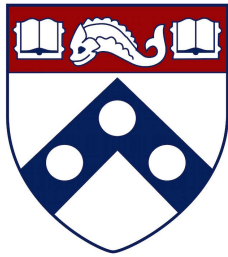
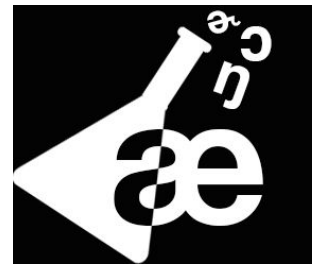


# Empathy, flexibility, and conformity in a sound change in progress



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Personality in Speech Perception and Production  
LabPhon 15 Satellite Workshop  
Cornell University - July 17, 2016

# Who leads language change?

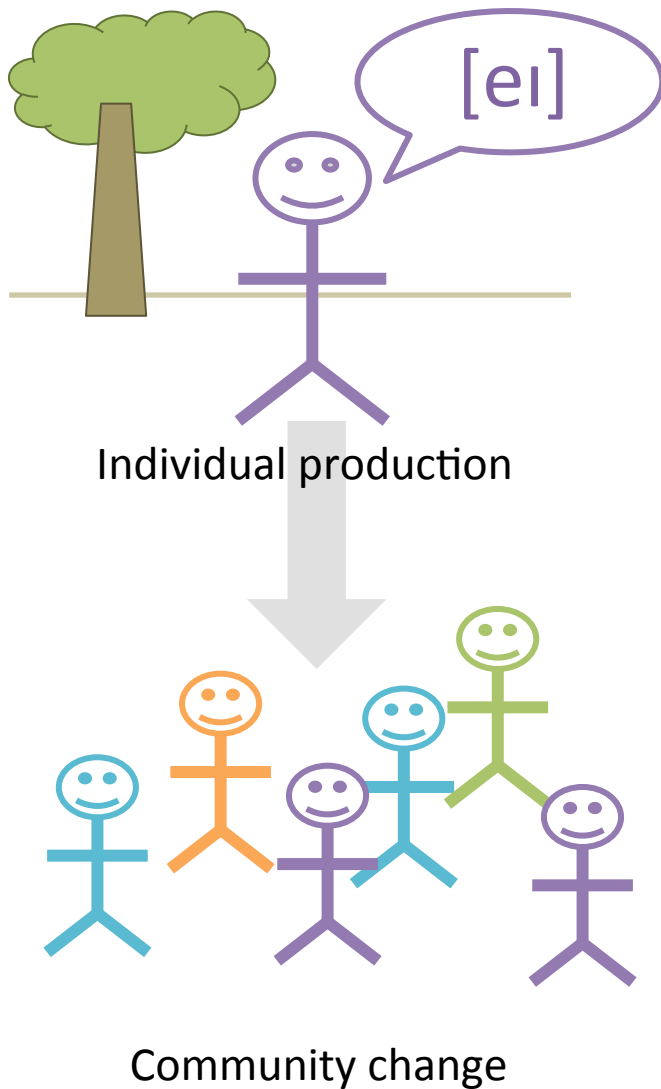
“The basic strategy of this pursuit of the causes of change is to identify the leaders of change in progress; in place of the question ‘why?’ I substituted the question ‘who?’.”

Labov 2001: 90

# Who leads language change?

- Reflects relationship between the key role of the speaker-hearer as the agent of sound change and the need to identify change at the community level
- Empirical evidence on this relationship has come from both laboratory experiments and sociolinguistic fieldwork

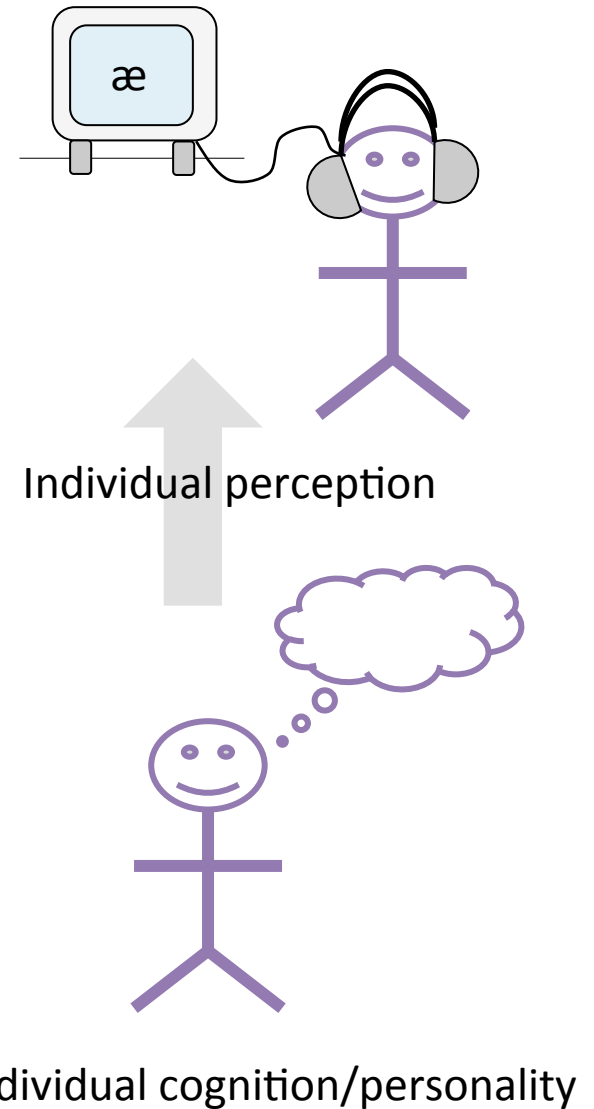
## Sociolinguistic fieldwork



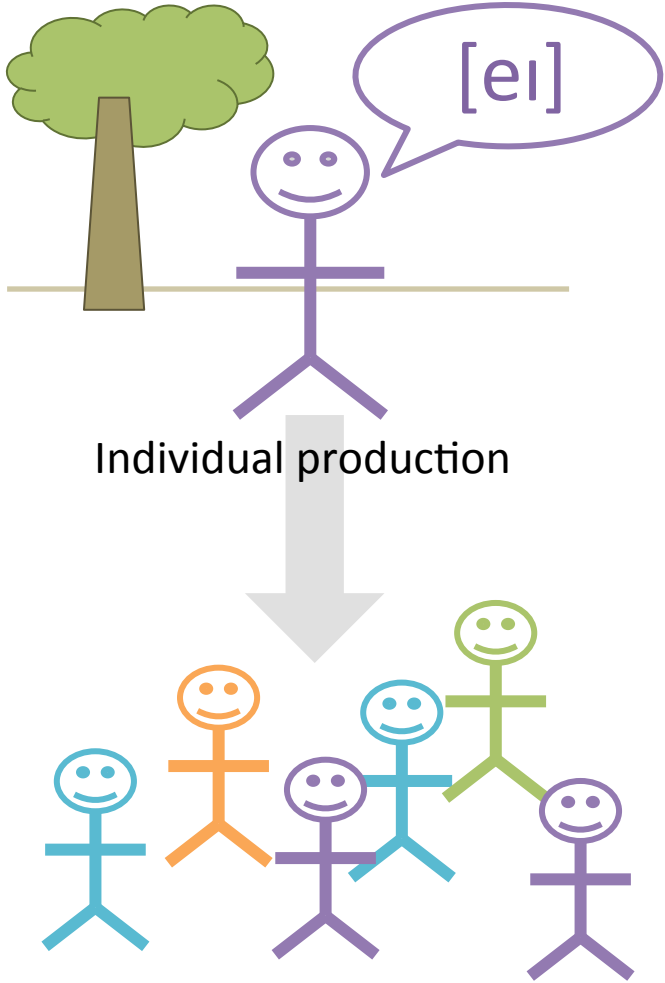
- Demographically, tends to be young women
- Martha's Vineyard, Labov 1972
- "their sociolinguistic position is a display of nonconformity."  
Labov 2001: 410
- "burned-out burnouts"  
Eckert 2003
- "exert more influence than they receive" Labov 2001: 410

- Stewart & Ota 2008 – inverse correlation between AQ and Ganong effect
- Yu 2010 – less perceptual compensation by low-AQ women
- See also Lev-Ari & Peperkamp 2014, Baese-Berk 2015, Turnbull 2015, Kingston et al. 2015...
- “minimal compensators who are superior empathizers” Yu 2013: 224

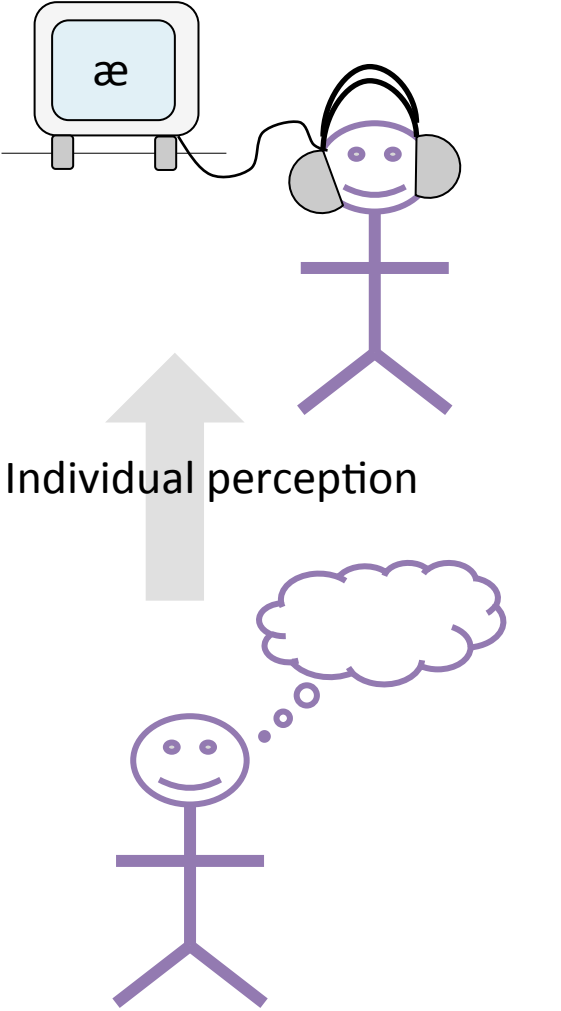
## Laboratory experiments



# Sociolinguistic fieldwork



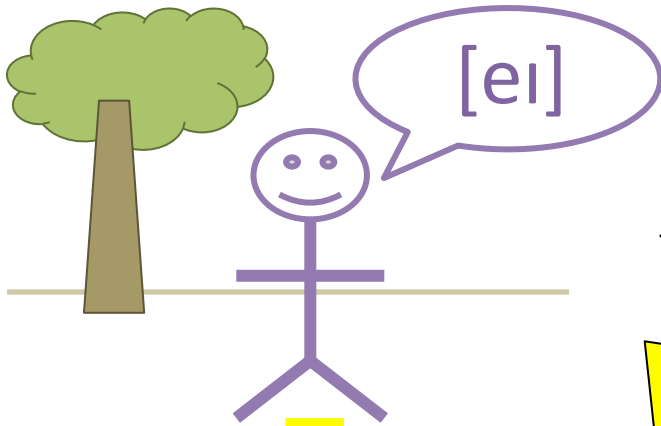
# Laboratory experiments



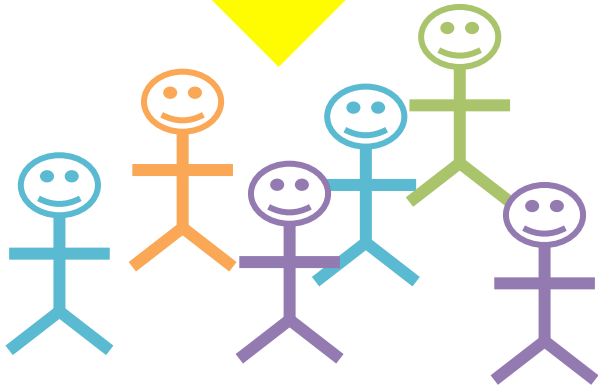
Community change

Individual cognition/personality

## Sociolinguistic fieldwork

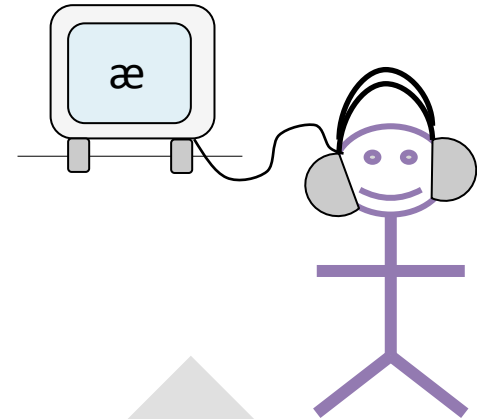


Individual production



Community change

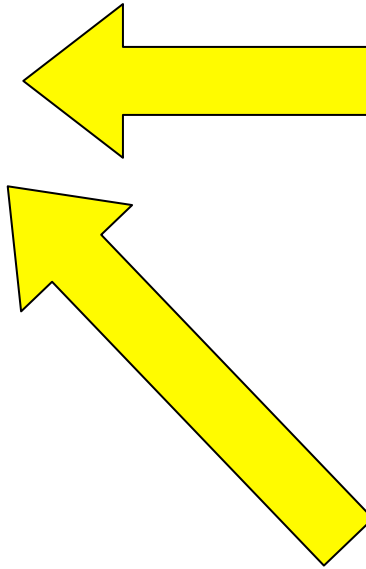
## Laboratory experiments



Individual perception



Individual cognition/personality

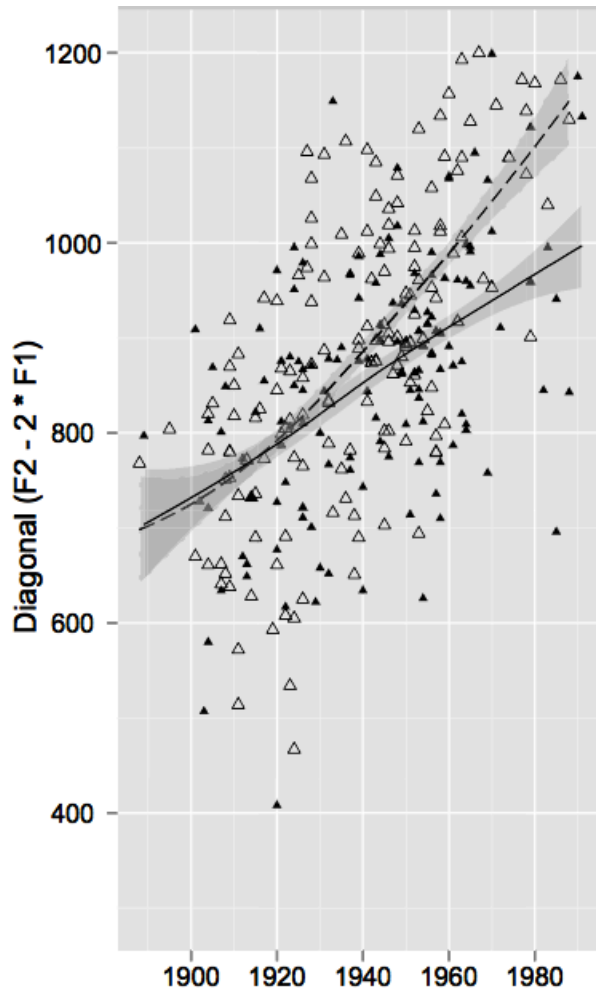


# Who leads language change?

- Need to connect what we know about leaders of language change from sociolinguistic fieldwork perspective and laboratory experimental perspective
- New project to combine data from spontaneous speech and experimental performance by same individuals



# Change from below in /eyC/



from Labov et al. 2013

- Raising of /ey/ (“plate”) before consonants
- Does not reverse mid-century like other Philly sound changes (Labov et al. 2013)
- Does not show educational stratification (Prichard 2016)
- Never mentioned in meta-discussion of Philly accent

# Pilot with Philadelphian women

- 20 young women recruited in friendship pairs
- 30 minute dyadic conversation without interviewer present
- Individual differences experimental battery
- F1 of /eyC/ tokens measured by hand in Praat
- Pilot data relating to hypotheses about **empathy**, linguistic **flexibility**, and **conformity**

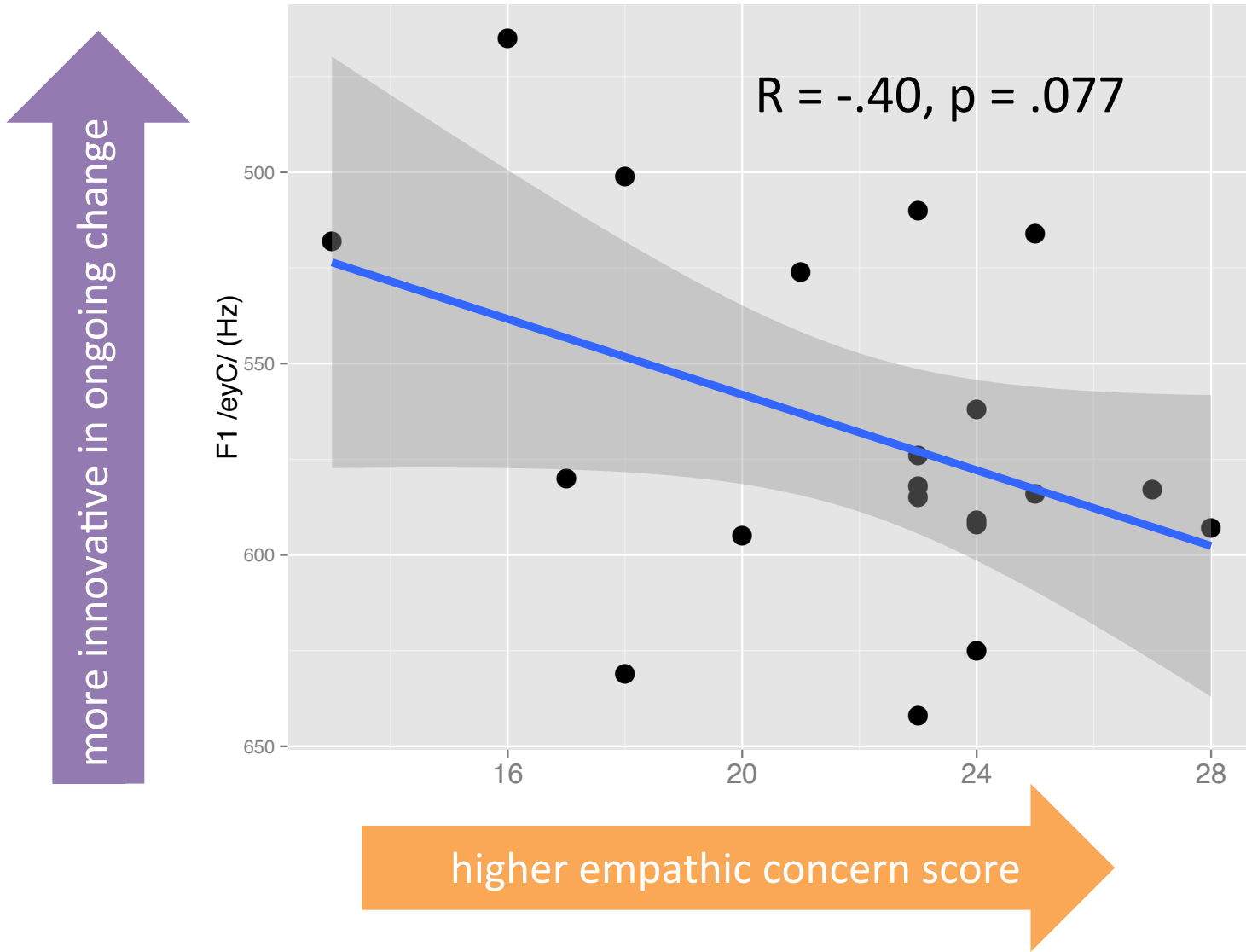
# Pilot with Philadelphian women

- Are the young women with the most innovative /eyC/ production in conversational speech...
  1. More **empathetic**?
  2. More linguistically **inflexible**?
  3. More **nonconformist**?

# Are the leaders more empathetic?

- Empathic Concern subtest of Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis 1983)
- 28-item self-reported questionnaire
- Assesses “feelings of sympathy and concern for unfortunate others” (Davis 1983: 114)
- Hypothesis: Empathic concern will correlate positively with /ey/-raising

# Are the leaders more empathetic?

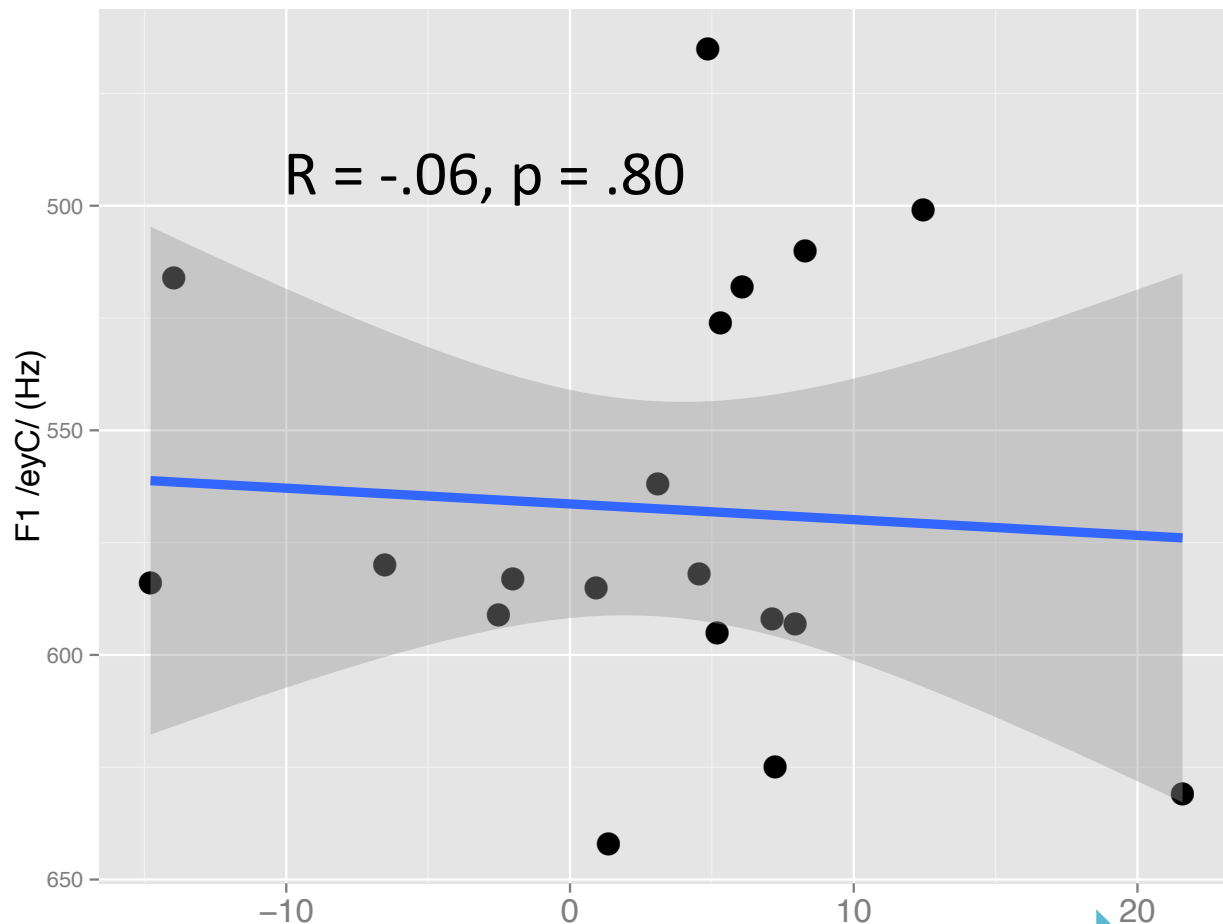


# Are the leaders less linguistically flexible?

- Shadowing task with model talker's word-initial voiceless stop VOT extended 100%
- Replication of Shockley, Sabadini & Fowler 2004, Experiment 2
- Participant baseline from reading condition
- Hypothesis: VOT convergence will correlate negatively with /ey/-raising

# Are the leaders less linguistically flexible?

more innovative in ongoing change



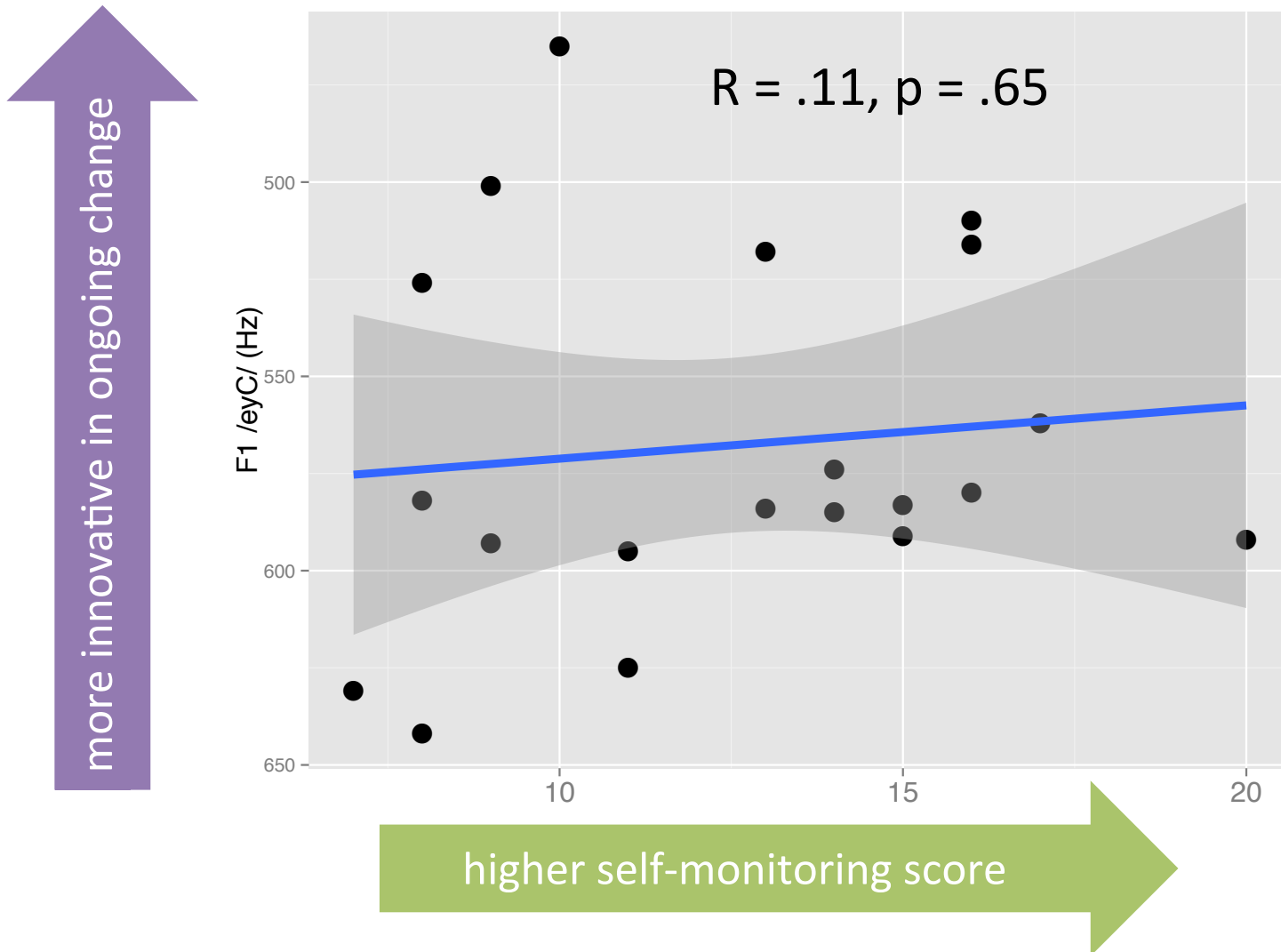
greater VOT convergence in shadowing

# Are the leaders **nonconformist**?

- Self Monitoring Scale (Snyder 1974)
- 25-item self-reported questionnaire
- Monitoring of self-presentation out of a concern for social appropriateness
- Hypothesis: SMS scores will correlate negatively with /ey/-raising



# Are the leaders **nonconformist**?



# Discussion

- Limited preliminary evidence on role of empathy is in opposite direction from Yu's conjecture: speakers who are most advanced in /eyC/-raising are *least* empathetic, not most
- Not yet any evidence to support the hypotheses that the leaders of this sound change are socially nonconformist or linguistically inflexible

# Discussion

- Theories of what role personality plays in sound change will need to be sensitive to different particular changes or different types of change:
  - different levels of social salience
  - different origins
  - different involvement of phonetic factors

# Discussion

- Theories of sound change from the laboratory can and should be tested against spontaneous speech data on change in progress in speech community
- Stay tuned for results from the full project!

# Thank you

Thanks to Elisha Cooper for her assistance and to the members of the Language Variation and Cognition Lab for their input.

Thanks also to Daniela and Keith!

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