

University study is the talk of Buckie

Speech: Investigation into 'dual linguistic identity'

BY KAYE NICOLSON

A research project on regional dialects is being launched with the help of a Moray town.

Academics from Glasgow University will visit Buckie to investigate the growth of "bidialectalism" and look at what it will mean to the future of linguistics in Scotland.

They want to find out why increasing numbers of people have developed a "dual linguistic identity".

Previous studies have shown that people in smaller communities develop a local dialect - used among members of the same community - but also a more formal standard dialect that is used when talking to "outsiders".

It is thought the phenomenon may be particularly prevalent in younger generations.

At Buckie, the team will measure the speech patterns of three generations of residents, aged 15 to 80.

Subjects will be interviewed twice, first by a native speaker of the dialect and then by someone with no ties to the area.

The team wants to know whether there are changes in patterns of bidialectalism over the three generations.

Principal investigator Jennifer Smith said: "We are investigating one community, Buckie, which has a highly specialised dialect.

"This local dialect is used the majority of the time when talking to other community members and, indeed, speaking 'posh' is a big no-no within the community.

"However, speakers do use a more standard variety in certain situations, such as in school and talking to

outsiders. This ability to switch between local and standard is particularly noticeable among the younger generations, but the question is where, when and how do speakers switch?"

"Can all speakers switch fluently or does it depend on the individual person? Do certain situations make people switch more than others? Do speakers switch words, sounds and grammar or only certain parts of the language?"

"We're hoping this will help us learn how our language is evolving, and what to expect in the future."

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Your say: Do you speak differently depending on who you speak to?



"I try to speak a bit slower and with less of an accent when I'm

with people who aren't local, but I can feel it come back when I'm chatting away.

Aileen Ayres, 49,
catering assistant,
Buckie.



"When I moved here from England I struggled with Doric and

people would try to slow down. Now my ears have tuned into it, although the girls at work do like to throw in the odd obscure word now and again."

Debbie Lake, 52,
catering assistant,
Garmouth.



"I don't think people speak in a strong dialect up here

unless they are from a fishing background.

"I'm from Glasgow and when I first moved to Lossiemouth I struggled, but I learned to understand people."

Gavin Russell, 63,
retired worker, Buckie.



"I think everyone tones down their accent when they

are with people who aren't local.

"When my wife first came up here she had to ask my mother what people were on about."

Bill Ferguson, 71, retired
teacher, Banff.



HEAR THIS: Speaking "posh" is frowned on in Buckie – and rightly so, says Doric champion Robbie Shepherd