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# ELTWeekly

India's first weekly ELT eNewsletter

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# ELTWeekly

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## Tip of the week: Use MyPodcast.com to Create and Post your A-Lessons

As we all know, audio and video materials enhance the effectiveness of the contents we deliver.

MyPodcast is a free service that enables people create and post their audio contents online.

Here is the 2-step way to create and publish your audio contents:

### Recording

MyPodcast provides a free software designed to work with our website, which will help you record your podcast and allocate spots, where advertisement can be inserted. Recorder takes care of file uploading for you. No flashy ads, no spyware, just a clean interface.

### Publish

Once you have completed your new episode, it will be available to your podcast listeners. Your podcast website will be automatically updated. Subscribed users will be able to see the new episode.

When you publish your audio, you get a unique link to the contents you post. You can share it among your students and keep sending your instructions to them in Audio format.

This could help make them be better listeners and help you become a creative teacher

Here is a video demonstrating how to create and publish your podcasts on MyPodcast.com - <http://www.eltweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2010/05/58-tip-of-the-week-use-mypodcast-com-to-create-and-post-your-a-lessons/>

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## **Video: Error Correction in Speaking – The Fun Way**

This week's video features teaching tips for teenagers, Herbert Puchta looks at fun ways of correcting students' mistakes.

Read the complete news item at <http://www.eltweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2010/05/58-video-error-correction-in-speaking-the-fun-way>

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## **News: Pearson Companies Win English-Language Teaching Awards in China**

Pearson Longman, Pearson Language Tests and Wall Street English were among the 50 organisations selected as the “most influential institutions in the English Language Teaching industry in China.”

At an award ceremony held in Beijing on May 13, the 21st Century English Newspaper group announced the winners of its first annual Award Ceremony for the Most Influential Institutions in the ELT Industry. Awards were presented in six categories: Publishing Companies, Training Companies, Electronic Device Makers, Translation Service Providers, Overseas Study Service Providers, and Institutions with Special Merit.

Pearson Longman was awarded in the Publishing category and was also chosen for Special Merit; in addition, several titles including New Concept English were mentioned as key works enhancing the influence of our publishing partners. Wall Street English was recognised in the Training Company category, while Pearson Language Tests was honoured in the Special Merit category.

Read the complete news item here: <http://www.eltweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2010/05/58-news-pearson-companies-win-english-language-teaching-awards-in-china/>

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## Article: Using web resources to create tasks with real outcomes

“I consider the greatest problem facing me as a language teacher is knowing how to motivate my students: how to get them past the hurdle of seeing learning English as just another academic subject, to regarding it as developing a communication tool that will be useful for them throughout their lives.

Over the last years I've gradually developed a working method that seems, at least, to tackle the problem. It's based on using web publishing resources for creating tasks which are relevant to students and that produce tangible results.

Case study

The broader context – task-based learning and developing PLEs

Drawing out the implications

Case study: presenting a recipe task

In my first session with a group of adult students (Basque School teachers) we set up a class blog and, soon after, identified that pronunciation was an area they wanted to focus on.”

Read the complete article at <http://www.eltweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2010/05/58-article-using-web-resources-to-create-tasks-with-real-outcomes/>

## Article: Creative writing for language learners (and teachers)

Creative writing normally refers to the production of texts which have an aesthetic rather than a purely informative, instrumental or pragmatic purpose. Most often, such texts take the form of poems or stories, though they are not confined to these genres. (Letters, journal entries, blogs, essays, travelogues, etc. can also be more or less creative.) In fact, the line between creative writing (CW) and expository writing (ER) is not carved in stone. In general, however CW texts draw more heavily on intuition, close observation, imagination, and personal memories than ER texts.

One of the chief distinguishing characteristics of CW texts is a playful engagement with language, stretching and testing its rules to the limit in a guilt-free atmosphere, where risk is encouraged. Such writing combines cognitive with affective modes of thinking. As the poet, R.S. Thomas once wrote, 'Poetry is that which arrives at the intellect by way of the heart.' The playful element in CW should not, however be confused with a lax and unregulated use of language.

On the contrary, CW requires a willing submission on the part of the writer to the 'rules' of the sub-genre being undertaken. If you want to write a Limerick, then you have to follow the rules governing limericks. If not, what you produce will be something other than a limerick: obvious, perhaps, but important too. The interesting thing is that the very constraints which the rules impose seem to foster rather than restrict the creativity of the writer. This apparent paradox is explained partly by the deeper processing of thought and language which the rules require.

Read the complete article at <http://www.elweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2010/05/58-article-creative-writing-for-language-learners-and-teachers/>

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## Article: Developing Communication Skills

Life is a process of communication. Our activities and relationships depend on our ability to connect and communicate. A large part of our private and professional life is a series of communication events. We communicate with family, friends, visitors, acquaintances, colleagues and casual passers-by. We can communicate through **body language** and **verbal language**. Charlie Chaplin, and Laurel and Hardy are probably the best examples of communication through body language. However, most of us communicate through verbal language and body language together. We use body language to complement, contradict and highlight what we say through verbal language.

All of us know that language is an **instrument**. It's a tool like a saw, a hammer, and a drill. It's a tool of communication. We communicate our ideas, thoughts, feelings, opinions, attitudes, information and even misinformation through language. I'm sure you'll have noticed that different people express the same idea in different words. They use different sentence patterns. That's why we say that style is the man. Let me cite an example.

Suppose, there are two young men who want to express their love for their girl friends. One of them is a realist and doesn't believe in expressing his love in a poetic manner. He would like to say to his beloved, "I'll love you till I die. That's it." The other one is a poet and would like to express his feelings in a poetic way. He would like to say, "I'll love you till all the mountains in the world melt due to the heat of the sun, till all the oceans go dry, and till the all the deserts fly away."

Words are necessary for us to do things. Therefore, we need to master the art of doing things with words. When we look at the way we use language, we realize that it's a tool serving four main functions. Let's take a close look at these functions briefly. As you know, we meet lots of people every day. We meet our friends, relatives, acquaintances, teachers, etc. We greet them and ask questions of them and their families and friends. We pay compliments to them and congratulate them on their achievements. We thank them for their help and apologize to them for our mistakes. What do we achieve when we do these things through language? The answer is very simple. We want to establish relationships, build rapport with them and strengthen ties with them. This is called the **social function** of language. Imagine a day when we don't greet anyone, thank anyone, say sorry to anyone! Don't you think that day will be a drab day?

Then, there's the **informative function** of language. In our everyday life we ask questions to get information about people, places, objects, processes, etc. These questions differ from classroom questions, examination questions and interview questions. The latter type assumes that the questioner has the answers whereas the former type assumes that the information seeker doesn't have the answers. Newspapers, journals, magazines and encyclopedias have funds of information of all kinds. Travel brochures and railway timetables provide us information about tourist destinations and arrivals and departures of trains respectively. We can take them as illustrations of the content function of language. By the same token, books on history, physics, chemistry, and so on are examples of informative function of language. You'll agree with me that a major part of our daily life is spent seeking and providing information about a whole gamut of things and issues.

A botanical description of the daffodil flower is an instance of informative function of language. But, William Wordsworth's poem on daffodils and Robert Herrick's poem on the same flowers are illustrations of the **expressive function** or **poetic function** of language. The botanist is not interested in the impact of the daffodil flower on our minds and in our response to them. His aim is to analyze the flower and describe its various parts objectively. On the other hand, the poets use the flower as an objective correlative, an excuse, a catalyst, to portray their response to the beauty of the flower and to express their worldviews. Wordsworth is delighted to see the daffodil flowers dancing in the breeze; Herrick is sad to see the daffodils fade away so quickly. Thus, for Wordsworth the flowers represent the optimistic side of life, whereas for Herrick they represent the pessimistic side of life and symbolize the brevity of human life.

The fourth function of language is the **directive function**. As children we're constantly subjected to our mothers' several dos and don'ts. At school we have to follow instructions and do exercises according to textbook rubrics. As adults we refer to manuals for gadgets. When we drive, roadside traffic instructions and directions designed for our safety draw our attention. All these illustrate the directive function of language.

Now, keeping in mind these four important functions of language, let's examine if our students are effective communicators in English. I'm sure you'll bear me out that most of our graduates are good at writing beautiful and very literary answers to questions on Shakespeare, Wordsworth and other great writers. However, their literary competence isn't enough for them to **be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in everyday situations**. The ability to communicate requires us to use language to perform interpersonal functions such as starting a conversation, joining and leaving a conversation, making the hearer feel comfortable, giving options, and so on. Mere linguistic competence isn't sufficient. Of course, there's no denying the value of linguistic mastery, which is the basis for communicative competence. Unless we have words and grammar patterns, we

can't think of building communicative competence. **However, rules of use** are more essential than **rules of grammar**. Many of our graduates don't know how to introduce themselves and how to introduce others; they don't know how to ask for information politely, how to disagree tactfully, how to offer suggestions, etc. This is one very significant aspect that we need to pay attention to. Secondly, their English is bookish. They don't know that choice of syntax and vocabulary depends on the topic, the occasion, and the relationship between the speaker and the listener. As you know, it's important to know **what to say, when, to whom and how**. Thirdly, they need to be told that the vocabulary and syntax of spoken English are different from vocabulary and syntax of written English. They seem to be unaware of the fact that **the words and grammar of spoken English are simpler than those of written English**. As a result, they don't use contracted forms and question tags while conversing and their English sounds bookish.

In this context I'd like to make a case of a **proper exploitation of literature for language teaching**. Some pedagogues oppose the use of literature for language teaching on the grounds that literature teaching doesn't equip our learners with the skills required for handling communication situations. However, I'd like to note that it's not literature that's detrimental to communication skills; it's the way literature is used in our language classes. Most literature teachers lay too much emphasis on the content of literature at the cost of linguistic resource available in the form of literature. Let me explain the issue in some more detail. Many of us teach one act plays and short stories, among other genres. We rivet our attention on aspects such as the plot, the story, the theme, the characters, and the setting, but don't tap the linguistic richness that literature offers us. For example, we don't draw our learners' attention to **how characters interact, how they agree, disagree, advise, apologize, complain, criticize, compliment, congratulate**, and so on. Neither do we draw their attention to the **salient features of spoken English** such as contracted forms, question tags, hesitation markers, fillers, rewordings, regressions, self corrections, etc. It's mainly because of these lacunae that our graduates speak in a bookish and stilted manner.

To remedy this situation we need to connect literature teaching with life outside. Sadly, the academic world and the real world stand apart as islands. From the standpoint of the learner, the great waste in the school/college comes from the learner's inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside the school/college in any complete and free way within the school itself; while, on the other hand, he's unable to apply in daily life what he's learning in school/college. That's the isolation of the school-its isolation from life. As soon as the learner gets into the school/college, he has to put out of his mind a large part of his ideas, interests and activities that predominate in his home and neighbourhood. Similarly, no sooner does the learner leave the school/college campus, he puts out of his mind whatever literature and language (vocabulary and grammar taught without context) he has studied in

school/college. So, the school/college, being unable to utilize this everyday experience, sets painfully to work, on another tack and by a variety of means, arouse in the learner an interest in school/college studies.

In addition, we need to develop our **listening, speaking, reading and writing skills**. These language skills are the foundation of communication skills. A good communicator is a keen and interested listener. Many of us hear what we want to hear and therefore we can't understand others. Even if you're a good listener, you may not be an effective speaker. In order for you to be a good speaker, you need to master the **accent, the rhythm** and the **intonation** of the English language. Moreover, you need to mind your tone of voice and make an effective use of your facial **expressions, gestures, eye contact**, and **posture**. An excellent communicator uses his verbal and non-verbal language to achieve the best effect. A refined listener listens to the lines, listens between the lines and listens beyond the lines.

Let's look at the game we play with communication. Quite often we communicate in a roundabout manner. Let's consider the following example:

"The door is open."

On the surface level, the utterance has just one **meaning**; but it may have several **messages** depending on who says it to whom, on what occasion, and with which tone. Accordingly, it may mean the following things and a lot more:

- Please come in.
- Please leave. I'm not holding you back.
- Let's enter.
- Please don't do it. Someone might walk in any time.
- I'm afraid. I don't know what to do.
- Please close the door.
- Why didn't you close the door? Do I have to tell you again and again?
- The helper leaves the door open every day.
- We're so lucky. We don't have to break in.
- Speak softly. Walls have ears.
- We can start the negotiations any time.
- The border between the two countries is porous. Therefore, infiltration continues.
- You're welcome to Kashmir.

Developing communication skills means knowing how to discover the hidden agendas and how to exploit the language beautifully to inform, persuade, entertain, instruct, and above

all, how to make others feel at home. Developing communication skills also means overcoming barriers to communication. There are many roadblocks that make our communication slow and inefficient. Here are the seven major stumbling blocks:

- Differences in perspective
- Differences in knowledge levels
- Lack of common language/dialect/accents
- Adoption of stereotypes
- Strong emotions
- Self-centeredness
- Laziness

Communication is one of the commonest things people do. It's like eating and breathing. Everyone can do it- the educated and the uneducated, the rich and the poor, the young and the old- and all with reasonable success. Understandably, we assume our ability to communicate effectively. As soon as there's a serious misunderstanding, the speaker puts the onus on the listener and the listener blames the speaker.

All of us are like the blind people and the elephant and we assume that our perception is the only right one and a complete one. In fact, all perceptions are incomplete and fragmented. Communication may break down because of various levels of knowledge shared by two communicators. The speaker may have certain assumptions, which the listener may not share. As a result, there is a mismatch between the intended meaning and the perceived meaning. Sometimes, people having unfamiliar accents may not be able to understand each other well. The speaker may be intelligible locally, but not so nationally and internationally. Stereotype kind of thinking may be detrimental to understanding. Many of us have prejudices, which don't let us understand the message properly. Quite often our strong sentiments create stumbling blocks in the way of smooth communication. We have very hardened likes and dislikes for people and those affect our perception of meaning and messages. Some people think that they can never go wrong. At times, our laziness is responsible for lack of proper understanding.

In conclusion, let me say that in order for all of us to be good communicators, we need to

- develop our listening, speaking, reading and writing skills,
- to be able to use language to perform various functions,
- master the rhythm, accent and intonation of the language,
- understand the differences between spoken and written language,
- remember the difference between meanings and messages and
- overcome the barriers to communication.

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## Worldwide ELT Events

- [JERUSALEM: ETAI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, JULY 13-15](http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/jerusalem-etai-international-conference-july-13-15/)  
(<http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/jerusalem-etai-international-conference-july-13-15/>)
- [UNITY AND DIVERSITY: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, CUBA, JUNE 28-JULY 1](http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/unity-and-diversity-language-and-culture-cuba-june-28-july-1/)  
(<http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/unity-and-diversity-language-and-culture-cuba-june-28-july-1/>)
- [INGED ELT CONFERENCE, TURKEY, OCTOBER 2010](http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/inged-elt-conference-turkey-october-2010/)  
(<http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/inged-elt-conference-turkey-october-2010/>)
- [THE TEACHER TRAINER JOURNAL ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE, ENGLAND, AUGUST 2011](http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/the-teacher-trainer-journal-anniversary-conference-england-august-2011/)  
(<http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/the-teacher-trainer-journal-anniversary-conference-england-august-2011/>)
- [THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL NILETESOL/AUC CONFERENCE, EGYPT, FEBRUARY 1-3, 2011](http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/the-sixteenth-annual-niletesol-auc-conference-egypt-february-1-3-2011/)  
(<http://eltweekly.com/elt-events/2010/05/15/the-sixteenth-annual-niletesol-auc-conference-egypt-february-1-3-2011/>)

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## GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

- 1. Papers / Articles:** All articles should be computerized using double-spacing, including tables, references and footnotes. Submission of manuscripts should be done in electronic form only. Electronic version of the article/research paper should be e-mailed to the Editor, ELTWeekly at [info@eltweekly.com](mailto:info@eltweekly.com).
- 2. Abstracts:** An abstract in approximately 200 words should assist the article.
- 3. Abbreviations:** No stops are needed between capitals e.g. ELT, IELTS.
- 4. Figures and Tables:** Tables should be numbered sequentially with Arabic numerals.
- 5. Notes:** Notes should be consecutively numbered and presented at the foot of the page.
- 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.
- 7. Book Reviews:** Book reviews must contain the name of the author and title / subtitle of the book reviewed, place of publication and publisher and date of publication.
- 8. For Event Submissions:** Please submit your event details at least 30 days prior to the event.
- 9.** For a **more detailed stylesheet**, please write to The Editor, ELTWeekly at [info@eltweekly.com](mailto:info@eltweekly.com).