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Celebrating Indigenous linguistic diversity in Australia's parliaments

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ABSTRACT

New language practices in Australia's parliaments are notable both as increasing the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) languages in these otherwise monolingual institutions, and as constructing Indigenous identities on a public, prestigious and representative stage. This study has identified non-mandated, ad hoc instances of Indigenous language use in six of Australia's nine parliaments. It demonstrates that the use of Indigenous languages is increasing from both Members of Parliament (MPs) who are Indigenous and MPs who are not, during ceremonial parliamentary activities when invitees speak, during MPs' milestone first speeches, and elsewhere in parliamentary debate, particularly in debate over bilingually-titled legislation. The article analyses the identity construction for which extended uses and individual words are resources, as well as the "social space" within monolingual norms that these uses are creating in order for others to speak Indigenous languages, arguably evident in the clustering of the instances. Arguing against prior literature that discounts the significance of using Indigenous languages in MPs' first speeches and parliamentary ceremonies, the article frames these 86 instances as significant for "slipping and sliding", following Dr Robyn Ober, a Mamu/Djirribal woman and scholar from Northern Australia, and as practices of individually and collectively navigating and resisting the social and institutional power structures of parliaments in Australia.

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1. Introduction

New language practices in Australia's national and sub-national parliaments are notable both as increasing the presence of Indigenous languages in these otherwise monolingual institutions, and as constructing Indigenous identities on public, prestigious and representative stages. Overall, in the study upon which this article reports, I have identified and analyzed non-mandated instances of Indigenous language use in six of Australia's nine parliaments. Almost all came within the 2010s, although the earliest was in 1981, in the Northern Territory (NT). The latest instance captured within this study was in

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2023, in New South Wales (NSW). This parliamentary language study is part of ongoing research into the role of government in light of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' aspirations and practices of self-determination in regards to language. The goals of this specific study of parliamentary language are, first, to amplify voices challenging monolingual and Anglo-centric parliamentary norms and, second, to better understand the diversity of and relationships between Indigenous language practices in Australia's parliaments. In this way, the study aligns with the overarching values of the Indigenist Research Methodologies (IRM) paradigm (see e.g. the pioneering work of Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney (1999), descendant of the Narungga, Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri peoples, on "privileging Indigenous voices"), echoed similarly in another recent Australian study aimed at "'hearing the voices' of speakers rarely featured in sociolinguistic research" (Rodríguez Luoro & Collard 2021, p. 785). In working towards these goals, I have had guidance from an advisory group of Indigenous scholars, senior Indigenous colleagues and others noted in the Acknowledgements. Where possible, specific Indigenous group/language names are used. This follows scholarly conventions in Australia and aligns with the "commitment to respecting the diversities within and across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities" set out in the *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* (AIATSIS, 2020, p. 12).

1.1 The conceptual frame of the study

Another means used here to privilege Indigenous voices is to adopt conceptual frames specifically from Australian, Indigenous scholarship, as this section will now explain, starting with an introduction of the "language ecologies" contextualizing this study. The Indigenous peoples in Australia are diverse, including both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the sociolinguistic environments across the country are complex and dynamic. The concept of "language ecologies" has emerged to describe this complexity and dynamism, and is notably foregrounded in the most recent National Indigenous Languages Report (DITRDC et al., 2020, pp. 20–24). These ecologies may include Aboriginal Englishes and Standard Australian English, and ancestral/traditional as well as new non-English languages. (See further DITRDC et al. (2020, p. 49) on traditional and new language varieties.) The diversity of Englishes is itself important to highlight; some scholars name Australian Aboriginal English as an overarching contact variety used in differing ways in differing places and spoken overall by "an estimated 80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people" (Rodríguez Luoro & Collard 2021, p. 786), while others speak of multiple Aboriginal Englishes. Tudor-Smith et al. (2024, p. 121) have recently expanded our understanding in their explanation of "Blackfulla English" noting the influence of "First Languages" on intonation, pronunciation and grammar as well as the repurposing of English words to "encode Indigenous ways of being and vocabulary from local First Languages". That features associated with a variety of English can encode Indigenous ways of being is important to bear in mind. States of separation from traditional languages as a product of colonization vary across the linguistic ecologies of Australia, and as well there are varied forms of language revitalization. (On the term *separation from language* and the overlap of the terms *renewal*, *revitalization* and *reawakening*, see Thorpe et al. (2021).) In their recent, highly consultative report, *Access to Country for Language Learning and Teaching*, the NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust (Jacobsen &

Pearce, 2024, p. 9) articulates that "Language and Culture belong to and are one with Country. […] Aboriginal Language Communities [in NSW] emphasised the integral connection between Language, Culture and Country". Language ecologies are therefore localized in connection with particular Countries, and an ecology may include relationships of custodianship with languages which are different from being a "speaker" of a language.

Furthering the focus on the dynamism and socially situated interconnectivity of language ecologies rather than static language boundaries, the latest National Indigenous Languages Report also uses the concept of "linguistic repertoires" (DITRDC et al., 2020, p. 21). This develops from work such as Eades (2013), which recognizes multiple and dynamic "Aboriginal ways of using English" and which has also been influential on my own thinking (Grey, 2015). Recognizing that language ecologies are dynamic and diverse, this study does not impose names on the ways of speaking recorded in the data, but rather reports how ways of speaking are named by those in parliament themselves, by Hansard transcribers (Hansard is the proprietary name of the official reports of parliamentary proceedings) and, where relevant, by linguists, other scholars and journalists reporting on parliamentary speech.

Some of the words from Indigenous languages which are recorded in use in Australian parliaments may be in the process of becoming everyday lexemes in the linguistic repertoires of some groups of English speakers, and their use in a parliament possibly accelerates that uptake. This study, however, does not attempt to find out for whom these words are already or will become common. Rather, the driving questions for this study stay focused within parliament: who, in which of Australia's nine parliaments, is using linguistic resources associated with Indigenous languages; and how (including in terms of the type of parliamentary speech, the extent of use and identity construction)? Knowing that all parliamentary speech is subject to rules enforced by the Speaker or President of the chamber, the secondary question in this study is whether and how those rules apply to regulate Indigenous language use in parliament; the answer to this secondary question is the subject of a separate article (Grey, under submission).

To flag the results upon which this article will centre, the use of Indigenous languages in Australia's parliaments is increasing, and the article identifies differences between the language practices contributing to this increase. These include differences in who speaks – whether an Indigenous person or not, whether a Member of Parliament (MP) or not – and whether they are speaking an Indigenous language during ceremonial parliamentary activities, during their milestone first speech in parliamentary debate or elsewhere in parliamentary debate. Indigenous MPs have themselves increased in number to 36 across the nation as at 2024 (Simms, 2022; see also Richards, 2022). This study finds, however, that the use of Indigenous languages is neither limited to first speeches nor to MPs who identify as Indigenous. The argument is therefore made that these language practices are doing varied identity work while at the same time collectively challenging the monolingual, non-Indigenous norms of Australia's parliaments.

In teasing out differences within Indigenous language use in parliament, the article explores instances of extended language use – the kind of language use noticed and celebrated beyond academic literature, e.g. on the AIATSIS website (Battin, 2020), in the *National Indigenous Times* (Cross, 2019) and on the Australian Public Law blog (Goodwin & Murphy, 2019) – and instances where individual words from Indigenous languages are peppered into English sentences. This latter practice becomes apparent

when reading the Hansard records of each parliament. However, this individual word use has not been celebrated or academically analyzed, to my knowledge. The article will notice, celebrate and understand these practices as sociolinguistic resources.

My focus on linguistic resources and repertoires rather than on language categorization also aligns with general sociolinguistic theory. Thus, in regards to the instances of individual word use, I have not focused on describing the data using the existing theories on either loanwords or single-word code-switches: see Haspelmath (2009, pp. 37–41) on the distinction; Ober (2022, p. 20) on the limits of code-switching theory in the Aboriginal context; and Piller (2003, p. 170) on the limits of loanword theory when examining how language indexes identity. It seems to me these uses of individual words, including their important affective elements, are readily understood as resources within the linguistic repertoires of speakers who have lived and learnt within Indigenous language ecologies. In this sense these shorter uses, as well as the more extended uses of Indigenous languages, may be considered "translanguaging", as conceived by García and Wei (2014, p. 2):

> translanguaging is an approach to the use of language […] that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages.

As that passage predicts, there is societal construction of separate languages in these data; most speakers and their interlocutors clearly position Indigenous languages as separate from English. Examples in this article show speakers immediately explaining in English the words they assume their audience finds unfamiliar, or naming the languages they consider themselves to be using. We will see that the societal construction of a language as *not English* can be meaningful for constructing Indigenous identities. This is why my analysis does not shirk from counting discrete instances of Indigenous language use, while accepting that these are linguistic resources within wider repertoires and accepting that others may (de)construct the boundaries between languages differently.

Moreover, the article will argue that even when speakers do not explicitly divide their own repertoires into distinct languages, through their non-mainstream linguistic repertoires they are representing in parliament their personal experiences of linguistic and cultural contact, which is a practice of identity politics and a challenge to institutional norms, creating affordances for others. I have therefore adopted a theoretical frame which foregrounds the sociolinguistic "work" of language practices, and specifically the "slipping and sliding" frame first developed by Dr Robyn Ober, a Mamu/Djirribal woman and scholar from Northern Australia, as the review of sociolinguistic literature below explains.

1.2 Overview of the article

This next section expands upon how the study builds on disparate but relevant legal and sociolinguistic literature, followed by an outline of the study's materials and methods. The analysis of results section then reports and discusses 86 discrete instances of Indigenous language use, tabulated in Appendices A–F. The analysis commences with foundational findings about when, where and what is being spoken. This article then makes two

interrelated arguments. The first is that instances of Indigenous language use in parliament are usually clustered because these language practices are a form of slipping and sliding which creates space for the same and other people to not only continue to use Indigenous languages, but to embody Indigenous identities and draw upon Indigenous epistemologies. The second is that all Indigenous use in parliaments is significant, in the dual senses of being important (not least because it challenges norms and creates space) and making meaning (signifying). This argument responds to the most similar, prior study in Australia (Murphy, 2020b), by rejecting that study's use of the label "ceremonial" in opposition to "substantial" and the over-stretching of the category of "ceremonial speech" to MPs first speeches. The following section introduces that study after first situating the Australian context within the international literature on Indigenous language use in parliaments.

2. Building on the research literature

2.1 Literature exploring Indigenous language use in parliaments overseas

Indigenous languages have been used overseas in certain comparable parliaments, according to a small body of relevant literature. In NZ, Māori language seems first to have been used in Parliament in 1868, although this was only "tolerated" because the Māori MPs of the day could not speak English, were often excluded from parliamentary business anyway, and were expected to stop speaking Māori once they learnt English (Stephens & Monk, 2012, p. 71). Over the twentieth century, Māori came to be used 36 times in the NZ Parliament before its use became a right in 1985, and at least 194 times from that time until 2009 (Stephens & Monk, 2012, p. 76, whose data stop at 2009). In Canada, Cree was used for a national parliamentary speech in 2017 by Robert-Falcon Ouellette, a (now former) MP of Cree and Métis descent (Goodwin & Murphy, 2019, p. 16; see further Ouellette, 2019). This led to the report from the House of Commons (2018) containing a process for implementing Indigenous language use after a Senate pilot programme and further use of Cree language in the House by another Cree (former) MP, Romeo Saganash, in 2019 (Schneider & Norman, 2023, pp. 150–151). There is also Indigenous language use in Canada's sub-national parliaments. For example, Goodwin and Murphy (2021) report that "in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut – a Territory of Canada where 86 per cent of the population speak Inuktitut as their first language – Inuktitut is extensively used during debate and Hansard is published in English and Inuktitut", and that various MPs have used Indigenous languages at least since 2018 in the Northwest Territories Parliament.

Despite these Indigenous linguistic journeys of parliaments overseas sharing elements with the Australian context, there is nevertheless no direct precedent for my study. Rather, it builds from foundational work published across a range of disciplines, most directly building upon one similar Australian study undertaken by legal scholar Julian R. Murphy.

2.2 Extending from a previous Australian legal study

My study builds upon Murphy's two articles on the topic. The first (Murphy, 2020a, p. 1006) is a study of Aboriginal language use in legislation in Australia (as part of a

comparison with the interpretation of multilingual legislation in Canada, Wales, South Africa and New Zealand), in which he identifies a small "trend towards Indigenous language lawmaking" in Australia. Murphy (2020a, p. 1006) also notes in passing that it has become "reasonably common for new Indigenous Members of Australian Parliaments to use an Indigenous language in their first address", citing NT and Commonwealth (Cth) Parliament examples. My study develops beyond Murphy's work in showing that Indigenous language use in our parliaments goes beyond first speeches, and in revising the distinctions between "ceremonial" and "substantive" speech and between "symbolic" and "meaningful" speech that he suggests in his related article comparing parliamentary multilingualism in Australia and New Zealand (Murphy, 2020b, p. 3). Second, while Murphy (2020b, p. 1) describes multilingual legislation as "the next stage of this process" after Indigenous languages come to be used in parliamentary speech in Australia, my study shows that multilingual legislation in fact precipitates much of the increased language use in Australia's parliaments. The third way in which this study extends beyond Murphy's research is in taking a sociolinguistic approach. This sociolinguistic analysis provides a compliment to existing law and politics scholarship which discusses the difficult dual responsibility of Indigenous MPs to represent both their own First Nation and their non-Indigenous constituents (e.g. Hobbs, 2020, p. 32; Maddison, 2010). Legal scholar Harry Hobbs (2020, p. 31) makes mention of the Yanyuwa–English bilingualism of Senator Malarndirri McCarthy's first speech in 2016 as a means of navigating this dual role, but language practices are not a focus of the legal or political scholarship. My study therefore builds instead on linguistic, and especially sociolinguistic, scholarship.

2.3 Building on the sociolinguistic literature

I have introduced, above, the study's general alignment with sociolinguistic literature on translanguaging and flagged my choice to more specifically apply a theory from an Aboriginal Australian scholar, Dr Robyn Ober. Like translanguaging adherents and many other sociolinguists, I adopt the fundamental idea that features of a linguistic repertoire are dynamically constructed as indexing certain languages and sociolinguistic groups. While translanguaging theory challenges concepts of bilingualism, it still builds from this same starting point of recognizing the importance of language practices in social construction. Forms of "bilingual" speech have long been understood to be resources for doing social identity work: for example, Piller (2003) explores how features associated with both German and English are combined to construct certain social identities valued in advertising, drawing on Bell's work on identity construction in a *te reo Māori*–English discourse. Moreover, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004, p. 1) make the general point that "in multilingual settings, language choice and attitudes are inseparable from political arrangements, relations of power, language ideologies, and interlocutors' view of their own and others' identities".

With a focus on Indigenous sociolinguistic construction in Australia, Dahmen (2022, p. 200) cites McConvell's (1988) research on Kriol and Gurindji bilingual speech, which "demonstrates that speakers can choose one language over another to express social meanings by identifying with the social categories related to each language". In another pertinent recent example, Gari Tudor-Smith, a Barada, Yiman, Gangulu and Gureng Gureng linguist, and Paul Williams, a Gamilaraay man and linguist, explain that

"For many of us, Blackfulla English is also an important marker of identity and a vessel for cultural knowledge" (Tudor-Smith et al., 2024, p. 122).

In order to focus this general sociolinguistic approach on the role of Indigenous language practices in challenging norms and creating affordances for others, I frame my analysis using a concept proposed by Dr Robyn Ober and first encountered by me in Ober (2024a). It is termed "slipping and sliding", named after a metalinguistic comment from an Indigenous research participant (Ober, 2022, p. 28). Ober (2024a) understands "language as a vehicle to move in and out of social spaces" in terms of transitioning between both Indigenous and non-Indigenous social identities and diverse epistemologies. Thus, "slipping and sliding" between the language features associated with home and those associated with school "helps students to express their own cultural identity by breaking down obstacles" (Ober, 2022, p. 29; education contexts are the focus of her research). Ober (2022, p. 30) herself aligns this concept with translanguaging literature. Ober (2024a) further explains that language is an unstable vehicle, sometimes getting "stuck" instead of sliding, which can prompt linguistic innovation and a linguistic negotiation of social power. Moreover, she is referring to "more than just the spoken language – it is how speakers make meaning with others by drawing on their own social, cultural and linguistic repertoires to communicate their truths and realities" (Ober, 2022, p. 34). This concept is well suited for my study as it foregrounds the cues or affordances that one person's non-mainstream language practices create for themselves and others to resist or overcome Anglo-centric social, institutional and epistemological norms.

Ober (2024b) explains that although "moving to and fro between linguistic codes, and cultural, and social domains happens in all socio-cultural contexts", it does not happen readily for Indigenous students in mainstream Australian education. Rather, an "assumed priority" is given to Standard Australian English despite this not being a language variety with which her study's Indigenous students identify. The same could be said of Australia's parliaments; not only are they places where Standard Australian English has normative priority, but moreover they have a legacy of excluding Indigenous peoples from their elected memberships. A paper by Lo Bianco (2007, p. 21.5–21.11) on the self-reported language abilities of MPs across Australia in 2004 reveals *not one report of Indigenous language knowledge*, although my study shows that some MPs at that time could in fact speak certain Indigenous languages. Linguistic diversity has been almost invisible in Australia's parliaments. Parliaments, therefore, are also places where moving between linguistic, cultural and social worlds is likely to be difficult for Indigenous people.

This article therefore develops the idea of "slipping and sliding" via language practices within parliaments as a means of creating channels between the social space of those institutions and the identities and epistemologies of social spaces outside parliaments. In doing so, the article is also indebted to conceptual foundations of sociolinguistics developed outside the Australia context. Specifically, Heller's (1995, p. 373) foundation work developing Bourdieu's (1991) theory of "symbolic domination" for analyses of language practices as both "central to" maintaining or resisting social institutions and to revealing ideologies of social and epistemological (il)legitimacy. Resonating with the power dynamics of parliaments and racio-linguistic politics in Australia even today, Heller (1995, pp. 373–374) theorized that "language norms are a key aspect of institutional

norms [… and] all the more important when institutional relations of power are tied up with ethnolinguistic ones, as in the monolingualizing tendencies of the bureaucratic nation state". Relating to Heller's insights into the conservation of power through institutionalized language, and therefore the significance of language practices that resist it, I see "slipping and sliding" as a frame for bringing Bourdieusian sociolinguistics into the Australian context to analyze how Indigenous ways of speaking individually and collectively navigate and resist the power structures of our parliaments and the social institutions beyond them.

International sociolinguistic research has paid increasing attention to power and multilingualism in identity construction, including my own analysis of government-authored signage using "majority" and "minority" languages in China (e.g. Grey, 2021), and in this sense the study also converses with studies of sociolinguist situations overseas. Especially relevant for this study because of its focus on political discourse, Opeibi (2007) observed that in political advertising in Nigeria, "codeswitching in political discourse is an interpersonal strategy that can be used to create, strengthen or destroy interpersonal boundaries". Certain relevant European studies have looked at discourses about parliamentary multilingualism. Wodak (2014, p. 135) has studied the multilingualism of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) through interviews rather than through records of their parliamentary speech and she finds, inter alia, "hegemonic multilingualism" in which English, French and German are "de facto, replacing the plurality of the twenty-three languages in the EU" and "that MEPs have internalized a range of language ideologies. Multilingualism is perceived as an inherent part of Europe's and the EU's identity". Similarly, "European identity" has been found to be constructed in part through political discourses about multilingualism in speeches (in English) by the Commissioner for Multilingualism (Zappettini, 2014). However, a sociolinguistic approach has never been applied to Indigenous multilingualism/translanguaging in parliamentary discourse in Australia, to my knowledge. There has been, however, a little work on multilingualism and identity construction in political discourses in Australia outside of parliament, namely Bonotti and Willoughby's (2023, p. 641) study of how "widespread unconscious linguistic prejudice" attaches to variations within English in Australia such as accents and "constitutes a constraint on some citizens' right to run for political office that is incompatible with democratic equality". And in contrast to the European studies showing multilingualism is part of the (super)national identity, it is understood that the social context in which Australian parliaments exist is one in which English monolingualism is part of the national identity. Piller et al. (2023, p. 706) have, for example, recently examined the construction of a "hegemonic Australian identity of the White native speaker of English" in the *Border Security* reality TV show and the Australian history of policies creating this Anglophone identity is recapped in Piller et al. (2024, p. 5), while Grey and Strauss (2022) expose judicial assumptions about the status of English as Australia's national language.

To recap, this study centres Aboriginal Australian scholar Ober's concept of slipping and sliding, sharing Ober's alignment with general linguistic repertoire and translanguaging literature as well as sharing Bourdieusian theoretical foundations about language and symbolic power with scholars noted above and with much of my own other work (e.g. Grey, 2021). In doing so, it extends beyond Murphy's (2020a, 2020b) pre-existing, legal study of Indigenous multilingualism in Australia's parliaments and the legislation they make, and beyond the pre-existing literature here and overseas on identity

construction through multilingualism in political discourse. This literature informs my approach to Indigenous language practices in otherwise English-monolingual parliaments across Australia as having the potential to resist symbolic domination and practice self-determination.

3. Materials and methods

3.1 Data collection

The study's data sources are the publicly available, online Hansard records of each parliament in Australia: URLs for each are provided in the appendices. While these data have the advantage of being on the public record, they are hard to excavate. Each jurisdiction's Hansard database is organized and retrieved differently, and all share the significant drawback of not including metadata that would enable computerized searches for Indigenous language use. Hansard is a particular kind of transcription, "accurate and readable, with minimal alterations being made only to clarify ambiguous or confusing passages" (Parliament of Australia, n.d.). These "substantially verbatim accounts" (Parliament of Australia, n.d.) are not the transcripts produced by linguists for conversational or forensic analysis. I worked with these data in the most rigorous and painstaking way possible so that Indigenous language practices in Australia's parliaments could be studied at all, and I transparently describe the methodological challenges I faced, making the plea that Hansard data could and should be made more suited to rigorous study, especially by the inclusion of better metadata.

Because Hansard does not have metadata/functionality to support any automated search about the languages used in Australia's parliaments, I developed a method of manual searching more akin to archival work, using secondary records as my leads. Specifically, these secondary sources were the lists of Indigenous language use in Australia's parliaments in a blog by Yuin man and lawyer, Timothy Goodwin, along with lawyer Julian R. Murphy (Goodwin & Murphy, 2019) and in an article by linguist Jacqueline Battin (2020) published on the website of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), as well as occasional newspaper reports (each cited where relevant below). These sources typically mention an MP's name, parliament and year, sometimes with additional details, such as the language they were said to have used. I then found and read the Hansard records of these specific days in parliament to verify the reported details and to add further details about each instance to my data tabulation. In the specific case of Linda Burney, having found her first speech in the Cth Parliament following a secondary source lead, I then tracked down her earlier first speech when she was elected to the NSW Parliament, which I don't believe the secondary sources note. I cross-checked the instances between these starting point sources and with two other sources which I later found, namely footnotes in Goodwin and Murphy (2021, notes 16–17) and a guide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parliamentarians produced by the Parliament of Australia (Richards, 2022).

After tracking down and tabulating an instance of Indigenous language use, I then read the Hansard records of related parliamentary business, including other speakers' contributions shortly before and after the specific instance; debate on the same motion that day and on subsequent days; and debate from other days on related bills/motions

referred to in that debate. This was imperfect but led me to identify additional instances of Indigenous language use which had not otherwise been reported in the secondary sources. (Having made efforts to email each person whose speech was identified in this study in order to inform them of the research, I have at the time of publication recently commenced interviews with those who responded and wished to tell me more about their experiences using Indigenous languages in parliaments.)

A descriptive analysis of each instance is tabulated in Appendices A–F, including the names and parliaments of those who spoke as well as date, leave-to-speak requirements, the type of parliamentary business, and the name(s) of the language used according to those speaking in parliament/Hansard transcribers/secondary sources. Each appendix tabulates one jurisdiction (NT, Cth, Western Australia (WA), NSW, Victoria (Vic) and Queensland (Qld)), starting with the NT because an Indigenous language was first used in that parliament. Note that I have not coded the data to name the languages myself. When I quote or refer to a specific instance in this article, I also footnote the pinpoint Hansard citation in the legal referencing style. This includes further information: the specific chamber of parliament, the section of Hansard and the page of Hansard. For example, the first Indigenous person to speak and use an Indigenous language in the NT Parliament was Minister Alison Anderson, footnoted later in this article as: NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 11 September 2008, 163–164 (Ms Anderson). That is, Minister Anderson's words are recorded on pages 163–164 of the Hansard transcription of the Parliamentary Debates in the NT Legislative Assembly (i.e. lower house) on 11 September 2008. As none of the secondary sources provide equivalently up-to-date or detailed information on Indigenous language use in Australia's parliaments, these tabulated, descriptive data are themselves a significant contribution to future research. It is, however, possible that additional instances of Indigenous language use have been overlooked because of the inability to systematically search Hansard.

3.2 Methods of analysis

I iteratively developed a typology of speech types. I first categorized speaking in parliament into two broad categories, ceremonial speech and debate speech. This distinction aligns with parliamentary practice: the practice notes from the Cth Parliament, for example, explain that while a narrow technical definition of debate includes only motions and responses, "'debate' is often used more loosely, to cover all words spoken by Members during House proceedings", including "asking and answering of questions, ministerial statements, matters of public importance, Members' statements and personal explanations" (Elder, 2018, Ch. 14). This is what I categorize as debate speech. This categorization recognizes that first speeches are not distinct from debate. In this respect, I depart from Murphy's seemingly subjective categorization of first speeches as ceremonial rather than substantive and I don't ascribe "substantive" as a category at all. Murphy appears to apply the label "ceremonial" to first speeches because they are pre-written and/or conventionalized, but many forms of parliamentary speech are, even within the cut-and-thrust of debate, as may well be noticed in watching Question Time. There are, for example, conventions of address, question formation, proposing motions, interjection and insult during parliamentary debate. And of course, parts of "impromptu" debate are prepared in advance, for example to make a point piercingly or to get a rejoinder right. To

take conventionalization and/or preparation as criteria for consigning parliamentary speech to the ceremonial category rather than debate category seems naive about how communication works. Of course, this is not to deny that first speeches are a distinct kind of debate speech. We could say they are a genre deriving from the "recurring rhetorical situation" to which these speeches respond, namely arrival of a new MP in a parliament, following the social action approach to genre (Miller, 1984, p. 162). This approach to genre was taken up in a recent Australian study of another form of autobiographical political speech, the televised speeches of outgoing Australian Prime Ministers after leadership spills (Williamson & Pâquet, 2023, p. 614). The point here is that there are good reasons to treat the previous classification of first speeches as ceremonial as inaccurate.

What, then, is ceremonial speech? The parliamentary practice notes do not acknowledge a ceremonial speech category. I have therefore only categorized **invited addresses from non-MPs as ceremonial**; they are not spoken by MPs and therefore do not fall within even the wide definition of parliamentary debate above. For those who may wish to re-analyze the data differently and take a wider view of ceremonial speech, instead, I have noted in the appendices those instances which are first speeches, valedictory speeches and Statements.

I identified the significant presence of individual words from traditional and, occasionally, new Indigenous languages within English sentences. I came to label this **individual word use** in contrast with instances where a speaker said whole phrases/sentences in an Indigenous language, which I came to categorize as **extended use.** This labelling is also included in Appendices A–F. I did not anticipate finding this individual word usage as the secondary sources note only extended uses of Indigenous languages. This study was therefore not designed to inquire into individual word use; it is beyond my scope to compare these instances to the same speakers' typical parliamentary speech or to assign this data to specific varieties of English. I have nevertheless counted and reported the individual word use that I found to highlight it for the public and other researchers. In theory, individual words should also be resources for identity construction and in practice these ways of talking no doubt expand the representation of Indigenous peoples and knowledges in parliament, whether they are ad hoc or sustained variations to English.

An illustrative example of extended use comes from groundbreaker, Josie Farrer, of WA:[1] "*Gilingaan yurran-ga Parliament-ji rurt yurran kili*". This is the first of four consecutive sentences in Gidja in her valedictory speech, which also later includes another extended use, the Lord's Prayer in Gidja. Occasions like this, with more than one extended use within one speech, are counted as one instance. In the quoted phrase, we can also see individual words associated with one language being used in another: Ms Farrer borrows *Parliament* into Gidja and adapts it to Gidja morphology with the suffix *-ji*. However, this study focused on words travelling from Indigenous languages into English. An example of individual word use doing this is *yapa*, meaning sister in Yolŋu Matha; it is used by another groundbreaker, Yingiya Mark Guyula of the NT, in his own translation into English of his extended Yolŋu Matha use.[2] I have tabulated that

[1]WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 18 November 2020, 8065 (Ms Farrer).
[2]NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 9 May 2019, 6211 (Mr Guyula).

speech, and similar speeches, as demonstrating both individual word use and extended word use within one instance.

3.3 Inclusions and exclusions

For transparency, there were some grey areas where I had to decide whether to count an individual word as an instance of Indigenous language use, in particular, certain proper nouns naming peoples and Countries. I have counted these proper nouns even though they are not always explained by the speaker, unlike the other instances in the data. Proper nouns can do important work representing Indigenous knowledges and identities (see Dovchin (2022) and Makoni et al. (2007) on the similar work of personal names in other contexts). For example, I have therefore treated as countable instances a speech in the WA Parliament naming the "Amangu, Yuat, Whadjuk, Pinjarup, Wardandi, Ballardong, Nyakinyaki, Wilman, Wirlomin, Ganeang, Bibulmun Mineng, Goreng, Wudjari and Njunga" peoples making up the Noongar nation,[3] as well as the use of *Noongar Boodja*, explained as "Noongar earth" within the Preamble to a landmark, bilingually-titled piece of legislation. By contrast, some Indigenous language is now scripted into mandated Acknowledgments of Country in some parliaments. I have *excluded* those uses. Indeed, these do not appear in full in Hansard anyway, recoded elliptically with phrases like "The Speaker [of the House] took the chair at [time], made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers". Tabulating each mandatory Acknowledgment of Country would dilute the power of spotlighting and analyzing the individually initiated uses of Indigenous languages. For example, listing each instance of the Speaker of the Cth House of Representative's mandated Acknowledgment of Country every sitting day since 2010 (Elder, 2018, n. 24) would not be helpful, although it contains the proper nouns *Ngunnawal* and *Ngambri*. Nor would it be helpful to tabulate the Acknowledgement made in Ngunnawal language in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Legislative Assembly daily since July 2020 (Legislative Assembly for the ACT, n.d.-a): "*Dhawura nguna, dhawura Ngunnawal. Yanggu ngalawiri, dhunimanyin Ngunnawalwari dhawurawari. Nginggada Dindi dhawura Ngunnaawalbun yindjumaralidjinyin*". With well over a hundred sitting days having occurred in the ACT since its introduction (Legislative Assembly for the ACT, n.d.-b), the count would obscure the mere 38 individuated instances of extended Indigenous language use which this study identified in all parliaments across the country. The point should nevertheless be made that such acknowledgments are another part of changing parliamentary norms and creating sociolinguistic affordances, and they vastly increase the presence of certain languages. For instance, apart from its use in the ACT Parliament's acknowledgements, Ngunnawal has only been used one other time in any Australian parliament,[4] and no other Indigenous languages have been used in the ACT parliament, to my knowledge.

Similarly, I have not counted each time MPs name bills with official bilingual titles. (A bill is legislation under debate which has not yet passed the process to become enacted as law.) These comprise another category of scripted language use in Parliament beyond

[3]WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 19 November 2015, 8693 (Ms JM Freeman).
[4]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 10 February 2016, 1171 (Mr Turnbull).

the scope of this study, but I acknowledge that these bilingual titles are an enduring form of representation of Indigenous languages and those affiliated with them. To be precise, I excluded from my count the mere naming of the Noongar (*Koorah, Nitja, Boordahwan*) (Past, Present, Future) Recognition Bill, debated in WA between November 2015 and May 2016; the Yarra River Protection (*Wilip-gin Birrarung murron*) Bill debated in Vic during 2017; and the *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa* (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Bill debated in Qld in 2020. While I have not counted the specific instances of MPs naming bilingual titles, they come into my analysis when I discuss these titles cuing other language use clustered together in the data.

4. Analysis of results

4.1 Foundational results

Overall, my research identified 86 ad hoc instances of Indigenous language use in parliaments in Australia. These comprise 12 in the NT since 1981 (Appendix A); 11 in the Cth, i.e. national parliament since 1998 (Appendix B); 30 in WA since 2013 (Appendix C); 14 in NSW since 2003 (Appendix D); 11 in Vic, all in 2017 (Appendix E); and eight in Qld since 2018 (Appendix F). I could not find any usage in South Australia or Tasmania, and in the ACT none except within the mandatory Acknowledgement of Country excluded above. Recall that the lack of Hansard searchability means there may be additional instances which have not been located despite my thoroughgoing efforts, especially instances of individual word usage. Of these 86 instances, 38 are counted as extended uses of an Indigenous language (some including individual words at another point in the same speech); and the 48 remaining instances comprise individual words but not extended use. Figure 1

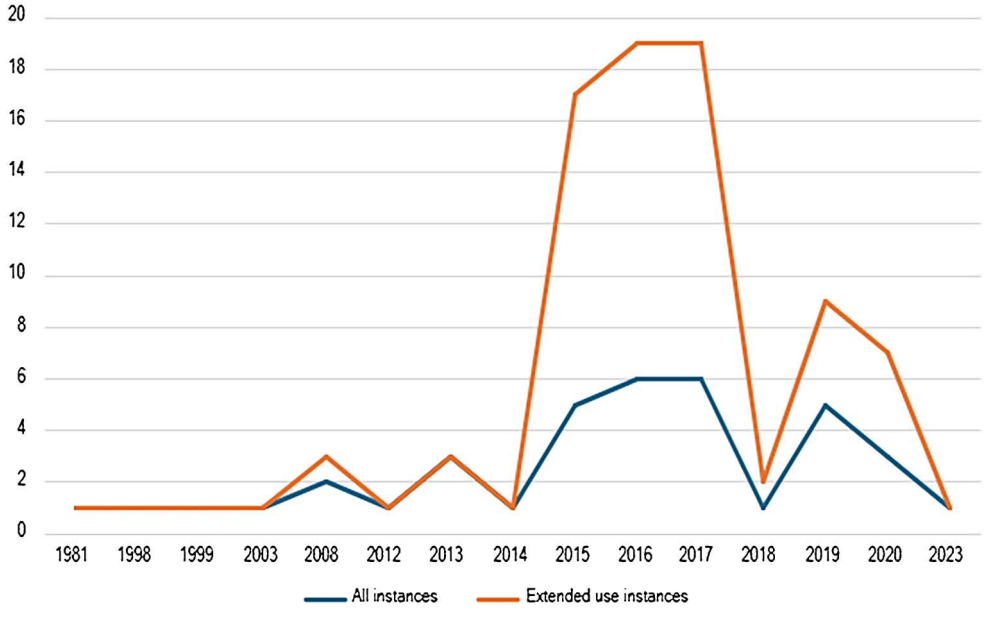

Figure 1 Language use by year

shows an increase in usage since the turn of this century, peaking in 2016 and 2017, and 28 of the 38 instances of extended use of an Indigenous language fall in the 2010s.

The use of Aboriginal languages, specifically, is not localized to one part of Australia, with use recorded in the Cth, NSW, Vic, WA and NT parliaments. By contrast, Torres Strait Islander language use in parliament is so far limited to Qld. The NSW and Vic instances are predominantly ceremonial, with Aboriginal languages largely used in those parliaments by invitees rather than MPs themselves. By contrast, the NT, WA, Cth and Qld instances are predominantly uses of Indigenous languages in debate by MPs. All instances of Indigenous languages found in the Cth Parliament ($n = 11$) included extended usage and all but one were by MPs. By contrast, I found no extended usage in the Vic Parliament except four instances when invitees spoke.

Figure 2 shows that 18 languages are explicitly named by either the person speaking or the Hansard transcriber (or both). Readers may consult the *Gambay – First Languages Map*

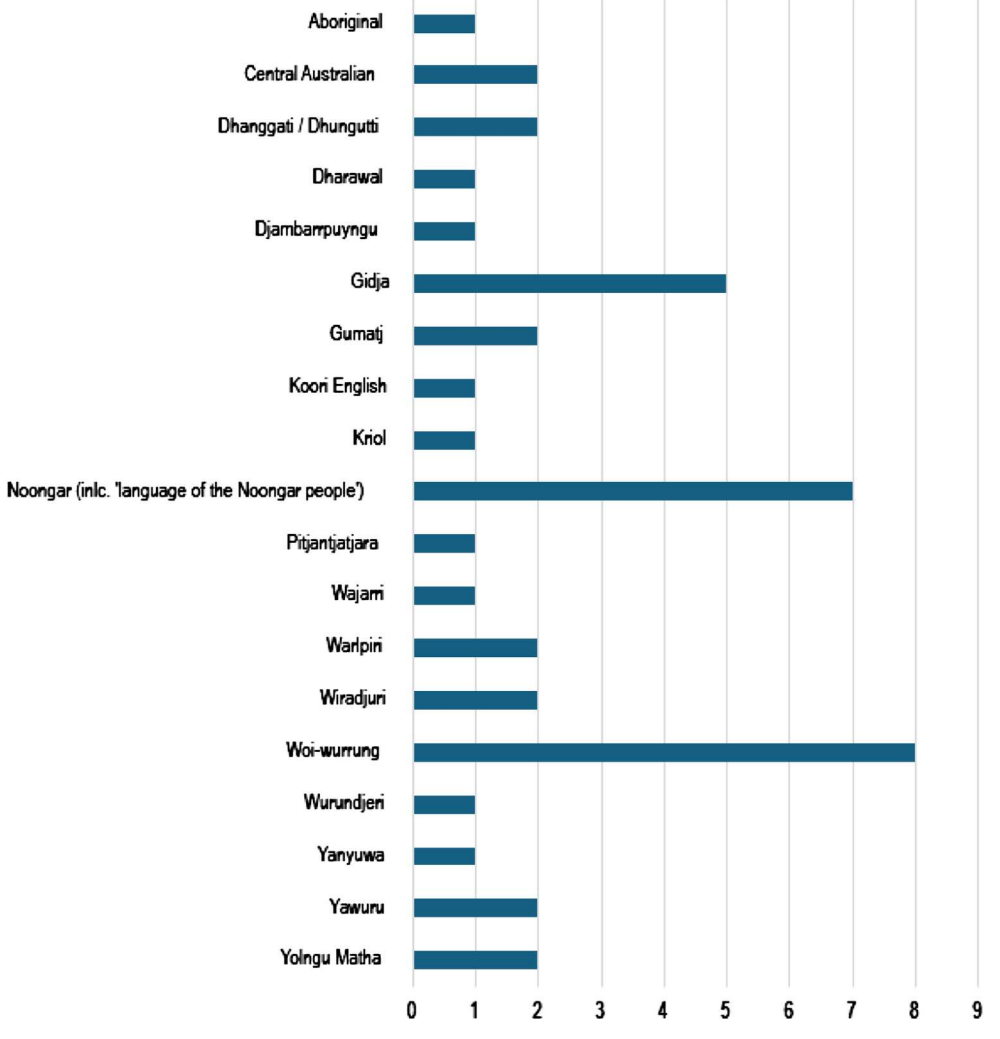

Figure 2 Name provided in parliament/Hansard when an Indigenous language is used

(First Languages Australia, n.d.) or the *AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia* (AIATSIS, 2024) to locate the Country of the languages named in Figure 2. In another instance included in Figure 2, a language is explicitly but generically named "Aboriginal"; it is Dhanggati, according to Battin (2020). Figure 2 only includes the 43 instances where a name was given, showing that language use is often *not* named. Sometimes, a name is nevertheless implied (also noted in Appendices A–F). For example, when then-Prime Minister Turnbull made an Acknowledgement of Ngunnawal Country in 2016 without explicitly naming the language other than English which he was speaking,[5] the context implied he was speaking Ngunnawal. Numerous media reports named this language, for example Gordon (2016) reports on the role of Tyronne Bell and Glen Freeman from Ngaiyuriidja Ngunawal Language Group and Dr Doug Marmion from AIATSIS in teaching Mr Turnbull this acknowledgement. (I note for readers' assistance in future searches that Hansard also spells Ngunnawal with double *n* in the now-regular Acknowledgements of Country.)

Allowing us to put these findings into some context, Anneke Myers' in-progress doctoral research provides a count of Indigenous language use in Cth parliamentary committee hearings. Myers (2021) has found "79 federal parliamentary committee hearings held between 2010 and 2021 where Indigenous languages were spoken" and displayed these on a freely available online map which shows that Aboriginal languages have been used in Cth parliamentary committee hearings all over Australia, while Torres Strait Islander languages were used five times during hearings on Thursday Island. The map includes metadata attributes that record whether a language was named or not. Let us now move beyond a simple count to consider what these linguistic resources are being used to do.

4.2 Use goes beyond MPs' first speeches

Indigenous language use in Australia's parliaments has often come within Indigenous MPs' first speeches, as Murphy (2020a) noted, but this study shows clearly that it goes beyond first speeches and beyond Indigenous MPs. Table 1 lists the 14 instances which are first speeches, out of 86.

First speeches containing Indigenous languages tend to use extended passages of those languages: 13 of these 14 do, as shown in Table 1. These 13 first comprise roughly one third of all 38 instances of extended use that my study identified. The use of both an extended passage and individual words from Indigenous languages within one first speech is not uncommon in the data; it occurs, for example, in first speeches of Linda Burney,[6] Senator Dodson,[7] Senator McCarthy[8] and Cynthia Lui,[9] as well as in Alison Anderson's first Ministerial speech,[10] and Minister Anderson uses more language later in debate the same day.[11] I suggest that extended use is not the only significant or valuable use of Indigenous languages in parliaments, but readers will understand that extended language use attracts media and community attention, as does a new

[5]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 10 February 2016, 1171 (Mr Turnbull).
[6]NSW, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 6 May 2003, 295 (Ms Burney).
[7]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 1 September 2016, 448 (Senator Dodson).
[8]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 14 September 2014, 944 (Senator McCarthy).
[9]Qld, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 15 February 2018, 94 and 96 (Ms Lui).
[10]NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 11 September 2008, 163–164 (Ms Anderson).
[11]NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 11 September 2008, 197 (Ms Anderson).

Table 1 Fourteen first speeches

Jurisdiction	Date	Spoken by MP or invitee?	Language named	Extended use (one phrase or more) / Individual word(s) use?	Known to use language again in parliament?
NT	1981, 2 June	MP – Bell	Pitjantjatjara	Extended	No
Cth	1998, 24 June	MP – Crossin	Gumatj	Extended	Yes (2013)
Cth	1999, 25 Aug	MP – Ridgeway	Not named	Extended	No
NSW	2003, 6 May	MP – Burney	Not named and Koori English	Extended and Individual word(s)	Yes (in Cth Parliament)
NT	2008, 11 Sept	MP – Anderson	Central Australian	Extended and Individual word(s)	Yes (2008, same day, different debate)
Cth	2008, 22 Oct	MP – Oakeshott	Aboriginal	Extended	Yes (2013)
NT	2012, 23 Oct	MP – Price	Warlpiri	Extended	Yes (2015)
WA	2013, 17 April	MP – Farrer	Gidja and Kriol	Extended and Individual word(s)	|Yes (2015, 2017, 2020)
Cth	2016, 31 Aug	MP – Burney	Wiradjuri	Extended	Yes (but after the end of this study)
Cth	2016, 1 Sept	MP – Dodson	Yawuru	Extended and Individual word(s)	No
Cth	2016, 14 Sept	MP – McCarthy	Yanyuwa	Extended and Individual word(s)	No
NT	2016, 18 Oct	MP – Guyula	Not named (likely Djambarrpuyngu/ Yolngu Matha)	Extended (but cut off); Individual word(s) (spoken without leave).	Yes (2019, three times)
NT	2016, 18 Oct	MP – Paech	Not named (likely an Arrernte language)	Individual word(s)	No
Qld	2018, 15 Feb	MP – Lui	Not named (Battin (2020) says Kala Lagaw Ya)	Extended and Individual word(s)	Yes

MP's inaugural contribution, so first speeches therefore may have seemed to be the engine of increasing Indigenous language use in our parliaments. Moreover, while the increasing use of Indigenous languages in Australia's parliaments is not only happening within first speeches, those speeches may have an outsized influence in disrupting monolingual norms to create affordances for their speakers, and others, to continue to slide between linguistic and cultural identities in future parliamentary speech. I will return to this theme in the subsequent section.

Goodwin and Murphy (2019, p. 17) describe first speeches as "set piece speeches". Some of the other instances of Indigenous language use that my study identified occurred within other similarly "set" or conventionalized speech: two valedictory speeches (WA and Cth), one Private Member's Statement (NSW), one Prime Ministerial Statement (Cth) and one Statement introducing a bilingual bill in a formal addition to

debate protocol (Qld). Together with the 14 first speeches, this totals only 19 set piece instances out of 86. My method does not categorize these 19 speeches as "ceremonial" in contrast to "debate". Being pre-written/conventionalized does not prevent set pieces from engaging in debate. I note, for example, that the earliest instance in the data, the first speech from Mr Neil Bell in 1981 using Pitjantjatjara, engages directly in a debate then current in the NT Legislative Assembly over the 1980 Pastoral Land Tenure Inquiry Report.[12]

Taking a narrower view of ceremonial parliamentary speech as only that by invitees, not MPs, I have classified 14 instances of Indigenous language use as ceremonial. Five arose in opening ceremonies for the new term of the NSW Parliament in 2019 (when three invited Elders spoke, one of them twice i.e. four instances) and 2023 (when one invited Elder spoke). A few years earlier, in 2017, both the Vic and NSW Parliaments invited Elders to speak at the introduction of legislation in/about Aboriginal languages, the Yarra River Protection (*Wilip-gin Birrarung murron*) Bill (Vic) and the Aboriginal Languages Bill (NSW). These Elders used Aboriginal languages as well as English.

In sum, of the 86 instances, 14 are first speeches, two are MPs speaking to introduce/thank first speeches, five are other "set piece" speeches by MPs, and 14 are ceremonial speeches by invitees (including a song accompanying a first speech). This totals 34 instances that a wider view of "ceremony" would capture. All this means that the remaining, majority of instances – 42 of 86 – are times when MPs have used Indigenous languages within parliamentary debate and not even within first speeches. These 42 are a mix of extended and individual word use.

4.3 Use is clustered and cued

While first speeches containing Indigenous languages do not numerically dominate the data, the Hansard shows they sometimes directly prompt other instances of Indigenous language use. This can be seen in three instances: two instances where the Speaker/President of the House engages in a bilingual dialogue with the MP making a bilingual first speech, and one instance of a song being sung in Wiradjuri by an invitee, Lynette Riley, to herald Wiradjuri woman, Linda Burney's, Cth first speech in English and Wiradjuri.[13] In the first example, Yawuru man and Senator for WA, Pat Dodson, and the President of the Cth Senate both spoke Yawuru in this exchange at the commencement of Senator Dodson's first speech:[14]

> Senator DODSON (Western Australia): Ngaji mingan, Mr President? How are you, Mr President?
>
> The PRESIDENT: Gala mabu ngangan. I am good. Gala walju! Go ahead.
>
> Senator DODSON: Yawurugun Janu buru Rubibi. I am from Broome. Ngayu nilawal Djagun. My name is Djagun. Ngayu Banaga wamba. I am a Banaga man. I acknowledge with

[12]NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 2 June 1981, 876–879 (Mr Bell).
[13]Wiradjuri woman sings Linda Burney into parliament for her maiden speech – video. *The Guardian*, 31 August 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/video/2016/aug/31/wiradjuri-woman-sings-linda-burney-into-parliament-for-her-maiden-speech-video .
[14]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 1 September 2016, 448 (Senator Dodson, the President).

> respect the traditional owners of this country, the Ngambri and Ngunuwal people, their elders and their emerging leaders and I thank everyone who has made me welcome here.

Conifer (2016) reports on Senator Dodson teaching these Yawuru phrases to the President, Stephen Parry, in advance, i.e. the two collaboratively prepared this dialogue, at Senator Dodson's initiative. (In this and upcoming extracts, I have preserved the italics or lack thereof, and quotation marks or lack thereof, to illustrate the differences in how Hansard transcribes Indigenous language use.)

A second such dialogue comprises the study's first instances of Torres Strait Islander language use. Battin's (2020) AIATSIS article reports that, in 2018 in the Qld Parliament, MP Lui "spoke in Kala Lagaw Ya to express her thanks and talk about her ancestors and heritage, to which the Speaker said *eso* 'thank you'". The Hansard does not annotate that a language other than English is being used, nor name it, nor mark it with italics, but Ms Lui does provide an explanation in English immediately after each phrase, marking them out as not English:[15]

> I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land. Koeyma eso and au esoau, which means thank you for allowing us to be here on your beautiful and sacred country and I pay my respect to elders past and present. […] Adhapudhay koeyma eso and au esoau, which means my heartfelt gratitude and thank you for this wonderful opportunity to deliver my first speech to mark the 56th Legislative Assembly.

When her speech finishes, the Speaker responds: "Eso, member for Cook. Eso".[16]

Moreover, the concept of slipping and sliding encourages us to consider whether there may be an *indirect* link between first speeches and other instances in the data. The creation of multilingual affordances by challenging the monolingual norm can be hypothesized to explain the data showing that eight of the 14 first speakers use Indigenous languages on later occasions (see the righthand column of Table 1), namely Cth Senators Crossin and Oakeshott, neither of whom is Indigenous; NSW MP Ms Burney (a Wiradjuri woman); NT MPs Ms Anderson (an Indigenous woman representing Namatijra electorate), Mrs Price (a Warlpiri woman) and Mr Guyula (a Yolŋu man of the Djambarrpuyŋu clan and the Liya-Dhalinymirr people); WA MP Ms Farrer (from the Kija people of the East Kimberly); and Qld MP Ms Lui (a Torres Strait Iamalaig woman of the Kulkalgal nation). For example, Senator Crossin's Valedictory Speech in 2013 included multiple phrases in what she names Gumatj[17] and Senator Oakeshott's Constituency Statement the same year included four paragraphs (about half a page) in what he names as Dhanggati and is one of the most extensive instances of language use identified in this study.[18]

However, in the other six cases, the first speaker does not use the language in parliament again (to my knowledge); Indigenous linguistic resources have apparently not been those speakers' key resources to navigate between identities or knowledges. Even Ms Burney does not appear to use Wiradjuri again in the Cth Parliament after using it in both her NSW and then Cth first speeches until her valedictory speech in 2024,[19] which fell outside the data collection for this study. These data cannot tell us why, although I

[15]Qld, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 15 February 2018, 93 (Ms Lui).
[16]Qld, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 15 February 2018, 96 (Mr Speaker).
[17]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 18 June 2013, 3245 (Senator Crossin).
[18]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 26 June 2013, 7187 (Mr Oakeshott).
[19]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 21 August 2024, 6015–6016 (Ms Burney).

note that I found no record in Hansard of negative responses to the use of Indigenous languages in any first speech except for Mr Yiŋiya Mark Guyula being prevented from delivering an extended passage in a Yolŋu language as he intended in 2016; he still managed to use individual words then and has achieved more extensive Yolŋu language use in parliamentary debate in more recent years.

The first speech data lend themselves to the overall observation about interconnection that a new norm is being established that first speeches by Indigenous MPs will include Indigenous language. Indeed, we could even say the emerging norm goes beyond Indigenous MPs themselves: many of the earliest bilingual first speeches in this study were by non-Indigenous MPs with sizable First Nations constituencies: Mr Neil Bell (NT, 1981); Senator Trish Crossin (Cth, 1998); and Mr Rob Oakeshott (Cth, 2008).

Another important aspect of this interconnection between instances is the role of legislation containing Indigenous languages in opening space for further language use while it is debated. That bilingual legislation *precipitates* much of the increased Indigenous language use in Australia's parliaments is a new finding which challenges the argument in Murphy's (2020b, p. 1) admittedly smaller study that multilingual legislation is "the next stage of this process" *after* Indigenous languages come to be used in parliamentary speech in Australia.

I will start to illustrate this with the most recent data, from debate over the bilingually titled *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa* (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Bill, passed in Qld in 2020. This example also illustrates in concrete terms my process of finding and reviewing Hansard. Upon hearing that a recent Qld law used the phrase *ailan kastom* 'Island custom' and Googling its title and year, I then had to find out the dates of debate, as Qld Hansard is retrieved by date rather than retrieved via word searches. I started with the Index of 2020 Hansard of the 56th Parliament (after an election, the 57th Qld Parliament also sat in 2020). It listed pages relating to this bill from 16 July and 8 September's transcripts. I read each listed page, continuing to subsequent pages until the transcript showed a switch to a new motion/business. This totalled 22 pages (pp. 1739–1742 and pp. 2204–2221). In addition to each participant in the debate using the title phrase *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa* "for our children's children", within these 22 pages of debate I found the following two instances of extended use (expressing thanks) and four instances of individual word use. The data suggest affiliative identity construction purposes for these language choices, but for want of space this article will focus on the clustering of these instances.

Similar to her own first speech, quoted above, Ms Lui's introduction of the bill[20] includes "Koeyma eso and au esoau – which means thank you – " in an Acknowledgement (p. 1740), after having introduced herself, "I rise today as a proud Iamalaig woman of the Kulkalgal Nation of the Torres Strait and a member of the Torres Strait community in my capacity as a member of parliament", and she closes with "Koeyma eso, au esoau. Thank you" (pp. 1740–1742). She refers to *ailan kastom* 'an island custom in the Torres Strait Islands', which this bill legally recognizes, and explains:

> it was a significant decision to ensure the short title of the bill contained Torres Strait Islander languages. Derived from Eastern and Top Western languages, Meriba OmaskerKaziw Kazipa

[20]Qld, *Legislative Debates*, 16 July 2020, pp. 1740–1742 (Ms Lui).

> translates to "for our children's children" […] The phrase also pays homage to the legacy of the Kupai Omasker Working Party. (p. 1741)

This bilingually named Kupai Omasker Working Party is also named in the second reading speech (a second reading speech introduces a new bill to a parliament for debate),[21] and in responses from Ms Lui and Hon SM Fentiman,[22] the latter then also ending: "We have done it together. Eso, au esoau. Thank you".[23] This instance, along with Ms Lui's use of similar language above, are equivalent to the Torres Strait language usage celebrated in Ms Lui's first speech in 2018, but these 2020 instances have not yet been noted in secondary sources.

One other response to the second reading speech refers to *ailan kastom*,[24] and another response uses the Yuggera name for Brisbane: "Until First Nation sovereignty is recognized, whether in the Torres Strait or here in Meanjin, we live and work each day on stolen country".[25] This is not a lot of Indigenous language use, in absolute terms, but is an unusual increase in usage for the Qld Parliament clustered within debate on this unusual, bilingually-titled bill.

A similar spike occurred when Victorian MPs were prompted to use individual Aboriginal words during debate over the Yarra River Protection (*Wilip-gin Birrarung murron*) Bill in 2017. The bracketed words in the title mean "keep the Birrarung river alive" in Woi-wurrung language,[26] and the legislation also includes a preamble in Woi-wurrung and English. In 2017, the Victorian Parliament invited Elders to speak at the introduction of this legislation. Several Wurundjeri Elders addressed the Parliament during a specially resolved pause in debate when the bill was introduced: Uncle Colin Hunter, Jr, Aunty Gail Smith and Mr Allan Wandin each spoke aloud multiple sentences from the bill's preamble in Woi-wurrung while Mr Ron Jones, Aunty Alice Kolasa and Ms Jacqui Wandin, respectively, provided the English translation for each, keeping proper nouns from the original.[27] Aunty Alice Kolasa also welcomed people in Woi-wurrung,[28] making seven instances in total during this ceremony. The Indigenous language use in the subsequent debate included MPs quoting from Aunty Alice Kolasa's ceremonial speech and from the Preamble text, both of which use Woi-wurrung proper nouns, e.g. "Bunjil, the great Eagle";[29] and when another language, Wurundjeri, is used to explain: "The current name [of the river], Yarra, is translated from the Wurundjeri term Yarro-Yarro, which means 'ever flowing'".[30]

In WA, debate over the Noongar (*Koorah, Nitja, Boordahwan*) (Past, Present, Future) Recognition Bill 2015 likewise included some Indigenous language use in addition to

[21]Qld, *Legislative Debates*, 8 September 2020, 2205 (Hon CD Crawford).
[22]Qld, *Legislative Debates*, 8 September 2020, 2211 (Ms Lui) and 2218 (Hon SM Fentiman).
[23]Qld, *Legislative Debates*, 8 September 2020, 2219 (Hon SM Fentiman).
[24]Qld, *Legislative Debates*, 8 September 2020, 2209 (Dr Rowan).
[25]Qld, *Legislative Debates*, 8 September 2020, 2216 (Mr Berkman).
[26]Vic, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 22 August 2017, 4234 (Mr Jennings).
[27]Vic, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 22 June 2017, 2018–2019 (Uncle Colin Hunter Jr) and 2019 (Mr Ron Jones, Aunty Gail Smith, Aunty Alice Kolasa, Mr Allan Wandin, Ms Jacqui Wandin).
[28]Vic, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 22 June 2017, 2018 (Kolasa).
[29]MPs quote Aunty Alice Kolasa's speech, which in turn quotes the preamble in the legislation: Vic, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 9 August 2017, 2253 (Ms Victoria) and Vic, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 9 August 2017, 2257 (Ms Kilkenny).
[30]Vic, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Council, 21 September 2017, 4875 (Ms Bath).

MPs saying the bilingual title.[31] The title was groundbreaking in containing three Noongar words and the bill became law in 2016, the Australian-first use of Aboriginal language in a legislative title (cf. Goodwin and Murphy (2019) describe Vic's act as the first to use Indigenous words in its title). The word *kaat* 'head', was introduced when an MP quoted the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council on the death of a historical Noongar figure, Yagan,[32] and *Noongar boodja* appears in MPs' ad hoc Acknowledgements of Country and descriptions of the bill.[33] In addition, "Noongar Boodja Trust" was used, and almost always capitalized. This is a legal term from a Native Title agreement related to the bill. It was said during the bill's second reading speech in each house,[34] then in the lower house the second reading speech was quoted and the term repeated by Mr Quigley and Mr Tinley.[35] Debate continued use of the term in the second reading speech of related legislation and the leader of the Opposition again used the term,[36] as did others in that debate.[37] Some of these speakers also used other Indigenous words, namely Mr Wyatt and Ms Freeman.[38] The Premier also used the term in the second reading speech of related legislation likewise debated in late 2015,[39] and a section of the legislation containing the term was quoted in that debate.[40]

Affordances to "slip and slide" are not always linguistic, of course. For example, I found many short instances of Aboriginal language use when the WA Parliament debated the Constitution Amendment (Recognition of Aboriginal People) Bill in 2015, and some instances when the NSW Parliament debated the Aboriginal Languages Bill in 2017. Neither bill is bilingually titled but both are thematically related to a parliament recognizing Aboriginal peoples/languages.

5. Discussion – the significance of first speeches

There is, paradoxically, an emphasis on first speeches as the key practice of increased Indigenous language use in Australia's parliaments and at the same time a dismissal by some within and outside parliaments of these first speeches as insignificant, at least as compared to language use elsewhere in parliamentary debate. In response, this article now develops the argument that all instances of use of Indigenous languages in parliaments,

[31]I reviewed WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 18 November 2015, 8566–8569; WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 March 2016, 1376–1390 and 1405–1411; WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 22 March 2016, 1563–1570; WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Council, 22 March 2016, 1496–1498; WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Council, 10 May 2015, 2415–2418.
[32]WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 March 2016, 1405 (MS R SAFFIOTI).
[33]WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 March 2016, 1379 (Ms SF McGurk) and WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 March 2016, 1388 (Mr JR Quigley).
[34]WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 14 October 2015, 7313 (Mr CJ Barnett); WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Council, 22 March 2016, 1496 (Peter Collier) and continued in WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Council, 10 May 2016, 2416 (Hon Sue Ellery).
[35]WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 March 2016, 1387 (Mr J R Quigley); WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 March 2016, 1417–1418 (Mr P C Tinley).
[36]WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 22 March 2016, 1568–1569 (Mr M McGowan).
[37]WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 19 November 2015, 8693 (Mrs JM Freeman); WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 22 March 2016, 1575–1576 (Mr Cook); WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 22 March 2016, 1576–1577 (Mr BS Wyatt); WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 22 March 2016, 1578 (Mr CJ Barnett); WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Council, 10 May 2016, 2416 (Hon Robin Chapple).
[38]WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 22 March 2016, 1565 (Mr BS Wyatt); WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 19 November 2015, 8693 (Ms JM Freeman).
[39]WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 25 November 2015, 8903 (Mr CJ Barnett) re Land Administration (South West Native Title Settlement) Bill. On this occasion, partial capitalization: "Noongar Boodja trust".
[40]WA, *Legislative Debates*, Legislative Council, 10 May 2016, 2418 (Hon Sue Ellery).

including first speeches, are significant for construction and representing identities, in addition to the creation of affordances I have suggested that they are doing to explain the clustering of the data. First, let us see contestation of the value of Indigenous language use in first speeches compared to elsewhere in debate in the case of the NT Parliament.

The NT Parliament has the longest history of Aboriginal language use of any Australian parliament, as Appendix A shows, but there was a landmark instance of Aboriginal language use there as recently as 2019. The 2019 landmark instance was Mr Yingiya Mark Guyula, the Independent Member for Nhulunbuy, debating in a Yolŋu Matha language, Djambarrpuyŋu, in the NT Legislative Assembly. Here was an Aboriginal MP speaking an Aboriginal language, and for engaged debate on a motion about community-led schools.[41] His milestone use of language was noted contemporaneously by a Parliamentary colleague as a "historic first"[42] and covered by news reports (e.g. Cross, 2019). Wikipedia (2024) even mistakenly describes Mr Guyula's words as "the first indigenous language to be spoken in an Australian parliament".

However, another member of the chamber disputed: "it is not the first time a language has been spoken here. […] Alison Anderson gave a speech in her language some time ago".[43] That is true.[44] Minister Anderson should therefore be known as the first Aboriginal person recorded using an Aboriginal language in the NT Parliament, as indeed Battin (2020) describes her. Further, after Minister Anderson but before Mr Guyula, Mrs Bess Nungarryi Price spoke in Warlpiri in her first speech in the NT Legislative Assembly, in 2012, expressing this language practice as important "to show my respect to my parents, my sister and my family and my people".[45]

There had also been an earlier use of an Aboriginal language in the same legislature by Mr Neil Bell, who gave his first speech in Pitjantjatjara in 1981. While Mr Bell was not Aboriginal, he explicitly spoke of the "value" of his language practices. Before four long sentences in Pitjantjatjara recorded over eight lines of Hansard, he says:

> it seems wrong for me to allow the occasion of my maiden speech to this Assembly to pass without incorporating into the proceedings of the Assembly a statement in a language understood by the majority of the constituents of MacDonnell much more easily than is English. I am sure that honourable members will appreciate this symbol and recognise its value as an indication of the power of the Assembly to represent the diverse views and aspirations of our multi-cultural Territory community.

Mr Bell's first speech, moreover, engages in a debate over a 1980 report. However, the conventional discounting of first speeches is partly why Mr Guyula's use of an Aboriginal language elsewhere in debate was considered a milestone in 2019. It was also a milestone because it came just a few years after the stifling application of standing orders to stymie debate in Aboriginal languages in the NT, including in his own first speech in 2016 according to Battin (2020, n. 23) and Ethos Editor (2016).[46]

[41]NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 8 May 2019, 6081 (Mr Guyula) and 6081–6082 (The Interpreter) for the English interpretation.
[42]NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 8 May 2019, 6084 (Ms Uibo).
[43]NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 8 May 2019, 6095 (Mr Wood).
[44]NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 11 September 2008, 163–164 (Ms Anderson).
[45]NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 23 October 2012, 34 (Mrs Price).
[46]Hansard does not record the interruption, but only: "Mr GUYULA (Nhulunbuy): (The member spoke in language)" then records his English contribution: NT, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 18 October 2016 (Mr Guyula).

The discounting of first speeches also happens in the literature. Murphy (2020b, p. 3) makes a distinction between "symbolic" and "substantive" or "meaningful" parliamentary speech in Indigenous languages. This recasts a distinction made in a study of multilingualism in the NZ Parliament by Stephens and Monk (2012, p. 72) between "language of ritual" and "language of parliamentary debate", as part of a broader argument that Māori language has achieved some recent success in claiming a place as a "civic" language alongside English, including through its "institutionalization" in "*substantive debate*" in parliament (Stephens & Monk, 2012, p. 70, emphasis in original). Stephens and Monk (2012, p. 70) use "language of ritual" to describe instances of Māori use between 1907 and 1986 in the NZ Parliament which were of "a formal or ritualistic nature", specifically chants, *whakatauk* 'ancestral sayings', prayers and incantations. They do *not* describe first speeches as language of ritual. In his application of their categories, Murphy (2020b) considers first speeches and Acknowledgements of Country to be ritualistic, but they are hardly traditional rituals in Stephens and Monk's sense; they are modern, Westminster rituals borne of cultural contact.

I argue that it does not assist the analysis to treat first speeches as ritual language, especially when ritual language use in parliament is then evaluated as insubstantial. Stephens and Monk are not arguing that using Māori language of ritual in the NZ Parliament in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was insubstantial. Rather, Stephens and Monk (2012, p. 73) describe the political importance of all public Māori language use as "transformative magic that reclaims a *kind* of public space for Māori thinking and Māori ways of being" (original emphasis), echoing the value placed on the sociolinguistic work performed by "Blackfella English" and "home" ways of speaking in the Australian research literature quoted earlier in this article, from Tudor-Smith et al. (2024) and Ober (2024b), respectively. By contrast, the increasing use of Indigenous languages in the NZ and Australian parliaments was initially "symbolic or ritualistic", and is only now "used more substantively" and "in the process of becoming more meaningful", Murphy (2020b, pp. 1, 3) writes.

5.1 Something has been lost in translation if symbolism is opposed to meaning

All uses of Indigenous language in my study appear to be making social meaning, specifically in constructing and representing Indigenous identities. This may be symbolic, in the sense that publicly using one of these languages employs language as a symbolic resource and invests it with the symbolic power of the parliament, but that symbolism is politically important. It resists the symbolic domination perpetuated in parliaments through monolingual and standard-centric English practices and norms, and it may even be what Indigenous constituents have specifically asked their MP to do as part of representing them. In the Canadian context, Robert-Falcon Ouellette (2019, p. 5), who pushed successfully for the right to use his language, has reflected that "Elders had previously asked me to ensure that that our ceremonies would be in the House of Commons".

The symbolic importance can be illustrated by examining the "new" Aboriginal languages being used in parliament. In 2013, Kija woman, Josie Farrer, used both Gidja and Kriol in her first speech in the WA Parliament.[47] This is the only instance I have

[47]WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 April 2013, 112–115 (Ms Farrer).

found of use in a parliament of Kriol. Kriol "is spoken by an estimated 20,000 First Nations people across northern Australia – making it the most widely-spoken Aboriginal language in the country today" (see also Key Finding 9 of the *National Indigenous Languages Report*: DITRDC et al., 2020; Vukovljak, 2023). Its large speaker numbers make its representation important even though it is not a traditional Aboriginal language. Ms Farrer describes Kriol as "a form of English, but more in tune with the Indigenous people".[48] Kriol is what linguists term a "contact language", and specifically, a type called a creole. Angelo (2021) has explored the damaging impacts of the lack of recognition of Kriol, and of other creoles such as Yumplatok from Cape York, both in terms of being overlooked by policies and in terms of their speakers being treated within education contexts as deficient speakers of English. Using Kriol in a parliament is a small step in increasing awareness of this as a language in its own right and legitimizing its use.

Moreover, Angelo (quoted in Vukovljak, 2023) notes that Kriol can be a resource for identity construction: "our colonial practices have created certain kinds of new languages that now form the fabric of everyday life for their speakers – how people communicate every day. These languages are also an expression of speakers' identity and culture". It is this capability to express an identity which makes Kriol a resource for representation; its use in a public institution such as parliament makes public a language practice with which people identify and imbues that practice with the respectability of parliament. It is therefore a great shame that Ms Farrer's actual words in Kriol are not transcribed; the Hansard records only: *[Words spoken in Gidja language]* and *[Words spoken in Kriol language]*.[49]

The same argument can be made in general for the many instances of individual Indigenous word use in this study, as practising Indigenous ways of speaking and being on a representative, public stage, and/or representing ways of speaking and being allied with Indigenous peoples. A similar point is made by Ms Burney in the first of her two first speeches (i.e. in NSW, rather than the Cth Parliament) when she explicitly and metalinguistically emphasizes her own use of "Koori English" as part of positioning herself as an Indigenous MP and re-positioning her electorate within an Indigenous geography:

> I want to share with you this evening a picture of Canterbury [her electorate] through the stories of some of the people who live in this deadly part of Sydney. Now listen, you fellas, in Koori English the word "deadly" means "fantastic; fabulous". So if I ever call you "just too deadly", then look out! […] The electorate of Canterbury, like this area of Sydney, is part of the mighty Eora nation. The local group is the Badigal people.[50]

Any language variety can likewise express an identity: that is a premise of the sociolinguistic literature on which this article is based. This is why the use of a marginalized, under-represented language in a valorized, public context can function as an important means of inclusion and resistance to being marginalized. Thus, Yanyuwa woman, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy's, use of *sista girls* and *brutha boys*, in her Cth Parliament first speech, is also substantial though short.[51] Like Kriol, "Koori English" and other Aboriginal Englishes are under-represented not only in parliamentary speech specifically but in

[48]WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 April 2013, 113 (Ms Farrer).
[49]WA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 17 April 2013, 113 (Ms Farrer).
[50] NSW, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 6 May 2003, 295 (Ms Burney). Note that this speech also included an extended use of unnamed (Wiradjuri) language.
[51]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 14 September 2016, 947 (Senator McCarthy).

mainstream and formal speech across the board. That Senator McCarthy's particular words may also be affectionate appellations for Queer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (see e.g. Dias, 2017; Trans Mob, 2021), a doubly marginalized group, further heightens the importance of using these words in parliament.

The importance of language practices in first speeches for identity construction is again made rhetorically by Ms Burney in her Cth Parliament first speech, and similarly in Senator McCarthy's. Both rhetorically connect their use of Indigenous languages in parliament to the bridging of the multiple identities and epistemologies that they represent, the social spaces between which Indigenous people slip and slide, in Ober's terms. Ms Burney was the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person to address the Cth House of Representatives in an Indigenous language (as she had earlier been in NSW), and these words about "journeying" speak of the movement between social spaces which her inter-lingual movement represented:[52]

> Ballumb Ambul Ngunawhal Ngambri yindamarra. Ngadu bang marang Ngadhu Ngu-nha winhanga nha nulabang nguwandang. Ngadhu biyap yuganha. Birrang a ngawaal. Ngadhu, yand yaman gid yal. Yindyamarra. Mandaang. Ngarind-ja. I have just said, in the language of Wiradjuri, my people: "I pay respect to the ancient Ngunawhal and Ngambri. I say this: good day. I am giving my first speech and I am deeply moved. I have journeyed to another place – a powerful place"[.]

Using a similar metaphor of travel, Senator McCarthy connects language, songlines, Country and her own path:[53]

> I am here today starting off with Yanyuwa […] My families, they gave me this language, the language of my country. […] The old people would sing the kujika, the songline. They would follow the path of many kujika, the songlines, like the brolga, the kurdarraku, of my grandmother's country […] I grew up with the old men and women, the marlbu and barrdi bardis, and I am here thinking about them now, and I am thinking about my own path.

Finally, to return to the second part of the general point made above, the language practices spotlighted in this study demonstrate the emergence of Indigenous language practices as a way of non-Indigenous people aligning themselves with Indigenous people. Thus, we see, for example, first speeches using Indigenous languages doing identity work aimed at overcoming boundaries between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. A number of instances of extended language use in the data are first speeches by non-Indigenous MPs, like the 1981 speech of Mr Bell mentioned above. In the Cth Parliament in 1998, the first speech of Senator for the NT, Trish Crossin, a non-Indigenous MP, included:[54]

> I would like to thank the Yolngu people in their own language.
>
> Nhamirr bukmak? Manymak walnga nganapurr nhinan ngarra ga gurrutumirr ngarrak, ngunhal Yirrkala wangangur. Yolngu walal ngarrak djaka, ga gurrutu gathar ngarrak ga marnggikungal ngarran Yolngu Romgu. Buku – wekan mhuma, wanga – watangun Yolngun, nhe ngarrak, djaka. Those words translated mean thank you for welcoming my family and I, for allowing us to live on your land and for the opportunity to understand

[52]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 31 August 2016, 163 (Ms Burney).
[53]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 14 September 2016, 944 (Senator McCarthy).
[54]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, 24 June 1998, 3979 (Senator Crossin).

> your culture. I give a public undertaking to work hard to represent them and to continue to respect and acknowledge their rights.

A similar, strategic use of an Indigenous language for affiliative identity work was evident when then-Prime Minister Turnbull began his 2016 Closing the Gap Ministerial Statement (not a first speech but another "set piece") by acknowledging Ngunawal Country and Elders this way: "Yanggu gulanyin ngalawiri, dhunayi, Ngunawal dhawra. Wanggarralijinyin mariny bulan bugarabang".[55]

More could of course be said with these rich data. It is clear that slipping and sliding between English and Indigenous languages can be a deployment of linguistic resources for MPs constructing public identities in relation to their own and/or their constituents' indigeneity. Unsurprisingly, first speeches, a genre of speech that is about the social action of introducing oneself, appear in these data to be one key site for identity construction through the use of Indigenous language resources, but Indigenous linguistic resources are also increasingly being deployed for public identity work elsewhere in parliamentary speech.

6. Conclusions

It is evident from parliamentary, Indigenous community and media attention that extended uses of Indigenous languages in parliaments are noticed and celebrated as important representations. Having revealed individual word use as a less-noticed empirical phenomenon, this article argues that using either extended tracts of Indigenous languages or individual Indigenous words within English speech in Australia's parliaments is a valuable form of representation of people's diverse ways of speaking, the epistemologies Indigenous languages encode, and the First Nations they co-construct through language practices. These Indigenous language practices are also argued to be important in creating affordances, or social space, for later Indigenous language use and other Indigenous identity practices within parliaments; the instances of extended uses of Indigenous languages, particularly within first speeches, were explored in this regard.

Through examination of Hansard records, the article shows that the use of both traditional and new, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages has increased in many parliaments around Australia. These languages are used not only in first speeches but also in other parts of parliamentary debate – in fact more often not in first speeches – and not only by Indigenous MPs. In total, 86 instances of Indigenous language use were identified in the NT, Cth, WA, NSW, Vic and Qld parliaments. Of the total, 38 instances contained extended language use, and of those, only 14 were first speeches. Much of the language use is clustered in recent debates over legislation with bilingual titles (and sometimes also bilingual content) and around first speeches which feature extended passages of Indigenous language. The clustering in the data arguably shows instances of use are creating "space" within the monolingual norms of parliaments for other instances of use. In this way, the data bear out Ober's (2024a) point that "linguistic shift is one of the conditions that enables slipping and sliding to flow". On other occasions, it is a first speech making use of an Indigenous language which appears to prompt a spike in

[55]Cth, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 10 February 2016, 1171 (Mr Turnbull).

instances of use that same day in a parliament. Moreover, over time, a trend of using Indigenous languages in first speeches is also becoming established for MPs whose parliamentary identity is as a representative of Indigenous communities, whether or not they themselves are an Indigenous person and especially if they are.

My Hansard analysis highlighted two limits to the representation afforded by Indigenous language use in parliaments: the lack of naming of the specific language being used, and the lack of transcription of the content, although Hansard is improving. Doctoral researcher, Anneke Myers, has identified similar gaps in her study of Cth parliamentary committee hearing Hansard, while Stephens and Monk (2012) explain the importance of these gaps having now been overcome in NZ parliamentary reporting. Myers makes an important suggestion that I endorse, namely that parliaments: "could address some of the data limitations through adding metadata to parliamentary records, by using standardised and stable 'language code' fields […] from the AIATSIS languages database, AUSTLANG" (Personal communication on file with the author, 11 February 2024; see further: Myers, 2023). Even this will, however, likely not label or highlight the important uses of Blackfulla English that the data show in parliaments across Australia.

With the focus on first speeches, the data discussed in the article have tended to be instances of extended Indigenous language usage, albeit with a few examples of individual word use. The study has chosen not to assign any language label, such as Australian Aboriginal English, to the instances of parliamentary speech in (any) English which include individual words from Indigenous languages. Some of those speakers are unlikely to count as speakers of Australian Aboriginal English, e.g. non-Indigenous MPs from urban, largely non-Indigenous constituencies in South-Eastern Australia. Sometimes, these individual words are positioned by speakers as novel or multilingual through metalinguistic comments and explanations, other times they are not. Variationists may insightfully extend the analysis of these individual word use data.

For this study it is important, rather, to have highlighted this general type of individual use of Indigenous languages in parliaments as an empirical phenomenon (perhaps phenomena) observable in Hansard – different from extended uses of Indigenous languages in parliamentary speech in frequency and the wider range of speakers, amongst other features – and to have argued that this evolution of English in parliament may also be expanding the representation of Indigenous peoples and identities in these institutions which have been founded both on ideals of democratic representation and of racist exclusion. Grey (under submission) examines the individual word instances further as resources in the construction of Indigenous and political identities, from the perspective of these words' freedom from in-parliament leave-to-speak regulation compared to the leave requirements controlling extended Indigenous language use in some of Australia's parliaments.

Of course, as with other discourses, this parliamentary translanguaging may provide symbolic resources that others then take up in the construction of different social meanings. Piller (2003, p. 181) gives the example of purists decrying the bilingualism of advertising discourse in her own study; I was heartened to find, in my study, little evidence of these instances of Indigenous language use being decried within Australia's parliaments, except for in the NT in 2016 (see e.g. Price, 2016), and even there a change to more inclusive parliamentary rules is evident since 2019. Because these instances of language use are from our parliaments, they have both a level of profile and permanence "on the record"

that individuals' everyday language practices typically do not; they are therefore now also public linguistic resources for others seeking to construct stronger individual and group Indigenous identities. Further scouring of Hansard for resources attributed to Indigenous languages is therefore warranted, and we may hope that improved Hansard transcription, metadata and searchability facilitates future analyses of parliamentary language practices.

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Data availability statement

This paper is based on the referenced resources available in the public domain.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Twelve instances of Indigenous language use in the NT parliament

NT Hansard (unicameral parliament): https://parliament.nt.gov.au/business/parliamentary-record.

Jurisdiction	Date	Spoken by MP or invitee?	Language	Who names this language, how?	Leave required (and granted)?	Ceremonial or Debate (including first speeches)?	Extended use (one phrase or more) / Individual word(s) use?
NT	1981, 2 June	MP – Bell	Pitjantjatjara	Battin (2020)	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended
NT	2008, 11 Sept	MP – Anderson	Central Australian	MP's own description (Western Desert in Battin, 2020)	No	Debate (first ministerial speech)	Extended and Individual word(s)
NT	2008, 11 Sept	MP – Anderson	Central Australian	MP's own description (Western Desert in Battin, 2020)	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
NT	2012, 23 Oct	MP – Price	Warlpiri	MP's own description	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended
NT	2015, 2 Dec	MP – Price	Warlpiri	MP's letter to the Speaker (Price, 2016)	Yes (disputed) (not granted)	Debate	Extended
NT	2016, 18 Oct	MP – Guyula	Not named	Likely Djambarrpuyngu/ Y	Yes (reputedly not)	Debate (first speech)	Individual word(s) (spoken without leave).
NT	2016, 18 Oct	MP – Paech	Not named		No	Debate (first speech)	Individual word(s)
NT	2019, 14 Feb	MP – Guyula	Not named	Likely Djambarrpuyngu/ Yolngu Matha as same MP uses it later in 2019	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
NT	2019, 8 May	MP – Guyula	Djambarrpuyngu	Hansard metacommentary	Yes (granted)	Debate	Extended
NT	2019, 8 May	MP – Uibo	Not named	Likely Yolngu Matha; same MP uses Yolngu Matha the next day	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
NT	2019, 9 May	MP – Guyula	Yolngu Matha	Hansard metacommentary	Yes (granted)	Debate	Extended and Individual word(s)
NT	2019, 9 May	MP – Uibo	Yolngu Matha	MP's own description	No	Debate	Individual word(s)

Appendix B: Eleven instances of Indigenous language use in the Cth parliament

Cth Hansard (bicameral parliament): https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Hansard.

Jurisdiction	Date	Spoken by MP or invitee?	Language	Who names this language, how?	Leave required (and granted)?	Ceremonial or Debate (including first speeches)?	Extended use (one phrase or more) / Individual word(s) use?
Cth	1998, 24 June	MP – Crossin	Gumatj	Battin (2020)	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended
Cth	1999, 25 Aug	MP – Ridgeway	Not named	Within MP's description of self as Gumbayynggir (Gumbayynggir in Battin, 2020)	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended
Cth	2008, 22 Oct	MP – Oakeshott	Aboriginal	MP's own description (Dhanggati in Battin, 2020)	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended
Cth	2013, 18 June	MP – Crossin	Gumatj	MP's own description	No	Debate (valedictory)	Extended
Cth	2013, 26 June	MP – Oakeshott	Dhanggati	MP's own description	No	Debate	Extended
Cth	2016, 10 Feb	MP (PM) – Turnbull	Not named	Gordon (2016)	No	Debate (Ministerial Statement)	Extended
Cth	2016, 31 Aug	MP – Burney	Wiradjuri	MP's own description	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended
Cth	2016, 31 Aug	Invitee – Riley (in gallery)	Wiradjuri	MP's own description	No?	Ceremony (song)	Extended
Cth	2016, 1 Sept	MP – Dodson	Yawuru	MP's own description	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended and Individual word(s)
Cth	2016, 1 Sept	MP – Speaker	Yawuru	MP's own description	No	Debate (inviting first speech)	Extended
Cth	2016, 14 Sept	MP – McCarthy	Yanyuwa	MP's own description	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended and Individual word(s)

Appendix C: Thirty instances of Indigenous language use in the WA parliament

WA Hansard (bicameral parliament): https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/hansard/hansard.nsf/NewAdvancedSearch.

Jurisdiction	Date	Spoken by MP or invitee?	Language	Who names this language, how?	Leave required (and granted)?	Ceremonial or Debate (including first speeches)?	Extended use (one phrase or more) / Individual word(s) use?
WA	2013, 17 April	MP – Farrer	Gidja (alt. spelling Kija) and Kriol	MP's own description and Hansard metacommentary	Yes	Debate (first speech)	Extended and Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 17 June	MP – Farrer	Gidja	MP's own description and Hansard metacommentary	Yes (granted)	Debate	Extended
WA	2015, 19 Aug	MP – Blayney	Wajarri	MP's own description and Hansard metacommentary	Yes (granted)	Debate	Extended
WA	2015, 19 Aug	MP – McGrath	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 19 Aug	MP – Roberts	Noongar	MP's own description	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 19 Aug	MP – Cowper	Kukatja, Walpiri, Pintupi and Jaru	MP is naming languages	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 19 Aug	MP – Freeman	Noongar; then not named	MP's own description; then in quoting from an author described as a Nyungah person.	No	Debate	Extended and Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 19 Aug	MP – Johnston	Gidja	MP's own description	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 19 Aug	MP – Templeman	Noongar	MP's own description	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 19 Aug	MP – Baker	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 8 Sept	MP – Talbot	Not named	Within MP's description of language learnt from Ms Farrer MLA, above	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 8 Sept	MP – Farina	Noongar	MP's own description	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 10 Sept	MP – Dawson	Not named	Within MP's acknowledgement of the Noongar people.	No	Debate	Extended
WA	2015, 14 Oct	MP – Barnett	No named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 18 Nov	MP – Templeman	language of Noongar people	MP's own description	No	Debate	Individual word(s)

(*Continued*)

Continued.

Jurisdiction	Date	Spoken by MP or invitee?	Language	Who names this language, how?	Leave required (and granted)?	Ceremonial or Debate (including first speeches)?	Extended use (one phrase or more) / Individual word(s) use?
WA	2015, 19 Nov	MP – Freeman	Not named	Context talking about and quoting from Noongar people	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2015, 25 Nov	MP – Barnett	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 17 Mar	MP – Saffioti	Not named	Within MP's content about a Noongar hero	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 17 March	MP – McGurk	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 17 March	MP – Quigley	Noongar	MP's own description	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 17 March	MP – Tinley	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 22 March	MP – Collier	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 22 March	MP – McGowan	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 22 March	MP – Wyatt	Noongar	MP quoting legislative recognition statement, legislation names language Noongar	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 22 March	MP – Cook	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 22 March	MP – Barnett	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 10 May	MP – Ellery	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2016, 10 May	MP – Chapple	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
WA	2017, 28 June	MP – Farrer	Gidja	MP's own description and Hansard metacommentary	Yes	Debate	Extended and Individual word(s)
WA	2020, 18 Nov	MP – Farrer	Gidja	MP's own description and Hansard metacommentary	Yes (granted)	Debate (valedictory speech)	Extended and Individual word(s)

Appendix D: Fourteen instances of Indigenous language use in the NSW parliament

NSW Hansard (bicameral parliament): https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/hansard/pages/home.aspx?tab=Browse&s=1.

Jurisdiction	Date	Spoken by MP or invitee?	Language	Who names this language, how?	Leave required (and granted)?	Ceremonial or Debate (including first speeches)?	Extended use (one phrase or more) / Individual word(s) use?
NSW	2003, 6 May	MP	Unnamed and Koori English (same MP names her Wiradjuri use in later speeches)	MP's own description	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended and Individual word(s)
NSW	2014, 26 Mar	MP – Grant	Wiradjuri	MP's own description	No	Debate (member's statement)	Extended and Individual word(s)
NSW	2017, 11 Oct	Invitee – Kelly (in chamber)	Dhungutti (alt. spelling Dhanggati)	MP's own description	Yes (granted)	Ceremony within Debate (second reading speech)	Extended
NSW	2017, 11 Oct	MP – Mitchell	Eora, Gamilaraay, Wiradjuri, Gumbayngirr, Bundjalung and Pakaantji	MP when naming languages	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
NSW	2017, 11 Oct	MP – Green	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
NSW	2017, 11 Oct	MP – Pearce	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
NSW	2017, 18 Oct	MP – Williams	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
NSW	2017, 18 Oct	MP – Wilson	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
NSW	2017, 18 Oct	MP – Crakanthorp	Not named		No	Debate	Individual word(s)

(*Continued*)

Continued.

Jurisdiction	Date	Spoken by MP or invitee?	Language	Who names this language, how?	Leave required (and granted)?	Ceremonial or Debate (including first speeches)?	Extended use (one phrase or more) / Individual word(s) use?
NSW	2019, 7 May	Invitee – Sulter (in chamber)	Not named	(Invitees name themselves as Gamilieraay people but don't name the language)	No	Ceremony (opening term)	Individual word(s)
NSW	2019, 7 May	Invitee – McLaren (in chamber)	Not named	(Invitees name themselves as Gamilieraay people but don't name the language)	No	Ceremony (opening term)	Extended and Individual word(s)
NSW	2019, 7 May	Invitee – Munro (in chamber)	Not named	(Invitees name themselves as Gamilieraay people but don't name the language)	No	Ceremony (opening term)	Extended and Individual word(s)
NSW	2019, 7 May	Invitee – Sulter (in chamber)	Not named	(Invitees name themselves as Gamilieraay people but don't name the language)	No	Ceremony (opening term)	Extended
NSW	2023, 9 May	Invitee – Ingrey (in chamber)	Dharawal	Invitee's own description	No	Ceremony (opening term)	Extended

Appendix E: Eleven instances of Indigenous language use in the Vic parliament

Vic Hansard (bicameral parliament): https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/hansard.

Jurisdiction	Date	Spoken by MP or invitee?	Language	Who names this language, how?	Leave required (and granted)?	Ceremonial or Debate (including first speeches)?	Extended use (one phrase or more) / Individual word(s) use?
Vic	2017, 22 June	Invitee – Kolasa (in chamber)	Woi-wurrung	Invitee's own description	Yes	Ceremony (special resolution, pause to Debate)	Extended and Individual word(s)
Vic	2017, 22 June	Invitee – Hunter (in chamber)	Woi-wurrung	Invitee Kolasa's description	Yes	Ceremony (special resolution, pause to Debate)	Extended
Vic	2017, 22 June	Invitee – Jones (in chamber)	Woi-wurrung	Invitee Kolasa's description	Yes	Ceremony (special resolution, pause to Debate)	Individual words
Vic	2017, 22 June	Invitee – Smith (in chamber)	Woi-wurrung	Invitee Kolasa's description	Yes	Ceremony (special resolution, pause to Debate)	Extended
Vic	2017, 22 June	Invitee – Kolasa (in chamber)	Woi-wurrung	Invitee's own description in her earlier address this day	Yes	Ceremony (special resolution, pause to Debate)	Individual word(s)
Vic	2017, 22 June	Invitee – A Wandin (in chamber)	Woi-wurrung	Invitee Kolasa's description	Yes	Ceremony (special resolution, pause to Debate)	Extended
Vic	2017, 22 June	Invitee – J Wandin (in chamber)	Woi-wurrung	Invitee Kolasa's description	Yes	Ceremony (special resolution, pause to Debate)	Individual word(s)
Vic	2017, 9 Aug	MP – Victoria	Woi-wurrung	MP's own description	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
Vic	2017, 9 Aug	MP – Kilkenny	Not named	Woi-wurrung implied by context – speaking to legislation with Woi-wurrung title	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
Vic	2017, 9 Aug	MP – Watt	Not named	Naming peoples, implied in their languages	No	Debate	Individual word(s)
Vic	2017, 21 Sept	MP – Bath	Wurundjeri	MP's own description	No	Debate	Individual word(s)

Appendix F: Eight instances of Indigenous language use in the Qld parliament

Qld Hansard (unicameral parliament): https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-the-Assembly/Record-of-Proceedings.

Jurisdiction	Date	Spoken by MP or invitee?	Language	Who names this language, how?	Leave required (and granted)?	Ceremonial or Debate (including first speeches)?	Extended use (one phrase or more) / Individual word(s) use?
Qld	2018, 15 Feb	MP – Lui	Unnamed	Battin (2020) says Kala Lagaw Ya	No	Debate (first speech)	Extended and Individual word(s)
Qld	2018, 15 Feb	MP – Speaker of the House	Unnamed	Battin (2020) says Kala Lagaw Ya	No	Debate (in thanks for first speech)	Individual word(s)
Qld	2020, 16 July	MP – Lui	Unnamed		No	Debate	Extended and Individual word(s)
Qld	2020, 8 Sept	MP – Fentiman	Unnamed		No	Debate	Extended
Qld	2020, 8 Sept	MP – Crawford	Unnamed		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
Qld	2020, 8 Sept	MP – Lui	Unnamed		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
Qld	2020, 8 Sept	MP – Rowan	Unnamed		No	Debate	Individual word(s)
Qld	2020, 8 Sept	MP – Berkman	Unnamed		No	Debate	Individual word(s)