

CHANGE MY FOOD – CHANGE MY LIFE

An autobiographical documentary about food and acculturation in
New Zealand

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Exegesis

An exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Communication Studies.

Abstract

Ethnic food and documentary in the New Zealand context have been an area that lacks attention by the public, and there are not many representation films of it. By producing an autobiographical documentary, *Change My Food - Change My Life*, this research project engages with the concept of ethnic food experience and documentary practices based in New Zealand.

This research project contains a production of an autobiographical documentary and an exegesis to document the studies and findings of the project. *Change My Food - Change My Life* explores my experience of changing my diet and stepping out of my comfort zone and how this change affected what I explored as my acculturation process as an international student in New Zealand. Besides, the fundamental concept of the exegesis is to provide a conceptual foundation to support my production of an autobiographical documentary.

In this practice-led research project, I combine an autobiographical approach focused on my personal experience with an interview-based approach that explores the perspective of other international students and a food culture expert. Furthermore, to produce a compelling autobiographical documentary, I developed filmmaking techniques and strategies, including re-enactment, time distorting and montage, based on the framework of action research methodology.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Zihao Ou
18th July 2021

Intellectual Property Declaration

I retain copyright in all images and creative work produced and presented as part of this thesis apart from the following images that are the intellectual property of others listed below in the order they appear in this exegesis:

Figure 1 & 2: *Super-Size Me* (Spurlock, 2004)

Figure 3 & 4: *A Taste of Place: Stories of Food and Longing* (Kothari, 2001)

Figure 5: Look, Act, Think Loop of Action Research Interacting Spiral (Stinger, 2007)

Figure 6: Illustration of the Cyclic Nature of Action Research (De Guzman, 2013)

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Ethics approval and consents

This research received approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH) on 04 of March 2022, for a period of 3 years, until 04 March 2025

ETHICS APPROVAL NUMBER: 21/322

All research was conducted in keeping with the regulations and guidelines of the approval. [Appendix 2]

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Positioning of the Researcher

As an international student from China with a strong food culture background in that my family used to own a restaurant, I have always had a passion for food. However, as a newcomer living in New Zealand, making multiple changes in my life, including food, was not easy. The fear of the new environment, isolation and disconnection made me spend most of time staying in my comfort zone and basically communicating with Chinese students and eating food from my culture.

Things changed after I started eating local food, which I consider the gentlest way to integrate into a new culture. Through food, I made new friends, became more confident, had a better understanding of New Zealand, and got my job. I believe that changing my diet did change my life as well. Furthermore, I have a considerable interest in food documentaries, not only how they capture the incredible moment of the cooking process and the ingredients but also how they discover the relationship between food and humans.

Therefore, I started wondering how changing my diet could help me integrate into this society? What are the changes? And what is New Zealand food exactly? Reviewing this experience of my life could help some international students, newcomers like me, to recognise what changes they need to make and the consequences.

As for film production, I had a few years of experience in photography and did a few short video projects in school, but this is my first experience of making a documentary. I have always had a passion for filmmaking and turning my experience into a documentary is one thing that I am trying to achieve. In this documentary, I intend to reveal the relationship between food and acculturation from my personal experience to encourage people like me to embrace the difference and step out of their comfort zone.

1.2 Background of the Study

As a multicultural country with a great educational foundation, New Zealand has always been an ideal selection for international students. However, this attraction for international students is gradually declining. Based on the Export Education Levy Annual Report (2019), the number of international fee-paying students reduced by 6.7% from 2017 to 2018. The willingness of international students to recommend their institution to others has also fallen 6% from 2013 to 2017 (2017, Think New). Therefore, the life experience of international students in New Zealand is of great concern to the community. This study examines how the use of food to facilitate the acculturation process can help enhance the experience of international students in New Zealand. Fundamentally, this study explores how to portray this acculturation story through a short autobiographical documentary.

In this research, a documentary is selected as the research method to shape the reality of a researcher's personal experience because "...documentary is an important reality-shaping communication because its claim of truth" (Aufderheide, 2008). Also, a documentary as a "creative treatment of actuality" (Grierson, 1933, p. 8) allows the filmmaker to present the facts from their perspective. In this documentary, the actuality is the story of my personal experience, which is connected to other international students, and the creative treatment is the technique I chose to represent reality.

Questions were raised when I decided to explore documentary as filmmaking research to present this story; what part of my experience should I select? How to prove my personal experience is also related to those of other international students? Why should I select documentary for this research project? And what kind of modes should I select for filming this documentary? These are the most important questions that I needed to answer to engage with from the beginning of the project.

This research project is a practice-led research. It consists of a short documentary as the creative component of the research project combined with an exegesis to provide conceptual background and critical reflection. This practice-led research allowed me to explore how food became my motivational force to connect me to the new society and provide insight into minority ethnic consciousness and international student acculturation in New Zealand.

As a country with a multicultural society, there are academic studies focused on migration and diasporic groups but they lack specific to screen production in New Zealand media to contextualise the filmmaking practice that emerged from migrant and diasporic communities in New Zealand (Zalipour, 2019). This

research focuses on documenting and analysing my personal experience through various documentary filmmaking techniques to deliver my opinion on the research question by combining a participatory and performative mode in this documentary. This research contributes to diasporic films within “Asian New Zealand Cinema” (Zalipour, 2015) through autobiographical and participatory documentary techniques and strategies informed by the experience of the work of New Zealand diasporic filmmakers.

By documenting the conditions of acculturation experienced by myself and other Chinese international students in New Zealand, my research provides a better understanding of individual cross-cultural identity to local and international audiences.

1.3 Research Question

This research project focuses on one central question:

How can an autobiographical documentary portray a story of acculturation through food?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research project contributes to film practice and knowledge in the areas of ethnic food and documentary in New Zealand media in relationship to international students' exploration of acculturation strategies, and it also contributes to diasporic film within Asian New Zealand Cinema. Besides, the study, research and practice carried out in this project enhance the researcher's documentary filmmaking techniques and furthers the current scholarship around the documentary and ethnic subjects in New Zealand, an area of practice that Zalipour (2015, 2019) stressed the gap has persisted. Moreover, it provides filmmaking techniques and strategies for a similar type of film production.

1.5 Exegesis Break down

This exegesis includes five chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction

An outline of the personal experiences, theoretical motivation foundational to the research and an overview of the project's main focus.

Chapter Two: A Review of the Contextual Knowledge

The context and background information of this research project and relevant documentaries, in-depth analysis and studies for this research project. Including modes of documentary, acculturation processes, New Zealand context and two film case studies.

Chapter Three: Methodology

A theoretical investigation of practical research, action research and other research methods adopted in this research project.

Chapter Four: Critical Reflections

A reflective journal analysis of the methodology and the filmmaking techniques and strategies behind the documentary.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

An overall conclusion of the research findings, the significance of the research, limitation, and the future research throughout the project.

Chapter 2

A Review of the Contextual Knowledge

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the contextual knowledge related to the key concerns of this research project. These include an overview of the modes of documentary with a focus on participatory and autobiographical modes that helped position my study; New Zealand culture as the context of the study and where my documentary film is based; the ways food and identity are connected; and examples of significant documentaries that are connected to food and the diaspora.

2.2 Modes of documentary

John Grierson (1933) describes documentary as "the creative treatment of actuality" (p. 8), which is one of the most potent means of communication. Aufderheide also indicates that documentary is a "creative treatment" so how the director presents the film affects the audience's attitude (Aufderheide, 2008).

Therefore, the documentary filmmaker needs to consider the impact of the film's content on the public and how to use different filmmaking techniques to convey the core concept or message of the film. To achieve these goals, the filmmaker needs to understand the fundamental functions of documentary. In *Theorizing Documentary* (1993), Michael Renov defined the four fundamental functions of documentary:

1. To record, reveal, or preserve
2. To persuade or promote
3. To analyse or interrogate
4. To express

Three of these fundamental functions apply to this research documentary project: "to record, reveal, or preserve", "to analyse or interrogate", and "to express".

Renov (1993) points out that documentaries always produce a mediated version of reality. Through re-enactment of the subject's experience, the documentary is able to record and reveal the historical real (Renov, 1998) through the camera. However, Renov considered this "real" is "transfigured" (Renov, 1998, p. 25), and it is an "embarrassing failure of authenticity". Because re-enactments may mean that the event being re-enacted exceeds its true value and leads to a matter of authenticity (Renov, 1998). However, this transfigured reality is not worthless, and it provides a "subjective dimension that permeates historical representation" (Renov, 1998, p. 180), which is a perspective that is easily buried by historical fact. In relation to Renov's notion of reality and truth, my research project explores the ways that re-enactment is an example of the transfiguration of reality.

"To analyse or interrogate" is considered as a response "to cognitive requirement" (Renov, 1993, p. 24) in the documentary. It usually "poses and subsequently resolves puzzles or mysteries by means of the characters' activities" (p. 24). Leading the audience through the storyline implies a theory of the filmmaker's understanding of the event. Interviewing and analysing interviewees' differences provides a judgement space for the audience and encourages them to inquire (Renov, 1998) about the facts behind these differences. Therefore, in this documentary, by telling my story it explores my opinion of the relationship between food and acculturation. Furthermore, through interviews with other people I bring in different perspectives and connect my experience to another group of people. This documentary includes two different types of interviews subject to support my theory: university students who share a similar perspective from my generation; and a food and culture expert to provide an academic viewpoint.

The aesthetic function of the expressive is fully reflected in the documentary (Renov, 1998). With the development of photography and editing techniques, their combination in documentary can create "explosive effects" (Renov, 1998, p. 33) to evoke an emotional response from the audience. Renov (1998) considered the aesthetic function enhanced the way of expression to better achieve the purpose of communication in documentary. One of the purposes of this documentary is to express the feeling in certain scenes. A warm and humorous atmosphere is established in these scenes to indicate that the character is enjoying this food discovery journey. It also matches the message this documentary is trying to deliver to the audience: stepping outside one's comfort zone and embracing the experience. The filmmaker's voice and style are the most significant parts of the film, which requires this documentary to express the filmmaker's style. The combination of cinematography and editing presents the artful side

of the work, which should not be against documentation, and can enlarge the target audience (Renov, 1998), eventually establishing the film's tone.

Bill Nichols in his *Introduction to Documentary* (2014) claims “Documentary film speaks about situations and events involving real people (social actors) who present themselves within a framework.” But there is not only one framework. “The desire to come up with different ways of representing the world contributes to the formation of each mode, as does a changing set of circumstances.” Therefore, he identified six types of documentary modes: Poetic, Expository, Observational, Participatory, Reflexive and Performative. These six modes provided a theoretical and practical way to understand documentary and identify its nature based on the selection of filmmaking techniques and characters the filmmaker has used.

The expository mode is one of the most popular and commonly used documentary methods because it addresses the viewer directly and aims to “galvanize support more than compassion” (Nichols, 2014, p. 122) to persuade the audience. It’s about telling rather than showing, which is good for making an argument or telling a story from one point of view. By using evidentiary editing and persuasive voice-over, the expository mode enables one to speak with authority and direct address in the film.

The observational mode aims to capture natural behaviour using “fly on the wall” (Nichols, 2014, p. 137) techniques and avoiding voice over and interview. In observational mode the audience needs to “... make inferences and come to a conclusion on the basis of behaviour we observe and overhear” (Nichols, 2014, p. 133). Observational mode has constantly challenged the audience by putting audiences in an uncomfortable position to watch the film, which Nichols describes as “at the keyhole”. The observational mode relies on the camera's presence while the issue unfolds. Therefore, it is not suitable for telling a historical story.

The participatory mode was also originally referred to as the interactive mode because the filmmaker actively interacts with the subject, usually in the form of interviews. In this mode, the question to the subject will generate conversation. Furthermore, “The actual, lived encounter between filmmaker and subject” (Nichols, 2014, p. 141) emphasises to the audience that this is the truth of interaction instead of absolute truth.

Nichols describes the poetic mode as a "...straightforward transfer of information, the pursuit of a particular argument or point of view..." (Nichols, 2014, p. 116). By seeing and experiencing the world

from a poetic perspective, it emphasises "poetic, associative qualities" (Nichols, 2014, p. 121) over reality and focuses on building the film's tone and mood. Therefore, the Poetic mode leans less on narrative than other modes. Still, poetic documentaries do not abandon reality but emphasise its elements instead of mounting an argument or telling a story.

The performative mode focuses on the filmmaker's involvement and develops the story through the filmmaker's experience to explore a more significant truth and reality. To prove "knowledge can be transferred or exchanged freely" in the documentary, the performative mode gives the filmmaker enormous freedom, often including singing and dancing, montage, re-enactment, and direct address to the camera. It's a mode suitable for subjective storytelling.

The reflexive mode distinguishes itself from other modes by stressing the relationship between the filmmaker and the audience. By revealing how the film is made, it reveals the essence of documentary, "a construct or representation" (Nichols, 2014, p. 125). Therefore, the filmmaking process will be shown to the audience in the reflexive mode to push the audience to reflect and re-analyse their understanding of the truth and "prompt us to question the authenticity of documentary in general". Furthermore, it embraces subjective interpretation, similar to the poetic mode to present a self-awareness to "convince us of the authenticity or truthfulness of representation itself."

This documentary adopts the performative and participatory modes to explore the relationship between international students' daily diet and New Zealand society. It combines re-enactment and interviews in the film and features the filmmaker both being the director leading the audience and being a participant in the film. Since the filmmaker is also the subject, this documentary observes not only the subject's but also the filmmaker's behaviour; the filmmaker's interaction can help the audience focus on the details that might be easily ignored. Observational, reflexive and expository modes are not adopted in this documentary. Because this documentary tells a story that happened in the past from a personal point of view, it does not reveal the filmmaking process to ask the audience to question the film, and this documentary does look for compassion for people who share similar experiences, which are different features from these modes.

To create a compelling autobiographical documentary in this research, I understand the weakness of the performative and participatory modes as a high personal subjective nature leads to difficulty avoiding factual errors, misrepresentation, distortion, and judgmental bias (Nichols, 2014). Therefore, this research

adopts the academic voice of food and culture expert Associate Professor Tracy Berno to support the research argument.

Adopting documentary in this research project provides more space for the researcher to shape the reality that he believes in. Moreover, documentary is one of the best ways to explore a complex issue (Nichols, 2017, p. 64). This research explores questions about eating habits, social life, personal identity, New Zealand food identity and acculturation. Finally, the researcher of this project considers the subject's image and sound as important as research related to food: image and sound bring more sensory satisfaction and a clear recognition to the viewer. Therefore, documentary as the creative component in this practical research is a valid method for exploring it.

2.3 Performative mode

The performative mode is very personal and is particularly suited to telling the stories of filmmakers from marginalized social groups. It provides the opportunity to express a unique point of view without having to argue about the validity of their experiences and is referred to by Nichols (2014) as a "subjective, affect-laden phenomenon" (p. 149). In the performative mode, filmmakers have more space for creative visualization and narrative in the filmmaking process.

One of the common features of the performative mode is combining the actual and the imagined through memory (Nichols, 2014). Due to the "subjective qualities of experience and memory", the performative documentary allows the filmmaker to bring the audience to the subjective world and "creatively embellish" (Nichols, 2014, p. 150) an actual event to enhance the audience's emotional involvement in the situation. In this documentary, by adopting re-enactment and time distortion techniques, a scene is creatively established in which the filmmaker experiences the illusion of returning to his hometown. This embellishes a life experience and emphasises the characters' inner loneliness and sense of loss.

The researcher acknowledges the limitation of lack of objectivity in performative mode due to the subjectivity and the filmmaker's personality this documentary tries to emphasise. However, *Change My Food - Change My Life* is focused on sharing the filmmaker's voice. By using creative filmmaking techniques like a subjective lens, re-enactment, dolly zoom, and directly talking to the camera to share the filmmaker's experience and feelings, this documentary can engage with the audience, and evoke the audience's emotional response and empathy. It helps to send a message from the documentary that

encourages international students to step out of their comfort zone and embrace cultural differences. Therefore, the performative is considered a valid mode to adopt in this documentary.

2.4 Participatory mode

Participatory documentaries feature interaction between the filmmaker and the subject, which can drive the audience to experience the film through the director's perspective (Aufderheide, 2008). The interview is the major tool in the participatory documentary. It allows the filmmaker to interact with the subject and have a certain control over the interaction. Therefore, interviews become a valuable tool to create interaction and collect information for the filmmaker and also one of the most commonly used techniques in participatory mode (Nichols, 2014). Shuchi Kothari's documentary *A taste of Place: Stories of food and Longing* (2001) connects people and food through interviews that reveal their "own distinctive diasporic histories" (Zalipour, 2019, p. 146) in New Zealand. Interviews are able to reveal these diasporic histories directly in the subject's own words and allow them to speak for themselves. Besides, in the interview, the audience is able to see the subject's response "to represent broad social issues and historical perspectives" (Nichols, 2014, p. 143) which indicates that in participatory mode, the filmmaker is trying to present a relatively objective truth that can be self-evident to most people.

Compared to other documentary technique like observation, instead of maintaining a neutral position, interviews allow the filmmaker to have more control over the communication with the subject and improve efficiency in the filmmaking process. However, interviews initiated by filmmakers may lead to inevitable subjective, purposeful communication during the interview. This means the response from the interviewee will be controlled by the filmmaker on certain levels and could affect the subjectivity of the interviewee. However, in this documentary, a certain level of control in the interview is acceptable to establish the subjective truth significant to the filmmaker.

In this documentary, by adopting the participatory mode, the researcher will take on the role of both the filmmaker and participant in the story. Through voice-over and re-enactment, looking back at the filmmaker's life experiences from his perspective, the audience sees the interviews are affected by the earlier scenes and can feel the filmmaker's emotions as he appears in the scene. Through voice-over and re-enactment, the audience can empathize with the story as the filmmaker portrays his experience. In addition, through interviews, the filmmaker can relate his experiences to audiences providing a more critical conclusion to the story.

2.5 Autobiographical documentary

In Bill Nichols's *Introduction to Documentary* (2014), he defines the autobiographical documentary as a "Personal account of someone's experience, maturation, or outlook of life." (p. 107). The autobiographical documentary's highly personal nature allows the filmmaker to "integrate different ideas, feelings and experiences" (De Jong, 2011, p. 111) and freely express themselves directly to the audience (De Jong, 2011).

Furthermore, in an autobiographical documentary, the filmmaker can attest to or implicitly point out broader underlying social issues without invoking them explicitly (Nichols, 2014). Nichols indicates that autobiographical documentary allows marginalised groups to speak for themselves (Nichols, 2014) to "...break a silence and by doing so lessen the isolation and despair that we often experience, both personally and culturally" (De Jong, 2011, p. 4).

De Jong (2011), in *Creative Documentary: Theory and Practice*, suggests that autobiographical documentary is challenging to the "disembodied knowledge and fact" (p. 2) that classic documentary represented and "... emphasises more uncertain, incomplete and complex, unstable patterns of knowledge in our world" (p. 2). Therefore, in autobiographical documentaries, the 'voice' of the film plays a more critical role than before (De Jong, 2011).

In this order to emphasise the filmmaker's voice in this autobiographical documentary, *Change My Food - Chang My life* used filmmaking techniques and strategies such as time distortion, re-enactment and montage to present his ideas, feelings and experiences. These techniques also help this documentary directly reveal the isolation and separation experienced by the Chinese international student community to the audience. Finally, by showing the filmmaker's experience of stepping out of his comfort zone through food, one of the documentary's goals is to break the silence and reduce isolation among the international student community.

2.6 Acculturation, adjustment and integration

"Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield, 1936, p. 149).

Cross-culture psychology has proven a strong relationship between individual behaviour development and cultural context. (Berry, 1997) Typically, individuals in a new culture or society are affected by cultural influences and expectations (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992) because the interaction with other cultural groups is an unavoidable objective reality. Such strong influences raise a question: how will individual behaviour react to the new environment? This question must be dealt with between all plural societies, cultural groups, and individuals (Berry, 1997).

To answer this question, two core concepts need to be mentioned: cultural maintenance and contact and participants (Berry, 1997). The former indicated the cultural identity and characteristics, and the latter indicated how much individuals were involved in other cultures. At the same time, the problem of personal culture loss is rising as well.

Berry (1997) identified four acculturation strategies:

- Assimilation (Individual rejects their original cultural identity)
- Separation (Individual maintains their cultural identity and avoids interacting with other cultural groups)
- Integration (Willing to maintain both of their cultural identities and also maintain a certain level of cultural integrity)
- Marginalisation (The individual is separated from all cultural groups including themselves)

Crossing cultural barriers is always challenging for outsiders. Acculturation requires mutual adaptation of the individual and society. Berry (1997) states that successful integration requires individuals to study and accept the local culture and that the dominant social group is open and culturally diverse. In addition, he argues that immigrants need to participate in the larger dominant group rather than remain in immigrant and ethnocultural groups. In this documentary, to discover the relationship between food culture and acculturation in New Zealand, the researcher chose two interviewees, Linda and Wendy, who have similar social status and economic conditions but different acculturation strategies. Wendy chooses the integration and Linda chooses the separation acculturation strategies. Talking to them about their changes in eating habits and New Zealand food culture helps the researcher understand their level of acculturation and the reasons behind it.

However, there is also a risk of failure in acculturation, which might lead to marginalisation (Pumariega et al., 2005). The concern of “a new language, new customs, and new values and belief systems, and their security in their established cultural practices” (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 586) becomes the limitation of individuals

assimilating major changes. It could lead to two extreme situations: a marginalisation that separates from their own culture and the mainstream culture or an assimilation that over-identifies with the mainstream culture value and abandons their own culture (Pumariega et al., 2005). These risks are also an important part of this documentary revealed by the interviewee's experience combined with the filmmaker's fear of stepping out of his comfort zone in the early stage of acculturation. Showing different reactions to the acculturation process offers a dialectical perspective to the documentary.

As an immigrant country, New Zealand is an open and culturally diverse country that could be considered as an ideal place for acculturation which can improve immigrants willing to integrate (Berry, 1997). In this documentary, the major line of the story is my acculturation journey changing from the separation to the integration strategies and I identified myself as an integrator: "there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network" (Berry 1997). The scene of me discovering different restaurants and trying different food showing I was trying to study New Zealand and reveal that I am starting actively to involve society because of my psychological change. Therefore, acculturation theory provides a theoretical background to the behaviours and events within this research documentary.

2.7 New Zealand culture as the context of the study

One of the topics that kept coming up in this documentary was the issue of New Zealand's identity. The interviewees were confused about what New Zealand food is. Therefore, this documentary raises another question: What is New Zealand food? Based on this question, the researcher believes that there is a need to introduce the New Zealand food culture background. In addition, "We are what we eat" (Ludwig Feuerbach, 1848) embodies the idea that food culture can also reflect social culture, therefore, studying New Zealand food culture can provide a cultural context for this documentary.

Food culture is one of the characteristics of local identity (Trubek, 2008). According to Bell and Valentine (1997), "food has long ceased to be just about sustenance and nutrition. It is imbued with social, cultural and symbolic meanings". Thus, food identity can be considered as part of the "cultural politics of symbolism" (Pearson & Kothari, 2007) of national identity. However, when it comes to food, New Zealand actually lacks a distinct cultural identity." (Pearson & Kothari, 2007)

As a country once controlled by the British, New Zealand's food culture was and continues to be influenced by the British (Shirley, 2019). In addition, globalization has created more immigrants (Nijman, 1999), leading

to a more diverse population in New Zealand. New immigrants and new businesses have changed the meaning of New Zealand culture and identity (Nijman, 1999) and created a multicultural style of eating." We are a melting pot of cultures," says Elizabeth Latham (2021, p. 228).

Some voices argue that this multicultural style of food is dying and that food is being used to "exclude and marginalize New Zealand's ethnic communities" (Pearson & Kothari, 2007). However, some argue that this diversity is part of New Zealand's food culture (Latham, 2021). However, there is a consistent theme that New Zealand food needs to find its voice within the food culture (Latham, 2021). The government seems to be more concerned with food exports: "We celebrate the food we export, but not the food experience at home" (Latham, 2021, p. 228).

In previous research on the identity of New Zealand food, most of the work has focused on the food industry, including restaurants, dishes, ingredients, and history, which is an under-study of people." "Humans are what they eat" (Brillat-Savarin, 1994). By analysing people's eating habits, this study can identify the influence of New Zealand's food culture on people. Therefore, one of the objectives of this study was to identify the distress caused to international students by the lack of specific types of New Zealand food by interviewing international students to describe what they consider to be New Zealand food.

It has been proven that New Zealand's food is very diverse and reflects the multicultural population and the patterns of immigration. This research considers this as a prerequisite and aims to explore this issue in depth by analysing the variations in the subject of eating habits, locating the differences and changes, and seeking the relationships between food and the acculturation process. In addition, by showing New Zealand food in images, the audience can clearly understand New Zealand food.

2.8 Examples of documentaries related to food and identity

Food documentaries and television as programmes that can satisfy viewers' desires for emotional, physical and social pleasure by watching the cooking process and discussing and eating the food (Adema, 2000). This has become one of the most popular mediums for spreading food culture in New Zealand (Pearson & Kothari, 2007). In addition, documentaries also reflect social issues through the evolution of food and drink, such as *Gourmet Inc* (2008), which points out that the food industry controls what people eat. In *A Bite of China* (2012), the exploration of local food reveals the relationship between humans and nature. Back in New Zealand, the conflicting relationship between New Zealand society and immigrant food culture is explored in *A Taste of Place: Stories of Food and Longing* (2001). However, a different

perspective is held in *A Nation of Immigrants* (1994), which argues that ethnic differences and the convenience of ethnic food being included in a multicultural ethnic imaginary (Pearson & Kothari, 2007) demonstrates the inclusiveness of New Zealand's national culture. Both documentaries subconsciously define New Zealand food as multicultural, which is seen as an answer to the lack of culture and uniqueness.

Change My Food - Change My Life focuses on the lived experience and change of eating habits with the filmmaker in New Zealand. It is a story of how a Chinese international student stepped out of his comfort zone by exploring the relationship between international students and New Zealand food. The interview with international students is one important part of the documentary to reveal the relationship between international students, the acculturation process and food. Therefore, this research addresses two main questions: how do we describe food and identity issues in an autobiographical documentary? And how do we construct effective interview content?

Here are two film case studies that contributed to this documentary *Super-Size Me* (2004) and *A Taste of Place: Stories of food and Longing* (2001):

Super-Size Me (2003)

This autobiographical documentary presents the filmmaker's personal experience and ideas through telling the story from the filmmaker's point of view; it is a highly personal production.

Director Morgan Spurlock, in his social experiment on fast food cuisine, *Super-Size Me* (2004), tells the story of how fast food endangers human health by setting a strict daily diet and activity rule of eating only McDonald's for 30 days and walking less than 5,000 steps per day. *Super-Size Me* (2004) is a documentary that represents "the prominence and extremes of opinion" (Bloomfield & Sangalang, 2014) as it sets up an extreme experimental environment for the participants to present the picture the filmmakers are seeking. As director Spurlock explained in an interview with Matt Holzman (2013), he was not initially in the film, but he could not ensure that the actors followed the rules to the letter, so he had to be involved in the film to ensure that every rule in the film was followed. Therefore, he could build trust and connection between the film and the audience.

What this study has in common with *Super-Size Me* (2004) is the attempt to represent the voice of a small part of society by telling a personal story about the filmmaker's acculturation process and gaining insight

into the existing isolation and separation situation among international students. This study initially considered using other people as the protagonists to tell the story. However, after discussions with supervisors and influenced by *Super-Size Me* (2004), the researcher considered that the filmmaker, as the main character, would build a stronger relationship between the film and the audience and help the filmmaker express emotions and thoughts that would elicit empathy from the audience.

Another prominent feature of *Super-Size Me* (2004) is the dramatic camera language, including animation, special effects and the huge size change of his body combined with argumentative footage showing different perspectives on the event. Bloomfield and Sangalang (2014) attempt to explain this feature using Burke's (1941) concept of synecdoche, a "microcosm of the larger discourse" (p. 144), which means the producer uses a microcosm as a metaphor for the entirety. It implies that the filmmakers use their personal experiences to relate to the public discourse. In *Super-Size Me* (2004), Spurlock uses the language of a dramatic lens to tell his personal story/experiment and an argumentative lens to interview various industry-relevant participants. This combination of lenses reveals the current relationship between the individual's health and the food industry giants and state. Similarly, this documentary aims to use a dramatic lens to tell the filmmaker's acculturation story and interview relevant participants to reveal the current state of separation and isolation among international students.



Figure 1 *Super-Size Me* (2004) Spurlock struggles with the supersize meal

In one scene, Spurlock eats an oversized meal in his car; he struggles to finish the meal without breaking the rules and ends up vomiting. A combination of shots from different angles and long shots shows how long the meal took and Spurlock's reaction, emphasizing his struggle and pain. In addition, showing this struggle reveals the relationship between Spurlock and the film, both filmmaker and participant. The audience can observe his behaviour and reactions, which improves the persuasiveness of the film.



Figure 2 *Super-Size Me* (2004) Spurlock gets sick because of overconsumption

Spurlock's overconsumption later in this film led his body to react and become sick. Spurlock uses his medical test results as one way of persuading the audience that the diet he has adopted is unhealthy. To enhance the effect, Spurlock uses a more emotive, subjective camera language by superimposing multiple shots to indicate the changes in his body.

This subjective approach leaves *Super-Size Me* (2004) open to attack. *Fat Head* (2009) is a documentary that aims to prove *Super-Size Me* (2004) "was entertaining, but also dishonest and illogical" (Ammi, 2011, p. 5). *Fat Head* (2009) argues its case using a massive number of expert interviews, scientific terms and statistics to make this documentary feel factual and objective. However, both films are trying to provide insight into the national health debate and situation. Using documentary as a visual argument contributes to public deliberation (Bloomfield & Sangalang, 2014), successfully attracts public attention and sparks discussion around fast food.

By using dramatic camera language and editing techniques, Spurlock can emphasise the emotion in the scene and separate himself from the film to successfully catch the audience's attention and build trust with them. *Super-Size Me* (2004) is a significant point of reference for my project as an important autobiographical documentary related to food and humans. How Spurlock established himself as a dramatic character has given me ideas about establishing my character as a filmmaker and participant. In this research project, I aim to develop an autobiographical documentary that tells my story, contributes to

the international students and newcomers in New Zealand, and creates understanding and empathy among them.

A Taste of Place: Stories of Food and Longing (2001)

In filmmaker Shuchi Kothari's documentary *A Taste of Place: Stories of Food and Longing* (2001), she is also the main character of the film. Shuchi Kothari is engaging in developing minorities' representation in the media in New Zealand (Zalipour, 2019). In *A Taste of Place* (2001), Kothari uses her experience as a new immigrant to interview other immigrants while preparing and eating food from their culture, to reveal their "own distinctive diasporic histories" (Zalipour, 2019, p. 146). Kothari considers food a powerful metaphor, a powerful way of maintaining connections with the home country (Zalipour, 2019). The emotions that arise around food from home are mixed, including pleasure, tension, conflict and sadness (Zalipour, 2019).

A Taste of Place (2001) strongly affects this research project by how it connects people and food through interviews. Three parts in *A Taste of Place* have contributed to this research project: identifying and description of the food, interview techniques, and personal experience storytelling.

As Kothari describes in the interview with Zalipour (2019), "food is home and comfort, but it travels with you." and "It's important for carrying cultural identity in its tastes and rituals." (p. 148). It reveals the core of food, and it is a bridge to people's roots that lead people back to their comfort zone. Especially when people living in diaspora struggle with an identity full of displacement and uncertainty as Kang (2012) describes as his personal experiences in New Zealand (Zalipour, 2016). Food from their culture could provide a sense of peace and pleasure in their diaspora life. In reflecting on this research project, it answers why I mostly ate Chinese food and communicated with Chinese people. Because I was uncertain about my identity and position in this society, Chinese food became something that could bring me peace and pleasure.



Figure 3 A Taste of Place: Stories of Food and Longing (2001) Shuchi Kothari interviewing people in the cooking process.

During interviews, one of the most critical things Kothari did was to interview people not only when they are sharing food but also in the food preparation process. One of the biggest problems I met in pre-interview was that interviewees could not relax in front of the camera, and their minds became stuck on the question, which led to the conversation becoming very short and unable to achieve my expectations. What Kothari actually did was give the interviewee a task and let them talk in a familiar and comfortable environment, making the interview less formal and becoming like a conversation between friends. This interview technique is adopted in my film by having a food party with the interviewees after the interview to provide a more friendly environment.



Figure 4 *A Taste of Place: Stories of Food and Longing* (2001) Shuchi Kothari buying “New Zealand food” for her family

How Kothari combines her personal experience with interviews is also an excellent reference for my project. Through portraying more than one storyline combined with her own experience. It allows her to compare with other interviewees’ stories and gives the audience different angles to see the question. *Change My Food - Change My Life* also uses this technique to parallel the filmmaker and the interviewees to provide various perspectives of Chinese international students’ life in New Zealand.

Besides, telling Kothari’s personal experience gives the filmmaker more space to shape the film deeper or more multidimensionally. In one scene, Kothari tries to buy some New Zealand food as a gift to send back to her country at the airport. She gets confused because she has no idea what New Zealand food is and eventually buys some chocolate and honey. This short scene pushes forward the storyline and reflects the lack of identity of New Zealand food, which has added more layers to the film. In *Change My Food – Change My Life* the filmmaker also tries to explore the question of what New Zealand food is to push forward the story and provide more background information on New Zealand food culture to the audience.

I admire the reality reflected in *A Taste of Place* (2001) and how the director uses cinematography and editing effectively to evoke emotion. By portraying different storylines, it not only catches the audience’s attention but also gradually develops the filmmaker’s character, which makes it a journey of self-identification. I aimed to adapt these concepts and techniques for my own practical research process to

provide additional context and a better environment for my own autobiographical experiences and the interview process.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the key concepts and ideas related to this project, including John Grierson's (1933) original definition of documentary; Michael Renov's (2011) definition of the fundamental documentary functions; the different ways documentary addresses the audience, which Bill Nichols (2014) calls documentary modes; and John Berry's (1997) acculturation concept and strategies. As well as background information about New Zealand food culture, I have discussed two examples of food documentaries: *Super-Size Me* (2004) and *A Taste of Place: Stories of Food and Longing* (2001). Even though they both show the director in the film, they have different approaches that would inform my practice in making my own film.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Practice-led Research

This research project is based on a practice-led research format (also known as ‘creative practice research’ or ‘screen practice as research’) and uses filmmaking as the research methodology. It is guided by an action research method as the overall method to produce an autobiographical documentary. This project employs several research methods, including collecting reflective journals, collecting feedback and employs an iterative method to develop techniques and strategies for documenting the cause-and-effect relationship between an international student changing their diet and the acculturation process. Furthermore, as the nature of this research is gathering data from the researcher’s reflections in general and the filmmaking process to contribute knowledge to this practice (Batty & Kerrigan, 2018), this research is defined as practice-led research (see AUT Handbook of Postgraduate Studies).

Batty & Kerrigan (2018) assert that "Creative practice methodologies are preferred in screen production because they reveal research insights into how audio-visual meaning is made from the perspective of the creator/s of a screen work." (p. 11). This emphasises the importance of the filmmaking researcher maintaining a subjective position in their research. Because in creative practice research of screen production, the researcher is also the screening producer that "...can take on an insider's perspective that values the researcher's subjective position" (Batty & Kerrigan, 2018, p. 25) and provide an insight exclusive from other research conclusions (Batty & Kerrigan, 2018).

Furthermore, as a screen production by a researcher guided by a research question, this research will benefit from understanding ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods, which will ensure the final product is logical, academically rigorous, and has creative integrity (Kerrigan 2018).

In practice-led research, the focus of 'creative' has been considered as a "production of novelty that is judged as being unique and valuable by peers" (Batty & Kerrigan, 2018). Here, 'creative' means the research data could be gathered through creative means and/or expressed through a creative product, a documentary film in the case of this project. It separates into two modes: gaining new knowledge through the creative process or through practice or creative product (Batty & Kerrigan, 2018). In this research, the

re-enactment of the researcher's own experience combined with interviews becomes the creative process, a form of gathering qualitative data. The qualitative data is contributed to the final production of an autobiographical documentary and the exegesis.

Batty & Kerrigan (2018) suggest that all researchers declare their ontology in their research as ontologies “are like a skin not a sweater; they cannot be put on and taken off whenever the researcher sees fit” (Marsh & Furlong 2002, p. 18). To get more specific, Bryman identifies two opposing ontological modes: 'constructionism' and 'objectivism' (2012, p. 32–34). Objectivism features seeing the world through an objective angle, "an ontological position that implies that social phenomena confront us as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence" (Bryman 2012, p. 32). Constructionism features seeing the world through a subjective angle that can "accommodate subjectivity" (Batty & Kerrigan, 2018, p. 18). Based on the highly personal nature of this research project, it fits well within the constructionism paradigm. Because this research is investigating from my point of view, it is with subjectivity. Theoretically, there will be no objective fact and statement that I can argue due to the subjectivity of the project. As part of the research subject, my acculturation experience is fundamental to the research. The epistemological questioning of my acculturation process and diet change became the root of my autobiographical documentary in this research.

3.2 Action research

The concept of action research was initially developed by social psychologist Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1946) and later became an action research movement in Britain (Double Exposure & Flashback TV, 2006). Action research is originally from the discipline of Education. In *Action Research* (2006), in St George’s Infants, a local primary school, action research was used for helping international students integrate into school life, and teachers improve their teaching quality. Using a cycle of reflective research, inquiry, interview, and other methods helped faculty researchers understand the situation by gathering data from various perspectives. This data eventually contributed to the planning process, creating a virtuous cycle. Stringer (2007, original 1996) describes the general process of action research as “a continually recycling set of activities” (p. 8-9) then he brings out three fundamental modes: Look (Gather information and build a picture); Think (Explore and analyse, Interpret and Explain); and Act (Plan, Implement, Evaluate). Winter and Munn-Giddings (2005), in their discussion of action research, describe feedback as "a process which alternates continuously between inquiry and action, between practice and innovative thinking" (p. 5) that fills the age-old problem gap between 'theory' and 'practice'. However, some voices consider this

'look, think, act mode' to be focused on "reliability," "validity", and "objectivity", which is "against humanistic values" (Fishman, 1997). One of the solutions to protect the 'humanistic values' is to let the participant be involved in the research and allow them to control and voice the situation.

In this research project, I aimed to explore how changing daily diet could help international students and newcomers improve their acculturation process. This project shares a similar concept with the local primary school in *Action Research* (2006): both aim to help people adapt to a new environment. Therefore, my research and exegesis become the 'look' and 'think' process, and then the short autobiographical documentary becomes the 'act' in the action research in general.

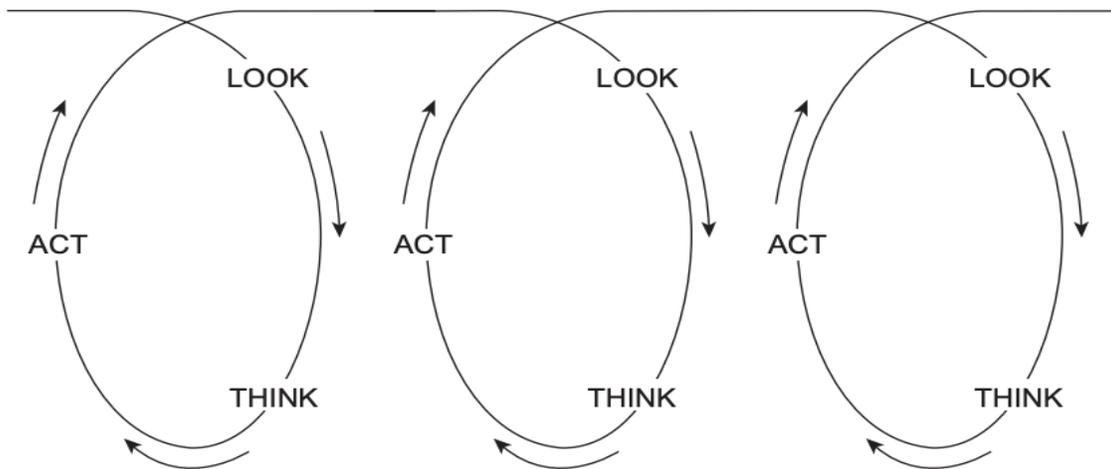


Figure 5 Look, Act, Think loop of Action Research Interacting Spiral (Stinger, 2007)

Regarding the filmmaking process, action research provides a useful tool for establishing a reflexive environment for examining ideas (De Guzman, 2013). De Guzman (2013), in his master's project, developed an optimized mode (Figure 6) (De Guzman, 2013) for action research adopted in the filmmaking process. The filmmaking process includes narrative, cinematography, editing, and different aspects to be developed and considered; using action research helps test and evaluate each decision in a reflexive environment (De Guzman, 2013). In this research project, action research has been adopted throughout the entire filmmaking process, including research, scriptwriting, interviewee selection, storyboard, shooting, lighting, audio, editing, special effects, pick-up shots, sound effects and music. Theoretically, each stage should be reflected and modified in post-production because there are unexpected human or objective factors in the filmmaking process that might affect the production. Therefore, each stage could overlap and be different.

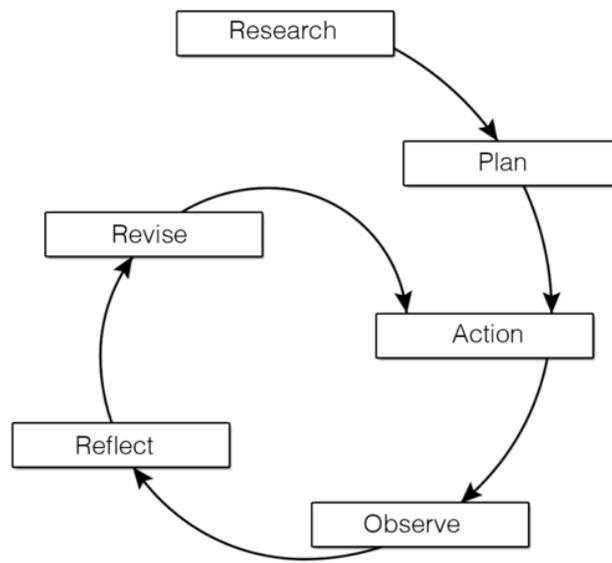


Figure 6 Illustration of the cyclic nature of action research (De Guzman, 2013)

3.4 Research Methods

In this project, in order to develop action research interacting spiral loop (Figure 5) of ‘Look, Think, Act’, this research employs several research methods, including collecting reflective journals, collecting feedback and iterative method. Collecting a reflective journal helps the researcher ‘Look’ at the project and receive information from the entire research process. For the ‘Think’ part, collecting feedback from the supervisors allows the researcher to review the project from various perspectives and locate mistakes in the project that the researcher might ignore. The iterative method plays an important role in this project, especially in the interview process. Through pre-interview, the researcher can find out the gaps and problems within the interview and interview questions to better prepare for the actual interview. With these methods, this research project is able to locate problems and “Act” to respond to step forward to the next loop and continually refine the project.

The information about the interviewees (participants) and research questions are presented in the next chapter while also reflecting on the process in the course of filmmaking.

3.5 Limitations and Obstacles

As an international student and a rookie filmmaker, doing research and shooting in an unfamiliar environment is always a challenge. This unfamiliarity might lead to problems:

- Misunderstanding in communication with the interviewee.
- How to follow the cultural norms to avoid disrespectful actions during the interview.
- How to deal with unpredictable situations during the filmmaking process.
- How to perform in front of the camera.
- How to balance both roles as a filmmaker and a performer in the documentary.
- How to safely shoot under the Covid situation to protect both participant and myself.

3.6 Goals for the Project

In general, this research aims to discover the relationship between changing diet and acculturation by including perspectives of other Chinese international students to explore their reactions and experiences of changing diet and social activity compared with my own experience; therefore, to breaking a silence and lessening isolation of the international student social group (especially the Chinese international student group).

As previously discussed, one of my goals was successfully playing two roles in this project: the filmmaker and the subject of the documentary. To clarify, the subject here is a narrator, performer and interviewer.

Furthermore, in this autobiographical documentary, my intention was to elicit empathy from the audience. Films in the performative mode “primarily address us emotionally and expressively rather than factually” (Nichols, 2014, p. 152). This allows me to avoid some objective obstacles to focus on “... heightened emotional involvement to a situation or role” (Nichols, 2014, p. 151) which required using mixed expressive techniques to help me perform in the film.

3.7 Research Outputs

The two primary outputs of this research project are a short documentary and this exegesis.

As creative practice research, the creative production outcome in this research is a well-constructed short documentary that intends to prove the positive relationship between changing diet and acculturation.

Besides new findings through reflexive analysis in action research, pre-production research learnings, narrative strategies, filmmaking techniques, and practical research data from interviewing documentary subjects, the final autobiographical documentary is documented in the next chapter of critical reflection.

3.8 Conclusion

In this practice-led research, I have employed action research as the framework for the research method of an iterative method, collecting feedback and collecting reflective journals because they are able to adapt to the needs of the project. Simultaneously, making a documentary requires experimenting with different filmmaking techniques and strategies, which requires a proper system to help me test my decisions and refine my ideas. These methods enable my ideas to combine with academic resources and critical reflection to gather data and develop creative outcomes.

Chapter 4

Critical Reflection

This chapter is a critical reflection of the project's creative process, including filmmaking, behind-the-scenes analysis, and decision-making.

According to Russell and Kelly (2002), using the researcher's journal to examine "personal assumptions and goals" and to clarify "personal belief systems and subjectivity" (p. 2) is a strategy to help the researcher maintain subjectivity during the reflexive analysis of the research process.

A reflective journal is written from a first-person perspective, indicating that the writing is subjective. In a reflective journal, the researcher is encouraged to identify new findings in the study, which means that the researcher can discuss hypotheses, experiences, and actions. In addition, the purpose of reflective journaling is for the researcher to "learn from themselves and others" (Russell & Kelly, 2002). Therefore, documenting the decision-making process is also an essential element of reflective journaling.

Furthermore, the action of writing down ideas prompts the researcher to develop and rationalize ideas and combined with critical thinking, reflective journaling enables research to broaden perspectives and discover research possibilities (Russell & Kelly, 2002). However, reflective journals also need to avoid the problems of hindsight bias and confidentiality disclosure. Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher will strive to avoid several of these issues through timely documentation and independent writing that happened in the process of this research-filmmaking project.

4.1 My personal stories

As De Jong (2011) says, an autobiographical documentary is a highly personal film to "witness our lives in all their variation", which lives are "untidy and contradictory" (p. 4). In *Change My Food – Change My Life*, my changing diet to integrate into New Zealand society also comes with my fear of losing my identity during the acculturation. These struggles raise an ontological question about my identity in this cross-cultural society. The answer to the question reflected in this documentary is that I am trying new food, meeting new people, and maintaining a connection with people from my culture. In acculturation theory, this shows I am an integrator; based on this identification, the epistemology question of how food helps me integrate into this society is rising, which could summarise what the relationship between

changing diet and acculturation contributes to crossing cultural boundaries. Based on the previous review of acculturation combined with my personal experience, I decided to put my personal story on the screen. As De Jong (2011) discussed in *Creative Documentary: Theory and Practice*, there are common ingredients for a strong documentary: “a compelling narrative; a strong concept or form; engaging central characters and the depiction of a particular world” (p. 58). Guided by this conclusion, a general summary of this documentary is formulated: ‘A Chinese international student trying to change his life through changing his eating habits’.

At an early stage of the project, I questioned my identity as a participant in this study. What is my role in this society? As an international student, I am trying to integrate into New Zealand society, but most international students focus more on their lives and cultural experience abroad rather than on integrating into the society. Therefore, I wondered whether I had chosen the wrong direction in this study. As the project developed, I had a clearer idea of my identity. As someone pursuing and seeing myself within the the Integration strategy (Berry, 1997), I am maintaining my cultural identity and being willing to accept a certain level of cultural integrity maintenance from other cultures. However, in my early days in New Zealand, I pursued the Separation strategy that avoided interaction with other cultural groups (Berry, 1997). Then the question arises: what makes me change? And what makes me different from others? The answer came from the interviews with two international students when I asked them, “Why did you choose to study in New Zealand?” Linda, whose answers fit within the Separation strategy, said, “It was a family decision”, and she would likely return to her country after graduation. Conversely, I believe Wendy’s approach fits within the Integration strategy, and she stated it was primarily a personal choice for her.

Similarly, I am one who decided to study in New Zealand, it was my personal choice, and I believe it was the right choice. In order to prove it, I had to do something different from other international students, like actually living in New Zealand. Achieving my goals requires me to be physically and mentally integrated into this community. Therefore, I think the documentary of this study reveals the truth about me and my acculturation process, from pursuing the Separation strategy to the Integration strategy.

4.2 Narrative structure of the film

Chiarulli (2021) reviewed the history of the three-act narrative structure between theatre and cinema and concluded it is a "fundamental nature" (p. 120) in storytelling. The three-act structure included an intro to the character or conflict, challenge, and resolution. This documentary starts with my early life in New

Zealand, which is repetitious and boring, and then a challenge shows up. I recognized I was isolated from this society, stress and nervousness showed in my mind and eventually, I resonated with a flat white, and food became the trigger of the starting point of my acculturation.

Another part I focus on in the narrative structure is the 'turning point'. A 'Turning point' is when a character or issue makes significant changes in the story, and it is an effective tool to help audiences emotionally engage with the film's story (De Jong, 2011). This is the moment the filmmaker can connect to the audience by sharing a similar life experience in the scene.

Two turning points in the film indicated my internal and external changes: the bus scene and the flat white scene. A turning point usually involves a "key moment" (Aronson, 2010, p.45) of decision or commitment. In the bus scene, I recognize I need to make changes; otherwise, I might be wasting my time and money doing the same thing as I am in my hometown. It is a moment when I decided to make changes in my life, and the image of me pressing the stop sign also indicates the change. My first experience of trying a flat white indicates another function of a turning point that changes the story's direction. This scene is a harmless choice for a person who tries to step out of their comfort zone and is a good representation of New Zealand culture, and it is also my actual experience. Secondly, the energetic music shows the story is start going up and the feeling of joy after trying delicious food is a familiar feeling that most audiences should agree with.

With two turning points, I can switch the film's tone from stressful to energetic and hopeful, achieving the image I am looking for in the film.

4. 3 Pre-production

In the initial phase of this study, my research question was "What is New Zealand food?" however, the scale of the research question was too large and the time and resources available to achieve the topic were too small. Therefore, I needed to narrow the scope of the question. To achieve this, I broke down the question into What do people in New Zealand eat? What is New Zealand food to me? And What is New Zealand's food culture? I found that what I was looking for was the impact of New Zealand food culture on the acculturation process of international students. In order to answer this question, I needed a method or storyline to achieve it. Finally, when I read "*Introduction to Documentary Film*" (Nichols, 2014), it referred to the researcher's position, which is about why you made this film, why you are qualified, "does

it give us a unique and perhaps very personal response or exploration of something, preferably in more abstract or general terms?" (Nichols, 2014). Then I realised my personal experience could also be a good resource for discussing this question in this film, the six years of experience living in New Zealand. In addition, the target audience for this film is potential migrants and international students in New Zealand. Therefore, I think my personal experience is a compelling case to use in this study.

The importance of the research question was also a challenge for me, as the starting point for this research was that I wanted to know what New Zealand food is. This is a question that keeps coming up. Bill Nichols refers to "deliberation" (Nichols, 2014): "Does this film offer a new perspective to answer or give a possible solution to the key question?" And "does it explore the consequences that might occur if a certain course of action is followed?" (Nichols, 2014). This gave me a direction to focus on the historical context and then bring it to the problem. In my research, the target audience was those newcomers to New Zealand, such as international students, new immigrants, and tourists, and the historical context was the announcement of the resident visa in 2021 when over 160,000 new immigrants would be present in New Zealand. This means "What is the impact of New Zealand food culture on the cultural adaptation of international students?" could be an important question. This question will be more critical than ever. Therefore, the existence of this film is necessary.

4.4 Interview

The interview is a core element in documentary filmmaking. Since the sound was adopted in film (De Jong, 2011), the way the filmmaker uses interviews will directly affect the outcome of the film.

Dorothy Heathcote defined eight modes for the interviewee based on the relationship between interviewer and subject: Participant, Guide, Demonstrator, Authority, Witness, Researcher, Critic and Artist. Each mode shows a different perspective of the subject, providing the audience with a better understanding of the subject (De Jong, 2011).

This documentary adopts Participant and Authority modes. The participant mode indicates the subject is the main participant in the event that is able to provide instant reaction and feeling to the subject (De Jong, 2011), and the authority mode indicates the subject was a participant in the event. After a period, they can memorise and provide a deeper thought to the event (De Jong, 2011). These two modes show both the immediacy of the subject by "participating" in the event and stepping outside of the event to provide a much "deeper reflection" (De Jong, 2011) on the subject from the "authority". In this

documentary, the participants are international students revealing the truth and feelings. The authority is a food culture expert, Associate Professor Tracy Berno, who "combines both intimate knowledge and the potential for much deeper reflection" (De Jong, 2011, p. 243). The event is the Chinese international student's change of daily diet. Besides drawing inspiration from Shuchi Kothari's *A taste of Place: Stories of Food and Longing* (2001), the interviews were held before or after a meal. In order to create a more friendly environment for the interviewees, most interviews are conducted a meal together with the host and the interviewee after the interview.

Thanks to a suggestion from my supervisors, James and Arezou, I decided to add one more interview with a New Zealander to the film with my Kiwi friend, Shane. Adopting a native perspective gives us an insight into whether a Kiwi accepts this way for international students to integrate into their society. Therefore, this documentary was planned with four interviews, and there are more details later in chapter 4.5.

Reflecting on the interviews in this project, I find out the differences between the "participant" and "authority" (De Jong, 2011). In Tracy Berno's interview, due to her academic background, she was able to provide much valuable information from several questions and was able to help to shape the results of this study. However, one limitation of this interview was the lack of empathy with the audience; most of the conversation was very academic, which is not how people speak in everyday conversations; therefore, I would describe this interview as cogent but not resonant. On the other hand, Linda and Wendy, as participants, provided many personal perspectives, which may have lacked scholarship, but they provided a force of reality. I had initially planned to present Linda's and Wendy's interviews separately. However, after reviewing the original clips of the interviews, I realised that the connections between these interviews were so weak that it was difficult for the audience to follow them. So, instead of showing the entire interview, I decided to cut it into a few questions, show their ideas, and create an argument between them by juxtaposing the two interviews, creating a picture of the two interviewees talking to each other, similar to how *Fat Man* (2009) challenged *Supersize Me* (2004), to improve the flow of the film.

After discussing this with my supervisor, I decided to remove the interview with my Kiwi friend, Shane. Initially, this interview aimed to give the documentary a humorous ending and show that I was on the right path to integrating into New Zealand society and being accepted by the locals. However, as the project developed, I realised that my identity as an international student trying to integrate into New Zealand society meant that I was still on that path. Furthermore, this interview might suggest that I am integrated into the community already. To avoid this misunderstanding, I decided to replace this interview

with a scene of me walking across a bridge with the Sky Tower as a backdrop. Showing that I have stepped out of my comfort zone and am still on my way to this community, full of confidence and courage.

For most of the interview set-ups, I use a single light to ensure the brightness of the interviewer's face. This was effective because the dramatic changes in outdoor lighting during the Wendy interviews caused a difference in the lighting of the scenes, but the fill light measures for the interviewees allowed for sufficient brightness on the interviewees' faces.

Most interviews used a dual-camera set-up with one close-up of the interviewee and one wide shot of the interviewee and me. The lack of close-ups of myself caused some problems in post-production. However, as the interviews were recorded in 4k format, there was plenty of room to crop the close-ups in post. Also, the interviews were recorded with wireless microphones. Therefore, the quality of the audio was guaranteed.



Figure 7 Different light condition within Wendy's interview



Figure 8 Different light condition within Wendy's interview

4.5 Interviewees and Interview Questions

This chapter includes all interviewees' details, why they were selected, and how the iterative method is adopted in the interview question development.

Wendy Fan

Wendy was a Chinese international student two years ago, and now she is working as a visual effects editor in a production studio. Wendy has been in New Zealand for eight years and is perfectly integrated into New Zealand society. Her lifestyle and eating habits are completely changed, similar to my personal experience. However, she is more experienced and knowledgeable about living in New Zealand as following the integration strategy (“willing to maintain their cultural identity and also maintain a certain level of cultural integrity maintained”) in acculturation theory (Berry, 1997). As a typical immigrant following the integration strategy, I wonder how much common thinking there is between Wendy and me. I am also curious about what motivated her to integrate into this society and what challenges she faced during the acculturation process.

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me one of your favorite food experiences in New Zealand.
2. How different was your diet before you came to New Zealand?
3. What would you normally eat with your friends?
4. Describe a weird food experience in New Zealand.
5. What do you think of New Zealand food?

6. How often do you have food from your country and why?
7. Have you tried to change your diet after coming to New Zealand and how did that end?
8. Was it hard to make friends in New Zealand who are not from the same country as you?
 - a. Do you think that eating New Zealand food helps you make friends here?
9. What were the changes for you in food selection and eating habits after you came to New Zealand?
 - a. Do you think changing your diet helped you integrate into this society? And why?
10. What obstacles and challenges have you faced when you tried to integrate into this society (acculturation process)? / What is the moment when you felt separate from this society?
11. No matter purposely or unconsciously, how did you try to integrate into this society? What have you done?
12. Why did you choose New Zealand for studying abroad?

Linda Zhuang

Linda and Wendy shared different acculturation strategies, and this documentary shows their ideas collide with each other. Linda is a Chinese international student who has studied in New Zealand for six years. For most of the time, Chinese food was her first selection, and she does feel a bit uncomfortable and stressed in an unfamiliar environment, which means she is in the separation mode (“Individual maintains their cultural identity and avoids interacting with other cultural groups”) (Berry, 1997). As an interviewee following a different strategy, Linda can offer a different angle to the film, providing insight into people choosing the separation alternative, which is an unknown area for me. The core question in this interview I am looking for is whether people only eating food from their culture is an action of staying in their comfort zone or just loving the food from their culture?

To parallel both interviews and make it fair to both interviewees. The interview questions for Linda are the same as for Wendy's to make sure they are in the same interview condition. However, further questions could be included because the interview style is relaxed and friendly.

Shane McErlane (New Zealander)

Shane is one of my early friends in New Zealand, and he is a person willing to share and be straightforward. I don't need to worry about him trying to protect my feelings from controlling the

conversation. Another reason I selected Shane as an interviewee is because he is a Kiwi who represents a typical New Zealander. Featuring an authentically New Zealand native perspective in this documentary is very important. Because this acculturation is toward New Zealand society, not considering the native perspective is illogical. Therefore, Shane was chosen to be the last interviewee in this documentary and to end the film.

Interview questions for Shane McErlane:

1. How many friends you have from other countries?
2. Do you think food is a good topic to talk about with people you have just met?
3. In what situation will you consider this person separate from your culture or society?
 - a. In what situation you will consider this person part of this society?
4. Do you think eating the local food, helps an international student to build a relationship with you?

Associate Professor **Tracy Berno** (New Zealand food and culture expert)

Tracy Berno is an associate Professor in Culture & Society at AUT. She participated in the 4th Annual Regional Food Cultures and Networks Conference, has written a related paper about food and society and is someone who has a great experience and knowledge background in New Zealand food and culture. Adopting a professional voice in this documentary not only helps the audience see questions from a wider perspective but also improves the documentary's persuasiveness.

Furthermore, Tracy's interview could help me shape my research concept and test findings in the research. Therefore, Tracy's interview will be the last interview to shoot and the third interview in the documentary to summarise the two Wendy and Linda interviews.

Interview questions for Tracy Berno:

1. What kind of food do you like in New Zealand?
2. If you have to cook a New Zealand dish for your friends what it would be?
 - a. Why did you choose to cook this dish?
3. What do you think of the connection between food and culture?
4. How can we approach the idea of New Zealand food?
5. In your opinion, what is the meaning of local food to the new immigrant or international student?

6. Does an immigrant have to change their diet to integrate into this society?
 - a. What is the relationship between acculturation and changing diet?
7. What feature of New Zealand society and culture is reflected through its food?
8. What is the New Zealand food future trend?

Due to the characteristics of action research, an iterative method is used in the interview questions development. The pre-interviews provided the filmmaker with a better understanding of the interview questions and interviewees, which led to adjustments in the interview and improved the quality of the interview questions.

In pre-interview, I found out interview questions have a high similarity between each other, which created confusion among the interviewees and affected the flow of the interview. Moreover, in the pre-interview, we discovered more new ideas about the reasons why people refuse to make an effort to integrate into New Zealand society and how New Zealand food lacks identity. These experiences also contributed to the hypotheses of this study, including the challenges people face in acculturating, separation and isolation, language barriers, and different lifestyles.

Based on the reflection from the pre-interview, a new list of interview questions was created to explore dietary change, cultural identity, acculturation challenges, personal choice, and New Zealand food identity. These questions allowed interviewees to speak for themselves to maintain a better flow in the interview. Finally, this new list of interview questions will serve as a framework for inquiry and dialogue during the interviews.

New interview questions for Linda and Wendy:

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. Tell me one of your favourite food in New Zealand.
3. How different is the diet here before you come to New Zealand
4. How often do you have food from your country, and why?
5. Have you tried to change your diet after coming to New Zealand?
6. How is your social life here? Do you think this is a good place for making new friends?
7. Do you talk about food with your friends, and what role does food play in your social life?
8. Why did you select New Zealand to study? Who made this decision?
9. Have you tried to integrate into this society? What have you done?
10. What is New Zealand food?

4.6 Techniques and Strategies

Nichols (2014) argues that a documentary is not a "reproduction of reality" but a "representation" (p. 9). In this documentary, to produce a high quality autobiographical documentary and deliver the message to the audience effectively, re-enactment, time distortion, dolly zoom, montage and various editing techniques are adopted in the film.

4.6.1 Editing

Editing is one of the essential parts of the documentary and research. By reviewing the footage and finding connections in it, I gained a better understanding of this documentary and tested my choices of filming techniques.

In the "flat white" scene, I initially used a first-person perspective and jump cuts; however, these techniques ultimately led to poor results. My supervisors commented, "It gives the impression of poor production skills and makes it look like a YouTube video," and "Too many jump cuts show that you didn't have enough footage in this shoot". I reconsidered the technique and completed a reshoot plan using multiple angles based on these comments. This is an example of the process of action research theory (Fishman, 1997), an active cycle of theory guiding practice and practice refining theory.

Because the camera operator lacked experience in this project, post-production was used to fill in the photographic gaps in the dolly zoom shot and the panning shot of the bridge I walked across in front of the Sky Tower. Shooting in a higher resolution provided more space for editing to achieve the image I was looking for. This allowed the camera operator to shoot a static shot, and then by cropping the image and adding movement to the shot, I created a pan shot in post-production.



Figure 9 Change My Food – Change My Life The Scene shot in 8k resolution

For the transition between Associate Professor Tracy Berno’s interview and the ending scene, I use a drone shot showing Auckland city. By using this aerial shot, I am trying to remind the audience this documentary is located in New Zealand and indicating the story is about to end. Furthermore, a wide shot doesn’t evoke high emotional pressure for the audience, and it could provide a pause for breathing space for the audience.



Figure 10 Change My Food – Change My Life the a drone shot of the Auckland city view

4.6.2 Re-enactment

Re-enactment is a tool to help the filmmaker shape the film from his unique point of view by creatively recreating events that can effectively be shown on the screen and are possible to film (Nichols, 2014).

Personal experience can be considered as a “plausible perspective on reality” (Nichols, 2014, p. 10).

However, re-enactment also leads to an authenticity problem. Creatively recreating events and maintaining their authenticity becomes a problem for filmmakers. One of the solutions is for re-enactment “...to correspond to the known historical fact if it is to remain plausible” (Nichols, 2014, p. 10),

Therefore, adopting re-enactment in my documentary has given me more freedom to express myself, from the surprising sensation of tasting the flat white to the confusing feeling of seeing my hometown through the window of a bus.

4.6.3 Distorting time

Distorting time is another technique I adopt in this documentary including time-lapse, slow motion and frame extracting. I believe that pictures and content are complementary to each other. In this documentary, the use of slow motion, time-lapse and frame extraction helps the filmmaker depict realities that are hidden from human perception and reveals realities that are invisible to the human eye (De Jong, 2011) and the emotions behind the characters. Therefore, all these techniques are here for a reason, to elevate the film and emotionally engage with the audience.



Figure 11 Change My Food – Change My Life the bus scene

In this scene, frame extracting creates a dreamy vibe, indicating that the illusion of the hometown street view will show up. It stresses the confusion and separation of the character, leading to him questioning himself at the end of the scene.



Figure 12 Change My Food – Change My Life time-lapse scene

Time-lapse footage here describes the time passing by and indicates that the character is trapped in the same loop of staying in his comfort zone.



Figure 13 Change My Food – Change My Life flat white close-up shot

Slow motion here emphasises the importance of the flat white and the both excited and fearful feelings of my first experience of a flat white.

4.6.4 Two Timeframes

In this documentary, I am playing myself in two timeframes: one in the memory and the other in the present. Therefore, it is essential to separate the two timeframes. My solution was to establish two different textures of the image between these timelines and adopt a mist filter in the memory scenes to create a creamy, soft and traditional texture, besides using a warmer tone in these scenes to separate it from the modern colder tone of the present scenes. Furthermore, I also controlled the dress of the scenes, wearing a white t-shirt in the memory scenes to draw a line for the audience to recognise the scene. However, in the scenes of me seeing my hometown, the illusion was not strong enough to deliver enough information to prove this was my hometown because of the high similarity of the composition. With a suggestion from my supervisors, I decided to emphasise the Chinese factors in the footage by increasing the saturation to pop up the colour of the shop signs and zoom in on the image to see the signs. Furthermore, I also set a warmer tone in this footage to separate it from the New Zealand street view.

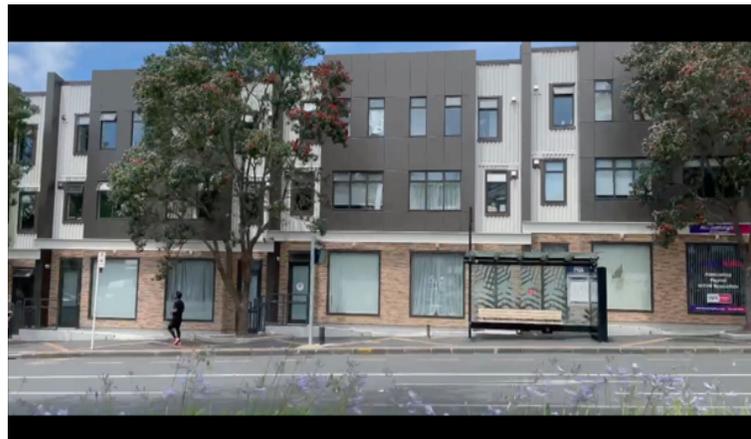


Figure 14 Change My Food – Change My Life New Zealand street view



Figure 15 *Change My Food – Change My Life* My hometown's view



Figure 16 *Change My Food – Change My Life* My hometown's view after adjustment

4.6.5 Dolly Zoom

The dolly zoom, which originated in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), visualises an extremely emotional situation and significantly enhances the audience's unsettled feeling by keeping the subject the same size while the camera moves forward or backward, an effect which is normally reserved for a meaningful or special moment in the film (Mercado 2013). A slowly performed dolly zoom can reduce the unsettling sensation and indicate that a change is happening (Mercado, 2013). In this documentary, dolly zoom is used at the turning point, which is the scene of my first time trying a flat white. This is a huge moment in the film, which indicates the starting point of my acculturation, and I want to present this moment as dramatically and effectively as possible. Dolly zoom is able to catch the audience's attention and shows a change in my mind; combined with a voice-over and impactful footages from nature, it can achieve my expectation of the scene.



Figure 17 Change My Food - Change My Life Dolly Zoom shot

4.6.6 Montage

Montage is a film technique that combines or assembles a series of shots into one sequence that can extremely compress time, space and information to describe an event or reveal a character. A descriptive montage scene is adopted in the film to show the process of me stepping out of my comfort zone and trying a different kind of food in Auckland. A good montage can help the audience understand “..the progression of time, spatial relationships, shifts in perspective, thought processes of characters and so on.” (De Jong, 2011, p151). It is a tool that both delivers emotion and integrates different materials. It allows the filmmaker to decide what element is essential to the film and what elements could be abandoned, and establishes a highly personal footage sequence representing the filmmaker’s idea of the film. There are three montage scenes in this documentary: my early days in New Zealand, my food exploring journey and the summary ending of the film. To enhance the feeling of isolation of my early days in New Zealand, I use sad background music with slow jump cuts to establish the scene.

In my food journey, I use a jump cut of several shots in similar composition, energetic background music, and fast-paced editing to establish a fun, warm, hopeful vibe in the film. And the ending is shot by using upbeat music and symbolic images to describe my imaginary positive future.

4.7 New Zealand Food Identity

“What is New Zealand food?” is a question that kept being brought in during the filmmaking process, from the film case study of *A Taste of Place* (2001) to interviews with Chinese international students and even during my food journey. It is a question with a huge space, for most people like to jump over it like *A Taste of Place* (2001) “My family asked me to bring some New Zealand food, I am not sure what that is”. I have discussed this question with my supervisors many times in this research. Should we mention it? How deep should we dive in?

In the end, I decided to bring this question into this documentary. Firstly, it provides excellent background information on the food culture in New Zealand to support this film. Secondly, this is a question the audience will be interested in, including me. Then we move to the next question: how deep should we dive in? As this is a short documentary, there will be limited time to dive into background information. Therefore, I decided to bring it to the expert, the interview with Tracy Berno. This interview had two significant functions: to analyse the previous interviews and explain how important food experience is for international students. Combining my experience, I can conclude in this documentary that due to the multicultural society and lack of branding, New Zealand food is a hidden gem that requires people to experience the country to find the answer.

4.8 Conclusion

By critically analysing this research project, I have a better understanding of the acculturation process and the impact of filmmaking techniques on a similar type of autobiographical documentary. This documentary provided me with a unique perspective, allowing me to review the different responses of international students to cultural differences and explore the impact of food on individuals during acculturation in a practical framework. With the support from my supervisors, I am able to narrow down the content in filmmaking techniques to tell a better, more complete story. The findings suggest that the techniques and strategies used in this documentary have implications for the creation of other works on similar topics and demonstrate the particular relevance of effective documentary engagement to this study.

As the international student community grows in New Zealand, this documentary reminds us that stepping out of our comfort zones and embracing differences is a better way to experience or integrate into the culture of a new society. Of course, I acknowledge that there are various ways of living, and it is

not a wrong or right choice, but when you live in a multicultural society like New Zealand, one small step out of your comfort zone opens up a new possibility that could make a huge difference for you.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This research project explored through documentary filmmaking how to portray the ways in which my personal food choices have influenced the process of acculturation. The research was conducted through the production of an autobiographical documentary film. Through *Change My Food – Change My Life*, this study effectively reproduces and summarises several key factors related to the impact of food on the acculturation process, including embracing cultural differences, positive attitudes to step out of the comfort zone, and willingness to share and communicate. In addition, this is the first documentary I have made; therefore, another goal of this study was to produce a clearly structured and compelling documentary by examining documentary filmmaking techniques and film case studies guided by action research theory. Action research theory contributed to my practice and this documentary in the technical part to refine the documentary and also my own self-discovery.

Action research helped me to reflect on each choice, find problems and refine my approach during the filming process. Combined with my supervisors' inputs, it became the most powerful tool for making this film, especially since it was my first documentary. However, several issues became challenges for me, such as my inability to control the camera most of the time and my assistant's lack of experience in using the camera. In addition, shooting under COVID19 was difficult for most of my participants and helpers. Many of the ideal participants had already returned to their home countries. Despite the many adjustments and delays that occurred during the shoot, we finally completed the documentary with all participants safe and healthy.

The production of this documentary offers a helpful perspective on aspects of cultural adaptation and integration. Action research required me to keep thinking about the concepts and questions of this research as the film developed. It has helped me understand how food changes my life. From the beginning, when changing my diet was the key to experiencing life here and fitting into this community, to the more fundamental element of personal willingness to learn and experience other cultures. This willingness is not simply to copy what the locals do but to accept the cultural differences, both the good and bad aspects of that culture.

In addition, this will also affect the individual's choice to stay in or leave their comfort zone. Because of New Zealand's multicultural context, people can find their comfort zone easier than in other countries with strong cultural backgrounds. Still, this documentary has the potential to encourage people to step out of their comfort zone, break the silence, reduce isolation, and embrace the difference. Relating back to food, it plays a significant role in people's daily communication; as Tracy Berno describes, the food in this documentary is the communication gateway, breaking down differences and connecting people. In addition, the same ingredients taste different in different countries, and eating local food is a self-challenge for individuals to change their tastes, but it is also a process that changes one's understanding of the world.

Overall, making this autobiographical documentary was a great choice to document my personal experiences and provided an excellent medium for me to convey to the audience the truth I believe in. Most importantly, it furthered my filmmaking practice and experience. For further research, this research project has a great potential to expand to a feature film, and the research question could go beyond international students but also other immigrants that have already settled in New Zealand and include not only food but also music, film and other aspects of life. Finally, as far as food is concerned, it is something I have always been passionate about, not only eating but sharing with people. It has played a unique role in my life, encouraging me to see the world and experience life, and I am genuinely grateful for the opportunity to document this time in my life. To this day, I believe I am still in the process of acculturation, as there are still many areas of New Zealand culture that I need to explore, and I think I am already moving in the right direction.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Consent and Release form



Appendix 3. Consent and Release Form

Project title: **Creative Practice Research Documentary.**

Project Supervisors: **James Nicholson, and Dr. Arezou Zalipour.**

Researcher: **Zihao Ou**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice).
- I understand that if I have any further concerns about this research project I can contact the researcher who will identify any issues and do his best to remedy or mitigate any concerns. However, once the research project/documentary has been produced, this may not be possible.
- I permit the researcher to use the images and sounds that are part of this project and any other reproductions or adaptations from them, either complete or in part, alone or in conjunction with any wording solely and exclusively for (a) the researcher's documentary; and (b) educational exhibition and examination purposes and related design works; and (c) public exhibition or broadcast.
- I do not permit the researcher to sell or grant access to any footage in which I appear for use in any works other than this research project.
- I understand that any material created by the filming sessions is deemed to be owned by the researcher/filmmaker and that I do not own copyright of any of this material.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research project at any time.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the film then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I agree to be identified in the finished documentary: Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....

Date:

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

James Nicholson, james.nicholson@aut.ac.nz, +9 21 9999 EXT 7825

Associate Professor Arezou Zalipour, arezou.zalipour@aut.ac.nz, +9 21 9999 EXT 8682

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEC Reference number type the AUTEC reference number



Appendix 3. Consent and Release Form

Project title: **Creative Practice Research Documentary.**

Project Supervisors: **James Nicholson, and Dr. Arezou Zalipour.**

Researcher: **Zihao Ou**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the information Sheet dated ...
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice).
- I understand that if I have any further concerns about this research project I can contact the researcher who will identify any issues and do his best to remedy or mitigate any concerns. However, once the research project/documentary has been produced, this may not be possible.
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- I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research project at any time.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the film then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I agree to be identified in the finished documentary: Yes No

Participant's signature: *J. Berno*

Participant's name: TRACY BERNO

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):
.....
.....
.....

Date: 6.3.22

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

James Nicholson, james.nicholson@aut.ac.nz, +9 21 9999 EXT 7825

Associate Professor Arezou Zalipour, arezou.zalipour@aut.ac.nz, +9 21 9999 EXT 8682

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEK Reference number type the AUTEK reference number



Appendix 3. Consent and Release Form

Project title: **Creative Practice Research Documentary.**

Project Supervisors: **James Nicholson, and Dr. Arezou Zalipour.**

Researcher: **Zihao Ou**

I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice).

I understand that if I have any further concerns about this research project I can contact the researcher who will identify any issues and do his best to remedy or mitigate any concerns. However, once the research project/documentary has been produced, this may not be possible.

I permit the researcher to use the images and sounds that are part of this project and any other reproductions or adaptations from them, either complete or in part, alone or in conjunction with any wording solely and exclusively for (a) the researcher's documentary; and (b) educational exhibition and examination purposes and related design works; and (c) public exhibition or broadcast.

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I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research project at any time.

I understand that if I withdraw from the film then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

I agree to take part in this research.

I agree to be identified in the finished documentary: Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name: Wendy Fan

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

0204 204777

Date: 06/03/2022

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

James Nicholson, james.nicholson@aut.ac.nz, +9 21 9999 EXT 7825

Associate Professor Arezou Zalipour, arezou.zalipour@aut.ac.nz, +9 21 9999 EXT 8682

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on the date on which the final approval was granted & IATEF Reference

Appendix 2: Ethic Approval



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

4 March 2022

James Nicholson
Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies

Dear James

Re Ethics Application: **21/322 New Zealand, Food and Identity: Creative Practice Research of Food Documentary Making in New Zealand.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 4 March 2025.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.
8. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: ozhoknoo1@gmail.com; arezou.zalipour@aut.ac.nz



Appendix 1. Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

18 August 2021

Project Title: Eating in New Zealand: Creative Practice Research Documentary.

An Invitation

Kia ora, my name's Zihao Ou and I'm inviting you to participate in my practice-based research, for my Master of Communication Studies qualification at Auckland University of Technology.

What is the purpose of this research?

My documentary aims to tell the story of how I my life in New Zealand changed when I began to broaden my diet, and compares my own experience with that of other Chinese international students. The focus of the project is on story-telling techniques in documentary: how can documentary techniques be used to tell a personal story in a thought-provoking and entertaining way? I hope that the documentary will inform its audience about some of the ways Chinese international students experience life in New Zealand.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You're identified as you're either a Chinese international student who knows me, or a New Zealand-born acquaintance of mine. I believe your experience and opinions could make a significant contribution to this research project/documentary. This is an invitation to participate.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to take part in this research, please respond to my university email address: frm2273@autuni.ac.nz or my phone: 0273509511. To partake in this research, you will need to complete a Consent and Release Form.

In signing a consent form, you will agree that your identity will be revealed in the documentary.

If you are interviewed, the researcher will play back the footage straight after recording it to check that you are comfortable with it.

You will be shown the film when it has been edited, and asked for your feedback. You will be able to ask the researcher to make changes before submitting the project if you feel uncomfortable or at risk. Any material that threatens your safety or reputation will be removed.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You will be asked to sign a consent form to allow the material gathered as a documentary to be screened at public film screenings, or on the internet and as part of any written research work that is generated from the recordings. You will be asked to sign the consent form before any filming takes place.

You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

If you are interviewed, the process will involve one formal interview with you at a mutually agreed time and place. The interview will take around one hour. I am happy to work around a time that suits you best. The purpose of the

interviews will be to offer a variety of perspectives on diet and eating habits, and whether this has any effect on the rest of your life in New Zealand.

What are the discomforts and risks? How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

We do not foresee that there will be any risks or discomfort for you in the filming process. You don't have to say anything if there is a topic you don't like to talk about. You will be invited to view the documentary and provide feedback before we submit this project. I will video-audio record the feedback session to ensure I have an accurate record of your ideas; your feedback will be seriously considered.

What are the benefits?

You will receive a free copy of the finished documentary.
I hope that the documentary will inform its audience about the ways Chinese international students experience life in New Zealand. For you, this may be an interesting record into the future of one aspect of your life in New Zealand.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your participation will mean that you are identifiable as you will appear on screen. You will be invited to view the rough cut of the documentary and provide feedback, and this will give you the chance to ask for the removal of any material you feel you would rather keep private. Any material that threatens your safety or reputation will be removed.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Other than your personal time required to partake in this research, there are no other associated costs to take part in this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have ten days from the time of invitation to consider your participation.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will be updated on the progress of this project and be invited to view the rough cut for feedback if you would like to do so. Later, you will also be given a copy of the documentary when it is completed.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, James Nicholson, james.nicholson@aut.ac.nz, +9 21 9999 EXT 7825

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Zihao Ou, frm2273@autuni.ac.nz

Researcher Contact Details:

Zihao Ou, frm2273@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Associate Professor James Nicholson, james.nicholson@aut.ac.nz, +9 21 9999 EXT 7825

Arezou Zalipour, arezou.zalipour@aut.ac.nz, +9 21 9999 EXT 8682

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTC Reference number *type the reference number*.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEK Reference number *type the reference number*.