



The Culture of Singapore English (Studies in English Language)

By Jock O. Wong

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This book provides a fresh approach to Singapore English, by focusing on its cultural connotations. The author, a native Singaporean, explores a range of aspects of this rich variety of English - including address forms, cultural categories, particles and interjections - and links particular words to particular cultural norms. By using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach, which is free from technical terminology, he explains the relationship between meaning and culture with maximal clarity, and an added strength of this study lies in its use of authentic examples and pictures, which offer a fascinating glimpse of Singaporean life. Through comparisons with Anglo English, it also explores some difficulties associated with Standard English and cultural misunderstanding. Lending a unique local perspective and written with an incisiveness that makes it ideal for both academic and non-academic readers, this book will appeal to all those interested in Singapore English and its cultural values.

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Review

"Wong unravels the semantic, pragmatic and structural intricacies of Singlish, treating it not as a variety of English but as a language in its own right. Fresh, strong and original, this is a book for everyone interested in language, culture and meaning."

Cliff Goddard, Griffith University

"Jock O. Wong's study of English in Singapore is a major contribution to our understanding of not only the semantic structuring of "Singlish" but moreover to studies of pragmatics and culture. The latter is demonstrated broadly by considerations of data from everyday conversations, email and chat rooms, and analyses of the meanings activated in such usage. The consideration of various linguistic devices such as forms of address, various cultural categories, including tonal qualities, all demonstrate how the use of a rigorous Semantic Metalanguage clarifies specific cultural meanings that are associated with Singlish and everyday language."

Donal Carbaugh, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

About the Author

Jock O. Wong is a Lecturer in Academic English at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

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