Multilingual Manchester

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How is language choice in the 'Curry Mile' district of Rusholme, Manchester, affected by different domains?

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"Manchester is home to over 150 languages" (Gopal et al., 2013), and has become a hub for 'language contact' (Weinreich and Martinet, 1968). This, therefore, indicates that there are a number of multilingual speakers living in Manchester, who are able to choose to speak one language or another (language choice) depending on the social and cultural context, i.e. domains (Fishman, 2007, p. 58). This difference in language choice between domains is pivotal to the process of "language maintenance" and "language shift" (Fishman 2007, p. 58; Namei 2008, p. 419; Weinreich and Martinet, 1968), as any multilingual speaker can choose to either maintain their first language (by employing it in a certain domain) or shift from their first language to their second language or languages (by employing them in another domain) (Simmons, 2003). In this study we aim to identify the different languages used by multilingual speakers in the 'Curry Mile' district of Rusholme, Manchester and examine which domains these languages are used in, while also exploring the various motives for this difference in language choice.

The 'Curry Mile' (see appendix 1 and 2 for a map and image of the area, respectively), famed for its large concentration of 'Indian' restaurants, takeaways, shisha bars and a number of other businesses is incredibly ethnically diverse, and is an integral part of everyday life for the South Asian and Middle Eastern community in Manchester, among many others. According to Kaplan and Li (2006) "Until the 1960's, Rusholme was an ordinary suburban shopping district", yet much like the rest of Britain, Rusholme experienced an influx of immigration, from a variety of ethnic groups, thus creating the thriving ethnically diverse community we know today. We have decided to concentrate our study on this particular area, as this huge ethnic diversity, in turn, creates vast linguistic diversity and will, therefore, provide a large sample of multilingual speakers for the study, and a great deal of 'language contact' between speakers (Weinreich and Martinet, 1968). The 2011 British census showed that Urdu is the most common language other than English in Manchester, with well over 13,000 residents using the language (Manchester City Council, 2015). The census also showed that the population of Asian ethnicities in Manchester has grown from 10.4% in 2001 to 17% in 2011 (Manchester City Council, 2015), and that the current percentage of UK Muslim population lies at 5%, whereas, in Manchester this number is much higher, currently standing at 15.8%, with the most concentrated area of Muslim population and businesses being in our chosen area, the 'Curry Mile' district of Rusholme, Manchester. We can, therefore, predict that Asian languages such as Urdu and Arabic will be most prevalent, apart from English, within the overall findings of our study.

Furthermore, Manchester stands out as an area of the UK that has a lower proportion of residents who speak English as their main language in the home compared to the national average, and is more than double the national average for no one speaking English at home

(10.3%) (Manchester City Council, 2015). Ergo, we can also predict that a number of our participants will use languages other than English in the home domain, and some will not use any English at all.

Previous research on the 'Curry Mile' has found similar trends. For example, Bailey et al. (2012) found that Urdu and Punjabi were the most prevalent in the area, after English and that the majority of multilingual speakers spent a large amount of their time speaking to customers in English but reported that when found in a home situation many would choose to favour their native language over English and instead speak in their native language to family members. This, therefore, supports our earlier predictions based upon the census data.

Methodology

To obtain the data for our study we conducted a questionnaire in a number of businesses' on the 'Curry Mile' district of Rusholme, Manchester. The questionnaire is a method of data collection widely used in sociolinguistic research (Labov 1984; Milroy 1987) and seemed most cogent for this study, as we collected data from a large speech community, and aimed to elicit specific types of data about language use across various domains. We have developed the questionnaire from our original pilot questionnaire, by adding a number of other questions, which regard language use in the media, i.e. music and television, as this provides another interesting domain to examine language use in. However, we did not want to add too many sections to our original questionnaire, as we felt this would have been an excessive number of questions for the participants to complete, which could have jeopardized the quality of the data and also resulted in poor completion rates. The same set of questions was employed for each participant, as this allowed us to compare the results and elicit the specific data required for the study. The questionnaire (see appendix 3) is composed of several questions, which aimed to elicit basic information (age and sex et cetera), language usage and language choices across several domains along with the subjective attitudes towards different language choices.

Additionally, we have also decided to design our questionnaire to be delivered in a Labovian style sociolinguistic interview (Labov, 1984), as we felt that people are bombarded with leaflets and other types of advertising nowadays and the large proportion of the questionnaires would either be lost or thrown away if we distributed them physically and asked the participants to complete the questionnaires in their own time. Furthermore, this Labovian style sociolinguistic interview allowed us to explain any ambiguity in the questions, as we found that some participants did not understand certain linguistic terminology,

i.e. social prestige et cetera. This method, therefore, provided us with quantitative and qualitative data, thus allowing us to identify the different languages used by multilingual speakers in the 'Curry Mile' district of Rusholme, Manchester and examine which domains these languages are used in, while also exploring the various motives for this difference in language choice.

When conducting the survey we approached several different businesses in the 'Curry Mile', including restaurants, newsagents, jewelers, shisha bars and electronic goods stores. We introduced ourselves as students at the University of Manchester conducting research on societal multilingualism; briefly explaining what that entailed, and enquired as to whether they would partake in our questionnaire. This provided us with a range of work and other domains to examine language use in, while also hopefully providing a representative sample of the languages used in the area. We analyzed our collected data by compiling the results into a table using the Microsoft Excel program, and presented the data in the form of tables and graphs also using the Excel program

Methodological issues

Unfortunately, as predicted in the project proposal, we found that certain businesses were reluctant to partake in the survey, as either the owner was not present and the other employs did not want to partake without the owner's permission, there was a language barrier between us and the shop assistant or they were simply unwilling to partake for unknown reasons. Therefore, to combat this problem we approached as many businesses as feasibly possible, and also approached more independent business, as the owner was much more likely to be present. Furthermore, we also offered those businesses willing to partake in the study an appointment to conduct the interview at their own choosing, as they may have had a particularly busy period of business when we approached them or another time may just have been more suitable for personal reasons.

However, we found that the main issue when collecting our data was inconsistency or lack of detail in answers. For example, some participants gave extremely vague answers, such as 'it's just good innit' regarding questions on language attitudes and even when pushed could not provide any useful data. Also, we found some misreporting in answers, such as reporting that they only employed English in the work place, while obviously speaking other languages in the workplace. Yet, when these participants had this pointed out to them they did amend their response and claimed it was due to a misunderstanding of the question,

which is more than understandable. We also found that a number of people were simply not prepared to answer the question on place of worship, or did not understand the question with answers such as 'mosque' rather than the language used, so we did not have as much data as originally anticipated for this domain.

Furthermore, the participants in our study are also very likely to have been affected by the 'Observers Paradox' (Meyerhoff, 2006, p. 42), as we observed participants natural behavior, i.e. language use in different domains, but the knowledge that they are being observed is likely to have altered their behavior, thus resulting in reporting an unnatural usage of language. To combat this, all participants in our study are anonymous and we made sure the interview style was fairly informal; to ease the participant into a more relaxed setting, which hopefully resulted in more natural data.

Results

Table 1: Participant Age groups

	Under 30	30-40	Over 40
Male	2	6	14
Female	2	3	2

Table 2: Basic information

Sex	Nationa	Age	Occupation	Country of Birt	Length of UK Re
Male	English	24	takeaway store wo	England	24
Male	Lebanese	41	restaurant manage	Lebanon	16
Male	Pakistani	48	restaurant owner	Pakistan	14
Male	Pakistani	61	restaurant owner	Pakistan	45
Male	British/Paki	44	restaurant owner	British	15
Male	English	41	Restaurant	England	42
Female	Syrian	35	shop assistant	Syria	8
Male	Syrian	38	shisha shop owner	Syria	19
Male	Pakistani	46	Shop Owner	Pakistan	30
Male	Pakistani	56	Customer Assistant	Pakistan	49
Female	English	31	customer service	Pakistan	27
Male	Pakistani	57	Restaurant Manage	Pakistan	35
Male	British	37	restaurant manage	England	37
Male	Bangladesh	32	Restaurant Staff	Bangladesh	8
Male	English	42	shisha shop owner	England	42
Male	Indian	32	western union cash	India	8
Female	Syrian	29	shop assistant	Syria	6
Male	British	32	shisha shop worker	UK	32
Female	Indian	40	Restaurant Staff	India	16
Male	Syrian	47	Newsagent Owner	Syria	17
Female	Pakistani	34	Restaurant staff	Pakistan	9
Male	British/Paki	43	jewelry shop salesr	Pakistan	20
Male	Pakistani	58	restaurant owner	Pakistan	23
Female	Syrian	42	Jewelry store assist	Syria	21
Male	Syrian	35	N/A	Syria	13
Female	Syrian	27	customer service	Syria	6
Male	Pakistani	29	Restaurant Staff	Pakistan	9
Male	Pakistani	43	manager	Pakistan	13
Male	English	59	manager	Pakistan	30

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Table 3: Linguistic information

Native Language	Other Languages Spoken	Fluency in Written and Spoken Language	Language Used the Most
English	None	English-Both	English
Arabic	English, French	Arabic-Both,English-Both,French-Spoken	English
Punjabi	English, Arabic	Punjabi-Both,English-Both,Arabic-Both	English
Punjabi	English, Arabic	Punjabi-Both,English-Both,Arabic-Both	English
Urdu	English	Urdu-Both,English-Both	Urdu
English	Urdu,Arabic	English-Both,Urdu-Both,Arabic-Can't	English
Kurdish	Persian, English	Kurdish-Spoken,Persian-Spoken,English-Spoken	Kurdish
Kurdish	English,Arabic	Kurdish-Both,English-Both,Arabic-Written	Kurdish
Urdu	English	English-Both,Urdu-Both	Urdu
English	Urdu, Punjab	Urdu-Both,Punjab-spoken,English-Both	English
Punjabi	English	Punjabi-Spoken,English-Both	English
Punjabi	English,Arabic	English-Both,Arabic-None	English
English	English, Bengali, Arabic	English-Both,Bengali-Both,Arabic-Both	English
Bengali	Portugese,Hindi,Urdu,English	Portugese-Both,Hindi-Both,English-Both,Urdu-Spok	English+Bengali
English	Farsi	English-Both,Farsi-Both	English
Hindi	Morathi, English	Hindi-Both,English-Both,Morathi-Both	English+Hindi
Kurdish	English,Persian	Kurdish-Both,English-Spoken,Persian-Spoken	Kurdish
English	Punjabi	English-Both,Punjabi-Both	English
Hindi	English,Morathi	Hindi-Both,English-Both,Morathi-Both	English+Hindi
Kurdish	English	Kurdish-Both,English-Both	English
Punjabi	English,Urdu	Punjabi-Both,English-Both,Urdu-Both	English
Urdu	English, Punjabi	Urdu-Both,Punjabi-Spoken,English-Both	English
Urdu	English, Punjabi	Urdu-Both,English-Both,Punjabi-Spoken	English
Kurdish	English,Persian	Kurdish-Both,English-Spoken,Persian-Spoken	Kurdish
Kurdish	English, Arabic	Kurdish-Both,English-Both,Arabic-Both	Kurdish
Kurdish	Kurdish, Persian, English	Kurdish-Both,Persian-Spoken,English-Can't	Kurdish
Punjabi	English, Urdu	Punjabi-Both,English-spoken	Punjabi
Urdu	English, Punjabi	Urdu-Spoken,Punjabi-Spoken,English-Spoken	Urdu
Urdu	English, Punjabi	Urdu-Both,Punjabi-Spoken,English-Both	English

Table 4: Linguistic information (part 2)

K Language Used at Home	L Language Used at Work	M Language Used in Worship	N Languages Used in Advertisement
English	English	Arabic	English
English+Arabic	English+Arabic	Arabic	English+Arabic
English+Some Punjabi	English+Punjabi	Arabic	English+Arabic
English+Some Punjabi	English+Punjabi+Arabic	Arabic	English+Arabic
English+Urdu	English+Urdu	Arabic	English
English+Urdu	English+Urdu+Arabic	Arabic	English+Arabic
Kurdish	English+Kurdish	Arabic	N/A
Kurdish	English+Kurdish	Arabic	Kurdish+English
English+Urdu	English,Urdu	English, Urdu	English, Arabic
English	English	N/A	N/A
English+Some Punjabi	English	N/A	English
English+Punjabi	English,Punjabi	N/A	English
English+Bengali	English+Bengali+Arabic	N/A	English+Arabic
Bengali	English+Bengali+Urdu	N/A	English+Arabic
English+Some Farsi	English+Farsi	N/A	N/A
English+Hindi	English+Hindi	N/A	Urdu
Kurdish+Some Persian	English+Kurdish	N/A	English
English+Some Punjabi	English+Punjabi	N/A	English
Hindi	English+Some Hindi	N/A	N/A
Kurdish	English+Some Kurdish	N/A	English+Kurdish
Punjabi+Some Urdu	English+Some Punjabi	N/A	English+Punjabi
English+Punjabi+Some Urdu	English+Some Urdu	N/A	English+Arabic
English+Some Urdu	English+Some Urdu	N/A	Urdu+English
Kurdish	English+Kurdish	N/A	English
Kurdish	English+Kurdish+Arabic	N/A	N/A
Kurdish+Some Persian	English+Kurdish+Some Persian	N/A	N/A
Punjabi+Urdu	English+Punjabi	N/A	English
Urdu+Some Punjabi	Urdu+Some English	N/A	English
English+Urdu	English+Urdu+Punjabi	Punjabi	English+Urdu

Table 5: Language attitudes

Language with most Prestige	Language Important for Children	Importance of Multilingualism
English	English	No
English	English	Yes for Opportunities and Faith
English	English	Yes for Heritage
English	English	Yes
English	Urdu	Yes for Employability
English	English+Urdu	Yes for tradition
English	N/A	Yes for Culture
N/A	N/A	Yes for business
English, Arabic	English	Yes
N/A	English	Always a good thing
English	English	N/A
English	English	Yes
English	English	Yes for Opportunities
English	N/A	Yes
English	English	Yes for Family
English	N/A	Yes for Work Reasons
English	Kurdish	N/A
English	English	No
English	Hindi	Yes for Culture
N/A	English	N/A
English	Punjabi	Yes for Communication
English	English	Yes
English	English	Yes for Employability
N/A	N/A	Yes for culture
English	Kurdish	Yes
N/A	N/A	Yes for Communication
N/A	N/A	N/A
Urdu	Urdu	Yes for Communication
English	English	Yes

Table 6: Percentage of participants that can speak each language

| Language	No. of Speakers
English	100%
Urdu	41%
Kurdish	24%
Punjabi	38%
Bengali	7%
Morathi	7%
Persian	10%
Hindi	7%
Portuguese	3%
Farsi	3%
Arabic	28%
French	3%

Table 7: Difference in language use depending on addressee across the different languages recorded in the study

Language	Children	Spouse	Other Relatives	Friends	Work Colleagues	Customers
English	52%	52%	10%	66%	93%	83%
Urdu	14%	21%	31%	21%	21%	14%
Kurdish	14%	17%	17%	21%	24%	7%
Punjabi	0%	3%	28%	10%	21%	3%
Bengali	0%	3%	7%	0%	3%	3%
Morathi	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Persian	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Hindi	3%	3%	7%	7%	7%	3%
Portuguese	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Farsi	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Arabic	0%	3%	3%	0%	7%	3%
French	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Graph 1: Prevalence of each language in our study among all participants
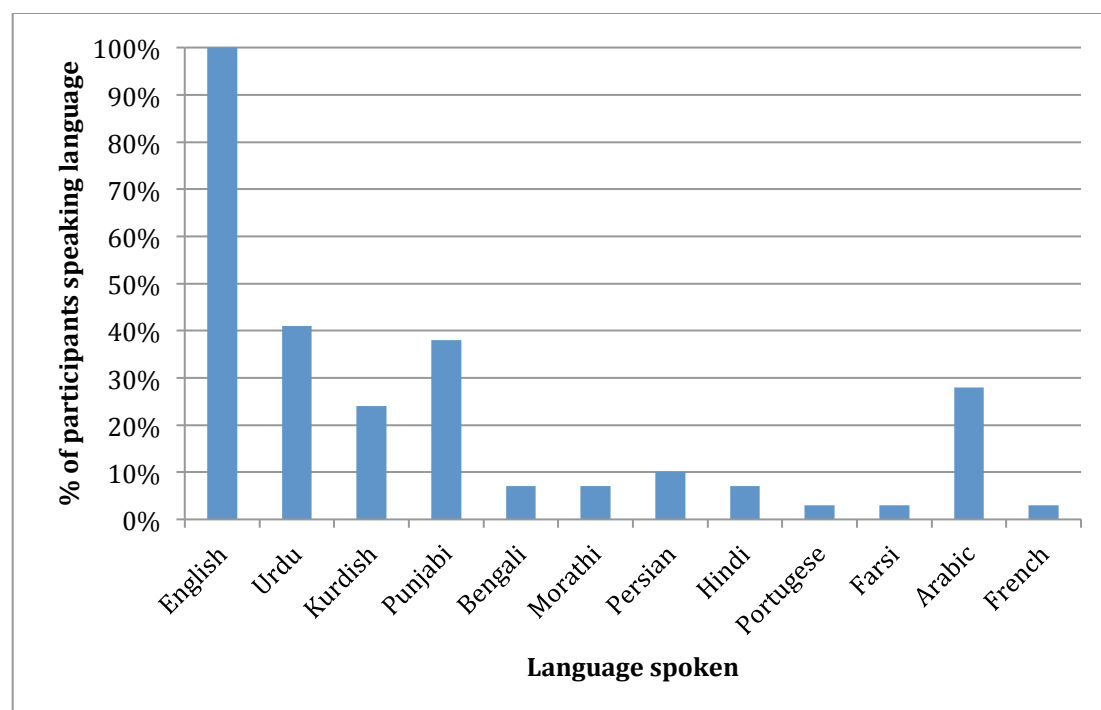
Graph 2: Prevalence of each language across the various domains
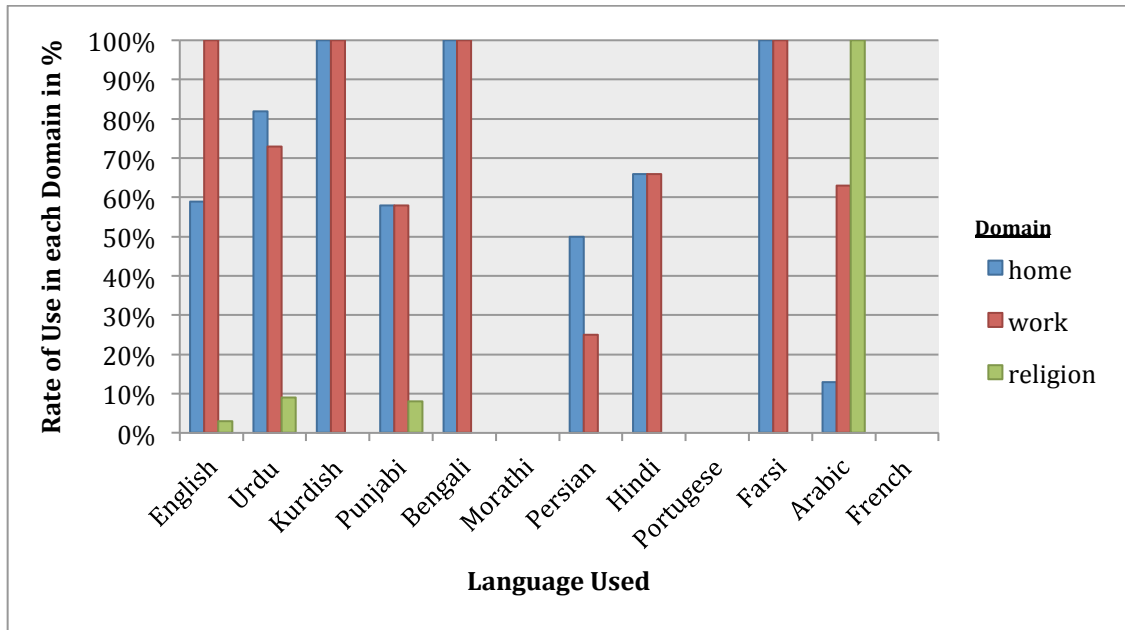
Graph 3: Prevalence of each language across the various addresses
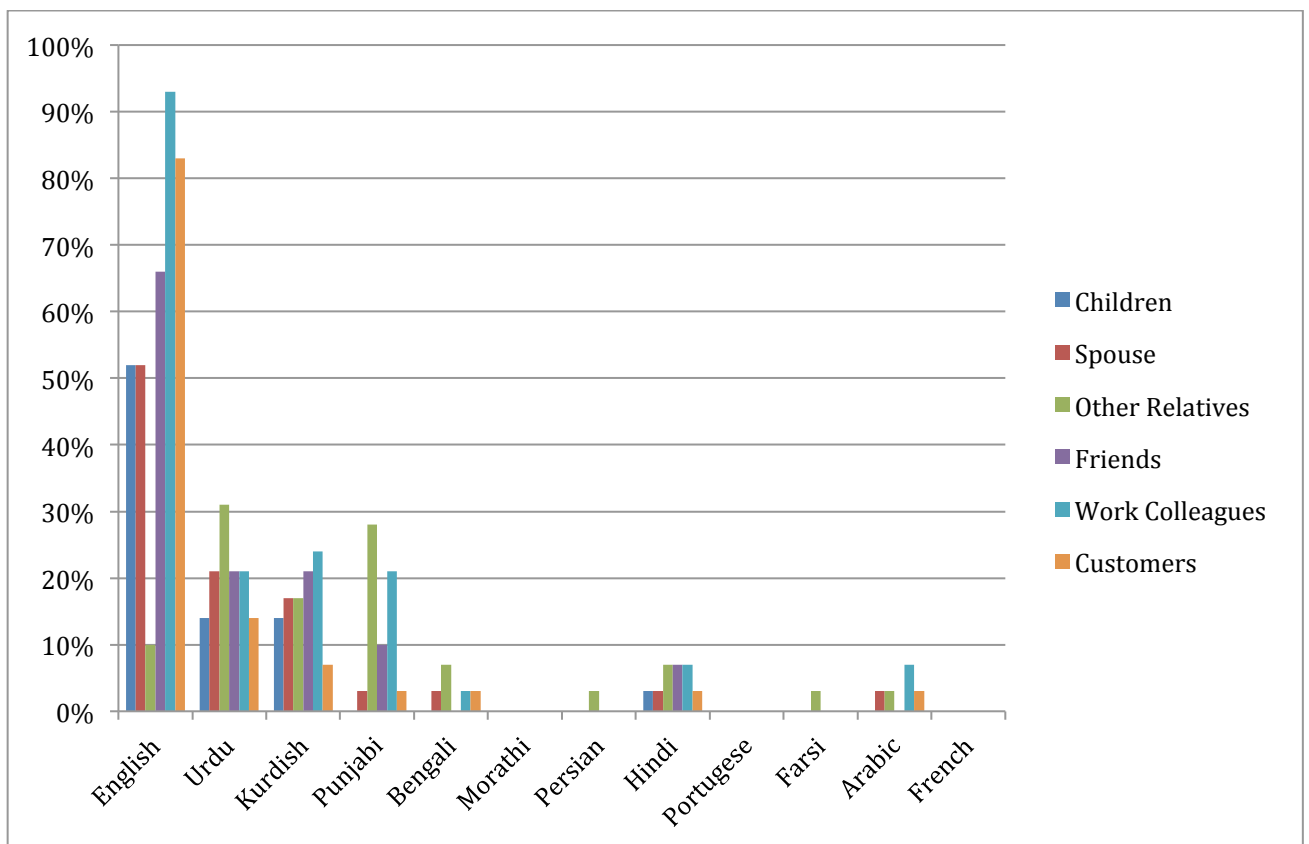
Discussion

In this study we focused primarily on the concepts of "language maintenance" and "language shift" (Fishman 2007, p. 58; Namei 2008, p. 419; Weinreich and Martinet, 1968), and expected to see varying use of languages between domains. This entails that we seek out instances of both the use of participant's native language in any given domain (language maintenance) and any deviation from its use in the form of a secondary language (language shift). From the results we can observe evidence of both of these concepts in effect. As we can observe from graph 1 and table 6, 100% of participants showed use of English in the workplace, whether they had fluent or partial knowledge, although only 10% of participants used only English. Our data presented in graph 1 also suggests that as previously predicted Urdu and Punjabi (the two most common languages amongst Pakistani) appear to be the most prevalent languages other than English amongst the participants in our survey.

As seen in graph 2 the domain of place of worship we can see small percentages in the use of Urdu, English and Punjabi. We posit that this language use will consist mainly of conversations between participants and acquaintances within the place of worship as opposed to the language used actively in the act of worship. Of those who chose to provide the language used in the domain of places of worship we found that 97% of participants who answered this section (many opting to veto this line of questioning) responded that they did not use English in this domain. Furthermore, 90% of these participants used Arabic, an unsurprising statistic considering that 43% of all participants originated from Pakistan, a country with an overwhelmingly Muslim populace (Arabic being the language of the Quran and therefore extremely prominent within Muslim circles). Therefore, the participant's native language seems to be maintained in the domain of religion.

Of the 29 participants in our study 12 identified their place of birth as Pakistan. Interestingly, 75% of these participants reported that their most used language was in fact English yet their native languages were Middle Eastern languages such as Urdu or Punjabi. This suggests a language shift has occurred particularly in those born in Pakistan, with the majority now choosing English as their preferred language to use in most situations over the native Urdu or Punjabi. Such a high percentage may be explained by the number of hours in the average working week, which would mean that those in customer service positions i.e. all of the Pakistani participants, may have spent a predominant portion of each day speaking English due to it's standardization of use in establishments such as restaurants and shops, dealing with customers of varied backgrounds who share English as the common language. This is reflected in the domain data in graph 2 regarding the workplace in which every

Pakistani subject and in turn every participant reported either the sole use of English, or English in combination with Kurdish, Hindi, Punjabi, Persian, Urdu or Arabic. We found that of the Pakistani participants, 59% noted Punjabi as their native language, with the remaining 33% being Urdu and 8% English. In comparing the data regarding the participants most used language with the section regarding time of residence in the UK we see a clear instance of language shift. The minimum amount of time spent as a resident of the UK by any one of these participants is 9 years, suggesting that 75% of Pakistani's surveyed experienced a clear shift from the predominant use of their native languages to the use of English over the course of their residence in the UK.

When we examine the family/home domain of those with Urdu as their native language we see that there is a clear patterning in the use of English in the contexts of conversations with different members of the family and friends. 77% of these 13 participants said that they use English when talking to their children, whereas, the percentage of English used when addressing older relatives was a mere 15%. We can attribute one of the causes of such a high rate of use with children to be the standard of English language use in UK schools which all of these children will attend daily and thus will benefit from or even require it's use in the home. Older relatives, however, would be much more likely to retain a high rate of native language usage. This data shows that within one generation there has been a tremendous shift in language and also suggests that younger parents value English highly. Many of the parents who answered said that they thought it was important to be multi-lingual for reasons such as traditions, career opportunities et cetera, but in spite of this the majority of parents stated that they spoke almost exclusively English to their children and that they regarded English as the language with the greatest prestige or importance in the development of their child in Britain. This generational change perfectly exemplifies language shift and the change in attitudes amongst families towards maintaining their native languages.

Continuing our focus on the native speakers of Urdu, we can see that in the work domain 92% of participants reported that they would use English when conversing with work colleagues and 85% said they would employ it when speaking to customers. The use of Urdu within the workplace stands at 46%, applying respectively to use with both customers and work colleagues. This result tells us that there is a relatively large usage of the language in both aspects of the workplace domain, thus meaning a vast amount of people around the 'Curry Mile' are confident enough to use Urdu in a public space around other people.

The widespread use of English in both the home and workplace domains could stem from it's perceived prestige amongst those interviewed and indeed it's place in a worldwide standing as a major lingua franca, it's demand in education and employment. This idea is supported by the fact that of the 23 participants who answered the question of which language carries the most prestige, 96% reported English as carrying the most prestige in their opinion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have identified a number of different languages being used by multilingual speakers in the 'Curry Mile' district of Rusholme, Manchester, and have discovered that Urdu and Punjabi are used most frequently in our data. This, therefore, suggests that these languages are being maintained, at least in the work domain. Furthermore, we have also discovered that English is perceived as a particularly prestigious language amongst businesses on the 'Curry mile', as they tend to employ English when speaking to customers, thus making English the 'overt prestige' (Labov, 1984). Whereas, in different social contexts, i.e. other domains, more native languages were employed, possibly to instill cultural heritage, thus making it the 'covert prestige' (Labov, 1984). Additionally, our results demonstrate that language choices are dependent on the domain in which the speakers find themselves. For example, our results demonstrate that in the family domain the native languages of the speakers are more prominent when dealing with older generations such as parents and grandparents. Yet, with siblings and children English becomes more prominent, possibly due to a conscious awareness that English is the most prestigious language and, therefore, will be a very useful language for children to learn. Finally, our study has provided data that correlates with the findings of previous reports and lines up with the national statistics of immigration, religion and language use. Thus, further corroborating their veracity.

Appendix

1.)

2.)

3.)
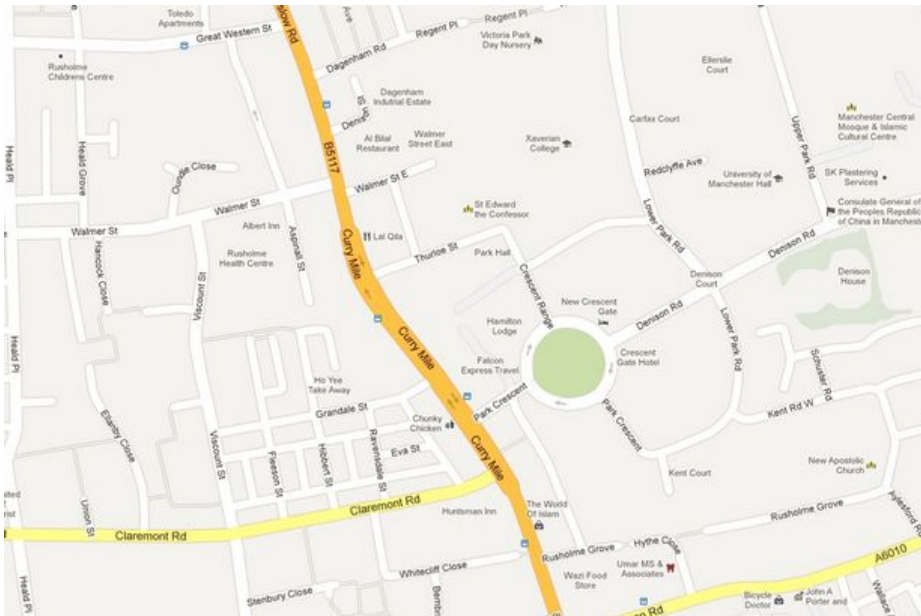
Section 1: Personal details

Sex: Male ☐   Female ☐

Nationality: _____

What is your age? _____

What is your current occupation? _____

Where were you originally born? _____

How long have you resided in the UK? _____

What is your native language? _____

Which other languages can you speak? _____

To what degree can you understand and speak these languages?

Language: _____

Fluent in written and spoken language ☐

Spoken only ☐

Written only ☐

Understand others speech but can't speak it ☐

Language: _____

Fluent in written and spoken language ☐

Spoken only ☐

Written only ☐

Understand others speech but can't speak it ☐

Which language do you think you use the most?

_____

Which languages do you use when speaking to the following:

Family:

Children (if applicable): _____

Spouse: _____

Other relatives: _____

Friends: _____

Workplace:

Work colleagues: _____

Customers: _____

Place of worship (if applicable): _____

Which languages do you advertise in?

_____

Language Attitudes

Which language do you believe has the most prestige?

_____

Which language do you believe is most important for your children to be proficient in?

_____

If yes, why?

_____

Do you think it's important to be multilingual?

_____

If yes, why?

_____

Media

What languages do you listen to music in?

_____

What languages do you watch television in?

_____

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