

## Introduction

Preposition drop (P-drop) is a cross-linguistic phenomenon.

- Northwest British English (Myler, 2013, p. 189)  
*John came [to] the pub with me.*
- Berlin Kiezdeutsch German (Wiese, 2009, p. 792)  
*morgen ich geh [zum] arbeitsamt*  
tomorrow 1sg go [to.the] job.center  
'Tomorrow, I will go to the job center.'

To date, an extreme case seems to be reported for non-standard varieties of Russian. We systematically study this phenomenon in the speech of Daghestanian highlanders.

- Russian spoken in Daghestan [DagRus, Dobrushina et al., 2018]  
*u nego vse zapisi [na] latinskom jazyke byli*  
at 3MSG.GEN all note.PL [on] latin.ATTR.LOC language.LOC be.PST.PL  
'he had all of his notes taken in latin script [lit. language]'

### Research questions

- What factors condition the phenomenon of P-drop in locative, directional and temporal PPs? What kind of prepositional phrases (PPs) allow P-drop and to what extent?
- What can be a possible rationale for P-drop? Can any of the existing analyses of P-drop capture the pattern observed in the Russian speech of Daghestanian highlanders?

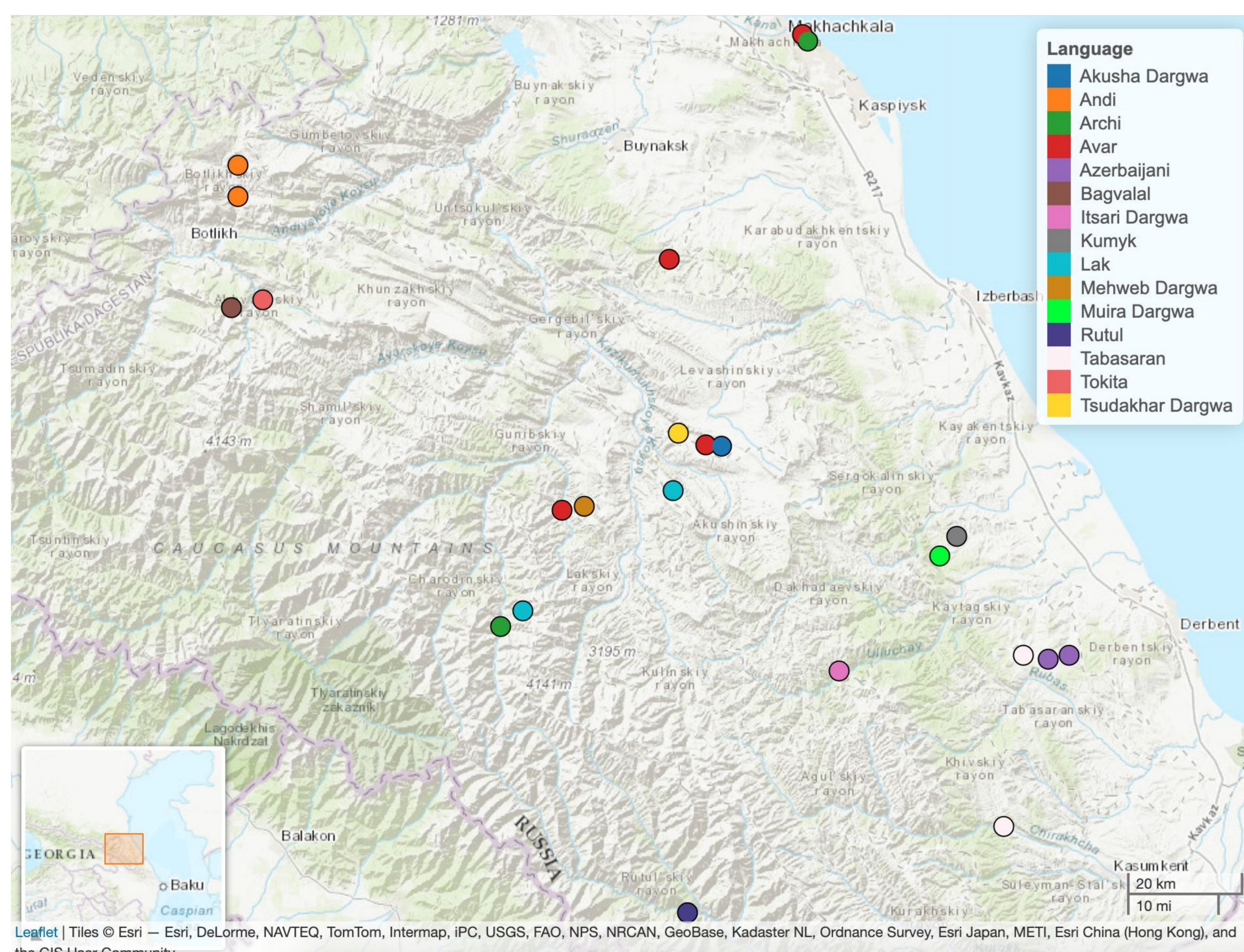


Figure 1. Speakers' native languages and places where the interviews were recorded; created with the "lingtypology" package for R (Moroz, 2017).

## Existing approaches

- accounts appealing to phonetic interference with other languages (Stoynova 2019);
- accounts appealing to morphosyntactic interference with other languages (Wiese 2009; Daniel et al. 2010; Shagal 2016; Stoynova 2019 a.o.);
- markedness-based accounts suggesting that P-drop occurs in unmarked contexts (Comrie 1986; Haspelmath 2019);
- formal syntactic accounts positing exceptional structure for P-drop constructions (Longobardi 2001; Ioannidou & Den Dikken 2009; Biggs 2015; Bailey 2018 a.o.).

## Data set

- interviews with 47 consultants from the Corpus of Russian spoken in Daghestan (DagRus, <http://www.parasolcorpus.org/dagrus/>)
- 2350 prepositional phrases (50 from each consultant), 421 phrases with P-drop

### Annotation

- sex, year of birth, L1, education level, fluency in Russian
- P-head
- initial phoneme of the P-complement (consonant/vowel)
- complement type (toponym, temporal location, institution, other)
- semantic type (goal, source, location, other)

## Descriptive statistics

Table 1. Number of omissions and retentions for different prepositions.

		omitted Ps	retained Ps	% omitted
Preposition	v 'in(to)'	352	478	42.0%
	na 'on(to)'	45	289	13.5%
	others	24	1162	2.1%

- Only v 'in(to)' and na 'on(to)' are systematically dropped.
  - Moreover, they are more often omitted in what we call core contexts: phrases where the NP denotes a toponym, a temporal location or an institution (these contexts account for 66% of all P-drop cases)
- (4) *nu on mog by [v] institut postupit' pravil'no že?*  
well 3MSG CAN.PST.MSG SUBJ in institute.NOM/ACC enroll.INF right PART  
*net, [v] texnikum pošel*  
no in vocational\_school go.PST.MSG  
'Well, he could have gone to college, right? But no, he went to a vocational school instead.' [DagRus, Dobrushina et al., 2018]

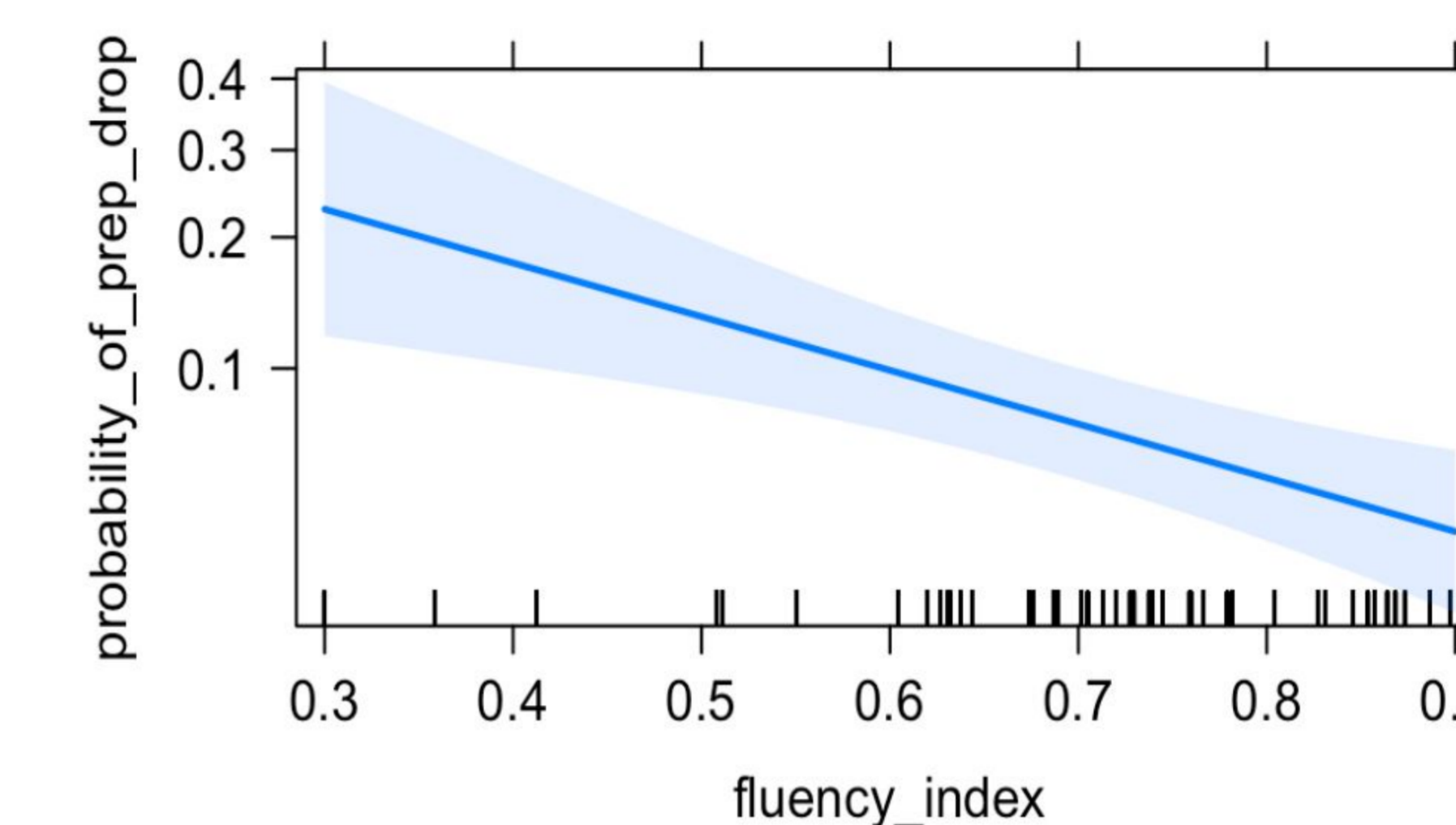
Table 2. Omission of prepositions v 'in(to)', na 'on(to)' and complement type.

		omitted Ps	retained Ps	% omitted
Complement type	Toponym	133	131	50%
	Temporal location	80	43	65%
	Institution	49	85	37%
	Other	134	509	21%
	Total	396	768	34%

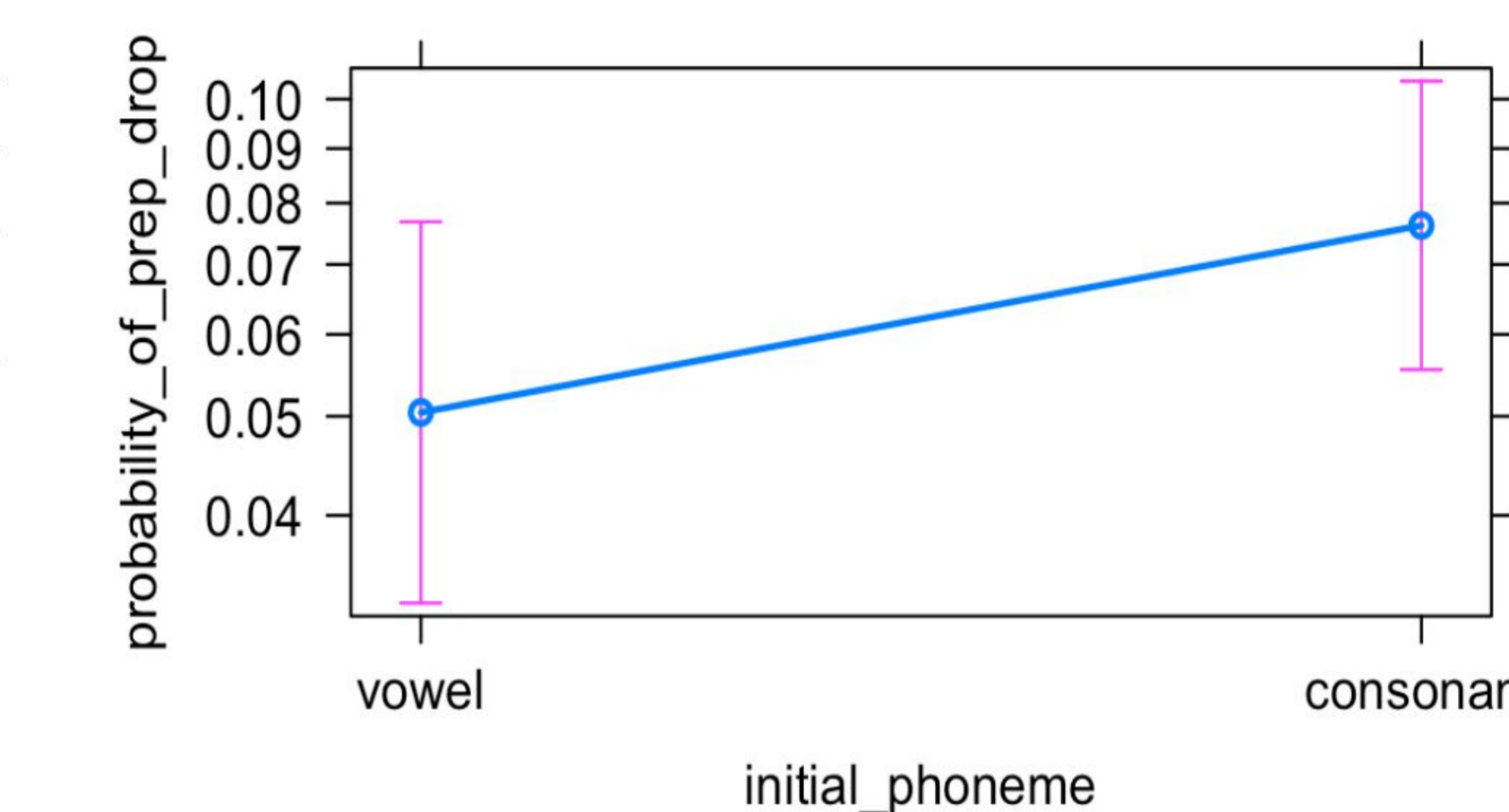
## Logistic regression

- We fitted a logistic mixed-effects regression model to determine which sociolinguistic and linguistic parameters are significant predictors for P-drop.

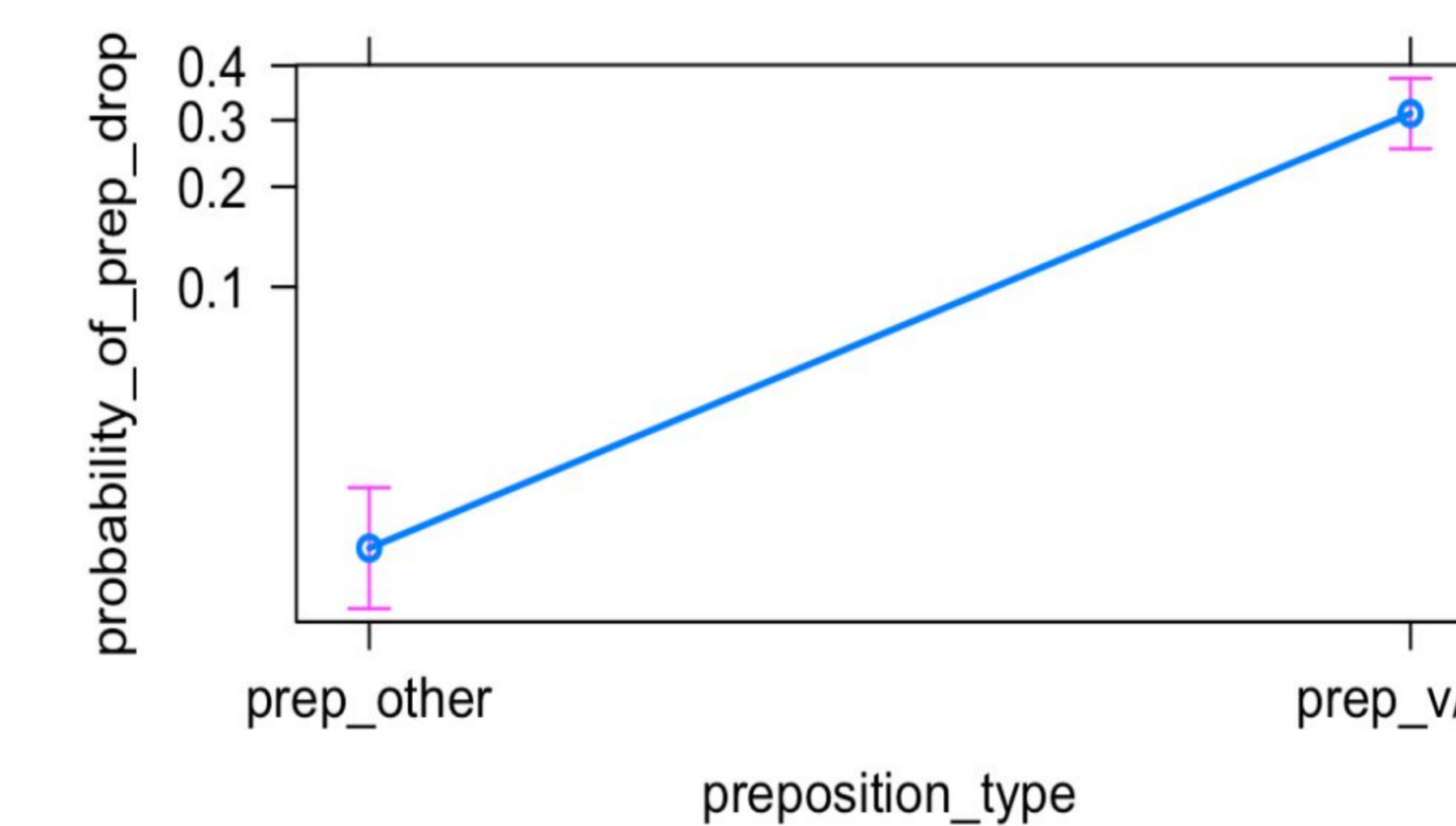
fluency\_index effect plot



initial\_phoneme effect plot



preposition\_type effect plot



The backward stepwise variable selection procedure (Levshina, 2015) left three predictors in the model:

- preposition type:** v/na 'in(to)/on(to)' vs. other
- fluency index** (continuous variable)
- initial phoneme of the P-complement** (consonant vs. vowel)

Figure 2. Plots of the fixed effects of the logistic regression model.

## Discussion

We propose a bipartite explanation for P-drop observed in our data:

- v 'in(to)' and na 'on(to)' are systematically dropped because they have a very abstract meaning in core contexts ~ markedness accounts (c)
- incomplete acquisition of the Russian prepositional system on the part of native speakers of postpositional languages ~ interference accounts (b)

However, the influence of L1 is more general in our case: it is the absence of marking of the left edge of the NP in the speakers' L1 that makes the acquisition of the Russian prepositional system a particularly challenging task (cf. Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008)

## Selected references

Bailey 2018. Some characteristics of Southeast English preposition dropping. *Iberia*, 10. Biggs 2015. A new case for A-movement in Northwest British English. *Proceedings of WCCFL 32*. Comrie 1986. Markedness, grammar, people, and the world. In F. R. Eckman et al. (Eds.), *Markedness*. Springer. Daniel, Knyazev, & Dobrushina 2010. Highlander's Russian. *Slavica Helsingiensia*, 40. Dobrushina, Daniel, von Waldenfels, Maisak, & Panova 2018. Corpus of Russian spoken in Daghestan. Haspelmath 2019. Differential place marking and differential object marking. *STUF*, 72(3). Jarvis & Pavlenko 2008. Crosslinguistic influence in language and cognition. Routledge. Levshina 2015. *How to do linguistics with R: Data exploration and statistical analysis*. JB. Moroz 2017. *lingtypology: easy mapping for Linguistic Typology\_ [R package]*. Panova & Philippova to appear. When a cross-linguistic tendency marries incomplete acquisition: preposition drop in Russian spoken in Daghestan. *IJB*. Shagal 2016. Contact-induced grammatical phenomena in the Russian of Erzya Speakers. *Uralica Helsingiensia*, 10. Stoynova 2019. Russian in contact with Southern Tungusic languages. *Slavica Helsingiensia*, 52. Wiese 2009. Grammatical innovation in multiethnic urban Europe. *Lingua*, 119.