

लघुतौल्युवा MANCHESTER

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The University
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MANCHESTER
1824

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To What Extent is the Polish Language Represented Within Various Domains in Manchester?

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1.0 Research Question and Methods

According to an article in the Guardian about the 'UK's foreign-born population', the number of Polish-born residents in the UK has risen from 75,000 in 2003 to 521,000 in 2011, meaning it has astonishingly multiplied by almost seven times in less than a decade. This striking increase in Polish-born residents has meant that the Poles have become the largest UK community by foreign nationality. Furthermore, around 9% of these Poles are now residing in the North West of England, with Manchester's Polish consulate occupying the largest group of between 20,000 and 30,000 Polish people.

With such significant evidence of the growing Polish migration patterns, and such a surprising lack of concrete research surrounding this topic in the North West, we felt we had discovered a niche in this field of study. As a consequence, we chose to investigate the trends of the Polish language usage in Manchester and explore attitudes regarding the existence of such a great number of foreign nationals in our city. It is important to mention that in saying there was a 'lack of research', we are aware of the previous similar studies carried out by Fishman and Labov. However their work was not specific to Manchester and will not be a barrier to the advancement of our study, in fact, they will stand as useful resources in comparing patterns and findings. In carrying out our investigation, a domain-based analysis seemed appropriate in order to fulfil our research question:

'To what extent is the Polish language represented within various domains in Manchester?'

Initially in our method, we planned to be extremely thorough in our domain-based investigation and had therefore organised each of the five team members to take responsibility of one domain and carry out questionnaires and interviews with participants in each domain. The different sections of investigation were as follows:

- Places of Worship

- Education/work
- Media
- Service sector
- Social situations

However, after further consideration, we reassessed this plan with our tight schedule in mind as this method could have potentially been too time-consuming and also perhaps it could have been slightly intimidating approaching a group of foreigners in their environment whilst alone. Besides, our surveys contained questions regarding each of the domains, for example, 'Do you know of any Polish media in Manchester?', therefore we did not necessarily need Polish people from a media based domain to answer such a question, but rather a non-biased Polish speaker from the local church was deemed a better option. We therefore chose to use the Polish church in Moss Side as our main focal point as we discovered it is a centre for Polish people, of all backgrounds and ages, to gather once or twice a week and communicate in their native language. In addition, we made a couple of visits to Ayres Road – a renowned Polish street in Manchester– where we gathered a few participants in a local hairdressing salon. Our visits to Ayres Road also gave us an understanding and a direct feel of the Polish community and their way of living which was important before we started interpreting data.

Furthermore, in the early stages of our planning, we aimed to use both a questionnaire and an interview to gather data. However, after reconsidering this idea, it was not entirely clear why we needed both these methods, especially seen as they overlapped to a degree. As a result, we decided to merge the questions from both the forms of data collection into one, thus making it less imposing, more tolerable and less time-consuming for our subjects (see appendix 1). The initial idea of interviewing participants would have potentially led to the issue of the Observer's Paradox and also, the lengthy process of transcribing the recordings afterwards. As a consequence, we did not attend the social events which we mentioned in the planning stage.

Findings

2.0 Quantitative data

In order to clearly analyse our quantitative results, we tabulated the answers into spreadsheets and then created a number of graphs and pie charts. Data will be analysed in more detail in the discussion section of the report.

Graph 1:



2.1

The first pie chart reveals the regions in Manchester in which the Polish participants live. It is clear that a quarter of the subjects occupy the Fallowfield area. Other residential areas with Polish inhabitants include Salford and Castlefield, although these areas contain a considerably lower percentage.

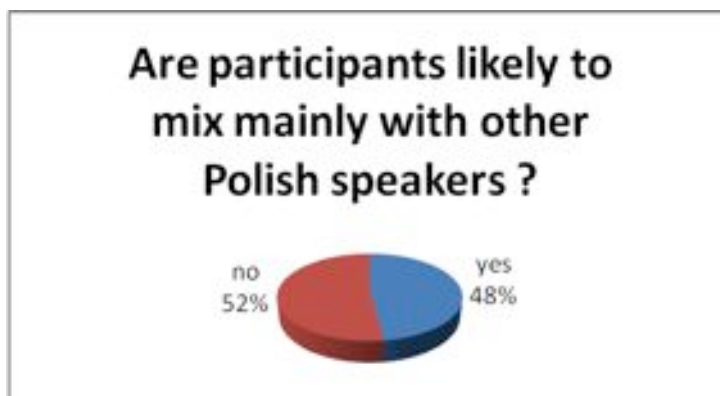
Graph 2:



2.2

We also aimed to find out the length of time people had lived in Manchester. We found this point interesting, as from the second pie chart, it is evident that no one has lived in Manchester longer than 8 years. The largest group (35%) had only been living here for up to 6 years. We felt this statistic was significant, as a number of people pointed out through the questionnaires given, that they felt the Polish community was not fully recognised as of yet, due to the majority of people only coming over to England fairly recently.

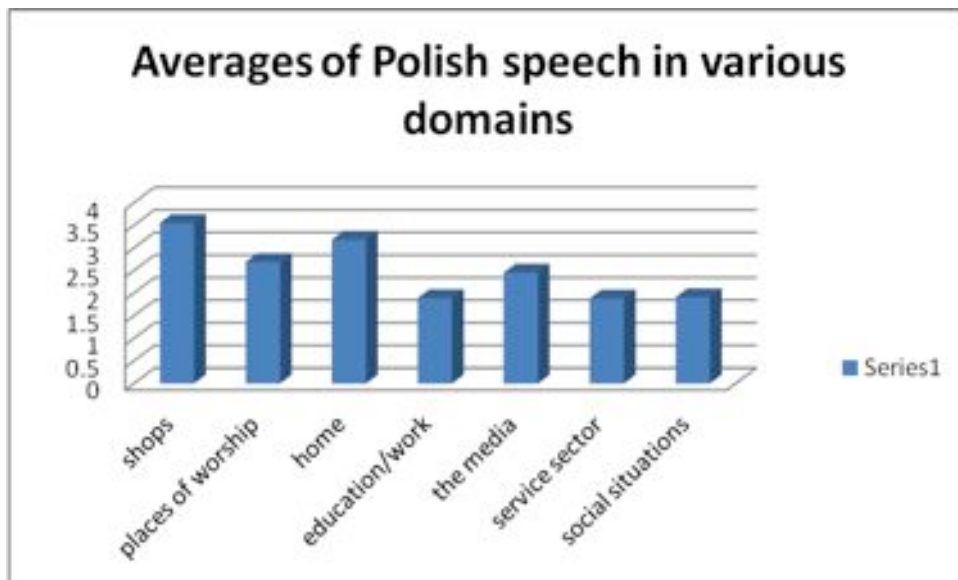
Graph 3:



2.3

For the next question, we asked speakers a closed question about whether they were most likely to mix socially with other Polish speakers or not. As the pie chart demonstrates, the results were very evenly split.

Graph 4:



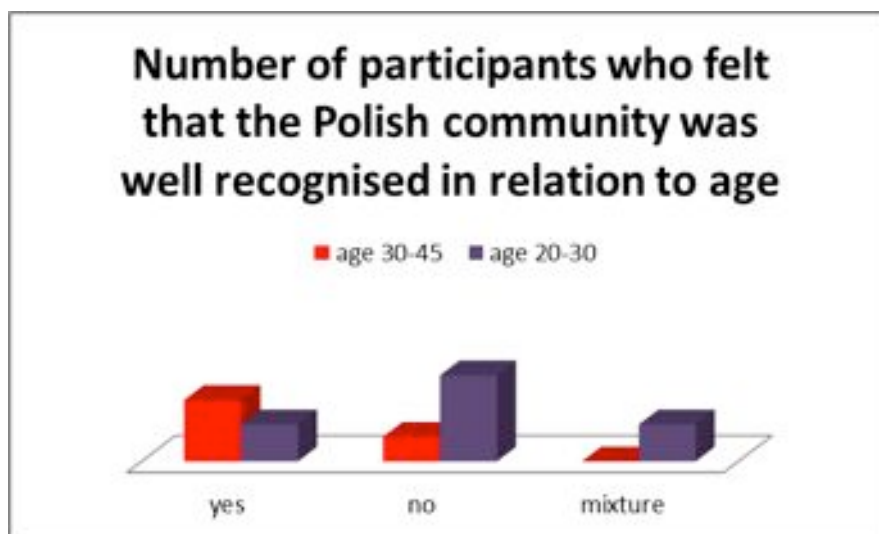
2.4

Graph four illustrates the results for our final question, whereby participants were asked to rate on a scale how likely they were to speak/hear Polish in each of the given domains. The scale ranged from never, to all the time, with sometimes and often as the intermediate stages. When calculating the data, we felt it would be necessary to convert these ratings into a points system, whereby if a participant were to select the 'never' category, it would be worth one point, 'sometimes' two points, 'often' three and 'all the time' a score of four. This way it was easy to work out a numerical average for each given domain by multiplying the number of people choosing a particular category by the points system and dividing the total by the overall number of participants. The results were then plotted on the graph above, showing the higher the numerical score, the higher the likelihood Polish would be spoken in the corresponding domain.

3.0 Correlations with age

After having collected and collated our data , we noticed that all of the questionnaires collected had been filled in by participants who fell into one of two age groups ; 20-30 or 30-45. We therefore thought it might be interesting to see whether the age of a participant may affect their answers to the questions they were asked. The following charts have therefore been created in order to identify any patterns that may be associated with the extralinguistic factor of age.

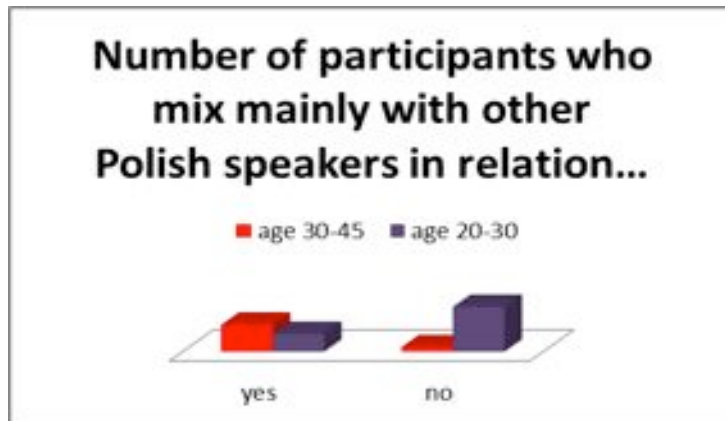
Graph 5:



3.1

Although we felt the above question would be better analysed in general terms in our qualitative section, the answers we received could be summarised in terms of their conclusion as to whether they felt the community was well recognised. We therefore used the general conclusions to create the above chart, in order to show the differences in responses from the alternate age groups.

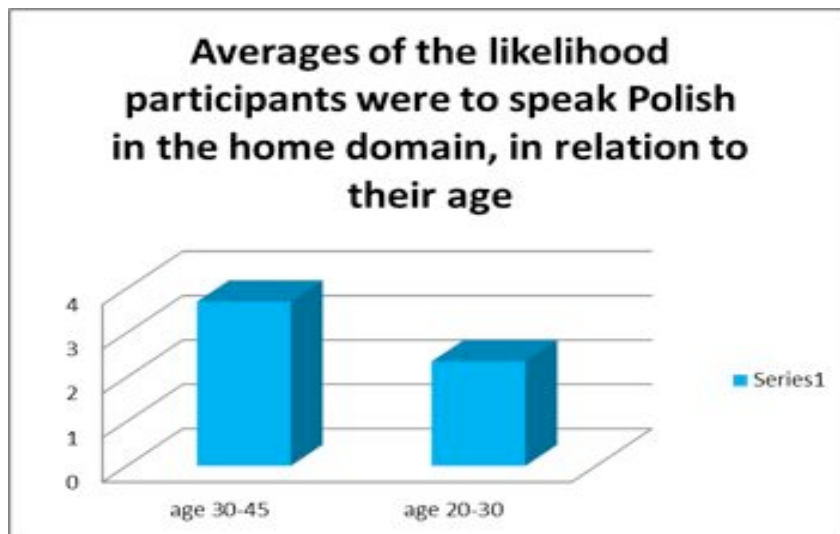
Graph 6:



3.2

This chart represents the same data as in graph three above; however it is apparent from the above chart that age played a big role in how participants answered this question, and therefore it is important to show this chart also to demonstrate the differences between the given age groups.

Graph 7:



3.3

This chart is a narrower version of graph four, and has been edited to show only the averages in terms of whether participants speak/hear Polish in the home domain. The reason that we chose to examine only the home domain in terms of age differences was that it showed the biggest difference. As can be seen in the above chart, there was a very significant gap between the averages given by the younger and older groups. Possible

reasons for this trend will be outlined in the discussion section.

4.0 Qualitative data

A number of the questions lent themselves to a more qualitative approach in their analysis as they were more open ended and encouraged participants to elaborate. For these questions we have given short summaries below of any interesting answers that were received, as well as details of any extra information that was identified. As with the quantitative results, these will be addressed in more depth in the discussion section below.

4.1 Did/do you go to Polish school or have children that do?

We wanted to find out the extent of Polish education provided in Manchester. It appears that this is one very limited area, as the results showed that there are only three Polish Saturday schools in Manchester, and one of them requires fees to attend - therefore not appearing too popular amongst the community. Many did attend the free Saturday schools, as do some of their children now; however, it seemed that it is now becoming more popular for Polish parents to send their children to English Catholic schools.

4.2 List any forms of Polish media that you are aware of

We believed that a good knowledge of Polish recognition would be shown through Polish media in the city. Although a few participants had very little knowledge of media provided in Manchester, we were satisfied with the response of some participants who knew of plenty of Polish media. Examples included Polish films played at Cineworld in Stockport, Polish shops providing Polish magazines, a Polish newspaper, Polish television programmes and a Polish drive time radio show on a local community station. Although a lot of members of the Polish community believe many aspects of Polish media to be limited and not easily accessible, it appears that other members disagree. This knowledge however, will potentially grow in time with the inevitable growth of the Polish community.

4.3 Do you feel the Polish community is well recognised in Manchester? Please give reasons for your answer

Answers to this question varied a great deal in length, and were split almost 50/50 in their conclusions as to whether participants believed the Polish community is well represented in Manchester. The most descriptive answers given were by those who believed their community was not recognised enough, as they showed quite a passion for the subject and believed more should be done. One answer in particular focused on the need for a change in stereotypes that people in Manchester have of the Polish community, in particular regarding their occupations and social practices. (See appendix 2 for the answer discussed.)

4.4 Do you feel more could be done for the Polish community in Manchester? If yes what?

Responses given to this question seemed to be quite limited, despite the fact that many participants wanted more recognition of the Polish community. It was interesting to note that the few participants who did suggest a number of ideas to improve understanding of the community, were all from the older age bracket (aged 30-45). The most popular suggestions for this answer were free English lessons, better communication in the service sector and the possibilities of interpreters. Many participants desired better communication in the service sector which inevitably correlated with the low average rating that the service sector received in graph four.

5.0 Discussion

It appears that age plays a crucial role in understanding the language maintenance of Poles in the Manchester area. We focused our attention on the age of our participants which we then related to our other questions. Our results showed that most of the participants over 30 said they mainly mixed with just Polish speakers, whereas participants aged between 20 and 30 answered that the larger portion of their social acquaintances were not Polish (see graph 6). Based on the fact that most of the younger participants were students, we believed this trend could be due to the mixture of speakers within a university environment. Their lecturers and fellow peers would not all necessarily be Polish; therefore they are

forced to communicate with people outside their nationality. It could also be a sign of the slow integration of the languages, English and Polish, over time and generation.

This idea is further supported by the question regarding domains in which Polish is spoken. Again, the younger participants were less likely to use Polish within their home (see graph 7) than the older participants which, given the living arrangements of students would make sense due to the fact that most students live with other students. However, the above 30s would most likely live with their families who would therefore also be Polish and so it is probably the case that they are less likely to use English within their homes; a theory supported by Fishman who stated that:

‘Multilingualism often begins in the family and depends upon it for encouragement if not for protection’ (Fishman; 1965 pg76)

Although the home was not the strongest domain for Polish speech recognition, it was still very high and when speaking to our participants it was clear that they placed great importance on maintaining their mother tongue within their family.

From the comments we received from parents and carers, a distinct link can be drawn between upholding their original language and heritage. This was apparent when asked about education for our participants’ children. We spoke to parents at a communal meeting held at the church function hall on Thursday and Friday mornings, and when asked about the sort of education their children received; whether or not they went to Polish school or English, the general consensus was that they wanted their children to receive some Polish education. However in Manchester there are no Polish schools and so most of their children attended a Polish Saturday school. The parents seemed extremely keen on ensuring their children were bilingual in both Polish and English so attending both schools was of importance.

As our research was centrally focused around the domains in which Polish was spoken, it was interesting to see where the Polish language was most popular, Contrary to our

predictions, Polish shops appeared to be the most common place (see graph 4). As expected when conducting multilingual research, there was some difficulty in communicating with all the participants but when asked why they spoke Polish mostly in shops it became clear that they were referring to Polish shops only. As some of the surveys were completed online, we can't be sure if this was the case for all participants, which may be a flaw in our question and perhaps we should have specified what type of shops as limiting the study to just Polish shops would obviously create biased results. However this might also tell us that our Polish participants chose to shop in Polish shops more than English shops, which is significant in analysing their levels of integration. From conducting our fieldwork, we found there are several Polish shops mostly selling Polish produce. There was a large selection of Polish magazines, food and drink and there was always a notice board advertising upcoming Polish events and individual sales of Polish goods. With all this so easily accessible in one place, it is understandable why Polish shops are a central domain for the Polish community.

The next domain which proved most popular within our study was the home which was expected considering previous studies as mentioned before. The church was the third most popular domain and as this was one of the places we chose to conduct our questionnaires, we expected this to be an area of high Polish interaction. When conducting our initial research to find Polish communities within Manchester, the Polish Church, Divine Mercy, was the easiest to find with a clear website and relatively central location to a popular residential area. In most communities, a place of worship acts as a gravitational point in which people of the same culture and nationality commune with one another, therefore language use within the church would be utilised in a way that would make those who attended feel comfortable in their surroundings. Regular church-goers would presumably attend alongside the same group of people; therefore using Polish here would seem logical. This usage supports Fishman's idea of domains within a language being of more importance to their sub-group:

'If individuals or sub-groups tend to handle topic x in language x, this may well be because this topic pertains to a domain in which that language is "dominant" for their society or for

their sub-group as a whole.’ (Fishman; 1965 pg73)

Based on this idea of topical language choice, it is clear from our results that religion is a topic in which the Polish language is maintained due to its topical dominance in society. In our original hypothesis we focused on Fishman’s theory that multilingualism is most commonly found in informal situations and considering places such as work and the service sector scored the lowest on the graph (see graph 4), Fishman’s theory holds for our analysis also.

Looking closely at the data, it is also apparent that the majority of the Polish population we surveyed differentiate between their mother tongue and their second language depending on the given environment or situation. This differentiation could perhaps be explained by Howard Giles’ speech accommodation theory:

‘When people interact they adjust their speech, their vocal patterns and their gestures to accommodate to others’, (Turner & West; 2010 pg405)

To prevent any miscommunication it seems that many Polish speakers we studied followed the language which was first being used in the situation. For example, as we have established, most of our participants were referring to Polish shops they attend when they took our survey. So naturally, a Polish shop with a Polish speaking employee would lead for both customer and worker to speak in their mother tongue. This also proves true for its overriding use in the home and in places of worship, where presumably the dominating language would be Polish. However in the situations where English is the leading language, our results show that most of the participants accommodate to the circumstances. In addition we can also apply Labov’s theory of formality and style (1966) which can explain the relevance of our results. Labov identified a:

‘...style stratification (speakers vary their production according to level of formality)’
(Hundt 1999:37)

which we can also clarify the significantly higher use of Polish at home or in shops compared to more formal environments such as work and education (graph four) . This result is also a good indication to whether our participants feel their language is fully recognised and catered to. We can establish from the qualitative data we received that some Poles did feel that the effort made towards the recognition of their language was sufficient. However our data does point out the certain places in which they feel most comfortable speaking their language.

6.0 Summary of our findings

Our research question aimed to find the extent to which the Polish language is represented in Manchester and the data collected has shown a varying degree of this representation. On the one hand, the existence of intensely 'Polish' communities which operate on a daily basis with access to Polish produce, native speakers and various events is telling of the high levels of maintenance of Polish heritage in the city and the abundance of the Polish language. On the other hand, some participants expressed anger at the lack of understanding towards their culture and felt there was a negative stereotype associated with their Polish language and associations. Furthermore, it seems that certain domains have a significant influence of language use, with the family home and the community church being key areas of fluent Polish interaction - thus highlighting areas of significant Polish representation. The data undeniably reveals correlations between participants' ages and their opinions. As a result, it seems our research provides a platform for further research into different and more varied age groups and their opinions on their language representation in a new, and very different, country. As mentioned, many of our participants had been living here for less than a decade. It might be interesting, therefore, for future studies to investigate the potential widening of these particular horizons when the current Polish community have resided in Manchester for a longer sustained period.

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Appendix

1) Copy of the final questionnaire used:

Survey for Polish people in Manchester

Name

Age

Gender

Address

.....

Occupation

How Long have you lived in Manchester?

Is Polish your mother tongue?

Did/do you go to a Polish school or if you have children do they go to a Polish school?

Do you feel the Polish community is recognized in Manchester? If so how?

List any form of Polish media you are aware of? (magazines, radio, cinema etc)

Domains in which you are likely to speak/hear Polish:

Polish shops	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	All the time <input type="checkbox"/>
Places of worship	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	All the time <input type="checkbox"/>
Home	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	All the time <input type="checkbox"/>
Education/work	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	All the time <input type="checkbox"/>
Media	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	All the time <input type="checkbox"/>
Service sector	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	All the time <input type="checkbox"/>
Social situations	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	All the time <input type="checkbox"/>

Do you mix with mainly other Polish speakers?

Would you know how to find Polish shops, media etc? If so are they easily accessible?

Do you feel more could be done for the Polish community in Manchester?

If yes, what?

Any further information?

2) Example of qualitative answer:

6. Do you feel the Polish community is well recognised in Manchester? If yes, please explain why and if no, please explain what more you think could be done.

Polish community is still not fully recognised, not as well as other communities. I think it's because people only came here fairly recently and things are still being organised. This would definitely help banish the stereotype that is looming over Poles at the moment; I mean why and how do so many people think that Poles in the UK are all washing dishes at the restaurants and when they don't they drink massive amounts of vodka? I would be happy if more work was done towards creating the better view of a typical Pole, smart, independent and valuing family roots. Polish Church is quite a strong base of Polish community in Manchester.

3) Map of places we researched/visited:



4) Pictures of places we visited:



Fig1: Polish Hairdresser, Trafford



Fig 2: Polish convenience store, Trafford

Fig3: Divine Mercy Church, Moss Side





Fig 4: Polish Shop, Central Manchester

EVENING CHRONICLE Wed, June 4, 1958 7

STRANGERS IN OUR MIDST—3

THE PROUD and tragic POLES

IN the make-up of all people who are exiled from the land of their birth—whether by choice or persuasion—there is a trace of sadness.

More often than the Poles.

They are naturally a proud race and a fierce national pride which has been nurtured in the past by a cruel history. It is reflected in their fascinating faces.

In Manchester the Poles have been for years a close-knit group of about 100,000. They number up to 400,000 in the north-west of England. They speak a Polish dialect which is different from the one spoken in Poland. They have a reputation for being hard-headed and practical.

From 1939, when it was the war, they have been in a state of constant flux. Many have been sent to the front. Others have been evacuated to the countryside. Some have been sent to the work camps.

They are proud and they are tragic. They are a people who have been through a great deal of suffering and hardship.

By BARRY COCKCROFT

Mr. Antoni Borecki with his wife and baby. The baby part of the Warsaw refugees.

They are a people of the Poles in the Manchester Club in the city of Manchester.

Typical

.....

The Seats

.....

Escapes

.....

The Old Days

.....

Tomorrow's Horoscope

A GOOD BUYING with Any How

5) Article found in newspaper from 1958: