



The Singapore Association for

Applied Linguistics (SAAL)

in collaboration with

The Division of Linguistics and

Multilingual Studies (LMS),

Nanyang Technological University

warmly invite you to a

SAAL Talk

on

# Conversational Storytelling

by Professor Neal R. Norrick, Saarland University, Germany

**Date:** Tuesday, 21 July 09  
**Time:** 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM  
**Venue:** NTU, HSS Seminar Room 6, S3.2-B3 (South Spine, Building 3.2, Level B3)

**Parking** Carpark R and Carpark Q next to the new Humanities and Social Sciences main building.

A **Map** can be found [here](#).

*Light refreshments will be provided.*

**Please note** that in line with regulations set by the Ministry of Education on 28 June 2009, all attendees will be required to take their temperature before the event.

Conversation is the natural home of narrative, and the most familiar context of storytelling for most of us. Storytelling is a common part of conversation between friends and family members. We tell stories to make a point, to catch up on each others' lives, to report news, and to entertain each other. And one story opens the floor to other participants for stories of their own. Our conversational stories are embedded in their local contexts, their forms and functions developing from and reflecting these contexts.

Genuine conversational storytelling is always interactive, negotiated and not simply designed for a particular audience by a single teller; indeed, it is often hard to determine even who is the primary teller, especially when the events were jointly experienced or the basic story is already familiar. Conversational stories may be

deeply contextualized, diffuse, and not easily detachable from the local conditions that occasion them or understandable outside of them. Further, there are many kinds of conversation from family dinner-table talk to self-revelation in troubles talk between women friends; each context has its own characteristic conditions on storytelling rights and tellability, and engenders stories of different kinds.

In my talk, I will identify linguistic cues to narrative structure, marking openings, closings and transitions. I will discuss story features like dialogue and conditions on storytelling. We will see how conversational stories fulfill multiple simultaneous interactional functions: revealing attitudes, constructing identity, inviting counter-disclosure and so on. Finally, we will explore examples of audience response and conarration.