Mobility and dialect identity as factors in language change:
Findings from a 35-year panel and trend study in Swabia

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Urban Language Research
University of Graz, Austria
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Research Questions

1. Is Swabian thriving or dying as a German dialect?
2. What dialect features are stable versus receding?
3. How do notions of identity and mobility impact dialect attrition or retention?
Swabian

Swabian or Schwäbisch is a High German dialect, belonging to the Alemannic family, spoken by just over 800,000 people.

Two communities:
- Stuttgart area
- Schwäbisch Gmünd
Two Speech Communities

Stuttgart

Schwäbisch Gmünd
Swabian Attitudes – Loved or Loathed

von dem her war i mal typisch, und zum Glück nimme so arg, ... wer schwäbisch versteht, mä legt sich hin ... brutal.

‘at that time I was typical [Swabian], and luckily not so anymore ... those who understand Swabian, have to laugh ... brutal.’ (Pepin-17)

wenn i Urschwâbe hör, also die mä gar ned versteht, des denkt mä immer, des isch e Fremdsprache ja, ... muss mä halt manchmal de Kopf schüttle, aber so find i des ... kôi schlimme Sprach ... i find e Dialekt isch nie schlecht

‘if I hear old-Swabian, that you can‘t even understand, then you always think, that’s a foreign language yeah, ... sometimes you just have to shake your head, but I don‘t think it‘s a bad language ... I think a dialect is never bad.’ (Bertha-82)
Corpus – Trend & Panel Study

1982  40 speakers
24 speakers Stuttgart 16 speakers Gmünd

2017  80+ speakers
40 speakers Stuttgart 40 speakers Gmünd

2017 Panel Study
20 speakers

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Challenges with Panel and Trend Studies

**Panel Studies**
- Comparability across time periods
- Paucity of Data / Small n’s
- Heterogeneous samples
- Too few data points
- Long gaps in time-points
- Individual style changes
- Individual biological changes
- Individual life event changes
- Interviewer/Interviewee relationships
- Changes from above/below
- Age-grading

**Trend Studies**
- Comparability across generations
- Appropriately stratified sample
- Heterogeneous speakers
- Too many data points
- Binned versus continuous variables
- Individual styles
- Generational biological differences
- Individual life trajectories
- Interviewer/Interviewee relationships
- Changes from above/below
- Age-grading
Methods

• **Sociolinguistic Interviews**
  —Labovian-style, casual interview questions
  —Same interview instrument used in 1982 and 2017

• **Transcription/Annotation**
  —Native Swabian speakers
  —Transcription Guidelines and Swabian Orthography
  —Reviewed/Corrected by Principal Investigator

• **Quantitative Analyses**
  —Frequency analyses
  —Generalized Linear Mixed Models with Random Effects (GLMER)
  —Principal Components Analysis (PCA)

• **Qualitative Assessment**
  —Quasi-Ethnographic Investigations
### Linguistic Variables under Investigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>SWG ~ STD</th>
<th>Examples (Swabian Orthography)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Phono-logical:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP</td>
<td>-st Palatalisation</td>
<td>[ʃt] ~ [st]</td>
<td>da darfsch ja bloß hundertdreißig fahre in Italien</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIS1</td>
<td>ai Diphthong Shift (mhd i)</td>
<td>[ɔɪ] ~ [aɪ]</td>
<td>mhd /ei/ braucht da köi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIS2</td>
<td>ai Diphthong Shift (mhd ei)</td>
<td>[œɪ] ~ [aɪ]</td>
<td>da dud mhd in den Zylinder ob der Dêig neii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANN</td>
<td>an Nasalisation</td>
<td>[ã] ~ [a]</td>
<td>mã kã es mihe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRV1</td>
<td>ö Front Rounded Vowel</td>
<td>[œ] ~ [ø]</td>
<td>so gut wie meeg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRV2</td>
<td>eu Front Rounded Vowel</td>
<td>[œɪ] ~ [aɪ]</td>
<td>bin gern auf Baim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRV3</td>
<td>ü Front Rounded Vowel</td>
<td>[ʏ] ~ [y]</td>
<td>dann ist d Kiche</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEO</td>
<td>Long e Opening</td>
<td>lääben ~ leben</td>
<td>nã Kanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Morpho-syntactic:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDP</td>
<td>Verbal Plural Inflection</td>
<td>[œd] ~ [an]</td>
<td>die findeu</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRV1</td>
<td>Irregular Verb: gehen</td>
<td>[gangə] ~ [geːn]</td>
<td>willsch du an Tel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRV2</td>
<td>Irregular Verb: stehen</td>
<td>[ʃtandə] ~ [ʃteːn]</td>
<td>lässt mä no e ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRV3</td>
<td>Irregular Verb: haben</td>
<td>[hen] ~ [haːn]</td>
<td>nich hen e aldes h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAF1</td>
<td>Swabian Affix: -le</td>
<td>-le ~ -chen/-lein</td>
<td>dass er verändlí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAF2</td>
<td>Swabian Affix: ver-</td>
<td>ver-~ -er/-zer</td>
<td>nã verzählet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAF3</td>
<td>Swabian Affix: na-</td>
<td>nã ~ hin-</td>
<td>ich glaub net, da</td>
</tr>
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<td>SAF5</td>
<td>Swabian Affix: ge-</td>
<td>θ ~ ge-</td>
<td>un hen hier e Hã</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVB</td>
<td>Periphrastic Subjunctive</td>
<td>däd ~ würde</td>
<td>es däd beeinflusse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Social Factors

**Fixed Effects:**
1. Recording Year – 1982 and 2017
2. Community – Gmünd and Stuttgart
3. Speaker Sex – male and female
4. Swabian Orientation – continuous scale from 1 to 5
5. Speaker Mobility – continuous scale from 1 to 5

**Random Effects:**
Interviewer Name – five interviewers
Speaker ID – 20 speakers, 40 interviews
### Swabian Orientation Index (SOI)

#### Swabian Allegiance:
1-1. **Self-Declared Swabian**: Are you a ‘real’ Swabian?
   5=definitely, 4=maybe, 3=don’t know, 2=not really, 1=no
1-2. **Non-Swabian Friends**: Do you have friends who are NOT Swabian?
   5=no, 4=a few, 3=don’t know, 2=many, 1=a lot
1-3. **Swabian Ridicule**: Do they laugh at how you speak?
   5=always, 4=sometimes, 3=don’t know, 2=not really, 1=not at all
1-4. **Accommodation**: Do you change how you speak?
   5=not at all, 4=a little, 3=don’t know, 2=a lot, 1=always

#### Swabian Cultural Competence:
3-1. **Swabian Knowledge**: Are there different Swabian dialects?
   5=considerable, 4=some, 3=don’t know, 2=not much, 1=none
3-2. **Swabian Specialties**: Do you know how to make Spätzle? Maultaschen?
   5=of course, 4=somewhat, 3=don’t know, 2=not well, 1=not at all
3-3. **Swabian People & Jokes**: Do you know [various well-known Swabians]?
   5=of course, 4=somewhat, 3=don’t know, 2=not well, 1=not at all
3-4. **Swabian Activities**: Do you participate in Hocketse & local activities?
   5=always, 4=some, 3=don’t know, 2=not much, 1=never

#### Swabian Language Attitudes:
2-1. **Opinion of Swabian Language**: What do you think of the Swabian language?
   5=super, 4=good, 3=don’t know, 2=not good, 1=awful
2-2. **Job Prospects for Swabians**: Is it difficult to find a job when you speak Swabian?
   5=hard, 4=difficult, 3=impact/impact, 2=maybe some, 1=very difficult
2-3. **Swabians Speaking German**: Is it odd when a Swabian speaks standard German?
   5=very odd/awful, 4=funny, 3=don’t know, 2=good, 1=great
2-4. **Non-Swabians Speaking Swabian**: Is it odd when a non-Swabian speaks Swabian?
   5=very odd/awful, 4=funny, 3=don’t know, 2=good, 1=great

#### Swabian Language Usage:
4-1. **Parents Speak Swabian**: Do your parent speak Swabian?
   5=both, 4=one, 1=neither
4-2. **Swabian with Friends & Family**: Do you speak Swabian with ...?
   5=considerable, 4=some, 3=don’t know, 2=not much, 1=none
4-3. **Swabian with Neighbors**: Do you speak Swabian with ...?
   5=considerable, 4=some, 3=don’t know, 2=not much, 1=none
4-4. **Swabian with Others**: Do you speak Swabian with ...?
   5=considerable, 4=some, 3=don’t know, 2=not much, 1=none
Positive SOI Examples

Annelise-1982:
e echter Schwââb isch ôifach so ôiner, der sich als Schwââb fühlts.
‘a real Schwab is simply someone who feels like a Schwab.’

Louise-2017:
i bin e Schwââb und bleib ôiner.
‘I’m a Schwab and will stay one.’
Example of Changing SOI

Ricarda-1982:

die Annie zum Beispiel, derer gfällt s net, wenn i schwäbisch schwätz. es würd net zu mir passe. sie meint schweitzerisch oder österreichisch würd besser zu mir passe. des würd sich so lätschig anhöre.

‘Annie for example, doesn’t like it when I speak Swabian. It wouldn’t go with me. She thinks Swiss German or Austrian German would go better with me. [Swabian] would sound so slouchy.’
Swabian Mobility Index (SMI)

1. Residential Dispersion
2. Residential Distance
3. Workplace Dispersion
4. Workplace Distance
Dialect Density

- Greater loss of morpho-syntactic variables than phonological ones
- Greater diversity in use of dialect variants in 2017
- Two speakers show retrograde movement
Dialect Change Over the Years

Dialect Use in 2017
Attrition since 1982

PANEL STUDY (20 speakers)
## Dialect Change: Year + Sex + Orientation

**PANEL STUDY (20 speakers)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>spkrs</th>
<th>lodds</th>
<th>prob</th>
<th>diff</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Low (mean 3.5)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.6158</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High (mean 4.2)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.1917</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Low (mean 3.5)</td>
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<td>-0.2522</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High (mean 4.2)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-0.0590</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Low (mean 3.0)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-1.7768</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High (mean 4.2)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.6450</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Low (mean 3.1)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-1.3245</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High (mean 4.2)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0.6757</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
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</table>
Swabian Orientation

• For the men, there is strong positive correlation between Swabian Orientation and dialect usage

• For the women, Swabian Orientation is a less important factor in dialect usage
Workplace Mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Mobility</th>
<th>spkrs</th>
<th>lodds</th>
<th>prob</th>
<th>diff</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-0.3459</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>-5.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-0.1234</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Low (mean 2.1)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-1.2907</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>-2.2%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High (mean 3.5)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-1.4274</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Low (mean 1.7)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0.7078</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>-11.3%</td>
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<td>High (mean 3.5)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-1.2844</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
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</table>
Some Ethnographic Insights

• **Opposing World Views**
  —Rupert, Ph.D. sociologist, consultant and author, living in Tübingen – 17% DDM attrition
  —Jurgen, school director and teacher, living in northern Germany – 10% DDM attrition

• **Differing Identities**
  —Ricarda, local kindergarten teacher, living in suburbs around Stuttgart – 23% DDM attrition
  —Elke, local kindergarten teacher, living in small town near Gmünd – 3% DDM attrition

• **Changing Mobilities**
  —Markus, marketing manager for an IT company in Munich – 35% DDM attrition
  —Annelise, medical doctor, now living and working in Zurich – 19% DDM attrition

*DDM = Dialect Density Measure*
### Trend Study Participants

#### Stuttgart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording Year / Generation / Age</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Abitur</td>
<td>+ Abitur</td>
<td>- Abitur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982 Gen1 30 - 60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982 Gen2 &lt; 30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Gen3 &gt; 60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Gen4 30 - 60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Gen5 &lt; 30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Schwäbisch Gmünd

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording Year / Generation / Age</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Abitur</td>
<td>+ Abitur</td>
<td>- Abitur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982 Gen1 30 - 60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982 Gen2 &lt; 30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Gen3 &gt; 60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Gen4 30 - 60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Gen5 &lt; 30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Men**
- Abitur: 43
- + Abitur: 58%

**Women**
- Abitur: 27
- + Abitur: 57
- 47%

(100 speakers)
Dialect Density Measure (DDM)

TREND STUDY
(100 speakers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gen 1</th>
<th>Gen 2</th>
<th>Gen 3</th>
<th>Gen 4</th>
<th>Gen 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>30-60</td>
<td>&lt;30</td>
<td>&gt;60</td>
<td>30-60</td>
<td>&lt;30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=104,014
–st Palatalisation (syllable coda position)

TREND STUDY
(100 speakers)

n=19,057
–st Palatalisation for Six Common Verbs

TREND STUDY
(100 speakers)

* bisch~bist, hasch~hast, kannsch~kannst, mussch~mußt, weisch~weißt, willsch~willst

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gen1</th>
<th>Gen2</th>
<th>Gen3</th>
<th>Gen4</th>
<th>Gen5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>30 - 60</td>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>&gt; 60</td>
<td>30 - 60</td>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>n=1,410</td>
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</table>
Shifting of ai Diphthong (AIS1)

TRENDS STUDY
(100 speakers)

n=15,712
In Summary

• **Dialect attrition** is occurring in Swabia but is driven or inhibited by factors such as orientation, mobility, education, prestige and stigma.

• **German urban/rural divide** is ever-present and becoming even more prominent.

• **Gender Effect** can be seen in how differently men and women respond to indices of orientation and mobility.

• **Panel and Trend Studies** provide differing and complementary insights into language change.
Thank you!

**SPECIAL THANKS TO:**
Peter Auer, Jenny Cheshire, James Garrett, Gregory Guy

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