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# ELTWeekly

India's first weekly ELT eNewsletter

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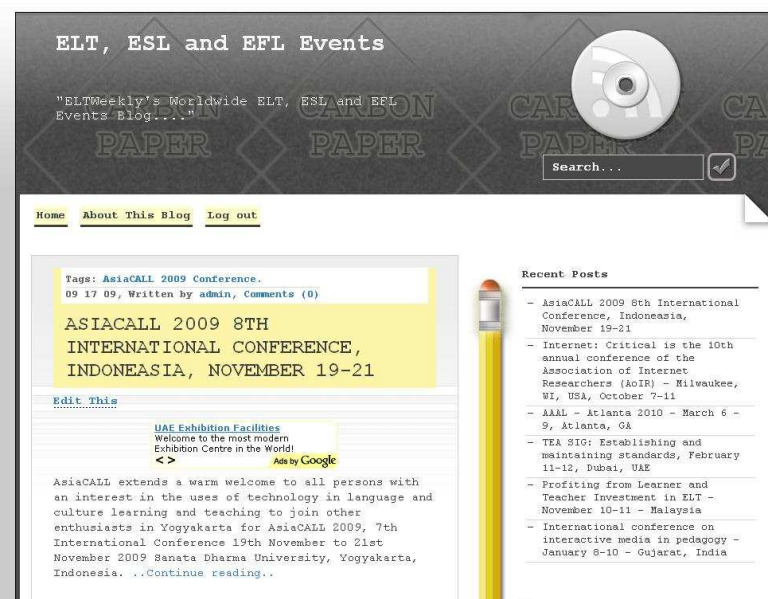
# ELTWeekly

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ANNOUNCING

THE LAUNCH OF

## ELTWeekly's ELT, ESL and EFL Events Blog



On our new blog, you can find detailed information on various ELT, ESL and EFL conferences taking place all around the globe.

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details to this blog. We would like to have your suggestions and feedback for this blog.

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## WORD OF THE WEEK

**Word: demean** • \dih-MEEN\

Meaning: to conduct or behave (oneself) usually in a proper manner

Example sentence: Sylvia was proud of the polite way her young children demeaned themselves in front of the dinner guests.

To know more about 'demean' visit <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

To leave your comment, click this link: <http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/09/eltweekly-issue34-word-of-the-week-demean-%e2%80%a2-dih-meen/#respond>

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## **VIDEO: Web 2.0 & Language Learning**

Presentation of Web 2.0 for Educators interested in language learning and emerging technologies.

Watch the video at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/09/eltweekly-issue34-video-web-20-language-learning/>

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## ELT Resource of the Week: The Bus Stop



This Macmillan resource site complements two best-selling primary courses from Macmillan Heinemann ELT. These are MINIBUS by Elisenda Papiol and Maria Toth and SUPER BUS by María José Lobo and Pepita Subirà. Together they provide a complete 6-level course for Primary First, Second and Third cycle.

Enjoy this exciting bus ride with MINIBUS and SUPER BUS and as you travel through these courses you'll also discover a wealth of extra ideas and activities for the primary classroom.

### **The Bus Stop - Free Resources:**

In these pages you will find lots of extra resources including ideas for using songs, flashcards and games, plus a special section containing articles selected by our Teacher Training team in Spain. Where necessary you can download photocopiable worksheets, and in the case of the songs, you can listen to the tune. You may need some special software to get some of the resources.

To take Macmillan's Bus Ride, visit this link:

<http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/09/eltweekly-issue34-elt-resource-of-the-week-the-bus-stop/>

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## ARTICLE: Social Networking Sites for Teaching English, Part-2

*Subtitle: Using Twitter to Teach English*

by Tarun Patel

The Internet has brought in a “revolution” as far as information exchange is concerned. It has helped people reach any corner of the world “in fractions of a second”, advertise online, sell their stuff and more.

Along with all these the education is the sector which has gained a big momentum with the evolution of Internet.

Google - the search giant has equipped the educators with superb tools which help us be “more” effective in the classroom. All the Google’s educational tools can be explored at <http://www.google.com/educators/tools.html>. Google’s tools help us even keep in touch and keep educating our learners from anywhere “online” :).

I will explore all Google for Educator tools sometime late, today I would like to share a new social networking application that could help us improve our students’ English to a greater extent.

The name of this application is Twitter.

Twitter is a privately funded startup with offices in the SoMA neighborhood of San Francisco, CA. Started as a side project in March of 2006, Twitter has grown into a real-time short messaging service that works over multiple networks and devices.

In countries all around the world, people follow the sources most relevant to them and access information via Twitter as it happens—from breaking international news to updates from friends.

Twitter is a free service that asks one question, “What are you doing?” Answers must be under 140 characters in length and can be sent via mobile texting, instant message, or the

web. These short messages are called “Tweets”. Tweets can be read via email, instant messages, text messages on a mobile phone, or on the Web.

### **Educators and Twitter**

Teachers can utilize Twitter in several ways.

1. We can make timely announcements without need for reliable Internet service. It hardly takes a second for a message to appear on Twitter.
2. We can have better connections with our learners.
3. It can prove a big time saver for the students as they don’t have to visit the blog / website on a daily basis.

### **ELT and Twitter**

Now comes the role of Twitter in helping our students be better users of English language.

How can I do that? The biggest problem with the ESL students is the correct usage of English language. They are not able to use correct English as they “do not” use enough of English everyday.

This is how we can make them use English and improve upon.

Ask your students to answer the question “What are you doing?” on Twitter 15 times a day. Review all their answers everyday and offer corrections as and when required.

Your students will answer the question “What are you doing?” in these manners.

When he / she is reading, he / she would write “I am reading my textbook now”.

When he / she is chatting, he / she would write “I am chatting with my friend on Yahoo! messenger”.

When he / she is about to close the Internet connection, he / she would write “I am shutting down my computer now”.

In the above manner they would keep writing and with the correct usage of the English language they are bound to make the mistakes too. Correct them by posting their original answer as your tweet and the correct version of their sentence below.

This can definitely help improve the language usage of our students.

With Twitter we can easily help improve our students improve upon all kinds of language functions.

Here I would like to request you to read a case study in which a Saudi Arabian teacher explains how he experimented with Twitter and shares his research results. A link to this case study is given at the end of this article.

So friends, this is what I have discovered with this messaging technology, and I am sure that many of you would come forward with some better ideas

Here are two videos showing the ways to using Twitter:

Video#1: How to use Twitter\*

Video#2: Using Twitter for EdTech Networking (to watch these videos, visit this link: <http://eltweekly.com/more/2008/12/08/tweet-and-teach-english/>)\*

\* Links available at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/09/eltweekly-issue34-article-social-networking-sites-for-teaching-english-part-2/>

In this video Steve Dembo discusses Twitter as a networking tool for the educational community.

Other Twitter Related Links

- \* Twitter in Academia: A Case Study from Saudi Arabia
- \* Twitter Tweets for Higher Education
- \* Teaching with Twitter.

\* Links available at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/09/eltweekly-issue34-article-social-networking-sites-for-teaching-english-part-2/>

To leave your comment, click this link: <http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/09/eltweekly-issue34-article-social-networking-sites-for-teaching-english-part-2/#respond>

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## **RESEARCH ARTICLE: Learning English Genres: A New ELT Paradigm**

by **Dr. G. A. Ghanshyam**, Professor of English, Govt. M. L. Shukla College, Seepat, Bilaspur (C.G.) India.

“... we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, love, despair, plan, revise, criticize, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative.” - Barbara Hardy

English language teaching and learning is an important and crucial part of contemporary education. Accorded a global stature and currency the language has made inroads within every nation and culture. A language that engenders avenues of progress and prosperity, teaching and learning of the language (ELT) is not without its share of obstacles and difficulties.

Several approaches abound as to the application of techniques and methods in ELT. A method that is steadily gaining ground is the genre based method. Communication (transference of knowledge: emotive or informative) being the prime function of language forms the basis of the concept of genre based language teaching. Inspired by Bakhtin's dialogic principle that defines language as a way of conceptualizing the world; genre focuses on studying the use of language in context. Bakhtin further explains genre as a derivative of the 'inner genre' that resides in an individual just like inner speech gives shape to outer speech. Several factors that contribute to the creation of the inner genre are based upon the culture, tradition and social milieu.

Language is a process of signification that derives its meaning from the social, political and economic culture of which it is a part. To learn a language it is essential to be aware of the culture of which it is a part and a product. Genre helps in this area because it not only gives an example of the technicalities of language usage (grammar, syntax, etc.) but also the innate nuances of its use, the expressions and emotions.

In the arena of second language teaching that distinguishes ELT in India, it is very important that the students are made aware of the nuances of its use. Lack of a proper and conducive environment impedes the smooth progress of ELT. It is an uphill task that has to grapple with multiple problems of lack of: relevant context, motivation, proper student-teacher interaction, passivity, practical and learner centered approach and most importantly the culture that language carries within itself. Genre is seen as the way culture carries out its transactions and communication. Knowledge is conveyed through different genres determined by culture. The use of genre in an English classroom provides the teacher and student with more room to actively interact, learn and use the language.

The various genres of literature that prove to be an important aide to ELT convey this very knowledge integral to the learning of a language, and its eventual practical use. Poetry, Drama and Fiction complement ELT as useful resources in the form of context that contribute to the four integral steps of language learning i.e. LSRW.

ELT cannot be confined merely to the technical knowledge of its structure and grammar; comprehension forms an integral part of the process. Unless the student comprehends fully what he/she listens and reads, he/she will not be able to effectively use it in speaking and writing. One has to develop the ability to comprehend, think and decide the particular way he/she need to employ to articulate the knowledge he/she wants to convey; Genre helps the students of language to learn and understand the ways in which language is used in particular situations and context.

Story, theme, character, emotion of a poem, play or fiction helps to generate an interest among the students. They can listen to the teacher reading out the text, discussing it in the class or try reading it themselves, discuss it with peers, comprehend the meaning and form their own perception.

Discussion, speaking out in the class and reading helps the students to overcome the initial inhibition and shyness thereby raising their self-confidence and interest in the class and classroom activity. It will also help them to learn and actively practice pronunciation, punctuation, stress and intonation to be used in a particular situation and expression as dictated by the context in use.

Eventually leading to the stage of composition, the above activities will help in the effective usage of the language with the aide of a new ELT paradigm; genre.

Knowledge, language and culture are interrelated. A major obstacle that most second language learners' face is the inability to relate to an emotion or thought in English, the target language. They think in their mother tongue and then try translating it into English. This often gives rise to difficulties related to difference in cultural context, errors in construction and the use of the target language. Use of genre in the teaching of English as a second language helps the learners to think in the target language by enhancing their language skill as well as their knowledge of the cultural context of the language text, and developing their level of comprehension and critical faculty in that language.

## POETRY

Poetry in the words of Wordsworth is the 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' which is a quite difficult genre to teach and utilize to teach language. As a genre it is often highly symbolical but at the same time very interesting and enchanting that can help in catching the attention, interest and curiosity of the student.

In language teaching the students can benefit from listening and imbibing the aesthetic employment of language, comprehension of the underlying ideas and emotions, intonation, stress, etc. Being rhythmic in nature the students will enjoy poems and lilting music of the verse which will in turn help them to sustain their interest in the language. The use of metaphoric language and expressions help the students to understand and learn the poetical use of language; it will help to develop a sense of aestheticism related to the language.

Recitation is an important part of poetry reading and appreciation. Great significance is laid on proper stress, intonation and pitch that vary with the emotions expressed in a particular poem. Reading a poem aloud in class helps the student to understand these peculiarities and nuances of the language and learn their proper usage.

Poems which express strong emotions, attitudes, feelings, opinions, or ideas are usually more 'productive' than those which are gentle, descriptive, or neutral. (Tomlinson 36)

Language is not merely a system of set rules and grammar, for effective communication it requires to be substantiated with appropriate non-verbal communication as well; expression, voice modulation, stress, etc. Use of literary text like a poem will help invigorate the language classroom with new ideas, information, sounds, and knowledge. Learners will be able to discuss the related cultural attitude and ethos of the text.

Use of poetry provides a waft of fresh air into the ELT environment. Along with the grammatical rules learners enjoy and learn the rhyme and rhythm; the music inherent in poetical use of language, their vocabulary is enhanced and they can try out the interesting exercise of finding new words that rhyme and they learn the use of metaphorical language by listening to the recitation of the poem and reciting it themselves they become familiar with the sight and sound of the language. Learning should be an enjoyable experience and poetry aides in the process of enlivening the process of language acquirement.

Communication being the sole aim of language learning an associated and important aim that often gets ignored in the language classroom is creation. Introduction of the poetic genre in ELT will attune the students to the lyrical quality of the language which can be further culminated into a creative activity of poetry writing that they can present themselves later in the class.

Use of poetry apart from making the language classroom more learner centred does not however negate the role of the teacher as a facilitator who will guide and supervise the learning and appreciation of poetry, its various nuances and technicalities, and its eventual contribution to the overall process of ELT.

## DRAMA

Drama facilitates communication in L2 learners by encouraging the following psychological factors to operate: heightened self-esteem, motivation, and spontaneity; increased capacity for empathy, lowered sensitivity to rejection. (Stern)

Drama is an important and effective genre in the field of ELT. The use of short plays and skids enable the teacher not only to enliven the classroom atmosphere and break the monotony by actively involving the students in role play but it also helps in teaching the students the expressions and other inherent characteristics of language usage.

An important contribution made by the dramatic genre has been in the generation of interest and interaction in the language classroom. The students can read out the play and enact the roles with dialogue delivery in the class guided by the language teacher. The exercise will help them to learn the way a character speaks, the emotions expressed through words with proper stress and intonation, the pitch, etc. The exercise will enable the students to come out of their cocoons and open up as they will be enacting the character of someone else.

Coming out of the traditional confines of the text will also help enliven the teaching process and motivate the students to learn and use the language effectively.

The employment of the dramatic genre in an ELT classroom enables even the passive students to take part, as drama is a group activity that demands team work and equal participation. It not only helps in learning and practicing the four basic steps of language learning but also in acquiring the non-verbal part of communication, building of self confidence and self-worth and also helps to overcome shyness and inhibitions, and most importantly makes the learner aware of social and emotional situations and the language used therein.

Drama demands enthusiasm- not only for the lesson, but also for the students. And this in turn depends on the formation of a relationship of mutual trust in which neither teacher nor student feels 'at risk', but they willingly change roles and status to achieve the aims of the lesson. (Wessels 15)

## FICTION

Second language learners of English do not have minimal ability in the use of the language nor do they have a proper atmosphere wherein they can become familiar with it. A major hurdle for the language teacher is to overcome the inhibition and fear that the learners have for the language by creating an enjoyable, interesting and relaxed environment for the students to get familiar with the language. Genre plays an important role in helping the students to become friendly with the language. Poems, drama and stories create simulation of real life situation and help people to understand and learn the practical usage of the language. This helps in developing the imaginative, creative and critical faculties of the students along with their language skills. It develops their understanding of literature within social, cultural and political constructs thereby extending their knowledge of the language; its features and conventions.

Fiction involves the use of short stories and novels, preferably novellas to generate an atmosphere of active student-teacher interaction, and enhance the level of comprehension and perception of the language through the narrative.

The stories help the student to understand not only the particularities of language use but also the culture in which it took birth. Local and global texts help them to understand the

differences and similarities of language use and the way it transforms and alters to suit to a particular culture and ethos.

Comprehension and perception help the students to progress from the path of imitation to imagination and creation. Stories can be given the form of a play by the student themselves thereby writing dialogues and enacting the story in the form of a performance.

Visual media has always proved to be a more effective medium of instruction compared to traditional ones. Use of genre in ELT can also benefit from the use of media like feature films that are based on literary texts. Use of popular culture in the form of films will help the English teacher to break the monotony of the classroom as well as provide the students with a visual representation of the use of language and the culture of which it is a part. Ayesha Viswamohan says in this regard, “To begin with, a film can add to the understanding of the period: the socio-political milieu, the ambience, the lifestyle, and also the language.” (Viswamohan 4)

The exercise will help motivate and create an interest among the students regarding the language. They will be able to listen and learn accents, expressions, pronunciation, and other features of the use of language. Level of comprehension will be enhanced when the narrative will be depicted through actual performance. Plays and fiction can be taught with the help of the cinematic media along with the text. Comparisons can be made by the students regarding the difference in both, the text and the film, and their own interpretation of the theme and characters. Viswamohan in her article also emphasises the use of songs to teach the language thereby imparting to the English classroom a degree of energy and enthusiasm that would benefit all the students to actively take part in the class, enjoy the experience and learn from it. Viswamohan further remarks:

Their use instills the class with a sense of belonging, promotes better interaction, and facilitates positive attitudes among the learners. The not-so-proficient learners are also motivated to learn the language better as they feel that their insufficient skills act as deterrent in their whole-hearted participation. (Viswamohan 5)

Primary function of language is communication. Unless effective communication takes place between addressor and addressee, learning a language is of no use. Genre helps the language students with examples of how to use the language in particular context; the manner and the ways. Each genre has its equal place of importance in ELT. A primary concern for an ELT teacher is the content that he/she needs to incorporate in the classroom to teach. Content

development is a crucial part of language teaching that can be benefitted tremendously by the employment of literary genres.

In the use of genres particular attention should be given to the fact that English is no longer the language of the Britishers but has today many roots and many voices. The students should be made aware of the changing facets of the target language particularly the local use of the language. Knowledge of the way Indian English is fashioned to suit the Indian ethos and culture will help the learners to relate to it more easily, and think and employ the language in their speech and writing effectively without stumbling over cultural constructs that hinder their understanding and use of the language. “If English is imposing the world on our students, we can enable them, through English, to impose their voices on the world.” (Warschauer)

The learners should be provided with the knowledge that will enable them to master the language, and also the freedom to use the language in their own authentic voice.

Apart from the complementary role that the genres will provide to the process of LSRW it will also help in making ELT learner based by incorporating projects and study groups on the genre and the related text. The teaching process will become more interactive and interesting catching the attention of the students and sustaining it throughout the class for a better reception of knowledge and its practical use in society and practical situations.

Genre and its contribution to the basic steps of ELT are- L S R & W

L (Listening)

The teacher can brief the class with an introduction of the theme and background of the text. The students will become familiar with the social and cultural background of the work that will help them in better comprehension.

Initial reading out of the text by the teacher will enable the students to listen and learn: pronunciation, punctuation, voice modulation, stress, intonation and expression.

Being the first step towards language learning the students will benefit from listening to the language as it is spoken; verbally as well as non-verbally with proper and appropriate expression.

S (Speaking)

Students should be actively involved by the teacher in the discussion of the text. Expression of their views regarding the theme, background and culture are to be encouraged.

Groups can be formed and after the teacher has discussed the introductory part of the text, one speaker from each group can present their view after discussion.

Queries related to the text and introduction should be encouraged thereby initiating the second step of language learning the ability to overcome inhibitions and speak out.

#### R (Reading)

After the initial introduction and discussion, students are to be encouraged to read the text aloud in class with proper pronunciation, punctuation, stress, intonation and expression.

The teacher is to act as a guide in correcting the errors if any.

Groups can be formed and listener groups should act as an invigilator to record the mistakes made by the student of the speaker group. In case groups are not formed, some individual students can be made as reporters to record the mistakes of the speaker.

Discussion of the errors spotted while reading should be discussed with active student participation under the guidance of the teacher.

The teacher is to guide the student regarding the norms and convention of recitation while reciting poetry; the rhyme and the rhythm, the stress, etc. Emotion and expression should be properly coordinated through pitch, intonation and stress.

The teacher is to guide the students through the salient features of non-verbal communication as well as per the requirement of the genre, the inherent mood and expression of the text.

Through reading, along with the earlier step of speaking the most important aspect of language learning is undertaken and that is oral communication: verbal and non-verbal.

Proper care, constant guidance and supervision is to be provided by the language teacher with adequate freedom to the student to make their own effort and learn so as to master the language and not just be a passive imitator.

#### W (Writing)

The final step of language learning is to put into practice the creative and critical faculties developed through the employment of the genre in ELT.

Writing project should include a discussion and analysis of the poem, drama or fiction; theme and convention of a particular genre; character analysis, vocabulary, and their own interpretation and analysis of the genre, the text and the cultural construct.

Writing work should also encourage creativity of the students thereby enabling them not only to learn the structure and conventions of the language but also to think in it which is a crucial link in its effective use. Students should be encouraged to write their own verse, dialogues and stories and present them in class.

Here the teacher needs to understand the responsibility that rests with him/her as not only the guide but to be truly a friend, philosopher and guide. Content should be chosen with proper care and activities related to content should be developed to encourage the students to practice their skill.

Text should match the level of the learners' language skill.

It should be relevant to their lives, age and interest.

It should be fun, interesting and lively.

Should have emotion, expression, racial and cultural variants that will stimulate the students' curiosity and interest.

Content having violent, aggressive and negative emotions, expressions and prejudice are to be avoided.

Activities like quiz related to the textual content, author, and social milieu can be held.

Vocabulary test as to the formation of words in rhyme, pronunciation, etc. can be incorporated into games and quizzes.

Character development and dramatic presentation of the poem, play or story can be undertaken as a group activity.

Public speaking and conversation can be developed through recitation and role play.

Poetry, drama and stories can be developed created and presented by the students themselves.

The four crucial steps of language learning and the importance of the course content is an integral part of ELT irrespective of the method or approach adopted in teaching. Use of literary genre however transforms this somewhat placid and dull task into an activity full of creative potential and energy. Imagination gets a free and controlled reign with the role of the teacher as a facilitator not the dictator. With creative energies flowing out through the content onto the minds and hearts of the students the language teaching and learning experience becomes an enjoyable and fruitful one. Motivated and curious the students themselves make the effort to learn and utilize the language in their expression and boundaries of inhibition, fear and unfamiliarity are broken down to usher in knowledge that liberates not confines.

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**\*ELTWeekly** would like to thanks **Dr. G. A. Ghanshyam** for contributing this article.

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## RESEARCH PAPER: Anxiety in Language Learning

by **Melahat Amir Jahansouz Shahi**, Iran

### ABSTRACT

Anxiety is one of the most challenging obstacles to overcome in learning a new foreign language. Learners are afraid of making mistakes, of looking and sounding foolish, of being vulnerable. They like feeling smart, worthy of admiration, respected for their skills and knowledge, knowing their true personality is coming through. That can be hard to do in a foreign language, especially in the beginning. Moreover, as it is statistically demonstrated, anxiety can be a determining factor in test performance of students. Due to the apparent importance of this factor in language learning, it seems relevant to focus on this element more. This article is an attempt to provide some of the underlying points in this regard, discussing its effects on different facets of language learning, and offer some important tips for the learners to overcome the problems arising from it.

### INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that some students in English classrooms experience anxiety. This psychological state-anxiety has been investigated by many linguists and psychologists in recent years. Anxiety has been regarded as one of the most important affective factors that influence language learning.

Much research (e.g. /Aida, 1994; Bailey, 1983; Crookal and Oxford, 1991; Ely, 1986; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Ganschow & Sparks, 1996; Krashen, 1985b; MacIntyre, 1995; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1988, 1989, 1991; 1994; Muchnick & Wolfe, 1982; Price, 1988, 1991; Schlesinger, 1995; Trylong, 1987; von Wörde, 1998; Young, 1990, 1991, 1992) has consistently revealed that anxiety can impede foreign language production and achievement. Language anxiety is experienced by learners of both foreign and second language and poses potential problems “because it can interfere with the acquisition, retention and production of the new language” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 86)

The issue of anxiety in L2 learning has been widely recognized for its significant impact on the L2 learners. This is especially so in the various socio-cultural contexts in which they are required to express themselves in a language of which they have little command (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre, 1999; Young, 1991). Although language anxiety is sometimes viewed as a helpful “energizer” for approach such complex tasks as L2 learning, the potentially harmful effects of anxiety, often called “debilitating anxiety” (Brown, 1994), cannot be easily dismissed in the context of L2 teaching.

The primary goal of this research was to identify those factors, as perceived by students that may contribute to anxiety, and those factors that may reduce anxiety in an attempt to understand more fully the role that anxiety may play in learning a foreign or second language.

#### DEFINITION OF ANXIETY

As we all know, anxiety is a negative way to present human feelings. When we are anxious, we feel nervous, worried, and fearful. We struggle, shake, perspire, and our hearts beat quickly. When we are learning a foreign language, most of people have language anxiety. Anxiety is a kind of troubled feeling in the mind. It is a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system (Horwitz, 1986).. Consideration of psychological aspects of learning is important in the study of anxiety, as can be seen in Scovel’s reference to an emotional state of “apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object” (1978), and in Horwitz et al’s (1986) “subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.” Such psychological definitions most commonly refer to a “transitory emotional state or condition characterised by feelings of tension and apprehension and heightened autonomic nervous system activity” (Spielberger 1983), a state which can have both negative and positive effects, and which motivates and facilitates as well as disrupting and inhibiting cognitive actions such as learning.

#### LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Language anxiety, a type of anxiety specifically associated with L2 learning contexts, can arise from many kinds of sources, according to the learners’ individually unique frame of reference (Skehan, 1989; Young, 1991). The language classroom setting, for instance, naturally presents itself as an anxiety-provoking situation to some learners, as it often involves constant evaluations from others as well as from the learner him/herself. In such an

environment, chances of being evaluated might serve as a reminder of the learner's current L2 competence in comparison to others' or idealized images of him/herself as a successful language learner (Eharman, 1996). As Horwitz et al. (1986) clearly note, "any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic" (p. 128).

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), language anxiety, a distinct phenomenon particular to language learning, comprises three componential sources, especially in relation to various kinds of L2 activities that the learners perform in the classroom:

1) communication apprehension, 2) test anxiety, and 3) fear of negative evaluation.

Communication apprehension, which generally refers to a type of anxiety experienced in interpersonal communicative settings (McCroskey, 1987), is relevant to second/foreign language learning contexts. Especially in the language classroom where the learners have little control of the communicative situation and their performance is constantly monitored by both their teacher and peers (Horwitz et al., 1986), communication apprehension seems to be augmented in relation to the learner's negative self-perceptions caused by the inability to understand others and make oneself understood (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991c).

Such feelings of apprehension that second/foreign language communicative contexts induce often accompany fear of negative evaluation from others. Watson and Friend (1969) characterize it as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively"(p. 448). As Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) also note, such feelings of apprehension can be characterized by "derogatory self-related cognition, feelings of apprehension, and physiological responses such as increased heart rate". Even in small group discussions, for instance, some learners might feel anxious for fear of negative evaluation from their peers, possibly resulting in being quiet and reticent, contrary to their initial intention to participate. Such psychological dilemmas of L2 learners between willingness to speak up in the classroom and fear of losing their self-esteem in front of others seems to be a ubiquitous phenomenon in second/foreign language classroom settings (Bailey, 1983; Cohen & Norst, 1989).

Another conflict within L2 learners, which may attribute to their unrealistic expectations or beliefs on language learning and achievement, can often be instantiated as frustration or anger toward their own poor performance on language tests. Although many students are afraid of tests in general, those who are required to take them in a foreign/second language might feel more pressure, challenged by the fact that they need to recall and coordinate

many grammar points at the same time during the limited test period. As a result, they may put down the wrong answer or simply “freeze up” due to nervousness, even if they know the correct answer (Price, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

According to Tobias (1979, 1980, 1986), anxiety may work as a mental block to cognitive performance at all three cognitive stages: Input, Processing, and Output. In other words, anxiety arousal, which is typically associated with self-deprecating thoughts, fear of failure, or worry over performance procedures, may compete for cognitive resources that normal cognitive processing will demand. Because the capacity for information processing is limited, when combined with anxiety related self-thoughts, the mental processing is naturally overloaded to the extent that language performance is impaired (Eysenck, 1979). Moreover, even superior students who are excessively concerned about their performance may become so anxious that they attempt to compensate by studying even harder (e.g., in the form of “over-studying,” as stated by Horwitz et al., 1986) because their compulsive efforts do not lead to their intended performance.

#### TEST ANXIETY

Many students experience some level of anxiety before, during or after an exam. When anxiety affects exam performance it has become a problem and it can be a powerful motivator. However, some student experience test-related anxiety to such a degree that it can lead to poor performance and interfere with their learning. These students suffer from test anxiety also called examination anxiety.

Anxiety is described as an uncomfortable emotional state in which one perceives danger, feels powerless and experiences tension in preparation for an expected danger. It is generally classified into three types: Trait, state and situation-specific anxiety.

Trait anxiety, a more permanent disposition to be anxious, is viewed as an aspect of personality.

State anxiety is an apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment in time as a response to a definite situation.

Lastly, situation-specific anxiety is related to apprehension aroused at specific situations and events (Ellis, 1994).

Language anxiety is an effective factor that affects achievement in L2 (Gardner, 1985). It is a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process (Horwitz et al., 1986). Depending on the synthesis of research context on L2 anxiety, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) describes it as the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of L2 with which the individual is not fully proficient. Thus, L2 anxiety is described as a situation-specific anxiety. It has three varieties: Communicative apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety.

Communicative apprehension occurs when learners have immature communication skills although they have mature ideas and thoughts. It is a fear about real communication with others.

Fear of negative evaluation occurs when L2 learners feel that they are not able to make the proper social impression. It is an apprehension about others' evaluation, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation.

Test anxiety is an apprehension over academic evaluation. It is a fear of failing in test situations and an unpleasant experience held consciously or unconsciously by learners in many situations. It is a type of anxiety concerning apprehension over academic evaluation which comes from a fear of failure (Horwitz and Young, 1991).

There are some factors that have an influence on students' reactions to language tests. These are perceptions of test validity, time limit, test techniques, test format, length, testing environment and clarity of test instructions (Young, 1999). Test validity is one of significant factors that provoke test anxiety. Young (1991) found that students experience anxiety if the test involves content that was not taught in class. Similarly, Horwitz and Young (1991) noted that tests in the lack of face validity led to higher anxiety and a negative attitude toward instruction. Furthermore, Madsen (in Young, 1999) investigated the effects of anxiety on ESL tests and found that high anxiety producing tests were also perceived by students as less valid.

Time limit is another factor that increases test anxiety and decreases performance. In a study conducted by Ohata (2005), learners sometimes felt pressured to think that they had to organize their ideas in a short period of time. Using an inappropriate test technique is one of the reasons that cause test anxiety. As Young (1991) reported, students felt anxious when they had studied hours for a test and then they found that question types with which they

had no experience. In the study, it found that learners experienced anxiety with a particular test format. In addition to the anxiety provoking factors mentioned above, learners' capacity, task difficulty, the fear of getting bad grades, and lack of preparation for a test are the other factors that make learners worried.

## POTENTIAL SOURCES OF LANGUAGE ANXIETY

In relation to the performance anxieties mentioned above, Young (1991) also offers an extensive list of the potential sources of language anxiety. She discusses the six potential sources of language anxiety, some of which are associated with the learner, some with the teacher, and others with the instructional practice. She argues that language anxiety can arise from:

- personal and interpersonal anxieties;
- learner beliefs about language learning;
- instructor beliefs about language teaching;
- instructor-learner actions;
- classroom procedures; and
- language testing.

Although there are overlaps with the three performance anxieties, some of these six categories are worth examining here, because they are addressing still other critical issues that may underlie or affect the formation of student anxiety:

- socio-psychological issues of language anxiety,
- learner/instructor beliefs on language learning and teaching, and
- Instructor-learner interactions/ classroom procedures.

## CAUSES OF TEST ANXIETY

Test anxiety can develop for a number of reasons:

There may be some prior negative experience with test taking that serves as the activating event.

Students who have experienced, or have a fear of, blanking out on tests or the inability to perform in testing situations can develop anticipatory anxiety. Worrying about how anxiety may affect oneself can be as debilitating as the anxiety itself. This kind of anxiety can build as

the testing situation approaches, and can interfere with a student's ability to prepare adequately.

Lack of preparation can contribute to test anxiety. Poor time management, poor study habits, and lack of organization can lead to a student feeling overwhelmed. Students who are forced to cram at the last minute tend to feel less confident about the material covered than those who have been able to follow a structured plan for studying. Being able to anticipate what the exam will cover, and knowing all the information has been covered during the study sessions, can help students to enter the testing situation with a more positive attitude.

Test anxiety may also have a genetic component.

Lack of confidence, fear of failure, and other negative thought processes may also contribute to test anxiety. The pressure to perform well on exams is a great motivator unless it is so extreme that it becomes irrational.

Perfectionism, low self-esteem, and feelings of unworthiness provide unreasonable goals to achieve through testing situations. When a student's self-esteem is too closely tied to the outcome of any one academic task, the results can be devastating. In these situations, students may actually spend more time worrying about the test than actually studying for it.

What can be done to alleviate the effects of anxiety?

A. In the Classroom:

Is the classroom a safe and secure place for learning or is the teacher's approach to teaching the language causing us to feel anxious?

In humanistic psychology, the role of individual differences in creating personal meaning is emphasized. Thus, emotions, attitudes, motivations, interest, needs, and beliefs of learners are considered as influential factors in language learning. In doing so, the teacher is responsible for creating a feeling of security and trust among the learners, and he/she is always there to create a supportive environment in which learners can discover their own problems and gradually remove them.

Teachers therefore play a significant role in the amount of anxiety students experience. If your teacher is making you unduly nervous, excuse yourself from his or her class and study with a tutor. If you are easily anxious, you need teachers who are more like friends helping you to learn and less like authority figures goading you to perform.

This avoids 'defensive learning' where the student, in order to avoid humiliation and embarrassment, hides behind defense mechanisms for protection of their self-esteem. So, the 'natural child' in us - creative, spontaneous, curious, free of fear - is therefore allowed to emerge freely and openly, not being under the parental gaze of the critical teacher. Instead, it rests in an accepting warmth and understanding where defensive learning is unnecessary.

## B. In the Community

In order to try to alleviate the effects of anxiety, we can:

1. Avoid embarrassing situations and try to have a contact with local people.
2. Try to go outside to find people with whom we can practice the language.
3. Find safe and secure places for practicing language where it is okay to make mistake, where we won't be humiliated or embarrassed.

Anxious language learners have a great fear of public embarrassment - making a fool of themselves in front of other people. So they need to find the right persons, some friendly native speakers with a gentle, empathetic personality where, in a safe and secure environment, they can do what so desperately want to do to improve their language. We also need to adjust our expectations as to how soon we ought to be mastering the language. We are all going to make mistakes, and we need to see that errors are a useful source of information about the language. So try not to feel so bad when you don't get it right the first time.

One of the ways to decrease the level of anxiety is to build confidence. Here are some tips that may help:

- Developing good study habits and strategies;
- Managing time (dealing with procrastination, distractions, laziness);
- Organizing material to be studied and learned (Take a step by step approach to build a strategy and not get overwhelmed);
- Outside pressures: success/failure consequences (grades, graduation), peer pressure, competitiveness, etc.
- Reviewing your past performance on tests to improve and learn from experience.
- Test preparation to reduce anxiety:

- Approach the exam with confidence;

Use whatever strategies you can to personalize success: visualization, logic, talking to your self, practice, team work, journaling, etc. View the exam as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and to receive a reward for the studying you've done.

Be prepared!

- Learn your material thoroughly and organize what materials you will need for the test. Use a checklist.
- Choose a comfortable location for taking the test with good lighting and minimal distractions.
- Allow yourself plenty of time, especially to do things you need to do before the test and still get there a little early.
- Avoid thinking; you need to cram just before.
- Strive for a relaxed state of concentration;
- Avoid speaking with any fellow students who have not prepared, who express negativity, who will distract your preparation
- A program of exercise is said to sharpen the mind
- Get a good night's sleep the night before the exam
- Don't go to the exam with an empty stomach;
- Fresh fruits and vegetables are often recommended to reduce stress.

Stressful foods can include processed foods, artificial sweeteners, carbonated soft drinks, chocolate, eggs, fried foods, junk foods, pork, red meat, sugar, white flour products, chips and similar snack foods, foods containing preservatives or heavy spices.

Take a small snack, or some other nourishment to help take your mind off of your anxiety. Avoid high sugar content (candy) which may aggravate your condition.

Do tell yourself that you will do your best on the test, and that will be enough.

During the test:

- Read the directions carefully;
- Budget your test taking time;
- Change positions to help you relax;
- If you go blank, skip the question and go on;

- If you're taking an essay test and you go blank on the whole test, pick a question and start writing. It may trigger the answer in your mind;
- Don't panic when students start handing in their papers. There's no reward for being the first done.

If you find yourself tensing and getting anxious during the test:

- Relax; you are in control. Take slow, deep breaths;
- Don't think about the fear; Pause: think about the next step and keep on task, step by step;
- Use positive reinforcement for yourself: Acknowledge that you have done, and are doing, your best;
- Expect some anxiety; it's a reminder that you want to do your best and can provide energy; just keep it manageable.
- Realize that anxiety can be a "habit" and that it takes practice to use it as a tool to succeed.

After the test, review how you did:

- List what worked, and hold onto these strategies; It does not matter how small the items are: they are building blocks to success.
- List what did not work for improvement.
- Celebrate that you are on the road to overcoming this obstacle.

## GENERAL TIPS

Before you Begin:

1. Preview the test before you answer anything. This gets you thinking about the material. Make sure to note the point value of each question. This will give you some ideas on budgeting your time.
2. Quickly calculate how much time you should allow for each section according to the point value.
3. Do a mind dump. Using what you saw in the preview, make notes of anything you think you might forget. Write down things that you used in learning the material that might help you remember. Outline your answers to discussion questions.

### Taking a Test:

1. Read the directions. (Can more than one answer be correct? Are you penalized for guessing? ...). Never assume that you know what the directions say.
2. Answer the easy questions first. This will give you the confidence and momentum to get through the rest of the test. You are sure these answers are correct. Try not to spend too much time on one question.
3. Go back to the difficult questions. While looking over the test and doing the easy questions, your subconscious mind will have been working on the answers to the hardest ones. Also, later items on the test might give you useful or needed information for earlier items.
4. Answer all questions (unless you are penalized for wrong answers).
5. Ask the instructor to explain any items that are not clear. Do not ask for the answer, but phrase your question in a way that shows the instructor that you have the information but are not sure what the question is asking for.
6. Try to answer the questions from the instructor's point of view. Try to remember what the instructor emphasized and felt was important.
7. Use the margin to help you figure out if the question does not seem clear or if the answer seems ambiguous.
8. Circle key words in difficult questions. This will force you to focus on the central point.
9. Express difficult questions in your own words. Rephrasing can make it clear to you, but be sure you don't change the meaning of the question.
10. Use all of the time allotted for the test. If you have extra time, cover up your answers and actually rework the question.

### CONCLUSION

This study corroborates that anxiety can negatively affect the language learning and reducing anxiety seems to increase language acquisition, retention, and learner motivation. Therefore, it is suggested that awareness of language anxiety be heightened and taken

seriously by teachers and students alike. Language teachers should acknowledge students' fears and find ways to evaluate students without inducing high levels of anxiety. Good communication and feedback before and after tests is beneficial to decrease test anxiety of learners. Good communication between teachers and learners allows learners to express their feelings and comments. Teachers have to find ways such as assignments, group works, and projects to confirm and compare their students' performance, knowledge and skills. As a result, L2 teachers who are in the center of test anxiety provoking issues also have the key role to decrease the level of test anxiety of L2 learners.

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## WORLDWIDE ELT EVENTS

### **Making Multimedia work in the Digital Lab, University of Ulster, York Street, Belfast, September 18**

Sue Swift's 'ELT Notebook' is selected to feature in Blog of the week column of ELTWeekly Issue#34.

Sue Swift is an EFL teacher and teacher trainer for over thirty years now and has lived and worked in a variety of European and Asian countries. She is the author of a number of published courses, and runs a small language training business in Italy.



Sue's 'ELT Notebook' blog is for EFL teachers of all levels of experience.

Sue says, "I hope teachers new to ELT will find some useful ideas, and that both they and others will treat it as a forum for sharing opinions and experiences."

On ELT Notebook, Sue posts ELT and ESL event details, articles on English Language Teaching, articles on ICT in ELT and more.

#### **Her latest blog entries are:**

- IATEFL On-line - Don't Miss It !
- English Consonant Sounds
- Using YouTube for Vocabulary Development
- Teaching in Bucharest, Romania
- The Teaching Knowledge Test.\*

\* Links available at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2009/09/eltweekly-issue34-blog-of-the-week-sue-swifts-elt-notebook/>

Sue also runs some more blogs: The Hamster Hideout, Languages Languages ... and The Balcony Garden.

Visit Sue's ELT Notebook at <http://eltnotebook.blogspot.com>.

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## **FREE eBOOK: BritLit - using literature in EFL classrooms**

'BritLit - using literature in EFL classrooms' e-book was originally published in print form by the Catalan Teachers of English Association, Associació de Professors d'Anglès de Catalunya (APAC), to help launch the BritLit initiative at the APAC Congress in February 2009. It coincided with a visit to schools in the city of author Louise Cooper, who also contributes to this book, and a short series of workshops for teachers about the project.

This slightly revised version has been produced because it was recognised that teachers worldwide would be interested in the contents, not just those fortunate enough to live in Catalonia. The contents cover the whole range of BritLit activity in that the voices of teachers and authors are heard along with some comments from students, as well as more detailed studies from the project team and academics.

The BritLit project has produced numerous resources for teachers and students, which can be found on the British Council Teaching English website

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/resources/britlit>.

These include the complete versions of the sample kits to be found in this book as well as nearly 40 other resource packs or kits, ranging from stories for primary school learners of English to those studying at tertiary level.

Download the ebook for free by visiting <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/resources>

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## Book of the Week: English for Specific Purposes

by **Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters**

### Book Description

English for Specific Purposes offers the teacher a new perspective on this important field.



The main concern of the book is effective learning and how this can best be achieved in ESP courses. The authors discuss the evolution of ESP and its position today; the role of the ESP teacher; course design; syllabuses; materials; teaching methods, and evaluation procedures. The book will be of interest to all teachers who are concerned with ESP. Those who are new to the field will find it a thorough, practical introduction while those with more extensive experience will find its approach both stimulating and

innovative.

### More Details

- Paperback: 192 pages
- Publisher: Cambridge University Press (February 27, 1987)
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 0521318378
- ISBN-13: 978-0521318372
- Price: \$24.27

### Review

‘... highly recommended to all practising and would-be ESP teachers for its commonsense and practical approach ... an important contribution to the continuing ESP debate and a model of clarity, brevity and interest.’ Jonathan Seath, EFL Gazette

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6. **References:** References in the text should follow the author-date system. The complete reference list should be given at the end of the article. They should be in alphabetical order.
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## This is what our readers say:

Dear Tarun and team, its really great that you all are putting great effort to have a weekly almost regularly. The articles published are of contemporary relevance and without the monotony. Wish you all the best. – **MUKESH MODI**

ELT Weekly is doing a wonderful job by bringing people together and by promoting the cause of ELT. All kudos for the team of ELT Weekly. – **DR. RAVI BHUSHAN**

Yesterday while i was searching for ELT journals i saw ELTWeekly, after went through #29th issue i realized that i missed a lot without seeing the Weekly. Any how it is a tool to give valuable information of language learners and research scholars. I thank to Patel for facilitating this weekly. I request patil to display information about monthly, quarterly and half yearly journals details. -  
**DASHARATHAM**

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