Multilingual Manchester

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Multilingual Manchester's Linguistic Landscapes: A Study on the Use of Multilingual Signs for Public Services in Manchester

Ellie Forrester O'Neill
Jessica Richardson
Arif True

1   Recap of Research Questions

Multilingualism is an ever-increasing factor across not only Manchester, but the United Kingdom in general. This is due to several reasons, the most prominent being a rise in immigration. Resulting in more culturally diverse towns and cities which inevitably brings about a more frequent use of multilingualism. This increase should trigger companies and public services to cater to the wider range of languages spoken by the inhabitants of the different areas. Our project will look at certain aspects to question whether this is the case or not.

In this report, we intend to analyse the linguistic landscapes using LinguaSnapp across certain areas of the public services in Stockport and Wythenshawe located in Greater Manchester. Within this sphere, we are focusing on hospitals, libraries and schools to gain a generalised insight into multilingualism in public services. We chose these two areas based on the current overall lack of information and linguistic mapping that has occurred before our study, regarding the data we found on LinguaSnapp. LinguaSnapp is an application which photographically maps the existence of multilingualism in Manchester, through signs, posters, leaflets and any other form of signage produced in other languages. The ultimate purpose of our investigation is to acquire a better awareness of the usage of multilingualism across Greater Manchester through conducting an analysis of two lesser-studied areas in the city.

Our aim is to discover answers to the following questions:

1. What languages are spoken in the given areas, and does this compare with the most recent census data?

2. What languages are found on the multilingual signage in each of the areas?

3. Do the ways in which the languages used in public services accurately reflect the languages spoken by the people in these areas?

Another question which was originally part of our project was to discover a dominant foreign language in each of the areas that we investigated. However, following our project, we were unable to detect a single language other than English which was clearly the dominant language. The census data allowed us to see the most common foreign language across the area of Stockport (which included Wythenshawe) so we could make certain assumptions however we could not accurately verify the validity of the census, and this was also since it had been conducted in 2011 [1]. Since then, there may be changes in the linguistic landscapes of these areas. This report will then outline our discoveries and possible answers to the remaining research questions which shaped our project.

2   Recap of Methodology

The method we used to collect our data was using LinguaSnapp, which was created by The University of Manchester. We did this by taking images of the multilingual signs and uploading them to the app. This helped to expand the linguistic mapping of multilingualism in Manchester. In addition to this we conducted informal interviews with members of staff

in the various areas of the public services we researched. This allowed us to get a first-hand view into the frequency of multilingualism in each sector, as well as providing us with some opinions on the accuracy of multilingualism use, and whether there was a need for an increase of signage, for example. What's more, through use of websites and translation applications, we could discover for ourselves the presences (or lack of) multilingualism in each service.

Some difficulty arose with regards to data collection in the schools that we chose to investigate. This may have been due to protection and the right to take photographs in schools, as well as a possible lack of multilingual signage apart from in the obvious areas such as in Modern Foreign Languages. Census data also provides a vague image of the different languages spoken in schools, as often students may only specify that they speak a language 'other than English' rather than the exact language [1].

Similarly, in libraries the multilingual signage came from books in foreign languages, like in the schools' languages departments. We were, however, able to conduct interviews with staff and discover the methods used to deal with multilingualism, despite the actual existence of signage was somewhat sparse. Our original plan in Stockport was to visit The Heatons Library, however we changed this and visited Stockport Central Library as it was closer to the city centre and we concluded that it would be more largely populated and in turn, possibly deal with a wider range of languages.

In hospitals, we could find multilingual signage and members of staff to give their insight into the variety of language use, however since there were numerous areas within each hospital we had to make generalised conclusions about multilingualism in this area of the public sphere.

3   Findings

3.1   Stockport

Stepping Hill Hospital
Stepping Hill Hospital is Stockport's main hospital, catering to over 300,000 people. Located only several miles outside of Manchester city centre, this hospital sees a variety of languages, and like much of the NHS is operated by a request-based system. On their website, it says that the CCG's (Clinical Commissioning Groups) have been working alongside GPs who themselves are multilingual, to establish an improved method of catering to those with a first language that is not English. Already, Stepping Hill Hospital has produced videos which are available in several languages to help when a patient has an issue and what steps to take [2]. This shows that there is an awareness of multilingualism as well as an awareness for its increasing nature, and a need for a more accessible multilingual approach.

Our own research involved photographing the multilingual signage in the hospital. Despite the website's' claims of working to accommodate to those whose first language is not English, there was very little presence of signs on display, which were readily available without having to go through the request based system. We found several leaflets which featured some translations in many languages (Appendix A), but no texts written entirely in other languages that were produced by the NHS. After it initially appearing as though there was only a small number of signs and texts readily available, we conducted short interviews with members of staff in the hospital including the volunteers, the reception and sat down for a session with the head customer inquiry. The volunteers gave a general observation

that there was a wealth of languages commonly heard in the Stepping Hill Hospital, talks with the reception confirmed this assumption claiming they hear around a dozen instances of foreign languages a day. The meeting with customer inquiry explained the efficacy of request based system, when customers call the service they give the hospital, department, name, date of appointment and language and the interpreter will be booked to meet the client at the hospital on the appointed time. There was however the issue of daily overbookings, it was suggested by both the service when we rang the North Manchester NHS interpreters that patients make the request at least three days their set appointment so that there is enough time to organise the correct interpreter.

The unanimous answer to our question of how multilingualism is dealt with was that it didn't seem to be a burgeoning issue and that the process of a request-based system worked adequately within this hospital.

Stockport Library

This library is centrally located close to the main hub of businesses and services in Stockport. It is the main library in use in this town, hence our decision to investigate in in relation to multilingualism. In terms of multilingual signage, there wasn't any in the library. There was, however, a fairly large section catering specifically to foreign language books (Appendix B). After speaking to a member of staff, it appears requests for books in languages other than English was quite infrequent as most requests were for inter-library loans. The library offered a wide range of books in languages such as Urdu, Chinese and European with books in languages such as French and German being on a rotary system so that books are alternated between libraries in the area once every two months. On the government website, it claims that there is a programme called Bookstart which provides dual language books in 25 community languages [3]. This is in a way promoting the idea of multilingualism in Stockport.

Schools in Stockport (Reddish Vale High School, Priestnall School)

To gather information within schools it was necessary to request a visit to the schools since we would be taking photographs on school property. After several attempts to contact the schools via phone calls and e-mails, we had some difficulty in getting in touch with them and therefore attaining the information that we needed for our report. However, through accessing the schools' websites we could at least piece together a general view of the level of multilingualism in the schools and how it is dealt with.

As previously mentioned, there is often an ambiguity linked with the data from the 2011 Census [1], however the School census is an additional source of information regarding multilingualism in the UK. In the most recent census, Stockport was found to have 6.7% of students whose first language was not English within state-funded secondary schools, and 8.6% in Primary Schools. This should show that there is a need to cater to those students whose native language is not English [4].

On the Ofsted report for Reddish Vale High School, however, it claims that the percentage of students who do not have English as a first language is low (reference Ofsted report).

The primary school that we planned to visit in Stockport was Priestnall School. According to its most recent Ofsted report [5], it maintains that the percentage of student whose first language is not English is broadly average. Although, again, the primary school did not respond to our contacts so we had no evidence to document in LinguaSnapp.

Therefore, due to not gaining any information that was relevant in terms of LinguaSnapp (i.e. signs or leaflets) we made the decision that the schools were not relevant to our report.

3.2   Wythenshawe

The University Hospital of South Manchester

University of South Manchester Hospital (Wythenshawe Hospital) is located approximately 9 miles outside of Manchester City Centre. The hospital has over 900 beds and 5,994 staff members. [6] Being a large hospital, they service the people of South Manchester, whilst also helping patients from across the North West and beyond. As the hospital caters to so many people, they cater to patients who speak a variety of languages, but like most of the NHS services, they operate on a request-based system. The Hospital has a policy in place 'Interpretation and Translation Service Operational Policy', which as stated 'sets out the arrangements for the provision of interpreters and translation of information to patients and/or relatives whose first language is not English, British Sign Language users and patients who may have communication difficulties, sensory loss and/or learning difficulties (Vulnerable Adults) and Trust staff' **[7].** This policy coincides with the poster found in Wythenshawe Hospital, displaying many languages alongside a phone number provided, instructing the reader on what to say (in their own language) in order to get an interpreter (Appendix C)**.** This sign shows there is awareness of multilingualism in the Hospital and confirms that the hospital's policy is being used actively. We have photographed this sign to LinguaSnapp to document the evidence of multilingualism in the hospital, but also help people that may find this service of use in Manchester.

As our project required us to photograph signs and leaflets that displayed Multilingual evidence, we spent hours in the hospital searching for evidence that was relevant to our aims. Despite the hospitals websites policy stating that they accommodate to their patients whose first language is not English, we did not find much evidence to show this. We asked the information desk in the main entrance of the hospital if they had an idea of where any multilingual signs may be and they had no clue but rang the interpreter department in the hospital for us. Upon having a discussion, we were informed that they do not have signage throughout the hospital to accommodate those whose first language is not English. However, through the NHS they are able to order leaflets specific to the needs of an individual's first language in order to give them information on specific illnesses when required. Our assumption is that they do not have these readily available and displayed in the hospital as it may cost too much money to provide if they are not sure of how many will actually be used.

Interestingly, one sign we did find in the hospital that was multilingual was the sign that indicated where the prayer room was (Appendix D). An obvious reason for this is that religion is universal and the hospital is accepting of this and using it to accommodate patients of different religions whose first language may not be English.

A part of the hospital that did offer many leaflets in multiple languages was the Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre. This centre offers an environment for patients and relatives/friends to gain support and get information about their concerns regarding different cancer diagnoses and treatments. As shown on their website [8], they provide information about cancer diagnosis and treatment in different languages through written form, DVD's and CD's. Just outside the door to the centre we found a rack full of

leaflets about different types of cancer in many different languages, all including English translation as well. We were able to upload these to LinguaSnapp in order to show that support for cancer treatment and diagnosis was available in the hospital to those that did not speak English as a first language (Appendix E). Some of the languages they provided leaflets in included Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Hindi, Italian etc. These leaflets are also available to download and print from the Macmillan Cancer website.

In concluding our visit to Wythenshawe hospital, we were generally disappointed in the availability of multilingual signs and leaflets used. It seems that the main service they offer to people that do not speak English as a first language is their interpretation service. We were told that this is easily accessed in the hospital by telephone and this was shown in the sign we found regarding interpretation. Although the prayer room sign was multilingual we are aware that this is mainly due to religion and accommodating visitors or patients that practice different religions. However, we were hoping there would be more evidence to show support to patients in multilingual forms regarding their health and navigating throughout the hospital. We also found it interesting that it seemed only Macmillan Cancer offered information that was readily available in the hospital to patients who speak other languages, yet this was not evident throughout different parts of the hospital where patients or relatives/friends may need information regarding illnesses unrelated to cancer. Although we were able to get some evidence to upload to LinguaSnapp to show multilingual signage/leaflets, we were expecting much more from our visit.

Bowland Medical Centre

Bowland Medical Centre is a five-doctor partnership which aims to provide a GP service to those in the surrounding catchment area. On their website, they have a section for 'non-English speakers' which covers issues regarding the role of GP's, how to register and emergency services. It offers information in 20 different languages in the form of leaflets that can be printed online [9].

Upon visiting the medical practice, there were multiple signs and leaflets displayed but unfortunately, they were all in English and there was no evidence of multilingual information being readily available. However, we asked the receptionist of the practice if she had any information in multilingual form. She confirmed there was no information readily available in different languages, however she told us that they offer an interpretation service for patients that may need it. However, the process for this is more complicated than we thought. The patient must come into the practice to book an appointment and speak through a telephone interpreting service in order for the receptionist to meet their needs. The leaflet containing the information of which phone number to call for each specific language (Appendix F), the receptionist provided us with this. She also informed us that the use of a telephone interpreter is available during the appointment with the GP, however this must be arranged in advance in order to make an appointment with a big enough time slot to accommodate the patient's needs.

Wythenshawe Forum Library

Wythenshawe Forum Library is a fairly new library set in the heart of Wythenshawe town centre. They offer a wide variety of services including advice sessions and community groups, computers, books, study zones etc. They are open five days a week and anyone can apply for a library card and borrow books instantly. Upon visiting the library in hopes of finding any multilingual signs we approached the staff to ask them if they were aware of

any. The lady we spoke to took us to a section of books in the library that were written in different languages. There was a small section of books in Polish, Urdu, Persian and Lithuanian (Appendix G). We asked her how they decide on which books they get in different languages. We were informed that they are given a certain budget to acquire books in different languages based on the demographics of people that sign up for a library card in the area. Although they were not able to give us exact figures of the amount of people who applied for a library card and gave their first language spoken as one other than English, we were informed that there were more Polish and Urdu speakers in that area. They knew this as they were given a larger budget to bring in books from these different languages. We were able to document these sections of books onto LinguaSnapp.

Another sign that was found in Wythenshawe Forum Library was a sign on the wall by the computer's (Appendix H). This sign was written in Polish and used in order to inform Polish speakers of the charges applied when printing in the library from their computers. We were also able to upload this sign onto LinguaSnapp. We found it interesting, however, that although they provided books in four different languages based on the demographics, that the sign regarding charges when printing from computers was only in Polish. This could suggest that only Polish speakers have asked about computer charges or the sign may have been put up on the community board by the computers by a member of the library that speaks polish as a first language in order to help others.

Although we didn't find much in the library to upload to LinguaSnapp, it was interesting that they get a budget for books in different languages based on the demographics of members. However, we believe that signs for computer printing charges should also be displayed in the rest of the languages spoken by members in order to be accommodating to every member.

Schools (Newall Green High School, Button Lane Primary School)

In order to gain information from the schools in Wythenshawe, it was necessary to contact them first via telephone and email to arrange a time where we could visit, possibly take pictures of any evidence for LinguaSnapp and speak to someone about their approach to students who do not speak English as a first language. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in terms of our contact with the schools as they did not reply to our emails and upon phoning them they were not keen in arranging a time for us to come and speak to anyone nor look around the schools for any evidence to upload to LinguaSnapp. Therefore, we were not able to use these schools as part of our study as with no evidence for LinguaSnapp, it was not relevant.

4   Discussion

Our project studied the areas of Stockport and Wythenshawe in Greater Manchester, and their multilingual landscapes across areas of the public service sector. From our findings and investigations, we can make certain claims about whether these areas cater to the various languages spoken by their inhabitants.

4.1   Hospitals

In the hospitals, as you would expect, there are often patients whose first language is not English, which reflects the multicultural and multilingual characteristics of the city of

Manchester. The way in which multilingualism is dealt with in this area of the public sphere is generally through a request based system, whereby patients can request an interpreter in their native language for appointments and other meetings in the health service. From speaking to staff, this system seems to adequately cater to the level of multilingualism in the area. Other reports written about multilingualism in the healthcare service in Manchester maintain that it is integral to the health service not only in Manchester but across the UK to provide interpretation services to patients, and that this system is improving in reaction alongside the increase in number of requests. One report references the ambiguity of the 2011 census in which questions were more general than specific in terms of the languages spoken by the public, and that it may not offer an accurate insight into the linguistic mapping of Manchester but that it was nonetheless helpful in providing a general view of the languages spoken [10]. This then allowed the hospitals to cater to the languages other than English that were generally the most common, as well as having various other languages readily available through interpreter requests.

4.2   Libraries

In the libraries we visited, we can conclude that in terms of immediate signage that is available on entry, there is little to none. This seems to be a common theme amongst the public sector, as it is often running on a request-based system. Through speaking with the staff, this system appears to be working adequately to accommodate to the multilingual speakers in the community the system appears adequate provides an interpreter to meet with the client on the day of their appointment or over the phone if it is too late to book, but the efficacy of request based system seemed agreeable with most staff and has a well working face value. If say the presence of languages was over 5% maybe staffing and locating of skilled interpreters would be very difficult for the request system luckily the presence of languages spoken in our specific areas does not cap 2% [11] of the population and even those who are bilingual (in their native language and English) we assume would not always use an interpreter when he have a good grasp of what the doctor is telling them in English.

4.3   Schools

As expected within most schools, there is a department dedicated to the study of modern foreign languages. However, the use of multilingual signage for reasons other than this seems sparse. This ultimately may be a reflection of the smaller percentages of students whose first language is not English, meaning there is less of a requirement for multilingual signage. It is also a shame that it is difficult to organise talks about students with a school as well as the inadequacy of staff knowledge in how they deal with such a question of ethnicity suggesting certain political undertones for example when asking how many children were in the school they replied 2000 when we asked about amount of languages they referred to that as personal information. We posit that interviews with schools that investigations must be taken with a large timeframe, sensitivity and communication that is directly to the correct staff, head-teacher or language department.

5   Conclusions

Our investigations provided a wide range of public services to get a large breath of the linguistic mappings on the areas in the boroughs of greater Manchester. We saw from census data that the prevalence of language in the communities of Stockport and Wythenshawe are less than 2%, considering the population of both Wythenshawe & Stockport is around 100,000, less than 2000 individuals are multilingual. We have identified from our research at Stepping Hill Hospital, The University Hospital of South Manchester, Newall Green High School, Button Lane Primary School, Reddish Vale High School, Priestnall School that multilingualism is somewhat a minor priority for these institutions from the staff we spoke to at least on a surface level. It has nonetheless important implications towards the policy and customs within these institutions, the hospital request system appears to be working without too many major issues for accommodating less than 2000 people of which a smaller percent of this figure, we could assume, would even be involved with using the service. In libraries, the stocking of books is less policy and more personal choice but it is amiable to see libraries inviting foreign text sometimes dependant on request and having a system for translation based inter-library requests is very inviting for the minority of those who are multilingual. The disparity of foreign signs in these institutions may be taken both from a fairly constructivist standpoint– that seeing that the appeal for foreign language signs is quite low institutions so had no need for a multi-lingual sign policy. In another scenario, it is possible that these choices for no signage are based on ignorance of the issues. Overall, we believe the attempt of the multilingualism in these institutions is provisionally successful. Where public services lack in immediate signage available, they make up for in having an adequately functioning system whereby those whose first language is not English have accessibility to language services.

6   Bibliography

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"Baguley Demographics (Manchester, England)". *Baguley.localstats.co.uk*. N.p., 2017. Web. 8 June 2017.
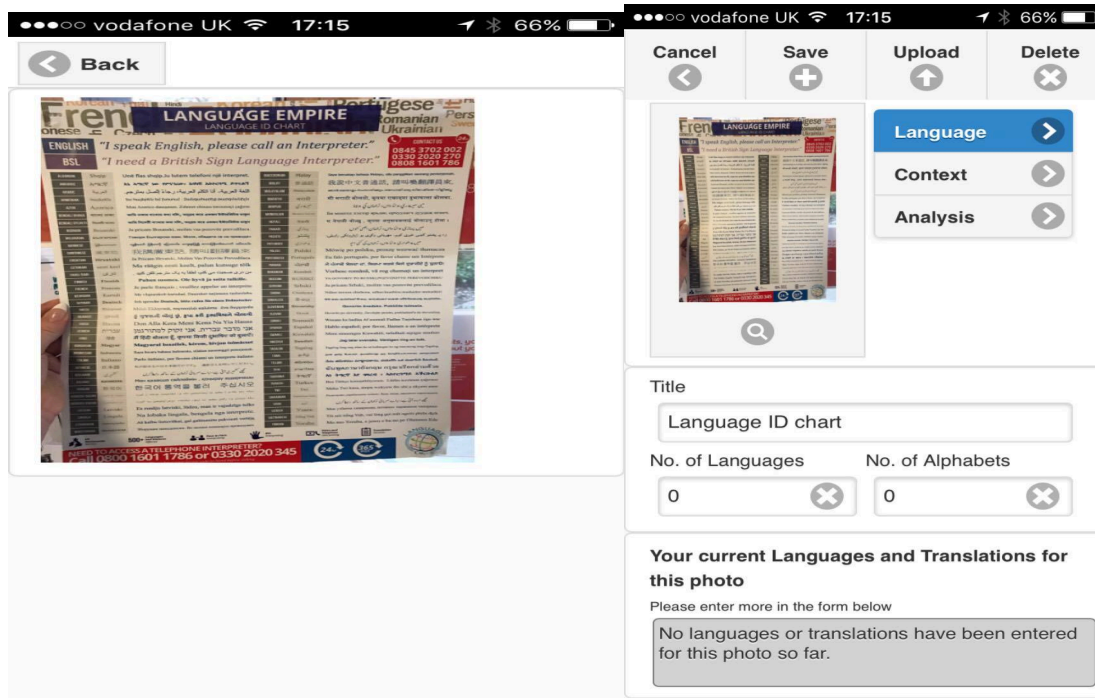
7   Appendix

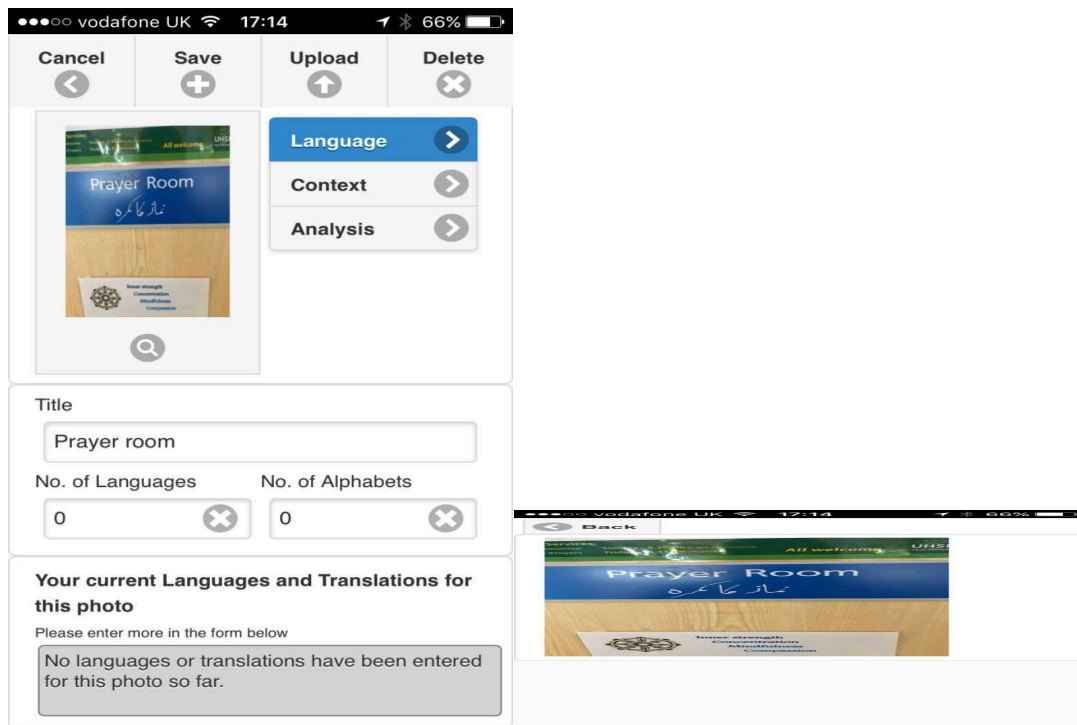A) Multilingual leaflet found in Stepping Hill Hospital
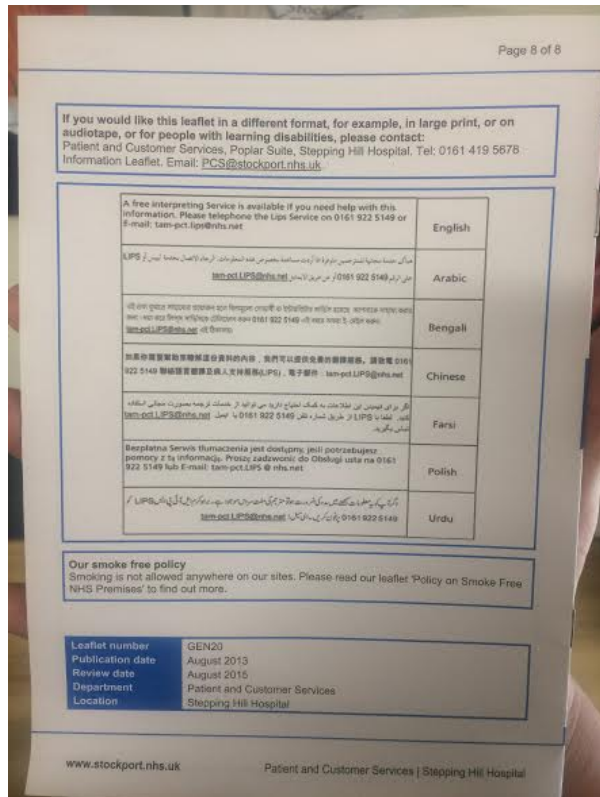
B) Foreign Languages section found in Stockport Central Library
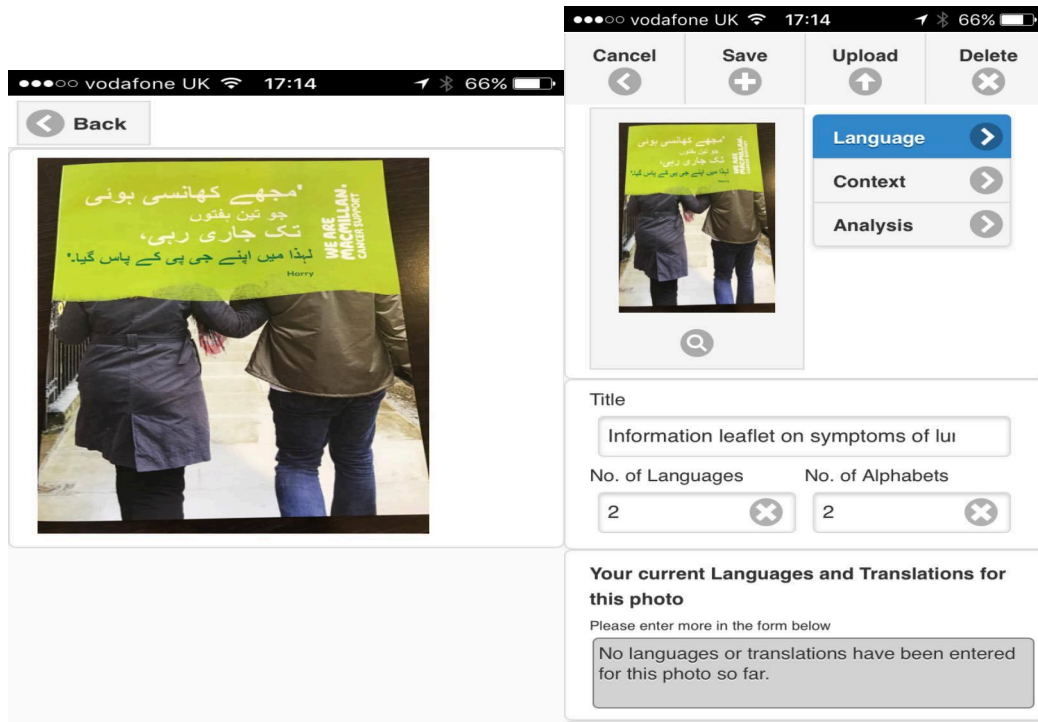
C) Poster in Wythenshawe Hospital displaying phone numbers to call when in need of an interpreter. Also shown on LinguaSnapp.
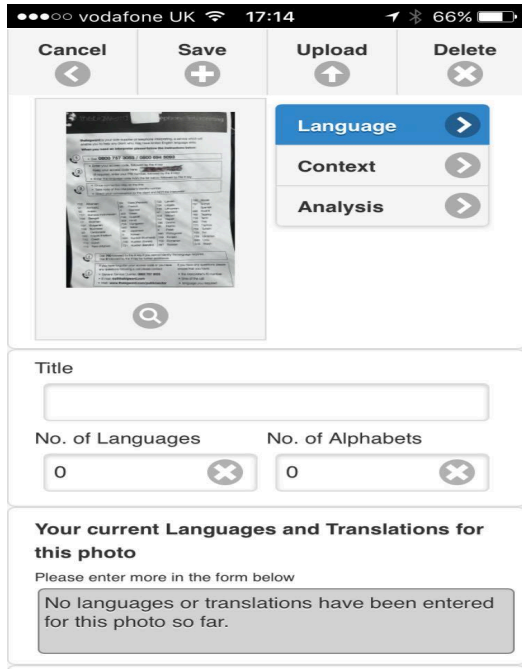

D) Sign in Wythenshawe Hospital to indicate the location of the Prayer room. Also shown as an upload on LinguaSnapp.

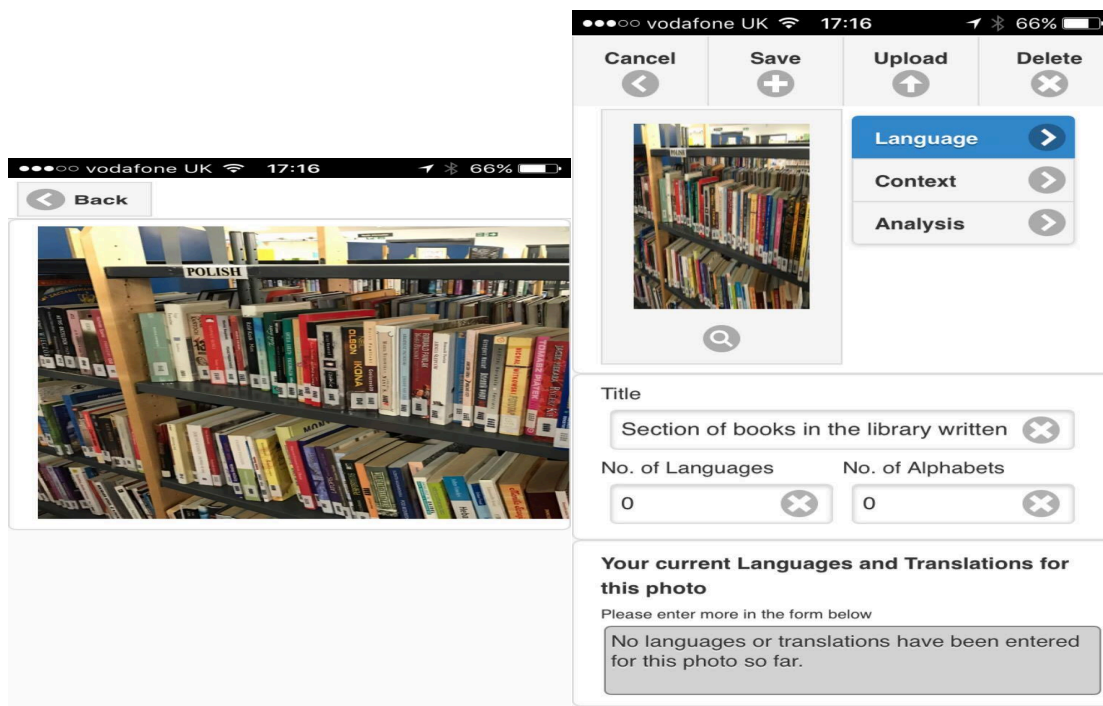E) Evidence to show a few of the leaflets displayed outside of Macmillan Cancer Support centre in Wythenshawe Hospital

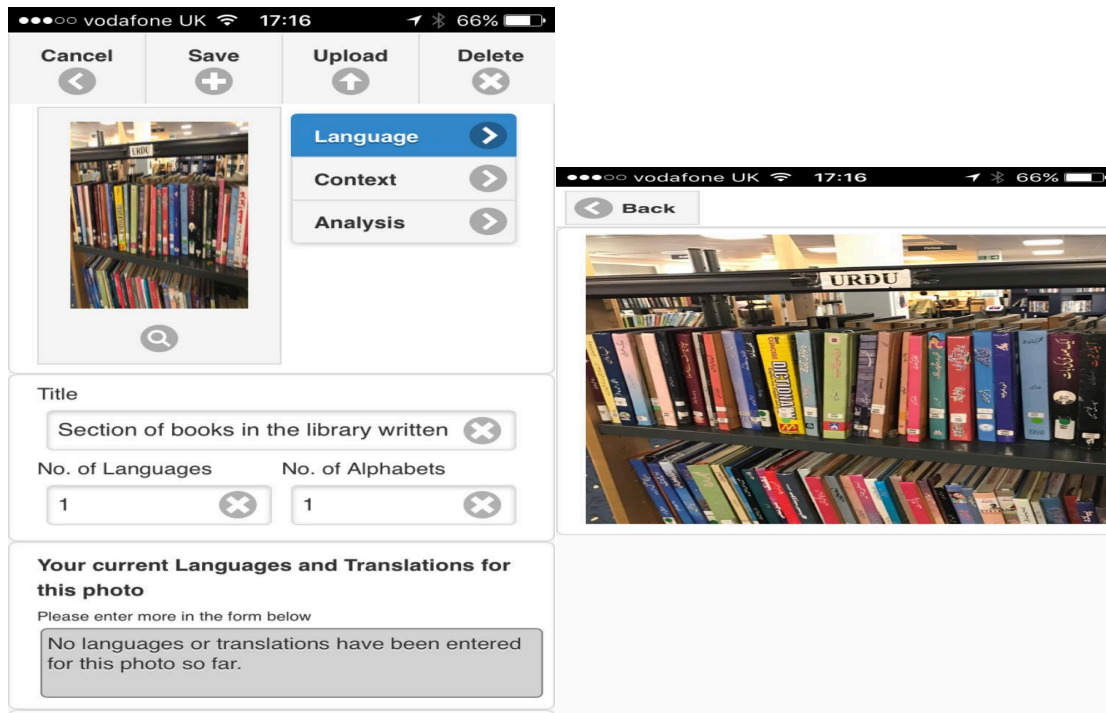F) Leaflet provided by Bowland Medical Practice giving phone numbers of interpreters based on each language.

G) Images to show the sections of books within Wythenshawe Forum Library
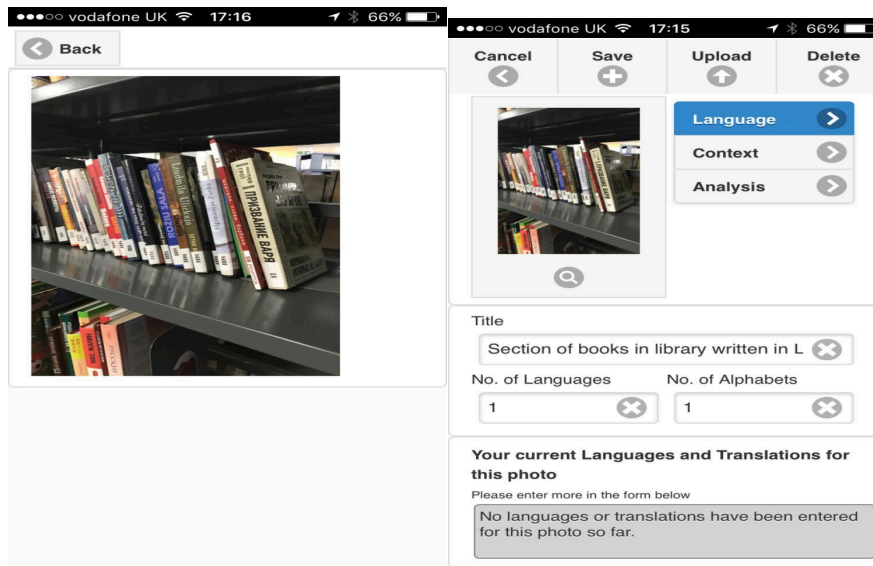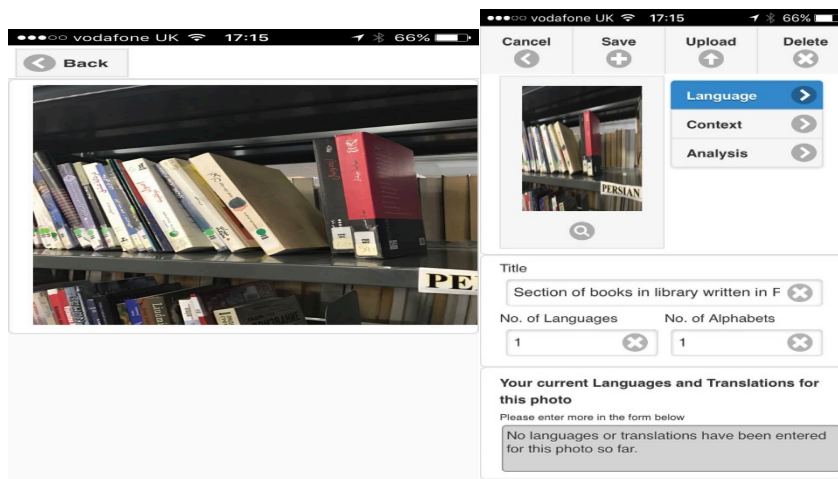
Polish:

Urdu:

Lithuanian:

Persian:

H) Poster explaining computer printing charges in Polish