

INTRODUCTION

- Although Americans of Middle Eastern or North African descent (MENA-Americans) feel like they are physically visible, they don't feel like they are linguistically visible.
- However, Dearborners feel like they are linguistically visible too (Sheydaei & Purnell 2019)
- Some features of Dearborn English, from a bottom-up approach:
 - Lexicon:
 - Borrowed: *allab*-words (e.g., *wallah, yallah*), *yani shobaddek bro, sallying*
 - Adopted: *hawk, boater, jumper, bro, cons*
 - Phonology:
 - Tone, gruffy, throaty

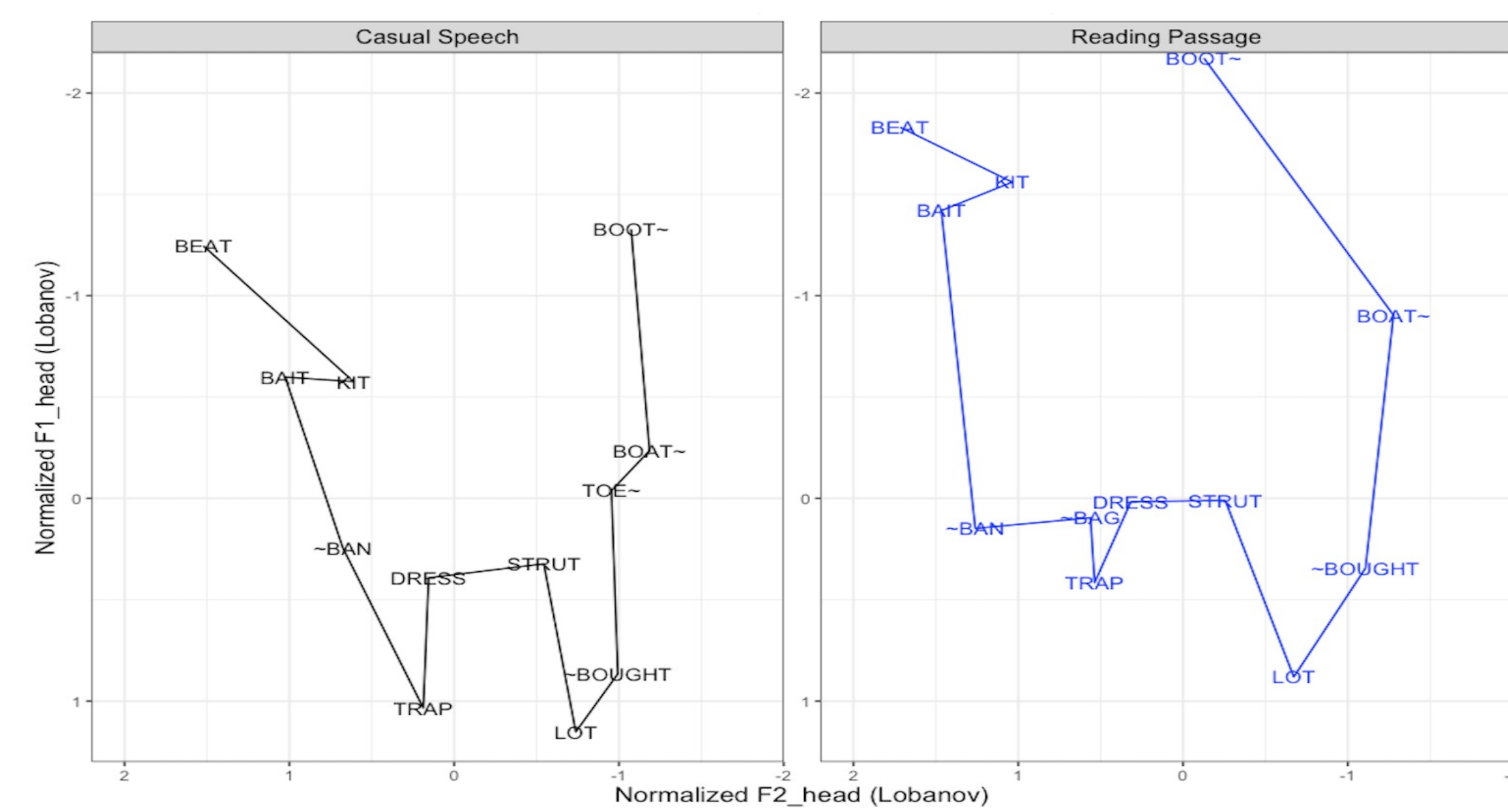
Research Questions:

- Can a listener distinguish between a Dearborn speaker and a non-Dearborn speaker in the absence of any stereotypical markers in a local context?
- How would Dearborn English be grouped with other varieties?
- Can we see differences in grouping based on conceptual gender of the voice and self positioning of the speaker in relation to the variety?

BACKGROUND

- Previous work on vowels in Dearborn
 - Bakos 2012: Lebanese Dearborners mostly non-NCSers
 - Samant 2010: inter-community differences among youth
 - Among sporadic religious youth, Lebanese had the most fronted and raised TRAP
 - Sheydaei & Purnell 2020: mostly non-NCS shifters

Figure 1. Dearborners' vowel space across contextual styles of casual speech and reading passage



- Emerging work on consonants:
 - Sheydaei 2022

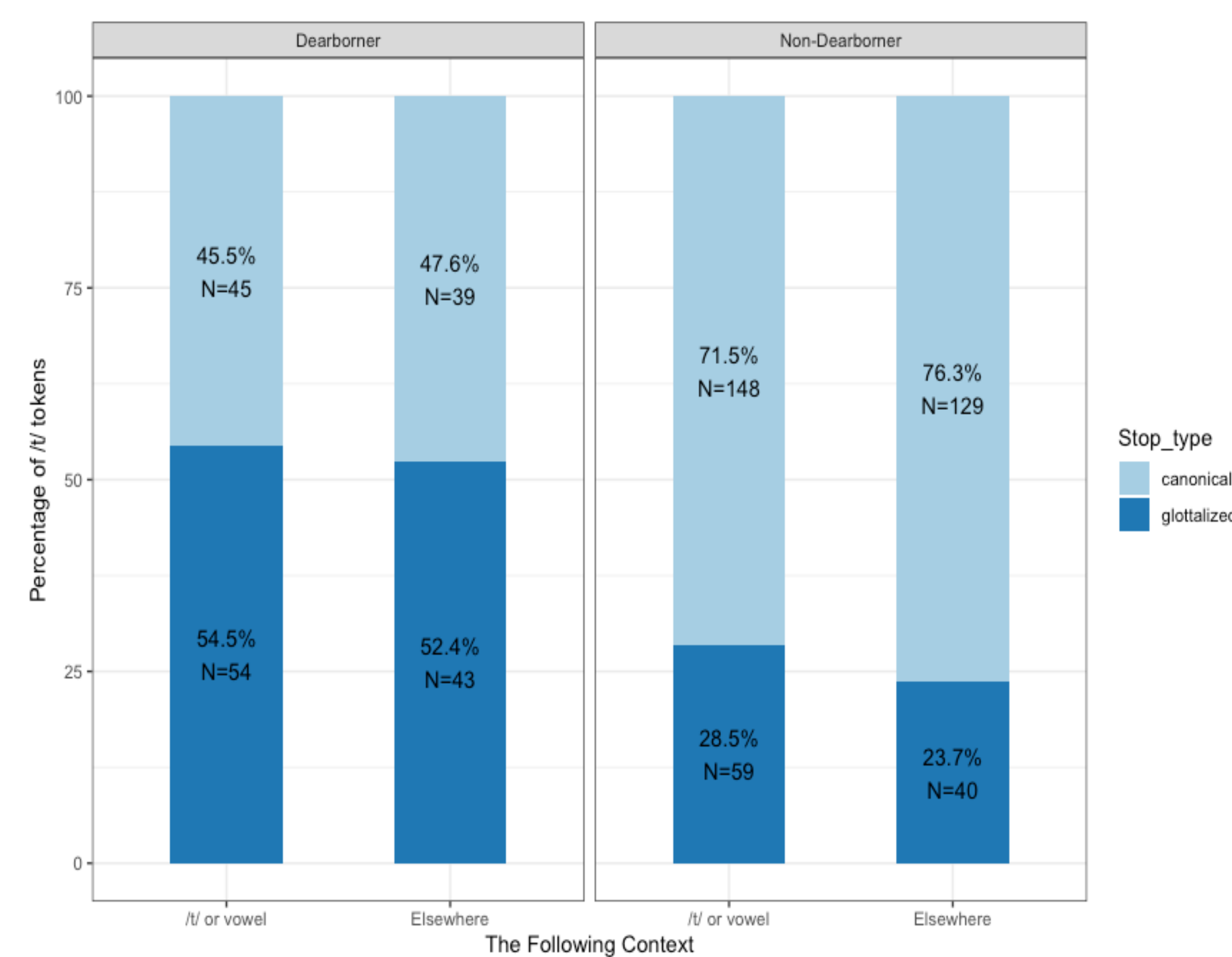


Figure 2. Glottalization of postvocalic word-final /t/ for Dearborners (N=5) vs. non-Dearborners (N=11)

METHODOLOGY

Procedure:

- A three-section online survey on the Qualtrics platform with two identical but separate versions: one including only female voices, and another including only male voices

Audio recordings in the survey included the same sentence read by 10 difference speakers (5 male and 5 female)

2 from Dearborn, 1 Black speaker from SE MI, 1 white speaker from SE MI, and 1 non-native speaker of English with an Arabic accent (male speaker from Tunisia, and female speaker from Syria)

“He poured it into a tin cup; when he put it up to his lips, he spilled it on his hand; his hand puffed up and hurt a lot.”

In these recordings different speakers read the same sentences. Please pay attention only to the accent and not to how fast or slow a given speaker reads the sentences.

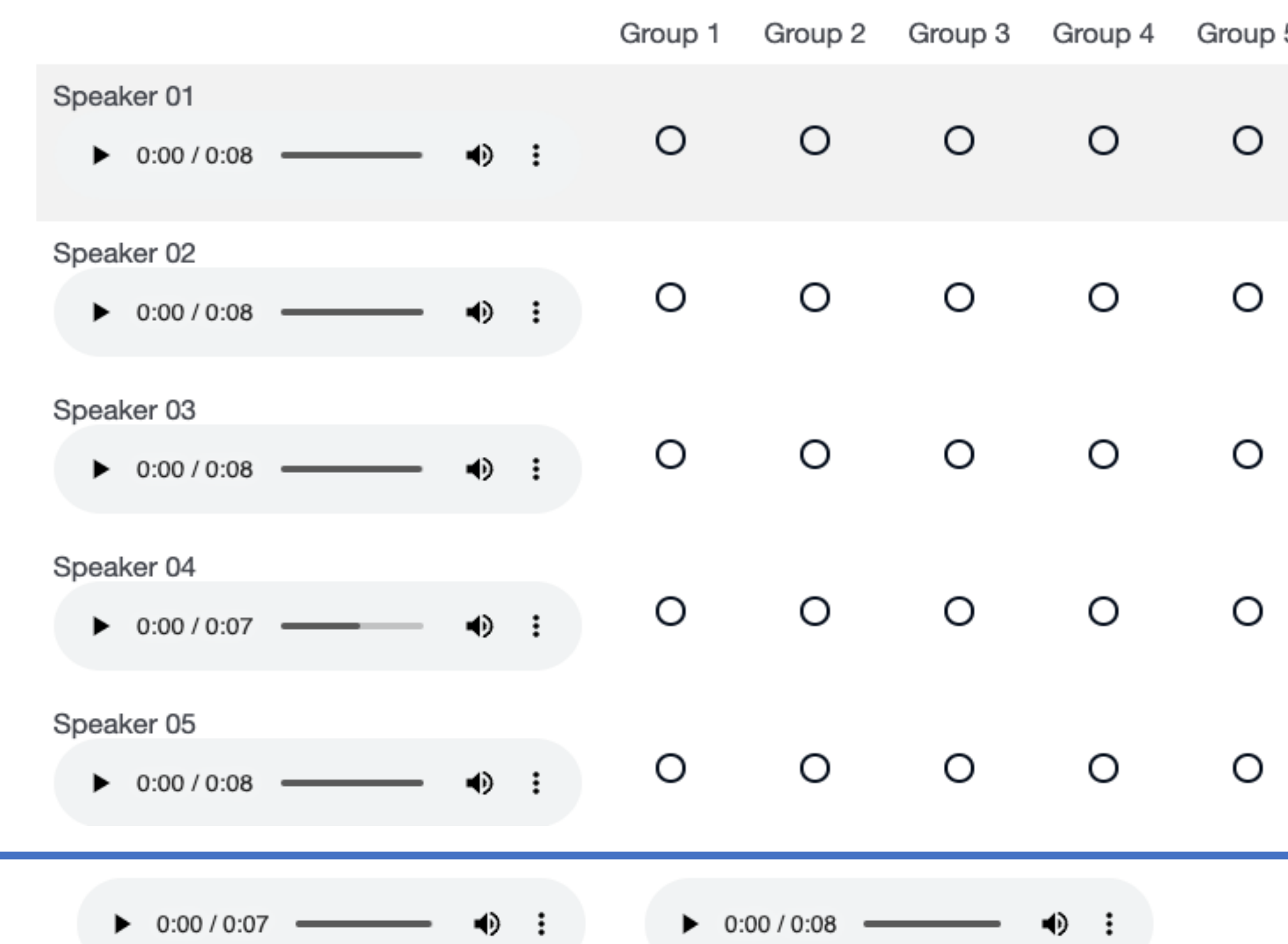
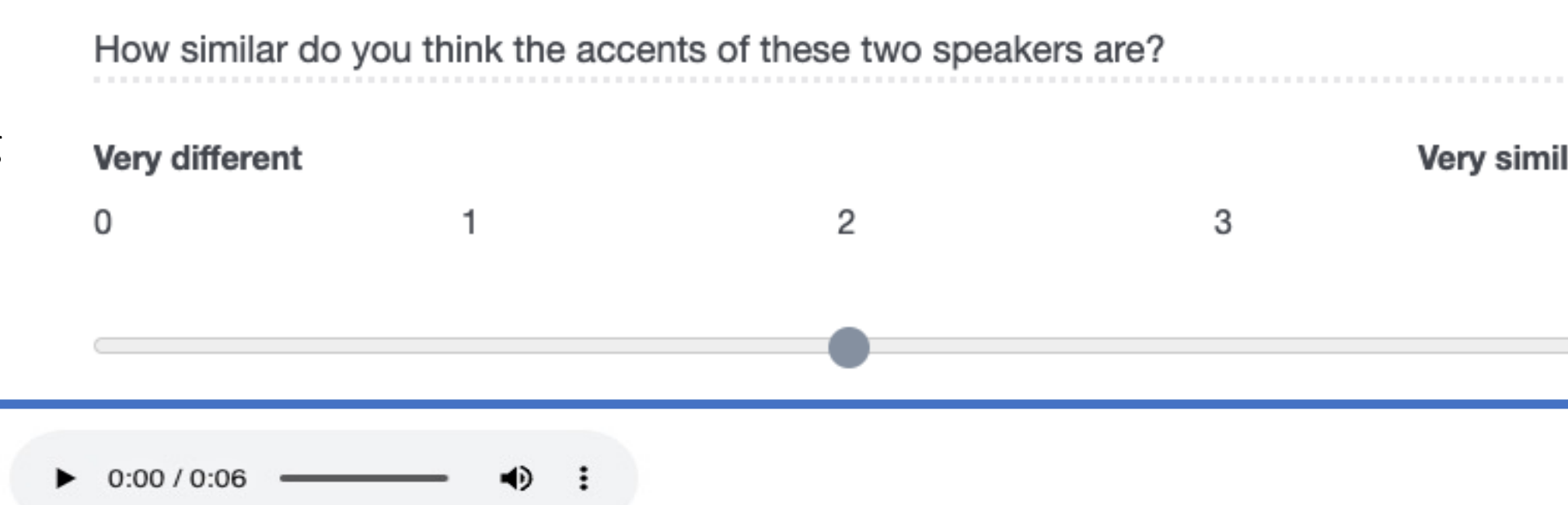


Figure 3. Sample question from Section 1 of the survey: grouping speakers based on accent

Figure 4. Sample question from Section 2 of the survey: matching speakers



Below you see a map of southeastern Michigan. Where do you think the person whose voice is in the recording is from on the map below? Please click on the area that you think this person is from. Please select only one area from the ones listed below.

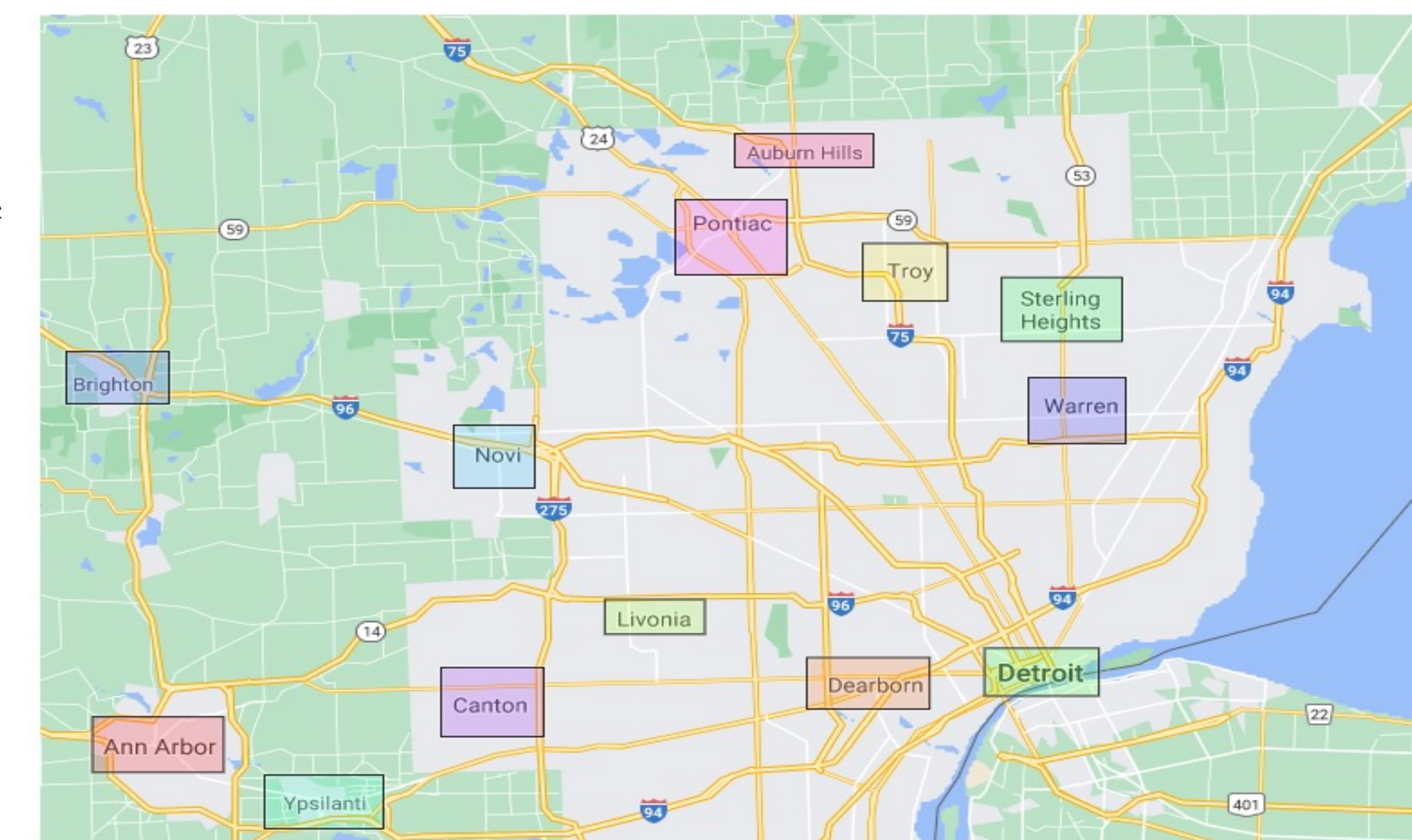
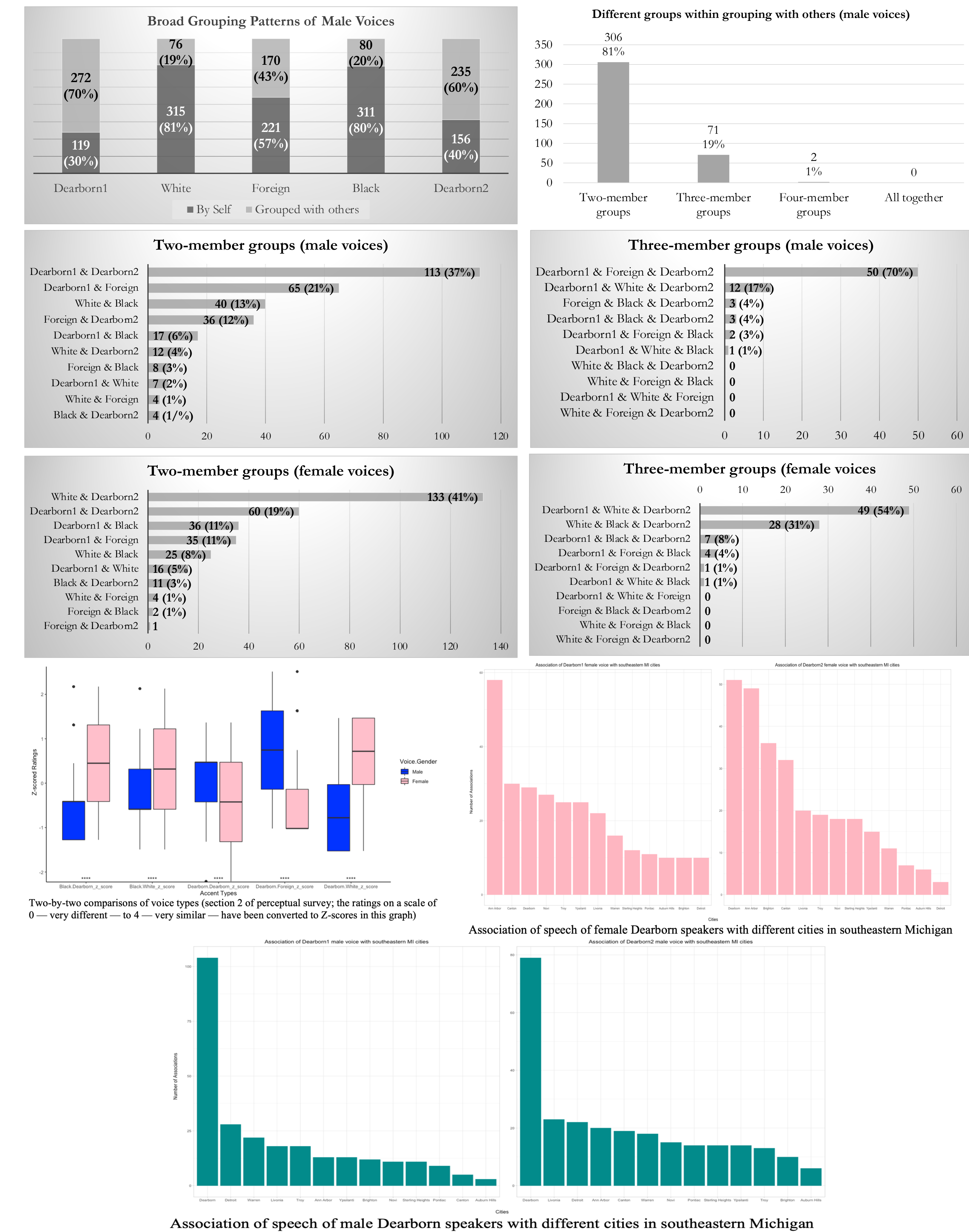


Figure 5. Sample question from Section 3 of the survey: map interaction

Participants:

- 391 listeners (309 from SE MI) took the survey with the male voices, 411 listeners (320 from SE MI) took the survey with the female voices

RESULTS



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- The American English variety spoken by residents of Dearborn, MI, is recognized as a distinct and locally enregistered variety
- Based on speakers' positionality and findings, I argue that Dearborn English is mostly an ethnolinguistic repertoire rather than an ethnolect
- This ethnolinguistic repertoire has associations with masculinity in the specific context of Dearborn
- Future studies can look at intercommunity differences and speaker agency, specifically gender differences informed by ethnographic work in the Middle East (cf., Habib 2016)
- Future studies can also look at language attitudes towards Dearborn English and explore social judgements

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