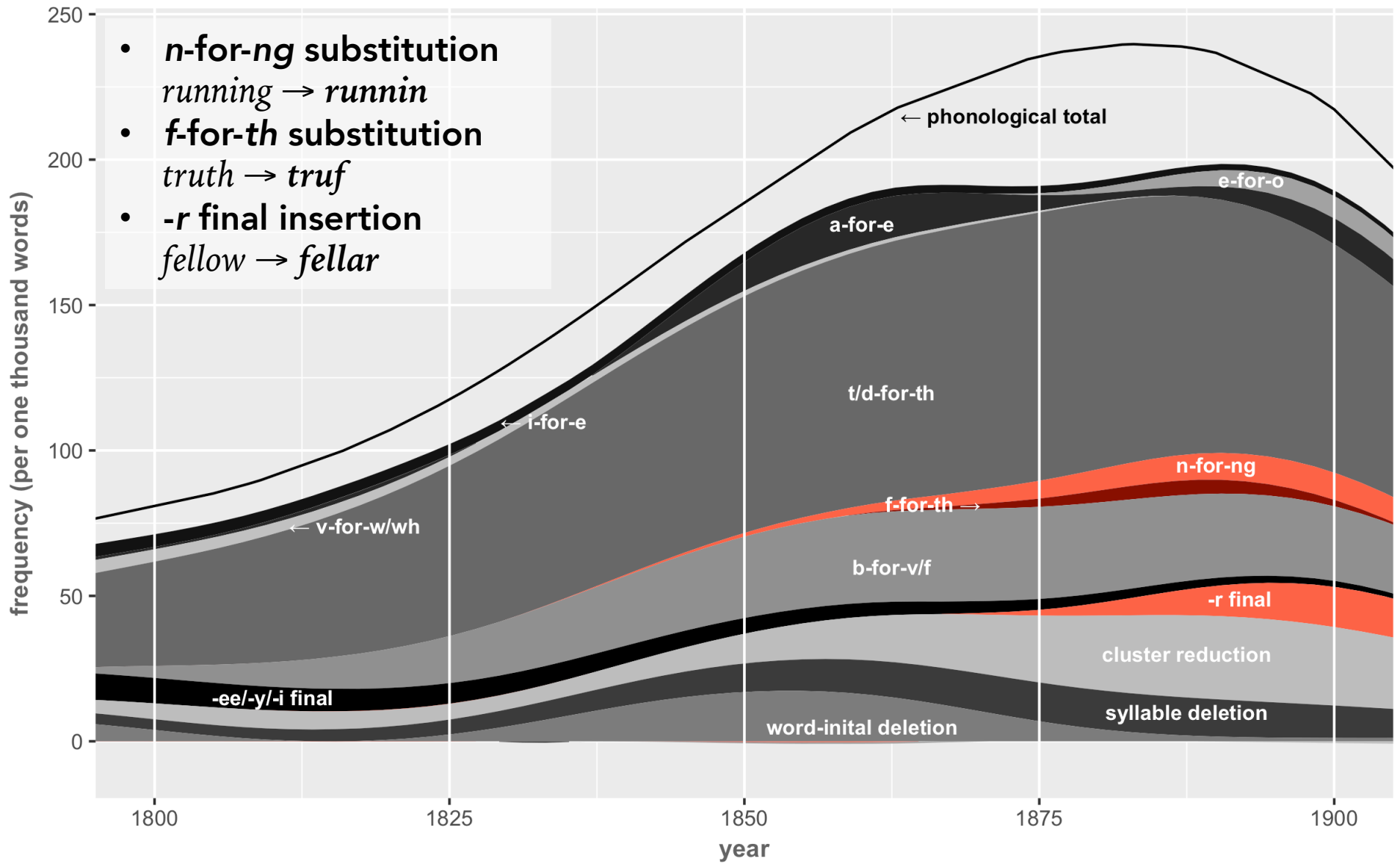
Effect sizes for comparisons between the early (pre-1830), middle (1830-1880), and late (1880-1930) periods for the morphosyntactic, orthographic, and phonological categories in African diasporic dialogue.



Stacked area chart showing the nineteenth century trends (using a generalized additive model) for selected phonological features in African diasporic dialogue.



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Yes, sar, dat's what I'se cumming to. It wuz ver' late 'fore I left Massa Jordan's, an' den I sez ter mysel', sez I, now yer jest step out with yer best leg foremost, Ulysses, case yer gets into trouble wid de ole woman. Ver' talkative woman she is, sar, very –

Three Men on the Bummel by Jerome K. Jerome (1900)

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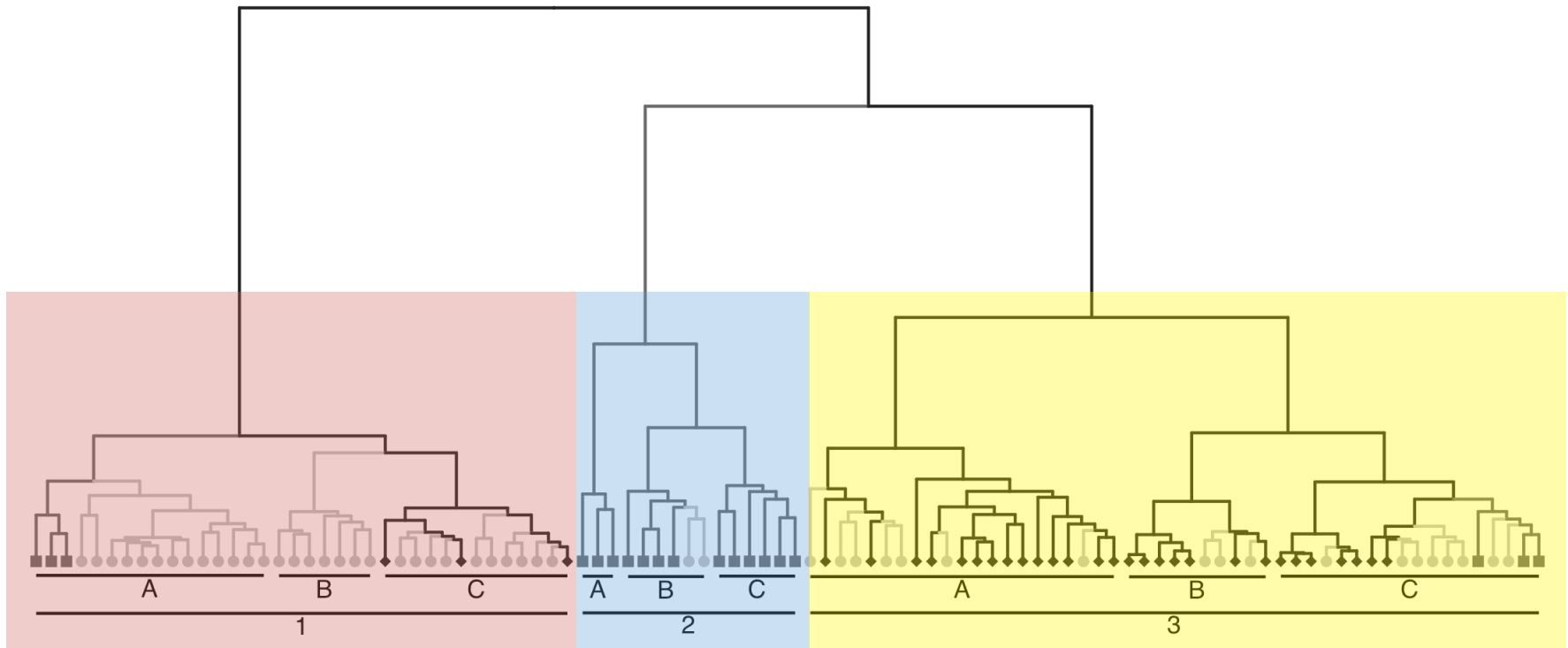
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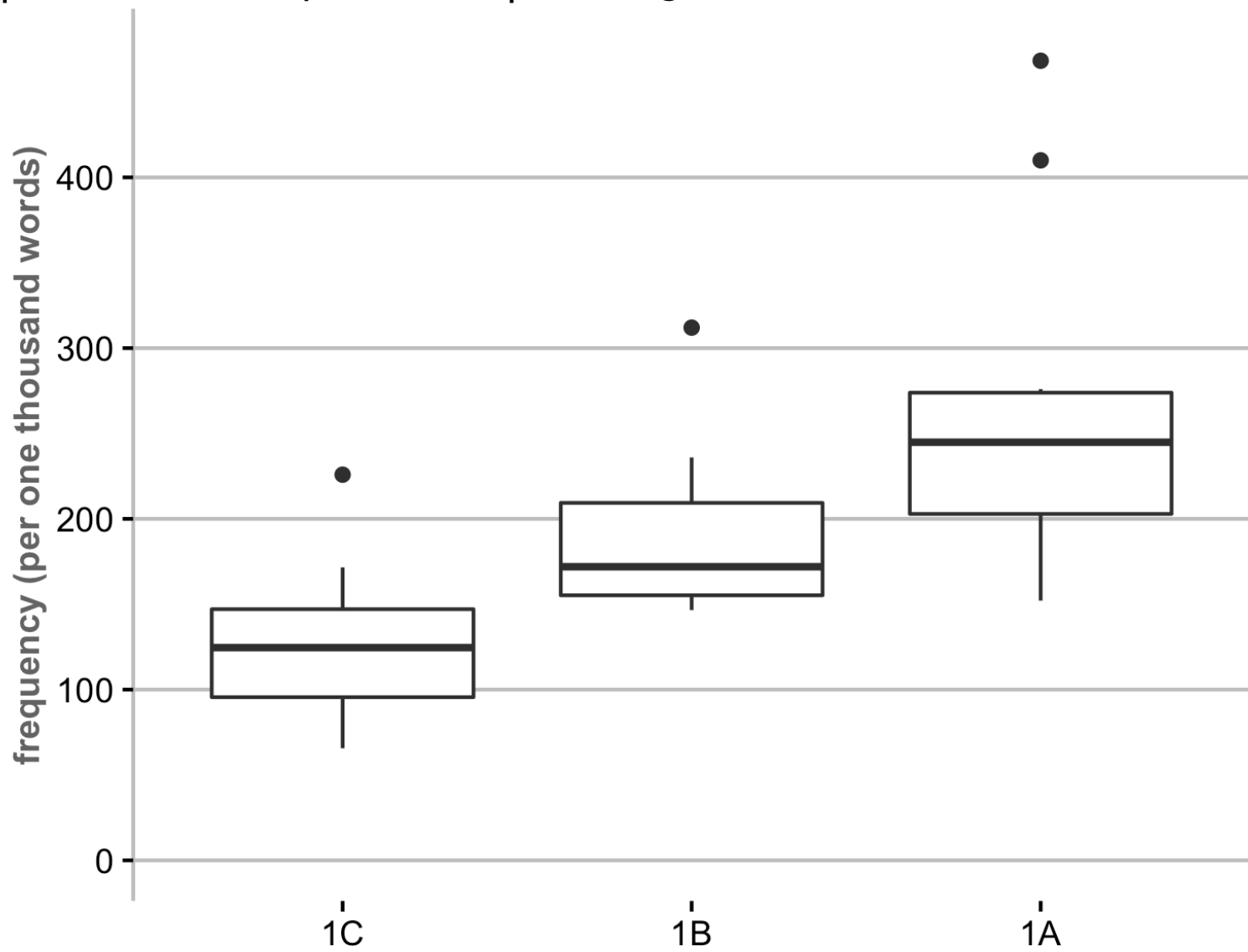
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a dendrogram containing extracted dialogue with at least 100 words

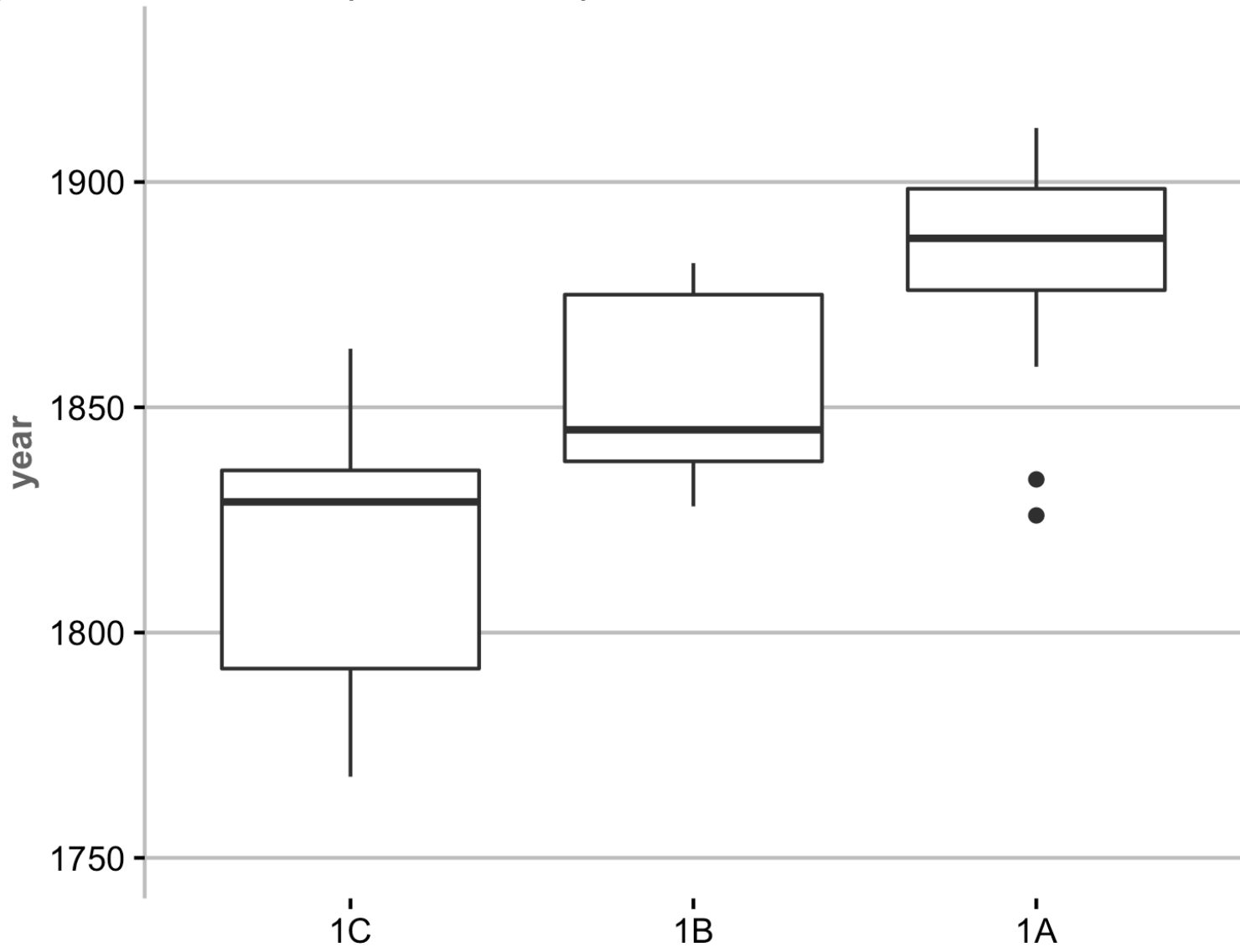


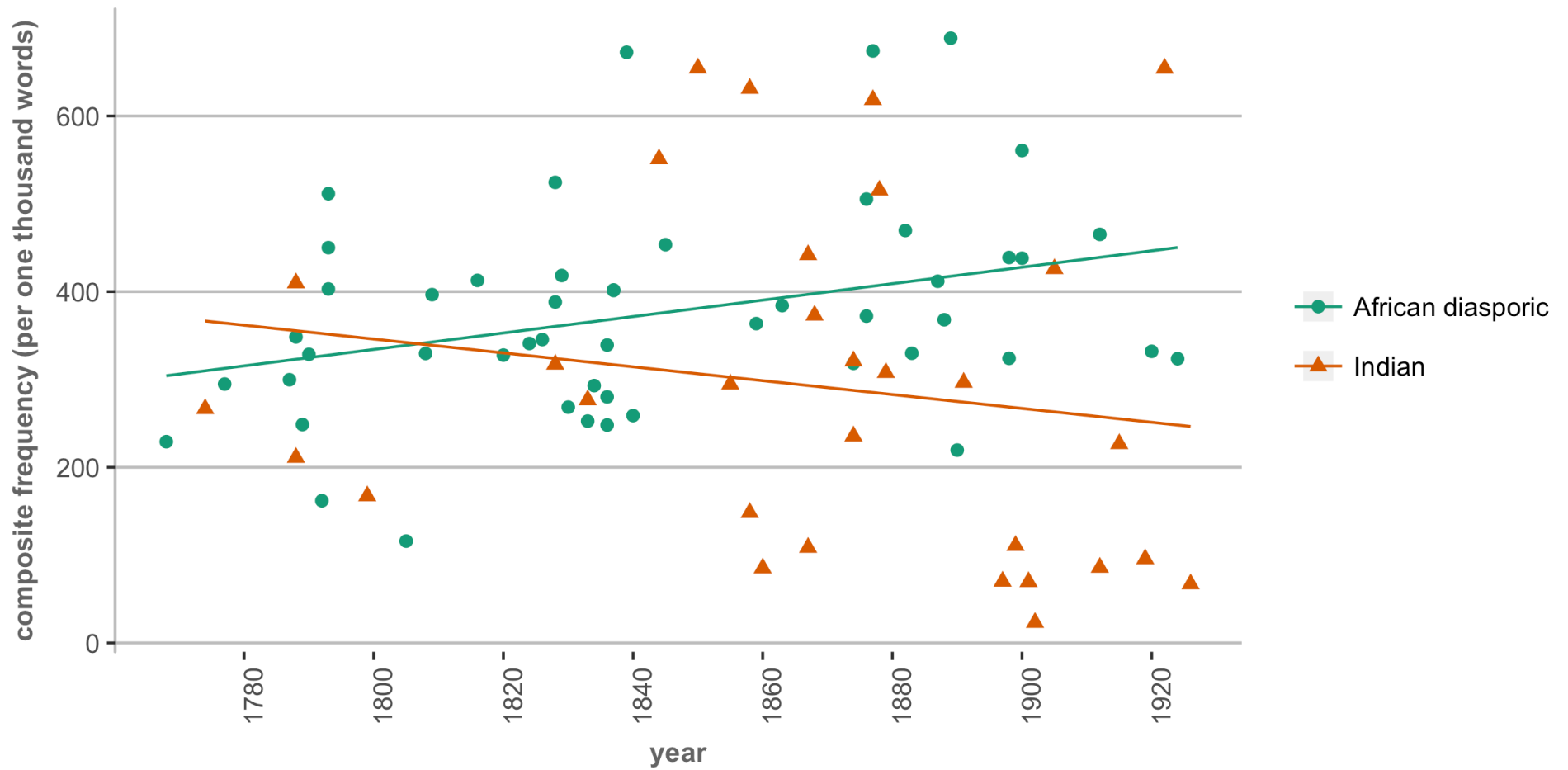
○ African diasporic □ Chinese ◆ Indian

boxplots for the frequencies of phonological features in the sub-clusters of 1

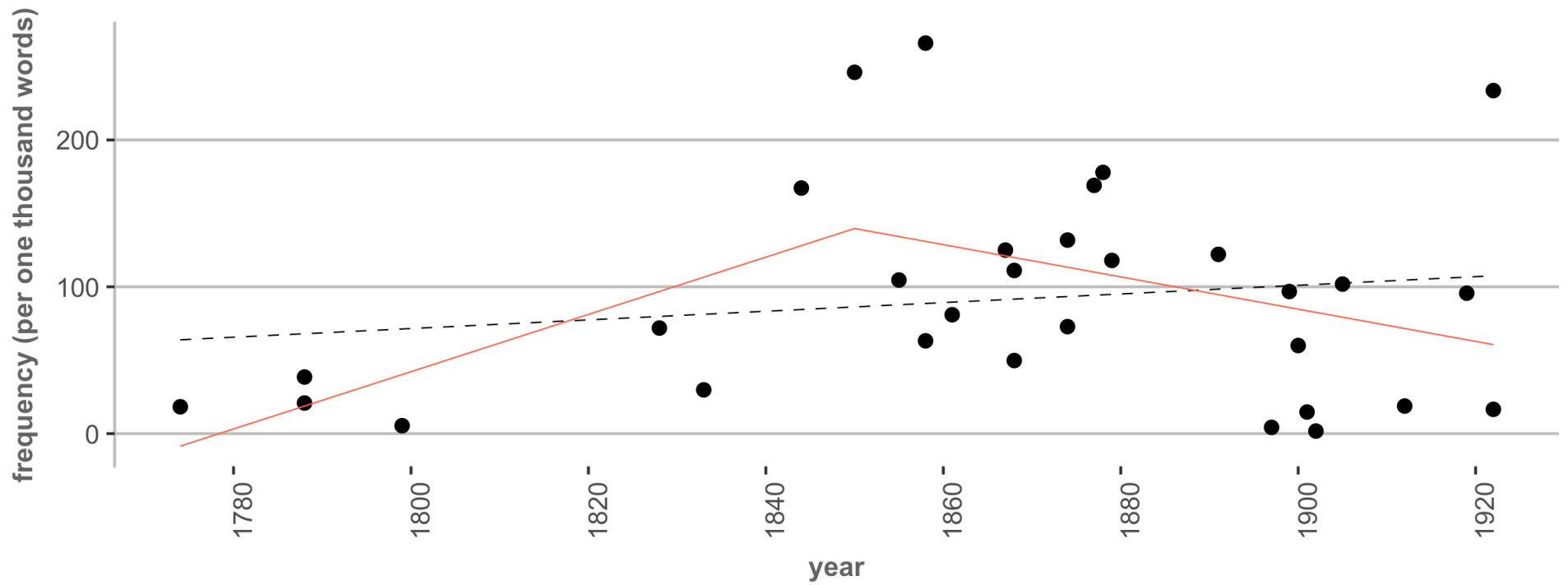


boxplots showing the spread in the publication dates in the sub-clusters of 1





frequency of literary dialect features in the dialogue of African diasporic and Indian characters



frequency of lexical features in the dialogue of Indian characters

Cassim, that Seymour sahib dubashee, he eat little rice with me last night. He want Fatimah, mistress's ayah, for his wife; – I tell him his sahib give her new bangles, – want her live in his house. Then Cassim too much angry, – say I one lie-man, – say his master laugh at sahib's beard, and very often send little chit to mistress, till her horse ride morning time, – elephant not ride. Gora-wallahs got no sense; – go away far off; – Seymour sahib come on horse, – then he and mistress ride off together – same like this morning.

The English in India by William Hockley (1828)

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His words, though few, are seldom, if ever mispronounced; – there is a slight Indian accent; but you never hear a native of Hindostan speak the gibberish which characterizes the African attempts at English. They take the liberty, however, of making considerable alterations in those English words which they have been compelled to adopt, to designate foreign productions – for instance, muffin is invariable called “mufkin”; and dumpling “dumpkin,” by the native servants.

“Indian Scenes: Shopping” by Emma Roberts (1830)



The “faithful ayah”

HEROINE OF INDIA.

Return of Lady Hardinge to England.

Lady Hardinge, the wife of the Viceroy of India, has arrived in England on her long-delayed visit to that country.

With a view to avoiding the heat of the Indian summer, Lady Hardinge intended to go to England last spring, but in the December of the previous year, amid all the pomp and splendour of a ceremonial journey, a bomb came hurtling down. A second later, a native attendant lay dead, and her husband the Viceroy was—so it then appeared—at the point of death. It was then that the great qualities of Lady Hardinge revealed themselves. Through the dark days that followed when the Viceroy's life ebbed and flowed Lady Hardinge was incessantly at his bedside. As Lord Hardinge gradually regained his strength she had her reward, but even then she would not leave him, and insisted on abandoning her visit to England. Nowhere was her devotion and her courage more appreciated than in India—the land of the faithful ayah. Money flowed in from all parts of the country to be distributed amongst her favourite charities.

Lady Hardinge will remain in England during the summer. She has three children—two boys and one girl. The former are named Edward and Alexander, after King Edward and Queen Alexandra, who were their sponsors. The daughter was called Diamond, for she was born just when King Edward's Diamond Jubilee won the Derby in 1900. Lady Hardinge is a personal friend of Queen Alexandra.

HOBSON-JOBSON

A GLOSSARY OF COLLOQUIAL
ANGLO-INDIAN WORDS AND
PHRASES, AND OF KINDRED
TERMS, ETYMOLOGICAL, HIS-
TORICAL, GEOGRAPHICAL AND
DISCURSIVE

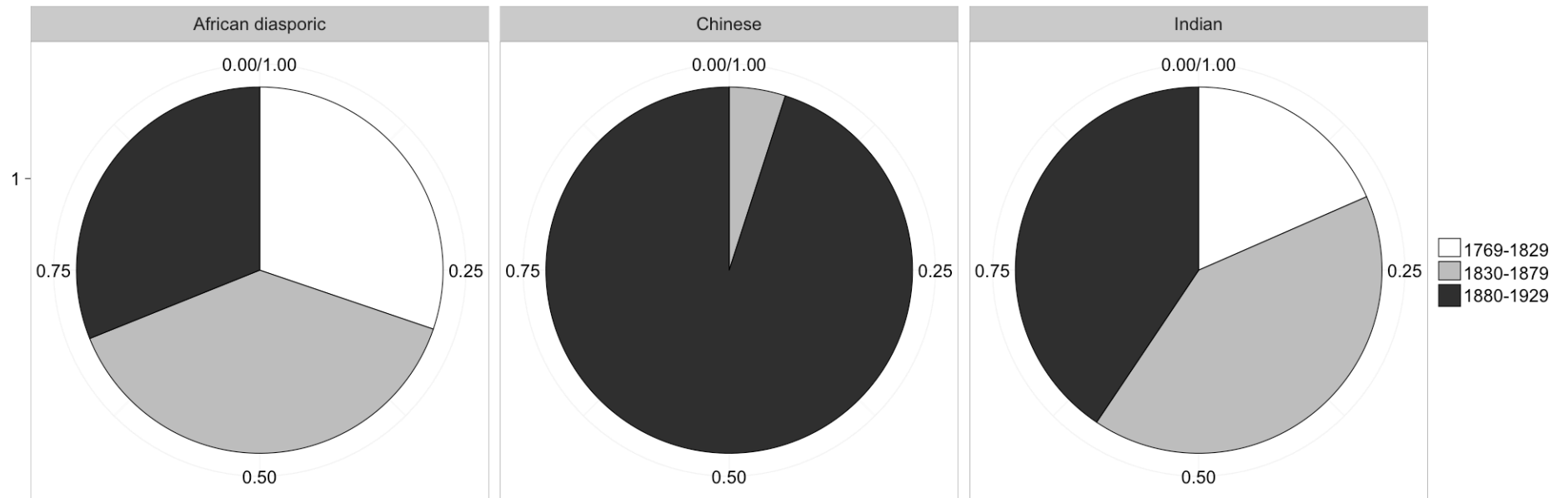
BY COL. HENRY YULE, R.E., C.B.
AND A. C. BURNELL, PH.D., C.I.E.

GORAWALLAH, s. H. *ghorā-wālā*, *ghorā*, 'a horse.' A groom or horsekeeper; used at Bombay. On the Bengal side **syce** (q.v.) is always used, on the Madras side **horsekeeper** (q.v.).

1680.—**Gurrials**, apparently for *ghorā-wālās* (*Gurrials* would be alligators, **Gavial**), are allowed with the horses kept with the Hoogly Factory.—See *Fort St. Geo. Consns. on Tour*, Dec. 12, in *Notes and Exts.*, No. ii. 63.

c. 1848.—“On approaching the different points, one knows Mrs. — is at hand, for her **Gorahwallas** wear green and gold *puggies*.”—*Chow-Chow*, i. 151.

Percentages of word counts by period (1768-1829, 1830-1879, and 1880-1929) and controlling for speaker.



China is no more; –
The eastern world is lost – this mighty empire
Falls with the universe beneath the stroke
Of savage force – falls from its tow'ring hopes;
For ever, ever fall'n!

The Orphan of China by Arthur Murphy (1759)

Chinaman. Me help! Me help! Shooty me! Bang me shooty!
One, tree, five hundred Indian! O! O! O!

Pike. Shoot you, bang you, two or three hundred Indians?
What the devil do you want with so many Indians?

Chinaman. No, no, no! Pop! Bang! Bullet shooty me!

Old Swamp. Indians shoot you?

Chinaman. Gold prospect, me hill over. Par one dol,ar [*sic*]
– one dollar, two bit – one dollar half. Indian come! Me
bang! Bang! Bullet! Pop me! Two, tree, five hundred!

[...]

Old Swamp. The Diggers are upon us, boys – let's meet
them on the hill and surprise them

Pike. And lick them before they have a chance to scalp
Short-Tail. [All rush out, except CHINAMAN, with a
“Huzzah!”]

Chinaman. Chinaman no fight; Chinaman skin good skin;
keep him so. Mellican man big devil – no hurty bullet him.

A Live Woman in the Mines by Alonzo Delano (1857)

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THE
CHINESE REPOSITORY

VOL. IV

FROM MAY, 1835 TO APRIL, 1836

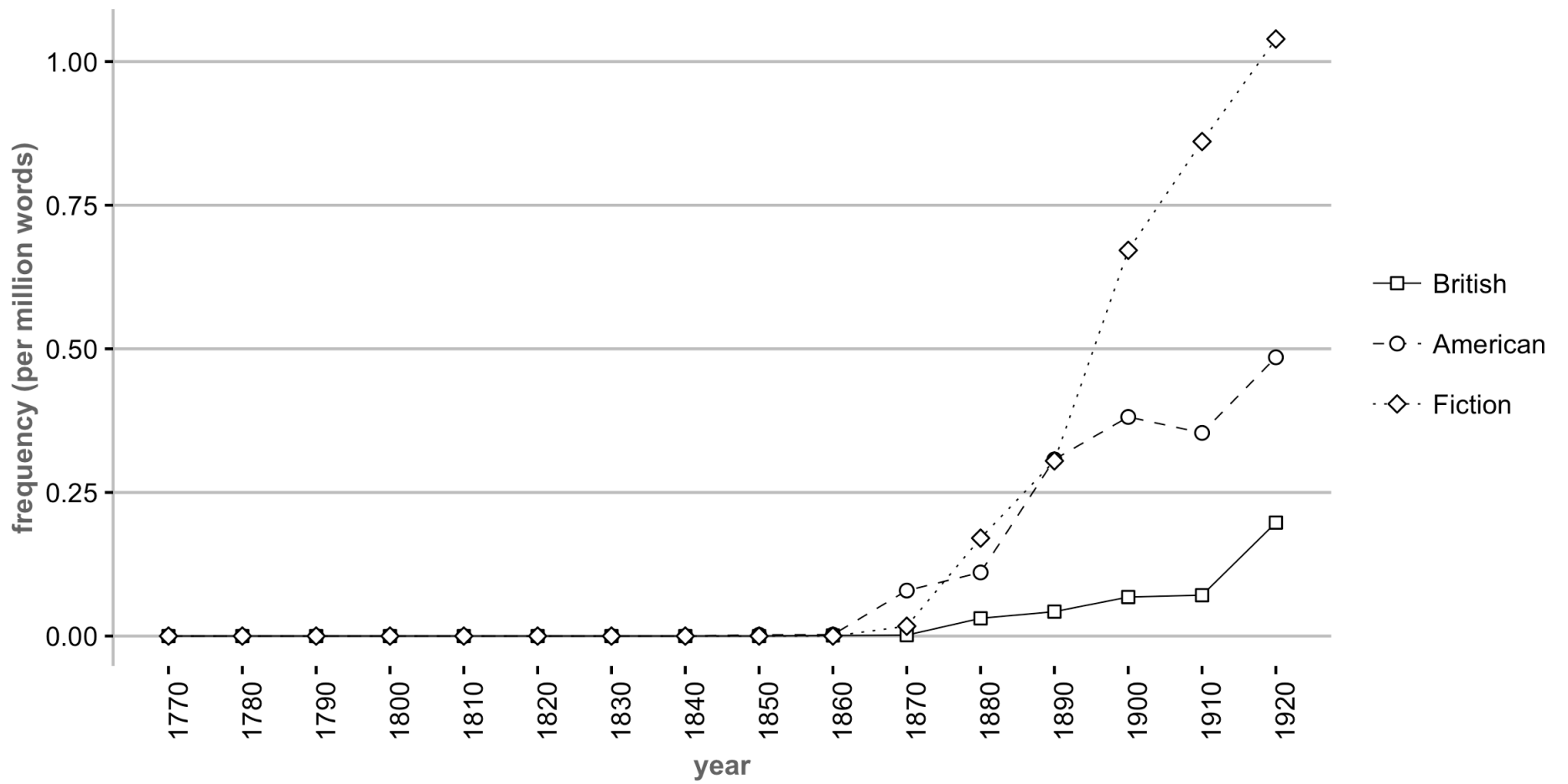
“ ‘ Maskee, ’ spose you no got lever, putee sileek, you please : my wantchee make finish one moon so, no mistake ; you can do, true ? ’ inquired I.

“ ‘ Can see, can savy ; I secure one moon half so can bindee alla proper, ’ he replied. ‘ You can call-um one coolie sendee go my shop. ’

“ ‘ Velly well, ’ said I : whereupon he raised himself up and moved off, bidding me ‘ good bye, ’ as he went.

We may here remark, that the chief object of this article is to give those of our readers who live "outside," an idea of the manner in which the king's English is murdered in this flowery land. A few conversations, written by one who was much amused with the oddity of this representation of the confusion at Babel, will serve our present purpose very well.

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frequency of *CHINATOWN* in English from Google Books data

OPIMUM DENS IN LONDON.

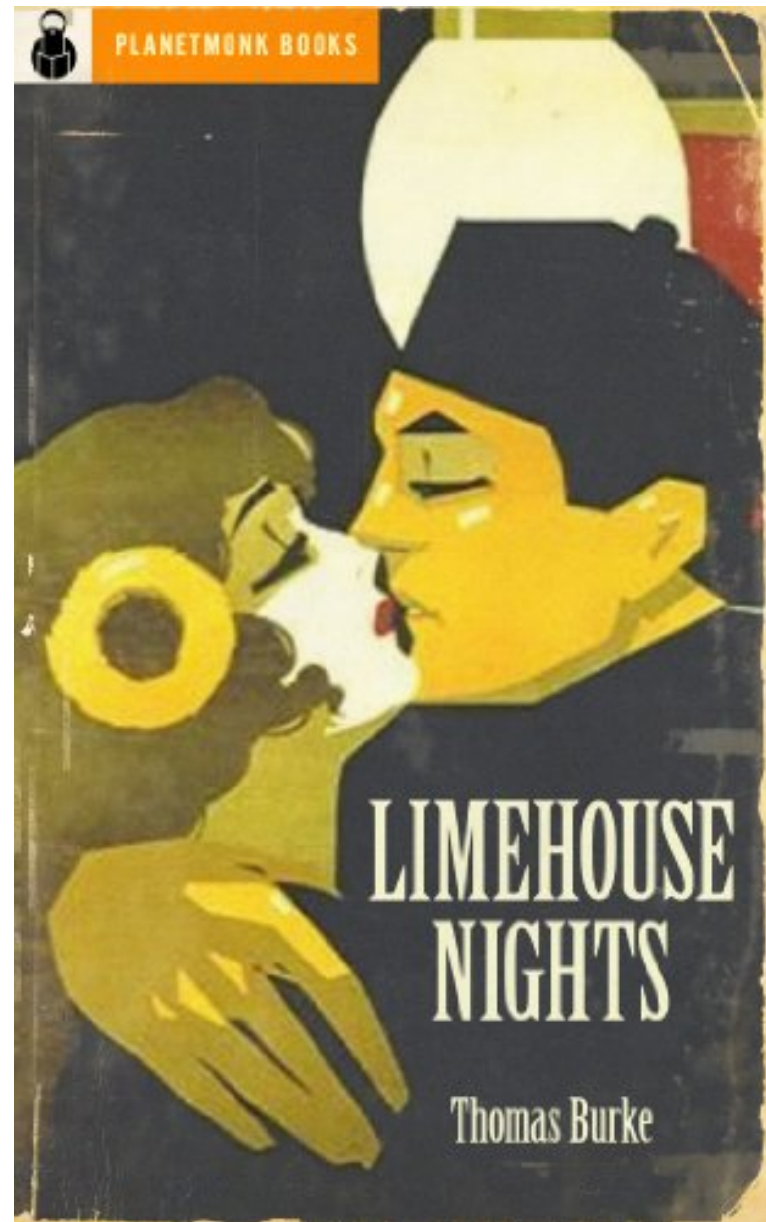
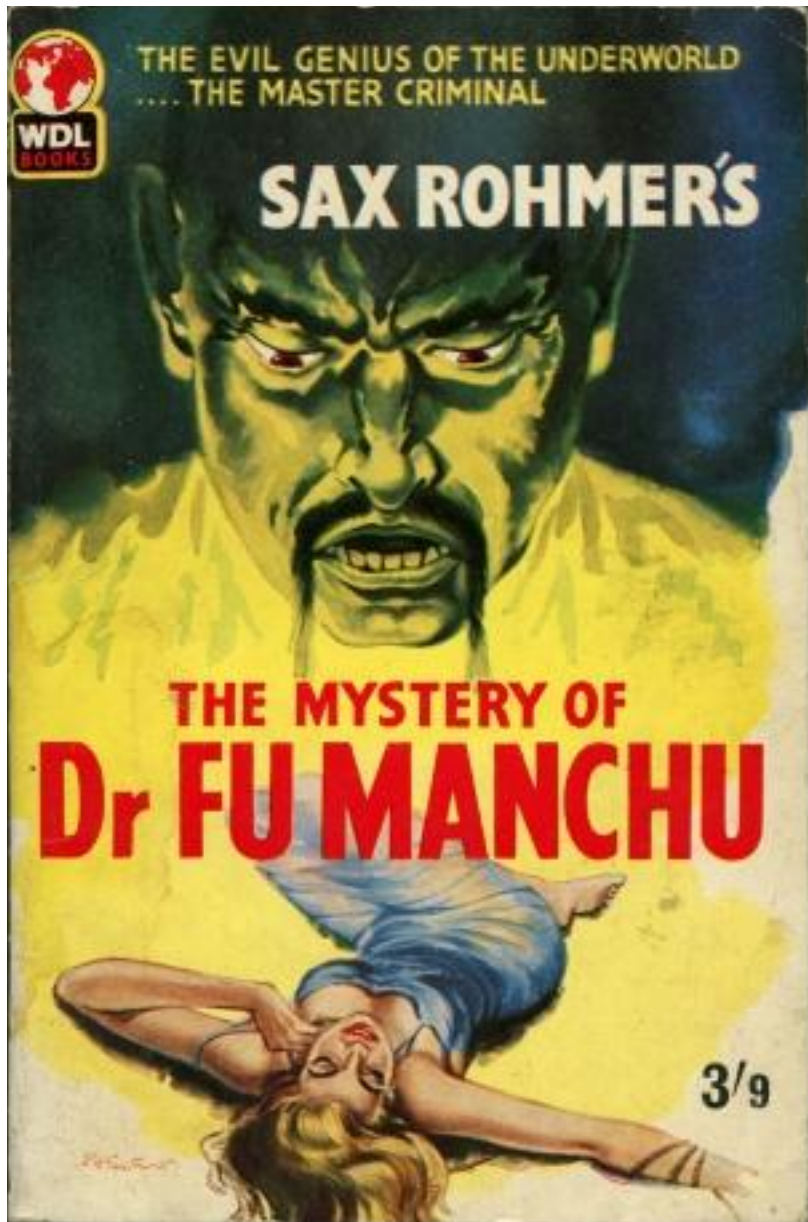
BY AN EX-MEMBER OF THE LONDON POLICE
FORCE.

Londoners may scarcely be aware that they have a district of their city where opium dens flourish as much as they do in Hong Kong or Shanghai.

CHINA IN LONDON!

Ocean travellers who arrive at the East and West India Docks and drive away in their cabs pass through what appears to be a low-class district inhabited by the families of sailors. This district is locally known as Chinatown, but the worst dens are to be found in two streets, Salmons Lane and Limehouse Causeway.

Outside the houses look thoroughly English in appearance, but go inside No. X or No. Z, and the scene changes from English to Oriental by the simple process of stepping through the doorway.



Thank you!

dbrown@marymount.edu