multilingual Manchester

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COMMUNITY LANGUAGES IN LONGSIGHT

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ABSTRACT

Paradoxically, the UK is one of the most monolingual nations in Europe, but owing to a tradition of immigration it is also home to great linguistic diversity. The present study investigates community languages in Longsight, Manchester. The first section of the study aims to answer the following questions: firstly, which languages are spoken in Longsight, by whom, and in what contexts? Secondly, what support is there for speakers of community languages and how has this been decided upon? Finally, what level of awareness do people have of the languages spoken around them?

The findings indicate strong correlation between a person's language ability and their place of birth. The dominant language in Longsight is English; however, among the numerous community languages, Urdu shows significant dominance. The study identifies a wide range of support for community languages, some of which is provided by Manchester City Council and the level of support a language receives closely corresponds to the size of its speech community. This study also identifies considerable variation in subjects' language awareness, which, again, is connected to place of birth.

The second section of this study determines the significance of these findings in relation to some of the main discussions on urban multilingualism: language policy, language learning, minority language rights, and the function of language testing in immigration control.

DECLARATION

I declare that I have read and understood the university guidelines on plagiarism and that, unless otherwise indicated, this dissertation is all my own work.

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1. Introduction

A study by Baker and Eversley (2000) revealed the presence of more than 300 languages in London's primary schools. Yet, despite the irrefutable linguistic diversity displayed in the UK's urban areas, an overwhelming majority of the population remains monolingual. There exists this paradoxical reality whereby the UK can be accredited with being both one of the most linguistically diverse nations in Europe and at the same time one of the most linguistically unskilled. A survey undertaken by the European Commission puts the proportion of people in the UK who can only speak one language at 70% (Eurobarometer, 2005). As high as this is, if one were to leave out the many multilingual residents for whom English is a second language, it is likely that this figure would be significantly higher. So who make up the other 30% of the population, the UK's multilingual minority, and what languages do they speak?

When initially reading recent studies on the general topic of minority languages, a number of issues began to emerge:

- Much of the literature, especially about topics such as minority language rights, language policy and language shift, seemed to focus primarily on regional language minorities, rather than community languages (Laponce, 1993; Laintin, 1996; Nelde, 2000).

- Beyond the Baker and Eversley study looking at multilingualism in London schools, little has been done to survey and profile community languages in other

urban areas of the UK (exceptions include Lamb, 2001 for Sheffield; Mcgregor & Li, 2002 for Newcastle).

- Other studies which concentrate on community languages tend not to go beyond providing an overall demographic of speakers or simply discussing the impact of such languages on teaching (Extra & Gorter, 2001 and Extra & Verhoeven, 1992).

In response to these issues, the first aim of this present study will be to identify an area of Manchester with high linguistic diversity and profile the various speech communities. At this micro-level, the focus will not be on simply tallying up numbers of speakers of different languages, a process which, though at times can prove useful, is limited in the type of information it provides; rather, by employing qualitative methods, the present study will seek to form a more thorough understanding of the everyday reality of living within a multilingual community. For this to be achieved, the following questions need to be answered:

(1) Which languages are spoken in Longsight, by whom, and in what contexts?

(2) What support is there for speakers of community languages in Longsight and how has this been decided upon?

(3) What level of awareness do people have of the languages spoken around them?

The second stage of this study will seek to determine how this localised example of linguistic diversity relates to some of the main discussions on urban multilingualism such as language policy, language learning, minority language rights, and the function of language testing in immigration control.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Terminology

Beyond making the distinction between majority languages and minority languages - which, alone, can prove to be a rather misleading terms - sometimes further categorisation is required. Linguists commonly group languages based on how long they have been spoken in a particular area. Ager (2003), for example, when writing about language attitudes in the UK, distinguishes 'Territorial Languages' (English, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish and Ulster Scots) from 'Non-territorial Languages' (any other language). Similarly, Barbour (2000) also favours this categorisation over that of 'Indigenous' vs. 'Non-indigenous', which he deems to be imprecise, asking the critical question "How long must a language be spoken in an area to be indigenous?"(2000: 18).

'Immigrant (minority) languages' is another term that seems to have been widely adopted in the literature (Extra & Verhoeven, 1992; Hornberger, 1998; and Gorter & De Bot 2005), though it has come under attack by some academics. In a book review (Varro, 1993), Extra and Verhoeven's choice of title for their book, *Immigrant languages in Europe*, was described as "disparaging". Edwards argues that most of the speakers of these so-called 'immigrant languages' are, in fact, "second, third or

even fourth generation of settlers in the UK" and chooses to use the more neutral terms of 'community' or 'heritage' languages (2001: 243).

Evidently then, there has been little standardisation of terminology and one is afforded a certain amount of choice when categorising languages. It is important, however, to be mindful of the implications some terms can have and the ambiguity they may create. To describe a language as 'non-territorial' or 'immigrant' would imply that it has been recently introduced, is spoken only by foreign people and, is not entirely welcome. Even when talking about 'minority' languages, one must be clear of the parameters of the speech group in question. In a study by London Education Authorities it transpired that in certain schools some of these 'minority' languages were actually spoken as a first language by the majority of children. In some cases, a single language other than English was shared by up to 90% of the children.

A further judgement on the matter has been made by some academics (in particular Lamb, 2001) who prefer the term 'community languages' to 'heritage languages', because the latter, which gives the impression of being in the past, would support the view that these languages are not permanent, but merely transitional.

2.2 The relationship between majority and minority languages

2.2.1 Language and nationalism

Nationalism and, in fact, the very idea of a nation are relatively recent constructs. Whereas a nation-state can be quite simply defined as possessing "a permanent

population; a defined territory; government; and capacity to enter into relations with other states" (US Department of State, 1943), 'nation' is a far more abstract term. Partly, this is due to the fact that nations are inherently different; they have often formed under different conditions and been unified by different principles. The contrast between the formations of the French nation, which was based on the concept of *jus solis* and that of the German nation, which was based on *jus sanguinis* highlights the vastly different ways in which the idea of 'nation' can be approached (Panayi, 2004).

To follow Smith's definition, the population of a nation may have a shared historic territory, common myths and memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties (1991:14). Meanwhile, Alter (1991: 15) claims that the principal unifying factors of a nation are "a uniform language, a uniform judicial and administrative system, a central government and shared political ideals". In fact, as early as 1772, Herder wrote about the importance of language in the formation of communal groups (cited in Mar-Molinero 2000:8); this sentiment was later echoed in the motto of the French Revolution: 'one state, one nation, one language' (Broeder&Extra 1999:77). The French republican model that came after the revolution is traditionally seen as the "ideal of inclusivity", with citizenship offered to anyone who accepted the nation's values (Asari *et al*., 2008). This open inclusivity, however, hides France's assimilationist core. Gellner (1983) describes nationalism as a doctrine which holds that the boundaries of a state should be equal to those of the cultural group and makes no allowances for minority groups. Where language is concerned, this is certainly the case for most nations. Again, focusing on

the French model, there is no official recognition of the great linguistic diversity exhibited by its citizens. French stands alone as the official language of France, although with a total of thirty-seven languages spoken within its borders, it is far from being a monolingual nation (Ethnologue, 2010). Moreover, many of these languages are spoken by significant proportions of the population: Alsatian, Breton, Italian, Portuguese, Algerian Arabic and Kabyle all have 500,000 or more speakers (Ethnologue, 2010). This point is echoed by Thomason, who states that no nation is completely monolingual, with the possible exception of Iceland (2001:36).

Up to this point much of this chapter has focused on France, which lends itself so willingly as prime example of the innate relationship between language and nationalist ideology; however, it certainly should not be viewed as an exceptional case. Many nations that contain speakers of numerous other languages only recognise one language for official use - Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Hungary and Iran, to name a few.

2.2.2 Treatment of minority languages - past and present

Throughout twentieth-century Europe - as wars were won and lost, territories altered and today's nations began to emerge - the importance of language remained central in the minds of nation-builders. Whether under the governance of Nazism or a strain of Fascism, linguistic minorities became subjected to an array of overtly repressive measures.

As Salvi (1975) outlines, under Mussolini's fascist dictatorship, a process of Italianisation was introduced in the North-East of Italy and parts of occupied Croatia that forced the substitution of Slavic names for Italian equivalents. Not even the deceased were exempt from such treatment; engravers were employed to amend numerous Slavic gravestones. Elsewhere, residents of the South Tyrol, a predominantly German-speaking region of Italy, were given an ultimatum: to remain where they were and adopt the Italian language, or leave Italy to live in Nazi Germany (Salvi, 1975:73).

A similar situation is depicted by Mar-Molinero in her account of the denial of language rights during the Franco years, in Spain (2000:83). She explains that, although severe measures such as fines and imprisonment were imposed in cases where individuals spoke languages other than Castilian, it was the more subtle approaches, such as the manipulation of public opinion, which caused more enduring damage. For instance, regional languages (e.g. Galician and Catalan) were frequently referred to as 'dialects' of Castilian. In making this distinction, one effectively creates a hierarchical framework whereby one sister language is given supremacy and others are relegated to dialectal status. What constitutes a language as opposed to a dialect is a matter of some contention, but the devaluing function that the label 'dialect' carries appears to be widely accepted in the literature (see Coluzzi, 2007:26, for an Italian perspective). Regardless of whether a regime referred to them as 'foreign languages', which needed to be stamped out, or as 'dialects', which could be marginalised, it is clear that there was no room within twentieth-century nationalism for 'other' languages. The severity of the repressive methods

employed by certain regimes suggests that these 'other' languages were seen as posing some significant threat.

Today, many attitudes have changed and with the arrival of regional autonomy, the languages mention above (Galician, Catalan and German in the South Tyrol), now enjoy a certain amount of official recognition. That said, language is still a highly emotive issue and is frequently a line along which nationalist political movements seek to marginalise particular groups of society, both in the UK and abroad. Far-right Dutch 'Party for Freedom', headed by anti-Islamist Geert Wilders, has outlined in their manifesto that, besides refusing to produce any government document in any language other than Dutch, they would pass laws to force imams to use Dutch in their religious sermons (PVV, 2006). In the UK, the manifesto of the far-right British National Party takes a similar stance on the provision of official documents in other languages and, in regards to education, proposes that "children for whom English is a second language should be taught separately so that they don't hold back the rest" (BNP, 2009).

Evidently, some of these would-be policies are not motivated simply by a dislike of different languages, but are the products of far broader and more deeply-rooted prejudices. Though policies such as those mentioned above tend to discriminate against the newer linguistic minorities or so-called community languages, many regional minority languages (even those which are recognised as official languages) may face a degree of prejudice as well. This last point became apparent to me when a local newspaper in North Devon, as an April Fools' Day prank, printed a story

purporting that, due to an influx of visitors from South Wales all signposts would have to be changed to give information in both English and Welsh. Not only was it surprising how many of my neighbours were taken in by the fictitious story, but also by the strong reactions it provoked. It was staggering to witness how speakers of a language as dominant as English appeared so threatened by the proposal. Whilst purely anecdotal, this exemplifies the fact that many majority speakers are not supportive of regional languages that go beyond the boundaries of their designated regions.

2.3 Language shift

Speakers of minority languages, regardless of how they have been classified, face many of the same pressures, which over time can result in language shift towards the adoption of a dominant language. Academics have attributed this pattern to a variety of factors, including "economic change, social mobility and opportunity, changing social network structures, and speakers' choices of social identity" (Gal, 1979, cited in Winford, 2003)

Alladina and Edwards (1991) observe that the factors can vary greatly depending on the speech community; for example, they determine that in the Bangladeshi community widespread unemployment has forced some individuals to move away, causing a change in the family structure which in turn accelerates language shift. Similarly, the diffuseness of the Hindi community, described as its "hallmark" (1991:108), is considered to be detrimental to language maintenance. Other factors,

such as negative attitudes of the host society and conscious efforts by parents to encourage the use of English, are also mentioned.

This notion is strongly upheld by García and Fishman (1997), in their study of multilingualism in New York. They note that the rate of shifting to English is different for different groups. A relatively slow rate of language shift displayed by Latino groups, for example, is attributed to:

- the presence of a large foreign-born population, due to a new wave of immigrants;

- the fact that they are an ethnically distinct group and may suffer from segregation;

- their low socio-economic status.

The above two studies are both concerned with recent patterns of language shift by speakers of community languages and have therefore been selected for their relevance to this study. The process of language shift, however, is not a modern one and multilingual landscapes are not always the result of the minority group immigration. Macías (2001:333) underlines the fact that before Europeans reached the shores of North America, the continent was home to over five hundred languages. As part of a more wide-spanning, ongoing pattern of cultural homogenisation, language shift and the extinction of languages have been brought

about by the building of nations, the expansion of empires, globalisation and emerging dominance of certain languages.

2.4 Language policy and planning for regional languages

The phenomenon of language shift, which Eriksen calls "acculturation" (1992: 315), has not gone unnoticed and in many cases has led to hostile reactions amongst minority language speakers. Negative attitudes towards dominant languages are as extensive as they are explicable. Price, in the following resounding statement, presents a typical response to the dominance of a language: "For English is a killer…it is English that has killed off Cumbric, Cornish, Norn and Manx." (1984: 170)

Widespread discontentment about language loss and ethnic tensions, particularly after the collapse of Communism in the former Eastern Bloc, fuelled the demands for minority language rights as well as more general minority rights (Dunbar, 2001: 90). Gradually and rather sporadically over the last couple of decades efforts have been made to provide legislative support for minority languages. In October 1991, after half a century of Soviet policies devoted to assimilation, Russia officially recognised the need for minority language rights; all languages are now equal before law and legislation outlines provisions for minority language teaching in specific areas of the country (Extra & Yagmur, 2004: 75). Another example a legislative initiative at a national level is the Welsh Language Act of 1993, which was effectively a "declaration of co-officiality" (Ager, 1996: 50). There have also been international proposals dealing specifically with language rights; in June 1996, UNESCO implemented the *Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights*. However, it is the

Council of Europe's *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* that forms the basis of most European nations' legal framework regarding the protection of linguistic minorities. The charter was drawn up in 1992, but was not put into effect until 1998, and despite stimulating provision for minority languages, has been heavily criticised. Coluzzi considers it to be "insufficiently binding" (2007: 55). He laments the position of the Italian Government, which, still complying with the charter, has applied "only a minimum of provisions" (2007: 57). In another paper (Coluzzi, 2009), he illustrates this point by drawing comparisons with Spain. He claims that the total spent by the Italian Government on language planning strategies in 2002 was €13,784,607, whereas the autonomous region of Galicia, alone, spent €17,054,049.

An even more serious flaw identified by Extra and Yagur (2004: 83-90) is that the charter discriminates against certain language groups, particularly "immigrant minority" languages (or 'community languages', as I have referred to them) and dialects. In treating community languages differently than regional languages and failing to give them any legal standing, the Council of Europe is effectively constructing the following hierarchical framework:

Majority Language > Regional Language > Community Language

2.5 Language policy and planning for community languages in the UK

As stated in the introduction of this paper, the few studies I have found that do refer to community languages tend to concern themselves primarily with the matter of

education. The impact which community languages can have on teaching is a sensitive issue that has received much attention from the press (Daily Mail, 2009). It lends itself naturally as a political battleground and surfaces frequently in debates over immigration. Ager (1996) highlights that as early as 1975, the government had acknowledged the problems that many pupils from families of overseas origin were experiencing with English. The Bullock Report (1975) promoted the maintenance of community languages and, although failing to give advice as to how it was to be achieved, is viewed as being "the inspiration for 'multicultural' education" (Ager 1996: 91). Whereas the drive for increased language rights for regional minority languages is more overtly connected to political autonomy, the politicalisation of the situation of community languages is more subtle. Ager (1996: 91) describes how "'multicultural' policies soon became associated with 'anti-rascist' policies" and thus were used to attack the Conservative Party, which was governing at the time.

The Swan Report in 1985 more explicitly expressed the need for a pluralist society, rather than an assimilationist or separatist one, and described how this model could be supported within an education system. Despite this progressive rhetoric, however, emphasis remained on the need to have a good level of ability in English, and support for pupils was focused on aiding the transition from speaking a community language to speaking English (Ager 2003: 102). Though some community organisations made requests for funding and support following the Swan Report, "such support has always been minimal" (Edwards 2001: 250).

The Education Reform Act of 1988, which aimed to establish a national curriculum seems to have followed in a similar vein. Alladina (1992) notes that the reform fails to include the teaching of any languages other than English at primary level, with the one exception of Welsh. She describes this decision as a regression "to notions of 'one nation, one language", an idea mentioned earlier in the examination of nationalism. Here, once again, the theme of assisted transition returns, carrying with it the implication that community languages are merely temporary and not worthy of support. This view is evident in looking at the considerable budget set aside for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision, which was £300m in 2009 (ESOL, 2009).

In fact, besides the Linguistic Minority Report (1985), which looks exclusively at languages in schools, very little seems to be known about multilingualism in the UK; therefore, when providing language support, local authorities have little to inform them. Ager (2003: 104) suggests that the only real form of support for speakers of community languages are merely pragmatic, such as the provision of documents in other languages and interpreters; even these only exist as the result of individual initiatives. The same criticism has also been made with particular reference to Manchester (Donakey 2007, cited in Matras 2009:56) and therefore it will be of interest to assess the types of support available for speakers of community languages in the context of Longsight (e.g. ESOL classes, community language classes, multilingual services, etc.), discover who the providers are and evaluate why they have decided to take such action.

3. Method

The method behind this study may be broken down into three separate elements: selection of area to study, interviews and assessment of services and provisions in the immediate area.

3.1 Selection of area to study

The first stage, before any data collection or further research could begin, was to decide upon a suitable area of Manchester to study. For reasons described earlier in this paper, the research had to take place in a linguistically diverse area of the city. In 2004, the boundaries of the various areas of Manchester were modified, which resulted in the formation of thirty-two separate wards. Any resident with reasonable experience of the city could likely make an informed judgement about the varying degrees of linguistic diversity displayed by each of these wards; however, personal judgement was not deemed an adequate basis for the selection of an area, and thus further justifications were necessary.

The last census carried out in Manchester in 2001 addressed issues such as sex, age, ethnicity, religion, health, housing and economic activity, but, unfortunately, contained no mention of the languages spoken by residents in the different wards. Of all the information presented in the census, ethnic diversity may be seen as the best indicator of linguistic diversity, even though it is clearly acknowledged that the ethnicity of an individual and the language which that individual speaks are two discrete features.

This inference was based, in part, on the following information from the 2001 census: only 53.4% of the City's ethnic minority population were born in the UK compared to 92.7% of the White population (Manchester City Council, 2004). As previously stated (c.f. section 1), the UK is a predominantly monolingual nation and an individual born in the UK is most likely to speak English and no other language. Of the ethnic minority population in the city who were born outside of the UK, large proportions originate from African nations, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and China. Although English still has some function in some of these countries - even carrying status as a co-official language in India, Pakistan and many African nations - it is not as dominant as it is in the UK. Therefore, while immigrants from these countries may already speak some English on their arrival to the UK, for many it does not constitute their mother tongue (L1); rather it is their second language (L2). Moreover, given the linguistically diverse nature of countries like India and Pakistan, which are believed to have 438 and 72 living languages (Ethnologue, 2010), respectively, someone originating from one of these countries is likely to be multilingual before coming to the UK. It is evident then that individuals of ethnic minority, and especially those who were born outside of the UK, have a much higher likelihood of being multilingual, and of having English as a second language.

Having established this relationship between ethnic diversity and linguistic diversity, the 2001 census was used to select a ward. Of all the ethnic minority groups that live in Manchester, 9.4% live in Longsight. Situated approximately three miles south of the city centre, the ward of Longsight has a population of just over 16,000. 57.3% of this total are from ethnic minority groups, which serves to remind us of the

ambiguity of the term ‘minority’, as outlined in section 2. The most abundant ethnic minority group is Pakistani, which makes up 23.7% of the population of Longsight; followed by Bangladeshi, which makes up 8.1% of the population; and Black Carribean, which make up 4.5% of the population.

3.2 Interviews

The principle method of data collection for this research was interviewing the residents of Longsight. The ward is densely populated, with 83.7 persons per hectare (Manchester City Council, 2009), which indicated that there would be plenty of subjects to interview. When deciding upon a precise location and time of day to perform the interviews, the following factors were considered:

- concentration and mix of people
- optimum conditions in which to record interviews
- likelihood of people consenting to be interviewed
- safety of location

Bearing these factors in mind, the daily market, situated in the centre of Longsight, was the natural choice. The market is off the road and is well frequented by a diverse range of ages and ethnicities. Not only does it have a high volume of people, but it also seems to be a focal point of much social interaction, far more so than the local supermarket. Although it is an outdoor market, its layout, which is characterised by

rows of stalls with overhead awnings, offers some degree of protection from the elements, which could otherwise make sound-recording difficult.

Most of the subjects were stall-keepers and customers at the market, although other subjects were approached in the streets and shops around the market as well. Interviews were carried out in a spontaneous manner; they were not prearranged. Over the past few years, Longsight has witnessed a considerable amount of violence; thus, for the sake of safety, as well as the increased likelihood of finding willing participants, interviews were carried out only during the hours of daylight. All interviews were recorded with an Olympus WS-110 digital voice recorder.

The purpose of the interviews was to gather information about the language abilities of different community members, language awareness within the community, individuals' attitudes towards community languages, the prevalence of different languages, and their different functions. With these topics in mind, the subject was first asked, "Do you live in the area?" to establish whether they were, in fact, residents of Longsight. However, it is important to note that even if they did not live in the area, they were still deemed to be contributing to the linguistic environment and were therefore still considered to be valid subjects. The next question asked was, "Were you born in Manchester?" and if the answer was 'No', they were invited to specify where they had been born, be that another city in the UK or another country. The following question was "Do you speak any other languages apart from English?" and their response to this question then determined the structure of the rest of the interview.

If their answer was “Yes”, then they would be asked the following questions:

- “Which other language(s) do you speak?”
- “Which language(s) do you use at home?”
- “Do you have children?”
    - “Which languages do you speak with your children?”
    - “Do your children learn language x in an institution or centre?”
- “When do you use languages y (and z)?”
- “What other contact do you have with language x (y and z)?”

If their answer was “No” to being able to speak another language other than English, then they were asked:

- “Which language would you like to be able to speak, and why?”

Finally, all subjects were asked:

- “Are many other languages spoken in this area? Which languages are spoken in this area apart from English?”

In a separate study carried out by Lambert and Taylor (1988), the matter of ‘subject-interviewer ethnicity matching’ is discussed. For their study on how different ethnic groups in the USA viewed assimilation and multiculturalism, they ensured that subjects were interviewed by individuals of the same ethnic background. Though Lambert and Taylor (1988: 75) highlighted the possible biases this could have introduced, they stated that without subject-interviewer ethnicity matching, it would

have been “impossible to gain the confidence of these difficult-to-access communities”. The key difference between the present study and that of Lambert and Taylor, is that the present study is not dealing with discrete neighbourhoods of different ethnic minorities, but a single community in which many ethnic minorities are present. Therefore, ethnicity matching in the present study would have proved quite impractical. Finally, all interviews were performed in English.

3.3 Assessment of services and provisions

The level of services and provisions for a language can be viewed as an indicator of its status. Besides asking subjects about any other contact they had with languages other than English, such as television, newspapers, radio, etc., it was necessary to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the results of any minority language policy and planning. One effective way of achieving this was to go to Longsight, in person, and note any local services, businesses or community centres that accommodate or actively promote the use of other languages. In conjunction with this approach, the internet was used to search for similar examples of language provision. From this information it was possible to assess which languages were deemed worthy of support - whether that be by the council, or by private businesses and services.

4. Results

4.1 Results from interviewing

The previous chapter discussed the possible problem of accessibility, with the idea of interviewer-subject matching, offered by Lambert and Taylor (1988) as a solution. This was ruled out for the present study, but due to the welcoming nature of

Longsight, and in particular the market, accessibility was not a problem. Though subjects were often curious as to the purpose of the study, very few refused to participate. 12 subjects were interviewed in total.

Where the subjects lived

Only 25% of the subjects interviewed actually lived in Longsight. Of those that lived outside of Longsight, just over half lived in other wards of Manchester, including Ardwick, Levenshulme, Wythenshawe, Disdsbury and the City Centre. The remaining subjects who lived outside of Longsight resided in other areas of Greater Manchester, such as Old Trafford and Stockport.

Place of birth

58% of the subjects interviewed were born outside the UK. The principal country of origin was Pakistan, which was birthplace to 42% of the foreign-born subjects. Other countries included India, China and the West Indies.

Languages spoken

Accumulatively, subjects claimed to be able to speak a total of seven different languages: English, Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Cantonese, Turkish and Azerbaijani.

Subjects' language abilities

All the subjects interviewed spoke English, but there was a marked difference in abilities amongst them. 41% of subjects reported that they speak Urdu, making this the second most spoken language. Only 8% of the subjects who were born in the UK

claimed to be able to speak another language; where as 85% of foreign-born subjects reported that they spoke an additional language to English. 33% of all subjects claimed to speak at least two other languages in addition to English.

Language use

41% of subjects said that English was the only language spoken at home. 33% of subjects claimed that two languages were spoken at home, of which one was English in all cases.

Contact with media

Of the subjects that claimed to speak an additional language to English, only 14% said they listened to the radio in a language other than English, while 71% said they read newspapers in another language and 85% said they watched television in another language.

Awareness of community languages

When asked which languages were spoken around Longsight, subjects named the following: English, Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Arabic and Somali. 66% of subjects were aware of Urdu being spoken in Longsight, 33% named Punjabi, and 25% named Arabic, but only 8% of subjects recognised Somali or Hindi as community languages of Longsight. 16% of subjects, all of whom were born in the UK, were unable to identify any language other than English that was spoken in Longsight.

Desirable languages

Monolingual subjects were asked if there was a language that they would like to be able to speak. Spanish was the most popular choice, followed by French; none of Longsight's community languages were named.

4.2 Results from the assessment of services and provisions in Longsight

The terms 'services' and 'provisions' are rather vague, but this merely reflects the fact that languages may be supported in a range of different ways. To aid clarity and give some structure to results, a method of classification will be helpful. In his discussion of language rights of immigrant groups, Kloss advocates the following distinction: 'promotion-orientated' vs. 'tolerance-orientated' (1971: 259).

'Promotion-orientated', as Kloss defines it, describes any instances in which public authorities, whether at a national, regional or local level, make use of a minority language in their own activities. The following examples are given:

- the publication of public notices and advertisement
- the use or teaching of the language in schools
- the purchase by public libraries of reading material in the language
- the use of the language in street signs
- the provision of bilingual services by public services

In contrast, 'tolerance-orientated' language rights refer to the freedom given to the use of a language in domains where the residents and not the authorities have taken steps to support a language. This could include the following activities:

- the founding of newspapers and periodicals
- the publication of books
- the setting up of private language schools
- the setting up of private libraries
- the use of a language in shop signs
- the provision of bilingual services by private businesses

4.2.1 Evidence of 'promotion-orientated' rights for speakers of community languages in Longsight

Library Services

In April 2010, a new library and learning centre was opened in Longsight. As a part of the Manchester Libraries group, Longsight library is involved in the Community Languages Resource, an initiative funded by Manchester City Council. The aim of this initiative, according to the Council's website, is "to provide books and other resources for as many people as possible in a range of languages" (Manchester City Council, 2010). In Longsight, such resources are available in the following languages: Arabic, Bengali, Persian, Somali, Urdu, and Vietmanese. The same website makes the following statement: "Is your language not listed above? Are you part of a growing community? We welcome suggestions for new languages" (Manchester City Council,

2010). This would imply that the selection of languages is directly affected by minority groups' requests and pressure from the public.

The largest section of fiction and non-fiction literature at the library is dedicated to Urdu. Newspapers, CDs and films were also available. At the entrance of the library, there are a number of computers that can be used to view the library catalogue; this computer system can be accessed in Urdu and French, in addition to English.

The learning centre also offers free beginners' classes in Arabic, French and Urdu. The District Manager, responsible for planning programmes, explained that the Adult Education Service had decided upon those three languages based on a range of sources of information, including feedback given during a series of taster classes and other publicity events, ideas gathered from networking with local community organisations, and suggestions collected from users of the library.

Employment Services

The Jobcentre and Connexions are free, public services which provide support to those looking for work and general advice on careers and training. Employees of both centres said that when someone who cannot speak English comes in seeking assistance, they use Manchester City Council's M-four interpreting service. It is also worth mentioning that the Connexions national website can be accessed in Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Polish, Punjabi, Somali, Urdu, and Vietmanese.

4.2.2 Evidence of 'tolerance-orientated' rights for speakers of community languages in Longsight

Longsight displays many visible and audible examples of urban multilingualism. Community languages, including those identified in interviews, are openly used by Longsight's residents, in the street, market and within the surrounding local businesses. Likewise, many signs, posters and notices are written in languages other than English.

Of all the community languages, Urdu and Arabic are most prominent on signs and notices. These languages were usually present in the signs of businesses and institutes which specifically market their products or services to speakers of these languages. For example, Hanifah Pre-school, which provides childcare and education in an Islamic environment, had its sign in English and Arabic. This is a logical decision as the teaching of Arabic is a fundamental part of the curriculum of the school, which is clearly designed to appeal to Arabic speaking parents (Hanifah, 2009).

Similarly, culturally-specific businesses like homeopathic centres, saree shops and foreign food stores frequently had information in languages other than English. However, more general services such as travel agents, banks and solicitors also incorporated community languages into their displays and publicity. In fact, the Islamic Bank of Britain and Otta Penna Solicitors both claim that their services can be accessed in Urdu and in Punjabi. The Branch Manager of the Islamic Bank of Britain clarified that this multilingual service was not a matter of company policy, available in all branches, but occurred as a result of the staff's linguistic abilities. Presumably,

the same can be said for Otta Penna Solicitors, whose website states that its staff "include speakers of Urdu & Punjabi", not that is it necessarily a defined policy (Otta Penna). Therefore, such support for Urdu and Punjabi is not a coordinated response to legislation, but rather can be viewed as a more organic process, whereby the linguistic repertoires of employees and service providers match the linguistic needs of their clients. What is uncertain, however, is whether staff were purposefully recruited because of their ability to speak community languages, or whether it is purely a reflection of the demographic of the area.

4.3 Support for community languages across Manchester

Although this paper is specifically concerned with speakers of community languages in Longsight, obviously these individuals do not spend all of their time within the boundaries of this ward. Subsequently, it is crucial to assess the more general support available to speakers of community languages throughout Manchester. A study by Donakey (2007) comprehensively details Manchester City Council's language planning and policies. The author categorises language services based on the governing authority responsible for their implementation: 'Category A' refers to services governed directly by the City Council, 'Category B' refers to services maintained by the Council and other governmental groups, while 'Category C' covers services involving agencies which work alongside the Council (Donakey 2007:32). Donakey (2007:32-48) offers a lengthy description of each of the language services, but for the purposes of this paper an overview of their functions will surfice.

Language services available in Manchester include: the Manchester City Council website, which contains links to translated materials; bilingual Link Workers, who provide practical advice and interpreting services to speakers of other languages; and M-four, which as previously mentioned, is the Council's free translation and interpreting service. While the library service has been mentioned, it should be noted also that community language resources are available in many of Manchester's libraries and not just in Longsight. Finally, with reference to policing: government legislation determines that there is language support in the form of interpreters and translators for anyone in court or police custody who does not speak English; the Greater Manchester Police 'Policing Pledge' is available for download in Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese Hindi, Putonghua, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu (GMP, 2010); and, perhaps most progressively, there have been some instances of police officers learning community languages in order to improve relations with minority groups (GMP, 2009).

5. Discussion

5.1 Reflecting upon methodology and results

The selection of Longsight as the focus of this study was based on a number of judgments (c.f. section 3.1). The results show that Longsight is an area of great linguistic variety and, thus, confirm initial judgments about its suitability. However, methological aspects of the inverviewing process had some unforeseen implications. Firstly, while stall keepers were generally very happy to be questioned, the arrival of a customer frequently meant that interviews had to be stopped. It is possible that these interruptions and concerns over loss of trade may have affected the quality of

their responses. The spontaneous nature of the interviews made this inevitable and, were this study to be repeated, improvements could be made by scheduling interviews beforehand and by selecting a less distracting environment. Secondly, from the interviews it transpired that the majority of subjects lived outside of Longsight. Nonetheless, these individuals are a regular presence in the market and certainly contribute to Longsight's linguistic environment. It would, however, be of interest to exclusively interview permanent residents and observe any differences in responses. Finally, the number of subjects interviewed in the present study is quite limited and, consequently, any generalisations based on results from this study should also be limited. Though a greater number of subjects would have been desirable, the interviews remained a fundamental, qualatitive element of this study and resulted in several intersting observations.

5.2. Answering the research questions

(1) Which languages are spoken in Longsight, by whom, and in which contexts?

From the interviews, it can be established that Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Cantonese, Turkish and Azerbaijani are all spoken in Longsight, in addition to English. This is not to say that other languages are not also spoken. In fact, in light of Manchester City Council's reactionary provision of library resources (c.f. section 4.2.1), the following languages should also be added: Arabic, Bengali, Persian, Somali, and Vietmanese. However, with a total of 129 languages spoken across Manchester (Donakey, 2007: 28), one suspects that the full list of languages spoken in Longsight could be much longer. All subjects, by participating in the interviews, displayed a reasonable level of

spoken English and, despite the fact that more than half of the subjects were born abroad, almost three quarters of subjects said English was spoken at home.

(2) What support is there for speakers of community languages in Longsight and how has this been decided upon?

The results show that support for community languages is reasonably strong; as Fathi (2006: 66) remarks, Manchester City Council "considers providing information to the public in their own languages as its responsibility". The findings of this study support this claim: online access to translated documents, employment of Link workers and the free provision of interpreting services all reflect the Council's commitment to community languages. Substantial investments have also been made to provide specific speech communities with even greater support, particularly speakers of Urdu. On this evidence, as the above initiatives are funded by local authorities, community languages can be said to have promotion-orientated language rights. In certain cases, before deciding which languages to support, the Council actively consults the public; in other cases, it seems that support is provided as a result of suggestions or pressure from community groups.

Of equal importance, there is no evidence that the use of community languages within private enterprises has been restricted in any way. Community languages are present in the signs and publicity material of many private businesses and speech communities have been allowed to start up private schools and nurseries; this all points to the conclusion that community languages also have tolerance-orientated language rights.

Kloss (1971: 260), beyond making this distinction, claims that “acquiescent minority rights should be granted wherever a minority - whether indigenous or not - wants to cultivate its language”. However, shortly after, he states that “immigrant groups can lay no claim to promotion-orientated rights” (1971: 260). Manchester City Council’s approach to language rights is clearly more progressive than Kloss’s judgments require it to be. Donakey (2006: 57) goes as far to say that “Language planning and policy in Manchester presents a leading example of community language services”.

(3) What level of awareness do people have of the languages spoken around them?

Of all the community languages spoken in the area, Urdu was most frequently named by subjects. People’s high levels of awareness, together with the considerable presence of support for it, suggest that Urdu enjoys a high status within Longsight. People born in the UK were far less likely to be aware of other languages compared to those born abroad. As one would expect, those with little or no awareness of community languages had no interest in learning them; only European languages were mentioned as languages they would like to learn, despite the immediate use the ability to speak a community language would have.

5.3. Motivation in language learning

To develop this last point, one which was introduced at the beginning of this paper, some time must be taken to look at some of the factors which affect language learning. Why is it that 70% of people from the UK only speak English, while all of the foreign-born subjects in this study displayed, at the very least, the ability to speak

two languages? Dornyei (1998: 119) argues that all theories on motivation in language learning rely on the belief that "we are all innately active learners, born with an inbuilt curiosity to find out about our surroundings". This seems to be the case for those who do not speak English as their first language: English is the dominant language in society and, as this study shows, those who do not speak English as their first language manage to acquire it. Yet, despite the presence of community languages, this curiosity is not exhibited by monolingual English speakers.

One of the theories that Dornyei (1998: 119) refers to is the 'Expectancy-value' theory. The key principle proposed by this theory is that motivation is determines by an individuals expectancy of success in a given task and the value an individual attaches to success in that task. By applying this principle to the situation in Longsight, the great difference in subjects' language abilities becomes readily explicable. Firstly, for a learner of English, expectancy is created by the numerous examples of individuals who speak English as a second language. Additionally, there is an expectancy imposed on the speaker by society (an issue which will be covered in section 5.5). For the monolingual speaker of English there is no expectancy - whether intrinsic or extrinsic - to learn a community language. Secondly, the perceived value of English is invariably higher than that of any community language. As this study shows, English enables an individual to speak to the highest number of people.

Another factor is the language learning environment. Notwithstanding the strong presence of community languages, life in Longsight is still more conducive to learning English. Oxford and Shearin (1994: 14) explain how "the learner of the second language is surrounded by stimulation, both visual and auditory, in the target language and thus has many motivational and instructional advantages".

Finally, Ellis (1994) outlines a feature of language acquisition that could inhibit a learner of English. It is a concept that is concerned with "the 'distance' between the cultures of the native and target language, the idea being that the more distant the two cultures are the more difficult L2 learning is" (Ellis, 1994: 207). Though this is a logical judgment, its application is limited. If we deem mainstream, white, British culture to be 'the culture of the target language', then the 'distance' could be quite large. However, owing to the UK's history as a country of immigration, it is not possible to talk of a single 'culture' of English speakers. To give an example, Manchester is home to a well-established Pakistani community, more than half of whom were born in the UK (Manchester City Council, 2004). Presumably, many members of this community speak English, the 'target language'. If the learner of English is from Pakistan, then the distance between 'cultures' of the native language and the target language would be marginal and acquisition would not be difficult. Conversely, such models are less prevalent for the learner of a community language; the culture of community languages remains distant from most monolingual British people.

5.4 Different rights for different minority languages

As this study has shown, speakers of community languages in Longsight benefit from a range of support; it was observed that multilingualism is not simply tolerated, but actively promoted. However, the language rights enjoyed by minority groups here are not necessarily equal to those in other parts of the country, or for that matter in other parts of the city. Moreover, not all community languages within Longsight receive equal amounts of assistance. By analysing such discrepancies, it is possible to identify the universal principles which underpin language planning and policy.

The first problem is one of practicality. For Manchester City Council to ensure complete linguistic equality, it would have to provide equal support for over 100 different languages. To take the library service as an example, this principle would mean purchasing material in all of these languages, the cost of which would be enormous. The issue being discussed is that of ethnolinguistic democracy and its necessary boundaries. In a chapter dedicated to this concept, Fishman (1995: 49-61) discusses the example of the European Commission (EC), thus, at suprastate level. The EC maintains that the cultures of the peoples of Europe have a right to "conduct their intra-cultural affairs in their own languages", which is a demonstration of ethnolinguistic democracy. However, the EC has limited its number of 'working languages' and, consequently accepts that "the principle of ethnolinguistic democracy does not require all languages to be declared equally important and equally privileged" (Fishman, 1995: 50). Similarly, in Manchester, speakers of all languages are entitled to basic linguistic rights (e.g. to communicate in one's own language with the Council and the Police), but further support is only offered to

selected languages. So how do the powers that be decide upon whether a language is important or not? Results from the interviews and the assessment of language provisions indicate that proportionality is a factor. The level of support is related to the size of the speech community: Urdu is the dominant minority language and, therefore, speakers of Urdu have the most amount of resources at their disposal. At this point, it is important to keep in mind that the level of support for community languages is not attributable to national legislation, but to commendable initiatives implemented by the local authorities. The support is localised and, in any case, is not without deficiencies. Though there have been recent developments in the teaching of community languages (c.f. Edwards, 2001: 249-255), as Anderson and Chaudhuri (2003: 53) highlight, the National Curriculum takes no interest in the development of community languages at primary level, and at secondary level the only basis for their inclusion is as part of Modern Foreign Languages. In fact, the only cases of bilingual education involve minority languages of Celtic origin and, thus, the hierarchical framework reappears (c.f. section 2.3).

The question which arises is: why are regional language minorities - such as Welsh, in the UK and Catalan, in Spain - judged to be more important and worthy of greater rights than community languages? Proportionality may be retained as a factor; however, as Extra and Gorter (2001:3) remind us, “Turkish and Arabic are good examples of so-called ‘non-European’ languages that are spoken and learned by millions of inhabitants of the member states of the EU”. The value judgment here is one based on territoriality: while Turkish and Arabic are spoken by concentrated populations within certain territories outside of EU; speakers of these languages

within EU are far more finely scattered and make no claims to particular territories. This principle of territoriality as a basis for language rights not only explain Wales's "official societal bilingualism" (Ager, 1996: 25) but, furthermore, is embodied by Manchester City Council's decision to support Urdu in Longsight. By forming a concentrated community, speakers of Urdu now constitute a significant proportion of the ward's population and, additionally, they have managed to establish a 'micro-territory', within which they are able to enjoy greater linguistic liberty. To a certain extent, this claim is consolidated by comment made by Young (1989) who, despite being in favour of special rights for linguistic and cultural minorities - explaining that assimilation requires "a person to transform his or her sense of identity" - suggests that these rights only apply to sizeable communities, living in distinct communities (Young, 1989: 272).

The ability to lay claim to a defined territory, rather than an imagined one, is not the only advantage a regional minority language has over a community language in their battle for language rights. There is the matter of whether a language is indigenous or not, although, this point is perhaps more accurately explain as how indigenous a language is. Intrinsically, 'indigenousness' must be determined in a sequential manner, rather than an absolute one. In the strictest terms, neither English or Welsh are indigenous to Britain, as they were both brought here by groups of people from abroad. Having said this, as the Celtic languages preceded English, Welsh's claim to being an indigenous language is an undeniably strong one. However, it remains a contentious issue and has been for some time. In Vienna, in 1904, a request by the Czech people for there own public schools, with classes conducted in the Czech

language, was austerely rejected. Despite the fact that the Austrian constitution stated that “the equity of all languages which regionally were in customary use” and that Czech speakers totalled more than one hundred thousand, they were said to had “no historical roots in the city” (Kloss, 1971:252).

In reality, different minority language groups face the same challenges (c.f. section 2.3), yet somehow they appear to be in competition. Nowhere is this conflict more resolutely fought than in the realms of academia. In recent years, the Language Ecology movement has played a central role in reporting the ominous rate at which minority languages are being lost. The following statement by Krauss summarises the philosophy behind this ideology "Any language is a supreme achievement of a uniquely human collective genius, as divine and endless a mystery as a living organism” (Krauss, 1992: 8). Perhaps more than any other linguistic movement it is Language Ecology, which makes the link between the demise of linguistic diversity and that of bio-diversity, that has reached a popular readership (e.g. Nettle & Romaine, 2000). And, crucially, it is the Language Ecology movement which provides regional minority languages with a further advantage over community languages: endangerment.

To return to the former example, if all the speakers of Urdu in the UK were to shift to English, Urdu would continue to be spoken by nearly eleven million people in Pakistan, alone (Ethnologue, 2010). On the other hand, Welsh is spoken almost nowhere else outside of Wales (except by small groups in Argentina, Canada and the US), so if these speakers began to shift to English, it would soon be endangered. By

this principle, Urdu is no longer viewed as a minority language. While there is danger of individual loss, Urdu remains a secure language globally. The speaker of Welsh is regarded as more vulnerable and, essentially, more valuable. This argument is strong and coherent, conveying the notion that the extinction of a language is not only a loss for that particular culture, but a loss for mankind.

The counter argument, dependent on the ideology of language and identity, is equally strong and coherent (Fishman, 1989). The argument articulates the idea that "every language represents a unique and precious expression of culture", but also that "languages form an integral part of one's identity, their sense of who they are" (Anderson & Chaudhuri, 2003: 55). In other words, it is said to emphasise the "inherent emotional and spiritual connection between a person and his/her native language" (Myhill, 1999: 34). A 'language and identity' approach holds that "language is a fundamental constitutive element of personal identity" (Dunbar, 2001: 93), a human right and negates the issue of territoriality.

The objective of the two approaches is essentially the same: to protect and promote minority language rights. But, by campaigning in an antagonistic manner, they only succeed in impeding the overall progress of the minority language rights movement. The incongruity of the situation is most lucidly illustrated by Myhill (1999), though others have made similar appeals for increased academic unity (Grin, 1995; May, 2003). To explain the conflict between the "language-and-identity" and "language-and-territory" approaches, Myhill visualises two situations (Myhill, 1999: 35-36):

- In the first situation, there is an indigenous population, concentrated in one particular area of the country, who speak a minority language. There is an Influx of speakers of another language, which constitutes the majority language. The 'identity' approach suggests that the immigrant group should maintain their language and should not be pushed to learn the minority language. However, the 'territory' approach suggests that the majority should be pushed to learn the minority language.

- In the second situation, a group migrate to an area where their language is not indigenous and they constitute a minority. The 'identity' approach suggests that they should maintain their language; the 'territory' approach suggests that, in public functions at least, they and their descendents should adopt the majority language of the area.

Myhill (1999: 47) observes how some linguists, in an attempt to support all minority language groups, switch from one argument to the other, depending on the linguistic situation. Though he openly criticises this "opportunistic approach" taken by Fishman (1991) and others, judging it to have damaging effects which could lead to "a situation where neither of these principles are taken seriously", no solid alternative is offered (Myhill, 1999: 48).

It is unclear whether a new, remodelled approach to minority language rights is required or simply greater collaboration between its different branches. What does seem clear, is that, while bold legislative support has been put in place to stabilise

the use of regional minority languages (e.g. Welsh, c.f. Williams, 2001), support for community languages is comparatively modest. On account of this limited official recognition, community languages continue to have a relatively low status. It is of no surprise then that subjects, when asked to choose a language that they would like to be able to speak, uniformally named a European language (c.f. section 4.1), despite its minimal day-to-day application. As regrettable as this value judgment may be, it is one which shared by much of society. Alladina and Edwards (1991: 5) remark that when a child is fluent in French, or any other Western European language, they "are considered very fortunate and are encouraged to make efforts to maintain their fluency". Conversely, "the bilingualism of the Gujurati or Punjabi or Hakka-speaking child is often undervalued or ignored". In a similar way, Extra and Gorter (2001: 3) note that immigrant languages are frequently seen as "sources of problems and deficits and as obstacles to integration", while national languages, within the EU at least, are viewed as "sources of enrichment and as prerequisites for integration".

5.5 Language testing and naturalisation

Previously, this paper has identified that speakers of community languages in Longsight experience a relatively high level of linguistic liberty. Certain community language speakers have been able to mark out a 'micro-territory', in which they constitute a significant proportion of the population. The establishment of this 'micro-territory' has strengthened their claim to resources and the extent of their success is evident. Speakers of one of the main community languages in Longsight (e.g. Urdu) now find themselves in an environment, in which they can go about their daily lives while almost exclusively using their mother tongue.

Though English still has a strong presence in Longsight, this study indicates that an individual can conceivably do their food shopping, open a bank account, attain legal advice, book a holiday, and deal with the local authorities, along with numerous other everyday activities, without the need for English. This situation, one which goes some way to realising linguistic equality for all residents, has not been impeded in its construction. Interviews from this study suggest that most people living in Longsight do, in fact, speak English, but the tacit message from the local authorities is that they do not need to. The message coming from central government, however, is quite dissimilar; particularly when it comes to citizenship.

There is a vast disparity in the ways different countries handle citizenship and programmes of naturalisation. Ireland, Israel, Italy and Sweden, for example, do not make any language requirement in their respective naturalisation legislation (Piller, 2001: 265). Various reasons are given for why countries may decide on this, but in the case of Sweden it is down to a commitment to policies of multiculturalism. Alternatively, 'immigration countries' such as the US, Canada and Australia define citizenship based on a precise set of rights and obligations. The difficulty of language testing is kept to a minimum; the individual must display the basic language skills to carry out the rights and duties, required of any citizen (Piller, 2001: 266).

In reference to the UK's naturalisation programme, the Home Office states that "your knowledge of the language does not have to be perfect, but it must be sufficient for you to fulfil your duties as a citizen and to mix easily with the people with whom you live and work" (cited in Piller, 2001: 267). The initial part closely

resembles the requirements laid down by the US, Canada and Australia, however, the final part is an addition; it conveys the expectancy of assimilation. Notably, this is not a notion which politicians feel the need to conceal. In the run up to the recent general elections, assimilation and immigrants' obligation to learn English, which is typically a right-wing standpoint, was present in all the major parties' manifestos (Conservative, 2010; Labour, 2010; Liberal Democrats, 2010).

In stipulating that a prospective citizen must have a level of English that allows them to mix easily with the people with whom they live and work, the authorities are making two, discrete assumptions. Firstly, in requesting prospective candidates to 'mix', it is entailed that within our society we, as citizens, do a lot of mixing. Of course, in most cases this is true, but not for all. Secondly, and most pertinently, the authorities are assuming that the people with whom the prospective candidate will be living and working will only speak English. As highlighted by this study, the situation in Longsight is a compelling contradiction to the latter assumption.

Is the government's stance on language testing simply an expression of its ignorance of Britain's urban multilingualism, or is it a decision born of ulterior motives? Immigration control is about creating a division, a division between "'us' and 'them'" (Ålund, 1999, p.148). As the following statement shows, the government is only willing to accept a certain kind of immigrant:

"We know that migrants who are fluent in English are more likely to work and find it easier to integrate. So as well as making our English test harder, we will ensure it is

taken by all applicants before they arrive." (Labour, 2010: 42). The intentions are plain, but, if the ability to speak English were the real issue, then surely the government would not invest the amount money that it currently does in initiatives that actively promote the use of community languages. McNamara argues that, regardless of the country, "the requirements of language for social participation should be the same"; but this is not the case (2009: 1). He explains that, occasionally, there can be questionable motives behind some countries' policies; with the hope of more gold medals in the Olympics, Australia lowered residency requirements for elite athletes (McNamara, 2009: 1). Though not as trivial as this past example, a new law, to be introduced by the UK government, will insist that all foreign nationals who are married to British citizens must pass an English test before they are able to apply for a visa and join their partners (de Lotbinière, 2009: 2). This new rule, which will cost up to $81m to implement, has come under significant criticism by some academics. Spotti highlights the possible relationship between a foreign national's ability to speak English and their social-economic and educational background (cited in de Lotbinière, 2009: 2). Furthermore, Alderson states that "a lot of tests are used for political purposes and this is a gate-keeping decision" (cited in de Lotbinière, 2009: 2). Arguably, English language testing is not simply a measure of someone's linguistic abilities; rather a measure of their economic status.

6. Conclusion

The findings from this study show that Longsight is home to great linguistic diversity and, owing to high levels of support, the various community languages present in this ward show no signs of disappearing. Accordingly, these languages should not be viewed as 'immigrant' languages; just as the multilingualism their speakers display should not be viewed as a transitional skill. It should be acknowledged that outside of the UK monolingualism is not the norm and the ability to speak another language, whether a community language or another European language, is a valuable one.

This study has also identified that, while community languages enjoy considerable support in Longsight, this is not necessarily the case in other parts of the country; and the profiling of community languages in other cities around the UK is certainly an area that warrants further research. No research comparisons were made with community languages in other areas of the UK, but this study did consider the relative support received by regional minority languages. Due to increased legislative support and the strength of arguments concerning territoriality and 'indigenousness', regional minority languages are more strongly positioned in their struggle for linguistic equality. Unless community languages receive greater recognition from governing bodies, both in the UK and in Europe, they will remain at the bottom of the language rights hierarchy.

Finally, in light of the urban multilingualism which Longsight exhibits, this paper questions the rationality behind English language testing as a prerequisite for immigration. To the credit of Manchester City Council, initiatives have been seen to

actively promote the maintenance of community languages; however the message from central government remains assimilationist. Policies regarding language testing not only reflect a very dated view of society, but also set out criteria relating to language ability that, members of the indigenous population consisting predominantly of monolinguals, would not meet. It is not unreasonable to expect an immigrant to learn English, but the task would surely be easier in a post-immigration English environment, with the appropriate assistance (e.g. ESOL classes). Moreover, this study shows that foreign-born members of the community are by no means lacking in language skills; rather it is those of us born in this country who are in need of language support.

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