In trend studies we normally find that language changes over time. On the individual level, though, tendencies may vary considerably. Panel studies enable us to see what happens with a person’s language in real time. Previous studies (in apparent time) have indicated that geographic stability in a person’s life is important when it comes to explaining dialectal stability. Mats Thelander has investigated different factors that can influence language change among 24 movers from Västerbotten in the North to Eskilstuna in the Central part of Sweden (Thelander 1985). In Norway Helge Omdal has made a study of 24 migrants from rural Setesdal to the urban Kristiansand. He concludes that their main strategy is to exchange their local forms for general forms of the region instead of picking up the language forms in the city of Kristiansand (Omdal 1994: 220).

Do people who continue living in the same locality change their language less than those who have moved to another locality, or have such differences already appeared when they were adolescents? According to Malene Monka’s Phd panel study in three localities in Denmark, those who end up moving socially and geographically as grownups, are already the ones using less dialectal forms in their childhood (Monka 2010).

In this paper I will especially look at two informants from a suburb of Bergen called Ytre Arna, but two other suburbs of Bergen will be valuable for comparison. In 1978/79 an extensive project was carried through where 14-15-year olds in eight suburbs of Bergen were tape-recorded. One generation later in 2010/11 eight of the same informants from three of these suburbs were interviewed again. They were now grownups and in the middle of their forties. The suburbs were: Fana (Nesttun): 3 (Where 2 of them still lived in the same suburb), Bergen (Bergenhus): 3 (where none of them still lived in the same suburb) and Arna (Ytre Arna): 2 (where 2 of them still lived in the same suburb).

In the beginning of the 20th century, Ytre Arna was the biggest community in Hordaland outside Bergen (Mikkelsen 1996: 11). It was an industrialized and complete society with Arne Factories as the ruling point. Until the mid-1960’s Ytre Arna had 1200 people working in these factories. Now Ytre Arna is more like an isolated suburb stuck between the two bigger suburbs and the centres of Indre Arna and Åsane. Although Ytre Arna is a suburb of Bergen, the dialect here traditionally has more in common with the local dialects in the rural northern parts of Hordaland.

My first hypothesis is:

1) Those who continue living in the same locality as grownups, will already as children have more local forms than those moving from the locality.

My second hypothesis is:

2) Those who are part of a local family and have a stable social network in the locality tend more than others to continue living in the same locality as grownups.
References