Researching the mindsets of monolinguals: a ‘linguistic self’ of twenty-first century monolingual art students in Australia

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Abstract

This thesis empirically investigates attitudes towards language and language learning of a small group of monolingual art students in Adelaide, Australia. It explores the term “monolingual mindset” (Clyne 2005, 2007, 2008), questioning the dual representation of both an individual’s monolingual attitude towards language as well as the socio-political concept of monolingualism (Jostes 2010) inherent in this phrase, arguing the benefits of rigorous empirical research into actual individual mindsets of monolinguals.

To understand the language attitudes of individual monolinguals, the concept of ‘language’ is discussed as a taken-for-granted concept and frameworks within sociology, psychology, motivation theory and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) are utilized to develop methods in which to both interview and analyze authentic attitudes of self-identifying monolinguals towards language.

Chapter 1 introduces the research, reviewing the way monolingualism is commonly portrayed in the literature. I argue that monolingual research within the context of multilingualism or as a socio-cultural problem avoids understanding monolingualism as a field in its own right and additionally is unintentionally misrepresenting monolingual individuals.

In chapter 2, I adapt a theoretical framework using Second Language (L2) motivational research and psychological concepts of ‘self’ to analyze attitudes towards language, reflecting on the inevitability of personality traits and individual differences in the way attitudes may be expressed and conceived. I review indirect, collaborative, qualitative research methodologies, where innovative, active and visual approaches are used to collect and analyze data when identifying taken-for-granted knowledge. I explain the procedure, the use of semi-structured interviews and the thematic analytic approach I use to develop a linguistic self of the monolingual participants.

In chapter 3, I analyze the eight mindsets presented in this research. I look at the attitudes of resistance, non-resistance, and a non-committal eagerness to learn an L2. I question personality types and past experiences of language and education,
whilst interpreting the reactions and responses drawn from the research participants during the interview.

Chapter 4 describes the benefits of this research. It discusses the way deflective responses ‘mark’ the interviews of three of the participants, suggesting possible socio-cultural expectations that produce feelings that one should know about language. A monolingual sense of language is reviewed, discussing both a ‘socially-integrative’ understanding, as well as a ‘standardized-authoritative’ response to language, whilst noting that the participants’ replies relate to their experiences or ‘what they know’ about language.

The findings suggest that the monolingual participants in this research perceive language as a relatively simple, taken for granted concept without linking it to a sense of identity, cultural affiliation or belonging. Additionally, although the participants feel they would benefit by learning an L2, attitudes accepting diversity appear not to be dependent upon knowledge of a second language. In fact the participants in this research appear socially aware and supportive of multilingual speakers and multilingualism.
Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and, where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Sign ………………… Date …03/09/2017…
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1 Introduction and review of the literature

1.1 Introduction

This thesis presents a study of attitudes towards language of a small group of monolingual speakers in Adelaide, South Australia. It extends well-accepted methodologies to tackle inquiries into the taken-for-granted concept of ‘language’ from a monolingual’s point of view, developing a picture of what I define as the ‘linguistic self’ of eight self-identifying monolinguals.

This pilot investigation explores the various ways in which chosen participants position themselves as members of the dominant English speaking monolingual culture of Australia in the twenty-first century. The global twenty-first century presents linguists with an interesting era in Australia where multicultural discourses are fuelled with an expectation that monolinguals would prefer to position themselves as cosmopolitan, linguistically flexible, global citizens. However, with 76.8% of the population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011) recognized as monolingual, it appears that monolinguals do not share the view that learning a language should be prioritized.

To some degree this thesis breaks new ground by initiating a dialogue, inviting monolinguals speaking the dominant language of English to be participants in linguistic research. It addresses a sizeable gap in the literature where monolinguals and their personal attitudes towards language and the idea of learning a second language (L2) is absent. It thereby contributes to linguistic research by providing an empirical, ethnographically orientated, phenomenological investigation and detailed analysis of monolingual individuals who self-identify as members of the dominant English-speaking culture of Australians.
1.2 Research questions

The research questions addressed in this thesis are:

1. How can existing methodologies be extended to provide a usable research framework to identify monolingual attitudes towards language?

2. What attitudes do English speaking monolingual Australians have towards language and language learning?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the field of monolingual studies and reviews the literature. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical and methodological frameworks employed in this study. It adapts Dörnyei’s theory of L2 motivation using the psychological concept of self to explore the ‘linguistic self’ of eight self-identifying monolingual individuals. It then reviews indirect means to collect data when regarding language as a ‘taken-for-granted’ concept, justifying the development of a visual interpretive methodology to research monolinguals. In addition, the second chapter outlines the procedure involved in the collection and thematic analysis of the data. Chapter 3 presents a detailed analysis of the linguistic selves of the eight monolingual participants. Chapter 4 reflects upon the research frameworks, the findings of the research and concludes the thesis. It discusses how the monolingual participants perceive the concept of ‘language’, comparing these attitudes with the depiction of monolinguals and the term ‘monolingual mindset’ explored in the opening chapter. Lastly, further avenues for monolingual research are suggested.

1.4 The literature review

In reviewing the literature I discuss how monolingualism is being debated amongst sociolinguists, applied linguists, and researchers in second language learning in the twenty-first century. I demonstrate that the prevailing perspective taken by linguistic researchers is to define dominant monolingual cultures and their minds...
as conflicting with bilingual and multilingual\textsuperscript{1} experiences and research priorities. I question whether, whilst prioritizing exploration of areas that identify the problems monolingualism brings to linguistic research, researchers are failing to recognize that “monolingualism is deserving of study as a phenomenon in its own right” (Ellis 2006, 189)?

1.4.1 Monolingualism and the individual

The literature discusses monolingualism, the ‘monolingual mindset’ and monolinguals as interrelated concerns with little, if any, distinction between the ideological underpinnings of monolingualism and monolinguals as individuals with a particular lived experience of language. Therefore, to initiate empirical studies and develop frameworks in which to research monolinguals as individuals, I refer to a noteworthy distinction made by Jostes (2010), who brings to our attention the Council of Europe’s differentiation between plurilingualism and multilingualism. This distinction refers to plurilingualism as the language repertoire used by an individual, whilst multilingualism is clarified as the coexisting languages in a given society. Importantly, Jostes asks for a similar terminological differentiation to be made to separate “monolingualism as a societal phenomenon or a political principle from the monolingualism of the individual” (34). Whilst, to my knowledge, this request has not been answered, the step to separate monolinguals as individuals from the monolingual ideologies that tend to stigmatize them provides linguists with new opportunities to present evidence of matters regarding individual monolinguals. Monolinguals can thereby be humanistically or phenomenologically researched as twenty-first century citizens, rather than as individuals tethered by monolingual ideologies. They can be critiqued without vilification (see Ellis 2008, 321) because the researcher need not assume monolinguals are products or supporters of monolingual norms. By creating new research areas and reducing linguistic biases of the past, monolinguals as individuals have the opportunity to become current, relevant and perhaps even ‘popular’ (Jostes 2010) research participants.

\textsuperscript{1} In this thesis I use the term ‘multilingual’ to refer to both bilingual and multilingual concepts.
1.4.2 Monolingualism in the global twenty-first century

The conversation in the literature has not as yet addressed monolinguals as twenty-first century individuals with their own experience of language. Rather, the literature demonstrates a continuation of the late twentieth century trend contesting “The idea that monolingualism is a normal and desirable state of affairs, while multilingualism is divisive…” (Romaine 1995, 321-322). Monolinguals and monolingualism remain accountable for prejudiced anti-multilingual views, carrying “The monolingual urge which fails to recognize the linguistic rights of minorities” (Smolicz 1994, 235). Further, monolingualism is controversially and perhaps even provocatively, portrayed as an illness or pathology (see Ellis 2006, 185-186), a condition in need of a cure (see Met 2008).

Twenty-first century literature emphasizes the perceived negative impact of monolingual ideologies, values and attitudes. The discussion focuses on monolingualism as a practice at odds with multilingual communities and individuals who unlike themselves are “not tied to any form of ‘national’ space, and neither to a national, stable regime of language” (Blommaert 2010, 170). Dominant monolingual ideologies, stemming from an “official culture” (Kroskrity 2004, 497) are discussed as discriminatory, suppressing the language variation found in minority cultures as well as the linguistic rights of multilingual individuals (Blackledge 2000, Eades 2010, Skutnabb Kangas and Phillipson 1994).

Monolinguals are represented with a mindset unable to understand either the social, linguistic or cultural importance in maintaining immigrant and indigenous languages, or the personal cognitive, economic and socio-cultural advantages of bilingualism and multilingualism (Clyne 2005, 2008, 2007, Grosjean 2010). Monolinguals are depicted as socially and cognitively inferior, not only without the skills granted to multilinguals (see review in Ellis 2006, 180-185, and metalinguistic awareness in Clyne, Rossi Hunt, and Isaakidis 2004), but as naïve and ignorant speakers of a single language (Clyne 2005).

Whilst twenty-first century monolingualism in dominant anglicized nations is criticized for preserving historical norms that value stability and linguistic borders, multilingualism is conversely praised for providing a novel arena where global
citizens are no longer bound by time and place (Otsuji and Pennycook 2010, 2011, Makoni and Pennycook 2007, Heller 2007). The literature describes the benefits and delights enjoyed by individuals with multilingual abilities (Kramsch 2009, 2005, Besemer and Wierzbicka 2008, Burck 2005, Todeva and Cenoz 2009), providing a voice for those living between two or more linguistic realms whilst teasing monolinguals for their ignorance and inability to comprehend the multilingual’s advantageous “aerial existence” (Kramsch 1997, 365).

Further, monolinguals are seldom identified as individuals in need of research, rather they are individuals in a transitional state, the “potential language students to be courted: the as-yet-unconverted” (Ellis 2006, 189). They are depicted as ‘yet’ to learn a second language, thus ‘yet’ to require linguistic research. So, whilst researchers are struggling to encourage monolinguals to take advantage of the linguistic potential at their doorstep (Clyne 2005, 2008), monolinguals are not identified or researched as individuals in their own right.

The twenty-first century discourse is pro-linguistic diversity, with little acknowledgement from individuals who are, whether by choice or coincidence, monolingual. Jostes (2010) and Roberts (2012) however, are two researchers who openly defy this norm, presenting their own monolingual voices. Both begin their papers provocatively, Jostes ‘outing herself’ by admitting she is a chronically homesick monolingual, whilst Roberts questions her role as a legitimate author when the subject is language. She says, “I only speak English and this troubles me to the point where I wonder if I should remain silent in debates about language, such as this one” (110). The point is, that both Jostes and Roberts write positively about multilingualism and have a wealth of personal and profession linguistic experience. They intentionally position themselves as unknowledgeable, unjustified linguistic authorities in order to exemplify the plight of monolinguals. As Jostes sarcastically retorts “…like my fellow sufferers, I shall, of course, continue to fight and conceal my monolingualism in future” (28). As these authors exemplify in their papers, monolingualism in the twenty-first century is best kept out of sight.

The literature conveys the polarity of the debate. As Ndhlovu (2017) recently explains, “Multilingualism is currently conceived as being in an oppositional relationship with the equally problematic notion of monolingualism” (148). With
multilingualism as the linguistic ideal of the twenty-first century, individuals feeling the need to cover up their monolingual identity and a corresponding lack of empirical research into monolinguals as individuals, there appears an unintentional condemnation of monolinguals. The danger in this approach is disturbing, as Gramling (2016) points out:

While scholarship in most spheres of the social sciences and humanities has long been circumspect about moralizing on the positionalities of others, there has indeed been, in the young twenty-first century, an odd sense that it is open season for pronouncements about so-called ‘monolinguals’ and ‘their’ monolingualism (51).

1.4.3 The ‘monolingual mindset’ in Australia

Turning to the Australian context, we see a similar ambivalence in the literature, with little encouragement or support for researching monolingual individuals. In fact, Michael Clyne’s notion of the ‘monolingual mindset’ amplifies the dilemma by failing to distinguish between national ideologies and policy settings, and the lived cultural values of Anglo-Australian monolinguals. Although the ‘monolingual mindset’ was no doubt employed as a rhetorical device to characterize Australian attitudes, values and practices towards language during the decades Clyne dedicated to language education and language policy, the term itself is problematic. Whilst the expression, the ‘monolingual mindset’ originates from Gogolin’s (1994) *monolingual habitus*, the English translation (by Christ (1997)) replaces habitus with the term ‘mindset’. The difference is, that whilst Gogolin employs ‘habitus’ to describe a system of socialization, ‘mindset’ presents a personified notion, which is able to represent both individuals and social systems. In looking at Clyne’s 2008 definition of the ‘monolingual mindset’, monolingualism as a societal concern, and an individual’s monolingually prejudiced mindset become one compounded obstacle, termed the ‘monolingual mindset’.

I would define the ‘monolingual mindset’ as seeing everything in terms of a single language. This includes (a) regarding monolingualism as the norm and plurilingualism (whether bi- or multilingualism) as exceptional, deviant,

2 Whilst originating from Gogolin (1994) the phrase is influenced by Bourdieu’s (1991) social theory of habitus.
unnecessary, dangerous or undesirable, (b) not understanding the links between skills in one language and others, and (c) reflecting such thinking in social and educational planning (348).

Rather than distinguishing between a monolingual ideology and the mindset of monolinguals, Clyne (2008) has in fact popularized a term that assumes a permanent link between monolingual ideologies, and present and future monolinguals. With the lack of differentiation between monolingual ideologies and the attitudes of monolinguals towards language and multilingual speakers, the impression is of a socially and culturally entrenched, unchangeable mindset. This approach reveals assumptions as to a monolingual’s attitude to language, but as Ndhllovu (2017) states, “people are not naturally bigoted or intolerant of others’ lingual practices just because they have a ‘monolingual mindset’” (149-150).

The ambiguities in Clyne’s definition convey the idea that monolinguals are individuals perpetuating monolingual ideologies of the past. Clyne (2005) speaks of public discourses and individuals in powerful positions who illustrate such a mindset. He produces a text from a 1978 letter from the Australian Linguistic Society to the Prime Minister to illustrate “a component of this mindset” (21). He writes:

It appears to be widely believed in Australia that foreign languages are essentially unlearnable to normal people, and that Australians have a special innate anti-talent for learning them. Multilingualism is too hard for us, it is really for ‘the others’ (2005, 21).

In continuing, Clyne refers to the relevance of this letter in 2005. He says:

This attitude, which is very much alive in today’s Australia, needs to be overcome in order for Australia to be a self-confident innovative force in the world. Second language acquisition research has shown that anyone can acquire a second language if they are sufficiently motivated, receive the input to be able to develop their competence and have the opportunity to practice (2005, 22).

Clyne’s intention is to overcome the ‘monolingual mindset’. However, his aim is not to actively investigate the actual mindsets of monolingual individuals, but to
encourage monolinguals to engage with or better, to learn a second language. He explains:

It is through any exposure to a second language that the attitudinal and cognitive obstacles with which we are constantly confronted in this book begin to be overcome (2005, 53 authors italics).

Thus, the onus appears to be on monolinguals to change their mindset in order to stop impeding the development of multilingualism, whilst researchers continue to restrict themselves by focusing their investigations solely on the problems of monolingualism (see section 1.4.4 below).

Clyne’s depiction of the ‘monolingual mindset’ appears inflexible and uncompromising, however it is worth appreciating that it was indisputably Clyne’s experience at the level of language policy which provoked Clyne’s argument. Nonetheless, rhetoric such as, “Australia is caught in the grip of the monolingual mindset which promises to make it one of the last bastions of complacent xenophobia” (2007, 03.6) and “It is important for linguists to address as many ‘ordinary people’ as possible so that they are not infected by the monolingual mindset” (2007, 03.11) is bound to influence linguists and educators alike. Researchers are left characterizing the ‘monolingual mindset’ as a naïve, disruptive mindset, full of “monolingual misconceptions” (Clyne 2007, 03.9) and erroneous “fallacious clichés” (Clyne 2008, 253), damaging to minority cultures and the maintenance of their languages, corrupting the development of Australia as a multicultural country, and obstructive to the plurilingual mindset of those with language ability and awareness.

1.4.4 Researching monolingualism and monolinguals in the twenty-first century

Since Ellis’s noteworthy review of monolingualism in 2006, there have been a handful of publications engaged in monolingualism and the ‘monolingual mindset’, however researchers have not as yet challenged the multilingual context in which they view monolingualism and are yet to create a framework in which to research monolinguals as individuals.
In 2008 for example, Ellis answers Romaine’s (1995) call for a publication to be named *Monolingualism* by entitling a special journal issue of *Sociolinguistic Studies* as such. The issue is rich with inquiries regarding the problems of monolingual ideologies in multilingual contexts, but the contributions overlook the alternative area of the individual monolingual’s experience of, and attitudes towards, language. Rather than identify and research individual monolinguals, Angermeyer (2008) for example, looks at the practice of presenting monolingualism as the norm in a New York multilingual courtroom, forcing bilingual court users to only use one language, thus suppressing communication skills in other languages. Liddicoat and Crichton (2008) criticize a pervasive English language monolingualism as the underlying ideology when constructing international education in Australia. They refer to a “monolingual, monocultural form of international education” (379) where diversity is paradoxically viewed from the perspective of the ‘monolingual mindset’. Likewise, Park (2008) identifies monolingual ideologies which ‘erase’ English from the sociolinguistic terrain so as to maintain South Korea as a monolingual society. Petrucci (2008) depicts a ‘monolingual lens’ in recent American film where English interpretations are not representative of the Spanish dialogues they display. Once again, it is the ‘monolingual mindset’, which is questioned in regard to the peripheral role of languages other than English in film.

Planchenault (2008) is also interested in the way foreign languages are depicted for predominantly monolingual audiences. She looks at representations, or ‘tokens’ of bilingualism found in movies as stereotypes that do “not endanger the monolithic and monolingual popular vision of British society” (2008, 438). Rothman (2008) on the other hand, asks why monolingualism prevails as the norm or ‘unmarked case’ (Ellis 2006) in western countries and linguistic research. Although his theoretical approach questions, “why do we compare multilinguals to monolinguals” (448) he answers by explaining the differences may not be significant as both states involve variables in the language used. He concludes with a statement, which indeed reflects the ethos of this volume. He writes:

---

3 The journal *Sociolinguistic Studies* was previously known as *Estudios de Sociolingüística.*
Although this volume is dedicated to monolingualism, it is still inherently part of the general program for multilingualism highlighted throughout, inasmuch as critical analyses and the problematising of the concepts that underlie monolingualism are much needed first steps towards understanding bi/multilingualism” (454).

Reflecting on this monolingual edition’s priority on presenting examples where monolingualism negatively *pervas*es multilingualism, one might query why the editorial team “is all multilingual” (Ellis 2008, 322) and why there is no contribution aimed at providing a critical informed, scholarly, monolingual voice. Even though Ellis acknowledges the importance of recognizing the linguistic experience of the researcher, in this case the multilingual experience of the researcher has not been critically examined.

An even more recent example of a multilingual frame of reference in monolingual research can be seen in the edited volume, *Challenging the Monolingual Mindset* (Hajek and Slaughter 2015). In this volume neither the term ‘monolingual mindset’ nor Clyne’s portrayal of monolinguals is critiqued. As in Ellis’s special edition, the studies in this volume take place within multilingual contexts. In fact, the only reference to monolinguals as researchable individuals appears in chapter six where L1 speakers of Chinese, German and Spanish are researched as members of a minority group of migrants (aged between 60-93 years) living in Australia (see Cordella and Huang 2015). Other than this brief example, which does not provide the monolingual voice of those of the English speaking dominant culture in Australia, I am unable to find examples of empirical data on monolinguals or their mindset in this volume.

From these monolingual contributions, it appears linguists are comfortable researching monolingualism in multilingual contexts, but do not feel the need to research monolinguals outside of these confines. In effect, this oversight is contributing to “[m]onolingualism’s persistent *non-place* in humanities and social science research methodology” (Gramling 2016, ix, my italics), condemning monolingual individuals to the peripheries of twenty-first century linguistic research. Without acknowledging the gap in the literature, the likelihood is that this ‘multilingual mindset’ will continue to be reflected in future research biases,
sustaining the impression that research in the global twenty-first century should focus on the linguistic ideal presented by multilingual speakers.
2  Adapting a theoretical and methodological framework in which to research mindsets of monolinguals in twenty-first century Australia

This thesis presents a study of English-speaking monolinguals as members of the dominant Australian culture. The inquiry is focused on an analysis of the mindsets of individual monolinguals, established through discussions with individuals who self identify as speakers of a single language. In describing the mindset of the monolinguals I refer to ‘mindset’ as described by the Oxford English dictionary. It states a mindset is:

An established set of attitudes, esp. regarded as typical of a particular group’s social or cultural values; the outlook, philosophy, or values of a person; (now also more generally) frame of mind, attitude, disposition (OED Online 2016).

Therefore, to ascertain the mindsets of monolinguals, this thesis will analyze the attitudes monolinguals present towards language and language learning.

The lack of empirical investigations into attitudes towards language and language learning of dominant English speaking monolinguals, however, means I am without established methodological and theoretical frameworks in which to research monolinguals. I am therefore reliant upon adapting accepted and well-established frameworks used within linguistic, sociological and psychological fields to illustrate the mindsets of monolinguals.

2.1  Theoretical framework

To develop a theoretical framework in which to analyze attitudes towards language and language learning of monolinguals, I look at investigations of the self in both SLA motivation theory and psychology.
2.1.1 Attitudes, L2 motivational theory and psychological theories of self

In L2 motivational research, attitude to language is considered a key factor when examining motivation to learn an L2. Gardner and Lambert (1972, 1959) for example, develop theories with integrative and instrumental outlooks, postulating that an individual’s attitude to language is reflected in the language-learning outcome. They suggest an attitude motivated by an integrative outlook, where the L2 learner shows “a willingness or a desire to be like some representative members of the ‘other’ language community, and to become associated, at least vicariously, with that other community” serves the L2 learner better in the long term than the instrumental outlook reflecting “the desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language” (14). Attitudes are thereby discerned by the relationship the L2 learner/user has to the active experience of learning and using a second language.

Distinguishing an attitude to language is however, more complex when the subjects of inquiry are not L2 learners, have no target language community, and are not speakers identifying and comparing different languages in their linguistic repertoire. In researching the attitude of monolinguals I therefore adapt Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei 2009, 2014, Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009), breaking from Gardner and Lambert’s assumption that L2 learners are motivated to learn an L2 based upon the wish to integrate into a target community. In fact, in re-examining the concept of integrativeness, Dörnyei reflects upon the process of identification going on within the individual, rather than the idea of a target community. As Dörnyei and Csizér (2002, 453) explain:

> We suspect that the motivation dimension captured by the term [integrativeness] is not so much related to any actual, or metaphorical, integration into an L2 community as to some more basic identification process within the individual’s self concept (author’s italics).

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4 See also notions of ‘integrativeness’ when the target language is English(s) (Coetzee-Van Rooy 2006, Saito and Hatoss 2011, Lamb 2004)
To understand motivation and the process of identity making, Dörnyei turns to the psychological work of Markus and Nurius (1986) and Higgins (1987)\(^5\), where future self concepts are defined as *possible* selves or future self-states reliant upon past experiences, social comparisons and individual differences. In Markus and Nurius’s approach individuals are understood to be actively involved in making meaning and differentiating between “what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming” (1986, 954). Likewise, Higgins (1987) describes the discomfort involved when an individual is aware of a discrepancy between an actual self-state and an ‘ideal’ or ‘ought’ self, explaining that the desired self acts as a self guide, motivating individuals towards easing the sense of discrepancy.

Dörnyei’s theory of motivation recognises the beneficial implications in Markus and Nurius’s identification of a “conceptual link between cognition and motivation”(1986, 954). In his theory he explores the use of self guides and possible future selves to link the present self to a future desired self cognitively, understanding motivation in L2 to be the incentive towards a possible ideal future L2 self. Dörnyei (2009) modifies the terms ‘ideal self’ and ‘ought self’ (Higgins 1987) to the concepts of ‘ideal L2 self’, ‘ought-to L2 self’, adding ‘L2 learning experience’ to the L2 motivational self system. These concepts of self are used to define and visualize possible self-states, motivating his language learners towards their ideal self. Importantly, Dörnyei believes it is through the *process* of imagining a variety of possible selves in particular situations that decisions, motivations and language learning goals can be personally conceived and behavior regulated (2009).

### 2.1.2 Extending Dörnyei’s theory of L2 motivation: imagining possible future L2 selves

While Dörnyei presents an approach, which seeks to motivate L2 learners with visualizations of an ‘ideal L2 self’ and an ‘ought to L2 self’ as possible future L2

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\(^5\) Higgin’s work is acknowledged by Markus and Nurius to precede their 1986 publication (see Dörnyei (2009, 13)).
selves, this study explores an imagined or expected L2 self to develop insights and narratives into the participant’s attitude towards language and language learning. Thus, narratives where monolingual individuals discuss and evaluate their personal linguistic experiences of past, present (as experienced during the interview), and expected or imagined hopes, wishes, fears and fantasies of a future L2 self, gives this research a usable theoretical framework. Through explorations of the self and possible future selves, a monolingual’s attitude towards language and language learning can therefore be assessed and analyzed.

In this research process, I employ the term ‘linguistic self’ to denote a self concept, referring to an individual’s personal sense of language, influenced by experiences living within a particular socio cultural and historical context. Through the interview process, I encourage monolingual individuals to develop their sense of ‘linguistic self’ by creating and sharing narratives or stories about language experiences with the researcher. As Ryan and Irie explain, the narrative or “story of the self” is valuable because it has the possibility to generate “images of ourselves beyond our actual experience or environment” (2014, 109).

A monolingual’s account of her/his experience with language and expectations towards a possible future L2 learner self, enables the researcher to develop an informed understanding of monolingual attitudes to language and language learning. As Markus and Nurius explain, exploring the self acts as “interpretive frameworks” (1986, 955), making sense of past experiences whilst reflecting upon possible future selves. In fact, by recounting and discussing past and possible future experiences with the researcher, monolinguals not only exhibit attitudes towards language, but also engage in a process, which further expands and integrates their understanding of themselves and the topic of language.

2.1.2.1 Monolingual selves

As I am not working with L2 learners, but monolinguals I use the concepts of, ‘ideal self’ and ‘ought to self’ (originally from Higgins (1987) Self Discrepancy theory) as well as Dörnyei’s modifications of these terms, the ‘ideal L2 self’ and ‘ought-to L2 self’ to understand the monolinguals’ perceptions of themselves when discussing language. I also refer to the concepts of the ‘ideal monolingual self’, the ‘ideal
monolingual research participant self”, the ‘L2 user onlooker self’ and the ‘unable L2 user self’. Further, as monolingual participants do not have determinable language learning experience to discuss, I replace Dörnyei’s ‘L2 learning experience’ with a hypothetical future concept of ‘as-yet-to commit L2 learner self’, and ‘expected L2 learner self’ to research a monolingual’s imagined or expected beliefs of her/himself as an L2 speaker (see section 2.3.3 for a list of the terms used).

2.1.2.2 Personality traits and self-efficacy in motivational research

In applying a motivational self-system as the theoretical framework in which to analyze the monolingual participants, I also mention research which looks at the way personal differences may influence an individual's motivation towards learning an L2. When researching attitudes towards language and language learning in L2 learners, Dewaele and colleagues for example, ask SLA researchers to broaden their understanding of research participants by considering the influence of emotional and psychological obstacles (Dewaele 2005, Dewaele and Furnham 2000). Similarly, when researching the responses of the as-yet-to commit L2 learner, differing psychological and emotional personality traits rather than actual attitudes to language may impact upon the participant’s perceived beliefs and self-confidence to discuss language. Therefore, even if monolingual participants have linguistic knowledge to share, without a personal belief regarding the legitimacy of their linguistic knowledge, the participants may avoid presenting their opinion, affecting the responses they give towards the inquiry, the interview and the researcher in general.

Social cognitive theories of perceived self efficacy (Bandura 1994, Mills 2014, Mills, Pajares, and Herron 2007) look at the perception or judgment individuals make of their capabilities, understanding that it is possible to approach a task as either a challenge or a threat, dependent upon the participant’s sense of efficacy. Bandura (1994) explains that those who feel they lack ability have a lower sense of self-efficacy and would be less motivated to accept a challenge and begin a new

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6 See also more recent research investigating attitudes towards code switching (Dewaele and Li 2014) and attitudes towards foreign accents (Dewaele and McClosky 2014).
task. On the other hand, those with a high sense of self-efficacy apply themselves to challenges with vigor, more interested in mastering the skill than fear of failure. Therefore, those strongly efficacious would understand failure in a set task as a lack of effort or knowledge, whilst a person doubting their abilities would focus on personal deficiencies. From these descriptions it follows that an individual’s sense of efficacy can also be interpreted through the interviews. In fact, when questioning hypothetical possibilities of future possible selves, it is quite possible that a participant’s sense of efficacy will be visibly established and deeply bound to the attitudes expressed. Personality traits or a perceived belief in the capacity of one’s self are therefore important elements to consider when in the process of assessing attitudes to language.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Introduction

An underpinning assumption of the data collection method for this research aligns with a firmly entrenched understanding in SLA pedagogical literature which asks language teachers to view L2 students in their classroom as individuals with linguistic knowledge even before learning an L2 (Cook 2002, Leung, Harris, and Rampton 1997, Kramsch 2009). Likewise, notwithstanding the monolingual participants’ lack of L2 learning, I assume monolinguals are individuals able to bring their own linguistic experience and knowledge into the interview situation. Subsequently, it is through narratives drawn from semi-structured interviews engaging with monolinguals discussing linguistic experiences that a monolingual’s attitude to language can be researched.

However, in searching for a qualitative method to analyze narratives of monolingual English speaking Australians, two points need consideration. Firstly, when developing a usable qualitative research methodology for monolingual attitudes, it is worthwhile recognizing that a common research practice used to explore bilingual and multilingual attitudes towards language(s) is to adopt methods of comparison between languages in the participant’s personal language repertoire. A participant’s appreciation, use and attitude towards language(s), and associated insights regarding
culture and identity therefore become dependent upon negotiating and comparing experiences of difference (see for example, Ndhlovu 2010, Miller 2010, Hatoss and Sheely 2009, Willoughby 2009, Busch 2012). In designing a qualitative research methodology to explore the attitudes monolinguals have towards language, monolingual participants are without languages to compare (although some would conjecture the presence of “real variation” (Rothman 2008, 453) within a single language), and may be unable to answer questions regarding their experience and thoughts towards language. In fact, without the ability to contrast linguistic experiences, it is possible that monolinguals take the daily practice of speaking English, as well as the notion of ‘language’, for granted, and could easily find questions directly related to language meaningless or even confronting.

Secondly, linguistic research in the twenty-first century commonly looks at minority groups and those struggling against the dominant culture, whilst my research participants are members of the dominant culture. It should be expected that monolingual Australians are aware of their majority status and the official rhetoric, supporting multiculturalism, multilingualism and cultural diversity in Australia. The research participants may therefore respond to interview questions showing a need to defend their position as monolinguals. Conversely, the monolingual participants may feel the need to take a politically correct stance, praising language and multilingualism, regardless of their actual attitude to language and L2 learning. For this reason, direct questions relating to language, language learning and remaining a single language speaker may not produce the insights and reflections necessary to give a clear understanding of attitudes to language as required in this research.

Consequently, in creating a methodological framework to research a monolingual’s experience and attitude towards language, it is necessary to review methodologies that use indirect, interpretive methods. These methods are less dependent upon the actual explicit knowledge communicated by the participant, but benefit from the understanding that taken-for-granted knowledge, assumptions and beliefs, although implicit, are essential elements to consider when constructing a representational linguistic portrait of the research participant. Indirect methods that accept implicit responses will also benefit this research by acknowledging that attitude to language is not only displayed by narratives where participant discuss language and language
learning, but is also reflected in the participants’ ethos towards the topic of ‘language’, how they explain what a language is, their reaction towards the researcher, their reflections concerning L2 users, the research questions, as well as their personal interpretation of the questions asked.

The aim of this methodological exploration is therefore, to consider research methods that use alternative innovative means to access the research participant’s taken-for-granted notions and assumptions. I will therefore look at novel ethnographic methods to source data as well as interpretations of narrative in order to construct a useful methodological approach to explore a monolingual’s attitude to language or, ‘linguistic self’.

2.2.2 Indirect approaches to research knowledge considered ‘taken-for-granted’

Since the 1990s there have been an increasing number of studies within the social sciences profiting from novel, visual, active and reflective ethnographical research methods. Importantly, these studies are now recognized as viable and relevant methods to research and interpret findings after decades of rebuke and accusations that the methods were subjective and without scientific objectivity and rigor (Pink 2013, Mead 2003 [1974]). In assessing indirect research approaches to gain insights into a monolinguals taken-for-granted knowledge of language, I therefore review a series of visual and active methodologies. These examples of visual representations of the participant’s identity or self examine both researcher and participant subjectivity as well as the benefits of an interactive collaboration between researcher and participant.

New, innovative methods of indirect research also demonstrate that researchers are seeking to move beyond traditional research methods. Mercer (2014) for example, expresses her need to find a new methodological approach, explaining that after many years interviewing participants with in depth interviews, there are more complex aspects of the self that she is unable to access purely via an interview. She therefore uses visual, interpretive means of research to discover the multifaceted concept of self in regard to learners of a foreign language. Mercer does this by providing the research participants with an opportunity to use collages, images and
multimedia, describing a visual, creative approach “…to elicit more deeply held understandings of the self which might even lie on the periphery of the learner’s consciousness” (57).

Busch (2012) also describes the need for a multimodal approach, utilizing a ‘language portrait’ in her exploration of Gumperz’s interpretation of linguistic repertoire and the challenges posed by super diversity (Vertovec 2007) in the twenty-first century. She emphasizes the importance of both a subjective and biographical approach to develop narratives. Busch gives the participants a silhouette of a body on a piece of paper, asking them to use multicoloured pens to map out their linguistic repertoire. The research participants are asked to think about the definitions they wish to illustrate when considering “the codes, languages, the means of expression and communication that play a role in their lives” (511). Importantly, participants are placed in charge of their visual representations and given the power and authority to express the position each language plays in their life. The language portrait is then used as a reference or focal point, whilst the researcher elicits personal reflective explanations of the participant’s thoughts as they explore their identity and attitude to language during and after the visual practice.

Likewise, Gauntlett (2007) studies the building of metaphors as a symbolic form of identity. He looks at “activity-based ethnography” or “ethnographic action research” (96) where participants are instructed to make objects and then reflect upon them. As the objects take time to create, participants are not faced with questions needing immediate answers but benefit from problem solving thought processes that generate as the object is created. These objects then become the central focus in an exploration into personal identity, a study with meaning for both participant and researcher

Reason (2010) explores what people think, or “the articulation of experience” (391) through visual practices. He describes a creative, reflective methodology of research where participants are invited to develop drawings or ‘artifacts’, which serve to encourage dialogues with the researcher. He explains that in creative, arts based methodologies “research participants are involved in a non-threatening and mediating activity through which their feelings and attitudes might be more
revealingly communicated” (396). Reason thereby legitimizes his post-dance drawing workshops as ways to create explicit opinions from workshop participants, explaining that methodologies that rely on purely language-based explanations of experiences can be limiting to some individuals.

2.2.3 Reflexive and active, collaborative practices

Visual and active reflective practices engage both the researcher and the participant collaboratively. In fact, recent ethnographical practices appear to be both encouraging the researcher to account for her role as creator, participant and observer of the inquiry, as well as granting the participant more responsibility in the outcome of the research. Schembri and Boyle (2013) and Pink (2013, 112-114) for example, describe two studies that look at the collaborative processes involved as researcher and participant negotiate the outcome of experiential meaning. In their research, Schembri and Boyle use visual ethnography to achieve rigorous interpretations of a socially constructed reality, incorporating storytelling with the participant’s experience of consumer culture. Similarly, Pink deploys collaborative video ethnography to examine the relationship between housework, cultural and personal identity, inviting research participants to act out (or embody) their housework experiences as well as reflect, discuss and produce meaning of their practices with the researchers. These studies explain the enhanced validity of ethnographic data obtained when the participant is an active agent leading the research and handling the visual expression (even to the extent that the researcher may be absent from the recording of the event, (see Schembri and Boyle 2013)). Importantly, both of these studies provide a representation of the participant’s subjective reality, rather than solely relying on the researcher’s memory, experience and interpretation of the phenomenon.

2.2.4 Accepting researcher subjectivity

Visual and reflexive, interpretive methodologies are also dependent upon an acceptance of subjectivity as the researcher engages with her assumptions and biases whilst exploring creative outcomes with the research participant. As in ethnographical research, the topic of subjective research processes has long been a significant issue for researchers. Geertz (1973, 15) for example questions where
exactly objectivity lies when accounting for interpretations of experiences. In fact he considers second or third hand interpretations of accounts as subjective fictions or thought experiments rather than objectively ‘true’ accounts. He explains, “[c]ultural analysis is…guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses…” (20). Hymes (1996) also acknowledges the inevitability of subjectivity in research. In fact, he relies on the researcher to be involved in the continual process of learning, stating that “without the general human capacity to learn culture, the inquiry would be impossible” (13). Both Geertz and Hymes emphasize the ‘human’ in the researcher, preferring to embrace difference amongst researchers positively, accepting that contrasting subjective opinions are positive as they have the potential to access different forms of cultural knowledge. Likewise, Pink (2013), Luttrell (2005) and Quinn (2005) urge the acceptance of a researcher’s subjectivity. Pink not only accepts the inevitability of subjective taints in visual anthropology, but also encourages the different versions of experience subjectively negotiated by ethnographers. Like Hymes and Geertz, Pink commends visual ethnography as a valuable interpretive method of research across interdisciplinary fields.

Subjectivity should not be denied and hidden, but rather it should be reflexively and self-critically cultivated and mobilized, reinforcing the ability to discover interesting research issues (Alvesson and Kärreman 2011, 58).

2.2.4.1 Impartiality and accountability

Researchers find advantages in using subjective methods even though a personalized approach is often criticized for its lack of impartiality. Hymes (1996) however, asks why an ethnographer who has successfully attained the necessary trust and confidence of the people being researched, is even criticized as not impartial? He believes, “scientific objectivity resides, not in the individual scientist, but in the community of scientists” (13).

A visual, interpretive method can be an effective way to interview monolinguals regarding the taken-for-granted notion of language. It will however, be influenced by the researcher’s personal insights and subjectivity. Therefore, I integrate the perspective Luttrell (2005) brings to research when discussing the role of the researcher. Following Luttrell, I understand the researcher to be an individual with a
particular temperament and personality, an individual who plays the role of active collaborator or social artist, with the understanding that research benefits from the creative and innovative practice developed through the experiences and personality of the researcher. Luttrell openly accepts the subjective nature of an “ethnographic encounter” (243) and explains that accountability is given through the creation of a reflective transparency which details personal experiences and decision making during the research process. As Luttrell puts it, “[a]ccounting for the decisions one makes is the nitty-gritty of researcher reflexivity…” (244).

2.2.4.2 The researcher’s sense of self

As acknowledged by Norton and Toohey (2011) in their review of poststructuralist approaches, researchers are also individuals continually creating a sense of self, both during the research process and outcome. With two individuals taking part in the collaborative interviews, it is apparent that two individuals are involved in a process of constructing meaning whilst forging a personal narrative. The researcher is an integral part of the process, invested in her work, and consequently actively redefining her narrative of self whilst in the process of presenting dialogues, interpreting discourse and contributing to research.

In this study of monolinguals, I take the approach that a research practice draws benefits by accepting a subjective researcher as ethical. As Goffman’s (1959, 2) insights reveal, an individual uses “verbal symbols or their substitutes” to “give” (through the utterance) an expression of who s/he is, and simultaneously “gives off” an expression (an interactional meaning between interlocutors; author’s italics). Therefore, whilst it is consistently acknowledged that participants communicate using both ‘given’ and ‘given off’ meanings, it is correspondingly important to admit that the researcher is also an individual ‘giving’ and ‘giving off’ messages. Johnston (2007, 175) aptly explains, “roles and relationships are collaboratively created by all participants in an interaction” (underlined by author). Like the research participants, the researcher should be seen as a complex individual endowed with a socio cultural history, shaping and being shaped by interactions. The researcher is situated through experience, extracting a “researcher’s lens” (Ramanathan 2004, 15) to position and reposition both an epistemological outlook and her self. Identity is bound to the research as knowledge accumulates and is
actively accepted or disregarded by the researcher as evidence of her position. Therefore, an interview process should be considered interdependent, with both the participant and the researcher contributing to the data and research outcomes.

2.2.4.3 The researcher as competent model

Whilst a personal, reflexive approach provides benefits when researching language as a taken-for-granted concept, sharing information in regard to my status and experiences can also affect the interview. Explanations of my experiences as a visual artist, living in diverse cultures and learning the languages of these countries encourages the art students to participate as I am identified as someone with an interesting background, a person they can relate to and talk with about themselves and their art practice. This fed into the research positively as I was able to develop strong insights into the participant’s experiences and attitude to language, and review their expectations in regard to learning an L2. However, the students may have perceived me as both a researcher and a ‘competent model’, purposely sharing knowledge, skills and strategies with the participants in order to encourage a positive experience of language. As Bandura (1994, 3) explains, “[p]eople seek proficient models who possess the competencies to which they aspire”. Therefore by modeling successful experiences in the visual arts and positive language learning outcomes whilst living in different cultures in Europe and Japan, derogatory remarks from the students regarding language could be perceived as unlikely.

So, whilst a shared socio-cultural understanding that believes it is advantageous to explore the world and learn to speak languages whilst assimilating into unknown cultures appears to benefit this research, it may influence the outcomes.

2.2.5 Searching for significance in narratives of experience

Active ethnographic methods can provide effective means to encourage narratives, where the taken-for-granted concept of language is worked with and discussed within known realms of experience and the participant’s personal understanding of their sense of self. In this way, the narrative becomes, as Bruner (2010) suggests, the multifunctional vehicle shaping our experiences of the past as well as our expectations of the future. It is also, as Hill (2005, 196) explains, “a conveniently
accessible site of cultural production”, understood as a resource to manage and revise the social and cultural construction of identity (Linde 1993).

Within cultural studies, narratives or stories are well recognized to contain implicit forms of meaning, valuable in the understanding of social and cultural settings. As Bruner (2010) explains, narrative is built upon established understandings and accepted narratives of the past that have become ‘ordinary’. Therefore “our told stories…are about particular deviations from the ordinary” (48).

To interpret implicit forms of meaning in the narrative, I consider research in cultural studies, which seeks to identify the ordinary or taken-for-granted in the narrative. Hill (2005) explains it is the ethnographer’s task to determine what is understood as ordinary, mundane or taken-for-granted by the interlocutor. She suggests that it is the gaps or silences made by the stories not narrated, left out or unreported that will most often have significance. She explains that, even though these gaps may at first appear as apparent absences of cohesion, they signal knowledge that is simply assumed and therefore unuttered. Therefore, in researching the taken-for-granted concept of language, it is necessary to search the text for gaps, examples of lack of coherence, or, as Strauss (2005) explains, ‘marks’ within the narrative. These ‘marks’ provide the researcher with valuable cues or ‘mysteries’ (Alvesson and Kärreman 2011) of significance, worthy of further investigation.

It is through the analysis of the narrative or personal story that the researcher extracts significant experiences that have impacted upon the individual’s sense of self, as well as identifying social conventions and cultural assumptions towards a personal understanding of language. By developing a narrative of experience collaboratively with the researcher, the participant’s socio-cultural norms and expectations that reflect their beliefs and sense of self can be accessed both explicitly and implicitly. It is thereby through the interaction with the researcher and the analysis of the narrative and interview performance that attitudes to language and language learning can be interpreted.
2.2.6 Implications for this study

Monolinguals may not have noteworthy personal experiences or engagement in questions or events regarding language, nor a linguistic relationship to culture and identity paralleling a bilingual or multilingual speaker. Therefore monolinguals may find it difficult to communicate beliefs about language in an explicit fashion. An indirect, interpretive methodology is thereby useful to access taken-for-granted notions of language and provide narratives of thought and experience where both explicit and implicit responses and potentially influencing socio-cultural ideologies can be acknowledged.

The visual, active and collaborative methods of ethnographic research discussed above offer an indirect, phenomenological approach to discern the monolingual participant’s attitudes and beliefs concerning language. Importantly, this approach acknowledges the monolingual participant as an active and able interpreter of personal experience in a non-judgmental, non-inhibitive fashion.

2.2.6.1 A visual interpretive approach

Considering my past 25 years experience as a practising visual artist, I devise a visual, interpretive methodology where art students (who self identify as single language speakers) engage in two semi-structured interviews, generating narratives as they discuss their experiences with language, culture and identity together with the personal experiences that have consciously suggested or unconsciously imposed the direction of their art practice. The first interview focuses on the art student’s familiar space where the individual’s experiences and sense of self develops during a year-long creative process. It initiates the discussion of language and establishes the importance of using experience to understand the past, present and possible future self. The second interview takes a more hypothetical approach, asking the participants to consider their personal meaning of language, firstly by understanding the question and then by developing their opinion, or answer whilst reflecting on their past experiences in discussion with the researcher.

This methodology does not present an interpretive inquiry into the artwork itself, but rather an interpretation of the implicit and explicit responses drawn from the participants as they explore the turns and direction their artwork has taken, and with
it, the connection of their art practice to noteworthy experiences in their lives. As Taylor (2008, 10) identifies, the thinking process in creating a drawing or working towards an art project is full of decisions that need to be identified, dealt with and answered. She says:

… and through the act of drawing we are not only left a trace of the physical act but the trace of the thinking process, as images or marks are made manifest, and evidently expose decisions, indecisions and indiscretions of this ‘thinking out loud’.

It is with internal and external dialogues and the resulting acceptance and rejection of ideas that we demonstrate who we are, our cultural background, as well as the beliefs and norms that dominate our worldview. In this way the thought process of the artist is a useful doorway to inquire into cultural understandings and personal assessments. As Gauntlett (2007, 30) explains, “artistic works are a thinking through and reflection of social and psychological experience”. During the interview, narratives are accessed and developed as a communicative thinking space is established between the participant and the researcher, disclosing the participant’s privately lived experiences, social expectations and public institutionalized discourses.

2.3 Procedure

This study was conducted from May to August 2014 at a reputable Adelaide art school. The independent art school provides intensive tertiary level education in the visual arts offering both a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours) and an Associate Degree of Visual Art. The art school is accredited as a Higher Education Provider with a student loan scheme and scholarships available to cover tuition costs, granting access to students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. It is a small school with only 22 students graduating in 2013 and 19 students graduating in 2014. The school is situated in the south-eastern suburbs of Adelaide, a comfortable middle class location with close proximity to the city. There are no prerequisites for enrolment.
After approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee (University of Adelaide), I contacted the art school to discuss my research proposal. Two instructors at the school were interested and we agreed to have a meeting to discuss my research more thoroughly. Although I had at first hoped to ask the students to create a work in response to the term ‘language’, in negotiation with the school’s educational prerequisites it became evident that it would be more time efficient and practical for the students if I were to discuss the work the students were presently in the process of creating. In fact, in considering that the students were engaged in a year-long project, it became apparent that even without my instigation of a particular visual project, this lengthy study would provide a place to discuss language and develop narratives describing the students’ experiences with language.

I was invited to attend an artist talk where I was introduced to the second and third year Bachelor of Visual Art students participating in the course work unit, Professional Studies. I briefly described my research project, discussing my past multilingual and cultural experiences as a visual artist living and working in Europe and Japan for 15 years. The students were fascinated by the research I proposed and were pleased to participate, returning most of the short questionnaire and consent forms that were handed out. With three of the participants difficult to contact, I was left with a group of twelve students, who committed themselves to the two interviews.

Whilst explaining my research, I spoke about monolingualism and monolinguals as those who speak one language. My intention was not to produce a viewpoint that discriminated against monolinguals as individuals who only speak one language, but to explain my research with a neutral approach. The position I took was to invite the art students, as speakers of one language, to be involved in my ‘unusual’ but ‘worthwhile’ research, which was aimed at understanding the way Australian single language speakers in the twenty-first century think about language. Additionally, I talked about experience and the student’s art practice and how they would benefit by being involved in this research because of my personal experience with visual art.

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as well as language. The students’ teachers also encouraged the students to take advantage of this opportunity.

Of the twelve students, one participant identified herself as bilingual whilst eleven self-identified as single language speakers, with another participant writing “1” and “fragments of others” in the initial Participation questions and contact details. Although my research is concerned with self-identifying monolinguals, I assigned pseudonyms and transcribed both interviews from all twelve participants to learn of the extent of the participants’ experience with a second language and any possible contrasts in attitudes between the participants. In analyzing the data however, it became apparent that four students had quite extensive experience of another language. Natalie was a speaker of both French and English, Michelle had been raised speaking Greek, Karen had learnt Finnish and Estonian from her grandmother from an early age, and Leah had been a student of French throughout her school years and had trips to France. Therefore for this research, these four participants were assessed as ‘less’ monolingual and excluded from further analysis.

The remaining three male and five female students were aged between 21-53 years of age. Donna, Jody, George, Joe and Peta were interviewed in their studios surrounded by their work. Olivia, Peta and Sam were second year students without their own studio, so were interviewed in the common area. Two interviews were conducted with each student two months apart. The first interview created a relationship and commenced a dialogue with the art students. I asked the participants if personal experiences had influenced their art practice and if so, how? I also questioned whether issues of language, culture and identity were being considered during the development of their art practice (see appendix A, p.78) The second interview was loosely based upon monolingual assumptions, ideals and linguistic norms found in the literature (see appendix B pp.79-80). The interviews varied from 20 to 40 minutes in duration and were digitally recorded and transcribed by myself. In addition, I also took photos of the artwork the students were working on and attended the final exhibitions in 2014 and 2015. I have not, however, used photo documentation in this thesis, as it does not bear on the issues under consideration.
It is important to point out that although these students are well informed, somewhat socially conscious individuals, they were not chosen on the basis of any perceived monolingual attitudes to language, or as representatives supporting or challenging Clyne’s ‘monolingual mindset’ (see section 1.4.3).

2.3.1 Verbal practices - creating dialogues

The art school study unit named *Professional Studies* aims to develop the student’s ability to verbally clarify the process involved in the development of a body of work, establishing an ongoing discourse to identify the student’s personal artistic direction. On completion of this unit the students are not only assessed on the presentation and quality of their visual artwork, but also on their written proposals and ability to articulate and present their work before a panel of peers and artists. This course unit provides the students with a framework in which they are given opportunities to talk over the progress of their art practice with mentors and other students and supported to produce written proposals and statements.

The school’s emphasis on creating a verbal dialogue was fundamental to my research. The interviews gave the students a chance to practice defining their approach to their studies verbally, creating a space for the students to think about their life experiences and how these experiences related to their visual art practice. Not only was I a researcher, but I also had first hand experience in the visual arts and was quickly able to build a rapport with the students.

Semi-structured interviews used open ended questions in view of Hymes (1996) interactive-adaptive method of interviewing, which justifies the modification of interrogative questions as the inquiry develops. The first interview was focused on the personal experiences of the art student with questions encouraging the art students to reflect upon their experiences with language and to examine or make sense of the role any linguistic, social or cultural experiences may have had in determining the direction of their visual art practice (see appendix A, p.78). The second interview took advantage of the rapport built between the participant and myself during the first interview. It was a more structured interview, but with open ended questions that required the participants to give their opinion about their linguistic position and expectations or assumptions regarding language and learning
a second language (see appendix B, pp.79-80). The questions in the second interview were developed to identify the existence of any deep rooted “myths” regarding bilingualism (Grosjean 2010), native speaker ideals, or examples of the Clyne’s ‘monolingual mindset’ as these were aspects that were to be considered in the analysis.

2.3.2 Development of a thematic analytical approach

In discussing qualitative research procedures Creswell (2009) explains that the thematic development of an analysis is dependent upon a thorough understanding of the data. This in turn, leads to the interpretation and exploration of themes that are considered relevant by the researcher. In looking for themes I am aware that “hunches” (Cannon 1976), “establishing a mystery” (Alvesson and Kärreman 2011) or “intuitive leaps” (Johnstone 2000, 77) play an important role in evolving themes for further investigation. In fact, it is the quality of not knowing, coupled with a belief in the rigor and integrity of research, which assures that intuitive leaps will take form during the writing of the research project.

Luttrell’s (2005, 266) explanation that the researcher is foremost a person “shap[ing] her/his social art form…with one’s particular temperament, personality and intended audience” is fundamental in my approach and should be taken into account when considering the development of the data analysis. After all, it is myself as researcher who identifies the research project, is present at the interviews, and makes the necessary decisions concerning the significant themes to be discussed as meaningful and relevant.

As Alvesson and Kärreman (2011, 111) explain, “Establish[ing] a mystery offers an interesting source for further thinking, as it encourages problematization and self-reflexivity”. Thus, the researcher becomes reliant upon thought and imagination, complementing past established theories whilst identifying and solving newly apparent mysteries. This understanding benefits research by opening up fresh areas of inquiry, acknowledging that researchers can alternatively obstruct the development of innovative ways of thinking if relying on accepted frameworks early in an analysis. This is especially the case when reviewing the taken-for-granted.
At this point it is also important to mention that it was through the process of creating themes that Dörnyei’s *L2 Motivational Self System* (Dörnyei 2009, 2014, Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009) and the benefit of self-concepts (Higgins 1987, Markus and Nurius 1986) began to take form and assist the analysis. Similarly to Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) and Quinn (2005) I did not enter the analysis with preconceived notions in how to organize the data, but relied upon an in depth rigorous familiarization with the data to display unknowns and taken for granted themes. In this way I was able to explore patterns that *became relevant* rather than preconceived expectations of what I thought would be relevant to research, regarding attitudes towards language and language learning of these particular monolingual participants.

**2.3.3 Creating themes: developing an understanding of a linguistic self**

As is the usual practice in qualitative research, the process of analysis took on many lengthy stages as I became familiar with the data and began a thematic analysis. As mentioned, I initially worked with two transcripts from all twelve participants. I created grid like systems to look at the biographical material provided, separating the students into groups according to their experience in learning and speaking an L2. I then looked at recurring themes that became relevant in the interviews, once again using grids to align the different responses. Each question was then construed separately, cross-referencing the participants’ answers. By looking at the responses to each question I was able to reanalyze the questions and their relevance to the participants, the research, and my interpretation and expectations. Next I wrote a series of vignettes, looking at each of the participants from a more personal point of view, rereading notes taken and visualizing the individuals as they spoke. The similarities and differences between the participants were compared, reflecting on the participant’s:

- experience and relationship to language
- interview performance and engagement with questions regarding language
- behaviour towards the researcher
- understanding of audience (or other)
- imagined future L2 self
It was at this stage that I separated the group of participants to focus on those who had less experience speaking other languages. In limiting the analysis to eight participants, I sought more succinct groupings, to develop an understanding of attitudes the participants had towards different aspects of the interview, looking at both explicit and implicit responses. The four areas became:

- apparent attitude to the researcher
- apparent attitude to multilingual speakers
- linguistic questions and beliefs
- presented interview responses

I then went back to looking at the participants separately as complex individuals (Mercer 2014, Ushioda 2009) and began to formulate notions of linguistic self by expanding on Dörnyei’s *L2 Motivational Self System* (Dörnyei 2009, 2014), Higgins (1987) *Self Discrepancy Theory*, and Markus and Nurius (1986) *Possible Selves*. As explained above (see section 2.1), the self-concept was useful in providing a theoretical framework to investigate and make sense of monolingual narratives of past, present and possible future linguistic experiences. The selves implicitly and explicitly portrayed by the monolingual participants as they negotiated their linguistic position fall into the following categories:

1. A present self, identifying as a speaker of one language
   
   - an ideal self
   - an ought to self
   - a monolingual self
   - an ideal monolingual self
   - an unable L2 user/learner self

2. A present self, participating in linguistic research
   
   - an ideal monolingual research participant self
   - a linguistically self confident monolingual

3. A self with linguistic experiences and thoughts regulated by past experiences
   
   - an ideal L2 user/learner self
• an ought-to L2 self
• an as-yet-to-commit L2 learner self
• an L2 user-onlooker self

4. An expectant self, portraying future imagined selves

• an expected L2 learner self

In summary, this chapter has identified the need to look at alternative fields of research in the social sciences to determine the most beneficial way to research individual monolinguals. In doing so, I have explored motivational theory, sociology, ethnography, psychology as well as linguistics to adapt existing frameworks to monolingual research in order to successfully investigate language as a taken-for-granted concept. A linguistic self is thereby an analytical tool to assist a systematic process of thinking about the way the participants understand language as a meaningful concept in their sense of self or identity. By developing an understanding of a linguistic self, an assessment of monolingual attitudes towards language can be made.
3 Data analysis: discovering the taken for granted and presenting a ‘linguistic self’

3.1 Introduction

The monolingual participants actively construct their linguistic identity or self as they engage in the interviews, positioning themselves in respect to the researcher, L2 users, and socio-cultural ideals and beliefs. They discuss and interpret past experiences, thoughts and personal expectations regarding language and language learning, constructing their linguistic story or narrative of self whilst making sense of the interview questions. Importantly, a monolingual’s linguistic self and attitude to language is not only about the participant’s potential motivation to learn an L2 and the explicit information given by the responses in the interview, it is also drawn from the implicit responses and reactions that are reflected in the participants’ ethos towards language. The analysis of a ‘linguistic self’ is therefore built upon the way the participants respond to the interview, the participant’s interaction with the researcher, the personal interpretation of the questions posed, and the explicit and implicit responses presented during the two interviews.

This data analysis gives a rigorous investigation into the linguistic narratives of eight English-speaking monolinguals living in Adelaide, Australia. I take motifs from the past, the present and the projected future of the monolingual participants to develop and display what I define as the monolingual participant’s linguistic self. The motifs are analyzed and self-reported experiences, expectations and assumptions discussed. The participants are both individuals with a relevant personal language story as well as interviewees presenting a particular self to the researcher. It must also be noted however, that the language story and depicted linguistic self portrayed in this research gives the participant’s point of view at the time of the interview and is not a static unchanging construction, predicting the future. On the contrary, it could even be questioned whether opportunities like this to discuss language are in fact examples of ‘language learning’ potentially fostering further curiosity and interest in language.
In analyzing the monolingual participants, I divide the group into three by identifying the different ways the participants relate to thoughts regarding future decisions or suppositions that may influence or provide incentives towards becoming an L2 user. Firstly, I look at the reported experiences and linguistic narratives that culminate in a form of resistance towards language learning, evident in the interviews with Jody, Donna, Sam and George. Next I analyze the accounts given by Olivia and Joe, which do not exhibit resistance to learning an L2 but also show no commitment towards a future language learning self. Lastly I discuss the enthusiasm and eagerness shown by Mona and Peta to one day learn an L2, whilst also identifying an underlying apprehension regarding an expected L2 learning experience.

3.2 Theme 1: Resistance to language learning

Jody, Donna, Sam and George appear resistant towards learning an L2. They make sense of their past experiences, present position and future expectations regarding language, clarifying the reasons why learning an L2 has not been something they consider a feasible priority. Jody and Donna actively resist learning an L2, imparting a notion that it is only academically successful individuals who have the potential to learn a second language, foreseeing themselves as unable L2 learners. Sam and George, on the other hand, do not imagine themselves as unable, but rather as individuals who make a choice concerning their future L2 selves. Sam is in fact more focused upon being given the choice, or securing himself the option of whether to learn an L2, than defining himself as an able L2 learner. George defines himself as an able L2 learner in a blasé manner, but defends his position of resistance by explaining the lack of opportunities to speak an L2 in Australia, as well as the technological advances of the global twenty-first century that make learning an L2 redundant.

3.2.1 Imagining the ideal L2 user as an able or academic ideal

3.2.1.1 Jody: an apologizing monolingual

Jody is in her mid thirties. She explains, “language, language means difficulty, umm I don’t know, language is a very powerful thing, but because I don’t grasp it
very well, I tend to avoid it” (see appendix C, p.143). She rationalizes, saying that she has dyslexia and that this has meant that she prefers to “bypass words entirely” (see appendix C, p.141). She explains, “I speak very well, I just don’t write it very well” (see appendix C, p.143). She feels confident with her spoken language, but the written form of language has proven alienating for Jody. She explains that she prefers the visual, pictorial form of narration found in books and films because the meaning is easier to grasp than with just abstract, written words. In fact, Jody believes her understanding of written words only began to evolve when her mother introduced her to foreign movies with subtitles, the subtitles providing Jody with the chance to both watch and understand the action and begin to consolidate meaning with accompanying written words. Interestingly, Jody, a self-identifying monolingual, has actively benefitted from movies in other languages, using them to familiarize herself with the written form of her spoken language. As she says:

J: That’s pretty much how the only way my mother could get me to read was subtitles so I got a whole lot of world cinema when I was a kid because I wouldn’t pick up a book, but I’d watch a movie because it had, it had a narrative running behind it, so if I got lost on the words I at least knew what was going on, I couldn’t do that with a book, I needed a visual with the book (see appendix C, pp.145-146).

Jody distinguishes herself as unable and those, including the researcher, who can and do speak other languages, as able. At numerous times Jody mirthfully apologizes for her linguistic incompetence, her lack of knowledge about language and her inability to feel confident enough to answer some questions. In effect, Jody locates herself as ‘unlike’ the researcher, seemingly searching to participate with linguistic knowledge, but with an apparent expectation that the knowledge the researcher is asking for is in regard to something she has no understanding of. Interestingly, in recounting her past watching foreign movies, Jody proudly turns to me with what she concedes, is a small amount of relevant information to contribute to linguistic research. With a rather amused, gleeful and sarcastic glint in her eyes she says, “so I got all this wonderful, there you go, cultural experiences through movies so that, that’s a good thing” (see appendix C, p.146).

So whilst the researcher has faith in the participant and has in actual fact come to interview the participant because of the very person she is, the participant does not
feel justified to give an answer. Jody does not feel she is an ideal monolingual research participant, but nor does she feel she will ever be an ideal L2 user. Even though I have appealed to Jody’s linguistic knowledge as a monolingual, Jody’s interpretation of a person with valid linguistic knowledge appears to be confined to multilinguals. Jody’s linguistic self is presented as non-existing and irrelevant, or something she wishes she had. To have a linguistic self, Jody believes her life would not have “all been English, English, English” (see appendix C, p.136) and she would not have dyslexia.

It would seem that Jody’s lack of belief that she can answer the interview questions results in quick answers with a range of changes in focus. In the following question Jody moves from her personal concerns with language, to the assumption that she must be insulting the researcher because she is without the necessary knowledge, to inviting the researcher to participate in her light hearted jokes. This can be seen in interview 2, question 8 when the researcher asks:

I: do you think you would have more difficulty (yes) learning a language than another person?

J: Yes, but only because I have difficulty learning English period (yeah) so it doesn’t make sense to me so

I: yeah, it’s interesting that language doesn’t make sense to you

J: yeah I guess it is (laughing) yeah, it must be terrible insulting to somebody who loves language

I: not at all, it’s very interesting actually, y’know, because that’s what I’m here to learn about, other people and what they’re thinking about, I think you’re just as justified as anybody else to have an opinion

J: oh good, you’re not going to storm off on me or anything (sarcastically)

I: no no no

J: you bitch, you art wank! Just leave (in a mocking tone)

I: you language wank, or you could say to me I’m a language wank
J: just a language wank

I: “she’s a language wanker!” (see appendix C, pp.150-151)

Jody not only insinuates that someone like herself, who is unqualified to speak about language, may offend the researcher and be expelled from the interview, but also draws the researcher into a word game, retrieving material from an earlier question regarding ‘art wank’. So, even though the researcher qualifies Jody for her worthwhile linguistic thoughts and experiences, Jody appears not to be convinced and evades the issue, preferring to brighten the discussion with a casual play-on-words. The researcher may be of contrasting experience, someone Jody is “in complete awe of” (see appendix C, p.145), however the word game pulls the researcher and participant together using shared knowledge constructed three questions earlier in the interview. In this way Jody becomes equal with the researcher, and can momentarily forget the inadequacies she has identified herself with, as neither an ideal monolingual participant, nor an ideal L2 user.

Although Jody appears to believe that anything to do with ‘language’ and her interpretation of the term, play a relatively small role in her life, it is apparent that her dismissal of language has in fact proved to have a strong influence on her life choices. She feels different from those who do not have dyslexia, and impressed with those who are able to use more than one language. In explaining that she is a confident speaker, she implies that the problem with language appears to be the written form rather than the spoken, and that for Jody, language learning is dependent upon the ability to write. Recognizing this, it would indeed be interesting to consider if Jody could succeed in a spoken L2 learning programme if language was learnt with social interaction and an engaging interpersonal dimension of word play rather than with reliance on the written word.

Apparently, Jody is resigned to the position she presents. She would like to enjoy languages and become a speaker of more than one language, but she denies that she is able to learn an L2 and appears to expect failure. When asked, “What would it mean to you if you could speak another language?” she answers “Oh I think that would be awesome, I think that would be very cool, I’m very jealous of people who can speak other languages” (see appendix C, p.151). Jody’s ideal L2 self would be
an impressive speaker of more than one language, a person who could love language and have the skills to write words and sentences without the crippling condition of dyslexia.

3.2.1.2 Donna: a non-academic monolingual

Donna is in her late forties. Like Jody, she resists the idea of learning an L2, manifesting her resistance by reflecting on her past self. For Donna, this was a time when she was uncompromisingly uninterested in reading books or any form of study. Donna describes herself as someone who has “never studied in my life” (see appendix C, p. 82). She adamantly justifies her lack of knowledge about language and her inability to “understand a lot of big words” (see appendix C, p. 89), explaining that as a country girl she has preferred to party and enjoy life rather than read books and settle into a study regime. In interview 2, question 2 I ask Donna, “Why do you think you haven’t learnt a second language?” in which she answers:

D: Ah I wasn’t interested in learning anymore English either, I was yeah I didn’t actually, I was never interested in further studying since I left school, I um, I never thought I’d be back at school um because I wasn’t interested in learning, I thought umm so just lived a naïve life and believed that, hmm, threw dinner parties instead, that’s what I got good at (yeah) and I thought that was enough

I: yeah, well and you think it’s not now?

D: and then I watch my kids grow up intelligently and that was probably that’s probably it, because they’ve got brains, so where did they get the brains from? I’m, maybe I did have a brain, maybe I wasn’t as thick as I thought I was

I: so it’s just about education?

D: Yeah, self esteem with me probably, it’s it’s no belief in yourself so why would you go to a further education? (mm) cos you get the dunce cap there as well I guess (see appendix C, pp. 93-94).

Donna’s justification for her present interest in study is contrary to the past understanding she has of her non-academic, unable self. Almost 50, Donna remembers the girl she once was, lacking in confidence or self-esteem and without the belief that she possessed the academic ability to learn. This past self has
constrained her appreciation of what she may be able to achieve in the future, however she is just on the cusp of understanding her new developing able self and adapting to her very recent love of reading and learning. She explains a new acceptance she has shown herself and the reasoning behind her belief that she is now able to feel confident and admit that she can succeed in her studies. However, although she is experiencing learning as a positive and richly rewarding activity, the idea of learning a new language seems to signal to her the limitations and frustrations she has experienced in the past. Learning a language is not regarded as something Donna is able to do, but presents as a threat, evidence that she may not be good enough and may once again be assessed as the dunce.

Even though Donna recognizes her linguistic self as an unable L2 user, this does not concern her and she has no plans to lose her monolingual identity. Donna has difficulties rationalizing why she ‘should’ learn another language as she has never been outside of Australia, and has a “great fear of flying and won’t travel” (see appendix C, p.97). Donna has begun to identify herself as a capable learner and is developing a new understanding of her self, however she remains the as-yet-to-commit L2 learner with the study of language remaining far outside her perimeters of interest. She does encourage others who have a reason to learn another language to study an L2, mentioning her children, her friends and exchange students as examples, but unlike Jody, she is not in awe of those who are able to speak an L2 and feels no commitment to act as though she is during the interview. She believes her lack of self-esteem has limited her choices in the past but does not reflect on future linguistic choices that may be available to her new able, learning self. Donna presents as someone who has reached a point in her life where she is secure with her non-L2 speaking future, content to remain a monolingual living in Australia.

3.2.2 Sam: an oppositional monolingual restoring his monolingual self

Sam’s linguistic perspective differs noticeably from the other participants. His Indigenous background and the choices he makes in regard to language appear to define his understanding of where he fits in society. Sam moves between a self who prefers to ignore his Aboriginal background to a self, questioning societal expectations and what he considers unjustified assumptions regarding his identity.
Sam explains he never really learnt his maternal grandmother’s indigenous language. His mother spoke it to her sisters, but never to Sam. Sam consciously chooses not to identify as an Indigenous Australian, however he reflects upon the expectations he believes others have concerning the language they assume Sam ‘ought’ to learn. Sam explains his resistance to learning an L2, believing he has the right to choose whether to engage with an L2 or not. In the first question of the first interview Sam says, “I never got the urge to learn any language because I think umm I just think everyone’s just an equal being” (see appendix C, p. 252). This rather obscure rationale is bound by Sam’s belief that equality exists where there is choice and opportunity. In Sam’s case, language symbolizes a direct lack of choice as well as other’s preconceived assumptions of who Sam is and what he wants out of life. He feels that others have the mindset that an indigenous person should have the opportunity to learn the language of his culture, however Sam’s concern is that they never asked him what he wants, or even thought that he may be an individual with different linguistic needs than what they blindly expect. His overriding attitude is that language should not define the speaker, that equality should prevail regardless of the language spoken.

Sam addresses linguistic equality seeking personal opportunity for efficacy. Whilst linguists have inquired into the rights of minority speakers to speak their mother tongue (see for example Phillipson 1992, Skutnabb Kangas and Phillipson 1994), Sam’s perspective means having the opportunity to say ‘no’ to his mother’s Indigenous language, to be allowed to decide himself whether to learn an L2 or not. Interestingly, he believes he has this right to choose regardless of those in mainstream Australia who seem to be encouraging him to take the opportunity to learn the language of his cultural background.

It is difficult not to draw the conclusion that Sam’s experiences as an Indigenous Australian may have negatively influenced any intention to learn an L2. It is in fact as though the ought-to-L2 self, which has been asking Sam to acknowledge and embrace his Indigenous culture and language, has been silenced by Sam’s monolingual self, the self choosing to largely ignore his background. Sam explains that he felt at odds with his Indigenous background and increasingly without a voice during his school education. He describes the pressures from Aboriginal workers
who “sort of urg[ing] you into Aboriginal learning and learning the language and doing umm y’know recreational youth stuff and all that and I just wasn’t interested” (see appendix C, p. 252). Sam has felt inhibited and uncomfortable with attention to his Indigenous background and expectations that he would appreciate being supported at school. In fact, now in his early twenties, Sam remembers distinctly his unhappy school experiences where the label of Indigenous Australian Aboriginal meant defect or holder of a disability. He gives an explanation:

it’s almost like having some kind of defect it’s like um you can label someone as that and say oh yeah you can use that to your advantage cos like y’know you can use a disabled car park or something (see appendix C, pp.260-261).

Sam is unhappy about the way he and other Indigenous Australians have been treated and the expectations of others. He wants to forge his own way, and make his own choices in regard to his grandmother’s language.

Sam also questions the integrity involved when an individual accepts a culture as their own when it is not one hundred percent their own culture. For example, he finds it difficult to understand how his cousins can proudly identify themselves as Indigenous Australians. He explains:

they’re in my family but, yeah no I think that’s the weird part for me I guess it’s cos they’re very proud of their heritage umm but they don’t speak the language umm and they probably don’t know it as well as they probably could umm I mean like if I ask my mum what something meant she’d probably answer half of them but she probably wouldn’t know how to speak it fluently (right) umm so I guess it’s kind of weird I mean, it’s good to be proud of yourself, but I mean if it’s not your cultural thing, it’s a kind of weird if they don’t know the language (see appendix C, p.251)

Sam says, not only are they proud of their cultural background, but they “don’t speak the language”, linking their inability to speak with questions regarding cultural belonging. Interestingly, Sam questions whether it is possible to belong to a culture without linguistic knowledge, a leading assumption in both local and global areas of linguistic anthropology and linguistic research (Carroll 1956, Pennycook 2010, Duranti 2004). He notices the difference between himself, who rejects both
language and cultural affinity, and his cousins who are proud to belong, citing the situation as complex and difficult to understand.

Whilst Sam chooses to remain an English speaking monolingual, language becomes a symbol of his cultural and linguistic identity and personal choices. Interestingly however, when Sam’s present personal situation is removed from inquiry and a hypothetical question posed, Sam does answer positively in regard to L2 learning, believing in the sincerity of a culture and the importance of language for individuals who are immersed within that culture. In interview 2, question 23 in fact Sam answers that he would like to learn another language and incorporate the new language into his home life if he were to partner someone from a different background, although he was aware that with this response, he might sound like a hypocrite. I ask:

I: Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual should be brought up speaking 2 languages?

S: No! haha umm I think I don’t, I ‘m not against it umm but I guess I’m not for it either because that would be contradicting my past, but I guess that was more my choice so umm I guess some cultures are more um with it like um enforce it more than others so I think that can depend on it (yeah)

I: so if you were to marry someone who had a German background for example would you be interested to learn the language or incorporate that language in to your home life and teach your children that language or get the partner to teach the language or

S: Yeah yeah that’d be cool yeah yeah I mean I guess cos you need to communicate with the other family as well so um yeah (see appendix C, p. 270).

Sam’s ideal monolingual self is someone without the cultural conflicts he continues to deal with, someone who can make their own choices without the pervading ought-to-L2 self. Sam has had the opportunity to learn languages both at school and in his home environment, but he explains that by participating in this research, it is the first time he has been prompted to actually think about what a language is. It would seem that Sam is struggling with his cultural identity and what it means to have an Indigenous grandmother. I would suggest that Sam has recognized that he
is of a minority and that he may be positioned differently in society if he accepts the identity others have chosen for him. In this account Sam clearly prefers to identify with the majority and remain an English speaking monolingual.

I would like to note, that Sam’s present day resistant-self does not imply anything about his future linguistic self. Importantly, Sam enjoyed the interviews and showed great interest in trying to identify with his personal definition of language. I believe that if Sam were to have people around him who spoke another language and adequate curiosity in another language without pressure from others, he may endeavor to learn an L2.

3.2.3 George: a linguistically self confident monolingual

George is in his mid twenties and has Italian heritage from both sets of grandparents who came to Australia after the Second World War. His parents only ever spoke English at home with George and his brother, but divorced when George was nine years old. George’s parents speak Italian with their parents, often mixing between English and Italian, but continue to solely speak English with George.

George presents an interesting approach to language learning, explaining that the key factor is whether the opportunity to use and practice the language exists. In interview 2, question 2 George explains he has learnt an L2 in High School, but he has not had “a necessity to practice it” (see appendix C, p.122). Without the opportunity to practice the language, George denies he is a speaker of an L2. He explains, his ideal L2 self would feel the necessity to use the language and have the opportunity to do so, it would be a part of his daily life. George’s point of view is further explained in the next question when I ask, “How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?” He says:

G: Maybe not how well, it’s like how often they use it in their daily life, or literally just talking and like, like can you pass me that bottle, or can, where’s the chair or

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Grosjean (1982) also believed the definition of bilingual is based upon the frequent use of two languages.
something and if you said that in another language regularly I think that would be y’know, you’re speaking another language

I: ok, that’s interesting

G: but if you kind of just say like y’know a word here or there y’know anyone can really do that

I: mm

G: like I know words in Swahili, and like German and y’know like Arabic, but I wouldn’t say that I speak Swahili or that I speak Arabic (see appendix C, p.122)

George speaks about the necessity to practice a language believing it is not how well, but how often you speak a language, which defines whether someone can in fact call themselves a speaker of two languages. He feels that within Australia, (noting that his idea of Australia may be conditioned by his life in provincial Adelaide) there is very little opportunity to speak a language other than English, questioning the reason why someone would want to learn a language when practicing it in daily social discourse is such a distant probability. Furthermore, George questions the need for individuals to speak more than one language in the global world of technological advances, believing that communication across languages will soon become a real possibility. In interview 1, question 8 he explains that misunderstandings and barriers between languages will soon be remedied because of Internet translating possibilities at the “press [of] a button” (see appendix C, p.114). There is however, no recognition of the point that effective understanding can never be guaranteed, even when the same language is being spoken.

George says “we live in such a short cut type of world” (see appendix C, p.115) where learning, whether language learning or general learning is not required because we have access to tools “close to us” (see appendix C, p.115) which are able to provide information within a short space of time. His rhetoric is one of a global citizen without the distance and time restraints of past centuries. Language is not admired or desired, it is not a personally significant or worthwhile ability to be proud of, but is simply a tool for communication.
George is reflective and talkative. Like Donna he appears content with his monolingual self and doesn’t portray a present need to change that. He seems rather indifferent to his experiences of learning an L2 at school, finding learning a language rather insignificant and “oh just easy” (see appendix C, p.107). Interestingly however, George is keen to find his own personal sub-culture within Australia, but does not link this search with language, or his Italian background. Obviously, George is not concerned with whether he can use an L2 or not, he is confident that if he had an essential need to communicate in an L2, he would soon learn it. Nevertheless, this is far from George’s interpretation of what is necessary in Australia. Therefore, the concept of language and his L2 self are at present inconsequential in his life in general and as he explains, taken for granted.

3.3 Theme 2: Non resistance to language learning

Olivia and Joe are not resistant, but do not discuss an intention to learn a second language. In the interviews, Olivia suggests her admiration for multilinguals and their ability to speak other languages. Several times she makes her point by mentioning the beauty of languages other than English, and how she enjoys listening to them being spoken. Joe is reflective and curious to learn about language and multilingual speakers. He takes note of various linguistic accounts he has experienced and uses the interview proactively, taking the opportunity to question me in order to make sense of the experiences and thoughts he has.

3.3.1 Olivia: an admiring monolingual

Olivia, aged in her mid fifties, positions herself as an inexperienced, but interested and accepting onlooker. She appears to aspire towards an L2 user as an impressive and worthwhile ideal, enthusiastically expressing positive feelings about languages and especially those who are able to communicate using more than one language. Personally, however, she shows regret that she and her family haven’t benefitted from learning and speaking the “beautiful words” (see appendix C, p.204) of her Welsh grandfather.

The questions in the interview are not always easy for Olivia. She spends time thinking through the question and her approach, often reflecting upon what she has
just said, as well as changing or adapting previously expressed comments. In answering question 13 in the second interview, “Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?” she firstly answers:

Umm, some times it does, but then I worry that I’m sounding like a grumpy old woman and umm just think that everything is in constant flux so you’ve just got to roll with it to a certain extent (see appendix C, p.214).

Then, in question 14, she returns to an earlier question, affirming her acceptance of other cultures and justifying her interest to learn about linguistic difference. She says:

Um yeah y’know just when you were saying before about people using more than one language in conversation and umm y’know, I always find that really interesting and exciting and vibrant and um learning new words and understanding what they mean or why they’re said in a certain way I mean it’s all interesting and it can only be a positive thing (see appendix C, p.215)

It appears that Olivia is aware of the way she presents herself in the interview. She doesn’t want to sound “like a grumpy old woman” (see appendix C, p.214) or identify with her husband complaining about linguistic change. She explains, “even my husband bangs on about it all the time, y’know, certain things upset him and Americanisms and um, I wouldn’t want to be like that” (see appendix C, p.215).

Rather than criticize she talks positively about language as intriguing and beautiful. Of course, Olivia is being interviewed and it could be assumed that she is giving responses presumed politically correct in multicultural Australia. I believe however, that Olivia is positioning herself as an L2 user-onlooker who wishes she knew more about language and speaking an L2. The choice she has taken is to represent herself as someone who empathises with generational and global change and is without unjust prejudices towards others. She appears understanding and eager to make a good impression on the researcher, presenting her self in a positive and welcoming way.

Nonetheless there are some instances where I am admittedly confused by Olivia’s answers. Whilst it appears that she wishes to provide me with information in regard
to language, she sometimes doesn’t continue the dialogue as I expect. This can be seen in the discussion that ensues in interview 2, question 24. Olivia describes,

O: …, y’know I’ve got one friend that lives in France for 6 months of the year, so this idyllic life and six months here … she said that when she’s in France she thinks in French, not just speaks French, she thinks in French, but when she’s here she thinks in English

I: Is she from here or from France

O: No she’s here from here, so French is her second language

I: ok, do you think that’s strange, that she thinks in French when she’s in France?

O: No, not really sort of that whole total immersion y’know and commitment to to being y’know to it all, I’ve got, my son’s partner is Russian, so English is her second language.. and I’m always interested when she and her mother speak and just of course I, that is just heard as a, I can’t ever obviously pick out words with that but umm it’s so intriguing yeah (see appendix C, pp.218-219).

In this instance, Olivia mentions the notion of ‘thinking in another language’ when the language being spoken is not the speaker’s first language, suggesting that to think in a second language is unusual, interesting or in some way incongruous to her understanding of language (see marking a discourse in section 2.2.5). In asking Olivia if she finds this unusual, I expected a new branch of discussion to develop, where she considered why she pointed this out, however Olivia answers saying it makes sense that thinking would be in the language the speaker is totally immersed in. Even though I was interested to delve deeper into this area, Olivia’s topic change to her son’s partner seemed to signal the topic of thinking in another language was over. Olivia was once again the onlooker, intrigued by language.

Olivia’s approach to question 12 in the second interview has also been a challenge to decipher. I ask:

I: Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person to mix their languages when speaking or do you think they should keep their languages separate?

O: No I think it’s um, I think it’s a beautiful way to express yourself, to cross over and choose different words from whatever language that that you think might be
right in the right, how people, how clearly everyone else understands you might be another thing but, I love it when someone crosses over

I: right, even if the understanding isn’t there?

O: Yeah, I think it’s quite beautiful (see appendix C, p.214)

Whilst my second question attempts to get beyond Olivia’s L2 user onlooker status, her second answer does not provide me with further understanding of her point of view. Olivia presents as an L2 user onlooker. She appreciates the aesthetical qualities of conversations and admires multilingual speakers, perhaps even “Seduced by the foreign sounds, rhythms and meanings, and by the ‘coolness’ of native speakers” (Kramsch 2006, 102). Her linguistic self is aware and sensitive to the politically correct notion to accept multilingualism. Olivia does not present the unable or non-academic L2 learner self, like Jody and Donna, nor does she present an argument for why she is not learning an L2. Rather her discourse focuses on admiring the L2 user able to and view language as beautiful, interesting and exciting.

3.3.2 Joe: an inquiring monolingual…or ideal twenty-first century monolingual?

Unlike George, Joe explains that he “didn’t grow up around a lot of people from overseas” (see appendix C p.176). Now in his late twenties, Joe says until recently he had very little opportunity to experience languages other than English. He learnt some Japanese and German at school, but those learning experiences were clearly not memorable enough for him to want to share them in any detail. However, at the time of the interviews, Joe had a part time job where customers and co-workers spoke English as a second, third and fourth language, providing Joe with experiences with languages other than English on a daily basis. Joe took the opportunity to discuss these experiences productively in the interviews, reviewing his insights collaboratively with the researcher whilst developing an understanding of his personal relationship to language.

At the end of the second interview for example, Joe waited until I had turned off the digital recorder before asking me about simultaneous translation. Clearly he had
been thinking about language (even though he had answered in the negative) and had questions for me. He was fascinated by the idea that someone could translate between two languages simultaneously and wanted to know if I thought the headphones used by a soccer coach during a press conference meant that the conversation was being translated directly to the coach. I suggested it was and we went on to discuss other examples of simultaneous translation used in international conferences.

A particularly interesting conversation develops in question 15 of the second interview (see appendix C, pp.176-177). In asking Joe ‘do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand nearby?’ he responds with a situation he had experienced the day before whilst he was helping two girls find an item at his workplace. After finding the requested item the girls said “ok wait” in English to Joe before they started to communicate together in a second language. Joe was left trying to interpret the situation, wondering whether the girls needed his help further, or were in fact finished talking with him. He felt uncomfortable as he was not able to contribute to the conversation, but nor was he able to assume the girls were finished with his help and leave. Joe was left facing the girls but not able to pick up upon the usual linguistic and cultural cues to know whether he was needed further, or could in fact leave. He didn’t want to appear rude, interrupt them or do anything that the girls would assess as impolite, however at the same time he also wondered whether the customers were being rude to him? In talking to me, Joe wishes to make sense of the situation in terms of his own worldview and considers whether it was a difference in language or perhaps a cultural contrast in politeness that instigated the predicament. Joe finds it “a weird thing” and like other questions he has, he is interested to discuss the issue and develop a better understanding of the event. Joe later reflects that the same thing could possibly happen in English, so suggests that this issue is not really about politeness or language. He realizes however that he wouldn’t feel so uncomfortable if it happened in English as he would understand the context better. He says:

Joe: I guess that politeness is sort of, it’s not really, it’s not even just language, its, if it was in English, it’s sort of the same thing, like

I: yeah that’s true
Joe: but you can kind of, you can pick up cos you know what they’re saying so you know if you’re done, yeah so it’s not really, I wouldn’t say it’s a language issue it’s just, yeah (see appendix C, p.177).

The opportunity to discuss this account gave Joe the time to reflect and discover for himself that the situation was not about politeness and that no one was in fact exhibiting behavior that could be defined as right or wrong. Joe’s internal dialogue was reconstructed and briefly analyzed in the interview producing a realistic and, I would consider, a positive conclusion to a cultural experience that challenged Joe in ways he had not been challenged before.

Through the interview Joe’s interest and enthusiasm to discuss linguistic and cultural experiences is apparent. As he tries to assimilate these notions into his own worldview, he shows an openness to develop an understanding of concepts perceived as different or ‘other’. I believe this would be of particular benefit to Joe when either engaging in or learning another language. Joe says that he would like to learn more about cultural communities, countries and the languages they speak. When asked, “What would it mean to you if you could speak another language?” in question 9 of the second interview, Joe answers:

Joe: Yeah, I reckon it would probably mean like, it would feel like it could be part of another sort of world or community or social group I guess, like speaking only English, like you can only sort of umm explore like English literature or English movies without subtitling and that kind of thing

I: so would you like that, like to be able to read a book in another language or to see a film in another language

Joe: Yeah yeah I think so, like sometimes if you watch, like if I watch films that are from other countries with other languages, just from the subtitling sometimes it seems like the way they articulate things can be more poetic than they would in English (mm) yeah, so I think there’s like a world of, there’s different ways of expressing things that, like you don’t get, like that are unique to different languages I think (see appendix C, p.172).

Like Olivia, Joe seems to believe that there is beauty in the articulation of other languages. Importantly, he is also aware of the benefits an L2 may provide in a
broader socio-cultural context. Joe’s ideal L2 self would be someone interested to learn and assimilate differences between languages. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that Joe appears to be benefitting from the experiences with language that he is receiving in his work place. Although he is not in a typical L2 learning environment, his monolingual self is being challenged in linguistic and cultural ways, providing him with experiences, reflections and insights he clearly regards as worthwhile.

3.4 Theme 3: Eager but not committed

At first, Peta and Mona’s enthusiastic comments that they will learn a second language in the future, appear to position them a step closer towards learning an L2 than the other participants. They defend their present monolingual self by explaining that their main obstacle is due to limited time. They are aware that a new language will demand both time and commitment and believe that they will be able to meet these demands at a later stage in their life. Nonetheless, the data suggests that there is more to be explained. In fact, the responses given by Peta and Mona compel the researcher to inquire into the monolingual participant’s expected presentation as an L2 learner.

3.4.1 Peta: presenting an expected L2 learner self

Even though Peta fully anticipates becoming an L2 learner in the future, the descriptions she provides of herself as an L2 learner may in fact negatively affect her motivation to learn a new language. Peta, in her early thirties, explains that she has travelled to many countries and experienced some challenges in trying to communicate in another language. She draws on these experiences to predict her ‘willingness to communicate’ and how she expects she will appear as an L2 learner. In question 10 of the first interview she explains:

if say, if I were to learn a new language I’d be going back like to the beginning with that as well, which would be quite interesting, I mean I have travelled overseas several times and learnt just a few phrases over there to try and communicate and

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9 For the theory ‘willingness to communicate’ (WTC) see Macintyre et al. (1998)
you do feel really, really stupid like you can’t, you can hardly say anything and everyone laughs at you and you pronounce it a bit funny or something or, so yeah I definitely will learn a language one day, when I have the time, but I’m sure it will be a little bit of a kind of an embarrassing process as well at times, like being like a child again (see appendix C, p.233).

Peta presents as someone who is interested in challenges but at the same time concerned with the thought that she would not be her usual linguistically competent self when using a new language. The familiar monolingual self, with the expertise and confidence she enjoys in being able to speak, pronounce and produce intelligible thoughts in English would be replaced with what she conveys is a reduced childlike or basic ability to express. Peta expects learning an L2 to be similar to the “embarrassing process” she has experienced in the past while overseas, struggling to communicate using an unfamiliar group of linguistic standards.

Here it is worth remembering, that Peta’s L2 learner self has only briefly been presented to her in the past. What is being portrayed is a fictional image of Peta’s expectations based upon past experiences and beliefs concerning language learning. These beliefs have developed from different socio-cultural and personal experiences, presenting the researcher with insights into how some monolinguals may perceive L2 learning for both themselves and in so doing, assume the same L2 learning experience for others.

Clearly, for an L2 learner with gloomy preconceived beliefs regarding the presentation of an L2 self, the task to learn a new language appears daunting. It could however be questioned whether other, more socially interactive, learning experiences could give Peta a different view of language learning and influence her expectations regarding the presentation of her L2 self? The insights expressed by Cook (2002) for example, do not consider the L2 user as childlike, or a new beginner, but already a skilled speaker of a language.

For now however, Peta is very attached to her monolingual self. She appreciates a large vocabulary and the ability to articulate herself well. The feeling of being without her words as she learns a new language appears undesirable. Learning an
L2 at present would threaten the confident identity or self that Peta is familiar and comfortable with.

3.4.2 Mona: presenting an expected L2 learner self

Mona is in her early twenties and has not travelled to non-English speaking countries as yet, although she is clearly excited at the thought of it. Her expectations are therefore without direct lived experience and more based upon personal and socio cultural beliefs. In question 2 of the second interview she states:

I don’t really want to go to countries that don’t speak English without a bit of a proficiency, mainly because I think it’s rude, and I feel really like yeah, really overwhelmed with not knowing the language (see appendix C, p.193).

It would seem that Mona believes it is wrong for travellers to assume speakers in other countries are able to communicate in English and further, that this presumption would be rude and disrespectful of the people in the country being visited. It follows that proper respect means making an effort to have some proficiency in the language of the country being travelled to.

Additionally, Mona imagines she would be overwhelmed if not able to communicate using her familiar tools of communication. Whilst Peta explains the possible loss of her known and able monolingual self as difficult, Mona reflects on the pre travelling expectations she would put in place to protect herself from any future chance to appear impolite or experience communication failure. From these extracts it would seem that Peta and Mona have somewhat justified their positions as monolinguals, comfortable in their familiar language and not willing to present their expected L2 learner self. Interestingly however, whilst Mona and Peta independently discuss the positive benefits of extracting themselves from a comfort zone in their art practice, they do not consciously link these ideals to the present comfort zone they experience living as English-speaking monolinguals in Australia.

3.5 Summary of the chapter

This analysis of the data investigates the mindsets of monolinguals, interpreting the participants’ attitudes towards language through discourses using examples of
monolingual selves and perceived L2 selves. The L2 self is used as a researcher’s tool to think systematically through the participants understanding of language and the importance given to the notion of ‘language’ when developing their sense of self. As an analytical tool, the linguistic self has provided a method to identify the participants’ understanding of ‘language’. Using responses to past linguistic experiences, discussions during the interviews, and future beliefs regarding language, I interpret the data to present the participant’s personal notion and relationship to language. In this way, I describe both the participant’s attitude towards language and how this understanding contributes to the monolingual’s sense of self.

This section of the thesis has identified a variety of psychological and physical restraints as reasons for why these monolingual participants have not learnt an L2, exploring perceptions of inability, disinterest, living in a country that doesn’t necessitate language learning, feelings of inequality and questions regarding prioritization of time as reported constraints against a commitment towards learning an L2.

A monolingual’s linguistic self and attitude to language is however, not only about the participant’s potential motivation to learn an L2 and the information given by the responses in the interview. It is also drawn from the explicit and implicit responses and reactions that are reflected in the participants’ disposition towards language. In chapter 4, I will further describe the variation in the participants’ responses to the interview, their personal interpretation of the research questions and their reactions towards the linguistic researcher.
4 Discussion and conclusion: researching the mindsets of monolinguals

4.1 Introduction

In this discussion I revisit the responses given by the participants during the interviews to demonstrate that this research does benefit monolingual participants. I then examine the possible meaning behind deflective or evasive type responses given by three of the participants in the second interview and how this understanding may be influenced by socio-cultural beliefs. I then describe a monolingual perspective of the concept of ‘language’ in twenty-first century Australia, comparing the analyzed attitudes towards language presented through empirical observations and responses shown in this research with Clyne’s generalized depiction of the ‘monolingual mindset’ displayed in the literature (see 1.4.2-1.4.3). Lastly, I conclude the thesis, suggesting avenues for further monolingual research.

4.2 Learning within a collaborative methodological framework

The participants approached the inquiry, the researcher and investigations into language, happy to commit and contribute, curious to participate in the unusual experience of linguistic research. This is particularly evident during and after the participants’ initial interviews, seen when the participants express the advantages of having an opportunity to discuss language, themselves, and the direction of their art practice with the researcher. For example, when ending Mona’s first interview I ask, “Ok well that’s it, is there anything else you’d like to say?” and she responds:

M: No, just thank you, it’s kinda nice to talk and have someone prompt you as well because it starts my mind whirring and going oh actually I get a chance to articulate this and then I’ll reflect on that later, so that’ll be good (see appendix C, p.193).

Likewise, Sam is animated during the interview, excited to think about something he had never thought about before and relate it to his practice. In interview 1, question 7 he says:
S: I guess I never really thought about language, cos I was actually thinking about it when arr you read out the paper at Hugo Michell…¹⁰ (see appendix C, p.259).

Donna is also appreciative of the opportunity to discuss her work in this context. At the end of the first interview she replies:

D: Um, that’s probably the best thing of this for me so I’m taking something out of it too cos I haven’t been able to talk about my work but I’m just starting to be able to do it so this is another chance for me to talk about my work, so I had to look at it like anything like that umm if I talk then I’m getting my thoughts out, mmm (see appendix C, p.92).

By contributing to the research, the participants are no longer taking language for granted, but actively pursue what language means for their sense of self. Prompted by the researcher, they enjoy the process of the research, learning about their thoughts regarding language through dialogues and experiences of language. Through the engagement of the research process, the unknown, or unconsidered, linguistic self develops, becoming familiar to both the researcher and the participant. As Sam explains in the first interview, learning is beneficial and productive when within a field of interest. He explains:

S: I’ve never learnt as much in my life until I came here umm I guess once you’re in a field that you’re interested in, and you start thinking about things like umm like I was saying even when you said about language and what is language I was just like shit hahaha and I actually thought about it, it just takes those little triggers I think (see appendix C, p.260).

Language appears to become interesting for these monolinguals because it is integrated into an approach, which appeals to the participants. As Sam says, through this research language becomes something he wants to think about. Likewise, Mona explains “I haven’t yet particularly thought about language, but this conversation is going to make me think about that, now, a lot” (see appendix C, p.188).

The process of developing a linguistic self is seen during the discussion and whilst the participants reflect upon the researcher’s intended meaning of the research

¹⁰ It was at Gallery Hugo Michell that I introduced my research.
questions. In fact the research questions are an important hurdle for the participants to traverse to involve themselves actively in the interview. Question 21 in the second interview for example, shows Donna actively pursuing meaning (and myself trying to be more explicit), firstly juggling her interpretation of the question and then her approach to find an answer as follows:

I: Do you think a language teacher should only teach their first or ‘native’ language or would it be beneficial to have a teacher who speaks the language being taught as a second language?

D: Did you just contradict yourself or am I listening to a contradiction

I: (...) no, it is a hard sentence (making it in to) if you’ve got a, if you’re going to learn a language, if you’ve got a language teacher umm, if if for example you have… if you go to Singapore and you’re going to teach English (yep) ahh that’s not very good, wait a second, if, if you are going to learn Chinese (yes) would you prefer to have a Chinese person,

D: to teach

I: which is actually the meaning of native speaker ok

D: yes

I: would you prefer to have a Chinese person teaching you the language or would you prefer an Australian who has learnt Chinese to teach you the language?

D: Totally understand where you’re coming from now, umm I, that’s a good question too, because ultimately, my first thought was that I liked the Chinese person umm teaching me properly cos it’s the, it’s all on the pronunciation isn’t it’s it’s we can might be able to talk their language and that’s what the kids have always said, we might be able to say the words but whether we’re if we’re not pronouncing them right then they’re not really saying the words you just umm so maybe umm, maybe I should just stick with the Chinese, have the Chinese person, but then we’ve got to understand that so, hmm, cos I’ve got a friend that’s a French, she comes from France, and she teaches, she teaches French over here and when she goes to France she teaches English I think (aha) she does exactly that so (yeah) and cos she’s from France, I love the way it listening to her talk and she’s, and I
think she’s a very good teacher like mm and so she’d be the person I’d choose to learn Franch, French (see appendix C, pp.101-102).

At first Donna is unable to understand the perspective of the question, or the two types of teacher I am questioning her about. In rephrasing the question to include a speculative situation (as well as Donna’s persistence in staying focused on the question as I rephrase), Donna makes sense of the question, considers it legitimate and proceeds to make further sense of her expected language learning priorities. The journey of assessment towards her final answer shows us that Donna has possibly not had the idea that there are different types of language teachers before. Nonetheless, she is interested to reflect upon her answer. In doing so she firstly relies upon her children’s learning experiences and opinions regarding pronunciation and the need to be understood, assuming the native speaker would have better pronunciation. Finally however, it is the personal relationship and trust in her French friend as a good teacher that leads her towards her choice. Donna has thereby used this inquiry to learn about language, firstly in comprehending the question and then in proceeding to find her answer.

Likewise, Joe and George eagerly interpret the questions, making sense of their experiences with language whilst consolidating their sense of self. As discussed above (see section 3.3.2), Joe’s answer to question 9 in the second interview provides an impression of Joe’s personal priorities in regard to language. Joe feels he would like to have the opportunity to understand his world differently by being a part of another social group or community. By exploring this question and giving an answer he identifies difference as interesting and something worth learning about. Even though he is not committed to learning an L2, Joe is interested to experience a different mindset through a language other than the one he is familiar with. From this dialogue it appears that Joe sees benefits in learning about and understanding a multilingual mindset.

Collaborative discussions based around semi-structured interviews provide the monolingual participants with an opportunity to slowly develop and become familiar with their point of view. Therefore, when the subject of the discussion is

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11 Piller (2002) explains this is not always the case.
taken-for-granted or less immediately accessible to the participant, the interview provides the means in which to ingest and negotiate meaning. The methodology used in this research thereby highlights the interview as a valuable place to react, think, discuss and develop a personal linguistic narrative or story.

This research has thereby generated an approach where the taken-for-granted concept of language can be approached and researched without vilification (see section 1.4.1), benefitting both monolingual participants and the researcher. Through genuine, interactional dialogue or ‘ongoing talk’ (Richards 2006) with the researcher the monolingual participants find the opportunity to learn about language. The informal, natural discourse used when talking about art, language and identity motivates the participants to engage and feel appreciated by the researcher as reflective, insightful individuals.

4.3 Deflecting questions: Donna, Olivia and Jody

The methodological framework used in this research prompts the researcher to discuss the task of analyzing expressions ‘given off’ (see section 2.2.4.2) by both the research participants and the researcher. Although the researcher is expected to stay neutral to the topic of inquiry and not influence the responses, it cannot be expected that an interview will deliver a convivial discussion and provide noteworthy outcomes if the researcher does not play an interactive and at times, subjective role (see section 2.2.4). For example, during the semi-structured inquiries, quick and easy rote-like replies, laughter and tone changes draw attention to the participant’s experience of the interview. The interviewer interprets these expressions as for example, signs of interest, boredom, enthusiasm or confusion. Additionally, the signals ‘mark’ (see section 2.2.5) the narrative, challenging the researcher to respond in a way deemed appropriate. This could mean proceeding with the interview by engaging with further discussion, changing the topic, or making an adjustment to the intensity of the inquiry.
4.3.1 Reviewing ‘marked’ responses

During the second interview in particular, I notice that Donna, Jody and Olivia seem to be using various techniques, which separate them from the context of the interview. Not only has Donna brought a threading activity to the interview, on occasions she appears to withdraw from the conversation, uncomfortable in trying to find replies to questions she doesn’t really know. Whilst not knowing the answer is a legitimate response, in these instances Donna also turns the inquiry onto me and asks me for answers. This can be seen in the following examples:

D: I think the younger you are, is the easier so and especially when you’re talking y’know, perhaps a couple of different languages and stuff. I think everything in life is, is easier learnt young, but I’m not 100% sure that’s right. That’s just what I’ve felt umm, it’s like a lot of kids that grow up in an ethnic family and they, they grow up straight away speaking the two languages, and it’s just I think I think that, I’ve always looked at that, well that’s probably, as an example of that being an easier time to to learn I guess, I don’t, is it? Do you know? Have you done any tests? (See appendix C, p.97).

D: Umm, I guess it’s I guess when they’re speaking one language they should stay with that language unless they speak, oh I don’t know, why would they be yeah mixing them up, I don’t know, are they showing off to the other person are they? (See appendix C, p.98).

D: To me it’d be from where you are born, your ancestry rather than, umm that would be my instinct to say, but I don’t know, do you, is that? (See appendix C, p.105).

During these instances I feel inclined to respond, but being interested to learn Donna’s opinion, I feel it inappropriate to give my opinion and possibly influence Donna’s understandings.

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12 The second interview appeared more demanding for Donna, Jody and Olivia with less art related references than the first interview (see section 2.3.1).
Olivia asks fewer questions, but uses final-like phrases that I feel act as signals to stop me from asking further question regarding to the topic at hand. These phrases seem to finish the conversation off with comments about how much Olivia appreciates another language, or phrases that strongly persist with explanations of not knowing. For example, as described in section 3.3.1, in question 12 of the second interview I acknowledge that Olivia enjoys experiencing code-switching, but when trying to expand on her response, I am unsuccessful.

I: Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person to mix their languages when speaking or do you think they should keep their languages separate?

O: No I think it’s um, I think it’s a beautiful way to express yourself, to cross over and choose different words from whatever language that that you think might be right in the right, how people how clearly everyone else understands you might be another thing but, I love it when someone crosses over

I: right, even if the understanding isn’t there?

O: Yeah, I think it’s quite beautiful (see appendix C, p.214).

Likewise in question 23 of the second interview, I ask Olivia, “Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual should be brought up speaking 2 languages?” to which she replies:

O: Um well that would be the ideal I think

I: Do you think that’s an easy job to do?

O: Umm well it’s hard for, I’d have to say, when I don’t, y’know only a single language speaker, but umm I don’t really know whether it would be hard or not, I’m not really sure whether it would be hard or not Lyndal, I mean, you’d think if that’s just the way you’re raised and that’s what you know then no it’s not that difficult, but I don’t know (see appendix C, p.217).

Once again, I was interested to understand Olivia’s reply and wanted to question further, but yet when asking, “Do you think that’s an easy job to do?” Olivia answers she doesn’t know. In fact, from Olivia’s tone, body language and the use of my name in her response, the impression I receive is to move on to the next question.
Jody also replies with responses expressing *not knowing*. She openly exclaims, “but who knows, who knows” (see appendix C, p.148 and p.157) or, “oh god, I have no idea, … but I have no idea if that’s true. I wouldn’t have a clue, again I have never tried to tackle any other language” (see appendix C, p.149). “I don’t know, it’s never happened to me” (see appendix C, p.156) or “…that’s as far as I know, which isn’t very far” (see appendix C, p.148).

In addition Jody injects humor and jokes into the interview. In fact, in the second interview Jody answers over half the questions with jokes or laughter, with questions 5, 8, 10 and 13 using terms related to ‘wank’ in the answer (see section 3.2.1.1). Like Donna and Olivia, Jody feels she is without linguistic experience, but in contrast with Donna and Olivia, Jody does not appear harassed by her lack of knowledge. She enjoys the interview and remains engaged, joking, laughing and even switching dialects at the end of two of her responses.13

Whilst happily absorbed, Jody does however appear to be deflecting the interview questions, more interested in creating an atmosphere of informality between researcher and participant. These humorous snippets appear as effective diversions throughout the interview, covering up any concerns Jody may have of not knowing about language. Additionally, they remove any threat Jody may feel in being, what she considers ‘unknowledgeable’ in linguistic research and perhaps letting the researcher down. So whilst I ask Jody’s opinion, Jody appears somewhat uncomfortable in being confronted by a ‘knowledgeable’ linguistic researcher in a situation where she is unable to participate in what she considers a meaningful way. Whilst this perception may be influenced by an expectation that researchers only ask questions of those who have answers (even though it has been explained to the students that I am interested in their experiences as single language speakers, not as multilingual speakers), the reactions given persuade me to believe that Jody believes she should know more about language.

13 She embellishes a cockney like accent in question 21 “no, no, in my ’umble opinion, no” (see appendix C, p.155) and uses a standard English accent at the end of question 23 “yes really educated guess” (see appendix C, p.156).
From these examples, the verbal and given off expressions I receive from Donna, Olivia and Jody work as methods to avoid the linguistic discussion and the possibility of appearing unknowledgeable in the interviews. The topic of ‘language’ appears an area they are not always able or willing to present opinions about. The impression I am given is that these three participants don’t, but believe they should know about language.

4.3.2 Socio-cultural expectations ‘to know’ about language

By interpreting the responses given by Jody, Donna and Olivia we learn that these three individuals appear without enough linguistic knowledge to feel confident or comfortable being placed in front of a linguistic researcher. Importantly, whilst lacking the linguistic authority to give opinions about language and those who speak an L2, these participants do not show evidence of a mindset, which is negative towards multilingual speakers and those able to learn a second language. In fact those able to use more than one language are held in high esteem (as shown in sections 3.2.1 and 3.3.1) and perceived as fortunate to be linguistically (or academically) able to make the exotic sounds of another language and experience another realm of being. In these interviews Jody and Donna in particular are not only individuals struggling with personal experiences marked by self-esteem, self-confidence and perceived self-efficacy (see section 2.1.2.2), but they are also constrained by socio-cultural expectations ‘to know’ or have ability in another language. With a socio-cultural value system, placing a premium on active multiculturalism and valuing individuals who speak more than one language it makes sense that these three participants feel that they should know more about language. It follows that Jody, Donna and Olivia would feel able to contribute to linguistic research if they could present themselves as individuals who know about language, that is, L2 speakers.

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14 In discussing a symbolic systems of the senses and adolescent language learners Kramsch (2006, 102) makes a similar point in saying “Seduced by the foreign sounds, rhythms and meanings and by the ‘coolness’ of native speakers, many adolescent learners strive to enter new, exotic worlds where they can be, or at least pretend to be, someone else, where they too can become ‘cool’ and inhabit their bodies in more powerful ways” (see section 3.3.1).
Although this conjecture is less overtly discoverable in the context of the remaining five participants, it does appear that the monolinguals in this research may have a sense of not measuring up to their multilingual peers. This is an important point when considering the discussion in chapter 1 (see section 1.4.1). As Clyne’s ‘monolingual mindset’ doesn’t separate a monolingual socio-political arena of monolingualism with individual mindsets, it is assumed that monolinguals share the socio-cultural perspective that places English at the top of the linguistic hierarchy (see also De Swaan 2001). In this study however, contributing to linguistic research means individual, personal opinions about language. Therefore I now ask what is *language* for these monolingual participants?

### 4.4 Presenting a monolingual sense of language

As expected, the monolingual participants have rarely genuinely considered the concept of language (see section 2.2). Even Sam, for whom language is a key factor in his struggle to construct acceptable identities that take into account his Indigenous background (see section 3.2.2), does not consciously describe language as an element of personal identification. In question 7 of the first interview he says:

> I’ve never thought as language as a thing to me umm because language is usually generalized as something that you speak or whatever but now that I’ve actually thought about it I think language is more than that, I think it’s, like I said, like music, that’s probably the heaviest language I’ve ever spoken in my life (see appendix C, p.259).

Similarly, George explains, “I just kinda take that for granted” (see appendix C, p. 112). Donna has problems with the question, asking if the question means “language as… a different language?” explaining that she is trying to find the “right language” (see appendix C, p. 88) by using different mediums in her art practice. Jody and Donna also explain that they don’t really know what language is. Mona and Peta briefly talk about language as a form of communication and then use ‘visual language’ as does Joe, to show an understanding of the many forms of language. Alternatively, Olivia explains less about what she thinks in regard to the concept of language, presenting herself as an admirer of those who speak different languages.
Considering that sociolinguistic research often depicts language, and especially spoken language as an important element of a speaker’s identity or self, it appears that the monolingual participants generally do not consciously associate language with personal relations of identity or cultural alliance. It could therefore be suggested that Clyne’s ‘monolingual mindset’, which “views multilingualism as outside the possible experience of ‘real Australians’ or even in the too-hard basket” (Clyne 2005, xi) has some truth, as these monolinguists appear unable to imagine or empathize with issues of identity related to a multilingual speaker’s culture and linguistic repertoire. On the other hand, however, in this research the monolingual participants are not attempting to assume that they have the linguistic knowledge or awareness to answer the questions posed. They are not suggesting they have the skills to understand multilingualism or the multilingual speaker. In fact, all but George present uneasy at times, feeling they don’t know the answers and are unqualified to answer because they don’t want to presume they have knowledge about something they take-for-granted.

In presenting a monolingual sense of language I interpret two quite contrary understandings of what language means to the monolingual participants. The first I classify as a ‘socially-integrative’ understanding, the predominant characteristics being communication and interactional social activity. The second meaning is concerned with the written, standardized, grammatical characteristics of language and conveys an authoritative attitude of knowing. I call this a ‘standardized-authoritative’ response to language. Whilst looking at these two ways to respond to the concept of language, I compare Clyne’s expectations towards those with a ‘monolingual mindset’ with findings from the data.

4.4.1 A socially-integrative understanding

In discussing the values of plurilingualism, Clyne (2005, 31-34) firstly reflects on “what it is that language does”. In answering he expresses a belief that the most important function of language is communication. Interestingly, this is also the conclusion I take from the interviews with the monolingual participants. These insights become apparent in question 3 of the second interview when I ask, “How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?” Here, the participants explain their answers, reasoning the
importance of social priorities regarding communication and ‘getting by’ in a foreign country. Donna explains, “Oh I don’t think you have to be able to speak it well” (see appendix C, p.94) and similarly Peta says, “to be able to be conversational” (see appendix C, p.235). Jody says, “as long as you can communicate” (see appendix C, p.148) and Olivia responds, to “understand and be understood” (see appendix C, p.211). Joe explains, “to be able to communicate on like a basic level or be able to, yeah just be able to get by, by speaking another language” (see appendix C, p.169). Even Mona who explains, “I’ve never been fluent, I don’t and I haven’t been travelling yet, I don’t know what is y’know, getting by and what isn’t” (see appendix C, p.193), focuses on language as a form of communication that one needs whilst travelling.

Likewise, Sam reflects upon a personal wish to merge within a social environment when explaining his notion regarding how well an L2 speaker should be able to speak a second language. Sam’s linguistic aim is to be able to integrate socially, rather than be singled out and identified as a tourist. Socially, Sam wishes to be like the others and thereby accepted as equal.

So, although the monolingual participants are not linguists and do not discuss the grammatical intricacies, vocabulary prerequisites and pronunciation concerns involved when learning a new language, they support the same fundamental belief of language as an important socially interactive form of communication, even without the having learnt an L2.

Whilst this question was asked with the expectation that the participants would use this occasion to comment upon an ideal competence somehow related to their personal degree of linguistic fluency in speaking English, the monolingual participants were not interested in rationalizing their positions and explaining why they didn’t recognize themselves as speakers of two languages, even though they had some knowledge of a second language through schooling. On the other hand, when the discussion relates to two languages, (both a known and a less-known language) Donna, Peta, Jody, Olivia, Joe, Sam and Mona relate to how well by aligning their linguistic preferences with the social practice of communicating, prioritizing a successful understanding between interlocutors.
George however, takes a different approach, identifying a further interesting consideration when answering my question. In fact, he takes the underlying conjecture in my question as incorrect stating, “maybe not how well, it’s like how often they use it in their daily life” (see appendix C, p.122). In considering a definition of what makes someone able to state that they speak two languages, George doesn’t support the proposition I make that ‘how well’ is an indicator of acceptance into the category, ‘speaker of two languages’ but prefers to look at ‘how often’ the opportunity arises to speak the second language. Competence is displaced by frequency\(^\text{15}\) by George, who also favours a social, interactional view of language. Additionally, like Clyne, George looks at possibilities for discourse within Australia rather than reflecting on opportunities to speak an L2 in other countries when answering this question. Therefore, we learn that George agrees with Clyne that it is through the opportunity of using an L2 in one’s local community that a language is able to survive (see section 3.2.3).

In rationalizing the social-integrative approach to language, the monolinguals support the use of two languages in a community, not overtly differentiating between learners or established speakers. The monolingual participants show no attitude of authority in this respect, in fact difference in competence is not seen as a concern because the priority is communication. This attitude of acceptance alters however when I ask the participants to reflect upon the current changes to the English language because of the developments in social media.

4.4.2 A standardized-authoritative understanding

A standardized-authoritative understanding of language is based upon the participants’ depiction of written words and sentences, grammatical standards and examples of texts as written forms of social media. In discussing this view of language I point out that it is through answers to question 13 of the second interview asking, “Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?” that I am able to show that the monolingual participants generally take an authoritative stance when describing the

\(^{15}\) This is an interesting approach when considering the hotly debated topic of competence and native speaker ideals in linguistic research.
need for individuals to have proficiency in different forms of written English. George, Mona and Sam explain that whilst they understand that subscribers to social media benefit from colloquial shortenings and grammatical changes, this freedom of linguistic expression should not take precedence over the ability to use the correct grammatical structures and linguistic standards when required in formal settings. They believe that speakers should be able to recognize when and how to use each form of English dependent upon the given context. George explains:

…but if they couldn’t carry their correct grammatical and spelling English into like a formally written letter and be able to spell things correctly and grammatically…(see appendix C, p. 129).

It therefore appears that Clyne (2005, 30) has a point when he says, “the idea of having ‘perfect’ and ‘uncontaminated’ command of a language is a misconception of the monolingual mindset”. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that in answering this question, the monolingual participants are exhibiting knowledge of linguistic complexities within their familiar language. They are not trying to find “…something wrong with plurilingualism…” (Clyne 2005, 27).

The standardized-authoritative approach brings out the participant’s sense of ownership or self-righteousness when discussing the language they are familiar with. In responding, all the participants but Joe show tangible emotions of disdain and horror at the idea that English has undergone this transformation. Peta is the most passionate, reflecting on her various concerns for eight minutes, more than a fifth of the interview time. She explains:

Yes, it bothers me hugely, although it’s another language really I suppose, but I guess we should be learning but I hate it, yeah I mean I think it really just ruins the English language, I just think it’s horrible haha ….it’s kind of like it’s really lazy language, I think and it seems really uneducated….if it really becomes ingrained there’ll be people who are young who are writing books like that and not thinking twice….it sounds outrageous to us now but so many things sound outrageous and then they happen (see appendix C, pp. 241-245).

Feeling a sense of satisfaction and pride in her personal ability to use English, Peta’s sense of the English language is threatened when she imagines the linguistic changes that could become commonplace. Therefore she does not want others to use
a “degenerative” form of English, which may influence uneducated, lazy and incorrect forms of English to dominate.

This question thereby interprets both the participant’s understanding and acceptance of linguistic change within the formal language system they are familiar with and their attitude towards others who are not able to keep the prescribed linguistic rules. With all of the participants aware of a standardized understanding of written English, all but Joe, who doesn’t use social media and says, “yeah, it doesn’t really get to me”, acknowledge their dislike and disapproval of those using variation, grammatical differences or making mistakes in English.

4.4.3 A sense of linguistic authority

In discussing Clyne’s ‘monolingual mindset’, it is perhaps a sense of linguistic authority or righteousness that has been Clyne’s primary argument against monolinguals in the past. His monolinguals appear with an unacceptable authority, opinionated and willing to speak negatively about multilingual speakers even though they are speakers of a single language and without knowledge of multilingualism. This is clearly not the case with the monolinguals in this research. In fact, as mentioned above (see section 4.4) the monolinguals I present have no interest in sounding like they know about multilingualism or language in general.

Whilst Peta, Mona, George and Sam show a sense of authority when discussing the written form of English, Donna, Jody and Olivia, on the other hand, do not wish to presume authority, even towards the language they use everyday. This difference in approach has been discussed as a deflection in the responses (see section 4.3) given by Donna, Olivia and Jody, but it could also be described as a difference in linguistic authority. Looking at question 13 it becomes clear that Donna, Olivia and Jody may at first express authority when answering the question, but remove it quickly from their discourse. Donna for example, begins her tirade, saying, “you wonder where the heck it’s goin’, what’s going to be affected later on”, but changes her approach in the next sentence, rationalising her attitude and removing any sense of unwarranted judgment from her response. She says:

I guess we’ve just got to go with the times umm I try not to be like I used to think my mother was all the time …. me being nearly 50 I’d love em to speak proper and
love umm a lot of the social media stuff not to be around, but at the same time I just have to remind myself that it’s no different to something else we were probably doing at the time and y’know our swear language, our swear words aren’t even, we don’t see them as swear words anymore that we were growing up with when the words that we really detested are now the ones that are in common and, and it’s just like ohhh so I’m trying, I’m trying to be one of those mothers that just understands (see appendix C, p.99).

Donna quickly dismisses her outburst and in doing so, disregards her opinion, explaining it must be motivated by an age-old discord between generations. Likewise, Olivia removes any authority that may be present in her response by converting any discouraging opinion of the practices used in social media into criticism of her negative approach towards change. As explained in section 3.3.1, she says:

Umm, some times it does, but then I worry that I’m sounding like a grumpy old woman and umm just think that everything is in constant flux so you’ve just got to roll with it to a certain extent (see appendix C, p.214).

Jody also uses the ‘old-age’ approach saying, “that just shits me but it’s probably because I’m getting old”. When I try to question further, asking, “why does it shit you?” Jody also responds by becoming critical of herself and refusing to exhibit any authority of knowing in her answer. She says:

I don’t know, I’m contradicting myself again as saying I don’t give a crap about what you do with English and then saying that the simplification of English shits me (mm) I just think it’s lazy to be perfectly honest and I don’t understand, I don’t get it (see appendix C, p.152).

From these examples we see that although Donna, Jody and Olivia firstly react with clear intention to express their meaning, when attempting to rationalise their responses they soon discredit and dismiss their opinions. So whilst Donna, Jody and Olivia firstly feel justified to answer with the authority of knowing the language they use and having a right to their opinions, they are also willing to concede that they may be wrong, and that they really are not sure of how to judge the situation. In contrast to Clyne’s depiction of monolinguals (see section 1.4.3) these monolinguals are reflective and self critical of their responses. They are clearly not
the outspoken, confident monolinguals with a dominating, xenophobic ‘monolingual mindset’. In fact they appear more concerned in accepting difference and in exploring why they may be wrong, than in persecuting others.

4.4.4 Loss of minority languages

Loss of minority language is a concern, which pervades multilingual research (see section 1.4.2). The decrease in the number of languages spoken in both Australia and the world at large is in fact, one of the grounds Clyne gives when appealing to linguists, policy makers and educators to generate awareness and solve the problem of the ‘monolingual mindset’ (see section 1.4.3). His plea is for the maintenance of languages and cultures, and for the minority and indigenous speakers to be respected and appreciated. He explains:

It has been estimated that between 75 percent and 90 percent of the world’s languages will disappear within the present century. These are largely indigenous languages in the Americas and Australia, which are no longer being transmitted to the next generation….The loss of the languages constitutes a loss of cultures to the world as well as to the communities and the individuals (Clyne 2005, 55)

We might therefore infer from Clyne that monolinguals could be expected to show little concern about language loss, particularly because they are unable to understand the connection of language to culture and personal identity (see sections 2.2 and 4.4). However, in asking the monolingual participants, “Do you think it is possible to lose a language?” in the second interview, I find that it is possibly because they don’t understand the personal and cultural connection a multilingual has with the languages spoken that they are unable to empathise.

Of the participants, it is only Jody who shares the same understanding regarding language loss as I, answering emphatically:

J: Yes! I think indigenous folk have proven that fact, that it’s possible to lose a language, they are desperately trying to get back any language that they can find so (that’s right) it’s a shame and horrible thing that’s happening (see appendix C, p.149).
However, whilst Jody is aware of the problems indigenous cultures are facing, the other participants perceive loss of a language differently. This does not however infer that the other participants do not know about language loss in the context both Jody and I perceive. What it does mean is that the participants are more focused on their own personal experiences and perceptions of the questions. This can be seen in recounts of the participants’ experiences, which describe alternative notions of language loss. From these answers we learn that Mona’s childhood experiences with story telling lead her to interpret linguistic loss by relating it to children who no longer benefit from storytelling in the home. On the other hand, Olivia, George and Joe speak about language loss by reflecting on experiences with friends and family. Olivia speaks of her grandfather who returned to Wales after 40 years, encouragingly still able to speak “fluent Welsh”. George speaks of a friend who forgot or “dropped” speaking English whilst living in France. Joe draws attention to his mother from South Africa with the opinion that she seems to have lost her ability to speak Afrikaans. Sam speaks of his own experiences learning three languages as a child, stating he hasn’t remembered any of them, so believes therefore that it is possible to lose languages as you grow up because you just let them slip. Peta is without a personal example, but offers a further possibility, saying:

like say someone who might migrate to a country and then learn that country’s language, as they get very old and they have memory problems or something they completely forget that language that they’ve been speaking for 40 years and they go back to their mother tongue (see appendix C, p.238).

Importantly, there is no example where the participant’s concept of language loss is considered a good, positive or beneficial idea. Although the monolingual participants have not understood language loss in the context expected, the participants do not have an attitude preferring monolinguialism or wanting languages other than English to become irrelevant or replaceable.

What these answers portray is the monolingual’s need to depend upon personal experiences and what they know when relating to this question. This is shown in question 12, when I ask Joe, “do you think it’s ok for a multilingual person, a person who speaks a few different languages to mix their language or do you think
they should stick to the one language when they’re speaking?” In answering Joe shows he is aware of language loss amongst cultures, but does not discuss it at any length. Whilst he thinks this question is interesting, he comes to the conclusion that even though the evolution of a language would seem to be a natural process (and therefore acceptable and difficult to alter), it is hard to accept the disappearance of a language. He answers:

J: Oh that’s interesting, hahaha that’s really interesting. I know that people in Cape Town in South Africa they tend to speak where they mix English and Afrikaans together a lot and it becomes like a sub language of English and Afrikaans where

I: like a pidgin

J: yeah so I don’t know if that’s a good thing or a bad thing, all the mixing, I don’t know, like

I: do you care? do you think that the language is becoming less defined, that they should keep it (…)

J: Yeah I think they should be yeah I think, shouldn’t like disregard the original language, but I don’t know, saying that, it’s going to evolve naturally anyway so I guess it’s yeah there’s two sides to it isn’t there, like you don’t want the threat of, like the idea of a language disappearing is like, that’s quite a horrible thing but yeah at the same time like, yeah it seems like that’s just the way nature evolves and yeah (see appendix C, p.173-174).

Importantly, although language loss does not appear a subject, which is deeply relevant to Joe, this does not mean that he is not empathetic towards Clyne’s concerns. In fact, Joe (see section 3.3.2) presents as exactly the type of inquiring and non-judgmental monolingual that would impress Clyne.

Clyne’s interpretation of a ‘monolingual mindset’ projects the belief that English speaking monolinguals would not be concerned about the loss of a language because their mindset presents an attitude that one language is best (see section 1.4.3). However, in this research we find that the monolingual participants actively engage with questions regarding language loss, presenting a variety of experiences and an array of personal responses towards the undesired ideal of losing a language.
4.5 Attitudes to language and language learning

Through the analysis of linguistic selves we begin to comprehend the monolingual participants’ notion of what language is and their many attitudes towards it. By analyzing past experiences and constructing an idea of the participants’ expected future L2 self we find attitudes explaining perceived inability, lack of interest, living in a country that doesn’t necessitate language learning, feelings of inequality, and time restraints to commit, as reasons why the monolingual participants have not prioritized learning an L2. The monolingual participants are not negative towards language, multilingual speakers, the linguistic research or the researcher, even though some of the questions in the second interview make some uncomfortable (as explained above in section 4.3). These attitudes defy resemblance to Clyne’s portrayal of a ‘monolingual mindset’ as the participants do not present with an overarching need to be “seeing everything in terms of a single language” (2008, 348) (see section 1.4.3) or to believe that “…monolingualism is a normal state of affairs” (Clyne 2005, 27). In fact, these monolinguals are aware of languages and linguistic diversity and are not interested in portraying their monolingual experience as the best linguistic possibility.

4.6 Conclusion: portraying the mindsets of monolinguals

In researching the attitudes of monolinguals to language, I have shown the concept of language to be problematic, unfamiliar and even mystical for the participants. Importantly, I have also identified that, given the opportunity to discuss and examine language and difference, this small group of Australian self-identifying monolinguals are socially aware and supportive of multilingual communities, the languages they speak, and Australia as a progressive multicultural nation.

In examining the mindsets of eight monolinguals in Adelaide, Australia we learn of language in a functional social sense. It is not clothed in ideas of competency, cultural affiliation, discussions of belonging and identity, or processes of learning. Language is defined much more simplistically as an important form of communication. This does not however assume that monolingual attitudes towards language are simplistic, or that they share similar mindsets.
In this small, but in depth analysis I reveal that monolinguals may lack an L2, but this does not unconditionally result in a mindset that criticizes or condemns multilingual speakers, or derogatory views regarding multilingualism.

These Australian monolinguals value multiculturalism. They are envious, appreciative and curious of those who speak a different language, aware that they would benefit from a process of engagement with another language. They want to know more, yet are not committing to learning an L2 at this point.

This study is however, only a pilot study for further research and has never been anticipated as a representative study of monolinguals in Australia. In fact the alternative socio-cultural environment that the participants engage in could be considered supportive of multiculturalism, diversity, individualism and progressive ideals.

Living in Adelaide, Australia, the monolingual participants are familiar with pro-multicultural values as their social environment depends upon multicultural interactions on a day-to-day basis. From the participants’ point of view, even though English is the medium for communication, their lives are positively engaged with multilingualism and multiculturalism.

Considering that these monolingual participants are positively inclined towards cultural and linguistic difference, learning an L2 appears less important as a barometer of attitudinal difference between monolingual and multilingual individuals. Therefore the core expectation in the literature that monolingual attitudes towards multilingualism will only become positive if monolinguals learn an L2 would benefit from further research where English-speaking monolinguals in different sociological contexts in Adelaide and Australia are explored.

At a time where the rate of societal change appears to be faster than ever before, review of past ideals and accepted norms can benefit research with fresh, invigorative perspectives. Understanding monolinguals in the global twenty-first century as individuals with a linguistic perspective, rather than with problematic linguistic ideals is just one step towards true acceptance of diversity.
Appendix A: Interview 1

1. Firstly, could you tell me a little about yourself, your cultural background and any experience with language/ languages that you have had?

2. Could you tell me about the body of art you are working on?

3. Do you think your personal experiences are important in the creation of this work and the choices you’ve made?

4. Do you think there has been a particular experience that you have had which has been pivotal or somehow relevant for this work?

5. Have you come across any obstacles that may have made you change your intentions?

6. What have you thought about when deciding how to portray your ideas visually?

7. If I were to ask you what does ‘language’ mean to you, how would you answer?

8. Do you think this artwork explains in some way your experiences with language, culture or identity?

9. Have you had any thoughts about ‘language’ in particular during the development of your piece?

10. How have you identified your role in the creation of this artwork?

Have you questioned who you are in the creation of this artwork?

11. Is this artwork of personal importance, or does it have broader implications?

At the moment, what do you think you want to say with this body of work?
Appendix B: Interview 2

1. Did you hesitate at all when you wrote ‘1’ for the question “how many languages do you speak”?

2. Why do you think you haven’t learnt a second language?

3. How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?

4. Have you thought about language, culture or identity since the first interview?

5. What does ‘Artwank’ mean to you?

6. Which language do you think is the hardest language to learn?

7. Is it possible to lose a language?

8. Do you think that everyone has an equal ability to learn a language or are there some people who are better at learning languages than others?

9. What would it mean to you if you could speak another language?

10. What is the best age for learning a language?

11. Do you think you can be too old to learn a language?

12. Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person to mix their languages when speaking or do you think it is important to keep languages separate?

13. Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?

14. Do you think Australians benefit or are impeded by the diversity of languages around us?

15. Do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand near you?
16. In what environment would someone learn to speak a language best?

17. What does the term ‘native speaker’ mean to you?

18. Do you think it is possible to be a native speaker of more than one language?

19. Does a native speaker make mistakes in his/ her language?

20. Do you think someone can become a native speaker of a language if they haven’t grown up with the language, but learn it later in life?

21. Would you prefer to have a teacher who has speaks the language being taught as a first or second language?

22. If you were going to have brain surgery would you prefer a surgeon who spoke one or more than one language?

23. Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual should be brought up speaking 2 languages?

24. Do you have facebook friends, friends on social media from different countries who speak different languages?
Appendix C: Transcripts

Key to the transcripts

(...)
Inaudible or otherwise unclear

(____)
Interjection from interlocutor

……
Discourse not transcribed\textsuperscript{16}

I:
The interviewer/ researcher

All other participants are denoted with the first initial of their pseudonym.

Questions are given in \textbf{bold text}. In Interview 1 the questions are often asked in the course of the discussion.

\textsuperscript{16} Overly personal information, which could identify participants and was not relevant for this thesis has been excluded.
D: I am, hence the swirling, hence the spiraling, like, where I’m at in life

I: Ahh, that’s an interesting thing isn’t it

D: it is, my emotional journey

……

I: so you’re Australian, you’ve you were born in Mt Gambier, you’ve been here the whole time you

D: yep, generation I didn’t know what to write, I don’t know, how, how many generations am I

I: doesn’t matter

D: Ok, my, I was a convict on my on one side and a good person on the other, so..

I: right no it was just more to do with having a general feel of how long, how Australian you are, that’s all, that’s why I put that one in, because I expected to get a lot of people who have different cultures……

D: And country Australia, I grew up, so in the country, so I’m a country girl

……

1. So firstly could you tell me a little bit about yourself, your cultural background, any experiences with language, languages that you’ve had, just a general where are you up to I guess

D: No experience with language, so I, I didn’t study any language, I was supposed to study French at school, but that was a lesson that I played up in, so I didn’t study French at school, um, so I grew up in the country, um and I have never studied in my life, I’ve messed around, like I’ve said, I messed around at school so I just got out of school, got married, had kids at the age, well got married at 20 and had kids a couple of years later, umm so I’ve got a 26 year old down to an 18 year old, 4 of them…mmm so yeah…lots of.. they’re spiraling in different ways as well
I. Spiraling seems to be the thing, spiraling

D: Spiraling is my world, yes, I’m trying to, I’m trying to make sense of where I’m at to push myself forward I guess, umm, and what I’ve, I didn’t realize art would have such an impact on me, I didn’t realize it would, it was probably what I needed to do, it was.. um.. it, ahh, I was abused when I was young, um, so and I’ve been made to face up to it, so hence the self help books that I’ve got here on this spiraling case was supposed to fix me

I: the five love languages

D: I’ve never read them, I bought them, they fixed me for about 5 minutes when I bought them thinking I’m going to get something out of this, this is going to help me, but ahh… I would never

I: so now you can play with them

D: I would never have believed how much this I think can… maybe help me, maybe so, so these books, I bought them and obviously paid good money for them, they were new books um and I’ve never been able to take them off my shelves so I’ve had them for a long time now um and hence I’ve taken them off my shelf, so in airing myself I guess so its my little spiral of self help emotional journey, emotional phases of a woman’s life and probably not just a woman’s life, probably anybody’s life, but I’m living a woman’s life so that’s what I’m dealing with hmm and I’m dealing with the fact that a man, having a man abuser I guess, so even though I am happily married, I’ve been married for 29 years umm probably probably, 28 years something like that um .. and a humm, but ahh I still have anger I guess in me or emo a like a yeah er I still have nightmares put it that way so umm and I’m trying to yeah face them now, like really face them and and tell myself I’m ok, like get my get the belief back so..

……...

2. So your body of art, that’s, this is your side of the room I guess

D: Yep, from the door.. so the spiraling
I: Is it, like, would you like to tell me about it, you are talking about spiraling, you are talking about the essence of who you are, identifying, acknowledging, looking at, umm

D: So, well, I didn’t start the year.. spiraling… I started the year, I just took a heap of snapshots of holes, cos I’ve always been intrigued with holes, had no idea why, so I just thought well I’ll start with a wall of my snapshots on my phone and see if that gets me somewhere and I’ve been, so I work physically, we look after strata units, we caretake, maintain units on the outside and a I’ve gotta always do the bin enclosures in these places because they are the messiest things and I just kept looking at these bottle caps and I thought they are sooo pretty when they are in just a big pile of bin enclosures there’s just something about them, had no idea what I was going to do with them, I just started bringing them to school and I made these fun little shapes I created around my body, I did all sorts of things and then finally started with a cityscape really and then the reflection in the water was what the bottom was, but that wasn’t to stop there so hence I’ve just as I’ve found them I’ve grown and ahh..and I’ve crept through holes, I’m back into holes again so I’ve gone so it is me hiding from life, its from what I’ve what I so where I am at so far its me I’m crawling to safety, I’m getting you know in my safe, I’ve, like I said, married, in a safe house, I take kids in from the country and … they are a bit scared of the city and let em live with us for a while just to feel make them feel safe I’m sort of the nurturer y’know I’m always looking for another child to bring in so, it’s just I dunno, I’m crazy everyone says, my mum thinks I’m crazy umm

I: it’s interesting that you got back to the hole

D: And that’s what started the whole thing and then I had to look at what I’m doing and the holes and I’ve always drawn circles and everything I, I have appreciated in art has been circle mostly has been circular work so I’mg trying to discover why, why holes, why circular, and now we’re spiraling, so… ummm..

I: right, and you

D: Trying to breathe

I: yeah right, um
3. so your personal experiences… the question is, do you think your personal experiences are important in the creation of your work and the choices you’ve made, but you’ve answered that (yep) because obviously that’s all it is

D: Yep, they are they are massively important, umm, so I’m telling my story, now I think that is what art is in for for lots of people it is their story it’s their and it’s my emotional journey which I’ve also said haven’t I

I: no that’s good.

4. Do you think there has been a particular experience that has been pivotal or somehow relevant in this work, do you think it perhaps the abuse

D: It’s the abuse, totally umm, I still cry, I still nightmare, I still it still affects me and that’s 30 odd years later, like it’s just, I was 14 umm yeah so its it’s there..

I: it’s not fair is it

D: And it’s not fair and then look every job I applied for the boss would try to sleep with me so I’d quit, I’ve just had lots, there’s been lots of just little, babysitters, y’know I’ve had different things, and, but that that one emotional, that was tough, that, if, that, so I was just a pretty little blonde girl and yeah, people like to take advantage of that, so I didn’t think I was a pretty little blonde girl, I I thought I was deserving of everything I got mmm

I: yeah at that age, what can you do?

D: Mmm, so I have protected and over loved my kids and it was really hard to let go hence that’s why I’m at art school, because I had to get myself through this unhappy stage of them getting a life and I couldn’t control, I’m, my work is trying to control the uncontrollable would probably be the best way of summing up what I’m doing. Everything, everything I do just creates just, I’m bringing in like when I make something with something I tend to roll it all up and give it some sort of organic, I find these very organic and loving and…
I: It’s just that when you are talking it it becomes so clear that what you’re saying is so related to (someone leaves and says good bye) to your work and I’m just thinking, I I it’s one of my questions, umm

6. What have you thought about when deciding how to portray your ideas visually, so… from your words, from your ideas, you’re transposing it into a visual type of language, a visual type of expression. Have you thought about that process of change or have you thought about um as far as your experience, your language, your story, how you can make that, has that been an experience you have thought about?

D: Yeah, putting yourself in it, you’ve got to put yourself in your work, you’ve got to, to me, what I’ve learnt I guess at art school is everything I make, I, I somehow, my, my main objective is to try to, to try to find me in the work. You’ve still got to find the human, you’ve still got to find that touch, that that trace of me being inside that work, so that’s what I’m, and and that is so we work with a group of 5 of us have the one mentor at the moment and and she umm is, that’s her main focus, to get us to move, not just make a heap of thing, I’m good at making lots of things, but the thinking and the process and the why I’m making them I haven’t been so good at so now she’s got me to stop and contin just going from one thing to another but to actually finish something so that think about what that piece has and then take that to the next work so so now that’s what I’m very focused on is what I so so I had to make these things with the string hanging off and then I had to think of something that has that same feeling, well I went straight to the black because they had the strings hanging off and I thought well that’s nice, but then I’ve wrapped it up in my frustrations of technology because things weren’t it wasn’t working how I wanted to do, so I just started that with no idea what I was going to do with it, I just wanted to get the nice cords hanging off and doing what these were doing, but in my frustrations it became that.. so I’ve got no, you’ve never got any, when you’re work with found objects, which is what I am doing at the moment, umm and I can paint and I can draw but I’ve chosen at this stage this this way of telling my story, umm so it’s through through working with the material that the material end up ends up telling you what you’ve got to do with it, so it I don’t get to decide a thing, it gets to decide and
I: Ok, so that’s the other question I have, umm,

5. Have you come across any obstacles that may have made you change your intentions

D: Ever piece you see in here, every pi, nothing is as I planned it

I: Everything has a time when it is not what you expected it to be

D: Yep

I: it moves, it takes its own life

D: It does

I: It does. do you write about what’s going on, (yes), do you try and get it into words, (yes), does it make it clearer, (yes), does it make the process

D: And, and we have to ahh really study particular artists that work in similar ways and and but the key in its ok what I’ve found is to look at them, I was looking at artist after artist, but to but to delve deeper into their practice and why they do what they do has probably helped me more than anything in the world, yes, is getting into their emotional thoughts and and cos we, I might make something out of the same material as another artist, but will end up going in different directions coz their, their reasons they make stuff will be totally different to the reasons I make such stuff so I’ll make it with my raw emotion, they’ll make it with their um repetition of collecting and and we’re doing something different with it.. so..

I: No that’s really great. umm

8. So do you think if you’re to think about language, culture and identity umm, maybe identity is the strongest one that you can that you that you do identify with, like, do you think this artwork exper, like I’m trying also to think about the way you see language, the way you see culture, particularly living within Australia

D: Well culture’s important because it's the consumer culture I’m dealing with like, everything the everyday items I’m dealing with, umm basically I’m, I pick things
that are big in our society, recycling’s huge today in our cul in our consumer
culture, umm and the phone charges the same thing, so I’m using materials of the
everyday life, and then, so probably I’d need to do, I think that, the culture part
probably would be a stronger part in my work than the identity, I, identity speaks
emotion umm and what was the other one?

7, 9. I: umm language (language)

D: Well language is the way I describe, I’m telling us, you a story, I guess that’s,
but I’m not talking in a different language here, yeah I was thinking you meant
language as as a different language?

I: no no language can be

D: Umm no language, I’m trying to find the right language to tell this story and it
may end up being painting y’know I might just do all of this sculptural stuff and I
may end up going back to something, I have no idea, I don’t know where this is
taking me but I’m in for the ride

I: yeah, that’s interesting isn’t it yeah, the journey that you take and, it doesn’t
really matter, you get off at different places, you know you are heading somewhere

D: that’s right, well, umm, I’m I’m doing my dammedness to head somewhere
anyway, so, and I’ve done a heck of a lot more than I ever dreamed I could’ve so
far…

I: so yeah, so when you think of language, you think more of different languages,
that’s what

D: yes

I: that word means to you, it doesn’t necessarily mean the language you speak

D: No, I wasn’t, I just was not even having it in art terms, umm, like I said I’m a
country girl, I was brought up, I didn’t read, I, I played lots of sport, umm, I partied
a lot, umm lots of my friends got killed in car accidents, like we just lived a really
fun life and alcohol and and and whatever else, it was a cra a crazy time umm, I
didn’t, I’ve never read, umm if I had intentions on reading but a yeah I don I don’t
understand a lot of big words so ahh so history has been a real challenge but I can’t believe where I’ve come with that umm and now I can’t get enough of reading I just develop and so so I am a literal thinker straight away, like when someone says language I think language, she means another language, like it’s just like, I yes and to make the art I’m making I’ve had to, I’ve had to think more about it, so no, I mmm

I: no, that’s really interesting from my point of view, because that’s exactly what I want, I want what you think these things are, that’s important to me and within y’know, your world of actually identifying different, different idea umm it’s also interesting that you started to read, that you read more, what sort of books do you read now?

D. Ahh ha art books (laughing)

I: do you

D: And I don’t watch television, I watch, I watch art documentaries, I’m very boring, but I am, I’m living

I: so you’ve become quite passionate

D: Ahh passion, I, I, I’m OCD everyone calls me here OCD umm my, my family think I’m doing something wrong, so… but they don’t understand, and because I’m making weird stuff, I can’t sort of describe to th, they’ll, if I’m painting I can say to someone this is, they’ll say show your work, show your work and I’ll show em my painting and they’ll think ahh your fantastic, you’re great, but they’re not going to think I’m fantastic making this one, it’s hide away, but I think I’m fantastic making what I’m making so, and that’s more important at the moment ahh, one day I’ll probably be very proud to show some stuff, but I have to just grow with my work a bit more and

I: mmm, umm, no it’s an interesting journey, umm I’ll ask you about that probably at the second interview too, just how you’re thinking because I’m thinking that my interviewing you will probably will prompt other ideas, or it may, you might flick a switch on…
10. So how have you identified your role in the creation of this work, how do you relate, how do you see your position in relation to this work?

D: Umm well it’s all my position isn’t it, its umm, what could I give you for the best answer, it’s umm, well my position is to listen to the materi material, the materiality of everything that I, my role, I bring something home and then I look at it, and I might look at it for days, I might look at it for weeks until I, an idea comes to me, so my role is to let the material speak to me, so I’m actually, yeah, the the material’s the first, the first movement in everything I find with what I’m doing, umm does that help, does that?

I: yeah I’m thinking y’know the material’s there, then something else actually does happen because it becomes a process of decision making of what, where you are going to go with it

D: And I do find that specific, I go hunting for specific things too, y’know I don’t just pick up everything I find, but I I I it is a real choice, it’s like I’m at a shop, a grocery store and I’m picking and I have no idea why I’m picking what I do, I just hey it’ll make good art out out of that, well I shouldn’t say that it like that but I’ll, I could, I could make something out of that, but there were also y’know a couple of other things but I’ll leave there, like I won’t pick them up, so I’m very

I: …do you think there’s a conscious something happening there or?

D: There’s something, it’s quite eery mmm I do

I: or a visual.. oh I like the colour better, or

D: yep

I: is this, do you know what that decision making process is?

D: No, if I did it would make my job a heck of a lot easier

I: Be fun to know wouldn’t it,

D: mm

I: interesting to know, yeah
11. So do you think there’s broader, because we’ve talked about personal importance and do you think there’s broader implications to your work?

D: Broader as in politics, as in umm recycling, as in issues is, I think everything every artist makes things political, I think we’re all political charge and like reading I never read anything about politics in my life, I don, I’m not, I’m still, I still battle with politics, umm but I think every single artist would have to admit you’re political in some way because you’re voicing, by voicing your opinion your political really I is what I’m thinking at this stage, but umm, and everything has a grander meaning, has a has a umm mmm

I: so the personal can be blown up into a more

D: Yes, I think so

I: social, aware, (mmm) political

D: Well it’s the everyday again, it’s it’s us living in the cultures we live in and living the way we do and

……

I: They’re my questions, I’d like to know if there’s anything else you’d like to to mention about your work, is there

D: that I have no idea where it’s going (laughter)

I: is there one piece, that would be, like we talked about the pivotal experience (uh hhhm), is there one piece that speaks loudly to you?

D: I love the the mobile mobile charges, mobile phone charges

I: Do you think that’s because it is so recent?

D: Mmm, but I don’t know yet, I haven’t lived with it long enough umm and it is about living with this long enough umm did you come in this side of the building? Like the white house thing is mine out there, I built that last year and there’s a white collapse building, collapse out of hard rubbish, didn’t notice it?
I: I might have seen that last time I was here actually

D: umm that was just an amazing journey and that was probably what got me here umm was was the fact that I could do it was was my belief, that built my belief system to be able to continue because men, my husband and men in my family would were saying that I’d never be able to do it, never be able to do it, so I’ll show you, so the determination got greater, greater grander and then, those particular men now drive people past it and say ‘look what she did’, so it was a real umm and the security guards were guys too that guard this place at night and they were telling people in cos my brother came with someone and had a look at it and ahh the security guard came up and started saying a girl did that like and went right into the, so I didn’t think I was feminist much either something I certainly learnt that I am probably more so in my

I: Well you stand up for your own gender

D: And we grew up in that era, so I did learn a lot from that that time but yeah so there were a lot of wins for me in building that thing out there. I don’t know how it’s still standing, nothing’s holding it up, it’s just hard rubbish…

I: This female, male thing, it’s probably something, I mean you’ve mentioned it a few times

D: it’s bigger than I thought it was

……

**I: Ok well we’re finished that’s been fantastic, I’d like to know if you’ve enjoyed talking about your work, if you, if you found it somehow valuable or enriching or just a waste of time, like, how have you felt talking about**

D: Um, that’s probably the best thing of this for me so I’m I’m taking something out of it too cos

I haven’t been able to talk about my work but I’m just starting to be able to do it so this is another chance for me to talk about my work, so I had to look at it like anything like that umm if I talk then I’m getting my thoughts out, mmm.
Donna: Interview 2, 23/07/2014

Donna was busy working threading bottle caps while I interviewed her

1. Did you hesitate at all when you wrote ‘1’ for the question “how many languages do you speak”?

D: no, cos I just only speak English, why why

I: well some people do actually have more languages

D: oh ok

I: yeah sneakily, they do

D: without telling you?

I: well they have told me, within the in the interview, but they’ve still written one (ohh) y’see so it’s just interesting

D: no I can’t do anything else other than English

2. Why do you think you haven’t learnt a second language?

D: Ah I wasn’t interested in learning anymore English either, I was yeah I didn’t actually I was never interested in further studying since I left school, I um, I never thought I’d be back at school um because I wasn’t interested in learning, I thought umm so just lived a naive life and believed that, hmm, threw dinner parties instead, that’s what I got good at (yeah) and I thought that was enough

I: yeah, well and you think it’s not now?

D: and then I watch my kids grow up intelligently and that was probably that’s probably it, because they’ve got brains, so where did they get the brains from? I’m, maybe I did have a brain, maybe I wasn’t as thick as I thought I was

I: so it’s just about education?
D: Yeah, self esteem with me probably, it’s it’s no belief in yourself so why would you go to a further education? (mm) cos you get the dunce cap there as well I guess

……

D: I did learn French at school,

I: oh you did

D: but I didn’t if you know what I mean, I attended classes and I was a ratbag

……

3. How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?

D: Oh I don’t think you have to be able to speak it well, umm all of my kids speak, have have studied a language, and they can all travel overseas and talk to people, communicate, and I’m sure their language isn’t good and they y’know, they tell me it’s not good, but it gets them around it gets them so I think they can class themselves as speaking that language even though they’re able to speak some of that language yeah

I: do you think they’d write they speak 2 languages on that first form?

D: um yeah I’d be interesting wouldn’t it, they probably wouldn’t, they probab it’s probably not something they think they are good at so they probably wouldn’t write it down (mm) that’s an interesting question

4. So, since are last interview have you thought about language, culture or identity at all?

D: Ahh, probably, not, um language as in a language again? Culture, identity, well I’m really interested in indigenous studies at the moment, is that, is that, does that count in that question?

I: yep, that absolutely counts
I don’t have to do it because we actually missed doing it because they’ve changed the curriculum here so indigenous used to be taught in third year and now it’s gone back to being taught in second year

I: so you skipped it

D: so we didn’t have to do it, so we’ve gone straight into third year without indigenous, but I think it’s important so I’m sitting in on the class, I don’t have to do any of the work, but I can sit in there and quietly listen to everything, and I’m loving it so (wow) umm and I’m actually, so I am sort of studying a lot of umm indigenous well working through different indigenous artists (mm) to help me with my work

I: To help you with your work, how do you think it’s going to help you with your work?

D: I’m working at the moment is whether to bring my abuse into my story or not so I’m I sway go up yes no yes no and I guess I relate a lot to umm the indigenous, their turn of abuse umm and it’s relates, so yesterday I was studying Fiona Foley, looking at a few things of Fiona Foley umm and it said, what did it say here? Because of the harsh light that Fiona Foley shines on the land, swindle, sexual violations, wholesale massacres and have been perpetrated, I’m still the worse reader in the world, on indigenous people. Many observers regard her as a political artist, where was the bit that I was, umm, but I wrote not just not just the indigenous y’know, ok they are fighting for their rights of all of those things together, umm but I’m not Aboriginal but I’ve still got yeah yeah (some issues) so I still battle with it if the issues, so the issues are similar……

……

5. Artwank, have you heard that (yes) do you know what that means? what does that mean to you?

D: Just means us dribbling shit about our art I guess, the art, is that is that what I’m thinking it is, that’s what I would say
I: I think that’s, well I didn’t know the word, I mean wank is a very common word in y’know as an extension to another word

D: My dad says that artists it’s the art it’s the reason umm the world’s so buggered is cos we’re artists so, mm that’s what he said to me just the other day

I: ah sounds like my father would say something like that

D: they ruined the world

I: artists

D: artists, I’m like good, you just didn’t think

I: that little minority

D: I just ignored it, let it go over my head …..

6. Which language do you think is the hardest language to learn?

D: Says me who speaks them, ahh I wouldn’t have a clue

I: you wouldn’t have a clue, that’s ok

D: no, sorry. I haven’t even tried to learn what my kids are learning ever so

I: yeah

7. Do you think it is possible to lose a language?

D: Umm, I guess it is if you don’t practice, I guess it’s a practice thing, you’d get confused or, oh I don’t know, I don’t know, I’m not good with these questions today am I?

I: that’s ok, I’m just looking into your brain and seeing what you think.

8. Do you think that everyone has an equal ability to learn a language or do you think some people are better at learning languages than others?

D: Well I think we can all learn it, but I do I do still think there’s something in some kids, kids in particular that just seem to pick it up like it’s just, y’know some kids
do, oh we had a little umm Italian girl come and live with us cos quite often I’ve had exchange students at home, she spoke 5 languages fluently so I think y’know my kids were just like, they speak one they can do part of one language, one of my kids wants to learn a third language (right) at the moment cos she wants to travel to South America and stuff so she wants to learn (Spanish) Spanish

I: so scary, what do you mean by scary

D: How did I use that in context, what did I say was scary?

I: Umm like knowing 5 languages or learning 5 languages, your children being able to speak 5 languages is a bit scary

D: Yeah I guess, they couldn’t comprehend that even though they’d learnt what they’d learnt, is that what you mean, they couldn’t comprehend the ability to learn 5 language but then Marty was explaining to us that there are so many similarities between the languages she had learnt and ah I can’t remember what other ones they were, they were all something similar so it wasn’t as if you were learning a whole new language each time you’d learn a language, so (right) um

9. Would it mean anything to you if you could speak another language?

D: Umm me who doesn’t travel haha ahh I haven’t ever had an ambition to learn another language because I’ve because I’ve had this great fear of flying and won’t travel umm… I don’t know, it’s it’s no, (ok) I haven’t needed to yet

10. Is there, do you think there is an optimal age for learning a language?

D: I think the younger you are, is the easier so and especially when you’re talking y’know, perhaps a couple of different languages and stuff. I think everything in life is, is easier learnt young, but I’m not 100% sure that’s right. That’s just what I’ve felt umm, it’s like a lot of kids that grow up in an ethnic family and they, they grow up straight away speaking the two languages, and it’s just I think I think that, I’ve always looked at that, well that’s probably, as an example of that being an easier time to to learn I guess, I don’t, is it? Do you know? Have you done any tests?
I: umm I’ve got some other questions, I’ll come to them first before I answer (yeah, yeah do) before I give you all the answers

D: I’m intrigued, yes

(Laughter)

11. Do you think there’s an age where learning a language slows down, becomes more difficult or even stops?

D: Ahh I think it would now, I think from probably 50 up, I even battle with certain things that you’ve always been doing or things you’ve done and you think ahh, I’m even nervous to drive even each day and then I’ll have a day when I just think I don’t think I should be driving today and I’m only y’know nearly 50 so

I: you live a long way away though don’t you……

D: and I do feel it is harder for me to read and study I just at this age then it would have been perhaps younger, but I don’t know… I tend to have to read and reread and re and just to get it to sink into my head and then I worry that is it going to stay there or is the dementia going to take over and take it out the other way (yep)…..

12. Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person as in a person who speaks a few different languages, to mix their languages when speaking or do you think it is important that they should keep languages separate?

D: Umm, I guess it’s I guess when they’re speaking one language they should stay with that language unless they speak, oh I don’t know, why would they be yeah mixing them up, I don’t know, are they showing off to the other person are they?

I: or it could be that both speak the two languages and therefore

D: oh ok, so they’re using the word that they like better or something

I: word that comes quicker to the brain

D: aah, ok
I: Well, I’m quite happy for them to do that, it’s really none of my business hahaha and I can’t understand what they’re talking about anyway so, obviously

13. Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?

D: You wonder where the heck it’s goin, what’s going to be affected later on, like it’s ha um I guess we’ve just got to go with the times umm I try not to be like I used to think my mother was all the time umm of course in us b or me being nearly 50 I’d love em to speak proper and love umm a lot of the social media stuff not to be around, but at the same time I just have to remind myself that it’s no different to something else we were probably doing at the time and y’know our swear language, our swear words aren’t even, we don’t see them as swear words anymore that we were growing up with when the words that we really detested are now the ones that are in common and, and it’s just like ohhh so I’m trying, I’m trying to be one of those mothers that just understands

I: do you use it, are you on Facebook and

D: I am on Facebook and I wouldn’t have a clue how to use it (haha) and I do, I get things so totally wrong like a lot, my daughters tell me off ‘mum that’s not what that meaning by that’ cos I get worried about kids when I see certain speech or a certain, the young one’s around here…..

I: so do you use things like LOL ?

D: I try not to, I have used it once and I got told off like you wouldn’t believe (oh ok) because I thought it was laugh, no what did I think, oh I thought it was something totally different, and then my kids said mum it’s no you don’t use it in that texting and plus, you don’t use it at all, I got told so (oh really) yeah, it is very uncool or as they probably would say, unco don’t they or something, so I have listened to their language and watched their language and think it’s crazy

14. Do you think Australians benefit or are impeded by the diversity of languages around us?
D: Ahh, I think I think we have to benefit, a lot of people’d probably say the other way round I think, umm I think we could all learn something from our neighbour and umm look it probably has made a lot of people learn languages, it could be a lot of the reasons why certain people do umm, but I think…. that people should try to use English while they are around English But ohh I don’t know, I don’t know that answer

I: yeah that’s my next question

15. Do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand near you?

D: It does make you feel uncomfortable, but maybe the person they’re speaking to doesn’t speak English, so they have to speak like that, so you got to think of, I always try to think of the reasons they’re doing it rather than thinking well y’know cos so many people just get cross with them and write something on some social media about foreign people doing something yeah, umm, should learn to speak our language, shouldn’t be here and they shouldn’t be there mm, but we’re not in their position, so unless we are in their position, we really can’t judge

I: so why do you think you would be feeling uncomfortable, what would make you feel uncomfortable?

D: Ahh probably that, wondering if they’re talking about me (right) umm but no umm y’know they could say anything, you just feel a slight you just feel a little bit inferior I guess it’s a little bit umm, they’ve got the top over you, they’ve got the, cos there have been times when I’ve thought gee I wish I could understand what they’re saying so I could come back, cos when you’ve felt that maybe it is you they’re talking about whereas buying a T shirt with words on it that you’re not sure what the words are, like that always, y’know well I don’t think I should get that just in case that says something that I don’t want it to say,

I: like the script as in Chinese or Japanese or something particularly

D: yes yes that’s right
16. Do you know the term ‘native speaker’?

D: Native speaker, (yeah) No, not really

I: do you know what Native speaker means?

D: What does it mean, are you going to tell me or not?

I: No

D: No, umm good! Ok, what, you’re going to, I’m going to guess am I?

I: well if I was to say I’m a native speaker

D: to the land

I: of of oh Norwegian, what would you say, what does that mean?

D: So native to me is like the aboriginals in Australia, so it’s the native language, so in Australia the native language would be the indigenous language but then there’s millions of indigenous languages

I: would you have a native language?

D: Oh, so, is it our ancestors? Is that where it is now, no I’m totally confused now, my native language no, well I’d just have to say English, but

I: ok, then all those questions we can just leave

D: Sorry!,

I: that’s ok, no, this is part of it

21. Do you think a language teacher should only teach their first or ‘native’ language or would it be beneficial to have a teacher who speaks the language being taught as a second language?

D: Did you just contradict yourself or am I listening to a contradiction

I: If you are going to learn Chinese would you prefer to have a Chinese person,
D: to teach

I: which is actually the meaning of native speaker ok

D: yes

I: would you prefer to have a Chinese person teaching you the language or would you prefer an Australian who has learnt Chinese to teach you the language?

D: Totally understand where you’re coming from now, umm I, that’s a good question too because ultimately, my first thought was that I liked the Chinese person umm teaching me properly cos it’s the, it’s all on the pronunciation isn’t it’s it’s we can might be able to talk their language and that’s what the kids have always said, we might be able to say the words but whether we’re if we’re not pronouncing them right then they’re not really saying the words you just umm so maybe umm, maybe I should just stick with the Chinese, have the Chinese person, but then we’ve got to understand that so, hmm, cos I’ve got a friend that’s a French, she comes from France, and she teaches, she teaches French over here and when she goes to France she teaches English I think (aha) she does exactly that so (yeah) and cos she’s from France, I love the way it listening to her talk and she’s, and I think she’s a very good teacher like mm and so she’d be the person I’d choose to learn French,

French

I: French from, and if you lived in France would you choose her to (wow, balloon pops)…

D: when that happens sorry, I’m used to it, just seeing your reaction was beautiful though, I wished I had a camera …. Laughter etc

I: so if you were in France and you were to learn English, would you like her to teach you English do you think?

D: Yeah, I think I would too because I know she’d be a great teacher (right) Umm although, so we only had dinner at her place the other night and her kids who are Aussie born and bred um picked on her the whole time for her English (uff really) yeah so and they’re at the right age to pick on mum for their English and I
understood everything, I didn’t think there was a fault in it but the kids see the faults that she’s saying, so it’s interesting that they have to pick on her the whole time…

I: do they speak French?

D: They do, they’ve both had to learn French umm and obviously they’re not, it’s interesting, so they’ve obviously spoke French their whole time but they still go to Alliance School of learning French because obviously they’ve perhaps got Aussie slang too much on their French

I: umm, so when you say they’ve spoken French the whole time, at home?

D: mm at home and like umm she talks to a certain friend that also comes around but she talks to her in in French (yeah) because they’ve

I: common language yeah

D: So I guess it comes easier for her to teach her ‘native language’ umm yeah yeah

22. If you were going to have brain surgery would you prefer a surgeon who spoke one or more than one language?

D: Umm, I don’t think I’d care, as long as he can do the surgery properly

I: I don’t know why I’ve got this question, but I feel it’s a really important question

D: It is interesting cos I do have, I do prefer to have an English person, isn’t that interesting, so I do have that prejudice then, at, in a doctor (ok) don’t know why that’s why cos most of the better doctors are probably from elsewhere

I: ok so you’d prefer someone who speaks your English

D: It is the only time that I really would say that I obviously have some racial issue against, yeah

I: oh well, then that question is important because that’s an interesting umm thing that you found out
D: Yeah I feel very uncomfortable, and especially when I don’t think they’re conveying English very well to me, then I just feel like ohh can I go somewhere else

(someone comes in and another balloon pops)

23. Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual should be brought up speaking the 2 languages? Like for example your French friend?

D: Yeah I probably do yep, umm cos generally, lots of reasons why they’d speak the other language is the fact, is that they would get to go home to their y’know their ‘native’ homeland, I’m going to use that word all the time now

I: you love that one don’t you

D: umm so it’s it would definitely be an asset for them, the only, like I said, the only reason I don’t speak it is I don’t I haven’t had a need to go anywhere (mm) to use it whereas in their case they would be learning it for a good reason (mm) and I guess the barrier between the parents would go down, like there’d be a lot of reasons yeah y’know, when, I don’t know, when people get mad as a parent, maybe they speak mad better in their native language than they do in the new….

I: just a quick about this native speaker thing, umm now that you’ve got the jist of it,

17. is can you tell if someone is a native speaker or not? A native speaker of English?

D: By, by having an accent you mean like umm (for example yeah) well I can always pick someone when they, cos I’ll always say where are you from? (yeah) so umm and I do ask that question quite a lot because we we are from everywhere these days umm so I guess yes yes I can pick a native speaker, but I wouldn’t know where they come from

18. And do you think you can be a native speaker of two languages then?

D: Well
I: like your friend, the French lady, …

D: Yes

I: her children would they be

D: To me it’d be from where you are born, your ancestry rather than, umm that would be my instinct to say, but I don’t know, do you, is that

I: No you, That, that would be the common understanding of it yeah

D: That’s how I’ve just taken it on, born of what it being, no she wasn’t born in Australia but, so it’d be interesting if she her ancestry was from, no if they’re born somewhere they are aussie aren’t they so no forget that….

George: Interview 1, 19/05/2014

G: Explain my historical, political, cultural context…

I: Do you know what your sub culture is? Do you know where you sit?

G: I’ve been trying to like, think about like what, about umm… about what a sub culture is and how I would define myself so I don’t know if there is a name for the kinds of things I’m interested in hahaha

I: Just write down all the things you’re interested in and then make your own sub culture

G: Make it up

……

I: yeah no that’s that’s really interesting, so you’re just sitting there thinking about those things?

G: Yeah Well like going over some old journals and that kinda thing and trying to find my links and threads and feelings and yeah
I: It’s very introspective isn’t it, art you really gotta think a lot, you really gotta acknowledge or just yeah I, I use the word acknowledge, but you gotta think about where you are. I think you can get away with not doing it if you’re not creative, although at some stage in your life I think you probably have to, but as a creative artist you’ve always got to

G: Your location, your actual physical location do you mean

I: Everything to do with it, y’know, your physical location is important for some people, perhaps your emotional location is important for other people, umm, where you are within your social network, your family, all those things all those arrows, I see them as arrows going in to who you have become or who you are becoming, umm let me see, you’re 26, you’re second generation……

yeah so what you’re doing is you are telling me about who you are and that leads to my first question…

1. For you to tell me about yourself, your cultural background, your experiences with language, languages that you’ve had

G: Umm my grandparents were born in, like all 4 of my grandparents were born in Italy and came to Australia in the 1950s after World War 2 (right) umm all like both of my parents were born in Australia umm I was, they speak Italian to their parents and to their siblings and that kinda thing, but

I: And to each other, your mum and dad?

G: Umm well my parents divorced when I was younger, when I was 9 but na they spoke English to each other, like so, umm but they spoke English to me and my brother umm I learned Italian in in High School, I learned German in primary school but I don’t really remember much of it, like I can probably get by if I was speaking to someone in Italian but yeah, it’s not necessarily, umm yeah I don’t really, I guess I’d say oh I’m Italian or I’ve got an Italian background or Italian heritage but I’ve, I’m not Italian, like I’m not, I’ve never been to Italy, I don’t really know much about Italy, I don’t know what it’s like in Italy
I: have you talked to your parents about where in Italy they come from? Have you been interested in any of that?

G: Yeah umm, my mum’s side was from Trieste which is the top of Italy, which is on the bottom of Yugoslavia and Italy and my dad’s side was Sicily and Calabria, so the north, no that’s the south side and my mum’s side is the north side (hmm) so polar opposite sides yeah

I: and are you interested in any of that or do is it just something that you haven’t interrogated yet, that you just living

G: Ahh it is interesting, its interesting in I guess the reason why my family is here and like I guess if my grandparents hadn’t, like I wouldn’t of been born, my parents would’ve met, yknow like, like if they had stayed in Europe, like the generation which would have been me would be there y’know

I: And probably north and south they may not have met each other… .How was it learning Italian at school in High School and German in

G: oh just easy, just

I: oh it was easy was it

G: Yeah, I didn’t find it particularly difficult

I: ok did you do it in year 12 as well?

G: No, no, I did it, no not in year 12 no

I: so how many years did you do your lang well Italian for?

G: Oh I mean, like 2 or 3 years I think it was yep

I: so your school offered it, or you had to go somewhere special?

Yep, school offered it yep

I: yeah ok, and your brother, you’ve got a brother

G: Yep yep
I: ok then

2. Do you feel you’ve come far enough to discuss an area of what you’re working on? Has it become a body of art as far as, or is it still in the thought process?

G: A bit of both, like for example, there’s some drawings, just some of these have, I guess related to other cultures, so hmm, an indigenous American girl, that’s a Venezuelan girl with like mythological elements in it

I: so do you think you’re working, is is there something, do you have a question, do you have something that you’re wondering about like there, of different cultures or is there, are you still formulating, like what have you, how have you started to think about what you wanted to do, how, why did you think to draw those ones for example

G: Hmm yeah they were they were just things that I think that I associated with and so the question is why do I associate with them and my next kind of project is to do self portraits based on the same style (ok) and so that’s yeah been quite interesting (ok) so I haven’t really begun that just yet (hm mm) yep

……

3. so when you’re looking at your work, the creating of your work, are you thinking do you think your personal experiences have umm somehow informed what you are doing

G: Hmm my personal experiences, yeah I’d say so like hmm, it’s kinda like everything we do, like the way we dress or the way we talk, or the way we do our hair or something is is expressive of something we’ve learned or acq or umm gained or some knowledge we’ve or piece of insight we’ve come in contact with or encountered so yeah I think definitely our experiences umm have a part to play in the our creative process (right) yep

4. and can you see it in particular in anything that you’ve either thought about or worked with like can you give me an example of an experience which has made you think about umm these issues,
I: do you understand, like if you have a direction that you are going on or your thinking about umm ahh your personal experiences are being reflected in some way in what you’re doing or was there one day that you were walking down the street and something happened that made you think, can you bring to mind some something that has perhaps made you think this instead of that or (yeah) just been a little bit persuasive

G: more specific about something hmm, umm

I: just if something comes to mind

G: I’d say, yeah, growing up maybe at the age of 17 my, believing in god became much more of a, became much more a part of my life, where as previous to that I was against it (mm mm) so I’d say more of a spiritual experience or a spiritual encounter was in something which I think I should bring into my work a lot more (ok) hahaha, there’s kinda like when something’s I think quite personal and its it can be a very inner and in your mind a lot and umm to communicating that with other people it's like you almost like you require a lot of courage or bravery or being able to art articulate it yeah

I: and there’s this this thing that happens isn’t it because it’s there and you somehow, like you you have to put it out there and that’s where I guess the bravery is, that you’ve got to somehow translate from here to to what you are going to be creating

G: Yeah and not only just to draw a picture of it or to illustrate it, but to have some kind of material conceptual richness which umm aids that as well, which aids that really(mm mm)

I: or even practicing with different materials and seeing what each material gives you (yeah) and how you relate to that and how that might make your experience more real or less real or just a different real virtually yeah (yeah yep) so that would you, would you call that a pivotal, so you’ve named that type of understanding of umm spirituality, do you think that’s been a really big pivotal umm personal
experience that is relevant to your work or are you going to, you said you’re going to

G: incorporate it yeah ah yeah I think definitely I should (yeah) cos when umm when I was just making drawings or images of other people when I was saying that I was expressing myself has like the other people were the extension of me y’know it was kind of, it’s really more about the other person and it wasn’t really about myself enough, or it wasn’t really ah telling much about me as a person or an artist, it was just like kinda don’t look at me, look at someone else y’know and it was like ok maybe like y’know cos it’s all like, not uncomfortable, but it’s like sometimes you don’t wanna be that centre of attention you want to people to look at something else that you’ve created yeah

I: yeah, it’s probably called shyness (yeah, I donno yeah, I dunno yeah) umm is the school saying to you to look at who you are your own identity or is that something that you’ve come up with? (umm) as in in their teaching practice (yeah) are they looking…

G: Definitely teaching, like the school has umm like certain lectures of y’know question yourself, question your interests your motivations, your drive behind things, your own thoughts umm y’know because ultimately you y’know when you are out of the comfortable place of school, when you’re out there kinda really making work it has to come from somewhere within you that’s really real otherwise it’s I: doesn’t mean anything yeah

G: yeah

I: I was thinking also today that it it’s also because we’re actually interested in different interpretations aren’t we, so you’re a person who has got worth and so we’re interested in your interpretation of you and the world (mmm yeah) and that’s what each artist has to bring to the world, just your own (yeah) interpretation it is it’s a really valuable thing, I think within research too you’ve got to really stick by your guns or whatever you call it, like you’ve really got to believe in what you’re doing, it is a worthwhile thing because umm from everyone’s perspective what they are looking at has to be new and interesting because we’ve all got our own way of
looking at the world and our own experiences, that’s my own blurb in any case, that’s what I think

G: umm yeah yeah

5. So what about obstacles, have you come across any obstacles that have pushed you or made you change your intentions or make you rethink or?

G: Yeah, I find perhaps an obstacle of mine is umm I will umm, be distracted by everything, like I’ll I’ll, I’ll become overwhelmed by things, by like lots of, like too many possibilities rather than focusing down on a set group of things or narrowing down to like maybe one or two things, I’m looking at a hundred or two hundred things at once like, I get, umm like bewildered by it and then I don’t create anything because I don’t know which decision to pick because I want to do all of them at the same time but

I: oh well, a few more years, you can do them all

G: yeah, yeah so but yeah its yeah, if if anything’s a obstacle it would be like my myself y’know like or umm, not being certain about things, y’know but what do you mean, like an obstacle that’s pushed me in a different direction

I: no, that's that’s exactly right, I mean some people might find that yeah god I really want to paint a picture but it’s not working in a picture so I’m going to have to do a sculpture or, it can be as banal as that (yeah) it can be any type of obstacle, it could be that you don’t have enough money to do what you want to do so therefore you’ve got to change it, that could be an obstacle (yep) umm different circumstances in different different things yeah, so so you’re thinking, I mean y’know that’s the way you’ve taken it

8. Umm there’s also this thing about language, culture and identity and how you see those three umm ideas, like I mean, what does language mean to you if I was to ask you, that’s not the next question but umm… when you are working do you think that what you’ve experienced with language, culture and identity has somehow informed your work, informed, so we’ve talked about personal experiences, but also your experiences of, I’m just trying to pull out
from you what language means to you, what culture, what identity actually means

G: Mmm mmm Not sure, like Italian ah English is the only language that I speak so I suppose I’m not really, I don’t really umm I just kinda take that for granted like that’s just I don’t really think of my work as being like English or something like umm but culture, let’s go to identity cos identity and culture are a bit more like connected, like being Australian, coz I guess I am Australian, right? Like I’m not Italian, but I’m not indigenous Australian, I’m not aboriginal, I’m not I guess Asian or African or middle eastern so I’m, but then there’s like the stereotypes of Australians so like barbecues and like footy and cricket and like going to the beach, I don’t know those types of stereotypical like farmers and like cattle and y’know those kinds of umm things that I don’t associate with y’know, like I don’t have a British or a yeah English kind of umm understanding of being an Australian, so umm

I: so what would your understanding of Australia be, if it’s not British or English is it

G: I guess I’m finding my own, like making my own, like as you said making your own sub culture, so that can be based on a lot of things, like even the food you eat, like I’m vegan so I don’t eat things that like a stereotypical Australian might eat or ah if my favourite sport is cycling as opposed to footy, like cycling’s like Tour de France and very kinda European I suppose, but that’s in an Australian contemporary context, y’know, umm, what else yeah like I suppose Christianity or like having a bible based Jesus kind of understanding of your spirituality, that’s not like a Buddhist or a Muslim kind of background so I guess, yeah just different elements make up your sub culture, or make up what you identify yourself to be, or like the groups that you would associate with, yeah

I: so where do you think those, those influences or those things have come from

G: Well they’ve definitely been imported y’know they are not indigenous to this land or y’know everything that’s here like umm like Australia was invaded by other countries and nations and now everyone everyone’s here, this great multicultural,
diverse place which y’know that’s what we kinda have to deal with now, or that’s what exists now

I: who’s the ‘we’?

G: We, everyone, like y’know like y’know like indigenous people, every other culture that exists here like, that’s I suppose, that’s what umm we’re faced with or that’s what we live with today, umm so everything that exists here I mean I guess that would be talking about like colonization and umm hmm …and then yeah everything’s from I guess other countries now like you could say that Australia is Americanized y’know like we have more like MacDonalds and pizza hut and like movies from America and TV shows from America and y’now that y’know we’ve got everything, we’ve got lots of different things

I: So do you feel that … that’s, you’ve become that multi emblem in some way, so therefore you can pick, is that what you were meaning?

G: mm yeah I understand what you’re yeah

I: like we’ve got a lot of choice, so you’ve got the choice to become vegan, you’ve got the choice

G: yeah but a certain products we want at the supermarket, like there’s so much options

I: or on line

G yeah on line

I: there’s no limit

G: Yeah, like would I buy something from China cos it’s cheaper like or would I buy something that’s 5 times more expensive cos it was Australian made but from Chinese parts anyway, y’know, that kind of thing, so I guess we’re dealing with like globalization and and mass industrial things and, and technology and y’know…. 

G: Even like that having the internet is another thing as well because like then your friends that you can be in contact with are from other countries so you might be in
contact more often with people in other countries than the people that are around you like in your daily life or that are closer to you in terms of distance, yknow

I: and who are those people, are they friends or are they family or

G: Oh friends or just people like like on Facebook or people on you tube or something you get in contact with them and then yeah like yeah

I: so that would be umm English speaking people? Do you, it’s a bit hard to translate facebook, I mean you can translate

G: Oh some speak like Spanish or Italian y’know but yeah even y’know, but as you’re talking about language like we’ve got dictionaries, translators and stuff, you just type in the words, you press translate and then you can figure out what they said and then you type in what you want to say and then you translate it, you pick from a list of languages then you just press trans y’know you press a button and then you can speak every language in the world so it’s kind of like language barriers aren’t really that much of a threat or umm obstacle in the ability to communicate with other people

I: Saying that does that mean that perhaps it’s not important to learn another language do you think, because, would you feel that, that it isn’t a priority to learn another language because you’ve got the communication possibilities through translation and those buttons and things that you can push?

G: Yeah, I think like if, I’d want to learn another language if I was actually going to that country and I really needed to learn it in order to umm communicate with other people and y’know survive and they can deal with me cos I can understand what they are saying as well, but just to learn a language just to learn one, it’s kinda, it would be like learning Latin or something like just for the sake of it

I: unuseful mmm

G: like it would just be like hmm not that it’s a waste of time, like I’m sure it’s a valuable thing that would be like great to learn but its kinda like learn how to like I donno (fly) or like learn how to do like electrician work it’s like you just kind of google it y’know like yeah umm maybe maybe learning things is just umm the
knowledge is so close to us like I can get that from my smart phone and just dj dj dj dj dj and then in a couple of minutes I’ll know some piece of information so it’s like, it’s not so much that I have to go to like courses and classes and read books and learn things its its maybe maybe we live in such a short cut type of world that umm doing those things like is not seen as so necessary?

……

G: so now that we can speak all the languages in the world, what do we do? Cos no we still don’t really talk to other people using it, like I don’t go out and ‘hey are you Italian?, read this y’know like or like cos yeah you can speak Russian or Polish or whatever yknow umm yeah

I: Go and do gardening or something because we have that instant knowledge anyway so we may as well just go and cut the grass. I don’t know it’s weird isn’t it, yeah, very interesting

G: Like we don’t, like memory is no longer required, because it’s kind of like why learn something if you just buy the book and have that in your book shelf, you don’t need to kind of like learn how to do whatever’s in the book cos you’ve just got the book (mm) so you can always go back to the book if you need it but you don’t have to learn it and like waste the space in your brain essentially, y’know haha

I: I hope we don’t just have finite space in our brain, that’s be

G: Just be empty and vacuous, easier….

9. Have you thought anything about language while doing your artwork?

G: Umm if you think of like I just think of like say in the Renaissance times when there were a lot of people who were illiterate and umm like alter pieces in churches were umm like people didn’t have to be able to read read to hear like the gospel or about God and that kinda thing cos they could see it it was like pictorial so the illiterate were still able to like receive like their salvation and what was being preached to them (you mean as the paintings) yep (the images) yep (ok yeah) so yeah, but that was 500 years ago though but yeah
6. you’re not really thinking of visual language, you’re just thinking you’re thinking of something as an alternative to (Text maybe) yeah text, because that’s the other thing, (oh ok) I’m thinking um (language) yeah no no no that’s all good, y’know when you’re having thoughts and you’ve got also a visual work and um thinking about whether you **get a thought in a visual form and then you have to translate it into words and expression or vice versa, that you get these thoughts**

G: Mmm it’s probably vice versa yeah

I: you’ve got the thoughts first of all in words and then you have to translate them into visual (yeah) expressions (yep) Do you feel that umm juxtaposition, do you feel that difference between crap now I have to get this into a visual form, like you’ve got all these ideas (yeah) or you’ve got this verbal kind of communication and now you’ve got to somehow translate it into

G: Sometimes it’s not so much an image but the concept or a material so yeah hmm so it’s not so much an illustration of the text that you’re thinking about, it’s maybe like if you’re thinking about something which is more of a invisible concept like I’ve done some work in the past where I was thinking about God for example, ahh God is an invisible being and so I used invisible ink to kind of represent that or drew using invisible ink, but it was not seen, you couldn’t see it because it’s invisible and so you needed an ultra violet light to be able to see what was drawn or whatever so it was kind of using a material played to which had a conceptual rational behind that (mm) so that was yeah mm so that’s using like a material language or a or a conceptual language rather than just a picture or an illustrated representational language (hmm mm) which I think I should do more of, it’s like because yeah (that’s what makes sense to you) it has to be strong enough, I think works that have strong material considerations are very strong and if you just if you’re not doing that then it’s kind of like oh you haven’t really considered your materials, you were just taking them for granted like there is no material which is, which can be taken for granted like everything like your pen, like that paper, the notepad they’re from somewhere, they mean something, they say something before you’ve even done anything with them and so when you’re using them, to not consider that it’s umm if you haven’t considered that it’s like well why didn’t you consider it because you yeah to do things unthinkingly is like a bit weak, it’s a bit
like where’s that pen, like if you were saying something about oh I’m really against the I don’t know mass industrialization of China or something and you drew a picture with that pen, that pen is made from the thing that you’re like protesting, it’s like someone would critic it well what was that pen made out of y’know ow y’know and you haven’t y’know like

I: what about what about the extension of that and living the consequence of what you’re saying and living the consequences of your actions… and just because also when we started the interview, you used the words taken take for granted English take for granted your language (yeah) and so that just struck me when you’re using the same frame to talk about materials (yeah) and umm …

10. How have you identified your role in the creation of this artwork……

G: my role

I: yeah, your role…

G: I feel like I should be like ahh spreading a message or communicating an idea or an ideal which is represented in something I’m creating so let’s say as an example if you’re making a work and you’re saying I’m against deforestation of Tasmania, but once again, like, if you’re doing it on paper made of Reflex paper which is made of Tasmanian old growth forests, it’s like you have to consider those kinds of things so yeah

I: so that’s that hypocrite hypo critic (yeap) so you’re not allowed to be a hypocrite

G: Yeah I don’t think you should, or if you are do it deliberately, do it deliberately like I’m deliberately being hypocritical ahh y’know like so so you’re making up your you’re making a statement you’re saying something by using materials and like like a wasteful way y’know and saying look how terrible this is this is what people are doing on a global scale or like y’know umm mmm but yeah I was thinking like, like even pencils like oh what are all these pencils made out of, they’re shipped from Germany like, don’t we get Australian pencils like ahh

I: is that true, are they shipped from Germany?
G: oh that’s what, Staedler’s Australian wow, wait, that one says made in Germany

I: oh ok, I’ve never I’ve never thought about where pencils came from, one’s made in Germany, one’s made in Australia

G: it’s the same brand! That’s weird

I: yeah that’s really interesting, ok so you’re really on to this awareness thing, being really aware, really critical really um clear that seems to be where your, your work is headed or where what y’know you're about

G: what I need it to be yep

11. Ok and when you have your work that you’re working on do do you think your artwork will have personal importance or do you think it will have broader implications?

G: I think it will be broad in the sense of many people will be able to comprehend or associate with my personal expression, so it’s kind of like if someone writes a autobiography, it’s very personal and private but maybe like millions of people will associate and identify with what that person has gone through or lived through or what they’ve done with their life

I: mm mm ok, so is there anything else you’d like to mention, talk about umm any other thoughts to do with your work?

G: In terms of what you are saying about culture and identity I’ve only experienced, like I haven’t travelled broadly yet in my life so I can only really speak from like Adelaide and Melbourne maybe Sydney, Queensland, a little bit of Perth a bit of like Tasmania when I was younger, but still it’s all just Australia Australian people

I: so you’ve not been outside of Australia?

G: I’ve been to Vanuatu for a little tiny bit, but really it’s like not enough to have really gained a lot of what it’s like, like even like for example in Vanuatu they speak a language called Dislama which is essentially like Pigeon English based, it’s kind of a hybrid of their indigenous language plus English so it’s like just funny like they just make, it’s kind of like if someone just made up English, but spiced with
other, flavoured with just their normal language, it’s just really funny I mean yeah it’s

I: could you understand it?

G: umm …not really, not really but when it was explained I’m like oh that’s how you made that up like, like they’d say like ‘me you blong’ something and it just means like you and I we belong, instead of like me you blong it’s like what ohh me and you we belong y’know (yeah) so they just make up

I: and this is a consistent language as in that they all say the same thing, they’re not all making it up each time?

G: No, oh no they have the same, oh it just sounds, I’m not saying, I don’t mean they make it up, it sounds to an English speaking person that it’s made up English but yeah they have like a set kind of dialect that they speak

I: and and what did you think of that apart from being funny and stuff did you think it was cool or did you think it was umm

G: Ohh I guess that’s, I guess once again that’s the umm British Empire or the English Empire or English itself as a language spreading to just a remote tropical island and kind of, I wouldn’t say, I don’t know if it’s perverting or des distorting or destroying their language or their culture, but in a way it, like why don’t they just speak ah traditional language, I guess they’ve just adapted or like I don’t know historically why that is, but maybe there’s like some reason or people just began to speak that way

I: often there’s lots of reasons and one can be that they wanna be Western (ohh) they its they feel that their home language is often not as much worth or yeah it’s a very complicated issue but (yeah) that’s the big issue, particularly within linguistics because I think everyone’s fighting for the survival of all these languages that are being virtually

G: like lost languages
I: they’re being killed off, linguicide from English umm big English powers and (yeah) yeah

G: I guess like y’know like the biblical story of the Tower of Babel that y’know like God confused the tongues of man so that they wouldn’t build this tower, and but prior to that they all spoke this one language and y’know they all did things together because they were able to understand each other

I: yeah they cooperated

G: it’s kinda like yeah

I: what do you make of that? Why would he do that? Why doesn’t he want them to cooperate because he doesn’t want them to get up to him?

G: I think

I: build this tower and

G: But if they were to build a tower that was that tall it would of like fallen and killed them all

I: so you reckon he’s saving them?

G: I think so hahahahaha do you think so? Because even, even like y’know even quite modern architecture y’know those like flying buttresses things, like the cathedrals were so tall and they had to have these external supports on the exterior of the buildings because they were too, they didn’t have steel reinforced things it was just stone or whatever it was and so but some of them were too tall, they were too ambitious they were too, because they saw the cathedral, like the higher the cathedral, the closer to God, but it was kind of like they were falling, it was structurally unsound, so y’know maybe like, they were building a tower to heaven to try and get to God, but it wasn’t maybe yeah probably I reckon he was protecting them like cos it’s not it’s not, it’s not through like literal clouds into the sky that you, it’s more like an internal thing I’d say, but yeah like I guess maybe yeah…
George: Interview 2, 08/07/2014

I: And that’s your work in there?

G: Yep

I: Yep, great, you talked about doing self portraits last I spoke to you

G: Oh Yeah

I: Can you remember that (yep) whether that’s what’s eventuated or not

G: Yeah, there’s portraits of something, maybe not necessarily me, but they’re from me …even if you define like what isn’t you, that’s kind of defines you as well, to define what you’re not, do you know what I mean?

I: Yeah yeah yeah

1. Did you hesitate at all when you wrote ‘1’ for the question “how many languages do you speak”?

G: I wouldn’t say that I fluently speak a second language but I can speak bits of other languages, but um I wouldn’t say like at home or with friends or with other people that a speak a second language other than English

I: right, so it was pretty easy just to write one

G: yeah, yep

I: you didn’t have to think for a few seconds umm umm umm

G: No, I can’t think of another like maybe I’d be able to say like Buongiorno como esta da da da da bene, molto bene and like, but really it, I, but that’s just a few little snippets of words, like anyone could say that really, it’s not like I speak um yeah this complete language to somebody yep

2. Why do you think you haven’t learnt a second language?
Umm perhaps, I mean I’ve learnt it in like High school and stuff but I, it’s not so much not learning it, it’s just not having a necessity to practice it

3. How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?

G: How well do umm do they have to be able to speak it?

I: Yeah how well do you reckon they need to be able to speak it to be able to say?

G: Maybe not *how well*, it’s like *how often* they use it in their daily life or literally just talking and like like can you pass me that bottle or can where’s the chair or something and if you said that in another language regularly I think that would be *y’know you’re speaking another language*

I: ok, that’s interesting

G: but if you kind of just say like *y’know a word here or there* you know anyone can really do that

I: mm

G: like I know words in Swahili, and like German and *y’know like Arabic*, but I wouldn’t say that I speak Swahili or that I speak Arabic

I: but you’re not putting the division between how well you speak it, you’re putting a division between how often you speak it

G: hmm yeah, I mean anyone has the ability to speak multiple languages, it’s just, *y’know even sign language is a language that we all talk with our hands, body language that’s another language as well and like u mm there’s lots of languages really*

4. Have you thought about language, culture or identity since the first interview?

G: Yeah I think last time we were talking about how I was saying like I was born here and I have Italian ancestors and heritage, but I’m not, but I, I’m Australian by default, so I’m here and I speak English because I speak English, because that was
what I was taught to read and taught to speak and taught how to write (yep) and y’know hmm but in terms of like have I thought about it more umm, I think cos I’m thinking about like my artwork and that kind of thing (yeah yeah) I’ve sourced like um ideas about mythology and um things from different cultures so I’ve found them to be interesting

I: Can you remember you were talking about sub cultures…

G: Or like how do you identify yourself, y’know, umm yeah, I think in terms of sub culture I think I’ve been like involving myself in my community a bit more…community bike repair shops and things like that like…

5. What does ‘Artwank’ mean to you? Do you know the word artwank?

G: Yeah, artwank is a bit like if you ever read um um like journals and then articles and things in books or in magazines and it’s like when a person, I just find it when a person uses a whole lot of words and it’s very wordy and there’s all this like verbage in it of this vocabulary, this vernacular that you’d never speak in other than in that kind of little art context and it’s very umm sometimes ha it’s not for the common people, it’s not for someone who you’re just explaining something to, its (is it the artist or who is it that uses that?)… I encounter it more from art critics and art writers, I don’t really um yeah I don’t find that artists use that I don’t like maybe they do and I haven’t read much but or or or particular examples but I just find it more in books and like in articles and stuff…

I: Ok, no it’s a word I got, came across with someone else and I (yeah) thought that’s interesting yeah

G: probably Jody, or maybe I don’t know, she says that a lot

I: Who was it? Oh really (haha) so she’s an artist and she says it

G: oh ah no, like the word artwank is like often we have to umm, y’know in in our studios here with the school and stuff we have to articulate what we’re doing and y’know which is a necessary function but it’s kind of when you go one step beyond that when you’re just talking, it’s just you’re just talking yourself up or something like that and it gets a bit well like just wanky it’s like y’know yeah
I: so that would be an artist talking (yeah maybe) or it could be someone saying oh that’s just artwank (yeah) maybe it’s used by both.

G: It’s kind of like um when something’s a bit too bourgeois or something it’s kind of like when art becomes like um wine tasting or something “oh it’s smoky and it’s got a charcoal blah blah blah flavour” y’know and then art becomes like that, that’s when it’s kind of wanky (yeah) haha

6. Which language do you think is the hardest language to learn?

G: Ah probably Australian I’ve heard, like I mean haha Australian that’s not a language, English like but umm, I heard that English is the hardest one to learn because it doesn’t really fl, it’s made up of lots of different languages like Latin and French and whatever, Greek, I don’t know, something but umm yeah it doesn’t really follow rules, it has rules but then there’s all these words (exceptions) yeah exceptions that don’t really apply to the rules and I think if someone was not born here you know how people that kind of come here, or immigrants whatever they kind of speak in this broken English it’s like cos, and you can understand what they’re saying, but it’s not like exactly perfect um yeah

I: What’s not exactly perfect?

G: um just just just um like ah like maybe the way they all say a sentence like like give this, give me this one or give this one, I don’t know, they won’t say every little word that needs to be said like h I don’t know how to explain it

I: so it would be grammatically incorrect?

G: yeah, yeah just little grammatical errors but they’ve just said enough that they’ve communicated enough and I think if I was to like go to Italy I’d speak I’d speak broken Italian, I’d just make up, I’d just say the bare minimum of what I need to communicate and then they’d figure the rest out (haha) I think umm yeah

I: you’d make them work hard to understand you

G: yep yep

7. Do you think it is possible to lose a language?
G: Yeah, I had a friend who I worked with and she went to France and she was from Australia and she forgot how to speak English, she lived there for like four or five years or something, never spoke, I don’t know if she never spoke English, but she just dropped it, when she came back she had to learn how to speak English again because it was just yeah

I: did it take her very long to learn it again?

I don’t think, nah she probably picked it up I’m not sure but yeah, just the fact that she forgot it like is quite interesting cos you’re just not yeah practising it and your mind isn’t remembering, it has no necessity to remember like the words and how to put them together and the defin, you probably know what you meant but you forget how to say a word or something I think yeah

8. Do you think that everyone has an equal ability to learn a language or are there some people who are better at learning languages than others?

G: Um, is better? I think everyone does have an equal ability to be able to learn a language, like um like if you’ve learned, if you’ve been able to speak the language that you currently speak, then you’re able to learn another one if necessary y’know um but are some people better than others at learning, that’s like some people are better at learning how to drive than other people, some people are better learning how to I don’t know, type a word document or something like I guess it just depends (yeah) their personal, their ability to learn (yeah) umm but I think if they had a necessity to require that communication then I think it would be easier

I: When I asked you in the last interview about your learning a language at school ah you said it was easy

G: Yeah yep

I: quite interesting

9. So what would it mean to you if you could speak another language?

G: Umm mm maybe it would mean, cos where I live currently in Adelaide, South Australia, I don’t ever go somewhere where I’m not, where I don’t need to speak
more than English umm but I think maybe if I wanted to travel and like I was able to speak another language of the destination place, um I’d be able to be maybe more confident in going there

I: Do you think it would open your horizons of travel or do you think you would…y’know, be off once you got over there because you can speak the language, would it be an impetus do you think?

G: Hmm, I think it would work the other way though, I don’t think I’d learn the language first and then go to the country, I think I’d go to the country and then immerse myself y’know because you just, that’s when you’re there and you’re seeing the street signs and the menus and the postcards and the y’know like I: newspapers

G: yeah it’s just you would read, yeah, it would become more natural faster rather than kind of having to go to lessons and read a book and y’know I think that would be a slower way of learning something

10. Ok so do you think there’s an optimal age for learning a language? A best age for learning a language?

G: Mmm, I’m not sure I think maybe, like I think people that are, ahh any age I guess you can learn a language (quite emphatic feeling like how would you ever consider that there is an age that you can’t learn a language and then justifying his answer) like you can learn how to do something, and you can likewise you can loose, you can forget a language at any age as well so umm, but maybe when you’re a child you absorb more and you’re less distracted by everything else in life so maybe you can learn language, maybe it stays with you longer than I don’t know, something else

11. Do you think there is an age where learning a language slows down, becomes more difficult or stops?

G: Mmm, no I think mm, I think anyone with practice, they’d be able to do it, just as a child would have to practice, it wouldn’t come instantly but y’know y’know when you’re like teaching a child English before they can speak, you have to teach them the words over and over then they kind of repeat it and then they begin to
speak better and better y’know from 2 years old, 3, 4, 5 years, they get better and better cos they begin to practice I think if a person, let’s say like a refugee was in their 40s and they came to Australia and they can only speak Arabic or something um and they had to learn how to speak English to get a job or to y’know and they didn’t have any family here, I think the necessity in order for them to survive and live would would cause them to need to be able to speak it faster so they’d, it’s kinda like necessity’s the mother of creation or invention, whatever it is

I: so you don’t think there’s a particular time in your life where learning a language might become more difficult, or impossible?

G: Hm I mean if someone was in their 80s and they’re in like a nursing home and they chose to

I: and they’ve got dementia (joking)

G: oh yeah maybe y’know but if they did have dementia and they were fully capable in their mind to be able to cognitively think and that kind of thing, I think even they would be able to learn how to do some like speak and do language, umm, just us, yeah umm, I think if you’re a teenager or if you’re out of uni, like if someone asked me to learn how to speak another lang like Japanese or something now, I’m like well I’m busy now, like so it’s not so much that I’m not mentally capable, it’s just that I’m busy, I’ve got um not yeah, but if I took some specific time out every week and I practice and I learn then after a year then I might be able to say a few sentences or be good at something

I: so it’s prioritizing?

G: yeah

I: Yeah

12. Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person to mix their languages when speaking or do you think it is important for them, the languages to be kept separate?
G: Oh yeah ahh depends who they’re talking to, like my mother and my grandmother they’ll often speak in like, cos my mum will say stuff in Italian and she’ll say a sentence or two in English and then she’ll go to Italian again so cos they both speak Italian and English so they’re both communicating and it’s kind of irrelevant what language they speak, they’re like da da da da da da and then blah blah blah blah da da da da da y’know it’s just

I: do you like that when you listen, do you

G: well I pick up what they’re saying and I can understand words they’re saying in the Italian, yeah

I: so it’s ok

G: yeah, I don’t think it’s a negative thing, it’s just, just as long as the other person can understand you I guess that doesn’t matter and if that person’s saying what, what are you saying?, then you’re not communicating correctly y’know

13. Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?

G: Ahh, like if people write LOL like laugh out loud, as like a quick

I: they even say that now

G: yeah like LOL like, but that’s funny, that’s just like a, it doesn’t bother me it’s cute, it’s it’s but it’s it’s yeah, umm I wouldn’t say it bothers me, it’s just a different, it’s just a faster way of typing something if you need to type quickly instead of what writing ‘u’ as in y-o-u just write u (yeah) y’know if people write that I can still understand what they wrote

I: How about when they write they, they’re y’know you’ve got a few different there’s and they get them wrong

G: That’s just a spelling error then isn’t it, but yeah, some people like, they genuinely don’t know the difference between there, their and they’re

I: or your and you’re, you are and you your, you’re
G: yeah yeah. I don’t know if that bothers me haha but if they couldn’t carry their correct grammatical and spelling English into like a formally written letter and be able to spell things correctly and grammatically y’know, you apostrophe re and that kind of thing or they apostrophe re

I: at the right time

G: yeah well that would be y’know if I knew that they didn’t know how to do it I’d almost be like dude, did you not know that it’s, you’re using the wrong, y’know, but when it’s in a text message you don’t care, because it’s just like oh hey man I’ll be there soon da da da yep where are you ok yep there there now, where are they so it’s not like, it’s just like err um a quick method of communication

I: so it’s the context? (yeah) you feel, you feel that they should know it, they should know how to spell it and do it correctly but then if they want to, they can just not care also

G: But some people are just genuinely aren’t umm y’know maybe they weren’t good at reading growing up and they weren’t good at writing growing up and they haven’t practiced doing it and maybe their job doesn’t require them or they haven’t, they’re not in study, and they’re not working in a place where they need to write things formally and write professional documents and stuff so they just never have a necessity to learn (mm) so even people that do speak English, they umm y’know it’s there’s kind of a difference between speaking and writing and umm writing well and writing with a great vocabulary and y’know and…

14. Do you think Australians benefit or are impeded by the diversity of languages around us?

G: Well depends what the definition of Australian is, like if Australians are multicultural, multi, if Australia is a multicultural ah term where we’re all from lots of different places then of course we’re all going to speak a lot of different languages, it’s not like we should all like wasn’t it in China

… to unify the country they had they made it that you speak one language so y’know… to make that a law in Australia, like you have to speak like one language,
it’s kind of superfluous or even racist it’s like it’s unnecessary because most people do speak English anyway, just cos they want to haha I don’t know, maybe

I: you have to speak English here they or do you have to?

G: If you want to go to a particular school or something maybe, I don’t know …but whether you go to jail for that or get exiled for that, not necessarily y’know

I: no, yeah that’s right

G: which is what happened in other countries y’know…

……

G: Well y’know my grandmother from Italy came here in the 50’s and it’s 64 years later and she still speaks Italian so y’know like it’s no one told her to not speak Italian and no one told her to speak Italian, it’s just that’s her language and she’s practiced it with her relatives and y’know cos everyone’s going to call people on their phone and call people back in their home countries or whatever or they’re going to read y’know the Italian newspaper or something or watch Italian movies and I think that’s how you keep the language alive

I: what about indigenous languages?

G: Indigenous, what about them?

I: there used to be about 250, now 12, 25 something very small in any case

G: Well I guess that goes to show the history of Australia and like the racism that occurred in Australia and still occurs like y’know, the stolen generation and massacres and a lot of them were just killed …… people have this fear of the other or this kind of, we don’t want these people from other countries coming in they’re illegal terrorist people or something like that, they’re bad, they’re rats, they’re like the plague or something coming on boats, it’s like dude they’re getting shot at and killed where they are…… it’s still that same kind of racism or that same, y’know maybe I don’t know it’s weird like if you spoke, if you could speak the language that they speak, and if everyone spoke umm yeah, if when a refugee came off the boat or whatever and you could talk to them maybe people would be more tolerant
or understanding of that person rather than like, who are you, you’re going to like ruin our economy or something and you’re going to ruin the Australian way of life and bring your like weird religions and…

G: That umm, there’s like a theory, it’s, y’know like post modern theory there’s like feminist theory like in art terms I’m talking about, art criticism, no art theory, there’s like ahh feminism and post colonial theory which is talking about like the Modernists, like even Picasso and those guys they would appropriate umm cultural artefacts that weren’t theirs, so in the newly colonized countries… so and then Gauguin went to Tahiti and he was drawing and painting all this Tahitian stuff so it’s not necessarily his culture but it’s this we invaded and we’re painting it now so it’s ours now y’know, it’s kinda they took it, claimed it as their own, so its not only they took the country or the land, they also took the culture and the artefacts and the crafts of it as well

I: so here’s… thinking the artefacts are probably the sculptures and the

G: and the masks

I: he didn’t make and copy them, he

G: No, just appropriated them, like the style or the imagery of them, put them in his works so this I mean I don’t know if it was, it’s not that they were necessarily being overtly rascist but in hindsight, like a hundred years later, it’s kind of like hmm it’s kind of a bit politically incorrect or a bit of a touchy thing to have done

I: like making use of?

G: Yeah

I: like if they could commercialize those artefacts, they sort of have done, but because it wasn’t such a commercial society back then they just produced it in their art work…

……

15. Do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand near you?
G: Yeah I feel comfortable as long as they’re not yelling at me or something.

Yeah I’m fine (ok) if someones, or if, if they’re speaking near me I don’t mind, if they’re trying to say something to me I’ll maybe try to y’know what are you saying, do you mean this bottle or that, or y’know I’ll try to communicate with them, but yeah doesn’t bother me

I: Native speaker, do you know that term?

G: No (hum) I can guess maybe it’s the person that speaks the language but I don’t know, I don’t know

I: yeah ok, well, never heard of it? No one’s ever said are you a native speaker of English, or I guess they wouldn’t would they… Ok well that’s that of those questions (mm) Shall I try and ask you anyway and see what happens? (I am trying to be polite and kind!) If I was, y’know, just go along, it’s a game

I: How can you tell if someone is a native speaker or not?

G: Oh yeah, alright, let’s say native speaker to Adelaide when you can hear little ways that they pronounce words or little phrases or things that are kind of specific to Adelaide, or kind of, umm not a dialect but a pronunciation umm yeah whereas when you go to like Sydney or Cairns they say things differently and you’re just like oh that’s the way they say stuff in Cairns y’know like in Cairns, my cousins they pronounce they were like yeah it’s very cool like I don’t know, I can’t even say it but… are you going to go to school, I’m like what? like cos I just say school but they say it different and oh another thing they say is, they say but at the end of words (sentences) sentences like whereas we would say um maybe we’d say though, like yeah ‘it’s pretty hot though’ y’know they would say ‘it’s pretty hot but’ y’know just little things like that

I: I remember when I was young, we used to say that here, but

G: Really

I: Yeah
G: umm, just things like that you just learn oh that’s, even though we’re both in Australia, we both speak English, we’re both Australian in the same way, but just different, being in a different city or a different state you say things differently, I don’t know, maybe the TV shows are different or maybe the adds are different and maybe people pick things up differently, or I don’t know but yeah

I: ok do you think, seeing you’re getting the hang of native speaker

18. Do you think it is possible to be a native speaker of more than one language?

G: Yeah I get it yeah, I get what you mean like, ok so like lets say my mum she speaks Italian but it’s not Italian, it’s Triestin, so Triestin is a dialect spoken in Trieste which is a city in Italy so she’d be a native speaker of Triestin, but not necessarily of other cities in Italy or proper Italian, so I guess she’d be a native speaker of that particular dialect cos that’s what she was taught um yeah, so yeah

I: is she a native speaker of English as well?

G: Yeah

I: she is?

G: I guess so yeah, like she was born here and speaks English, yeah, so like she speaks the same way as I do but she also speaks this other language that’s native to somewhere else

19. If you’re a native speaker of a language, can you make mistakes?

G: What kind of mistakes, like grammatical errors, spelling errors ahh, saying the wrong word for the wrong meaning or the wrong intention

G: could be that yeah

I: yep

I: yeah you do?
G: or sometimes you just make things up hahaha like things and someone else says oh yeah I know what you mean, I know what you mean, or you know when you’re tired and you’re just like oh y’know that word you you forget words and you just say like a lesser word like

I: that doesn’t quite hit the spot do you mean?

G: yeah yeah

20. Do you think you can become a native speaker of a language if they haven’t grown up with the language, but learnt it later in life?

G: Yeee-ah cos if you learn, if you learn a particular, like I said dialect that’s specific to a certain place and then, but you’ve never been there, it’s just the language, but you would miss out on the little cultural like inflections and little specific pronunciations I think by not being there um yeah (ok)

21. Do you think a language teacher should only teach their first or ‘native’ language or would it be beneficial to have a teacher who speaks the language being taught as a second language?

G: I think it would be beneficial if they could speak it, I, yeah it would be beneficial so they’d know it

I: speak it as a first language? Or as a second language, so do you get what I mean, like…

G: I’d like the person who’s lived who was born there and lived there cos like y’know, they’re just, they’d just, even the pronunciation, y’know, I think even if mm, pronunciation kind of comes with the language though sometimes, y’know some, sometimes it can have this Aussie twang to it a little bit um yeah so I think you’d learn better if it was from like a Polish person

I: right you don’t want to speak Polish with an Aussie twang?

G: no well well just yeah I think yeah, cos they, even if they both knew the language equally as well ahh if you actually, if it was for the purpose of going to Poland, the Polish person would know all the y’know if you went hmm it’s one
thing to just speak a language, it’s another thing to like know where the shops are and know where the post office is and know little cultural custom kind of things like don’t wear your hat at the dinner table or something, or take off your shoes whereas if you were from Australia you wouldn’t care about that really cos we’re a very like, I don’t, we’re a very like we don’t care kind of people haha don’t, like we’re not

I: if that guy had gone to Poland to learn it

G: and then learnt it yeah then ahh might be just the same really (ahh) like they might be on on par mm

I: ok we’re finished, I just have a really silly question,

**22. If you were going to have brain surgery and you’ve got the choice of a surgeon who’s good at one language, like really really good at one language or good at three languages which one would you choose to operate on your brain? … or wouldn’t you care, no difference whatsoever?**

G: Just as long as he’s a good brain surgeon yeah

I: that’s right…

G: unless there’s something like got lost in translation, for example y’know how like American have what is it, the metric, no the American have the imperial and like the Australian have the metric (yeah) so when there were two astronauts doing some particular thing with looking at stars and the Australian says oh it’s, it’s only like 3 units, but one person might be thinking of centimeters while the other person’s thinking of inches, y’know so 3 inches compared with 3 centimeters, your telescope is going to be way off (yeah) so there’d be an inaccuracy lost in translation, just as long as that doesn’t happen

I: So if you’ve got 2 surgeons and one can speak lots of languages (ahh) and one can’t, then you have you wouldn’t want the 2 surgeons talking together would you haha

G: You’d want them to speak the same language, yeah otherwise they might sever the wrong gland or something out of your brain or something.
Jody: Interview 1, 20/05/2014

1. Can you just tell me a little bit about yourself, your cultural background, your experiences with language

J: Well not a hell of a lot of experience really, pretty much British family so it’s all been English, English, English umm

I: Your parents are from

J: Ahh umm my mother’s yeah ah well Australian, my grandmother’s Australian, but her mother came here from England .. so yep, English

I: and what about at school and what about your father and

J: Umm my father I have no idea, he left before I was born so, can’t confirm or deny

I: that makes it more simpler

J: yes! Haha, my sister’s father is Italian, and my other sister’s father is Chinese, but we haven’t had any (ok) yeah so don’t get too excited, there hasn’t been much contact there either.. so.. no real language to get around with that, sorry

I: and what about school?

J: Ahh lord, I learnt Italian if I remember correctly, but wasn’t very good at it and if I remember correctly, our our Italian teacher had a nervous break down so (great) he wasn’t having a good day either, Mr Luten, good old Mr Luten.. so

I: so was that High School or Primary School

J: That was high school, primary school no, no language, maybe a bit of pit, pitjantjatjara, bit I went to a school which was very aboriginal focused, umm but apart from that, nup, Ngarrindjeri maybe

(Horrible sound)

I: Okay, I don’t know what that was
J: Obviously someone’s upset about me talking about it

2. Can you tell me a little bit about what you’ve been doing?

J: My main practice is about identity pretty much, my identity, umm the identity of growing up as a tomboy umm which has led me into heroines and female figures of genuine strength and things like that so movies are a big influence of mine, so pretty much yeah, movies and identities, trying to merge the two really

I: Do you have any idea how your work will play out?

J: At this point it's a lot of photo montage, video work, art performance umm, scuze me, ahh, drawing hopefully we get in there at some point in time umm yep

3. ok great, now do you think your personal experiences are important in the creation of this work and the choices you’ve made?

J: Yeah absolutely

I: How would that be?

J: I knew you were going to get me to explain umm because I’m using personal memories and I’m using personal my personal identity as fodder for this stuff so, I couldn’t do it without it, I don’t think, you can create without using a bit of your self, your self is going to come through regardless, I don’t think you can avoid that, personally (yeah) I certainly haven’t

I: so and do you think there’s been one, a main idea, a pivotal umm an area which has made you really direct your focus? A pivotal experience for example or is it just really

J: It would be growing up umm as a tom boy pretty much, umm that persona has really triggered something in this, I don’t know what it is, ahh, looking for them, trying to find a girl that looked like me through cinema that sort of thing (coughing) trying to find a place

I: tomboys?
J: Tomboys, yeah, yep, so, umm, just yeah trying to ahh completely forgot what I was talking about haha

4. ah no you were talking about the pivotal, the… decisive type of area, the one, the personal experiences, do you have a personal experience, like, to you have something that you can reflect upon that has made you aware of that tomboy ness

J: Ahh, seeing Jodie Foster for the first time, seeing a girl dressed like I did, like it was mind blowing to see a girl that looked like me, in cinema, so it was accepted by society that she was like that, she was famous, it was something new to me that was like like my own identity shown back at me which was like wow, it’s like cool thought she was the coolest thing ever, so, that other movies have ahh have influenced that decision that it was ok, well it was fine, I wasn’t abnormal in any way, that sort of thing, my mother didn’t care (laughs) one way or the other, so I was yeah, as far as I knew I was normal and that reinforced that fact I think

I: Can you remember the movie?

J: Ahh, Candleshoe it was… the opening sequence is her coming up the road with a bunch of blo ah boys and she steals a basketball off of a group of kids at a basketball court and she’s just completely a rebel and a y’know

I: how old is she in that one?

J: Oh lord, must have been in her early teens 14, 15 maybe yeah,

I: because there’s that Paris Texas that she plays in too and she’s not a Tomboy in that one, (well yeah yeah she was) way well she’s sort of is a tomboy isn’t she

J: she was, she still is yeah pretty much yeah

I: yeah ok umm great so within that, like even, what does the word Tom boy mean to you?

J: Umm it means the way a person looks, but through my research it’s brought up a whole bunch of other things like where the actual name comes from and that sort of thing, it’s umm I don’t know what you call it, an identifier I guess of
I: of a type of person

J: of a type of person yeah

I: Ok do you think there’s anything to do with language or is there a cultural meaning included, like do you think of culture or language, you’re talking about identity?

J: Well through my research I found out that they’ve, in Japan and India they are like umm, ahh they use their words for male and female, they kind of combine them somehow, I don’t know how it works, or they use the male for the female

I: They have different, you can say ‘I’ in Japanese in two different ways, if you’re a woman you say ‘watashi’ if you’re a man you say ‘boku’

J: Right, they refer to themselves as the opposite sex to what they are, as far as I can work out, I don’t know their language well enough, you would, um to, ahh from what I’ve seen, if they class themselves as Tomboys they use the opposite sex,

I: ahh, so they probably say boku instead of watashi

J: that’s it boku that’s yeah, that’s the word that I’ve come across, so but everytime I type it in I just get these animated Japanese characters so I don’t know what else I can look up for that, but umm yeah so it obviously spans cross culturally, the word tomboy, the persona of wanting to be comfortable

I: or identifying in a way that society is not saying

J: that it’s ok

I: an alternative way

J: mmm

I: right ok yeah

5. so have you come across any obstacles that have made you, like you’ve got your intentions but that it’s sort of saying to you wait a second you’ve got to think about this a bit more or that it’s not working
J: Oh yes, every day hahaha, umm, not yet, I’ve been extremely lucky, I’ve, last couple of weeks I’ve been kind of like, what the, where am I going with this what am I doing, I don’t know what the hell I’m doing, this is ridiculous, umm, and I’ve slowly started to come round again so it was one of the just flooded with ideas and it was all of a sudden like high and away, but yeah, slowly started to ahh dissipate, which is normal this is what they tell me

I: oh absolutely, have you been doing art for a long time?

J: Oh yes, yeah yeah

5. so and what obstacles have you come across?

J: Just general brain seizure, just writer’s block or artist’s block or just there’s nothing that inspired me to do anything. I wasn’t feeling like I could, like everything was kinda like ‘ahh whatever’ I didn’t have any ideas or nothing was cooking

I: so what do you do when that happens?

J: Well, you go and complain to your facilitator and then he tells you what to do umm, Ned (changed name), my facilitator suggested that I go back from the beginning of what I started and start revisiting some of that stuff again and he was right, it just clicked and I went off again (mmm) which was brilliant so I started going back and reworking some more stuff and came through again and now I’ve gone into all new territories so that’s good

I: right, and what sort of territories have you gone into?

J: Umm, I’m heading towards ahh working with photography, hopefully, something with um, I was, I wanted a strong female character so I’m working with an Amazon as a character, but not as a sexy sexual thing, just as a strong female thing and I’m hoping to put her into situations like just shopping and stuff like that and hopefully getting people’s reactions to her, as a reaction of a strong woman, not as a reaction as an Amazon walking down the road. But both would be the same as far as I’m concerned, so we’ll see how that goes, so that’s where my heads at at the moment, I’m also dealing with a whole lot of daddy issues too so that helps
I: daddy issues?

J: There’s plenty of those to go around so ahh yes

I: so are they within, do you mean personally or

J: no!, in the work yeah that guy keeps on slipping on in there hahaha

I: so perhaps personally as well?

J: Yes, well the stuff digs up stuff as you know

I: yes, of course

J: you’re digging through your childhood and your personal stuff and it just comes all pa tumbling out of you so umm yeah again you can’t stop yourself it’s going to turn up

I: yeah that’s right and it’s probably saying have a good look at it

J: yes haha you can’t repress me anymore

I: yeah that’s right, so it’s not really an obstacle as such, it’s a umm, it’s a journey, it’s a pathway which is just leading you in different (pretty much) directions (yeah) So when you’re… do you see your ideas being the preliminary thing, is that what happens first,

6. do you get visual inspiration that gets mounted into umm words and ideas, or is it more the words and ideas then have to be portrayed visually?

J: It’s all visual for me, it always has been

I: starts visually

J: yeah something visual will trigger me and then I’ll work visually again, I bypass words entirely, I’m so sorry hahaha don’t be insulting to you

I: well you’re using words now
J: I’m using words now but I don’t write, I don’t read, I avoid as much as possible, I’ve got dyslexia so I try to avoid that as as much as possible ah movies will trigger me, words, pictures, ‘words’ (she’s surprised that she said this) pictures will trigger me, umm I’ll be scrolling through Google images and I’ll find something that will trigger something else and then I’ll be off on that tangent, so

I: how are they connecting?

J: I don’t know, umm they just always have, one thing will make me think of something and then I’ll go and find that and then and that will make me think of something else and then I’ll go and find that and then that’ll make me think of something else so it’s just like a a family tree of images that (yep) I scroll through (yep) and they just lead me to where I need to go (mmm) I don’t know why but it’s always worked that way, very, extraordinarily visual person

I: mm so ok umm so when you like for example you’re doing the Amazon woman and you’ve come up with the idea that you’re going to put her into like a supermarket ahh situation or just in an unusual type of situation

J: for an Amazon yeah (laughing)

I: yeah so in a way you’re it sounds like you are working with ideas and thinking how can I transpose them visually, how can I create umm like a visual art work and then y’know whether you work with photography or not umm ok so as an art work, is there a particular, shall we talk about like this for example, is this something you’ve done this year?

J: No that was done for a site specific work, do you know what that is?

I: Site specific

J: yeah, it’s a type of art work that you work with the actual surroundings so that (right) you take cue from your surroundings (ok) so it was the school that used to be a slaughter house (aha) so I dressed up as a lost sheep, I took photographs of me around the school as umm little bo peeps lost sheep (ahh) suggesting that I was a slaughtered sheep of this place
I: or maybe the one that got away

J: or maybe the one that got away, so there’s a whole bunch of me as this bloody sheep, the one where I’m hiding behind the tree is one of them, umm and my facilitator suggested that maybe I use the mask as a performative umm trigger (aha) cos I was I’m, I’m, hard to believe but I’m actually quite shy so I found that quite liberating (hmm mm) that I could get away with this stuff, behind a mask, I didn’t feel like myself which was brilliant I’m assuming that’s how actors feel so I’ve been putting myself into movie stills so into my favourite kinds of movie stills as the sheep, the lamb umm and from there it’s gone into family and football and all that sort of thing (hmm) so yeah that’s quite a catalyst that mask

I: yeah and so I’m thinking like to find an artwork I’m just thinking well we could for example reflect on that because I’m sure everything you’re experiencing now is in the mask anyway, umm so and then I’m just thinking about y’know experiences with language, culture or identity, or ‘and’ identity how ah can you reflect on those things when you’re thinking of the mask, or when you’re thinking about you're your larger body of work? Is there something that sparks up ahh, like you’ve been talking about identity, I’m just trying to find if you umm, you don’t reflect upon language in any way (nup) culture in any way (no) no, just identity

J: pretty much

I: with identity

J: yep, may branch out there who knows

8. I: yeah, what does language mean and what does culture mean to you?

J: Umm language, language means difficulty, umm I don’t know, language is a very powerful thing, but because I don’t grasp it very well I tend to avoid it so (mm mm) umm I speak very well, I just don’t write it very well, well I think I speak well umm, I speak fast ahh (hahaha) umm, cultural is everywhere, it’s everything, it should influence me more than it does I suppose, maybe I’m very closed off as a white Australian, who knows, umm I don’t know
I: so what is culture for you, I’m just wondering, like I had my interpretation of what culture means and then when I ask different people they actually have different interpretations of what it means and so I’m (hahaha) thinking culture ok

J: Culture is who you are I suppose (ok) and if ahh or whoever the person is who’s standing next to you, their culture is different to yours

I: because

J: because they’re from somewhere else or their family’s from somewhere else or they speak another language or (mm ok)

I: so within the artwork it’s not really something that’s been

J: I spose because it hasn’t been a huge influence in my life, it hasn’t been a huge influence in my art, maybe when I start travelling, but I’ve never left Australia so, who knows, I don’t know

I: yeah yeah

10. ok so your role in the creation of this work, how do you see yourself and the art the relationship between them?

J: There’s a very very thin line between me and my art at the moment. There’s umm, I am the art pretty much, which sounds totally poxy but ahh it’s true at the moment umm yeah, there, it is me (mm) yeah

11. so do you think it has personal implications or does it have broader, like personal meaning or it perhaps broader implications

J: At the moment it’s very personal, I’m hoping to get broader, I want to involve people in my art, I don’t want to be all about me, I’ve never wanted things to be all about me, it’s strange that I’ve gone down this weird egotistical hahaha path but it seems to have taken me there umm yeah

I: maybe it’s a path you have to take? (who knows) How can you not yeah

J: you never know (yeah) I’m happy, I’m sitting on the train, I’m happy, so (right) I’m not going anywhere (ok great)
I: So, is there anything more you’d like to say about your process your artwork, your thoughts

J: no

I: your lack of language (I ask jokingly, because that is what her sense of my questioning seems to be about)

J: hahaha my poor lack of language

I: I’m thinking you’re going to have to write about it

J: I do , it s-u-c-k-s I do I’m forced to write about it and I’ve had to come to the terms with that’s going to happen and I have to learn how to do that all over again, so umm, I’ve actually bitten the bullet about language, damn language, I am in complete awe of somebody that loves language as much as you do I think that’s fascinating, I love language, I think it’s brilliant I just don’t, it would clash unfortunately

I: I think that’s what’s important for this research that I’m doing, whether you come from a background of having quite a few experiences and language you’ve learnt different languages and you see different things, the focus is generally on the multilingual speaker as, wow that’s (mm) …

J: I can’t even grasp English, let alone anything else I’m terribly impressed by that, but I see your point, it’s what it is, that’s the path their on

I: That’s right and I was thinking if I had a brain surgeon would I want him to be very very good at only English or would I want him to be, if I needed an operation, um very very good at three languages, like what would I want? (Both laughing)

J: You want him to be very very good at brain surgery, is what you want (exactly that’s right) who’d care about anything else

……

J: That’s pretty much how the only way my mother could get me to read was subtitles so I got a whole lot of world cinema when I was a kid because I wouldn’t
pick up a book, but I’d watch a movie because it had, it had a narrative running behind it, so if I got lost on the words I at least knew what was going on, I couldn’t do that with a book, I needed a visual with the book

I: right

J: and a book didn’t have that (yeah) a movie did so I got all this wonderful, there you go, cultural experiences through movies so that that’s a good thing it just hasn’t come through this year hmm that’s interesting

I: mm that is interesting, so you actually watched the movies in different languages? (Well yeah yeah) and you had the subtitles (yeah yeah) because otherwise you don’t get English, if it’s just an English movie you don’t get English subtitles (no) do you

J: no, not unless you do it for the hearing impaired, but that’s..

I: So did you realize that you had dyslexia, or did your mum realize you had dyslexia quite early?

J: Yes well hm hm, not early enough, in ahh high school, so I went all through Primary school thinking I was completely dumb ass and then (yeah) someone went ‘ahh maybe she’s dyslexic’ and then (ahh) it, it was the 80s it was a bad time to be dyslexic

I: yeah, it’s not even good now, I don’t know

J: no it’s become a dirty word I think, people are, don’t want to say it out loud (well there’s not the funding) it’s like saying your kid has ADHD that no body wants to know, it sounds like a like a fake thing…

I: Well, we’re finished, that’s interesting, I’m glad we came upon the answer that umm or the thought of movies as being the type of language that you are involved in, I mean it might be, it might not be the only thing but it might be some a thread (definitely) mm going through your work

J: it’s the greatest visual language in town
I: Yeah that’s really interesting cos yeah movies are great aren’t they (yeah) and they’re accessible culturally

J: by everyone yeah

I: like you can get them really easy

J: except if you live in Russia….

_Jody: Interview 2, 21/07/2014_

1. Did you hesitate at all when you wrote ‘1’ for the question “how many languages do you speak”?

J: Only as far as I thought should I be smart ass and I put Pig Latin down there so umm no

I: Pig Latin?

J: pig latin, yeah, you remember pig latin when you were a kid, never did that (no) oh it’s alright, that’s fine

I: I don’t know it

J: stupid slang language, as kids (is it) yeah

2. Why do you think you haven’t learnt a second language?

J: Err, cos I barely grasp English, as a first language, ahh don’t have any other cultural influences in our family really umm yeah no not really no so it’s never been our thing really

3. How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?

J: Hmm I don’t know, depends on the language I spose, umm it depends on how well that certain kinds of people would expect you to speak that language

I: yeah, how well would you expect them to speak it?
J: haha I accept broken English, that’s fine, as long as you can communicate with someone that’s cool, hand gestures always my favourite things (hm mm) so that’s fine, err if I was French I’d probably be really pissed if someone didn’t know the language, apparently they’re quite big on you need to know the language if you’re going to speak to me, so who knows? That’s as far as I know, which isn’t very far. umm no personally I don’t think you have to speak English very well (to be able to say that you speak 2 languages?) yeah

4. Have you thought about language, culture or identity since the first interview?

J: Yeah actually, umm probably the first week after I first spoke with you but since then probably not no, all this took over so umm yeah it was heavy on my mind actually, but I couldn’t tell you what

I: can you remember we were talking about, because you said culture, no, you hadn’t thought about culture and then we later on in the interview we talked about movies from different countries (yes yeh) and you suddenly realized oh I have had a bit of cultural influence in that way (mm) and it quite a sort of moment of oh yeah there’s some stuff here maybe that’s what you were thinking about in that week

J: Mmm it’s possible, it’s possible. I think I was thinking about all the answers I’d given and thought oh I had so much more to say (say) about that

I: It’s always like that isn’t it

J: You walk away and you remember what you were going to say, yeah but no it’s gone, whatever it was, it was I’m sure grey pearls of wisdom but who knows, who knows

I: that’s fine

5. ‘Artwank’ do you know that word?

J: Artwank No! (laughing)

I: you don’t know that word?
J: No

I: ok, some others do

J: I’ve never heard of artwank, as in being pretentious about art?

I: Umm yeah

J: right yes then yes

I: yeah, but you’ve not heard it in the context of that’s a lot of artwank or

J: ahh …yeah a I spose… yeah

I: or he’s art wanking along or something

J: “what an artwanker”

I: yeah exactly

J: Yeah I guess as opposed to wank could be put on anything, then yes I spose

I: Yeah I guess that’s where it’s come from isn’t it, just stick wank on everything, cabbage wanker

(laughter)

6. What language do you think is the hardest language to learn?

J: Oh god, I have no idea, I heard in fact that Japanese was the hardest language to learn, but I have no idea if that’s true. I wouldn’t have a clue, again I have never tried to tackle any other language so

I: ok

7. Do you think it is possible to lose a language?

J: Yes! I think indigenous folk have proven that fact, that it’s impossible to lose a language, they are desperately trying to get back any language that they can find so (that’s right) it’s a shame and horrible thing that’s happening
I: do you think you’ve got any indigenous in you?

J: Don’t think so, as far as I know

I: ahh just because you went to an indigenous school you said or a school that did

J: Kindy, when I was a little tacker, yeah

I: ok where was that?

J: That was, that was in umm where was that, Alberton, that was in Alberton

I: Alberton, in Adelaide somewhere?

J: Yeah yeah yeah, yeah yeah

I: Oh ok, I don’t know

J: haha

8. Do you think that everyone has an equal ability to learn a language or are there some people who are better at learning languages than others?

J: Just exactly the same as some people are better at putting together shelves than others I think, it’s a skill that can be learnt if you’ve got the dedication to learn it, go nuts

I: so do you think that everyone’s equal then?

J: Humph I don’t know. I don’t think everyone’s equal in the learning capacity period (mm), so what level of learning that a language takes, is I guess a skill that needs to be learnt

I: do you think you would have more difficulty (yes) learning a language than another person?

J: Yes, but only because I have difficulty learning English period (yeah) so it doesn’t make sense to me so

I: yeah, it’s interesting that language doesn’t make sense to you
J: yeah I guess it is (laughing) yeah, it must be terrible insulting to somebody who loves language

I: not at all, it’s very interesting actually, y’know, because that’s what I’m here to learn about, other people and what they’re thinking about, I think you’re just as justified as anybody else to have an opinion

J: oh good, you’re not going to storm off on me or anything

I: no no no

J: you bitch, you art wank! Just leave

I: you language wank, or you could say to me I’m a language wank

J: just a language wank

I: “she’s a language wanker!”

9. What would it mean to you if you could speak another language?

J: Oh I think that would be awesome, I think that would be very cool, I’m very jealous of people who can speak other languages, very jealous of people who can play the piano, I’m very jealous of them. I think it’s quite common to be jealous of somebody who can do something you can’t

I: what are you proud of that you can do?

J: Art I guess (mm) yep (mm)

10. Do you there’s an optimal age for learning a language?

J: Well, they say, if you’re a little tacker it’s easier to get your little brainy sponge to suck it all in (yep) Aren’t there like European countries that teach kids when they are little little? (yeah) so I guess that would be the optimal time, I think they’re starting that in schools now, with different languages

I: well, to such a limited extent, but yeah, like an hour a week

J: a wanky extent (laughing) um yeah so I guess when you are little I spose, yeah
11. Do you think there is an age where learning a language slows down, becomes more difficult or stops?

J: I don’t think so (so learning a language can continue) you learn all the time, everyday (mm) never stops

12. Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person to mix their languages when speaking or do you think it is important to keep languages separate?

J: (Laughing) well you're a language racist, I wouldn’t have a clue, I I I’m not that precious about English so umm I don’t care what you do with your language really, as long as it doesn’t disappear I spose

13. Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?

J: That just shits me but it’s probably because I’m getting old

I: why does it shit you?

J: I don’t know, I’m contradicting myself again as saying I don’t give a crap about what you do with English and then saying that the simplification of English shits me (mm) I just think it’s lazy to be perfectly honest and I don’t understand, I don’t get it so

I: so do you think it’s important to hold those standards that we’ve got, like to write they are instead of there and all these different

J: Oh I don’t know, to all their own I suppose, umm it hasn’t y’know, given me any grief or anything, it doesn’t really effect my life (no no) on a huge scale, so I should just get over it I suppose

I: but it does give you the shits and I’m wondering y’know

J: Hahaha I’m a puritan umm

I: do you think you are a puritan?
J: I think yeah I like the way things are (mm) period (mm) I don’t like change at all (hm mm) very much, sticking to what I know and just go along with it so yeah and I find it quite wanky to be perfectly honest, play on another word for ya

14. Do you think Australians benefit or are impeded by the diversity of languages around us?

J: Oh definitely benefit, benefit from all diversity, not just the language, and we are a diverse country, so it’s not like the us and them so, it’s them and them I guess, us and us? (laughter).

15. Do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand near you?

J: umm, I get that I get that ahh English paranoia, they talking bout me, ah they’re looking over in my direction, maybe they’re talking about me, probably talking about groceries for all I know, part from the general paranoia of when someone’s talking bout me or not no (ok) I kind, I quite enjoy people s other languages mm

I: yeah, like listening to different sounds and trying to work it out a bit yeah

16. What does the term ‘native speaker’ mean to you?

J: Oo ow, native speaker, somebody who speaks the native language I guess

I: would you classify yourself as a native speaker of English?

J: Yes I guess so, in Australia I would yeah

I: ok, do you know why you’d classify yourself as a native speaker?

J: Cos it’s an English speaking country by all accounts I guess (laughing)

17. How do you tell if someone is a native speaker or not?

J: Oh I don’t know, whether they speak English fluently I guess (laughing). You’re looking at me very weirdly
I: No I just, I’m just prompting your answers y’know, massaging them out softly (laughing)

**18. Do you think it is possible to be a native speaker of more than one language?**

J: Yes, absolutely if you’re fluent in that language (ok) mm yes that’s a tricky one isn’t it

I guess then you’re not, ugh, I don’t know, I s’pose if you’re fluent in the language of the country your in, then you’re a native speaker

I: does it have anything to do with where you are born?

J: I don’t think so, no

**19. Does a native speaker make mistakes**

J: I would hope so, they are human beings after all

I: mistakes in the language, sorry

J: (laughing) I’m more general, they’re a perfect human being. Umm, yes I guess ahh I see what you mean, right umm, no I guess not because that’d be their language

I: so you’ve said they’re fluent (yes) and they’re speaking the language of the country they’re in at the moment (yes) and then I’m just wondering

J: does that allow for stuff ups in the language?

I: yeah, do they make mistakes, or do they just tend to speak it very well?

J: I don’t know, I guess mm I don’t know, ahh if you’re fluent then you shouldn’t make mistakes

**20. Do you think someone can become a native speaker of a language if they haven’t grown up with the language, but learn it later in life?**

J: Yes
I: do you know anybody like that

J: No, not really, don’t think so, my sister came back from Norway for a year and she spoke Norwegian quite fluently, she picked it up amazingly well, in fact couldn’t work out how to speak English for a really long time, it was confusing her when she got back (that sounds like my story) yeah and she kept speaking with a British accent, kind of like trying to find her accent again, it was really bizarre, she got really depressed and couldn’t work out what the hell was going on um So I guess, I’ve completely forgotten the question,

I: umm, if someone can become a native speaker

J: Oh yeah well, I spose in Norway she was a native speaker (mm ok)

21. Do you think a language teacher should only teach their first or ‘native’ language or would it be beneficial to have a teacher who speaks the language being taught as a second language?

I: Did you get that?

J: No, you’re going to have to break that one down for me

I: Yeah, so if you’re learning a language, you’ve got two teachers to chose between, one is a native speaker, like if you’re learning French, born in France, spoken French for a long time… the other one has learnt French

J: right

I: who would you prefer to have as a teacher?

J: Whoever could teach it better

I: so would you be able to, do you think one of them would be able to teach it better?

J: No, no, in my 'umble' opinion, no

23. Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual should be brought up to speak 2 languages?
J: They shouldn’t have to be, but it’s probably handy

I: they shouldn’t have to

J: no, they shouldn’t be forced to speak another language if they don’t want to

I: well they’re only children

J: I assume it just happens when they grow up with their parents if they speak a different languages, tonnes of that in Australia, it’s just how it is, usually

I: um so you think it just happens naturally, that they would learn to speak 2 different languages? J: Yeah usually, when we were kids it was you spoke one language at home and then when you came to school you spoke Australian, so English, so it was the norm pretty much, what if you’ve got a French speaking mother and a German speaking father

J: (laughing) you’d be very confused

I: or even a French speaking mother and an Australian father

J: All depends how thick their accents are, the language they speak at home, that sort of thing (aha ok) I guess, I don’t know, it’s never happened to me

I: no, this is just sort of guessing

J: yes really educated guess (said in Standardized English)

24. Do you have facebook friends, friends on social media from different countries who speak different languages?

J: Don’t have any of that no, period

I: do you have any experience with people who speak different languages?

J: Oh yeah, yeah yeah yeah, yep

I: As friends in Australia
J: yeah, yes yeah yes yeah yeah yeah, I had an umm Arabic friend growing up and her mum used to speak Arabic, read Arabic books and um she was amazingly, she probably still is, haven’t seen her in god knows how long, but um I haha that’s all, I always remember the notes on the door which is ‘I’m down the shops to get some milk’ but it was in that beautiful Arabic language and it was so gorgeous (it is yeah) just want to keep the little notes she had on the door (yeah) umm so yeah no, I’ve never bothered me, it was all good

I: I wonder if, because dyslexic, dyslexia is often umm to do with written language, a written script, a different script would be as problematic for you

J: Donno

I: Be interesting wouldn’t it, to know, I bet there’s dyslexia in every culture, in every language

J: I would hope so, I would think so,

I: (….)

J: except for American’s they seem to speak in phonetics, so they’re fine

**I: Can you tell me anything about how you feel living in Australia in the 21st century?**

J: How do I feel, I personally feel umm fabulous, but I worry and it scares me that we seem to be turning on each other a lot, which shits me to no end and we, I don’t know, we seem to have done this full circle of racism and it’s all coming back, like we’re living in the goddam 40s again, it’s crazy, umm that scares me and it worries me but, and I hope I can change some minds through what I do

I: right

J: but who knows, who knows?

I: yeah, the discrimination and stuff
J: in general yeah, xenophobia, all that crap, what the hell, y’know, y’know in a land of like multiculturalism, we all come from somewhere, get over it already (yeah, that’s right) bunch of racist wanks.

Joe: Interview 1, 21/05/2014

I. Tell me about yourself, your cultural background, the languages that you’ve had experience of

Joe: Umm, well my parents are from South Africa, born and grown up there, and they grew up speaking English and Africaans, but they were both English English first language, so when they came here they didn’t speak Africaans to each other, so I never learnt any of it (ahhh) yeah

I: so when did they come here, how long have you been here?

Joe: I was born here, so they came here in 79

I: right really long time ago

Joe: Yeah, yeah like what’s that like 35 years ago?.... I should know this because it’s they got married in the same year, so I should know their anniversary, right

I: Yeah, you need to know that, so they don’t speak Africaans at all together?

Joe: No, my mum doesn’t even like, because she she didn’t use it that much growing up and then didn’t, just stopped practicing it when she came over here she like has trouble like kind of understanding it now, yeah

I: and what about do you go back? At all, have you visited your grandparents

Joe: Yeah I’ve been there, ahh my grandparents have all passed away, but I’ve been there ahh probably about 4 times, yeah, most recently, like oh probably 5 years ago

I: ok so you just speak English then, they do have a little bit different sound though don’t they
Joe: Yeah and they kinda speak in a umm particularly in Cape Town they speak in a way where they kind of mix the two languages together it’s like a local kinda dialect so if you weren’t necessarily from Cape Town you wouldn’t necessarily understand, yeah

I: their dialect

Joe: yeah, the way they speak and that so (and what about), they drop in and out of Africaans and English, (do they) yeah it’s really weird

I: so have you learnt any languages at school or

Joe: Ah I learnt a little bit of Japanese in primary school and a little bit of German in High School

I: ok so was that one or two years of German?

Joe: Ah I think it was two years

I: Ok because it’s compulsory for the first year isn’t it and then the second year you can choose (yeah) isn’t that what it is and then

Joe: I think so yeah

I: yeah and so your body of art, that’s this,

2. Could you tell me a little bit about what you’re dealing with, what you’re working with

Joe: Umm it’s kind of shifted a little bit but I guess like to sum it up briefly I’m trying to deal with like the psychology of places, so places in the mind, the feeling of places umm the energy that’s in different places and stuff, atmospheres and stuff like that

I: so places being, so you said in the mind, are they only in the mind, or are you dealing with places?

Joe: Umm well it’s sort of bit of like both kind of cos I can’t really think of anyway how they can not be, like if you’re imagining something it’s got to be based on
something (yeah) yeah so it’s going to be based on what you’ve seen or experienced or been to

I: ok so that’s interesting so you’ve got your place, as in I’m looking here (yeah) you’ve got empty, public, got these different places

Joe: So I’m trying to like explore so the different feelings that that you have in different kinds of places, different kinds of spaces (yep) how you get different feelings, umm so I think I guess I’m trying to like merge like what it is of the actual space with what it is that you’re bringing to it (you) yeah well

I: as the artist?

Joe: yeah

I: wow that’s great, yeah no

Joe: It’s a bit tricky, I’ve been on a bit of a weird journey with this trying to work stuff out like

I: it’s very close to what I’m doing though as far as (yeah like searching stuff) I’m trying to say this and merging it with this and saying that this is relevant to this (yeah, yeah) and I think that’s that juxtaposition is really really important in a lot of ways to create a bit of y’know creative thinking (yeah), a bit of development of thought, you put two things together (yeah)

3. So do you umm think about your experiences in these different spaces? The spaces being, they’re not different countries, they’re just different spaces, is the culture ambiguous?, it doesn’t need to be particularly a space in Australia or in South Africa or in

Joe: Not not at this point but I have considered that umm just based on my own experiences in different places and feelings that come up in different places (hmm ok) so basically like I guess just to like yeah go back over what I was saying like umm it’s a lot of it sort of coming from the idea that growing up, living in the built environment, how does that effect like our being (mm) how we behave (mm)

I: and arr public space, are you looking at public space as well?
Joe: Ahh I’m looking at all kinds of space (all sorts of space) yeah yeah

I: There’s not a lot of people there

Joe: No, Yeah, I didn’t put, I’m not really looking at putting people in just because it kind of implies a bit of a narrative (ok) like y’know what I mean,

I: it’s not your

Joe: like you look at a space, like if you look at something so empty, as like this empty carpark, once you put a figure there, then it’s like what’s that figure there doing, why are they there, what, y’know what I mean, so yeah I’m not really I’m trying I’m not, I’m not interested in that so much

I: so you’re taking the people out so that it is directly referenced to that feeling or (yep) that what response you ( … ) to those spaces

Joe: yeah, yeah and

I: alright ok

4. Umm so you’ve talked about your personal experience and I mean it’s all very tied up in there, I’m wondering is there a pivotal, is there a particular experience that made you think wow, that’s what I want to work with, that’s what I get, that something that’s happened that has brought you to this space idea?

Joe: uum yeah, probably a few things like umm when I was like really little I used to have like a weird dream of being like this this weird places umm and it would like freak me out but I could never describe it, so but I can sort of, I can still see visualize what the spaces kind of looked like (oh) yeah, these empty big vacant places that were like

I: was that when you were dreaming?

Joe: yeah when I was like yeah when I was a little kid yeah and I think that’s that’s kind of like where I started with this whole thing (ok) and then like just got into places where like and then it feels kind of sinister or you know something sinister
has kind of happened or yeah how that effects your experience of it, and like things like yeah, empty car parks and stuff like that

I: so they’re not your memories, there’s things that have happened are like things you know of know about, so it’s not memories of what you’ve experienced in those places but more like if something horrible has happened there and then you, sinister has happened there and then you go. Does that sinisterism does that effect your experience of that place?

Joe: Yeah well yeah that’s umm like yeah it’s a weird thing like I’ve I went to Cambodia and travelled around there and it was kind of weird knowing all the horrible stuff that had happened there (mm mm) all the genocide and stuff like that and being at like some of the sites where this stuff had happened that was really strange like yeah but then it was like oh, it’s only strange because I’m bringing that knowledge to it generally like if I didn’t would it still feel like a strange space? (mm) yeah

I: so when you look at a photo of that that’s probably an ant from home I bring them everywhere hahaha, umm so when you look at that space you’re y’know your non person memories but your knowledge of what has happened in that space is actually giving a new dimension to the actual physical reality of it, that’s what you’re talking about (… horrible noise…) Umm (is that) is that me (is that yours beeping?) no I think it’s something else (ah) when I was here the other day we had a fire alarm or something, yesterday!

Joe: Oh yeah there was something going on yesterday, there was a guy walking around testing them all

I: Oh yeah that must be what he’s doing today then, one went off, wherever I was the second floor hahaha you get weird noises around here sometimes, yeah ok so you’ve, do you think of it as a choice, do you think of your journey, what you’re doing as choices being made?

Joe: Oh yeah yeah

I: you do, so it’s a conscious decision of which direction you want to go in? Like y’know
Joe: ah yeah yeah I guess so like sort of like yeah making decisions based on my research and trying to make informed choices I guess

I: how how are they informed?

Joe: By umm just by researching things and developing good like processes and stuff that support the ideas

I: So that’s not personal experiences and stuff that’s that’s more ethical considerations like just doing it correctly or doing it umm

Joe: Yeah I guess … more even technical

5. technical ok, oh well that brings me to the next question umm have you come across any obstacles that may have made you change your intentions or change your direction?

Joe: Any obstacles, like what, like what do you

I: Well you’ve said technical now I can… horrible noise

Joe: hahaha it’s really irritating isn’t it

I: yeah, it’s out there isn’t it

Joe: yeah must be, no one seems to be running so think we’re alright

I: yeah yeah, when I think of obstacles I think of like technical obstacles, things that ‘oh god I really want to do that, but I don’t have the right colour or I’d really like (right ok) to do colour photography but I can’t be bothered it’s too whatever (yeah) too expensive or whatever, or I think of obstacles as far as umm your own experiences, I wish I knew or umm well I haven’t been there so I don’t, just things that may have that, you could think of alternative ways that you’d like to do it but doesn’t there’s a big obstacle

Joe: there’s something stopping you yeah (yeah) umm ok I guess, like well what I’ve been dealing with today is like trying to resolve like the imagery that I’m using and umm so that I want it to be, I want it to be, I want to use images that are relevant to me not just like images that are just from anywhere in the world, umm
but at the same time I don’t want to just draw like a place I’ve been to, y’know it’s gotta, I want to bring some of that that feeling of psychology to it as well

I: so relevant to me you said

Joe: umm to my experiences and stuff

I: how would you say

Joe: so I’m not just taking like a picture from like New York city or something like that because it looks cool (yeah) like I’ve never been to New York so

I: ok so relevant to you and not relevant to you, the differentiation is, that you’ve experienced it you’ve been there you’ve somehow connected to that (yeah) yep

Joe: I’ve had feelings in these places I guess (yep) yeah

I: do you have to go to them to have your feelings there?

Joe: Oh, that’s a good question hmmm (yeah) mm that’s a good question

I: you didn’t go to the one you dreamt about

Joe: Yeah true, or did I? ohh ha that’s a ….yeah hahaha …I’m getting surrealist now

I: An impression of, yeah no, that’s and I’m thinking

Joe: but no that’s probably

I: it’s an interesting question isn’t it (yeah) as far as impressionists and their paintings and the way you feel when you look at them in comparison to realistic type of art like do you get, I get a real buzz when I look at really expressionistic (yeah) types of works, yeah, not because I’ve been there, but because of different things that I guess are more involved with who I am

8. So this, this body of work or what you’re working with, do you think it in anyway explains your experiences with language, culture or identity?

Joe: Mmm Maybe umm through culture I guess
I: Hmm mm if you don’t see any relevance you can just say, you don’t have to see any relevance

Joe: Yeah I guess, I guess culture like but it can still sort of be a bit ambiguous but like I’ve got a lot of images that sort of suggest like city and suburban kind of built (so when you say) you know what I mean, like it’s definitely not like from somebody that’s, even the drawings and stuff, it’s definitely not from someone that’s like engaged with nature, yeah, do you know what I mean?

I: I’m interested in what you think, or what your interpretation of culture is? (mm) so can you just say a little bit more about that like now you’re saying it’s not to do with nature it’s to do with so how do you define culture?

Joe: I guess it’s umm sort of like to do with like the way, the values that you have in the way you live and I guess language is like one of the obvious way to sort of define culture, or just like segregate people from one culture to another I guess (hmm) yeah

I: it’s very interesting, everyone has a different version of culture, everyone’s got a different idea of culture, something that I thought was really clear to me but obviously (yeah) there’s so many different ways of thinking about it (yeah) so ahh ok can you go back to when you were talking about ‘it’s not nature’ (yeah) ok? If culture is not nature, what is it?

Joe: Oh not oh not that culture isn’t nature, I mean like like the culture that I feel I belong to it’s not engaged in nature (ok) cos I’ve grown up in like suburban Adelaide, city in the, nature’s not really like I don’t know I guess it’s not, it’s not a huge part on, in how we shape our lives I don’t think (mm) it probably should be but, it’s nice to think that it is but really like

I: might be something we do at different times in our life too (yeah) go through different journeys

Joe: yeah it’s kinda like a hobby hahaha
I: yeah, a nature hobby (yeah) what you do on the week ends (yeah) umm in Norway that’s what they do on the weekends, they all go out, go walking in the nature

Joe: yeah right

9. ahh have you had thoughts about language in any way while you’ve been doing the doing this, and the reason why I ask you is because you may not have, but by the second interview I bet there’ll be a little bit inspurts there of what you’ve been thinking about so, can you think that if there’s been I mean I can see words written down (mm) umm but once again, what language means to me might be very different from what language means to you so do you feel

Joe: No I haven’t really like yeah, haven’t really thought much about like language and words and stuff, it’s just more like visual language really (hm mm) umm sort of like patterns and stuff, like the way you read a visual image, in that way, but yeah not really (hm mm) yeah, in a descriptive sense I guess (yeah) yeah

10. ok, have you considered, have you identified your role in this work?

Joe: Hmm I guess through the process of like exploring the stuff and making yeah (so), that’s what I was saying before, I don’t want to just make an image that’s just umm like a pure representation of a somewhere (right), y’know what I mean, of bring something of my own to it (yeah) so in that way yeah

I: So you’re pretty I mean you’re very attached to it aren’t you, you’re not standing separate

Joe: yeah, I think so

I: You’re personally involved, you’re finding your own connection (yeah)

11. Last question, is this artwork of personal importance or do you think there ‘ll be broader umm implications

Joe: Umm Yeah I think it’s probably more personal, yeah, might not, yeah I guess the, probably it’s a bit selfish, I’m not really making it for anyone else I spose haha (do you think) like y’know I don’t really I’m not making it with like an audience in
mind I guess, I’m trying to make good work because I want to make good work (yep) yeah so yeah

……

I: and will you be writing, oh that’s one question I didn’t ask you, I’ll do that next umm you’re happy to write about your work? Because I know you have to (yeah, yeah) don’t you

Joe: Yeah Well that’s actually helped me a bit to sort of umm make sense of what I’m trying to do myself (mm) yeah

I: that’s interesting, so the word helps you, the writing it down helps you

Joe: it’s like reflecting on it (yeah) yeah

6. You know how when you’re thinking of a work there’s the visual understanding or process you’re going through and then there’s the intellectual one with words and language and all that, do you feel that you’re going from, starting in the one and going to the other, or do you feel that you’re mixing them up or

Joe: Umm, yeah, it’s probably like yeah going from one trying to shift to the other

I: which one, is there, what alternatively?

Joe: yeah because sometimes there might be a few words that like oh like y’know that really gets the idea across what I’m trying to do or (yeah) and then I’ve got to make that into a visual thing or vice versa sometimes it’s like yeah you might see an image or something like (…) how can I explain that? (mm mm) yeah

I: because it’s interesting that you’ve actually put all these words to these photos (yeah) isn’t it , (yeah) I think it’s

Joe: I was trying to make sense of what kind of images, like why I’m drawn towards certain images, what it is about these images that umm is important or useful

I: mm and do you change the words? Do you think ah crap, that’s not the right word and change it?
Joe: Oh no I haven’t actually, I just I put them up and just kind of

I: and they’re right

Joe: of think about it, oh I don’t know yeah oh, are they right?? Hahahaha

I: I can’t even read one of them something (which one) oh place, places

Joe: oh this one here placelessness

I: placelessness (yeah) ahh

Joe: Yeah that one’s been a recurring theme, placelessness it’s sort of like, umm y’know it can be anywhere, (ahh ok) it’s like does it’s like a transitional kind of space

I: wow it’ll be very interesting to see you next time

Joe: see what happens

I: I’m, can I take some photos?

Joe: yeah if you like yeah

Joe: Interview 2, 25/07/2014

1. Did you hesitate at all when you wrote ‘1’ for the question “how many languages do you speak”?

Joe: No not really, no yeah I don’t feel comfortable in, like a know a few words in other languages but I wouldn’t say I feel comfortable enough to yeah find my way

I: write down 2 or 3 languages, yeah

Joe: yeah yeah

2. Why do you think you haven’t learnt a second language?
Joe: Umm probably just environment where I’ve grown up like there isn’t another language that’s used, yeah, circumstantial I guess, I learnt bits at school as you do, but it’s not like I was around people that spoke other languages and all that so

3. How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?

Joe: How well, I guess to be able to communicate on like a basic level or be able to, yeah just be able to get by, by speaking another language (ok) yeah, like I know, I’ve got a couple of people at work that English is like second, third fourth languages for them and yeah they all sort of seem to come in at the point where they know basics to be able to just like organize and work things out, cooperate (of their English) yeah they know enough English to be able to do that, so I think that’s probably it, if you can communicate with y’know in that language yeah

I: do you reckon they would say that they speak English, would they count English as one of their languages?

Joe: I think so yeah

I: Where do you work?

Joe: I work at Ikea…

4. Have you thought about language, culture or identity since the first interview?

Joe: Umm not really language, I guess culture and identity a little bit

I: Your work’s changed a bit (Yeah) hasn’t it, it’s moved on (yeah) the place thing is less apparent and it’s like you’re working with dimensions…

5. What does ‘Artwank’ mean to you?

Joe: Artwank

I: artwank, have you heard of that? (yeah) yeah
Joe: Umm I don’t know it’s funny, I was thinking about I was thinking about something to do with Artwank today when I was riding in ah it’s I guess it’s like when you sort of like explaining an idea that in a work or something that’s really hard to see or not even, that’s weak or not really there, but you’re just using like (what makes it) academic (oh ok) to just using just to make it sound like it’s, like a fuller work or than what it really is

I: do you use artwank, or would you say to someone you’re artwanking around or something?

Joe: Haha I guess I try not to, yeah, I try to make work that can stand on it’s own, that doesn’t need to rely on too much wordiness around it, yeah

I: is there a difference between artwank words and non artwank words? Like if you’re going to be writing about it um and you’re not going to be you don’t want to sound artwanky, umm is it about the words you choose? To express…

Joe: I think it’s the way, the way (the way) that you do it (ok)

6. Which language do you think, y’know, if you guess, is the hardest language to learn? Have you heard anyone talking about, oh that’s a really hard language to learn?

Joe: Yeah well, like going back to the like friends at work and stuff, they all sort of, even the ones that speak like multiple languages, have said English was hardest (really) yeah

I: where do they come from?

Joe: umm Korea and Afghanistan I think it’s because there’s no like, there’s patterns and there’s rules, but they bend and shift (mm) so it’s like, it’s kind of hard to follow (ah I see, ok) and maybe from going from particularly from Asian languages, maybe that’s even more difficult cos it’s not like a Latin based language, like maybe a European language, someone speaking some European language, to them to learn English may be easier cos it’s like saying same similar alphabet and family yeah (yeah)
Joe: I mean you speak European languages don’t you?

I: I speak Japanese which is non European I guess and umm Norwegian and Danish and a bit of stuff yeah. Norwegian is my best language, or used to be my best language.

7. **Is it possible to lose a language?**

Joe: Ah yeah I think so

I: do you talk about language to your friends at Ikea?

Joe: Ah yeah sometimes yeah, sometimes like yeah you kind of find that, I guess just helping, helping them a bit or

I: oh with the language? (yeah) learning a new word or pronunciation or something? yeah, yeah (ok)

I: so in what instances would someone loose a language?

Joe: I think my mum has lost the ability to speak Afrikaans, yeah (I wonder if she’s got any words left or if) I think she does, but she like yeah like, I think she finds it harder to understand now and really struggle to respond, like my dad he he can still understand it quite well, if people were speaking Afrikaans around him so he said he has to really think about it to respond, that he can still like read it and hear it but because you’re not used to using it

I: wonder what would happen if he went over there

Joe: I reckon it would probably come back, quite, quicker than they think I reckon (yeah) yeah

8. **Do you think that everyone has an equal ability to learn a language or do you think there are some people who are better at learning languages than others?**

Joe: Hmm that’s a good question. haha I don’t know, I guess if you, if you gave yourself the right circumstances to learn then I think then I think yeah it probably would be equal yeah
I: put everyone in the same circumstances yeah

Joe: Yeah

9. What would it mean to you if you could speak another language? Like nothing y’know or heaps

Joe: Yeah, I reckon it would probably mean like, it would feel like I could be part of another sort of world or community or social group I guess, like speaking only English, like you can only sort of umm explore like English literature or English movies without subtitling and that kind of thing

I: so would you like that, like to be able to read a book in another language or to see a film in another language

Joe: Yeah yeah I think so, like sometimes if you watch like if I watch films that are from other countries with other languages, just from the subtitling sometimes it seems like the way they articulate things can be more poetic than they would in English (mm) yeah, so I think there’s like a world of, there’s different ways of expressing things that, like you don’t get, like that are unique to different languages I think

I: yep absolutely, mmm, what about your friends, like what about talking to people ahh in different languages as well, like on the street or y’know, if you got a bunch of, if you started to learn Iranian or some language and then you were able to communicate, you talked about films and books but would you like that also to get within an ethnic group? Perhaps?

Joe: Yeah I guess it would be interesting, yeah

10. Do you think there an optimal age for learning a language?

Joe: Umm, maybe when you’re younger and you’re learning how to use language, like yeah, when you’re learning umm how to, how to explain yourself yeah, I think that’s probably

I: when are you doing that? When, what what um area of age are you thinking about? Like are you meaning
Joe: Maybe like primary school kind of when you’re trying to when you when you like, like learning things and understanding the world and that kind of thing, yeah like you haven’t kind of got like your own ideas already I think

I: oh I see what you mean

Joe: yeah like I think when you’re an adult you’ve already got, you’re embedded with your own ideas and your place in the world and how things are, I think you’d have to open enough to (ok) (...) that a bit, yeah, look past it maybe

I: It’s true, I think you’re right because learning a language means you’ve just got to be a bit naïve and just be a non knower instead of a knower

Joe: yeah

11. Do you think there is an age where learning a language slows down, becomes more difficult or stops?

Joe: I’d imagine so, but I’m not sure, I haven’t explored learning another language as an adult I guess (ok)

12. Do you think it’s ok for a multilingual person, a person who speaks a few different languages to mix their language or do you think they should stick to the one language when they’re speaking?

Joe: Oh that’s interesting, hahaha that’s really interesting. I know that people in Cape Town in South Africa they tend to speak where they mix English and Afrikaans together a lot and it becomes like a sub language of English and Afrikaans where

I: like a pidgin

Joe: yeah so I don’t know if that’s a good thing or a bad thing, all the mixing, I don’t know, like

I: do you care? do you think that the language is becoming less defined, that they should keep it(…)
Joe: Yeah I think they should be yeah I think, shouldn’t like disregard the original language, but I don’t know, saying that, it’s going to evolve naturally anyway so I guess it’s yeah there’s two sides to it isn’t there, like you don’t want the threat of, like the idea of a language disappearing is like, that’s quite a horrible thing but yeah at the same time like, yeah it seems like that’s just the way nature evolves and yeah

**13. Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?**

Joe: Umm, I don’t really use that sort of stuff (why don’t you use it?) umm I just don’t like that way of communicating I guess

I: so does it bother you that they do it or do you just say to yourself I don’t want to do it?

Joe: Umm yeah, it doesn’t really get to me

I: do you use social media? (no) oh you don’t use social media (nup)You don’t text?

Joe: I text yeah, I don’t use like facebook and things like that to communicate

I: ok and in your texting you don’t use those abbreviations like LOL or, I don’t actually know what they all are

Joe: haha no I don’t either, like I hear, sometimes I’ll get texts from people and I won’t really know what what they’ll mean

I: So you’ve never used LOL for example (nup) ok

**14. Do you think Australians benefit or are impeded by the diversity of languages around us?**

Joe: I think it, I think it should be a good thing, but I don’t think it, I don’t think it’s acknowledged enough, like I don’t think, that say for example when they’re learning languages in school, I always thought it was weird that we’re learning languages that of people that aren’t like they’re not even the neighbours of this of people from this country (what language like?) Like learning German, and then it
seemed really odd, and people learning French and stuff it was like well that would make sense I, I, I think that would make sense if we lived say maybe even in Canada where there’s an area where people speak that, but to learn that when there’s no not like a big community of like

I: so do you think it would be better to learn perhaps Chinese or the

Joe: yeah more local languages

I: yeah the Asian languages are probably the most, I mean seems the communities are the biggest and they’re growing all the time…

Joe: Even like Aboriginal languages, I mean they always talk about the languages being lost and how many languages have been lost, but then it’s like not oh well it’s sad but no one’s really doing anything about it, I don’t think like

I: my professors are

Joe: yeah hahaha

I: there’s a lot at uni they’re trying really hard

Joe: Ok well I’ll say from my experience from yeah school and stuff, it doesn’t really seem like anything’s really been done to preserve that, I think it’s pretty bizarre that you wouldn’t try to learn like the languages of the area

I: so do you think it would be a good idea to learn an indigenous language at school? (yeah) like the one of the area like I think Adelaide Plains is Kaulna

Joe: Yeah I think so and I think it would help to get an understanding of like where we are (mm) yeah, like um, I’ve got a friend that’s from New Zealand and he knows some words in like Maori languages and it seems like so like oh of course you would because that’s the area of the world that you’re from but here, we’ve learnt English and….yeah I think they’re quite ahead of us in a lot of ways, like socially and I’ve never really thought that until I went over there I think just cos growing up and just stereotypes and stuff that skued my view of it, like oh y’know, Australia’s poor cousin…
15. Do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand nearby?

Joe: If if they’re speaking to me or just, it’s a weird one

I: ah no, I think they’re not speaking to you hahaha hope they’re not speaking to you

Joe: That’s a weird thing I’ve experienced that quite a lot at work actually like you’ll help a customer and then they’ll start speaking their language but they haven’t sort of, I don’t have a problem with it, I just find it weird that you just break from like us talking and then just talking rather than say, like end this conversation thank you and then you can go on in your language. I think there’s just a little politeness issue (…) haha but I don’t have a problem with it yeah

I: or they could speak to you and then they might be asking their partner or something (yeah) pay for this or not and then they could go back to you in English, y’know it could be this dynamic (yeah) situation because actually you don’t understand what they’re saying

Joe: Yeah, like at the moment, this is just yesterday it was like that there were two girls trying to buy something and they were asking me for help trying to find this thing and then I found it for them and they just said ok wait and they just started speaking in their language but I didn’t know whether like are we done now or like cos I didn’t understand what they were saying, whether they still needed my help or not

I: Ikea would be…

……

Joe: Yeah Working there is the same, like I’ve had times when I’ve been on shift where I’m the only person that’s like English first language in my group or (of the workers?) yeah, of like my particular department, yeah I’ve had a few times like that yeah, it’s just interesting cos I didn’t grow up around a lot of people from overseas (yeah) so
I: so you feel there’s a politeness issue when they talk to you when they talk away, what about if they’re just talking and you’re just talking with your friend and there’s someone talking a different language, does that umm

Joe: No it doesn’t bother me no, but I think, I guess that politeness is sort of, it’s not really it’s not even just language, its, if it was in English, it’s sort of the same thing like

I: yeah that’s true

J: but you can kind of you can pick up cos you know what they’re saying so you know if you’re done, yeah so it’s not really, I wouldn’t say it’s a language issue it’s just, yeah

I: it is though because you can’t understand what they’re saying that it, that that you feel as though wait a sec, I don’t (yeah) sort of insecure, what should I be doing here, because if you walk away, you could be rude

Joe: yeah that’s true

I: cos they might be talking about costs and want to get back to you (yeah), ohh yeah

Joe: It’s a weird one

I: yeah

Joe: yeah

I: very interesting

16. In what environment would someone learn to speak a language best?

Joe: …. I think an environment where the language you are trying to learn is predominantly spoken and written around you,

17. What does the term ‘native speaker’ mean to you?
Joe: Yeah um I guess it would be someone of a language group who speaks that language as a first language

18. Do you think it is possible to be a native speaker of more than one language?

Joe: Umm yeah I guess so like if you lived in an area that was like on the cusp of two language groups, yeah I don’t see why not

19. Does a native speaker make mistakes in his/ her language?

Joe: Umm yeah, I don’t see why not your still human right

20. Do you think someone can become a native speaker of a language if they haven’t grown up with the language, but learn it later in life?

Joe: umm, ohh

I: see the dilemma is that a native speaker for their first language that they’ve spoken from their childhood in the environment of being in that country (yeah), now I’m saying, not learnt it as a child, but learnt a language later in life

Joe: yeah, oh, I don’t know like hmm, I reckon it would, I reckon if you if you I’ll shut that (oh thanks) If you had a shift in the language you were thinking in then maybe

I: if you had a shift in the language you are thinking in?

Joe: yeah like do, you speak multiple languages, do you think in all of those languages or do you think (yeah) yeah right

I: sometimes at the same time

Joe: hahaha, yeah right, I don’t know, I think I reckon I’d have to know a bit more about it to make a make an opinion (yeah)

I: ok well this is a bit easier, I’ll have to rethink those…..
21. Do you think a language teacher should only teach their first or native language, or would it be beneficial to have a teacher, yeah, if you’re learning the language, would it be beneficial to have a teacher who speaks the language being taught as a second language?

Joe: hmm mm

I: so would you prefer to have a teacher who’s spoken that language as a native language or as a first language or would you prefer to have someone who has learnt that language?

Joe: Yeah, ahh I don’t know, I guess there’s probably benefits in learning from someone that has learnt it umm because they’ve been through that experience of learning, so maybe they would understand a better way of teaching it

22. If you were going to have brain surgery would you prefer a surgeon who could speak one or more than one language? You’re choosing your brain surgeon

Joe: Haha…

I: It’s not a trick question, you can answer what ever you want!

Joe: ok hahaha ahh, I don’t really think it would matter, as long as they were good at what they did haha

23. Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual should be brought up speaking 2 languages?

Joe: Ah yeah yeah I think that’s a good idea

I: So if you were to get together with someone who was French, you think your child/ children should be brought up speaking English and French?

Joe: Yeah (yep) yeah, I think then you hang onto like both languages then, yeah

I: ok
24. so you don’t, you don’t do Facebook, so you don’t have friends from different countries that you communicate with on social media or

Joe: No, not really

I: Great, that’s it then. I thought your work was very, very interesting, your, your use of place and that placelessness (…)

Joe: yeah

I: that sense of

Joe: Yeah, I had all those lists up there before, I sort of covered them up a bit umm, just to free my thinking up a bit

I: So where are you going now

Joe: I’m playing around with distorting like memory of place

I: oh because it’s the psychological aspect of place, isn’t it

Joe: Yeah, yeah so now I’m playing around with that so I’m just sort of developing another process at the moment where umm I make drawings from memory and then I’ve got umm these folded little templates that I’m intending to then draw these remembered places on these as they’re flat and then fold them out to cause like distortions (aha) yeah

Mona: Interview 1, 29/05/2014

I: … you’re from Tasmania

M: Yeah

I: Yep, and you speak one language

M: Just English haha

I: just English, I don’t know what, when did you come here? Did you have schooling in Tasmania?
M: Yeah, I came over here when I was 14, so oh that’s a good 10 years ago almost 9 years ago, so I was in year 8, so I had schooling from yeah 1-7 down in Tasmania and then I came up here and I was at the Mt Barker Waldorf School in the

I: Oh were you?

M: In the hills, yes lovely

Umm so **1. Could you tell me a little bit about yourself, your cultural background, any experiences with language, languages that you’ve had**

M: Umm, I did Japanese and German in school and that’s the bit, I’ve got a little bit of a retention for that, but not much anymore, probably

I: do you mean Primary or High School

M: Umm both, both so.. so yeah and umm other than that it’s English at home and my dad’s English, he was born in England and came over here and mum’s Australian, but all of our heritage is probably from y’know Britain and Scotland and all of that, (yeah) we’re a bit of a mix (yeah) bunch.

**2. And now your body of art, what are you working on?**

M: Ahh I’m working on things to do with place, more so feeling out of place and the idea of unsettled. I’m looking at the idea of home and that duality of the home being somewhere you belong and the parts where maybe you don’t. I moved continually throughout my childhood, we had like a new house every two years

I: so it wasn’t just Launceston, it was

M: Ohh ahh it was in Launceston and then Hobart and then around and up here so it was just, y’know round here where the school was but just different homes. I’m looking at place in the more sort of domestic and local side of that and I’m looking at where I live now and kind of drawing up memories from the past that relate to that and I’m working with video, drawing and some installation as a way to y’know kind of explore that

I: ok so domestic home and space or memories, that’s what you, memories of
M: Both, mainly because my idea of domestic space and place and home is quite contingent on my memory, like

I: strangely enough

M: Yeah, strangely enough, you so you know, I feel at home when you know I have memories of this is what I did in my childhood, this has happened in this home and and now I relate it to now and try to adapt it to a new environment, a new house and create a sense of home there, but it’s through memory that I start creating that sense of home, where I belong

I: when you say memory I just get this, visual memory, umm sound memory, smell memory, tasting, all those memories are you working with any of those in particular?

M: Ahh visual memory, sound not so much, smells, well I hadn’t really thought of that yet, but I s’pose it’s mainly visual memory

I: ok… goats

M: Umm that, that was the seed for me to realize that I was working with you know things out of place. I’m interested in animals because they tie very closely to my sense of home, I grew up with animals and since we came up here didn’t really have many animals until now, I’ve got 2 pet birds, so goats they’re a symbolic reference, they were a stand in for me, kind of position them around in you know small places where they

I: like a symbol

M: yeah yeah like

I: taken away the you and put in

M: yeah (ok) I’m working with them in my video as well so I’m trying to nut out why I’m doing that, mainly cos I think they do represent something to me personally from my memory but now I’m kind of using them as a motive or a stand in for myself and if they’re representing me they’re kind of anthropomorphized and they’re walking around in you know human spaces
I: so… tell me about the choice of …a goat (Umm) although I realize you might be just here right now and y’know you’re going to go … places

M: umm ahh yeah, a goat, they’re, they’re rich, rich symbols, they really are umm I like them because they’re kind of y’know they’re herd animals but they’re independent they also they’ve got that sort of reference to sort of independence of cheekiness or y’know they don’t belong here but they’re going to be here anyway, kind of and umm

I: ok, there’s ladders hmmm

M: There’s also, it ties nicely to the idea of the scapegoat as well, so I’ve been as far as positioning that little one, yeah

I: right is he in the home?

M: He is in

I: oh he’s in that box and you’re photographing him

M: I’m photographing him in this box (ahh) and that was umm, I started with these floor plans from all the houses from my childhood and there’s not not in here, it’s in this book but umm one of the houses I lived in there was a room that we called the scary bedroom and me and my sister would never go into it, unless mum and dad were there and we just used it as a spare room so I kind of mocked up and pieced together from memory a little bit, this room that was the scary bedroom so I kind of put the goat in the scary bedroom moving it around, like it was the stand in for me, like it was being brave for me or something

I: sounds like you’re putting yourself in a confrontational position (yeah) umm and see what will happen, will you scream, will you cope, will you yeah

3. Ok so that leads me to the next question, do you think your personal experiences are important in the creation of this work and the choices that you’ve made?
M: Yes, it’s stemming directly from my personal experience because I think I have to go I start personally to start understanding and then relate it to the y’know the more broader side of things…

4. I: so has there been a particular experience that you’ve had that has been somehow pivotal, important relevant in your work?

M: I think my continual moving house, I’ve got this y’know these strong memories of not being quite settled in a home and that was y’know that was the norm and I kind of like that and don't like it the same way which is I s’pose it’s my interests in, that one there starting to look at the spare room or y’know rooms after or before y’know habitation, sort of umm

I: How does that relate to like your movings, are you thinking of the room before you move into it, a room that exists before you move into it, is that what you’re thinking of, or a room that you’ve left, or

M: Both because the kind of y’know when you’re renting you’re moving into a place generally that’s had someone else in there, you’re moving into a place with already that history, and you’re leaving that place and leaving your history kind of there and then, there’s that that moment umm, been looking at Samantha Small’s work and she had a still that she mocked up out of cardboard of a room, but it was empty and y’know just little slight umm hints of human presence and it’s just kind of haunting cos it’s yknow, humans not there anymore but they were

I: And if you’re thinking, like you’ve got 3D you’ve got 2D, as far as a gallery space and a the body of work that you are going to show, have you thought have you come towards no has to be a 2D, no it has to be a 3D or it has to be a whole room, have you thought about that

M: I’ve I’ve thought about it, I think because ahh they do use these studios as a space to show the work in so

I: so people will move around to see your work, move around this building to see the final umm exhibition ohh ok
M: Yeah that’s what they did last year and I think it will it will be it’ll be installation, video and drawing, I’ll work those in together so I’ll have the drawings that I start and then see how they relate to the video, see how they relate to the installation. I want them kind of all the process and materials and methods I use will be immersive with each other, I don’t want them to be this is this, this is that, this is that (yep) so it’ll be kind of like it will be a body of work y’know, I’m trying to think of the word its umm y’know when flows all together yeah (yeah)

I: like that what I’m thinking is you’re actually giving the onlooker an experience of what your body of work is, so, just from what you’re saying it sounds like you come into the space and there’ll be different things perhaps, either happening or yeah the space becomes important just because you’re talking about space (yeah) then, I’m thinking about that.

5. Ok then, have you come across any obstacles that may have made you change your intentions?

M: Ahh yes I s’pose, I’m limited by the skill and knowledge that I already have and soon as I hit that limit I try and expand it really, so I’m, I’ve I’ve had it’s mostly your own mind second guessing yourself because it’s very much a territory of ‘I don’t know what’s going on’, I’m here standing for myself with my own work now, how do I make this important, how do I, and it’s all the questions that the lecturers have of me (mmm) and so I think they’re the obstacles they’re the obstacle, they’re the more personal, emotional obstacles that I have, but in terms of the work, y’know, I if a drawing isn’t working for me I’ll just keep going at it until it destroys and something else comes from it, it's the same with the rooms it’s the same with that so my process is very much let’s keep working practically with my hands until it starts working

I: yeah and is that how you work with your thoughts as well? (yeah, yeah) So if you’re confronted with something and it’s like ahh I don’t know scenario, I mean, you let it live within you that idea and slowly do you think you sort it out?

M: chip away at it yeah it’s very much yeah, spose that idea that you bought the confrontation I’ll confront it and then go well ok lets see what I can do with this and just push it until I can find a solution or move it further (yeah) or leave it until I can,
but I will come back and resolve it I think that’s what I’m doing with all of my work, I’m not necessarily discarding pieces yet I’m going alright I’m going to leave that there and then I’ll come back to it and try to resolve it

I: yeah, no I’m thinking that’s an interesting thing as far as I used to think do a few, get that problem you solve it but in fact now I think no you wait, you let it solve itself out through time and through reflection and through just, doing things quickly is not always the right way, you might get an answer but it might not be the real answer (yeah)

6. Uum what have you thought about when deciding how to portray your ideas visually?

M: Arr are we talking about subject matter or very much the practical how do I talk visually?

I: could be both, whatever one comes into your mind, how are you going to portray your ideas visually, whether you’ve felt ugh but no in one way or another

M: I think this particular semester has been really interesting because we’ve been told, alright if this is your comfort zone, go and explore everything outside it so you know that you haven’t y’know haven’t been disregarding opportunities for your work to manifest, y’know, and so I’ve always been a drawer, so I started with drawing and and then when actually no, I want to go to video, maybe video’s a kind of media that speaks for this better so I’ve been just trying to explore different ways of yeah how to portray my work and how to portray my idea and then by actually going to that then being able to say afterwards ok had a look at that, that worked, that didn’t work, I’ll go back, had a look at this, that worked, that didn’t work so it’s kind of a process of elimination really

I: so is that within the materials of

M: yes very much

I: what you are doing. Just because when you are talking about what’s in your comfort zone umm there could be lots of other stuff as well like for example looking at a room you didn’t think of or an experience you didn’t think of or
something that is uncomfortable that you don’t want to think of, just when they’re saying, look at what y’know your comfort zone is everything you know, when you’re out of your comfort zone they are things that you don’t know, but how can you not, how can you look at the things you don’t know (yeah)

M: Yeah, I think that’s the hard thing which is probably why, that’s why I chose the technique of alright I’ll start from here and then see where else I can take it once I’ve got an actual, it took me a couple of weeks to figure out my idea what I was actually going to work with and determine that was through just y’know doing something practical and then reflecting on it, so each time I find a new reference artist, each time I read something new it expands how I’m going to approach my work again

7. ok so if I was to ask you what ‘language’ meant, what how would you answer? What is language to you?

M: It’s the way I communicate the way I communicate something, so it’s not, it’s y’know writing, it’s verbal, it’s visual as well and, cos I am a musician as well, it is sound, but I spose in terms of my practice now, it’s how I write it how I talk about it and how I, I’ve got to really think about my visual language, so the way I communicate through the aesthetics of what I’m doing

I: do you use the word expression at all when you are talking about your your work?

M: No, not really, I’ll say express, not necessarily expression

I: How to express yeah expression And what sort of music do you do?

M: All sorts, I’m a violinist so I yeah I was yeah classically trained and now I generally do gypsy folk

I: do you? that’s great isn’t it

M: Yeah so much fun, do you play at all?

I: Yeah, violin

M: Oh lovely, that’s great
I: Yeah, but I started when I was 28 and now (that’s awesome) yeah and I did 10 hrs a day, I was frantically wanting to play the violin, but, it’s next to my bed, it doesn’t get used a lot now, and y’know what it’s like when you listen and it’s not good, it’s not good enough and then the bow’s not good enough and it’s like aghh (yes) I think I just need to stop with it and, I love it every now and again, but yeah I don’t have the time (yeah) … you started early so you got the the good feeling in (I was lucky yeah) but mine’s still yeah. But that’s important to what I’m thinking about, that you work with music ……

M: Oh great

8. umm so do you think this artwork explains in some way your experiences with language, culture or identity?

M: Yes, identity, I’m looking at my identity in the way, in the sense of belonging and also how my identity is grounded by my sense of place of home, so I’m looking at that. I haven’t yet particularly thought about language, but this conversation is going to make me think about that, now, a lot cos, yeah, I can, when I use language I consider but I don’t often think of language now in the way that I talk or the way that I write, it’s now visual, if I’m using the word language it’s connected now to my visual language really so

I: mm mm I mean I’ve recognized that by asking you that question, I get to come back you see, second interview, I guess you hear reflections on that, so yes, I’m prodding, I’m prodding

M: No that’s, that’s good, there was a third one, it was identity, language (and culture) and culture umm yeah I haven’t really thought about it, I’m quite uncertain about culture, I understand, I’m starting to understand the visual culture that I live in y’know Australian art it’s Australian that, but in terms of my actual culture I’m not really sure how to categorize that yet

I: mmm no nor am I (yeah) I don’t really know what it means, I thought I did (mm) things keep happening to make me question what it really means

M: Oh that’s good cos yeah I’m not really sure either (yeah)
I: But it’s interesting too see how or if, it’s like the language thing as someone who only speaks one language or someone who speaks one language, how you would reflect upon something which could be very very important for someone who is bilingual or multilingual (yeah yeah) and obviously it’s different so therefore I think, what’s it called, curious that’s my other language you see, straight away, came in Norwegian and then I have to translate it to you (oh yeah) umm

9. Have you had any thoughts about language in particular during the development of this piece? I know you’ve got to write about it for example, have you thought of language or has it just been something nup, not thought about that at all

M: No, I’ve thought of it because we’ve got to condense, particularly now this proposal into 12 hundred words so I’ve got to really think about ‘what words’ I use, what’s going to express this the in the best way because y’know most I’m now sending my proposal off to people who will assume that they’re only going to get an idea of what I’m working with through what I write so that’s the way I’ve gotta pick my language and my words well when I’m writing

I: it’s really hard isn’t it, to portray what you’re thinking in such a clear and concise way, with such a limited amount of words and give it to someone else and they’re supposed to get get it yknow (yeah) it’s hard

M: Yeah, it’s good, we get to put up a few drafts up so they can point out my gaps (right) yeah

I: no that’s good and that helps you to think also and be more aware of where where you are failing, where you haven’t quite manage to put it in a good way (yeah) it’s only practice that’s all it is…(yeah) like everything, (yeah) practice

10. Have you identified your role in the creation of this work? Have you questioned who you are, in creating it?

M: Hmm, my self as a author or?

I: do you see yourself as an author do you?
M: I think so, I think cos I am central in this I have to be y’know physically, there’s not a moment when I’m not thinking about it or not physically making something so and as far as my work is concerned I am the central piece in it really, I’m kind of yeah

11. So this is the broader implications one, is this art work of personal importance or does it have broader implications, so, is there anything you want to say with your work?

M: Yes I think, particularly my generation now really in Australia we’re dealing with kind of disorientated and displaced senses of selves. What whatever our background I mean for someone like me and my heritage I’m standing upon some really really troubled history that y’know don’t necessarily feel that we belong in this country and I don’t feel that I should belong in this country really for that sake so I am recognising the idea of feeling out of place as y’know, a global condition, I want to talk about my personal experience of that by looking at a small aspect of it and then relating it to the more outside world y’know to say something to say something about my place and this cos y’know I’m trying to understand it really now I think other people are trying to understand it as well, and using their work as a way of getting it out there into the world

I: yeah because you’re 23 aren’t you (yeah) and so this new global society which is something that is your world virtually isn’t it (yeah) it’s not mine… umm so when you’re talking about that broader context and the feeling out of place, are you identifying why you, I don’t want to put words into your mouth (No that’s ok) but the goat and the big picture, I’m wondering whether you are becoming a symbol for what’s happening, displacement of people or, can you tell me about that broader globalized world?

M: Possibly, I mean we live in so many quasi realities now especially with all of the y’know social networking and all that, I think most of my friends live in that world, not in the real world, and I think as artists we get a chance to actually live a bit more directly, it sounds like a contradiction because they see artists as y’know living up here or up with the fairies sometimes but we get to actually live in a bit more of the real world and I spose I am a bit of a symbol for that just y’know I represent a
certain category of person and I think I might be trying to use that to say something in my work

I: ok so do you think it is mostly a reflection upon that that take on virtual reality experience that a lot of your friends and a lot of the world are participating in?

M: I think it talks of that but I’m not directly referencing that I’m happy for that to talk of so I think me trying to find my feet in my reality talks of that but I come from a bit more of a personal prerogative, I want to y’know understand this for myself and then maybe I can do something about it with other people I spose, I’m not I’m not necessarily political I’m not y’know an activist but I do care about a lot of things so that does inform my work subtly, not directly I don’t think I have enough knowledge or y’know enough experience to be able to make a prop y’know, a very overt statement I think that wouldn’t be fair, I think that would be ignorant of me, but I can start to talk of these things that I am thinking about and hopefully other people relate to and maybe they’ll come back and say ohh this is my work I’m talking about this too or

I: and what about your impact upon these people, that you like you said your friends are, there’s a lot of your friends that are living in that unreal world, although for them that’s the real world of course umm

M: Ahh they’re going to do what they’re going to do but y’know if they’re going to come to my exhibitions or if they’re going to have a chat to me about y’know things that mean something which, I like to do now and again, then y’know, we’ll start to communicate and maybe they’ll start thinking of a different kind of life because I spose as an artist I’ve said I don’t want to participate in this, I’m going to do my work I’m going to be a practicing artist, I’m going to work for myself and I’m y’know going to live this way and everyone else they live in that way which they can, but

I: where do you think those choices have come from?

M: Umm family background and society I think and we have so much projected upon us like it’s interesting that we y’know as visual artists live in a world that y’know our language is very very closely connected to that of advertising. I I like
um watching y’know stuff about advertising going oow I see what they did there, y’know understanding that so I think we have a lot of projected ideals on us and I’m I’ve got a lot of projected ideals, I’m fully aware that all of what I’m thinking, my choices, they’ve been projected on to me and I’m doing something with them now, so I don’t know how much I am an author of that or not

I: it’s just that the advertising companies are y’know strongly dependent upon changing peoples point of view, aren’t they, they don’t exist without it (yeah) you don’t have that position, you don’t have to be dependent upon that (no) yeah umm, interesting that you think their language and your language is strongly similar (yeah yeah) that it’s the same mm

M: I don’t have it on y’know national tv however so

I: no, did you used to watch Gruen Transfer? Yeah fantastic (loved it) yeah and what about Facebook

M: Yeah I do, I like facebook in the way that it keeps me connected with all of the people I’ve met who live far away, I won’t get to talk to them in any other way, I like social networking for events, I like it for networking in terms of my art and exhibitions I think that’s great but y’know, I don I don’t want to be checking it every hour y’know living there oh my god, I didn’t get 40 likes for this picture kind of thing

I: it must be a very different place where you are than where I am, but actually there’s still a lot of people at my age that want to have a lot of friends,

M:I know

……

M: Yeah and so I spose maybe that’s why I feel out of place as well, we’ve got so many reasons to feel a bit like that

……

I: Ok well that’s it, is there anything else you’d like to say?
M: No, just thank you, it’s kinda nice to talk and have someone prompt you as well because it starts my mind whirring and going oh actually I get a chance to articulate this and then I’ll reflect on that later, so that’ll be good

……

M: that’s the nice thing about drawing you can see your entire history, you’ve got that pentimenting of umm layers and layers of what you’ve done

Mona: Interview 2, 31/07/2014

1. Did you hesitate at all when you wrote ‘1’ for the question “how many languages do you speak”?

M: Oh I’ve I’m not y’know I’m not fluent in anything and anything that I started being getting to have any sort of grasp on in High School, like Japanese and German, it’s all gone now, I I I expect if I pick it up again, decided to start learning again, there’d be a lot more that would come naturally to me and I’d probably remember more of like the all the kanji then, then y’know I think I’ve forgotten but yeah I’m not, I don’t speak really

2. So, why do you think you haven’t, like that you’re not in the situation of saying that you can like, of learning a language?

M: I think it's um 1. time 2. I was never in a position to be able to do any exchanges that a lot of people did at school and I haven’t been travelling yet, I think once I allow myself some time to start travelling and go like where I’m going to go, I’m I’m quite actually, I don’t really want to go to countries that doesn’t speak English without a bit of a proficiency mainly because I think 1. it’s rude and I feel really like yeah really overwhelmed with not knowing the language I think that sometime start learning but I spose time and I’ve been focusing on study now

3. How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?

M: I don’t quite know cos I think I spose cos I’ve never been fluent, I don’t and I haven’t been travelling yet, I don’t know what is y’know getting by and what isn’t
but I think to be honest, you don’t know til you go there and you have to speak (yeah) that language, that’s what I found at least with my friends that came back, they went with rudimentary stuff and they came back fluent and it was great, it was great

I: so nice isn’t it

M: yeah

4. Since the first interview have you thought about language, culture or identity in the process of making your art?

M: Yes, in terms of that I have been with developing my writing at least and how I articulate I’ve been focusing on specific words and phrases and trying to narrow down from the broader ideas (hm mm) and I’ve been conscious of language in that way

I: You did talk about that in the first one about having to choose your words efficiently, you did

M: Yeah and I’m I’m getting better at that and (ok) yeah being able to express what these ideas exactly are and having y’know all the lectures and y’know the panel understand what I’m talking about, ‘why you doing this’ y’know

I: yeah, no that’s great

M: I can say this is why

I: and it comes

M: Yep and it comes, it’s not just the alright I need to research this a bit more, I’m getting there

I: it’s incredible isn’t it

I: so that’s just through practice and through reading and through thinking about your work?
M: yeah, continual thinking and just like bouncing it around in my head every spare moment really

I: yeah and culture and identity are they in there too

M: A little bit, I spose because I’m looking at childhood experiences and dealing with y’know personal experiences, I’m looking back and going well this was my family background and that’s translated into this work y’know somebody from another background, the work will be completely different, I’m trying to be aware of y’know how I’m visually betraying things and going well are the people going to get this because even my childhood experiences, other people y’know will, yeah different cultural backgrounds so they can understand what this is, so yeah I’m trying yeah just make sure that I have the common thread that

I: y’know that word generic, I’m not thinking of it in a bad way, I’m just thinking of it as in speaks to everyone type of a way which like music also, I’m just wondering whether is that where you feel your art should be, that it does fit to regardless of culture and

M: Yes, I think I think I’m thinking from like a collective culture, mainly because as um someone who comes from y’know colonial background really, I don’t have really strong y’know sets of culture, it’s mainly, I’m I’m Australian as much as y’know I’ve got y’know the stories that mum has dredged up from y’know Scotland and Ireland all of that, I’m, I’m just here and that’s my culture and in some ways I think that’s a bit of a non-culture and y’know at the same time y’know, a completely diverse and huge one at the same time, it’s got that duality. I’m not really sure that I know what it is I think looking at y’know post colonialism as an extension that I might go through for y’know maybe bridging a bit on honors and um through to, cos I am interested in that cos y’know

I: identifying what the culture is you mean, like what it means to, is that what you meant?

M: Yeah, I think

I: that non-culture what the non-culture is
M: that non-culture, that that little aspect of well, historically why I don’t feel that maybe I’m, not y’know not as connected that then I don’t really belong here like somebody from another country say oh I’m y’know I’m Italian I’m German blah blah blah I spose I’ve got that kind of yeah white colonial guilt in the back of my mind all the time and I think I want to explore that a little bit

I: A conscious guilt, I think there’s a lot that don’t really have that as a conscious kind of a guilt, it’s interesting that you do, that you feel that

M: yeah, I do, I think maybe because I’m I’m on a lot detachment from nature and land as y’know, general, when I think about that I think about y’know how indigenous culture, how absolutely bereft they must feel being disconnected from that and that makes me feel very guilty. Cos if I’m feeling that, just the slightest they must be feeling that y’know 100 times fold (yeah yeah)

5. ‘Artwank’ what does it mean?

M: Oh to me pretentious y’know pretentious language that you use around describing your own work which doesn’t necessarily have much of a backing y’know, that art piece is that way because you say it is, it doesn’t, you actually haven’t, yeah you’re saying a lot of, scuze the word, bullshit for the sake of saying it and sounding impressive

I: right, like a um rooster) haha

M: Like a rooster yes, it’s all show it’s not haha

6. Which language do you think is the hardest language to learn?

M: I’ve heard Chinese is very hard, very very hard, I think English would be very simple in comparison, but I’m not quite sure really

7. Do you think it’s possible to lose a language?

M: Um, like for yourself that you learn one and loose it or

I: anyone at all, to have a language and then no longer have it
M: Yes I think as much as there’s written language I think it’s important for language to be communicated and like storytelling, when we loose some of that, that’s a potential to loose a lot of language

I: ah where have you heard that

M: I’m not sure I probably, probably read it that might be my parents, my parents are teachers, so there’s a lot, I grew up on stories and then y’know say my nieces aren’t growing up on those stories and y’know it doesn’t really matter but at the same point they’re also fundamental to me and going through and doing y’know little philosophy segment with learning about how important storytelling is and this and that, I feel it’s really important

I: They talk about that in the indigenous cultures too, their storytelling

M: yeah, I think it’s important

8. Do you think that everyone has an equal ability to learn a language or are there some people who are better at it than others, have some natural gift or something?

M: Um, I think there’s there is aptitude but the same with I think the same with drawing and music, I’ve always found that there are the people who are good because they work really really hard at it and then there’s people who y’know maybe it comes a little bit more easy, but the same point, even if it comes a bit more easily you you’ve got to work hard at it (mm) so I think, I think it’s actual effort and y’know flavour to learn stuff, and keep it there in your memory and continue practice, it’s like I’ve done a fair amount of acting and my memory now cos I’m not doing as much, I’m not remembering as much, it’s not as good as when it was then, I could y’know I was working at the time and I could hold y’know orders of 10 people in my head and put it down in the computer absolutely accurately, now, nup, not so much (yeah, ok)

I: so you’re talking about passion then, the the y’know that thing to actually um to work hard, to want to work hard, if we’re at an equal playing field and everybody’s got the same ability to learn a language so perhaps y’know some people work really really hard and others don’t, what, what’s going on there?
9. What would it mean to you if you could speak another language?

M: Um, that I can learn more languages haha

I: ahh that’s a great answer haha never stopping

10. What is the best age for learning a language?

M: I’ve heard when you’re really young but I don’t really know, I think I’d still be able to learn a language in a few years time

11. Do you think you can be too old to learn a language?

M: No, my mum’s just started learning violin and cello and she’s doing really well (has she) yeah  haha

I: violin and cello

M: And cello, she wants to play the cello but because she has to hire a cello and we’ve got a violin, she started on the violin, she’s so…. (hey?) she’s having a lot of fun (wow) so she’s yeah, she’s ah 64

……

12. Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person to mix their languages when speaking or do you think it is important to keep languages separate?

M: No I think you can mix language, I think, ah well historically we’ve got so many French words and this and that and it just makes our language better, more more um appetising I suppose haha

13. Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?

M: Yes, I’m a bit of a spelling, grammar person, it makes a difference to me, I mean it’s fine, if it’s easy whatever just do it, but at the same point if you want to talk, I have issues when that translates to y’know more official or important things and
people are still using text and y’know, if you want to communicate properly with me on some sort of level proper spelling’s alright, please

I: do you use it yourself? Like do you use lol for example?

M: No not really, I have on the occasion and it’s actually really annoyed me and I’m going like, ‘never using that again’ haha

I: Oh my god, there’s the same mentality going on at school…. it’s an interesting thing really isn’t it, that choise of nup nup it’s ok to mix your languages but it’s not ok to change the English language, it’s (yeah) something less grammatically correct

M: I don’t know why, it might be yeah, might be a thing I’ve picked up from family or just

I: could just be a part of being an artist as well, being particular (that’s true) …… just not wanting to be the same as everyone else (yay) and accepting difference and alternative ideas

M: yeah I think so

I: yeah

14. Do you think Australians benefit or are impeded by the diversity of languages around us?

M: Benefit in my opinion, we need more

15. Do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand near you?

M: Yeah y’know I’ve I’ve met a lot of that, a lot of um friends with German or French and they’ve had whole conversations that I have no idea what’s going on but it didn’t really bother me, that if they needed me to chip in they would turn to English haha

I: yeah, do you listen and try and work out what they’re saying?

M: yeah
I: yeah you do, do you get tired, or you just keep going, trying, trying, trying?

M: No I keep going, I like it hehe

I: do you get it sometimes, do you hear the

M: Sometimes, if I recognize words or it’s just often body language and expressions as well y’know, any swear words I pick up instantly cos I know what they are but haha

16. In what environment would someone learn to speak a language best?

M: Hmm, personally I think a school environment was good but I say going to another country and having to actually you’ve got no other choice but to speak that language is probably the best, best environment to learn (mm) um that’s y’know it’s why I love having a studio here, it makes me come out of the house and be disciplined and spend the time, I think I need that approach to languages to learn, I need to go somewhere and spend the time, and then come back and immerse myself with it but I, I couldn’t just try and learn from home, I’m not that disciplined

I: mm, or a school once a week (yeah) or

M: yeah something like that

17. What does the term ‘native speaker’ mean to you?

M: Um someone who’s born with the language that they speak they learned it from childhood that’s their language

18. Ok, do you think it is possible to be a native speaker of more than one language?

M: Yes, I suppose, yeah, cos there’s a few different countries where there is more than one language and y’know even people I know that’ve had, they were born here but had Dutch parents they first learnt Dutch and then English, but or at the same time, I don’t know, I’m quite aware that they flip between both constantly so I spose you can learn languages simultaneously (mm)

19. Does a native speaker make mistakes in his/ her language?
M: As in when they are writing or academically or when they are talking?

I: talking, writing

M: some, I’m not sure about mistakes but sometimes they flip between them when they are trying to search for a word that they want to express or they forget who they’re talking to maybe or forget that I can’t understand y’know (…) that, that sometimes happens

I: so if you’ve got umm like for example you're a native speaker of English I would presume (yeah) um, do you make mistakes in your language?

M: Yeah, all the time, it depends how much I’m if the more I’m actively articulating things, like having to public speak y’know, think on my feet critics, the better I am at talking I don’t forget words, I don’t have mental blanks, but if I spend a lot of time not speaking there’ll be those moments where I’ll be like ahh no the word’s gone, it’s gone haha I won’t remember it til later

I: That’s incredible

M: yeah yeah

20. So do you think someone can become a native speaker of a language if they haven’t grown up with the language, but learn it later in life?

M: Yeah I will I think I the term native speaker I really categorise it as someone whose born with that language in that country, but y’know it’s nothing to say that someone can y’know become fluent and be better in that language in effect than their original language

21. Would you prefer to have a teacher who speaks the language being taught as a first or second language?

M: First (ok) I’m not sure why but I think the teacher that I’ve had for languages is that they’ve had that language as their first language, it’s always been better, better communicated, yeah I’m not sure why
I: yeah, that must be, this week people saying different from last week, weird, ok, so a lot of people said second language up until this week

M: Yeah, I mean logically I probably would say that but from just experience it’s been the other way round

22. If you were going to have brain surgery would you prefer a surgeon who spoke one or more than one language?

M: I think I’d be impressed by more than one language haha

I: so you’d let the person who speaks more than one language have a go?

M: probably, if I had to have brain surgery, I’ve never had surgery in my life so it’d be one of those things, I’d have to think about it for a long time, it’s like life or death maybe, lobotomies haha

23. Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual should be brought up speaking 2 languages?

M: Oh, I don’t really want to pass judgment on somebody else’s family but I think they should be brought up with more than one language (mm) I s’pose I just think language is important, I think different languages, languages are important as well, and and maybe a bit of that

I: Yeah, I suddenly felt that too, that oh wait a second, if you don’t speak 2 languages, you only speak 1 and then you’re thinking of being able to speak 2 just because you’re brought up that way then the emphasis y’know that it becomes less your own ahh deficit or something isn’t it less something that you’ve got, nearly for free in a way (yeah) yeah, with the cornflakes, as in y’know with the food you’ve eaten you’ve also got the language, a second language haha

M: Absolutely, haha yeah that’s exactly how I feel about it

I: yeah, do you think it would be an easy thing? To learn as a child in a family where there’s two languages being spoken and you’re learning 2 languages, do you think it’d be an easy thing?
M: I wouldn’t know but I think, I think yes, mainly cos when I think back to when I was a child, I was just so eager for knowledge and just did stuff (…) I just would have loved knowing more things, it would have given me a whole new set of questions to ask about

I: one in English and one in another language?

M: Yeah! And why are these different and why why isn’t the word for this in this language and that, and that

I: on the other hand, I wonder if it would have instilled in you this abstractness of things are different, that there aren’t always answers to why this is called something in this language and it’s called something else in this language because there is really no meaning

M: yeah maybe

I: it might have done the opposite, who knows (yeah haha)

24. Do you have facebook friends, friends on social media from different countries who speak different languages?

……

I: Oh, of course all in English, or do you use translator google or?

M: Sometimes I’ve used translator google um particularly with a lot of French friends… ok heaps of English or they would try and get me to learn French…

I: so you have to find the French phrase?.......... 

I: Ok that’s great, thanks very much,

M: No worries,

I: that’s the questions

M: that was quite fun
I: Oh good, well I wondered whether people would enjoy it as in it’s less to do with your artwork and more to do with just language I guess, but um

M: we talk so much about our artwork at the moment, it’s kind of nice to talk a little bit about it, but also about y’know other stuff and it’s important

Olivia: interview 1, 03/06/2014

1. ahh yes, you wrote down one language like everyone but one person here

O: Sadly yes

I: Ah so can you tell me a little about yourself, your cultural background, umm any experiences with language, languages that you’ve had

O: Well I was born in Australia, I was born in Adelaide I’m the I’m youngest of 4 children, no one speaks another language apart from English in our family. My grandfather is Welsh so he, he can speak Welsh but we never umm picked up anything but a few y’know beautiful words here and there umm so no no other language, I did language at school, yeah, studied French at school and I’ve got a smattering of lots of different y’know greetings and things like that, but nothing more than that

2. And your art, like you’ve not begun upon your body of art as such perhaps, maybe it is still in the thinking, what, can you tell me a little bit about what you’re working on?

O: Well at the moment I am working on lots of things, here y’know, you go across quite a broad um broad spectrum of mediums but I’ve always been interested in painting and drawing and just trying to find some way to articulate what I’m thinking, I’ve been making art for a long time, y’know, right through school and I studied when I first left school and then dropped out and got married and lived in the country for y’know 20 years, but I was always mak, sort of compelled to make some kind of art right through children and everything, and now that I’ve got sort of more time in my head as well as physical time, umm to get back to some more formal study and just to sort of give my work maybe a bit of an anchor or cos you
contextualize your thinking and give it some, some deeper thought rather than just I don’t know, perhaps a little bit more spontaneous and more, a really want to try and get a bit more serious about it (yep) so with what I’m doing at the moment I guess I’m just getting more tools in my bag to be able to help me to express, express what I’m wanting to express

I: ok, and do you feel that there’s one area that is more interesting that pulls you, that you’re becoming more fascinated with?

O: Do you mean like painting or drawing things like that or

I: Could be or could be what you’re thinking of as far as, how, mm your ideas of which area you want to go into, I’m thinking of the way you, y’know I just don’t want to give you too many words here (yeah) the way you, what you want to express

O: Well I think the things, I’m finding that what motivates me is trying to have connections, so I’m trying to, through my work, connect with others y’know some people just want to paint and then it’s done with, but I really want to try and get other people to feel perhaps as strongly or somehow what I feel with different works so if I’m I don’t know, painting like at the moment I’m painting umm a plane in the sky and for me that’s very ominous and dark and y’know quite loaded with sort of contemporary, the con, the sort of global ahh feelings at the moment so I’m hoping that if anybody sees that painting they might think about it and think ok I actually feel that way too or haven’t thought about it, but seeing that painting makes me share those feelings, so I think really it’s for me it’s probably about connection

I:  Ok when you say ominous, (ominous) ominous, the plane represents ominousicity to you, I mean, I think straight away about Malaysia for example, is that what you’re thinking of, or what are you thinking of when you say

O: Well it’s also in a really dark sky so it’s a very sort of it’s a very movie, the sky it looks like a big, its like painting a bruise, y’know it’s a really dark sort of sky so that alludes, (storm) alludes to a heaviness not oh great we’re off on some holiday somewhere (yes) so I guess it’s about thinking about terrorism y’know, and just you
know a different set of ideas now with travel and just the global weight of things at the moment

I: mm that’s interesting yeah

3. Do you think your personal experiences, this will help you a bit in explaining what you are talking about I think too, do you think your personal experiences are important in the creation of this work and the choices you’ve made?

O: Yeah I do personally, y’know, as an older person, as a mature aged student, I think that umm, it’s a real asset being older because you have had a lot of life experiences and I always admire young people that can articulate feelings that they don’t even really understand or know or have never experienced so clearly, especially with music and things I think like the Beatles and all of their music and and things that they’ve expressed, that they, I can’t imagine they would have got or known then, and yet now as an older person you hear that music and it y’know rips your heart out some of those songs (mm) so yeah, I like I like being older because I think umm even though you probably don’t feel any older, it’s nice knowing some things, that things will pass, and y’know you’ve got rid of a lot of anxieties and um things that you stressed about when you were younger (mm) and, as a student again, yeah, I like it

4. Do you think there’s been a particular experience that you’ve had that has been pivotal or somehow relevant to your work, your direction?

O: ahh, well I do a lot of clay work as well and I’ve always had a y’know, I’ve had a very happy good life y’know as childhood and with my, I’ve been very lucky with my marriage, in all relationships really, but I lost my both my parents probably in the last 5 years, and I think that’s been a lot bigger than I expected it to be yeah and I think it has moving forward affected my work

I: umm can I ask you about the plane that you’re doing right now, I empathise….

O: It’s funny how as an adult you expect

(Digital recorder ran out of batteries).
I: No, but what you said about your language and bout your umm, you were talking about your visual, let’s talk about that again, ok, your visual language that you’ve said you’ve developed your ah visual language

O: Ahh yes definitely at this school I think

I: yes so umm then I asked you do you think you’ve developed your, because the way you have to talk about art, and the way that you’re always made to express (mm) umm so you were talking about your material use umm learning different ways to express yourself and also the language

O: I think the language based talking about your work, that process has been good and y’know very gently every year they step it up a bit and so that you are using different words and y’know there’s a different vocabulary when you’re talking about about art, I don’t think you have to y’know completely adhere to it but the words are there for good reason, y’know, specific words so you can really hone in on particular things.

I: I have noticed it, that you all use ‘practice’ for example, ‘my practice’ and I have noticed that those sorts of things have been given to you as in part of I mean that that’s the language of the school that’s the language of like you say, the artist, it’s what’s necessary to be able to talk about your work umm so you learn the vocabulary and it is interesting to come and to hear you all doing that

O: I think y’know a lot of people outside outside of the artworld call it ‘artwank’ I’m sure because umm because it is a different different set of words, but y’know there a lot of them are really good words so it’s just getting the confidence to use them and y’know believe in them y’know and trust them and know that they’re the right words for what you are trying to talk about

I: What does artwank mean?

O: Well I know that I went down to Mona in Hobart (yes, yes) and David Walsh the owner of it all has, you walk around with a, have you been down there (no no) it’s quite incredible and you walk around with a a small ipod and every artwork you go to, it’s um magically connected, without wires … I never understood how a telephone even works but, and you can have 3 different versions of the of the art
and so they’ll I don’t know what they’ll call, but the last one is called artwank and it’s and it’s a articulate art speak kind of description of (by the artist?) by the artist or it might be by David Walsh or who’s curators or whatever describing the work so y’know I think people I think people use those words when they don’t really understand, things and so perhaps it’s a bit scary and that umm a bit too challenging so they’ll

I: call it art wank, I was thinking of y’know

O: it’s not all that accessible

I: yes, I was thinking alienation like it it, that’s their world and (hmm) it’s a put down isn’t it art wank it isn’t, it’s derogative, it’s not saying yeah it’s fantastic, it’s actually saying what a waste of time, what are they doing over there?

O: And y’know some there are times where I subscribe to that, when I just find things too inaccessible and people are just getting too high brow and so I think y’know it is good to have a medium so that well just so that I can understand

I: hmm, mm ok well we got a little bit of that in then.

10. So how have you identified your role as an artist, have you questioned who you are in the creation of the work?

O: Oh yeah I think I’ve questioned who ohh I’m interested in who I am and y’know I think (still going) yeah I think that umm I’m interested in working out who I am and I guess y’know the older you get the in some ways the less you you know y’know, you know a lot but the more you know the less you know, that kind of thing so umm I’m interested in trying to put that out there, if I can (hmm mmm) but I think a lot of, I’m also interested in that it’s probably not that interesting to a lot of people, a lot of that of who I am, but if I’m interested then someone else must be, there might be someone else out there who’s interested, so I’m not that self absorbed or indulgent that that is a big part of my work, but obviously the art making is all me so so it has to be even if it’s just in process…

11. ok, so, do you think when you’re making that it, the person, the personal implications, it’s got personal importance or do you also see it as having
broader, a broader focus, a broader audience or a bigger than personal importance

O: Well I guess it depends on the piece, y’know on the actual work, but I think that most work has both, y’know it has, it has to have that umm intimacy y’know if it’s a painting, to see those marks, to see those brushstrokes immediately for me evokes the sense that someone’s hand has been there and umm put them on and especially the way they’re put on y’know can, can speak of whether they are angry or considered or a whole gammat of things like that, but then I guess, yeah stepping back from that of course it is always going to have a broader audience unless it’s a piece that’s so intimate and sort of the scale of it and things is is intimate as well then, it maybe designed for an audience of one, I guess the work dictates that to a certain extent

I: at the beginning was your word ‘connection’? What was the word, or did it start with an ‘s’? What you were saying about your

O: Yes, I think that’s what drives my practice, is for me I like to talk about y’know, things that other people overlook y’know just everyday boring stuff that that I see all the time, that other people would just walk past or not consider umm

I: for example?

O: for example, I don’t know maybe even y’know you’re driving and two cars exactly the same colour go past each other and it looks like a different shape or no one else would even notice but things like that happen to me all the time, I feel like I and I’m talking from a from a visual artist point of view now that happens to a lot of people like me, but I see things differently, so and I’d like to try and record those things and show that to a greater audience and people go oh god I would never have thought of, I don’t know, that car looking like a

I: ok, so creates (yeah just) communication with that reality that you see like

O: mm and and probably just trying to articulate the beauty of some very small moment, that is considered no consequence but of course is as important as as bigger things or whatever, it’s just that not many people see them
I: It would be interesting to know what everyone did see wouldn’t it! (yes yeah) so that’s great is there anything else you’d like to mention about what you’re doing?

O: Umm no I think y’know obviously when I graduate next year so you have to think more definitively about what you’re going to end up with but for me I think I’m just enjoying the whole umm journey really and whether when I finish here and move on to the next thing it’ll just all be the next thing, y’know everything is always the next thing so umm no I’m just hoping that I’ll get better and more articulate with my art making, but I’ve never questioned whether I’ll that I’ll won’t continue doing it even though some days I think I should because I’m so bad and other days y’know, I, that’s that would never stop me, y’know I’ve always been compelled to make my art and so I always will continue to do that (mmm) but who sees them well I guess that just depends how umm how well I do it, how yeah how good I am but how lucky y’know how much luck and hard work plays into that

I: and what about this written, its not a, what is it? its something you’ve gotta write to say what your work is going to be, like when will that come that’ll be next year

O: early next year

I: that you have to do that

O: I think first semester of next year, you have to be really quite direct have some kind of direction

I: yeah and have you come up with, you’re a bit far away, I mean

O: Oh I think, I’m very aware of it and thinking about it but actually putting it into words will for me will be a challenge, but I’m thinking about it and I’m sort of coming out of the fog, I feel like I’m in, it’s it’s there and it will come together (yeah) yeah I hope, I’m sure it will

Olivia: Interview 2, 29/07/2014

1. Did you hesitate at all when you wrote ‘1’ for the question “how many languages do you speak”?
O: No

I: was that a difficult question

O: No, sadly

2. Why do you think you haven’t learnt a second language?

O: Umm, I studied language at school, y’know French I think was the standard back when I was at school, I didn’t find it all that easy and I guess I’ve just filled up those spaces that I could have learnt another language with things that I prefer to do y’know

3. How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?

O: Umm well I think they’d have to be reasonably fluent to both understand another language y’know just in conversation and to be able to communicate with a certain level of clarity, I mean I know a few words in lots of, in a few different languages but I wouldn’t say that I could speak any other language

I: do you think there’s a bar of recognition, like one language speakers, two languages speakers like where, what would be your criteria

O: Well that you could understand and be understood (ok) I think (ok) does that make sense

I: yeah yeah, but I think (…) so if they said ‘read’ that’s understood, it’s hard isn’t it

O: umm yeah, so maybe, if they could understand conversational umm language in another language, not just pick out, y’know if I’m listening to people speak French, I can recognize certain words along the way but it might not necessarily give me an understanding of the conversation, yeah

4. Have you thought anymore about language, culture or identity since the first interview?

O: Umm, probably not more than you would normally, no, no I haven’t suddenly decided to go out and learn that second language or third language or anything
I: in your work it hasn’t

O: No, not really, not anymore than it’s sort of been pushed in my studies

I: are you doing art history?

O: mind you I did have to write an artist statement and um title some work since that last conversation so maybe umm maybe it made me dig a bit deeper I don’t know, not on a conscious level anyway

6. What language do you think is the hardest language to learn?

O: I would have no idea really, umm you hear that Chinese is very hard, difficult to learn. Umm, one of our sons is learning Russian at the moment and I hear that’s quite challenging

7. Is it possible do you think to lose a language once you’ve learned it?

O: Ahh I don’t know, I know my grandfather was Welsh and he left his village in Wales as a 19 year old and he didn’t return, he came to Australia, jumped ship in Pt Lincoln and went back as a 60 year old, married with a daughter and 4 grand daughters, took us all back to Wales to meet to see his two sisters who he hadn’t seen since he left and as soon as he saw them, spoke fluent Welsh and didn’t, hadn’t used this language at all because he was just on a little farm on the west coast, so had no opportunity to speak Welsh

I: did he talk at all about what it’s like to speak that language again?

O: Oh tears and yes y’know yeah it was a very powerful, and powerfully emotional experience for him

I: so you were there?

O: yes yeah. It was fantastic yeah

I: Be incredible

O: yeah it was
I: be quite beautiful really

O: oh it was just stunning to think that he’d left and just never been back to see them, and these two little women who’d never left their village and y’know their world was so contained, to see this beloved little brother returning with this whole entourage with him, it was more than they could fathom I think

I: (laughing) oh it’s a lovely thing

8. Do you think that everyone has an equal ability to learn a language or are there some people who are better at learning languages than others?

O: I think some people find it easier, because, I only say that because everyone is exposed to other cultures and language right through their primary and secondary school umm educational experience now and they don’t all learn, y’know, they don’t have the same affinity I don’t think, so no I think some people, that’s a completely uninformed answer but I think some people find it easier, do you?

I: do you think you’re going on personal experience then? As in, can you think of

O: Yeah, I mean I’ve got friends that umm went on with a second language and perhaps y’know they enjoyed it more or or were better at it and things. I know my, with our own three children, one the eldest was always interested, y’know read just devoured any information that we could give him and was a lot more interested in language in learning another language and the middle one would always sit and listen to the books but never interested in reading and even as an adult isn’t and y’know now the eldest one has gone back to learn a second language and things

I: So he didn’t learn a language at school?

O: Yeah he learnt German at school, but only to year 12 level and didn’t pursue it

I: That’s pretty good to year 12, there’s not a lot of people who do that

O: no no no I didn’t mean only to year 12, but I mean he didn’t

I: No as in pretty good to year 12 because I know like my son is the only one in the class doing that, like there’s not a lot of people doing language til year 12 so
O: But do you think that? Do you think some people are more attuned?

9. What would it mean to you if you could speak another language?

O: Umm, I think I’d find it very satisfying, I think I’d find it interesting and I think I’d find it fun to communicate via a different language, yeah

10. What is the best age for learning a language?

O: Oh I’m sure umm y’know the younger the better just as y’know you’re learning whatever your mother tongue is I think, if you could learn more than one at a time like a lot of children do, surely that would be the best, best way

11. Do you think you can be too old to learn a language?

O: I can’t imagine so

12. Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person to mix their languages when speaking or do you think they should keep their languages separate?

O: No I think it’s um, I think it’s a beautiful way to express yourself, to cross over and choose different words from whatever language that that you think might be right in the right, how people how clearly everyone else understands you might be another thing but, I love it when someone crosses over

I: right, even if the understanding isn’t there?

O: Yeah, I think it’s quite beautiful

13. Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?

O: Umm, some times it does, but then I worry that I’m sounding like a grumpy old woman and umm just think that everything is in constant flux so you’ve just got to roll with it to a certain extent

I: I was thinking that if I asked other people I would probably get a really different answer to that (oh really?) within here where people are a bit more alternative and
open to change and differences everyone’s fine with it (yeah) but I think if I was to ask someone else it might be different

O: No, even my husband bangs on about it all the time, y’know, certain things upset him and Americanisms and um, I wouldn’t want to be like that because I just, y’know it’s no big deal, I don’t think, Oh y’know, it’s a slippery slope and blah blah blah, but y’know, as long as you’re communicating and connecting with people well I think that’s the ultimate picture really, however you do it well, long as you get there I think that’s the important part of the process

I: yeah

14. Do you think Australians benefit or are impeded by the diversity of languages around us?

O: Oh, I think it’s a benefit, can only be a benefit really

I: do you benefit?

O: Um yeah y’know just when you were saying before about people using more than one language in conversation and umm y’know, I always find that really interesting and exciting and vibrant and um learning new words and understanding what they mean or why they’re said in a certain way I mean it’s all interesting and it can only be a positive thing

I: what would your husband say?

O: oh no he’d agree, I’m sure he would agree with that

15. Do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand near you?

O: Yeah, I find it really interesting, yeah always try to think, see if I can get some kind of notion of what’s going on, yeah

I: guess in a way

O: yeah yeah
I: and you’ve learnt French so you, depending on the language you can probably hear the words, it’s not just that music (mm) I remember when I first learnt, my first language and all I could hear was this music as in just (sounds) and it took such a long time to be able to hear the words happening within that (yes) that was Danish

O: Oh really (and that’s) that’s difficult isn’t it

I: I don’t know hahaha…

16. In what environment would someone learn to speak a language best?

O: Um well I guess that if their guardians parents or whoever was looking after them were speaking it to them on a daily basis I think as a young person, I think that would be the ideal or being able to live in that country would be, would be immersive because then of course you get the whole culture, not just the spoken word

17. What does the term ‘native speaker’ mean to you?

O: Umm, I guess it’s that means that, well to me just that, that is the language that you’ve grown up with, where, where you are, where you live is and that’s the language that you speak

I: so you’re a native speaker of English because you’ve grown up in Australia

O: Probably yes, and that I’ve grown up with y’know family that speak English y’know my parents spoke English and mm

18. Do you think it is possible to be a native speaker of more than one language?

O: Yeah I’m sure it would be if you’ve got multilingual parents or whoever’s raising you, then I’m sure there’s a lot of people like that

19. Does a native speaker make mistakes in his/ her language?

O: haha

……
20. Do you think someone can become a native speaker of a language if they haven’t grown up with the language, but learn it later in life?

O: Ahum I don’t really know, I’d like to say yes, but there’s all those sort of um subtleties that you just sort of are under your skin aren’t they when it is your native, that perhaps you can’t learn or y’know they are just sort of innate within the, you don’t really know that you’ve got, but maybe you can I don’t know

21. Would you prefer to have a teacher if you are going to learn a language, would you prefer to have a teacher who speaks the language being taught as a first or second language?

O: I don’t really have a preference I don’t think

22. If you were going to have brain surgery would you prefer a surgeon who spoke one or more than one language?

O: Ahum ah I wouldn’t I wouldn’t have a preference I’d want someone that spoke brain surgery, haha fluent was fluent in brain surgery, yeah

23. Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual should be brought up speaking 2 languages?

O: Um well that would be the ideal I think

I: do you think that’s an easy job to do?

O: Umm well it’s hard for, I’d have to say, when I don’t, y’know only a single language speaker, but umm I don’t really know whether it would be hard or not, I’m not really sure whether it would be hard or not Lyndal, I mean, you’d think if that’s just the way you’re raised and that’s what you know then no it’s not that difficult, but I don’t know

24. Do you are you on facebook? Do you have facebook friends?

O: I do have, no not really, I’ve got a few, no I’m not an active facebook person (ok)
I: do you do you have people from different countries, some sort of social media that you’re getting to talk to people from different places?

O: Umm yes I do I use facebook for that, for friends overseas but they’re all English speaking

I: oh ok, do you have friends who are multilingual?

O: Yes yeah, umm but we obviously are always speaking English because that’s the only one I understand

I: do you talk to them about language, their language, talking, experiences in Australia

O: Um not so much on an intellectual level, more more just sort of in admiration and y’know how how interesting it must be to be able to speak that second language

I: what do they say?

O: Yeah they say it’s it is interesting and especially when, y’know I’ve got one friend that lives in France for 6 months of the year, so this idyllic life and six months here

I: someone else has got that friend

O: oh really, maybe there’s more than one, she said that when she’s in France she thinks in French, not just speaks French, she thinks in French, but when she’s here she thinks in English

I: Is she from here or from France

O: No she’s here from here, so French is her second language

I: ok, do you think that’s strange, that she thinks in French when she’s in France?

O: No, not really sort of that whole total immersion y’know and commitment to to being y’know to it all, I’ve got, my son’s partner is Russian, so English is her second language.. and I’m always interested when she and her mother speak and
just of course I, that is just heard as a, I can’t ever obviously pick out words with
that but umm it’s so intriguing yeah

Peta: Interview 1, 06/06/2014

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself, your cultural background, because
it said just one language didn’t it, but it did say second generation

P: Yeah well I mean I couldn’t say, I wasn’t exactly sure what to put in terms of
generation so whatever but my mum had a Yugoslavian father and an Australian
mother when dad was English but moved over here when he was quite young so it’s
a bit of a mix

I: So your mum had the Yugoslavian

P: Father Yeah, half and then my dad was just basically English, (aha) sort of a
funny mix (yeah) as I a lot of Australians are I guess

I: Yes that’s right

P: Yeah, though certainly didn’t learn any other languages as I was growing up and
I don’t know any other languages now, I would really like to learn some languages
but (ok) I haven’t had time yet, to do that, but

I: what about school?

P: Mmm I learnt Chinese for a couple of years at high school, but didn’t really
pursue that umm at all like even, I stopped in like year 10 or something, and that
was it, it wasn’t compulsory at all

I: Primary School?

P: None were offered

I: wow ok, so that’s changed in the last 10 years
P: Probably has there I mean I went to a public school in Semaphore umm and it was just a very basic sort of curriculum, it wasn’t we didn’t, yeah there’s so much more now I think, when I think when people talk about what they are doing

I: Yep in Primary School there’s I think one lesson a week, (really) wow, but it is that, and then in year 8 you have to do a language, but you did a bit longer then the Chinese you did for 2 or 3 years

P: 2 years we didn’t have to do it, I don’t think we had to do it though either(yeah)

I: so now it’s just year 8

2. Ok umm so what about your art, what are you looking at in your artwork

P: In terms of like medium or in terms of ideas or

I: yeah, everything, like you don’t have a studio so you’re a part time student?

P: I’m doing full time but I’m doing I had to make up some elective subjects, I’m doing some of third year and some of second year this year (ok) so next year I will just do the studio practice on its own (ok) umm so yeah so far I’m well up until probably the past year I was really interested in drawing solely, now I’m moving more into sculpture but probably not so much looking at it as drawing or sculpture more like 3dimensional works that might have a drawn element to them or might be drawings, but in a 3D kind of sense umm so that’s sort of what I am interested in is more crossing between like those sorts of boundaries and not it being like one particular thing as such

I: like not 2D not 3D but

P: Mmm maybe moving between both like or maybe a combination of both or kind of deciding on that in terms of how it’s relevant to what I’m wanting to express or something rather than just like I’m a sculptor, or I’m a drawer or so, that’s sort of what I’ve been becoming more and more interested in through doing sculpture is looking at cross between different mediums and disciplines and how loosely that can really be defined I guess (hmm mm) so I’m not exactly sure what form my work next year will take at this stage, like yeah whether, I actually have no kind of
visual idea, exactly what form that will take, I do still love drawing and I love
making things in 3D as well so it’ll be something like that but (ok) whether it’ll
even be an image I don’t know…

I: and what about the process of thinking about umm what it is you’re going to, to
work with yknow um ideas, experiences, ah lessons, have you formulated what type
of thing you want to work with as far as ideas go?

P: A little bit umm, I like I am interested in materiality and how like different
surfaces interact with one another or different shapes or forms relate to each other
umm and like a language that could be developed through choice of material, or
texture, or whatever, that that’s quite interesting to me, not so much in an
expressive, like I, actually not really interested in expressing my own personal
experiences in the work, more just about umm the things themselves I guess (mm)
formal qualities or something uum

3. Do you feel like you.. are taking yourself separate from from your work? Is..
you’re not interested in expressing personal experiences I just wondered is that a
conscious decision to.. or you’re just not interested like, no I don’t want to do that
or, how have you seen that as something

P: Mmm, kind of that, I don’t look I don’t really feel the need to sort of release
things from myself that, might like, in terms of like forms of therapy or something,
like I don’t feel like I want to get these things out into the world to kind of feel freer
or explore the or anything like that I’m kind of happy to deal with anything on the
personal level in other areas of my life I guess so for me I’m probably more
interested in making things and like having an influence over things like I love
working with my hands and I love things that are very direct umm and sort of
tangible I guess (mmm) umm so it’s perhaps more of a poetic sort of experience or
something in just the event of like making that thing or the processes involved in
that thing

I: do you have, do you have differentiation with colour or do you see or think of
everything as umm one coloured and just the difference of texture and stuff working
with that one colour or do you then also think of different colours?
P: I usually don’t use colour at all, just like black and white, black, grey white, I actually really struggle with using colour, like I’m never I don’t feel that I have a reason to use it and so I’m not sure how to relate it, like it sort of not so far been important for me in the work so I haven’t just gone ohh I’d like to make it red cos that’d look really nice or it might be intense or something like that, feels a little bit arbitrary to me, so yes, it would be more about the texture or line, or the shape of something or

I: umm what about shadow?

P: Umm I haven’t really yeah like that is not something that I’ve really played around with much (hmm mm) either I kind of think it’s umm it can be quite beautiful to look at the shadows that are made by things but sometimes I find maybe it’s a little bit easy like to make something and then put a nice light on it and then it has all these pretty shadows or whatever but, it’s quite beautiful but hasn’t had much meaning for me I suppose like I would not rule that out but I would probably I’d need to kind of rationalize it or sort of justify that decision somehow like the work needed to have that extra expression in terms of the shadow or it was dependent on the shadow, I enjoy like those thought processes of like why am I choosing this material or why have I like, yeah just all the that, this is really interesting to me

I: yeah yeah I I I I see what you’re meaning (ok) that tactile kind of

P: that’s good

I: yes and you’re very clear and that’s why I asked about colour because then (yeah) and that’s why I asked about shadow too because it would anyway, I’ll let you work all that out

P: It’s a bit confusing sometimes and to put it into words is

I: well it’s just that

P: quite convoluted in a way, like it’s like how do I express what’s in my head, but yeah
I: yeah, but you’re getting there, it’s clear ok, well these ones about personal experience may not make much sense to you, the first one is do you think your personal experiences are important in the creation of this work (mm) and the choices you’ve made?

P: Umm I mean having said that I don’t I can sort of inject that into the work, I do think that all of that kind of just influences you anyway probably, at least in some kind of mood or whatever that ends up kind of inherent in the work you’re making and so I don’t umm, yeah, it’s not something I’d intend on doing but I do think it it’s relative, definitely

I: right, so there are reasons there that have pointed you in the direction of being interested in (yeah probably yeah) textile, not textile, but texture and, well what about textile is that also a part of it?

P: Umm not so far umm I mean, the drawings, I’ve spent a lot of time doing drawing for several years and the drawings that I do always seem to end up having quite a dark kind of mood not like a sort of tragic mood or anything but just dark sort of overtones I guess and I don’t really intend on doing that, I don’t really think about that, they always end up that way so that’s sort of how I feel that possibly like my kind of sense of the world comes out in what I’m doing without me really thinking about that stuff, so that’s not really a decision I make, I might be making a decision on like the medium or like what kind of line I’m going to use, yeah that does seem to naturally kind of evolve, so I find that kind of interesting and I think mmm

I: so I was just wondering, is it figurative work (umm) or is it non figurative?

P: Umm sort of been both I’m more interested in non figurative now, but traditionally I was interested in figurative (mm) now I’m more not yeah

4. Ok so, this is another one that probably won’t make much sense but I’m just wondering whether there’s a particular experience that you feel that has somehow been pivotal or made you choose what you’re doing. I guess, is there anything that I mean it may not be but a lot of people have found that yes that was the one thing that made them go in that direction
P: Like in terms in the direction of their work or to be an artist or

I: direction of what their work is on about, what they are doing in this body of work that they are working on (mmm)

P: Mmm umm no I wouldn’t really say there was a personal experience but certainly starting to do sculpture here did open my mind like to so many other possibilities (mm) and that has been quite influential but not really a personal experience

I: Mmm yeah it’s weird that I wrote personal experience because every experience we have is personal

P: well, I guess so yeah

I: and so I was thinking why the hell did I write that because I don’t think that’s what I meant (ok) I think that I just meant we all have experiences that we have everyday like driving here today or whatever and um (ok) so it’s not that inside reflective type of thing it’s just oh yeah I saw that tree and it was growing in a weird way and I thought wow

P: oh I see ok

I: y’know what I mean?

P: oh I see that kind of thing mmm, not, not really to be honest I always interested in like what’s going on around me and what I’m always observing everything and I think I’m influenced constantly like I’m there’s it’s actually hard to channel that into a particular work there’s so much happening but I wouldn’t, I can’t really pick out one thing, yeah

I: no that’s ok

5. **What about obstacles**, as yet you’re not working with your body of art, but have you felt that ahh I’d like to take it this direction but crap there’s something in the way like there’s an obstacle, there’s some reason why that’s not going to work
P: I have had that sort of issue in terms of umm, well that’s another reason why the sculpture has become so interesting because I was doing so much drawing and kind of felt I’d developed that technically to quite a level I was quite happy with and it was a little bit of a comfort zone I guess for me so I found it hard to try very new things like I’d go back to the same like methods or techniques that I knew worked umm and I’d liked the results of it but I was a little bit bored, it was sort of like I could anticipate that I’d get where I wanted to go with it if I put in enough time, I’d eventually get there and so with the sculptural things because there I’m dealing with all these materials that I’m not really familiar with it’s more unpredictable as to what the result will be and I’ve found that having that switch from drawing to sculpture for some reason cos I didn’t take sculpture so seriously at first I guess or I felt it doesn’t really matter, I don’t care if it doesn’t work out, I’m just going to try this or try that but I took the drawing so seriously that I found it hard to move outside of things that might be successful (mmm) with the sculptures I was quite open to them failing, (mmm) yeah so that’s been pretty interesting

I: yeah that is interesting

P: and I may even, I probably will still do a lot more drawing, but I’m hoping that I might feel a bit freer to and not so attached to the result of the drawing (mmm) yeah

I: It’s interesting isn’t it, that that leads me to a lot a lot of thoughts ummmm so what have you thought about when deciding how to portray your ideas visually

P: Uum I’ve thought like hmm do you mean in terms of decisions like should I go with this idea or how should I communicate this idea

I: for example, yeah

P: umm yeah I have thought a lot about that also because like I’m very sort of interested in the environment and politics and social sort of issues, but I don’t really, I’m not really able to put those into my work umm without can’t really find a way to do that without being too sort of cliché or too overt about what I’m saying (mm) and and when I try to do it it kind of actually stumps me and I feel a bit paralyzed. So I’ve realized that those views are also things that I will probably express in other ways and that that artwork kind of needs to be more about my own
imagination and whatever like might feed my mind in the world and just about communicating that and not having to like talk about issues or whatever (mm) umm like to realize that I didn’t really need to do that umm like you kind of feel like as an artist you’ve got this opportunity to perhaps have an influence on society or something and kind of did feel like a sense of obligation to do that but, now that I’m more on the track of it just being about making things and languages and dialogues that might develop through that and it sort of I don’t really think of umm the idea that I might put into it might be something inspired by the actual material or the action of using that material and that, I might develop that and then perhaps I might think of other things that are going on that might represent other things but its almost like something I might realize as I’m going along, not so much ok this is going to be about this thing, so I found by just starting with the material and the restriction of that material that has kind of helped me in just sort of moving along with the work and allowing umm other things to kind of influence it as it goes along

I: yeah so it’s not an idea y’know the first thing isn’t the idea that you want to portray, its more that the material speak and let the ideas come to to to they will format themselves

P: yeah yeah exactly

7. Umm ok umm so language, what does language mean to you

P: Umm do you mean like just generally or do you mean like in terms of the work again like does how do I like, the relationship between those things or do you mean just generally

I: no, I mean both I think (ok) like ahh umm the way I would express what language means to me would encompass probably about 3 or 4 different areas (ok) yeah

P: So I guess well the first thing that came to my mind was communicate and a form of communication that might be verbal or written I suppose but then I guess you’ve got the visual language as well, are you meaning that also? Like umm

I: ahh well I guess I’m just trying to get you to say(…) yeah visual language for me is y’know it’s it that’s what I’m on, in to (ok) y’see that’s interesting but (…) I’m also very interested in y’know as a single language speaker the way you, what you
think of language because if you’ve got 2 languages I think it’s a very different experience of what language means it’s a much more

P: it’s true

I: umm it’s a much more personal identity thing, a language, but when you’ve only got the one, maybe it’s not that? So

P: Yeah I guess it’s more hmm well in terms of speaking or learning another language or whatever I guess it, I probably don’t think about it so much, cos I don’t know other languages so I don’t have to think like what does that word or how shall I use that word or like its sort of like a natural thing whereas I think if I knew another language, maybe I’d be analyzing, like construction of sentences more or maybe it’d be a more conscious thing for me perhaps, but I do find it like now that I’m learning a lot more about art find that I like I want to learn a lot more words to try and describe the things that I’m doing visually because we are so often asked to talk about our work and our ideas and all of this and yeah I feel that my vocabulary needs to kind of be extended to accommodate all of these new things that I’m now dealing with (hm mm) so I have found that kind of interesting because previously I sort of considered myself to probably have a fairly good vocabulary (what will she say in interview 2 re this?- words, associations etc) now I feel that it is very limited umm there’s so many more sort of descriptive words that you need like, yeah so

I: is it fun learning the new words?

P: Well I haven’t had time, like well it’s so busy, but umm I’m sure that it will be and my memory, it’s sort of hard to, yeah, I find it really hard to remember a lot of things like I actually previously also thought I had a really good memory but so many different things happening an so much information going into my head all the time that I’m not yeah a lot of things escape me now, so

I: it’s refreshing to hear!

P: So, a bit of a worry but yeah

I: I think we all get worried, It’s a scary thing…
8. So do you think this art work or the where you are going to with your art 
umm explains in some way your experience with culture, identity or language?

P: Mmm I don’t really think it does, well experience of culture mmm I I think very 
differently now having done all this study to how I thought before, even though I 
we would have considered myself to be an artist anyway I guess (mmm) I hadn’t 
learnt al the kind of theory and critical thinking but so now I view all the making 
and everything and culture and all of that very differently I suppose but I don’t yeah 
I mean, perhaps, like I’m really interested in all lots of different cultures and ahh 
different art forms and different, all sorts of different areas I guess in life so perhaps 
maybe that has made me a fairly open open minded kind of person in terms of not 
being too limited with what I make or whatever perhaps or yeah pushing or able to 
push things quite outside of ordinary frameworks or whatever

I: yeah ok umm because I’ll ask you in the second interview too just if you’ve come 
across like language in making, in the development of your piece, whether you’ve 
come across the idea of or if it develops because I’ve prompted you, of language 
within you're, the working, you know how you hear a word and suddenly it just 
keeps reiterating itself

P: Ok so an actual word like, so you mean like (still trying to understand my 
question)

I: when y’know how, well we’ll see y’know, if when while you’re developing your 
work until y’know in a month’s time whatever, when I come for the second 
interview to see if you’ve thought about language in any way then and if you haven 
haven’t well well and good, y’know umm

P: I mean well we do, like cos when they give us briefs, often like they'll say this, 
use this word, like think about this word or something and make something from 
that, so like what does it mean

I: like what sort of word, like alienation or something

P: Yeah or like err, we had span, span was a word we were given ‘s p a n’ span so 
we had to that was for 3D drawing so we had to like spanning across a space or 
something, so
I: is that a bin? A bucket, spann? No, might be for me

P: I don’t think so, it sounds like umm yeah like it spanned the length of the room or something it’s like a distance thing, usually from sort of one point to another or something whether it’s

I: it’s a verb or to span

P: to span

I: to span the room

P: yeah spanning

10. Umm so what about your role in the creation of this work? Have you thought about who you are? What your role is?

P: umm it could you explain that a bit further, like?

I: umm well you're the creator I guess (mmm) umm you're the instigator, you’re the the manipulator, you’re umm your totally a nothing, it just makes itself

P: I see, like people who are sort of intuitive or let the work

I: it’s more to do with how you perceive what your position is (mmm), like can you imagine if someone thought yeah God was doing it or y’know I’m just being silly but umm how whether ahh how are you feel, how active you are in the creation of it or (mm) how important you are

P: Umm I guess I see it as probably an equal sort of thing between the materials I might be using and me, so I might select some materials, even if it’s charcoal to do a drawing or something and I will kind of direct that and guide that and influence how that reacts but umm then those material in turn will impose things upon me and I will need to then make decisions based on what they will allow so I would probably and whether it’s like three quarters to a quarter, a quarter being materials or something I don’t know but I wouldn’t say that I like just have total control umm mm I think it would it’s important to relinquish some of that control also (mm) but
equally I wouldn’t say that I’m completely controlled by those materials and at the whim of that so (yeah), probably both of those

I: I was speaking to one guy and I was saying y’know like umm you write a play and then you give it over to the next director or artistic director and they use it, so you’ve actually removed yourself from the the event from the creation and then you’ve just got to accept the next person’s interpretation, I think also when you’re umm in the ahh exhibiting your work, how much of it is in like how much is you and how much is you’ve you’ve left in the room for others to look at or I mean its its different for different people but I I think um I sort of think of the artist as y’know you think of everything so I think also it’s important to think of who you are or where you are in comparison to your work(yeah) and that you’ve been talking about that you’ve been talking about the materials and the way that they work with each other or and listening to those, what’s going on you’ve been talking about that and umm particularly because you’re not using colour and so I’m thinking of all those different variants and that’s I guess why I used shade or shadow because I was thinking ( ok yeah yeah yeah) y’know I can see a lot of textures and I can see a lot of different gradients of colour of you know the grayness of light y’know the way it reflects and those sorts of things, they are beautiful too, really aren’t they I mean you can

P: Absolutely the transparence, things that’re a little bit transparent like I I like also like when things are obscured from being a particular thing like when something becomes less and less identifiable so that people can’t quite grab like what is it like (mm) whether it’s an object or. Like also that’s what I can photograph, like particularly old photographs that are quite blurred, you actually the face is just made up of shades of grey basically, its not really a face anymore even, its just layers of tone, and I like that idea like removing

I: someone else working here with that

P:  oh ok that’s interesting (yeah) yeah

I: I was going to say something to that ohh
P: That’s actually a common, like having looked back, I’m often looking back at things I’ve done in the past and that is quite a common thread throughout everything I think is that is obscuring things (mm) basically yeah

I: and when you obscure things when you in a way abstractify the thing, do you think that’ll make it ahh translatable for the onlooker, that they will be able to like when they look at it are they going to reflect upon their own thoughts to do with that piece or are they going to think about ahh this artist wanted to portray that or what is that or, do you understand what I mean, there’s so many different ways when you look at a work, like I might see something out of it that another person would never see or I might see…

P: I’m very open to those sorts of ideas like I think it’s good to be able to take a step back once you’ve created something and be open to other interpretations like I find it quite interesting actually how people will perceive it that might be so different from your own intention and ah yeah I really appreciate it when other, and find it quite refreshing when other artists encourage that as well, and like when they open up the discussion of the work in a completely sort of open way I guess like (mm mm) yeah there was an artist Jessica Stockholder that I’ve been reading about recently and she always like when she’s interviewed about her work she always says well how do you view the work like back to the interviewer or what’s your idea about it and then they might tell her about it and she’ll go like expand upon that, that’s interesting, like just trying to see what you mean there, I didn’t that wasn’t my intention but that’s really interesting to me, all yeah no I really enjoy that

I: yeah that’s what you’ve been doing to me a bit too, that… some people don’t and then a few of you do and y’know I’m willing to to pour out but I have to stop myself as well y’know because I want to, y’know it it’s a thing we’re doing together isn’t it really (yeah exactly) but it is important for you also to y’know it’s an inquiry isn’t it, you want to know stuff as much as I do

P: that’s right it must be an interesting balance for you like interviewing people

I: it is

P: like that well yeah
I: and I find it is, it’s it’s really lucky that I know a lot about y’know, I’ve been an artist myself for such a long time, so, not that I’m doing it now but I get what you’re talking about, it’s not foreign to me at all, and that’s like, imagine if I didn’t know that then

P: it’d be a difficult conversation (yeah) wouldn’t it it’d be stopped so quickly, like you’d answer the question and you wouldn’t know how to get them to expand on it

I: no and I don’t think it would be a very useful interview at all, so luckily I’m not a football player or y’know I’m not interviewing football players

P: that’s right

I: I’m not, no great

P: Uum just on something you said about before about what of you is in the work, I thought of another, like I really enjoy seeing mistakes in work and in my own work, so particularly in drawings I like it when you have many layers and you can see all the lines you did that were wrong or not to the form or whatever (mmm) and I would like to explore that more in terms of umm perhaps choosing materials to work with that would really expose all of that (mmm) and have that whole process kind of evident in the final thing, I enjoy that

I: hope I got that on (ie that it is recording!) no I understand exactly what you’re talking about it’s it’s there’s a lot of meaning behind that I think and for me too (exactly) why would you rub out something and pretend it didn’t exist, (exactly) it’s important that it exists, let it be, give it life y’know (that’s right) and also I think it is the shock that you get when you’re working with maybe you’re talking about sculpture (mm) and it’s you’re liberated in a way and I think why are we so so stuck when we’re doing 2D then what’s the drawing thing that’s getting us stuck? And and is it because we don’t want to make mistakes but when we make mistakes, wow they’re fantastic (yeah exactly) or is it what are we doing saying that’s a mistake and that’s not a mistake, that’s my intention and that’s a mistake y’know, it’s just how we portray it

P: yeah, it’s a funny one, maybe just maybe because there’s such a, hmm sculpture has a long tradition also but most people seem to start off with 2D, maybe, there’s
some sort of notion of that that’s what you should do as an artist or something, painting or, or painting it is normally but

I: it’s like the rigour isn’t it, it’s the practice

P: yeah, and when you learn how to draw properly then it’s kind of excruciating to to draw badly on purpose, like to do something that might be very naïve or childlike even if that’s sort of what’s interesting to you. I’m not sure that I could really put anything out there like that but

I: I don’t know if I even could do something naïve and childlike

P: Exactly, it’s like, it’s hard yeah, but then with sculpture like yeah with something unfamiliar, you’re able to probably y’know, it could be very crude y’know the things that you’re producing but you can still find something interesting in them in the process of making them (mm) but yeah

I: it just makes me wonder umm we’ve virtually finished, but it just maked me wonder this thing about learning languages then y’know to put yourself in that position of learning (exactly) for comparison to what you’re saying, like to accept that we’re going to make mistakes and to enjoy the journey and not have expectations and no intentions and so we just learn the language. I mean why are we exploring art work and all that or why are we exploring language, what, I guess they’re just choices we make or opportunities we get, which is why I throw in the personal experiences bit because I think we get the opportunities or we become through things that we’ve experienced y’know so (mmm yeah absolutely) yeah mmm ( yeah)

P: The I mean with the language thing if say if I were to learn a new language I’d be going back like to the beginning with that as well. which would be quite interesting, I mean I have travelled overseas several times and learnt just a few phrases over there to try and communicate and you do feel really really stupid like you can’t, you can hardly say anything and everyone laughs at you and you pronounce it a bit funny or something or, so yeah I definitely will learn a language one day, when I have the time, but I’m sure it will be a little bit of a kind of an embarrassing process as well at times like being like a child again, yeah
I: see you can either feel embarrassed or you can either think wow this is fun

P: Yeah, you have to get over that embarrassment don’t you and just sort of go with it I guess (yeah I think) you can’t be sort of that would be paralyzing

I: yeah yeah who knows I think some people don’t care so much about it, I think it is also something to do with our mouth and we don’t want to do the wrong sounds (that’s right) or the wrong gestures or y’know …..

P: yeah yeah

I: So the only other thing that I’d just like to know is when you’re working, doing your work, do you think of it well I think you’ve actually answered it y’know, I’m asking people if they see that as of personal importance or to have broader implications

P: Mmm in terms of society and well yeah umm I mean ultimately I think it is personal importance but of course there is still the desire for your work to be recognized, like, in a wider context (mmm) but I’m not I’m not really interested in appealing to the broader public but I would like the work to be recognized at least within y’know artistic circles or whatever, like people who who kind of might understand that particular work better or something but ultimately I’d like to have that as very little importance and it just be about the work itself and my enjoying making that work, umm over the years I’ve obviously gone a little bit too like definitely tried to hone in on that and stop myself from caring at all what other people are thinking about it because I think that can be a little bit limiting and it could also perhaps drive you in a direction that is not actually that interesting to you if you think (yeah yeah), ahh I should be doing this because this thing is sort of more impressive or better or something but ultimately I’m not really interested in that and like to keep that at bay

I: what about money?

P: Umm well I don’t really expect to make any money, much money from it so it’s not important at all I just want to be able to survive umm I’m working as well and whatever and I’d like to not be working at all and to be able to only make art work but that’s sort of the only way money will come into it for me, as long as I could
sustain y’know yeah just sustain that as much as possible to devote as much time to it (mmm) it’s frustrating to be torn in so many directions (mm) just because you need to make ends meet, so that is important, I would like it to be sustained, but I’ve always been on a very low income so I’m not really seeking the high income …

Peta: Interview 2, 07/08/2014

1. Did you hesitate at all when you wrote ‘1’ for the question “how many languages do you speak”?

P: No, definitely one, but I am wanting to learn another one, but I don’t, like I mean I’m often interested finding out words, what like my partner’s learning Italian and like I often ask him what the Italian words are so, I’m interested in learning new words in other languages but I haven’t officially ever learnt another language, so, I doesn’t really have the time, but I do want to y’know yeah

I: ok, because you’ve been overseas too haven’t you (yeah) a few times

P: yeah, I just think it would be really interesting, just a good skill to have I guess (yeah) mm

2. I: so I guess that’s why you haven’t learnt a second language, is the time thing

P: Yeah I’ve just had too many other things to learn like yeah so, it’s kind of endless yeah… all time just goes really quickly

3. How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?

P: I suppose I would probably say for them to be able to be conversational, I would say that you could then say you spoke another language perhaps rather than, if you can’t actually have a dialogue with another person but you know a lot of words or something, I would kind of feel that you’re not really able to express that language anyway

4. Have you thought about language, culture or identity since I was here last?
P: Um What I did think about was that I think cos you were asking me questions about my own work and whether language influences that and I think I said that it doesn’t but then I kind of remembered that it actually really does because I write lists of words before I start making something, so I’d kind of forgotten that language is actually a really important element of the way I generate ideas like (ok) um I might start off with a particular object or material or even an actual just a word that I’ve encountered and then kind of bounce off that or expand upon that by looking it up in the dictionary or researching that particular word or making lists of words that are associated with that or things that are associated with that, so yeah that is a really important part of the process for me

I: so how long does that process go for, like could that be a few days or a few weeks before you get into the visual side of the process

P: Um yeah I think it could be a few weeks depends on cos I kind of use it to arrive at a suitable material or form (mm) so sometimes it can take a long time for me to find that thing that really kind of connects with everything and it’s sort of the right thing to start working from I guess and it can take a long lot of thinking time and writing time (mm that’s interesting) mm yeah so it’s kind of funny because as soon as I got home I remembered like that’s actually a hugely vital, whereas when I was being interviewed I like completely forgot about that like hahaha

I: Yeah, I think you’ve got different understandings of what language is and when I say what does language mean to you they just like go to different places, so what does language mean to you now that you’ve had that second airing?

P: I guess it’s like a way of relating to things around you like umm I think that’s how I use it, is trying to discern the way I view something or the way I perceive something by having a word kind of association with that thing, rather than just trying to sort of grapple with it as an image kind of thing in my mind it’s like that sense of language sort of draws out other aspects of something or a deeper sort of thoughts about something

I: like is it representational? Like that word will stand for something that you’ll then delve in and out of, is that what you mean?
P: yeah and very much in terms of like a sense of something like it wouldn’t really be like um I don’t know, a material it wouldn’t be wood necessarily, but I might it might be structure or steel or heavy like those sorts of words that describe that thing I guess, and by kind of brainstorming those kinds of words I might then be able to arrive at a material that I feel is best sort best represents all that stuff I guess

I: what about when you’ve got the title at the other end? When you’ve, when do you start thinking of the title, is that from the beginning, or is that during the process or at the end of the process?

P: Well actually so far I’ve just been untitled because I haven’t, I just haven’t felt, I mean I think titles are really important and they aid a lot in the work but for me I haven’t felt the need, I haven’t felt that that would really do anything for those particular works, so I haven’t just wanted to call it something because it needs a name, I’d rather it to be untitled, unless I feel the name is actually important to that work, so far I haven’t use any titles but I probably would like to explore that I would say, so

I: that’d be interesting, when you do that

P: yeah exactly, I mean I guess it could easily be like the brief that you give yourself or the idea you might have of a particular, yeah, I mean often there are particular streams of words or a phrase that is in my mind or comes up in my mind as I’m making something, umm that it sort of describes what I’m making and those words might be going through my head so I can kind of see how that would be a, kind of a good way to form a title I guess that had some sort of relationship to the work and not just a name thing like

I: yeah but because you haven’t yet then said ok that’s the title it’ll be interesting to see how you actually allow that to become a title or if you allow that yeah

P: Yeah it’s true mm

I: and then also because I’m thinking of the audience and their interpretation of your work, whether you want it to be without a title because then the audience don’t get a clue (yeah) and then interpret from themselves and their own y’know
5. What does ‘Artwank’ mean to you?

P: Haha oh I mean that’s something I think that you come across frequently in the world umm I guess I think it’s kind of like a sense of fashion, like where people are talking about something in a way that they think is going to be well received or they think is sort of fashionable, that’s how I kind of view it, like I don’t think there’s anything wrong with using words that are sort of specific to visual art or art or words that other people don’t understand, I don’t have a problem with that but I think sometimes people use that language just to present a certain image but

I: would that be the artist or who who would be doing that?

P: sometimes I think the artist like perhaps if they don’t have a very deep kind of process or thought process behind the work, but they want to appear as though they do so they kind of apply all this language to it that might boost their I don’t know work or idea or whatever

6. Which language do you think is the hardest language to learn?

P: Umm well I guess it would depend what language I was, well coming from English to another I would say Chinese, because it’s so different to that, but y’know if I was Chinese I’d probably say English, I don’t know! Or something but yeah for me like the one that seems the most foreign or whatever, seems the most difficult

7. Do you think it possible to lose a language?

P: I do, well I’ve heard of stories of people who have, forgotten how to speak y’know their, often the learnt language like, but like say someone who might migrate to a country and then learn that country’s language, as they get very old and they have memory problems or something they completely forget that language that they’ve been speaking for 40 years and they go back to their mother tongue, I’ve heard of that happening

8. Do you think that everyone has an equal ability to learn a language or do you think some people are better at learning languages than others?
P: I would imagine some people are better just probably just in terms of some people being better at lots of other, better at maths or better at sports, probably people have an aptitude for things but I still think it would be universal in terms of everyone has the potential to

I: learn a language

P: yeah

9. What would it mean if you could speak another language? What would it mean to you?

P: Umm to me it would open up possibilities of communicating fluently with people, more people umm yeah and perhaps umm also ahh getting to know different cultures and societies more intimately and not being an outsider because of the language barrier, also not being perceived as an outsider I guess during travels and things like that

I: yep, what countries have you been to overseas?

P: I’ve been to India, Vietnam, New Zealand, Paris ah France, Holland and Belgium (lots) I’d like to go to lots more, I want to go to every country

I: what language would you like to learn if you had to choose?

P: I think I’d learn Italian, a couple would be good but maybe like Italian and then Spanish or something like that, um mainly because I like the sound of those languages um cos I know that they’re not probably spoken in as many countries as something like Chinese or maybe they’re not as used I don’t know, specific to particular regions

I: yeah depends where you’re going

P: Spanish is probably a quite, a bit more universal language I guess…

10. What do you think is the best age for learning a language?

P: I think when they’re a child because your brain is at a point where it’s kind of developing very quickly and I think you would probably be able to retain things
better umm but I have also heard that as you’re getting older it’s a very good thing for your memory and for sort of exercising your brain, to learn a language then, in terms of using it I would say as a child but y’know maybe in terms of fulfillment perhaps when you are older it would be very fulfilling

11. Do you think you can be too old to learn a language?

P: I guess when you are very old I’d have to say that you might not retain very much but I mean I don’t think that should limit, like stop you from trying I suppose

12. Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person to mix their languages when speaking or do you think it is important to keep languages separate?

P: Mmm, it’s hard to say cos I don’t actually speak another language but I would imagine it to be perhaps a little bit confusing for someone who is multilingual if they’re switching, maybe they might get a little bit cloudy with what words are relating to which language? Like it might be easy for them to say one word and then go oh hang on no that’s the word from that other language, I meant this one or hahaha do you have that experience as a very multilingual person?

I: it’s often context driven but yes, the wrong word in the wrong language will come, but in the case of being with other people who speak the same languages as I do, then umm there’s no problem

P: It’s understood, like everyone yeah, that must be a very interesting conversation to, well for an outsider to listen to in so many different languages in one conversation

I: If the outsider can hear that we’re speaking a few different languages (mm) I know to be the speaker it’s fun, haha it’s like play, it’s like lego (yeah) it’s just fun to be able to just do that, but of course you need the other person to be able to speak those languages too (yeah) once again it’s very context driven because you’re talking about things that are familiar to both of you (mm) in the same context y’know (mm mm) but I’m sure there’s a lot of people who do that umm and it’s just interesting to think if you believe no they should keep them separate and just speak one language
P: oh I see, yeah

I: or no you can mix them that’s all ok

P: I don’t think it matters at all, myself, yeah

13. Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions does that bother you?

P: Yes, it bothers me hugely, although it’s another language really I suppose, but I guess we should be learning but I hate it, yeah I mean I think it really just ruins the English language, I just think it’s horrible haha (so you don’t use it?) no not at all (do your friends or) some do and I really do irritates me like especially if I don’t know them that well and I haven’t perhaps, they haven’t sent me a text before and then they do and I see that I don’t know, I hesitate to say loose respect for them but I kind of think hm that’s a shame, like y’know oh well, I thought you were really cool

I: I don’t need you as a friend anyway

P: yeah I mean but y’know that’s not going to be an overall judgement, but it’s sort of just a bit of a character thing or something

I: what, what’s the thing you hate the most that they say in or that they like?

P: It’s kind of like it’s really lazy language, I think and it seems really uneducated…… It seems really uneducated it seems like they’ve never learnt to read or write and if they actually haven’t then that’s fair enough but a lot of them have been through schooling and then they go, it seems like they’re taking a backwards step into a very juvenile form of language that I just don’t think is necessary at all and in fact I see no use for it so haha

I: Can you, I can pick up 2 examples that I find that with, can you think of an example?

P: The numbers instead of a word, like (like in gr8) 2 something like (oh yeah ok) I’m going 2 the whatever, like I mean I had one person who sent me a text that every single word was shortened or altered and haha I could hardly read it, I mean it
actually took more effort to read that then if it was in plain English, so it makes you think, it’s obviously for the benefit of the person sending the message cos they can’t be bothered adding extra characters, but it’s certainly not for the benefit of the receiver, it’s kind of a selfish, that seems quite selfish to me like it becomes a laborious task for the receiver to interpret that message but hahaha

I: you cross them off your friendship list

P: you just avoid that kind of communication with them I suppose, you just, but it’s hard to predict cos this particular person is a lady who’s in her late 40s so you would never, you wouldn’t think that so

I: so is she got children and trying to be cool or something

P: no children

I: No children, has she got no children and trying to be cool

P: She’s obviously sort of realised that it’s acceptable, socially acceptable and gone with that and doesn’t really view it as a problem I think she’s just gone, oh ok fair enough, I’ll, that’s ok, it saves me typing this and people don’t mind it, it’s y’know

I: yeah, that’s interesting because I’m thinking the older people might feel that oh well y’know language is always in change and we’ve just got to go along with it (yeah) and we can’t be grumpy old women (yeah) and we need to say ok and then

P: they completely run with it

I: and they run, yes it’s possibly it’s true yeah, um Gosh, that would be an interesting research

P: That was one you should think about (yeah) cos there’d be wildly different opinions

I: no everyone here said exactly the same

P: did they? Yeah, I mean

I: not as strong as you but…
P: I’m pretty strong about that sort of stuff but yeah

I: I think there’s been one person who has admitted to saying ‘lol’ once, but refuses

P: To saying what?

I: To writing lol (yeah) I think one person has actually said ‘lol’

P: Well I’ll tell you who says it all the time, there’s ‘Michelle’, who you’ve interviewed my friend, right, she’s a close friend of mine here and she says lol all the time and the first time I heard it I oh what, what are you, what are you saying that for and, she’s like oh haha lol, like she, she doesn’t find it odd, it must be, she’s very she’s 21, it must be common around her friends I think

I: well I’ll have to look back into her interview (you should) and see what she said about that

P: She says it all the time

I: she was the only one who said she does say it, but everyone was against abbreviations (yeah) and it bothers them

P: yeah, I’ve found that very funny when it was a natural part of her language, because it did make me think it must be a generational thing like, it must actually be very common in her age that she doesn’t think ahh why did I say that or ah I’ve picked, picked up that funny phrase or y’know

I: but there are some people here who are around about 20 that hate it, refuse to use it, will never use lol and stuff (ohh) as well cos

P: oh well that’s good to know hahaha

I: you’re in between like it’s interesting isn’t it

P: Yeah, I mean I also do think it’s just actually really sad if if that if the English language does degenerate to the point where most of it is like that, that would be a real shame to me (mm) like culturally and as a society and all of this like, I think it would be terrible (mm) imagine reading books that are full of pretend words like
y’know you’ve got Shakespeare, and then you’ve got all this stuff and you just think, how far has it come like

I: are there any books written with it? (haha)

P: I don’t think so, but it’s only a matter of time surely, like if it becomes as much a part of, if it really becomes ingrained there’ll be people who are young who are writing books like that and not thinking twice

P: Spell check will all be changed I guess to suit those words (haha said in a reading a list like way with inflection at ‘words’ signifying all the changes that are likely to happen with the onset and takeover of this new language) you’ll try to type it properly and it’ll go no that’s wrong (wrong) but I hope it’s retained, I really hope that it is

I: wow that’s an interesting prognosis of what’s going to happen

P: Yeah. It’s funny cos it sounds outrageous to us now but so many things sound outrageous and then they happen

I: But within 2 different languages mixing them, you’re fine with that?

P: Because if they’re like proper words like I don’t, I don’t have a sense that languages should be spoken purely like only one at a time, I think for me it’s more about grammar and y’know context and the

I: I wonder if you, mm no I’m just thinking I wonder if you do speak 2 languages together whether you keep the grammatical structures of each language

P: That would be difficult surely (you don’t) is it possible to

I: well if you’re just speaking as you wish, you do what you want (yeah) which means you change whatever words the way you want to

P: Mm yeah well it’s true yeah I mean I guess amongst friends that would be ok, but you might not want to do it out in the wider, like you might be perceived as just not speaking very well, but if you’re in a group of friends and you’re all speaking that way because you enjoy that as a kind of activity yeah
I: It could virtually parallel with lol language couldn’t it, It could virtually hmm Hahaha

P: It yeah It would be interesting to hear people who were of those nationalities, how they perceived the way you were using that language, their languages or whatever, whether they would…

I: because everyone here has said it’s ok to do that (right I see) so everyone, you’re all a group of artists, you’re all alternative, you’re all thinkers and so it’s just umm it’s a pretty peculiar group that I’ve chosen, my son says it’s not representational, y’know you’re doing a non representational group…

P: it’s true I guess… I mean if you went to say, I don’t know like a community hall of a particular ethnicity then you’d probably find a lot of people saying no you should not speak Greek and Italian at the same time for instance…

15. Do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand near you?

P: Yeah yeah I mean I do absolutely I usually just wish I could speak that language as well so I could understand

16. In what environment would someone learn to speak a language best?

P: I would say in an environment where other people are speaking that language, like in an actual country that where you are forced to use it

17. I: ah do you know the term “native speaker”?

P: Like as in a person who is speaking the language from the country they’re from?

That’s right yeah, that’s the general understanding

18. Do you think it is possible to be a native speaker of more than one language?

P: I guess if the country has a couple of languages happening like umm Belgium and French and Dutch are spoken, yeah I would say
19. Does a native speaker make mistakes in his or her language?

P: Well, definitely yeah I mean I think definitely, like within English I would be making mistakes all the time cos I’m I wouldn’t be as familiar with the grammar as I should be and, but I like, I’m interested in learning about English and improving my English and my written skills and all of that, I’m always interested in improving

I: yeah, you said you wanted more words you were trying y’know getting a bigger vocabulary, learning art was giving you more learning opportunities (yeah yeah) that you’re actually changing you said as in getting mm through education

P: Exactly, and I actually used to know a lot more words when I was younger because I was reading more books and looking up new words and all of that and I did realise that I’ve lost a lot of that through doing a lot more making and I want to now, like I want to do creative writing at Adelaide Uni and I want to do literature as well later and I actually want to develop those skills again as it was always an interest of mine, so

……

14. Do you think Australians benefit or are impeded by the diversity of languages around us?

P: Benefit I think, not that a lot of them kind of are receptive to it but I think it’d be better if people were more receptive to all of that and umm feeding from that sense of multiculturalness

I: How do you reckon they’d get more receptive?

P: Ah not being a racist I suppose

I: do you find Australians racist

P: Yeah! Extremely racist I think umm I mean mainstream society in Australia I find extremely racist

I: where do you see that, do you see that on TV?

P: Umm I don’t watch TV but I
I: on the bus or something?

P: I think in like advertising like ads like billboards and things are usually aimed at a particular demographic or type of person which is usually like a white just a white person, whatever class, I guess you’d say often middle class but you just don’t or they’ll put in a token Asian face or something and yeah the value systems of umm y’know capitalism and everything and politics, cos I do read a bit about what’s happening politically and that seems all extremely racist um and I think that the Australian public agree with most of that stuff which is why they vote those sorts of politicians in cos those policies have never really changed so….

20. Do you think someone can become a native speaker of a language if they haven’t grown up with the language, but learn it later in life?

P: Yeah, I think I do believe that I mean trying to think about that logically I think I guess if you’re from that country and you simply haven’t learnt that language, maybe you’ve learnt English instead, I suppose you’d have to say within your genes or something um you’re kind of tied to that country in terms of your heritage or whether its there are genetic qualities I’m not sure (mm) but I feel as though that connection is kind of relevant in terms of language. What do you think? Do you think that or do you not think that?

I: Well like I’m thinking if they speak 2 languages so the person that is displaced from his country that you’re talking about, that is coming from a different country um, would you suggest they are in a different country? I don’t quite understand exactly what you were saying

P: Yeah, like if they’ve left that country, say as a child or something (yeah) yeah and then they relearn that language, I feel that they that would, could still be considered their native language

……

P: Mm I mean like in terms of the types of sounds, like I guess that’s learnt from the child, like some languages, like Dutch for instance that those sounds are very difficult for me to make and I wonder I mean I suppose that’s just cos I’ve never, not learnt them, I guess if I’d learnt them from when I was born then I wouldn’t be
feeling that way, sometimes you won mm yeah I suppose it’s just a muscle that you
exercise differently isn’t it, like your tongue

……

21. **Would you prefer to have a teacher who has speaks the language being
taught as a first or second language?** Would you prefer them to have learnt it as a
child or learnt it as their second language?

P: Ahh that wouldn’t bother me, it would just I guess depend on their skill, level of
speaking it at that time mm

22. **If you were going to have brain surgery would you prefer a surgeon who
spoke one or more than one language?**

P: I would not be fazed at all actually that’s a funny question, that as long as they
knew the medicine that would be enough for me haha does some people cos some
people might say oh they must be more intelligent if they know more than one
language, is that why?

I: no one has, no one has said that (ok) just one person said she would prefer a
doctor who spoke English

P: really, that’s bizarre, yeah

I: because it’s easy to understand (oh) as in if it’s a doctor you need, like if you’ve
got some sort of critical condition you want to understand exactly what they’re
saying, if they’ve got a bit of an accent, then that could be a little bit difficult (oh
right) she might have had experience…

23. **Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual
should be brought up speaking 2 languages?**

P: Well I think it would be a service to them I mean it’s a shame when they don’t
but a lot of parents don’t teach like my partner he has Italian parents he learnt
Italian as he first language but then at the age of maybe 6 or something they, he
went to school and then learnt English only and that was it
I: and forgot his Italian?

P: he he can understand by listening cos they all kept speaking it at home but they’d speak English to him cos they wanted him to improve his English, so now he’s learning it at university um but he wishes that he had it fluently from y’know throughout his life and he didn’t have to relearn it all, he’s doing well at it but I just thought it’s was such a shame that they didn’t keep up both languages

I: so they were quite competent in English?

P: Yeah I guess so yeah yeah

I: do you think it would be easy to to have that situation in the family where there’s 2 languages being spoken, with the parents giving the child two languages or to be a child with two languages, do you think it would be easy?

P: Yeah I do and I think it would be fun probably, like when you see kids who can speak a couple of languages they seem to enjoy it a lot so yeah I think it’d be good

24. Do you have facebook friends, friends on social media from different countries who speak different languages?

P: Yeah some from Vietnam when we travelled there they added us on Facebook

.......... 

P: You must find it annoying all that text and language and everything or are you up with that as a new language idea?

I: umm what am I? I don’t use it

P: um well haha it would be funny if you did as someone who is like specializing in like languages and then you used, well it would kind of make sense at the same time, cos it’s a new language, so for you to completely embrace it would kind of make sense as well but

I: yeah, I have no idea
I. So can you just tell me a little bit about yourself, you said second generation on that piece of paper somewhere (yep) umm so your cultural background your experience with language

S: Umm ok yep so umm so I’m, I’m a quarter aboriginal (oh) umm and half English, my dad was born (…) in England and umm ah my mum’s from [a district in South Australia]\(^\text{17}\), so [an Aboriginal language], that’s the group. My experience with language, I’ve always spoken English and I’ve only ever learnt a language in high school and primary school and yeah I think that’s

I: so what did you say? You’re a quarter aboriginal but your mum is, (she’s half) she’s half, I get it ok ok, and you learnt languages in school so what languages did you learn

S: Umm, in Primary school I did French, which was really cool and in High School I did Indonesian

I: ok so how many years did you do Indonesian?

S: I think I did it for 2 years I’m pretty sure, year 8 and 9 so (ok)

I: and did your mum want you to learn, was it her mum or her dad who was Aboriginal?

S: umm it was her mum

I: mum so did your mum want you to learn her mum’s language?

S: language, umm I guess it was kind of like umm impressionised on me I didn’t I was, I never felt like I was forced to sort of learn it um, and I was never interested in learning it, I don’t know why, I sort of umm

\(^{17}\) The name of this area and language has been redacted from this document, in order to maintain the anonymity of the research participant.
I: just she mostly just spoke English at home did she

S: yep yeah yeah she only ever umm well she wouldn’t really speak the language, she’d more speak the lingo around her sisters sort of thing like umm ahh I guess that’s just a personality trait yeah so

I: what about with her mum, did she speak, what was the name of the language?

S: Umm [an aboriginal language] is the group yep, so that’s umm from [an area in South Australia], yep

I: Umm so yes, so did your mum speak her language with her mum?

S: Umm not that I know, yeah, cos my my grandma passed away when I was probably 7 years old, so umm I don’t have much recollection, but I’m pretty sure they all spoke English (hmm) yeah

I: ok how do you feel a bout that, doesn’t, that’s fine?

S: Yeah I think so I mean I guess cos I don’t know anything different really, unless I’d been taught in schools and stuff cos I wouldn’t have learnt it if I didn’t need to like to pass or whatever umm, but yeah it is, it’s weird, I don’t understand it cos I I’ve never thought about it cos I mean my grandma yeah like when I was 7 years old, so I never really knew her that well sort of thing (yeah) umm

I: there’s a lot of talk about y’know the indigenous cultures and (yep) well in my spheres reclaiming the language umm that’s probably not come through to you but (yep) that kind of cultural awareness and being proud of being aboriginal, do you have those types of

S: yeah they’re in my family but yeah no I think that’s the weird part for me I guess it’s cos they’re very proud of their heritage umm but they don’t speak the language umm and they probably don’t know it as well as they probably could umm I mean like if I ask my mum what something meant she’d probably answer half of them but she probably wouldn’t know how to speak it fluently (right) umm so I guess it’s kind of weird I mean, it’s good to be proud of yourself, but I mean if it’s not your cultural thing, it’s a kind of weird if they don’t know the language, but
I: it’s interesting though isn’t it

S: yeah I mean it’s kinda I never got the urge to learn any language because I think umm I just think everyone’s just an equal being umm so it’s kind of umm yeah I kind of in high school I sort of had like Aboriginal workers and stuff coming up to me and high school

I: oh, that’s right

S: stuff and

I: disadvantaged, you get these disadvantage things

S: yeah and they’re like ‘oh do you need like help passing and stuff ‘ and I’m just like fuck off I don’t care but umm yeah and they try and sort of urge you into Aboriginal learning and learning the language and doing umm y’know recreational youth stuff and all that and I just wasn’t interested because I think it’s just the same in any sort of thing I guess but (yeah) yeah

I: you can identify with all that type of

S: and I like yeah if you’re sort of part of something I don’t think you need to be umm I guess fluent with it, I don’t think you need to go extremist (yeah) yeah like umm I guess it’s sort of culture to me is sort of umm there when you’re a kid and then as you grow up you decide what you want to do with it, whether you want to take it and use it to your advantage or use it as part of you or not umm

I: I’ve seen people who are like an eighth or a sixteenth and they’re just so proudly aboriginal and I sometimes wonder about that

S: Yeah, and I think that’s kind of weird as well, I don’t think it’s right, like I think it’s good to be proud of yourself, but I don’t think you should label yourself as something completely if it’s only a very small part of you (mm) it’s kind of umm redundant

I: yeah, but for them it’s just totally important, those ones that I’ve seen (yeah) yeah
S: Cos it, it’s a lot of my cousins are actually like that because they’re all sort of like umm my aunty’s (…) married to like Caucasians and stuff like that, and all different kinds of and then they’ll come out and they’ll (…) as much as me umm if not less and they’ll be full proud about it and stuff and really extremist about it and it’s kind of pointless (mm) I don’t, like, it’s just really weird, cos my sister, my sister’s white and my dad’s white and so it’s like inverted all around ha

I: but is she white because of her colouring or becau, like she had the same mum (yeah, yeah) but she become white as in (yeah) like I’ve got half half children, as in Japanese and the first one’s white, the second one’s Japanese and the third one’s a mixture

S: yeah so and I think people definitely label on that as well (mm) cos like all through primary school and all that stuff, everyone wouldn’t believe we were brother and sister, cos of that sort of separation

I: don’t look the same

S: yeah so it’s kind of like I guess umm that’s why I think culture is such a weird thing, cos people very much judge it by umm the cover I guess

I: yeah absolutely

S: yeah so umm

I: because you don’t even actually to me you don’t even look aboriginal

S: yeah, a lot of people say that, they think I’m Maori or something, or like anything, I’ve had the weirdest things thrown at me

I: really difficult to know, but yeah

S: yeah yeah so umm

I: but I think that visual, like I’ve become really aware of how visual differences or what the visual, which is interesting because we’re in the visual field (yeah) umm, how much that means to people, or even when I go to parent teacher evenings for my second son, it’s like they don’t even think I’m his mum, like who are you with,
y’know yours? because we look different, so I bet your mum had that with your sister

S: Yeah yeah, but it’s actually kind of funny cos all through, I guess up to high school, my sister didn’t look like my mum but she’s starting to look a lot like my mum now, I mean, like she’s not darkening up or anything like that but like (features) yeah umm, which is kind of strange

I: Is she older than you or younger than you

S: Yeah she’s one year older

I: and what do your parents do?

S: Umm, my mum works at Coles and my dad is has been a carpenter and a maintenance man for however long I can remember so (right) yeah yes

I: very interesting, I’m glad you’re a part of this research because you’re a really important part now hahaha seeing we live in Australia and I y’know I haven’t I said to the supervisor, oh well if I get someone who is indigenous y’know that’ll just be good but maybe I won’t so I didn’t, I didn’t know (yeah sweet) Aren’t I lucky! Haha

2. so umm, your body of art, you’re not a third year student, you’re going to be doing the practice I guess next year, is that what (yep, yep)

S: I’ve got umm I’m doing all of my third year electives this year (ok) so that way next year I’ll only have to do the studio and the art history and theory next to one another so umm at the moment I’m starting the bachelor and finishing the associate so

I: and have you, so where are you up to as far as your art goes, are you thinking of what you want to work with or are you just wait til next year?

S: yeah, yeah it’s um, I guess cos I’m doing painting 3 and that’s very much the sort of thing that you do alongside the studio prac so that um, basically they push you along in that as well um and you have to really um bring forth your sort of personal, conceptual ideas I guess so
I: to that as you’re painting so you have to have your paintings and they push you to create (yep) your own direction I guess

S: yeah yep, yeah, it’s very much um you need er, gets very personal this year, it’s very yeah intimate umm so yeah and we just did our assessments then and we had to read out our artist statements and what not so (oh) Yeah and now I’m pretty yeah

I: So that was 500 words or is that the 1000 word one

S: Umm these ones are just I think like 2 or 300 words cos it was just a specific statement about the one work so yeah

I: so can you tell me about your work?

S: Well, I guess I, I sort of work with human emotions I guess, it’s always interested me as I thing umm and I like to base my work off of personal experience cos I feel like I can channel more energy through that way, I think and it’s easier to communicate with people but umm yeah I just like to bring forward sort of umm guess things that people don’t like to see like the sort of I guess negatives of everything, because I mean you can’t really have like light without dark and that sort of thing but umm yeah it’s very just emotional work umm I like

I: can you give me some examples, when you say pull out those things that people don’t like to see, do you mean like horror and war and

S: Yeah I mean like yeah horror, depression, anxiety, sadness, all that sort of thing, cos I feel like those sorts of emotions are really powerful and it’s really good when it comes to creativity I think, they’re really good fields to sort of work with because there’s always going to be emotion and if there’s not an, any sense of emotion in a work, for me it’s, I can’t really take anything out of it except for formal elements and stuff like that but umm so yeah that sort of interests me and I like I really love portraiture, so I sort of like to mess with people’s faces and do sort of weird things and yeah so

I: in painting, do you paint?
S: Yep, painting’s my favourite, I never painted before I came here (ok) um but um I did one year of it and fell in love with it, so yeah, but I was actually a musician before I came here so

I: oh really, what music, what do you play?

S: I used to play in a few bands umm I had a few heavy metal bands, acoustic bands and stuff like that umm so umm

I: did you do the guitar or the bass what

S: A bit of everything and writing stuff but umm I’m mainly a singer (oh ok) so yeah I’ve done that since I was about 12 years old and yeah so that was pretty (nice) cool yeah,

I: we have another person here who is a musician as well

S: Yep, yeah (y’know?) there’s a few of them hiding around here (is there) yeah it’s funny because you sort of like bring it up and then everyone’s like oh yeah I’m (…) why didn’t you say so? Like but yeah it’s brilliant… it’s very much another language as well like (absolutely) yeah

3. ok so you’ve answered the next question, it’s do you think your personal experiences are important in the creation of your work

S: oh right yeah

I: you did that one

S: sweet

4. so could you tell me, has there been a particular experience that you’ve had which has been somehow pivotal or y’know, incredibly relevant to the direction that you’ve chosen?

S: I guess so yeah, umm I mean umm when I was in year 12 umm I’ve seen one of my loved ones sort of get dragged through the justice system like a rag doll and umm for about 18 months until they figured out he was actually innocent, and so it’s very, that’s a very personal thing for me and that’s what this painting was about
and I was just sort of showing the before and afters of what the system we live
under can actually do to someone’s brain and umm just like the paranoia and stuff
that you’re left with, but umm I think and I was just trying to show that we’re not so
free as we think sort of thing and I mean everyone has their things that happen in
their life and that’s one of mine and I had a best friend who was just the greatest
dude in the world and umm he committed suicide last year so that really fucked me
up but umm so umm yeah so I think those sorts of big things really umm (they are
really big) make me yeah they sort of make me want to express my emotions
somehow I mean I’d like people to see that y’know if people can relate cos I’ve
always listened to, I started listening to heavy metal when I was probably 10 years
old or something and when you hear someone else expressing something that you
can relate to it drives you more I think umm and I think it’s just good to show
people what’s actually out there if they haven’t experienced such events or
whatever um so

I: what do you reckon they’ll y’know, if they haven’t experienced it, they don’t
know about that intensity, is there something you’re hoping will happen? (um um)
I’m just thinking is it something for you that you need to show them or is it
something you want to express in a bigger, y’know make it bigger make it more
potent or um something for everyone to

S: Yeah I feel like, umm I, the reason why I do art is sort of just to get it out I feel
like umm, when I like y’know write a song or do a painting something I feel like
it’s getting some kind of emotional stress out of my mind or something so um I
guess so I want to get it out there for my health and to sort of just yeah sort of
connect to people, just to, almost like a reassurance, because the stuff I sort of yeah,
like the stuff I depict isn’t very easy to look at for some people umm but at the same
time it’s umm, it connects I guess that’s what I’m trying to do I think yeah, umm so
like I think that’s what like all humans have in common, it’s just straight up that’s
emotion like cos I know there’s culture, there’s religion, there’s all of that
everything, that is irrelevant to me but powerful to other people which they would,
that would be their drive umm and for me it’s emotion and I think everyone
connects on a different emotional level with one another, so
I: I wonder if culture is even related to emotion I mean maybe it’s maybe and you sort of separated it there and said that some people deal with it with culture, but then I’m thinking what I’ve experienced in Japan maybe emotion and culture are very closely related (yep) maybe y’know

S: Cos I don’t know much about Japan but I’ve got a friend who actually went over there and he does some swordsmanship and he won a tournament over there and stuff and he was telling me about that culture and it’s very, they’re very cultural based country, I don’t know very much about it because I haven’t studied it but yeah he was telling me all this stuff about them and the Chinese….

5. have you come across obstacles, like things that are in your face

S: Ah yeah, I guess so, do you mean like in my practice? (yeah) like with that relating? um I guess sort of if I try to depict something that might be too intense for me to even work on, yeah like I said, indirectly. I mean writing music and just stuff like that, it’s not necessarily aimed at one person, that’s what makes it relatable I think, when you actually just speak the emotion and everyone can sort of hear it and relate to it, oh be like oh yeah I’ve felt like this, but it might not be what this thing is on about or whatever and they might not have experienced anything like that but they’ve related their two situations together, in the same sort of emotion

I: Like an abstract of something that people attach there reading of (yeah yeah)

S: So um yeah I guess, I think the only obstacles I have are in my own mind, that’s the only problems I get is finding my self sometimes but…

6. What have you thought about when deciding how to portray your ideas visually?

S: what, sort of compositionally sort of? Like what I think about what I want to

I: Do you think you come from when you’re thinking of, y’know you’ve got the visual world and you’ve got the thoughts, the stuff, do you think you come from one more than the other?

S: Yeah I think so, I think the umm, I feel the emotion before I do anything, uum
I: So you’ve been thinking about I want to do emotion

S: Before I sort of do anything, unless it’s work for here that’s based on perspective structure and what not umm, before I bring in all those sorts of rules and of art and what not, I guess I think about what I’m trying to portray to people….

7. So language, what does language as such mean to you?

S: I guess I never really thought about language : cos I was actually thinking about it when arr you read out the paper at Hugo Michelle cos I’ve never thought as language as a thing to me umm because language is usually generalized as something that you speak or whatever but now that I’ve actually thought about it I think language is more than that, I think it’s, like I said, like music, that’s probably the heaviest language I’ve ever spoken in my life and I think that’s the most influential on my practice and life and what not umm and I guess it’s the same sort of thing as like before I can, connecting on an emotional level, I think that’s a language that can be spoken by all humans that aren’t, that don’t speak the same language, umm I guess it’s like talking to a dog like y’know when a dog’s hurt because of an emotional connection and they don’t have to say fucking help me out like hahahaha, it’s sort of umm, yeah so I guess and I mean it’s the same with kids and stuff like that if they’re not quite able to speak English or whatever or whatever language they’re going to speak when they’re older and I guess you can just sort of connect obviously cos it’s your child, oh I don’t have a child but I imagine that’s the sort of umm thing umm but yeah um

I: So do you think, that’s very, really interesting, and do you think you, you, it’s not a conscious decision but you’re, you’re once again you’re sort of separating the verbal language or the spoken language and you’re saying y’know these all these forms of connecting with emotion that aren’t related to language or that well you don’t need that verbal communication (yep yep) Is that where you’re at?

S: So like I mean, language is a very important thing um that often gets misconstrued and what not but umm I think people can connect that, like it’s almost like it’s a language just to be human and connect with another human I think umm without having that actual verbal language, so I think yeah, it sounds kind of weird but
I: no I get what you’re saying, I’m thinking wow, it is a very idealistic type of thing and, I’m glad you’ve thought about it, in the second interview I’ll ask you again …

S: I’ve never learnt as much in my life until I came here umm I guess once you’re in a field that you’re interested in, and you start thinking about things like umm like I was saying even when you said about language and what is language I was just like shit hahaha and I actually thought about it, it just takes those little triggers I think

I: yeah no, very interesting.

8. Do you think your art work explains your experiences with language, culture or identity?

S: Yeah ahh culture I would probably say no, but language highly umm and identity yes umm not just talking about self portraits or whatever but um I think no matter what sort of art you do I think it’s always going to be a self portrait of yourself umm, no matter what song you write, it’s always going to reflect on you or whatever umm so I think on that level yes, I think culture no because it’s never influenced me, umm my mum and her side of the family I don’t really get along with umm because that’s just who they are and that’s just who I am sort of thing

I: and your mum, you don’t get along with your mum either

S: No not really no yeah so umm it’s I guess that might be another thing that’s added to that so I’ve maybe just steered clear of it and people like coming up to you and high school like teachers and stuff it’s sort of demeaning, so I think maybe I’d just been, not so much ignorant but kind of just like pushed it away because I think, I just think everyone is an equal being on this planet, I don't think anyone is more powerful than anyone else, but it’s just sort of, I’ve just disregarded it I think, which is interesting because in like class and stuff, whenever they bring up indigenous art and what not everyone’s talking all their stuff and then like one of them finds out that I’m actually aboriginal and they’re like shit, why didn’t you say anything? I’m like because I don’t really care, like it’s not my thing, it’s not my field I don’t, y’know I’m not interested and that’s just history is history but umm everyone’s just like why don’t you like, you can just use that like, as a power like well who cares, like you use something else, like y’know what I mean, it’s sort of like, it’s almost
like having some kind of defect it’s like um you can label someone as that and say oh yeah you can use that to your advantage cos like y’know you can use a disabled car park or something, it’s kind of like I put it on that sort of level because I just think well I don’t really need to dabble in it I don’t really need to learn about it cos that’s not where I want my practice to go umm

I: it’s interesting what other people’s perceptions of what they think is….they want to put you in that little slot because that’s effective, y’know if that makes sense?

S: And they see it as like a strength that I could have, but I’m not convinced, I don’t think…

I: Do you mean language as in straight up verbal or just an all rounder sort of? ahh some people think of language as a verbal, grammatical, written thing, other people think of it as an all rounder

S: cos I think about it, I think about the message that I’m trying to send umm to people umm and cos I’ve umm been a musician I think umm lyrically umm my meaning’s important and I sort of have to get that structure as well, if I can’t talk about my painting then I feel like it’s not what I was trying to say, almost um like I mean paintings can speak for themselves and what not but I think it’s so much more enjoyable if someone knows a little bit of history about it and why the artist has done it and their intention and what not…

I: so you like talking about your art

S: Yeah yep, some of it I find really hard to talk about like today, that was really hard for me to read out my artist statement, cos I didn’t expect that we were reading them out…

…..reading artist’s statement and his feelings…

10. Have you identified your role in the creation of this work? (Too hard really)

S… I guess the messenger I guess, but the leader at the same time I think just I really want to get a strong message and I guess, put it out to people….. I can’t do
non-rep painting, I can’t do it unless (non-representative?) yep yep, it’s sort of umm it’s too much for me I think

Sam: Interview 2, 01/08/2014

1. Did you hesitate at all when you wrote ‘1’ for the question “how many languages do you speak”? Did you have any reason to think oh wait a second?

S: Oh, because I’ve learnt a few, but yeah (or just) I’ve only ever spoken English umm seriously, but I have learnt a few different languages in my but yeah

I: ok generation, you wrote that you were second generation, (yep) no first, are you the first, second, third or more generation Australian? You wrote first first generation

S: Umm, my mum’s aboriginal so (yeah) and that’s, is that first or second?

I: I would have said forever (ok) because first generation is like if you’ve come from Europe, like your dad (oh right yep) is English no (yep) um so you’re first generation on his side, as far as I understand it. Having indigenous blood means that you’re not, it’s I wonder what it means? Like what did it mean to you? That because your mum’s indigenous that you’re first generation from?

S: Yeah um I just think it’s kind of ironic hahaha

I: well that’s very clear (yeah) did you do it on purpose? Why do you think you wrote first?

S: Umm oh cos I asked somebody um who I was with at the Gallery (yeah) and they said ah if one of your parents is born overseas then um you’re

I: first generation ok

S: yeah, so I’m like ah ok

I: so it is because of your father
S: yep yep (ok) so I thought that was right but I didn’t quite understand it too well so

I: I think that’s right then, I think that’s correct, but it is ironic isn’t it (yep) cos wait a second, you’re a forever Australian (haha)

2. Why do you think you haven’t learnt a second language?

S: Umm, I think by choice, I think umm I umm growing up I did learn a bit of Aboriginal, when I was younger um and then as I sort of as I got older it didn’t quite stick with me as an interest I guess umm and in High school it was sort of just put across as you have to do this to pass, it wasn’t a umm particular they didn’t really put it across as a particular strength to have or anything like that so um I guess I never really took it seriously, so I think that’s why just I sort of stopped, but umm, yeah

3. How well do you think someone needs to speak a second language to be able to say they speak two languages?

S: Umm, I think fluently, yeah

I: what does that mean?

S: Um being able to I guess, hold a conversation with someone who can speak the language as well maybe, um say like if you go overseas and you learnt German to go over to Germany and whatnot, um I think, but then again I guess they can sort of pick out the tourists as well Haha so it’s sort of um yeah

I: so they can pick pick out the differences, does that mean you’re not fluent?

S: I think so I think, I think it’s sort of if you’re sticking to the hello, how’s it going sort of thing, then it’s kind of like they can sort of tell um and then they’ll start speaking English and tell you to shut up

I: and you’d be really annoyed because you’ve learnt German so you can…

4. Have you thought about language, culture or identity since the first interview?
S: Um actually yeah cos um I’ve just started history too too and that’s actually um Aboriginal art, Australian art so I actually really had to relearn everything, so umm it’s been interesting, cos I was in the class and um the lecturer was like oh yeah, so what background are you and I’m like I’m a little bit Aboriginal and she’s like oh great you can like help me along the way and I’m like no I can’t, I’m like, I know nothing haha like

I: she has to teach you, how does that feel?

S: Um, it feels fine for me, I think everyone else has a bit of a hard time sort of trying to grasp the concept of it um but for me I guess I just feel like I’m at that learning level and I’m here to learn as well sort of thing so

I: do you enjoy, is it interesting?

S: yeah, so far yeah, it’s definitely different um, I never thought I would be studying it (mm) um but yeah so

I: does it give you a different appreciation of where your mum comes from?

S: I think so, I think, I think hearing it from someone else is definitely easier to understand I think, cos um I think last time I was saying how um like yeah one person… personality, opinion and stuff like that but um I think hearing it from an actual lecturer and um having the credibility to teach the subject and whatnot but um yeah, so it’s quite interesting, but yeah, I’m only in the second week of it but it seems pretty cool

5. What does ‘Artwank’ mean to you?

S: Art what

I: artwank, do you know artwank?

S: Um no, I don’t know it, to me it just sounds like haha like a joke it just sounds like what my friends would call me, hahaha

6. Which language do you think is the hardest language to learn?

Student walking nearby says ‘Icelandic’
S: Haha um I’m going to say Finnish

I: why do you say Finnish?

S: Cos I listen to a lot of Finnish bands and umm hearing them actually speak their actual language is kind of mind blowing, is quite intense

I: short sharp sounds

S: yeah, yeah, very quick

I: so you’re guessing that’s probably a hard language to learn

S: Yeah, I think any language would sort of be hard to learn, but that’s just the only

7. **Do you think it possible to lose a language?**

S: I think it depends on age maybe cos I think yeah um as I was growing up when I learnt sort of yeah three different languages on and off um the whole time when you’re doing it as you grow up you just let go of it sort of thing and now I don’t know anything, absolutely anything at all

I: so what were the three? There was [an aboriginal language]

S: There was um French when I was in primary school (oh primary school) yep Indonesian and Aboriginal

I: your, so your mum was a source??

S: Yeah, so when I was younger it was sort of more of a thing (ok) for me but, as my mum’s side of the family have sort of distanced a bit and um I didn’t really um carry on with it, umm so yeah I think it is possible, I think it would be a bit harder to shake if I learnt it now umm because I’m older but um I think it’s probably sort of possible I think like anything you probably, when you get back into it it’s a bit rusty, but

8. **Do you think that everyone has an equal ability to learn a language or are there some people who are better at learning languages than others?**
S: Na I don’t think so, I think everyone has the same ability (yeah) yeah um yeah (yeah) yeah

9. Ok, not sure if it applies, but what would it mean to you if you could speak another language?

S: I don’t know actually, yeah, I’m not sure umm. I wouldn’t feel any, I’d probably feel a bit more comfortable if it was for travelling or something like that. I think, I think it would be valuable for that um but um just here I think, I don’t think it’d differ for anyone around me I think um I think I say that mainly because no one else around me speaks another language as well umm so I think it’s sort of (mm) yeah

I: except quite a bit of your family

S: yeah yeah even like even my mum probably doesn’t know that much at all but yeah so (ok)

10. What do you think is the best age for learning a language?

S: I think the younger the better but it’s I feel it’s the sort of thing that needs to be carried out throughout a few years, umm I guess it’s sort of like music, if you have no musical talent you sort of get hammered at it for a lot of years while you um it’s gonna eventually stick um but I think yeah as you get older I think it’s sort of a um, because it’s more of a choice I think it depends on the person you are at the time I think, I know this girl she’s 22 and she’s just learnt 3 different languages at uni. So she can go travelling and I was like how the fuck can she do that like (she just learnt 3) yeah (did she have them before) no (no just straight wow) yeah, she learnt Japanese and German and something else and yeah for travelling and she knows them quite fluently and I was just like how can you like put that in your head, it just seems like such a like knowledge overload

11. Do you think you can be too old to learn a language?

S: I guess it depends how old I think

I: how old is old?

S: yeah um yeah that’s a hard one
I: mm don’t know?

S: na not sure

12. Do you think it is ok for a multilingual person to mix their languages when speaking or do you think it is important to keep languages separate?

S: I guess it depends on the context of it, I think if it’s two people trying to have a sneaky conversation about someone in the circle while they’re there or something that’s just umm it’s not needed umm but I think if it’s just a social thing I don’t see it as a problem

13. Do changes to English with text and social media using simplified and new expressions bother you?

S: Umm, ah well I sort of like umm I don’t like young people talk is kind of funny it’s just a good thing to observe umm but I think in media and stuff like that where they twist it a lot and that sort of bothers me I think umm

I: so like in social media, you know how you write abbreviations and change things or you can’t remember how to write they’re for example could be they are or they’re or whatever (yep) those sorts of things, do they make you feel, like are you bothered by that?

S: If it’s a professional piece of writing and it’s got like little wrong things like that then it does bother me, haha (yeah) but yeah

I: so if it’s friends swopping like texts and stuff is that ok?

S: Yeah I think so cos most of my friends text like retardedly so I think I’m the only one who knows how to spell but

I: what about the word ‘lol’ do you use that?

S: No, but a few people in my life have

I: would you?
S: umm yeah but um I’d probably rather just write lots of hahas for like 50 pages 
haha

I: so do you think you have used lol?

S: I think when I was younger, I reckon in highschool yeah (moved on) yeah yep
I’ve moved, I realised because I’ve never actually laughed when I wrote it so it’s 
kind of just like ‘why am I writing it?’

I: well a lot of people say it, people say it now

S: Yeah that’s not hahaha

I: Isn’t that interesting yeah

S: It’s cos they say ‘lol’ instead of laughing it’s like ‘what’ haha

I: very strange

14. Do you think Australians benefit or are impeded by the diversity of 
languages around us?

S: I think um I think they benefit socially, I think on media scale they sort of fear it, 
I think

I: On a media scale?

S: Yeah I think so cos like, (what does ?) like um politics and stuff like that, they’re 
really, I don’t know, to me they’re not really very open minded, so that’s the way I 
sort of see it

I: who’s ‘they’?

S; Government

I: oh I see what you mean

S; Stuff like that yeah media, just stuff higher up sort of um
I: so on the ground level you’re drawing a condition between the ground level and the upper spheres (yep yeah) it’s an important definition y’know I see that too ……

15. Do you feel comfortable if someone is speaking a language you don’t understand near you?

S: Yeah

I: no problems with that?

S: No unless it’s like really aggressively at me

I: in a different language

S: in traffic hahaha

16. In what environment would someone learn to speak a language best?

S: I think in the country of origin, I think umm in the culture, I think that would be the most beneficial, not so much just one person from that country in a classroom in another country trying to put a whole country’s worth of culture and language into a kid’s mind, with a bunch of kids that really don’t care probably, but yeah I think that would be the best way

17. What does the term ‘native speaker’ mean to you?

S: Probably a spokesperson of um the culture, who actually knows a lot about the language and the background and heritage and everything like that umm yeah definitely not a politician hahaha

I: Have you heard the term ‘native speaker’ before?

S: No (no)

21. Would you prefer to have a teacher who has speaks the language being taught as a first or second language?

S: Probably a first language, (yeah) yep

I: why would you think that
S: I think because they’d be more in touch with the culture, I think (ok) umm

22. If you were going to have brain surgery would you prefer a surgeon who spoke one or more than one language?

S: I wouldn’t mind as long as they knew about the brain and knew how to use a knife

23. Do you think a child born into a family where the parents are multilingual should be brought up speaking 2 languages?

S: No! haha umm I think I don’t, I ‘m not against it umm but I guess I’m not for it either because that would be contradicting my past, but I guess that was more my choice so umm I guess some cultures are more um with it like um enforce it more than others so I think that can depend on it (yeah)

I: so if you were to marry someone who had a German background for example would you be interested to learn the language or incorporate that language in to your home life and teach your children that language or get the partner to teach the language or

S: Yeah yeah that’d be cool yeah yeah I mean I guess cos you need to communicate with the other family as well so um yeah

I: ok, do you think it’s an easy thing to do?

S: I don’t think it would be, I’ve never really stuck to learning another language because I think it’s hard so um

I: and in that family structure, to have two languages and be giving that to the child, from the child’s perspective

S: I think it would be a good, not easier but um I guess more you’d be more inclined I think um because it’s your partner’s background and whatnot, um and you have settled as a family you’ve both agreed on many different things, so I think that would be part of it

I: What if your, sorry go ahead
S: That’s ok, no that’s fine

I: I’m just thinking, what if your children said to you ‘but what about you, you didn’t do it?!’

S: Then I’d tell them no smart assing, um I mean they’ve got freedom as well so um I think, I’d accept that, that’s their choice um, if they were willing to do it then I’d do it as well so yeah

24. Do you have facebook friends, friends on social media from different countries who speak different languages?

S: No

I: are you on facebook

S: Yes

I: And are all your friends in Australia

S: Yep yep, unless travelling

I : Do any of them speak a different language?

S: A few of them would, I can’t think off the top of my head but I few of them would. I did have a Greek girlfriend who spoke fluent Greek and had a family. I sat there not knowing anything except for how good lamb tastes haha

I: how did that feel?

S: Um I just thought it was like entertaining, so I was just kind of like oh this is cool but um ah I like that, I think the cultural diversity comes into it as well, like I think that’s quite nice so (yeah) yeah

I: Particularly if you’re eating lamb!

S: yeah, exactly
I: How do you feel being y’know 21st century, Australia, living here, global citizenish y’know you can travel as you want, how does it all feel? Do you feel anything about that

S: No cos I don’t feel like any country is really that free, like everyone’s bound by rules and the justice system and everything, I think everything is just on the same level, umm I mean I love Australia but I don’t like the people running it…. 
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