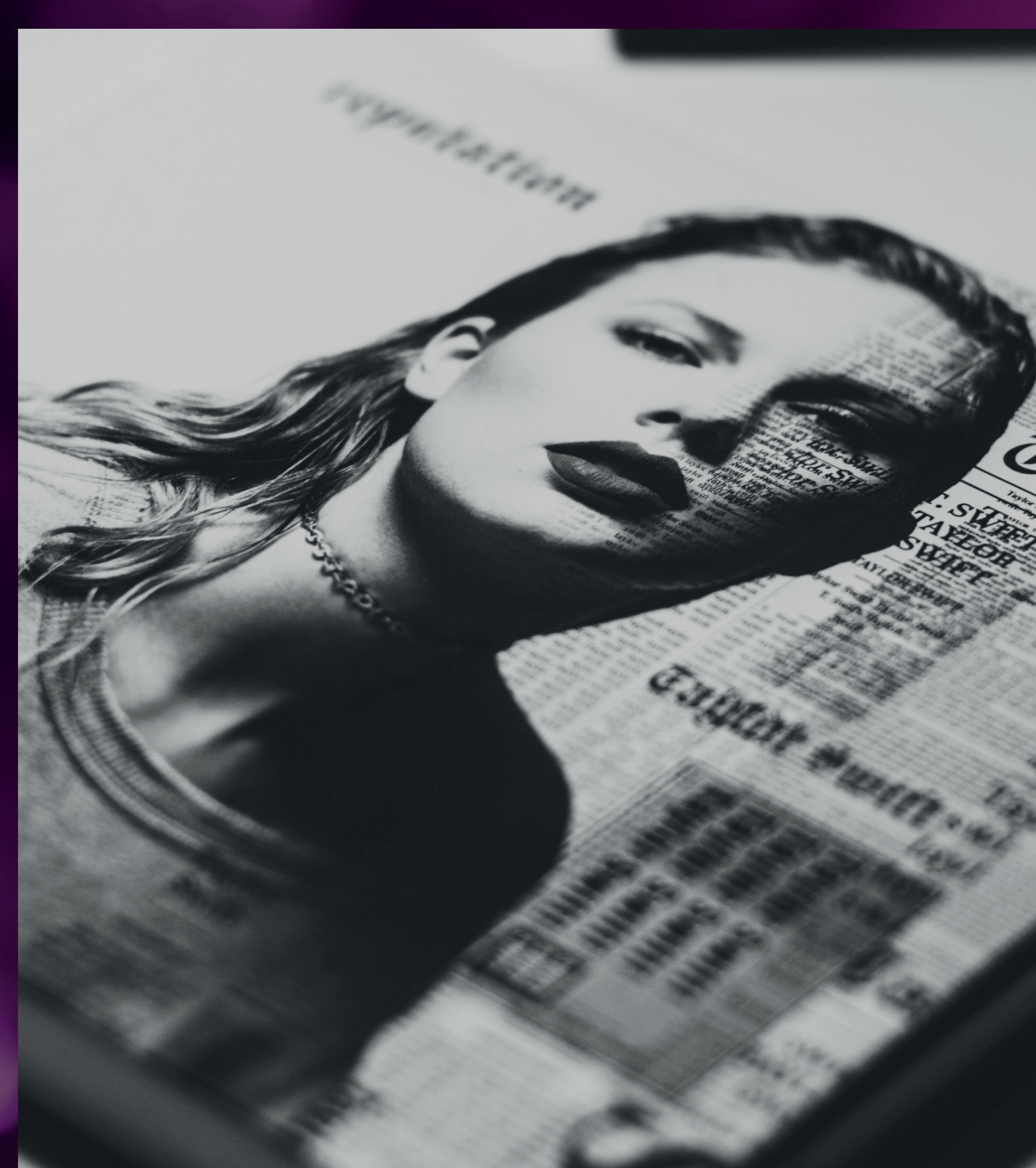




“EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED”

OR HAS IT?: SWIFT’S ACCENT SHIFTS

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BLANK SPACE... OUR QUESTIONS

1. Does she sing in a Southern American accent for her country style music and in a Northern American accent in her pop style music?
2. Which accent sounds are salient/perceptible or just perceptible?
3. How strongly are linguistic forms linked to knowledge about social categories?



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[deleted] · 8 mo. ago
people in Pennsylvania don't really have Southern accents, at least not from the area Taylor grew up in. she totally played it up in the beginning
111 ↓ Share ...

hodgepodge21 · 8 mo. ago
She played it up for the country music but she also likely got rid of it when doing voice training for her pop music
106 ↓ Share ...

SeaworthinessSome454 · 8 mo. ago
She can definitely pull it out when needed (see-I bet you think about me). But she also lives in Nashville for a good bit and it takes hardly any time to accidentally pick up an accent

culture_vulture_1961 · 8 mo. ago
Taylor sung in a southern accent because she was singing country music. She is not unique in that. Mick Jagger sings in an exaggerated American accent and he is from just outside London.
60 ↓ Share ...

uabparkerkl · 8 mo. ago
True! Keith Urban has an Australian accent and also sings with a southern twang.
43 ↓

Mediocre_Lie1275 · 8 mo. ago
She was born in Reading, PA, which is about an hour outside of Philadelphia. People in Eastern PA don't have southern accents. It was put on for her country career.
179 ↓ Share ...

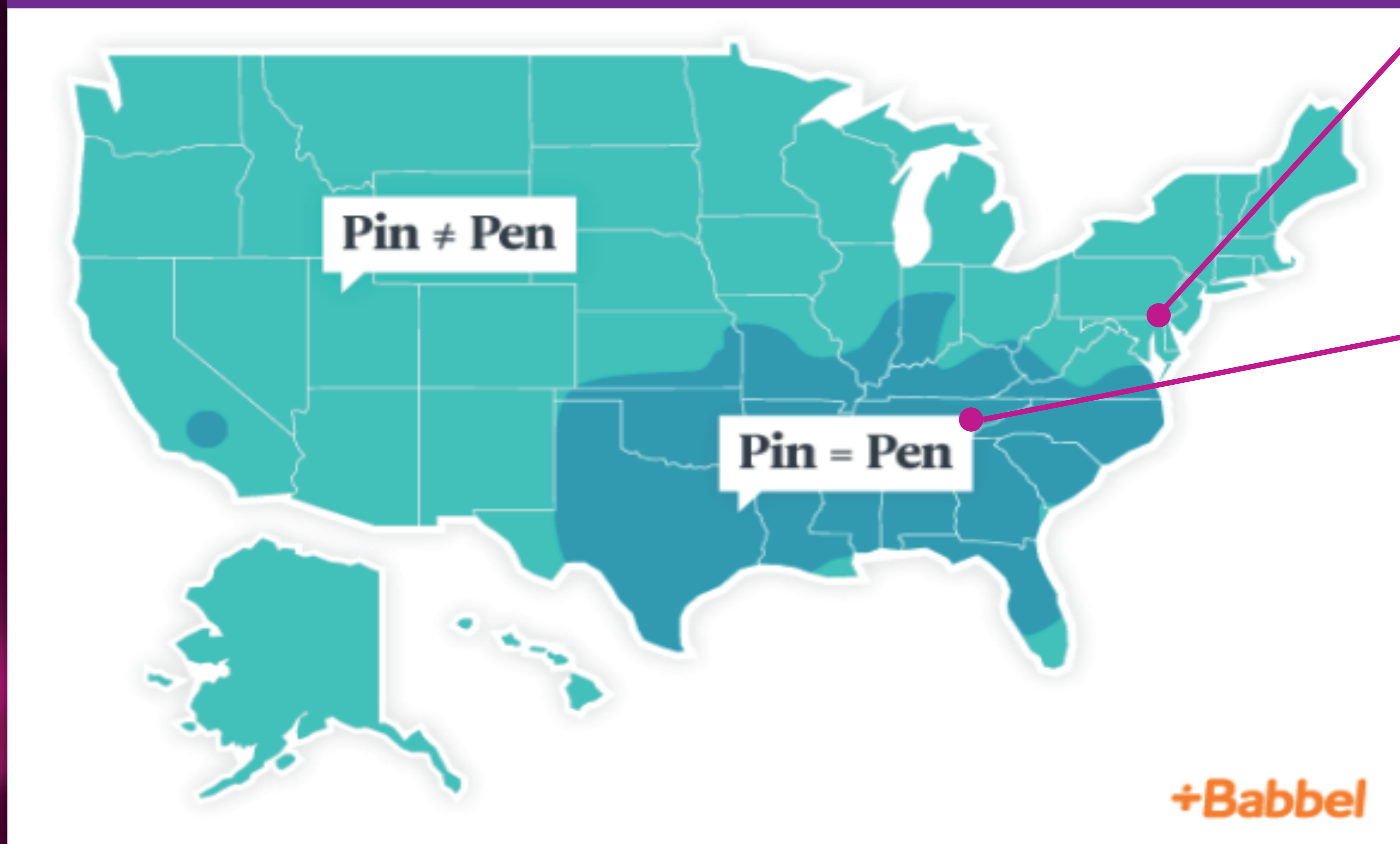
faerithorne23 · 8 mo. ago
This but I'd also like to add that when she went to school in TN she likely switched her accent a bit to fit in.
I'm Irish but I lived and went to school in the US for a while, I had to switch my accent so that the other kids could understand me and to fit in. My accent reverted mostly back to normal when I went home but to this day my accent sounds like it's about 500 miles off the Atlantic coast and I can switch back to American when I'm over there without thinking about it.

[deleted] · 8 mo. ago
I've always wondered why this isn't talked about more. I have spent a lot of time in PA and nobody I ever encountered had a southern accent.
8 ↓ Share ...



YOU GO TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS, TALK TO MY FRIENDS, TALK TO ME... SWIFT'S BACKGROUND

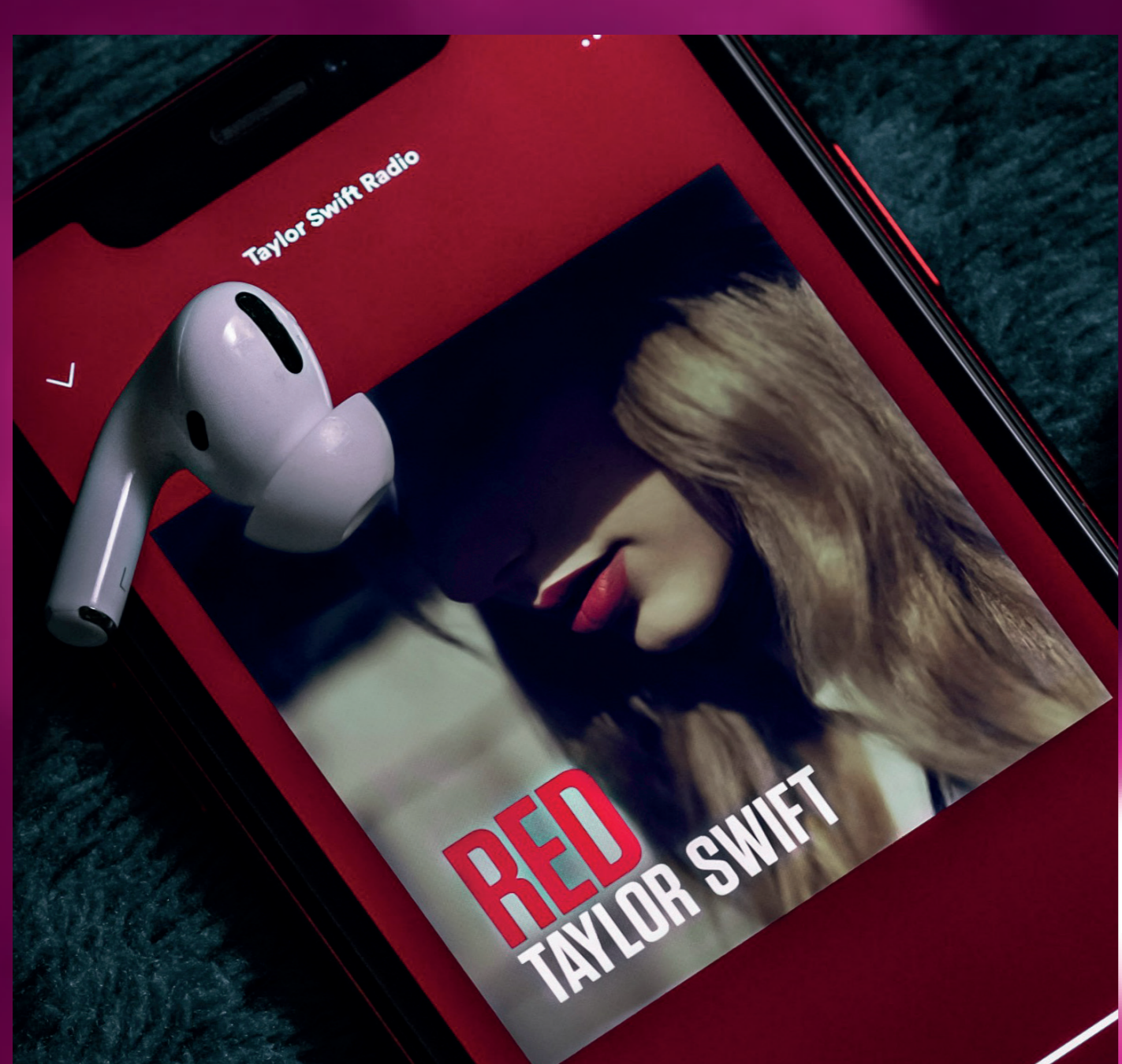
The "Linguistic South" (Source: Moore Devlin, 2017, What's considered "The South?" [Map] Babel Magazine. Retrieved March 21, 2023)



Born December 13th, 1989, in Reading, Pennsylvania (Hunt, 2019, p. 241)

Moved to Hendersonville, (near Nashville), Tennessee aged 14 (Hunt, 2019, p. 242)

In the following year, signed a publishing deal with Sony/ATV Music Publishing (Hunt, 2019, p. 242)



YOU BELONG WITH ME... SOME ACCENT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE NORTH AND SOUTH

Variable	IPA	Southern (Fridland, 2000; 2008 Labov et. al., 2006)	Northern (Wells, 1982 Labov et. al., 2006)
PRICE	/aɪ/	1. a: 2. a ^ɪ	3. aɪ
DRESS	/ɛ/	4. ɛ _ɪ 5. ɛ ^a	6. ɛ
KIT	/ɪ/	7. ɪ _ɪ 8. ɪ ^a	9. ɪ
<-ing>	/ɪŋ/	10. ɪn	11. ɪŋ



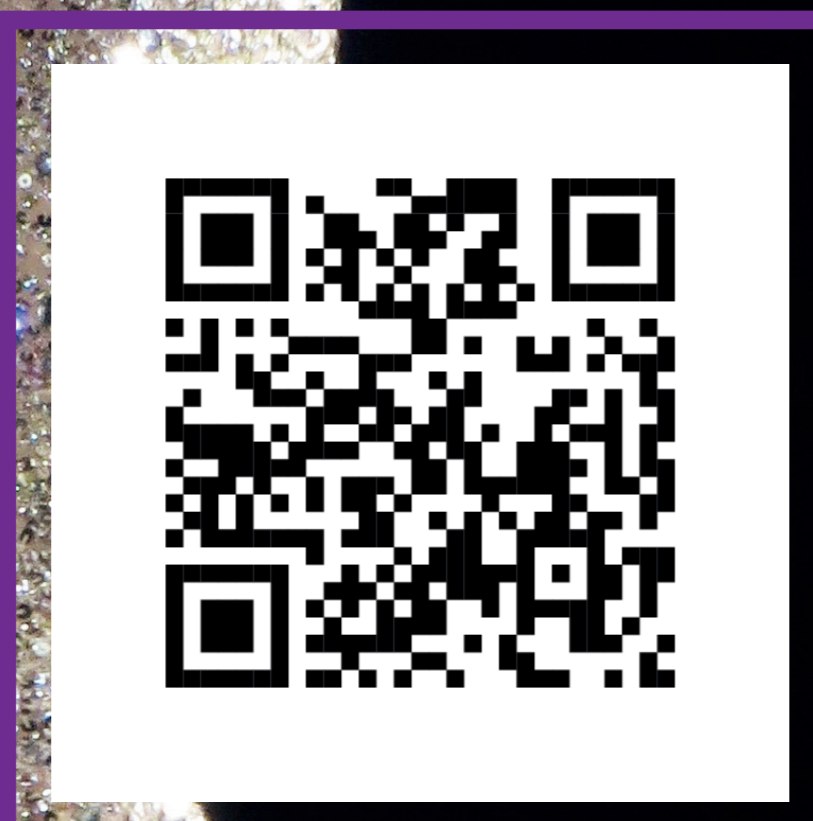
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'CAUSE WHEN YOUR 15, FEELING LIKE THERE'S NOTHING TO FIGURE OUT, WELL...

- Kids talk more like their friends than they do like their parents" (Meyerhoff, 2019, p. 206).
- Critical Period: Language learning seems to be easiest [...] in childhood and early adolescence.
- BUT ALSO, the adoption of accent (and dialect) by young speakers may constitute an act of identity (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985).

WE NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE... STYLIS/ZATION



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HYPOTHESES:

- her accent shifts between Country and Pop genre;
- acquisition is different to imitation: Competence in non-salient forms would suggest acquisition rather than imitation;
- her natural speech will be like her singing: Southern forms will be present in natural speech during her country era; Northern forms in spoken style in her later pop era.

I KNEW YOU WERE TROUBLE... METHODS

Genre	Album	Most streamed songs	No. of Plays (Taylor Swift, 2023)
Country	Taylor Swift [2006]	Our Song	194,954,338
		Teardrops on My Guitar – RadioSingleRemix	155,781,462
		Picture to Burn	113,357,196
		Tim McGraw	85,026,652
		Should've Said No	75,395,527
	Fearless [2008]	LoveStory	669,431,345
		You Belongwith Me	479,526,170
		White Horse	98,368,636
		Fifteen	97,020,618
		Fearless	92,883,389
Pop	Red (Deluxe Edition) [2012]	I Knew You Were Trouble	634,219,096
		We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together	541,104,839
		22	316,423,932
		Everything Has Changed	240,850,148
		All Too Well	216,997,157
	1989 (Deluxe) [2014]	Blank Space	1,117,388,305
		Shake It Off	968,528,067
		Wildest Dreams	689,312,757
		Style	567,841,766
		Bad Blood	380,515,158



We also analysed her natural speech (interview) in 2006 and 2012.



References:

Hunt, H. (2019). Taylor Swift: In her own words. Agate Publishing.
 Fridland, V. (2000). The Southern shift in Memphis, Tennessee. Language variation and change, 11(3).
 Fridland, V. (2008). Regional differences in perceiving vowel tokens on Southernness, education, and pleasantness ratings. Language variation and change, 20(1). Meyerhoff, M. (2019). Introducing sociolinguistics (3rd Ed). Routledge.
 Labov, W., Ash, S. & Boberg, C. (2006). The atlas of North American English: Phonetics, phonology and sound change. Walter de Gruyter.
 Le Page, R. B. & Tabouret-Keller A. (1985). Acts of identity: Creole-based approaches to language and ethnicity. Cambridge University Press.
 Taylor Swift. (2023). Discography [Albums]. <https://open.spotify.com/artist/06HL4z0CvFAxyc27GXpf02/discography/album>

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 red iphone 5 c on black textile, Omid Armin, unsplash. Taylor Swift album Rosa Rafael, Unsplash.

EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED?

Percentage according to **genre and song** (Northern=block colour, Southern=pattern)

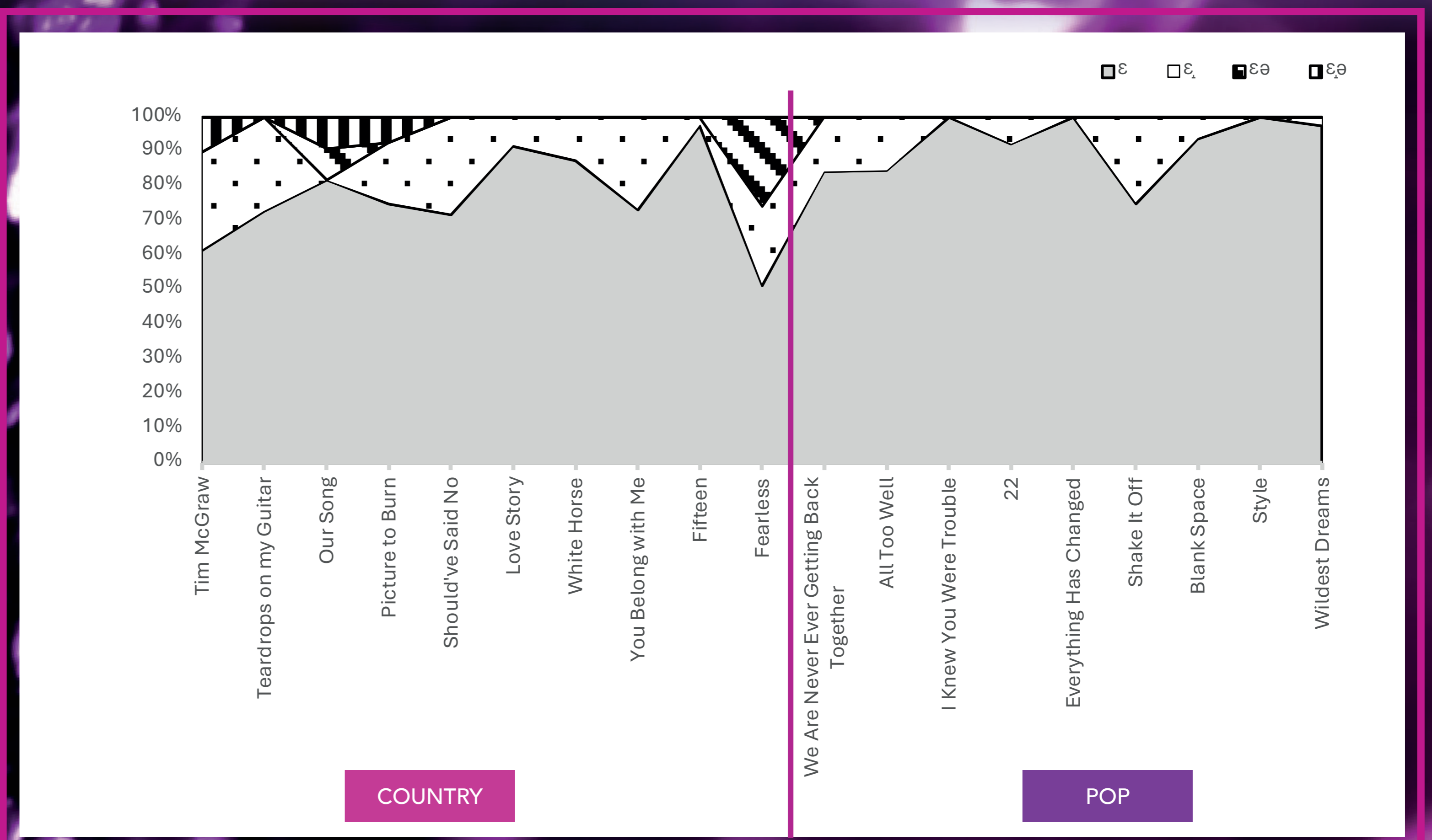
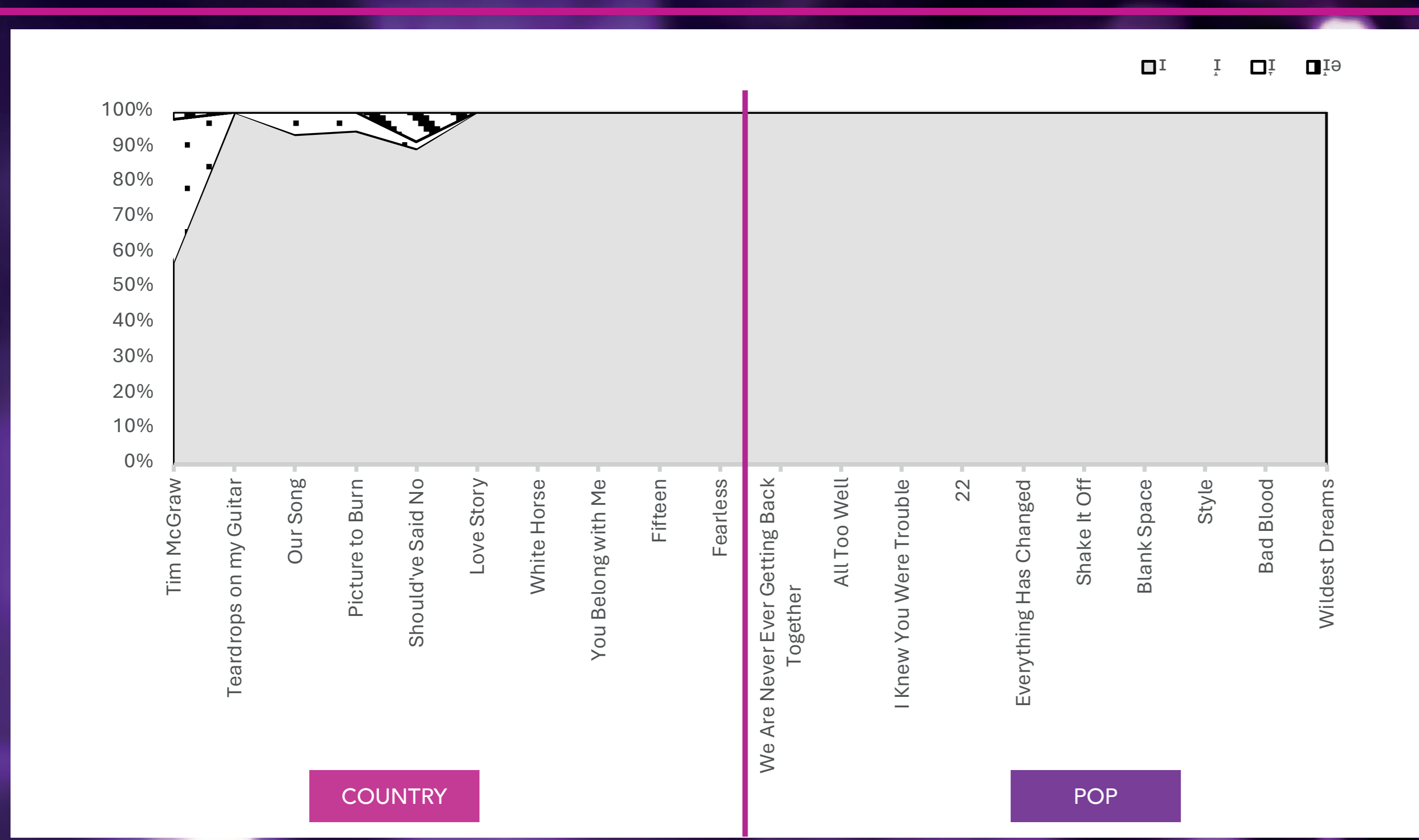
KIT has some Southern accent sounds in her country style.

BUT there are very few Southern forms overall!

No Southern **KIT** sounds evident in interview.

DRESS has more Southern forms in country music compared to pop, but very few salient ones overall.

Very little difference between her interview and performed speech.



Scan here

PRICE more Southern forms in country music compared to pop.

Similar pattern in interview speech, but more Southern forms overall in performed data.

OVERALL

There is a significant style-shift between genre.

- But results suggest that she is not simply performing the accent for her music.
- A form of bilingualism/bidialectalism – not the same as imitation.

However, performativity of country/pop is evident at song level:

- The shift in style here suggests some linguistic awareness (we're looking into this more!)
- Our analysis continues... We may even ask her!

<-ing> is an outlier, with more [n] overall, but still more prevalent in country. More meanings other than "country" encoded in this form?

Similar pattern in interview speech, but more Southern forms overall in performed data.

