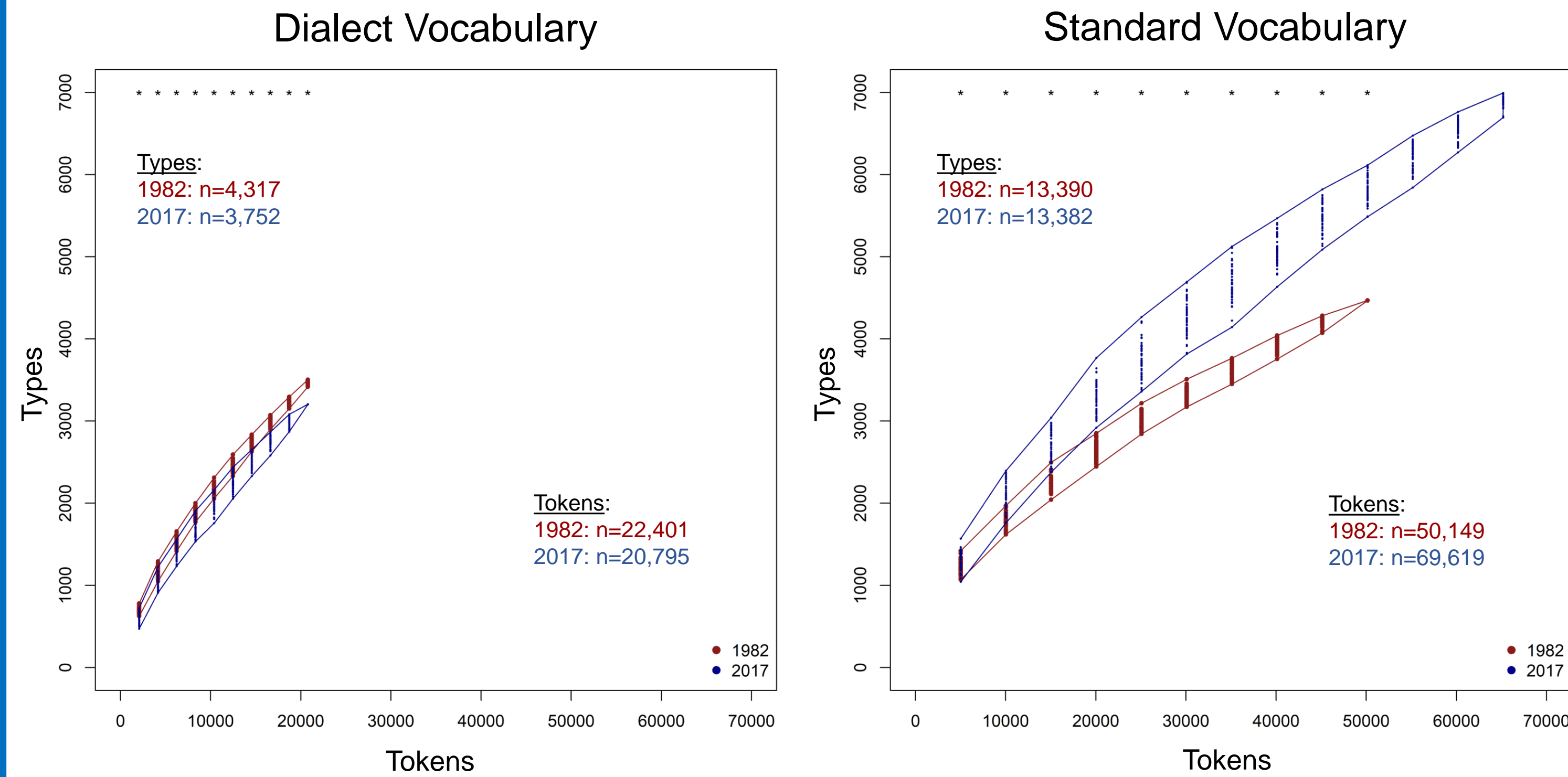


# Variation and change in lexical productivity across the lifespan:

## An interdisciplinary investigation of Swabian and standard German

### Surprisingly Little Dialect Attrition

Rather than lose dialect, through diverse experiences, speakers gain a massive amount of new lexical knowledge throughout their lifetime that is not dialect.



- Little change in speakers' active use of dialect words and colloquial forms over the 35 years
- The domains and contexts in which dialect is spoken appear to have changed little over the years
- Considerable enrichment of standard language vocabulary in 2017 over 1982
- The domains and contexts in which the standard language is encountered are vast and multifarious

### Data and Methods:

**Speakers:** 20 native Swabian speakers, recorded in ~one hour sociolinguistic interviews in 1982 and again in 2017, using same survey.

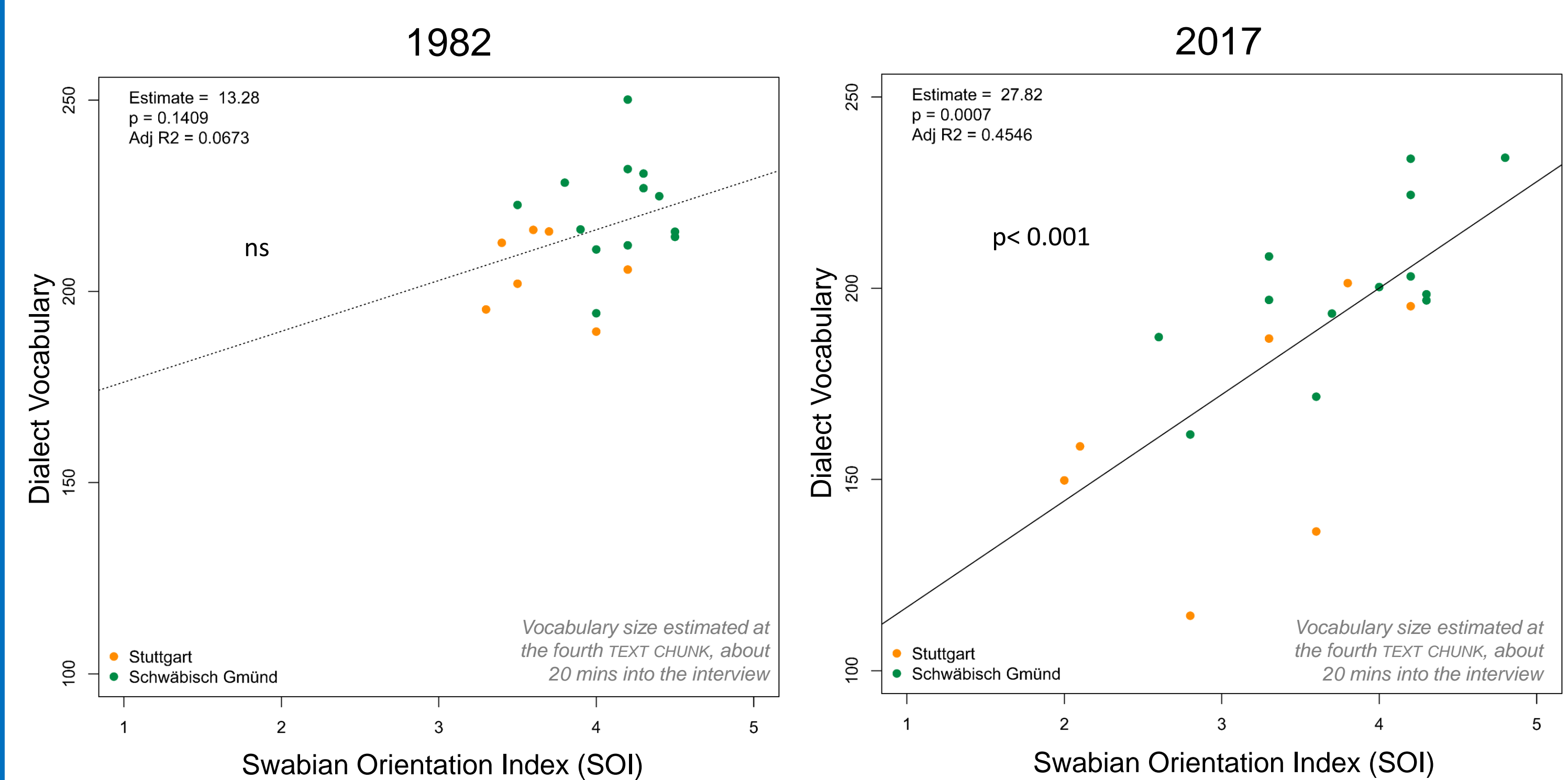
**Communities:** large urban centre of Stuttgart (~630,000 inhabitants) and semi-rural, mid-sized town of Schwäbisch Gmünd (~60,000 inhabitants).

**Linguistic Variables:** (1) 32 traditional Swabian dialect features (e.g., SWG *han* ~ STD *habe* 'have'); (2) colloquial words (typical spoken speech) (e.g., *mr* 'we'); (3) standard language words (Duden-prescribed) (e.g., *wir* 'we').

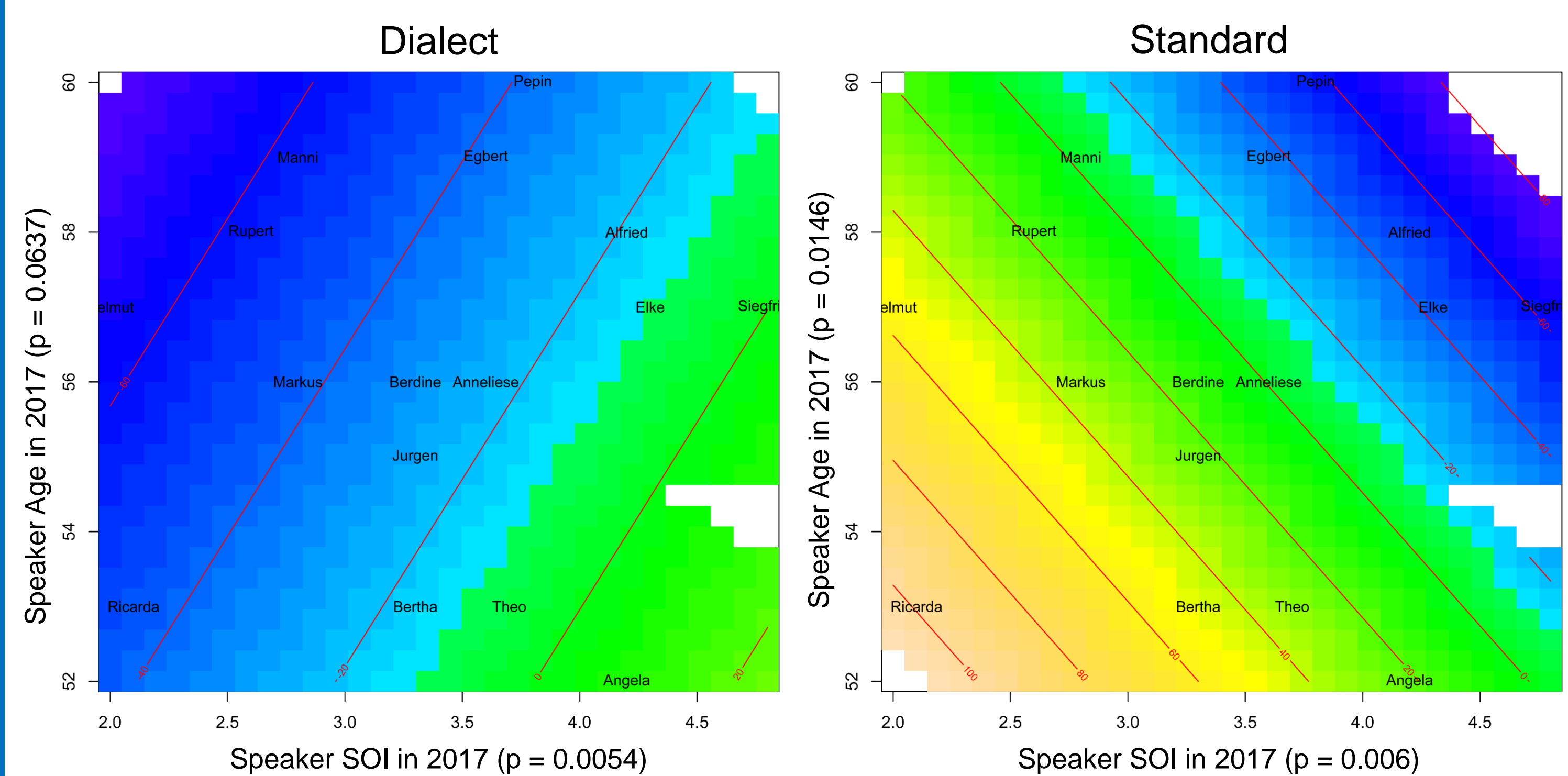
**Vocabulary Growth Curves:** projected by counting word tokens in equally spaced measurement points in the text (so called 'token time') and graphing the corresponding count of word types, for multiple randomized versions of the text.

### Swabian Orientation Matters

The higher a speaker's Swabian orientation, the larger the active dialect vocabulary; the lower the speaker's orientation, the smaller the active dialect vocabulary.



- In 1982 speakers are very similar, signalling close-knit homogeneous communities
- In 2017 speakers have diversified, higher SOI predicts greater dialect vocabulary

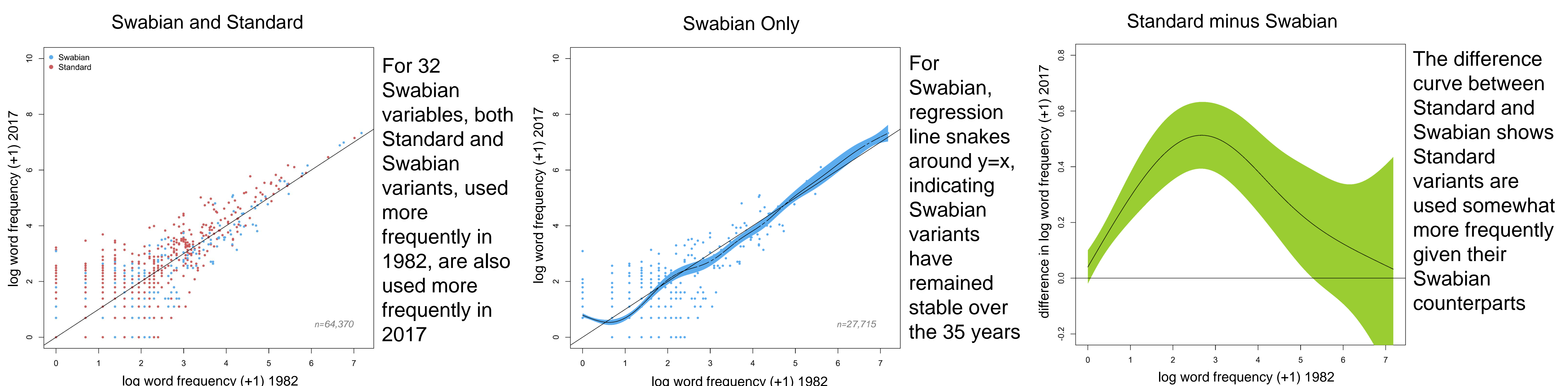


- Warmer colors: greater vocabulary gain; cooler colors: greater loss
- Higher SOI predicts less Swabian loss and less Standard gain
- Overall loss of vocabulary with increasing speaker age in 2017, but only in the standard language

*Swabian is holding its traditional ground; while the Standard language is expanding into new domains encountered over the lifetime.*

### Standard Variants are More Frequent

Dialect words are used with similar frequency across the years, whereas words from the standard language show higher frequencies in 2017 compared to 1982.



### References:

Baayen, R.H., Beaman, K.V., Ramscar, M. To Appear. "Deconfounding the effects of competition and attrition on dialect across the lifespan: a panel study investigation of Swabian German." In: Beaman, K.V. and Buchstaller, I. (editors). *Language Variation and Language Change across the Lifespan: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives from Panel Studies*. New York: Routledge.