Podcasting

Giving a Voice to the Words

By

Christopher G. Haswell

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my beloved and ever-patient wife, Michiko, my bright and inquisitive sons, Ira and Senna, my wonderful mother in Yorkshire, Diane, and my other wonderful mother in Miyazaki, Shimako. Also, I would like to mention my supportive but sadly departed father, David, in whose memory I use the name 'Christopher G. Haswell' when publishing my academic work, as he gave me the name 'Gareth' for reasons those who know, know.

Foreword

In early 2020, as the world entered a period of uncertainty, academia faced a challenge not seen in decades. Conferences were canceled, research collaborations were put on hold, and the usual forums for discussion and idea exchange disappeared overnight. In the midst of this disruption, a realization took hold: there had to be another way to keep these conversations alive. And so, *Lost in Citations* was born—a podcast dedicated to giving a voice to academic work and the people behind it. Such work is not of great benefit, to be sure, but we fulfill a role.

Academia is often perceived as a world of published papers and structured arguments, but every study, every citation, and every journal article has a backstory. Researchers don't just produce knowledge—they live it. Through *Lost in Citations*, Chris and I sought to capture the stories behind the research, providing a platform where scholars could speak openly about their work, their challenges, and their inspirations. What started as a response to isolation became something much greater: an ongoing conversation about the evolving nature of academic discourse.

My collaboration with Chris began after meeting him at a rain-soaked conference in Kumamoto and later attending a talk he gave in Fukuoka—the city we both call home. I was struck not only by how he had earned tenure at one of Japan's most prestigious universities but also by his generosity in offering advice. His tone was always social and friendly—something that stood out to me immediately. Over time, I came to see that Chris is more than just

a skilled researcher, writer, and communicator. I could see how hard work as an academic could pay real dividends.

His work ethic and vision are unmatched. When I first pitched the idea of joining me as a rotating host on the podcast, he immediately recognized its potential—not as a side project but as a serious academic endeavor. He saw beyond my core goals of quality and consistency, envisioning how episodes could be organized into thematic series, how conference presentations and research papers could emerge from discussions, and—yes—even how a book could take shape. His meticulous approach to content, relentless drive, commitment to meaningful dialogue, and ability to connect with people have made *Lost in Citations* what it is today.

One memory that stands out is a conversation we had after he recorded one of his earliest episodes. He had just interviewed a well-respected academic, and as we reflected on the discussion, he noted how much more he had learned from speaking with them directly than from reading their published work alone. That moment solidified what we were trying to do—not just discuss research, but humanize it. That mindset is what makes this book so compelling.

This book is more than just a reflection on a podcast—it's an argument for rethinking how academic knowledge is shared. Traditional publishing is valuable, but it is also slow, often inaccessible, and frequently detached from the people who produce the work. *Podcasting: Giving a Voice to the Words* makes the case that podcasting is not just entertainment; it is a powerful tool for education, research, connection, and support.

Through this book, Chris explores the intersection of digital media and academia, providing insights into how podcasting can complement traditional forms of research dissemination. He shares lessons learned from producing *Lost in Citations*, offering practical advice on how scholars can use digital platforms to expand their reach.

The book also serves as a call to action. It challenges academics to step outside their comfort zones and engage in conversations beyond their immediate research circles. It encourages readers to consider the importance of dialogue in academia—not just between experts but between scholars and the wider world. In doing so, it highlights how a simple shift in format can lead to deeper understanding, greater accessibility, and a stronger academic community.

When *Lost in Citations* began, I was excited to speak with academics with whom I had previously known only as in-text citations or names on a dry reference list. But Chris was thinking differently. Could podcasting be more than just conversations? Could it become a legitimate academic platform—one that offered something traditional research publications could not? After years of working on this project alongside him, I can say without hesitation the answer is yes.

For those of you who have listened to many of my episodes, I thank you. Chris has always endeavored to give a voice to scholars at various stages of their careers. When I started this podcast, I was a young, lost researcher trying to make my way in a sea of citations. Now, I engage with literature in a much more conversational way—something the podcast helped me with immensely.

As many of you know, I've stepped back from the podcast to focus on my PhD. Indeed, I am now at a different stage of my research career. I'm so happy Chris is keeping the project alive and that others—such as *Dr.* Chris Cooper—are joining him as contributing hosts.

I look forward to returning to the podcast—this time with *Dr.* before my name.

This book captures what makes *Lost in Citations* unique—the combination of rigorous academic inquiry and open, honest dialogue. Chris brings his characteristic depth and clarity to the discussion, making this book not only informative but also deeply engaging. One of the key takeaways is that academic work should not exist in isolation. The most impactful research is not just published; it is discussed, debated, and shared.

For anyone seeking a fresh perspective on academic engagement, this book is an invaluable resource. Whether you're an early-career researcher looking to expand your reach, a seasoned academic exploring new dissemination strategies, or simply someone curious about the evolving landscape of research communication, this book offers something of real value.

The academic world is changing, and this book is a guide to embracing that change. It invites scholars to see their work not as something confined to journals and conferences but as something that can be shared, discussed and brought to life through conversation.

Podcasting: Giving a Voice to the Words is not just about podcasting—it's about the future of academia. I encourage you to read it, reflect

on its insights, and perhaps even take part in this movement. Participation can be as simple as reaching out to someone whose work has inspired you, expressing gratitude for their contribution. That's exactly how this podcast began—with a single email. What ideas might emerge when you make your own connections?

Jonathan Shachter
Researcher, Educator, and retired host of *Lost in Citations*
March 11, 2025

Chapter One
The Background

It's 4:57 a.m. in November 2020. I am listening to the waves break on Nagahama Beach in Imajuku, Fukuoka. It's cold, so I am bundled up in a heavy jacket, rugby beanie, and a fluffy scarf. Still, I am powering through my walk because my wife has reminded me how heavy I have become during COVID-19 inactivity, so exercise is essential. Adding to the problem of my lack of movement is that I am also an associate professor at Kyushu University, so opportunities for exercising one's body are limited. As Sir Ken Robinson once said, the bodies of professors are only designed for them to shuffle their brains from meetings to meetings (TED TALKS, 2006).

I keep walking.

In my left ear is a little white curved thing connected to a flat black thing in my right pocket, which, if you had explained the concept to me 20 years previously, I would have called you a wizard. Didn't Lieutenant Uhura have one of these things on the bridge of the starship Enterprise in Star Trek in the 1960s? But, as this is pre-dawn Fukuoka in November 2020, and the weather is near freezing, I need something, or someone, to keep me company. What is playing in my ear? I'm listening to a podcast I confusingly helped create.

And I'm crying.

Now, there is a specific reason why this is happening, which relates to the content. I tend to connect closely with things with which I care very deeply. The podcast "Lost in Citations" is one of them. Jon, my co-producer and founder of the podcast, talks about me using "all of the buffalo"— this book is an example of this tendency: if I care, I care a lot. Which interview was I listening to on that cold beachfront before the sun had even considered breaching the horizon, causing my emotional response? I connected, and I was moved.

Jon interviewed Rebecca Oxford from the University of Maryland (Podcast #36, November 20th, 2020). Her impassioned pleas for "peace through math; peace through science" were profound. Professor Oxford is also someone of whom I would not have known were it not for my connection with the podcast or Jon's nerve to reach out and ask if she would avail herself for an interview. Her work has been cited over 60,000 times; she was kind enough to share her time so a few hundred more people could hear her speak about her work. Being one of those people and also a person of a Catholic background, I was connected with and touched by her words. I also thought that these words would not have been heard without the last months of effort and perseverance that Jon and I had given to this project.

I continue walking with renewed purpose.

The morning is still dark, but my mood is meaningfully light. Six months before this moment, an opportunity occurred in my outlook on what could be academic production. I had previously considered such to be workbooks, edited volumes, journals, and educational presentations. The change in my appreciation of the

scope of academia came when most of the world was being closed or, at the very least, heavily restricted. I don't know about you, but I prefer not to think back on this time as anything other than an aggravated panic. But, panic indeed it was, and we had to adapt or just take two to three years off in the middle of our most productive academic years until decision-makers decided we could regain our agency. So, we adapted.

Producing written or spoken academic content in person, in printed form or online, is a real job. It is no shift in a coal mine (having grown up in South Yorkshire, I have a frame of reference), but we all make our best efforts in our own ways. The story of our podcast, a light-lifting way of producing content as viewed from the outside, is, I hope, informative of the process and how it is received. Perhaps even inspirational. Jon and I have learned more from doing the interviews than perhaps our subscribers may have by listening to them. Personal growth through work is, in a way, the entire premise of the enterprise: "Do you want to learn more from a journal writer than you have by reading their articles?" was a question Jon asked: "Sure," I answered. "Let's do that, then" quoth Jon.

Jon's quite the negotiator.

When approaching something completely new, it helps to have support. Jon has always been that for me in this endeavor: he had the experience, the know-how, and the vision to make it work. There was no grand multi-year plan (that would come later), but he had a grounded confidence that inspired adhesion to the vision: we were going to produce something no one else was doing, at least not in the way we had expected the project to develop.

However, this project could have folded in the first month but for Jon's confidence. As you will read, even I was not invested in the idea at that time.

However, Jon's quite the negotiator.

Our work is grounded in our genuine interest in the academic work of the people of whom we have had the privilege to interview and also their life stories that inspire us to keep reaching out to people to be part of the project. But, for the Professor Oxford interview, what may have inspired me to reach out to huge names in my field like Professor Nobuyuki Hino, a lovely man and an inspiration in academia who insisted on calling me "Dr. Haswell" the whole time despite his manifest seniority in position and experience? Where could I have found such motivation?

Hopefully well elucidated in this book, our story could and should inspire you to reach out to your heroes and find new ones. If nothing else, we hope it helps you believe that you can use the digital space as well, or better, than we have. As Chapter Two outlines, we can also help you do just that. To reiterate, podcasting is not strenuous, anyone can do it given the time and motivation. Our message is that consistency brings results. Some people do not have 4-5 hours a week to produce an interview but 4-5 hours 2-3 times a year to speak with whom they would like to connect. That is doable. We hope we have established a position to assist with this endeavor and those others who would like to use our platform to help us expand our audio journal by providing interviews of their own. Reading this book may inspire you to join us in this work.

The inspiration for this book came from the amount of material we have collected to this point and our overall intent to make this material available to as many interested people as possible. When was the last time you spoke with your most cited academic? Jon and I have done so. When was the last time you heard the voice of a person you have included in multiple bibliographies? Jon and I have done so several times. When was the last time you learned something new about an academic you have cited that helped you learn more about how they orient their research? This is our background - listen and learn more, then use this to help you interpret the work you read and cite and, hopefully, inspire you to read, write, and research with increased vigor.

Now, we have introduced a vector shift. This should be acknowledged, not admired or revered, but as long as I have been an academic (if I may be considered such), I have noticed that new avenues of investigation were consistently recognized and necessary. You may think of podcasts as things you hear from a person you admire; publication does not come naturally from a source like interviews, such as ours. The medium is new, and we have received feedback on work we have done that reads:

> *I note the authors present podcasts, and this chapter looks as though that is what it is – a podcast, not an empirically researched academic piece.* (Anonymous Reviewer)

Want to annoy me? Write something like this. Jon and I do our homework: we have read the paper being investigated and the related documents and have a background of at least a decade or more of work within which we can situate the interview. We do not approach the interview as a banal chat, nor do the works we

produce rely solely on the words of another person in the interaction.

There is a reason we are repeatedly praised with the phrase "That's a great question" (see Chapter 5 for an analysis of this phenomenon); this is not a fly-by-night interaction of easily predictable questions. As I will note later, you could answer most of those questions by re-reading the paper; that is not our founding intent. Also, a response to a well-researched question is a compounding interaction: we are only getting better at this form of APA-citable interview by doing it repeatedly. We are building a new form of investigation that is only likely to expand further and improve in its ability to disseminate the message of the writer as widely as we are able to promise. I don't blame the above-cited reviewer for their opinion; they are just behind the times. We hope this book will enthuse you and inspire you to either join our network or start your outreach. At the very least, we hope it will make you notice not to discount the words shared with us because the angle of academic inquiry is novel.

Podcast interviews are by the nature of their time. Such a fact does not make them have any less value when compared to an article, chapter, or book that has taken 2-3 years to see the light of day. We have all had articles that did not fly, rejected chapters, and proposals for conferences that did not reach the required standard of the assessors. This is not to say all of the interviews we undertake are accepted, even by ourselves as producers and editors: many have been rejected on the grounds of quality because we don't want to waste our listeners' time, which is why I accept feedback based on the source of our research as was given above. Quality is still important, but we do not reject content out of hand

because it doesn't go through the traditional academic filters. That we set the filters for what is or is not a publishable podcast is not lost on me when making this point, but neither is our responsibility to the listeners to produce good quality content; their choice to listen is our responsibility to fulfill.

In this book, we hope to make an argument for a straightforward point: the academic world should adapt to what is best available to make the best decisions for what the academic world would like to receive; accelerated methods of learning the state of things mean accelerated methods of dissemination are required. Also, connecting with people at various stages of their careers is necessary to provide motivation to people trying to build their own route through an increasingly convoluted maze of professional academia. We interview early-stage researchers, post-grads, PhD candidates, mid-career researchers, those with advanced knowledge, and even emeritus researchers in various fields who still relish the challenge of an honest interview and a few pointed questions offered from a position of genuine inquiry. This podcast has established a beachhead into academia we didn't know it could when it was first envisioned.

In addition, the continued existence of our podcast, now into its fifth year, is a proof-of-concept. The format of interview-based podcasting was well established, and the entry bar is low; it could be as low as $100 a year for hosting your stream. Such a low bar of entry means competition will be high, and the need for a long-term strategy to populate your podcast will become the key factor in sustainability. When was the last time anyone asked, "Why is Joe Rogan still a thing?" Our audience, though far, far smaller than that of Mr. Rogan knows that what they receive in their feed will,

at the very least, give information about the state of a field they may or may not know much about. However, it will have been curated and produced with the best interests of our listeners in mind.

Finally for this chapter, our focus is always on the interviewees above our interests at every turn. Many podcasts go down the route of only talking about issues upon which the podcaster wants to focus. It would be perfectly fine if you could engender a different form of interest in potential listeners through the podcast's entertainment value (this is not to say our interviews lack entertainment, but this is not our primary focus). Although there have been some entertaining moments and humor that stemmed from the genuine rapport between interviewer and interviewee, there will be no "Best Moments" clip show from Lost in Citations. We want to bring genuinely interesting and in-depth interviews to listeners looking for something a little more academic to accompany them on their commute or evening walk. Or, as in my case, a very early morning walk. Focusing on the contents of the interviewee's citation helps to center our efforts.

This book is divided into several stages, some may call them chapters: the story of the background to the production of the podcast will be told; the initial issues and findings of the interviews will be elucidated; the publications produced from the contents of the podcast will be shared, and the process of their production explained; the struggles, content considerations, and advice for future content providers will be covered; the goals and aspirations for the future of the podcast as both a venue for content producers and a production source for research avenues will be discussed; and we will also discover what makes a "good

question" (the key element for any qualitative investigation). We hope that, if we share our journey, more and more positive avenues of academic investigation will be opened. Ultimately, we wouldn't know what we know now if we hadn't done as much as we have; the iterative process of academic progression would not have gone as far, in a very, very small way, as it has if we hadn't given it the 'old college try.'

We arrived in 2025 with the platform stronger than ever: robust weekly numbers of listeners, growing monthly numbers of people revisiting the podcast, and a back catalogue being accessed more often than ever. What this project required for it to be a (somewhat) successful podcast was a focus on quality content, consistent production, and more than a bit of love. As the late Christopher Hitchens said, when speaking with a young literary enthusiast while he was experiencing end-stage cancer, "Remember the love bit." Love will take you places, even to a moment on Imajuku Beach before sunrise.

Thus begins our story.

Chapter Two
The Pitch

"Hello, and welcome back to 'Lost in Citations,' our regular podcast where we speak to the producers of interesting content and see if we can learn a little bit more about their background. Joining me today is..."

In a world where Tik-Tok exists, how do you encourage people to listen to an hour of academic discourse?

In a world where content creators are encouraged to limit content to under 10 minutes, whence comes the motivation to spend hours of preparation for the actual interviewing, and then editing the work?

I've never been an ambitious man—from law school to a language school teacher in Japan was a bit of a downward move, in all honesty, especially when compared to where my university classmates were going (some have second houses now - I only bought my first one five years ago). Then, I kept my head down and got my MA by studying in the evenings and on the weekends available to me in English Language Teaching because, unlike many of my colleagues in the language industry in Japan, I am genuinely fascinated by language and how to help others improve their skills. Following five years of this as a university language instructor, I climbed the ladder from one position to the other as was made available, making small steps along the way and grinding through the gears until I was afforded a tenured position at Kyushu University in Fukuoka. Being a married father of two, I leaped at the chance of secure employment. These things helped

me gain confidence in my position. I guess the lack of initial ambition paid off. I made it to where I was supposed to be all along.

I only mentioned this quick timeline to highlight the truth about the workspace in which Jon and I reside. We don't earn much, nor does our work significantly impact the academic scene; the people we interview are usually more noted and better respected in their chosen fields than we are or may ever hope to be on our own. If anything, in the early days of the podcast, we used their status more than we could offer to assist them. However, we feel we have played our part to feed back what we can, as was given to us in assistance; what was afforded to us should be repaid. We have not achieved as much as can be claimed without much support, advice, and experience. I would not be writing this work if I thought it didn't have an audience. Shouting into the void is rarely a rewarding exercise.

Being someone who came to this medium of podcasting quite late on in the process, the learning curve was steep. However, it has, clearly from what you are reading right here, been very rewarding. As mentioned in Chapter One, this research space is not unique, but it is new and not well regarded, as it could potentially relate to research. I resisted joining this podcast project in the first place for two compounding reasons: I am an associate professor at a well-respected university in Japan; why would I join this enterprise as a hobby? While it quickly became more than a hobby, the initial reaction was equally valid. There was not a clear value to the enterprise.

Nevertheless, the skills I learned and the insight I gained through the interviews gave me confidence that it would be worth my time as a language and linguistic researcher and my genuine motivation for all other career decisions I have made: I want to know more things - tell me more, tell me more. This point is what I would like to share with you throughout this volume: opportunities come from the oddest places, sometimes for the most unexpected of reasons, but when approached from first principles, they will all have value.

As such, this chapter covers the initial pitch to inspire you to either a) start your own journey, or b) join us on ours. By covering how we started out, you will consider how you could start your own podcast, your theme, and what you will need to achieve this goal. Alternatively, there is always the option of contacting us with suggestions of academic works you would be interested in discussing with us as part of our podcast series. By going through the latter, you may gain more confidence to try the former. The fire has been lit; feel free to join the camp.

Getting started: The importance of tech literacy

The first point to cover, perhaps obviously but maybe not, is that the use of technology plays a large part in how our whole project came to be. Until 2019, at no point had I owned a stand-alone microphone. I now own seven. And I am still, ostensibly, a language professor, not a DJ or musical content creator. Jon is a harridan for quality, and I have followed him in this aspect: you mess it up, and the quality will be poor, and no one will return. There are so many other podcasts available; why would one choose ours? We strive to produce high-quality content through

high-quality audio so you will return to discover what academic gems we have uncovered this week.

The need for suitable quality components for the production of material that is available online, for free, to anyone who would choose to access it, is pretty straightforward: the quality of online-available content has been increasing year-on-year since the internet became widely available in the 1990s - with all this high-quality material, your differentiating factor, your USP, cannot be that it is well-produced. That is the starting point. What are you offering in the shiny, crisply-recorded, well-edited, and competently-provided content? Why should people choose your content, and why should they come back repeatedly? The answer is not, "I use the same microphone as The Young Turks." The ability to provide such quality is a given at this point.

Side note: learning a new skill is fun; no, really, I always think it's really enjoyable. When I first became a Level Coordinator (LC) at APU in 2007, I had to learn how to use various online systems that don't exist anymore, but their lingering ancestral shadows helped me learn how to use their antecedents. Several people around me suggested activities to help improve my skill base - to them I give grace, and they are all in my circle of colleagues to this day. I never claimed to have worked out the Learning Management System (LMS) until I reached the level of being able (and required) to teach it to others. Through this process, I understood the required standard to be considered a teacher: if you can't teach it, you don't know it. There is no particular reason why an LC from APU in the mid-2000s should know how to effectively use Adobe Suite, Dreamweaver, and HTML5, or see the difference between front-end and back-end access to data collection from a smartphone. If

nothing else, my experience was the gateway to realizing that if I was going to produce anything in the COVID wastescape of 2020-2022, I needed to embrace the new media with which I already had experience to assist me in learning more.

Much, much more.

A novel approach to interacting with published academic work

People without experience or vision can always speak ill of newer methodologies. "Those who can't do, teach." Hilarious. You've heard it before. I can teach you more about language teaching than you would ever need. LMS construction? Got that. Use of presentation aids? I'm your guy. In my research past, I also worked to create a smartphone app for listening practice that has gone on to some commercial success (not for me, I might add). In my opinion, the best language teachers find their best path to connect with their students - we collect skills over time because, as teachers, we retain the same emotional connection to our chosen field as that of our best students. It had, however, been an uphill struggle to integrate that which had been developed though necessity into my current courses. This was about to change, but it is essential to recognize the fertile soil within which the seeds of opportunity were about to find purchase.

Events occurred in 2019 and 2020 that required a change in my research activities. The main reason for my purchases of microphones, cameras, editing equipment, (so many) cables, monitors, etc. was a research project I started in 2019 to create an archive of graduate students' stories from their university

experiences. Thus, I would have a record of students' stories from around the world that could be used as a real-life, accessible, and relatable TED Talk-style LMS for my students at Kyushu University. I thought this would be an excellent way to reduce concerns among lower proficiency students, that they could communicate effectively with their fellow students on what was becoming an increasingly internationalized campus. This research project was intended to be what I did for the next 3-4 years in connection to my university's affiliation with the Top Global University Project promoted by the Japanese Department of Education. In the end, it kind of did, but we'll get to that in Chapter Five.

On a side note, my research field is English as a Lingua Franca. I don't want to tell stories out of school, but I don't care much for how grammar and lexis, pronunciation, or production are approached, as elucidated in current curricula or syllabi. I value genuine interactions using English as the tool, wielded as the student would prefer or as they are best able to produce when this tool has its highest communicative value. This has led to several arguments with fellow academics (or handbags at 20 paces, as my father used to call it), but also some deep divides in how university-produced textbooks should be aligned or if syllabi should have specific criteria included within them that were university-mandated. I only bring this up because of the number of times I hear the questions, "But, what about writing?" or "What about grading grammar?" Different skills can be developed concurrently, but I have picked my lane of investigation.

Having established my approach to teaching and research, our study could begin. I started contacting former TAs and people who

had contributed to my previous studies with international students on campus. Suddenly, COVID. What. The. Heck? I needed students in my office/studio for interviews; I can't even be on campus?! I was given six hours to clear my office and told not to return for six months. I took all the textbooks I needed and my RODE NT-USB mic, which I could stuff into a small pouch (and even this little beauty I almost left behind - the best office sweep I ever made), not like the YETI-Blue, which I think is made of lead dipped in uranium. Nor could I bring with me a host of other equipment that could have assisted me: I would have needed a small staff of RAs and pallet jack to get all of it home on that day. So began my experience of becoming an inadvertent YouTuber, amateur technical consultant, and, eventually, a podcaster.

As we all remember, consideration had to be given to home-working and online content production from this time forward. I spent a month writing an online manual with the help of my valued and much more talented colleagues - I did the wordy parts; they did the significant parts. Then, I set up several YouTube channels to provide on-demand video lessons and tutorials. I basically spent two months locked in my office-space at home, changing the course of my teaching career. Nevertheless, I was applying what knowledge and skill base I had gained, mostly passively, over the last 15 years to make the current situation more bearable.

There was, however, a mental strain to all of this: I was, for want of a better word, crushed. As much as I love my Good Lady and my children, the thought of not leaving the house and not being with students (who are, in all honesty, excellent - the interactions at the end of class with young adults and being able to shoot the S

with them face-to-face is my favorite time of the day) was devastating. Despite having had to learn various uses of the dark arts, I had never been one to overuse technology in my teaching. That being said, I did adapt more quickly than several of my colleagues, hence the need for the department technical manual. To those in the Faculty of Languages and Cultures at Kyushu University, I hope it helped or, at the very least, didn't hurt.

The Shachter Intervention

My improved confidence in the digital space was about to be intersected by an out-of-the-blue communique. During this time, I received an email from Mr. Jonathan Shachter. Thus began his pitch to me in a style that would be repeated over the next four years to people with whom we wanted to talk because we thought they had a story to tell. It helped Jon that I had the equipment to feel confident to participate in an interview, but he didn't know that at the time. Preparation can lead to many positive outcomes.

We now arrive at the crux of this chapter: our method of connecting with possible interviewees, helping them feel at ease with our process, and, in the process, forming a network between interviewee, interviewer, and listener. As you read this chapter, always be putting yourself in the position of the interviewee: how would you feel? Our process of curating our interview group is not perfect and has been unsuccessful many times. However, we would like to share how preparation, honesty, and a little bit of charm can help you connect with new and interesting people.

Imagine having no idea who someone might be; we all receive emails regularly saying, "Ms. X read your work." But, in context,

it means nothing. Now, this person interested in your work wants to investigate your academic work—mainly if it is a piece over a decade old—and wants to do it 'in camera,' recorded, for broadcast. To give my perspective as an early recipient of such an offer, I was initially not interested. I listened to podcasts to pass my time while building Moodle pages or taking walks around the local area during the COVID restrictions. Podcasts were what I listened to, not what I did. I could not see their value in the production of academic work.

Yet.

That being said, I created several YouTube channels to facilitate videos for my students because we hadn't yet discovered ZOOM in Japan. Yes, Skype for Business to YouTube was the order of the day for on-demand lessons (at least for the first six months—we fixed that problem in a g-d hurry). Social media engagement for language teaching and learning developed quickly in Japan in the spring of 2020, more rapidly in six months than I had witnessed in the previous 15 years.

As this chapter is somewhat of an autobiographical narrative (we'll cover the data later) of how we came to begin and then built the podcast, it would be behoven of us at this point to stop and consider what my feelings meant in relation to how we would determine our approach to future interviewees. Jon and I regularly contact academics worldwide and ask them to share their time. We do so very politely, and Jon's email to me was also very polite, but I always remember my first reaction, and the reaction of those we contact today might be the same as mine in 2020: "No. I'm busy. Just reread the paper."

Jon had an advantage, however, one we both exploited during 2020: everyone was at home. The excuse of "I'm busy in the office" or "I have to prepare for a conference" would not pass muster. Therefore, I did the interview. I did it from my office in Itoshima using the Yeti Blue, the one I couldn't initially bring home, after sneaking back on campus to turn off my refrigerator and make sure all my grades were complete (they were). The interview went well (it is Citation #2 from April 2020), and because Jon edits nothing, all my "ums" and "ahhs" and untrained interviewee fragments remain. However, afterward, Jon asked if I could recruit other interviewees. Then, he commented on my audio quality: "Not many people have this quality; what are you running?" "Yeti Blue" "Good, good…"

And that was that: I was a podcast interviewee. I thought nothing more of it and went about my day, preparing for the fast-approaching deadline to have the online courses up and running for the start of the semester, which had been delayed by a month. Being interviewed is fun, but I thought, "On to the next."

The next day, Jon asked if I wanted to partner with him on the podcast.

Honestly, I was not sure it was the thing for me. I have always been a qualitative researcher with a bit of quant for support, but this was something else: how could I find (as it was at the time) an interviewee every two weeks? Also, I was an inexperienced interviewer with no confidence the medium would suit my style. The editing time alone would be triple the interview time as I was not very good at interviewing and saw several holes in my skill-base that could make me look incredibly bad in front of my peers.

And, in the recesses of my over-caffeinated academically-oriented mind, could this opportunity work for me in the long-term? What could I gain?

That all being said, we decided we could make it work.

Jon's quite the negotiator.

So, let's get to the next point of this chapter: connecting with people, which is basically the reason for the podcast as a whole. If Jon had not connected with me, I would never have spoken with Professor Ahmar Mahboob while he was deep in The Bush using (not always robust) satellite wifi, three hours from Sydney, Professor Aya Matsuda in Arizona at 5 am Japanese Time (when my voice has never sounded duskier), Professor Jennifer Jenkins and her cat (a genuine hero of mine - and the cat), or learned so much from Professor James D'Angelo (and told him the reasons I had disagreed with him, and shared my PhD thesis with him within which I directly criticized his whole department; we have since become solid acquaintances). Nothing in my academic life could have replicated these opportunities and subsequent experiences.

Academic connectivity is, by its very essence, multiplicitous: the more people you know, the more people you WILL know. It also occurs suddenly and sometimes with little effort in most fields (Fun fact: Grammarly said "multiplicitous" was not in their dictionary—have we just made a new word?). Companies like Facebook and X on the social media side, LinkedIn and Shapr in business, and Academia and ResearchGate on the academic front all use this connection-by-connection model to increase

engagement. The point is that we did not know what was being denied us when the possibility of attending in-person conferences was taken away or how best to replace them with the technology we had available. The podcast route was our attempt at such a replacement.

We need to connect, and language teachers and academics maybe more so. The chances to be in the classroom, the Common Room, the presentation room at the next conference, or our own spaces where time with our research partners is shared is invaluable. When I launched "The Lunchtime Series" of in-studio interviews in 2024, the need for face-to-face conversations became evident. We could not lose these because of a temporary break in the way society was being organized, but how could we maintain these connection threads? Jon had the answer. Well, not THE answer, but AN answer if we could make it work.

Making and maintaining a connection

Our lack of connectivity in COVID tried to break us; we could not be broken. Because of necessity, we have also become more proficient in amplifying our connectivity methods: How do you frame an email? How do you send a message over a platform like Academia or LinkedIn that elicits a response? What's our 'sales pitch' for a podcast that is barely a week old and has two episodes? It is not so difficult to connect with people with whom you want to speak, but you have to do the work.

However, we have had as many failures as successes. Several podcast recordings have been left in the Audacity editing suite, never to be published—we just couldn't make them work. These