



## **Report**

**2014**



The University of Manchester

The contents of this report are the intellectual property of the authors. No part of this report may be circulated or reproduced without explicit permission from the authors, or from the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures at the University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, United Kingdom.

# **Language Usage in Manchester's Chinatown**

Laura Proctor

Nicola Telfer

Jessica Faith Rigby

Natasha Kathryn Stein

# Table of Contents

<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Wing Fat .....	5
Woo Sang .....	6
FJUZ Unisex Hair Salon .....	7
China Buffet .....	7
T.L.A.....	8
Pacific Restaurant.....	9
Lewis Bet Bookmakers .....	9
BEA Bank .....	10
BBQ .....	10
<b>Evaluation of Aims .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Collecting the data and difficulties .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Conclusion and Further Comments.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>29</b>

We have chosen to focus our investigation on businesses in the Chinatown area of Manchester, and how the community's language usage forms its own cultural identity. We have looked into how the community fits within such a highly populated cosmopolitan city, full of people from a wide range of multicultural backgrounds. Chinatown is an area that instantly sparked interest as a place for us to carry out our investigation. There are so many languages which occur in such a concentrated area, thus reinforcing the global scale that multilingualism is occurring on.

A number of studies and readings have been published surrounding multicultural language within communities, which have helped support our research and develop it further (Cheung 1975, Wei 1994, Aronin 2008, Fishman 2007).

The linguistic landscape of Chinatown has also played a massive part in our research. We came across a range of different signs, leaflets and menus upon entering businesses which amplified the range of languages and nationalities there were to be catered for. As stated by Ben-Rafael, Shoamy&Barni (2010) urban areas are becoming increasingly important in demonstrating how 'languages weave together and linguistic destinies and expectations are 'played out''.

## Findings

### Kim's Thai Food Store

**Business name:** Kim's Thai Food Store

**Business type:** Food Shop

**Position of person we spoke to:** Shop owner

Kim's Thai Food Store is a small shop located in the center of China Town. We found this interesting since it is the only shop we came across in China Town that mainly caters for Thai customers. We spoke to the owner, Kim, who has worked and lived there for twenty years. Her main language is Thai, which she speaks at home. She also spoke good English, and said English was the language that she spoke most at the shop with customers, along with Thai and some Chinese. Kim and her husband run the shop alone, and we will therefore class it as a family business.

Her husband spoke little English and communicated with his wife in the shop in Thai. He was able to greet in English and use words to suffice a customer-shop assistant relationship. Perhaps, as Cheung (1975) states, his main communication with society is at the shop, and he has little contact with society outside of that. Since family-run businesses usually entail working long hours (Li Wei, 1994), perhaps he also has little opportunity to learn and use English.

Interestingly, she said that around 80% of customers are from Thailand and speak Thai, even though China Town is known for its Chinese inhabitants. Over 20 years, the store has always had the same amount of Chinese, Thai and English customers. Since we came across no other Thai store whilst in China Town, perhaps the Thai store has always had the same custom because the generations of the Thai community go there rather than the Chinese food shops. We assume this since the Chinese food shops and restaurants we visited did not mention speaking Thai or often having customers from Thailand.

The signs outside the front of the shop are in Thai, Chinese and English. The labels on shelves and throughout the aisles are in English and Thai.

**Wing Fat****Business name:** Wing Fat**Business type:** Supermarket**Position of person we spoke to:** Shop Assistant

Wing Fat is a moderately large supermarket in the center of China Town that sells traditional Chinese food, and is not family-run. We spoke to a shop assistant who was stacking shelves. Her main language is Cantonese, which she speaks at home, to employees, and to customers. She also speaks Mandarin to both employees and customers. Her English was of a very low level, although she did try to accommodate for English customers, exemplified when speaking to us.

She told us that the main nationality of the customers who came into the shop is Chinese. At the tills, the staff greet and speak to the customers in Chinese, unless the customer is English. The employees also spoke to each other in Chinese.

The sign outside the shop, the labels on shelves, food packets and opening hours were in both Chinese and English. However, there were some handwritten 'special offers' that were in Chinese only. Perhaps this as a result of the staff only speaking low-level English and therefore not being able to write well in English either. However it could also be because most of the customers are Chinese.

From observing the way that staff seemed to know customers, the traditional food they sold, and how much the shop catered for Chinese speakers, the shop seemed to be a staple example of the community. Because of this, we thought that this shop seemed to be part of an 'ethnoburb': an ethnic cluster of residential areas and business districts in large metropolitan areas (Li Wei, 1997).

**Woo Sang****Business name:** Woo Sang**Business type:** Supermarket**Position of person we spoke to:** Shop assistant

Woo Sang is a relatively small family-run supermarket located in the centre of Chinatown, which sells traditional Chinese food and other goods. The business has been running for 30 years by the same family. We spoke to the shop keeper who was working on the till. She said her main language was Cantonese, which she spoke at home and to the other employees.

Her English was basic; however she was able to communicate with us to maintain a customer-shop assistant relationship, and greeted us in English upon entering the shop. Since family-run businesses usually entail working long hours (Li Wei, 1994), perhaps she has little opportunity to learn and use English outside of Woo Sang.

Interestingly, she said the nationalities that most commonly go to Woo Sang are Chinese, Filipino and Thai. This was the only establishment that we interviewed that mentioned having customers from the Philippines. She said she greeted customers in English, Cantonese or Mandarin, usually because she knows the customers and their language, but also by making assumptions upon the customers entering the shop.

Interestingly, there were Chinese newspapers outside the shop, which with the fact they sell Chinese goods, indicates that they are catering more for Chinese customers than any other nationality. From observing the relationship between the employees and customers, we noticed that, similar to Wing Fat, the staff knew the customers well. This also seemed to be a staple of the community and suggested China Town to be an ethno burb (Li Wei, 1997).

## **FJUZ Unisex Hair Salon**

**Business name:** FJUZ

**Business type:** Hairdressers

**Position of person we spoke to:** Receptionist/Stylist

FJUZ Unisex Hair Salon is a hairdressers located on Portland Street, on the very outskirts of Chinatown. We noticed that the hairdressers were catering for Chinese speakers because of the huge sign outside which is in Chinese only. Underneath, is a smaller sign which is translated into both Chinese and English.

Inside, we spoke to a receptionist who was also a stylist. Her main language is Mandarin, however she can also speak English, Cantonese, Japanese and Korean at a basic level. She found it difficult to understand some of our questions, suggesting she only spoke these languages enough to understand work-related questions. She usually greets customers in Chinese, indicating the customers are usually Chinese speakers. The business is not family run, and she told us that the other employees speak English, and Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese. This salon seemed to be able to cater for English and Chinese speakers well because of this mix of speakers employed.

The price list is in English and Chinese, again indicating that the residents of Chinatown will understand it, as well as non-Chinese speakers passing by on Portland Street.

## **China Buffet**

**Business name:** China Buffet

**Business type:** Buffet Restaurant

**Position of person we spoke to:** Head Waitress

From this business we discovered that the waitress's main language was English. She communicates in English most of the time, both to customers and at home. We found that the main nationalities that came to the buffet were most recently of European background; Polish and Romanian were very common. The large variety also emphasizes just how multicultural Manchester is and perhaps the large diversity is on the increase. The language she uses to greet the customers in depends on each person's nationality i.e. if they are Chinese she will greet in Chinese, but if they are English she will greet the customers in English.



The fact there is such a large variety of nationalities using this business shows just how well this business is accommodating for languages other than English and Chinese. It also shows which cultures specifically the inhabitants of Chinatown are catering for. She also mentioned that the waitresses hired had to speak English. This is not surprising as like our research suggests, English is now a 'leading international language' (Fishman. 1998 in Aronin and Singleton. P3. 2008.) and therefore we expected that the front of house staff would have to be able to communicate in English, as most nationalities would likely be able to have a basic understanding of it.

It is surprising to see the signs outside are in English only, yet the restaurant caters mostly for customers who are not English. Again though, perhaps this is because English is becoming the leading international language and so they thought the majority of cultures would understand it.

### **T.L.A**

**Business name:** T.L.A

**Business type:** Arts and Crafts Centre

**Position of person we spoke to:** Owner

From this family run business we discovered that the owner's main language was Cantonese. She communicates in this language at home and to his employees. As a result of this the employees also spoke in Cantonese to one another within the workplace. The main nationalities that came into the business were English, and so therefore customers were greeted upon arrival in English.

We also found that younger employees spoke better English, as stated in Fishman (1998), that (English) 'is becoming the language of high society and of the young'.

This could be because of technology which the younger generation are surrounded by, improving their English skills, and something the older generation may be more out of touch with.

## **Pacific Restaurant**

**Business name:** Pacific Restaurant

**Business type:** Restaurant

**Position of person we spoke to:** Manager

From this business we discovered that the manager's main language was Cantonese. She communicates within the home environment in Cantonese also. However, language used for other employees is dependent on their nationality. For example if the employee is of a Chinese speaking language he will accommodate and speak to them in Chinese. If they are English, she will speak to them in English. This was especially interesting as it showed how diverse the language is across and within the restaurant. It was also noted that this specific organisation was family run.

The nationalities that come into the restaurant are very mixed, but mainly local within China Town. Many customers are from Hong-Kong originally but living in and around the Chinese community within Manchester. Customers however are often greeted in English. This supports the point made by Aronin and Singleton (2008:1) that 'multilingualism is ubiquitous, on the rise worldwide and increasingly deep and broad in its effects'. We found that the business therefore had the power to alter the language spoken and affect how management want their employees to speak. The opening times listed outside were also of interest as they were written in English, despite the restaurant itself being Chinese.

## **Lewis Bet Bookmakers**

**Business name:** Lewis Bet Bookmakers

**Business type:** Betting shop

**Position of person we spoke to:** Manager and Front of house

This non-family run betting shop is located on the edge of Chinatown. It was of interest as the manager we spoke to informed us that 90% of his customers were Chinese, yet he was of English background and his main and only language was English. This suggests that despite being English-run, Chinese customers will use the business frequently. This shows the mixing of Chinese/English cultures and suggests that unlike some of the businesses in Chinatown, the locals who go to this betting shop are highly accepting of the influences of other nationalities, aside from their own.

## **BEA Bank**

**Business name:** BEA Bank

**Business type:** Bank

**Position of person we spoke to:** Financial Adviser

The lady we spoke to was from a Chinese background and she could communicate in English, Mandarin and Chinese. Her main language though, was Cantonese. She spoke this at home with her family and to other employees who also had Cantonese as their main language. The other two employees working alongside her could also communicate in these three languages.

A notable difference in this type of business in Chinatown compared to the others we looked at i.e. restaurants and supermarkets was that each adviser knew most of their customers. This is perhaps due to a bank being more personal than a restaurant, which someone may only visit once. She described it as more of a local bank for the residents in Chinatown. Considering this therefore, they know the majority of their customers' main languages and therefore adapt their language dependent on which customer it is.

The bank accommodating for mainly English, Mandarin and Chinese shows these three languages are perhaps the most frequent for finance in Chinatown. This is to be expected due to the high density of English and Chinese speakers in Chinatown, whether each is their first or second language.

## **BBQ**

**Business name:** BBQ

**Business type:** Restaurant

**Position of person we spoke to:** Waiter

BBQ restaurant is a non-family run business, located on Faulkner Street opposite Chinatown's main car park. The young waiter we conversed with had a low level of English and said his main language was Chinese. This is the language he communicated in the most but he also knows Cantonese and Mandarin which he speaks at home.

At work he spoke Chinese to his fellow employees; however there was one person in the kitchen who spoke English. The rest of the employees therefore tried to speak to him in English to accommodate him, as he spoke no Chinese.

This shows that people from cultures other than Chinese can apply for jobs in Chinatown as normally there will be at least one person working there who will be able to communicate with them. Again, this shows the increasing diversity and multiculturalism.

The main nationalities of the customers coming to BBQ were Chinese and Mandarin, therefore the waiter's low level of English was not an issue as he rarely needed to communicate in English. It was surprising therefore, that he said he always greeted customers in English with 'hello' and from observation this seemed to be the case.

The opening hours outside were in English and the general menu was in Chinese, then translated into English. In addition, there was an extra 'special menu' which was purely written in Chinese – this shows the restaurant keeping traditional heritage and making it more appealing to Chinese customers who have perhaps not yet adapted to mixing with other cultures.

## **Evaluation of Aims**

### **Aim 1: What is the difference between language spoken in the work place and language spoken at home?**

We hypothesised that Chinese will be spoken more at home than in the workplace, since it is likely to be their main language. This is as a result of certain 'role-relations' (Fishman 2007:60) which occur. For example an 'employer-employee' or 'employee-customer' relation has a profound effect on language selection, and differentiates what the speaker chooses as their form of communication.

Our hypothesis was correct in the fact that Chinese was the main language we found to be spoken at home. The tables in our appendix (1, 1.1 and 1.2) show a broken down format of the language spoken at home versus in the workplace. In agreement with our hypothesis, English is the more popular language choice in the working environment. This reflects our original ideas and findings that there is a strong English-based customer clientele, and so the language chosen accommodates the needs of customers.

<u>Business</u>	<u>Language Spoken at Home</u>	<u>Language Spoken in the Workplace</u>
<u>Kim's Thai Food Store</u>	Thai	English/Thai/Chinese
<u>Woo Sang</u>	Chinese	English/Chinese
<u>T.L.A</u>	Chinese	Chinese/English
<u>Pacific Restaurant</u>	Chinese	Chinese/English
<u>Wing Fat</u>	Chinese	Chinese
<u>FJUZ</u>	Chinese	English/Chinese
<u>China Buffet</u>	English	English/Chinese
<u>Lewis Bet Bookmakers</u>	English	English
<u>BEA Bank</u>	Chinese	English/Chinese
<u>BBQ</u>	Chinese	Chinese/English

## 1.1

Businesses which spoke Chinese at home	8
Businesses which spoke Chinese in the workplace	7

## 1.2

Businesses which spoke English at home	2
Businesses which spoke English in the workplace	9

### Analysis of Tables:

In reference to our reviewed literature, 'language behaviour in multilingual settings is likely to be exceedingly complex' (Fishman 2007:61). Indeed this is what we have found, and that there is no set language employers and employees stick to within the workplace. During our investigation we found there was often overlap between Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Thai and English used within the business.

In reference to 1.1, Chinese is spoken more at home than in the workplace, although the division is quite evenly spread. However, when we looked at our data more in depth, there were a combination of languages spoken in the workplace which included Chinese, whereas the language spoken at home was purely Chinese on its own.

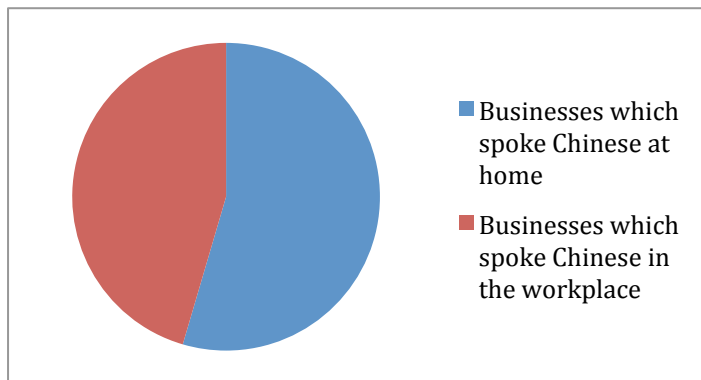
In reference to 1.2, English is spoken on a far lesser scale at home than it is in the workplace. This supports our original idea that if the workplace owners are Chinese native speakers, they will most likely choose to switch to speaking Chinese when at home (even if they switch to English for customer purposes in the workplace).

Differing domains (e.g. home versus the workplace) are 'socio-cultural constructs' (Fishman 2007:59) and serve to communicate in accordance and meet the needs of certain institutions within society. In our investigation, we found this to be employees meeting the linguistic needs of the customer. Problems such as language barriers and miscommunication can be damaging to the business, especially if the organisation does not show any means of accomodating for customers outside of their linguistic sphere.

According to Hewitt (2012: ch15: 269), we can further analyse our tables (1.1 & 1.2) as being a result of 'internal migration within and towards Western Europe'. The spread of languages, is due to people choosing to migrate over to the UK, which 'has created diversely multilingual workplaces with increasing frequency over the past 50 years'.

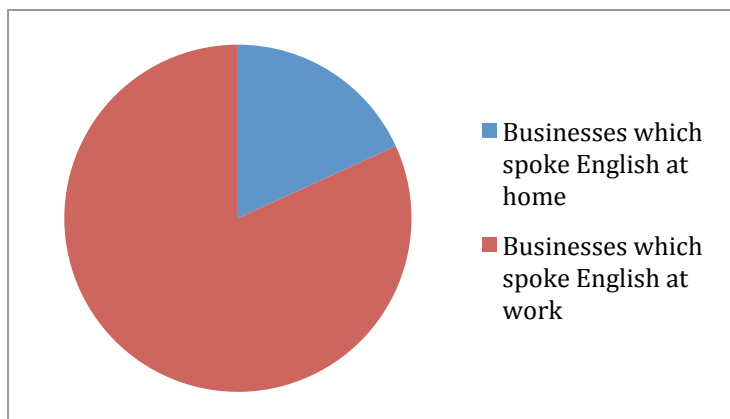
Pie chart reflections of our data:

1.1 (a)



A pie chart to show businesses which spoke Chinese at home versus the workplace

1.2 (a)



A pie chart to show businesses which spoke English at home versus the workplace

**Aim 2: Is there language differentiation between family run and non-family run businesses?**

We hypothesised that the employees of family-run businesses would speak low-level English due to long working hours (Li Wei, 1994). Also, that they would speak Chinese to each to each other in the workplace, since Chinese is likely to be the main language, and family members will communicate similarly.

We hypothesised that in non-family-run businesses, employees would speak advanced level English since they would be employed to cater for both Chinese and English customers. Also, that the employees' native language may not be Chinese, since English will be necessary for the job, and therefore the employees are unlikely to communicate with each other in Chinese only.

In tables (1.a) and (1.b), we have compiled data that we obtained from one employee at each establishment, concerning the native language of employees, the language spoken to other employees and their level of English. We then put this data into a series of graphs to compare the results for family-run businesses and non-family-run businesses.

(1.a)

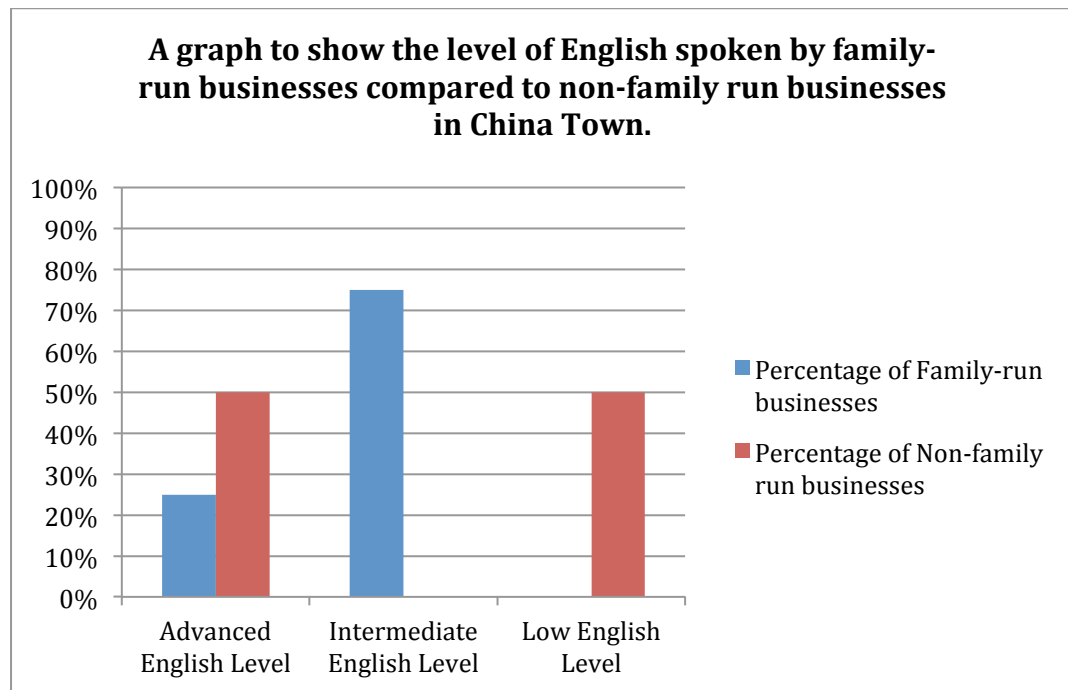
<b>Family-run businesses</b>			
	<u>Native Language of employee</u>	<u>Language spoken to employees</u>	<u>English level</u>
Kim's Thai Food Store	Thai	Thai	Advanced
Woo Sang	Chinese	Chinese	Intermediate
T.LA	Chinese	Chinese	Intermediate
Pacific Restaurant	Chinese	Chinese	Intermediate



(1.b)

<b>Non family-run businesses</b>			
	<u>Native Language of employee</u>	<u>Language spoken to employees</u>	<u>English level</u>
Wing Fat	Chinese	Chinese	Low
FJUZ	Chinese	English, Chinese	Low
China Buffet	English	English, Chinese	Advanced
Lewis Bet Bookmakers	English	English	Advanced
BEA Bank	Chinese	English, Chinese	Advanced
BBQ	Chinese	English, Chinese	Low

(2.a)



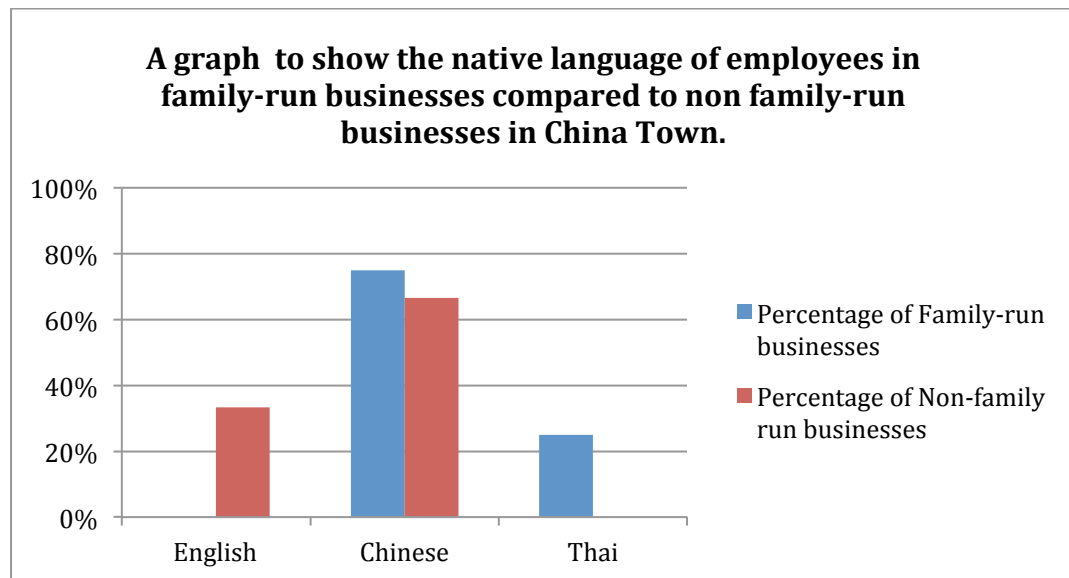
Graph (2.a) compares the level of English spoken by each type of business. Our data shows that 75% of employees at the family-run businesses spoke at an intermediate level, and the

remaining 25% were advanced. This disproves our hypothesis, and our research which suggested that 'the family-based catering trade [...] entails long working hours, and will subsequently give Chinese speakers fewer opportunities to learn and use English.' (Li Wei. 1994). Many employees working in these family-run businesses were between the ages of 18-30, suggesting that the younger generations running the establishments in Chinatown are well educated in English. Perhaps this due to the rise in Chinese schools in greater Manchester, offering out-of-school-hours education for Chinese children and adolescents. English is also, as stated in Fishman (1998), 'becoming the language of high society and of the young'. This could be because of technology which the younger generation are surrounded by, improving their English skills, and something the older generation may be more out of touch with.

With regards to non-family-run businesses, Graph (2.a) shows mixed results, with 50% of employees speaking advanced level English, and 50% speaking low level English. The establishments with employees that spoke advanced level English were either clearly more catered towards English speakers, such as China Buffet (shown by English menus and signs), or chains BEA Bank and Lewis Bet Bookmakers, where advanced level English is probably a prerequisite for employees. The establishments with employees who spoke low-level English were Wing Fat, FJUZ and BBQ, who all catered towards the Chinese community and had mainly Chinese customers. Therefore, it seems less necessary for the employees to speak more English than what is needed to establish a customer-employee relationship.

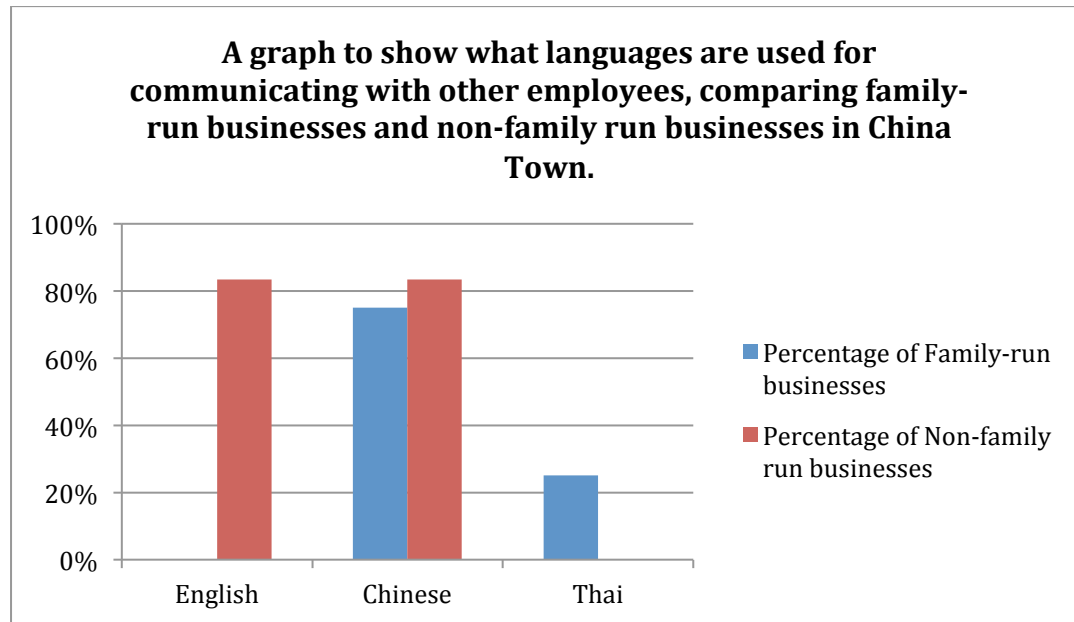
From the data in Graph (2.a) we can evaluate that education for the generations of young Chinese people in Manchester appears to be rising, since there is no correlation between the levels of English spoken in family-run or non-family-run businesses. We therefore assume that each business employs people with the language skills to cater for their particular customers; some establishments had mainly Thai customers, some Chinese, and some English. These are the factors that determine the level of English spoken; not whether the business is family-run or not.

(2.b)



Graph (2.b) compares the native languages of employees in family-run businesses to non-family-run businesses. The majority of employees we spoke to in family-run businesses said their native language was Chinese (75%), and the rest said Thai (25%). This was significantly different to the native languages of those in non-family-run businesses, with the majority of the employees native language was Chinese (66%), and the remaining English (33%). This confirms our hypothesis that in family-run businesses, the native language is likely to be Chinese, and in non-family-run businesses, employees who speak English natively might be employed. Although the majority of both types of businesses say Chinese is their native language, it is interesting that 33% of non-family-run businesses would choose to employ people who speak English natively. This correlates with the fact that non-family-run businesses are more likely to cater for English customers, shown by more English menus, signs etc. We assume that, since at family-run Kim's Thai Food Store the main nationality of the customers is Thai, the family have no intention to employ native English or Chinese speakers; hence why 25% of the family-run businesses natively speak Thai.

(2.c)



Graph (2.c) shows that languages spoken to other employees in the workplace are significantly different in family-run businesses to non-family-run businesses. In family-run businesses, the employees are likely to talk in Chinese or Thai to each other. Our data suggests that in a family-run business, the language used to speak to employees is the same as language spoken in the home. However, in the non-family-run businesses such as FJUZ, China Buffet, BEA Bank and BBQ, the employees speak a mixture of English and Chinese in the workplace to accommodate different speakers.

From analysing all three graphs together, it seems that in family-run businesses, employees mainly speak Chinese and enough intermediate-level English to communicate in the workplace. They learn a level enough to suffice in their day-to-day tasks. However, in non-family-run businesses, a mixture of native Chinese speakers and advanced English speakers are employed to work in the same establishment, to cater for whichever language a customer speaks.

### **Aim 3: How important is it for employees to have a sound level and understanding of the English language?**

From our research we knew that it would be important for employees in Chinatown to know basic English, since English is the “*leading international language*” (Fishman, 1998 in Aronin and Singleton, 2008:3) and therefore Chinese speakers living in England would have to learn some form of English to survive. We hypothesised that the importance of employees being able to *communicate* and understand English to an advanced level would vary according to the type of business. More specifically we predicted the front of house staff in catering industries such as restaurants would have to communicate to an advanced standard of English in order to communicate effectively with their customers. Following this we hypothesised it would be of less importance for the smaller businesses like supermarkets to communicate to an advanced level of English as it would be unlikely that tourists would go to Chinatown specifically for a weekly shop.

We have proved our hypothesis to an *extent* as the importance of employees being able to communicate and understand English to an advanced level does depend on the *type* of business i.e. in small independent businesses like FJUJ Hair Salon it was not a necessity for employees to speak to an advanced level, whereas at BEA Bank it was of sheer importance due to it being an international company. However we disproved the second half of our hypothesis as not all the front of house staff in restaurants had to communicate to an advanced level of English; it depended on what nationalities the restaurant catered for and therefore the more frequent nationalities using the business. In addition, 2/3 supermarkets had a good level of English, which again disproves our hypothesis that these businesses would be least likely to need an advanced level of English.

We have compiled tables and graphs featuring the level of English of the employee, the nationalities of the customers using the businesses and the Native language of the employee. By comparing these variables we were able to determine which factors are playing a role in the importance of employees being able to communicate in English.

We wanted to see if there were any patterns with the level of English and the type of business so we grouped them into 4 groups as follows;

- Restaurants - China Buffet, BBQ and Pacific Restaurant.
- Supermarkets – Wing Fat, Woo Sang and Kim’s Thai Food Store
- Public services – BEA Bank, FJUZ Hair Salon
- Miscellaneous – T.L.A and Lewis Bet Bookmakers

### Employees level of English by business

	<b>Level of English</b>	<b>Nationalities of customers using businesses</b>	<b>Native Language of employee</b>
<b>Kim’s Thai Food Store</b>	Advanced	Mostly Thai	Thai
<b>Wing Fat</b>	Low	Chinese mostly	Chinese
<b>Woo Sang</b>	Intermediate	Chinese/Filipino/Thai	Chinese
<b>China Buffet</b>	Advanced	European; Polish/Romanian  English/Chinese	English
<b>Pacific Restaurant</b>	Intermediate	Hongkong mostly/Chinese/English	Chinese
<b>BBQ</b>	Low	Chinese mostly	Chinese
<b>BEA Bank</b>	Advanced	Chinese and English	Chinese
<b>FJUZ Hairsalon</b>	Low	Chinese mostly/some English	Chinese
<b>Lewis Bet Bookmakers</b>	Advanced	Chinese mostly/Some English	English
<b>T.L.A</b>	Intermediate	English mostly	Chinese

Table 1: A table to show the level of English spoken by employees, the nationalities of the

<b>Businesses with an advanced level of English</b>	4
<b>Businesses with an intermediate level of English</b>	3
<b>Businesses with a low level of English</b>	3

customers using the businesses and the Native language of the employees.

Table 2: A table to show the businesses and their level of English as a whole.

<b>Restaurant</b>	<b>Advanced Level</b>	<b>Intermediate Level</b>	<b>Low Level</b>
China Buffet	✓		
BBQ			✓
Pacific Restaurant		✓	

Table 3: A table to show the different levels of English in our three restaurants under study.

<b>Supermarket</b>	<b>Advanced Level</b>	<b>Intermediate Level</b>	<b>Low Level</b>
Woo Sang		✓	
Wing Fat			✓
Kim's Thai Food Store	✓		

Table 4: A table to show the different levels of English in our three supermarkets under study.

<b>Public Service</b>	<b>Advanced Level</b>	<b>Intermediate Level</b>	<b>Low Level</b>
FJUZ Hair Salon			✓
BEA Bank	✓		

*Table 5: A table to show the different levels of English in our two Public Services under study.*

<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Advanced Level</b>	<b>Intermediate Level</b>	<b>Low Level</b>
T.L.A		✓	
Lewis Bet Bookmakers	✓		

*Table 6: A table to show the different levels of English in our two Miscellaneous businesses under study.*

### Analysis of Tables

As Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 show the level of English according to business type is mixed.

Looking firstly at Table 3, each of our three restaurants under study had different levels of English. An important find is that of 'BBQ' restaurant where the waiter we interviewed spoke low-level English and his main language of communication was Chinese. From our initial predictions this result is surprising as we predicted that front of house staff in these restaurants would have to communicate to an advanced level of English in order to communicate with their customers effectively. However when we looked at the nationalities of the customers using the business, the waiter told us it was mostly Chinese. This meant that his level of English did not need to be to an advanced level, or even an intermediate level as BBQ is catered towards his own nationality. The other two restaurants 'China Buffet' and 'Pacific Restaurant' had an advanced level and intermediate level of English, respectively. In contrast to BBQ, English nationalities frequently used these businesses; therefore it seems it was necessary for the employees here to have a sufficient standard of English.



The above suggests that it is not the business type that affects the level of an employee's English, but the nationalities that most frequent there.

Looking at our supermarkets in Table 4, again the level of English for each business is different. Surprisingly at 'Kim's Thai Food Store' the owner had an advanced level of English, even though the main nationalities of customers using the shop were Thai. From this, we thought her English would not have needed to be advanced as she rarely comes into contact with English speaking customers. However we discovered that she has owned the food store in Chinatown for 20 years. She will have therefore most likely developed a high standard of English through conversing with residents outside of Chinatown and in other areas of Manchester, picking up various aspects of the language. As Aronin and Singleton (2008:3) state, since English is the most dominant language of world communication "*more and more people are accordingly motivated to master it.*"

The employee we interviewed at Woo Sang had an intermediate level of English, even though her main customers that she would converse with would be of Chinese, Filipino and Thai nationalities. This result is therefore again surprising as she does not have to speak English frequently in her daily interactions at work, yet she can communicate to a good level of English. However, like Kim's Thai Food Store, the business had been there for a long time (30 years) and therefore perhaps her family and she had learned English living in England for that long period of time.

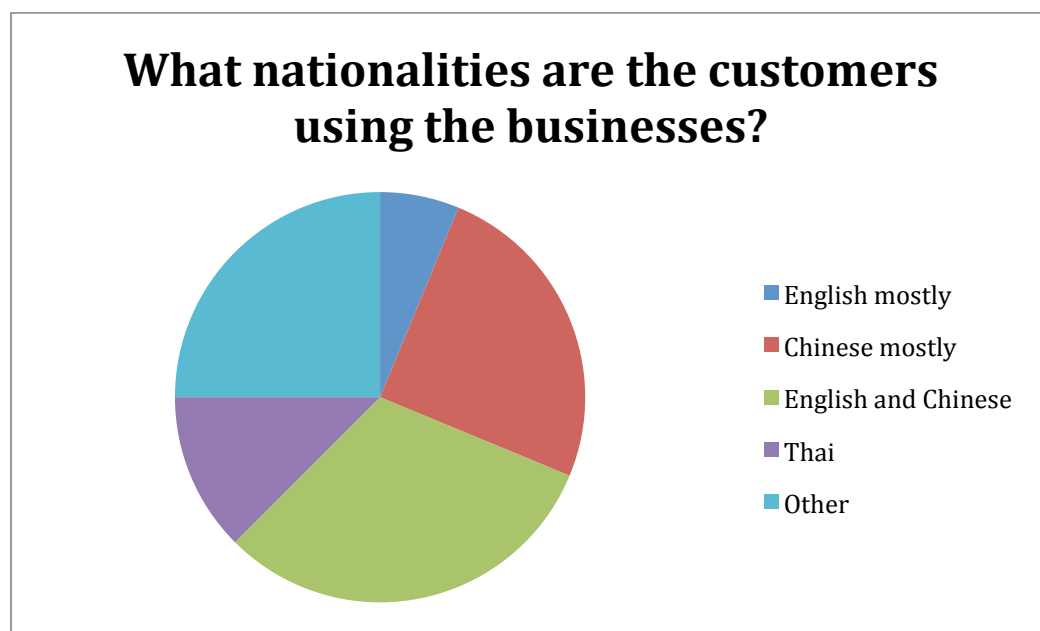
The supermarket supporting our initial predictions is Wing Fat, since the nationalities of the customers were mostly Chinese and the employee we interviewed spoke a low level of English. Having mostly Chinese customers and her main language being Chinese meant she did not need to communicate to an advanced standard of English. This is what we expected. Perhaps also her position in the shop also had an effect on the importance of her level of English; she worked mainly stacking shelves suggesting she would not need to converse with customers as much as an employee working on the tills. This was different to Woo Sang and Kim's Thai Food Store where both employees interviewed worked behind the tills at the front.

Our supermarkets therefore showed unexpected results as 2/3 supermarkets communicated to a good level of English, suggesting other factors like the length of time the owners have been in Chinatown for and their position in the shop implies affects their level of English.

Table 5 shows contrasting results for our Public Services, with BEA Bank having employees with an advanced level of English and FJUJ Hair Salon having a low-level. The reason for

BEA Bank having English to an advanced level is most likely because it is an international bank, “*BEA has also established presence in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Southeast Asia.*”([http://www.hkbea.co.uk/company\\_profile.html](http://www.hkbea.co.uk/company_profile.html)), they will therefore have to have a good level of English for global communication with their other branches. FJUZ Hair Salon in contrast is an independent business, with the majority of customers being of Chinese nationality. Therefore, similarly to BBQ restaurant, the employee’s low-level of English does not matter as much in her daily interactions.

Finally, our Miscellaneous businesses, ‘T.L.A’ and ‘Lewis Bet Bookmaker’s’ display good levels of English. This was expected since T.L.A’s arts and crafts shop is mainly a tourist attraction and therefore she said her main customers were of mostly English nationality. The lady spoke a sufficient amount of English and we noticed the younger employees spoke even better English suggesting younger generations are learning English more than their elders. This supports our research that English is now “*the language of the high society and the young*”. (Fishman. 1998.) At ‘Lewis Bet Bookmakers’ the front desk employee’s Native language was English, therefore his English was naturally to an advanced level. Surprisingly though he did not speak any other language, despite 90% of his customers being Chinese. This again reinforces the globalisation of English as the Chinese customers will have to speak English in order to use the business.



The pie chart above shows which nationalities Chinatown is accommodating for other than the expected Chinese and English. Not surprisingly, 62% of the nationalities using the businesses are either Chinese or English. However, interestingly 25% of the customers are under 'Other' nationality. These nationalities were largely European; Polish and Romanian in particular used 'China Buffet' most frequently, suggesting a further increase in language diversity in Chinatown.

Previous research from Chung (2008) suggests that Chinatown residents in the United Kingdom do not welcome cultures other than their own, "*because of their strong sense of ethnic identity meant they are often labelled an 'invisible community'*". However our current findings suggest otherwise, since the majority of our businesses in Manchester's Chinatown are accommodating for a wide range of languages other than Chinese. This implies since Chung's data there has been an increase in Chinese culture mixing with other cultures, hence the increase in language diversity.

### **Collecting the data and difficulties**

- The first time we went to collect our data, a few businesses we went into were reluctant to answer questions and a couple of businesses turned us away. These were mainly busy restaurants or supermarkets. We overcame this problem by going back the second time at a later time of around 3pm.
- We also found that some participants spoke low levels of English which made the interview in some businesses difficult to complete. At FJUZ Hair Salon in particular, the stylist struggled to understand some of our questions. However, as shown, we managed to collect enough data to overcome this problem, due to the wide range of businesses in Chinatown.
- Overall we found our questionnaire a success; asking seven questions was not too long for the participants and we could gather sufficient information.

## **Conclusion and Further Comments**

As expected, Chinese is spoken more at home than in the workplace. However, there is significant overlap with many businesses choosing to mirror their home language in the working environment. Although this may be seen as self accommodating, in order to meet their own linguistic needs, they may also be doing so in order to meet the needs of Chinese customer clientele. From our findings it is therefore suggested that both the home and working environments can be described as 'overlapping domains' (Fishman 2007: 63). Adding to this, as most of the businesses have been established for many years, a lot of the owners have a strong gage in respect to types of languages which are more appropriate to have employed in popular use within their organisation. If they see a general pattern that many of their customers are Chinese, then such a language will be most beneficial to accommodate their customers. Likewise, the owner may find it hard to tell, due to their extensively mixed customer base. In this instance an array of the most popular languages in and around China town would be most beneficial to meet the linguistic needs of their organization. Thus the concept of language regularity is something somewhat of the past. China Town is just a small example of how extensive overlap between languages can be, as a result of differing environments and 'domains'.

One significant finding from our data is that family-run businesses differ from non-family-run businesses in Chinatown. Non-family run businesses cater more for the English speakers in Manchester, whereas family-run businesses cater for the Chinese community in Manchester. Family-run businesses are a staple in the Chinese community in Chinatown, which we suggest is an ethnoburb.

Additionally, the importance of employees being able to communicate and understand English to an advanced level does depend on the type of business, but more importantly are the nationalities of the customers using the businesses. As we discovered, there has been an increase in European nationalities in Chinatown and as shown from the linguistic landscape, some businesses are willing to accommodate for these different nationalities. It suggests Chung's data (2008) on Chinese communities is perhaps outdated and certain Chinese communities like Manchester's Chinatown can no longer be labeled as 'invisible'.

An important question to ask then, is how the businesses within their own ethnoburb can continue to thrive as Manchester becomes more multicultural. Will the families running these businesses be forced to become more integrated into Mancunian society to maintain business, or thrive by continuing with the traditional Chinese language and cultures they

currently maintain? Furthermore, will the increase of European nationalities continue to rise? What other cultures will the Chinese be accommodating for years from now?

Word count: 6,398

## **Bibliography**

- Aronin, Larissa. 2008. "Multilingualism as a New Linguistic Dispensation" from *International Journal of Multilingualism* 5 pp. 1-16. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Cheung, C.-H.W. (1975) *The Chinese way: A social study of the Hong Kong Chinese community in a Yorkshire City*.
- Chung, S.S.-Y.; (2008) *The study of Chinatown as an urban artifice and its impact on the Chinese community in London*. Masters thesis, UCL (University College London).
- Fishman, Joshua (2007) "Who Speaks What Language to Whom and When?" from Wei, Li, *The Bilingualism Reader* pp. 55-72, London: Routledge ©
- Hewitt, R (2012). *'The Routledge Handbook of Multilingualism'* ch.15 p269
- Li Wei (1994) *Three Generations, Two Languages, One Family: Language Choice and Language Shift in a Chinese Community in Britain*.

## Appendix



1: The front of Kim's Thai Food Store: The shop signs are in Thai, Chinese and English.



2: Kim's Thai food store: More examples of shop signs in Thai, English and Chinese.



3: The front of Wing Fat: shop front signs are in both English and Chinese.



4: Wing Fat: Example of signs in the shop translated into both Chinese and English



5, 6: Wing Fat: Examples of shelf labelling and food packaging, translated into both Chinese and English



7: The entrance to Woo Sang: Image shows the translated shop sign into both Chinese and English.





8: Woo Sang: Examples of shelf labels, translated into both English and Chinese.



9: FJUJZ Unisex Hair Salon: Title of shop is translated into Chinese from English; however the opening times are in English.



10: FJUZ: Main title of the hair salon is in Chinese. A smaller sign is translated into English.



11: China Buffet sign is in English only.



12: China Buffet: Signs outside the restaurant are in English only.



T.LA Art & Craft Gallery sign is in both English & Chinese.



*T.LA Art & Craft gallery opening sign is in English only*



*15: Examples of posters in the window of T.LA are both directed towards English and Chinese speakers.*

**Business name:**

**Business type:**

**Position of person we spoke to:**

Questionnaire

(Summary) We are researching about the different languages spoken in Manchester, particularly in China Town. We would like to ask you seven short questions about the languages that yourself and your employees use. This questionnaire is used purely for research purposes for our University. You do not have to answer questions that you feel are inappropriate or invasive.

1. What would you consider to be your main language? i.e. What is the language you communicate the most?
2. What language do you usually speak at home?
3. What language do you usually speak at work to other employees?
4. Is this business family-run
5. What are the main nationalities of the customers who come into the businesses?
6. What language do you greet customers in, on entering the business?
7. Is there any other information you could give us about the languages used in your workplace?

Questions to consider

What other cultures are the Chinese accommodating for?

What languages are on the signs, other than what you would expect i.e. English or Chinese?

Are there businesses that have signs/menus only in Chinese (no English and

*16: The questionnaire we used*