

# The *go*-VERB construction in English

Form, meaning, and constructional ecology

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- I. The *go/come*-VERB construction
- II. A functional perspective
  - Schema & semantics
- III. Constructional ecologies
  - Network relations
  - Genre variation
  - Regional variation
- IV. Conclusion
  - Form & function
  - Arbitrariness & motivation
  - System & use

- (1)
- a. I **go get** the paper every morning.
  - b. Let's **go find** the the paragraph marker.
  - c. **Go climb** a rock!
  - d. The police insist that Bill **go talk** to a counselor.
  - e. Didn't he **go eat** there yesterday?
- (2)
- a. \* Every day my son **goes gets / go get** the paper.
  - b. \* He **went ate/eat** there yesterday.
  - c. \* She's **going getting** a new car.

BARE STEM CONDITION

**go**<sub>BARE</sub> **VERB**<sub>BARE</sub>

Formalism/GG



*usage-based  
functional  
cognitive linguistics*

# A usage-based perspective

- (3)
- a. **Go stab** the nearby patrolling guard from behind
  - b. I encourage you to **go read** the entire opinion.
  - c. Yes, Mark Antoinette, I'll **go eat** cake now.
  - d. **Go fuck** yourself and quit trolling.
  - e. The nurse told him to **go get** something to eat.

orders                      requests  
   suggestions  
recommendations      appeals  
   invitation      intention/volition  
   permission/endorsement  
*evaluation/imprecation*

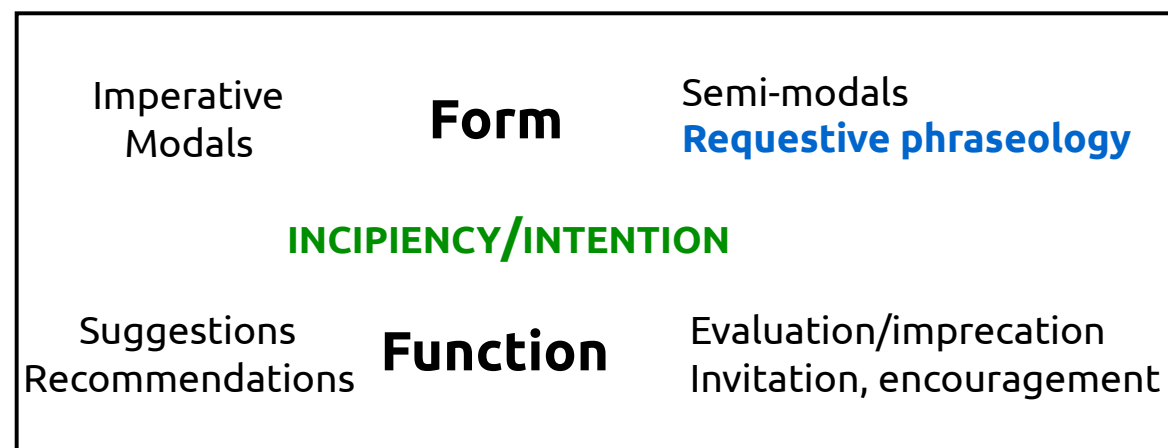
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## **go-VERB**

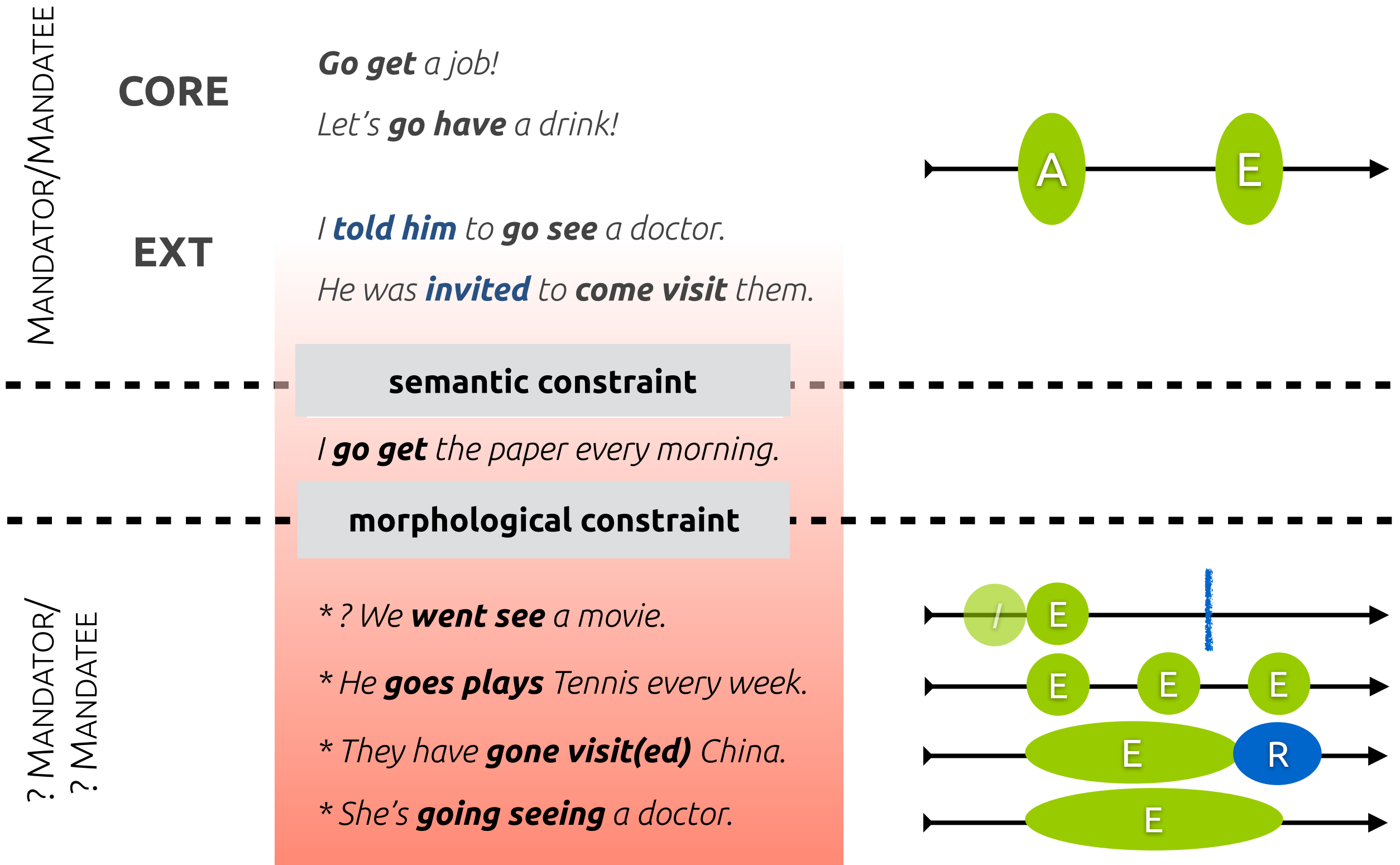
## HORTATIVE



## **come-VERB**

## HORTATIVE

- (4)
- a. **Come relax** at one of our secluded cabins and enjoy the serenity of nature
  - b. Once again, I want **to invite you** to **come visit** us as Gospel Light Baptist Church.
  - c. You can **come enjoy** the seminar.
  - d. We **encourage you** to **come see** an adviser if you're on probation.





## A. BARE STEM CONDITION:

- (5) a. \* She **goes gets** the paper.  
b. She **goes and gets** the paper.  
c. She **went and got** the paper.
- (6) a. \* He **comes visits** us.  
b. He **comes and visits** us.

## B. Questions:

- ▶ Does VERB-*and*-VERB instantiate a different schema?

- (5) a. Mama finally **tells me** to **go change** for dinner and to wash. [FIC:Gen (Jrnl)]  
b. ... and she **told Voltaire** to **go and change** his coat. [MAG:Soc/Arts]
- (6) a. "Let's **go play** racquetball." [FIC:SciFi/Fant]  
b. "Let's **go and play** there now!" [FIC:Gen(Book)]
- (7) a. Nixon **invited Williams** to **come visit** him in exile in San Clemente. [MAG:News/Opin]  
b. The president ... **invited Ms. Lewinsky** to **come and see** her ... [SPOK:CBS]
- (8) a. Ryan, **have your lawyers come speak** to me the next time ... [SPOK:CBS]  
b. "I even **had a certain nurse come and speak** to my father." [ACAD:History]

## A. BARE STEM CONDITION:

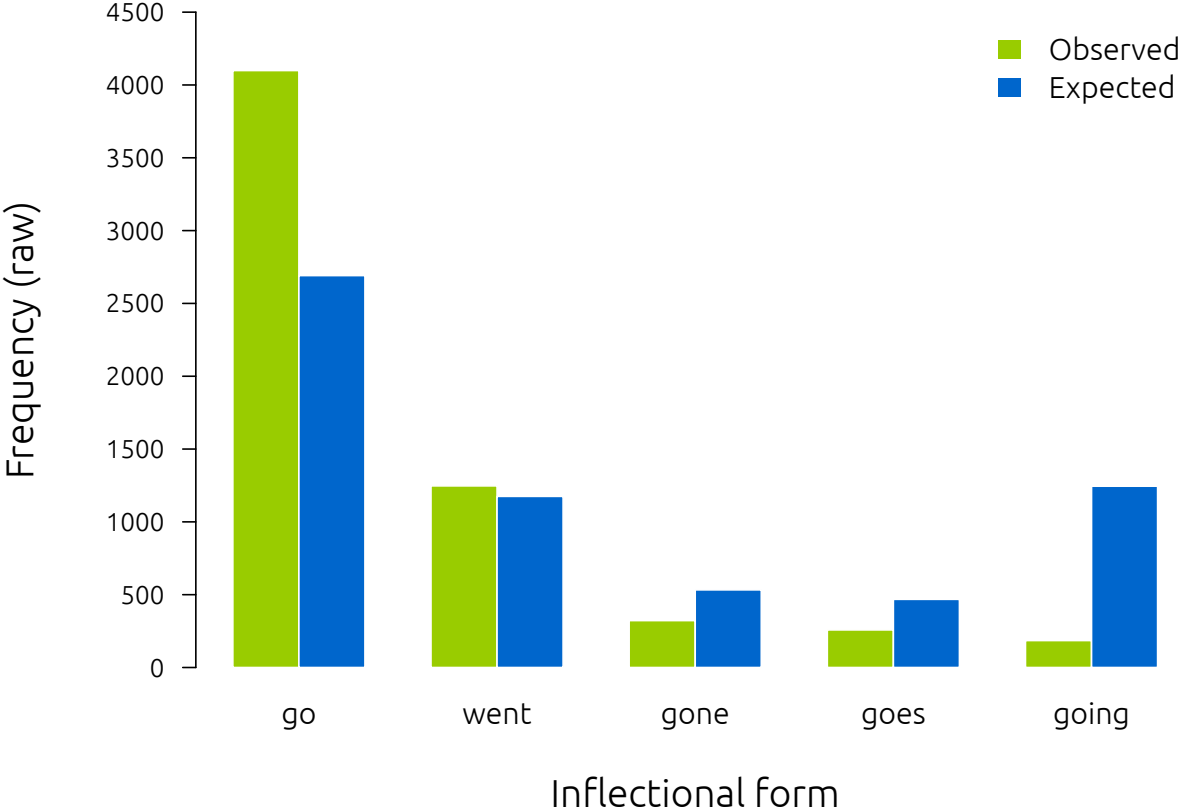
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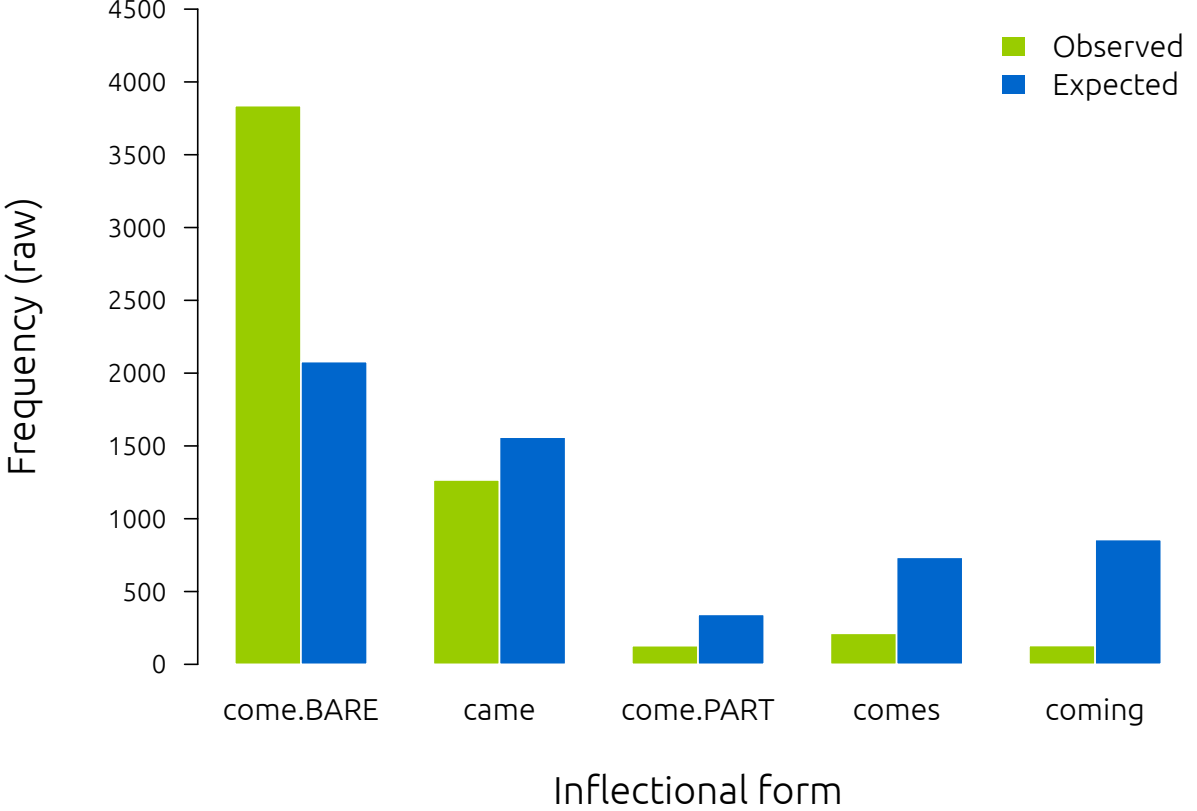
- ▶ Does VERB-*and*-VERB instantiate a different schema?
- ▶ Does VERB-*and*-VERB instantiate a *weaker* schema?

# Construction family: Inflectional behaviour

{go}-and-V, skew



{come}-and-V, skew



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- ▶ VERB-(*and*)-VERB = constructional network/family
- ▶ Continua: inflection & semantics
- ▶ Semantics in co-locational behaviour

**indicative ↔ imperative**

*You shall know a word  
by the company it keeps (Firth 1957)*

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**indicative ↔ imperative**

*You shall know a **construction**  
by the company it keeps*

# Construction ecology (*syntactic co-location*)

- |        |  |                            |
|--------|--|----------------------------|
| (7) a. | <b>Go stab</b> the nearby patrolling guard from behind.      | Imperativ                  |
| b.     | I <b>encourage you</b> to <b>go read</b> the entire opinion. | to.phraseology             |
| c.     | Oh, <b>let's go write</b> a song.                            | <i>let's</i> -construction |
| d.     | Um, you <b>can</b> kindly just <b>go fuck</b> yourself.      | modal                      |
| e.     | I <b>gotta go tickle</b> the Elmo.                           | semi-modal                 |
| g.     | Marge <b>suggests</b> everyone <b>go play</b> a game.        | subjunctive                |
| h.     | Not much incentive <b>to go find</b> a job any more.         | to.complement              |
| i.     | Then you <b>go sort</b> out the recycling.                   | indicative                 |



# Construction family: Syntactic co-location

	<i>go-V</i>	<i>come-V</i>	<i>go-and-V</i>	<i>come-and-V</i>
<b>imperative</b>	3594	1301	458	692
<b>to.phraseology</b>	1166	600	486	962
<b>semi.modals</b>	2151	333	671	360
<b>why-don't-NP-cxn</b>	228	51	51	35
<b>let's-cxn</b>	935	1	119	1
<b>subordinate</b>	66	11	23	13
<b>modals</b>	2615	673	1089	990
<b>subjunctive</b>	26	6	10	3
<b>to.complement</b>	1222	398	572	377
<b>do.support</b>	153	29	99	54
<b>indicative</b>	780	107	464	337
<b>Total</b>	12.936	3.510	4.042	3.824

$\chi^2 = 2486, df = 30, p < 2.2e-16$   
**Cramer's V = .185**

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significantly more  
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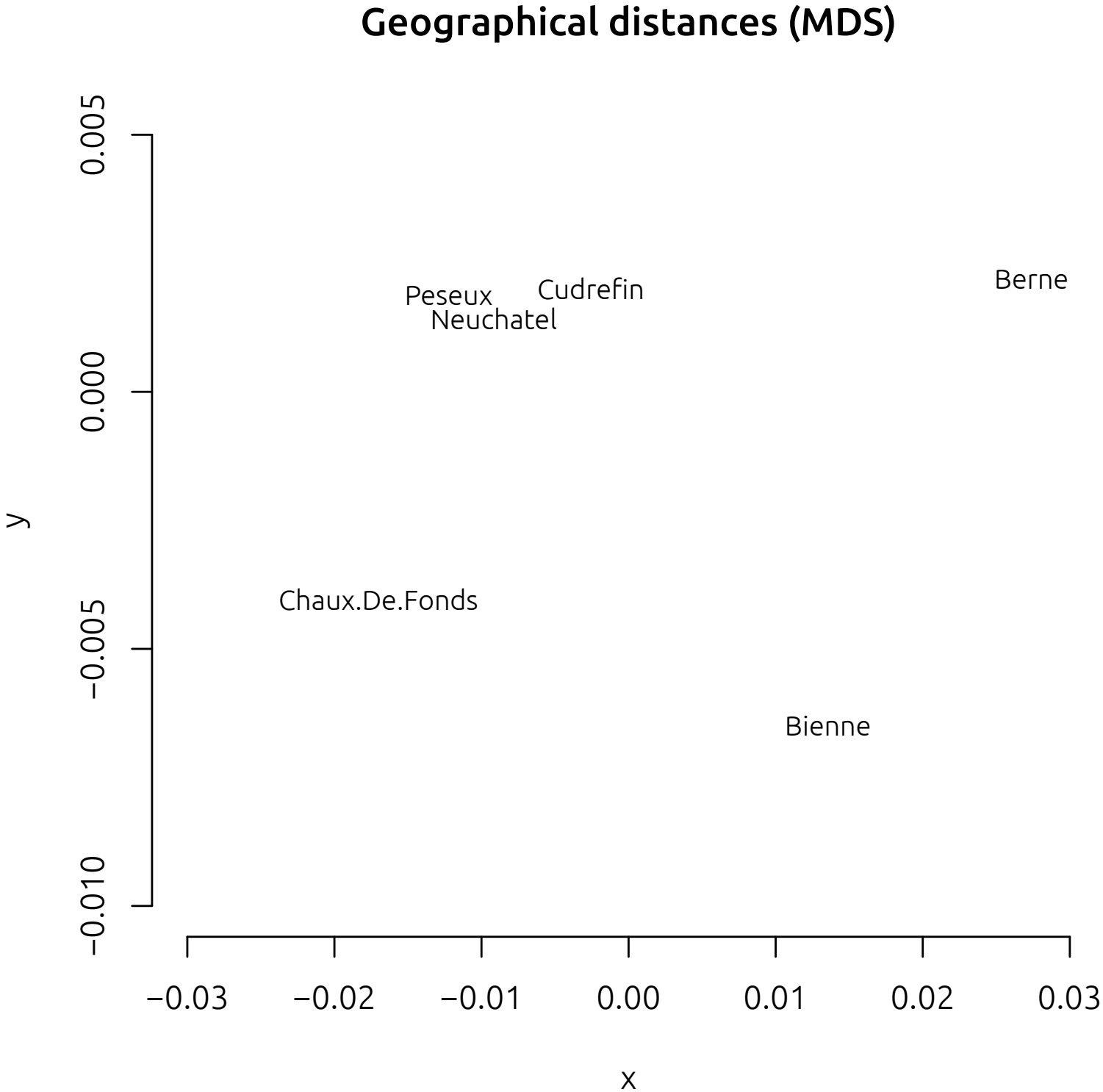
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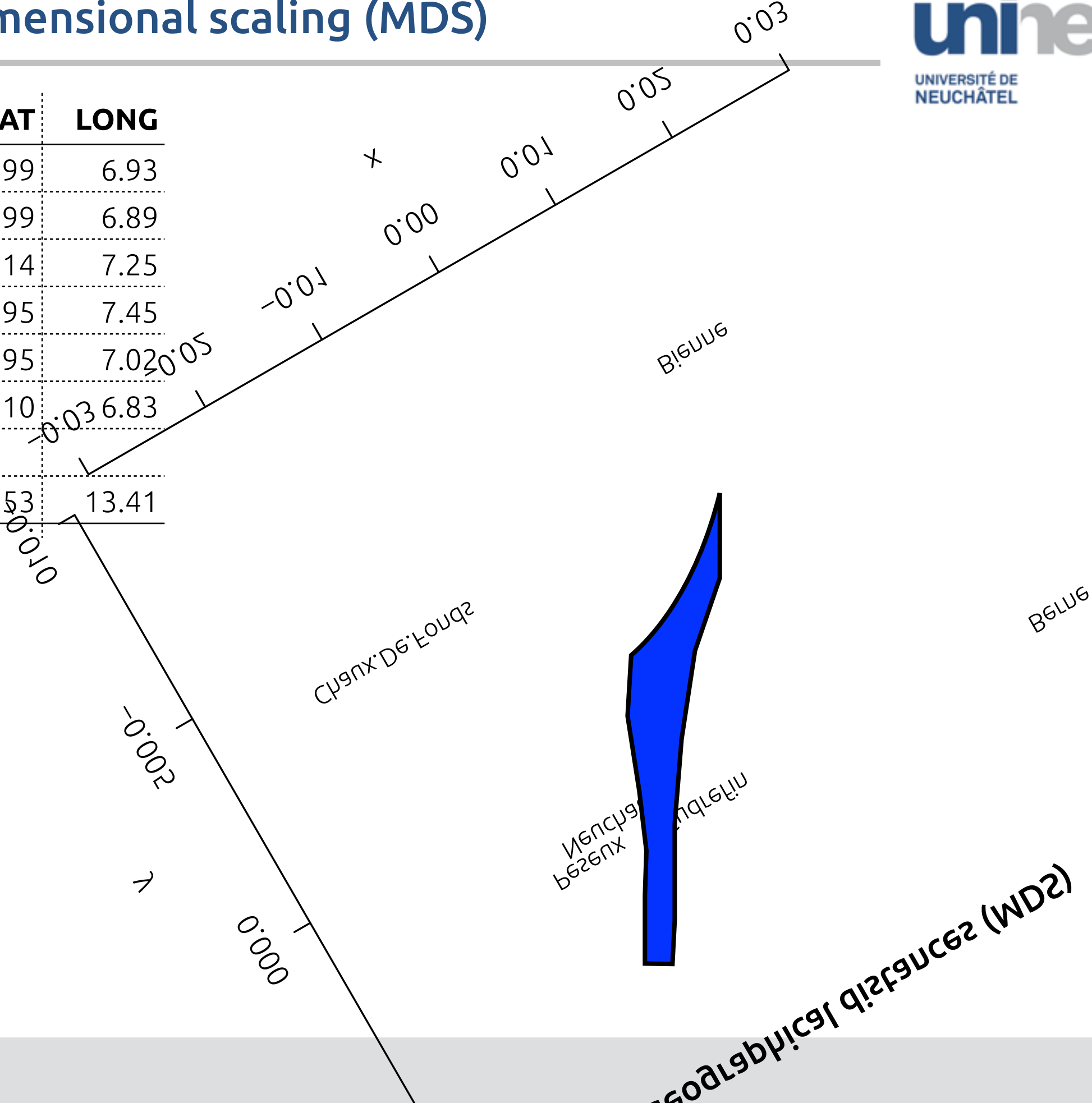
# Method: Multi-dimensional scaling (MDS)

	LAT	LONG
<b>Neuchâtel</b>	46.99	6.93
<b>Peseux</b>	46.99	6.89
<b>Bienne</b>	47.14	7.25
<b>Berne</b>	46.95	7.45
<b>Cudrefin</b>	46.95	7.02
<b>Chaux-De-Fonds</b>	47.10	6.83
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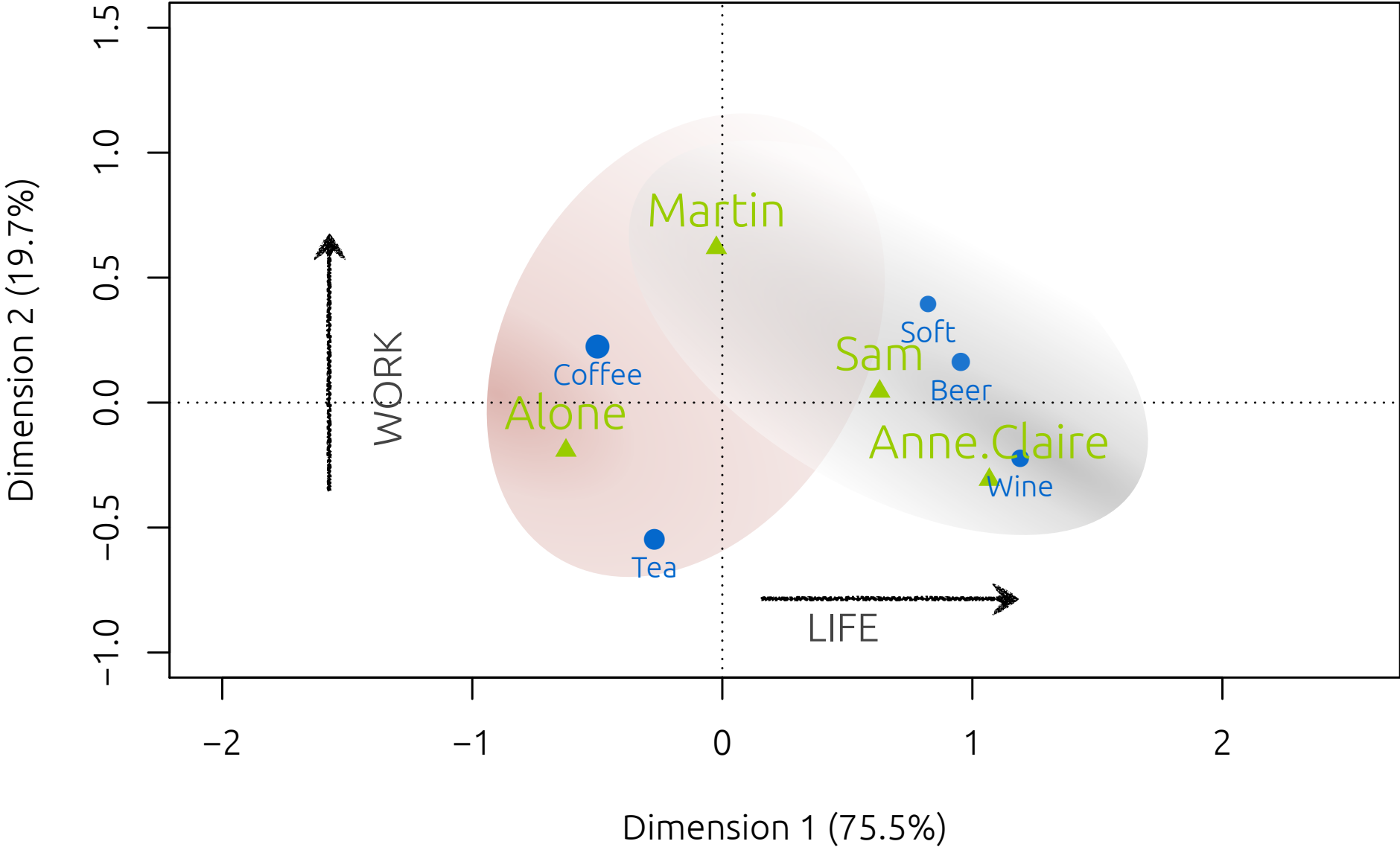
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# Method: Correspondence Analysis (categorical data)

	Anne-Claire	Sam	Martin	Alone
Coffee	0	3	10	20
Tea	3	0	0	12
Soft	2	1	2	5
Wine	4	2	1	0
Beer	3	4	2	0

Suz' Work-Life Balance



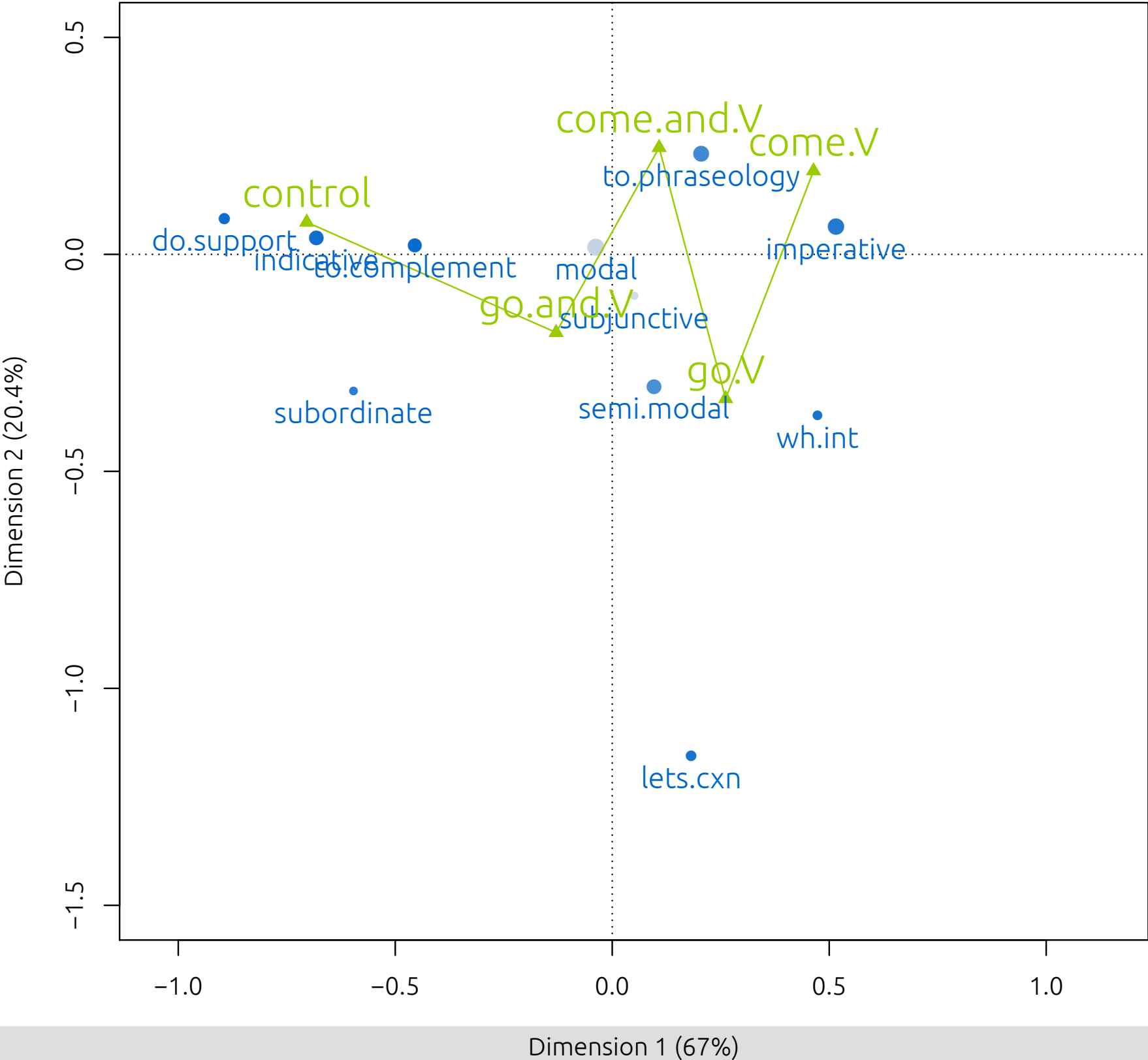
← CXN →

	<i>go-V</i>	<i>come-V</i>	<i>go-and-V</i>	<i>come-and-V</i>	CONTROL
<b>imperative</b>	270	369	122	191	61
requestive phraseology	77	147	112	171	45
semi.modals	171	88	151	100	72
<i>why-don't-NP-cxn</i>	21	15	11	12	1
<i>let's-cxn</i>	81	0	31	1	9
subordinate	23	25	26	38	24
modals	212	199	280	271	233
subjunctive	3	1	2	0	2
to.complement	82	118	137	125	207
do.support	12	9	24	12	75
<b>indicative</b>	47	29	104	78	271
	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

SYNENV

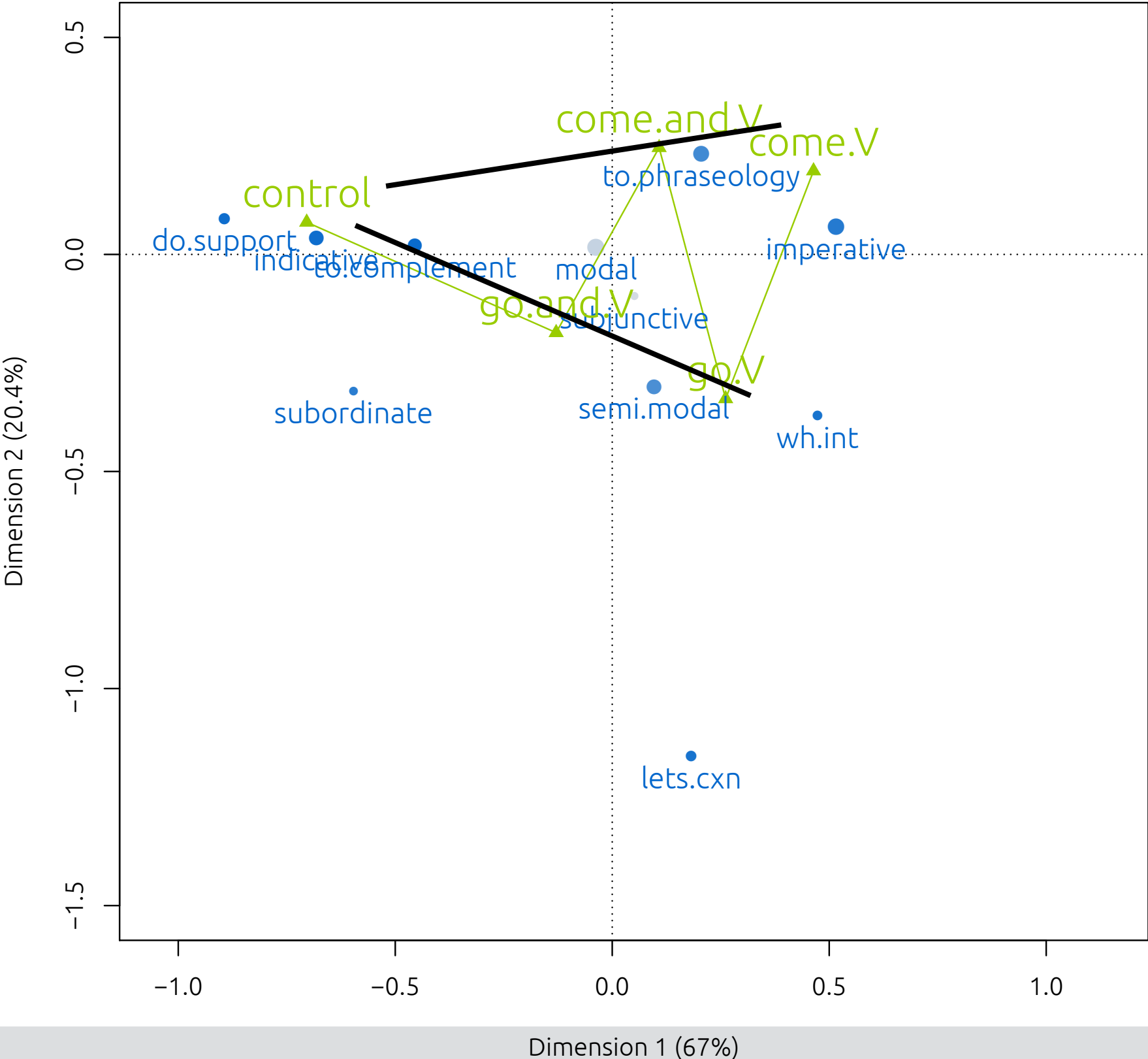
$\chi^2 = 1204.9, df = 40, p < 2.2e-16$   
**Cramer's V = .245**

Construction network (with control)

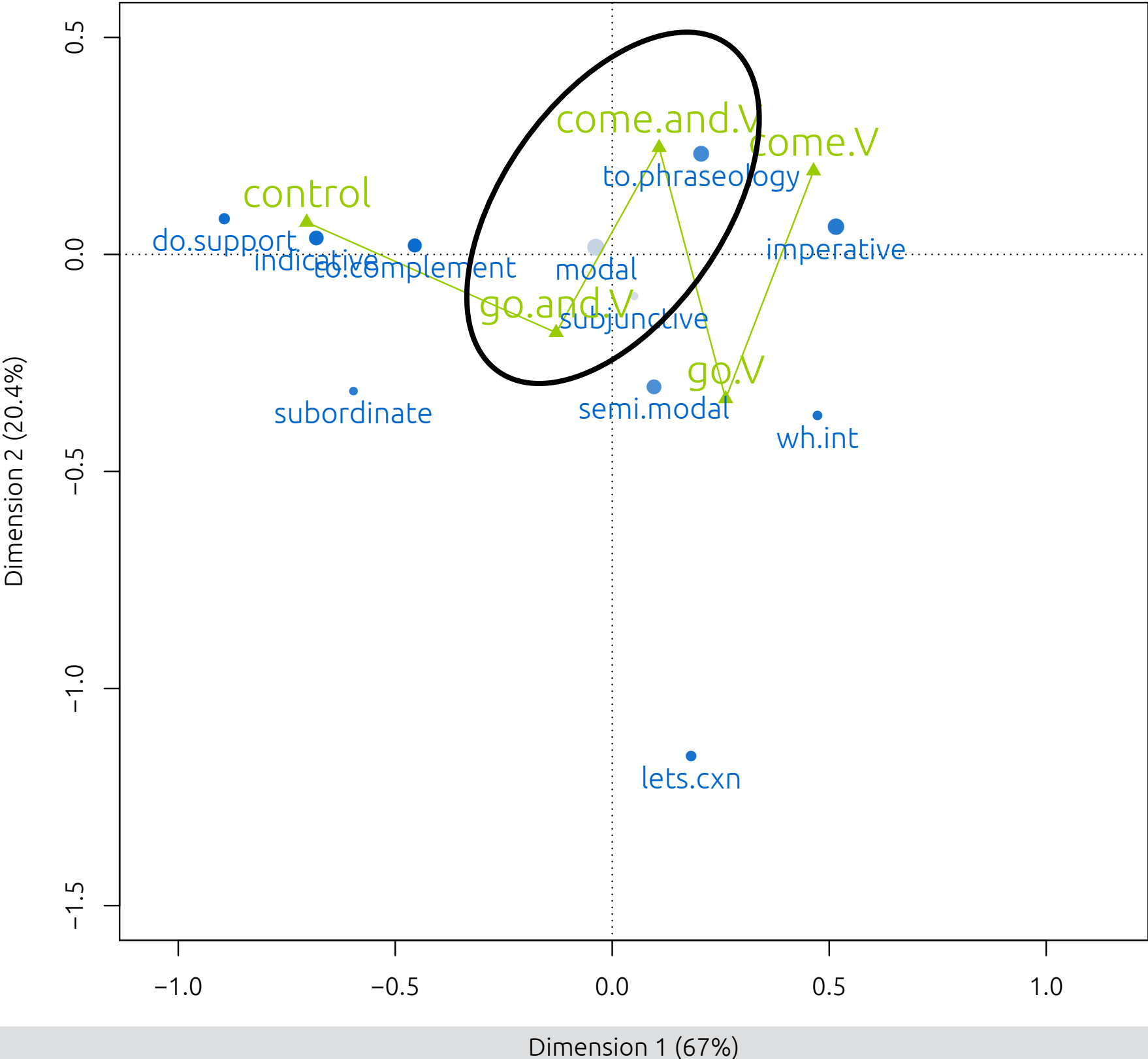




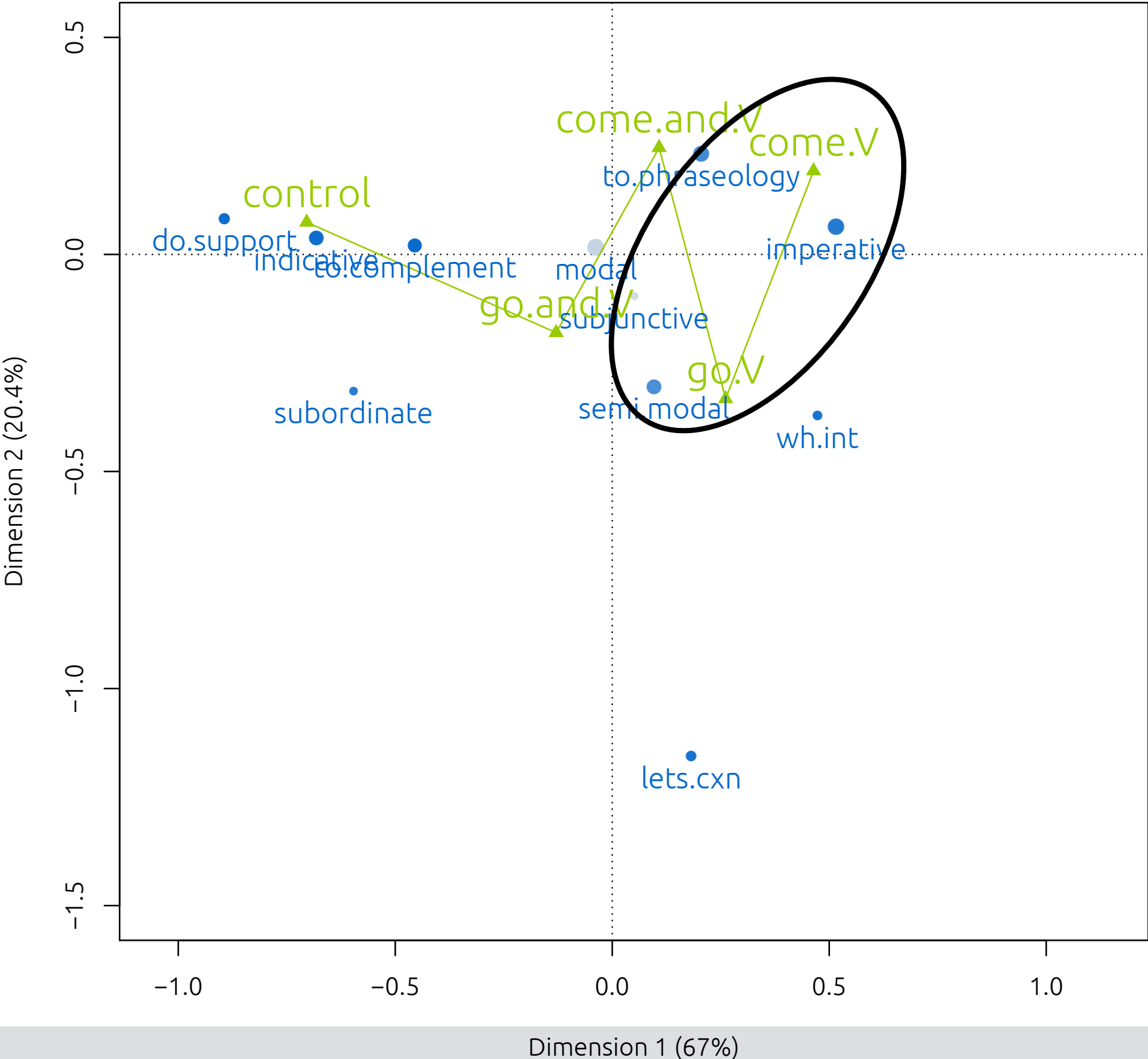
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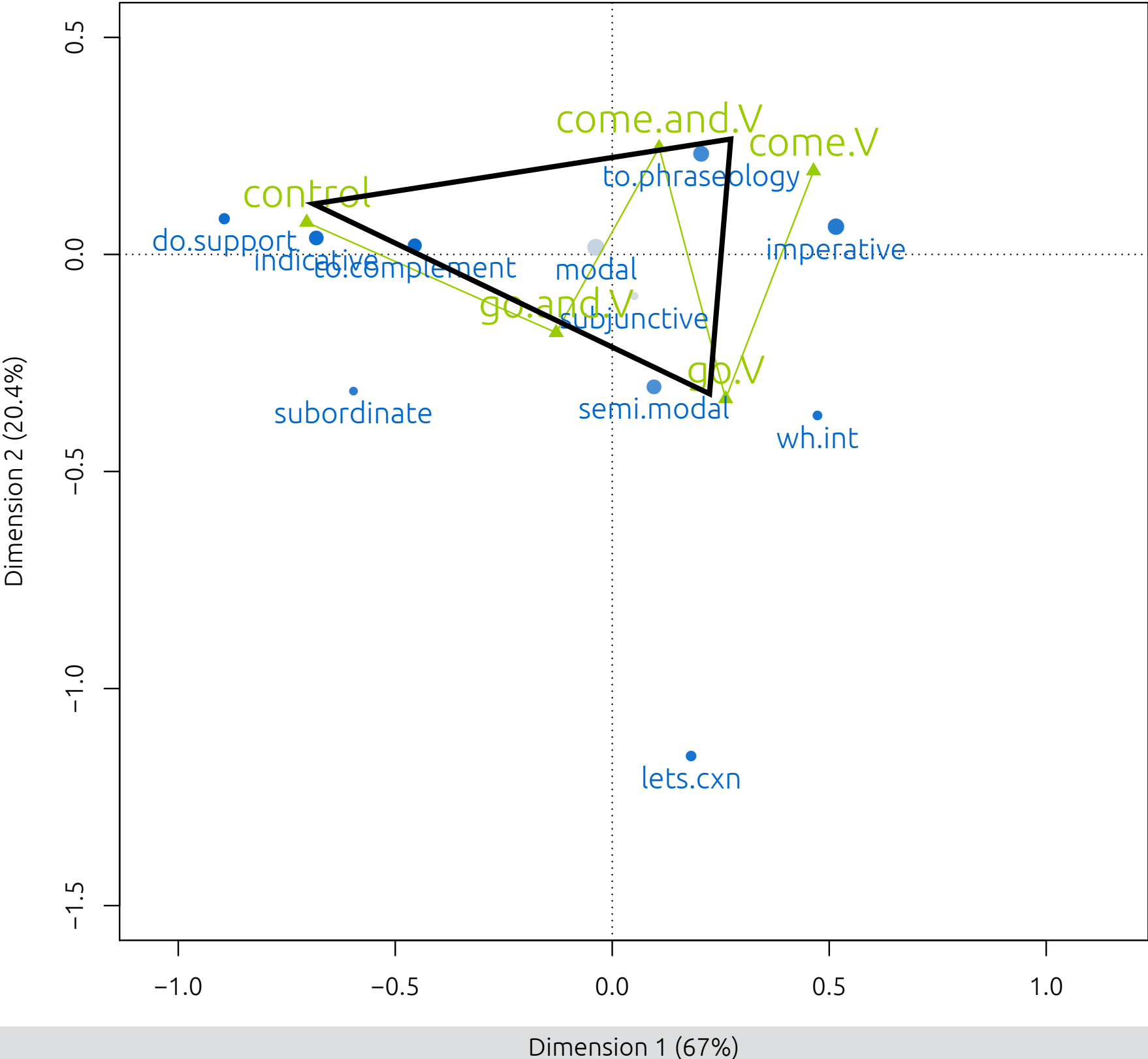
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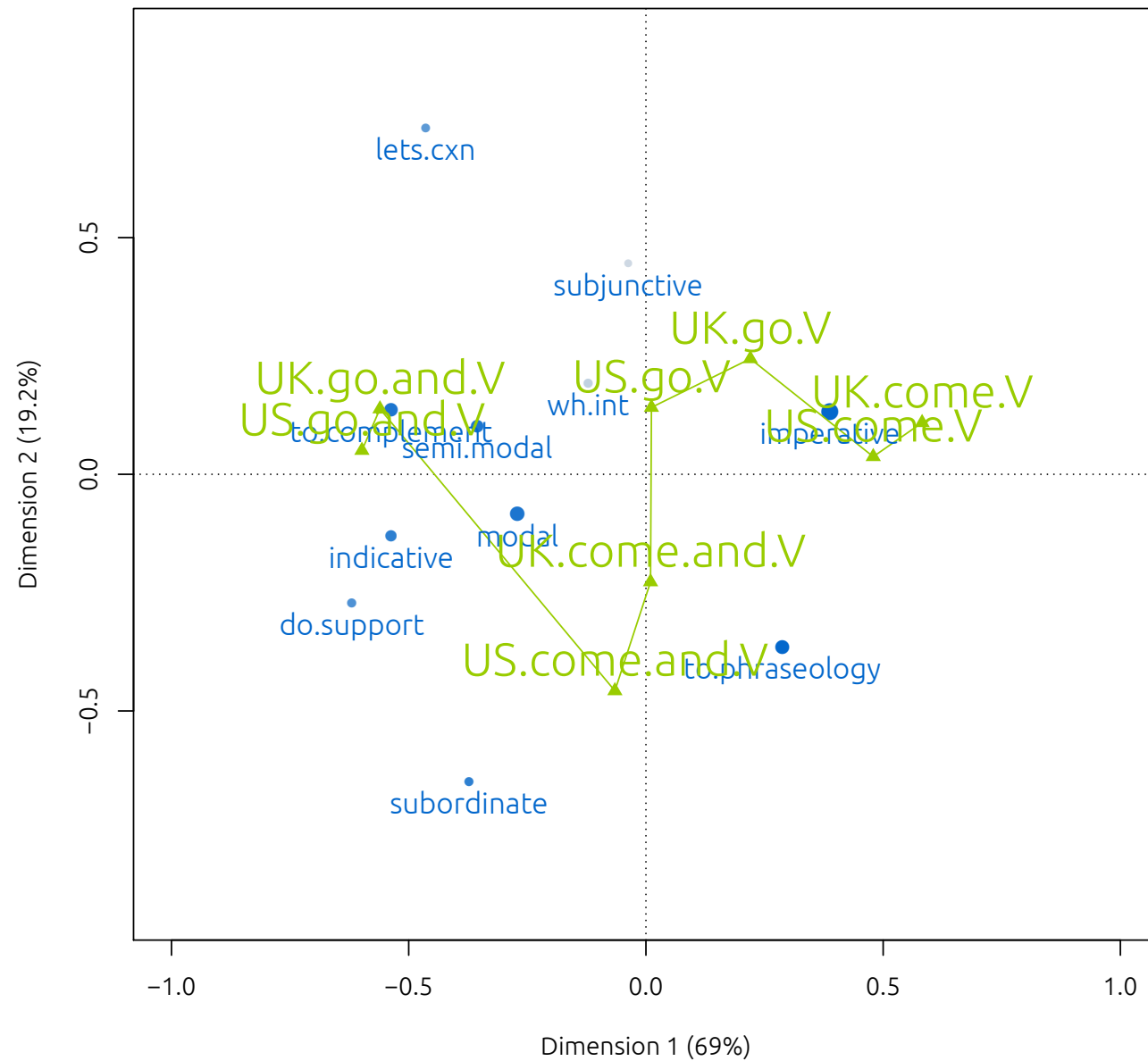


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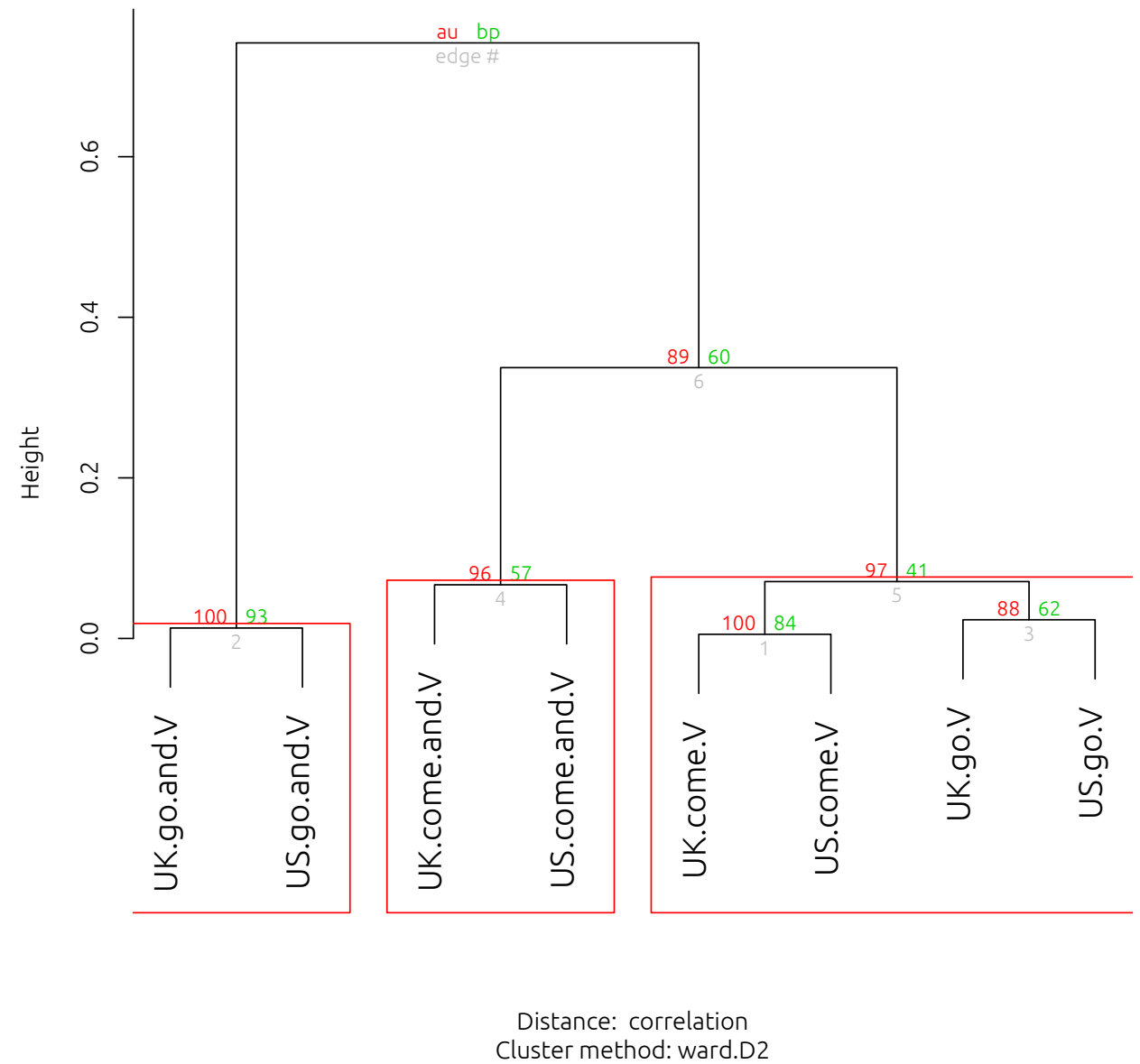


# Regional variation (ENCOW)

Construction network (Varieties)

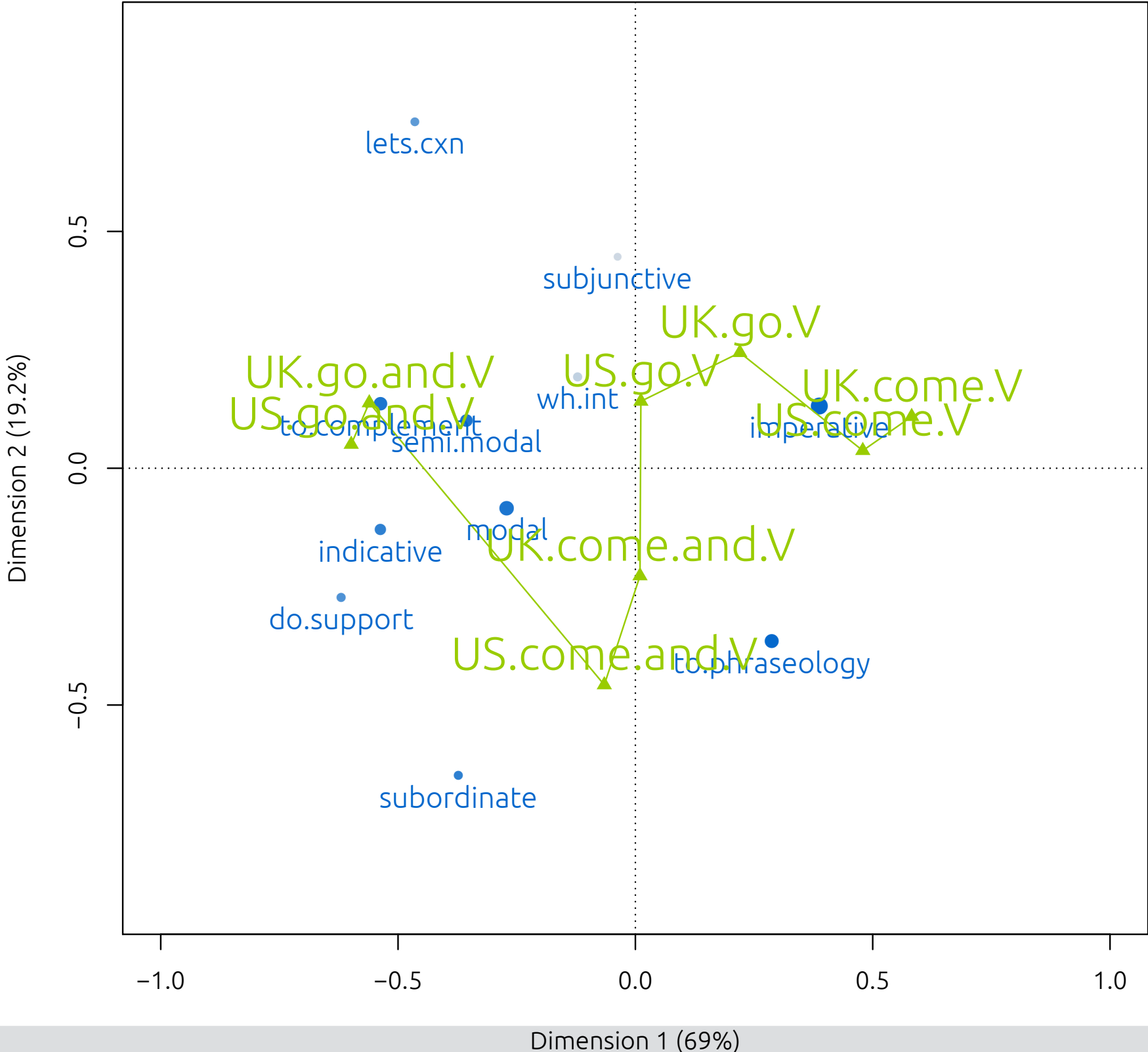


Cluster dendrogram with AU/BP values (%) (Varieties)



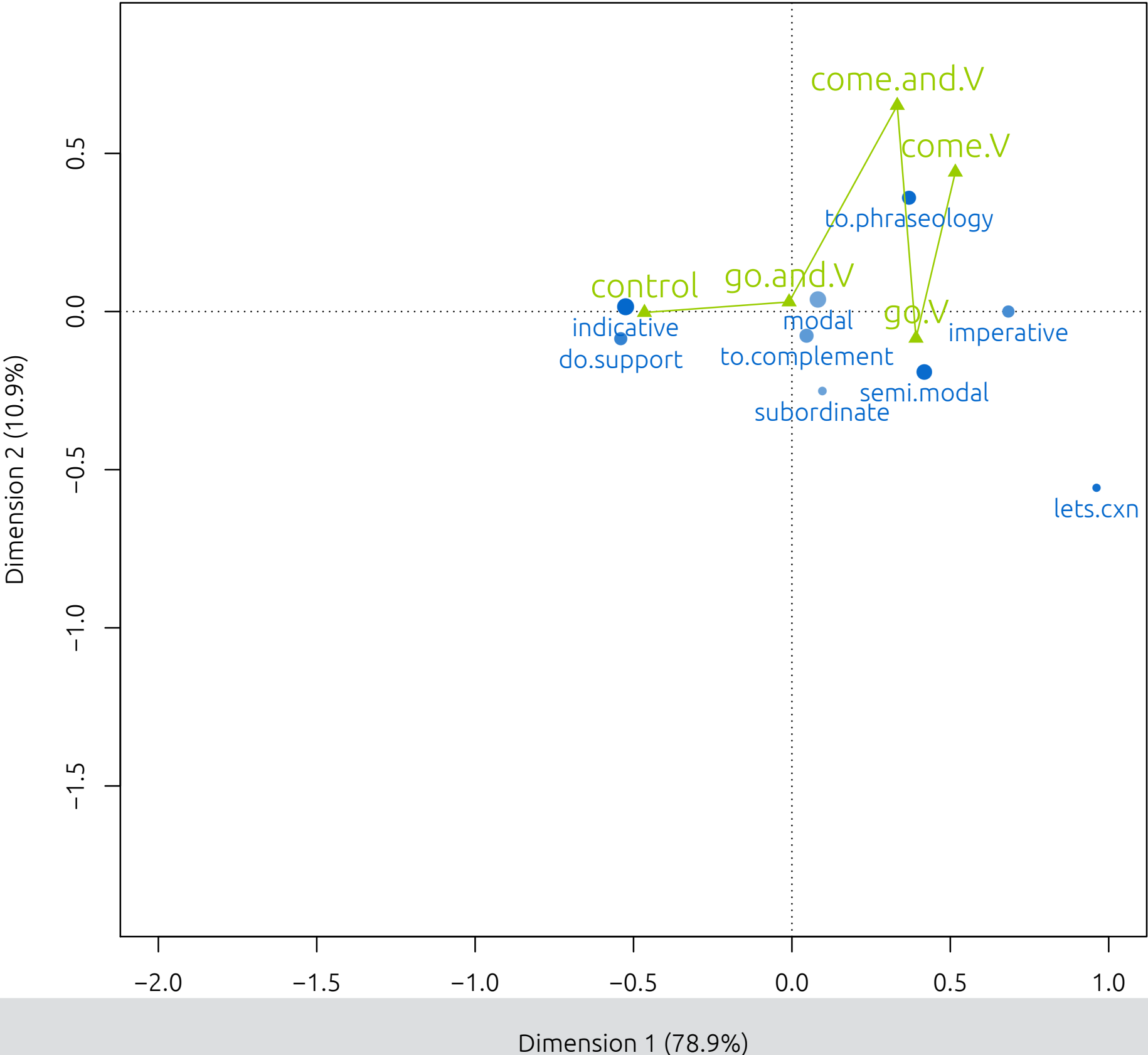
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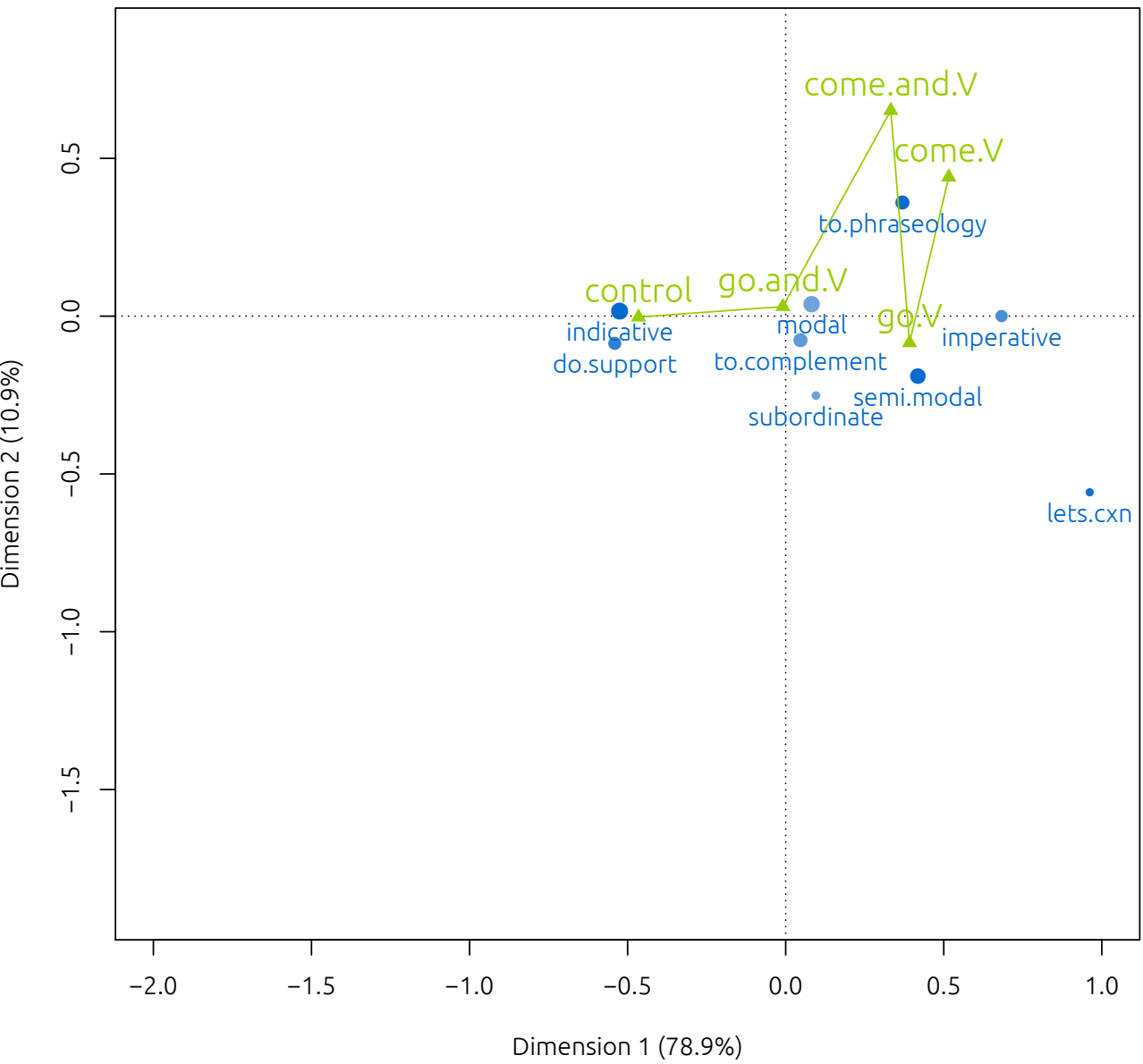
# Register variation (SWITCHBOARD)

Construction network with control (register variation)

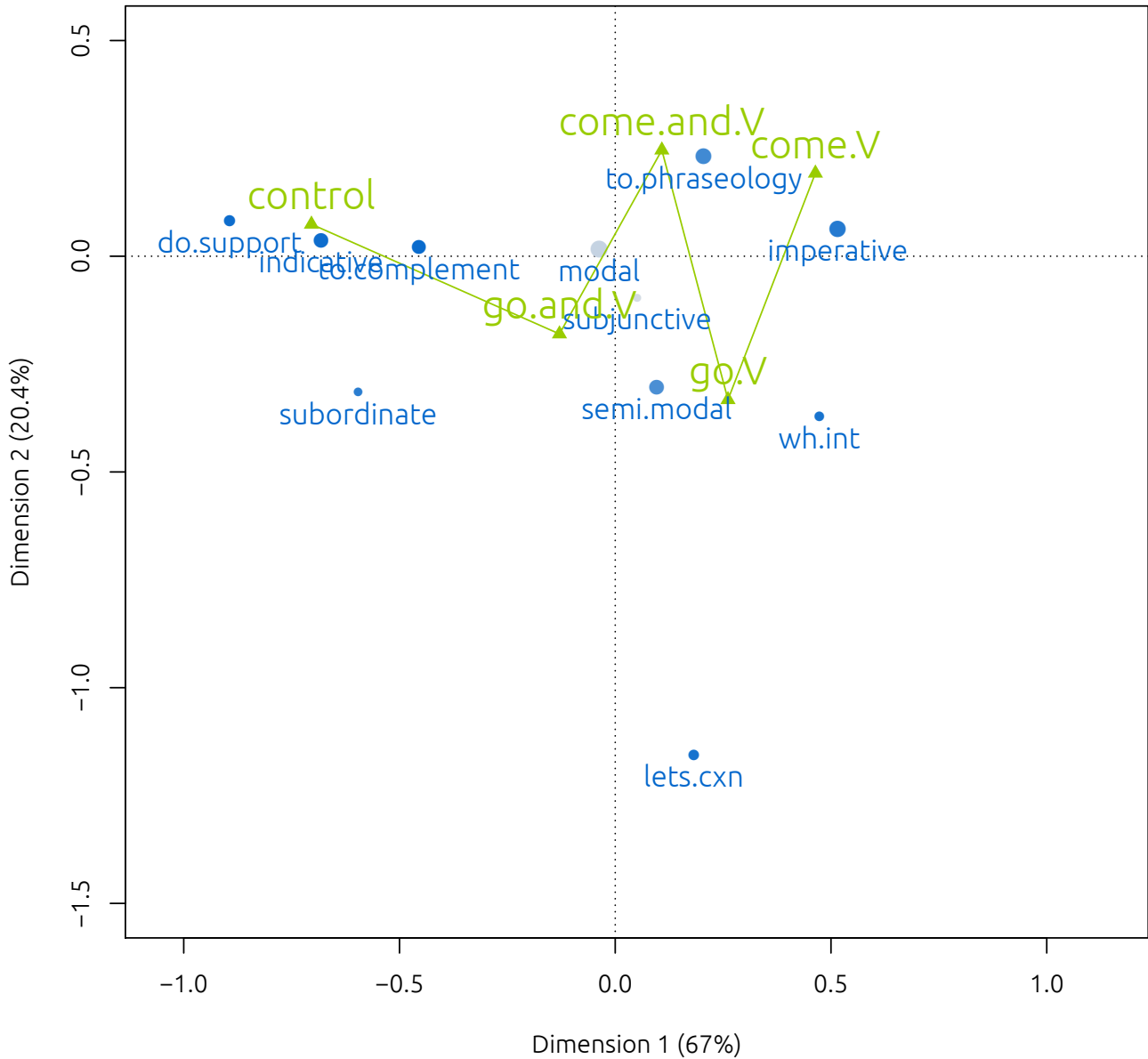


# Register variation (SWITCHBOARD)

Construction network with control (register variation)



Construction network (with control)





# Conclusion

## *What does co-locational behaviour tell us about form & meaning?*

- Semantics
  - ▶ Non-predictable, but motivated
- Constraints
  - ▶ Not arbitrary, but functionally conditioned
  - ▶ Hard with *go/come-V*, probabilistic with *go/come-and-V*
- Statistics
  - ▶ Not the single example ('below')
  - ▶ But the system ('above')
  - ▶ Semantic spaces:
    - constructions in use
    - constructions and relationships

*You shall know a **construction**  
by the company it keeps*

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