



Séminaire du CeRLA



Centre de Recherche en Linguistique Appliquée



**VENDREDI 14 NOVEMBRE 2025**

**14:00-16:00**

**SALLE 308 MILC**

**“Everything they say, I do” – Low self-entitlement and (mis)communication for Culturally and Linguistically Marginalised hospital patients**

**Niru PERERA**<sup>1,2</sup>, Louisa Willoughby<sup>1</sup>, Abby M. Foster<sup>1,3</sup>, Chris Lemoh<sup>1,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Monash University

<sup>2</sup> Curtin University

<sup>3</sup> La Trobe University

<sup>4</sup> The University of Melbourne

In Australia, hospital patients with a migrant/refugee background and limited English (known as Culturally and Linguistically Marginalised (CALM)) engage in ‘unsupported’ communication with clinicians due to a shortage of accessible interpreters. The study investigated how cases of miscommunication between patients and clinicians in such contexts are connected to patients’ sense of health-related deservingness and self-entitlement. A research team of clinicians and linguists undertook a linguistic ethnography in a general medicine ward in an Australian hospital that services a CALM population. Fieldwork involved observations of patient participants during their stays, focusing on clinician-patient interactions and medical ward rounds, and follow-up interviews with patients, their close others, and hospital staff. An inductive thematic analysis was applied to all data. The study found that certain CALM patient perspectives - that the Australian hospital system is far improved from their country of origin and that they should comply with the monolingual ideology - could lead patients to agree with clinician orders and not voice their lack of understanding. This resulted in less-than-desirable outcomes which had implications for patient safety. The study advocates for language and communication to be central to hospital system design to reduce patient risk and improve health equity.