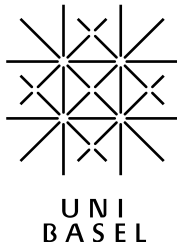

10th ASNEL Summer School
'Spaces of Projection'
5 September – 9 September 2011
Universities of Bern and Basel, Switzerland
http://spacesofprojection.wordpress.com

Lecture: "'My language, my identity' – Fiji Indians in New Zealand"

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Marianne Hundt, University of Zurich

Contact: m.hundt@es.uzh.ch

Approximately 20 million Indians do not live in India, either as people of Indian origin (PIOs) or non-resident Indians (NRIs). After some early studies by e.g. Mesthrie (1991, 1992) and Shameem (1994, 1998) there has been a recent surge in studying the sociolinguistics of the (rather diverse) Indian diaspora (see, e.g. Sharma&Sankaran 2009 or Stuart-Smith et al., 2009).

The lecture will look into the double diaspora situation of Indians who are descendants from indentured labourers in the Fiji islands but who, due to the political situation in Fiji, decided to migrate to New Zealand. The data come from a series of interviews conducted with first and second generation Fiji Indians in Wellington, New Zealand. The focus will be on the discursive construction of identity in this double diaspora situation, including issues of labelling, language use and attitudes towards varieties of English and Hindi. In addition, it will correlate the use of linguistic features typical of Fiji English and New Zealand English by first and second generation speakers and relate their language use to identity construction.

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