Chapter Four

Results: Presentation and Discussion

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I. Research question 1: Does the use of selected humanistic techniques result in a decrease in anxiety levels associated with oral performance in the TESOL classroom? My hypothesis was that the use of selected humanistic techniques results in a decrease in anxiety levels associated with oral performance in the TESOL classroom.

A. The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension

1. Discussion

The purpose of the PRCA was to determine the initial communication apprehension levels of students in the experimental and control groups. The PRCA was also used to prove that the groups were equivalent in terms of communication apprehension levels.

Mc Croskey (1977) states that a score above 85 indicates a high level of CA, a score above 72 indicates a higher degree of apprehension regarding communication than the average person would have and a score below 59 indicates a very low level of CA. In the experimental group the scores ranged from 63 to 77 with a mean of 70.4 and in the control group the scores ranged from 63 to 81 with a mean of 72.4. These results reveal that students in both groups experienced a moderate level of anxiety and apprehension regarding communication in group, meeting, dyadic and public speaking contexts.

After subjecting the raw scores to statistical analysis, one can conclude that the groups were similar at the outset of the study as the p value was greater than 0.05 signifying that there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of communication apprehension levels (see the column headed t value in the table below).

The sampling procedure used alternate experimental and control groups which could be termed as random selection as the researcher had no control over which students were placed in the class at any given time.

 With hindsight, the researcher feels that although the PRCA was used merely to determine incoming CA levels and to prove that the experimental and control groups

were similar at the outset, it would have been prudent to administer the PRCA a second time at the end of the course in order to determine whether CA levels in the experimental group decreased and whether CA levels in the control group remained the same or increased.

2. PRCA results

Testing the hypothesis that there is a difference between the experimental and control groups with regard to anxiety as measured by the following factors: Group Discussion, Meetings, Dyadic and Public Speaking individually and the total sum of these factors.

T- Tests

Variable	Method	Variances	DF	t value	Pr > {t}
Group Discussion	Pooled	Equal	59	- 1.27	0.2083
Group Discussion	Satterthwaite	Unequal	58	- 1.28	0.2070
Meetings	Pooled	Equal	59	-1.37	0.1744
Meetings	Satterthwaite	Unequal	58	- 1.41	0.1643
Dyadic	Pooled	Equal	59	- 1.09	0.2819
Dyadic	Satterthwaite	Unequal	57.5	- 1.09	0.2817
Public Speaking	Pooled	Equal	59	- 1.12	0.2680
Public Speaking	Satterthwaite	Unequal	56.4	- 1.11	0.2700
Total	Pooled	Equal	59	- 1.97	0.0535
Total	Satterthwaite	Unequal	59	-2.00	0.0505

B. The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory

1. Discussion

The researcher would like to note that in order to apply statistical procedures such as the t-test to the BALLI data, the original raw scores for each student were required so that each student's responses could be entered individually and BALLI administration 1 could be linked to BALLI administration 2. These raw scores were not available as all the questionnaires were filled in anonymously. The researcher felt that it was very important that anonymity was retained so that bias and subjectivity could not influence the results obtained and students would be more likely to submit honest answers. In addition, the BALLI is widely used in applied linguistics research with the results

expressed as percentages and not as statistical calculations. The researcher acknowledges that although numbers expressed as percentages may give the impression of differences between the two groups it does not present the full picture in terms of whether the differences between groups are statistically significant.

2. BALLI results

Results for BALLI administration 1 and 2 in terms of five selected questions:

Questions		Experimental Group N= 28	Experimental Group N= 25	Control Group N= 33	Control Group N= 24
		Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 1	Admin 2
4. English is a difficult language to learn.	Strongly Agree/Agree	32.14	16.00	51.52	58.33
	Neutral	39.29	52.00	33.33	29.17
	Disagree	28.57	32.00	15.15	12.50
5. I will learn to speak English well.	Strongly Agree/Agree	89.29	100.00	81.82	70.83
	Neutral	7.14	0.00	12.12	16.67
	Disagree	3.57	0.00	6.06	12.50
16. I have a special ability for foreign language learning.	Strongly Agree/Agree	10.71	64.00	27.27	29.17
	Neutral	50.00	16.00	36.36	29.17
	Disagree	39.29	20.00	36.36	41.67
21. I feel shy when I speak in English.	Strongly Agree/ Agree	57.14	28.00	63.64	79.17
	Neutral	10.71	0.00	9.09	0.00
	Disagree	32.14	72.00	27.27	20.83
33. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	Strongly Agree/Agree	75.00	92.00	75.76	62.50
	Neutral	7.14	8.00	12.12	20.83
	Disagree	17.86	0.00	12.12	16.67

The results from these five questions reveal that the experimental group students experienced a decrease in feelings of anxiety and apprehension over language learning

and perceptions of the difficulty of learning English from the first to the second administration of the BALLI. The researcher proposes that this was due to the intervention of humanistic techniques. The control group students, however, experienced an increase in feelings of anxiety and apprehension and became more negative in terms of their perceptions of the difficulty of learning English.

The BALLI questionnaires also produced interesting results in terms of experimental students' shifts in perceptions regarding the difficulty of language learning, perceptions about foreign language aptitude and the nature of language learning. These results are outside the scope of this dissertation but are included in the appendix.

C. The Foreign Language Anxiety Scale, Mid Course questionnaire and Post Course Questionnaire

1. Discussion

Due to the original idea of retaining anonymity of students, the raw scores for each student were not available therefore statistical procedures such as the t-test could not be applied to the data. It should be noted, however, that the FLAS is widely used in applied linguistics research with the results expressed as percentages and not as statistical calculations. The researcher acknowledges that although the numbers expressed as percentages may look as if there is a difference between the groups it does not present the full picture as one cannot say with certainty that the differences between the groups are statistically significant.

The FLAS was administered at the beginning of the course, the Mid course questionnaire was administered in week four and the Post course questionnaire was administered at the end of the course. The FLAS data reveals that at the beginning of the course both groups experienced considerable feelings of language anxiety. The data from the Mid and Post course questionnaires reveals that there was a greater decrease in anxiety in the experimental group as opposed to the control group. The researcher proposes that humanistic techniques were effective in reducing feelings of language anxiety associated with oral communication in the TESOL classroom.

2. FLAS, Mid-Course and Post-Course Questionnaire results:

a. Results for five selected questions from the FLAS questionnaire showing initial anxiety levels

FLAS Questions	Statement	Experimental Group	Control Group
10. I worry about failing my English class.	Agree	67.86	45.45
	Neutral	7.14	9.09
	Disagree	25.00	45.45
23. I always feel that other students speak better than I do.	Agree	53.57	51.52
	Neutral	3.57	6.06
	Disagree	42.86	42.42
25. My English class moves too quickly.	Agree	42.86	33.33
	Neutral	57.14	12.12
	Disagree	0.00	54.55
27. I get nervous and confused when I speak in class.	Agree	25.00	42.42
	Neutral	10.71	6.06
	Disagree	64.29	51.52
31. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak in class.	Agree	35.71	39.39
	Neutral	7.14	9.09
	Disagree	57.14	51.52

b. Results for five selected questions from the Mid and Post course questionnaires

Mid and Post Course Questions	Statement	Experimental Mid Course	Experimental Post Course	Control Mid Course	Control Post Course
3. Even though I studied hard I still feel I didn't reach my full potential in terms of speaking ability.	Agree	59.26	20.00	42.42	59.00
	Neutral	18.52	8.00	15.16	8.00
	Disagree	22.22	72.00	42.42	33.00
12. I would not have been so self-conscious if everyone knew that it was normal to make mistakes.	Agree	48.15	28.00	57.58	45.83
	Neutral	33.33	20.00	15.15	20.83
	Disagree	18.52	52.00	27.27	33.33
16. I felt high anxiety when presenting my oral to the class and my instructor.	Agree	62.96	56.00	96.97	91.67
	Neutral	29.63	32.00	3.03	4.17
	Disagree	7.41	12.00	0.00	4.17

18. I still feel unsure of my ability to speak English.	Agree	37.04	28.00	66.66	54.16
	Neutral	18.52	4.00	6.00	16.67
	Disagree	44.44	68.00	27.34	29.17
19. My English class moves so quickly that I felt that I was left behind.	Agree	44.44	28.00	57.58	50.00
	Neutral	18.52	12.00	12.12	16.67
	Disagree	37.04	60.00	30.30	33.33

D. Journals

1. Positive experiences inside the classroom

a. Language games

Many students commented that a variety of language games helped them to feel less anxious about speaking in English and brought a more positive and relaxed atmosphere to the classroom:

'We enjoy playing games; everybody gets a chance to practice speaking and it makes the lesson more interesting' (Ufulo: Angola)

'During the games, I felt that when I spoke in English it sounded like my mother tongue…I was surprised and I lost my shyness and fear about speaking' (Judy: China)

b. Acquisition of new vocabulary

The acquisition of new vocabulary is often a difficult experience for EFL students as they complained that they tended to forget new words very quickly. Students, however, expressed a desire for a significant quantity of new vocabulary which would add range to their speech and give them a sense of empowerment over their oral communication ability:

'I understand the meaning of more and more words…I am very proud of myself' (Manuel: Angola)

'I am learning many new words and I revise them every day at home…the more new words I learn, the less anxious I feel' (Tony: China)

c. The language learning process

Many students commented that mistakes, especially with regard to speaking, had been viewed in a negative light in previous language courses they had attended. Through the implementation of the humanistic techniques, students felt that they had gained new insights into how languages are successfully learned and had developed a more holistic view of language learning:

> 'When I started the course, my confidence was very low especially about my speaking…now I know that it is okay to make mistakes and I am trying to understand English in a whole way…this is very useful'. (Frank: China)
> 'The most important thing I learned is that I must talk freely in order to be good at English…if I don't speak in class, I can never improve my speaking …I also learned a lot about how languages are learned' (George: DRC).

d. Improvement in speaking ability

Students commented that they felt a significant improvement in their speaking skills and that they really valued the opportunity to speak in class particularly in discussions and debates:

> 'I have more courage to speak…I am not afraid to speak English anymore'.
> (Eric: China)
> 'During class I sometimes surprise myself when I speak… I sound fluent and I don't make mistakes…I am much more confident and relaxed'
> (Andrea: Chile)
> 'I can now talk to other students and make good contributions to a discussion…
> My confidence is much higher and I feel proud of myself' (Pierre: Ivory Coast)

e. Being part of a cohesive group working towards a common goal

Students felt that they were more confident about their speaking as they were part of a cohesive and caring group where oral communication was encouraged and mistakes were viewed as a natural part of the learning process:

> 'We gain knowledge from each other and have fun together…I feel less anxiety about speaking because I am part of this wonderful group. It has shown me that people from different countries can learn together and communicate with each other' (Judy: China)

'I feel I am really close to my classmates and this helps me relax in class…

hence I want to express my opinion or answer questions' (Nostalgia: Taiwan)

2. Negative experiences inside the classroom

a. Speaking in front of others

Students mentioned that at times they found discussions, debates and other fluency based activities to be stressful. Their anxiety centred on concerns about pronunciation, the fear of looking or sounding foolish and being evaluated in a negative way by other students:

'Sometimes I am afraid to express myself during discussions because I feel that I will sound stupid or say something the wrong way and everyone will know that I am at a low level of English when I speak' (George: DRC)

'I feel unhappy with my speaking…the other students make only one mistake but I make many…this is a big shame for me' (Amy: Ivory Coast)

b. Limited vocabulary

A number of students commented that their vocabulary was inadequate to meet their communicative needs:

'Sometimes when I talk in class, I don't have the words to express my feelings …this makes me feel anxious and stupid because I have to search for the words and waste time' (Iliane: Brazil)

'The words I use in oral communication are very limited…this is my biggest problem. It makes me sick because I forget new words very quickly and it makes me lose hope of being able to learn English' (Frank: China)

c. Oral test anxiety

Most students stated that they found the thought of the oral examination to be most anxiety-provoking. Their concerns centred on forgetting what they had learned, having to stand up in front of the class and the possibility of failure:

'I want my oral exam to be perfect but I am shy and scared…I don't know what I will sound like and I am very anxious about this exam' (Andrea: Chile)

'I am afraid for the oral exam…I don't want to stand in front of the class, I am nervous about how I will sound' (Eric: China)

3. Positive experiences outside the classroom

a. Dyadic communication situations

Students mentioned that as they progressed through the course and spent more time speaking English, they felt more confident of their ability to communicate in situations which required face to face communication with others:

> 'I helped my friend to find a place to stay and I had to speak English to the estate agent. I was surprised because she understood me and I understood her' (Ruby: China)

> 'At first I was scared of speaking to South African people, then I tried hard and I now think I can cope with one to one communication, I can go to the shops and have coffee by myself and I am okay' (Betty: DRC)

b. Sense of achievement regarding oral communication ability

As students became less afraid to speak in English, their command of the language and their general confidence in their ability increased. The smallest tasks for first language speakers became milestones of achievement for these students:

> 'When I go to a restaurant I can order my food without difficulty…the bus and taxi are easy too and I can even understand idiomatic expressions that South African people use' (Manuel: Angola)

> 'I felt proud when I went to the doctor and was able to talk to him and pay the bill by myself…In the past, my husband had to do all that for me' (Andrea: Chile)

c. Increased competence in social situations

Students stated that they felt an increased sense of confidence in their ability to communicate in social situations:

> 'I was invited to a dinner with English people, I was very nervous but I found that I could speak well and I understood the majority of the conversation…I feel very confident now' (Javier: Spain)

> 'I went to a youth meeting at the church, everyone was open to me and welcomed me, I found that I was able to speak without problems…I think I can manage social situations' (Ufulo: Angola)

4. Negative experiences outside the classroom

a. Pronunciation problems

Several students felt that their poor pronunciation led to negative experiences outside the classroom. They stated that others struggled to understand what they were saying even after repetition. Students felt that this was embarrassing and led them to feel a certain reluctance regarding speaking in English outside the classroom:

> 'I went to buy a cell phone and no-one in the shop could understand my pronunciation…I was shy and uncomfortable so I just left the shop and went home with nothing' (Eric: China)

> 'Sometimes I feel like no-one outside the class understands a word I am saying. I can see that people in shops don't understand my speech…it depresses my spirit sometimes' (J.P.: South Korea)

b. Limited vocabulary

Students generally found that their vocabulary was inadequate for their social needs outside the classroom. They felt that their restricted range of vocabulary limited their freedom of expression in social situations:

> 'I have problems to understand informal conversations between English people because they use many informal words and expressions which are not in the dictionary…so I stand there smiling but I don't understand a word' (Javier: Spain)

> 'My social vocabulary is so small; when I go out I never know what to say because it is hard to express what is in your heart if you have no words' (Michael: China)

c. Perceived lack of speaking skills

Most students perceived speaking to be the most difficult skill to master. While they developed great confidence in class, negative communication experiences outside the classroom often served to discourage them and made them reluctant to communicate in English:

> 'When I have to complain in a restaurant or shop, I get very nervous because the people become very rude and impatient when they see that I am a

foreigner learning English…this makes me unhappy' (Michael: China)

'I fear making mistakes when I am in public…I think South African people are impatient with foreigners and it makes us scared to speak' (Tony: China)

E. Mid and Post course Oral Interviews

The researcher focused on two main areas namely: what causes feelings of anxiety about speaking in the TESOL classroom and what suggestions experimental and control group students had for overcoming this problem.

1. What makes you anxious about speaking in class?

a. Poor pronunciation:

'Speaking in general makes me anxious because of my pronunciation …I have a strong accent and I wish I didn't' (Aguila: Mozambique)

'I hate speaking in English because my pronunciation is horrible…my accent is so bad that even my husband doesn't understand me' (Amy: Ivory Coast)

b. Fear of negative evaluation by others:

'Sometimes when I have to give my opinion or answer a question, I feel nervous in case I say the wrong thing and everyone laughs at me' (Gail: Haiti)

'I feel anxious about speaking in front of others, I don't like doing speeches or being the focus of attention in class' (Maria: Russia)

c. Discussions and fluency based activities:

'Discussions and debates make me nervous because I don't have enough time to prepare what I want to say so I make lots of mistakes and this makes me feel uncomfortable' (Stelio: Mozambique)

'Sometimes I don't like discussions because I don't always have an opinion on everything and it becomes difficult' (Geraldine: Ivory Coast)

d. The dilemma of knowing the grammar rule but being unable to apply it in speech:

'I know the grammar of English very well but it is difficult to remember all the rules when you speak so lots of mistakes are made and the teachers take

you back to learn the grammar rule you already know' (Frank: China)

'I think it is frustrating that I know the grammar but I can't speak fluently…
this is very strange for me' (Michael: China)

e. Large classes:

'I don't like big classes because I am shy and don't like to speak in front of
many people' (Iris: Taiwan)

'I prefer learning in a small group and not in a big class, I feel shy to speak
when I know everyone is looking at me' (Sandra: China)

f. Oral tests:

'I feel anxious about oral tests especially the final exam, I know I won't sleep
the night before the exam' (Nostalgia: Taiwan)

'I always feel anxious about oral tests and I wish we didn't have to do them
because they are not true pictures of our performance' (Iliane: Brazil)

g. Limited vocabulary:

'I feel that my speaking is poor because my vocabulary is so small…if I knew
more words then I wouldn't worry about speaking' (J.P.: South Korea)

'My small vocabulary frustrates me because it makes my speaking slower
and I don't feel fluent because my words don't flow' (Betty: DRC)

h. Intensive, fast-paced courses:

'I dislike these short and intensive courses because there is no time to relax
and enjoy speaking another language…all the time you feel you must perform
for your teacher and your classmates' (Gennady: Russia)

'I don't like fast-paced courses because I want to spend some time learning the
language…I now feel as if I am rushed and I cannot learn any more words than
I am…I think speaking ability takes more time' (Pierre: Ivory Coast)

2. Suggestions for overcoming anxiety associated with speaking in the TESOL
classroom

a. More speaking activities:

'I think we need to do a greater variety of speaking activities such as debates,
discussions, role plays and conversations…we need to do them every day and

we will see our speaking improve' (Cahit: Turkey)

'In language courses, too much time is spent on grammar and not enough on speaking. Even though we did a lot of speaking, I needed more' (Javier: Spain)

b. Longer courses:

'The courses need to be longer because you can't improve your speaking in eight weeks…that is a stressful goal to reach' (Maria: Russia)

'I think if the course time was more, I wouldn't have been so anxious about my speaking…I felt a lot of pressure to improve in a short time' (Tony: China)

c. Extra tuition in speaking:

'There should be extra speaking lessons offered because in class we also need to do grammar and writing so maybe in the afternoon' (Salah: Sudan)

'Maybe we could have extra discussions after class and the teacher could correct our speech…I think it is important to have this' (Michel: Ivory Coast)

d. A relaxed and supportive classroom atmosphere:

'Our class had a really good atmosphere and I felt more comfortable about speaking in that class…I think the atmosphere and the friendliness is important for the students' (Allie: China)

'I loved my class and my teacher…they are like my family and because of this I overcame my shyness about speaking and now I speak English all the time' (Nostalgia: Taiwan)

e. Group work:

'I used to have to write down before I could speak but now after the group work I can just speak without writing down…my anxiety about speaking in front of others has been expelled' (Judy: China)

'In China, we say 'people are power' and it is the same with group work, my speaking is more powerful because of practicing with others' (Michael: China)

f. Journal writing:

'I liked the journals because they helped me to see what was positive and negative about the way I was communicating…I realised that I was worrying too much about what other people thought…the journals gave me the power to see the truth' (Betty: DRC)

'I enjoyed the journals because it allowed me to write down what was
making me anxious and when we discussed them I saw that the others were
all worried about the same things…I felt less alone' (Andrea: Chile)

II. Research Question 2: What is the effect of language anxiety associated with oral performance in the TESOL classroom on the students' final results in the course as measured by two written examinations and an oral examination?
My hypothesis was that lower anxiety levels would not affect the cognitive learning process significantly and students in the experimental and control groups would receive similar results for the two written examinations. I hypothesised that students in the experimental groups would, however, receive higher results for the oral examination due to the intervention of humanistic techniques.

A. Written examinations

1. Discussion

The results of the written examinations were subjected to statistical analysis and surprising results were obtained. The first written examination which was administered in week four at the mid course point revealed no significant difference between the groups. The second written examination which was administered at the end of the course in week eight revealed a statistically significant difference between the results of the experimental and control groups. One can, therefore, state with a 95% level of confidence that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups with regard to the final examination results. This suggests that the use of humanistic techniques, although aimed at easing the oral component of the course, did actually result in greater learning of other components of the language such as writing, listening, grammar and vocabulary among the students in the experimental groups.

2. Written examination results

Testing the hypothesis that there is no difference between the experimental and control groups for written examination 1

The T-Test procedure

Variable	Group	N	Lower CL Mean	Mean	Upper CL Mean	Lower CL Std Dev	Std Dev	Upper CL Std Dev	Std Error	Min	Max
Exam 1	Experimental	25	69.977	73.52	77.063	6.7022	8.5835	11.941	1.7167	55	90
Exam 1	Control	24	64.159	71.125	78.091	12.821	16.496	23.14	3.3672	31	98
Exam 1	Diff (1-2)		-5.118	2.395	9.9081	10.879	13.068	16.369	3.7346		

T-Tests

Variable	Method	Variances	DF	t value	Pr > {t}
Exam 1	Pooled	Equal	47	0.64	0.5244
Exam 1	Satterthwaite	Unequal	34.3	0.63	0.5305

Testing hypothesis that there is no difference between the experimental and control groups for written examination 2

Variable	Group	N	Lower CL Mean	Mean	Upper CL Mean	Lower CL Std Dev	Std Dev	Upper CL Std Dev	Std Error	Min	Max
Exam 2	Experimental	25	72.957	77.6	82.243	8.7821	11.247	15.647	2.2494	41	95
Exam 2	Control	24	65.913	70.042	74.171	7.5995	9.7779	13.716	1.9959	52	89
Exam 2	Diff (1-2)		1.4909	7.5583	13.626	8.7857	10.554	13.219	3.016		

T-Tests

Variable	Method	Variances	DF	t value	Pr > {t}
Exam 2	Pooled	Equal	47	2.51	0.0157
Exam 2	Satterthwaite	Unequal	46.6	2.51	0.0155

B. Oral examination

1. Discussion

The results of the oral examination were subjected to statistical analysis and the results disproved the researcher's hypothesis that students in the experimental groups would receive higher marks for their oral examinations due to the intervention of humanistic techniques. In the experimental group, the oral examination scores ranged from 51% to 82% with a mean of 68.24. In the control group, the oral examination scores also ranged from 51% to 82% but with a mean of 65.04. Statistical analysis, however, revealed that the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant. The researcher, therefore, concludes that the intervention of humanistic techniques did not result in a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of the oral examination results.

2. Oral examination results

Testing hypothesis that there is no difference between the experimental and control groups for the oral examination

Variable	Group	N	Lower CL Mean	Mean	Upper CL Mean	Lower CL Std Dev	Std Dev	Upper CL Std Dev	Std Error	Min	Max
Oral Exam	Experimental	25	64.709	68.24	71.771	6.6801	8.5551	11.901	1.711	51	82
Oral Exam	Control	24	61.366	65.043	68.721	6.5769	8.5039	12.036	1.7732	51	82
Oral Exam	Diff (1-2)		-1.765	3.1965	8.1578	7.0888	8.5307	10.714	2.4647		

T-Tests

Variable	Method	Variances	DF	t value	Pr > {t}
Oral Exam	Pooled	Equal	46	1.30	0.2011
Oral Exam	Satterthwaite	Unequal	45.7	1.30	0.2011

III Research Question 3: What is the effect of language anxiety associated with oral performance in the TESOL classroom on drop-out rates from the course?

My hypothesis was that drop-out rates for the experimental groups would be lower than drop out rates for the control groups.

A. Drop-Out Rate

1. Discussion

The experimental group consisted of twenty-eight students at the beginning of all the respective courses and twenty-five students at the end of all the respective courses. The three students who dropped out did not do so due to feelings of anxiety. The control group consisted of thirty-three students at the beginning of all the respective courses and twenty-four students at the end of all the respective courses. Of the nine control group students who dropped out of the course, four students stated that they did so due to feelings of anxiety related to the speaking component of the course. The researcher, therefore, concludes that the drop-out rates for the experimental groups were lower due to the intervention of humanistic techniques.