

Report

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A study into the reasons behind top-down multilingual signs, the languages within these signs, and attitudes towards these signs, with a focus on Central Manchester

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1 Literature Review and Research Aims

In this report, we aim to explore and investigate ideas and motivations behind top-down multilingualism in Manchester by looking analytically at existing examples of top-down multilingual signs and surveying the effect that they have in society. Rather than collect data to quantify examples of multilingualism in Central Manchester or map out a linguistic landscape, we wanted to delve deeper into the motivations behind both the need for these signs, but also their effect on the public.

In the beginning of our investigation we decided on three main aims that we would tackle in order for us to organise our research and our fieldwork coherently. They are as follows:

- We aimed to find out possible reasons as to why multilingualism occurs on public (topdown) signs.
- 2. We aimed to find out the motives behind the selection of languages on top-down multilingual signs.
- 3. We aimed to find out people's attitudes towards these examples of multilingualism on topdown multilingual signs.

In our literature review, we answered these questions to an extent, informed by research that already existed. In answering the question concerning the motivations behind the occurrence of top-down multilingual signs, we concluded that it is largely influenced by both instrumental and influential forces. Indicating that it is not only desire to make the location more multilingual that bears influence, but also the responsibility of the government. The motivations behind the selection of languages, we discovered, is influenced by the status of the language in the society, this of course applied more to locations where more than one language was equally as widely spoken. In researching the attitudes that surround multilingualism in society, we found that the media's portrayal of multilingualism is largely pejorative in nature, but the views of the inhabitants were the opposite; their views included a desire for more multilingualism in their society.

In conducting our literature review, we concluded that it would be our literary research that would fulfil the majority of our first aim. However, to make our report worthwhile and tailor it specifically to Manchester, we felt the need to further develop our research. Rather than purely speculating the possible reasons for the occurrence of multilingualism on top-down government signs we wanted to seek out a more reliable source. As a result, we organised a meeting with a member of Manchester City Council's translations department. This sector of the council is responsible for not only providing translation services, but also for granting planning permission for the erection of multilingual signs. This meeting proved fruitful in providing us with up-to-date

information and knowledge of Manchester's multilingual situation; consequently, we will be able to use this information alongside that discovered in our literature review to test our hypotheses.

In our original research plan, we aimed to use Linguasnapp as a way of gaining knowledge of where the top-down multilingual signs occurred in Central Manchester and whether there was a link between their geographical location and the reason that they were there. Upon using the app, we discovered that it proved less useful than we had hoped at identifying those signs relevant to our investigation. In acting as a means of locating top-down multilingual signs in Central Manchester, we discovered that it was difficult to navigate and the search parameters only surfaced a limited range of relevant data. Instead, as well as using the application, we also followed our other means of photograph data collection which involved merely exploring the regions of the city centre that would include top-down multilingual signs and taking our own photographs; these included regions such as Chinatown and areas that would need more public information such as transport stations. This exploration was influenced by the information we gathered in our literary research on the most probable locations for top-down multilingual signs. Finally, upon finding the signs that we deemed relevant, by using the location that we had found them at, we were able to also locate them on Linguasnapp. In conducting our fieldwork this way, we were able to find relevant signs in our catchment area and access more information behind it.

In completing the second research aim, we anticipated to use the Census to draw conclusions as to what trends, if any, existed in the region of Central Manchester. The dominant and most significant trend that we would look for would include the population of members of certain ethnicities in an area against the presence of the languages spoken by these members on top-down multilingual signs. Furthermore, the area that we had outlined as 'Central Manchester' was taken to include everything within the inner ring road; this excludes areas of Manchester such as the University campuses and Rusholme. One of the main reasons as to why we wanted to exclude those areas was due to the extensive amount of research that has also been carried out there. Also, due to our research locus being focused on the attitudes and motivations of top-down multilingualism both related to the general public and the council, it made more sense to concentrate on the central area of Manchester.

Our completion of our third research aim involved using questionnaires to ask passers-by their opinions on multilingualism in Manchester. In terms of results, the outcome of our research in this section corresponded most closely to what we had anticipated. We did not need to change anything about the way we underwent this aspect of our investigation.

2 Why does multilingualism occur on public (top-down) signs?

To gain a further insight into the motivations behind the presence of multilingualism on top-down signs, we conducted an interview with the services manager at M-four Translations, at Manchester City Council. In our interview, we tackled not only the direct question that we are aiming to research, but we also investigated the relevance of the conclusions that we had been able to draw in our literature review to the city of Manchester.

Firstly, when approached with the main question 'Why does multilingualism occur on public (top-down) signs?' our interviewee revealed some interesting insight; rather than the council acting with the intention of fulfilling a higher responsibility or increasing the level of multilingualism in Manchester, it is the individual that requests the presence of translated signs. The M-four Translations services manager disclosed that the top-down multilingual signs that we encounter in the centre of Manchester were all signs that were requested by the independent organisation that is behind the sign. These independent organisations must, if they want to make a multilingual sign, apply for planning permission for the sign and apply for a translation. This insight comes as a surprise to the conclusion that we had drawn in our literature review. There appears to be no active role played by the council in initiating the production of multilingual signs, and consequently, little evidence of a higher responsibility to accommodate for otherwise marginalised communities. In addition to this, our interviewee indicated that if the council were to take a more dominant role in the production of top-down multilingual signs in Manchester it would be difficult to represent all the cultures and languages that are present in Manchester due to the city's vast diversity and changing nature. In light of this information, we researched into Manchester's history of immigration to explore this point further. In looking at the Census (2011), it becomes clear that the migration patterns of different ethnic groups is very dependent on context. Statistically, the number of national insurance number applications per ethnic group reveal that trends in migration fluctuate on a yearly basis. For example, in 2010-2011 it was people of Pakistani origin that were dominant in society. However, come 2012-2013 it was applications from people of Polish origin that exhibited a spike, and it was due to changes in migration laws and the economic situation of individual countries as well as free movement within the EU that influenced this. As a result therefore, it would be very difficult to truly represent the ethnic population of a city that changes so frequently.

One point the M-four Translations services manager highlighted however was that due to their expressed interest and desire in growing the multilingual landscape of Manchester, the council would pay for the translation services of signs that they feel the community needed rather than merely desired. This would apply to signs that benefit the majority rather than the individual. This type of situation is not easy to distinguish. Some would argue that certain locations and the

translations found within them, such as those found at Manchester Airport and other major transport stations would fall into the category of need rather than desire. The translated signs found at such locations were not paid for by the council and instead paid for by the organisation. Some examples of these are included in Figures (1) and (2).

Secondly, in our search of top-down multilingual signs within the city centre, we encountered examples both within and outside of the Linguasnapp app. In our manual search for multilingual signs we encountered the sign exhibited in Figure (1), which we were able to locate on the app afterwards. This sign was found on Portland Street outside Chinatown and is communicating in both English and Chinese. What is interesting about this sign however is the fact that the translation of this sign in Chinese does not directly correspond to the English on the same sign. Where the English reads "Wheel clamping in operation", the Chinese reads "No Parking", these messages communicate two different meanings. When asked about the difference in translation and meanings within this sign, the M-four Translations services manager revisited the notion that it is the individual that is responsible for the sign. Another of the conclusions that were drawn in the literature review included the notion that the presence of more languages in a community creates a sense of ownership of that area by that community. Due to the mistranslation in the sign, it can be deduced that not only is the sign there to serve a functional purpose, but it is also there to serve a symbolic purpose. The presence of the Chinese language on the sign alongside its location in Chinatown serves to declare the area as belonging to the members speaking that language.

However, it appears that not all of the multilingual signs found in Central Manchester serve this symbolic purpose. A couple of the examples of multilingual signs found on Linguasnapp, such as Figure (3) are examples of public signs that are seasonal and temporary rather than permanent installations. The M-four Translations services manager referenced these types of top-down signs are important to the multilingual landscape of Central Manchester. They, according to our interviewee, serve a functional purpose in that they provide relevant translated information towards a targeted audience. In our interview the M-four Translations services manager highlighted the various, temporary and occasional contexts in which the city of Manchester's linguistic landscape peaked over the recent years. One notable occasion mentioned was the European Championships in 1996 where temporary signs were created for speakers of the countries that were participating in the tournament. The signs themselves were requested by the organisers of the event however the translations were provided by the translations department at Manchester City Council. The employment of an accurate translation team highlights the attention paid to the legitimacy of the translation which forms a stark contrast to the example in Figure (1) that we discussed earlier. This begins to exemplify how these seasonal signs serve a very functional purpose rather than a symbolic

one. It appears therefore that the roles that top-down multilingual signs serve in Central Manchester are not limited in whether they serve a symbolic or functional purpose but instead are diverse in the role that they play in our society. It seems however, that there are distinguishable types of multilingual signs in Manchester and consequently a difference in the organisation behind the sign; there are some that truly wish to communicate their translated message and some that use the translation as a symbolic message to present the dominance of a certain language in a community.

3 What determines the languages selected on top-down multilingual signs?

In attaining an idea of the ethnic and linguistic landscape of Central Manchester, we decided to use data from the Census (2011). This enabled us to not only gain an insight into the populations of different ethnicities in Central Manchester, but also the top languages spoken and the rate of immigration into the city from abroad. Whereas this information proved helpful in gaining an overview, it did not provide us with a current and functional linguistic landscape. It was in fact our interview with the M-four Translations services manager that enlightened us to the factors determining not only the selection of languages on top-down multilingual signs, but also the languages that are in use in Manchester in 2017.

In our analysis of Census (2011) data, we discovered that there are major discrepancies in the way the figures compare against each other. For our investigation, we chose to concentrate on three facets of information: the most spoken languages in Manchester, the population of ethnic groups in Manchester, and the percentage of residents who cannot speak English. Firstly, if one looks at the most spoken language in Manchester besides English, the Census (2011) reveals that it is Urdu. This language is most commonly spoken by people of Pakistani and other South Asian origin; however, also according to the Census (2011) this ethnic group is more prevalent in areas outside the city centre, such as Cheetham and South Gorton, rather than in central Manchester. Urdu therefore may well be one of the most spoken languages in the city, but ward-specifically, it may not be as relevant to the district of Central Manchester as other languages are. This is indeed reflected in the photographic data we researched and collected; from what we saw, there was little evidence of Urdu being used in translation on top-down signs.

Secondly, another discrepancy found in Census (2011) data is that between the overall population of the Polish ethnic group and the amount that the Polish language is spoken in Manchester. According to data in the Census (2011), the Polish language is the second highest non-English language spoken in Manchester, however in terms of population, the Polish ethnic group does not appear until ninth place below the African and Irish ethnic groups. Representing the Polish

language more in society therefore may well be seen as unnecessary due to the lack of people using it.

Thirdly, the migration trends and patterns that are revealed in the Census (2011) theoretically should have an effect on the linguistic trends and patterns in Manchester. The influx of Spanish immigrants into Central Manchester in 2013-2014 should influence the city's linguistic landscape, however this is not represented. The way that multilingualism is controlled in Manchester is determined by the council through a series of translation applications from individual organisations, as we have already discussed. The multilingual landscape, in light of our interview with the M-four Translations services manager, disregards the discrepancies in the Census (2011) and instead deals with the linguistic picture that their department attains from their daily influx of applications. On the 22nd May 2017, the day that we conducted this interview, the number of applications from certain languages is vastly different from the languages that are represented in the Census (2011). This indicates that the languages that are in functional use in today's Manchester is not a fixed list.

Top 15 Languages Spoken in Manchester (Non-UK)	Residents
Urdu	13,095
Polish	6,447
'Other' Chinese (not Mandarin or Cantonese	5,878
Panjabi	4,719
Bengali (With Sylheti and Chatgaya)	3,114
African; Somali	2,958
Persian/Farsi	2,660
French	2,351
Kurdish	1,886
Spanish	1,869
Cantonese Chinese	1,739
Greek	1,588
Portuguese	1,458
Pashto	1,147
Czech	933

Table 1. Top 15 languages other than English spoken in Manchester; taken from the Census (2011).

Translations Department for 22/05/2017								
	Translations Department for 22/05/2017							
Language	Number of							
	Applications							
Urdu/Punjabi	10							
Somali	3							
Arabic	3							
Czech	2							
Romanian	2							
Russian	2							
Tigrinya	2							
Lingala	2							
Slovak	2							
Albanian	1							
Bengali	1							
Cantonese	1							
French	1							
Gujarati	1							
Hungarian	1							
Italian	1							
Kurdish	1							
Polish	1							
Portuguese	1							
Vietnamese	1							

Table 2. Data obtained from the M-four translations department at Manchester City Council.

Tables 1 and 2 both contain data surrounding the languages spoken and used in Manchester. From looking at both tables it becomes apparent that not all the languages represented in the Census (2011) are represented in table 2. This begins to implicate that those languages recorded as most dominant in the Census (2011) are not necessarily requested by Manchester's residents on a day-to-day basis. From these tables, one can see a stark difference between languages that are recorded in

the 2011 Census (table 1) and languages that have been requested for translation at the City Council's M-four department (table 2); this was not an anticipated outcome.

Urdu fulfils the notion that the most spoken language in Manchester, besides English, is the language that receives the most translation applications. It is interesting therefore that this popularity within the status of this language is not represented more in top-down multilingual signs. However, a language that is widely represented is Chinese, and by looking at the figures in tables 1 and 2, this is surprising because Chinese is low down on both tables.

In table 2 there is evidence of languages being used that are not represented as a common language for the city of Manchester, in particular Tigrinya and Lingala. According to table 1, both these languages are not widely spoken within Manchester however the presence of speakers of those languages can still be seen in the two language translation requests made for these languages on the 22th May 2017. It is because of this misrepresentation of languages in functional use in Manchester that deters the M-four Translations services manager and his office from using language data from surveys like the Census due to their temporal nature and the quickness with which they become outdated. Instead, their office prefers to use their daily list of applications to develop their idea of those languages in use in today's society and the linguistic trends and patterns that arise within their department.

It is worth noting however, that upon researching these statistics and number from the Census (2011) and the information given to us by the M-four Translations services manager, we soon became aware that finding city centre specific data was difficult. A lot of the data found within the Census (2011) was true for the whole of Manchester, with only a select few tables and statistics relating specifically to the city centre ward and our investigation. In order to overcome this, we found ourselves cross referencing different tables and statistics that were relevant to each other which consequently led to a set of more interesting results, but not specifically what we were looking for.

4 What are people's attitudes to top-down multilingual signs in Central Manchester?

In gathering the data for this aspect of our investigation, we did encounter some issues. These mainly came in the form of difficulty in finding willing participants for our questionnaire. In our research plan, we had planned to use three days to complete and gather information for these questionnaires. While at the time we thought this might be too much, the extra time added in for contingency definitely helped, as people became more willing to cooperate. We have included the questionnaire and the results of our interviews in a table in the appendix.

The questions that we asked went as follows:

- Q1) Do you think there are enough signs with multiple languages on them in and around Central Manchester? (Yes or No)
- Q1b) If not, should there be more? (Yes or No)
- Q2) On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being the most comfortable), how comfortable are you with these multilingual signs?
- Q3) On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being the most necessary), how necessary do you think the presence of foreign languages on these government signs are?
- Q4) Do you think the inclusion of other languages on government signs makes it more difficult for them to be read? (Yes or No)
- Q5) The majority of these signs in Central Manchester are translated into either Arabic or Chinese, do you think there should be a more diverse range of languages present? (Yes or No)

We then asked them for personal details such as gender, age, nationality, ethnicity and the languages that each participant spoke.

(Refer to Table 3 in Appendix)

From table 3 (Appendix) it is clear that the attitudes of the people in Central Manchester are largely positive. According to our data 90% of people interviewed would like to see more multilingualism on top-down signs in Central Manchester and 75% of these people have expressed a desire for the representation of more languages on these signs. In addition to this only 80% of people interviewed viewed top-down multilingual signs as necessary but this did not affect how comfortable they were with the presence of multiple languages on top-down signs as 85% of interviewees reacted positively when asked about their level of comfort. The people who felt that there was enough multilingualism in the city also expressed a low level of comfort towards the presence of multilingualism on top-down multilingual signs, and these people appeared to be from an older generation. If given more time for the investigation and a chance to further carry out our research this might be an interesting avenue to follow.

In our interview with the M-four Translations services manager we conducted this questionnaire to see if the attitudes of the general public differed to that of members of Manchester City Council. Our interviewee explicitly expressed a desire and long term goal for an increase in the multilingual landscape of the city of Manchester. He however also expressed the belief that the level of top-down multilingualism on signs in Central Manchester at the current level is sufficient due to the large amount of people that are capable of understanding English.

Although the results that we gathered do not correlate with the attitudes that we discovered represented in the media in our literature report, they do correlate with the conclusions that we were able to draw from other pieces of literature such as the LUCIDE Utrecht City Report

(2014). Within this report they conducted a similar survey whereby they reached the conclusion that residents desired more internationalisation of the city. This is very evident in our data and could go on to indicate that there is a larger, more international desire not just within Manchester, but in other countries as well, for more multilingualism.

5 Conclusions

From our study, we can conclude that multilingualism on top-down signs occurs due to individual desire and applications from independent organisations rather than from the government and council itself. This consequently leads to a selective representation of the city's languages on topdown multilingual signs and this invalidates sources of relevant information such as the Census (2011). Due to the process of application approval for translations and planning permission within the council, the selection of languages is not a process which uses information from the Census (2011) as guidance. This is partly because the prevalence of a certain language or language community within Manchester changes, often meaning that documents like the Census (2011) quickly become unreliable and outdated as a way of determining which languages are popular or needed. In light of this however, there appears to be a high demand for more representation of languages in society and Central Manchester specifically, which can begin to create conflict between the issues surrounding the supply and demand of such signs. Although multilingualism on top-down signs is very much welcomed in the city of Manchester, it is not provided to the extent that it perhaps could be. The satisfaction of this desire however, as we have seen, is a complex issue that is hard to tackle, due to the ever changing and ever evolving status of Manchester's ethnic and linguistic landscape.

6 Bibliography

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Nortier, J; Brasileiro Reis Pereira, I; Ridder, J; *Multilingualism in Utrecht – LUCIDE City Report*, (London: London School of Economics, 2014).

7 Appendix

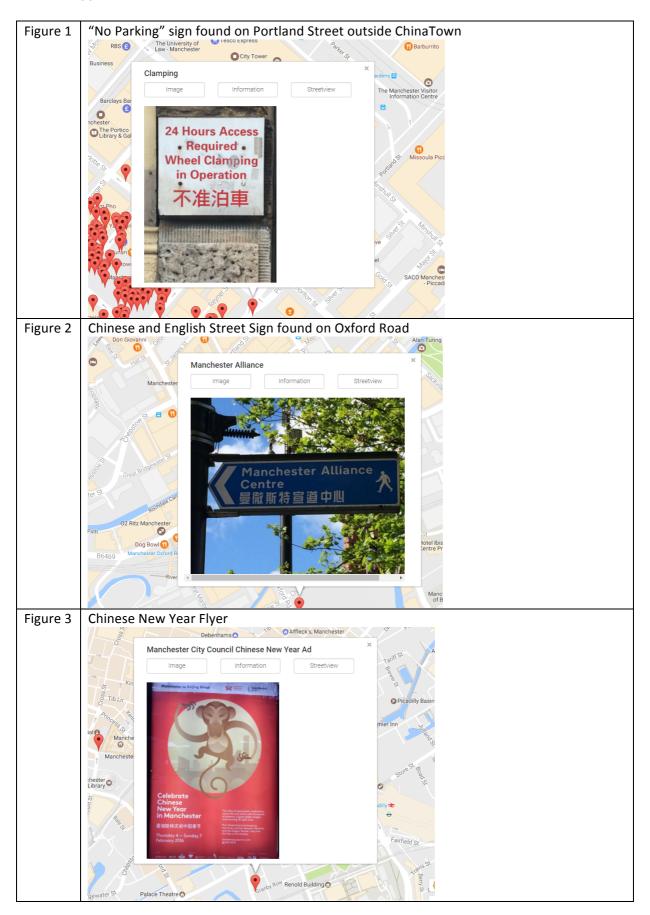


Table 1									
	Top 15 Languages Spoken in Manchester (Non-UK)					Residents			
	Urdu					1			
	Pol	Polish					6,447		
	'Other' Chinese (not Mandarin or Cantonese								
	Panjabi								
	Ber	Bengali (With Sylheti and Chatgaya)					3,114		
	African; Somali								
	Persian/Farsi								
	French								
	Kurdish								
	Spanish								
	Cantonese Chinese								
	Greek								
		Portuguese					1,458		
		shto					1,147		
		ech ce: Census Table QS204, ON	NS				933		
Table 2		uage Translation Re		Manchester	Citv Cour	cil M-four			
	_	lations Department	-		,				
	Langu	•	, ,			Number	of		
						Applicatio			
	Urdu	/Punjabi					10		
	Soma	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·					3		
	Arabic						3		
	Czech						2		
	Roma			2					
							2		
	Russian						2		
		Tigrina							
	Linga						2		
	Slova						2		
	Alban						1		
	Benga						1		
	Canto						1		
	Frenc						1		
	Gujar	ati				1			
	Hungarian						1		
	Italiar	Italian					1		
	Kurdish						1		
	Polish	Polish					1		
	Portuguese						1		
	Vietnamese						1		
Table 3	Table o	of questionnaire res	ults from o	ur study					
	Person	Personal Details	Question 1	Question 1B	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	
	1	Male, 60+, White British, Languages spoken: English	No	Yes	5	5	No	No	
	2	Male, 25-40, White	No	No	5	5	No	Yes	
		American, Languages spoken: English, Hebrew							
		and Yiddish					1		
	3	Male, 25-40, Indian, Languages spoken: English	No	Yes	5	5	No	Yes	
		and Hindi							
					1				

1			ı	1	T	ı	1		
	4	Female, 40-60, Jamaican/German, Languages spoken: English	No	Yes	5	5	No – depending on how many langages	Yes	
	5	Male, 18-24, White Italian, Languages spoken: English, Spanish and Italian	No	Yes	4	5	No	Yes	
	6	Female, 18-24, UK/Pakistani, Languages spoken: English and Punjabi	No	Yes	5	5	No	Yes	
	7	Male, 18-24, British, Assyrian, Languages Spoken: English	No	Yes	4	5	No	Yes	
	8	Female, 18-24, British, Albanian, Languages spoken: English, Albanian and Kosovan	No	Yes	3	4	No	Yes	
	9	Male, 40-60, UK, British, Languages spoken: English	Yes	No	2	1	Yes	No	
	10	Female, 25-40, UK, Albanian, Languages spoken: English and Albanian	No	Yes	4	3	No	No	
	11	Female, 18-24, White Britsh, Languages spoken: English	No	Yes	5	5	No	Yes	
	12	Female, 18-24, White British, Languages spoken: English	No	Yes	5	5	No	Yes	
	13	Female, 60+, White British, Languages spoken: English	Yes	No	3	3	Yes	No	
	14	Female, 18-24, Polish, Languages spoken: Polish and English	No	Yes	5	5	No	Yes	
	15	Female, 40-60, Spanish, Languages spoken: English, Spanish and French	No	Yes	4	4	No	Yes	
	16	Male, 18-24, UK , Pakistani, Languages spoken: Urdu and English	No	Yes	4	5	No	Yes	
	17	Male, 18-24, White British, Languages spoken: English	No	Yes	4	3	Yes	No	
	18	Male 40-60, White British, Languages spoken: English and French	No	Yes	4	4	No	Yes	
	19	Male, 60+, White American, Languages spoken: English	No	Yes	4	5	No	Yes	
	20	Male, 25-40, Chinese, Languages spoken: Cantonese and English	No	Yes	5	4	No	Yes	