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Report

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Manchester the City of Colour

Multilingualism in Longsight Market



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Multilingualism in Longsight Markets, part 2

Introduction

We originally chose Longsight Market as the basis for our study because, as our research confirmed, it is a highly diverse cultural area. Manchester City Council statistics indicated that a number of different countries are represented by residents in this area, with a 28% concentration of individuals of Pakistani ethnicity (see appendix. fig.8) This led to the conclusion that a variety of different languages were likely to be spoken by the inhabitants of Longsight. The market itself provided an interesting focal point for the ward, in that it was a gathering point for those who lived in and around it. Markets are areas of trade, and trade is an area of interest to Linguists, due to the customer/trader relationship dynamic which is naturally established. Through attempting to create a relationship with the customer, trade situations have given rise to the Lingua Franca; “any language that is widely used as a means of communication among speakers of other languages”. With this in mind, the logical conclusion was drawn that in studying the market, we were studying Longsight as an area. Therefore, part of the focus was on the market as a society, as reflected in our research methods (to be discussed below).

Preliminary work

To begin with, we spoke to M4 Translation Service Manager, Atul Ramanuj, in order to build up an idea of the linguistic situation of Manchester as a whole, as well as gaining an insight into the language provisions and services available to those who are unable to communicate effectively in English. Telephone conversations with the University Police Liaison Officer, Scott Schofield, and market manager, Tony Sproston, shed further light on the area, as well as informing us as to when the best times would be to visit. Based on our findings, we carried out fieldwork by walking around in the area during a Thursday morning trading day. This gave us an idea of the traders present, as well as the ground-level, physical make-up of the stalls. Speaking to traders gave us a qualitative starting point for the main study.

Methods of data collection

Our chosen methods of data collection were questionnaires and domain analyses. Questionnaires were chosen because of the breadth of question types that could be included, to solicit both quantitative and qualitative responses. The domain analysis provides direct data regarding languages spoken throughout the different areas of an informant’s lives, enabling the administrator to correlate various factors, such as age and nationality with their language use. A questionnaire was created for both stall

owners and customers as a coverall, however, it was unanimously decided that the questionnaire was too intrusive for customers; it was felt that better data would have been drawn from an informant who did not feel too much of their time was being used. We also utilised spoken interviews, on the assumption of verbal permission (see appendix. fig.10)

Methods of Research

The questionnaire, given mostly to stall owners, asked for qualitative and quantitative information from participants. Quantitative questions included “*Are you able to read more than one language*”, with the option of qualitative elaboration, such as “*Do you feel part of a community at Longsight market? Why?*” This was for the benefit of both parties; the informant, who was given a chance to explain and provide an opinion on an issue they may have felt strongly about. To explore the social element of the market’s usage, a question relating to the scale of frequency of usage across different shopping methods was asked. Participants were asked to assign a number from one to four to determine which types of shops were used most. Ultimately, this was to shed light on both the stall owners’ preference of the use of the market, over ‘*smaller independent shops*’ for example, and the market’s role as a cultural hub of the area. The areas included in our domain analysis were, ‘*Home, Elderly Relatives, Children, Work, Friends and Media*’, as we felt that these were a good representation of all of the areas in which differentiated linguistic transmission are required. For our scrutiny, the notion of ‘Mother Tongue’ was based upon the language spoken to elderly relatives, since it was decided that this was the truest representation of the speaker’s first language. The ‘Other’ category was based upon languages that were neither English, nor the Mother Tongue. Interviews were conducted on an informal basis, engaging individuals about their thoughts on language use, and Longsight and its market in general. All interviewing and domain analysis research was carried out on the basis of availability, due to the comparatively small scale of the market. While this eliminates an element of the randomness of allocation, it ensured that most users and traders at the market were represented.

Scheduling

Along with our initial visit to the market, preliminary phone calls, and interviews, based on the advice of Tony Sproston, our main research was carried out over two visits to the site. A Tuesday and a Thursday trading day, (second hand goods, and mixed second hand and normal goods respectively). Research was carried out at these times as we felt they were to be the best representations of the market’s usage demographic.

Findings

After collating our findings, we had a good base of information that allowed us to devise the following information. Our starting point was gathering together the qualitative data in order to give us an idea of the market's community foundations. In all but one of the cases in which market traders were asked if they felt a sense of community spirit they answered yes, over half willing to state why this was. Many of the comments were extremely positive, one individual stating that the traders here "make you feel welcome, no matter what religion or colour" another stating that the "ethnic mix is good, makes you feel alright, we get on good". Other traders went as far as to say that since working on the market, they have made some of their "best friends".

We had left space at the end of the questionnaire that would allow room for 'any further comments', this gave us a good idea of how the traders viewed the market. One individual stated that there are "a lot of nationalities", he went on to discuss how he "treats all the same" despite the fact that "some can't speak English" and in these cases he "uses hands to communicate or other traders will help". A monolingual English speaker informed us of how he has picked the odd word up in another language such as 'one pound' in Hindi.

The Tuesday market was largely what we had expected it to be, it was busy and a large cultural mix was clearly evident. A stall had been set up on the market by the NHS to help people quit smoking; this showed us that amongst this small market, government institutions such as the NHS had noticed the importance of such establishments, and recognised the diverse range of people that could be reached through having a presence there. The stall contained literature on how to quit smoking in several different languages other than English, including Polish, Czech, Arabic, Somali, Urdu, Hindi and Chinese, the lady working there clearly had a good rapport with her customers, following our interview a "regular" came to her for a check up of some sort. Her comments about the market were positive and frank, "you've got your Arabic and then you've got your Eastern Europeans and your Urdu and your Indians so there's quite a lot going on in one melting pot... this is very unique". The honesty we were getting from the traders was much more than we had expected.

Whilst our research shows us that the demographic of the market is widely multi-cultural (see appendix. fig.4), English led with 28% (see appendix. fig.2), the mother tongue data, however, with Urdu being 25% of people's mother tongue language they were not far behind. Punjabi has fewer mother tongue speakers with 19% and Bengali only 6%. Considering such figures as representatives of the whole market, we can see that over 70% of individuals on the market, customers and traders, do not speak English as a their first language, which is remarkable considering it is an 'English market'.

This being said, we did not come across any individual that could not communicate with us in English or did not consider themselves bilingual in at least their mother tongue and English.

It was interesting to see that only 20% of the traders had been trading on the market for over five years, and even more interesting that 33% had only been there for less than six months (see appendix. fig.5) This could be explained by the fact that only 40% of the people we asked have been in Manchester for less than ten years (see appendix. fig.3), it could also be due to the recession in which England has fallen into, one individual stating that the “market is good for when there are not many jobs” suggesting why many of the traders may have chosen to work on the market. We asked the participants if they lived in the area, and a number of those who did, had moved here because their “family was here” or they “came with the family” or there was simply “more opportunity for work in Longsight”.

The ratio was relatively equal across age (see appendix. fig.1) and gender with 47% female traders to 53% male traders, and 54% of the participants shopping, who we approached, were male and 46% female, again illustrating the fact that the market is diverse across age and gender not just culture.

We found it interesting to see through the use of the domain analysis (see appendix. figs.9) that there was a trend in the multilingual males, whereby 55% of them spoke to their children only in English rather than their mother tongue, whereas 33% of women did not speak to them in anything but their mother tongue (see appendix. fig.7). None of the women would converse with their children in English alone, they would use a combination of their mother tongue with English, something that only 33% of males were accustomed to. Similarly, we found that 82% of the people we interviewed would only speak to their parents in their first language, something that we had expected, however maybe not to such an extent.

There was a varied response on how the individuals use the media. A number of the Punjabi and Urdu speaking individuals tend to read newspapers, watch TV and listen to the radio in English, rather than their own language. Some said this was because there was little coverage, while others, referring specifically to written media coverage, could not read the Asian scripture. However, a Burmese individual said that the BBC was available to him in his language, something that we confirmed via the BBC website. This would suggest that a variety of languages are easily accessible on the BBC website.

We also enquired about the preferred shopping methods of the stall-owners – the market itself, supermarkets (most commonly the Asda across from the market), small independent shops (located all around Longsight) or the internet (see appendix. fig.6). It was quite surprising to find that the market was the third-most popular shopping method, with stall-owners only using it 20% of the time. On the

other hand, it was not a surprise at all to find that the supermarkets were the most popular method, considering how the Asda is a prominent feature of the area – located in the centre of Longsight – and also how it allows residents access to make all their purchases in one place. The fact that the internet was rated the least-popular shopping method can be attributed to the ages of the stall-owners we surveyed – commonly in the 40-59 age group.

Discussion

Our report's findings uncovered a number of interesting trends and discussion points. For the most part, these trends carried with what we expected at the beginning of the project. However, there were also a number of interesting findings.

The range of questions in our survey, and also our domain analysis, allowed us to collect information on more than one part of the market. For example, we were able to easily survey the nationalities of a cross-section of the market. This told us that the majority of traders and customers were British or Pakistani, with a handful of people from a wide variety of countries, from Burma to Germany. These results did not come as a surprise – clearly, as Longsight Market is British, there would be a large amount of British traders and customers. Also, the fact that Pakistani is so close behind British was expected, as Longsight has long had a large proportion of Pakistani residents (see appendix. fig.8). The fact that other countries are also represented can be attributed to the large amount of movement into Manchester and the surrounding areas, which contributes to its status as one of the most culturally-diverse areas in the UK.

It was also interesting to note that the vast majority of respondents commented on a sense of community spirit in the market. For the most part, this was attributed to the fact that most of the people in the market had good relationships with each other, regardless of race and religion (see appendix. fig.11). For the market to prosper, this community spirit is vital, so it is no surprise that it is the case, and is also one of the main factors for maintaining social harmony. For example, if a trader fostered poor relationships with customers and other traders for a certain reason, it is probable that their own stall would suffer as a result. As already discussed, some traders even went so far as to state that they have made some of their “best friends” on the stalls.

On a similar theme, it was interesting to note that our own study would benefit if we engaged with the customers or the stall owners on different levels to just the survey. By discussing the market as a whole with them, we were able to elicit more information. This was especially useful concerning the 'any further comments' section of our questionnaire.

For those respondents who were not natives of the area, the question of 'why did you move to Manchester?' provided us with some interesting results. The two principal reasons that we were given were the opportunity of jobs and opportunities in Longsight, compared to the area they had left, and the fact that they had family in the area. This reflects the reasons why Manchester as a whole is a multi-cultural area, and the latter reason often follows on from the former. Firstly, people come to Manchester for economic reasons – better wages, and job opportunities, are available than in their homeland. After that, the relatives of the original migrant move to the area too, creating the “melting pot” which we have at the moment. This confirms that people are attracted to areas where their own culture is represented.

Informants across the board were highly aware of the variety in languages present in the area. Dorian (1994: 480) suggests that “whether or not puristic attitudes are universal or not, they are widespread enough to create problems for efforts to support minority languages with a small native speaker base” This view is contrary to our findings. Speakers who expressed an opinion on different languages in the area simply viewed them as an alternative to their own (discussed above), without appearing to hold purist attitudes. In fact, the participant who claimed to have no ability to speak other codes and had picked up words in other languages for exchanges on his stall, illustrated the benefits of having such an array of users of the market.

Our domain analysis included questions about how people consumed media, such as television, radio and newspapers, and in which language they did so. It was interesting to note that the majority of Urdu and Punjabi speakers told us that they preferred to read newspapers in English and watch English television, either because their reading ability of English was superior to their first language, or because the media in Urdu and Punjabi simply was not available. Considering the high density of Urdu speakers in the area, it was surprising to find that paucity of Urdu media was highlighted as an issue. In the schedule for BBC Radio Manchester, there is only one weekly programme focused around Asian culture and language - “Indus”, which airs at 8pm every Sunday night. The BBC website bills this as “Talat Farooq Awan with Manchester's Asian magazine, with news, comment and entertainment for the Asian Community”. There are similar weekly programmes for other groups, such as Irish and Jewish communities. Taking Manchester's status as a very multi-cultural one into account, with an especially high proportion of Asian residents, it was quite surprising to find that the BBC's local station only dedicated one hour a week to it. However, there is a 24-hour independent station, *Asian Sound Radio*, which covers the North West England region in a variety of languages, including English, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali and Gujarati.

A desire was expressed to be as immersed into English as possible. When the domain of ‘friends’ and ‘media’ arose, one participant claimed that the language they chose to speak was appropriate to the situation. It is suggested that “changes in individuals’ language choices are motivated less by

institutional dicta themselves than by the social significance that such language choices acquire under particular institutional arrangements” (Woolard & Gahng 1990: 311). This correlates with our findings, in that people use multiple languages in their work place; as well as being a tool for work, the language chosen by a multilingual speaker is based on social and situational relevance.

Our domain analysis also probed respondents as to the language which they spoke to their children. This revealed that men were more likely to use exclusively English in such exchanges, while women used a mixture of languages, something which our study also suggests. Ochs (1982: 78) illustrates that children exhibit usages that are “more characteristic of men’s than women’s speech”, though, as elaborated, such patterns are not picked up so quickly due to their household setting, where “women and other family members are primary socializing agents”. Considering this we can assume that the mother’s role differentiates the use of language with her children which co-operates with our findings (as discussed above).

From this study we can conclude that Manchester’s status as a multicultural centre can be confirmed, its constituent languages come together, in the focal point of such areas as Longsight market. We believe that the market is a microcosm of Manchester as a whole, and its residents clearly respond well to this.

Fig.1

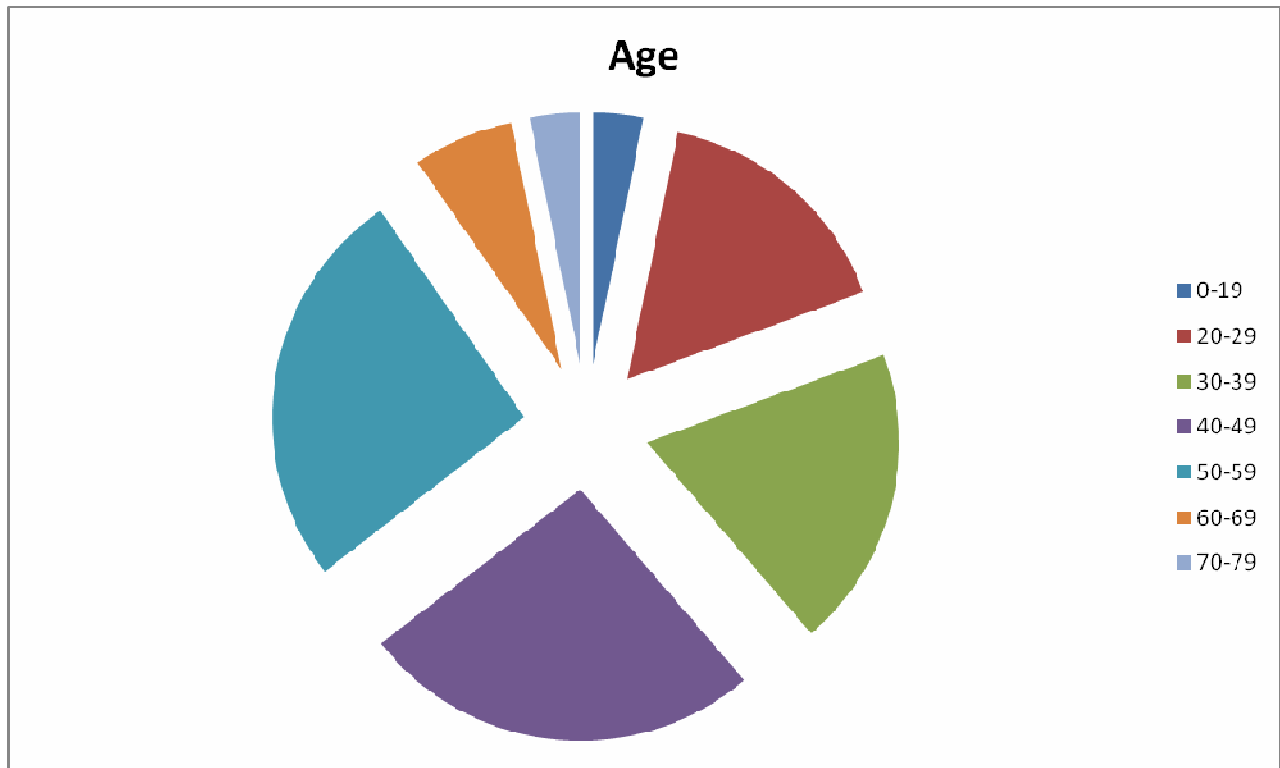


Fig.2

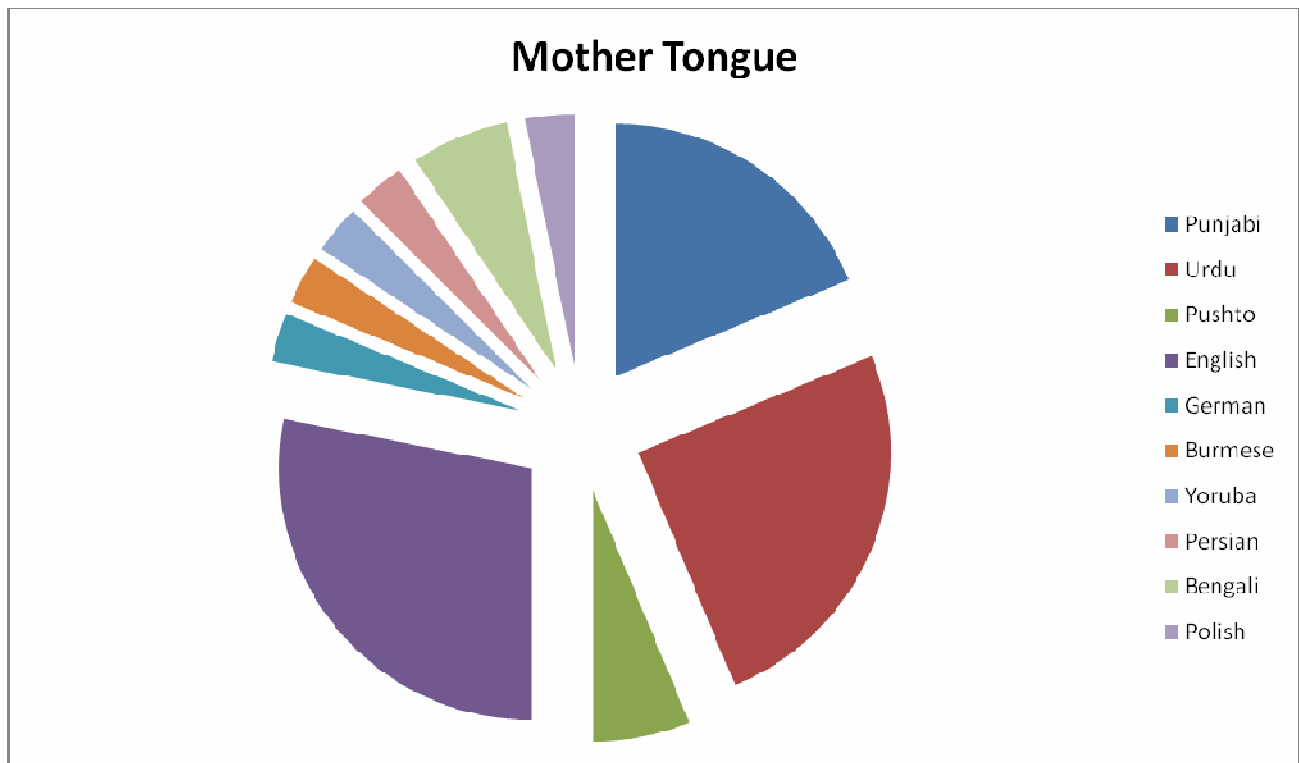


Fig.3

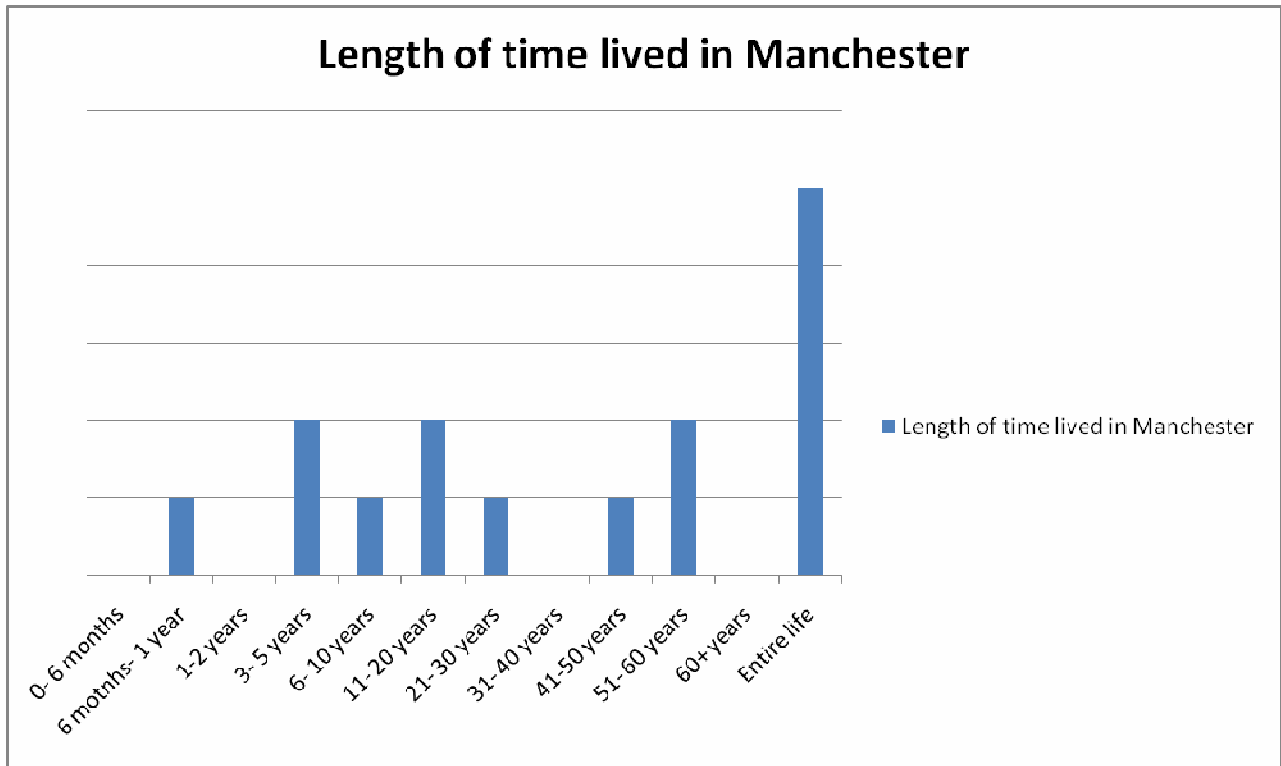


Fig.4

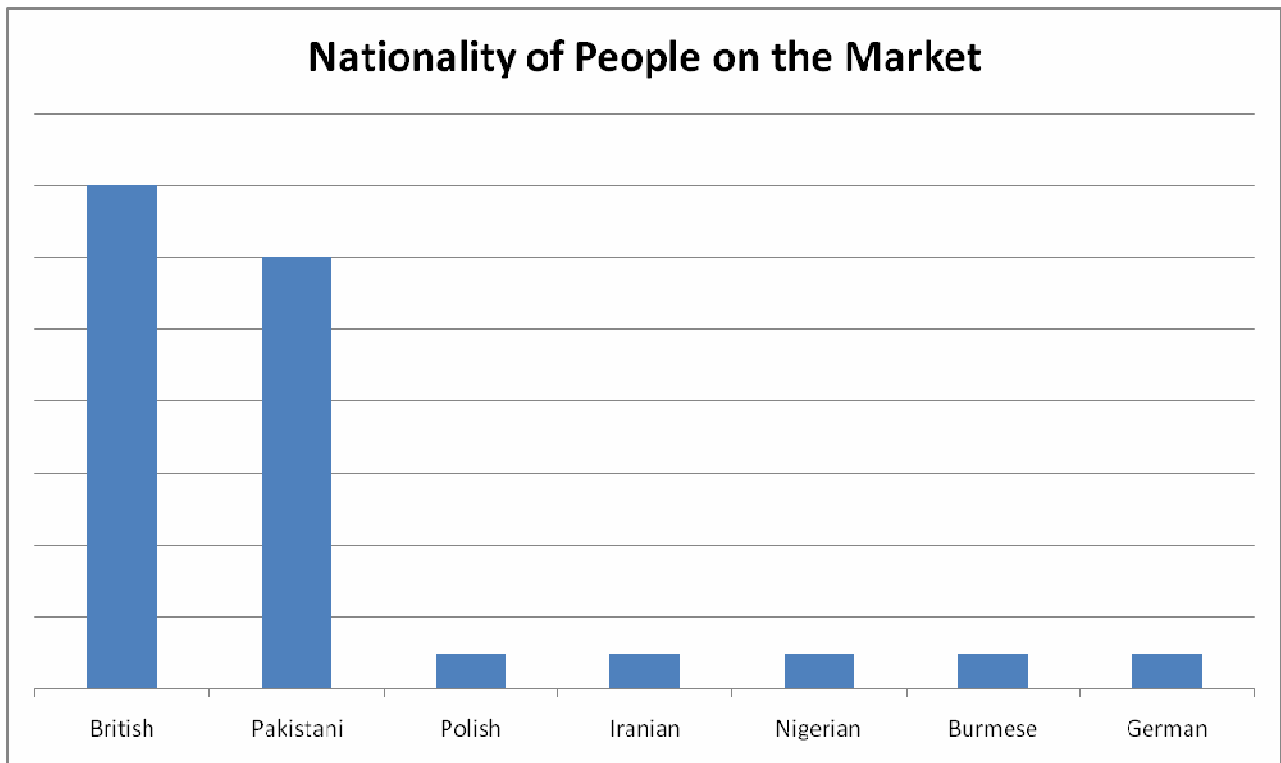


Fig.5

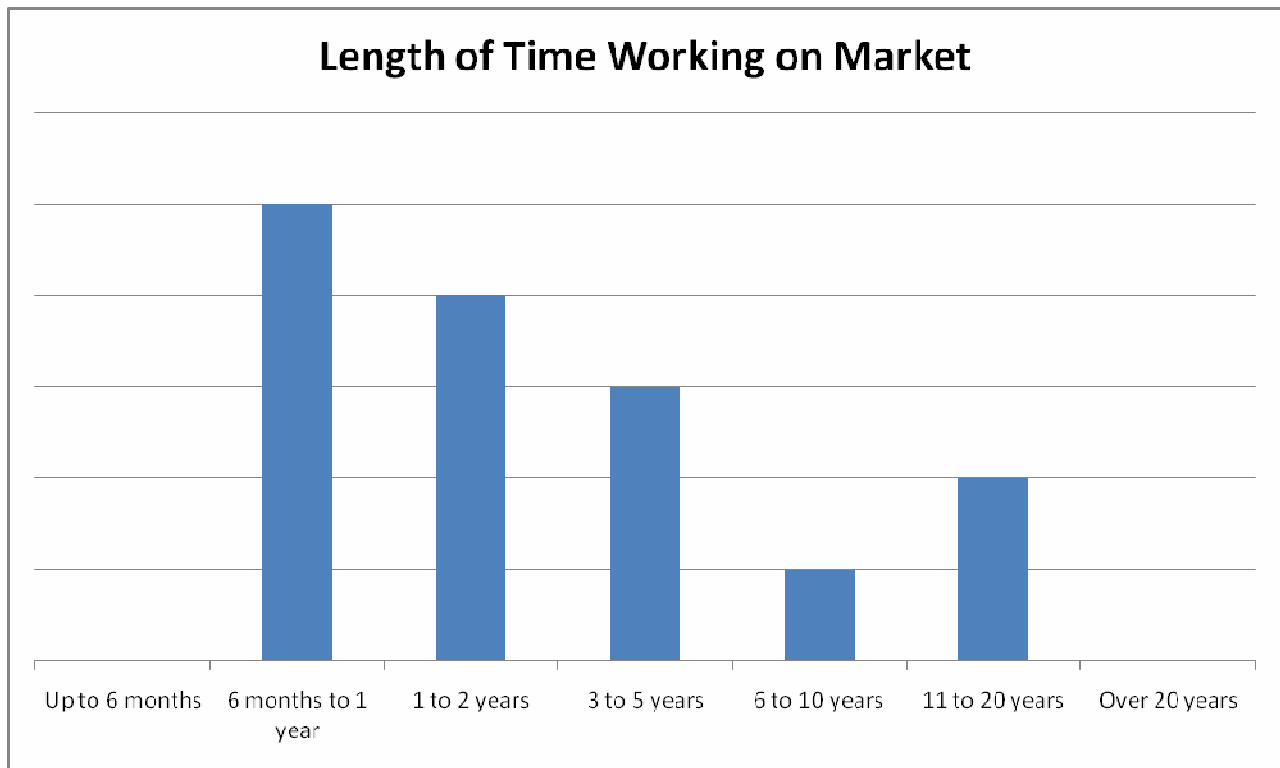


Fig.6



Fig.7

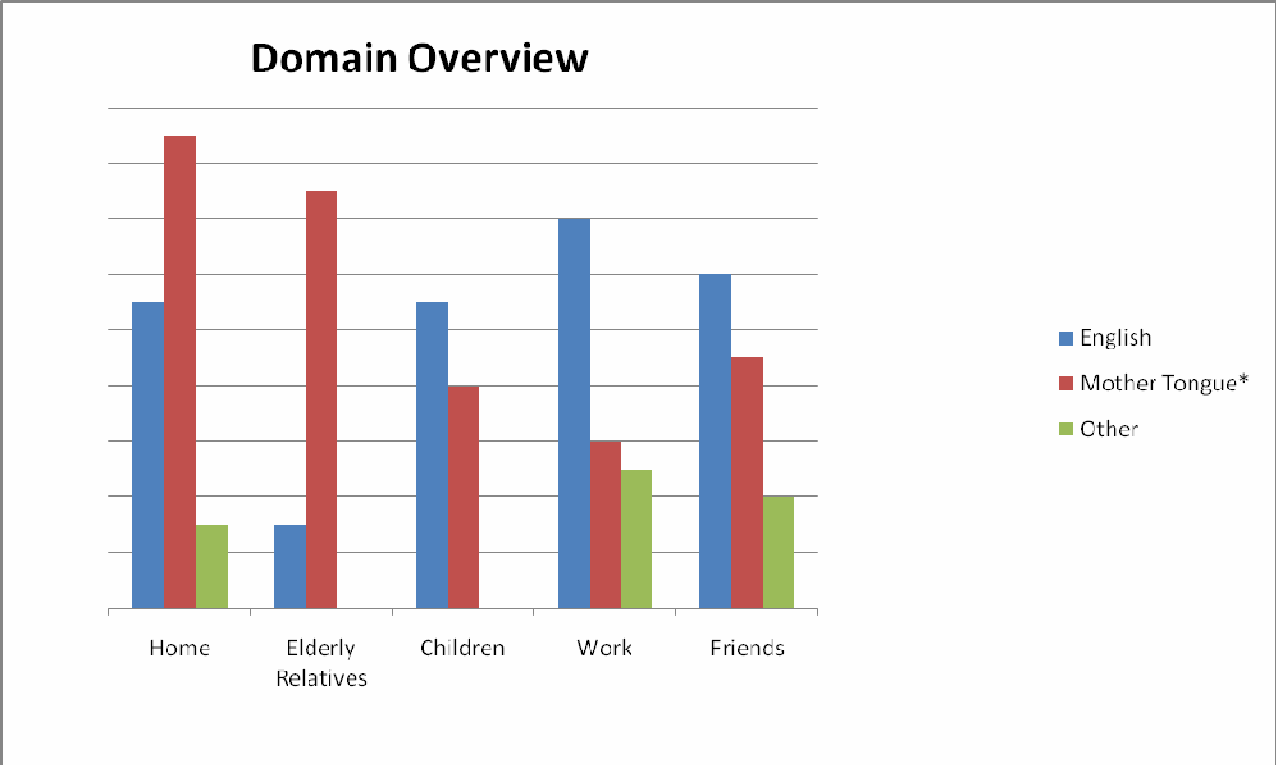


Fig.8 Longsight Ward Population

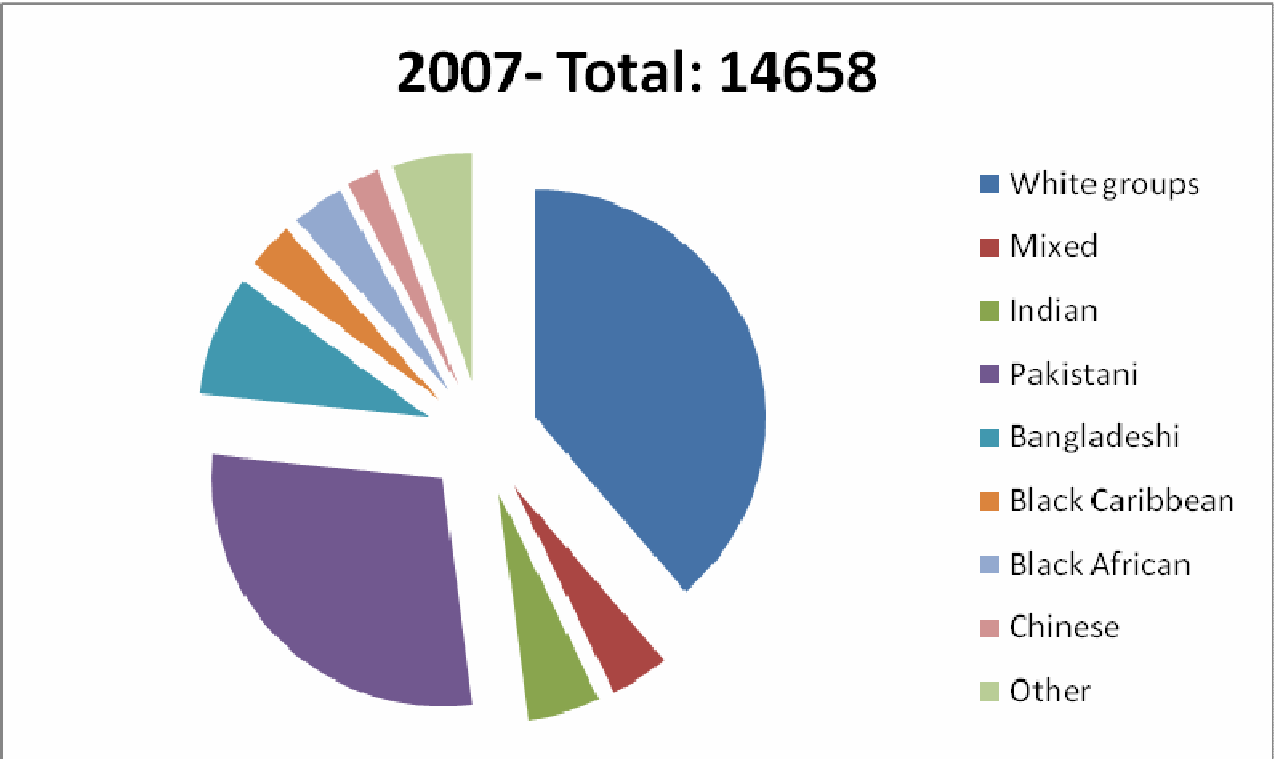


Fig.9 Domain Analyses examples

Example 1		
	Burmese	English
Home	x	x
Elderly Relatives	x	
Children	N/A	
Work	x	
Friends	x	

Example 2			
	German	English	Urdu
Home	x	x	x
Elderly Relatives	x		
Children	x		
Work	x	x	x
Friends	x		

Example 3		
	Yoruba	English
Home	x	x
Elderly Relatives	x	
Children	x	x
Work		x
Friends		x

Example 4					
	Urdu	English	German	Arabic	Sign
Home	x	x	x		
Elderly Relatives	x				
Children		x			
Work	x	x	x	x	x
Friends			x		

Fig.10 Longsight Recording Transcripts

Recording 1

"I was brought up in England and I speak fluent English but when I speak to my children, born in Pakistan... he tends to speak English more than his own language. I think it's best to speak both so you get used to it and don't lose your identity and culture ...

"I'm so glad I can speak English and read, so when I go abroad I don't have a problem with anything because it's so easy to communicate with them. Other people do speak English worldwide so when I go for holidays it's so much easier. I used to speak a little bit of French, I can remember a little bit... like numbers, dates..."

Recording 2

"...all sorts of languages, Bosnian, Pakistani, Afghani, Iranian, all around the world, I think there are... most friends are Iranian, and obviously we speak in our own language... I have lots of English friends, but to be honest they don't really mix or maybe they find it hard to mix with us or because of the culture..."

"We have our own... from America, even from Iran, our own magazine, in fact I work for our magazine, marketing... papers, magazines, radio, TV from London, big community in London... we have our own magazine in Manchester, they have their own in London but we only have one here"

Recording 2

"Urdu is most popular, than Arabic I would say, or Polish, Polish probably... the stall's been set up for about two years now so it's coming up to about two years in June but I didn't set it up, I came here... my boss from NHS Stop Smoking set up a whole load of markets around Manchester... and this one's probably got the highest concentration of different languages... I mean, I had one morning where I literally... I couldn't believe... I had a friend here so was explaining what was going on and it was like six different languages... I remember signing up the most amazing cross-section of people, from Irish, there's a big Irish population... and then you've got you've got your Arabic and then you've got your Eastern Europeans and your Urdu and your Indians so there's quite a lot going on in one melting pot... this is very unique, I've travelled quite a lot and this is the largest cross-section of languages I've ever come across in one market..."

"We had a helpline that you can use for... you can dial a number and they give you stop smoking advice in your own language... this is an initiative between Manchester City Council and the NHS, they did it as a pilot scheme, you can see here there's a lot more brochures on healthy living... things like alcohol, healthy living, cancer, people don't just come to stop smoking, they also come for health... it's just something different to have in your stall, it's come a long way... here you can see when you look around, all the different sections..."

"It's not just for the white speaking, but for everybody and I've got a lot of... there's a whole wide range of people now..."

Fig.11 Comment from the Questionnaire

Do you feel part of a community at Longsight market? Why?

“Yes – since we've been working here – I've got to know them... best friends... get on with everyone” (Ali)

“Yes – look out for everyone... try to help people” (Muhammed)

“Yes – lots of friends... when you're working you need to speak to them” (Urszula)

“Yes, everyone makes you feel welcome, no matter what religion or colour” (Claire)

“Yes, community spirit – when you work, people integrate” (Ahmed)

“Yes, nice people, chatty” (Jean)

“Yes, nice people, no problems” (Farsal)

“Yes, friendly people – people close by, friendly, customers and traders” (Anne)

“No, OK with others, but can't speak for long” (?)

“Yes, nice people, ethnic mix is good, makes you feel alright. 'We get on good', never been called a black bastard” (Joan)

Other comments

“Most people speak English – need communication. If neighbour is Polish then will speak Polish, otherwise English” (Urszula)

“The people lovely, stall owners friendly, considering big cultural mix” (Jean)

“Market is good for when there are not many jobs” (Farsal)

“Busy market, multi-racial. A new crowd every week” (P)

“Stalls could be cheaper” (Sandra)

“A lot of nationalities, treat all same. Some can't speak English, use hands to communicate. Other traders will help emulate” (Anne)

“Stalls too expensive – council is killing us, pushing us out of business” (Joan)

“Accent is changing – school. Really good cultural mix, excellent migration. Race relations, breaks barriers down” (Turnbull)

“Market should be free, no tax. No rent or half rent if it's a bad day. BNP can't take over – not fair – there would be no traders on market. I like to get on with everyone, no matter what colour” (Ali)

“Not how it used to be. Not as busy – people can't afford it, if they don't get benefits. 70% of people that shop here are on the dole. 'Get paid next week' comment of customers.

Manchester has changed, not as happy, people can't afford a living. Big stores will close down and people will come back to the markets” (Muhammed)

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