

EFL Test Anxiety: Effects, Sources and Strategies for Alleviating It

Dr. Sulaiman Hassan Qashoa

University of Sharjah-UAE

E-mail: Shussein@sharjah.ac.ae

Mobile No. 00971506495689

Abstract

Anxiety is a phenomenon encountered by human beings within their daily experience. It is a psychological discomfort resulted from potential threatening situation. The ubiquitous nature of anxiety creates different subtypes such as trait anxiety, social anxiety, situational and test anxieties. Apprehension has been found to interfere with many types of learning but when it is associated with learning a second or foreign language it is termed 'second/foreign language anxiety'. Interference of tests in almost all aspects of life normally creates a sort of tension and apprehension for the test takers and even for the others around them. Therefore, the main purpose of this paper is to increase the awareness towards test anxiety and its deleterious impact on learning L2 among the target groups like learners, practitioners, teachers and test designers. Additionally, it aims to uncover the causes of test anxiety and hopefully dispel some of the myths about tests.

Key words: test anxiety, timed tests, apprehension, alleviating strategies, performance, evaluation

EFL Test Anxiety: Effects, Sources and Strategies for Alleviating It

Anxiety is a phenomenon encountered by human beings within their daily experience. It is a psychological discomfort resulted from potential threatening situation (Rachman,2004). The ubiquitous nature of anxiety creates different subtypes such as trait anxiety, social anxiety, situational and test anxieties. Apprehension has been found to interfere with many types of learning but when it is associated with learning a second or foreign language it is termed 'second/foreign language anxiety'. Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is defined by some educators as a feeling of stress, apprehension, and nervousness associated with the L2 learning situation. It is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Young, 1991). Language anxiety may be experienced due to psychological factors such as the learner's own self perception, perception about peers, teachers or other cultures (Scovel, 1991). Additionally, it may be a result of insufficient command of the target language. Other educators relate it to different social and cultural factors like being afraid of making errors in front of others and losing social identity (e.g., Aydin,2001; Horwitz,2001; Richard, 1996).

Language acquisition is negatively influenced by the deleterious effect of the three main constituents of language anxiety: fear of social evaluation, communication apprehension and test anxiety (Horwitz et al (1986). Stress and fear which result from tests or evaluative situations are referred to as test apprehension. In this regard Zeidner (1998:17) defines test apprehension as the "set of behavioral, psychological, and physiological responses that accompany concern about possible negative consequences or failure on an exam or similar evaluative situation."

Undoubtedly, second/foreign language learning is greatly influenced and attributed by many learner variables such as attitudes, expectations, motivation, self esteem and other affective states. One of the

affective states which has a considerable effect on EFL learning is test anxiety. In other studies (Dalkilic, 2001; Koralp, 2005) test anxiety is viewed as a main cause for foreign language anxiety and an obstacle that stops L2 learners from performing well in tests. Unequivocally, taking tests has become decisive marks in our lives since passing some tests is a precondition for getting a certificate or being hired in many jobs. Interference of tests in almost all aspects of life normally create a sort of tension and apprehension for the test takers and even for the others around them. Therefore, the main purpose of this paper is to increase the awareness towards test anxiety and its deleterious impact on learning L2 among the target groups like learners, practitioners, teachers and test designers. Additionally, it aims to uncover the causes of test anxiety and hopefully dispel some of the myths about tests.

Being aware of test anxiety doesn't mean following superficial tips on the exam days such as sleeping enough hours, and having a nice dinner or nutritious breakfast (though that can be helpful). Rather, techniques for dealing and adapting with test anxiety and concerns should be incorporated into the learners' early academic life and become another nature to them by the time they take the tests. Additionally, diagnosing, recognizing and tackling the causes of test anxiety require the educators, learners and other stakeholders to realize the symptoms and levels of test anxiety among learners.

Signs and Effects of Test Anxiety

Signs of test anxiety can be classified according to the place they strike. First, signs in the test taker heads like lack of concentration, blank mind, excessive thinking about the consequences of failure, and forgetting the answers during the test and remembering them after taking it. The second type is the signs striking test taker bodies. For instance, sweating, headache, cramps, nausea, and faintness are some of other signs which can manifest themselves physically. Zeidner & Mathew (2005) elaborated test anxiety signs when they defined test anxiety as the appraisal of an evaluative situations as threatening and composed of affective, behavioral, and cognitive components. Physical sensations accompanying test anxiety such as dry mouth or headache etc are referred to as affective components. Behavioral components refer to actions which indicate lack of task focus during tests such as playing with pencils, biting nails and so forth. Apprehension and concerns about failure consequences are referred to as cognitive components. However, it can't be claimed that a little amount of concern or apprehension during test days is too bad. But, showing high level of tension and many of the aforementioned signs might hurt test takers' preparation and performance. In addition to physical, psychological and cognitive effects of test anxiety, learners experiencing apprehension and fears from tests have a problem of procrastination. They usually feel that they have not studied enough a day or two before the test. Thus, information becomes disorganized in the students' brain due to the last minute cramming which leads to excessive concern during a test situation and in turn, inability to remember or think logically.

Concerning the effects of test anxiety on EFL learning, many related studies (Aida,1994; Elbanna,1989; Petridou, 2007) confirmed the negative effects of test anxiety on the learning process and in turn on achievement. During the long period of teaching and testing EFL in high schools and tertiary levels, it has been noticed that much concern and fear of tests affect negatively actual EFL potential since anxious test takers might lose much of their effort on test coaching, cheating, language recognition, test interpretation rather than on production or real communicative competence. According to Black (2005) test anxious students think that scoring good results is more important than real understanding and their real learning and performance are consumed with feelings of anxiousness. In line with such claims, Aiden and et al (2006) conducted a study in a Turkish EFL context and found out that test anxiety creates psychological troubles

for learners; reduces motivation, confidence and self esteem; prevents learners from reflecting actual performance and consequently causes disinterest in EFL learning. Hall (1991) went further when he pointed out that test anxiety has also negative effects on learners' oral performance, writing and reading particularly when they are requested to make formal interviews, write essays and think aloud. Knox et al (1993) stressed that poorly managed tests can result in negative self efficacy, dropping out of schools and low learning potential. In addition, Krashen (1978) claims that high achievers are distinguished from low ones by levels of anxiety and degrees of self efficacy.

Additionally, in the field of FL learning, it is claimed that a vicious cycle is formed when high anxiety levels lead to poor performance and poor performance leads back to higher anxiety levels. MacIntyre et al (1997:278) raised this controversial issue when he pointed out that "highly anxious students do not perceive their competence to be as high as a more objective analysis reveals it to be. The arousal of anxiety probably makes some students more reluctant to speak. If language learners do not choose to communicate, they cannot reassess their competence. Thus begins a vicious cycle." Realizing the crucial role of test anxiety in learning and performance, Hambree (1988) conducted meta analysis of 562 studies and found that test apprehension is the main cause of poor performance and negative self confidence. This result is consistent with the fact that anxious feelings can occupy parts of working memory needed in language acquisition and problem solving. The negative effect of test worry on the working memory and achievement has been confirmed and addressed by many related studies (Chapell et al,2005; Eysenck,2001; Keogh et al,2004). For instance, Eysenck's study revealed that an attainable working memory capacity is impaired by worry which in turn causes cognitive impairment and task irrelevant thoughts to high test anxiety learners.

To be realistic, it should be realized that test discomfort is not the only cause standing behind learners poor performance. Although other factors such as poor preparation, thoughts disorganization etc might contribute to low performance, other researchers (Berinbaun and Nasser,1994) found out that learners who are well prepared but experience high levels of test anxiety face difficulties in retrieving information and doing well during tests.

Causes of Test Anxiety

The strong correlational relationship between test anxiety and second/ foreign language learning in addition to the detrimental effects of such anxieties on learners' performance have inspired researchers to investigate the sources and causes standing behind test apprehension and anxiety. In related literature, many factors contributing to test anxiety have been found such as, inappropriate content, inequitable social consequences, validity and inappropriate standardization samples. Furthermore, Young (1991) pointed to time limit, test techniques, clarity of test instructions, low level of language proficiency, weak study skills and gender as provoking test anxiety factors.

One of the most influential factors on students' anxiety is low language proficiency. Surprisingly, Horwitz (2001) confirmed that insufficient language learning could be a result and a cause of test anxiety. I think that test anxiety stems strongly from learner weakness in grammar, vocabulary etc since linguistic incompetence contribute to language learners' demotivation and low self esteem.

Environmental and situational variables have great influence on the level of test anxiety. The place, timing, surrounding etc could as well play significant roles in increasing or reducing test anxiety. Situational stress variables are presumed to have differential effects on test performance of both high and low test anxiety students. In this regard Bushnell (1978:3) pointed to the following dominant factors in actual test situations :

(a) the size of test location and the density of student seating, (b) distractions attendant upon the activity of students and monitors, (c) the proximity of high and low anxiety students in the seating arrangements, and (d) certain test embedding variables i.e. instructions prior test administrations, the general milieu established by instructors, etc.

In Bushnell's study, midterm and final exams were held in two different places; large lecture halls and language laboratories to investigate the effect of situational variables on test anxiety. The results revealed that sitting for a test in large halls with high noise levels increases students test stress whereas administering tests in language labs with sufficient desk space for thirty to thirty five students could minimize test fears and in turn, increase test performance. The results of Bushnell's confirmed the impact of situation on learning performance on high and low test anxious students. Additionally, Lee (1988) found out that a relaxing seating arrangement which puts the learner and examiners in a comfortable manner not in direct opposition can alleviate some of test apprehension and anxiety.

Another significant factor affecting test taking anxiety is time limit. Many studies (Immerman, 1980; Madsen, 1984) pointed out that high test anxiety students are affected and distressed by strict timed tests. Timed standardized and performance tests are controversial and debatable topics since they examine students under time constraints and pressure. I think that timed tests diminish examinees' authenticity and prevent them from expressing themselves in the time given since time factor becomes more important than the main aim of tests which is reflecting and checking test takers' intellectual power and abilities. Moreover, it has been found that untimed tests can increase students motivation and performance whereas timed tests are main sources of test anxiety (Walen,1996). On the other hand, the proponents of timed tests claimed that the allotted time given to all test takers enhances the fairness of standardized tests.

Test techniques, format and validity play a crucial role in the levels of test anxiety among learners. Students attitudes towards testing procedures have impact on test apprehension as well. To determine differential levels of test anxiety, Oh (1992) faced students with different reading assessment methods and found that think-aloud and cloze tests increased anxiety. Other related studies (Lynne, 1984; Madsen et al,1984; Shohamy, 1982) pointed out that oral interviews were more favorable than cloze tests and test takers' unfamiliarity with question types and format during tests constitute important sources of anxiety. Additionally, test invalidity was found to be a test anxiety provoking factor when the content of the test has not been taught before. Alderson's (1981:6) result is in consistent with this claim when the researcher pointed out that " when there is a serious discrepancy between the teaching and the means of evaluating that teaching, then something appears to be amiss."

With respect to gender as an important variable in test anxiety, in some exploratory studies (Elbanna,1989; Madsen, 1981; Putwain, 2007) it was indicated that there is a strong correlation between test anxiety and gender. In other words, female students were found to be more test anxious and more subject to test discomfort than male students. Strangely, the greater effect of test anxiety on female students has not been evidenced in most related studies. Nevertheless, I think that socialization patterns of males and females might be the reasonable explanation for this difference. In this regard, Mousavi (2008:6) presented a logic explanation when he claimed that "males are more defensive about admitting anxiety because it might be seen as threatening to their masculinity; they are trained to cope with anxiety by denying it or by finding ways to overcome it. Females are encouraged to admit to anxiety, which is perceived as a feminine trait."

Teachers' effect on the level of test anxiety in EFL context has been investigated in many studies (Aiden,2009; Baily,1983; young, 1991). In Aiden's study, the relationship between test anxiety and teacher's acts and strategies was investigated in EFL Turkish context. The results indicated that teacher is a significant factor that reduces the level of test apprehension rather than a strong source of test anxiety among students. The facilitating role of teachers stems from some effective strategies before, during and after tests such as informing students about the normality of moderate amounts of fear before tests, discussing some test techniques with test takers and cooperating with school counselors to alleviate students' test anxiety. On the contrary, utilizing tests as means of authority and punishment, lack of inter-rater reliability, negative comments during or after tests as well will inevitably cause fear and concern among learners.

On the other hand, the status of L2 in the society and language policy practices also largely affect the levels of test apprehension and concerns among learners. For example, high levels of test anxiety can be easily detected among L2 learners in the UAE context since students' occupational future and their admission to universities largely depend on the scores of some language proficiency tests like Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS). To prove such claims, Casado et al (2004) conducted a study to compare levels of anxiety among American university students learning Spanish and Spanish students learning English. The study revealed lower levels of anxiety among American students as learning foreign languages is not compulsory in US.

To deeply understand affective learning variables like anxiety, motivation or attitudes ,researchers and educators should have a considerable amount of cultural awareness since behaviors vary across cultures and what might seem to be anxious behavior in one culture might seem normal in another culture (Oxford,1999). So, it is beneficial to keep in mind cultural differences when addressing L2 test anxiety. Cultural influences such as parental expectations, teacher authority, emphasis on rote memorization, text book centeredness contribute to test anxiety. For instance, fear of losing face as a result of test failure and high parental expectations put excessive pressure on test takers in African American context (Crocker, 1988) and in Arab societies.

Strategies for alleviating Test Anxiety

As a pervasive problem in our modern society and in the age of technology, test anxiety and its possible roles in weakening performance and academic achievement of test anxious individuals have been prioritized by many educators, psychologists and counselors. Many attempts and investigative studies (Baily et al, 1999; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Horwitz,2001) tried to develop therapeutic interventions to alleviate test anxiety and its diverse effects. Assessment and evaluation tools are unavoidable parts in our life since classroom tests, proficiency and entrance tests are considered as determinant factors in our schools and post school period. Given that tests are inescapable, the only way for alleviating test anxiety is to "sugar the pill" by finding strategies to reduce the negative effects of test anxiety. Importantly, the strategies used for reducing test anxiety should take on different forms depending on whether anxious learners are low or high achievers. Based on the rule " one size doesn't fit all", Berinbaun et al (1994) suggested that highly anxious , high achieving students would benefit from learning test taking skills such as training on how to deal with different types of test formats whereas highly anxious , low achieving students need to be trained on learning strategies. Therefore, sources of support and suggested strategies should fit each anxiety situation since test anxious individuals are affected differently by many factors such as motivation level, intellectual giftedness , parental effects etc.

The suggested strategies to allay test anxiety aim to reduce test anxiety detrimental effects . It cannot be claimed that the suggested strategies will totally eliminate anxiety from one's academic and evaluative situations. Realizing the significance of increasing students' awareness towards test anxiety, some educational institutions like the College of Lake Country (Ross,1992) offers anxiety reduction programs as credit hour classes. In such programs, students are taught about the possible causes and symptoms of test apprehension. They are also trained on relaxation skills, effective time management, and test taking strategies.

Strategies for reducing test anxiety should be applied by students, teachers and testing policy makers. Preparation, organization, and practice are key points for students to tame and cope with test anxiety. As the first step towards reducing test concerns and fears, preparation includes learning about what the test covers and being familiar with the basic facts about test anxiety. Before sitting for a test, students should get a clear idea about the number of questions, test format and techniques, scoring system, time, topics to be tested , sample of test questions as well. To stay more organized, students could create a study schedule and stick to it. Planning and scheduling save the students' time and help them avoid accumulating the studied material for the last day before the exam. The practical study schedule and plan should outline what the student is going to concentrate on, and the resources needed to facilitate testing such as text books, handouts and knowledgeable people. With respect to practice, test takers need to train themselves on mock exams and get accustomed to test atmosphere before real sitting for the actual exam as "the more you become familiar to taking the test, the more comfortable you will be in real exam environment." (ETS,2005). Moreover, practice questions are beneficial since they enable test takers to identify areas that need more concentration and discover the level of pacing that best work with them. Importantly, practice tests should be conducted under timed conditions and feedback from tutors, parents etc to provide gradual exposure to test anxiety provoking situations.

On the other hand, teachers could play a significant role in alleviating test anxiety. Teachers should be objective in scoring processes and consider tests as means of evaluation and learning rather than means of punishment and authority. Students should be informed by teachers about the test format, number of questions, test technique, test aims etc. This could be achieved easily by administering a trial version of tests as suggested by Alcalá (2008) to familiarize test takers with test techniques and rating system. Additionally, other means of evaluation and checking students language proficiency such as assignments, projects and presentations should be incorporated within the testing and assessment system. In this regard, it was pointed out by Alcalá (2000) that anxious students usually fail to achieve their potential and their marks don't reflect their L2 knowledge. Therefore, finding other evaluation tools will help in decreasing test anxiety levels. Teachers also can contribute to combating test anxiety by giving students an opportunity to voice their concerns and express their attitudes about test fears they encounter during tests. Young (1991) noted that allowing students to express how they felt about tests is a practical strategy for test anxiety reduction. In FL context, creating a low stress language environment is of great importance for acquisition and communication. Language teachers can achieve this by acknowledging students' fears and maintaining a positive climate for testing as Philips (1999) recommended that an encouraging smile before the test starts is able to allay anxiety and diminish the stressful atmosphere.

Educational institutions and designers of standard tests can help students overcome test anxiety effects by teaching them effective methods to address test anxiety. For instance, counselors can help students identify the problem and determine the exact factors standing behind the discrepancy between ability and performance. It is worth mentioning that anxiety is one factor among many elements like demotivation,

depression and social difficulties that contribute to individual's underperformance. On the other hand, students should be encouraged to grasp the material before taking an exam by teaching them good study habits (e.g., time management, scheduling work, taking breaks, seeking help from other experienced people) and training them on effective study skills such as SQ3R (Robinson, 1970). By this method, students move from traditional reading technique to a more effective one by Surveying the material and Questioning what they read. The first R is to read the material with questions in their minds. The second R is to review the material which is read to find initial answers for the raised questions. The third R is to recite the gained information for further internalization of the material. Furthermore, test designers can diversify the ways for taking tests in order to enable test takers to opt the technique and format they like to be tested by. For example, the selection could take place between objective and subjective tests, individual and group interviews, timed or untimed tests. Interestingly, TOEFL designers consider students' desires and preferences when they give the test takers a freedom to sit for computer based test or paper based one.

To sum up, strategies and efforts for reducing test anxiety can be enriched and activated by cooperation of administrators, parents, students, teachers, counselors and educational policy makers in combating the deleterious cognitive and physiological effect of test anxiety. To be realistic, it cannot be claimed that the proposed strategies are magic prescription for totally eliminating students' test fears and concerns. Nevertheless, they will be of great significance if they are incorporated in student study plans and school programmes. Alarming, if performance anxiety is not minimized in elementary schools, it could continue through students' life and negatively influence future career paths (Miller et al, 2006). Therefore constant investigation and search for effective strategies for mitigating test anxiety should be an educational priority.

Conclusion

Due to the crucial role of test anxiety in determining students' academic performance and achievement, this review aimed to increase the awareness towards that phenomenon by discussing its signs, effects and causes. Moreover, it also aimed to find out practical strategies for mitigating and minimizing the detrimental effects of test apprehension on students' academic and personal life.

It was revealed that test anxiety and its levels could be recognized through the signs appearing on test takers such as blank mind, lack of concentration, excessive forgetting, nausea, cramps etc. According to Zeinder (2005), the signs could be behavioral, affective or cognitive.

The seriousness of test anxiety stems from the negative effects it imposes on test takers, parents and other stakeholders. Much concern about tests make students lose much of their efforts on test related issue instead of focusing on real learning and production. Furthermore, excessive fears of tests creates poor performance, psychological troubles, demotivation and disinterest.

With respect to sources of test anxiety, the study addressed some of the possible causes. Linguistic incompetence, poor study skills, time limit, test techniques, formats, teacher and social considerations were discussed as main causes for test anxiety. Accordingly, different strategies were suggested in this study to combat test anxiety and minimize its negative effects. Students should prepare for tests through an organized study plans. Teachers have to acknowledge students' fears and work as facilitators rather than debilitators. In addition, test designers and assessment policy makers can contribute to test anxiety reduction by diversifying test formats and techniques.

Realizing the impact of test anxiety on students and their parents as well, the educational institutions have to handle this issue seriously by incorporating anxiety reduction program within their plans. Furthermore, assessment should be considered an integral part of teaching and an ongoing process conducted together with learning and teaching instead of a single- day test. Therefore, when tests are used to reach formative goals like supporting students in language learning, they will act as stimulus. Contrary to this, if tests are used only to reach standard scores and determine students' academic and occupational future , they will act as deterrent for learners motivation and interest.

In conclusion, to deeply investigate the construct of test anxiety and its influence on our students, I recommend further qualitative and quantitative studies about the impact of test anxiety on test performance among Arab EFL students and a further investigation is needed to examine the correlation between teacher attitudes and test anxiety.

References

- Aida, Y. (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz, And Copes construct of foreign language anxiety: the case of students of Japanese. *Modern Language Journal*, 78 (2), 155 – 168.
- Alcala, F. R. (2002). Making oral tests more human and less anxiety generating. *Humanising Language Teaching*. 4 (4), 1 – 3.
- Black, S. (2005). Test anxiety. *American School Board Journal*, 192(6), 42-44.
- Alderson, J. (1981). Introduction in Alderson, J. & A Hughes (eds). 1981:5-8.
- Arnold, J. (2000). Seeing through listening comprehension exam anxiety. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34 (4), 777 – 786.
- Aydın, S., Yavuz, F. Yesilyurt, S. (2006). Test anxiety in foreign language learning. *Balikesir University, Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 9 (16), 145 – 160.
- Aydın, S. & Zengin, B. (2008). Anxiety in foreign language learning: A review of literature. *The Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 4(1), 81-94.
- Aydın, S., Karakuzu, M. & Elkılıç, G. (2009). Teacher effect on the level of test anxiety among young EFL learners. *International Symposium on Sustainable Development*. June 9—10. Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina, 190—194.
- Berinbaun, M. & Nasser, F. (1994). On the relationship between test anxiety and test performance. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 27, 293-301.
- Bushnell, D. D. (1978). Altering test environments for reducing test anxiety and for improving academic performance. Retrieved in November 2010 from: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED161946>
- Casado, M. A., & Dereshiwsy, M. I. (2004). Effect of educational strategies on anxiety in the second language classroom: An exploratory comparative study between U.S. and Spanish first-semester university students. *College Student Journal*, 38, 23-35.

Chapell, M.S., Blanding, Z.B., & Silverstein, M. E. (2005). Test- anxiety and academic achievement in undergraduate and graduate students. *Journal of Education Psychology*, 97(2), 268-278.

Crocker, L., Schmitt, A., & Tang, L. (1988). Test anxiety and standardized achievement test performance in the middle school years. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 20, 49–57.

Dalkilic, N. (2001). An investigation into the role of anxiety in second language learning. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Turkey.

Educational Testing System : The Praxis Series (2005). Reducing Test Anxiety. Retrieved from: www.ets.org/media/tests/praxis on November 14, 2010.

Eysenck, M.W. (2001). *Principles of cognitive psychology*. Hove, East Sussex: Psychology Press.

Hembree, R. (1988). Correlates, causes, effects, and treatment of test anxiety. *Review of Educational Research*, 58, 47-77.

Harlen, W. (2007) *The Quality of Learning: assessment alternatives for primary education*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125-132.

Immerman, M. A. (1980). The effects of eliminating time restraints on a standardized test with American Indian adults. Retrieved in September 2008 from ERIC Database (ED196584).

Keoghi, E., Bond, F.W., French, C.C., Richards, A., & Davis, R.E. (2004). Test-Anxiety, Susceptibility to distraction and examination performance. *Journal of Anxiety, Stress and Coping*, 17(3), 241-252.

Knox, D., Schacht, C., Turner, J. (1993), Virtual reality: A proposal for treating test anxiety in college students, *College Student Journal*, 27, 294-296

Koralp, S. (2005). A Retrospective Analysis of the English Language Learning Anxiety Experienced by Prospective Teachers of English. Unpublished MA Thesis. Turkey.

Lee, W. R. (1988). Communicative talk in interview-type assessment of spoken English. Retrieved in September 2008 from ERIC Database (ED296576).

Lynne, H. (1984). The ESL noise test: cultural differences in affect and performance. Retrieved in September 2008 from ERIC Database (ED274171).

MacIntyre, P. D., Noels, K. A., & Clément, R. (1997). Biases in self-ratings of second language proficiency: The role of language anxiety. *Language Learning*, 47, 265-287

Madsen, H. S. & Murray, N. (1984). Retrospective evaluation of testing in ESL content and skills courses. Retrieved in September 2008 from ERIC Database (ED249815).

- Madsen, H. S. (1981). Determining the debilitating impact of test anxiety. Retrieved in McDonald, A. (2001) The prevalence and effects of test anxiety in school children. *Educational Psychology*, 21, 89-101.
- Miller, M., Morton, J., Driscoll, R., & Davis, K. A. (2006). Accelerated desensitization with adaptive attitudes and test gains with 5th graders. Education Resources Information Center.
- Mousavi, M., Haghshenas, H., & Alishahi, M.J. (2008). Effect of gender, school performance and school type on test anxiety among Iranian adolescents. *Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal*, 10, January, 4-7.
- Petridou, A. & Williams, J. (2007). Accounting for aberrant test response patterns using multilevel models. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 44 (3), 227 – 247.
- Oh, J. (1992). The effects of reading assessment methods on anxiety level. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26 (1), 172 – 176.
- Oxford, R. (1999). Second language learning: Individual differences. In B. Spolsky (Ed.), *Concise encyclopedia of educational linguistics* (pp. 552-560). Oxford, UK: Elsevier
- Rachman, S. (2004). *Anxiety* (2nd ed). Routledge: New York, NY.
- Richard, A. P. (1996). *Making It Happen: Interaction in the Second Language Classroom – From theory to practice*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Robinson, P. (1970). *Effective study*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Scovel, T. (1991) .The Effect of Affect on Foreign Language Learning: A Review of the Anxiety Research', in Horwitz, E.K., & Young, D. J. (Eds.), *Language Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications* (pp. 15-24). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Shohamy, E. (1982). Affective considerations in language teaching. *Modern Language Journal*, 66 (1), 13 – 17.
- Wallen, M., Bonney, M. A., & Lennox, L. (1996). Inter-rater reliability of the Handwriting Speed Test. *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*, 17, 280-287.
- Young, D. J. (1986). The relationship between anxiety and foreign language oral proficiency ratings. *Foreign Language Annals*, 19 (5), 439 – 445.
- Young, D. J. (1991) Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: what does language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal*, 75 (4), 426-439.
- Young, D. J. (1999). *Affect in foreign language and second language learning*. Boston, MA:McGraw-Hill.
- Zeidner, M., & Mathews, G. (2005) Evaluation anxiety. In A.J. Elliot and C.S. Dweck (Eds.) *Handbook of Competence and Motivation*. London: Guildford Press.