**My journey from student to teacher…**

Talking about what I do for a living, I am often asked how I ended up in my current job. I work as a linguist supporting a passionate group of teachers, both local Indigenous and non-Indigenous to deliver a bilingual program. Students at the school that I work with learn in their first language, Warlpiri, and also learn English as a second language. Warlpiri is an Aboriginal language spoken by around 3,000 people in the region North-West of Alice Springs. Warlpiri communities have fought hard to maintain bilingual programs within their community schools, and thus the right of their children to continued learning and inspiration in first language. It is an absolute privilege to be working with such strong communities.

I will admit that when I first took an interest in linguistics during my undergraduate study I could never have dreamed that I might end up where I am today. In fact, it wasn’t until my second year of study that I even started taking linguistics units. My interest in the subject grew steadily over the course of my Bachelor of Arts (Languages). However I wasn’t sure that this interest could go any further as it seemed that linguistics led down an academic path, and it didn’t feel like this path was for me. Taking the Re-awakening Australian Languages in my final semester of study completely changed my perspective on linguistics, and the possibility of working in this field.

The course, combining as it did theory, current issues in the field of language maintenance and revitalisation in Australia, and unique insights into practical community-based language work truly inspired me. The practical aspects of the course included a field trip to the Many Rivers Language Centre on Gumbaynggirr country, and opportunities to connect with teachers of Australian Aboriginal languages who were completing the Masters of Indigenous Languages Education. Through these opportunities, I was able to see how my knowledge and skills could be applied in the real world. No other course that I had taken during my undergraduate had really reached out of an academic context, and into the real world in the way that Re-awakening Australian Languages did. Moreover, the small class size and the passion of our two lectures made it possible to establish a dynamic learning community, that I still feel very much a part of today. It was through contacts in this community that I found out about my current job.

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