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Article

Changing times, changing perceptions? A perceptual dialectology case study of a Scottish community in flux

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Abstract

According to census data, the North-East of Scotland is one of the strongholds of the Scots language. However, its "Doric" dialect is undergoing change, with linguistic studies reporting a loss of traditional dialect features. This article focuses on Inverurie—a town whose population has increased almost threefold since the 1950s as it has become an important commuter hub for Aberdeen.

By comparing perceptions of older and younger speakers, the results of this study support accounts of a shift away from the region's distinctive dialect, observed through weakening of the perceived urban/rural divide, youngsters' lack of identification with traditional identity labels, and —most importantly—differing accuracy rates when geographically placing a speech sample from an older resident. Conversely, the fact that such results are not found among youngsters surveyed in some other North-East communities suggests that linguistic change may be afoot at different paces in different parts of the region.

Keywords: Scots language; Doric dialect; dialect attrition; perceptual dialectology; mental mapping; speaker evaluation

1. Introduction

One of the key themes emerging from sociolinguistic research in Britain in recent decades has been the attrition of local, traditional dialect features. From the work of Smith & Durham (2011) in Shetland, to the findings of Jansen (2018) close to the Scottish/English border, to that of Piercy (2007) in the southwest of England (to name but a few), loss of regional distinctiveness has been widely observed. In some places, this has manifested itself via *dialect levelling*—the process whereby regionally specific dialect features decline and are replaced by supralocal non-standard variants. In others, the loss of regional distinctiveness has proved indicative more of a slide towards the "standard" as *dialect attrition* occurs among speakers and the community shifts away from their traditionally local variety.

However, evidence regarding the loss of dialectal diversity does not have to be limited to production data. The field of *language regard*, which investigates speakers' attitudes and perceptions towards language variation, can also offer insight into ongoing change. For instance, in "new and old towns" in England, Kerswill & Williams' (2002) employment of a dialect recognition task uncovered the effects of rapid change and linguistic discontinuity on speakers' ability to place recorded examples of local varieties, concluding that "dialect recognition … has a complex, but nonetheless investigable, relationship with other sociolinguistic processes, including dialect levelling and other forms of language change" (2002:202).

Taking its lead from such observations, this article examines perceptions of speech in the Garioch—an area of Aberdeenshire in Scotland which has undergone significant demographic and social change in the last half century. The present study relies on the conceptual framework of "focusing" posited by Kerswill & Williams (2002) in the abovementioned study as a means for understanding this "discontinuity." This draws upon the foundational work of Le Page (1980): in short, a "focused" community is one with relative linguistic stability which demonstrates limited signs of variation and in which change is slow; at the other end of the spectrum, "diffuse" communities are characterized by less settled social structures—as a result, for example, of extensive immigration or social upheaval. The hypothesis, borne out in the work of Kerswill & Williams (2002), is that people from more "focused" communities are more likely to recognize and be able to identify local voices than those from "diffuse" ones.

By presenting data gathered using perceptual dialectology methods, I will propose that the Garioch offers a case study in which similar findings can be observed. By employing perceptual dialectology methods, this article will query whether speakers' perceptions of variation can be used to corroborate the documented linguistic evidence that suggests speakers may be shifting away from the traditional local dialect, and to illuminate possible further avenues for sociolinguistic research.

2. Context: the Garioch

2.1. Geography and demography

The Garioch (pronounced [giri]) is an area of Aberdeenshire in the North-East of Scotland which centers on the town of Inverurie.

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From center to center, Inverurie sits 26 kilometers to the northwest of the city of Aberdeen (or around 17 km to the city's edge).

Owing to its location, Inverurie has historically been part of the rural agricultural sphere of North-East life and thus previously relatively insular: it was described in the eighteenth century by a passing Bishop as a "poor village" (Pococke, 1887:200). This was followed by a period of industrialization from the late nineteenth century onwards, when Inverurie became a prominent "railway town" due to the establishment of a thriving locomotive works that employed a significant portion of the working-age male population. However, the works closed in 1969 and, in what turned out to be a timely transition, their demise overlapped with an economic development which heralded a new chapter: not just for Inverurie's prospects, but for the North-East as a whole.

With the bringing ashore of North Sea oil, the mid-1970s saw two oil- and gas-related companies per week opening in Aberdeen, and, by the mid-1990s, 60% of all employment in the city was oil-related (Tiesdell & Allmendinger, 2004:174). Such rapid expansion of industry required a workforce and led to a mass influx of workers from many other parts of the English-speaking world and elsewhere, many of whom set down roots in the North-East and have remained there since (Millar, 2007:9). The effects of the oil industry did not just apply to Aberdeen city itself but radiated out into nearby Aberdeenshire. For satellite towns, being within commuter distance of Aberdeen was key; in the 1980s and 1990s, the former local authority district of Gordon, of which Inverurie is a part, was the fastest growing commuter area in the whole of Scotland (Blaikie, 2000:59).

Inverurie now has a population of almost fifteen thousand people (Aberdeenshire Council 2023). This represents a 174% population increase since 1971; for comparison, the increase for the previous fifty-year period (1921–1971) was only 22%—still a sizeable increase, but nothing compared to the demographic boom experienced by the town in the last half-century (GB Historical GIS, 2023). The demographic composition of the town has also been changing as such an increase in population has not been internally generated; in-migration to the town has played a significant part in this expansion—much of it due to people moving to Inverurie from other parts of the region, but also due to people moving to the town from further afield. This is evident in the intense activity of housing developers in Inverurie over the last few decades, expanding the size of the town year after year despite concerns from residents about struggling road infrastructure and over-subscribed schools and health services (Buchan, 2025). This has resulted in the creation of many new neighborhoods which may contain a mix of people with family roots in Inverurie and those with roots elsewhere.

Currently, around a quarter of Inverurie's working-age population make a daily commute into Aberdeen (Aberdeenshire Council, 2023; USP, 2018), confirming a strong interconnectedness between the city and the town. This interconnectedness also extends to other practicalities in Inverurie residents' day-to-day lives: in terms of retail, for instance, Aberdeen is home to most of the "big shops" for those in the wider region, making it necessary to travel into the city to buy certain items; regarding leisure-time, it is where people must travel to access the area's larger entertainment venues such as cinemas, theatres, concert venues, and so on; when it comes to local affiliations such as football support, Aberdeen FC has always had a significant following in the Shire as the North-East's only Premier League team and fans regularly travel into the city for matches; and, regarding necessities such as hospital care, accessing higher education, and connecting to transport networks to take one beyond the region, Aberdeen is also the central hub for such things. Compared to some other further-removed parts of the North-East and compared to previous generations in the town itself, Aberdeen is arguably more "on the doorstep" for present-day Inverurie residents, with well-timetabled public transport links and a driving journey time of around only twenty minutes (thanks to the dual carriageway developments of the 1980s and 1990s).

2.2. Linguistic history: "Doric" and the Scots/SSE continuum

While social and demographic change is clearly evident, the North-East of Scotland also has an interesting linguistic background. Although Gaelic was once spoken in the North-East, since the fourteenth century onwards, it has been regarded most commonly as a Scots-speaking region (McClure, 2002:9). Scots is a Germanic language, descended from Old English, and a close relative of modern English, although the two languages developed via slightly different linguistic journeys resulting in key differences between the two varieties. The dialect of Scots spoken in the North-East corner of Scotland is commonly referred to as "the Doric." The etymology of this label results from terminological transference relating to the "Doric" Greek dialect of Sparta being associated with notions of rurality and pastoralness (as opposed to the "Attic" dialect of Athens): this borrowed concept—although previously used more widely in Britain—is now employed almost exclusively to refer the dialect of the North-East. This is a dialect label which has real cultural currency in the region with most speakers opting to describe the variety as "Doric" rather than "(North-East) Scots" (Leslie, 2021).

In terms of a linguistic description of the dialect, North-East Scots shares many features with other varieties of Scots (Millar, 2018). It does, however, contain some features which make it distinctive: the most notable is the <wh> to /f/ distinction in which 'what, where, when, who, etc.' are realized as 'fit, far, fan, fa, etc.'. Certain vowel sounds also mark out the North-East dialect as distinct to many other regional varieties of Scots, such as "[u] words" like *moon*, *spoon*, *roof*, and *boot* featuring an [i] vowel, e.g. /min/, /spin/, /rif/, /bit/. Negation differs slightly in that, while most other Scots dialects employ the enclitic particle '-nae' and standalone 'no' (e.g. 'I dinnae ken' and 'I'm no goin'), North-East speakers use '-na' and 'nae' (e.g. 'I dinna ken' and 'I'm nae goin'). In many cases, the North-East also serves as a relic area for Scots features no longer heard elsewhere: for example, the common North-East word *quine/quean* (meaning 'girl/young woman') once had much wider currency, as evidenced by its appearance in the literary works of Ramsay (Lanarkshire), Hogg (Selkirkshire), and Burns (Ayrshire): however, the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (DSL) now notes that "outside North-East Scotland and Angus, where the form *quine* is universal, the word is obsolescent or obsolete."

In terms of the prevalence of Scots within communities, according to the 2022 census results, across Scotland, over 1.5 million people identified themselves as Scots speakers (almost a third of the population). The results of the census confirm the North-East as one of the Scots strongholds in terms of the concentration of speakers. In Aberdeenshire, 64% of residents reported having Scots skills—the highest in Scotland (in terms of percentage of the population).

The reality, however, is that speakers in the North-East (and indeed across Scotland) do not neatly switch between speaking Scots and English in the same way that someone might, for instance, switch between languages such as English and French.

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Rather, it is often posited that speakers operate on a continuum: one which has Scots in its densest form at one end, and Scottish Standard English (SSE)—essentially English with a Scottish accent and some Scotticisms—at the other. Millar (2018:3) proposes that speakers "commute" up and down this continuum daily, altering their speech depending on contextual factors. Therefore, although 64% of residents in Aberdeenshire identify as Scots speakers, there will inevitably be different levels of linguistic conservatism within the speech community, with some speakers spending more time in different parts of the "continuum" than others.

2.3. Sociolinguistic study in the Garioch

While the features of the traditional dialect of the Garioch (and the wider North-East) are well documented (most recently by McClure, 2002, and Millar, 2007), up-to-date sociolinguistic study of the immediate area has been sparse.

Further afield than the Garioch, certain parts of the North-East have received greater sociolinguistic attention: most notably, Smith's extensive work in the town of Buckie up on the Moray Firth has provided a valuable overview of language use in this coastal community and yielded complex results, ranging from relatively stable usage of some dialect features (such as the characteristic <wh> to /f/ forms) to a decline in other traditional usages (such as the velar fricative /x/ and past tense *-it* verb forms), as well as confirmation of supralocal features (such as glottalization) gaining momentum (Smith, 2000, 2005; Smith & Holmes-Elliott, 2017). Sticking to coastal communities, Millar, Barras & Bonnici's (2014) study of fisher lexis in towns and villages along the east coast of Scotland observed a gradual decline via a clear generational "knowledge gradient" of terms tied to the fishing industry, just as the communities themselves have also changed in terms of their demographic and economic profiles. In terms of the city of Aberdeen, Brato's (2016) sociophonetic study of the urban accent of Aberdeen reported that immigration has had a significant effect on the speech of urban Aberdonians, producing a variety which is distinct from those found in the rural hinterlands of Aberdeenshire and from the other main cities in Scotland. Through cross-generational comparison, Brato also observed a decline in traditional variants. One variant which exemplifies this is the "rapid loss" of the characteristic Doric /f/ (in <wh> contexts) among his Aberdeen informants; instead, Brato (2014) reports a "merger loss" in which speakers in older generations have been moving towards supraregional [ʍ] while younger generations have "bypassed" this on their way to use of innovative [w]. This contrasts with the stable /f/ usage reported by Smith in Buckie (around 100 km northwest of Aberdeen) mentioned earlier in this section. Elsewhere, in rural Aberdeenshire, Marshall's (2003, 2004) work in the town of Huntly, about 36 km north of Inverurie, gauged speaker loyalty towards the local rural community via a "mental urbanization index" and linked low scores to retention of traditional dialect features. In general, though, younger speakers in Huntly identified with their local community less strongly than their older neighbors: a finding which was accompanied by a decline in local variants. However, the results were not uniform across the younger speaker cohort, with Marshall suggesting that the variability and instability within these findings may be indicative of change in progress.

While these studies suggest some evidence of ongoing shift in certain North-East locations, only one sociolinguistic study has focused specifically on Inverurie and the Garioch area to date and, even then, it examined a fairly limited set of features. McRae's (2006) study of the demonstrative paradigm found that older speakers were more likely to produce the traditional North-East Scots variants (*this* and *that*) while younger speakers tended to use the more standard (*these* and *those*) or supralocal non-standard options (such as pan-dialectal *them*). McRae concludes that such results can be presented as indicative of dialect attrition or levelling, i.e. when a reduction in variation between dialects can be observed, resulting in a loss of local distinctiveness. It is also worth noting that nineteen years have elapsed since McRae's study and it can be reasonably expected that change within the speech community may have progressed even further in the interceding period.

Based on the Garioch-focused sociolinguistic findings of McRae (2006), this article aims to explore the following question: If dialect attrition is suspected to be underway in the area, can this also be observed using perceptual data? To investigate this, perceptual data gathered from Garioch-based youngsters will be compared with those of older residents to check for any evidence of perceptual discontinuity across the different generations; furthermore, their results will be compared with those of other adolescents from other parts of the North-East (including places which may not have experienced the same increasing "interconnectedness" with Aberdeen as discussed earlier) to explore whether a suspected loss of dialect distinctiveness can be observed uniformly across the region.

3. Methods

The methodology of this study is based in the field of perceptual dialectology (PD), which focuses on collecting and analyzing non-linguists' perceptions of language variation and change. PD research is acutely speaker-focused and can provide a complementary, and sometimes differing, perspective to linguistic accounts of language variation which can help "'fill the gaps' in linguists' understanding of how language works" (Montgomery & Beal, 2011:121). Using methods from the field of PD, the present study seeks to bolster existing sociolinguistic knowledge of the Garioch region (although scarce) by analyzing whether a hypothesis of an ongoing shift away from the local dialect towards SSE can be supported by perceptual evidence.

To collect this evidence, this study has deployed an adapted version of Preston's (1999) five-point methodology. Many (if not most) PD studies only employ a selection of these data collection methods; however, the present study has employed all five approaches to gather as much evidence as possible and provide opportunities for triangulation of results.

The tasks in this study were conducted in the following order.

1. A **hand-drawn map task**, in which participants annotate a map of a specific area with their classifications and evaluations of different speech areas. In this study, each individual participant was supplied with a blank paper map of the North-East of Scotland to annotate. This was the first task to be completed, before any places had been mentioned or speaker samples introduced, so that participants' unprompted perceptions of regional variation could be captured.
2. A **degree-of-difference task**,[1] in which participants rate other population centers based on how "similar" or "different" they consider speakers from those places as sounding compared to themselves. For this, the twelve largest population centers in Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire were listed.

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3. A **place-rating task**, in which participants again rate population centers but, this time, based on other evaluative scales. In this study, ratings of *pleasantness*, *comprehensibility*, and *Doricness* were sought.
4. A **speaker placement and evaluation task**, in which participants listen to recorded samples of speech and attempt to geographically and evaluate the speaker based on several scales (for this study, this included *pleasantness*, *friendliness*, *educatedness*, *Doricness*, *rural/urban*-sounding). Various PD studies have employed many different types of scales for the place-rating and speaker-evaluation tasks, usually falling under the umbrellas of "solidarity" and "status." Regarding the scales used in this study, *pleasantness* and *friendliness* are closest to being markers of "solidarity" while *educatedness* links more clearly to "status"-based evaluations of speakers. *Doricness* and *rural/urban*-sounding were included as additional scales reflective of the local context being explored. In terms of speech samples, five one-minute excerpts of uninterrupted conversational speech (clipped from longer interviews) were collected from male, middle-aged speakers from different parts of the North-East region (one from Aberdeen City, one from the Garioch, one from the Buchan coast, one from Moray, and one from Angus). Participants were played each clip twice and asked to place what they had heard on a blank map of the region and complete the set of evaluative scales for each speaker.
5. **Open-ended discussion**, in which participants are encouraged to give more lengthy answers to questions arising from the study. For this study, open-ended questions were asked about whether or not participants felt North-East speech is different to that of the rest of Scotland, whether or not they felt the way people in the North-East talk is changing, and the perceived advantages and disadvantages or speaking in the local dialect.

The survey was deployed through a series of face-to-face group sessions. 320 respondents were surveyed across fourteen different North-East locations. These can be broadly grouped as shown in Table 1.

These informants can be divided into two age groups: younger speakers (adolescents) aged 14–18 and older speakers (aged 60 and over). This article will focus mainly on the comparative results of younger ($n = 26$) and older speakers ($n = 25$) surveyed in the Inverurie area (the center of what is referred to as "the Garioch"), although findings from other groups of adolescents in different parts of the region will also be offered as counterpoints to the Inverurie data.

4. Results

There are two main areas of findings pertinent to the aforementioned research question: those where the younger Inverurie (Garioch) informants differ in their responses to their older counterparts in the Garioch (i.e. instances where we can see some sort of generational difference within this specific community); and, also, instances where the Inverurie adolescents differ from adolescents in other North-East locations (i.e. variation within the younger age group according to place). These differences will be explored by examining selected results from all five perceptual survey tasks.

Table 1. The fourteen North-East locations used in the survey

Survey locations	No. of participants
Aberdeen City (Kincorth, Dyce, Hazlehead)	58
Garioch (Inverurie, Logie Durno, Fetternear) and Oldmeldrum	61
Strathdon (Alford)	35
South Aberdeenshire (Muchalls)	21
NE-coastal Aberdeenshire (Newburgh, Peterhead, Banff)	89
Moray (Elgin, Duffus)	56

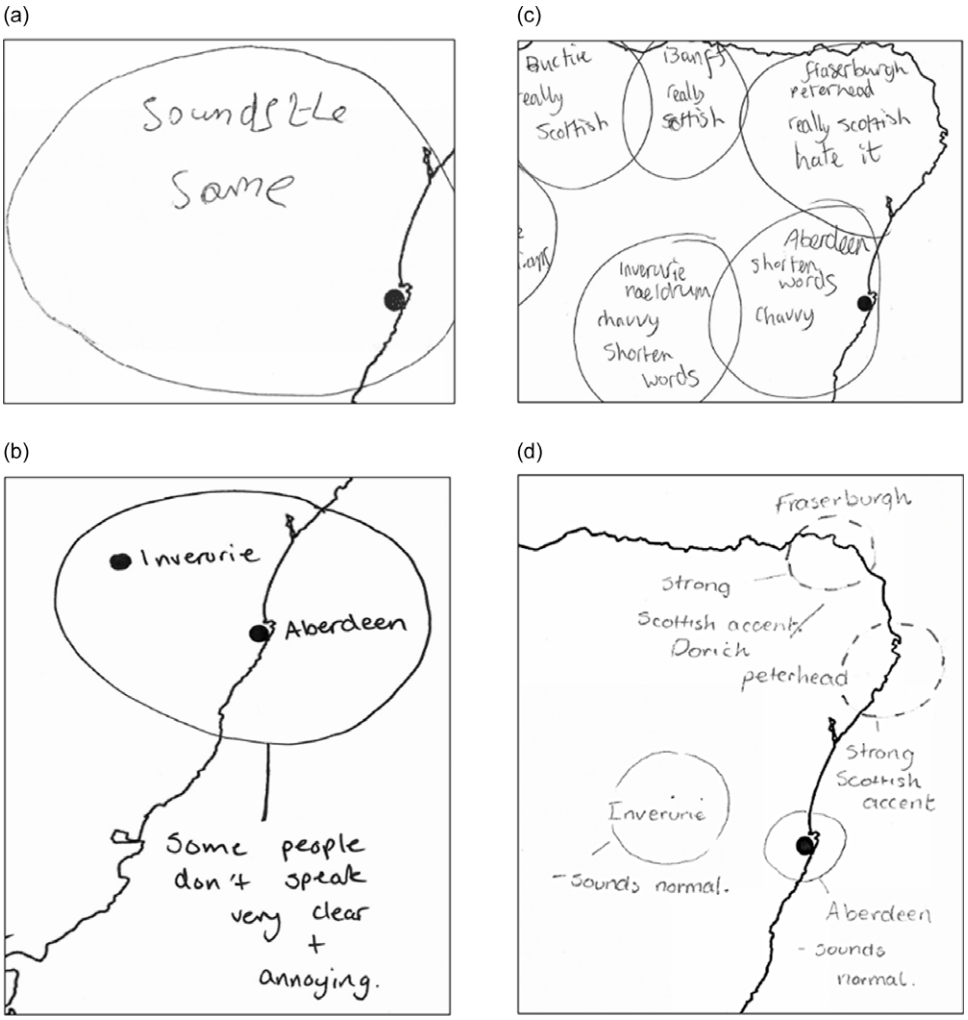
4.1. Map data

With the hand-drawn map task, there is inevitably some variation between individual maps as some participants engage more with the task and provide many annotations, whereas others may be sparser in their contributions. However, there are instances where groups of informants produce certain trends not observed in the maps created by comparable cohorts. For example, in 38% of North-East maps from Inverurie adolescents (i.e. ten out of 26 maps), Inverurie and Aberdeen were drawn as somehow connected to each other—whether through a shared boundary, a shared description, or a shared label. Maps 1**(a)**–1**(d)** show examples of this.

Map 1**(a)** offers the most simplistic rendering of this perceptual connection: here, the Inverurie youngster has geographically lumped together Aberdeen and a good portion of its commuter belt (including Inverurie) as "sounds the same." In Map 1**(b)**, a boundary is drawn which encapsulates both Inverurie and Aberdeen, accompanied by a pejorative comment regarding the apparent unclarity of speech found in these places and the fact that the informant considers some speakers to be "annoying." This prescriptive commentary is echoed by the respondent in Map 1**(c)** who describes both places as home to "chavvy" speakers who "shorten words." In the latter example in particular, the rural/urban divide that we might expect between Inverurie and Aberdeen is not present. However, a divide is emphasized between Inverurie/Aberdeen and the Buchan towns of Fraserburgh and Peterhead, as well as other coastal locations, which are associated (often negatively) with more conservative dialect speakers, both here and across the wider study.

The informant who produced Map 1**(d)** also chooses to make a distinction between the perceived "normal" speech found in Inverurie and Aberdeen versus the "strong" Doric/Scottish accents found in the Buchan corner. Apart from the "othering" of the Buchan corner, the "normal" label is an interesting one and appeared on the maps of two other Inverurie adolescents as well as in this one. In North America, Hartley & Preston (1999:229) found similar results where several Michigan informants labeled their own home area as "normal" with the researchers choosing to consider such evaluations under the umbrella of "standardness." Evans (2016:67) also reported speakers in Washington state labeling their home area as "normal," suggesting "they are unaware of the perceptions of their own region as non-standard." In this sense, descriptions of both Aberdeen and Inverurie as "sounding the same" and "sounding normal" as opposed to the distinctly "Scottish" varieties still being perceived by these informants in

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Map 1 (a–d). Four examples of hand-drawn maps by Inverurie youngsters.

other places such as Fraserburgh and Peterhead may be our first hint towards some sort of linguistic levelling. Considered together, these examples suggest a growing sense among some youngsters of Inverurie as part of the urban or, at least, as somehow sharing an identity with speakers from Aberdeen.

Notably, this did not occur in any of 25 hand-drawn maps of the North-East produced by the older (60 year old+) Garioch informants. Instead, many of these older participants were more likely to mark some sort of distinction between the speech of Inverurie (or Aberdeenshire) and the speech of Aberdeen, the city, with such a division appearing in over a third of their map returns. This suggests a stronger sense of urban/rural divide informing the linguistic perceptions of some of these older informants.

Maps 2**(a)**–2**(c)** offer examples of this. Map 2**(a)** references different "types" of "Doric": with "true" and "nearly" true Doric being spoken by "choochters" (a spelling variation of "teuchter," meaning someone from the countryside) and the type of "Toonser Doric" found in the city ("toonser" meaning a city-dweller). Map 2**(b)** marks Aberdeen as being "different from Aberdeenshire" while Map 2**(c)** provides a bit more detail with Aberdeenshire being assigned the "Doric" label (in a circular boundary which includes the Garioch) and Aberdeen city speakers described as having "less local words than Doric." In both Maps 2**(a)** and 2**(c)**, Aberdeen city is perceived as home to a less "true," less conservative, or less authentic form of Doric.

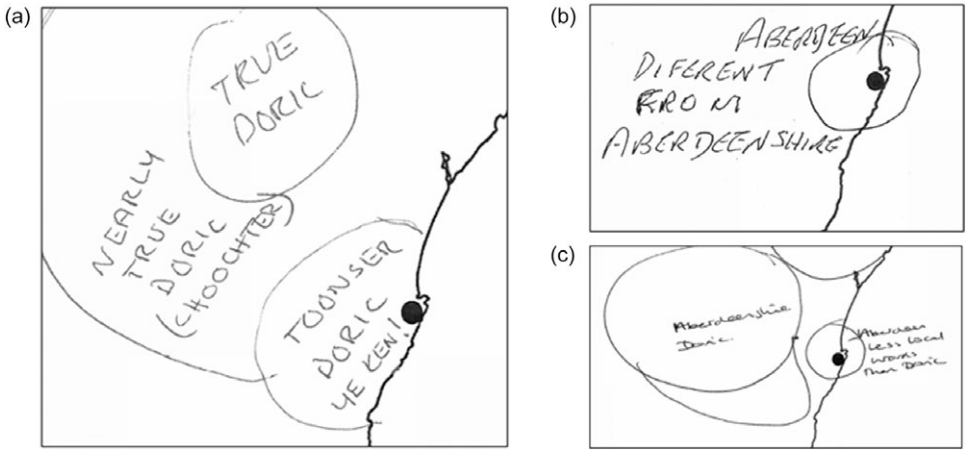
Such perceptions call upon the notion of "Toonser spik" (literally, "town speak"). "Toonser spik" is described by Millar (2007) as the urban vernacular of Aberdeen which, although undoubtedly a North-East variety, is influenced also by Central Belt dialects. McGarrity (1998:47) observes that "Toonser spik" is often looked down upon by those in the rural North-East, noting that "respondents identify the quintessential Doric but are not interested in being associated with the urban variety." In the data from the present study, this seems to hold true for some of the older informants, but not so much for the younger generation of speakers—many of whom are more eager to associate themselves with the speech of the city.

Therefore, when contrasted by age group, this perceptual map data seems to demonstrate a shift in which the "separateness" of an Inverurie/Garioch linguistic identity from the urban center of Aberdeen is lessening with time.

4.2. Degree-of-difference data

In the degree-of-difference task, at one end of the scale, the statement "People from this area sound exactly the same as people from my area" was offered and, at the other end, "People from this area sound very different to people from my area." Given that the North-East is considered part of the same "Mid-Northern" dialect area, it is not surprising that ratings clustered towards the bottom half of the scale in most cases (since deeming other people from the

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Map 2 (a–c). Three examples of hand-drawn maps by older Garioch informants.

region as "very different"-sounding is perhaps somewhat of a stretch); however, there are some small-scale variations observable between the results from different groups.

Across the region, it was observed that adolescents generally perceive intraregional difference slightly less keenly than their older counterparts (see Leslie, 2020:151–164 for a full breakdown of ratings from each location); that is, in most instances, the mean ratings for how "different sounding" other towns are to the informants' hometowns were higher among the older cohort than among the younger respondents. There were some anomalies to this pattern, but these were mostly due to hyperlocal rivalries between neighboring towns. Also, across all informant groups (young and old), the aforementioned towns of Peterhead and Fraserburgh were consistently ranked as the most "different"-sounding places, regardless of the location of the survey group. This is concurrent with previous findings in the map-task characterizing both towns as being strongly "Scottish"-sounding.

Returning to the issue discussed in the previous map results, one of the most relevant findings for this article's discussion of dialect levelling is the degree-of-difference ratings afforded by Aberdeenshire adolescents towards the city of Aberdeen. Despite both groups being from the same place, older and younger informants from Inverurie exhibit some variation in terms of how "different" they perceive the speech of nearby Aberdeen to be, as shown in Figure 1. These boxplots display a median difference rating for older Garioch informants of 30 (out of a maximum of 70), suggesting that they perceive Aberdeen speakers as somewhat different. In comparison, the median for younger Garioch informants is lower at 14, indicating that they find Aberdeen speakers more similar to themselves. In terms of the interquartile range (IQR), the older participants exhibit a wider IQR, spanning from around 10 to 40, meaning their perceptions of difference vary more, while the younger informants' scores have resulted in a more compressed IQR, suggesting more consistency in their responses. In terms of the range of the data, the range is larger for the older Garioch informants, with some responses reaching over 60; the younger Garioch participants also show some spread, but their upper range does not extend as far towards the "very different" end of the scale as that of the older group.

Among the younger groups surveyed in other parts of Aberdeenshire, the Inverurie adolescents also rated Aberdeen speech as the most similar-sounding to them. Figure 2 illustrates this, showing that, for the Inverurie youngsters, the median is relatively low (at 14), while the results for youngsters from

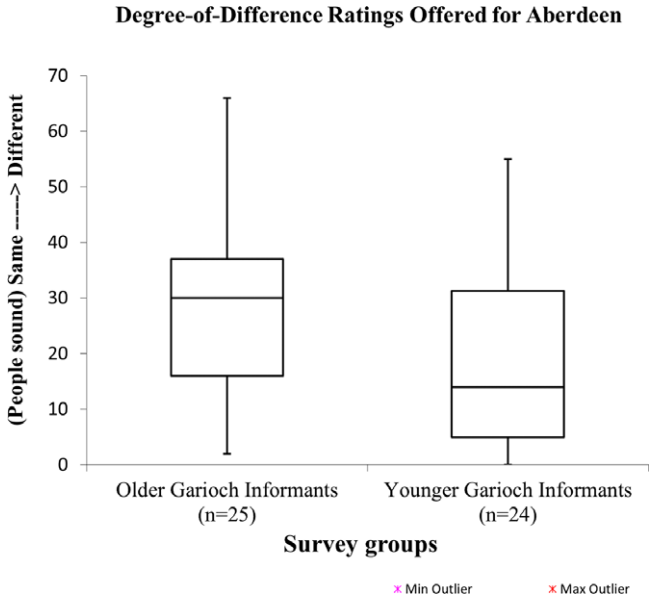


Figure 1. A comparison of older and younger Garioch informants' ratings regarding the "degree of difference" of perceived Aberdeen speech.

Peterhead, Alford, and Banff have higher median values (28, 33, and 36.5 respectively), indicating that these non-Inverurie respondents perceive greater differences between the speech of their own towns and that of Aberdeen. It should be noted, of course, that Inverurie is the geographically closest to Aberdeen of all the survey locations, so this result might be expected. That being said, as mentioned above, ratings of "similarity" did not always correlate with geographical closeness elsewhere in the data, with local tensions and socioeconomic differences often playing a part in resulting disparities; therefore, if youngsters in Inverurie had perceived a significant perceptual boundary between themselves and Aberdeen, the geographic closeness need not have been an automatic barrier to higher "difference" ratings. The absence of such ratings suggests that a perceptual town vs. city linguistic boundary is not keenly felt by these youngsters.

In summary, the "degree-of-difference" data provides another set of results in which younger Inverurie speakers appear to be more closely aligning themselves with the city of Aberdeen than both their older local counterparts and peer groups from other

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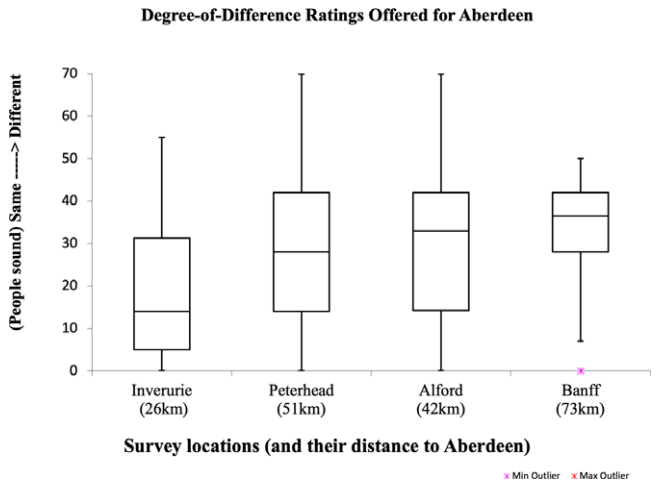


Figure 2. A comparison of younger Inverurie, Peterhead and Banff informants' ratings regarding the "degree of difference" of perceived Aberdeen speech.

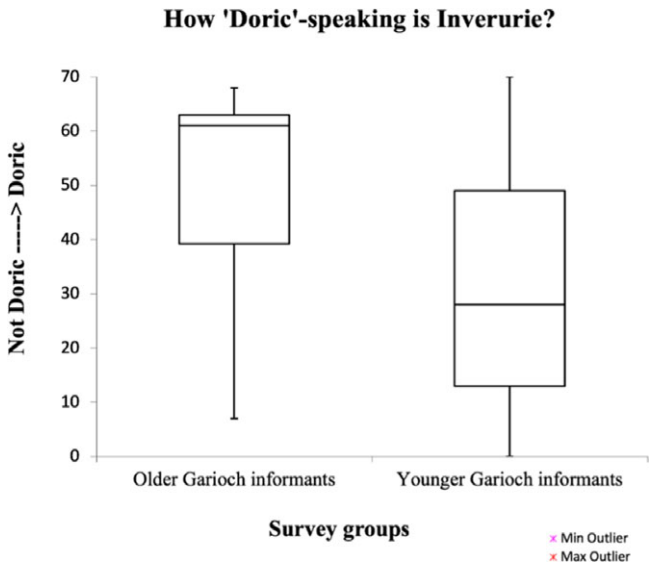


Figure 3. A comparison of older and younger Garioch informants' ratings regarding the "Doricness" of Inverurie.

parts of the region are inclined to, thus suggesting that Inverurie is being pulled somewhat into the city's orbit.

4.3. Rating places data

In the ratings part of the survey, the same twelve most-populous settlements were supplied, accompanied by Visual Analogue Scales with sets of bipolar adjectives. One of these evaluative scales asked participants to rate populous North-East places according to perceived "Doricness" (i.e. to place a mark on a scale from "Not Doric" to "Doric"). As mentioned previously, the dialect label "Doric" has considerable currency locally. Of particular interest here are the ratings offered by informants when asked to rate the "Doricness" of their own town: in this case, Inverurie.

Ultimately, the majority of the older Garioch informants agreed that Inverurie is a very Doric-speaking town; however, the adolescents were not so convinced of its Doric credentials. This is demonstrated in Figure 3, which shows not only a statistically significant difference in mean ratings (t-test, $p = .003$), but also a markedly different distribution of scores. This ratings data supplements the previous draw-a-map task findings: an age-related split in terms of how Inverurie is perceived linguistically by its residents can once again be observed.

Furthermore, once again, these Inverurie adolescents' responses also contrast with adolescents from elsewhere in the survey, and none more so than in these ratings of hometown "Doric-ness." Figure 4 compares the Inverurie adolescents' ratings with those supplied by adolescents in two other North-East survey locations. While Inverurie adolescents are lukewarm towards the "Doric" label, in the coastal towns of Peterhead and Banff, similarly aged informants rate their hometowns quite emphatically as "very Doric"; in fact, both sets of adolescents rated their own towns as the "most Doric" of the locations they were asked to evaluate, staking a claim for their communities as Doric strongholds. This strong sense of linguistic identity proves that a decreasing sense of "Doric" association cannot just be disregarded as a case of Doric identity no longer being relevant to younger generations, because it is not shown to be happening across the region: in certain places, there is still a strong sense of what it means to be a "Doric"-speaking place.

Surprisingly, this extended even to the city of Aberdeen itself where adolescents' identification with the "Doric" label was not as emphatic as in Peterhead or Banff, but still stronger than in

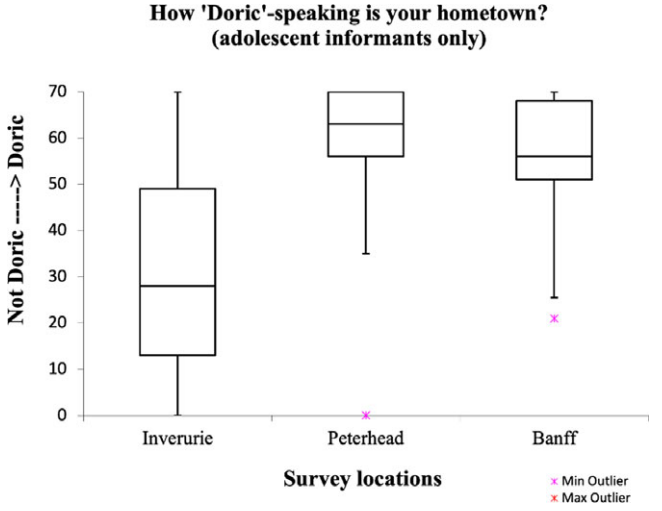


Figure 4. A comparison of younger Inverurie, Peterhead and Banff informants' ratings regarding the "Doricness" of their respective hometowns.

Inverurie. I have suggested elsewhere (see Leslie, 2021) that "Doric" may be gaining traction as a more general identity label rather than one which is purely linguistic, which may account for these higher results in Aberdeen, as teenagers come to equate "Doric" with a sense of localness. Either way, of all the adolescent groups surveyed, the Inverurie group emerge as the least "on board" with the idea of "Doric" identity, whether as a purely linguistic or broader cultural marker.

4.4. Speaker placement data

While the data discussed thus far has dealt with what could be thought of as "imagined language" (that is, it has examined speakers' perceptions when asked to call upon their "mind's ear" and offer evaluations based on their experience of variation), the next set of results consider informants' reactions when presented with recordings of actual speakers.

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As outlined earlier, participants were played five audio samples based on conversational snippets of speakers from across the North-East. For the relevance of this article, only one of those voices will be considered: that of the Garioch speaker. The Garioch speaker used in this study was a man in his late fifties from Inverurie itself who could be considered a fairly conservative speaker of the local dialect, but not uncommonly so for his demographic.

Participants listened to a one-minute excerpt in which he recounted a childhood accident (available in Audio file 1 and also transcribed in Leslie, 2020:68). From a linguistic viewpoint, as well as many general Scots features (such as the /u/ monophthong in words such as *doon*, *aboot*, *poorin*, and *noo*, or the use of *wis* for plural contexts), the speaker has several tokens of identifiably distinct North-East dialect features in his speech, including: total replacement of <wh> with /f/ (e.g. *fin* meaning 'when' and *fit* meaning 'what'); the omission of [g] in words with medial [ŋg] (specifically, in the word *youngest*); omission of word-initial [ð] in words like *this*, *them*, and *the*; the presence of the /a/ vowel in words such as *aa* ('all'), *snaa* ('snow'), and *gaan* ('going'), which would be *aw*, *snaw*, and *gaun* in many other dialects of Scots; the use of *bleed* as a noun rather than a verb (i.e. 'my chin wis poorin wi bleed'); and the negative enclitic particle *-na* in words such as *wisna* ('wasn't'), which would be *wisnae* in many other parts of Scotland. Compared against Millar's (2007) description of Northern Scots dialects, the excerpt fits comfortably within the "Mid-Northern A" subdialect area of which Inverurie is geographically a part.

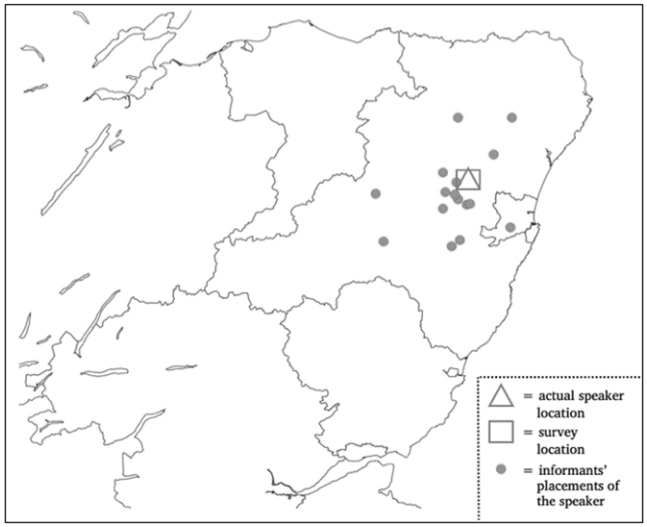
In terms of geographical placement of this speaker, the older Garioch informants are impressively accurate. Map 3 presents a raw summary of their placements, made by plotting their answers as points using QGIS mapping software.

While this provides an acceptable overview of the placements, it obscures several instances in which (mostly accurate) placements overlap each other. Therefore, for the purposes of observing such instances, the points have been transformed using the QGIS heatmap function which allows overlapping placements to be visualized as areas of more intense "heat." This is demonstrated in Map 4, which clearly shows a cluster of accurate placements around the town of Inverurie and is consistent with the slightly larger reach of the Garioch area.

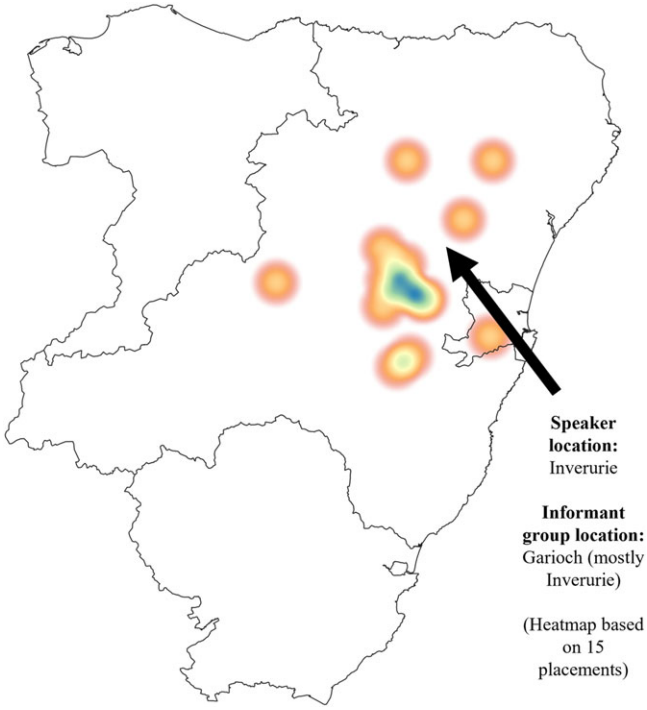
In such speaker placement tasks, a perfect degree of accuracy is somewhat unrealistic. However, when compared to other results from across the survey, the older Garioch informants' generalized placement of the Inverurie speaker is impressive: aside from the clear cluster of accurate placements in the general Garioch region, the other placements never stray too far from the speaker's actual location.

If this is then compared with the younger Inverurie informants' geographical placement of the speaker, a stark contrast is evident. As illustrated in Map 5, the Inverurie adolescents are largely uncertain about the origin of this speaker. A few have placed him with a degree of accuracy (accounting for the small Garioch-centered cluster), but most other respondents have him scattered all over the North-East, with some placing him as far away as Inverness or Dundee and beyond. To clarify: this is a middle-aged speaker from their own town, and yet most informants cannot place him with any degree of confidence.

As well as deviating from the responses of their older Garioch counterparts, this is also another instance in which the Inverurie youngsters do something different to their peers in other parts of the region. When examining speaker placements, Montgomery (2007:62) suggests that accuracy perhaps ought not to be the



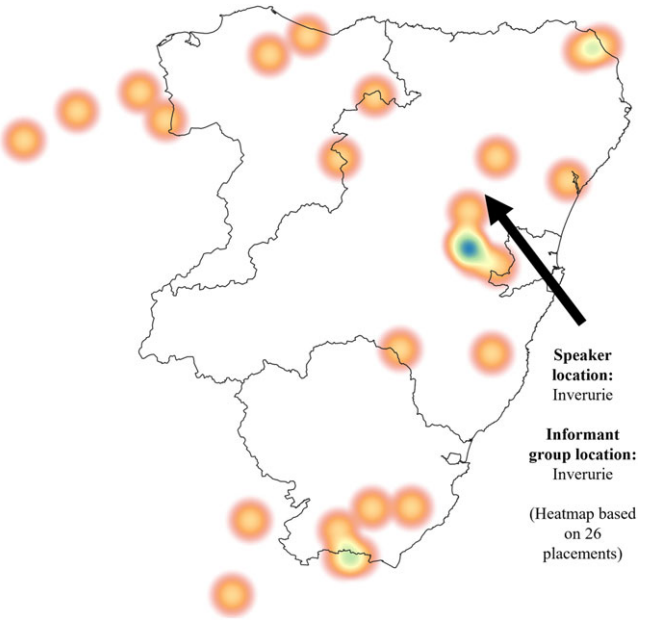
Map 3. A raw summary of older Garioch informants' geographical placements of the Inverurie speaker (based on 15 placements).



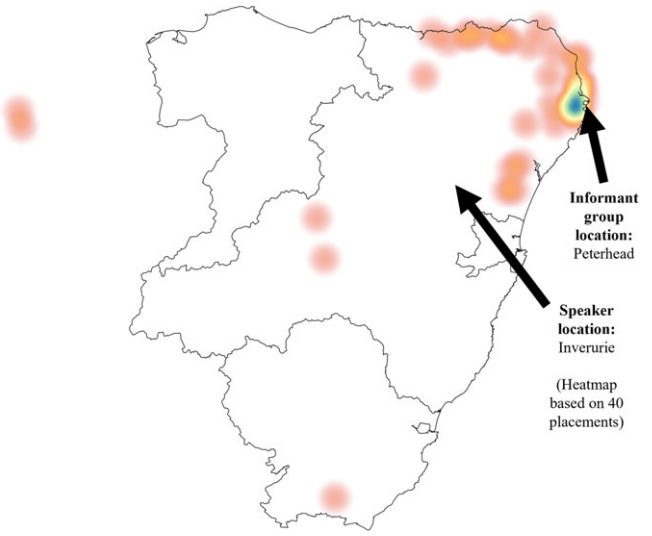
Map 4. A heatmap of older Garioch informants' placements of the Inverurie speaker.

"major concern" of such research given that "the matter at hand is perception, which for many is, in effect, reality." Therefore, even if their placements are inaccurate, it is prudent to be just as interested in where informants erroneously think a voice is from and how this links to their evaluations of both the speaker and the place in question. Closely linked to this is the phenomenon of "*claiming* and *denial*." This is the finding put forward by researchers such as Long (1999), Montgomery (2007), Coupland et al. (1999), and Williams & Kerswill (2014) that informants may place a speaker as closer to their "home area" if the speaker is thought upon favorably; conversely, a speaker may also be pushed away or placed somewhere undesirable if thought upon unfavorably for any reason.

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Map 5. A heatmap of younger Garioch informants' placements of the Inverurie speaker.



Map 6. A heatmap of younger Peterhead informants' placements of the Inverurie speaker.

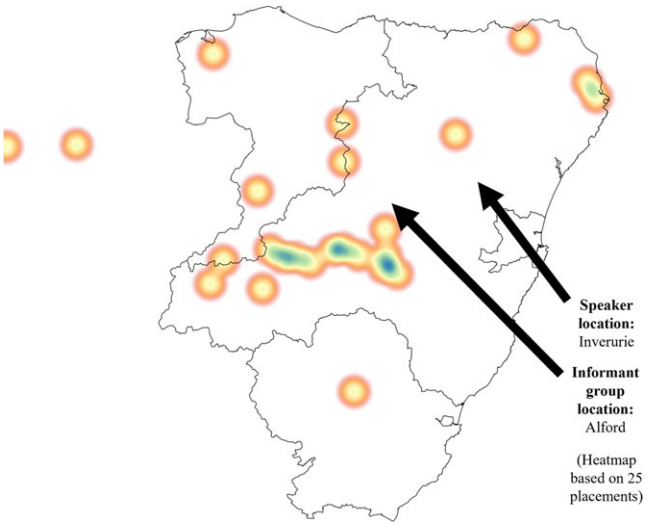
Considered through this lens, the majority of the younger Garioch informants can be thought of as "pushing away" the Inverurie speaker as being from somewhere else: his is not a voice that they perceive of as "local." On the other hand, youngsters from other parts of the North-East were found to do the opposite: many of them "claimed" him as being from their immediate area.

This is most clearly evident with the placements made by youngsters in Peterhead. Peterhead was mentioned previously in this article as a place which attracted perceptions of "distinctiveness" and "broadness" in the map-drawing part of the survey. With a rich history as a fishing (and formerly whaling) port, Peterhead is a town of considerable size (population approximately 18,500) and is currently the UK's largest fishing port. The town also has links to the oil industry in terms of businesses involved in oil-related support. Only around 9% of Peterhead's working-age population undertake a 50 km commute to Aberdeen for their main place of work, compared to approximately a quarter of working-age residents in Inverurie who make the equivalent journey into the city—although these figures may be affected by ongoing post-pandemic working-from-home arrangements (Aberdeenshire Council, 2023; USP, 2018). The unemployment rate in Peterhead sits at 3.4% (which is above the shared Aberdeenshire and Inverurie average of 1.9%) while the median household income is £29,032, compared to the Inverurie median of £38,910 (Aberdeenshire Council, 2023). Therefore, Peterhead presents an interesting comparison point to Inverurie: not just by being a town of considerable size, but also as an example of a place which has retained more of its localized industry while at the same time experiencing lower levels of general economic affluence. Geographically, Peterhead is also that bit further away from Aberdeen (50 km as opposed to Inverurie which is just 17 km from the city) which has prevented it from being pulled quite so much into the city's orbit as a "commuter" town.

In terms of geographical placement of the Inverurie speaker, the perceptions of the Peterhead adolescents present differently to those of the Inverurie cohort. Map 6 demonstrates these placements, presenting a clear cluster of responses focused predominantly on the town of Peterhead and radiating outwards along the coastal communities of the Buchan corner. Circling back to the description of the audio extract as a conservative example of the North-East dialect, this strong affinity with the speaker builds on the previous findings in which Peterhead youngsters marked out their own hometown as the "most Doric" place of all the locations they were asked to evaluate. Therefore, although their placements are technically inaccurate (the speaker was not from the Buchan coast), their "claiming" of him says something about how they perceive themselves.

This local "claiming" of the Inverurie speaker is also evident in the map placements of some Alford adolescents. Alford is a much smaller town which sits in the Howe of Alford—a flat area of land in the valley of the Upper River Don. Surrounded by good farming land, and as the home of the Aberdeen Angus cattle breed, Alford has a rich agricultural history. However, in recent times, a proliferation of new housing developments in Alford have catered for an increase in population (up 22.9% from 2006 to 2016) as the town expands. According to the Scottish Government-commissioned USP figures, just less than a quarter of all working-age people living in Alford make a daily commute to Aberdeen (Aberdeenshire Council, 2023; USP, 2018). However, the informants surveyed were adolescents attending the local secondary school, which means that they are not all strictly from the town of Alford itself. The academy has one of the largest catchment areas of any school in Aberdeenshire and stretches back along the course of the River Don almost 50 km westwards to the Lecht, reaching 778 m above sea level in the Eastern Cairngorms. In this respect, the Alford informants are drawn from an area which is both rural and, in some parts, very remote, and the highly concentrated cluster of placements evident to the west of Alford in Map 7 broadly matches the catchment area of the school. There are some dispersed placements of the speaker outside this area of concentration; however, this is not on the same scale observed in the placements made by the Inverurie adolescents. This signifies that, as in Peterhead, many of the younger Alford informants have also keenly identified with the conservative Inverurie speaker and have sought to "claim" him as local.

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Map 7. A heatmap of younger Alford informants' placements of the Inverurie speaker.

Notably, when it came to the rating of this speaker on several evaluative scales, the informants from all survey locations (Inverurie, included) rated him as characteristically more "Doric"-sounding than not. This suggests that adolescents across the North-East have a good sense of what it means to be a local dialect speaker but that, as shown by the placement maps from Peterhead and Alford, some are keener to identify their own communities as Doric-speaking places by claiming Doric-sounding voices as local to them. Contrastively, the Inverurie adolescents recognize this voice sample as belonging to a "Doric"-speaker but do not rush to place him as being from their community as a result.

In summary, these examples from the speaker placement task demonstrate, once again, that the Inverurie adolescents deviate from their peers in other parts of the region *and* from the older generation in their own town. When combined with generalized agreement that the speech sample can be considered as distinctively "Doric"-sounding, this dissociative reaction towards the dialect speaker serves to further distance these adolescents from the "Doric" identity.

4.5. Discussion-based data

Finally, the discussion-based data also supports some of these findings. In this part of surveying process, several Inverurie adolescents espoused a belief that they do not talk like the older people they know. When asked "Do you think the way people speak in the North-East is changing?," 20 of the 23 responses from Inverurie adolescents were in the affirmative and contained additional commentary such as follows.

(a) The accents are getting weaker and weaker.
(b) The youth have a large impact on how it changes. The phrases we use have changed or are disappearing.
(c) They're starting to lose the Doric accent, older people seem to be more Doric than the kids.
(d) Older you get the more Doric you get.
(e) We don't speak like farmers as much.
(f) Yes. Kids use slang words all the time and made-up words. Older people speak really Doric.
(g) The younger you are the Scottish accent fades away.
(h) Younger people aren't speaking as strong and Doric as older people.
(i) Young people are losing their accent. TV programs and films rub off on us.
(j) New generation are watching TV (foreign). Slang words. Mixture of nationality.

With all qualitative data gathered, inductive thematic coding was applied, using NVivo, to observe key ideas. The main theme to emerge from these Garioch adolescents' responses is that of *generational dialect attrition*. They firmly express that they no longer sound the same as older people in their community. This is conveyed through evaluations of "weakening" or "disappearing" language (see statements (a), (b), (c), and (g) as examples) and a less "Doric" way of speaking (see statements (c), (d), (f), and (h)). One comment remarks on younger people in the region not speaking "like farmers as much" (e), suggesting a move away from a rural identity. Not much is said by the adolescents, however, as to why this shift might be happening: limited references are made to the influence of media (i, j) and one mention is made of the "mixture of nationality" (j) but, beyond that, the comments are largely observational, simply pointing out that the shift towards a less conservative variety is one that they are acutely aware of.

This perspective of observable attrition is one echoed by the older informants surveyed in the Garioch. All but one of their 21 responses to the question were in the affirmative and included comments such as the following.

(a) Slightly more leaning towards English. Many of the old words are only spoken by the elderly.
(b) If you speak Doric most people don't understand you so you have to change to English.
(c) It's changing. Lots of people have moved to this area from other parts of the UK and abroad and I find myself speaking in a more anglasised (*sic*) way to be understood.
(d) Use of specific words is disappearing. Very few "old" Doric words used by our parents are used regularly. The types of occupations and industries are changing so words describing tasks and jobs are no longer needed.
(e) I think it is changing, perhaps the oil industry brought Americans, French and other nationals.
(f) Very much so. Due to years of Doric being "drummed" out of us and influx of mass "foreigners" diluting our own language.
(g) Definitely changing. Influences from so many different accents brought here mostly from oil industry.
(h) A lot of incomers to the area. English/Polish etc.

While both sets of answers make observations regarding apparent *generational dialect attrition*, they are somewhat different in terms of the nature of the commentary. Whereas the adolescents were quick to point out that the older generations speak "Doric," most did not attempt to attribute a label to their own speech. Analysis of the older informants' comments, however, reveal a prevailing theme regarding perceived *Anglicization* (see statements (a–c)). This may be because these older 60 years old+ speakers have witnessed these changes in progress, whereas, for the Garioch adolescents, the current situation is simply their norm. This is most likely coupled with an element of resistance among youngsters to label their own speech as "English" given the ideological issues surrounding Scottish identity.

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The theme of *Anglicization* is not the only aspect in which the younger and older informants' responses differ: whereas the adolescents failed to comment on the factors contributing towards this shift, the older informants had much more to say on the issue. The main theme in this regard is that of *incomers* (see statements (f–h)). In this set of responses, and in those across the study in relation to *incomers*, comments about immigration are aimed mainly at the English and people from other parts of Britain, as well as "foreigners" such as those from Eastern Europe. In these comments, the influence of the oil industry in the North-East is also clearly perceived as one of the key drivers of this demographic change. These perceptions may have some basis in reality. Shubin & Dickey (2013:2962) report that "Aberdeenshire has experienced the highest rate of net in-migration from outside Scotland as a proportion of the resident population of any British county." On the subject of English "incomers," census results show that the percentage of Scottish-born residents in Aberdeenshire dropped from 92% in 1971 to 81% in 2011, while in Aberdeen, the same figure decreased from 89% to 75% over the same period; simultaneously, the percentage of English-born residents has increased from comprising 3% of the total Aberdeenshire population in 1971 to 12% in 2011, and in Aberdeen city from 4% to 8% (General Register Office (Scotland), 1997, 2000, 2002; National Records of Scotland, 2018). Among the more recent "Scottish-born" figures are also likely to be people born to those who have moved to the region from elsewhere and who may be less exposed to the local dialect in the home.

This demographic change, combined with rapid population acceleration in towns within commuter distance of Aberdeen and people moving around within the region itself, is likely to have aided the development of more open social network structures, as opposed to the closer and more insular communities that once existed (McRae, 2006). Given that these more open network structures are more susceptible to dialect contact, which in turn can lead to linguistic accommodation and modification (Milroy, 1987), the comments of these older North-East informants regarding the effects of in-migration should perhaps not be disregarded as mere resistance to "incomers" but considered within the reality of the changing demographic of the region.

5. Discussion

5.1. De-focusing of the speech community?

The changing demographic of the region seems the most commonsense place to start a discussion of these results. To do this, the findings will be considered through the lens of "focused" and "diffuse" communities as proposed in the work of Kerswill & Williams (2002) which they, in turn, based on the concept of "focusing" set forth by Le Page (1980). Within this framework, speech communities are regarded as "focused" if "there is relatively little variation" partly because of being "socially stable"; meanwhile, "diffuse" communities are unlikely to have "such clear norms," which may be attributed to a "more volatile social structure" (Kerswill & Williams, 2002:175). Already, given what has been discussed in this present study about the changing nature of Garioch life, it is clear to see how Inverurie and its surrounding area may fit well with the latter description of a less stable community.

By asking adolescent informants to geographically locate taped speech samples, Kerswill & Williams (2002) uncovered a situation in the English town of Reading whereby a speech sample featuring an elderly Reading speaker proved difficult for younger respondents to place, with no informants recognizing him as Reading voice. The researchers posit that there are "clear signs of the 'defocusing' of the speech of the town" and that this failure to identify the elderly speaker suggests that "the rate of change there is sufficiently fast for there to be a disjunction between the oldest and youngest speakers, at least in terms of young people's recognition of old people as part of the speech community" (ibid. 192–195). They also report similar issues with older speaker identification in Milton Keynes, adjudged to be a consequence of a "lack of continuity" given that the city emerged as part of the "New Town" drive of the late 1960s and therefore contains many families who have "no time-depth in the town" (ibid. 195–196).

Clearly, Inverurie is not a new town in the same way as somewhere like Milton Keynes, even if it has experienced a degree of in-migration; however, the changing nature of the town is similar to that described in Reading. Kerswill & Williams (2002) describe how, in the 1950s, Reading "was a market town dominated by agriculture" and other industries such as food manufacturing and brewing; now, its economy is driven by "high technology computer-based industries, financial services and retailing" (ibid. 195). In terms of the identity of the town, this is quite a shift. As has been discussed, such a shift can also be observed in Inverurie with its transformation from a modestly sized agricultural market town with some specialized industries (such as the locomotive works and paper mill) to the ever-growing town that exists today: a much bigger and more urbanized settlement which serves as an important commuter hub for the city of Aberdeen and its world-leading energy industry. As in Reading, younger Inverurie informants routinely struggled to geographically identify an older speaker from their own town. This may link to the rapidity of change experienced in both places and the linguistic "discontinuity" that Kerswill & Williams (2002:201) have suggested can arise as a result. While these identification failures on the part of the Inverurie youngsters may not definitively prove that dialect attrition is in progress in the same way that production data might be able to, it certainly lends strong supporting evidence to the argument, as it suggests a disconnect between the older generation (of which the middle-aged speaker in the audio stimulus is a part) and the younger generation in terms of how they perceive the linguistic identity of their hometown.

5.2. Attrition at different paces in different places?

The results of this study have also offered some signs that the process of dialect attrition might be further advanced in Inverurie than in other parts of the region. Although direct production data has not been analyzed, the perceptual data gathered tells us something about how these speakers relate to their local linguistic variety and how they communicate their shared identity in relation to it. Furthermore, the fact that these perceptual findings are not uniform across the North-East may suggest that the dialect is weakening in strength, both linguistically and as an identity marker, in certain parts of the region. When compared with adolescents from other North-East towns, Inverurie youngsters were found to be less invested in the idea of "Doric" identity, less likely to consider their own town as Doric-speaking, and less open to identifying a middle-aged Doric voice as belonging to a local speaker.

This anomalous Inverurie data could be a result of the town's proximity to Aberdeen, but I would argue that they are perhaps more likely symptomatic of the rapid shift from being a regular-sized rural market town to what is now a fairly "big place."

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Compared to the other towns mentioned in this article, the population rise in Inverurie has been more drastic and more sustained. For comparison: Alford has doubled in size since 1951, but it is still a relatively small place with only around two-and-a-half thousand residents. Inverurie, on the other hand, has seen a population increase of almost 195% from 1951 to the current day: a period which broadly covers the lifespan of the older Garioch informants surveyed in this study and therefore still relatively "recent history" in the lives of such speakers.

Back in 1947, Milne (1947:103) wrote of the town that it was "small enough to ensure that the people at one end of the town know, and take an interest in, the ongoings of those at the other." This image of a relatively tight-knit town is most certainly not true for Inverurie and its near-fifteen thousand residents today. Life in Inverurie for its current youngsters is a far cry from the community their grandparents' generation would have known during their own formative years: not just in terms of size, but also in terms of the identity of the town, its demographic composition, and the area's perceptual "closeness" to Aberdeen.

The contrasting nature of the Inverurie adolescents' perceptions highlights the need for further sociolinguistic research of the North-East region. As discussed earlier, several sociolinguists have studied language variation and change within the North-East. However, great swathes of the North-East remain uncharted by sociolinguists. A comprehensive sociolinguistic survey of North-East speech communities would allow these changes-in-process to be measured in a more cohesive manner and allow the "different paces in different places" hypothesis regarding a loss of dialect distinctiveness to be empirically tested.

6. Conclusion

From a theoretical perspective, this study confirms the merit of completing all five parts of Preston's (1999) aforementioned methodology. In the case of suspected dialect attrition in the Garioch, exploration of perceptions collected through several different means, combining mapping methods with more traditional surveying, has allowed observations to be triangulated, thus making the findings more robust. In this case, the common thread that unites the findings from each task is that, when it comes to how they view the local dialect, younger speakers in the Garioch are perceptually diverging from both their older counterparts and their adolescent peers in certain other parts of the region.

In terms of the research question set out at the beginning of this article: given the economic, social, and demographic changes observed in the Garioch area, it is perhaps inevitable that such transformation might be accompanied by a resulting loss of general and linguistic local identity: a loss which may well be a result of the changing status of the dialect within the speech community as Inverurie has moved from being what we could call a relatively "focused" community to one which is much more diffuse. This article opened with the query of whether a suspected weakening of the dialect within the community can also be observed in perceptual data, and the results of this study suggest that—in this case—it can. For the Garioch at least, the evidence gathered supports the comment made by an Inverurie youngster offered earlier in the article that "older people seem to be more Doric than the kids."

However, this evidence of attrition has not been uniformly patterned across the region. While the Inverurie youngsters' perceptual offerings consistently point towards a weakened relationship with the traditional Scots dialect of the area, this result was not consistently replicated with other adolescent survey groups in different parts of the North-East. In terms of the general health of the North-East Scots dialect and the direction of ongoing language maintenance/revitalization endeavors in the region, this can be construed as both bad news and good news: bad news in that the situation in Inverurie could be interpreted as further along the road than in other North-East communities and could serve as a harbinger of what is to come for the rest of the region; or good news in that this study has confirmed communities of youngsters in the North-East (in places such as Alford, Banff, and Peterhead) who are still keen to align themselves with a "Doric" linguistic identity and for whom more arguably needs to be done to support the future of their local variety.

Supplementary material. To view supplementary material for this article, please visit https://doi.org/10.1017/jlg.2026.10011

Notes

1 All ratings data in tasks 2, 3, and 4 were gathered using a paper Visual Analog Scale (VAS) with bipolar adjectives and measured from 0 to 70; see Leslie (2020) for a more detailed explanation of the process, and also Llamas & Watt (2014) for commentary on the value of using VAS scales for measuring language attitudes.

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