

# लपतौलिंगुवा MANCHESTER

**Report**

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# **A Linguistic Profile of Whalley Range**

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## **1. Research questions and methods**

The area that we chose to investigate was Whalley Range, which is around 2 miles south of Manchester city centre. This area was of particular interest to us because there does not appear to have been any full language surveys of the area, however, by using data within the census, and also from other sources, we decided that the multi-ethnicity of the area would make it the ideal place to investigate.

After all White groups, Pakistani is the second most dominant ethnicity in Whalley Range, making up 21.4% of the population of the area. Indian people account for 6.3% of the population of Whalley Range and Black Caribbean people make up 4.3%. Generally, census data shows that there is a great mix of ethnicities, and that led us to the belief there would be at least passive knowledge of many languages.

However, despite the ethnic diversity indicated in the census data, the majority of Whalley Range's population indicated that they were born in the United Kingdom, with only 23% born outside the UK (Office for National Statistics). Thus, we suspected that a high number of residents would speak

English in most social contexts, unless they were aware that the people they were speaking to prefer to speak in other languages.

Our research question was, “does social context influence the languages used in Whalley range?” On the basis of the statistics and theories, we aimed to prove our main hypothesis which was, “Amongst multilinguals in Whalley Range English is used as a medium of communication in certain social contexts.”

Our plan was to visit Whalley Range and spend some time conducting interviews, observations, surveys, and collecting data from questionnaires. The specific social contexts we were interested in were educational institutions, places of worship, businesses, media and the home, and the questions in our questionnaire were designed to formulate an accurate description of the languages used in each of these contexts.

We investigated the public services available in Whalley Range, most notably the police. We found that despite the level of diversity within the community being quite large, representation of it within the police in Whalley Range was not evident. We found that out of a total of eleven police staff responsible for the area, only one was of an ethnic minority. This greatly contradicts the information we attained when out researching the area, however, with regards to police targets on ethnic minority recruitment, we found that the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) due to equality legislation has an annual target of 10% for recruiting ethnic minority officers. The GMP also offers translation services on their main website to aide ethnic and foreign nationals who live in communities from all over Manchester.

## **2. Changes to the plan**

We originally intended to send questionnaires to schools in Whalley Range, however, after contacting the three secondary schools we planned to send

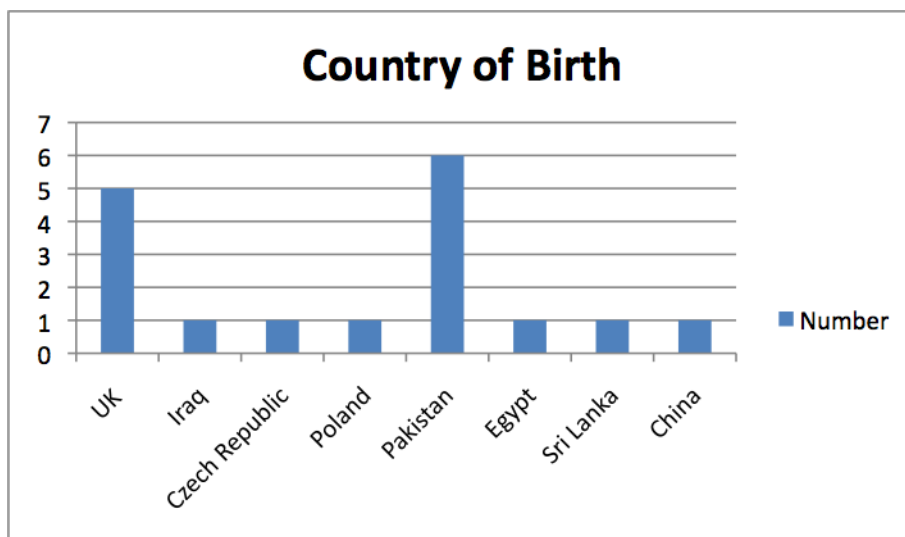
them to and being informed that this was not an option, we had to focus on other means such as responses from residents, business owners and so on to find information about the languages used in this particular context.

Upon visiting places of worship in Whalley Range, we were made aware that it was not appropriate for us to enter them to collect the data we needed, so to avoid offending anyone, we again used responses from residents, business owners and so on to discover the languages that were prevalent in these contexts.

Altogether we collected 25 responses from different people connected to different areas that we were investigating, though the areas were not represented as we had hoped, because of the problems described above. Discrepancies in the total numbers in the graph below are due to respondents declining to answer certain questions, as all questions on the questionnaire were optional.

### 3. Findings

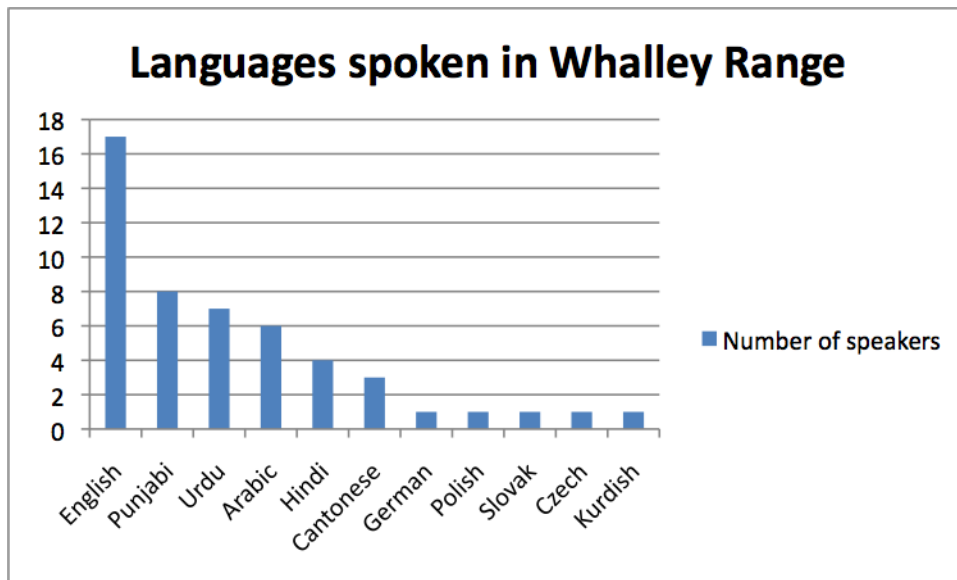
Graph 1:



Graph 1 illustrates that the majority of people we interviewed were born in Pakistan. This contradicts the 2001 Census information which shows that over half of the population of Whalley Range were born in the UK. The 2011 Census may support our findings as this may be due to changes in the

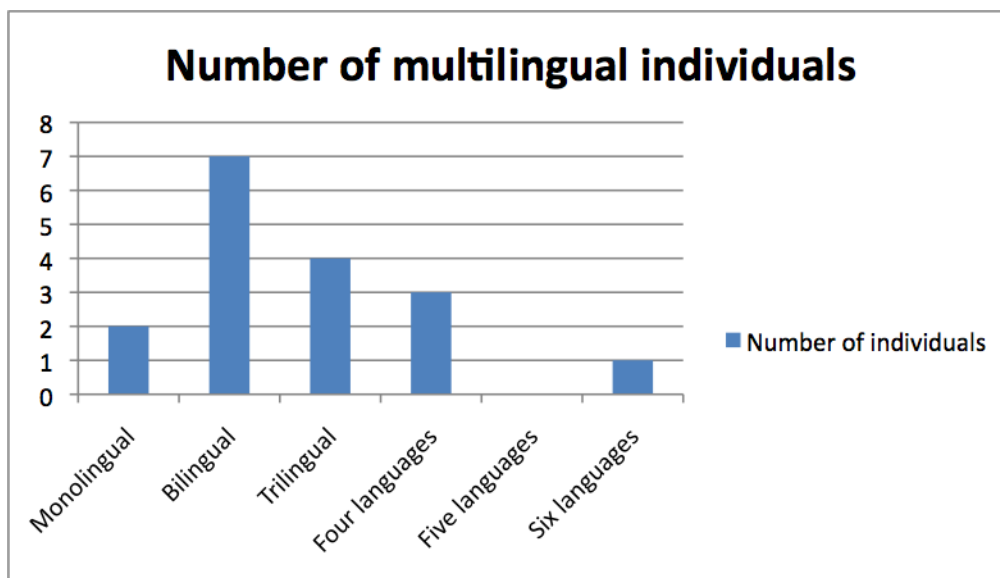
population over time. However, it is also likely that our sample is not representative of the population of Whalley Range, as it was a relatively small sample designed for the purpose of our investigation.

Graph 2:



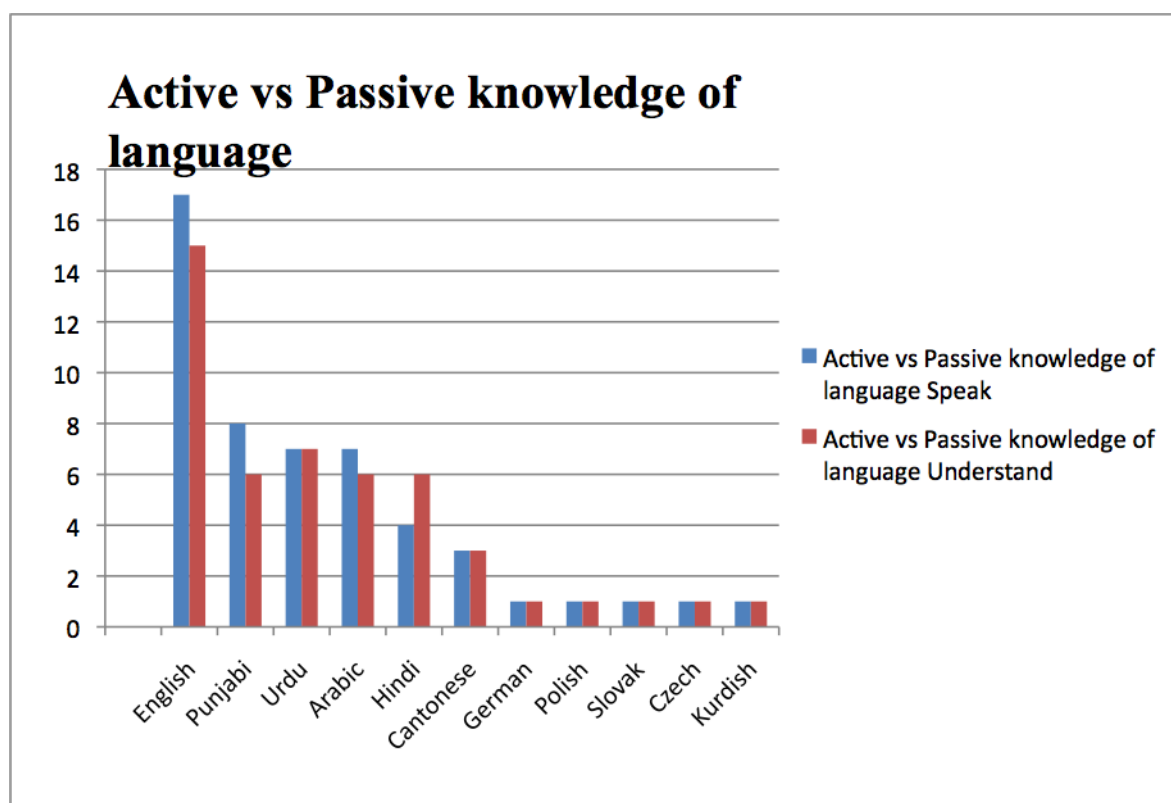
The census provided us with the knowledge that many languages are spoken in Whalley Range, and Graph 2 illustrates that our findings confirmed the linguistic diversity in Whalley Range. We found 11 languages spoken amongst the participants we gathered data from, and these are even more varied than we could have predicted, as Graph 2 shows.

Graph 3:



As Graph 3 shows, we found that most participants were bilingual, with all bilingual speakers speaking English and another language. There was also a speaker able to speak six languages, which included Arabic, Cantonese, English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. This participant worked in a fairly large restaurant and therefore would come into contact with many different languages on a regular basis, which may be the reason for him having knowledge of such diverse languages. He was also keen to stress that there are many languages in the area of which he was aware. Multilingualism is clearly a norm amongst the people in this community interviewed, which stands in stark contrast to the rest of the UK.

Graph 4:



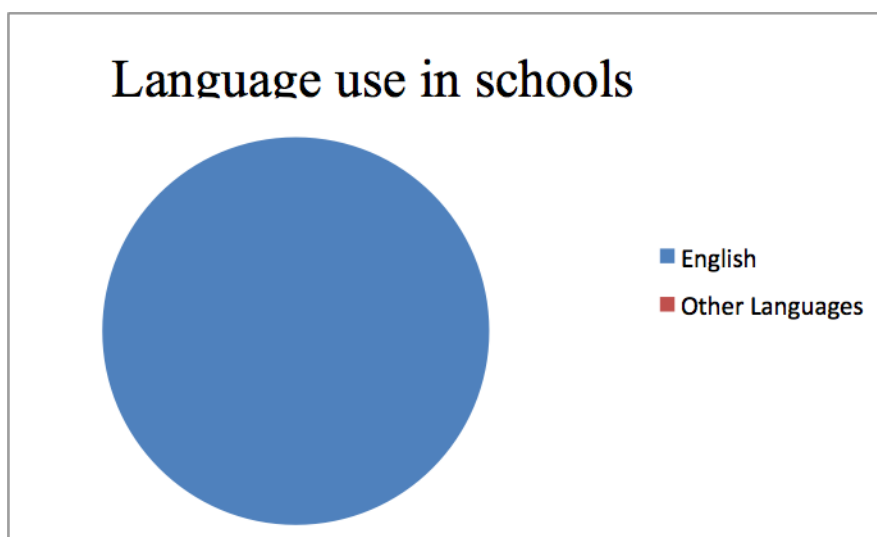
Graph 4 shows the correlation between the active and passive knowledge of languages in Whalley Range. It contradicts what we would expect to find in a multilingual area. We would have expected people to understand more languages than they are able to speak, however this graph generally shows the opposite pattern. This may be due to participants' lack of understanding of the question, possibly through poor phrasing in the questionnaire, or to a non-

linguist they may not have considered the difference between comprehension and production . It does show us though, that English is the most widely spoken and understood language in Whalley Range, which is a finding which we anticipated, and therefore the active and passive knowledge of English is greater than of any other language.

### 3.1 Educational Institutions

Unfortunately, we were not able to collect the data as we intended for this social context, as was mentioned in the introduction. However, as we planned for the possibility that this may be the case, we added questions about language use in schools to the questionnaire that was circulated among the general public.

Graph 5:



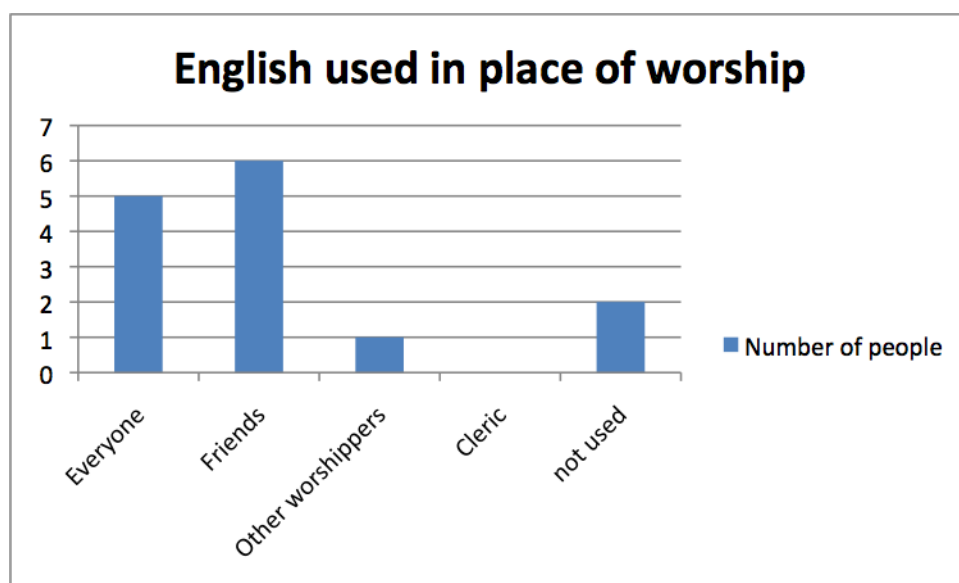
Graph 5 is a pie chart which shows that all respondents claimed to speak only English in schools to everyone, which we expected to some extent because schools are generally the most linguistically diverse context that we investigated, and as pupils in the UK are educated in English it is unlikely that they use other languages in school. However, having looked at Ofsted reports of the schools, we found that the schools varied greatly in their linguistic diversity. Whalley Range 11-18 High School's Ofsted report for 2009 claimed that, 'nearly half of the students speak a language other than English as their

first language' (Ofsted 2009). Furthermore, in William Hulme's Grammar School, the Ofsted report stated that the number of pupils from minority ethnic communities is higher than average, with a total of 25 languages spoken (Ofsted 2009). These findings suggest that English is used as a medium of communication in these schools as most of the pupils would be using a language other than their first language to communicate with everyone in that environment.

### 3.2 Places of Worship

Similarly to the educational institutions, we encountered problems in our initial plan for collecting the relevant data for languages used in places of worship. Nevertheless, questions in our questionnaires accounted for this possibility, and we are able to use responses from those questions to investigate the languages used in this social context.

Graph 6:



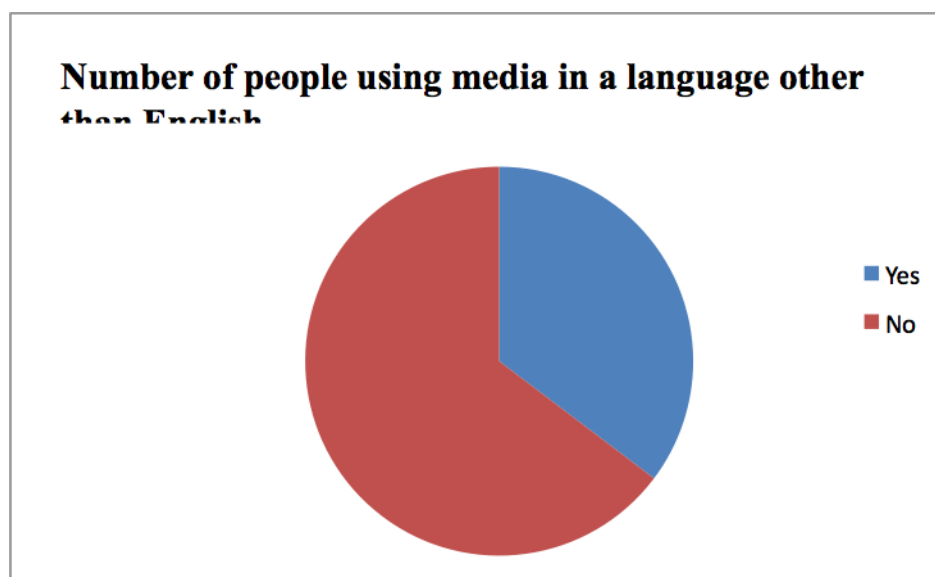
The questionnaire gave us data shown in Graph 6. We found that English is used to speak to people, whether it is friends, other worshippers or everyone, in places of worship. We find this surprising, as most of the participants' places of worship were places in which the services would not be given in English, such as Mosques and Temples. What the participants reported shows that English is used for social purposes, whereas in places of worship the language in which the services are given are considered to be more



formal and have different purposes in that situation. There may be some diglossia occurring in places of worship, where there are two languages in use at the same time but each has a different purpose. However, one is not necessarily more prestigious than the other.

### 3.3 Media

Graph 7:



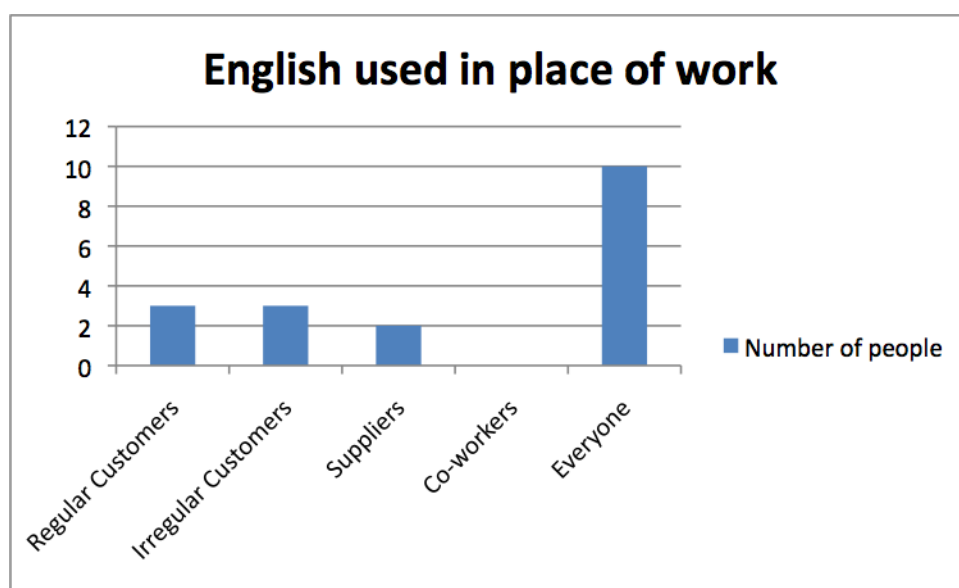
Graph 7 is a pie chart that illustrates that over a quarter of participants questioned use media in a language other than English. The fact that people use media in other languages suggests that these people use English as a medium of communication as when they use English they are using it to accommodate the hearer rather than it being their preferred and most comfortable language to use.

Respondents who stated that they used media in languages other than English reported to use the Asian Channel, Prime TV and Zee TV, amongst others. This suggests that a variety of languages are made accessible, as there are a number of available channels, although clearly the preferred language of media is English. According to Lewis (2001), the presence of a language in the media, can significantly enhance its prestige in the community, and this seems to be the case in Whalley Range, as there is no evidence that Urdu, Punjabi and Arabic (as well as other languages) have

less prestige than English. Therefore, when speakers of other languages use English they are likely to be using it to aid effective communication, and to exchange a group identity rather than for any other reason such as prestige, supporting the idea that English is a medium of communication for a linguistically diverse area.

### 3.4 Businesses

Graph 8:



As Graph 8 shows, English was found to be the most common language used in places of work for workers to speak to everyone. This is as we would have expected. If English is used as a medium of communication, workers would speak to most people in English as they may not know the first language of the customer and whether it is the same as their own. This appears to be what is happening in this social context according to our data. The same number of participants reported that they spoke English to regular and irregular customers. This was contradicted by the observations that we did, as indicated by Table 1. Also, the fact that a large number of participants reported to speak languages other than English to suppliers implies that they have a close relationship with them, which is possibly due to the fact that the shops in which we interviewed people were generally small family owned businesses.

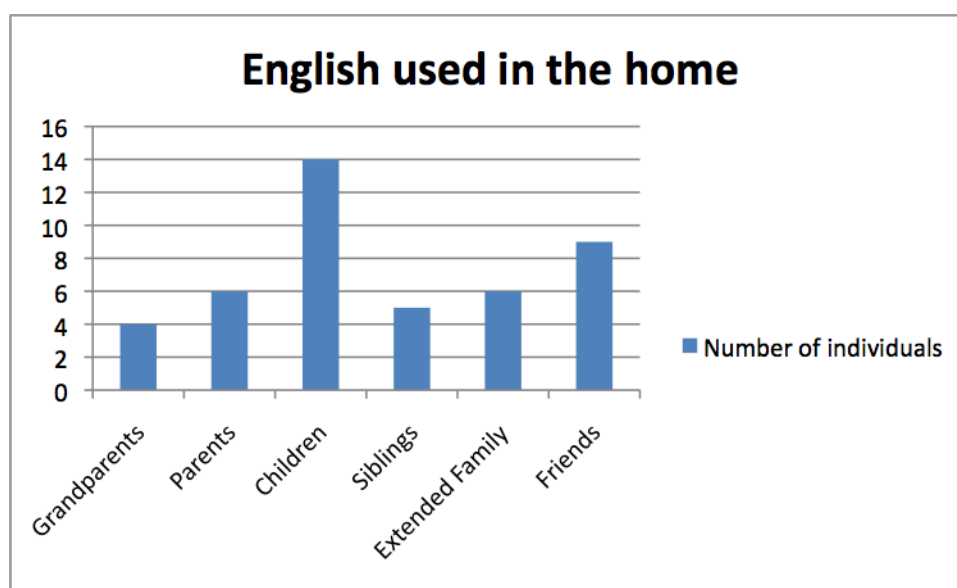
Table 1- Participant observation in grocer's in Whalley Range:

People Observed	People observed not using English
10	7

We also observed some of the communication taking place in shops in Whalley Range, and found that Arabic was used to speak to customers that shop owners appeared to be more familiar with, as well as co-workers. This language may not be the most widely spoken after English, but it seemed to be the most used in this particular social context according to our observations.

### 3.5 Home

Graph 9:



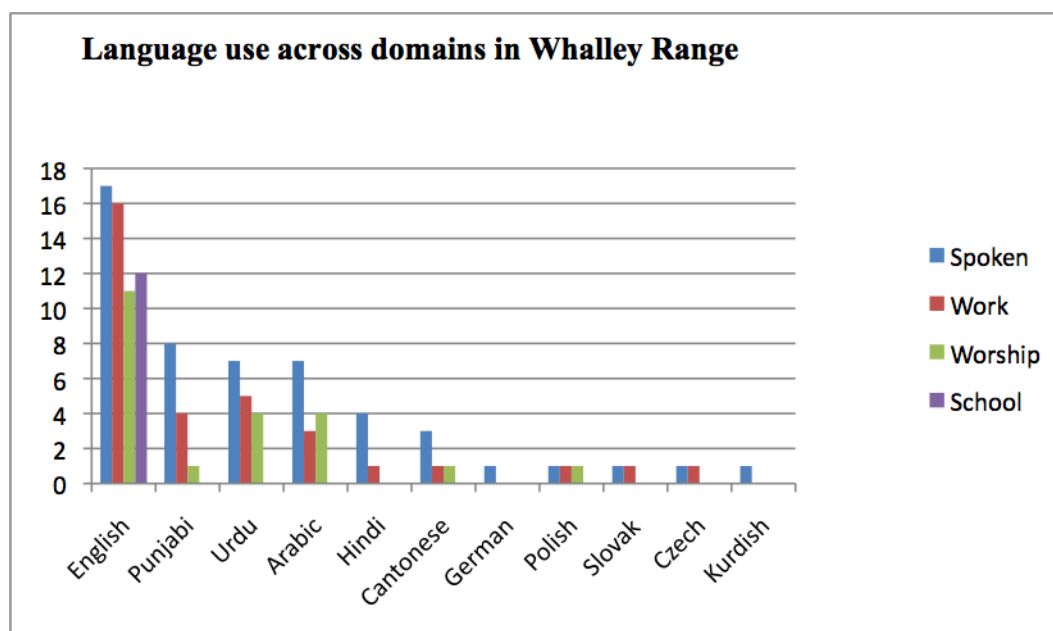
Graph 9 shows that most of the participants speak English to their children. This may have a link to our finding that we found only English was used in schools, and therefore children are either encouraged to speak English or are not fluent in the first language of their parents or other people in their family. This in turn is interesting as it is the only domain where English is completely dominant, and this may be tied to perceptions of English, as a language of

prestige, and a language that is needed for advancement in education and success.

As expected, English was reported to be used less to speak to grandparents. This is something we anticipated, as the older generations are more likely to either have spent more time in the country of birth before moving to England, or have stronger connections with that country and people who still live there. Therefore they will have more exposure to their native language and may have a preference to use that over English in the home.

Liebersohn, Dalto and Johnston (1975) and Alba, Logan and Lutz (2002) stated that the typical pattern in the past was for the first generation immigrants to learn enough English for economic survival; the second generation speak the parental tongue at home but English in most social domains in public life; and the third generation effectively speak English in every social context, including in the home (Portes and Schauflier 1994). Our findings support this strongly, as the data from each social context we investigated illustrate.

Graph 10:



Graph 10 sums up the different language use in different social contexts. English is used the most in all of the social contexts we investigated. The area where English was the weakest was in religious institutions. This may be

linked to patterns of religion acting as a domain for language preservation, as have been explored by Spolsky (2003).

#### **4. Discussion**

These findings show that multilingualism is alive and vibrant in Whalley Range. The findings have shown an astonishing number of languages spoken in a relatively small geographical area. The results also reveal that there is a great deal in variation in how multilingualism is used. For example, we have the situation that religious services are conducted in one language where non-English languages have been preserved, while some worshippers speak another language (English) amongst themselves. We see almost total use of English language in schools, despite Ofsted reports stating that for a number of children their first language is a language other than English. The results from the questionnaire also showed that the younger the individuals were in the family, the more likely they were to use English, with the use of English with children in the family being the highest and with grandparents the lowest, with presumably other languages in use as well.

There are some general trends here, but the overall picture is one of great mix and variety. At this point, a number of frameworks can be suggested to explain the patterns that we have seen in this community. As already mentioned, diglossia (Ferguson, 1959 and Fishman, 1967) can be suggested as a possible explanation for the patterns that we have seen revealed in Whalley Range, but given the enormous amount of variety, this may be too simplistic an explanation.

Matras (2008) has proposed that an individual's use of multiple languages is not a static thing and can vary massively with the slightest change in context. Matras encourages us to challenge the conventional perceptions of what multilingualism is and how it works.

Matras' ideas have sprung from research by Paradis (2004) which, although somewhat controversial, suggests that at a cognitive level, multilingual individuals have access to all their languages at once as one system, rather than having them separated. So consequently Matras encourages us to 'view multilingualism as an individual speaker's dynamic, goal-oriented and often creative use of a complex repertoire of linguistic structures. Multilingualism is thus an individual's diverse and differentiated network of communicative choices made during interaction with other individuals.' (Matras, 2008:72) This could potentially explain some of patterns observed occurring in Whalley Range, where we have a variety of different situations where individuals are using languages with great variation, and some inconsistency (for example, as we found in places of worship).

The changes that are taking place in the language community have a wide range of potential repercussions for the future. Although at present Whalley Range is linguistically dynamic and vibrant. It is possible in future that as the use of language in certain domains diminishes, there could be a degree of language death amongst the lesser used languages (of which there appear to be many in Whalley Range). Matras suggests (2008:71) that 'bilinguals will find themselves interacting in a continuum of contexts, many of which are likely to trigger what Grosjean (2001) has described as the 'bilingual mode', where language mixing is itself the default choice.' It is through this that mixing can occur, and as languages die, they may live on in mixed code in a new language, Matras suggests. Given the huge number of languages spoken in Whalley Range, it is possible that this could be a future development in the area.

As Lieberman, Dalto and Johnston (1975) stated, third generation immigrants are likely to have developed English as a first language and use it in all social contexts, including the home, even where parents or grandparents are unlikely to have English as a first language (Portes and Schauflyer 1994). Alongside this, Portes and Schauflyer (1994) also state that children growing up in societies where English is the dominant native language or where there

are many varied linguistic backgrounds will develop a rapid conversion to English monolingualism. Either of these two ideas can explain our findings, as Whalley Range is an area with many linguistic backgrounds but with English as the dominant native language, but also, Graph 9 shows that the idea by Lieberman, Dalto and Johnston (1975) may be relevant here, as English is used by less speakers to speak to older generations than younger ones.

## **5. Conclusion**

Generally, our hypothesis that “Amongst multilinguals in Whalley Range English is used as a medium of communication in certain social contexts” is supported by our findings. English is clearly the dominant language in Whalley Range, even though we were surprised to find how many other languages were used frequently in certain social domains, particularly in small shops.

We found that language transfer across generations was present in Whalley Range. English seemed to be used most frequently by younger speakers, as we can conclude from the data for educational institutions and in the home.

As there was not much research into the linguistic profile of Whalley Range previously, we feel that our research is of importance to the overall investigation into multilingualism in Manchester.

Future research directions could benefit from investigating the use of English in different domains in more depth, perhaps by trying to gain access to individuals in their home areas for participant observation, as opposed to relying on self-reporting.

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