

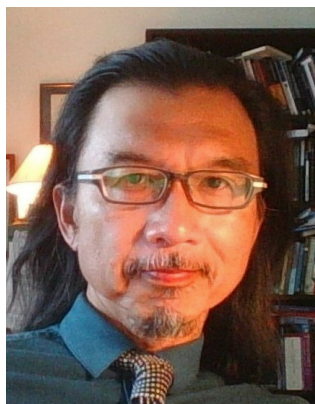
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## **Naming as Styling: Inauthenticity in Building Names in Singapore**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Authenticity has become a buzzword in corporate leadership, and therefore also in communication. This paper considers the styling options available to names and the ways in which they can be characterised as inauthentic. Styling options are available to all manner of linguistic texts and all manner of semiotic modes. I understand choices made from the available options to constitute styling, and these choices are meaningful and interpretable. This broad conception of styling is accepted within sociolinguistics, and often analysed in indexical terms (eg Eckert 2008). In other words, choices made by speakers index key features of their communicated identity; even organisations can be investigated from the perspective of styling (Wee 2015). In the tradition of research on the linguistic landscape (Landry and Bourhis 1997), I consider the cityscape as text. In particular, I focus on how residential buildings are named in Singapore. These names are open to styling opportunities from the point of view of their structure; whether they are derived from the lexicon of particular languages; whether they use derived names such as personal names, place names or street names; whether creative coinages are employed; and so on. The names of residential buildings in Singapore have also been the attention of public attention, as evident from discussions in blogs and forums; here some of the names have been held up as being inauthentic because they do not identify place or because they are reliant on exotic languages. Using names of more recent buildings, I explore the ways in which styling choices in names might be deemed authentic or inauthentic.



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