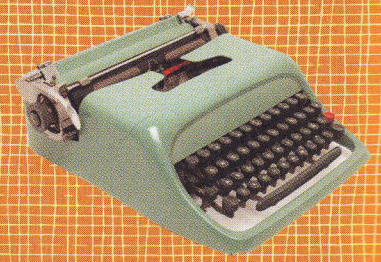


most people aren't very good at spotting lies



DECEPTION RESEARCHER, GINA VILLAR

When I caught up with Gina recently, she explained that, whether they mean to or not, people seem to change their speech when they're lying. Gina is now researching these changes as part of her PhD in deception and false confessions. It's fascinating work, and potentially very valuable to law enforcement, criminal justice and border security professionals.

Gina got interested in this area of criminology while studying the psychology of deception at university. 'I was hooked,' Gina admits. 'I learned that most people aren't very good at spotting lies. More research is needed to help us become better lie detectors; I wanted to be a part of that work.'

For her honours degree, Gina looked at the speech patterns of a convicted murderer. She wanted to see whether some of the clues about truth and deception that had been discovered when looking at the speech patterns of university student volunteers might work in a real-life, high-stakes murder case. The amazing thing was that they did. Realising she was onto something, Gina re-tested these clues under different situations, including during false confessions, to confirm her findings.

The hardest part of Gina's work is collecting the data. She has to recruit and interview hundreds of volunteer participants to gain samples of lying and truthful speech for later comparison. But in spite of all the painstaking work needed to get the data together, Gina is still passionate about deception research. She loves the search for clues. 'It's such a buzz to come up with a new idea and test it out, especially if it works,' she says. So although it may be hard work doing her PhD, Gina says it's well worth the effort.

