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Volume 4, Issues 1-2

Special issue:
The Ethnopragmatics of English in Australia

Edited by Michael Haugh and Susana Eisenchlas
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Griffith University
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Introduction

JUDITH O’BYRNE*

I would like to thank Dr Michael Haugh and Dr Susana Eisenchlas for the opportunity to guest edit this issue of Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication (Volume 4, Issue 1/2, 2011). The issue introduces the work of students in the School of Languages and Linguistics enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in Languages and Linguistics at Griffith University.

The special focus of this issue is on the Ethnopragmatics of English in Australia. It includes the use of English within and between different language, cultural and gender groups, along with an exploration of what it means to be Australian or multi-ethnic. These issues are also explored in a variety of verbal and non-verbal modes. Each of the papers, based on original data collection and analysis, covers new and interesting areas of research.

There are seven papers in this issue:

1. Swearing in the ‘Tradie’ Environment as a Tool for Solidarity by Lauren McLeod
2. Back-channelling: the use of yeah and mm to portray engaged listenerhip by Kathrin Lambertz
3. Proxemic Distance and Gender amongst Australians: a Study of Side-On Distances by Lara Parker and Tara Leo
4. ‘Who the bloody hell are you?’: What does it mean to be (un)Australian? by Kate Doyle
5. Women’s Language in Soap Operas: Comparing Features of Female Speech in Australia and Germany by Kathrin Lambertz and Melanie Hebrok
6. Intercultural Identity amongst International Students in Australia by Melanie Hebrok
7. Language Anxiety in International Students: how can it be overcome? by Rebecca Humphries

It is hoped that the issue will encourage others to pursue work on these important areas of ethnopragmatic inquiry.

Judith O’Byrne

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Swearing in the ‘Tradie’ Environment as a Tool for Solidarity

LAUREN MCLEOD*

Abstract
Swearing within a social interaction is often considered obscene and offensive, however swear words have many other functions within society that are rarely noted. The social meaning of swear words, such as fuck and cunt, have over time shifted from their offensive nature to having a more rapport-building function within certain contexts. This paper will analyse this meaning shift and the social motivations behind the use of the words fuck and cunt in the Australian trade workplace. It has been observed that Australian ‘tradies’ insult and swear at each other as a means of building and maintaining rapport amongst co-workers, as well as a means of differentiating themselves from the rest of society. In order to demonstrate this, ten conversations were recorded between five tradies on their lunchbreaks, with these interactions subsequently being analysed. It is hoped that this study will expose the need for further research in this area of linguistics and demonstrate how words may serve different functions within different cultures.

1. Introduction
For a class of words that is frequently censored within society and considered highly taboo, swear words are prevalent in social communication. It is for this reason that profanity is of such great interest to researchers in many different fields, including linguistics and psychology. Just as the phrases, for god’s sake!, hell no!, and damn it! have lost their offensive nature over time, the functions of more obscene words such as fuck and cunt are slowly shifting within society.

It is the aim of this paper to investigate this shift and the social motivations behind the use of swear words in Australian English, more specifically in the context of the ‘tradie’ culture. Due to their excessive use of swear words, Australian tradespeople (the vernacular ‘tradie’ will be used for the purpose of this study) are often regarded as unintelligent and extremely crass. In fact Johnson & Lewis (2010:110) stated that “[r]esearch has shown that swearers are perceived as socially inept, incompetent, and untrustworthy.” However, it is proposed that this extreme use of profanity in the tradie workplace is not a signal of a lack of intelligence but rather a tool used for building and maintaining positive affiliations between members of this unique culture.

The term ‘culture’ is used in this paper as defined by Oxford University Press (2011), namely, “the attitudes and behavior characteristic of a particular social group.” With this definition in mind, the following hypotheses were formulated concerning the motivations behind swearing in the tradie culture:

1. Swearing functions as a marker of solidarity in a workplace context, contrary to the offensive nature of the words outside of this environment.
2. Trades people use swearing as a means of differentiation from the rest of society.
In order to either validate or reject the above hypotheses, authentic data was recorded from ten lunch breaks at an Australian trade workplace. This paper will focus on the swear words fuck and cunt because these two would be considered the most obscene in society and also due to the fact that they were the swear words used most frequently in the recorded data. It is proposed that evidence will be found in the data to demonstrate tradies’ excessive use of the expletives fuck and cunt, as well as their use of these words not in a derogatory, offensive manner but as means of creating solidarity among the in-group.

Although previous research has been conducted concerning the social motivations behind swearing, scholars have only briefly touched on it as a means of building rapport. In fact research on social motivations and perceptions of swearing in the tradie environment is practically non-existent. It is hoped that this study will assist in furthering our knowledge of profanities and the social motivations behind their use in Australian English.

2. Literature Review
Due to the irregular nature of swear words, there has been an immense amount of research into the functions of expletives. For the purpose of this research, previous literature will be examined in relation to the functions of swear words, the use of swear words in the workplace and the use of linguistic features to assert in-group and out-group status.

2.1 The Functions of Swear Words
Within social interaction, it can be observed that expletives such as fuck and cunt can be used for many different functions. Prominent research within this area has been conducted by scholars such as Steven Pinker (2008), Alaina M. Winters and Steve Duck (2001), plus Yehuda Baruch and Stuart Jenkins (2006). From one point of view, “expletives carry a powerful emotional and psychological charge, contravening social taboos and are frequently used for shocking people, or indicating contempt or disregard for them” (DeKlerk quoted in Johnson & Lewis 2010:108). However it is the author’s opinion that this is only one of the many functions of swear words. As stated by Daly, Holmes, Newton and Stubbe (2004:959), swear words, such as fuck

...occur frequently in certain contexts and serve a range of functions, including the role of positive politeness strategy. Fuck is regularly associated with expressions of solidarity, including friendly terms of address and speech acts which unambiguously serve the function of solidarity construction; notable here are whinges, which serve to offload negative affect in a safe environment, to release tension, and to maintain rapport between people.

Expletives can be used as exemplifiers, for stress-release and to create solidarity among people, not just in producing obscene insults, as most commonly received out of context. On the subject, Winters and Duck (2001:173) argued “that the pragmatics of swearing point to a bonding function of a behaviour that is otherwise perceived only as aversive because of its use of negatively charged words.”
2.2 Swear Words in the Workplace
The most notable work on swearing in the workplace was produced by Daly, Holmes, Newton and Stubbe (2004). This team of researchers studied the use of *fuck* in direct complaints and refusals in a New Zealand factory and how the workers used this word to maintain close affiliations even in the context of Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). Daly et al. (2004:960) found that

> …team members convert the negative affect and strength associated with forms of *fuck* in standard contexts into a positive attribute in its use in interaction between members of their own community of practice. The inherent strength of the canonical expletive *fuck* thus contributes to its impact when used between friends and co-workers. It is as if they are saying ‘‘I know you so well I can be this rude to you.’’

Similarly, in Baruch and Jenkins’s paper (2006), they revealed that even though verbal abuse and swearing is extremely detrimental to a workplace, “language may … evolve to suit the culture and needs of particular groups of employees. Different domains, such as operational meetings or informal workplace discourse, dictate the use of different speech modes. They sometimes include the use of swearing” (2006:494).

3. Linguistic Differentiation
William Labov’s study (1972) on Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts and the social motivations of phonetic differentiation is still significantly influential in sociolinguistics to this day. It will be used in this research as a basis to help explain the social motivations of the tradie’s use of *fuck* and *cunt* in the workplace. Labov stated that linguistic variations between cultures

> …may be induced by the processes of assimilation or differentiation, by analogy, borrowing, fusion, contamination, random variation, or any number of processes in which the language system interacts with the physiological or psychological characteristics of the individual (1972:1-2).

In this study Labov related the phonetic shift towards centralised diphthongs to the social pressures on the island of Martha’s Vineyard. During a time when wealthy mainlanders were buying up a majority of the land for their summer vacations, there was a shift towards a broader accent within the local community, more noticeably with the proud, Vineyard-devoted fishermen (also referred to as Chilmarkers). Labov was able to successfully link this social change to the transformation in the local accent through his recordings, tests and interviews with the locals. “Chilmarkers pride themselves on their differences from mainlanders … At Chilmark retroflexion is at its strongest, and is steadily increasing among younger boys” (Labov 1972:29). In one of the interviews, a mother on Martha’s Vineyard had actually noted about her son, “You know, E. didn’t always speak that way … It’s only since he came back from college. I guess he wanted to be more like the men on the docks” (Labov 1972:31). This shows that there has been a choice, even subconsciously, towards differentiation from the mainlander accent in order to mark in-group status within the Vineyard community.
It is believed that through the use of evidence gathered in the current study, it will be demonstrated that, similarly to the Vineyard fishermen, Australian tradies use their lexical variations in order to differentiate themselves from the rest of society.

4. Methodology
The use of authentic, unprompted social conversations between tradies was essential in evaluating the validity of the stated hypotheses. The participants were notified of the recordings beforehand so as to be sure of their willingness to participate. This awareness of being recorded always poses a threat to acquiring untainted data, however it was hoped that recording over a two-week period would desensitise the participants to the presence of a recording device. Ten 25-minute recordings of the tradies’ lunchbreaks were collected. Although the participants were told that they were being recorded, they were not informed as to which aspects of the conversations would be analysed. The recordings were obtained by one of the tradies as it was believed a researcher sitting in on the lunchbreaks would only draw more attention to the fact that the participants were being studied. After the data was collected, each of the participants was asked to fill out a form providing their permission for use of the recordings, as well as details concerning their age, ethnicity and educational background. (See Table 1.)

All ten recordings were then listened to three times, with the use, frequency and nature of the words fuck and cunt in conversation being analysed. The occurrence of each word was tallied twice in order to avoid inaccuracy. On the third listening, prominent conversations using both fuck and cunt, or an extremely excessive use of fuck, were noted.

The indicated conversations were then transcribed for data analysis purposes. In transcribing, more emphasis was put on the content of the conversations rather than on stress and intonation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</th>
<th>LANGUAGES SPOKEN</th>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Spanish, English</td>
<td>Year 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Year 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Background Information of Participants

5. Results
After all recordings were listened to and the frequencies of fuck and cunt were counted for each day, the results were recorded in Table 2 for ease of analysis and comparison. It can be seen that within a 25-minute period, a worker in a trade environment uses intense expletives at a far higher rate than what might be considered socially acceptable in public. Although it must be noted that these numbers were produced collectively by five Australian tradies, the production of swear words is still significantly greater than the perceived average rate.
Lauren McLeod: Swearing in the ‘Tradie’ Environment as a Tool for Solidarity

Furthermore, with a closer look at the conversations, it can be seen that for the most part, these men did not use *fuck* and *cunt* in a derogatory manner or as a mechanism to preserve rapport between co-workers when in the context of FTAs such as complaints or refusals. Instead these expletives mostly occurred in general, everyday discussions as both exemplifiers and as a means of building solidarity within the group. Although widely perceived insults like “Fuck you!” were used quite often, analysis of the speaker’s intention and hearer’s reaction have shown that the phrase was used as a kind of jocular mockery. The three conversations listed in the Appendix were found to be the most evidential of this behaviour. Four short excerpts from these transcriptions illustrate this:

(1)  
6 D: anway hes fucking (.) he ne- he needed a fu-  
7 the fucking oil filter=  
8 J: =’yeah’=  
9 D: = to get his off coz his was fucking ridi-  
10 like I had- I was up in there with both my fucking  
11 arms fucking hanging off this cunt (.)  
12 could not get th- his oil filter (.) whoever did  
13 D: it up did it up [wa:y too tight]  

From the above passage, it can be observed that Speaker D has used the words *fuck* and *cunt* in his account as both exemplifiers and in a word-replacing role similar to pronouns. At no point during his utterance were the swear words directed at another person.

(2)  
1 D: whatd he say  
2 J: i don’t know fucks me  
3 R: haha  
4 R: i said cranberry sauce ya cunt(.) goes on  

Table 2: The frequency of occurrence over a ten-day period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 27 April</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 28 April</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 29 April</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 3 May</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 4 May</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 5 May</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 6 May</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 9 May</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 10 May</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11 May</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE</strong></td>
<td>118.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fucking turkey ya silly cunt

J: oh speak up alright
hahahhe
J: cant fucking understand a word ya saying

In this section of a conversation Speaker R has used a commonly derogative term of address towards speaker J. However no sincere offence appears to have been intended, which is evident in Speaker R’s jocular manner in producing the utterance as well as Speaker J’s reaction towards being called a cunt (i.e. laughing and providing a jocular retort).

R: ye:ah I had a couple but yeah (.) cracked a stubbie
J: a couple of stubbies ya rekron
R: o:he you’re a fucking alcoholic yourself ya cunt
J: fuck off
((laughing and murmering))
hehehe
D: says you ya cunt cant even fucking remember what
club you’re in cunt

In this extract the joking nature of the tradies’ swearing is quite obvious. A conversation which would more commonly be seen as extremely obscene shows evidence of distinct group solidarity within the tradie environment.

RD: making rocket fuel and shit you’ll know if
you like it too
[heheheheh]
R: [fuck yeah]
hehehe
RD: fuckin hell (.)fuckin bourbon distillery you’re off
S: your fuckin guts ya cunt
hehe

Finally, this last fragment demonstrates how excessive numbers of swear words are simply accepted as the norm and in some cases can even fuel the humour of a conversation. It is clear from the participants’ continual laughter that at no point is anyone stunned or insulted by the speaker’s behaviour.

The amount of evidence retrieved from the recorded conversations is immense, however it is believed that even from this small portion of data the commonplace use of swear words and their numerous functions in a tradie workplace can be identified.

6. Discussion
It is essential to have an understanding of the different behaviours of co-cultures within a community in order to avoid discrimination. A single community is comprised of various cultures, each with its own values and twists on language use. Tradies are one such culture. Australian tradies can sometimes be mistaken by the rest of the community as lacking in intelligence, based generally on their ‘crass’
behaviour and excessive use of swear words. However, it is argued that for the most part, tradies communicate in this way in order to differentiate their culture from the rest of the community. The continual use of *fuck* and *cunt* in conversations works as a marker of in-group membership and at times is used to exclude out-group members. In seeking to confirm this this, the two proposed hypotheses will be evaluated in relation to the results drawn from the data.

1. Swearing functions as a marker of solidarity in a workplace context, contrary to the offensive nature of the words outside of this environment.

The sheer quantity of swear words used in tradie speak and the blasé manner in which they are received indicate that tradies perceive the use of *fuck* and *cunt* in a completely different light to perhaps most other members of society. An occurrence of these words within the tradie context can show that swear words are able to be used in rapport building amongst co-workers. The following utterances provide evidence for this statement, as both “insults” are received with laughter and because the conversation does not break down due to loss of face:

8  R:  o:h you’re a fucking alcoholic yourself ya cunt
9  J:  fuck off
10  ((laughing and murmuring))

From the context (see Appendix) of these utterances it can be seen that neither of the participants relate the phrases used to negative connotations. Similarly, if any of the tradies produced a sentence like the above, in a context outside of the familiar, then offence would most likely be taken from such a statement.

2. Trades people use swearing as a means of differentiation from the rest of society.

The social motivations of swearing in the tradie workplace can be related back to Labov’s study (1972) in many aspects. Similar to the Chilmarkers of Martha’s Vineyard, over the years Australian tradies have created a language shift as a means of differentiation. However, unlike the phonetical shift of the locals of Martha’s Vineyard, tradies have created a lexical shift towards the more commonplace use of expletives. Evidence of this can easily be observed through the frequencies of *fuck* and *cunt* in a tradie conversation as compared to a more public, socially acceptable conversation.

It is acknowledged that this current study is not without limitations. However, it is hoped that with this as a basis, future research may be conducted with a more comprehensive data collection. With greater resources, surveys could be conducted on both the general community and tradies so as to create a better comparison of the use of the words *fuck* and *cunt*. In addition, it is believed that with recordings from a much wider range of trade workplaces, a more accurate use of swear words across all trades would be acquired.
7. Conclusion
As a linguistic community grows, its lexicon is moulded with it. Every year meanings of words within the English lexicon are forgotten or modified and hundreds of new words and meanings are created. The same can be said for swear words. On the subject of shift in meaning of swear words, Pinker (2008:29) has stated that “over time, taboo words relinquish their literal meanings and retain only a coloring of emotion, and then just an ability to arouse attention”. This is evident in the Australian tradies use of fuck and cunt. For the tradie culture at least, these words have begun to lose their literal or offensive meanings and instead are used throughout in-group conversations as a marker of membership and a means of differentiation.

*Author Note
Lauren McLeod graduated in December 2011 with a Bachelor of Arts in Languages and Applied Linguistics, majoring in Japanese. She has been accepted into Flinders University in Adelaide where she will be completing a Master of Speech Pathology degree.

References


Appendix

Transcription 1

From Recording: Tuesday 3rd May
1  D:  well coz I did the service on my car the last time
2     like (. ) the filter wasn’t t- so tight that
3   I couldn’t get it off like I could just fucking
do it with my hand
5   J:  ‘‘yeah’’
6  D:  anway he’s fucking (. ) he ne- he needed a fu-
7   the fucking oil filter=
8   J:  = ‘‘yeah’’=
9  D:  = to get his off coz his was fucking ridi-
10   like I had- I was up in there with both my fucking
11   arms fucking hanging off this cunt (. )
could not get th- his oil filter (. ) whoever did
13  D:  it up did it up [wa:y too tight]
14  R:  [yeah punch a] fuckin screwdriver
15   straight through it
16   [ hheh heh hhhhh ]
17  J:  [yeah that’s right]
18  RD:  (but a screwdriver-)
19  R:  straight into shoulder cunt

Transcription 2

From Recording: Wednesday 11th May
1   D:  whatd he say
2   J:  i don’t know fucks me
3   R:  haha
4  R:  i said cranberry sauce ya cunt(.) goes on
5   fucking turkey ya silly cunt
6   J:  oh speak up alright
7   hahahhhe
8  J:  cant fucking understand a word ya saying
9   (0.8)
10  ((murmuring))
11  D:  yeah cran- havent you ever had cranberry sauce
12   on turkey
13  J:  nuh
14  D:  uh its alright hey (1.2) its an American thing
15   but it tastes pretty good

Transcription 3

From Recording: Wednesday 11th May
1   ((noises coming from workshop throughout recording))
2   D:  he went home and got the piss
3   (0.1)
4  D:  didn’t ya reds (. ) went home and got on the piss
5   (0.1)
6  R:  ye:ah I had a couple but yeah (. ) cracked a stubbie
7  J:  a couple of stubbies ya rekon
8  R:  o:h you’re a fucking alcoholic yourself ya cunt
9  J:  fuck off
10  ((laughing and murmuring))
D: hehhehe

R: says you you cunt cant even fucking remember what
can't even remembering club your in cunt

RD: (what’s that)

RD: making rocket fuel and shit you’ll know if
you like it too
[hehheheh]

R: [fuck yeah]

hehehe

RD: fuckin hell (.)fuckin bourbon distillery your off

S: your fuckin guts ya cunt

hhehe
Back-channelling:
The use of yeah and mm to portray engaged listenership

KATHRIN LAMBERTZ

Abstract
This paper is concerned with the use of back-channels to portray engaged listenership. Specifically, the aim of the research was to investigate the uses of yeah and mm as back-channelling utterances to show engaged listenership. The research focused on the different back-channel functions that can be identified and the locations at which they occur. Data was analysed from the Griffith Corpus of Spoken Australian English (GCSAusE) and some data collected by the researcher. The key findings suggest that yeah and mm can function as continuers, alignment tokens and agreement tokens but mm seems to be weaker in respect to conversational engagement. Also, the functions of yeah and mm can be ambiguous. Further research should investigate whether cultural or gender issues have an effect on how people portray engaged listenership by back-channelling.

1. Introduction
In real life communication, there is a constant need for speakers to both self-monitor their own speech production and to monitor the reaction of their interlocutors. There is a need for listeners to ensure that their interpretation of the speaker’s communicative intention in fact matches what he wanted to say. And occasionally, there is a need for both speakers and listeners to solve problems as they crop up.

(Faerch 1982)

Back-channelling skills are important for people wishing to be able to function as supportive and engaged listeners in a conversation. There is no doubt that there has been some disagreement among researchers who have focused on back-channels; there has also been some dispute in regard to how to name this pragmatic phenomenon (Drummond 1993b; Gardner 1997, 2001; Jefferson 1983). However, there is agreement that the importance of the listener cannot be forgotten in the literature, as the listener is both a recipient and a co-constructer of interactive talk (Gardner 2001).

This study will first give an insight into the importance of listenership and the ways in which a listener can project effective listenership through back-channels. It will also discuss back-channeling in general. Secondly, it will analyse interactional data from the Griffith Corpus of Spoken Australian English (GCSAusE), along with a personally collected and transcribed conversation. The latter illustrates how the back-channels yeah and mm are used by listeners in conversational discourse to show engaged listenership and at which locations these pragmatic acts occur within a conversation. Finally, it will discuss the findings and submit suggestions about the implications, plus recommendations for further research.
2. Literature Review

In discussing the importance of the listener in a conversation, Zimmermann (1991) claims that the quality of a conversation depends largely on what takes place in the person to whom words are directed. In order to act as an active, supportive and polite listener, one should in general signal an interest in what the speaker is saying (Zimmermann 1991). This notion of politeness in hearer-oriented speech acts has also been addressed by some politeness theorists (Brown 1978). Svennevig (1999) claims that speakers and listeners are being polite by, for example, showing attentiveness in orientation to each other and using self-orientated comments to show alignment. In this research, the term ‘engaged listenership’ will be used to describe the desire of the listener to portray active, supportive and polite listenership. Of course, this term does not ignore the fact that listeners are in fact both speakers and listeners (Farr 2003). These comments or listener responses should be given at times when the other person seems to be welcoming it, and in many cases these times are marked by prosodic features of the speaker’s utterances.

Listener responses are often referred to as acknowledgment tokens (Drummond 1993a) or back-channels (Yngve 1970). This study will use the term ‘back-channels’ or ‘back-channelling’ because the recipient turns do not take the conversational floor. White (1989) explains that the term ‘back-channel’ refers to the ‘main’ channel being the person who is holding the floor - the speaker - and the ‘back’ channel being the addressed recipient of the talk - the listener - who gives information without claiming the floor. Back-channels can be verbal or non-verbal expressions such as the nodding of the head (White 1989) or gazing (Fellegy 1995; Young 2004). Back-channels are typically mono- or bi-syllabic responses of a restricted number of types (Gardner 2001) such as uh-huh, mm, mhm and yeah, and are also known as response tokens (Gardner 2001), minimal responses (Fellegy 1995), reactive tokens (Young 2004) and continuers (Zimmerman 1993). They “control turn-taking, the negotiation of agreement, the signalling of recognition and comprehension, management of interpersonal relations such as control and affiliation, and the expression of emotion, attitude, and affect” (Ward 2006).

The research in back-channelling initially only included non-lexical utterances e.g. mhm, but later included sentence completions, requests for clarification, brief statements, and non-verbal responses (Duncan 1974). It is now common to speak of three categories: non-lexical backchannels, which are vocalic sounds that have little or no referential meaning, such as mhm; phrasal backchannels, which are typical expressions of acknowledgment and assessment, such as really; and substantive backchannels, being turns with referential content such as a repetition or a clarifying question (Iwasaki 1997).

A considerable amount of attention has been given to back-channel utterances in particular: yeah and mm (Drummond 1993a, 1993b; Gardner 1997, 2001; Jefferson 1983). Gardner primarily addresses mm and yeah and notes that “such unobtrusive response tokens as yeah, mm hm, okay and mm turn out to be exquisitely complex, in a way that is still becoming apparent” (2001, p.1). He makes four major distinctions or sub-classes of back-channels: continuers, which function to hand the floor back straight away to the prior speaker (e.g. mm and uh huh); acknowledgements, which claim agreement or comprehension of the prior turn (e.g. mm and yeah); newsmakers, which mark the prior turn as newsworthy; and change-of-activity tokens, which

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mark a movement towards a new topic or action in a conversation (e.g. okay and right). It can be seen that according to Gardner (2001), mm can function as both a continuier and an agreement token, whereas the function of yeah is primarily as an agreeing utterance.

This research paper will concentrate on analysing the non-lexical verbal back-channels. In particular, it will look at the two main back-channel utterances, yeah and mm, and their uses in portraying engaged listenership.

3. Analysis of the interactional data
The analysed data in this research project consists primarily of a conversation between two female friends but is supported through examples collected from the GCSAusE. The Conversation Analysis approach was applied in order to detect significant features such as pitch, stress, overlapping, loudness and intonation. It is important to transcribe every single utterance of a conversation, as an absence of these items in the transcription might have great significance in the analysis of the meaning.

The analysis of the interactional data yielded three different functions of back-channelling through the use of yeah and mm: continuers, alignment tokens and agreement tokens, which will now be further discussed.

3.1. Continuers
As stated, the analysis found that yeah and mm can both be used as continuers. The former was seen as the most commonly occurring utterance in the data. In the private conversation the use of yeah occurred 32 times, whereas mm only occurred nine times. The use of yeah as a continuier as can be observed in the following example:

1. A: but just you know you feel like you can open up to ‘em and (.)
2. B: yeah
3. A: they understand what (0.5) you’re trying to say like (0.4)
4. [there’s no- ]
5. B: [yeah and ] they don’t judge you for it=

Two female friends are conversing here about their relationships to their friends. In line 3, Speaker A resumes speaking after she recognizes that Speaker B has uttered a continuier. As can be seen in this example, the utterance yeah is often used after the speaker has not completed an utterance followed by pause. Speaker B recognises that the story-telling is still in progress and uses yeah as a continuier to show low speakership incipiency (Drummond 1993b) and signals the speaker to continue with the telling in progress.

In the next example, data from the GCSAusE, another example can be seen of yeah being used by the listener as a continuier. J is using yeah as an overlapping utterance in order to show interest in the topic and to signal the speaker to keep going (Fellegy 1995). Also, N’s utterance contains a number of pauses and repetitions, which might signal that N is thinking about what to say. In this respect, J encourages N by using continuiers.

1. N: I was like .h ↑this is the first time ever that
2. i’ve only had two ↓ weeks to do: (.) an assign[men ]t=  
3. J:                      [yeah:]  
4. N: =oh less than two weeks [now=.  
5. J:  
6. N: =because they made that [on TU:esday,y,  
7. J: [↑When is she gonna put it up?  

The focus will now shift to how listeners portray their listenership through the use of the back-channelling utterance *mm*. In the following example, Speaker B is showing low speakership incipiency by signalling the speaker to continue with the storytelling. As has been seen with the use of *yeah*, the listener uses a continuers after an incomplete utterance followed by a pause. Therefore, Speaker B signals to the other speaker an interest in the storytelling in progress. However, a significant difference is that unlike *yeah*, which somewhat portrays an opinion about an utterance, the use of *mm* seems to be more neutral and less opinionated (Gardner 1997). It could be said that listeners feel that *yeah* signals a greater engagement in the conversation.

1. A: =like .hh and she’s- she’s really sweet she can be really sweet .hh  
2. but she’ll do: things sometimes that (1.3) re::ally make you think (1.2)  
   that  
3. she’s try::ing to:: (1.5) push you ↓do::wn or- or (0.5)  
4. B:  
5. A: um (2.0) >I: don’t kno::w< like just .hh yeah I- I- there was a couple  
   things  
6. that sh::e’s do::ne wou-  

As continuers, both *yeah* and *mm* can be used either after complete utterances or in between pauses or breathing by the speaker. Also, both utterances can be used as an overlap, without giving the impression of being rude. Moreover, overlapping might resemble a higher engagement in listenership (Farr 2003).

3.2 Alignment  
On the other hand, *yeah* was also used to enact alignment. In the same example, we can observe that Speaker B (line 5) uses *yeah* to signal that she shares the same thought but also continues with more talk in the same turn, to show that the listener is actively listening and contributing to the conversation.

1. A: they understand what (0.5) you’re trying to say like (0.4) [there’s no-]  
2. B:                      [yeah and ]  
3. they don’t judge you for it=  

Here, the listener is aligning with the speaker to signal a shared opinion. However, this example may be ambiguous, as the use of *yeah* could also be seen as a continuers. Even though the listener continues with more talk in the same turn, he/she does not take the floor; rather, the speaker resumes the storytelling.
The use of *mm* can also occur as an aligning back-channel utterance, as can be observed in the next example.

1. A: = courses with um (.) like *women* who have been in (1.1) domes- in violent
2. relationships or .hh *families* that have been *violent* and stuff and she does
3. like *positive assertion* and like [non ] *violent* communication and
4. stuff=
5. B: [*mm* ]

Here, the use of *mm* is overlapping the storytelling of the speaker. The listener shows alignment with the speaker without making any judgments. The back-channel utterance *mm* could easily be replaced by *yeah* without changing the meaning. In this respect, this example could be ambiguous, due to the possibility of regarding it as a continuer by the listener.

*Yeah* is more commonly used as an alignment token and can be followed by more talk in the same turn, to show interest by adding a statement. The use of *yeah* in this instance appears to be more common after utterances rather than in overlapping.

### 3.3 Agreement
A less ambiguous example of the use of *yeah* as a token of agreement can be seen in the next example:

1. A: =but this probably got to do a lot with< the superficiality of the
2. relationship? .hhh
3. B: yeah
4. A: because it- because it’s superficial you can have those little superficial
5. meanings like (.)when you get together every now and ↑the:n

Here, Speaker A is perhaps requesting the listener to give a token of agreement with A’s current utterance by a question-like rising contour at the end of the utterance, followed by a brief pause in the form of breathing. The listener back-channels to the speaker by agreeing with her before the speaker resumes with the storytelling.

Again, the following example shows the use of *yeah* as an agreement token by J, to signal that J agrees with N’s utterance. However, J does not take the floor and signals N to progress with the storytelling.

1. N: ↑oh was just thinking that uh
2. he’s the guy that used to run:
3. [Guci] =yeah:=
5. N: No [I saw him a couple of times
4. Discussion

The analysis of the interactional data gives an insight into how listeners back-channel by using *yeah* and *mm* to portray engaged listenership. The findings of this research article are to some extent cohesive with Gardner’s (2010) findings about *yeah* and *mm*. The first significant result is that listeners make more use of *yeah* as a back-channelling device than *mm*. One of the reasons for this might be that the use of *mm* is weaker and more neutral than *yeah* (Gardner 1997) and that listeners might feel that *yeah* signals a greater active engagement in the conversation.

Overall, the analysis found three different functions of *yeah* and *mm* as a back-channel utterance to signal engaged listenership: continuers, alignment tokens and agreement tokens. *Yeah* and *mm* can both function as continuers and can be interchangeable, however, the use of *yeah* would be less neutral and might signal higher speakership incipience than *mm* (Gardner 1997). Also, we have seen that while *yeah* and *mm* are both used to express alignment, *yeah* is used more frequently in this instance. The use of *mm* as an agreement token has not been found in this data. According to the literature review, an agreement token which is similar in sound and more favourably used in this instance would be *mhmm*, which in meaning would be closer to *yeah* (Gardner 2001).

Another general but important finding is that the back-channel functions that carry *yeah* and *mm* can be ambiguous. There is a fine line between these differences and at times they can be difficult to distinguish. This finding is also consistent with those of many researchers who have dealt with back-channels. Looking only at the term ‘back-channelling’ and its different uses that are apparent in the literature (Gardner 2001), it is understandable that there is a fine line between the functions of back-channelling. In this view, the distinctions between back-channels seem to blend into each other. For example, this research has made a distinction between alignment and agreement, because agreement seems to be more opinionated.

In this respect, one of the limitations of this research might be the quantity of data. It would be of interest to compare results taken from a larger range of data. Also, the use of *yeah* and *mm* (including all other back-channel utterances) are, for example, dependent on the speakers’ relationship to each other, as back-channels control the management of interpersonal relations such as control and affiliation, and the expression of emotion, attitude, and affect (Ward 2006). At the very least, there seems to be a shared view about the importance of back-channelling in regard to the management of conversations and, even more importantly, to the importance of engaged listenership in a conversation. In this respect, there is much more to back-channels as a pragmatic act in a linguistic sense. The psychological effects cannot be dismissed and should be incorporated into further research.

It is important to note that this research has only focused on back-channel utterances and their functions in Australian English. Backchannel communication is present in all cultures and languages, but the frequency and the use of utterances may vary (White 1989) and confusion might occur if speakers are unfamiliar with the backchannel utterances of the opposing speaker. However, this is also strongly affected by other factors, including the personalities of the speaker and listener, the context, and the culture (Tannen 1986).
Another factor that might have an effect on showing engaged listenership by back-channelling might be gender (Ward 2006). It is apparent in gender studies that women are said to use these utterances to signal support and engaged listenership, while men use them to signal agreement and inattentiveness (Fellegy 1995). In this respect, further study should incorporate both cultural and gender issues in regard to how one uses back-channelling to portray listenership.

In conclusion, the findings of this research have contributed to the importance of the listener in a conversation. Back-channel utterances are important, as they are one of the few indicators that shed some light on one of the central features in a conversation: the listener.

References


Proxemic Distance and Gender amongst Australians: 
A Study of Side-On Distances

LARA PARKER AND TARA LEO*

Abstract
The study of personal space, otherwise known as proxemics, has largely centred on the similarities and differences between various cultures, focusing primarily on the areas in front of and behind a person. The research conducted in this report examines the relatively neglected area of proxemic distances to either side of a person’s body, in a bid to contribute to contemporary research into intercultural non-verbal communication in this field. The experiment conducted was modeled on Mazur’s 1977 research into side-on proxemic distances between strangers but was changed from a cross-cultural study to an intercultural study of gender. To this end, proxemic distances between all-male, all-female and mixed gender groups of Australian students sitting on a public bench were observed. Although the data collected in the experiment was limited, it was found to support gender differences observed by Heshka and Nelson in their 1972 study.

1. Introduction
The term proxemics, also known as personal space, was first coined by Edward T. Hall and is defined as “the study of how man unconsciously structures microspace - the distance between men in the conduct of daily transactions, the organization of space in his houses, buildings and ultimately a layout of his towns” (Hall 1963:1003). Proxemic distances are categorized into four zones which were first identified by Hall (1969:117-125) as the Intimate zone (6-18in, 15-45cm), Personal zone (1.5-4ft, 45cm-1.2m), Social zone (4-12ft, 1.2-3.6m) and the Public zone (above 12ft or 3.6m). The Intimate zone is the most guarded area, with only emotionally close individuals permitted to enter. Friends and family are typically allowed to enter someone’s Personal zone, whereas the Social zone is more impersonal and encompasses acquaintances at social events such as a party. The Public zone is used at events such as conferences, where interaction becomes more formal with the speaker being divided from their audience not only by distance but possibly by a stage or lectern. Visual details become less obvious and more formal language is often used (Hall 1969:117-125).

Proxemics is generally measured by the distance separating people, but this is not its only feature. As defined by Lateiner (1992:136), it includes distance (near-far), posture (stiff-relaxed), elevation (standing-seated-abased), precedence (serial order) and orientation (frontal-oblique-dorsal).

There are many studies about the apparent cross-cultural differences in proxemics. Hall’s 1966 research found that North Americans, Northern Europeans and Asians stood furthest apart during interactions whilst South Americans, Southern and Eastern Europeans and Arabs stood much closer together (Beaulieu 2004:796). These two groups were referred to as ‘non-contact’ and ‘contact’ cultures respectively. Many studies have followed Hall, some finding results to support his claims, others to reject them. Among
these, the Watson and Graves study (1966) comparing North American proxemic distance to that of Arabs supports Hall’s hypotheses, whereas Remland, Jones and Brinkman (1991) found that their study of proxemics involving participants from three different European countries did not yield strong support for Hall’s hypotheses. Although Beaulieu defines personal space as “an invisible three-dimensional zone surrounding a person, which allows that person to regulate their interactions with the outside world … which can be envisioned as a bubble around a person” (2004:794), most of the previous studies have only focused on proxemic distances in front of and/or behind their participants, with little attention given to either side or to the space above the subject. Only one study, conducted by Mazur (1977), was found that focused on the proxemic distance to either side of a person.

Mazur conducted a non-obtrusive study on the proxemic distance between strangers seated on public benches in parks in three cities (Seville, Spain; San Francisco, USA; and Tangier, Morocco). The aim of Mazur’s research was to study the side-on proxemic distance of a person, focusing on differences (or lack thereof) between ‘contact’ and ‘non-contact’ cultures. His methodology involved taking photos of strangers sitting on benches in public parks, then measuring the distances between both the heads and the torsos of these participants. Unobtrusive methods were used for the research as he wished to study how people acted naturally in their own country. He rejected results if any type of object was placed between the participants or if there was any type of physical contact between the participants. He found that the people studied did not sit together on a bench unless all benches in the vicinity were already occupied by someone else. All participants preferred to sit at the extreme ends of the bench, thereby creating as much space between themselves and the other person as possible. It was also found that there was not a significant difference between the distances of the participants in all three cities (Mazur 1977: 54-58).

In regard to proxemic studies focusing on gender, Heshka and Nelson (1972) found that the proxemic distance used by male/male dyads did not differ greatly between close friends or strangers, whereas female/female dyad distances changed significantly depending on the relationship between the interactants. Close female friends stood much closer together than male dyads, but female strangers tended to stand at a greater distance than did male dyads. Heshka and Nelson (1972) stated that the reason for this difference may have been due to a reserve and caution that females felt towards each other until bonds had been established between them. Male/female dyads were found to stand at an intermediate distance between those of male/male and female/female friend dyads (1972:491-496). Beaulieu (2004) outlined similar results in her study although she did not distinguish between female friends and strangers and only stated that female dyads stood closer to each other than male dyads.

The most palpable difficulty facing researchers studying proxemics, which becomes clear when reading past experiments, is the extremely large range of variables involved. These include (but are not limited to) the age, gender, social class and cultural norms of participants; the relationship between participants, including the possibility of sexual attraction; the setting, approach distance and degree of crowding in an area (Gillespie &
Leffler 1983:121; Beaulieu 2004:795). A system for isolating single variables in order to study them has not yet been devised and this problem is prevalent in all proxemic studies to date (including the current one), although it is believed that researchers will continue to strive towards finding a solution to this predicament.

2. Aims

The aim of this research was to study the neglected area of proxemic distances to either side of a person’s body. The experiment was modeled on the study done by Mazur (1977), where the proxemic distances between strangers sitting together in a public place were recorded. The cultures studied, however, were changed from ‘contact’ and ‘non-contact’ cultures to that of male and female gender. The results relating to gender given in Heshka and Nelson’s (1972) study were used as this study’s hypotheses, namely:

1. Male/male dyads will sit the closest distance apart.
2. Female (stranger) dyads will sit the furthest apart.
3. People of opposite genders will sit at a distance intermediate to that of the male/male distance and the female/female distance.

3. Methodology

As stated above, the experiment conducted was modeled on Mazur’s (1977) study of strangers sitting next to each other on public benches. Due to the fact that many people must sit side by side while waiting at a public bus stop, this was the ‘public place’ chosen for this study. The length of a bus-stop bench at bus stop ‘B’ at Griffith University’s Nathan Campus in Brisbane was measured prior to the experiment. It was found to measure 180cm and was then marked with colourful sticking dots in 11 places along its length, at 10cm and 20cm intervals. These markers were clearly visible from the front of the bench and were used to assist the experimenters in taking measurements in an unobtrusive way. As there were no obvious signs of a tape measure, ruler or other measuring device and the dots were not mentioned either by the experimenters or the participants, it is believed that this measurement method did not give the participants an indication of the type of research being undertaken or impact negatively on the results obtained.

The study used ten female and four male participants who were students at the university in question and were chosen from around the bus stop area where the study took place. They were asked questions at the outset to determine whether they fitted the parameters of the study, namely:

- whether they were Australian-born and
- whether they were between the ages of 19-29.

The participants chosen were not friends; rather, people who were noticeably not walking or talking together were asked to participate. These parameters were set to reduce the number of variables affecting the study. As it was focusing on the effect of gender on proxemic distance, the aim was to eliminate as much as possible the variables
of cross-cultural differences, generational (age) differences and differences in the relationships of the participants.

The participants were asked to sit on the bench and the only instruction given to them was to put their bags behind the bench before they started, which was done to eliminate any objects being placed between the participants on the bench. Giving no instruction about the way the participants were to sit was intended to allow for as natural a context as possible. A photograph was then taken of the entire bench from end to end before the participants were asked to move. All photos were taken at the same place in front of the bench at a fixed point known to the photographer. Two different photographs were taken: one when there were two participants sitting on the bench and the other when there were three participants sitting on the bench. This was done in order to study whether having an extra person on the bench significantly affected the result.

Similar to Mazur’s (1977) study, only the proxemic distance and not the orientation, posture, precedence or elevation of the participants was tested as the people in the study were all sitting down and facing forward. The measurements were taken from the closest distance between the participants, measured either from the thigh or the knee. One of the identified shortcomings of Mazur’s study was that the benches used were all of differing lengths and shapes. In order to overcome this limitation, only one bench was used in this study.

4. Results
Table 1 displays the results of the current study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MALE/MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE/FEMALE</th>
<th>MIXED GENDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance (cm)</td>
<td>Average distance (cm)</td>
<td>Distance (cm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 people sitting on bench</td>
<td>3 43 20 0 46 41</td>
<td>22 29</td>
<td>40 8 25 0 40 38 18 83 0 0 86 0 21 25 41 0 52 38 37 63 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 people sitting on bench</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0 25 40 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The proxemic distances between participants (cm) and the average taken from these measurements.
The figures entered into the table were the closest distances measured between two points. Under the heading of ‘Distance (cm)’ with ‘2 people sitting on the bench’, 3 distances have been recorded: the first distance was measured from the edge of the bench to the right side of the first participant; the second distance measured the distance between the participants; and the third distance was the measurement from the left side of the second participant to the other edge of the bench. The results recorded for ‘3 people sitting on the bench’ (trios) have four measurements, the extra measurement taken being the distance between the second and third participant. Measurements reading ‘0’ indicate that the participant was sitting on the extreme edge of the bench. The measurements recorded for mixed gender trios display the gender of the participants in the order in which they were sitting. In the second column marked ‘Average (cm)’, an average of all the distances in the relevant interaction has been taken.

Unfortunately due to the inexperience of the experimenters and possibly also to the fact that both experimenters were female, more female students than male students were willing to participate in the study, which impacted on the results obtained. With the results achieved, the average proxemic distances (when all the results were averaged out) with two people sitting side by side on the bench were 25.5cm for male/male dyads, 29.2cm for female/female dyads and 28.65cm for mixed gender dyads. With three people sitting side by side on the bench the average distances were 17.5cm for female/female trios and 15cm for mixed gender trios. No male/male trio distances were obtained in this study. Although the results obtained when two people were sitting on the bench do support the hypotheses given at the beginning of this paper, where male/male dyads recorded the closest distance, female stranger dyads recorded the furthest distance and mixed gender dyads recorded an intermediate distance between that of male and female dyads, it will be noted here that due to the small sample used in obtaining these results and the fact that some data is missing, these results cannot be said to support the hypotheses and further research is therefore recommended.

Looking at the results as a whole, it was interesting to note that male participants almost always sat with their legs wider open than female participants, thereby increasing the amount of space they took up when sitting down and also possibly decreasing the distance between participants. It was also very common for participants of both genders to sit by choice close to or at the extreme ends of the bench when another person occupied it. This supports the evidence found by Mazur in his study. Although more research needs to be done in this area of proxemics, adding our observations of how people react when having to share a public bench with another person to Mazur’s findings, there does seem to be a strong indication that personal space exists around the sides of the body and that this is an important aspect of human behaviour. Any future studies of how side-on proxemic distances differ or correspond to previous studies on frontal or rear proxemic distances would be interesting to observe.

If this study were to be reproduced in the future, attaching a measuring tape to the back of the bench and arranging for an additional researcher to inconspicuously take measurements or photos from behind the seat would be recommended. This may reduce the impact of the Hawthorne effect, allowing more accurate distances to be
recorded. Furthermore, gathering the required participants together, getting them to place their bags on the floor, sit down and then complete a multiple choice questionnaire would distract potential participants from the object of the study whilst also allowing results to be recorded without interruption or movement.

One downfall in the experiment conducted was the difficulty in collecting participants. It had initially been envisaged that participants would be collected via pre-organisation, but finding enough people who fitted the parameters of the study and had the same day and time available proved to be a complicated process. In addition, at the bus stop students were usually either heading to class or rushing to catch a bus, which made gathering participants who had time to spare difficult. It is believed that more experience in planning and organising scientific experiments would reduce this problem. Conducting the experiment at the beginning of term when students are less busy or even using a completely different location for the experiment may also be effective preventative measures for this problem.

5. Conclusion
The aim of this research was to study side-on proxemic distances in a public place, focusing on the interaction between genders. The study was conducted in order to expand on the research of proxemic distances to either side of a person’s body, as this is a neglected area in the field of proxemics. The observation that a large number of participants sat at the extreme edge of the bench by choice was an interesting finding that gives some support to the idea that proxemic zones on either side of the body are real and do impact on human behavior. It is also interesting to note that although the four zones originally identified by Hall range from 15cm-3.6m (Hall 1969:117-125), the results in both this study and in Mazur’s (1977) study only included measurements in the Intimate zone and Personal zone, even though all the participants were strangers to each other. Possible explanations for this include the difference in the behaviour of people in crowded areas compared to in open areas, or the fact that as so few studies have been done in this particular area of proxemics it is relatively unknown as to whether or not these zones are identical for all areas of the body. Observing the results of this study together with those of Mazur’s study, it could be hypothesised that these zones are actually smaller around the side of the body. In regard to gender, the results for two people sitting on the bench together supported the hypotheses stated at the beginning of the paper and did not contradict the results of the study done by Heshka & Nelson (1972). However due to the small sample size and non-uniformity of the data collected, more research in this area is recommended to ascertain the validity of these results. It is hoped that future studies will assist in achieving a deeper understanding of this significant area of proxemics.

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References


‘Who the Bloody Hell are you?':
What does it Mean to be (Un)Australian?

KATE DOYLE*

Abstract
This essay addresses the sparsity of information on how Australians understand their national identity. In contrast with previous studies that use government data or prescribed categories, this paper employs an open-ended survey to allow respondents to ascribe their own meanings to what it means to be (un)Australian. The findings are in agreement with previous studies, with participants emphasising democratic and citizenship rights and a strong adherence to traditional Australian values. It is concluded that the concept of an Australian identity encompasses a broad set of shared understandings including respect, freedom and equality.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research aim
The aim of this study is to understand how Australian people think about their national identity. The first section identifies reasons for developing an understanding of Australian identity, research questions to be addressed and definitions of key terms.

The second section comprises a literature review. It discusses Jones’s (1997) data analysis which found an evolving sense of what it means to be Australian; Kabir’s (2007) interviews that found participants defined Australia in terms of tolerance and unAustralian in terms of racism; and findings by Phillips and Smith (2000; 2001) that identified themes of Australian and unAustralian identity. The third section discusses study methodology, including both limitations and the means of data collection. The fourth section details findings in relation to research questions and offers a comparison with previous studies.

1.2 Concept identification
Research regarding the Australian identity as understood by Australians is sparse; Phillips and Smith acknowledge that there is a “pressing need for more comprehensive and socially inclusive research” (2000:222). Views about Australian identity document socio-political change, reflect civic culture, indicate the extent of racism including the inclusion and exclusion of social groups, and structure public understanding on debates regarding multiculturalism, citizenship and national identity. Previous studies of Australian identity used government data (Jones 1997) or asked participants to think about their identity in terms of pre-defined categories (Phillips & Smith 2000, 2001; Kabir 2007). This project was undertaken to gain an understanding of the language Australian people use to describe their identity when no boundaries or categories have been imposed. It considers common understandings of Australian and unAustralian by everyday people.

1.3 Research questions
A set of research questions was designed to gain a better understanding of how Australians define their identity:

1. What words are most frequently used to describe a) Australian and b) unAustralian and how do these findings compare with those of previous studies?
2. Are there differences between Australian-born and overseas-born participants’ definitions of the terms Australian and unAustralian?
3. Does birthplace impact on participants’ identification with being Australian?
4. What percentage of participants understand themselves in terms of multiple identities?

In order to address these research questions, it is necessary to define the term identity.

1.4 Identity
The term identity is remarkably difficult to define. This study uses Fearon’s definition, which finds that identity has two aspects, namely the personal and the social. Personal identity incorporates “socially distinguishing features that a person takes a special pride in or views as unchangeable but socially consequential” (1999:2). Social identity is a category “defined by membership rules and characteristic attributes or expected behaviours” (Fearon 1999:2). Fearon’s understanding of identity is also supported by Maier (2007), who defines the dual aspects of identity as personal and collective. Personal identity is an expression of the individual across the years, while collective identity is ‘constructed out of a web of affiliations and sentiments … that express an individual’s sense of belonging within a particular society or community” (Maier 2007:67).

1.5 Australian identity
Despite numerous studies of Australian identity, a universal definition is elusive. The Macquarie Dictionary (2005) defines Australian as: adjective. 1. of or relating to Australia. – noun 2. a person native to or resident in Australia. *There is no longer any single simple answer to the question of what it is to be an Australian.

Defining unAustralian is equally problematic, with the Macquarie Dictionary defining the term in opposition to Australian:

adjective 1. not Australian in character 2. (of conduct, behaviour, etc.) not conforming to ideas of traditional Australian morality and customs, such as fairness, honesty, hard work, etc. 3. violating a pattern of conduct, behaviour, etc., which, it is implied by the user of the term, is one embraced by Australians.

Historically, Australian identity was an extension of British identity and emphasised cultural and racial superiority, as reflected in the 1901 White Australia Policy. This policy restricted ‘non-white’ immigration to Australia and was designed to maintain a racially and culturally homogenous society (Matereke 2009). The White Australia Policy served to position individuals or groups as either included (Australian) or excluded (unAustralian) from the national community. Being white and of British heritage became the cornerstone of being Australian, excluding all...

‘others’ (Matereke 2009). This period of Australian history saw the first use of the term unAustralian in political discourse and historical studies suggest it was used to label ‘non-whites and communists, such as aliens, fifth columnists, foreigners of the Yellow Peril’ (Smith & Phillips 2001:325).

The post-war immigration program saw the progressive dismantling of the White Australia Policy and served as an impetus for the development of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism encouraged cultural homogeneity: “a coherent and shared identity amongst a group of people of diverse ethnicity, gender, age, cultural and religious affiliation” (Elder 2007:24). Initially, multiculturalism urged tolerance and upheld the rights of migrants to express their cultural diversity. This meaning has changed somewhat to recognise that individuals understand themselves in terms of multiple identities (Elder 2007).

The following section discusses previous studies examining Australians’ understanding of their national identity.

2. Literature Review
Jones (1997) used data from the 1995 National Social Science Survey to investigate the extent to which Australians shared a common civic culture. He analysed data in terms of an open or closed conception of Australian identity. An open understanding of Australian identity (affective civic culture) examined whether people felt Australian and respected Australian institutions. In comparison, a closed understanding of Australian identity (nativism) emphasised the importance of being born in Australia, having long-term residence and adhering to Christianity. Jones (1997:302) found that:

national identity is not a fixed property…but an emergent and constantly evolving sense of what it means to be Australian, including a commitment to basic social institutions like parliamentary democracy, the rule of law…freedom of the individual, freedom of speech, religious and other forms of tolerance…and equality of opportunity.

Kabir (2007) conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews with Australian Muslim students and asked participants what they thought it meant to be Australian and unAustralian. She found that participants used the term Australian both as a noun (referring to a person or nationality) and as an adjective (referring to culture or behaviour). In defining Australian, she also found that participants emphasised tolerance, helping people, freedom of speech, integration and citizenship. Participants also endorsed the Australian values of ‘a fair go’ and patriotism.

Kabir (2007) identified variation in participants’ definition of unAustralian, including not being born in Australian, not having Australian values, plus showing disloyalty or racism. She found that overall, Muslim Australians felt loyalty towards Australia and held an optimistic view of Australianness (Kabir 2007).

Phillips and Smith conducted extensive and numerous research projects on what it means to be Australian and/or unAustralian. In What is “Australian”?: knowledge and attitudes among a gallery of contemporary Australians (2000), the authors stated that previous studies had focused on official discourses or media representations and that
one of the limitations of this approach was the lack of Australian voices. To address this, Phillips and Smith recruited focus groups based on demographic and regional criteria and asked them to identify Australian people, groups, places, activities, events and values. They found two main themes of Australian identity: modern political ideals and traditional Australian values. The former emphasised democratic and citizenship rights including freedom of speech, respect for laws, patriotism and equal opportunities. The latter included mateship, an easy-going orientation, helping others, deserving a fair go, being with other people, having fun, barbecues and beer-drinking (Phillips & Smith 2000).

A later study by Smith and Phillips (2001) used the same focus group structure and questions to determine what participants defined as being unAustralian. They found that the term unAustralian represents 1) ‘a violation of norms of civility and natural justice’—violence, intolerance, selfishness, racism; and 2) ‘foreign influence on Australian culture’—Americanisation and ‘the ethnic’ (Smith & Phillips 2001:335). They also found that participants had a shared conception that to be unAustralian is to behave in a way that is contrary to the Australian values of mateship, a fair go, self-reliance and an easy-going approach. Attributes of being unAustralian include intolerance, extremism, exploitation, a lack of respect, racism and not helping people (Smith & Phillips 2001). The authors also noted that while participants deemed racism to be unAustralian, many were suspicious of groups that maintained a cultural identity separate from the wider Australian community. Smith and Phillips concluded that ethnic groups are likely to be stigmatised as being unAustralian and that labelling something or someone as unAustralian is “a core aspect of the boundary-maintaining process” (2001:337).

The following section details current study methodology, limitations and data collection technique.

3. Methodology
In contrast with previous research that used focus groups with structured categories (Phillips & Smith 2000; 2001), in-depth interviews (Kabir 2007) or government data analysis (Jones 1997), data for the current study was obtained via a survey. (See Appendix B.) While surveys have limitations, the open-ended nature of the questions allows respondents to ascribe their own perceptions and meanings of national identity to an undefined Australia. In addition, with the exception of Phillips and Smith (2001), who included a focus group of Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) women in their research, there is limited information on whether identifying with another ethnic background has any implication on respondents’ perceptions of Australian identity.

3.1 Limitations of the methodology
Surveys are designed to ask questions and obtain self-reports from respondents and as a result of this, they are unable to measure causality. It is also important to note that survey responses are not definitive but indicative and should be treated as another body of evidence (Totten, Panacek & Price 1999).
3.2 Data collection
An informal, anonymous, self-administered, paper-based questionnaire was administered to obtain data. Participants were randomly drawn from the Griffith University (Brisbane, Australia) population and were acquaintances of the author, but not close personal friends. Additionally, six participants who identified as Yugoslavian were drawn from the wider Brisbane community. (See Appendix A for participant details.) These participants were known to the author and were approached at a small, informal gathering. Questionnaires were administered in the week of 2-5 May, 2011. Respondents were approached by the author in an outdoor environment and were either by themselves or in small groups comprising no more than three people. Potential respondents were asked if they would be willing to participate in a research project that would entail answering a number of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. They were advised that the survey would take no more than five minutes and of 40 people approached, 30 agreed to participate. The author advised respondents to ask if they were unsure of any questions and she remained at a slight distance while respondents completed the survey. Upon completion of the survey, respondents were thanked for their time.

The following section details findings and discusses them in relation to previous studies.

4. Findings
For ease of discussion, the main focus will be on terms that were utilized three or more times by participants; however all terms and the frequency of their use will be discussed. This discussion will be organised according to the four questions below.

1a. What words are most frequently used to describe the term Australian and how does this compare with previous studies? (On average, participants gave four responses to this question). The responses are listed in Table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laid back/easy going</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair go</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach/sand/surf</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mate/mateship</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for laws</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party animals (parties/beer drinking)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignorant (of the rest of the world)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: Words used to describe Australian and frequency of use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of speech</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal opportunities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally aware</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard workers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of sport</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native English speaker</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoorsy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBQ</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic minded</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcastic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconcerned what other people think</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courageous</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jones’ (1997) found that affective civic culture (respect for Australia’s laws) was strongly endorsed by contemporary Australians. Participants in the current study also identified this as an aspect of their identity, with three references to respect for laws and a further two responses indicating *civic-minded*. In regard to Jones’s nativism findings (the importance of being born in Australia, having long-term residence and adhering to Christianity), there was only one reference to Christianity, with no references to birthplace or residence. Jones also found that speaking English and being white/Caucasian was only of moderate importance in defining an Australian identity and both these terms had limited mention in the current study, with only two references to each term.

The study is also in agreement with Kabir’s findings that participants used the term *Australian* both as a noun (referring to a person or nationality) and as an adjective (referring to culture or behaviour). Kabir found that participants emphasised tolerance, freedom of speech, a fair go and patriotism. Likewise, these terms are reflected in the current study. The term *freedom* generated six responses, *freedom of speech* elicited two responses, *a fair go* was the second most frequent...
response with seven references and *patriotism* was the seventh most commonly used term, generating five references.

The greatest correlation of findings is with Phillips and Smith (2000). The importance of modern political ideals (democratic and citizenship rights including freedom of speech, respect for laws, patriotism and equal opportunities) was also reflected in the current study: freedom of speech (2 references), respect for laws (3 references), patriotism (5 references) and equal opportunities (2 references). Phillips and Smith’s findings regarding traditional Australian values of mateship, an easy-going orientation, helping others, deserving a fair go, being with other people, having fun, barbeques and beer-drinking were also reflected in the current study. *Easy-going* is the highest rating reference (11), followed by *fair go* (7), *mate/mateship* (4), and *having fun/barbeques/beer* generated two references each.

1b. What words are most frequently used to describe *unAustralian* and how do findings compare with those of previous studies? (On average, participants gave three responses to this question). The responses to this question are given in Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racist</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not welcoming</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence/stealing/dishonesty</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of respect</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequal opportunities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not charitable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptight (not easy-going)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet/shy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impatient</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignorance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploit others</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not offering a beer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpatriotic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike change</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political and religious extremism</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-faced</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Words used to describe *unAustralian* and frequency of use.
Of all the terms identified by Kabir as being unAustralian (not being born in Australian, not having Australian values, showing disloyalty or racism), the current study found that being racist was the most frequent term, with twelve references. Interestingly, no participants in the current study identified not being born in Australia as an indicator of unAustralianness, with only one reference to a lack of patriotism as indicative.

As with Australian identity, the current study is in strong agreement with Smith and Phillips’ (2001) findings. They found attributes of being unAustralian included violence, racism, extremism, exploitation, not helping others and a lack of respect. Participants also identified behaving contrary to the Australian values of mateship and a fair go as being unAustralian. The current study found that racism was the most frequently used term when defining unAustralian (12 references), with violence/stealing/dishonesty as the third most frequent reference (9). Behaving in an uptight manner generated three references, showing a lack of respect (5 references), not helping others (3), with extremism and exploitation generating one response each.

2. Are there differences between Australian-born and overseas-born participant’s use of the terms Australian and unAustralian?

Of the 14 overseas-born participants, results regarding the use of the term Australian were similar to those of Australian-born participants. The most frequent terms used by overseas-born participants were laid-back (5 references), a fair go (4), freedom (3) and multicultural (2). In addition, three Yugoslavian participants nominated a feeling of safety as an aspect of being Australian.

There was again strong consistency with Phillips and Smith (2000) regarding easy-going (3 references), equal opportunities (2) and mateship (1) but no overseas-born participants indicated that they considered patriotism to be an Australian value. Jones theorised that overseas-born participants would “be less likely to endorse a view of Australian identity that required Australian birth,” but none of the participants indicated birthplace as an aspect of Australian identity (1997:294).

Regarding the term unAustralian, the most frequently used term was lack of opportunities (4 references), unwelcoming (3), racist (2) and lack of respect (2). Additionally, overseas-born participants nominated being Asian, Muslim, Christian and homophobic as unAustralian.

3. Does birthplace impact on whether participants identify with being Australian?(See Table 3.)

Of six participants who were born in Australia and did not identify with any other ethnic background, 75% indicated a strong Australian identity, while the remaining 25% indicated either a mild or a neutral sense of identity. These findings are in agreement with Jones, who found an “unsurprising strong correlation” between birthplace and identifying as Australian (1997:289).

For the ten participants who were born in Australia but identified to some extent with another ethnic identity, 50% indicated a strong Australian/mild ethnic identity; 30% declared a strong Australian/neutral ethnic identity; 10% indicated a strong...
Australian/strong ethnic identity; while the remaining 10% indicated a neutral Australian/neutral ethnic identity. This group represents 33.3% of the total population surveyed and the findings are slightly lower than those of Kabir (2007), who interviewed 60 participants in total and found of the 28 born in Australia, 39.3% of those identified with a dual identity.

For the fourteen overseas-born participants, there was an even spread across the ranges, with the single biggest percentage of participants (21.4%) indicating a mild affiliation with both their Australian and ethnic identities. These findings are markedly different to those of Kabir (2007). Of the 60 participants Kabir interviewed, 32 were born overseas and 62.5% of that group identified only with their ethnic background. In comparison, the current study found that only one participant (7.1%) identified solely with their ethnic background, while two participants (14.3%) indicated both strong Australian and strong ethnic identities. One of the factors that may impact on variations in findings may be the age of participants: Kabir interviewed students aged 15 to 19, while the current study’s participants ranged from 17 to 61 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Australian Identity</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 born Aust.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 born Aust.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 born o/seas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 born o/seas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 born /seas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 born /seas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 born Aust.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 born o/seas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 born o/seas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 born Aust.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 born Aust.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 born o/seas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 born o/seas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 born Aust.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 born Aust.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 born Aust.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Participants’ ethnic and Australian identity

5. Conclusion
A single, unified definition of what it is to be Australian and/or unAustralian is elusive. Much of our understanding of the Australian identity has been shaped by political and media discourse, with limited documentation on how everyday Australians understand their national identity. While this study samples only a small population and is limited in its scope, findings reflect those of previous studies. This Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication 4, 1/2 (2011), 26-38
study found that the Australian identity encompasses a broad set of shared understandings including a respect for laws, freedom of the individual and equality of opportunity. It also incorporates the values of mateship, a fair go and an easy-going attitude (Jones 1997; Phillips & Smith 2000).

Previous studies found that unAustralian is defined in opposition to Australian and this is also supported by the current study. Racism, intolerance and a lack of respect are deemed unAustralian and show a disregard for the norms of civil society (Smith & Phillips 2001).

Additionally, this study found that participants exhibit a coherent and shared sense of identity, with evidence that individuals understand themselves in terms of multiple identities (Elder 2007). While this study does not have the depth or breadth of previous research, is limited in the conclusions that can be drawn and cannot determine the causality of participants’ responses, it serves as another body of evidence that supports previous findings. Regardless of birthplace or ethnic identity, Australian people appear to share and endorse a sense of national identity.

*Author Note
Kate Doyle is interested in identity, namely how we understand ourselves in relation to others and the role of society in the formation of our sense of self. While the terms Australian and unAustralian are used to represent a sense of self as a part of a nation, our understanding of what these terms mean is vague at best.

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References

Fearon, James D. 1999. What is Identity (as we now use the word)? Viewed 10 May 2011 at: <http://www.stanford.edu/~jfearon/papers/iden1v2.pdf>


Appendix A: Participant Demographics

| Participant number | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Gender             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Male               | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Female             | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Age                | 26| 20| 18| 21| 17| 20| 40| 21| 20| 23 | 20 | 49 | 37 | 19 | 18 | 23 | 18 | 23 | 24 | 20 | 22 | 20 | 23 | 30 | 61 | 58 | 34 | 34 | 32 |
| Place of Birth*    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Aust. Identity     | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Other              | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Aust. Identity     | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Other              | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Ethnic Identity    | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Other              | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Extent Ethnic Identity | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Other              | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Extent Aust. Identity | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Other              | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Australian-born    | 16|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Overseas-born      | 14|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Total Participants: | 30=100% |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Male               | 12=40% |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Female             | 18=60% |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Mean               | 27.03 years |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Median             | 22 years |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Mode               | 20 years |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Australian-born    | 16|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Overseas-born      | 14|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Bosnia Herzegovina | 6 | (4 male, 2 female) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| South Africa       | 2 | (2 female) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Argentina          | 1 | (1 female) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| China              | 2 | (2 female) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Tahiti-French Polynesia | 1 | (1 female) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Iceland            | 1 | (1 male) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Iraq               | 1 | (1 male) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

Appendix B: Survey

1) Are you:
   o Male
   o Female

2) What is your age? ________________

3) Where were you born? ________________________________

4) Do you identify with being Australian?
   o Yes
   o No

5) What other ethnic background/s do you identify with?
   __________________________________________________

6) Please indicate the extent to which you identify with your ethnic background/s.
   o Strong
   o Mild
   o Neutral
   o Not at all

7) Please indicate the extent to which you identify with being Australian.
   o Strong
   o Mild
   o Neutral
   o Not at all

8) Please list words you think describe what it is to be Australian.
   • __________________________________________________________________
   • __________________________________________________________________
   • __________________________________________________________________
   • __________________________________________________________________

9) Please list words you think describe what it is to be unAustralian.
   • __________________________________________________________________
   • __________________________________________________________________
   • __________________________________________________________________
   • __________________________________________________________________
Women’s Language in Soap Operas: 
Comparing Features of Female Speech in Australia and Germany

KATHRIN LAMBERTZ AND MELANIE HEBROK*

Abstract
This paper is concerned with investigating Robin Lakoff’s claims about tentativeness in women’s language and the influence of media role models on reproducing gender stereotypes. The aim of this research project was to investigate representations of women’s language in German and Australian soap operas. The project focused on the frequency and the functions of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions. The data consisted of female dialogues in several episodes of the Australian soap opera Home and Away and the German soap opera Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten. Questionnaires, forums and chat-rooms were designed to obtain a general background regarding women’s identification with soap operas and their language. The key findings supported the hypothesis that although the features can be identified in both cultural contexts, they tended to act as boosters rather than hedging devices. The research project confirms empirical studies disproving tentativeness in women’s language.

1. Introduction
Robin Lakoff (1975) suggests that there are universal characteristics of ‘women’s language’ and the way in which women are expected to speak. In her view, female speech expresses tentativeness and uncertainty through the extensive use of certain linguistic devices. For example, the frequent use of mitigating devices such as I think and I guess is supposed to “give the impression that the speaker lacks authority” (Lakoff 2004:79). She also points out that media plays an important role in creating stereotypes of women’s language and notes that “almost every woman you see in the media has many traits of women’s language built into her speech” (Lakoff 2004:83).

This paper is concerned with investigating Lakoff’s claims about tentativeness in women’s language and the influence of media role models on reproducing gender stereotypes. Since soap operas rely heavily on authentic representations of their characters in order to maintain the loyalty of a mainly female audience (Geraghty 1991:9), they provide an excellent medium for the current research concerns. Furthermore, as written dialogue in television shows needs to reflect authentic language use, the construction of these texts is inevitably a reflection of internalised perceptions and assumptions about female speech patterns (Biber & Burges 2000:23; Tannen & Lakoff 1994:139). Thus, soap opera speech can be used to illuminate the hidden assumptions about gendered language use across cultures. In order to test whether Lakoff’s claims can be validated cross-culturally, this paper analyses female dialogues in Australian and German soap operas.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Women’s Language
The most influential theory on women’s language was developed by Robin Lakoff in her book “Language and Woman’s place” (1975). Using introspection only, Lakoff...
identifies several interrelated features of ‘women’s speech’, among them super-politeness, avoidance of profane language and heightened indirectness. Lakoff argues that this language style both reflects and contributes to the oppressed role of women in a patriarchal world, as women are pressured into adopting the features which are deemed non-assertive and as a consequence, have to assume a demeaning position in society (Lakoff 2004:77-85). The overall effect of women’s language, Lakoff claims, is that it “submerges a woman’s personal identity, by denying her the means of expressing herself strongly, on the one hand, and encouraging expressions that suggest triviality in subject-matter and uncertainty about it” (Lakoff 1973: 48).

One example of this female tentativeness is the frequent use of ‘hedges,’ i.e. linguistic devices weakening the force of an utterance, in situations where the speaker is in fact perfectly certain of what she is saying. While qualifying words and phrases such as sort of, probably and I think are frequently used by both sexes to express genuine uncertainty, it is the woman who ‘excessively’ inserts these devices into her propositions “as an apology for making an assertion at all” (Lakoff 2004:79). The use of tag questions at the end of a statement is also seen as characteristic of female speech, offering the speaker a way to make an assertion without committing herself to its truthfulness. Tags such as isn’t it? allow the listener to disagree without attacking the speaker directly, as the speaker does not appear to be completely convinced of the statement anyway (Lakoff 1973:54). Thus, women are believed to use these devices to avoid making strong declarations and taking responsibility for their assertions, even in situations where there is no genuine doubt or uncertainty on their behalf.

The resulting lack of assertiveness is characteristic of the way in which women are supposed to speak “precisely because they are socialized to believe that asserting themselves strongly isn’t nice or ladylike, or even feminine” (Lakoff 2004:79). This stereotype is then purported to be reflected constantly in the women seen in the media, specifically the ones most likely to act as role models for female behaviour. The fact that they must have these female traits built into their speech in order to appeal to the audience (Lakoff 1973:46) at the same time creates even higher pressure for young women to match the ideal they are confronted with (Lakoff 2004:84). Hence, the pressure women feel in conforming to the female stereotype leaves them no other option but to reproduce gender inequality.

2.2 Women and Soap Operas
While female stereotypes are supposedly represented throughout all forms of media, the soap opera genre is particularly interesting for investigating this assumption. In his book about the meaning of soap operas, Allen (1985:9) defines them as dramatic serial programs that are concerned with domestic crisis, often featuring little action but much sentiment. Soap operas deal with thoughts and practical experiences of everyday life and, as Hobson (2003:29) claims, “[i]t is the way that individual characters handle their lives and the way that their actions and experiences resonate with the experiences of the audience that forges the bond between the characters in the drama and the audience.”

Initially aimed at suburban housewives by providing them with identifiable characters and morally relevant storylines (Brown 1994:46), soap operas are now a universal form of popular television that depends heavily on a close and continuous
relationship between women audiences and the multiple female characters on offer. Geraghty (1991:17) explains that the shows aim to provide identification with different aspects of the lives of several characters, rather than depending on central figures. Hobson (2003:82) concurs, stating that the characters deal with the resolution and negotiation of real-life problems and therefore provide points of recognition for many women viewers. Thus the characters need to reflect women’s real-life experiences as well as the expected language with which they can identify.

Weatherall (1996:61) claims that “the language used in television provides widely available representations of language use in the real world.” Furthermore, studies that have investigated linguistic sex roles on television have shown that men dominate women in a way that can also be found in real-life language use (Wober quoted in Weatherall 1996:61). This is consistent with Lakoff (1973:46), who makes the following observation:

The speech heard, e.g., in commercials or situation comedies on television mirrors the speech of the television-watching community: if it did not (not necessarily as an exact replica, but perhaps as a reflection of how the audience sees itself or wishes it were) it would not succeed.

2.3 Soap Operas and Cultural Identity

In order to successfully appeal to women in a particular country, local soap operas also need to reflect recognisable cultural themes and language patterns. Turner (2005:417) observes that television formats designed for national audiences always operate within discourses of familiar cultural identities. He states that Australian soap operas in particular tend to focus on suburban ordinariness and traditional values in order to display a simple and recognisable Australian identity for both local and overseas audiences.

The Australian soap opera Home and Away, created by Alan Bateman in 1988, is set in a fictional town on the New South Wales coast. The show focuses on poor children from broken homes and its themes are meant to take an educational approach to daily entertainment. Bateman was confident that the show’s dealing with problems of the working class would reflect contemporary Australian society more accurately than did the clichéd and conservative Neighbours (Kingsley 1989:211). As he stated, “I wanted to make something as effective for young people, written from their perspective, using their language. Most soap opera is written by middle-class people writing about ideal youngsters, and I didn’t want that” (Kingsley 1989:211).

In the case of Home and Away then, the idea was to challenge the ‘traditional’ Australian discourse of suburban middle-class life, highlighting the potential for the genre to extend beyond dominant ideals and include other members of society within a broader cultural discourse (Hobson 2003:16).

Emphasising cultural identity is particularly crucial with regard to adapting foreign soap operas from other cultural contexts. Germany’s longest-running daily soap opera, Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten (Good Times, Bad Times), began as an adaptation of the Australian show The Restless Years in 1992. The first 230 episodes of Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten were filmed according to the original Australian scripts, while local writers worked on independent dialogues and storylines after the initial period failed to draw a big audience (Moran 1998:123). A study conducted by Moran
(1998:150-154) reveals that German viewers now classify *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* as distinctly ‘German’, showing that the language, characters, and themes depicted in the show display identifiable aspects of German cultural identity. Set in a fictional suburb of the nation’s capital, Berlin, the popular soap opera deals with the lives and loves of several middle-class families and friends, focusing on topics such as homosexuality, racial conflict and teenage drug use (*Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten Official Site*, 2010).

While many soap operas differ in their approach to fictional versus realist storytelling, those that claim to be realist depend considerably more on contemporary cultural and social issues (Geraghty 1995:66). Thus, cultural identity is inevitably linked to the current questions about women’s language in soap operas, as both of the shows discussed claim to provide their audiences with recognisable and identifiable cultural discourses.

### 3. Questions and Criticism

The review of the dominant literature raises several interrelated questions. First, Lakoff’s theory has not been uncontested. Due to her lack of empirical evidence, Lakoff has inspired a variety of subsequent studies concerned with testing gender differences in language use. Dixon and Foster (1997:90) show that some of these studies have confirmed that women use more hedges than men, seemingly supporting the hypothesis that female speech is more tentative. However, they argue that most of these studies looked at the frequency of hedging devices without considering their specific linguistic and social functions. As Holmes (1997:201) explains: “Counting forms is demonstrably unilluminating if one is interested in the contribution of pragmatic particles to the construction of a particular gender identity.” Depending on factors like immediate context or intonation, Lakoff’s ‘hedges’ can also express assertiveness, challenging and facilitation (Holmes 1997:200). Holmes (1990:202) further shows that, contrary to Lakoff’s argument, men are in fact more likely to employ the devices as uncertainty markers while women use them either to emphasise their views confidently or to express solidarity with the hearer, rendering the claim that women are tentative communicators unsubstantiated (Palomares 2009).

This raises further questions about the supposed stereotypical representations of women in the media, especially with regard to fabricated language in soap operas. Brown (1994:7) says that “even though the genre is created for women, it is assumed to be keeping women in place.” But if real-life data suggests that women are confident speakers, how can writers create a language style for these female role models that both reflects dominant ideas about women’s subordinate role in society and at the same time accounts for the fact that women present themselves as strong and independent individuals? The result is often a pressure on soap operas to avoid stereotypical images of women and to include changing ideas about women’s role in society (Geraghty 1991:135). It would thus be interesting to see whether female soap opera characters represent Lakoff’s conservative notion of women’s language or the empirically tested confident speech style.

Another question that arises from the literature is if and how cultural identity is linked to the representation of women in realist soap operas. Can a universal women’s language be identified or do local soap operas differ in the way they
represent female speech styles according to distinct cultural ideas? While Lakoff admits that her theory is based on broad generalisations, she also believes that the features of ‘women’s speech’ are not limited to her own cultural context (USA) but “that, in fact, much may, *mutatis mutandis*, be universal” (Lakoff 1973:47). She describes her argument as a starting point for further research into cross-cultural variation in order to determine whether her claims can in fact be applied to other countries and languages. This study takes up this point to investigate Australian and German cultural contexts.

4. Research Questions and Hypotheses
The preceding claims and criticisms have led to the following research questions to be investigated in this paper:

1. Do women feel that soap operas reflect their real-life language patterns?
2. Can Lakoff’s characterization of women’s language be identified cross-culturally in soap operas?
3. Do these identified characteristics express more than just the suggested tentativeness and powerlessness?

After a careful review of the existing literature, the following hypotheses concerning the outcome of this study were developed:

1. Soap opera speech will display the features identified by Lakoff as characteristic of female language.
2. However, if women agree that female soap opera characters display realistic language use, the speech of the characters will not conform to Lakoff’s tentative stereotype, i.e. the features will have functions other than just expressing uncertainty.
3. In addition, there will be cross-cultural variation with regard to the form and functions of Lakoff’s features in Australian and German soap opera dialogue.

5. Methodology
In order to conduct the research, questionnaires were used as the first tool, in order to obtain a general view of women’s perception of and relation to soap operas. (See Appendix A.) Four questionnaires were sent to German and Australian women regardless of age and social background. They were asked about their views on the accuracy of language use in German and Australian soap operas in order to see whether soap operas could be deemed representative of real-life women’s speech. Also, we asked which German and Australian female characters women could identify with best and why they might identify with them. As an additional source, we posted questions onto forums and chat rooms designed by fans of the previously discussed soap operas *Home and Away* and *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* in order to start a general discussion.

In the process of finding the language data, we watched a randomly selected week (five episodes) of each soap opera. The duration of an episode of *Home and Away* was approximately 22 minutes and the duration of an episode of *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* was approximately 25 minutes. We then transcribed the relevant speech acts in which female characters used Lakoff’s linguistic devices in order to create a corpus for further analysis. (See Appendix B.) We focused on the sentence-
prefacing disclaimers I think, I guess, I mean in English and the German equivalents Ich denke, Ich glaube and Ich meine. Additionally, we analysed sentence-ending tag questions like right and okay in English and their German counterparts oder (+twas/wie) and ne. We chose these devices because they are most likely to be included in the script, while other ‘hedges’ might have been inserted by the women acting out the scenes. Finally, we counted the instances of these linguistic devices in each soap opera and analysed their different functions within the context.

6. Results

6.1 Questionnaires, forums and chat rooms
The first part of this research dealt with the question as to whether the language used in soap operas reflects ‘real-life’ language and whether women are able to identify with the female characters. Interestingly, all opinions gathered through the forums, chat rooms and questionnaires posted by the German respondents suggest the language in Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten generally reflects the language spoken in the real world. As an example, one of the German participants stated:

“Ja, ich denke schon. Eine einfache Sprache wird benutzt um viele Leute anzusprechen. Ich denke sie spiegelt die Sprache die Leute im alltäglichen privaten (nicht im Arbeits-) Leben benutzen.”

(“Yes, I think so. A simple language is used to appeal to as many people as possible. I think it reflects the language that people use in everyday life (but not work) situations.”)

Furthermore, we can conclude that the majority of the participants agree with the fact that one can identify with some of the female characters and their stories. The following quote represents one of the opinions towards identification with the characters:


(“I think the situations, reactions or opinions reflect personal experiences. Situations in soap operas not always but often remind me of my own life, the real world. I wouldn’t say that I can always identify with certain characters, but that aspects of different characters in specific situations remind me of myself and my own experiences and that can relate to the characters.”)

Australian respondents, on the other hand, turned out to be divided in their opinions regarding the reality of the language spoken in soap operas and the possible identification with the characters. One woman criticised the representation of language on Neighbours:

“I am quite conscious that the way they speak is not the way people speak in everyday life and it can become quite frustrating and annoying for me when I watch the show. I can see how the writers of the show try to convey serious
messages to their audience but their messages don’t really strike a serious cord with me.”

Another respondent goes even further and suggests that the language in Australian soap operas is somewhat altered by the writers in order to represent a certain ideology:
“...soap operas I think (in Australia anyway) tend to use language in more of an ideological, or pretentious way – like the way we think or want to speak.”

Fans of Home and Away, however, showed more confidence in its realistic language use and identifiable characters. When asked if the language on the show reflects real-life speech, fans claimed:
“Definitely yes because each word that comes out of their mouths is like any other thing someone would say (mainly ‘cause it’s a soap opera).”
“The dialogue seems very natural and you get a sense when watching the show that these characters are all very close to each other.”
“Yes I do think the language reflects the way of real-life speaking.”

(Source: Questionnaires, Home and Away Official Site Forum, Home and Away Central Forum, Gute Zeiten Schlechte Zeiten Official Site Forum)

6.2 Analysis of episodes of Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten
The language data found in Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten will now be the focus for discussion. Figure 1 represents the occurrences of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions in Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten. It can be seen here that women seem to use more sentence-prefacing disclaimers in Home and Away whereas women in Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten use more sentence-ending tag questions. Overall, 42 occurrences of the analysed linguistic devices were found in Home and Away but only 27 occurrences in Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten, as figure 1 shows:

![Figure 1: Occurrences of prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions in Home and Away and Gute Zeiten Schlechte Zeiten]
In figure 2 it can be observed that *Home and Away* makes more use of sentence-prefacing disclaimers, while *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* uses more sentence-ending tag questions:

![Figure 2: Occurrences of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions in percentage](image)

Figure 3 presents a more detailed description of figure 2. Here are depicted all of the different linguistic devices found in both soap operas. It can be concluded that *Home and Away* uses more sentence-prefacing disclaimers such as *I think* and *I mean* and *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* uses more sentence-ending tag questions such as *oder? (or?)* and *ne? (or?)*.  

![Figure 3: Types of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions](image)

Figure 4 displays the functions of the linguistic devices found in this analysis. An analysis of the corpus revealed that the linguistic devices function as a means of expressing opinion, emphasis, challenging, seeking confirmation, giving advice,
joking or uncertainty. The figure illustrates the different uses of disclaimers and tag questions in *Home and Away* and *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten*.

![Figure 4: Functions of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions in percentages](image)

### 7. Discussion

The first thing worth noting about the results is the difference in opinion concerning real-life speech in soap operas. While the German viewers agreed that it largely mirrors everyday language patterns, Australian women were divided in their opinions. Most of the latter argued that Australian soap opera speech in general is too pretentious or stereotypical and fails to portray a suitable image of real-life language use. This is consistent with Turner’s (2005:417) observations about the simplified and conservative Australian identity in local soap operas. However, faithful watchers of *Home and Away* felt quite differently about the language portrayed, arguing that it seems natural and mirrors the way in which they would use language as well. They also confirmed Hobson’s (2003:82) claims concerning multi-character identification by admitting they can relate to some aspects of the characters’ lives and behaviour.

The difference in opinion might be due to the fact that loyal fans know more about the stories, characters and language in *Home and Away* while the other women surveyed expressed general views of soap operas in Australia. Apart from familiarity, age and ethnic background could also be factors determining whether people can relate to soap opera speech. These factors were deliberately omitted from this study, as the main focus was on the general view of female audiences. The two soap operas were chosen because of their high popularity in their respective countries as well as their supposed realism. The mixed reactions from the Australian participants show that realism in soap operas is generally a matter of subjective judgement and not every member of the audience agrees with the stories and language portrayed in the shows. In the eyes of its loyal female fans, at least, *Home and Away* seems to be a good example of everyday speech patterns, while the unanimous reactions from the German audience indicate that *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* is also perceived as a reflection of real-life language use.
The first research question, as to whether women can relate to female soap opera speech, is therefore answered conclusively (within the scope of this study). Closer attention can now be paid to how this language reflects familiar assumptions about women’s speech.

The analysis of the language data confirmed the hypothesis that Lakoff’s actual features can be identified in soap opera speech. Both Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten provided numerous examples of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions which were used by a variety of female characters in every episode observed. However the data is also consistent with empirical research findings disproving Lakoff’s theory of tentativeness in women’s language. As Holmes (1997:201) suggested, it is also crucial to analyse the particular functions the instances served within their immediate contexts, in order to determine whether they really operated as hedging devices.

Only 1% of the devices in Home and Away conveyed possible uncertainty, while the others served a variety of different functions. For example, it was noted that the frequent use of I think in the Australian dialogue is not in fact a reflection of a particular tentative stereotype, but rather acts as a diversely applicable tool in taking a personal stance in utterances. Aijmer (quoted in Baumgarten & House 2010:1189) distinguishes between tentative and deliberate uses of the possible hedge I think, the former expressing uncertainty about the proposition and the latter operating as a booster to express reassurance. In this study only two tentative uses of I think were found, compared with 16 booster uses, confirming Holmes’s (1990; 1997) analysis of women’s speech. Furthermore, most of the tag questions in Home and Away were employed in a confident manner, emphasising a point or challenging the speaker, rather than acting as hedges (Dubois & Crouch 1975:292). Thus, the devices that Lakoff readily labelled as ‘hedges’ mostly had the opposite effect, by acting as ways to emphasise an utterance. The employment of boosters rather than hedges evidenced in this study’s corpus confirms the second hypothesis as correct.

Lastly, the third hypothesis also proved to be correct. While similar forms and functions were observed in Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten, there were also some differences with regard to linguistic preferences. Although episodes of Home and Away are slightly shorter than those of Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten (~3 minutes), a considerably higher number of the selected devices were identified in the Australian soap opera. Interestingly, the majority of these instances were sentence-prefacing disclaimers and I think was the most frequent device that occurred in female dialogue in Home and Away (43% of the total corpus). The German characters, on the other hand, displayed more sentence-ending tag questions, with oder? (or?) accounting for 45% of the total instances analysed. It can therefore be assumed that there may be different cultural conventions or preferences with regard to the use of deliberate linguistic features. There were also slight differences with regard to the functions of the observed features. While most instances in the corpus were used as boosters, a considerable amount of Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten dialogue dealt with confirmation-seeking tag questions. Again, this does not mean that the female characters were uncertain of their utterances. Rather, this might be an example of how women use language to facilitate communication and to express solidarity with the hearer (Holmes 1990:202). The context plays an important role and the differences in the features cannot be sufficiently explained without examining factors like the.

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role of character, plus relationships with other characters and overall story, which unfortunately cannot be considered in this limited research project.

8. Conclusion
Since *Home and Away* and *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* pride themselves on accurately depicting their cultural contexts, these findings can be said to reflect real-life preferences with regard to the use of Lakoff’s features. Further research would be needed to determine the reasons for these preferences and to investigate whether they are characteristic of female speech in their respective countries or if they reflect linguistic conventions for both genders in their cultural context.

What seems probable from these findings is that there are no universal conventions that account for women’s language in every social or cultural context, but rather that women deliberately employ different linguistic devices in different situations to serve different functions. Of course, due to the limitations of this research project, it cannot be implied that the findings are valid for every country or cultural background. Further research is therefore necessary to obtain a more universal picture of female language use. This observation makes it difficult to argue for the existence of a distinct female stereotype to which women feel they must conform in order to be accepted. Realist soap operas, at least, do not seem to portray a tentative language style as the norm for female speech. In fact, this study’s analysis disproved Lakoff’s claims and provided further evidence for acknowledging women’s language as facilitative and confident in both cultural contexts.

*Author Notes*
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References


**Appendix A: Questionnaire**

**Subject:** 3150LAL Language and Gender Research Project  
**Topic:** Women’s Language in German and Australian Soap Operas  
**Researchers:** Melanie Hebrok and Kathrin Lambertz, Griffith University

For your information, this questionnaire is part of a research project for Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. The aim of this research project is to compare women’s language in German and Australian soap operas. Your given information will be treated absolutely confidential by the researcher. Please fill out the form and send it back to Kathrin_Lambertz@yahoo.de or melanie.hebrok@gmx.de. If you have any further questions or enquiries please do not hesitate to contact us.

1. **Personal Information**

1.1 Country of Residence:

2. **Language in Soap Operas**

2.1 Which soap operas do you watch, if any?

2.2 Can you identify with any of the characters? Why? Why not?

2.3 Overall, do you think spoken language in soap operas in your country reflects ‘real-life’ ways of speaking? Please explain.

**Appendix B: Corpus**

**Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten**

27th of September 2010 Kathrin macht einen Tisch, Folge 4580

Ich hoffe ich werde euch nicht enttäuschen. (Anna)  
(I hope I won’t disappoint you.)
Du magst mich, oder? (Emily)  
(You like me, or?)
Ich weiß nicht, ob das so ’ne gute Idee ist. (Emily)  
(I don’t know if that’s a good idea.)
Ich denke, dass er es von sich aus sagen wird. (Kathrin)  
(I think he will say it himself.)
Das ist krass, oder? (Emily)  
(That’s crazy, or?)

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28th of September 2010 Patrick trifft einen alten Freund wieder, Folge 4581

Du willst doch Jasmine zurück, oder nicht? (Emily)
(You do want Jasmine back, or not?)
Wir haben doch einen Deal, oder nicht? (Emily)
(We do have a deal, or not?)
Soll ich ihn vielleicht noch mal anrufen, oder? (Pia)
(Should I maybe call him again, or?)
Also nerve mich nicht, okay? (Emily)
(So don’t get onto my nerves, okay?)
Was ja nicht allein meine Schuld ist, ne? (Pia)
(What isn’t just my fault, or what?)
Hast du dich jetzt um entschieden, oder wie? (Emily)
(Did you change your mind now, or what?)
Sind wir hier bei `ner Peep-Show, oder wie? (Pia)
(Are we at a peep show, or what?)

29th of September 2010 John ist ein stolzer Vater, Folge 4582

Ich weiß nicht, aber ich glaube wir haben gegen Tayfun keine Chance. (Pia)
(I don’t know, but I believe we have no chance against Tayfun.)
Wir können du sagen, oder? (Emily)
(We can „you“[personal 3rd person singular], or?)
Aber wir bleiben doch nicht hier, oder? (Emily)
(But we are not staying here, or?)
Ich dachte, wir wollten ins Casino. (Emily)
(I thought we wanted to go to the casino.)
Aktien, glaube ich. (Emily)
(Stocks, I believe.)

30th of September 2010 Ayla kann Pia doch verzeihen, Folge 4583

Soll ich dir was zu essen machen, oder? (Dascha)
(Should I make you something to eat, or?)
Ich hoffe, dass das alles gut geht. (Dascha)
(I hope that everything will be alright.)
Ich dachte, wir könnten mal wieder ins Kino gehen. (Ayla)
(I thought we could go to the cinema again.)
Ich weiß doch auch nicht, ob ich das Richtige mache. (Ayla)
(I don’t know if I am doing the right thing.)
Ich weiß nicht, aber ich glaube ich hab Mist gebaut. (Pia)
(I don’t know, but I think I did something wrong.)

1st of October 2010 Kathrin will auf Alexander verzichten, Folge 4584

Und heißt das, dass ihr dann eure ganzen Daten auswendig lernen müsst, oder wie? (Emily)
(And that means that you have to learn all the information by heart, or what?)
Das ist schon ein bisschen merkwürdig, oder? (Emily)
(That is a bit weird, or?)
Ich glaube nicht, dass es der Entwicklung von Johanna gut tut. (Anna)
(I don’t think that it is good for Johanna’s development.)
Irgendwie haben wir das Ausmaß nicht so ganz erfasst, oder? (Dascha)
(Somehow, we did not grasp the dimension of this, or?)
Mann, ich bin deine Schwester! Musst du mich dann anlügen, oder wie? (Emily)
(Man, I am your sister! Do you have to lie to me, or what?)

**Home and Away**

Tue 12 Oct, episode 5182

I’m HERE, aren’t I? (Indigo)
Well, some girls would be, I mean he doesn’t have a shortage of admiring girlfriends. (Indigo)
Just, eh, me and Annie, right? (Indigo)
I really think that you should be asking Romeo these questions. (Nicole)
Well, it’s irrelevant because it’s in the past, okay? (Nicole)
You don’t give up, do you? (Gina)
Well it’s understandable, her being homesick, right? I mean if I had been away for…how long has it been? (Indigo)
Do you think Annie is gonna move back to Summer Bay permanently? I mean you know her better than anyone else, right? (Indigo)
I don’t know it’s probably nothing but she was asking me about Annie today. (Nicole)
I think Romeo is still in love with his ex-girlfriend. (Indigo)
I know, I do but…it doesn’t mean that I have to trust Annie. I mean, what if she says she wants to get back with him? (Indigo)

**Wed 13 Oct, episode 5183**

No, well I don’t believe him of course I mean who could do such a terrible thing it’s unthinkable! (Coleen)
Well, that’s hardly the issue, is it! (Gina)
You really hurt me, you know? (Adrian)
That’s… sweet, I think. (Adrian)

**Thu 14 Oct, episode 5184**

I think that you are rushing into things with Vittorio. (April)
I think that you’re trying to rewrite history to make things the way they were before he cheated on you. (April)
I think that you’re in love with Liam. (April)
No, I don’t think my subconscious is that smart but I will try to take a bit more care I promise. (Leah)
I don’t think you should have done it but… I can understand why you did it. (Leah)
I don’t know why you’re taking this so hard, I mean, you just need to get yourself out there and- (Marilyn)
I’d be, eh, I’d be lying if I didn’t say that (.) I think that maybe we should be waiting. (Bianca)
I think we’d be better off sorting out some locks for the windows and the doors. (Marilyn)
What so that’s it then? There’s nothing else to do, right? (Adrian)

**Fri 15 Oct, episode 5185**

Well, I think the dream freaked me out a little bit more than I realised. And I think that we should ALL stay well aware from Penn, well AWAY. (Marilyn)
Well, I don’t think that you need to tell either of us that twice. (Nicole)
(I’m married) Yeah I know but that didn’t stop you coming after me, did it? (Shandi)
This thing between us, I told you it was casual, yeah? (Shandi)
I didn’t think you guys were right for each other anyway. (Leah)
Yeah I think I liked you better when you were being Sergeant Angelo. (Ruby)
Well, I’m glad Ruby is okay, I mean, that would be a great way to start your driving career, wouldn’t it? (Marilyn)

Mon 18 Oct, episode 5186

Let’s just hold off for a bit, okAY? (Charlie)
I think from now on Mister Steward the best thing is just to stay right away from him. (Marilyn)
I just… I don’t think I can. (Indigo)
No, no it’s just all a bit tense at the moment that’s all particularly for poor Mister Steward, I mean, apparently he had another run-in with Penn at the surf club last night. (Marilyn)
Hey, I know it’s easier said than done but if you’re thinking about Penn, don’t, okay? (Ruby)
I’m not proud of myself, okay but I really thought that you still had feelings for Annie and… That’s what this is REALLY about, isn’t it? (Indigo)
I just think you need to talk to her. (Nicole)
Yeah exactly, I mean knowing him this is probably some sick joke and he’s just gonna turn up and pretend like nothing’s happened. (Nicole)
Intercultural Identity amongst International Students in Australia

MELANIE HEBROK

Abstract
Identities, personal or social, are not fixed and stable products, but are constructed through communication with others. This paper applies the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) to argue that a person’s identity influences their use of language, paralanguage and non-verbal behaviour to accommodate others through either convergence, divergence or maintenance. The aim of this research project was firstly, to analyse whether and to what extent members of a cultural group perceive their sociocultural/ethnic identities in an intercultural context; and secondly, to identify the behaviour in intercultural communication used to accommodate their in-group as well as members of out-groups. To this end, the paper analyses participants’ construction of an ‘intercultural’ identity. The data was drawn from an ethnographic interview with four international students at an Australian High School: one Brazilian, one Italian, and two German students. Findings show that the German students use convergent behaviour, while the Italian student seeks to distance herself from the group through divergence. The research project confirms that differences in cultural identity salience, perception and interpretation of out-groups and interactional context are all contributing factors in the construction of identity in intercultural encounters.

1. Introduction
People think of themselves differently in different situations and therefore constantly display different identities. While personal identities involve people’s views of themselves that differentiate them from others, social identities entail people’s views of themselves that they expect to share with other members of their in-group (Gudykunst & Kim 1997). If the in-group is defined by cultural factors such as nationality or ethnicity, the kind of cultural identity emerging will undoubtedly influence communication between different cultural groups. This influence can lead to miscommunication or even communication breakdown, as “in many intercultural interactions, individuals may not be overly concerned with having smooth interaction but rather may take bold measures to highlight their distinct ethnic identity” (Abrams, O’Connor & Giles 2002:228).

Ethnic or cultural identity is gradually shaped and created partly by people becoming aware of their own cultural group and partly through communicating with other members of that group, therefore undergoing constant reconstruction (Abrams, O’Connor & Giles 2002). In an intercultural context, ethnic identities may be more salient when they are distinctive, i.e. when there are few people holding the same ethnic identity (Gudykunst & Kim 1997). If they feel motivated to maintain this distinctive identity, they tend to differentiate their group from others by diverging communicatively in intergroup encounters (Abrams, O’Connor & Giles 2002). However, communicative experiences in intercultural situations may also lead to

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greater tolerance, acceptance and willingness to accommodate out-groups. When this happens, the original cultural identity gradually loses its significance and rigidity: the emerging identity is ‘intercultural’, influenced by more than one cultural group (Kim 2001).

2. Aims
The aim of this research project is firstly to analyse whether and to what extent members of a cultural group perceive their sociocultural/ethnic identities in an intercultural context and secondly, to identify the behaviour in intercultural communication used to accommodate in-groups as well as members of out-groups. In order to achieve these aims, an analysis will be made of participants’ construction of an intercultural identity.

3. Methodology
Ethnographic research is a useful tool in analysing people’s perspectives with regard to how they perceive and make sense of the world. Ethnographic interviews in particular can give the researcher an insight into how identities are constructed, maintained and communicated with others (Marvasti 2004). The data for this project is therefore drawn from an ethnographic interview conducted and recorded by the researcher for later analysis.

The interview took place in an otherwise empty high school classroom during lunchbreak. The participants were international high school students attending Year 11 at Balmoral State High School in Brisbane, Australia. They included two German students (Larissa and Hannah), one Italian (Claudia) and one Brazilian student (Karen), who were all interviewed together as a group of international students. Hannah has been in Australia for five months, the others for two months.

The interview was semi-structured and questions were open, with the intention of leading to further discussion amongst the students. Although some set questions were asked with a view to understanding how the students perceived their (inter)cultural identity individually, the main focus of the interview was on the students’ interaction with each other and they were encouraged to elaborate on topics which were outside the main framework.

4. Results and Analysis
The spoken interaction was transcribed, with attention to what was said, how turns were taken and when overlaps and pauses occurred. The data was analysed by looking particularly at ways of constructing identity and perception of others. The focus was on how the students utilised language to express their values, perceptions and interpretations of others. This gives an insight into how the participants view themselves and their cultural identity in an intercultural context. With the application of the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), the next step in analysis was to show the participants’ behaviour toward each other with regard to similar or different identity construction, in order to determine to what extent individual perception might influence communicative behaviour. Finally, the overall
findings are the basis for proposing the students’ motivation for the construction of their intercultural identity.

4.1 Cultural Identity

Individuals may view intercultural encounters in different ways, depending on their own perception and interpretation of the interaction. As Chen and Starosta (1998:33) explain, “perception is a process by which we make sense into a meaningful experience by selecting, categorizing, and interpreting internal and external stimuli to form our view of the world.” The subjective nature of perception suggests that people pay more attention to stimuli that are most relevant to them and that they are highly dependent on their acquired cultural and social perspectives, as well as on their personal experiences. Individual perspective will therefore lead to a unique interpretation which might be very different from another person’s attribution of the same stimuli (McCall & Simmons, 1966).

In the analysis of the interview with the international students, the initial focus is on the different perceptions of life in Australia, as communicated by the students.

Example 1

Larissa: yeah it’s when we first ( ) yeah at first there was just this feeling like they were a little more- there was this distance between them and me and in fact I thought o:h oka::y I dunno and now it’s changed but ( ) they just need time ( ) they say come with us on the weekend riverfire or all that stuff and ( ) it just needs more time than Germany

This extract shows Larissa’s perception of the cultural differences in interpersonal relationships. She describes the initial distance between herself and the Australian students and that it took more time than usual for her to overcome it. By stating “it just needs more time than (in) Germany” she compares her own culture with the host culture in terms of creating interpersonal relationships with other students. By using mitigating devices like ‘just’, she implies that while it takes longer in Australia, she is willing to wait and does not perceive it as a major problem.

Example 2

Claudia: and I think it’s eh ( ) I don’t know it’s eh they are ( ) very::: ( ) I don’t know I’m seventeen and in Italy:: people who are seventeen and have the same eh argument and much people not all much are stupid but ( ) and there I speak with a person of seventeen and they’re not the same ( ) I must speak with eh ( ) I don’t know twenty twenty-two to to have the same eh argument and so on

Here, Claudia highlights the difference between perceived discursive interests in Italy and Australia. She explains that while in her country most people in her age group share conversational interests, she would have to turn to older Australians in order to have a meaningful conversation. Using ‘Italy’ and ‘here’ as her basis of
comparison, she creates an account of perceived cultural differences and therefore links the issue to her cultural identity.

Values are another important influence on the way in which people communicate. People’s values not only significantly determine their behaviour, but also the way in which they evaluate their own and other people’s actions. Hence values influence the communication of identity (Chen & Starosta 1998).

**Example 3**

Claudia: I think em that em that the young Australians the younger people are um eh more eh s-submission (.) that they are (.) I don’t know it’s- they don’t eh have eh (.) to rebel and just say I want this and they don’t eh (.) fight for eh for eh their right and so and- I don’t like this so much (.) I think it’s a little bit eh immature sometimes and- the people who I see in this school much people speak only about eh high school musical and eh the new hair of zac efron and you know it’s not my best subject the new hair of zac efron (laughter) it’s it’s boring and they never speak about war or em problems they- I- I asked my mother eh what she knows who is saddam hussein and she say no (.) bu- how you can? (.) say no?

Claudia describes the perceived differences between herself and Australian students in terms of values. The fact that she constructs a negative view of young Australians for not talking about political issues and being submissive highlights her own values, namely that she sees these topics as an important part of her belief system. Labelling young Australians as ‘immature’ and ‘boring’, Claudia seeks to distinguish herself from them by saying “I don’t like this so much” and (in a more ironical fashion), “it’s not my best subject”. She contrasts the perceived values of the host culture with her own and what she considers normal in her country. As a result, she creates the image of wanting to distinguish her strong cultural identity from her perception of Australian youths.

**Example 4**

Larissa: ( no it’s just) i don’t want to show them from which country i am but they know (.) something about germany and i’m here to learn their culture not to teach them my culture so (.) ye:ah "i want to learn the Australian culture and “we want”- while i’m here i want to (. ) live the Australian culture so "yeah"

In this extract, Larissa expresses the importance of ‘living’ the host culture. She describes her desire to learn more about Australia and to adapt to the culture rather than showing the others her distinct ‘German’ identity. The statement “I don’t want to show them from which country I am” constructs a weaker sense of her cultural identity in Australia and the desire for adaptation rather than distinguishing herself. These constructed values and beliefs are an important factor in her approach to intercultural communication.
Example 5

**Hannah:** > and you’re **Australian** when you’re in **Australia** and you’re **German** when you’re in **Germany**<

Similarly, Hannah creates the even stronger belief that she is Australian while she is living in Australia. Like Larissa, Hannah expresses the need for adaptation to the host culture as opposed to having a strong sense of distinct cultural identity. She categorises herself as German when she is in Germany and therefore co-creates the ideal of feeling part of the host culture.

When positive social identities are perceived in intergroup encounters, people are likely to behave and communicate in a way that allows for a positive evaluation of the in-group in comparison to (negatively) perceived out-groups (Gudykunst & Kim 1997). Claudia might therefore want to communicate a positive social identity when she highlights the differences between the Australian out-group and her Italian in-group and consequently tries to distinguish herself from the undesirable identification of Australian youths. Moreover, she not only distances herself from the host culture, but also from her interactional partners’ communication of their identities. The interaction between the participants will be considered in the next part of this analysis.

4.2 *Intercultural Communication*

The CAT argues that a person’s identity will influence their use of language, paralanguage and non-verbal behaviour to accommodate others in order “to achieve a desired level of social distance” (Abrams, O’Connor & Giles 2002:229). Accommodation is commonly divided into three strategies: convergence, divergence and maintenance. While convergence is the process of adapting and becoming more similar to others, divergence is used to highlight differences between self and others, and maintenance is defined as remaining at the original level regardless of the other’s communicative behaviour (Abrams, O’Connor & Giles 2002).

Convergent strategies can be used to ensure mutual comprehension, to appear more likeable or to show identification with other members of a social group (Gallois, Ogay & Giles 2005). Increasing similarity can be accomplished by adapting vocal (e.g. pauses, turn length) and non-vocal (e.g. smile, gestures) behaviour between interactional partners (Gallois, Giles, Jones, Cargile and Ota 1995).

Example 6

**Interviewer:** And how do you like it here in Australia  
**Hannah:** I like it  
**Larissa:** Yeah I like [it very much]  
**Hannah:** [I have to go] home soon and I don’t want to  
**Larissa:** I like it and I’m happy to have seven months left ( ) yeah  
**Karen:** I like Australia

This extract sees Larissa, Hannah and Karen converging to create a positive attitude towards Australia. The similarity of opinion is created by mutual agreement by using
like, smiling and gazing at each other. Throughout the interview, the German girls used non-verbal behaviour like smiling, gazing and mirroring of gestures to enhance similarity. In terms of verbal behaviour, they often used reassurance and agreement markers such as yeah and too. In addition, the frequent cases of overlap were complementary and used to co-construct accounts or beliefs about their time in Australia. Karen, although not expressing her own beliefs very strongly, also showed convergent behaviour throughout the interview by smiling, nodding and gazing at the others.

Non-converging speech and behaviour, often in the form of a change of topic, interruption or avoidance of eye-contact, can be used to maintain a positive social identity and to highlight group distinctiveness. Divergence and maintenance can express social disapproval of others as well as highlighting values and attitudes associated with one’s own group (Hecht, Jackson & Pitts 2005). In some cases, highlighting a distinct social identity can be considered more important than ensuring smooth interaction (Abrams, O’Connor & Giles 2002).

Example 7

Claudia: I’m I’m (pause) the loser like: I expecte::d eh different? and it was not so I was dreaming and because for the first month you’re here you think that eh Australia is eh free and eh so fiesta: party: and then you come here and it is not really so, and I dunno I- I’m not so happy here but ...

After the other participants expressed their liking of Australia, Claudia disagrees and gives this account of how she feels in the host culture. She remained silent when the others said they liked Australia and did not smile or gaze at the others. Labelling herself ‘the loser’ shows her distinction from the perception of the others and admitting ‘I’m not so happy here’ further distinguishes herself from the rest. She is voicing her opinion rather than ensuring smooth interaction and topical coherence, indicating that she wants to maintain her distinct identity. Throughout the interview, Claudia shows divergent behaviour by not acknowledging the others’ turns (lack of eye-contact, no smiling or nodding), taking long turns to express her different opinion and at times interrupting the others.

The CAT seeks to predict instances of intercultural communication based on characteristics of the interactants and the context by directly linking language, context and identity. Communicative behaviour is the direct result of speakers’ perception and evaluation of the behaviour of the interactional partners as well as of their perception of intergroup salience (Gallois, Giles, Jones, Cargile & Ota 1995). The convergent behaviour of the others, and the German girls expressing the same views in particular, might have triggered Claudia’s divergent behaviour and the awareness of her cultural identity. Consequently, she highlighted her distinct identity and Larissa and Hannah might have been more motivated to converge as a consequence to show their group identity. The motivation for Karen’s convergent behaviour might have been that she perceived the interaction as interpersonal rather than intergroup and felt part of a group of international students.
Eventually, speakers will evaluate the communicative behaviour of themselves and their interactional partners, interpreting and labelling their perception as positive or negative. In future intergroup encounters, this evaluation will influence the speakers’ orientation towards members of the other group (Gallois, Ogay & Giles, 2005). Gudykunst and Kim (1997) observe that people are more likely to attribute the cause of others’ behaviour to their cultural background, as opposed to individual values, if they come from a different culture.

4.3 Intercultural Identity

Internalizing new cultural elements lies at the core of a person’s development from a passive self based on ascription to an actively constructed and achieved self based on learning – from a cultural identity to an intercultural identity in which previously unknown life patterns are etched (Kim 2001:191).

When people spend some time away from their familiar surroundings and enter daily life within a different culture, some sort of cultural adaptation is inevitable. Chen and Starosta (1998) describe four stages in intercultural adaptation which together form the so-called ‘U-Curve Pattern’. While sojourners in the ‘honeymoon period’ are excited about new discoveries and experiences, they usually neglect differences and look for similarities between the new and the known culture. Facing the new culture on a daily basis, however, will lead to the ‘crisis stage’ during which differences in values, behaviours and beliefs become salient, leading to frustration with the host culture and the feeling of being rejected for being different. Claudia’s account of her experiences in Australia shows the transition from the first to the second stage of adaptation.

Example 8

Claudia: I expected eh different? and it was not so I was dreaming and because for the first month you’re here you think that eh Australia is eh free and eh so fiesta: party: and then you come here and it is not really so, and I dunno I- I- I’m not so happy here but …

As she explains, during her first month in Australia, her perception of the culture was positive. The change occurred when she started to settle into student life and at the time of the interview, she described her state as ‘not so happy’, indicating that she might be in the ‘crisis stage’. Another indication of this might be her divergent communicative behaviour towards the other international students, as “the increasing sense of being different, isolated, and inadequate to the demands of the host culture also lead sojourners to assert the superiority of their own culture” (Chen & Starosta 1998:173).

The next stage, the ‘adjustment period’, begins when solutions are found to cope with the problems of cultural differences. Sojourners learn to adapt to both the positive and negative aspects of the new culture, develop respect and appreciation for the differences and eventually learn to master everyday life without major
problems. This accomplishment can lead to a sense of personal growth and flexibility which may ultimately be enhanced in the last ‘biculturalism period’ (Chen & Starosta 1998:173).

Example 9

Hannah: > and you’re Australian when you’re in Australia and you’re German when you’re in Germany<

What Hannah expresses in this excerpt is a good indication of how she sees her cultural identity in Australia. She does not seem to experience problems in adapting to the host culture and views herself as equal to others, regardless of the cultural differences. This shows that she mastered the crisis stage and moved on to embrace her new intercultural identity.

Example 10

Larissa: most germans are with the australians so we’re in our group but in a big [group with the Australians so (.) yeah] “yeah
Hannah: [ we’re all ( ) so we just mix]

This extract is another clear example of the German girls co-constructing the account of an integrated student life in Australia, in which they successfully manage interpersonal relationships with Australian students while staying connected to students of their own culture. However, the fact that they have this connection to students of their own cultural background could have been a major factor in overcoming the initial difficulties and successfully adapting to life in Australia. That is to say, Claudia could also have had different perceptions of the new culture and have moved past the crisis stage more quickly if she had had the support of her own ethnic group in developing an ‘intercultural identity’.

Intercultural identity, linking a person to more than one culture, can ease decision-making by allowing a greater understanding of others’ social communication processes, rather than merely abiding by the norms of the childhood culture. It can account for a unique identity based on tolerance and acceptance without the restriction of ethnocentric biases (Kim 2001). Larissa and Hannah are on their way to experiencing this new universalised form of social identity if they stay open to change and new experiences in Australia and embrace the differences in culture with tolerance and flexibility. Even Claudia, regardless of whether she can overcome the difficulties she is facing in Australia, will undoubtedly take some experiences with her which will have some effect on her identity. As Kim (2001:199) stresses, “we learn that no two strangers travel the same path at the same speed and that each must find his or her own path.”

5. Discussion

Identities, personal or social, are not fixed and stable products, but are constructed through communication with others. The interview has shown that differences in cultural identity salience, perception and interpretation of out-groups and

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interactional context are all contributing factors to the construction of identity in intercultural encounters. With the help of the CAT, we can predict the communicative behaviour of interactants. The fact that two participants were from the same country and therefore the same cultural background, might have been a major contributor to Claudia’s communicative behaviour. Her need to distinguish her identity can be seen as a direct reaction to the similarity, and at times dominance, of Larissa and Hannah’s identities.

As has been shown, the overall construction of cultural/intercultural identity in intercultural contexts depends largely on the individual perception of the behaviour of the other interactants and therefore on the direct interactional context. Claudia might have expressed different values, perceptions and attributions if she had perceived the interaction as interpersonal and if the German girls had behaved and communicated differently. These interpretations of their adaptation stages towards intercultural identity are only extracted from the accounts and behaviours of the participants. It cannot be known how they really feel about their identity; likewise in regard to their psychological states. The only insights are drawn from what they communicated through description, verbal and non-verbal behaviour towards each other and their use of self-assigned categories. In another context, with other participants and in-/out-group members, they might have communicated a different intercultural identity.

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**References**


Language Anxiety in International Students: How can it be overcome?

REBECCA HUMPHRIES*

Abstract

The ability to communicate in more than one language is widely recognized as a desirable skill, whether to further a career or merely for personal use. Consequently, thousands worldwide study second languages, however, many factors hinder the learner’s progress and level of proficiency in their target language. This study explores language anxiety, which has shown to have a substantially negative impact on performance. This paper argues that while it has been widely studied, the focus of the vast majority of studies are classroom-based and focus on the instructors’ role in lowering students’ anxiety. This study focuses on a largely uninvestigated aspect of language anxiety: how students can reduce their anxiety outside the classroom in a target-language speaking environment without instructors’ intervention. It looks at a group of five Chinese students of English, assesses their levels of anxiety upon entering Australia, asks whether or not this has changed over time, and investigates whether there were any strategies they employed which helped to alleviate the initial anxiety they felt when speaking to native speakers of English. The findings indicate that forming friendships helps to diminish the stress experienced by second language students outside the language classroom, because between friends, the fear of negative evaluation is reduced and the level of confidence increased.

1. Introduction

“You just have to open your mouth and start speaking.”

How often do language learners hear this said about speaking in a second language? “You just have to do it.” However, for many learners there is a genuine fear of performing in the second language, a phenomenon known as (foreign or second) language anxiety, which can be an enormous hurdle for learners. As one of the participants in this study explained, “I don’t know how to not be nervous when speak to native speakers. I tried to force myself in a native English speaking environment, but failed. I don’t have the courage.”

With immigration, opportunities to study and travel overseas, and the increased importance of political and economic alliances between nations, the ability to communicate with cultures other than one’s own is an extremely important skill. Communication is defined as succeeding “in conveying information, evoking understanding” (The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 2005). As humans, our primary medium for communicating with each other is language. Mutual understanding is impossible when parties do not speak the same language; therefore learning the language of the culture in which you wish to communicate is vital. For this reason, whether for personal interest or in order to further a career, thousands worldwide are currently studying a second language. However as numerous studies, language teachers and researchers have shown, this is no simple task. There are many issues involved with learning a language, such as motivation, age, aptitude,
attitude, personality, learning styles and affective factors. One particular area addressed by many researchers (MacIntyre 1995; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope 1986; Young 1991; Sparks & Ganschow 1995; and Aida 1994), falls under the umbrella of affective factors or how the learner feels emotionally towards the language (Scovel 1991:16). This area is language anxiety. It is an important area of research firstly because the research suggests that “anxiety... may affect the quality of an individual’s communication or willingness to communicate” (Young 1991:58), but also because it affects a large number of students in higher institutions (Campbell & Ortiz 1991:159).

This paper will firstly outline language anxiety as defined in the literature, plus how and why it affects performance. Secondly it will discuss the focus of the literature thus far and explain how the current study ties into this research. Thirdly, the study conducted will be discussed in terms of the method, participants and results. It will conclude by stating the study’s indication that forming friendships helps to alleviate some of the stress experienced by second language students outside the language classroom, because between friends, the fear of negative evaluation is reduced and the level of confidence increased.

2. Literature Review

2.1 What is language Anxiety?

“Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Horwitz 2001:113). Anxiety has been found to interfere with many types of learning and it is only logical that this would also apply to second language learning (Horwitz 2001:113). In 1994, Gardner and MacIntyre defined language anxiety as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning”(Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daly 1999:218). This definition appears to be widely accepted by researchers.

2.2 A brief history of the research: anxiety as facilitating or debilitating

Scholars, teachers and students alike have long considered the probability that anxiety has an effect on language learning and performance (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986:1) but there was disagreement as to whether anxiety helped or hindered it (MacIntyre 1995:90). In 1977, Kleinmann split anxiety into two separate constructs, facilitating and debilitating anxiety (Scovel 1991:18), with the former an asset to performance and debilitating anxiety detrimental to performance (MacIntyre & Gardner 1991:41). However, the earliest studies of this construct produced mixed and often confusing results (Scovel 1991:17; Aida 1994:156).

In 1986, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope introduced a new system for measuring students’ anxiety. They called this test the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which consisted of a 33-item, five-point Likert scale survey (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986:129). With the help of this scale, the findings in this area have been fairly uniform (Horwitz 2001:114). Researchers have come to the conclusion that a little anxiety can be motivating and beneficial in language learning, however once
it passes a certain point it seriously impinges on the learner’s ability to focus, resulting in poorer performance (Crookall & Oxford 1991:141).

This assertion that it is largely debilitating has been corroborated by many studies. “Significant negative correlations between language anxiety and course grades have been reported for languages such as Japanese, Spanish and French” (MacIntyre 1995:91). Other studies have also shown that students with high levels of debilitating anxiety tend to avoid trying to produce complex or personal messages in the target language (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986:126). Thus, they prevent their interlanguage from growing more complex and elaborate, stunting their language acquisition and preventing their performance from improving. Therefore the phenomenon is now seen largely as detrimental rather than facilitating to language learning.

2.3 Attention, Self-perception, and Language Anxiety

One possible reason for the negative effect on performance has been proposed by MacIntyre, Noels and Clément (1997:269):

Anxious learners may focus their attention on their perceived inadequacies, the potential for failure, and the consequences of that imagined failure, rather than concentrating on the task itself. As a result, because they divide their mental resources and apply themselves less well to the task at hand, their performance on the task suffers.

The cognitive component of anxiety was identified by Liebert and Morris (quoted in MacIntyre 1995:91) as ‘worry’, which consists of “distressing preoccupations and concerns about impending events.” If students are worried about performing in the second language, it means their processing capacity for the second language is greatly reduced, having a severely negative impact on performance.

What is the focus of this worry? Often it centers around another form of anxiety called fear of negative evaluation, which Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) identified as an anxiety which relates closely to language anxiety. Defined as “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively,” fear of negative evaluation greatly contributes to the worry students experience when trying to communicate in the target language.

Adults typically perceive themselves as reasonably intelligent, socially-adept individuals. These assumptions are rarely challenged in the native language; … however, the situation when learning a foreign language stands in marked contrast… Because complex and non-spontaneous mental operations are required in order to communicate [in the target language] at all, any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual’s self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986: 128).

Self-perception plays a key role in students’ approaches to learning and use of a second language (Foss & Reitzel 1991:131). Elevating an individual’s self-perception and self-confidence is extremely important if they are to be expected to initiate

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conversation, thereby practicing and improving their language and becoming more effective communicators. Hence many studies have been conducted investigating how students’ anxiety can be reduced.

2.4 Focus of the research to date
An examination of the current literature on language anxiety reveals that the majority of the studies have been classroom-based, focusing on the relationship between language anxiety and interactions between the students and the teacher (Arnold & Brown 1999:65). They examine the ways in which teachers can reduce students’ language anxiety in the classroom so that the student can learn more effectively. The FLCAS proposed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) is an extremely popular scale for measuring anxiety. Its name of course indicates that the focus is on language anxiety inside the classroom and the accompanying discussion focuses in part on pedagogic implications. The research in this area seems to have remained focused on this particular angle of study. Studies by Aida (1994); MacIntyre and Gardner (1991); Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986); Koch and Terrell (1991); and Price (1991) stress the importance of the teacher’s role and what can be done to minimize language anxiety in the classroom, with the overall conclusion being that it is the responsibility of the instructor.

An important study to mention in further detail was conducted by Price (1991). She interviewed highly anxious students and finished by asking them if they had any ideas as to how language classes could be made less stressful (Price 1991:106). A frequently made observation by the students was that it would be less intimidating if the instructor was more friendly and encouraging, rather than an authority figure (Price 1991:107). Further to this, the role of friendship will be discussed in a subsequent section.

This notion of its being primarily the instructor’s responsibility to lower students’ anxiety in the classroom is intuitively reasonable, considering that the instructor plays a central role in the activities and atmosphere in the classroom. For foreign language students (i.e. learners of a language not primarily spoken in the country of study), this is not such an issue because their primary or sometimes only source of contact with the language is through their classes.

However for second language students (i.e. learners of the language of the country in which they are studying) as soon as they leave the classroom, they face numerous situations in which there is no teacher to mediate or lower their anxiety when having to communicate in the target language. There seems to have been very little research done on this particular aspect of language anxiety. Therefore the researcher has chosen to follow this line of investigation with two particular questions in mind:

1. Do second language students experience language anxiety outside the classroom?
2. If they do experience language anxiety, what helps them to overcome it?
   And is there anything that they themselves can do to overcome this fear?
3. The Study

3.1 Participants
The participants in this study consisted of five Chinese students of English: three females and two males between the ages of 19 and 29, with a mean age of 24. All of the subjects began studying English after the age of 17, their native language being Mandarin Chinese. They had between two and eight years' formal study of English and had spent between three months and six years in Australia, the average being just over three years (m = 3.05).

3.2 Method
The method chosen for conducting this study was a quantitative and qualitative cross-sectional survey. The survey was anonymous and was adapted from one used in a study by Canessa on whether nonnative foreign language teachers also experienced language anxiety (Canessa 2006:3-29). This method was chosen because within the time-constraints given to complete this assignment and the equipment available, it was considered the most effective method of gaining the necessary information. An anonymous survey was also chosen because some individuals may not have felt comfortable talking in an interview about their struggles with language anxiety. Also taking into account that the participants were all Chinese, it was considered that the importance in Chinese culture of “saving face” may come into play when speaking about personal struggles. Therefore writing responses anonymously on a paper survey with no identifying information was thought to be less confronting and would perhaps facilitate more honest and open results.

The survey consisted of four sections (see Appendix), the first of which covered the participants’ basic background information.

Section 2 consisted of 14 items, in a similar manner to the FLCAS, designed to ascertain the level of language anxiety experienced by the subjects upon their arrival in Australia. The participants were asked to think back to their arrival and rate on a five-point Likert scale (Canessa 2006:10) whether or not they agreed with the given statements. The principle for ascertaining an individual’s anxiety scores in this study was the same as those used in Canessa’s study and Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s FLCAS. Each participant’s anxiety score was derived by totalling the ratings of the 14 items; responses to negatively worded statements were reversed and recoded, so that a high score always corresponded to high anxiety in the learner (Aida 1994:158).

Section 3 requested the learner to consider whether any of their answers to the statements in the previous section had changed during their time in Australia. It then asked them to write the reasons for any change or lack thereof.

The final section asked the participants if they had experienced nervousness when interacting with native speakers outside of their English classes and if so, whether there were any strategies they used to help them overcome their fear.

4. Results
In answer to the first question, the results of this study indicated that this group of second language did experience at least some language anxiety outside the
classroom. Table 1 shows the students’ scores on the language anxiety scale out of a highest possible score of 70.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Students’ Language Anxiety Scores

In answer to the second question, how students can overcome language anxiety outside the classroom, one student’s answers indicated that encouragement from the native speaker was important. Student A’s response to item five in section three, states, “When speaking the target language, I could get so nervous I would forget things I knew” This student reported that originally they agreed with this statement, but that they “get over nervous and shy by people’s encouragement and hard working.” This indicates that when a native speaker encourages the student, as argued by other researchers, self-confidence grows, meaning anxiety diminishes.

Whilst only one student directly reported that encouragement helped him/her to feel less nervous, the surveys suggested that all the students used strategies which helped facilitate the forming of friendships with native speakers. A friend is commonly seen as someone who can be trusted and who sympathizes, encourages and supports. In this situation, there is a reduced fear of negative evaluation because of the assumption that one is not going to be judged. Instead, a friend will sympathize with a person’s plight and help him/her. They are much easier to talk to than a total stranger, and, according to the study by Price (1991), students said they find it less stressful inside a language classroom if the teacher is more of a friend. This implication, that students find it easier to practice and use their second language with friends, perhaps explains why the students in this study used strategies which helped facilitate the formation of friendships with native speakers. The way they did this was by putting themselves in situations where, if they were going to form friendships, it would be with native speakers of English.

For example, Student A reported, “I went to a local school to study instead of going to a language school which has lots of students from my country.” A school is not merely a place where one is bombarded with information; it is also a social setting. This student chose a situation where it would be easier to form friendships with native speakers because most of the students in the school would not speak the student’s native language. So in effect, this student would be forced to make friends and converse with native speakers.

Student B reported, “I tried to go to church with native speakers. Then gradually I am not so nervous talking to them in English.” A church is not merely a place of religion; it is also a social and relational setting. Many churches have a reputation for being friendly, so people who in reality have no interest in religion occasionally go merely for the networking and social interaction. This student has selected a situation where in theory it would be easy to form friendships with native speakers and where it would be necessary to communicate in English.

This opinion is echoed by Student C, who reported, “I think the most efficient way to overcome feeling nervous is to interact with as more native speaker as possible. For example joining uni clubs, going to church, watching TV, etc.”

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student also stresses the importance of cultural knowledge, giving an example of Westerners liking eye contact when conversing, this not being the case in the Chinese context and hence causing stress for the Chinese student when interacting with westerners. The simplest way to get cultural information would be through a friend from that culture who could explain it to you.

Student D further corroborated this pattern of forming friendships by the statement that she was “meeting language partners.” Griffith University has a system of finding a language partner to help students learn their target language. It is an online notice board on which students state the language that they can offer and the language they are learning. Then they try to find someone who is in the inverse situation. They meet as often as desired and share each other’s culture and practice the languages. Students form a friendship with the other person based on their interest in each other’s culture and language. Also, because both parties are still learning, there may not be as much fear of negative evaluation, meaning it may be easier to use the target language.

Student E has spent four years in Australia and is still extremely nervous. “I don’t know how to not be nervous when speak to native speakers. I tried to force myself in a native English speaking environment, but failed. I don’t have the courage.” This student is a salient example of why more detailed and in-depth research needs to be conducted in this area. Why has this student not been able to overcome his/her fear of speaking to people? The results of this survey point towards forming friendships with native speakers as a primary way of lowering anxiety, but for some this may be simpler than others. Other affective factors such as motivation and personality, for example, play a key role in an individual’s willingness to go out of their way to meet new people and practice the target language.

5. Limitations
An obvious limitation of this study is that it was conducted in the students’ target language instead of their native language. This means the participants could have had some problems with understanding the questions in the survey or in expressing themselves.

Another limitation is that this survey calls on memory. In the survey the subjects were asked to think back to their arrival in the target-language country. For one subject that time was only three months but for others it was between two and six years. Retrospect alters opinions and perceptions, and gaps can occur when calling on a person’s memory. Using two surveys, one when they arrived and one several months or years later would quite possibly reveal different results.

Another limitation of this study was its small scale. A very small sample was taken and for any conclusive findings a much larger sample would be needed. Also the survey itself was not in-depth in terms of the questions asked and the factors of personality type (e.g. introvert vs extrovert) were not taken into account, which could have been valuable.
6. Conclusions
Research in the area of language anxiety outside the classroom, in the target language-speaking environment, is an extremely important but severely underdeveloped area of research. It has been proven that production suffers when students are nervous, meaning that they are less effective communicators, lowering their morale. It is a vicious cycle which needs to be broken, but far more research needs to be conducted on how this might be achieved. This examination of a minute sample of Chinese students indicates that friendships with native speakers are essential to lowering a non-native speaker’s anxiety and that students can facilitate the reduction of their own anxiety levels by seeking to form friendships with native speakers. However not every native speaker encountered by the non-native speaker will be cordial with them; they may have some bad experiences, which have also been shown to impact on language anxiety. Therefore more research on the ways in which students can lower their own anxiety levels is vital, because there will not always be a teacher to mediate.

*Author note*
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References


Appendix: Questionnaire

Note: This survey is completely anonymous. Your name will not be published in the paper or presentation.

Section 1: Background information

Country of origin: __________

Age: __________

Gender (put an ‘X’ beside): Male  Female

Native Language(s): ______________________

Target Language: ______________________

How many years of formal (classroom) study of the target language have you had and what is highest level achieved?
________________________________________________________________

How much time have you spent in a target-language speaking country (for example two months in Australia, list all occasions)
____________________________________________________________________

Was improving your English a primary reason for coming to Australia? ______

While in target-language speaking country, how much contact did you have with native speakers? (Please insert an ‘X’ next to the relevant answer)
___a great deal of contact
___some contact
___only occasional contact for survival purposes

How would you describe your command of the target language? (please insert an ‘X’ next to the relevant answer)
___near – native
___adequate for most of my needs
___adequate for most of my needs although I often have difficulty expressing myself or understanding native speakers
___I usually have difficulty expressing myself or understanding native speakers
Section 2: When you first arrived
Think back to when you first arrived in Australia. How did you feel about the following things? (Please insert an ‘X’ in the relevant box.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It frightened me when I didn’t understand what someone is saying in the target language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I did not worry about taking a course conducted entirely in the target language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I was afraid that native speakers would notice every mistake I made.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I was pleased with the level of target-language proficiency I had achieved.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>When speaking the target language, I could get so nervous I would forget things I knew.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I felt overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn in order to speak the target language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I felt comfortable around native speakers of the target language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I never felt quite sure of myself when I was speaking the target language in front of native speakers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I was not nervous speaking the target language with fellow students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I didn’t worry about making mistakes in the target language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I spoke the target language well enough to tutor others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I got nervous when I didn’t understand every word a native speaker said.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I felt confident when I spoke the target language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I always felt that the other students spoke the target language better than I did</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 3: Now
Are any of your answers different now that you have been in Australia for a while? Why do you think this has changed? (Please answer ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ If ‘yes,’ write your reasons next to the number. If ‘no’ write any reasons for why it has not changed)

1
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
Section 4
If you were nervous about interacting with native speakers of English, were there any strategies which you used to help yourself overcome this fear? (E.g. did you purposely put yourself in a situation where you were forced to communicate in English? Did you only talk to native speakers of English about topics you knew well? Did you get a tutor?)

Thank you so much for your help by participating in this study.
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Volume 1, Issue 1

Special issue:
The Ethnopragmatics of Australian English

Edited by Michael Haugh and Susana Eisenchlas
School of Languages and Linguistics
Griffith University