



STETS News

Singapore Tertiary English Teachers Society

2004/2005 Issue 2

In This Issue

- STETS Event – Indian Words in English
- STETS Event – Interactive Whiteboard
- STETS Event – English in Singapore
- New textbook by STETS Vice-President
- Thank you
- Events in the Region
- Date Claimer
- Electronic Village Online (EVO) 2005
- Contacts with MELTA
- Forthcoming Events
- Call for Papers
- STETS Membership
- Call for Speakers

Contact Us

Website:

www.stets.org.sg

E-mail:

secretary@stets.org.sg

Address:

Singapore Tertiary English Teachers Society
c/o Centre for English Language Communication
National University of Singapore
10 Kent Ridge Crescent
Singapore 119260
Fax: 6777-9152
Tel: 6874-3865

STETS Event - Indian Words in English

On Saturday 21 August at RELC, Dr V R Narayanaswami treated an audience of 25 to delightful insights into the influence of Indian words in English. The talk included some linguistic background on word formation, history of the British in India and colourful examples of uses of words through poetry and essays.

The linguistic background was useful in explaining the creation of new words such as 'prepone'. If one can postpone an event, why not prepone (bring it forward)? An overview of the history of the British in India explained the many words that have come into everyday use in English. Dr Narayanaswami used our very own Straits Times headlines to give examples such as guru, pundit and mandarin. The 'reverse' migration of Indians to Britain since Indian Independence has further added to the vocabulary, a list of which was provided for the participants. Examples drawn from literature past and present, and from British, Anglo-Indian and Indian authors, further enlightened and engaged the audience. Dr Narayanaswami's examples and stories brought the field of vocabulary alive.

The participants included several of Dr Narayanaswami's family members and friends from Singapore, as well as STETS members. The light refreshments provided by RELC were fortifying and lacked only a chaiwallah - it was self-service as usual!

Phyllis Wachob



Dr V R Narayanaswami and STETS members

STETS Event - Interactive whiteboard

A relatively small but very enthusiastic group of STETS members met at the British Council on the evening of Thursday September 30 to see a demonstration

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of the interactive whiteboards the Council had recently installed. In an extremely effective presentation, Barbara Baird, the Council's ICT Coordinator in Singapore, took us through what the system could do. Everyone present was impressed by the way in which it allows previously prepared material of high quality to be integrated with live website links, while still retaining the possibility of on-the-fly contributions from both students and teacher through its touch-screen capability. Here is a new technological development which is clearly more than just a gimmick; I think everyone left the meeting wanting them for their own classrooms!

Richard Slessor



Barbara Baird demonstrates the features of the interactive whiteboard at the British Council

STETS Event - English in Singapore

Sixteen people attended the October STETS talk at RELC and we were more than happy to sacrifice a Saturday off to enjoy the three presenters speaking on *English in Singapore: variations on a theme*.

Dr Low Ee Ling, Sub Dean of Degree Programmes at NIE started the session by introducing her recently published book, co-authored with Dr Adam Brown and entitled, *English in Singapore: An Introduction*. In her lively and friendly manner, Ee Ling took us through the process they went through in *How to write a book in ten uneasy lessons*. We learned about the peaks and pitfalls of their writing experience from the conceptualisation to copyright issues and revisions. She concluded with a brief summary of the chapters, which moved us smoothly to our second presenter, Adam Brown, who focused our attention on one chapter about typical pronunciation of *Singapore English vowels*.

Dr Adam Brown works in the English Language and Literature Academic Group at NIE. In his presentation he identified the evidence (or lack thereof) that people use to make claims about phonological features. From measured but largely inconclusive data to puns, rhymes, misspellings and tongue slips, to name a few, we came away pondering the significance of assumptions people make about pronunciation.

Dr David Deterding continued this theme with his talk on *Recent research on the pronunciation of Singapore English*. To our delight, he had recorded examples of Singapore English, many of which surprised us. It was intriguing to hear Singaporean voices adding (t) to words like 'one(t)' and 'yes(t)'. His research was carried out at NIE where he specialises in phonetics, syntax and general linguistics. Many of his findings will be published in his new book due out in early 2005.

To me, the success of this session was measured by the interesting questions and discussion that followed the presentations - we didn't break up until just before noon! Hopefully the ideas and issues raised in this session will be shared beyond this audience.

Cynthia Macknish

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New Textbook by STETS Vice-President



Phyllis Wachob (far right) at the STETS workshop in November 2004

Our Vice-President, Phyllis Wachob, has recently had a business communication book published by Thomson. The title is *Persuasive Speaking and Writing*, and it is intended for students studying business communication in the SE Asian region.

Phyllis says in her preface, 'I decided to write this book when I could not find any book that had language and topics relevant to the Southeast Asian context and with content relevant to business. Moreover, most of the other options were not student-friendly; for example, the books were unwieldy.'

The 'slim volume' (to quote the blurb) of just over a hundred pages introduces a number of fundamental concepts in business communication, including audience, message, transitions, supporting an argument, formats, and editing and evaluation. For each concept it provides language activities, writing practice and team-based speaking activities.

Thank you

We would like to thank Moira Wee for her contribution to the Executive Committee for STETS. Moira is stepping down from her role as the representative of Singapore Polytechnic so we would like to extend a warm welcome to Puvanambigai Ponnampalam, the new Singapore Polytechnic representative.

Events in the Region

Don't forget that the STETS website (www.stets.org.sg) offers a regularly updated list of L&C-related events in our region (on the Events page, naturally enough!) New items have recently been added.

If you know of any relevant events not yet listed, please send details to our webmaster Lee Kooi Cheng at webmaster@stets.org.sg.

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Date Claimer

Take out your diary and make a date for upcoming STETS talks for 2005 including topics such as *Ngee Ann Polytechnic Learning Model* and *models of accent in the elt classroom*.

Further details can be found in the Forthcoming Events section of this newsletter and full publicity will be coming your way very shortly.

Electronic Village Online (EVO) 2005

If you are interested in ESOL you can participate in collaborative, online discussion sessions or hands-on virtual workshops in January and February. Further details are available on their website below and you can register online in January:

http://www.geocities.com/ehansonsmi/evo2005/announce.html#EVO_Sessions

Timelines are:

Participants REGISTER for Electronic Village Online (EVO) 2005 Sessions:
Monday, January 3 -
Sunday, January 16, 2005 [2 weeks]

2. EVO 2005 SESSIONS:
Monday, January 17 -
Sunday, February 27, 2005 [6 weeks]

Contacts with MELTA

We are currently working on the idea of a weekend trip to KL later this year. A feature of this would be a joint meeting with tertiary-level members of the Malaysian English Language Teaching Association (MELTA). We are currently in active discussion with the MELTA committee about suitable dates and topics (ideas for the latter welcome). More news as soon as we have it!

Meanwhile, the President of MELTA, Edwin Vethamani, has very kindly said that if even a small number of STETS members would like to attend the 2005 MELTA conference on May 30-June 1 (details at <http://www.melta.org.my/modules/news/>) they would consider offering us a group rate. If anyone is interested, please contact Richard Slessor (president@stets.org.sg) in the first instance.

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Forthcoming Events

15 January 2005

SMALL TECHNOLOGY SHIFT, BIG LEARNING GAINS: ONLINE DIGITAL VIDEO AND THE ANALYSIS OF PRESENTATION SKILLS

Michael Connor from the National University of Singapore will conduct a session about videotaping students' oral presentations and posting them on Blackboard for review. The session will be held on Saturday, 15 January 2005, at the British Council. The number of audience will be restricted to 35.

17 January - 27 February, 2005

ELECTRONIC VILLAGE ONLINE (EVO) 2005

For six weeks, participants and ESOL experts can engage in collaborative, online discussion sessions or hands-on virtual workshops of professional and scholarly benefit. The sessions are free and open to all interested parties. You do not need to be a TESOL member to participate. Register online at:

http://www.geocities.com/ehansonsmi/evo2005/announce.html#EVO_Sessions

16 February 2005

NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC LEARNING MODEL

This session will consist of two talks: Mr Michael Rebaczonok will speak on the status of international students in Ngee Ann Polytechnic and the students' use of English. Ms Jacintha John will speak on the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Learning Model.

10 March 2005
6.30 p.m.

Temasek
Polytechnic

MODELS OF ACCENT IN THE ELT CLASSROOM: A PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF APPROPRIATE ACCENT MODELS

This session will be conducted by Dr David Hyatt, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom (developed by David Hyatt and Sara Hannam).

This workshop will consider the views of teachers on varieties of English accent (native and non-native speaker) acceptable in the ELT classroom, and whether there should be a model of correct pronunciation in ELT settings. The intention is to consider a range of accents in a supportive, non-judgmental environment and to relate the workshop outcomes to previous research and theoretical perspectives. Implications for classroom practice and teacher education will also be explored.

Activities will include listening to a range of accent models, rating various accent examples and discussing these issues.

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23 April 2005

STETS AGM / TALK

(Venue to be finalised)

We are planning to combine the AGM and lunch with an interesting presentation. The guest speaker will be Professor Alan Luke from Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice, National Institute of Education, Singapore.

Call for Papers

The *STETS Language & Communication Review* invites the submission of unpublished articles concerning aspects of the teaching and learning of English proficiency and communication skills in tertiary institutions in Singapore and Southeast Asia. Specifically, articles may discuss the following issues related to teaching and learning of English in tertiary education:

- syllabus and curriculum design
- testing and evaluation
- teacher training, pedagogy
- classroom practices
- computer-assisted language learning
- other issues

We also welcome submissions of the following:

- reports of original research
- review articles
- bibliographic essays
- book reviews
- reviews of workshops (STETS-sponsored or otherwise)

Submission guidelines:

- Length - between 1500 and 6000 words.
- Abstract to be included with your submission.
- A 50-word author biography to be included with your submission.
- Your contact details to be included with your submission.

Articles will be submitted to a blind review by at least two of our Editorial Board members and / or subject reviewers. The Editor reserves the right to edit articles for format consistency when this does not alter the substance.

For more details, please refer to the *Contributor's Guidelines* which is available from your STETS representative or at the STETS website www.stets.org.sg

We encourage you to e-mail your articles. However, if you mail your article, please include a soft copy on floppy disk.

Please send your submissions to

Chief Editor, Language and Communication Review
c/o Centre for English Language Communication
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STETS Membership

The annual subscription fee is S\$10.00 which is renewable either at the end of June or December. STETS is a non-profit organization and does not charge GST for its membership and event registration fees.

Two types of membership are available:

Ordinary Membership: for full-time academic staff in tertiary institutions in Singapore.

Associate Membership: for anyone interested both in and outside Singapore.

Just complete the Membership Application Form which is available from your STETS representative or download a copy from www.stets.org.sg and send it to us. As a member, you can enjoy the following perks:

- opportunities to present your papers at IATEFL conferences
- 10% discount at Pansing RELC
- free copies of the L&C Review
- invitations to professional talks
- reduced workshop fees
- AGM lunches
- establishment of professional ties with all tertiary institutions in Singapore and associate members from other institutions and professional societies

Call for Speakers

We would like to ask all our readers to contribute suggestions for possible speakers and/or topics for events. The presenters could be locally-based or from overseas. The more ideas the better!

If you or someone you know, are willing to give a talk or workshop that would benefit STETS members, please contact Sandra Kemp at secretary@stets.org.sg

If you would like to publicize in our Newsletter, your research or your institute's events, that would be interesting to our members, Sandra Kemp at secretary@stets.org.sg
