

**A Comparison of the Linguistic Landscapes of**

**Manchester**

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**2011**

## **Declaration**

I have read and understood the University of Manchester guidelines on plagiarism and declare that this dissertation is all my own work except where I indicate otherwise by proper use of quotes and references.

Signed:

Date:

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Chapter List

Chapter 1 <b>Introduction</b> .....	1
Chapter 2 <b>Literature Review</b> .....	4
2.1 The Origins of Linguistic Landscapes .....	4
2.3 Varying Approaches to Linguistic Landscapes .....	5
Chapter 3 <b>Methodology</b> .....	9
Chapter 4 <b>Chinatown</b> .....	13
4.1 Background .....	13
4.2 Demographics of Chinatown in Manchester .....	14
4.3 Presentation of the Data Part I - Numbers of Signs .....	15
4.4 Presentation of the Data Part II – Business Interviews. ....	17
4.5 Presentation of the data Part III: Micro-Level analysis.....	22
Chapter 5 <b>Rusholme</b> .....	26
5.1 Background .....	26
5.2 Demographics of Rusholme, Manchester .....	26
5.3 Presentation of the Data Part I- Sign Data .....	27
5.4 Presentation of the Data Part II- Business Interviews.....	30
5.5 Presentation of the data Part III: Micro-Level analysis.....	32
Chapter 6 <b>Government and Official Policy</b> .....	37
Chapter 7 <b>Comparison between Chinatown and Rusholme Linguistic landscapes</b> .....	39
Chapter 8 <b>Discussion</b> .....	42
Chapter 9 <b>Conclusions</b> .....	46
<b>References</b> .....	48
<b>Annex</b> .....	53

## Table of Figures

Figure 3.1 A map of the area of Chinatown analysed for Linguistic Landscapes .....	11
Figure 3.2 A map of the area of Rusholme analysed for Linguistic Landscapes. ....	12
Figure 4.1 Combinations of languages on public signs in Chinatown, Manchester. ....	16
Figure 4.2 Most prominent language on Traditional Chinese and English bilingual signs .....	17
Figure 4.3 Multilingual sign for supermarket .....	22
Figure 4.4 Multilingual signage for accountants .....	22
Figure 4.5 Multilingual signage for restaurant .....	22
Figure 4.6 Multilingual signage for publishers .....	22
Figure 4.7 Multilingual English, Chinese, Japanese Video game store.....	23
Figure 4.8 Chinese only restaurant notice.....	24
Figure 5.1 Combinations of languages on public signs in Rusholme, Manchester .....	28
Figure 5.2 Most prominent language on English and Arabic signs in Rusholme, Manchester.....	29
Figure 5.3 Urdu in Latin characters, Urdu script and English sign in Rusholme.....	33
Figure 5.4 Hindi/Urdu shop name in Latin characters.....	34
Figure 5.5 Restaurant sign indexing multiple identities. ....	35
Figure 5.6 Rendering of English in Urdu .....	36
Figure 7.1 Most prominent language on signs in Rusholme.....	40
Figure 7.2 Most prominent language on signs in Chinatown .....	40

## Tables

Table 4.1 Number of Individuals born in China and Hong Kong, in Manchester City Centre and Greater Manchester County .....	14
Table 4.2 Number of individuals reporting their ethnicity as Chinese in Manchester City Centre and Greater Manchester County .....	14
Table 4.3 Combinations of languages on public signs in Chinatown, Manchester. ....	15
Table 4.4 Most prominent language on Traditional Chinese and English bilingual signs.....	17
Table 4.5 Number of people interviewed in each store, Chinatown .....	18
Table 5.1 Area of Birth in Rusholme .....	26
Table 5.2 Ethnic composition of Rusholme.....	27
Table 5.3 Combinations of languages on public signs in Rusholme Manchester. ....	28
Table 5.4 Most prominent language on English and Arabic signs in Rusholme, Manchester. ....	29
Table 5.5 Number of people interviewed in each store, Rusholme.....	30
Table 6.1 Signage produced by Public Bodies in Chinatown Manchester .....	38

Abstract: Linguistic Landscapes refers to linguistic objects that mark the public space. Despite being a relatively new field there have been a number of studies focusing on quantifying the number of languages on signs around the world. In this study, the linguistic landscapes of two different communities are quantified and compared and in addition to this interviews and micro-level analysis of signs has been conducted to try and produce a comprehensive analysis of multilingualism in a community. The study found differences in how both communities linguistic landscapes are structured, and proposes theories of plurilingualism as an alternative to arguments of power that have been used so far to explain the phenomenon uncovered.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

Within many communities in the UK, and around the world, there are multiple languages within a community. When walking through certain parts of a city in the UK today, you may hear many different languages spoken, and see signs written in a number of different languages. In recent years, the linguistic content of publicly visible signage has caught the attention of researchers as a unique area of linguistics that deserves investigation. The presence of any language poses a number of questions, firstly- who put it there? Why is it there? What communicative function does it serve? And finally, what does this say about multilingualism and language contact in a specific area? Does it reflect the patterns found in the communities themselves?

Within the field of multilingualism, Linguistic Landscapes has emerged as an area of study in recent years which specifically investigates the content of publicly visible signage. A very early study was conducted by Spolsky & Cooper (1991) which bears the basic hallmarks of what would become to be known as Linguistic Landscapes. A landmark study was conducted by Landry and Bourhis (1997) which contained the first usage of the term ‘Linguistic Landscapes’, originally defined as ‘[t]he language of public road signs, advertising billboards, place names, street names, commercial shop signs and public signs on government buildings, of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration.’ (Landry and Bourhis, 1997:25). This definition has been used in several other studies undertaken into Linguistic Landscapes (Backhaus 2005, Huebner 2006, Cenoz & Gorter 2006, Ben-Rafael & Shohamy 2006)

Since that time, a number of studies have been conducted investigating the content of signs, and expanding on the concept of a linguistic landscape (Backhaus, 2005 Reh, 2004 Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009 Leeman & Modan, 2009 Huebner, 2006). A linguistic landscape can perhaps be best defined as simply a study of ‘linguistic objects that mark the public space’ (Ben-Rafael, 2006:7) This is the definition that will be used in this dissertation, and for the research- as this definition includes almost every conceivable appearance of language in a public space, not just fixed signs, but stands, handwritten signs and other signs, of a non-public or non-commercial nature.

Linguistic landscapes are important, as the presence of written objects reveals much more than just the language of the people occupying a particular area. It also reveals the power relations, as clearly demonstrated in Ben Rafael & Shohamy’s (2006) study in Israel. In a multilingual context where the interests of different groups are at stake, debates on language visibility can create schisms within a community and even spill over into violence, as was the case with the firebombing “Second Cup” Coffee shops in Canada (Edwards, 2004:73), and more notably in the case of Jerusalem, as mentioned in Spolsky & Cooper (1991) and Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006).

However, by its nature alone a written sign can only tell us so much. A common feature of linguistic landscape studies is that they involve a strong quantitative analysis, focussing on recording and quantifying in detail the nature of multilingual signage in a geographical area. For example, Backhaus’s study of multilingual signage in Tokyo (2007) cannot be faulted for its very deep and comprehensive record of multilingual signs in Tokyo. Backhaus also goes beyond this, drawing correlations between the presence of multilingual signs and the presence of other linguistic groups, such as immigrants and expatriates (2007: 86-88). However, as Sebba (2010) notes, ‘...a linguistic landscape can never be interpreted at face value in this kind of direct way: the relationship between the visible universe of public texts and language communities themselves will always be mediated by a complex combination of literary practices, language policies, constraints on the use of public space, economic and other factors’ .

In other words, while recording the location and type of signs is a very effective quantitative measure, its lack of context means that the full significance of these signs cannot be uncovered. In addition Ben Rafael & Shohamy et al (2006) have shown how Linguistic landscapes as mere “symbolic constructions” (2006:7) can disguise the true make up of the



linguistic community. The underlying patterns cannot be uncovered or analysed by looking at the numbers alone. Secondly, looking at figures on a macro level such as this can miss vital information that could be obtained by looking at the micro level, such as analysing individual signs for their content, and what this reveals about patterns of multilingualism in the area. Although some linguistic landscape studies have looked at this (notably in MacGregor, 2003 and to a much lesser extent in Cenoz & Gorter, 2006) it has up until now not formed the basis of a co-ordinated analysis along with a quantitative macro analysis.

To address these weaknesses in previous studies, the study has several methods of investigation. Firstly, to make a quantitative macro-level documentation of the presence of multilingual signage in two multicultural areas of Manchester, similar to studies that have been conducted before. Second, to make a micro-level analysis of signs in both areas, analysing individual signs for their content.

Thirdly, to conduct interviews with business owners, customers, local government officials and other users of these areas. This will also involve considering how Manchester City Council language policy affects this area. Cenoz & Gorter (2006:67) have noted that language policy can have a considerable effect on the linguistic landscape. As discussed above, a common feature missing in many studies in this area so far is an exploration of the real motivations and incentives driving people to produce these signs. The purpose of the interviews is to uncover the reasoning and motivation behind the signage, and the user's opinions on the signs themselves and the area. This provides a much needed qualitative perspective.

The areas to be investigated are Chinatown, which is populated by mainly Chinese enterprises, and Rusholme- an area of Manchester populated with a number of establishments from South Asia and the Middle East. The final part of the study is to compare and contrast these two areas on both a micro and macro level. This will hopefully bring to light any linguistic practices that are unique to a particular community, and also the similarities.

# Chapter 2 Literature Review

## 2.1 The Origins of Linguistic Landscapes

As the field of linguistic landscapes is still relatively new, there is no single accepted approach for conducting research into linguistic landscapes or analysing them. One of the first major studies that could be described in structure as a “linguistic landscape” would be Spolsky & Cooper (1991). However as already mentioned, Landry and Bourhis (1997) are widely credited with defining the concept of the Linguistic Landscapes as we know them now, and demonstrating its importance to the field of multilingualism through their measurement of the ‘Individual Network of Linguistic Contacts’. Landry and Bourhis attempted to measure the effect that certain Linguistic variables had upon the language environment. Collectively, these influences were known as the Individual Network of Linguistic Contacts, these included such influences as interpersonal contacts, media, schooling experiences, economic and political capital. Landry and Bourhis measured the effect that these had upon the vitality of a language. Linguistic Landscapes (e.g. the language of public signs) was found to be an important variable amongst these.

Landry and Bourhis have attributed the theoretical grounding of linguistic landscapes, to Verdoot (1979) and Corbeil (1980). However, both Landry & Bourhis and Spolsky & Cooper have been criticised by Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006) as having a ‘limited grasp of the genuine and far reaching importance of Linguistic Landscapes’ (2006, 8). That being said, at the time linguistic landscapes was not the full and original focus of these studies. For example in both Spolsky & Cooper (1991) and Landry & Bourhis (1997) the study of linguistic landscapes formed just one part of a broader review of multilingualism in a geographical area. With Landry & Bourhis, it was a matter of also investigating ethnolinguistic vitality (See Giles, 1977).

It is also important to note that Landry & Bourhis’s initial study was the first to come to the conclusion that linguistic landscapes can be used to mark the relative power of a specific language group. A focus on relative linguistic power relations between different groups has gone on to be the focus of analysis in many other studies such as Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006), Cenoz & Gorter (2006) and Leeman & Modan (2009), and is a common hallmark of linguistic landscape studies.

Spolsky & Cooper's (1991) research into linguistic landscapes categorised the motivations for deciding the language of signs through three rules.

1. 'Write signs in a language you know.'
2. 'Prefer to write signs in the language or languages that intended readers are assumed to read'
3. 'Prefer to write signs in your own language or in a language with which you want to be identified.'

Spolsky & Cooper went on to suggest that rule one is a necessary condition, while rules two and three often conflict. This early realisation has been recognised by others, such as that of Scollon & Scollon (2003). In which, Scollon & Scollon suggest that a sign can either index, or symbolise something in the community- this roughly corresponds to the rules above. This has been further endorsed by Landry & Bourhis (1997) and Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006), who stated that signs can serve two functions either "informational" or "symbolic". The 'informational' or 'symbolic' nature of signs is a source of repeated analysis in linguistic landscape studies.

### 2.3 Varying Approaches to Linguistic Landscapes

Interpreting a Linguistic Landscape is a formidable task, and varying approaches have been used to try and explain the patterns that have been observed. A particularly notable and significant aspect of linguistic landscapes is the sheer number of areas and matters it can be applied to. It can be used to identify the linguistic boundaries of a certain area (Ben-Rafael & Shohamy, 2006). It can be used to assess the impact and penetration of multilingualism in a community (Huebner, 2006 and Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). It can be used to test to test sociolinguistic theories as Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006) have done. It can be used to analyse semiotics (Lou, 2007 & Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009), and they can be conducted as qualitative micro-level studies, analysing metacultural patterns. (Coupland & Garrett, 2010).

Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006) investigated the connections between Linguistic Landscapes and major sociological/sociolinguistic theories. They proposed three sociolinguistic theories that could be tested using Linguistic Landscapes. These theories were that of Bourdieu (1983), Goffman (1981) and Boudon (1990). The methodology was relatively simple. Signs from around the city were recorded using digital camera. For them the definition of what constituted a sign was 'street signs, commercial signs, billboards, signs on national and

municipal institutions, trade names, personal study plates or public notices.’ (Ben-Rafael, 2006, 10). Key to creating an accurate profile of the Linguistic Landscape is a suitable classification system. The data was collected in two waves. The first, targeting areas that were representative of certain ethnocultural parts of society, in the case of this study-focussing on Israeli Jews, Palestinian Israelis and non-Israeli Palestinians. The second focus was on areas that contained the most prolific and visible Linguistic Landscapes. The main findings of this study were that the different groups within Israeli society generated vastly different patterns in their linguistic landscapes, with Arabic-Hebrew in Israeli-Palestinian communities and Arabic-English in East Jerusalem. Another key finding made was that linguistic landscapes do not always reflect accurately the linguistic make up of the community, which has been a common finding in linguistic landscape studies with both Landry & Bourhis (1997) and Cenoz & Gorter (2006) having similar findings.

A fair criticism of many linguistic landscape studies so far has been voiced by Cenoz & Gorter (2008) criticising the lack of analytical theory in linguistic landscape studies, which they believe is rooted in the fact that linguistic landscapes cover several different disciplines. As noted in the study by Ben-Rafael & Shohamy above, sociolinguistic theories have been used to analyse existing linguistic landscapes, but much more could be done to expand the theoretical boundaries.

Backhaus’s (2005) approach to Linguistic Landscapes involved that of analysing the phenomenon of “layering”. As time goes on, the style and pattern that is chosen for the linguistic content of signs may change, due to the prevailing social, political or economic factors. For example, Backhaus documents changes from solely monolingual Japanese block signs, to signs which contain transliterations of Japanese texts in Roman characters. The presence and change in layering has also been mentioned as far back as Spolsky & Cooper (1991) who noticed that a great deal of signage existed in Jerusalem that dated back as far as the British Mandate of Palestine, and contained prominent English in addition to Arabic.

A strong quantitative approach has been a common feature of many Linguistic Landscape studies such as aforementioned work by Backhaus (2005) and Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006) along with Huebner (2006). These authors have undertaken very effective quantitative analysis, counting and documenting the number of signs, and categorising them according to tables in a very efficient way. However, Backhaus (2005) in particular lacks any deep

exploration of the meaning behind the landscape, as was touched on in the introduction. This approach has found criticism from other academics such as Sebba (2010). This is especially important when one considers that many studies have found that the Linguistic Landscape does not accurately reflect the linguistic make-up of the community, and it is very difficult to proscribe a one-on-one direct relationship between a linguistic landscape and languages spoken in an area, as it is tempting to do with quantitative data.

A strong quantitative approach is not the only way to approach the Linguistic Landscape however, as has been demonstrated by Reh (2004) who has focused on the effects that multilingual signage has on multilingualism and Coupland & Garrett (2010) who investigated metacultural patterns purely through the analysis of photographs of signs.

When analysing signs and linguistic landscapes, it is impossible to avoid some consideration of semiotics, with two major contributors being Kress (1996) and van Leeuwen (2005). Scollon & Scollon (2003) have contributed a large body of work to the field of semiotics. In “Discourses in Place” Scollon & Scollon advance the idea of geosemiotics, the principle that meaning is not grounded in the language, but in the material world that surrounds it. Geosemiotics, itself relevant in the field of Linguistic Landscapes, seems to have excited limited interest from other researchers. However there have been some studies, most notable by Lou (2007) and ongoing research by de Saint-Georges & Norris (2000).

Semiotic approaches have been applied to Linguistic Landscapes too, Stroud & Mpendukana (2009) have made a concrete effort to try and categorise the linguistic landscape semiotically in the Saussurean tradition, which in many ways carries echoes of Scollon’s work, which in their own words they call a “material ethnography of the linguistic landscape”. They are not alone in this approach, as Lou’s (2007) study is semiotics based, focussing on a geosemiotic analysis of Chinatown in Washington DC.

The effect of language policy and governmental intervention has not gone unnoticed either with Cenoz & Gorter (2006) and Leeman & Modan (2009) scrutinizing the relationship between the local government and the affect that this has on the linguistic landscape and on multilingualism in general. Motivation for the production of signs and authorship has gone largely ignored despite the vast numbers of studies conducted into linguistic landscapes, and this is a clear problem with many of the studies conducted so far. An exception to this is Malinowski (2009) who looked into motivations for the creation of multilingual signage by Korean-American businesses. Surprisingly, a key finding was that the business owners had

little to do with the designing of the signs, and much was decided by convention. E.g., English language was included as the store was located in an English-speaking country.

Cenoz & Gorter, (2006) Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006) and Huebner (2006) have all looked at linguistic landscapes across communities

# Chapter 3 Methodology

So, from what we have so far observed there are a number of research questions that can be addressed.

First, what does the linguistic landscape tell us about multilingualism in these areas?

Second, are there any differences between the ways communities structure their linguistic landscapes?

Third, if so, are there any identifiable reasons and motivations for this? Do they fit in with the findings of other researchers?

Fourth, to what extent does the government affect the appearance of the linguistic landscape in Manchester?

To answer these questions the analysis of the linguistic landscape takes part in several stages. First on a macro level, demographic data for an area is presented, in order to give a sense of context to the area that is being analysed. Second, the numbers of signs and the languages on them are counted and presented in tables and graphs along with data on the relative prominence of languages on signs. Third, business interviews are conducted and the results displayed. Fourth, a micro-level analysis is conducted and interesting individual examples from the area analysed. This process will be repeated for two areas, Rusholme and Chinatown. This will be followed by a brief review of the language policies of the local government, and then the results from the two areas will be compared, and the implications discussed, and theoretical explanations suggested. Distinguishing between the micro level and the macro level is crucial, as has been shown by Kelly-Homes. (2010)

When counting the numbers of signs and the languages on them for the collected data to be meaningful it must be appropriately categorised. This will reveal interesting and perhaps unseen areas that may require further comment and investigation. Here, I have taken the liberty of utilising elements of the classification system used by Cenoz & Gorter (2006). This was chosen as it covers the situation comprehensively, and will focus on three areas.

The main categories of analysis are;

1. Combinations of languages. The type and number of languages that are present on signs, and the combinations of these languages that exist.
2. Prominence of the languages. Knowing the combinations of languages alone does not teach us much about the broader use and prestige of a language. In this category signs are ranked on the basis of the prominence of the language used on them..
3. There must be a distinction made between signs produced by public entities such as the government and private entities such as business. As such, the number of signs produced by both will be counted.

Perhaps it would be prudent at this time to classify what exactly counts as a “sign”. In the scope of this investigation, we use Ben-Rafael & Shohamy’s definition ‘linguistic objects that mark the public space’ (Ben-Rafael & Shohamy, 2006:7) Ben-Rafael & Shohamy go on to state ‘Included in these linguistic objects are road signs, names of sites, streets, buildings, places and institutions as well as advertising billboards, commercial shop signs and even personal visiting cards.’

In addition to this, it is important to state how ‘prominence’ is decided. A language on a sign is considered to be ‘more’ prominent if it is larger, in a more eye-catching font or in a position which makes it superior to another. For example if one language was written in the middle of the sign, while the second was relegated to the bottom right corner.

As I am not a fluent speaker or writer of many of the languages being monitored in this study, steps have to be taken to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. To this end, all the signs photographed were reviewed in the presence of an individual’s knowledgeable in those languages, in order to verify that the languages had been correctly categorised. This is especially important for example in distinguishing between for example traditional and simplified Chinese.

Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, certain businesses will be interviewed. Clearly, it is not within the scope of this dissertation to interview every business owner in the area. The businesses chosen to be interviewed have been selected to try and form an accurate snapshot from the community- rather than to empirically and explicitly verify the widespread patterns found in the signs. This means trying to get samples from different kinds of businesses, for example, restaurants, grocers, cultural services etc. It is important also to ask the customers of



the businesses which languages they use. The use of languages in different domains is very important- and will perhaps explain the patterns of language behind the signs.

There are a few shortcomings with using census data. It is important to reiterate at this point that the aim of presenting the demographic data is to give something of a “backdrop” to the linguistic situation in the area. A degree of caution must be used when using these statistics however as already stated, the Census does not ask any questions regarding an individual’s languages. Because of this, assumptions have to be made based on their place of birth regarding their languages, which may not be completely accurate.

A pilot study was conducted analysing a small area of Chinatown, to test the effectiveness of the sign categories selected, and to trial the effectiveness of the questionnaire. The sign categories seemed to work very well, and plenty of data was available for collection. However, the original format of the questionnaire often resulted in confusion from the interviewees, as many business owners were unable to answer the question “why did you choose to use these languages in your sign?” The question was often not understood. This in itself reveals much about the production of linguistic landscapes, in that they may be subconscious and not deliberate constructions. However more importantly, this pilot study revealed the importance of asking more questions about the actual languages used in the business.

We must also define the areas to be studied which have been highlighted in the maps presented below. For statistical considerations, it is important that the area covered is similar.

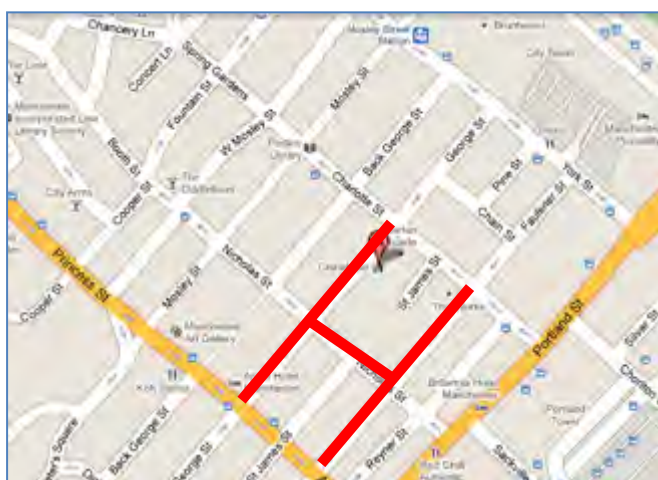


Figure 3.1 A map of the area of Chinatown analysed for Linguistic Landscapes

Postcode data from Google Maps “M1 4HE”

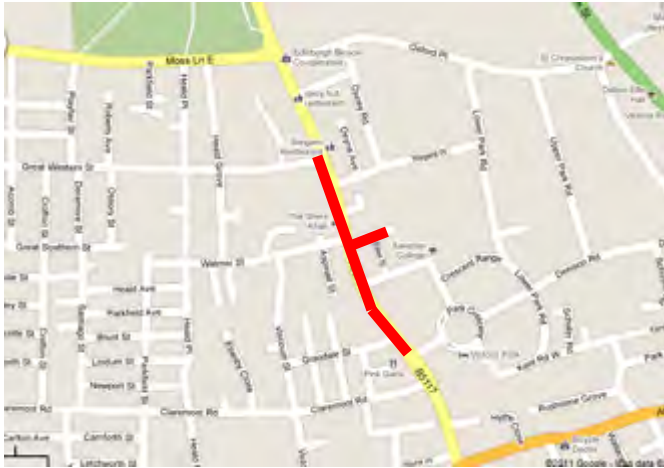


Figure 3.2 A map of the area of Rusholme analysed for Linguistic Landscapes.

Postcode data from Google Maps “M14 5TQ”

# Chapter 4 Chinatown

## 4.1 Background

When conducting an analysis of the Linguistic Landscape of Chinatown in particular, it is important to note some key things about the written system. As is well known, Chinese has been written for thousands of years, but during the turmoil of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the political structure of China fragmented. Some areas being under colonial control, for example Hong Kong, other areas split from China altogether, and the outcome of the Chinese Civil War (1927-1949) meant that two states declared themselves as being China.

So from this different political structure, arose different attitudes to the reform of the written language. The government of the People's Republic of China embarked upon a mass simplification of the written Chinese characters, under the charge that the writing system was too complicated, and needed to be simplified. A revised set of characters was produced known as "simplified" Chinese, which was also adopted by Singapore and Malaysia (Liu, 2010). The territories of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan maintained the use of their characters, without any simplification, which became known as "Traditional" characters, or Traditional Written Chinese. (Rohesnow, 2001)

The two systems are not always mutually intelligible, and because of the different political structures and societal norms in the different territories, certain forms become associated with particular groups of people (Liu, 2010). To further complicate matters, the spoken variety of Chinese used in Macau and Hong Kong is Cantonese, which is not mutually intelligible with the official language of the mainland (Mandarin) at all. In Hong Kong for example, almost all signage will be written with traditional characters, however the form which they take may be written Cantonese or standard written Chinese (Liu, 2010). This is particularly relevant as Lou (2007) has noted that the different characters have come to be associated with different groups and areas of society. For example, in the mainland of China in the past, Traditional characters were associated with backwardness and colonialism. Now, due to the economic vibrancy and success of Hong Kong and Taiwan, they have come to be associated with prosperity and success in the Mainland. Naturally, this has nothing to do with the characters themselves, and the connection is arbitrary. It is within this socio-political background that we must consider the landscape of signs revealed, and their meanings.

#### 4.2 Demographics of Chinatown in Manchester

Establishing which languages are used and spoken within a given area in the UK is a difficult task as no comprehensive language survey have ever been conducted, nor does the British census before 2011 ask questions about languages used. However, conclusions can be drawn based on questions that the census does ask, such as the country of birth.

Table 4.1 Number of Individuals born in China and Hong Kong, in Manchester City Centre and Greater Manchester County

Country	Number in City Centre	Number in Manchester (Unitary Authority)
Hong Kong	179	1366
China	127	1505
Japan	14	165
Total	306	2871

(Office for National Statistics)

Table 4.2 Number of individuals reporting their ethnicity as Chinese in Manchester City Centre and Greater Manchester County

Ethnic group	Number in City Centre	Number in Manchester (Unitary Authority)
Chinese	508	5126

(Office for National Statistics)

It can be assumed, that if an individual was born in Hong Kong they would have been educated to read and write Traditional Chinese. It is also likely that their first spoken language is Cantonese, as 89% of individuals were reported as speaking Cantonese in Hong Kong in the 2001 Census (Census and Statistics Department, 2011)

For an individual born in China, it can be assumed that they would have been educated to read and write in simplified Chinese. The question of their spoken language is harder to ascertain, as there are hundreds of languages spoken in China, however the official spoken standard of China is Mandarin, and is spoken by 50% of Chinese citizens (China Daily, 2004)

So from these statistics above, we can assume that roughly 127 individuals (41%) of the Chinese community in the City Centre would be reading and writing in Simplified Chinese.

From the statistics regarding ethnicity we can draw conclusions on the number of ethnic Chinese born in the UK. Subtracting the two values from each other we can find 202 individuals are ethnically Chinese but were not born in China. This suggests that a significant proportion of the Manchester Chinese community is second or third generation born abroad, either in the UK or elsewhere.

For the sake of this analysis, the first language of individuals born in Hong Kong are assumed to be Cantonese Speaking, Traditional Chinese writing individuals, while individuals born in China are assumed to be Mandarin speaking, Simplified Chinese writing individuals.

#### 4.3 Presentation of the Data Part I - Numbers of Signs

Table 4.3 details all of the combinations of languages on signs found within Chinatown. Figure 4.1 contains the same data in graph form. The category “Latin characters” is for when a language is normally written in another script (in this case Chinese) but has been written in Latin characters instead. This suggests language transfer without script transfer, among other things.

Table 4.3 Combinations of languages on public signs in Chinatown, Manchester.

Language Combinations on signs	Number
English Only	123
Chinese Traditional Only	30
Chinese Simplified Only	6
Chinese Traditional and English	126
Chinese Simplified and English	6
Latin Characters (Not English)	16
Chinese Traditional and English and Thai	3
Chinese Traditional and Chinese Simplified	0
Arabic and English	1
Urdu and English	0
Hindi and English	0
Thai Only	1

Vietnamese Only	2
Japanese and English	1
Japanese Only	2
Total	317

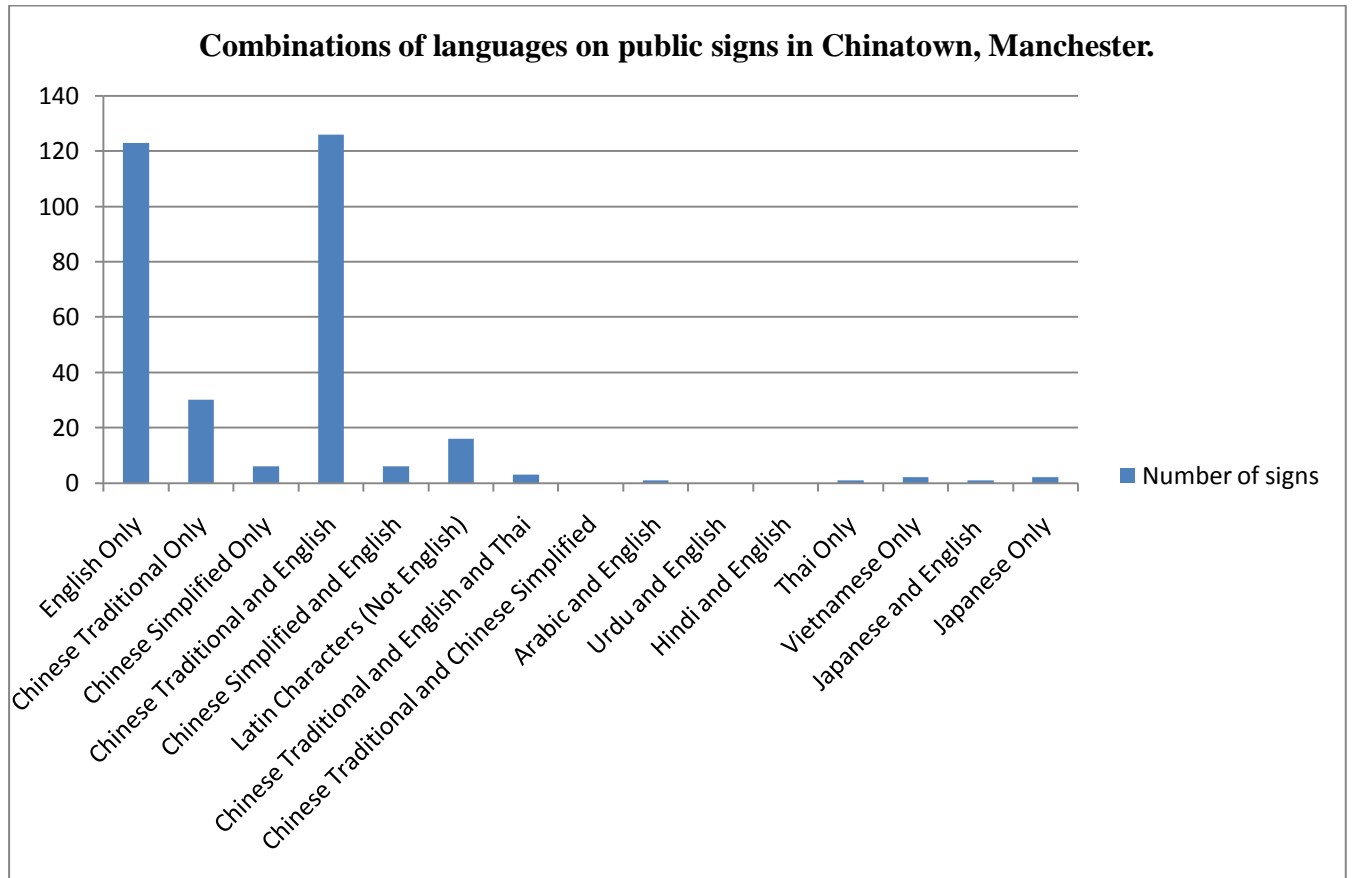


Figure 4.1 Combinations of languages on public signs in Chinatown, Manchester.

### Prominence of languages

It is important when documenting the languages of the signs in these neighbourhoods, to also count the prominence of the languages. As we can see from the data below, on signs that were multilingual the most prominent language was Chinese and then English.

When analysing linguistic landscapes, the saliency, or visibility of the languages concerned is an important part of how a specific language group views their own language (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Within one group of the signs recorded (English and Traditional Chinese) 46% of signs had Chinese as the most prominent language on the signs.

Table 4.4 Most prominent language on Traditional Chinese and English bilingual signs

Prominence of Traditional Chinese and English signs	Most prominent language on signs
English	44
Traditional Chinese	59
Equal	23

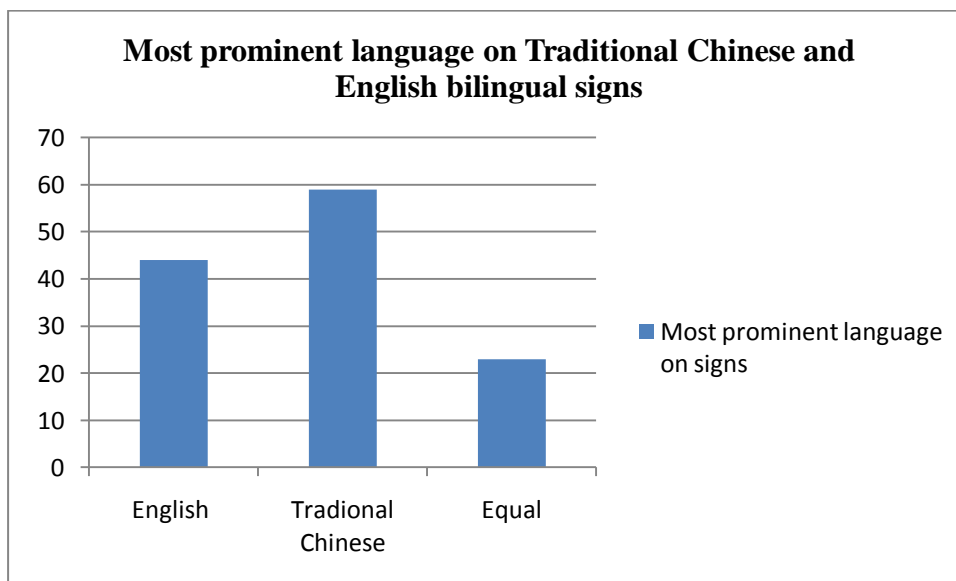


Figure 4.2 Most prominent language on Traditional Chinese and English bilingual signs

#### 4.4 Presentation of the Data Part II – Business Interviews.

As per the methodology, in total, six businesses were asked to participate- one business declined to complete the questionnaire but offered to answer questions, two other businesses did not return the questionnaire. Three others completed the questionnaire in its entirety. The businesses were a travel agent, a traditional crafts gift shop, an Asian supermarket, and a Cantonese restaurant.

Table 4.5 Number of people interviewed in each store, Chinatown

Store	Number of staff spoken to	Number of customers spoken to
Store 1	3	2
Store 2	1	4
Store 3	2	4
Total	6	10

### **Store 1: Travel Agents**

**Store Sign:** This store had both Traditional Chinese and English in equal proportions. They had chosen to use both languages in the sign as a way to appeal to all different customers across the community.

**Physical Description:** This travel agent focused greatly on flights to and from various parts of the Far East, but also to other worldwide destinations. It also offered a great number of trips and excursions around the British Isles.

#### **Languages in use:**

All three staff in the store reported that Mandarin and Cantonese were their two main languages of operation, with a mix of both being used both amongst staff and with customers. English is also used to a lesser extent, but mainly because it is an “international language”.

#### **Clientele:**

The staff reported that there had been a large increase in Mandarin speaking customers in the last few years, and that they also had some mandarin speaking staff. To quote, “more Chinese were from China cities- in the past, most were from Hong Kong.” The two customers in store were Mandarin speaking

#### **National Origin:**

All three staff stated their national origin to be Hong Kong and their native tongue to be Cantonese.

### **Store 2: Traditional crafts gift shop**



**Store Sign:**

This particular store had both Traditional Chinese and English in the shop name. The Chinese language was most prominent. The English text was a direct translation of the Chinese. When asked, the store owner could not give a single reason for why they chose to create the sign the way they did, suggesting it was an unconscious decision. They had not given it much thought when it was put up. They suggested that it may just have been a case of fitting in with other stores in the area.

**Physical Description:**

This store was of average size family run business, and was always reasonably busy when visited. The stores goods included a mix of Chinese language printed media (mostly written in traditional Chinese) religious supplies such as joss sticks and arts and crafts material such as calligraphy writing equipment.

**Languages in use:**

The store owner reported that the language use between colleagues in the store was that of Cantonese; however they stated that the use of language with customers was a mix of Cantonese, Mandarin and English. The store owner was trilingual in English, Cantonese and Mandarin and saw no issue with this. The store owner noted that there had been a large increase of the number of Mandarin speakers in the last five years. He also noted that many of these new arrivals seemed to be permanent.

**Clientele:** The clientele in the shop at the time of visiting were one Cantonese speaker and one Mandarin speaker, and two White English-speaking British.

**National Origin:** The store owner expressed their identity as “Chinese/English” and their home identity as “Chinese”

**Store 3: Asian Supermarket****Store Sign:**

This store had traditional Chinese and English in equal proportions in its signage. The store owner again could not recall the motivation for producing the sign in both languages.

**Physical Description:**

This store was also a family-run business, and prided itself on its heritage as being one of the longest established businesses in Chinatown in Manchester. Food available in the store was very diverse and represented a wide variety of different parts of Asia, ranging from several different cuisines of China itself, to Japanese, Malaysian, Thai, Indonesian and Vietnamese foodstuffs. Perhaps indicative of the greater ethnic make up of Chinatown's Asian community.

**Languages in use:**

The store owner declined to fill in the questionnaire, but was happy to answer questions. The native language of the store owner was Cantonese and Hakka, which is a minority Chinese language in Hong Kong. Cantonese was the language used between colleagues at the store. The store owner noted that in the last few years, the number of Mandarin speaking customers had increased, however neither she nor most of her colleagues could speak Mandarin and they expressed a degree of distaste for the language, and no intention to learn it.

**Clientele:**

Mixed, at the time of visiting, there were two White English-speaking British, and two Chinese, Cantonese speaking individuals.

**National Origin:**

The staff of the supermarket identified very strongly with Hong Kong and Cantonese as their language. The store owner hailed from a rural area of Hong Kong.

As can be seen here, the primary variety of written Chinese that can be observed is Traditional Chinese. This was also the most common variety to be combined with English. Simplified Chinese, as primarily used in the mainland has a comparatively tiny presence, with a total number of signs only accounting for around 5% of the total Chinese language signs.

When one considers the demographic data for this area however, it reveals an interesting picture. Chinatown sits in the middle of the statistical area "City Centre Ward" which has an area of 2.2 square miles (Office for National Statistics, Country of Birth). Within this area the total number of people recorded as being born in Hong Kong numbers 179 individuals, while

the number for China is recorded at 127. Assuming the above is true, 127 individuals would be expected to be using simplified characters-41%, yet this is a great mismatch when compared to the number of signs written in Simplified Chinese, which is only 5% of the total.

There are a number of possible explanations for this. The first is the possibility that the phenomenon described by Lou (2007) is occurring in Manchester's Chinatown, in that there are numerous mainland businesses which are writing in Traditional Chinese to have their businesses associated with success. However, the results of the questionnaires would seem to discourage this idea, as they suggest that a large number of business owners are from Hong Kong, a traditional Chinese writing area.

Linguistic Landscapes are not designed; they are generated from a mixture of forces. Such as, the community's need and economic capability to invest in the time and resources to produce the signs. So tellingly, here we have a the dominant economic and social sector of the Chinese community, the Traditional Chinese Writing and Cantonese speaking residents, responsible for much of the Linguistic Landscape, with the much economically weaker, simplified Chinese writing, Mandarin speaking community not pulling it's demographic weight. It is also worth noting, that due to Chinatown's location in the heart of Manchester, the rent and rates of shop rental are going to be high, and it is less likely that relatively recent arrivals from the Mainland of China, with less economic power, will be able to challenge this. This is interesting, as it reflects the situation found by Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006) in their investigation of the power relations relating to the Linguistic Landscape in Jerusalem.

As in Ben-Rafael and Shohamy (2006) a Bordieusard hypothesis can be applied to these results. A Bordieusard hypothesis attempts to explain the features of a linguistic landscape on the basis of inter-group power relations, suggesting that there are both dominant and subordinate groups- in this case, the dominant group is Cantonese speaking, traditional Chinese writing residents of Chinatown. The power has been afforded to this group through their long presence in the area, and the subsequent economic strength they have developed. As is indicated from the questionnaires, a large number of the business owners are aware and understand that a number of their customers come from Mainland China, yet they continue to display signs in Traditional Chinese.

Information from the Wai Yin Chinese Women Society (WYCWS) confirms that Manchester's Chinatown was originally a chiefly Cantonese community. It is most likely, when taking into consideration all that is mentioned above, including the questionnaires, that

the established and dominant economic group is Cantonese speaking, Traditional Chinese writing individuals.

#### 4.5 Presentation of the data Part III: Micro-Level analysis

One particularly interesting feature revealed in the analysis of Chinatown's linguistic landscape is revealed by comparing the images below.



Figure 4.3 Multilingual sign for supermarket



Figure 4.4 Multilingual signage for accountants



Figure 4.5 Multilingual signage for restaurant



Figure 4.6 Multilingual signage for publishers

When comparing fig 4.3 with fig 4.4 and fig 4.5 with 4.6, one can observe that there is a noticeable difference between the relative size and prominence of the bilingual text. In the two restaurants, the two languages are not afforded equal recognition, while in virtually all of the placards for the solicitors, law firms, and other organisations listed in 4.3 and 4.5 it can be observed that they are of equal proportion. The relative saliency of a language, be it Chinese or English seems to vary depending on the nature of the business. For example, service industries such as law firms, accountants, travel agencies etc appeared to have a much higher prevalence of English and Chinese displayed in equal proportions (e.g. same font and size) than other forms of business such as restaurants.

It could be argued that the linguistic landscapes can be linked with different domains of language use, as occurs in spoken conversation. For example, a lawyer is far more likely to need to utilise bilingualism in their everyday work with Chinese speaking clients in an English speaking country, than perhaps they would in a restaurant.

For future studies, it could be a point of great interest to assess the relative prominence of a language against the nature of the business, and see if there are any correlations between the nature of business and their languages use, and the relative prominence of the texts in multilingual signage.



Figure 4.7 Multilingual English, Chinese, Japanese Video game store

This store is located in Chinatown and specialises in selling imported video games, Japanese comics, designer toys and other such items. This store is located in Chinatown, yet the most

prominent text is English and also Japanese “ニューエスト” (literally “nyu-e su to”, English: “New East”) In addition to this in the smallest characters is Traditional Chinese, “新東” which also means “New East”.

This sign presents a number of interesting identities, the Japanese text is very prominent, yet it is also isolated, as there is no other information and nothing inside the store in Japanese. So here, the Japanese identity appears to be mostly symbolic, with no communicative purpose. This idea is given more weight by the comparatively tiny Japanese population in the area; only 165 people in the whole of Manchester stated their place of birth as Japan (Office for National Statistics). It is interesting that a store such as this would be found in this area, and is clearly not here to support a Japanese community, suggesting the language has emblematic use.

Humphreys & Miyazoe-Wong (2007) have noted the high popularity of learning Japanese as a foreign language in Hong Kong. They noted the great popularity of the language was partially due to the appeal of Japanese popular culture, and noted that the popularity of the language far outstripped that of other major foreign languages such as German or French. They also noted the prevalence of Japanese popular culture in Hong Kong.

With this in mind, it suggests one explanation for this particular sign’s complex multilingual identity, which effectively transplants a Hong Kong phenomenon onto the streets of Manchester.



Figure 4.8 Chinese only restaurant notice

This sign, attached to the outside of a large Chinese restaurant is advertising half price dim sum. There is no English translation anywhere nearby, so its presence indicates that

Chinatown does still cater for Chinese people looking to eat out, and not simply for non-Chinese looking for a Chinese meal experience.

# Chapter 5 Rusholme

## 5.1 Background

The ethnolinguistic make-up of the area known as Rusholme, or the “Curry Mile” in Manchester is complex. The Indian subcontinent is particular famous for the enormous amount of linguistic diversity it has. Both Pakistan and India have richly diverse linguistic palates, with 438 languages listed for India alone. (Ethnologue, online resource)

The languages of the sub-continent are diverse in their written form as they are in their spoken form, with Devanagari and Urdu script being two popular orthographies. Interestingly, Arabic script is prevalent in the Curry Mile, as we shall soon see. However, Arabic script represents more than just spoken Arabic. Modified versions of Arabic script can be used to write Urdu and Iranian languages such as Farsi, which complicates the issue further.

Another linguistic issue is particularly relevant when discussing the linguistic landscape of Rusholme. Urdu and Hindi are two languages that are mutually intelligible to speakers, but since the division of India in 1947, they have been written using two different scripts. Urdu, which is used in Pakistan, is written using a modified version of Arabic. While Hindi, which is used in India, is written using the Devanagari script. This issue becomes particular apparent when looking at some of the details of the Linguistic Landscape in Rusholme.

## 5.2 Demographics of Rusholme, Manchester

Table 5.1 Area of Birth in Rusholme

Area of Birth	
UK	10197
India	200
Pakistan	694
Bangladesh	554
Middle East	278

(Office for National Statistics)



Table 5.2 Ethnic composition of Rusholme

Ethnicity	Number
Indian	686
Pakistani	1656
Bangladeshi	936
White British	7422

(Office for National Statistics)

The area is ethnically diverse, with a large number of the population being of South Asian origin. Given the linguistic diversity of these countries, there is likely to be a diverse set of languages spoken in Rusholme. As the census data suggests a large number of these individuals are second and third generation British born Asians. Taking one group as an example, 1656 individuals claim Pakistani ethnicity, however only 694 were actually born in Pakistan.

From the figures above it can be deduced that in Rusholme there are going to be varying levels of fluency in these languages, some being native speakers, and others possessing something of a passive knowledge of the languages. Such patterns have been revealed by Littlefair, Morgan and Tebutt (2010) in their analysis of spoken language in Rusholme.

### 5.3 Presentation of the Data Part I- Sign Data

Below are the different combinations of languages on signs, and the numbers of which found in the area specified in the methodology.

Table 5.3 Combinations of languages on public signs in Rusholme Manchester.

Language Combinations	Number of signs
English Only	64
Arabic Only	4
Urdu Only	2
Farsi Only	2
Latin Characters (Not English)	25
English and Arabic	37
English and Urdu	6
English and Pashto	2
Hindi	1
Chinese Traditional	1
English and Japanese	2

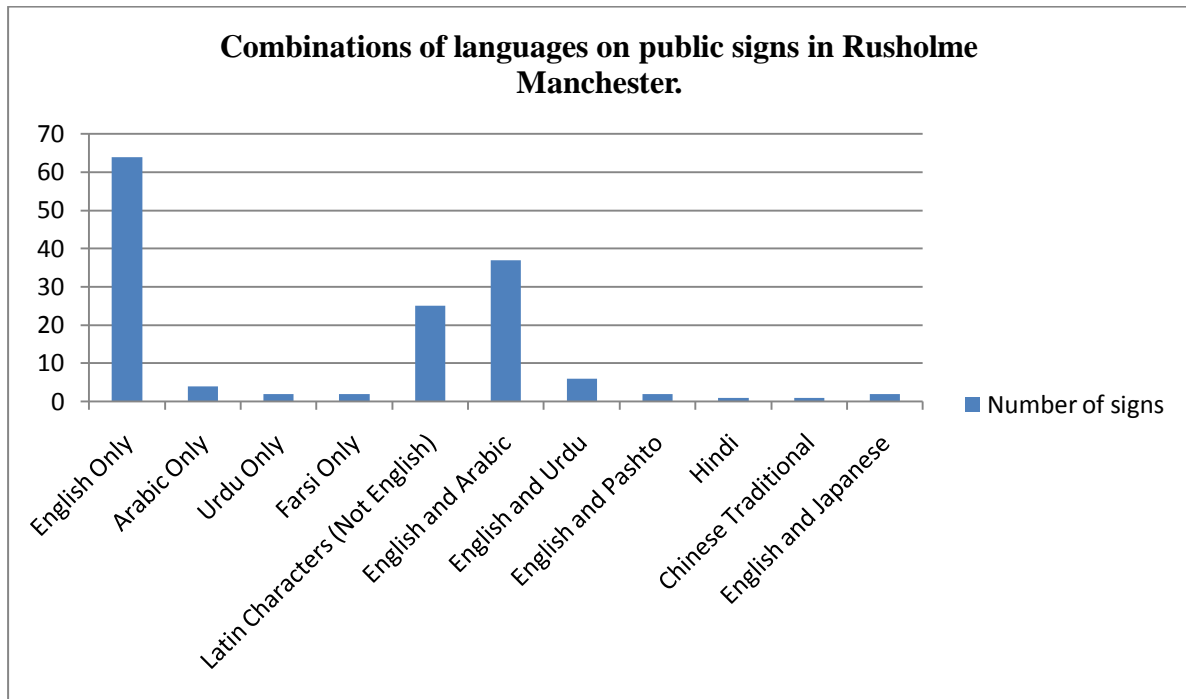


Figure 5.1 Combinations of languages on public signs in Rusholme, Manchester

We can see in Rusholme a large number of languages in the landscape, with the two most dominant languages being English and Arabic. As in Chinatown, we have a situation where the reported demographic situation is not reflected in the linguistic landscape. Individuals from the Middle East are only reported to make up a very small percentage of the population, yet Arabic is by far and away the most visible language. Urdu, which might be expected to be the dominant variety that is visible has a tiny presence, the reasons for which we shall explore further later.

### Most prominent language on multilingual signs

Here, all the bilingual English and Arabic signs were assessed to find what the relative prominence was.

Table 5.4 Most prominent language on English and Arabic signs in Rusholme, Manchester.

Most Prominent Language	Number of signs
English	26
Arabic	1
English and Arabic Equal	10

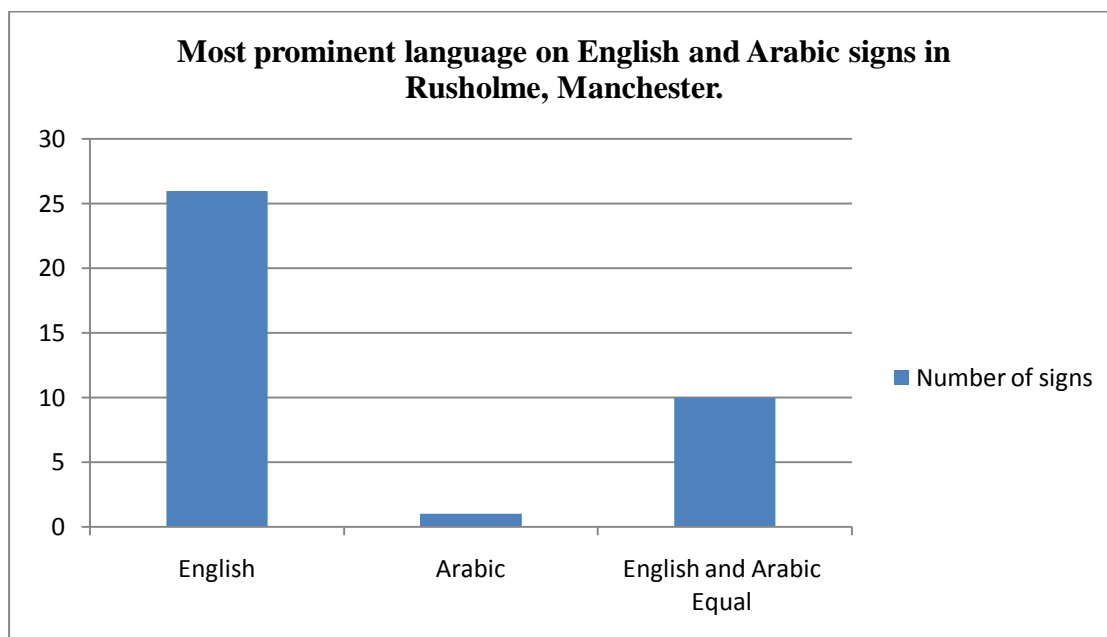


Figure 5.2 Most prominent language on English and Arabic signs in Rusholme, Manchester.

## 5.4 Presentation of the Data Part II- Business Interviews

Below is the data collected from interviewing a number of businesses in Rusholme.

Table 5.5 Number of people interviewed in each store, Rusholme

Store	Number of staff spoken to	Number of customers spoken to
Store 1	1	4
Store 2	1	3
Store 3	2	4
Total	4	10

### **Store 1: Indian Restaurant**

#### **Store Sign:**

The store sign was written in Latin characters, however the name of the store had its origin in Urdu, meaning “lover”. All other external signage was in English. The store owner could not recall the motivation for naming the store this way.

#### **Physical Description:**

This restaurant is based in the bustling heart of the curry mile, surrounded by other restaurants on all sides, and clearly in fierce competition with them. The pricing of the restaurant put it roughly in the mid-range of restaurants in the area.

#### **Languages in use:**

The staff reported that they regularly used Urdu amongst themselves to communicate, but chiefly used English to communicate with customers. They did get local people from the community in their restaurant, but chiefly, the customers were English speaking local people.

**Clientele:**

The owner reported that almost all customers were English speaking British. This was the case with all four people spoken to.

**National Origin:**

The owner reported that his national origin was Pakistani, and that his native tongue was Urdu.

**Store 2: Jewellery Store**

**Store Sign:** The store sign was written in Latin characters, and the store owner reported it to be the family name. He stated that he picked the name because of heritage and tradition. When asked why it was not also written in Urdu, he said that this was because not enough people could read the script.

**Physical Description:**

This jewellery store is smaller than most located in the area, and is flanked by rather more extravagant competitors further down the street. It positions itself as relatively youthful and has a modern and new décor.

**Languages in use:**

The two staff reported that amongst themselves they used both Urdu and English. But, with customers they used a mix of Urdu, English and Punjabi.

**Clientele:**

The owner reported that the customers they received were very broad, from across the whole of the Asian community in the area. They also received customers from outside the Asian community. Three customers were in the store at the time. Two of them were Urdu and English bilingual British born Asians, and the third described himself as British Sikh, but spoke only English.

**National Origin:**

The owner described themselves as “British/Pakistani” and enthused this greatly during the discussion.

**Store 3 Second Indian Restaurant**

**Store Sign:** As in the previous examples, the store’s sign was written in Latin characters, but had the meaning in Urdu of “Red Palace”. There was no Urdu script in the sign and there was no other script present in the sign- however the branding of the restaurant included a red-temple like structure as a logo, so clearly there is a deliberate semantic connection. The store owner could not remember the exact reason for choosing the name, but suggested heritage had played a part.

**Physical Description:**

This is one of the largest restaurants in Rusholme and a major competitor for business on the strip. The price margins are competitive, but find themselves on the upper end of the scale.

**Languages in use:**

The staff stated that amongst themselves they used a mixture of Urdu and English. However they used almost exclusively English when communicating with the customers in the store.

**Clientele:**

The staff reported that the clientele of their restaurant was extraordinarily broad, encompassing people from all kinds of backgrounds and interests, and from all across Manchester. However, once again only English-speaking British were seen in the restaurant.

**National Origin:**

The owner described his national and ethnic identity as Pakistani, and expressed his Linguistic identity as Urdu; his colleague also expressed this identity.

**5.5 Presentation of the data Part III: Micro-Level analysis**

An interesting feature of the linguistic landscape in Rusholme is revealed in the script itself. It would be prudent to explore the reasons for why Urdu has such a relatively light presence

in signage versus the size of the community, and of course the fact that it seems to be a widely spoken language. Urdu is traditionally written in a variant of Arabic script, and there are several examples of this occurring in the Rusholme area. However, there are also a number of signs, particularly store names that contained the Urdu language but written in Latin script, some of which will be listed below.

This suggests a number of things. Firstly, to the passer by with no knowledge of Urdu, the sign is intelligible, however the deeper meaning will not be communicated. Consequently the sign will have a “symbolic” reading, the unfamiliar word may be symbolic of South Asian cuisine, or culture. However, to one who possesses knowledge of the language of Urdu, this sign will have meaning that is deeper and more detailed, indicating more about the nature of the restaurant itself a “functional” or “communicative” reading.

In addition, it is interesting to note Urdu being written in a script that was not originally intended for. This suggests that there are individuals out there who possess an understanding of the Urdu language but not of Arabic script, suggesting intergenerational shifts in language maintenance amongst the community. This pattern of writing Urdu in Latin characters was present in more than just store signs- there were also signs in the street such as in fig 5.1 below.



Figure 5.3 Urdu in Latin characters, Urdu script and English sign in Rusholme.

Here, Urdu is written both in Latin script and Arabic Script, with a small amount of English at the very bottom of the sign. Both the Latin and Urdu script say the same thing.

This pattern of writing signs in Latin characters but with a semantic meaning rooted in another language brings a number of interesting issues to the fold here. Consider the example below.



Figure 5.4 Hindi/Urdu shop name in Latin characters

Here, we have a restaurant with the name “lal Qila” which means “Red Castle” in both Urdu and Hindi. A visitor to this restaurant who has no knowledge of these languages will have an ‘emblematic’ or ‘symbolic’ reading of the sign. In other words, they will be able to read it, but that will be the extent of their understanding of the sign. An individual with knowledge of Hindi or Urdu however, will read the true semantic meaning of the restaurant, a “communicative” reading. In addition, by being written in Latin characters, this means it is impossible to tell if the individuals running the restaurant are from India or Pakistan, as it is not using Urdu or Devanagari script, which makes the restaurant more open and inclusive to more customers. It is interesting that there is also a red castle in the restaurant’s logo, showing that the semantic connection is not lost on the sign makers.

Further motivations are possible. Khan (2011) noted that the patterns of multilingualism in the South Asian community in Manchester are undergoing change. Khan noted that particularly among those knowledgeable in Urdu, that although the language itself is transferring from one generation to another, Urdu as a script is not. Although this is something that is difficult to measure empirically, the low proportion of Urdu script versus



the relatively high numbers of individuals in the area who either were born in Pakistan or are descended from people who were, suggest more complex explanations.

In the same study Khan also noted that Urdu speaking second or third generation individuals when greeting another Urdu speaking individual would initially converse in Urdu, before moving to English. As we can see from some of the individual stores that were interviewed have either names that originate in Urdu, or use Urdu script in some part of their store sign, yet they report that they do much of their business in English. It is possible that this is an extension of this behaviour.

It could be suggested that English operates as a lingua franca to a certain extent in this area, serving to act as a language of intercommunity communication, particularly among second and third generation members of the community.

The linguistic landscape may in fact betray more complex linguistic identities that lie beneath the surface. Consider the image below.



Figure 5.5 Restaurant sign indexing multiple identities.

This sign reveals a complex multilingual identity. The most prominent language visible here is English, both in the largest font, and a prominent typeface. The second script visible is Arabic, which states the name of the restaurant “Arbil Restaurant and Kebab” however there

is additional information available in the Arabic script which is not stated in the English which states “special function room”. In addition to this are two flags, one of that of Iraq, and another of that of Iraqi Kurdistan, a non-sovereign autonomous region of Iraq.

The linguistic identity of Kurds is complex. They possess their own language, yet this can be written with a number of different scripts, from Latin characters to a modified version of Arabic depending on the geographical situation. So it seems we have a restaurant here that is owned by individuals of Kurdish origins, yet their linguistic identity is not mentioned in the sign.



Figure 5.6 Rendering of English in Urdu

This sign also is unusual, in that it is showing the reverse of the phenomenon of Urdu/Hindi being written in Latin characters. In this sign, the Urdu script says literally ‘Special lahori paan’ not using the Urdu word for ‘special’ instead writing English with Urdu script. This is the same for the whole of the sign except ‘Green Tea’ in which the Urdu word has been used.

## Chapter 6 Government and Official Policy

The City council of Manchester was contacted to give their position on Multilingualism in the city. Manchester City Council's language policy has been documented before by Donakey (2007). When asked about the Council's Policy towards multilingual signage, the Council stated that there is no legislation in the UK making the use of one language or another mandatory- this includes foreign languages and English language also. The council stated that multilingual signage, when it does feature is 'by partnership with local business'. There seems to be little consideration within the council towards this issue, and it does not seem to be at the forefront of their concerns. However, it does show that multilingual signage is very much linked to business, and hence economic concerns.

Generally, language policy of the council can best be described as highly unregulated. The local government seems to take a "hands off" policy towards languages in Manchester. It is not beyond the scope of the government to alter the Linguistic Landscape of a territory should they wish, even in the domain of private signs, it would simply be a matter of creating ordinances outlawing the use of foreign languages on signs. However this has not occurred.

In both Chinatown and Rusholme, there were no signs were produced by public bodies that occurred in a language other than English. But this does occur in other areas of the city, and in other areas around the country.

The council does however, run a comprehensive and detailed translations programme for non-speakers of English, and to overcome any language or cultural issues. An example of this would be the "linkworker" service. The linkworker service offers those who need it access to an interpreter in another language, for any number of purposes (Donakey, 2007) The council does produce some literature in languages other than English, which could potentially form part of the linguistic landscape. Landry and Bourhis (1997) noted that usually the dominant language of public signs is the language of the group that has majority control of the territory in question, which is certainly true of English where applicable, but not so much with other groups.

Table 6.1 Signage produced by Public Bodies in Chinatown Manchester

Area	Signs Produced by Public Bodies	Signs Produced by Private enterprise
Chinatown	23	294
Rusholme	21	146

From the observations carried out in Chinatown and Rusholme, all signs produced by public bodies, such as street signs, markings on the post boxes etc, have all been supplied in English only. Conversely, any multilingual signage was always provided by private enterprise. The closest a public entity came to providing multilingual signage services, was the multilingual signage used on the NCP Car Park in Chinatown, which is run in joint venture with the City Council. The script used was traditional Chinese.

# Chapter 7 Comparison between Chinatown and Rusholme Linguistic landscapes

At this point it may be interesting to point out some broad comparisons between the two areas. The proportion of signs in English is seemingly the same in both areas. As mentioned earlier, the presence of English-only signs was at 43% in Rusholme, while it was at 38% for Chinatown. With the use of a chi square test, the p-value was 0.30498355, so the difference is not statistically significant.

The first and most noticeable difference with Chinatown's linguistic landscape is that the linguistic landscape in Rusholme appears to be more diverse, with more languages and varieties competing for space in the public domain. However, the linguistic landscape was not quite as diverse as might have been expected of an area with such a large number of people from different backgrounds, as indicated by the population and census data, and the multilingual backgrounds of many of the people that were met when interviewing business owners.

There is also a higher percentage of different written varieties present, and there seems to be a degree of competition for space, and dominance of the public sphere, what Landry and Bourhis (1997, 29) call "*competing for visibility*". Despite this, the two dominant languages on signage are Arabic and English. However this is complicated by the results of the questionnaires, and the census data, which suggests that British born Pakistanis and Pakistani nationals are major presence in the area. This suggests a few things, firstly that the demographics of Rusholme are clearly changing but also as discussed in chapter 5, that knowledge of Urdu is passing down through the generations, but the script is not.

Comparing the relative visibility of languages in the area reveals some interesting differences:

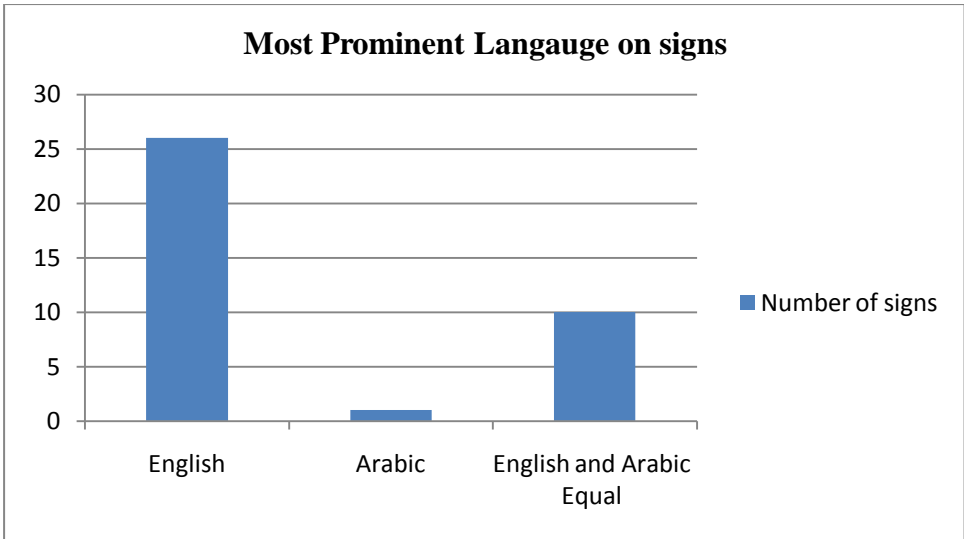


Figure 7.1 Most prominent language on signs in Rusholme

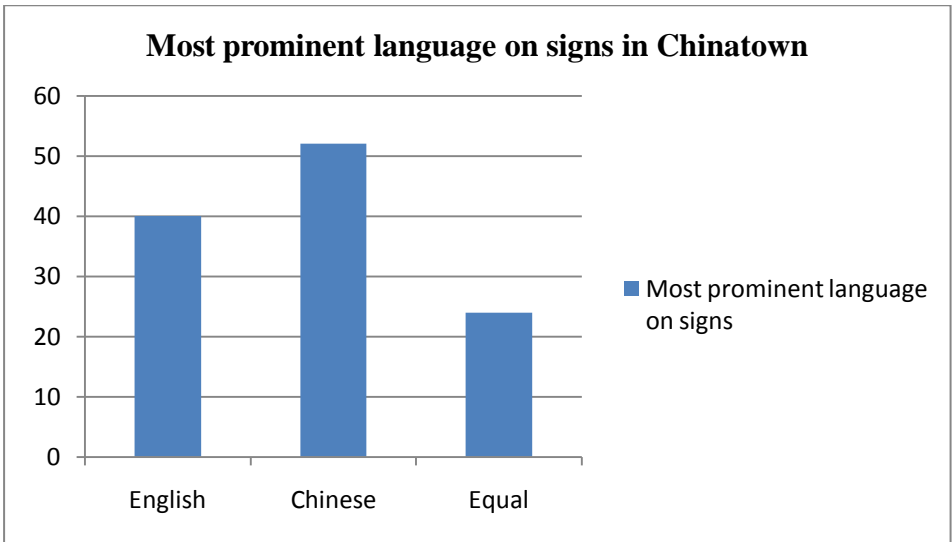


Figure 7.2 Most prominent language on signs in Chinatown

Here we can see a marked difference between the two areas. In Chinatown, Chinese language often finds itself on the most prominent position on multilingual signs in the area. While in Rusholme, one finds that English far and away is in the most prominent position on signage.

The relatively high prominence of English in both areas is likely not only because it is the majority language of the country in which these places are located. Several studies have found that English stands as a marker of globalisation, sophistication and modernity. (Kelly-Holmes 2005, Thurlow and Jaworski, 2003) and this will contribute towards this.

Perhaps it would be prudent at this time to look at certain theories, of languages as commodities. Language as a commodity refers to the idea that languages have an intrinsic economic value, that they are commodities in the same way that manufactured goods or labour can be (Tan & Rubdy, 2008). This can refer to all levels of a language, from its capital value (rather than cultural value) in learning a foreign language, to the production of multilingual signs. Leeman & Modan (2009), undertook a deep study of Washington DC's Chinatown, and came to the conclusion that 'the state and private enterprise use symbols of Chinese ethnicity and culture, including language, graphics, and architectural forms, to turn Chinatown into a commodity, marketing it and the things in it for consumption' (Leeman & Modan 2009: 338) It is highly likely, that the same characteristics can be seen used here in Manchester's Chinatown, and this may explain some of the high ratios of Chinese written language that have been observed, when comparing Chinatown with Rusholme. Especially when one considers that Chinatown is a major centre for business and consumption.

Another similarity is that in both areas when shop owners were asked why they had chosen to create multilingual signs, they often said that they did not know the reason. When reasons were suggested, they were often to do with culture and heritage. This then concurs with Malinowski's (2009) findings, that the business owners often do not have much of a conscious involvement in the sign production process.

## Chapter 8 Discussion

Many analyses of Linguistic Landscapes have focussed on the relative power of linguistic groups in a community, and this has been a defining feature of the analysis of the linguistic landscape. For example Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006) Cenoz & Gorter (2006) and Landry & Bourhis (1997) all mentioned power relations as a defining constructive feature of the Linguistic Landscapes they analysed. On first observations, it does seem that these power relations can be used to explain some of the patterns that have been observed in the community, for example the dominance of traditional Chinese and the emerging habit of writing Urdu in Latin characters. However Huebner (2006) suggested in his conclusion that the patterns of language he had observed in the Linguistic Landscape of Bangkok called into question ‘the boundaries of a speech community’ and additionally that this challenged the very question of what constitutes a language at all, due to the high degree of mixed code.

Taking the ideas touched on by Huebner one step further; there have been calls in some quarters to look at multilingualism more broadly. Matras (2008) calls for a ‘decoupling of multilingualism from arguments of power’. Appadurai (1992) notes that it is something of a fallacy to rigidly connect ethnic identities from the country of origin, to the settled communities in another country, as we have in Manchester in the case of Chinatown and Rusholme. This is a process Appadurai defines as ‘De-territorialisation’ (Appadurai, 1992, 49). Due to generations of migration, some individuals in multiethnic, multilingual communities were born and raised outside of the country of ethnic origin. This can be seen reflected in the census data for the two areas studied when one compares the number of people stating their ethnicity as Chinese or Pakistani, to the numbers of individuals born in these countries.

These ideas connect strongly with the processes associated with plurilingualism. Plurilingualism theories suggest that languages today can be used to fulfil certain roles within society, not necessarily in competition with each other, but in harmony, each fulfilling a certain function. Power-based arguments of multilingualism assume that with variation comes conflict, when this may not be the case. Glaser (2005) drawing on evidence from Bierbaumer (2003) cites a very clear example of how knowledge of numerous languages has resulted in their use in a variety of different circumstances and domains. In this research we



have found similar things for example, simplified Chinese writing individuals in Chinatown are still able to converse in Mandarin with Cantonese speaking-Traditional Chinese writing individuals. Second generation British born Pakistanis that can speak Urdu among some friends, English amongst others and appreciate the broader linguistic tradition in the environment around them.

Hypotheses on the structure of multilingual communities have roots in the very way that the brains of multilingual individuals process language information in the first place. Paradis (2004) conducted significant research into the nature of bilingualism in the human brain. This research, was best summarised by Matras (2008, 72)

‘Finally, psycholinguistic models of bilingual language processing are gradually developing a consensus according to which bilinguals have their full set of linguistic structures available to them at all times, and that the selection of individual lexical items and constructions proceeds in much the same way as the selection of appropriate stylistic variants in a monolingual repertoire – namely by reviewing context appropriateness, and inhibiting inappropriate choices.’

Matras (2008) further touches on the idea of multiple identities. So just as multilingual, multiethnic identities in the individuals of both Chinatown and Rusholme are not compartmentalised and static, neither are the Linguistic Landscapes that are an extension of them. The simplified Chinese writing, Mandarin speaking group of Chinese, is no less distinct in their identity despite their lack of representation in the Linguistic Landscape. They are perfectly capable of working within. On a more extreme level, the myriad of different language groups present in Rusholme, are no less distinct in their identity- For example the Kurdish kebab shop. So, in answer to the first research question, the answer is yes, communities do structure their linguistic landscapes differently; however this is a result of complex interactions of political, social, linguistic and economic factors.

We can see this effect in the multiple functions that a sign may serve, both communicative and emblematic, and the very vibrant linguistic diversity that this study suggests exists in Manchester. This is not an isolated incidence either, the Council of Europe has noted the increasing relevance of plurilingualism, and has even made the furtherance of it a part of their language policy. And the UK, as a part of Europe is likely to be affected by that policy.

Language can be used to mark community boundaries, and create so-called linguistic ghettos, which restrict access to them from certain groups. It is entirely plausible for linguistic landscapes to form a part of this phenomenon. However in both Rusholme and Chinatown, this does not seem to be the case. The linguistic landscapes are diverse, taking in a number of different languages of the community. Interviews with the staff members reveal that almost all are multilingual individuals able to operate in a variety of language environments, and also capable of using different languages for different functions.

Exploring our third research question, as to whether the council's policies affect the linguistic landscape. It is interesting to note that in both areas; virtually all multilingual signage was produced by private business and not by public bodies. It would be prudent to explore the reasons for this. As mentioned in the chapter before, the council is not obligated legally to produce signage in any language at all. There are no laws enforcing English, or any other language on signage, and its widespread existence on publically created signs is a matter of tradition, rather than law. This works both ways. As the council has not been obligated to produce signs they have not done so, in addition the multilingual communities with no restrictions on what they can produce have readily risen to the challenge, producing widespread multilingual signage. Nichols (2004) has demonstrated that an increase in centralised state power tends to result in a decrease in linguistic diversity, and this is the complete opposite to what is occurring in Manchester.

As mentioned earlier, the council takes a very much "hands off" approach towards language policy and have generally allowed the communities to develop as and how they wish- which can be seen to have contributed to the high level of linguistic diversity visible in the area. Within the theories of de-territorialisation and multilingual identities, the local government approach has created an environment in which these identities can naturally thrive, despite the fact that this does not seem to be by design, more of a "happy accident" of inaction on the council's part. So the answer is yes, the local government can affect linguistic landscapes.

It would be sensible to look at the wider linguistic situation and how it has come to arise. Within the UK, the government has an extremely relaxed attitude to language policy, much how it also has a very relaxed attitude to multiculturalism. This is at odds with say, France, where there are specific rules which are intended to defend the status of one language over another, e.g. French must always be the most prominent language on signage, the so-called

‘Toubon law’ (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). It is important to note that it is within this framework that the current Linguistic situation has been allowed to develop.

When considering Communicative versus Emblematic signs, this may also come to explain some of the patterns we see above. Broadly speaking, the idea of signs that are “communicative” or “emblematic”, even both, has been found in the Linguistic Landscape of both Chinatown and Rusholme. This is in line with findings of “informational versus symbolic” signs in many other studies such as Cenoz & Gorter (2006), Ben-Rafael & Shohamy (2006) and Landry and Bourhis (1997).

(Lou (2007) commented on the implementation of linguistic policy in Chinatown in Washington DC. Due to high rents, and declining amount of business the amount of Chinese present in Chinatown began to decline, as did the number of multilingual signs. Chinese language is a key part of emblematic language use in Chinatown. Without Chinese language, a Chinatown cannot be defined as “Chinese” by Chinese people or anyone else. The local business and local government banded together to make it mandatory for businesses in Chinatown to display multilingual signage, with the population of Chinatown shrinking, this was clearly a move to protect the emblematic image of the area. It may be that emblematic use of Chinese is seen as a key part of Chinatown’s identity, and this explains the high proportion of signage versus the relatively small population of Chinese reading and writing individuals.

Another thing that is clear from this study is that the Linguistic Landscape is by no means an accurate reflection of the linguistic situation that exists on the ground, confirming what was found in Landry & Bourhis (1997) and Cenoz & Gorter (2006). The appearance of the Linguistic Landscape is affected by a variety of external factors, the strongest seemingly being both prestige, and the economic power of the users of the language, and it’s acceptance by those in the community. As Landry & Bourhis (1997, 28) put it ‘Public signs in the in group language imply that one’s own group has gained a measure of institutional control within key sectors of the economy, mass media and state functions’. So for example we see that Cantonese speaking Hong Kongers form this group in Chinatown, but in Rusholme the picture is more complex, with a British Asian/Pakistani Urdu speaking majority being challenged in a sense by newcomers from the middle east.

# Chapter 9 Conclusions

This analysis of the Linguistic Landscape of Manchester has produced a number of interesting findings. The use of questionnaires has revealed more about the link between Linguistic Landscapes, the motivations for creating them, and the general linguistic patterns of multilingual individuals, suggesting that the creation of multilingual signage is often not a conscious decision.

Second, the study has reinforced the view that patterns of multilingualism visible in the Linguistic Landscape are not static, and are influenced by a huge number of factors; historical, cultural, political, economic and linguistic- as the large differences between the two communities in Rusholme and Chinatown shows. The role of government in determining the linguistic landscape of Manchester is minimal, and it is through their highly unregulated approach that the linguistic landscape has come to exist as it does.

In addition, phenomena that have been mentioned in previous studies have been shown to apply to Manchester as well. For example, the fact that linguistic landscapes do not necessarily reflect the linguistic community that surrounds them, nor do they always accurately mark the ‘boundaries’ of a language area.

In answer to our first research question, the linguistic landscape reveals an important piece of the multilingual jigsaw that exists in our communities, revealing perhaps hidden patterns, such as the shift to writing Urdu in Latin characters, and the multiple identities indexed by the Kurdish kebab shops.

In answer to our second and third research questions, yes there are clear differences in the way communities structure their linguistic landscapes, however the explanations, motivations and forces that create linguistic landscapes may be more complex than have been suggested in previous studies. Although undoubtedly power relations between groups play a role in defining the linguistic landscape, moving away from models focusing on power relations, and moving towards theories of plurilingualism to explain complex patterns multilingualism within communities.

As for future research, many questions remain unanswered. Exploring further the motivations for creating signs is a potential area for future research. The connection between the domain that a business occupies, and the nature of its linguistic landscape (size of text etc) such as was hinted at in Chinatown could also be another area that deserves greater attention.

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# Annex

Blank Questionnaire form

Linguistic Landscapes



**All questions are optional.**

1. What is the meaning of your store's main sign? (E.g. literal translation, transliteration etc)

2. Which languages are used in your store sign and why did you pick them? (E.g. Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Arabic etc)

3. Why did you choose these languages? (e.g., for benefit customers, tradition, to fit in with other stores)

4. What languages do you use day-to-day in your business? (E.g. Cantonese, Mandarin, Urdu etc)

With colleagues?

With customers?

5. What sort of people do you serve from the community? (E.g. Chinese, locals, BBC, Pakistanis etc)

6. Do you feel that there are any changes in the community?

7. How would you describe your Language Identity and national origin?

8. What is your role within the company? (E.g. owner, sales assistant etc)



**Thank you so much for helping with this research.**

## **INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **Who am I?**

My name is x, and I am a student of Linguistics at the University of Manchester. I can be contacted by email at [x@student.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:x@student.manchester.ac.uk), by mobile phone on 0777777777. My department can be reached on 0161 275 8311.

#### **What is the title and aim of this project?**

I am looking in to the diversity and difference in multilingual signs used in Manchester, with the aim of discovering more about motivations for making such signs.

#### **What do you do with the information?**

The information is made anonymous you or your business will never be personally identified. The information is used to help explain the patterns found in language signs. The overall result will be published in a report. The report will **not** be published, and forms part of my degree only. If you wish to see a copy of the final report, please contact me and I will make you a copy.

#### **What happens if you change your mind?**

You can change your mind and withdraw from participating at any time, and you do not need to give a reason. Please contact me straight away, if you do not want your anonymous answers to be included in the report.