Interactive Techniques for Visualising Categorical Data in Linguistics

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Presentation Aims

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1. To introduce a novel visualisation tool called **Staircase Plots**
2. To encourage you to use this tool in your own analyses

Motivation

- Categorical data are **prevalent** in linguistics
  - The most common type of data in corpus linguistics (Stefanowitsch, 2020: 177)
  - Phonological, lexical, grammatical features (among others!)
- 192 WALS features (wals.info) with 2-28 categories
  - **Rhythm Type** (17A) has 5 categories, 323 items (languages)

	Value	Representation
●	Trochaic: left-hand syllable in the foot is strong	153
●	Iambic: right-hand syllable in the foot is strong	31
●	Dual: system has both trochaic and iambic feet	4
●	Undetermined: no clear foot type	37
○	Absent: no rhythmic stress	98
	Total:	323

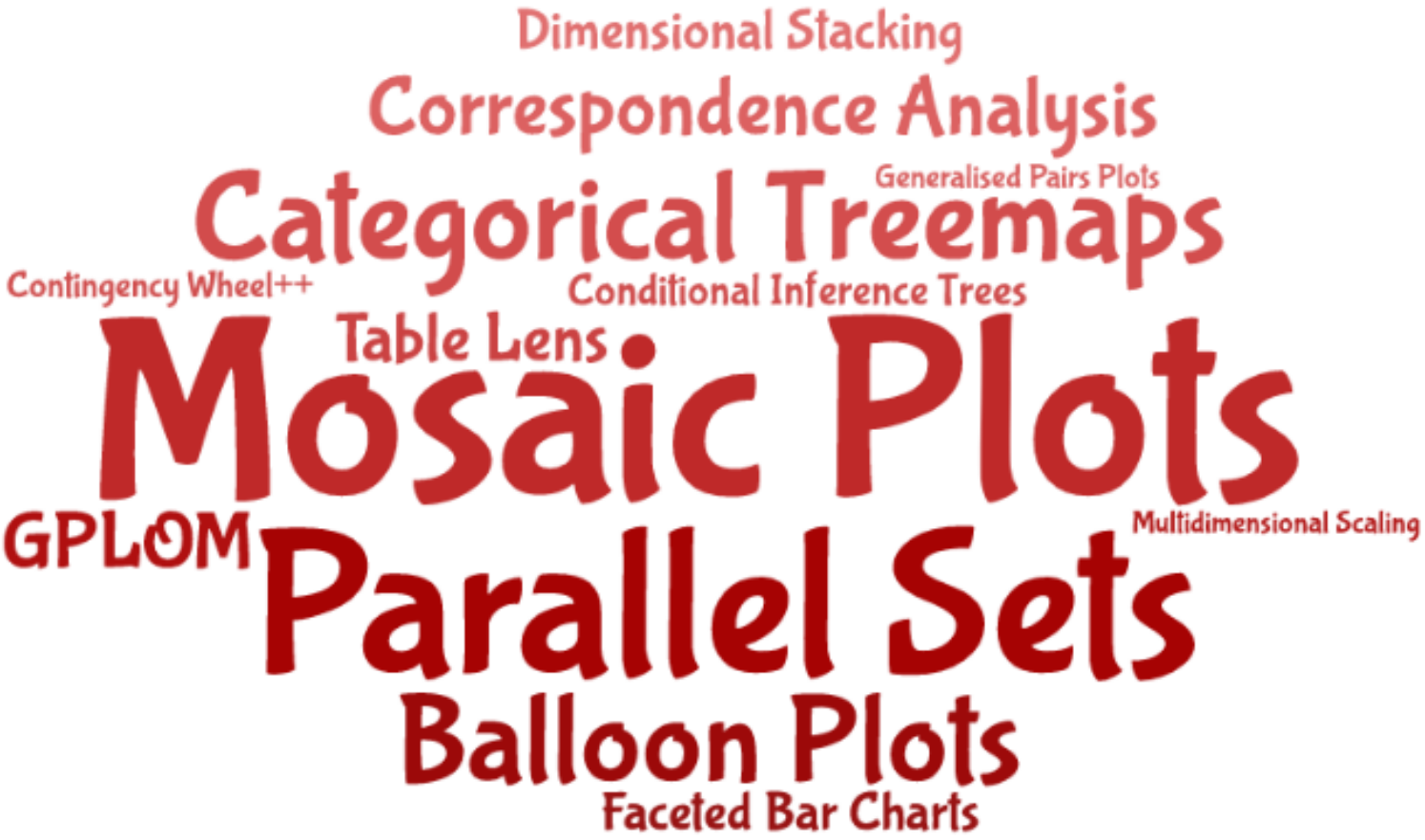
Motivation

- **Visualisation** can enhance linguistic analysis
  - Sanity checks
  - Anomaly detection
  - Knowledge discovery
  - Hypothesis testing
  - Statistical modelling
  - Presentation of results

  } Insights that might otherwise be missed!

- Few visualisation techniques effectively support **3+ categorical variables**
  - Limited scalability and interaction
  - Lack of user-friendly (no-code) tools available

Existing Techniques



Disclaimer

- Staircase Plots are currently **under development**
  - Design aspects are subject to change
  - Not available until next year

Dataset 1: Hybrid Hashtags

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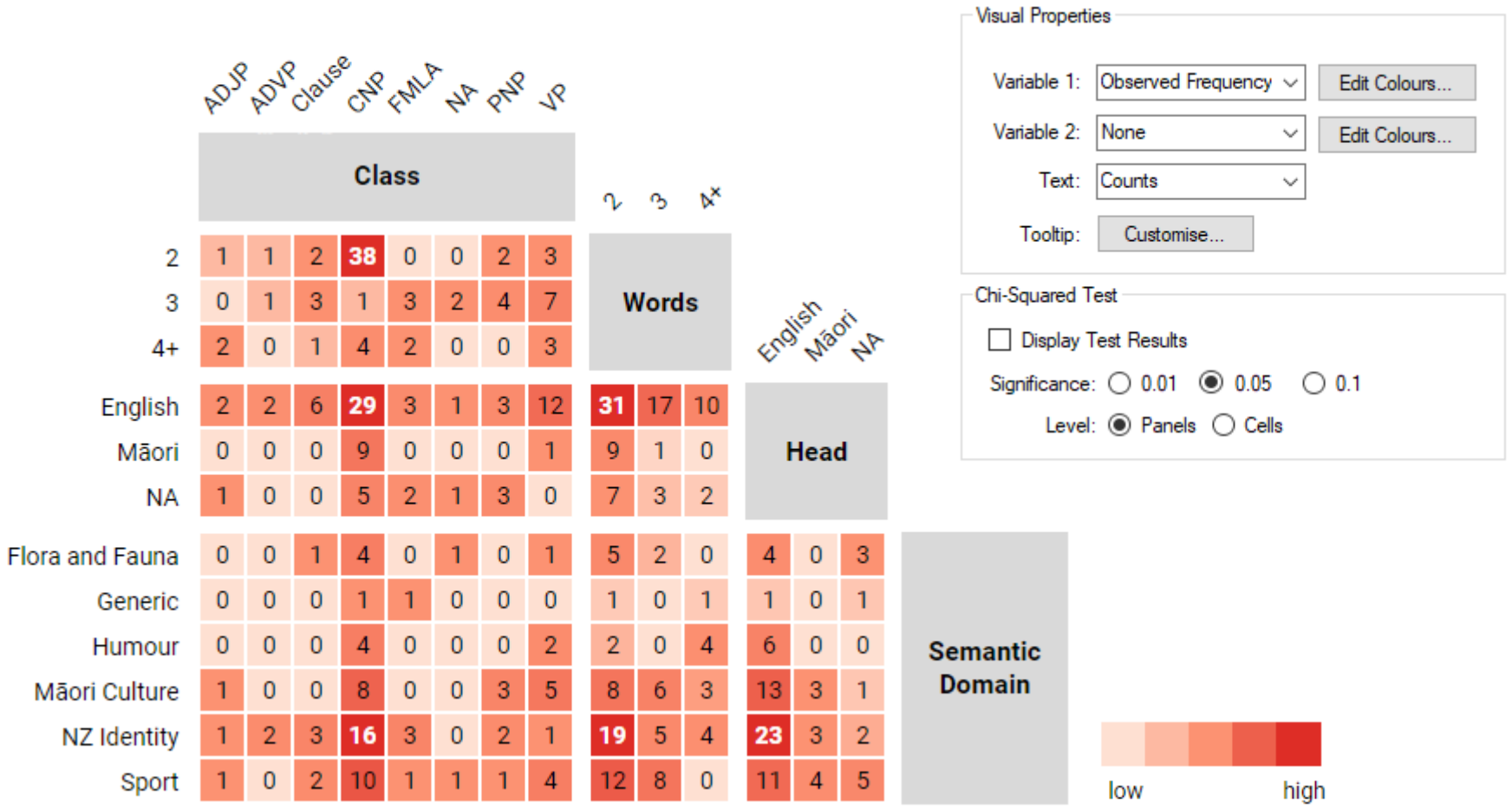
- 80 hashtags (rows) x 4 categorical variables (columns)
- Small **sample size**

Hashtag	Words (3)	Class (8)	Semantic Domain (6)	Head (3)
*#proud**kiwi***	2	CNP	Sport	Māori
#AotearoaNZ	3	PNP	NZ Identity	NA
		⋮		
*#maori**pride***	2	CNP	Māori Culture	English

Source: Trye et al. (2020)

The Basics

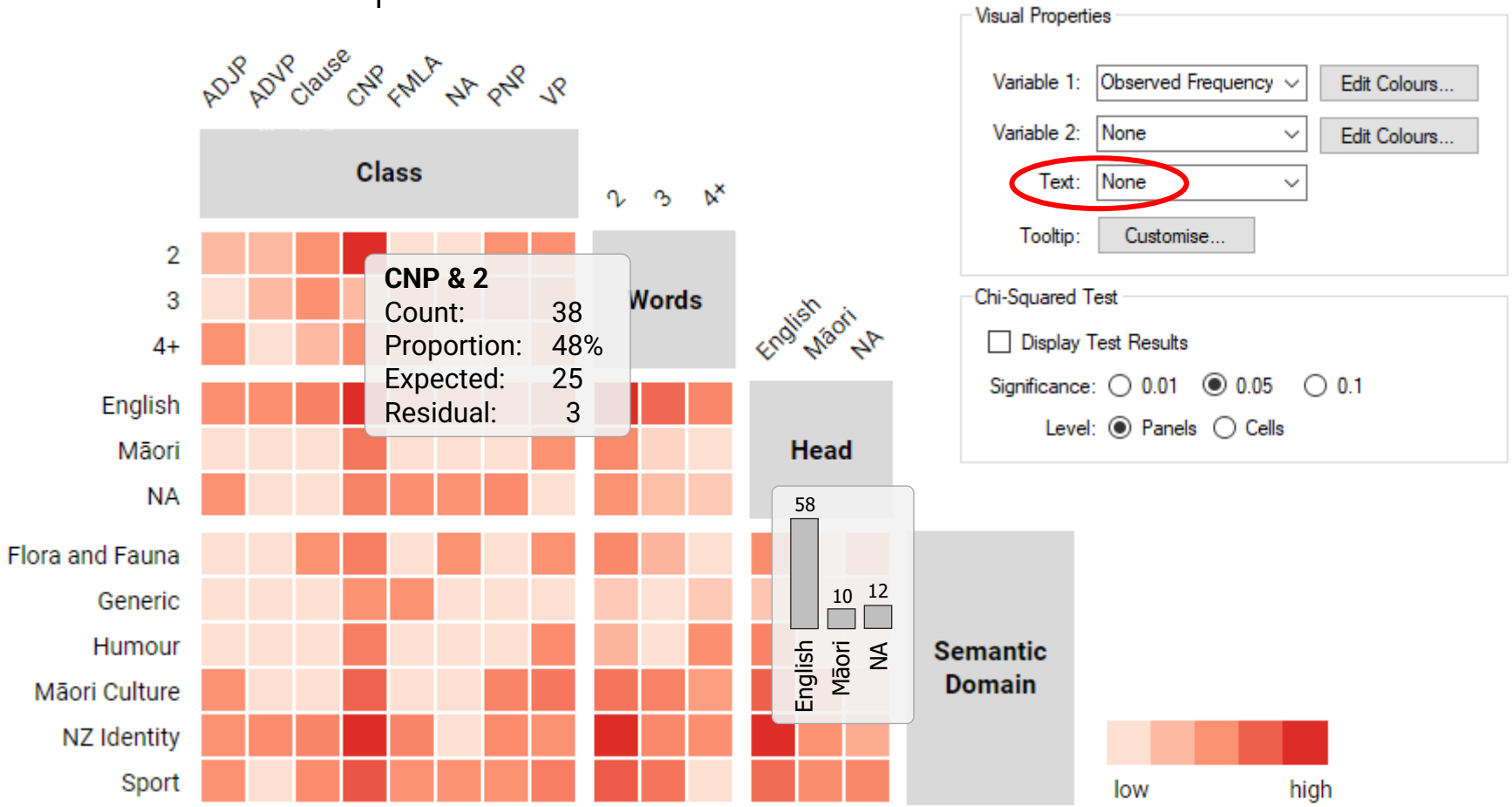

ADJP
ADVP
Clause
CNP
FMLA
NA
PNP
VP
Class
2
3
4+
Words
English
Māori
NA
Head
2 1 1 2 38 0 0 2 3
3 0 1 3 1 3 2 4 7
4+ 2 0 1 4 2 0 0 3
English 2 2 6 29 3 1 3 12 31 17 10
Māori 0 0 0 9 0 0 0 1 9 1 0
NA 1 0 0 5 2 1 3 0 7 3 2
Flora and Fauna 0 0 1 4 0 1 0 1 5 2 0 4 0 3
Generic 0 0 0 1 1 0 0 0 1 0 1 1 0 1
Humour 0 0 0 4 0 0 0 2 2 0 4 6 0 0
Māori Culture 1 0 0 8 0 0 3 5 8 6 3 13 3 1
NZ Identity 1 2 3 16 3 0 2 1 19 5 4 23 3 2
Sport 1 0 2 10 1 1 1 4 12 8 0 11 4 5
Semantic Domain
Visual Properties
Variable 1: Observed Frequency
Edit Colours...
Variable 2: None
Edit Colours...
Text: Counts
Tooltip: Customise...
Chi-Squared Test
Display Test Results
Significance: 0.01 0.05 0.1
Level: Panels Cells
low
high

Why this approach?

- "A good **starting point** for any data exploration is a simple summary table" (Brezina, 2018: 108)
  - An even better starting point is a heatmap!
- "It is always useful to do **cross-tabulation** of all categorical predictors and the response before beginning your analysis in order to detect configurations with zero frequencies or a large number of cells with **very low frequencies**" (Levshina, 2015: 273)

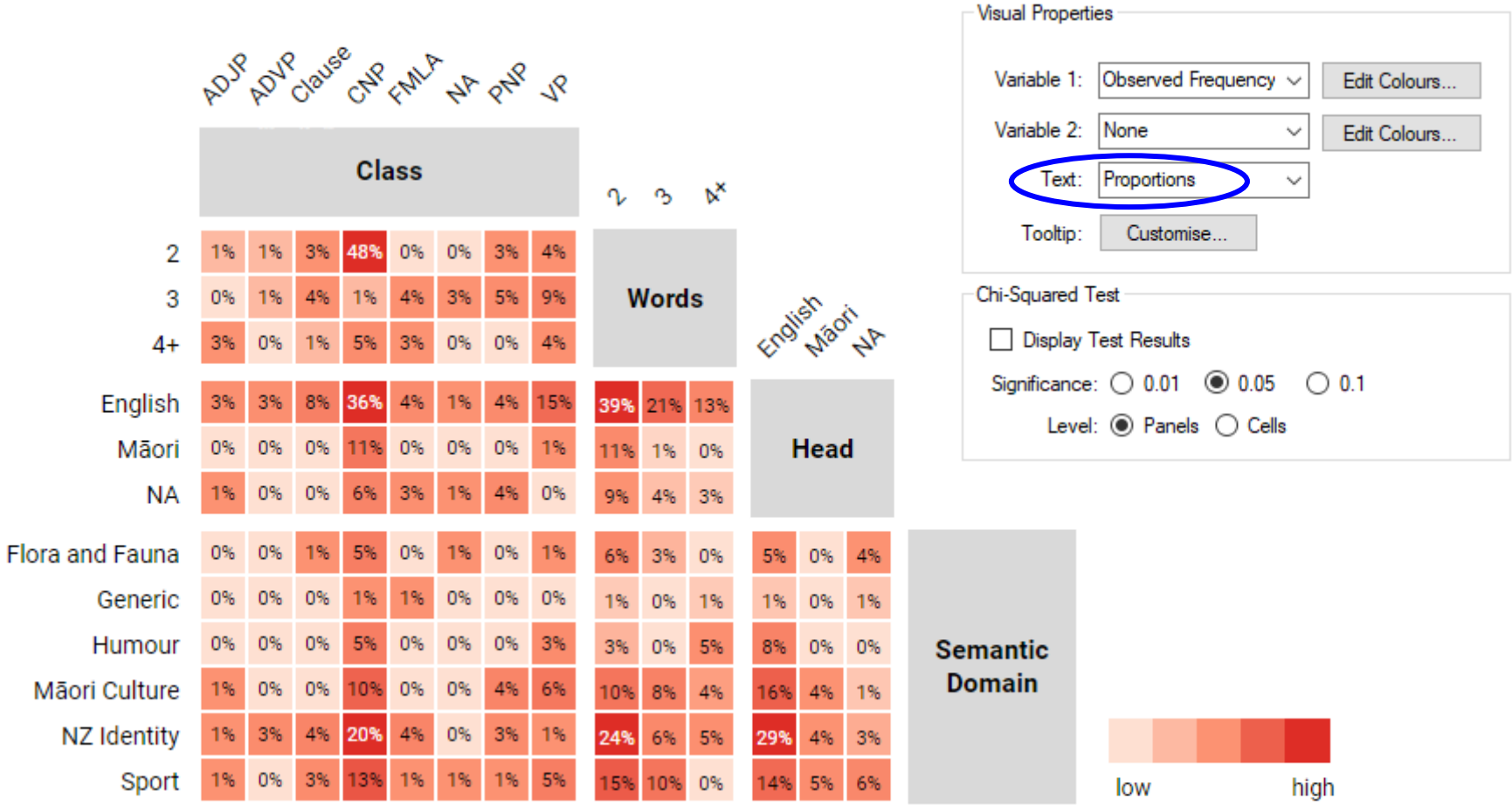
Removing Text Labels

- Easier to perceive general patterns
- Interactive tooltips reveal details on demand



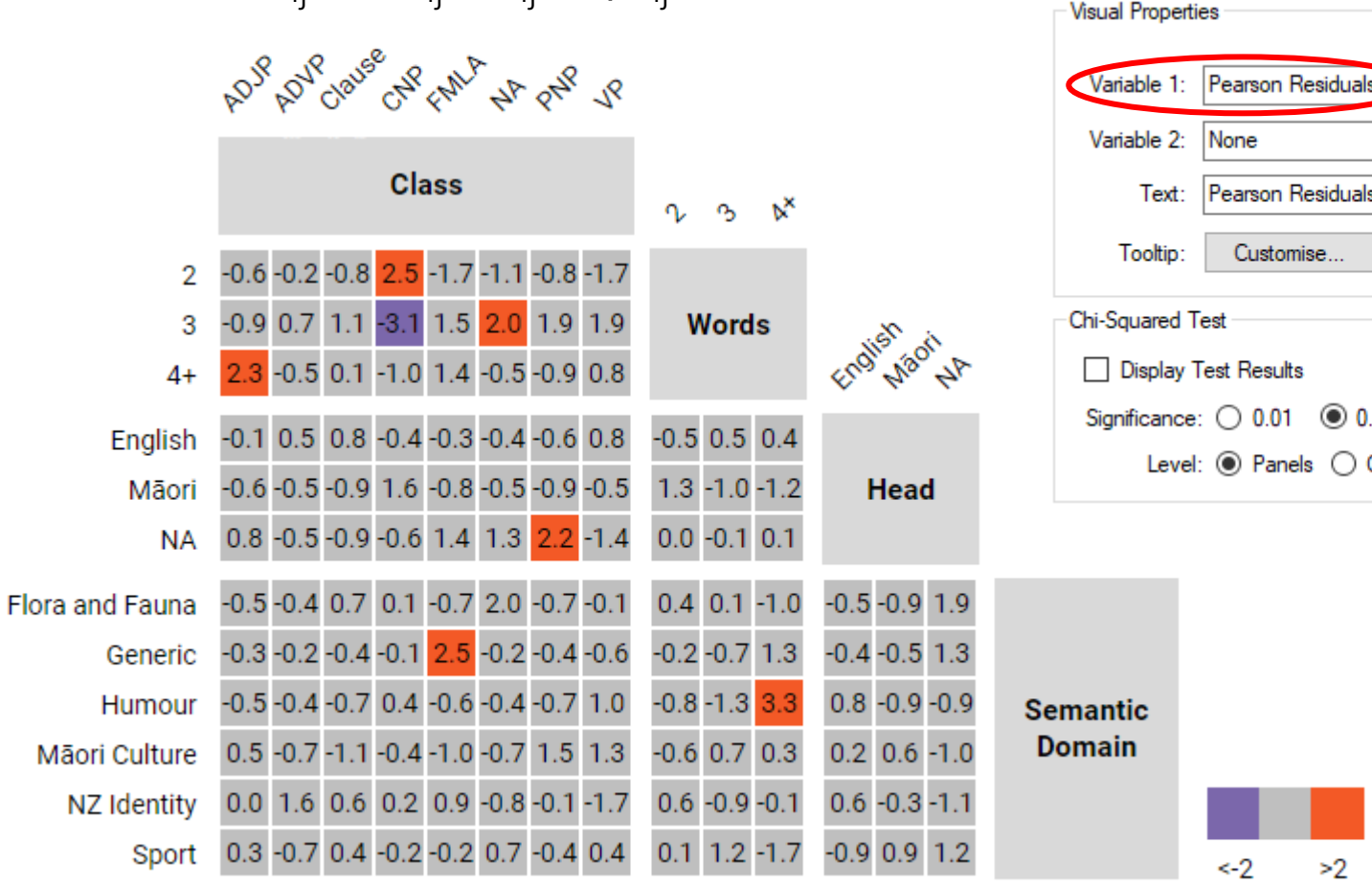
Proportions

- Cells show joint probability, P(X∩Y), where X and Y are the categories on each axis



Pearson Residuals

- Non-grey cells (>|2|) correspond to sig. residuals when $\alpha \approx 0.05$
- Formula: $r_{ij} = (O_{ij} - E_{ij}) / \sqrt{E_{ij}}$



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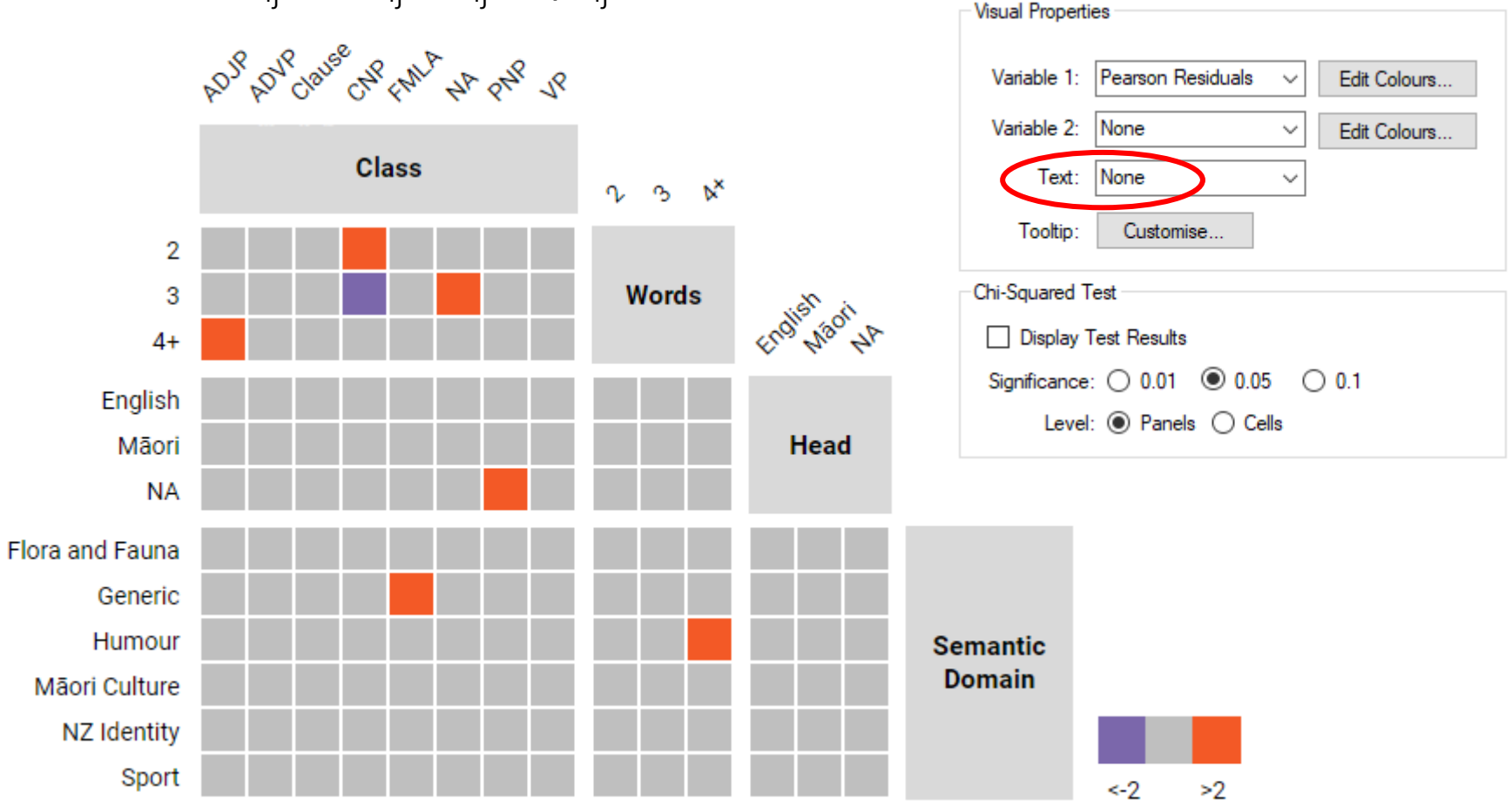
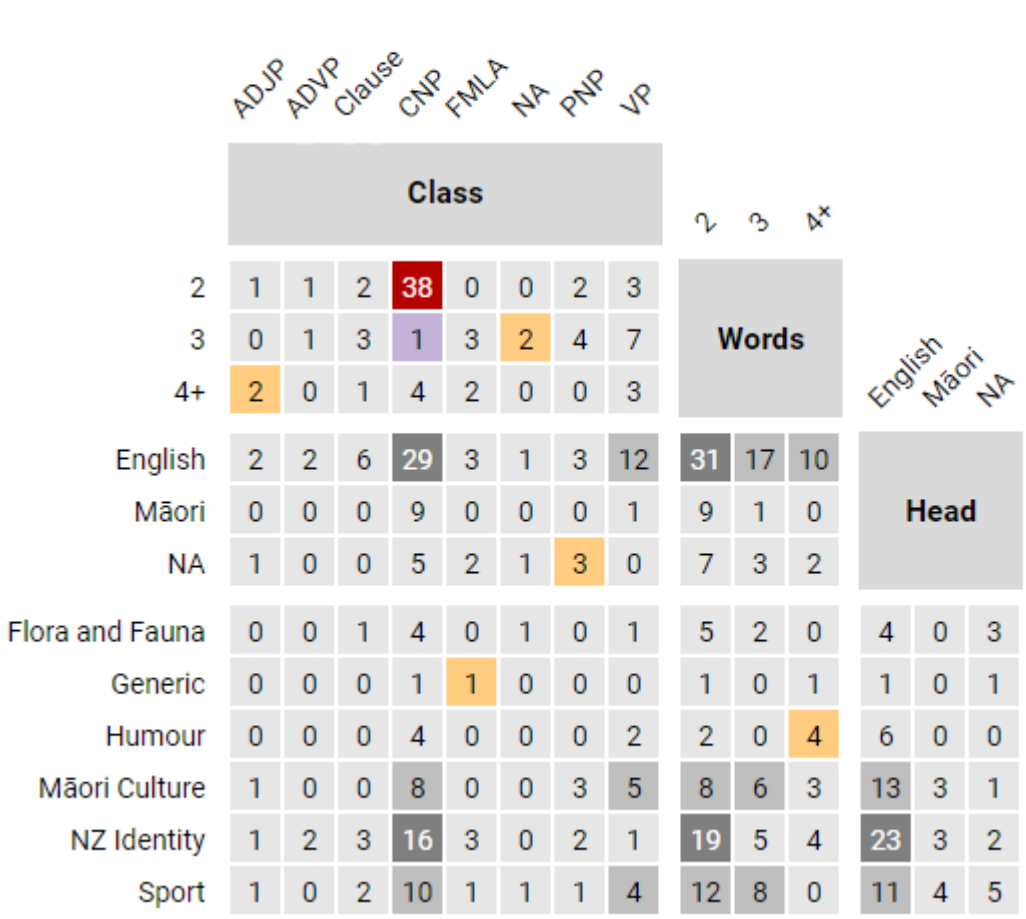
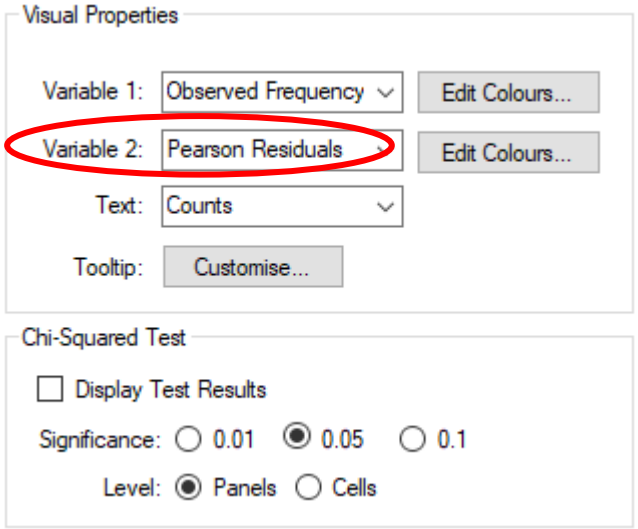
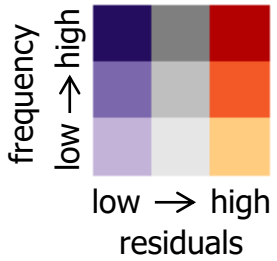


Bivariate Colour Scheme

- Show both counts (intensity) *and* residuals (colour)







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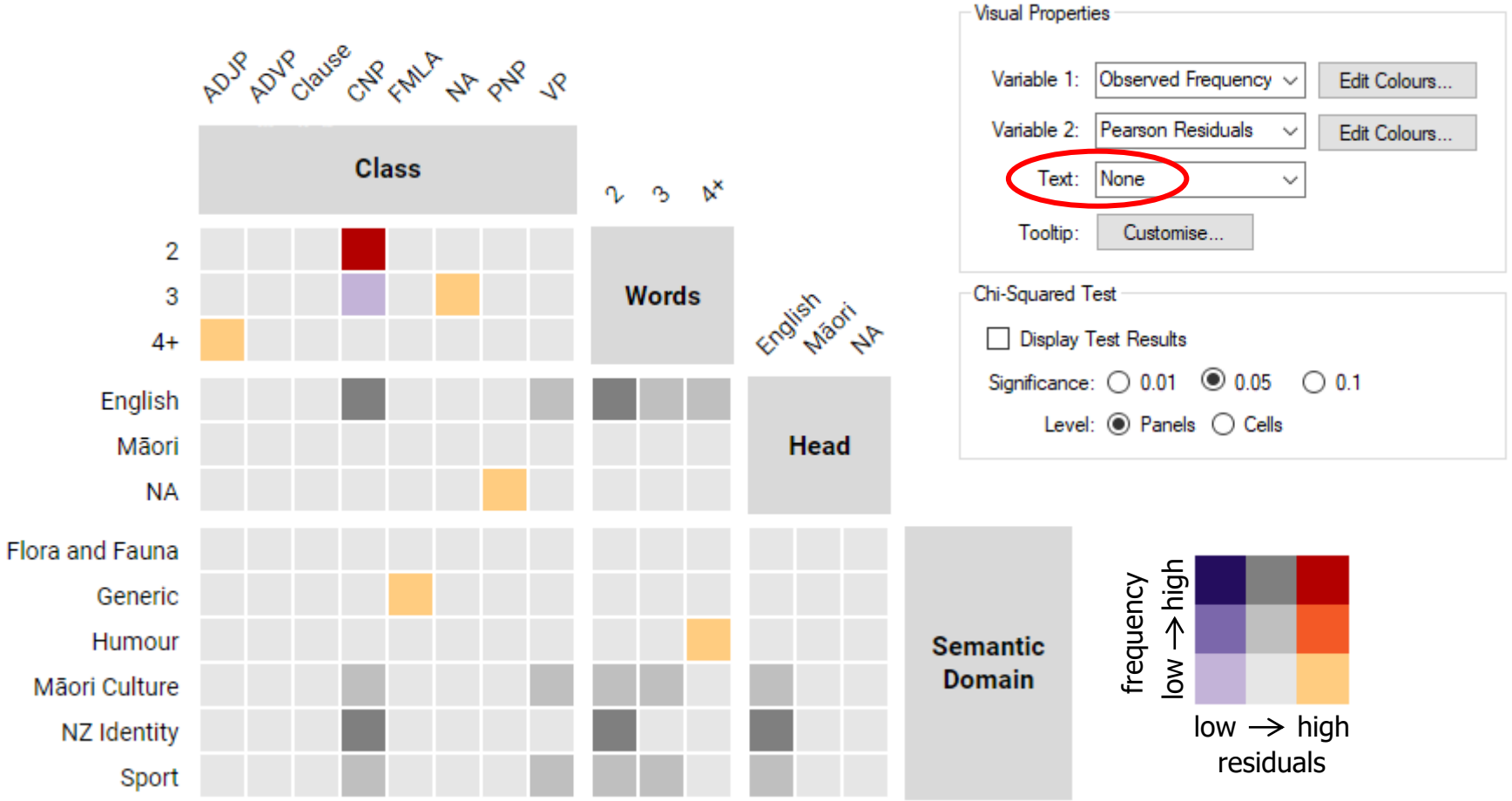


Chi-Squared Test

- Staircase Plots provide built-in support for the chi-squared test of independence
  - Used to determine whether there is an **association** between two categorical variables
- Ability to calculate & display results for all pairs of variables that satisfy the basic **test conditions**
  - Panels coloured according to strength of association
    - **Effect size** measured using Cramer's V
- Advantages:
  - Removes burden of manual computation
  - Visually reinforces correct interpretation
  - All results conveniently displayed in one place

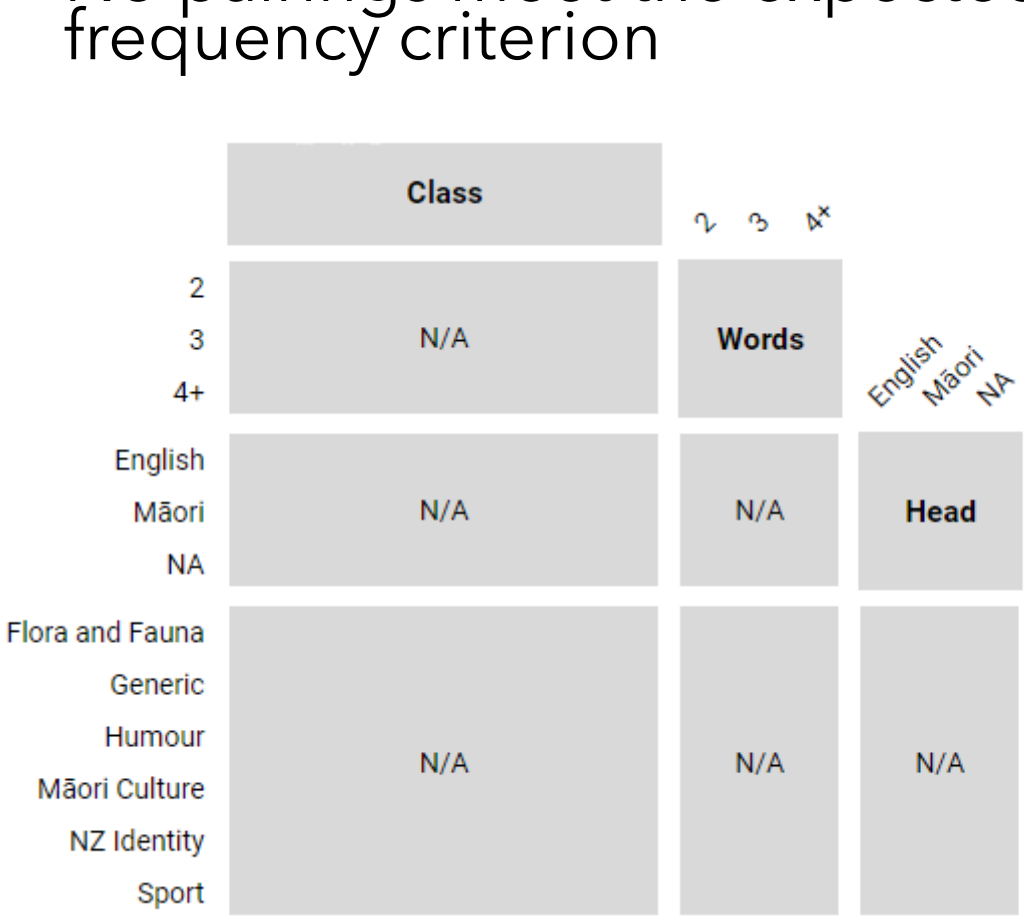
Chi-Squared Test Conditions

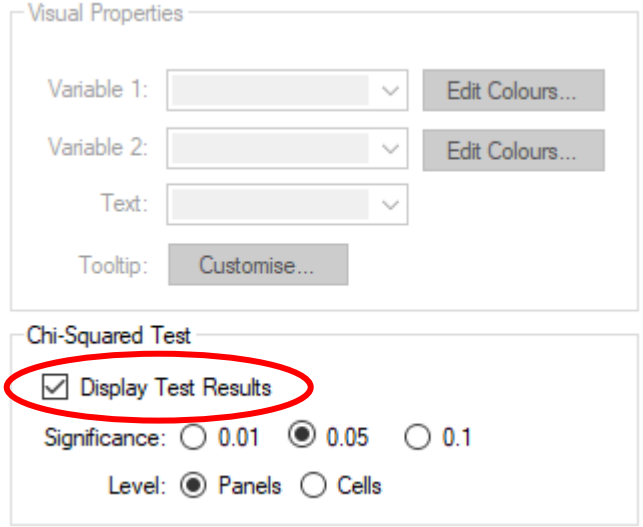
1. Nominal (preferred) or ordinal variables
   - Quantitative variables can be binned
2. Independent observations
   - Requires manual verification
3. Mutually-exclusive categories
   - Each observation contributes to one cell per panel
4. Expected frequency >1 in *all* cells and >5 in at least 80% of cells
   - Requires decent sample size
   - Typically at least 5x number of cells

	A	B	
C	X	-	Row
D	-	-	-
	Col	-	*N*

Chi-Squared Test

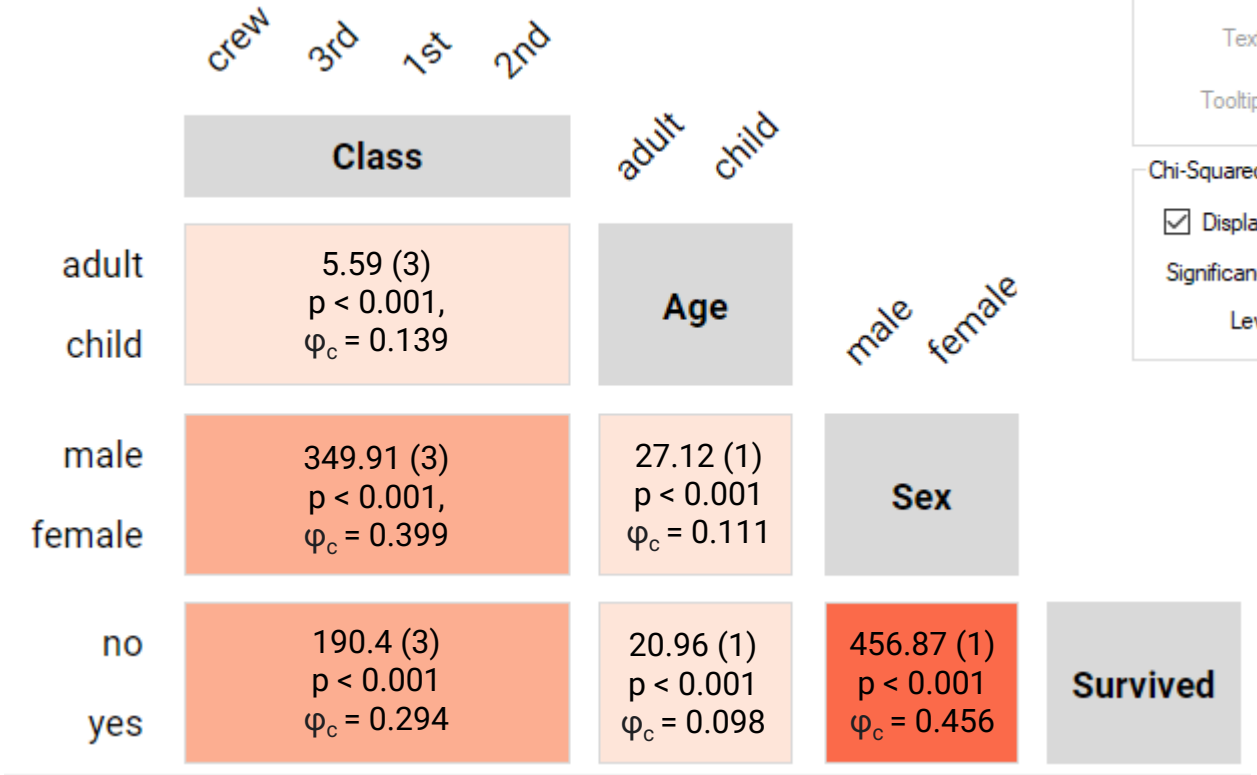
- **Insufficient sample size** for this dataset!
- No pairings meet the expected frequency criterion





Chi-Squared Test

- Example of a larger dataset (N= 2,201)
- Each panel reports the test statistic, (degrees of freedom), p-value & Cramer's V



Dataset 2: Covid Directives (Burnette & Calude, 2022)

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- 754 directives (rows) from tweets containing *#covid19nz*
- 10 variables (columns)

Variable	Categories
Stance (5)	against, pro, for stronger measures, neutral, unclear
Force (7)	advice, criticism, indirect, offer, plea, prototypical, well wishers
Politeness (4)	no redress, on record negative, on record positive, off record
Verb (4)	let, main verb, modal, no
Clause (3)	declarative, imperative, interrogative
Addressees (2)	explicit, implicit
Hashtags (2)	none, yes
Loanwords (2)	none, yes
Subjects (2)	individuated, non-individuated
Vocative (2)	none, yes


Force
proto_dir
plea
advice
criticism
indirect
well_wishers
offer
Stance
pro
stronger
anti
none
unclear
Politeness
no redress
off record
on record NEG
on record POS
Verb
main verb
modal
LET
NO
Clause
imperative
declarative
interrogative
Address.
implicit
explicit
Hashtags
none
yes
Loans
none
yes
Subjects
non-individuated
individuated
Vocative
none
vocative
Visual Properties
Variable 1: Observed Frequency
Edit Colours...
Variable 2: None
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low
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proto_dir
plea
advice
criticism
indirect
well_wishers
offer
Force
pro
stronger
anti
none
unclear
Stance
no redress
off record
on record NEG
on record POS
Politeness
main verb
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Key Limitations

- Inner variables are **split** across columns and rows
  - Displaying only half the matrix saves space but makes comparison with other variables difficult
- Layout restricts total **number of categories** that can be displayed
  - Don't want multiple variables with 10+ categories
  - Exact limit varies according to screen resolution
- **Loss of precision** when using bivariate colour maps
  - Fewer distinct shades for each variable
- Not optimised for **ordinal data**
  - Chi-squared test doesn't consider ordering information

Interactive Features – Coming Soon!

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- Display selected items in **scrollable table**
- **Associative highlighting** for categories (rows/columns) & variables (related panels)
  - Related: search feature
- Flexible **re-ordering** of categories & variables
  - Alphabetically, by frequency/cardinality, manually via drag-and-drop
- Basic **data transformations**
  - Collapse/expand existing categories
  - Add/remove variables
  - Filter by selection

Help needed!

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- Online participants needed for a **user study** about Staircase Plots
  - ~1 hour in Feb/March 2023
- Please fill out this quick Google Form (name + email) if you might be interested in taking part
- Thank you!

https://forms.gle/evL7j3jed8ZgfgVM6

Ngā pātai?

Contact me
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(Or talk to me on Stream 1 during the breaks!)

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