

**Jakob Leimgruber:**

**'A true blue Singaporean who speaks Singlish':  
Indices of authenticity in the multilingual ecology of  
Singapore**

**Abstract:**

The officially quadrilingual city-state of Singapore is characterised by a high degree of linguistic and cultural diversity. In a society consisting of a large majority of allochthonous migrant groups, what exactly contributes to the construction of the 'authentic Singaporean'? In this talk, I explore issues of linguistic authenticity and indexicality, and apply them to the Singaporean context. Of prime concern is the localised vernacular 'Singlish', characterised by heavy (grammatical and lexical) admixture from contact languages, resulting in a hybrid code that, unlike the four exonymic official languages, is 'uniquely Singaporean'. Far from being a static marker of local identity, however, the notion of Singlish itself is constantly re-defined and re-constructed, and discursively deployed for a range of indexical purposes.