

Communication Apprehension in English as a Foreign Language Classrooms: A Literature Review.

La aprehensión comunicativa en las aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera: Una revisión bibliográfica.

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Resumen

Algunos investigadores y profesores consideran que la teoría humanista del aprendizaje de idiomas, en la que el desarrollo emocional de los alumnos es uno de los objetivos principales, puede convertirse en una posible ayuda para alumnos que tienen ansiedad para hablar el inglés como lengua extranjera. Es así como el presente estudio hace uso del método cualitativo integrativo para identificar los estudios que, a juicio de la investigadora, son los más relevantes en este campo. Los resultados están agrupados en cinco grupos de información, a saber, los orígenes y el desarrollo de los estudios sobre ansiedad para hablar, el enfoque humanista particularmente de Gomes de Matos, las fuentes de la ansiedad para hablar, las estrategias más reconocidas para enfrentar a la ansiedad, así como, la gamificación como la estrategia más relevante para trabajar los problemas de ansiedad en los estudiantes. Se concluye que la teoría humanista tiene aplicaciones adecuadas para apoyar al docente cuando se encuentra con estudiantes que presentan ansiedad del habla.

Palabras clave: Ansiedad del habla en EFL, aprehensión comunicativa, enfoque humanista para la ansiedad del habla, humanismo en la educación, estrategias para la ansiedad del habla en EFL.

Abstract

Some researchers and teachers consider that the humanistic theory of language learning, in which the emotional development of learners is one of the main goals, may become a possible aid for learners who have anxiety in speaking English as a foreign language. Thus, the present study makes use of the integrative qualitative method to identify the studies that, in the researcher's opinion, are the most relevant in this field. The results are grouped into five groups of information, namely, the origins and development of studies on speaking anxiety, the humanistic approach particularly by Gomes de Matos, the sources of speaking anxiety, the most recognized strategies to cope with anxiety, as well as gamification as the most relevant strategy to work on anxiety problems in students. It is concluded that the humanistic theory has adequate applications to support the teacher when he/she encounters students who present speech anxiety.

Keywords: EFL speech anxiety, communication apprehension, humanistic approach for speech anxiety, humanism in education, strategies for EFL speech anxiety.

Introduction

Language anxiety, "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language texts," affects all four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Subasi, 2010 & Karakas, 2012). Affective factors include opinions, imagination, stress, self-esteem, character, learning manner, and other items such as level of maturity and cultural experience (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993). As a result of their study, Olivares-Cuhat (2010) identified anxiety as the greatest negative item affecting language development.

Communication apprehension (CA) is identified as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1984, p.13). Some research shows that up to 20 percent of the overall population of the U.S. suffers from excessive levels of CA (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). People with high levels of CA are routinely afraid to even try to communicate in different situations, such as interpersonal, groups, and speaking in public. Research reveals that excessive CA causes reduced levels of self-confidence, lower GPA's, and low degrees of academic achievement (McCroskey, Daly, & Sorensen, 1976; Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). CA is generally accepted as a universal problem for L2 learners, ranging from nervous jitters before a classroom speaking assignment to a full-blown panic attack, which is genuinely debilitating. Research is ongoing, looking for causes and effective treatments, especially since the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was developed (Horowitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986)

One possible practical approach to speaking anxiety is the humanist learning theory, based on Abraham Maslow's Theory of Motivation (1943). When correctly applied in an educational setting, humanistic learning theory complements and develops academic achievement, intellectual development, and the augmentation of knowledge and abilities. According to humanist assumption, teachers enhance academic growth by establishing interpersonal relations to students' lives, feelings, and backgrounds. This connection allows students to learn better and learn more profoundly. Although students traditionally learn by achieving a specific body of knowledge and abilities, they simultaneously forge close relations to the material and to other people. Thus, academic attainment affords a context for personal development and achieving sufficient knowledge and abilities in order to succeed.

Research Questions - The research questions for this literature review are

- 1) What is the humanist theoretical construct for students with foreign language communication apprehension (fear of speaking)?
- 2) What are some of the causes of speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms?
- 3) Are the combination of interventions and a supportive atmosphere in EFL classrooms helping students overcome their communication apprehension?

Research Objective – This study aims to link the theoretical construct of humanistic treatment of EFL speaking anxiety with regular classroom experiences. The overall goal is to give EFL teachers valuable suggestions to help them identify speaking anxiety, provide a

classroom conducive to reducing such anxiety, and hopefully increase the English language acquisition of their students.

Material and methods

This article is a literature based on the integrative qualitative method suggested by Snyder (2019) who suggests that when the scientific production is not very structured, the synthetic method can be used without necessarily being systematic, i.e., it can resort to various sources and search engines to provide an approximate classification of scientific production. Therefore, this review is presented on discovering the reason for some students' difficulties with L2 when they were otherwise outstanding students. The study then shifts to developing a humanist approach to foreign language instruction which began with Carl Rogers' attention to human-centered education in the 1950s. Each construct has moved through the decades, picking up expertise along the way, with research findings making essential contributions to the literature. The review then covers some critical humanist empirical studies on university students suffering from speaking anxiety. It culminates in integrating the two constructs in collaboration between students and teachers to develop effective strategies for treating speaking anxiety.

Since communication apprehension has attracted international interest, Google was selected as the primary search engine because of its universal familiarity. Searches were conducted using the following keywords: "EFL speech anxiety," "communication apprehension," "humanistic approach for speech anxiety," "humanism in education," and "strategies for EFL speech anxiety." Additional search engines, such as Bing, Duck Duck Go, Safari, ResearchGate, etc., were checked using the keywords listed above as a final step. As over 200 sources on humanism, humanist learning theory, and language anxiety were identified as part of a larger project, these data were rich sources from which seminal articles on these constructs were selected.

This review is focused on speaking anxiety among university students. Consequently, all other articles were discarded. Most articles on humanism and humanist teaching and learning are theoretical; therefore, seminal papers were kept for this review using purposive sampling. Although humanistic research is typically qualitative, quantitative studies were not automatically eliminated if they met the primary criteria. While attempts were made to select open-access articles wherever possible, abstracts were used if there was a compelling reason – i.e., a seminal work, a unique perspective, etc.

The review is divided into four sections. First, there is a discussion on the designation of anxiety as one of the significant affective influences on foreign language learning. Second, the humanistic approach to treating communication apprehension based on Maslow's Theory of Motivation (1943) was reviewed. Third, reviews of empirical studies using the humanistic approach, including journaling, questionnaires (descriptive statistics), interviews, case studies, focus groups, small group discussions, and pair work, were included. Using purposive sampling, the articles selected fit this review's objective as they include typical methods of humanist studies. Finally, strategies designed to assist those struggling with

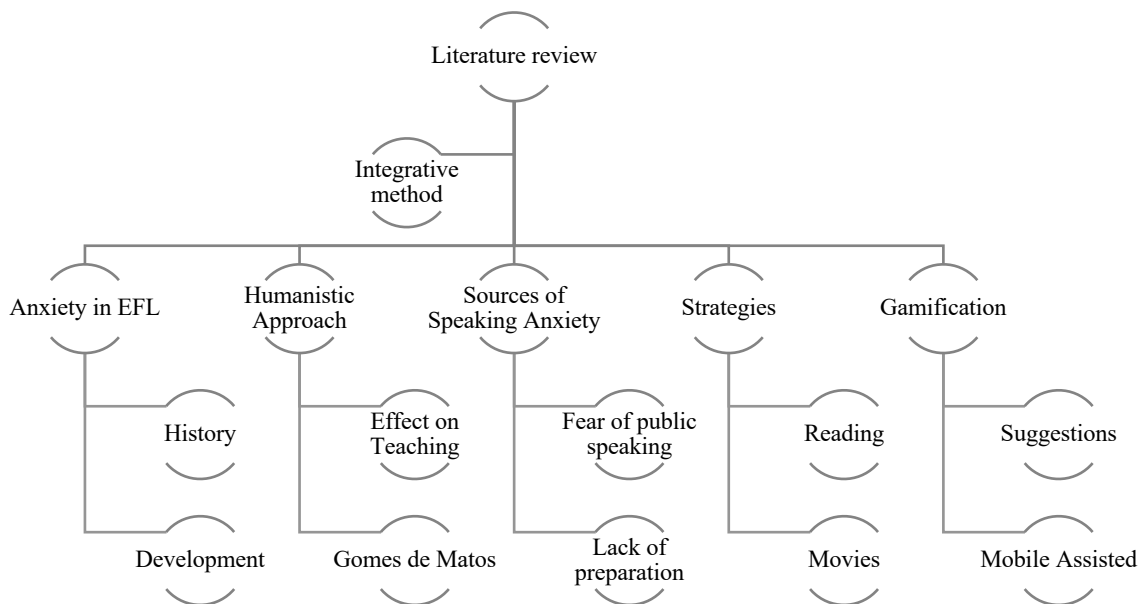
debilitating speaking anxiety are discussed, including role-play, debate, small group discussion, and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Recommendations for future studies emphasizing a humanistic approach toward communication apprehension are also presented, followed by a summary.

Results

The results are organized in five sections, namely, 1) the beginnings and development of the study of anxiety in the field of foreign language teaching, 2) The development of the humanistic approach to foreign language teaching, 3) The factors related to anxiety, 4) The coping strategies of anxiety, 5) The advantages of the gamification strategy in dealing with anxiety. A summary of its content can be seen in Figure 1, which shows that the method used is qualitative integrative and that it groups the content of the review into five major categories, each one has at least two entries that exemplify its content.

Figure 1.

Summary of the five categories of the literature review on EFL speaking anxiety.



Beginnings and development of the study of anxiety in foreign language production

Early Research

Early research on the role of anxiety in foreign language learning failed to demonstrate any clear-cut relationship between anxiety and a learner's achievement in a foreign language (Brown, 1973; Chastain, 1975; Backman, 1976; Kleinmann, 1977; Scovel, 1978; Bailey, 1983) These early researchers were among the first to recognize the critical and distinct role that anxiety played among the many variables that affect foreign language learning.

During the 1980s, interest in foreign language anxiety grew (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz, 1986; Lucas, 1984; Young, 1986). As a result of their studies, Gardner, Tremblay, and Masgoret (1997) and Olivares-Cuhat (2010) each declared anxiety as the greatest deterrent to language achievement, one of the essential affective factors influencing learning a foreign or second language (Brown, 2007). It is now believed to be the most powerful predictor of students' performance (Liu & Huang, 2011).

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that foreign language anxiety (FLA) seriously impedes the development of second language fluency and performance. Oxford (1999) warned that although teachers can observe various indications of language anxiety, the visible signs of such anxiety may differ from culture to culture. What learners consider "comfortable" in one culture might cause significant stress to learners in a different cultural group. It was evident that an instrument was needed to measure better the anxiety experienced by EFL students in different situations. Such instrumentation could enable them to actually measure their stress level. Accordingly, Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which consists of items primarily related to anxiety in oral production and apprehensive attitudes toward foreign language learning.

Situation-Specific Anxiety

Dörnyei (2005) separates anxiety into two categories: a) facilitating and debilitating and b) trait and state anxiety. To some extent, facilitating anxiety is helpful for students, whereas debilitating anxiety impairs performance and achievement. State anxiety is experienced in certain situations, hence situational, while trait anxiety is understood as an inherent characteristic of the individual. "Speaking-in-class anxiety" is acknowledged as situational, only evident on certain occasions involving speaking (Mak, 2011).

Four Distinct Language-Acquisition Skills

Classroom anxiety is now separated into four distinct factors: Listening (Chang, 2008); Kuru-Gonen, 2009); Reading (Kuru-Gonen), 2007, 2009; Shariati & Bordbar, 2009); Writing (Cheng, 2002, 2004 & Bidari, S. (2021).); and Speaking (Abdullah & Abdul Rahman, 2010; Osboe, Fujimura, & Hirschel, 2007). Subekti (2018) and Tsiplakides and Keraida (2009) reviewed three specific situational anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is defined as the learners' anxiety when they are forced to speak in front of others (Horwitz et al., 1986). They fear that they are not able to adequately express complex ideas. (Brown, 2000). Learners become anxious when they have to demonstrate their language ability in different speaking circumstances.

Other criteria

Aydin (2009) stated that learners might be unable to demonstrate their fundamental language skills because they are anxious, thus receiving negative evaluation. Fear of negative assessment is defined as learners' anxiety over the judgment of others, frequently combined with

peer pressure (Horwitz et al., 1986). For example, students may fear their peers laughing at them should they make errors.

Akbar (2014) argued that vacillations/weaknesses while speaking could be conquered by encouraging students to read texts. Teachers should utilize productive activities, such as appropriate and exciting reading texts to enable them to discuss what they have read.

Zhang (2009) commented that not only is speaking a critical skill, it is a special challenge for L2 learners since the mastery of different micro-skills must be achieved as well. Such micro-skills include pronouncing new phonemes, understanding appropriate stress and intonation, and correctly using both formal and informal expressions.

Students in an EFL environment have few opportunities to speak English outside the classroom since it is not a common language in most countries. Researchers and educators do not share uniform agreement on how to make alterations in how best to teach English.

Researchers generally agree that traditional emphasis on rules of grammar is a major impediment to foreign language acquisition. Teachers have tended to engage students in separate practice in the reading, writing, and listening skills, but with little or no speaking practice. Even speaking classes, which should give students an opportunity for oral interaction, too often result in students listening to teachers doing the talking. Instead of students interacting with the teacher or with each other orally, the class becomes a listening exercise (Zhang, 2009).

Humanistic Approach to English as a Second Language (EFL)

Humanist Education

Also referred to as person-centered education, humanistic education is based on the theories and studies of humanist psychologists, most notably Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Rogers, the "Father of Humanistic Psychology," devoted himself to applying the results of his psychological research to education that is person-centered, the critical traits of the most influential teachers (Huitt, 2009).

An example of a situation where a humanizing classroom is needed in EFL class is when students are asked to speak a foreign language, and the teacher focuses solely on their grammar, causing the students to feel stressed and make errors in speaking. This situation needs humanizing action, where teachers make empathetic corrections and try to help students become more comfortable (Ghanizadeh et al., 2020).

Huitt (2009) envisions the humanistic teacher as a facilitator, not a disseminator, of knowledge. Both the academic needs and affective needs of the students are considered. Both feeling and thinking are connected: Learning is facilitated if the student has a positive feeling about himself or herself. The efforts of a *humanist teacher* are devoted to developing students' self-esteem. Students should have high self-esteem and the confidence that they can establish and achieve realistic goals (high self-efficacy).

Objectives of the Humanist Approach

As described by Gage and Berliner in 1991 and quoted over the years by numerous researchers (Huitt, 2009; Nath, Kumar & Kumar Behura; Akter & Mamun, 2019 & Stevick, 1990), the humanistic practice of education has five primary objectives:

- The promotion of positive self-direction and independence;
- Development of the ability to assume responsibility for learning;
- Development of creativity;
- Promotion of curiosity; and
- Creation of an interest in the arts.

Unlike traditional teaching, the humanistic approach is based on developing specific characteristics in students, acquiring self-confidence, and developing various social and emotional abilities. Success in learning a foreign language is determined by the cognitive structure and the personality's emotional and affective characteristics (Arifi, 2017).

Affect on teaching

Stevick (1990) considers it necessary to include emotions and aesthetic experiences in teaching, work on improving social relations, increase responsibility, and, in addition to knowledge, help students understand the content. All this will lead students to experience self-achievement (Maslow, 1943).

The importance of the humanist form of teaching foreign languages is seen when the role of emotions in communication is understood and by including those emotions when learning. It is important that all students understand the meaning and ability of each person having different goals. Besides the cognitive and affective components, each class develops in accordance with group dynamics and the role of each person.

Some teachers intuitively use the humanistic approach, and their humanistic orientation stems from how they experience their interests, their subjects, and the students they teach. These aspects influence how they involve their class in the teaching process, how they introduce teaching materials, and how students give feedback.

Gomes de Matos' proposal

What teachers do in class is essential, but what they think about the teaching process is also important. In 1996 the Brazilian writer and language teacher Francisco Gomes de Matos published his Theory of Humanizing Knowledge, a concept that he felt should be part of every EFL classroom. Nine years later, in 2005, he published a second article expressing frustration that language teachers were paying no attention to his earlier plea and that most teachers knew nothing of humanizing knowledge. According to Gomes de Matos, EFL teachers know linguistic, pedagogical, psychological, cross-cultural, and technological knowledge but must be taught about humanizing knowledge.

Scholars began to take note, and several researchers began to explore the issue of implementing humanization in EFL classrooms. What Gomes de Matos was promoting, and others were discovered, was the educational benefits of humanization. By encouraging

students to use their own life experiences to help solve common problems and even to help shape the curriculum, teachers and researchers found better teaching, a more relaxed classroom atmosphere, and improved learning.

Humanistic goal

The teaching process brings teachers' experience, knowledge of subjects, methodology, personality, attitudes, and interests to the students, all of which are humanistic. The goal of humanistic teaching is to create a responsible civil society that accepts different cultures greatly assisted by knowing one or more foreign languages. Education is student-centered, typified by students taking responsibility for their education and owning their learning. A humanist approach is correct if education prepares students for adult life (Huitt, 2009).

Sources of Speaking Anxiety

Research results show numerous causes for speaking anxiety. The typical reasons are fear of making mistakes, fear of tests and assessments, worry over social comparison and competition (Dörnyei, 2001), negative evaluation and perceived low ability (Subaşlı, 2010), negative judgments toward the EFL classroom by peers not in the EFL classroom, and short wait-time by teachers who demand immediate answers to their questions (Mak, 2011). Students with debilitating fear of speaking usually avoid participating in tasks by keeping quiet, sitting in the back of the room, and avoiding looking at the teacher. Table 1 summarizes the amount of scientific production found linked to the factors that lead to speaking anxiety in EFL.

Table 1.

Sources of Speaking Anxiety

Causes	Causes of speaking anxiety	Number of studies
Internal factors	Fear of tests and assesment	7
	Fear of public speaking	2
	Lack of vocabulary	2
	Fear of making mistakes	1
	Silent students	1
		1
External factors	Negative judgements by peers	3
	Negative evaluation by teachers	1
	Short waiting time by the teacher	1

N= 10 (total number of studies where this information was obtained.)

These sources and avoidance strategies should be recognized by teachers (Gregersen, 2003; Aida, 1994 & Horwitz, 2001). Karakas (2012) said that, if needed, teachers should take a doctor-like role, diagnose the source of the anxiety, and apply interventions to dispose of

its effects. He offered suggestions to help teachers with interventions based on his research and experience (see below). There are many empirical studies on communication apprehension (speaking anxiety) which we will describe below.

Is public speaking more feared than death?

Although this literature review is specifically on classroom speaking anxiety, the following article is mentioned to demonstrate the pervasive nature of communication apprehension beyond the classroom. In the *London Sunday Times*, on October 7, 1973, an article reported that 41% of Americans who were surveyed (Watson, 1973), listed speaking in front of a group as their greatest fear. The brief story was written by Peter Watson and entitled "What People Usually Fear." His implication, according to Dwyer and Davidson (2012), was that people are more afraid of speaking in public than they fear dying.

Corroboration

In 2012, Dwyer and Davidson replicated that 1973 study, using university students (N=815) as subjects. They found that public speaking was often considered a more common phobia than any other, including death. However, students often selected death when asked to choose only a top fear.

Results of the study conducted by Abdullah and Abdul Rahman (2010) seem to confirm the findings of McCroskey's (1997) study, which found that most people experience communication apprehension when speaking to a group of people in a formal setting. The two researchers felt that oral performance also contributed to a higher anxiety level. Most students experience performance anxiety when performing in front of the class. When they feel nervous, students may hesitate or stumble or look uncomfortable and become silent.

Vocabulary Insufficiency

Abdullah and Abdul Rahman (2010) attributed speaking anxiety symptoms to a lack of vocabulary proficiency. However, they felt it is also possible that anxious students feel self-conscious when asked to risk revealing themselves by speaking a second language in the presence of other people. Akbar (2014) agrees with their supposition, asserting that insufficient vocabulary makes students afraid to talk, inasmuch as words are vital to communication.

Silent Students

"I like English but do not take part in speaking because I am so bad at speaking, and my friends will laugh at me" (Anonymous). This quote from an unidentified student is a statement heard by many teachers in speaking classes (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). It is also a common complaint from EFL teachers about their silent students. Despite its significant impact on language learning, EFL teachers frequently fail to identify students suffering from anxiety in speaking classes: They often mistake their students' anxiety as low ability or reluctance to engage in speaking activities as low motivation (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009) They rarely take steps to handle this serious issue (Riasiti, 2011). Humanistic techniques should be used here over traditional didacticism (Huitt, 2009).



Interventions

Experimental Treatment

Bowen (2004) investigated the humanistic role techniques played in reducing anxiety associated with oral communication. Classes that incorporated humanistic techniques (e.g. journal writing and group work) were attended by the experimental group. Bowen used questionnaires, journals, and interviews to measure language anxiety levels. Students in the control group were given average course content using traditional teaching methods without consideration of their affective domain. Results showed a decrease in anxiety in the experimental group, which also achieved better results in the final written examination. The two groups showed no significant variation in the oral examination. Bowen believes humanistic treatment was essential in reducing the experimental group's anxiety.

Speech Preparation

Mardijono (2001) assigned each student a speech to the class as a final project. In consideration of Maslow (1943) she applied the humanistic strategies in her speech class in the belief that a “supportive and cooperative group atmosphere” would improve learning to help students maximize their potentials and that there needed to be “sharing and caring” (Moskowitz, 1978, in Mardijono, 2001).

Case Study

Tsiplakides and Keraida (2009) employed a case study approach, using semi-structured interviews, group discussions, and direct observation to develop students' speeches. They discovered from the data that six of the twelve students in the case study experience speaking anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation from their peers and perception of low ability.

Mobile-assisted Language

Tarighat and Khodabakhsh (2016) investigated Mobile-Assisted Language Assessment (MALA) and the students' reactions it. This was achieved by using electronic portfolios and WhatsApp. Seventeen advanced-level learners of English participated in this study. In every session, one participant volunteered to record a two-minute speech and share the recording on the WhatsApp group of all class members and the teacher. Ultimately, the participants were interviewed for their attitudes and views on the method used to assess their speaking proficiency. The results indicated varied reactions toward MALA; some were concerned about fairness and lack of realistic communication. It is suggested that MALA be used alongside other assessment forms to form part of the learners' final score.

Strategies

Table 2 presents a summary of some strategies to combat speaking anxiety, ranging from improving the atmosphere to creating games through gamification. The most important findings of each of them are highlighted.

Table 2.

Strategies to combat speaking anxiety.

Strategies	Authors	Findings
Classroom Atmosphere	Mardijono (2001)	Active participation in a positive group develops positive feelings
	Ramírez Ortiz and Artunduaga Cuéllar (2018)	Language errors are considered natural which helps speech-anxious students overcome. Indirect rather than direct correction contributes for self-worth protection.
	Tsiplakides & Keraida (2009)	
Integrated Approach	Zhang (2009)	Adding speaking opportunities to a reading allows students to integrate skills. Classified three activities, based on reding.
Pleasure Reading	Akbar (2014)	Reding encourages learners to become pleasure readers.
	Karakas (2014)	vocabulary-enhanced games that may help students with speaking anxiety.
Vocabulary Acquisition	Ramírez Ortiz and Artunduaga Cuéllar (2018)	Project work provides anxious and non-anxious students opportunities.
	(Young, 1991)	Small groups can be constructive.
Gamification	Sykes (2014)	Developed three categories to serve for further research
	Fajardo-Guapisaca & Argudo-Garzón (2022); Carmona-Chica & Argudo-Garzón (2022); Marin-Pacurucu,& Argudo-Garzón (2022)	Developed several game elements for the language classroom

Classroom Atmosphere

Mardijono (2001) The principal aim of humanistic teaching that Mardijono employed was to help the students develop positive sentiments about themselves and their fellow students through active involvement in a comfortable ambiance. Ultimately, those students could each stand before the class to give their speeches.

Ramírez Ortiz and Artunduaga Cuéllar (2018) believe that the creation of a friendly and supportive classroom atmosphere where language errors are considered natural and where there is no excessive correction that can “draw students’ attention away from communication and toward a focus on form and accuracy” (Gregersen, 2003), can be useful in aiding speech-anxious learners to conquer their self-view of low ability and their fear of poor evaluation. Tsiplakides & Keraida (2009) agree with the importance of a supportive atmosphere, adding that teacher-student relations with indirect rather than direct correction,

the need for self-worth protection, and the provision of praise are also critical. Karakas (2014) commented on Dornyei's advice that teachers should avoid social comparison, promote cooperation instead of competition, help learners accept the fact that they will make mistakes as part of the learning process, make tests and assessments completely transparent, and involve students in the negotiation of their final grade (2001).

Integrated Approach

While Akbar (2014) advocates reading to assist with speaking anxiety, Zhang (2009) promotes a more integrated approach as a reasonable solution to such anxiety, where speaking is combined with reading and writing to provide students with extra practice in oral communication. Because the listening skill is a natural component with any actual oral activity, increasing speaking practice with any reading or writing lesson permits students to mix together at least three skills. He lists advantages, such as adding variety, encompassing students' abilities, and creating interactive activities by giving emphasis to both prolific and receptive abilities.

The student-centered topics employed with reading and writing activities also apply to speaking assignments, helping students acquire the new language by offering them interesting issues to talk about and chances to use their language abilities.

Pleasure Reading

Akbar (2014) says that in language learning, hesitations or weakness in speaking can be overcome by encouraging learners to become pleasure readers. Extensive reading helps foreign language learners develop their ability to understand the implied meaning of words and become capable of expressing their ideas, feelings, and emotions. Reading introduces learners to a greater extent of language and contexts and helps learners improve grammar skills.

Vocabulary Acquisition

Zhang (2009) argues that possessing sufficient vocabulary is a major component that influences fluency in speaking. Karakas (2014) suggests using vocabulary-enhanced games that may help students with speaking anxiety. Games based on group and pair work can be incorporated into speaking activities where cooperating with peers makes anxious students feel less threatened (Nakahashi, 2007).

Movies - Reading is more of a verbal experience than a visual one, while in addition to the written word, there is color, movement, and sound in a movie. An excellent example of a film with a humanistic theme is "Pay It Forward," starring Kevin Spacey. This film is frequently shown in classrooms because of its humanistic message and the opportunity to

acquire correct pronunciation and word usage. Authentic features such as facial expressions and hand and body movements are also taught to students using this strategy.

Ramírez Ortiz and Artunduaga Cuéllar (2018) encourage teachers to use project work because it provides anxious and non-anxious students opportunities to use language in a non-threatening context. They argue that the first step in reducing anxiety is having students participate in speaking tasks. Students are more eager to participate in oral activities in small groups so that project work can be constructive (Young, 1991). Tsiprakides & Keraida (2009) and Karakas (2012) received recommendations for project work from their case study groups.

Gamification

Several language teachers, such as Reinhardt and Sykes (2014), have employed gamification in their teaching process. They developed three categories that they believe merit further research: 1. game-enhanced language acquisition that can utilize commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) games in the classroom; 2. the use of games to enhance language learning means games that are specifically designed for educational purposes, and 3. game-informed teaching is limited to the use of *game and play principles* in the language classroom. Researchers in Ecuador have developed several game elements for the language classroom (Fajardo-Guapisaca & Argudo-Garzón, 2022; Carmona-Chica & Argudo-Garzón, 2022; Marin-Pacurucu, & Argudo-Garzón, 2022). Game-based programs explicitly designed for vocabulary enhancement show potential for aiding students with speaking anxiety.

Games for speaking

Mardijono (2001) argued that optimal learning would only occur when the students are actively taking part in the process (Rogers, 1969, in William & Burden, 1997). Students practiced their speeches in groups of two, then in larger groups, then with a partner in front of the class, and finally in front of the entire class. Her strategy was successful. Karakas (2012) also suggests that group discussions where nothing said is right or wrong might create space for anxious learners to participate.

Mobile Assisted Language Learning

One of the more recent forms of technology used to aid language learning is Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) which uses personal and portable devices. This new trend enables the user access to learning programs in different contexts and emphasizes continuity and spontaneity (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). MALL has been widely used in language teaching/learning, allowing practice opportunities, especially for speech-avoidant students.

Other suggestions

Osboe et al. (2007) received some suggestions from their focus groups for increasing their speaking confidence: out-of-class activities, such as talking with friends, sending e-mails, learning useful phrases, and participating in extra learning tasks. Zhang (2009) offers three activities, based on reading, for students to practice speaking English.

- Read to Act - Students act out a story they read from a textbook or other source, using their own creativity, and making any alterations they want to the plots and narratives.
- Read to Debate -Students perform a debate based on an article from any source. The topic should be on a controversial issue and within students' ability.
- Read to interview– More pliable than reading to act or debate, this activity emanates from persuasive, argumentative, or narrative texts.

Karakas (2012) suggests role plays where students take on new personas with pseudo names. Protecting their self-image by disguising with new identities, even wearing masks, somehow mitigates their fear of negative evaluation, assessment, and perception of low ability.

Table 3 summarizes the origins of the research and shows, by country, that there is a very varied production of studies of this nature from all continents. The United States and Ecuador are the countries that have recently presented more than one study.

Table 3.
Strategies to combat speaking anxiety.

Authors	Country
Dwyer & Davidson (2012)	USA
Reinhardt & Sykes (2014)	USA
Gomes de Matos (2005)	Brazil
Kukulsa-Hulme & Shield (2008)	UK
Karakas (2014)	Turkey
Bowen (2004)	South Africa
Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009)	Pakistan
Abdullah & Abdul Rahman (2010)	Malaysia
Osboe, Fujimura, & Hirschel (2007)	Japan
Taraghat & Khodabakhsh (2016)	Iran
Mardijono (2001)	Indonesia
Akbar (2014)	Greece
Guapisaca & Argudo-Garzón (2022)	Ecuador
Carmona-Chica & Argudo-Garzón (2022)	Ecuador
Marin-Pacurucu & Argudo-Garzón (2022)	Ecuador
Ramirez Ortiz & Artunduaga Cuellar (2018)	Colombia
Zhang (2009)	China

Discussion

Governments are demanding fluent English speakers for their international commerce. Although there is a conviction among some researchers that humanist learning theory holds the answers for some students' language learning difficulties, relatively few empirical studies have been published focusing on humanism in EFL classrooms, specifically

on the humanist treatment of speaking anxiety. This paper reviewed a representative selection of those studies.

The reader should appreciate the international flavor of these empirical studies and suggested strategies by examining the countries represented in this review. It should be clear immediately how widespread the problem of speech anxiety is. Researchers in many countries report that students who begin English instruction at the start of their formal instruction graduate from postsecondary educational institutions unable to speak the language.

Various humanist methods were employed in these studies: focus groups, interviews, case studies, controlled experiments, etc. In Bowen's study (2004), the experimental group experienced less speaking anxiety by the end of the testing period because they worked with journals, interviews, and questionnaires to measure speaking anxiety during the term. Likewise, in Mardijono's speaking class (2001), highly anxious students could stand before their classmates to deliver their final speeches at the end of the term, having used humanist techniques during the course.

A typically humanist strategy involves the students discussing effective strategies for dealing with classroom problems. For example, Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009) and Karakas (2014) employed case studies with their students and reported putting suggestions such as role-plays, small-group presentations, and project work into action. The focus group Osboe, Fujimora, and Hirschel (2007) conducted yielded suggestions for out-of-class projects such as emails, speaking English with friends, and learning useful phrases.

Teachers with considerable experience have formed strong convictions on how to help students with debilitating speaking anxiety. For example, Akbar (2014) and Zhang (2009) are convinced that encouraging students to read extensively to build their vocabularies will help them gain confidence in speaking. Of course, work being done with gamification could provide these students with the expansive vocabulary they may need to become confident speakers (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2014; Guapisaca & Argudo-Garzón, 2022; Carmona-Chica & Argudo-Garzón, 2022; Marin-Pacurucu & Argudo-Garzón, 2022; Kukulsa-Hulme & Shield, 2008, & Taraghat & Khodabakhsh 2016).

Conclusion

Gomes de Matos called in 2005 for all EFL teachers to become "humanizers" (Attachment). Teachers are beginning to follow his approach as humanizers by addressing students' communication apprehension in classrooms. However, for this approach to become genuinely effective worldwide, many more studies must be conducted, and results published. There is considerable literature on speaking anxiety published in the past twenty years, but very little is from a humanist perspective.

This paper reviews humanist literature that identifies, addresses, and strategizes for solutions to what is a serious problem. The studies reviewed here would lend themselves easily to replication. For example, could one of these studies be replicated in a different country and yield similar results, or are the cultural differences in the student bodies too different for replication?

This researcher has noticed an encouraging trend in Ecuador. Several undergraduate and master's theses have been published on EFL speaking anxiety. Since there is an urgent need for research studies conducted here; hopefully, a few of these researchers will expand their interest to include humanist treatment of the problem. Not only does this literature review contribute to the existing literature, but it should also pique interest.

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