Multilingual Manchester

Report

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Why do bilinguals code-switch in the Cheetham Hill area?

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Introduction

"Domain analysis may be a promising conceptual and methodological tool for future studies of language behaviour in multilingual settings" (Fishman, 1965). Within our initial proposal, we outlined that we would seek to investigate the linguistic behaviour of multilingual individuals and/or their families, in a small area just outside of central Manchester, specifically Cheetham Hill. We intended to focus on the central issue of code-switching during the conversations of bi-lingual speakers, and stated that we would analyse this code-switching through a number of data collection techniques such as qualitative surveys with open questions, voice recordings and transcriptions. However, upon retrospect, we found that we had underestimated the difficulties in transcribing recorded data from bilingual respondents, as none of the research team speak a second language. This being so, we decided to adapt our study and take on a more qualitative approach. As it was our intention to investigate the reasons why people code-switch, we wanted to focus upon speaker's conscious attitudes towards this behaviour. As such, we chose to combine a questionnaire that would allow us to fill in a Fishman style domain table with interviews on language attitudes.   Within this framework, we were able to conduct all data collection in English and approach our respondents as they go about their everyday lives within their environment.

It was appropriate to draw upon Fishman's domain choices, such as playground, street and church, altering them in accordance with the focus of our study. Through prior research, we as a group were already aware of the fact that Cheetham Hill has long since been an area of mass cultural diversity. This being so it was our intention to conduct a data analysis across a wide range of various language choices from within this geographical area. As such, it seemed best to reduce the number of domains used, these namely being school, home, work and street in order to look more closely at the language choices of specific bilingual individuals.

The primary aim of our investigation was to explore and evaluate the various reasons as to when and why bilingual individuals code-switch in the Cheetham Hill area of Manchester, whilst simultaneously evaluating the extent to which these findings fell in line with sociolinguistic theory. As a group, we found the topic of code-switching of particular interest as we were greatly aware of the culturally diverse nature of the United Kingdom today, which has seemingly lead to the notion that code-switching has now become common place within a wide variety of day to day social contexts.

A substantial amount of research has taken place in the subject area of code-switching, with a key focus on a domain-analysis approach. We identified that Chaudhry, Khan and Mahay's (2010) research was similar to ours in that they investigated domain-based reasons for switching between the English, Punjabi and Urdu languages. However they approached this through the construction of linguistic profiles of multilingual families in Manchester. As none of our group members were native speakers of languages other than English, this was not an appropriate arrangement. Consequently, we conducted an apparent time study utilising a questionnaire consisting of open and closed qualitative questions (see appendix). Within their study, Chaudhry, Khan and Mahay (2010) concluded that a notable reason for code-switching was the level of perceived prestige a language carries. It was recognized that Urdu was considered to be the most prestigious language, resulting in a greater use within formal contexts.

We found this approach to be of notable effectiveness, as it exhibited to us the usefulness of domain analysis in sociolinguistic research with regards to discovering code-switching tendencies in the community.

1 Data Findings

1.1 Telephone Conversation with Bilingual Bengali-English Speaker

In the initial course of our investigation, we were able to procure a bilingual speaker of Bengali and English. Born and raised in Cheetham Hill, he is a native speaker of English but proficient in Bengali. He could therefore be referred to as a 'sort of' semi-linguist (Hansegard 1986). We recorded a phone conversation he had conducted with his Mother and selected the most pertinent examples to deduce in what exact instances individuals code switch. For ease of examination, the English words have been produced in bold type.

"Hyālō, āmi yācchi **park** *Khēlatē* **football** *Ēbaṁ āmarā 8:30 Kāchākāchi phirē habēna"*
"Hello, I'm going to the park to play football and we'll be back around 8:30"

Our speaker stated his main reason for code switching stemmed from a need to compensate for limitations in his lexis. Words like "park" and "football" are common nouns which are easier to articulate than their Bengali alternatives.

Āja āmi ēkaṭi biṭa sampanna karēchi **revision** *ami karaba* **probably** *ekaṭu parē ārō kāja. Āmi pātā* **one hundred and eighty four** *upara āchi.*
"Today I've done a bit of revision; I'll probably do a bit more later. I'm on page 184."

Crystal (1987) judges that one reason for a bilingual to code-switch is that a speaker may not be able to adequately express themselves in one language so will switch to another to compensate. Through the speaker's use of the lexeme "revision", we can observe him successfully expressing himself through code-switching to the language believed to fulfil proficiency (Chin, 2007). Interestingly, our speaker brought to our attention that he would be unable to articulate high 2 or 3 digit numbers, due to the different typological characteristics of numerical elements in Bengali. This could be pursued as an avenue for further study.

*Āmi **book** ekati **ticket** ekaṭi jan'ya **festiva**l e'i grīṣmē, ami āpanākē jānātē ucita*
I'm booking tickets for a festival this summer; I thought I should let you know.

The most interesting aspect of this example is the absence of a suffix preceding the word "book", which should typically be in the present tense. This is substituted for the base form of the word. In addition, all the lexical items which are code-switched into English in this example are, again, common nouns. This might indicate a trend on the implications of language limitation on code switching. However, due to our acquisition of one conversation only, further inquiry is needed on which to base a credible hypothesis. Due to the conduction of our investigation during a busy exam period, the respondent was only available to provide us with one phone conversation.
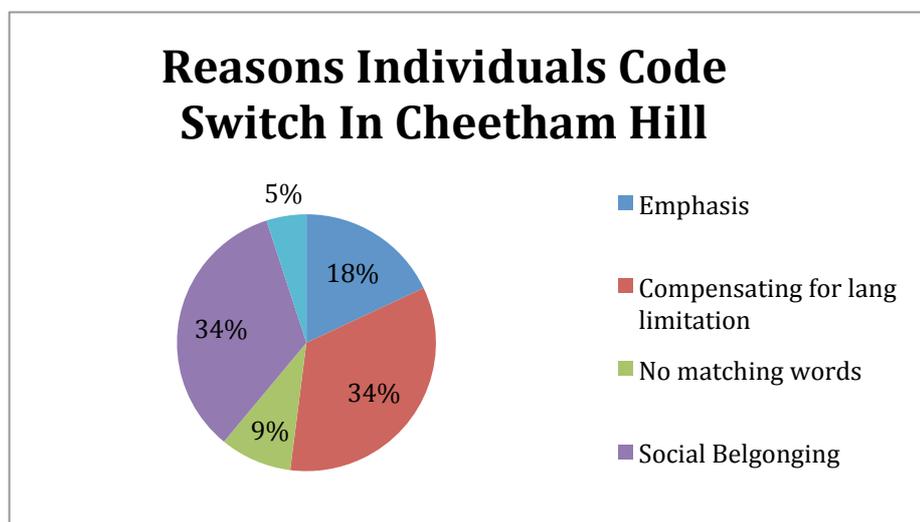

Figure 1: Bar Chart Showing Reasons Individuals Code Switch in Cheetham Hill

Figure 1 indicates that code switching is principally attributed to two lines of reasoning – either compensation for language limitation or to ensure a feeling of social belonging, perhaps in the work place or school environment. Emphasis is a curious anomaly as it is one of the aspects which we hypothesised to be a major contribution to rise of the code-switch. This data correlates with the transcription of our subject, who stated language limitation as the reason for all of his code switching. However, the information comes from a relatively small data pool and we can therefore not class it as reflective of code switching catalysts.

1.2 Domain Analysis

When observing the reasons why people code switch, we took several factors concerning the individual into account. These included their age, gender and how long they had lived in the area. We then inquired as to the nature of their code switching; how often they do so, how long for as, what domains dictate what language they use well as their attitudes towards language alternation to find any sort of correlation. The first part of our data analysis investigate the influence of domains.

Why our subjects used their first/second languages began by asking two questions: In which domain(s) would you use your first language and in which domain(s) would you use your second language? Possible answers included 'School', 'Home', 'Work' and 'Street'. Our decision to use these four domains in determining where a language is used was derived partly from Namei's (2008) study into the language choices of Iranians in Sweden. The investigation provided a particularly salient insight into language choice within the domains of school and home. We felt in our study however, we would need also to explore the domains of street and work to achieve an all-encompassing result. We initially compensated for the fact that our questionnaire required participants to tick the box(s) that applied to their chosen response. The presented us with the problem that, as the data wasn't numeric, it wasn't quantifiable. This rendered presenting the findings into a more comprehensible format difficult. We decided to avoid this problem by deeming that if a language was spoken in all four of the domains specified by a participant, then we could assume such a language was spoken 100% of the time. The results of these two questions are represented in Figure 2.
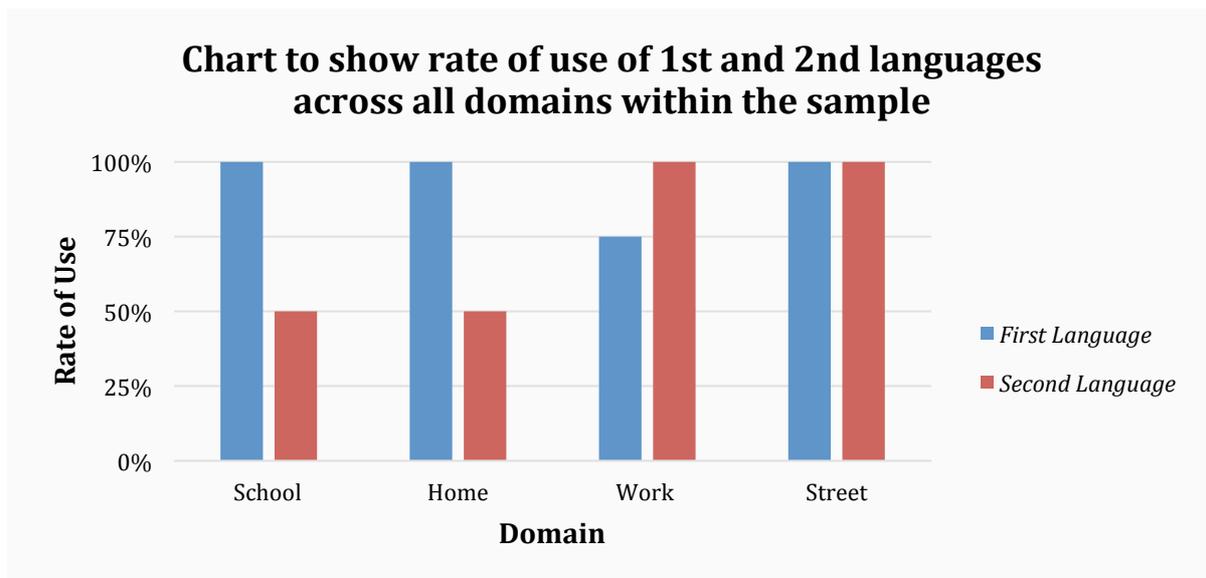
Chart to show rate of use of 1st and 2nd languages across all domains within the sample

Figure 2.

We initially see the first language of our participants being utilised 100% of the time in the school domain. However, more strikingly, their second languages are used only 50% of the time in the same domain. This may be attributed to the fact that some of the participants weren't in fact schooled in England, therefore their first language will have been their only means of communication within this domain. Moreover, it is apparent that the home domain exhibits the exact same rate of use of both first and second languages (100% and 50% respectively). This result is akin to that of previous endeavours, as it was proven that the mother tongue of a particular family would be the most commonly used within the home domain (Namei, 2008). Within the work domain, 75% of our participants would use their first languages whilst their second languages are used 100% of the time. This could be potentially due to the fact that 3 of our participants' had English as their second language, which is the tongue of commerce given that they work in Cheetham Hill. The remaining participant C's first language is in fact English, so the usage of his secondary language Urdu in the workplace is limited to fellow Urdu-speaking customers and family members. The final domain, street, exhibits a 100% rate of use of both first and second languages. Presumably this is telling of the heterogeneous nature of the Cheetham Hill area as the participants will often code-switch between their first and second languages at will. In sum, we can obtain from our results that within intimate domains such as the home, code switching is far less prevalent than within public domains such as the workplace and on the street. The participant's usage of a lingua franca (English) accommodates for the linguistic diversity within the area and allows business and social activity to soundly function.
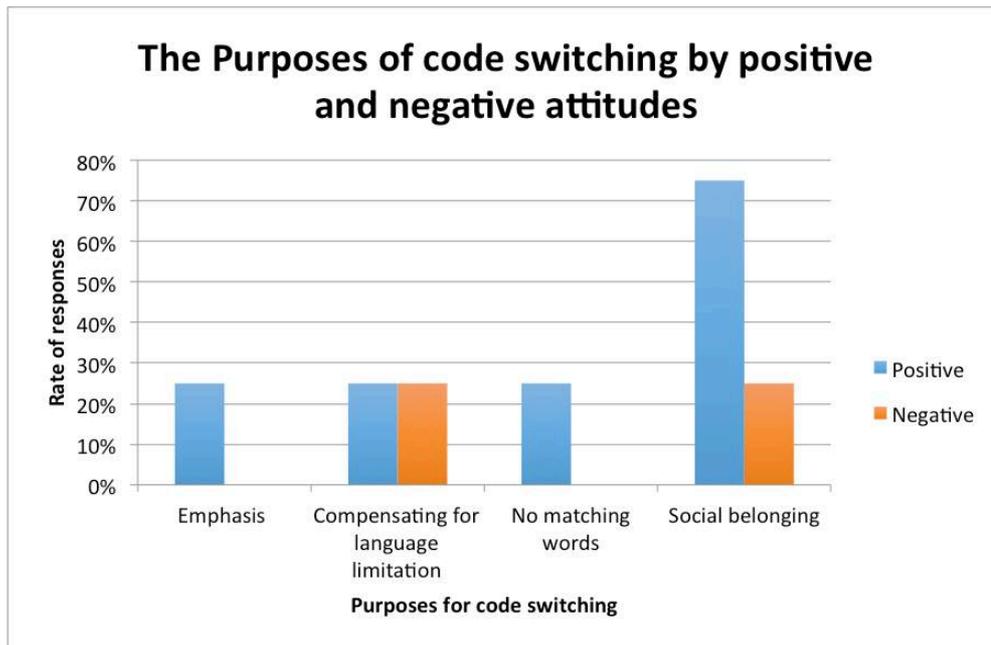
1.3 Attitudes towards code switching

Figure 3. The purposes of code switching by positive and negative attitudes

Our next variable observed the attitudes people held towards code switching and the effect this has on the languages they use. Here we used a combination of close and open ended questions in order to acquire both quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Our first question asked participants if they had a positive or negative attitude towards speech alternation within the context of the same sentence. Figure 3 shows that 75% of the people in Cheetham Hill held positive attitudes, where the respondent holding negative attitudes being a Polish speaker who uses English as a second language. The reasons for his negative attitude could be explained by looking at his response when asked what the purpose of language alternation was to which he replied 'compensating for language limitation'. Given that English wasn't this speaker's first language, his negative attitude could be accredited to the association between code switching and his inferior communication skills.

We also gain more understanding into why people hold negative attitudes by acknowledging that the only respondent holding negative views was also the only person that felt code switching indicated low proficiency. This shows a direct correlation between people's attitudes to the proficiency of code switching and their attitudes towards language mixing as a whole. We also found this to be the case during our open ended questions with speakers telling us they felt code switching held connotations with the inability to fully communicate in one language, this gave some indication towards negative attitudes.

Table A provides richer insight into the reasons influencing positive attitudes by illustrating that the main purpose of code switching is for 'social belonging' as 75% of positive speakers felt this was the main purpose. There are further implications here as it is suggested that code switching is used positively by acting as a form of social inclusion, enabling people to switch language mid-sentence in order to reside with different speech communities and consequently promote a sense of belonging This positive attitude can influence people's use of code switching, meaning they use it more, which we found to be the case during our qualitative research. This also aligns with Schmidt's findings that indicated code switching as an aspect of language that 'allows integration but embodies the speaker simultaneously' (Schmidt, 2014).
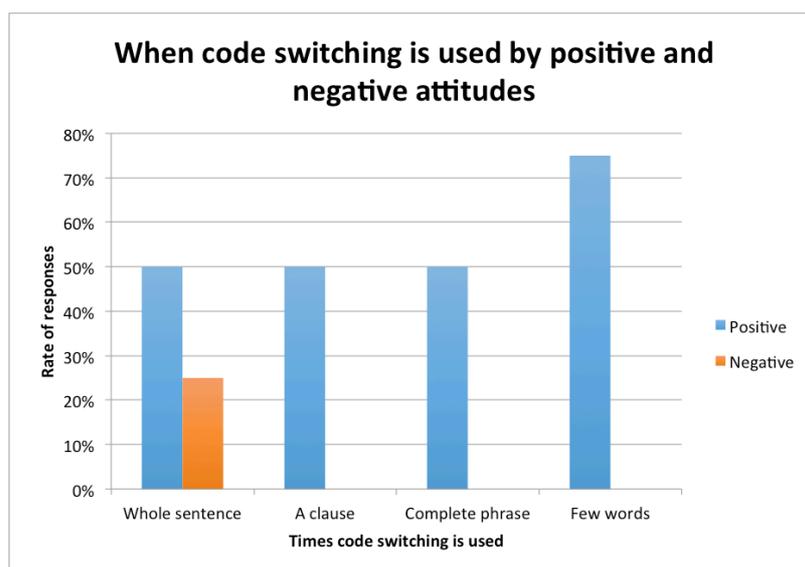

Figure 4. When code switching is used by positive and negative attitudes

Figure 4 illustrates the occasions in which multilingual speakers are likely to use code switching within an utterance. Gardner Chloros stated that 'code switching attitudes are learned within content rather than spontaneously and this is why we felt that the context of speech was an important factor to analyse (Gardner Chloros, 2009). The positive speakers, who see code switching as a good thing, are also the group most likely to use it less within the sentence, over few words as opposed to whole sentences. This contrasts with negative speakers who use code switching more readily over whole sentences, which suggests that language switching for lengthy periods is a contributing factor into the attitudes people hold. Using code switching more often within the sentence is often 'an inconvenience to use' which was supported by our respondents and indicates that this is one of the main reasons influencing people's negative attitudes (Titone, 1989).

1.4 Generational Variation in Code Switching

Amongst our investigation into code switching both preliminary and during the investigation in question, we understood that attitudes towards code switching were diversified particularly in regard to age. Our field observations included the participation of multiple generational speakers. In the first instance a 55 year old male Pakistani, along with his seventeen year old son, both of whom were speakers of Urdu – This rich data allowed us to understand the importance of code switching not only within the community of Cheetham hill, but also between age groups.

In order to maintain the novel nature of our research, we opted to analyse these parameters not in concordance with Chaudhry, Khan and Mahay (2010) who focused chiefly on the home. We appreciated that to acquire a reflective data set we must compare the utilisation of code switching between father and son in multiple domains.

We observe domains specifically elsewhere in the report, but it is important to visit domains in this framework as a means to identify triggers for code switching between generations. We look firstly at the 55 year old gentleman, who prefers to speak both active and passive Urdu at home with his wife, children, mother and father. This finding correlates directly to the work of Chaudhry, Khan and Mahay (2010) as the gentleman in question confirmed that indeed this preference is a result of not only familiarity as a first language, but also as a means of showing respect in the home. Indeed, ''a great deal of interest has been generated in the English language as a result of its spread around the world'' (Cheshire, 1991) however Urdu clearly enjoys a very prestigious status in Cheetham Hill homes regardless of the fact this subject has lived in Manchester for forty years.

Already we see that Urdu is fairly resilient to the influence of English, and this is confirmed even further by this subject's attitude towards code switching. Indeed, he admits to a positive outlook upon code switching but only in regard to short phrases and when communicating with Standard English speaking interlocutors.

Before addressing the 17 year old, son of the aforementioned participant, we delved into some preliminary readings. We established not only from previous Manchester based code-switching studies (Azam, Kilford, Mclaughlin, Yousaf), but also internationally renowned linguists, that the younger the person the more frequent the instances of code switching are (Auer, 1999).

With this hypothesis considered, we established virtually identical results between participant B and C. However, there were two crucial exceptions reflective of the influence of age. The 17 year old was currently a sixth form student whose education had been strictly in the U.K. This entailed of course that he had been perpetually exposed to English speaking children in a school environment from a young age. This participant confirmed that he utilised strictly Urdu in the home but due to his Manchester education (which his father never had, as he grew up in Pakistan) he utilised Standard English in school.

Taking all of the above into account, we can establish that generation does not directly affect code switching, particularly in Urdu. The data does demonstrate however, that growing up in the Manchester community from a young age provides a greater platform on which to make use of code switching.

Conclusion

All of the above having been carefully considered within their respective parameters, we have established a number of catalysts fundamental to the act of code switching in Cheetham hill. In the first instance, we understand our data to correspond to Fishman's ideas regarding the importance of domain analysis. Judging from both quantitative and qualitative data there is discernible evidence testament to the significant influence of a Manchester based education within code switching. Particularly in regard to Urdu, we find that the first language is maintained perpetually in the home, with code switching (or a complete transition to English) reserved for street and work.

Additionally, it has been interesting to observe the extent to which attitudes affect code switching, and naturally what affects these attitudes. We can link this to the domain element of the research; a British education certainly normalizes the use of code switching. However, the act of code switching itself seems to be indicative of language proficiency and perhaps even an inconvenience to the adept or inept speaker. As anticipated from our readings of Auer (1999), instances of code switching were greater in young people, however we can correlate that chiefly towards domain rather than age itself. All this being said, domain is clearly the most influencing factor regarding code switching, as well as the language spoken itself e.g. Urdu is considered a language of reverence and tradition and is less likely to be tinged by integration within a new community.

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Appendix 1

<u>**Respondent A**</u>

Respondent A.

Questionnaire

MANCHESTER
1824
The University of Manchester

Name:

Age: 25

Occupation: Eletronic shop sales assistant

Education: High School.

How would you describe your ethnicity?

White Polish

What is your first/second/third language?

Polish – 1st   /   English – 2nd

What is your preferred language?

Polish

How long have you been speaking English?

7 yrs

How long have you lived in Manchester?

6 yrs

FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, PLEASE TICK THE BOXES THAT APPLY

In which domain(s) would you use your first language?

School	✓
Work	✓
Home	✓
Street	✓

In which domain(s) would you use your second language?

School	
Work	✓
Home	
Street	✓

How would you say your attitude is towards moving between languages in a conversation?

Positive	
Negative	✓
Neutral	

What do you think switching or mixing languages indicates about your language proficiency?

High proficiency	
Low Proficiency	✓

How often do you realise that you are moving from one language to another

All the time	✓
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Never	

When you switch between languages, what is it usually for?

A whole sentence	✓
A clause	
A complete phrase	
Just a few words	
Other (specify)	

What's the purpose of you moving between languages?

Emphasis	
Compensating for language limitation	✓
No matching words	
Social belonging	✓
Other (specify)	

In your opinion what do you feel is the main reason/s for you moving between languages?

Mainly change so that people can understand what I am saying. Sometimes I don't know the English word.

Respondent B

Questionnaire

Name:

Age: 55

Occupation: Shop Owner

Education: High School

How would you describe your ethnicity?

Pakistani British

What is your first/second/third language?

Urdu – 1st / English – 2nd

What is your preferred language?

Urdu

How long have you been speaking English?

40 yrs

How long have you lived in Manchester?

40 yrs

FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, PLEASE TICK THE BOXES THAT APPLY

In which domain(s) would you use your first language?

School	✓
Work	✓
Home	✓
Street	✓

In which domain(s) would you use your second language?

School	
Work	✓
Home	
Street	✓

How would you say your attitude is towards moving between languages in a conversation?

Positive	✓
Negative	
Neutral	

What do you think switching or mixing languages indicates about your language proficiency?

| High proficiency | ✓ |
| Low Proficiency | |

How often do you realise that you are moving from one language to another

All the time	
Sometimes	
Seldom	
Never	✓

When you switch between languages, what is it usually for?

A whole sentence	
A clause	
A complete phrase	
Just a few words	✓
Other (specify)	

What's the purpose of you moving between languages?

Emphasis	✓
Compensating for language limitation	
No matching words	✓
Social belonging	✓
Other (specify)	

In your opinion what do you feel is the main reason/s for you moving between languages?

I mainly use Urdu to communicate with family or close friends. Some times it is easier to use an Urdu word if there is no equivalent in English.

Respondent C

MANCHESTER
1824
The University of Manchester

Questionnaire

Name:

Age: 17

Occupation: Student (Sixth Form) / Part time shop assistant

Education: Sixth Form. (Higher).

How would you describe your ethnicity?

Pakistani British

What is your first/second/third language?

English — 1st / Urdu — 2nd

What is your preferred language?

English

How long have you been speaking English?

Whole life

How long have you lived in Manchester?

Whole life (since birth).

FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, PLEASE TICK THE BOXES THAT APPLY

In which domain(s) would you use your first language?

School	✓
Work	✓
Home	✓
Street	✓

In which domain(s) would you use your second language?

School	✓
Work	✓
Home	✓
Street	✓

How would you say your attitude is towards moving between languages in a conversation?

Positive	✓
Negative	
Neutral	

What do you think switching or mixing languages indicates about your language proficiency?

High proficiency	✓
Low Proficiency	

How often do you realise that you are moving from one language to another

All the time	
Sometimes	
Seldom	✓
Never	

When you switch between languages, what is it usually for?

A whole sentence	✓
A clause	✓
A complete phrase	✓
Just a few words	✓
Other (specify)	

What's the purpose of you moving between languages?

Emphasis	
Compensating for language limitation	
No matching words	
Social belonging	✓
Other (specify)	

In your opinion what do you feel is the main reason/s for you moving between languages?

I will talk to my older family members in Urdu out of respect and to friends at school because we all do it, nobody else knows what we're saying.

Respondent D

Questionnaire

Name:

Age: 30

Occupation: Hair Dresser

Education: High School

How would you describe your ethnicity?

White Polish

What is your first/second/third language?

Polish - 1st / English - 2nd

What is your preferred language?

Polish

How long have you been speaking English?

Ten years

How long have you lived in Manchester?

Ten years

FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, PLEASE TICK THE BOXES THAT APPLY

In which domain(s) would you use your first language?

School	✓
Work	
Home	✓
Street	✓

→ would only use Polish at work if a customer was a native Polish speaker.

In which domain(s) would you use your second language?

School	✓
Work	✓
Home	✓
Street	✓

How would you say your attitude is towards moving between languages in a conversation?

Positive	✓
Negative	
Neutral	

What do you think switching or mixing languages indicates about your language proficiency?

High proficiency	✓
Low Proficiency	

How often do you realise that you are moving from one language to another

All the time	
Sometimes	✓
Seldom	
Never	

When you switch between languages, what is it usually for?

A whole sentence	✓
A clause	✓
A complete phrase	✓
Just a few words	✓
Other (specify)	

What's the purpose of you moving between languages?

Emphasis	
Compensating for language limitation	✓
No matching words	
Social belonging	✓
Other (specify)	

In your opinion what do you feel is the main reason/s for you moving between languages?

Sometimes I wont know a word in English so I will use the Polish equivalent. Mostly I will shift from Polish to English to fit in with most speakers in Manchester.

Transcript 1

Transcript to Show Code Switching Between Bengali and English

1) *Subject:* Hyālō <mark>Mum</mark>

2) *(Interlocutor)*

3) *Subject:* Hyām̐ āmi dhan'yabāda āpani āchi

4) *(Interlocutor)*

5) *Subject:* Āmi niścita na'I, āmi yācchi <mark>park</mark> Khēlatē <mark>football</mark> Ēbaṁ āmarā 8:30 Kāchākāchi phirē habēna

6) *(Interlocutor)*

7) *Subject:* Āmi manē kari āmarā āchē ki samaẏa jānatē <mark>tea</mark>

8) *(Interlocutor)*

9) *Subject:* Ēṭā sūkṣma āmi śudhu kāja anēka ache

10) *(Interlocutor)*

11) *Subject:* Āja āmi ēkaṭi biṭa sampanna karēchi <mark>revisio</mark>n ami karaba probably ekaṭu parē ārō kāja. Āmi pātā <mark>one hundred and eighty four</mark> upara āchi.

12) *(interlocoter)*

13) *Subject:* Āmi yē āmāra ṭrēna phirē jānēna <mark>home</mark> haya <mark>6th of June</mark>

14) *(Interlocutor)*

15) *Subject:* Āmi ēṭi phiriẏē karatē habē <mark>Dad's birthday</mark> ami sēkhānē thākaba kintu yadi āmi niścita na'I <mark>the end of July.</mark>

16) (Interlocutor)

17) *Subject:* Āmi kāja anēka pēẏēchēna kāraṇa. Āmi <mark>book</mark> ekati <mark>ticket</mark> ekaṭi jan'ya <mark>festival</mark> e'i grīṣmē, ami āpanākē jānātē ucita

18) (*Interlocutor*)

19) *Subject:* Yadi kichu <mark>changes</mark> ami tōmākē jānābō.

20) (*Interlocutor*)

21) *Subject: Āmi tāṛātāṛi āpani kathā balatē habē*