

Using Warm-Up Activities to Improve the Students' Speaking Skills: An Action Research Project at Dong Nai Technology University

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ABSTRACT

This is an action research project about speaking skills at Dong Nai Technology University. Its objectives are to find out students' attitudes toward warm-up activities as well as whether warm-up activities can improve the students' speaking skills or not. The data were collected through tests, questionnaires and observations. There were two classes attending in this research. Class A studied English speaking skills with warm-up activities but class B studied without warm-up activities. The results showed that warm-up activities basically have had a very little effect on students' speaking skills.

KEYWORDS: *speaking skills, warm-up activities, Dong Nai Technology University*

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INTRODUCTION

English has been considered one of the most necessary subjects for students in all levels of educational system in Vietnam. Moreover, speaking skill is believed the most essential skill because it is the most effective tool to carry out a conversation. Moreover, the importance of speaking is indicated with the combination of other language skills. Speaking helps students enhance their grammar knowledge, enrich their vocabulary and then perfect their writing skill. Learners can express their own feelings and ideas, tell stories, make requests, discuss and show a variety of language functions. Outside the classroom, in addition, speaking also plays a crucial role. Baker and Westrup (2003) said that learners who speak English very well can have greater chance for better education, finding good jobs, and getting promotion. As a result, many changes have been made in classroom's atmosphere to help learners involve actively and positively during the class time. Hence, warm-up activities are also highly recommended in English speaking classes because they stimulate students to engage and speak in English (Lassche, 2005).

Rationale of the study

At Dong Nai Technology University (DNTU), although teachers have created several warm-up activities before each lesson, their students still find it difficult to start talking in English during class time. Honestly, the researcher is also in

the same situation. The warm-up activities which are carried out in the researcher's classrooms seem to be useless. The students are not willing to participate in those activities or even after joining the warming up, they show no interest in new speaking lessons. Therefore, how to encourage students to speak English and feel free to participate in speaking activities is the worry of many teachers including the author.

Facing such a problem, the researcher wants to know the reasons behind her students' unwillingness of participation in warm-up activities and find out the possible solutions. Based on students' perception of warm-up activities, the researcher will redesign some activities, then, apply them in to her speaking classes to observe the result. Keeping those intentions in mind, the researcher conducted this study mainly to discover the students' perception of English speaking and find out the students' attitude toward warm-up activities in English speaking lessons as well as to investigate the effectiveness of redesigned warm-up activities on students' speaking skills at DNTU.

Research questions

Based on the main objectives, this research is implemented to find answers for the following questions:

1. What do students think of English speaking?

2. What are students' attitudes toward warm-up activities in English speaking lessons?
3. How do revised warm-up activities support students in improving English speaking skills?

Scope of the study

The study was carried in the third term of the school year 2018 – 2019 with the participation of 43 non – English majored freshmen at DNTU in Dong Nai. This group of students had learned an English course with the researcher; however, they had very bad speaking skills with unknown reasons. The warm-up activities in this study were chosen and revised according to the students' opinions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The advantages of using warm-up activities

Robertson & Acklam (2000) define that warm-up activities are short activities for the beginning of lesson which help the students begin to think in English, review previously introduced materials and become interested in the lesson. Velandia (2008) also pointed out some principles to make up a warm-up activity. He emphasizes that the right time when a warm-up activity should be carried out is at the starting point of the class. It will make the students pay more attention to the lesson. That activity should be interesting enough for students to be engaged at the beginning of the lesson. Also, it must be short because it is considered a preparation stage for other stages of a lesson. That warm-up activity must be connected to the lesson topic; therefore, students can take part in different activities more easily to develop their language skill in other stages.

Warm-up activities help create a good relationship between learners and teachers, which contributes to making a successful learning process. Lassche (2005) supported that by developing rapport with students, teachers can help them share their ideas and opinions with more relaxed activities. The teachers should know the effectiveness of using warm-up activities which can create an opportunity for all students get to know each other and for the teachers to understand the general level of that class in the first lesson. Those activities help build the connection among the whole class (Senior, 1997).

Warm-up activities help motivate students. Many researchers have examined that motivation plays a very important role in a language class. By spending five or ten minutes for warm-up activities, learners can be motivated from the beginning of a class (García & Martín, 2004). Learners' interest in class activities has an influence on their motivation. Learners will be interested in the lesson if class activities are interesting enough to attract them to the lesson. So, the warm-up activity used to motivate students should be interesting.

Finally, warm-up activities help attract attention. When people pay enough attention to something, they will learn quickly and more effectively. Thanks to warm-up activities, learners will pay attention and start to think of the topic or the new lesson. Moreover, students stop being distracted and focus their attention on the lesson. These kinds of activities lead the students to learn language effectively from the beginning (Velandia, 2008).

The effectiveness of warm-up activities in language classroom

A study was conducted by Velandia in 2008. The purpose of this study was using different kinds of warm-up activities to get students' attention from the beginning of the class. The

participants were 68 students from 12 to 15 years old and did not involve in the class much. Both qualitative and quantitative data are collected in this study. The result was that using warm-up activities is an effective way to begin a new lesson and get more attention from students.

Zahra PakdelEstalkhbijari and MohammadrezaKhodareza conducted a study in August 2012. The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of warm-up activities in an English writing class on the written production. The participants were divided randomly into two groups of 30 to form one experimental group who received the treatments on warm-up activities and one control group who received a placebo. Both groups have the same writing task. The result is that the group who received the treatments on warming up activities had better performance.

In 2014, another study was conducted by AshiaAkther whose purpose was to find out the effectiveness of using warm-up activities in language classrooms. The participants were from 5 private universities including 10 teachers and 247 students. There were two different questionnaires, one for teachers and the other for students. To get more in – depth information, the researcher also observed randomly some classes. The result shows that using warm-up activities in language classrooms is useful.

However, in his recent study in 2016, Hasan Savas showed his worry about his students' unwillingness to participate in such classroom activities although he had used a variety of warm-up activities including those in course books or prepared by himself. His study aimed to investigate his students' perception on warm-up activities by using questionnaires and redesigning the warm-up activities based on the discoveries. The participants were 32 A2 (pre – intermediate) students from 18 to 21 years old for the exploratory stage and 21 A2 (pre – intermediate) students from the previous group for the action stage. The result is that after redesigning the warm-up activities based on students' opinion and suggestions, the classroom works with more efficacies.

In 2009, a study which focused on examining the use of warm-up activities in speaking lessons was conducted by HoàngThịDư. 315 students from 6 classes and all English teachers in Yen Lang High School took part in this study. The data was mainly collected by two sets of survey questionnaires for both students and teachers. The result shows that the frequency of using warm-up activities among the teachers is not the same. The teachers' satisfaction of using warm-up activities is higher than that of students. However, those activities have positive effects on students and create an exciting atmosphere and encouraging environment in speaking lessons.

In 2010, a study was conducted by NguyễnThị Kim Cúc. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of using warm-up activities on students' listening skills. There were 90 participating students and the methods were questionnaires, interviews and personal observations. The author found that students feel excited during playing language games. However, when they start the lesson and do the listening task, they feel bored because they find the tasks too long and difficult.

One more study was carried out by NguyễnThịQuý in 2013 which aimed at using warm-up activities to enhance effectiveness of the speaking lesson and students' interest.

The participants were 50 students in grade 10 and 15 teachers at Thuan Thanh 3 High School. The data was collected by using two different questionnaires for both teachers and students. One video recorded in a speaking lesson to examine the students' attitude when the teacher started the lesson without warm-up activities. As a result, although using WAS in classroom still has some difficulties, it makes students speak better and more confident when they carry a speaking task.

In 2015, Nguyễn Thị Tuyết Nhung carried a study which aimed at investigating the use and effects of warm-up activities on 10th graders in reading lessons. There were 94 participating students from two classes and two questionnaires used in this study. The result shows that warm-up activities have active effects on students at a certain degree. Students pay more attention to the reading lesson, contribute to create an interesting atmosphere and interact more with their friends.

From those studies mentioned above, it is clear that warm-up activities play an essential role in language classrooms by engaging and motivating students in all skills especially speaking skills. However, the students at DNTU still have difficulties in their participation and performance in English speaking lessons. They show no interest in the warm-up activities or even after joining, they still find it hard to involve in other speaking activities. Therefore, the researcher wants to conduct this research to engage the students and improve their speaking skills.

METHODOLOGY

The research setting

The study was conducted at Dong Nai Technology University in Dong Nai province. The participants of this study were first – year students. Although most students started learning English at the early age, many of them have low proficiency of English because of their wrong attitudes to English learning, laziness even improper learning styles.

Research Design

Action Research (AR) was used in this study. AR is a kind of scientific research which is carried out by a teacher or an educator to identify and solve a problem in their classroom. As its name, it mainly concentrates on both actions of students and teachers. Because AR is very practical and efficient for teachers, it can help them solve all the issues and activities in their classroom. There were 2 cycles in this study.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was all of the first-year students at DNTU and the sample of this research was the two classes. Class A with warm-up activities (20 students) and class B without warm-up activities (23 students). These first – year students are learning English as a foreign language. All the students are of the same age, same class, but different levels of English.

Data collection instruments

Tests

The pre – test used in this study was similar to the final test of English 2 – the previous course that the students had finished. It was done at the beginning of the course to check the students' language competence. There are two parts including 10 points in this test and 5 points for each part. In part 1, students work in pairs and make a short talk with the given topic. In part 2, each student answers the questions related to topic from the examiners.

The post – test was the final test of English 3 – the current subject in this study. It was done at the end of the course to examine the students' language outcome. There are two parts including 4 points for part 1 and 6 points for part 2. In part 1, students work individually and answer the questions from the examiners. In part 2, students work in pairs and each of them has a card with some clues. The one with question – card will make questions and the other with the answer – card will answer. Both of the tests were chosen randomly from the test collection at DNTU.

Questionnaires

In order to obtain sufficient data for this study, students had to answer two different questionnaires during the process. 43 copies of Questionnaire 1 were delivered to 43 students at the beginning of the course to gather information about students' opinions of learning oral skill and warm-up activities to investigate their attitude and opportunities for and constraints on developing their English speaking skills. 160 copies of Questionnaire 2 were delivered to 20 students in class A to collect information about their points of view after each speaking lesson during 2 cycles.

Class observations

Non – participant observation was employed to clarify and test the validity of information about the current situation of using warm – up activities in teaching English speaking. Non – participant observation was chosen as it helps to witness what actually went on in the classroom in order to conclude the information collected from questionnaires. Therefore, class observation provided supplementary data on the real situation of warm-up activities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis from questionnaires and class observations

TABLE 1. STUDENTS' THOUGHTS ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF ENGLISH SPEAKING

Q: How do you feel about English speaking?	Class A (20)	Class B (23)	Total (43)
Very hard	9	8	17
Hard	8	10	18
Normal	3	5	8
Easy	0	0	0

From the table, there were 17 students (39.5%) who thought English speaking was very hard for them. 18 students (41.9%) chose the option "hard". 8 students (18.6%) felt it normal and no one thought it easy to speak English.

TABLE 2. STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH SPEAKING LESSONS

Q: Put a tick next to the difficulties that you have in English speaking lessons	Class A (20)	Class B (23)	Total (43)
Fell nervous or afraid of making mistakes	15	14	29
Lack of knowledge about the required topics	12	15	27
Have few opportunities to speak	7	6	13
Not have enough English to express the ideas	17	18	35
Usually use Vietnamese to discuss in groups	14	16	30
Others:....	0	0	0

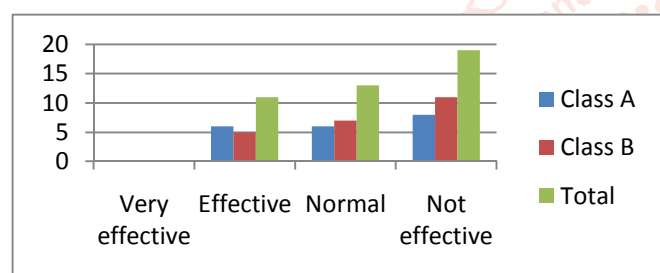
It can be seen that the top problem was that 35 students (81.4%) did not have enough English to express the ideas. There were 30 students (70%) who usually used Vietnamese to discuss in groups and 29 students (67.4%) felt nervous or afraid of making mistakes. 27 students (63%) lacked knowledge about the required topics. The least chosen option was "Have few opportunities to speak" with 13 students (30.2%).

TABLE 3 HOW STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

Q: Do you like warm - up activities?	Class A (20)	Class B (23)	Total (43)
A. Really like	9	5	14
B. Like	4	12	16
C. Normal	5	6	11
D. Do not like	2	0	2

30 (69.8%) students felt really like and like warm-up activities. Besides, 11 students (25.6%) felt normal, which means they neither like nor dislike warm-up activities. Only 2 students (4.6%) did not like warm-up activities. It can be inferred that most students like joining WAS; however, there are still several students who are not fond of warm-up activities or even hate those activities.

CHART 1. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WARM-UP ACTIVITIES IN SPEAKING LESSONS



Surprisingly, although there were many students like warm-up activities, 19 students (44.2%) thought that those activities in speaking lessons were not effective. Moreover, the number of students chose the option "Normal" was also high (13 students, 30.2%). Only 11 students (25.6%) thought those activities were effective and no one thought those warm-up activities very effective.

TABLE 4. STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES WHEN JOINING WARM-UP ACTIVITIES IN SPEAKING LESSON

Q: The difficulties that you have when m_ pail kit: wing in warm - up activities	Class A (20)	Class B (23)	Total (43)
Lack of ideas	16	17	33
Too difficult activities	13	9	22
Boring activities	12	8	20
Lack of cooperation among group members	8	15	23
Time consuming	3	6	9
Noisy and chaotic class	1	4	5
Not understanding the rules	1	0	1
Others:...	0	0	0

The collected data from 43 students revealed that lack of ideas is the problem facing by most students (33 students, 75.7%). The next problem is lack of cooperation among group members (23 students, 53.5%). Next, the warm-up activities which were used are too difficult for students' level (22 students, 51%). Then the WAS in speaking lessons are so

boring (20 students, 46.5%), time consuming (9 students, 20.9%), and make the class chaotic and noisy (5 students, 11.6%). Not understanding the rules seems not to be the difficulty for students (1 student, 2.3%).

TABLE 5. SUGGESTIONS FROM STUDENTS TO IMPROVE WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

The teacher should...	Class A (20)	Class B (23)	Total (43)
Use competitive wane - up activities	14	11	25
Adjust the difficulty of warm - up activities to match students' level	11	8	19
Use warm - up activities which connect group numbers	9	14	23
Spend proper time on each warm - up activity	5	5	10
Give clear instructions and demonstrations	1	0	1
Others:...	0	0	0

It can be seen from the collected data that the most wanted action from the teacher is using competitive warm-up activities (25 students, 58.1%). The next is using warm-up activities that connect group members (23 students, 53.5%).

TABLE 6. WARM-UP ACTIVITIES IN SPEAKING LESSONS PREFERRED BY STUDENTS

Put a tick next to the warm - up activities that you enjoy	Class A (20)	Class B (23)	Total (43)
Bingo	11	5	16
Songs	3	3	6
Problem solving	0	8	8
Mimic	14	11	25
Remembering pictures	18	13	31
Conversation	4	9	13
Facing games	10	18	28
Hangman	7	7	14
Words of mouth	15	6	21
Story telling	0	2	2
Flashcards	2	9	11
Riddles	1	15	16
Word jumble race	17	17	34
Secret words	8	4	12

The students' preference for each activity can be seen clearly from the table. Let's have a quick look on top four warm-up activities. The most preferred activity is *Word jumble race* (34 students, 79.1%) which requires quick responses and competition from participants. The next is *Remembering pictures* (31 students, 72.1%) which requires not only a good memory but also connection from group members. The third is *Facing games* (28 students, 65.1%) which is a very competitive activity. And the last is *Mimic* (25 students, 58.1%) which is an interesting and funny activity requires group work a lot.

It is obvious to recognize that students like many warm-up activities but the least wanted is *Story telling* (2 students, 4.7%), *Songs* (6 students, 14%) and *Problem solving* (8 students, 18.6%) due to their difficulty and complication. It can be inferred that students only enjoy warm-up activities which are competitive, funny, simple and easy.

Research question 3: revised warm-up activities and their effects on students**WORD JUMBLE RACE****TABLE 7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORD JUMBLE RACE**

Q: What do you think about the warm – up activity today?	Cycle 1 Date: 23 Mar, 2019	Cycle 2 Date: 11 Apr, 2019
Very effective	0 (0%)	2 (10%)
Effective	11 (55%)	14 (70%)
Normal	6 (30%)	3 (15%)
Not effective	3 (15%)	1 (5%)

TABLE 8. STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION LEVEL WITH WORD JUMBLE RACE

Q: Please rank your participation level in today speaking lesson.	Cycle 1 Date: 23 Mar, 2019	Cycle 2 Date: 11 Apr, 2019
Very positive	3 (15%)	5 (25%)
Positive	9 (45%)	12 (60%)
Normal	5 (25%)	2 (10%)
Not positive	3 (15%)	1 (5%)

TABLE 9. DATA FROM THE OBSERVATION SHEETS - WORD JUMBLE RACE

Word jumble race	Cycle 1 Date: 23 Mar, 2019	Cycle 2 Date: 11 Apr, 2019
Topic	➤ Food and drinks	➤ On vacation
Time	➤ 5 minutes	➤ 8 minutes
Preparation	➤ Power point: 10 words	➤ Power point: 5 sentences
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Group work. ➤ Teacher shows one scramble word on TV each time. ➤ Students say "bingo" to answer when they recognize the word as fast as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Group work. ➤ Teacher shows one scramble sentence on TV each time. ➤ Students say "bingo" to answer when they can make a meaningful sentence as fast as possible.
Rule	➤ Only winner can have 5 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Winner: 4 points ➤ 2nd group: 3 points ➤ 3rd group: 2 points ➤ 4th group: 1 point
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students feel fun. ➤ Create an interesting atmosphere and active learning environment. ➤ Clear instructions and examples. ➤ Finish the activity on time (5 — 6 minutes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students pay attention and feel interested. ➤ Group members work together, discuss and say the answer. ➤ Students enjoy the activity because they can have points although they are not the Pt group. ➤ Active learning environment.
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Good students dominate the others in a group. ➤ Students do not cooperate much with each other. (Who knows the word, raise their hand and say while the others keep silence.) ➤ About 5 or 6 students do not enjoy the activity much. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It takes 10 minutes to finish the activity, a little bit long. ➤ One group does not have the answer. However, they base on the answer from the other groups, so they guess the correct answer although they do not really understand the sentence. ➤ It is a little hard because students do not know the vocabularies.

Although there were several good points, the effectiveness of *Word jumble race* was not high because the students pointed out many weaknesses in the first cycle. This result was similar with the information taken from the observation sheet. However, an improvement was made in the second cycle. In spite of having some disadvantages, the activity made students feel more effective and they had more positive participation level in comparison with that in the first cycle. Generally speaking, revised *Word jumble race* had good effects on students' participation in English speaking lessons.

REMEMBERING PICTURES**TABLE 10. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF REMEMBERING PICTURES**

Q: What do you think about the warm – up activity today?	Cycle 1 Date: 28 Mar, 2019	Cycle 2 Date: 18 Apr, 2019
Very effective	0	0
Effective	11 (55%)	8 (40%)
Normal	5 (25%)	10 (50%)
Not effective	4 (20%)	2 (10%)

TABLE 11. STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION LEVEL WITH REMEMBERING PICTURES

Q: Please rank your participation level in today speaking lesson.	Cycle 1 Date: 28 Mar, 2019	Cycle 2 Date: 18 Apr, 2019
Very positive	3 (15%)	1 (5%)
Positive	8 (40%)	7 (35%)
Normal	6 (30%)	10 (50%)
Not positive	3 (15%)	2 (10%)

TABLE 12. DATA FROM THE OBSERVATION SHEETS – REMEMBERING PICTURES

Remembering pictures	Cycle 1 Date: 28 Mar, 2019	A Cycle 2 Date: 18 Apr, 2019
Topic	- Food and drinks	- Great people
Time	- 8 minutes	- 8 minutes
Preparation	- Power point: 3 pictures	- Power point: 18 photos of famous people around the world (with their name)
Instruction	- Students work in group. - Teacher shows one picture having some foods and drinks on TV each time. - Students have 20 seconds to memorize, then, say "bingo" to tell the teacher what they can remember.	- Students work in groups. - Teacher shows 6 famous people on TV each time. - Students have 20 seconds to memorize, then, say "bingo" to tell the teacher who they can remember
Rule	- Only winner can have 5 points	- Winner: 4 points - 2nd group: 3 points - 3rd group: 2 points - 4th group: 1 point
Pros	- Students work together to remember as much as possible. - They try their best and feel interested. - Students can speak when they list out the thing they can remember. - The activity finishes on time.	- Students have to work together well to remember as much as possible. - No cheating this time. - Active learning environment.
Cons	- Some students cheat by writing the object on paper. - Good pictures but some details are too small to see from the back of the shy when they say the class.	- Students show less interest, may be they don't know the characters that teacher chose. - It seems that students feel name of that famous people. - Most of students don't know how to call that proper name in English. - They pronounce the names as they often say in Vietnamese.

There is a similarity between the comments in the observation sheets and students' opinions. The topic in the first cycle was easier and more attractive than the one in the second cycle. That is the reason why students thought that warm – up activity was not effective and could not stay positive to participate in the speaking lesson. It can be seen clearly that the students' participation level decreased from 55% (11 students) to 40% (8 students) in the second cycle. In brief, the revised activity still had some strong points but the weak points were more than that. As a result, it did not have good effects on students' participation level in the main speaking lesson.

MIMIC**TABLE 13. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MIMIC**

Q: What do you think about the warm – up activity today?	Cycle 1 Date: 30 Mar, 2019	Cycle 2 Date: 25 Apr, 2019
Very effective	0	3 (15%)
Effective	9 (45%)	13 (65%)
Normal	6 (30%)	4 (20%)
Not effective	5 (25%)	0

TABLE 14. STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION LEVEL WITH MIMIC

Q: Please rank your participation level in today speaking lesson.	Cycle 1 Date: 30 Mar, 2019	Cycle 2 Date: 25 Apr, 2019
Very positive	3 (15%)	5 (25%)
Positive	7 (35%)	13 (65%)
Normal	8 (40%)	2 (10%)
Not positive	2 (10%)	0

TABLE 15. DATA FROM THE OBSERVATION SHEETS – MIMIC

Mimic	Cycle 1 Date: 30 Mar, 2019	Cycle 2 Date: 25 Apr, 2019
Topic	On vacation	Great people
Time	5 minutes	8 minutes
Preparation	Handout: 8 actions on vacations	Power point: 8 photos of superheroes
Instruction	Students work in groups. One student stand on the stage and uses body language to describe the actions on the handout. The rest of students have to guess what that action is. Say “bingo” to answer.	Students work in groups. Teacher shows one superhero on TV screen each time. 4 students from 4 groups stand on the stage and guess who it is. The rest of students use body language to describe the given superhero. Say “bingo” to answer.
Rule	Winner: 5 points	Winner: 5 points
Pros	Students stay focused and interested. All group members discuss and share ideas. This activity let students' imagination run wild.	Students feel extremely interested in the activity. The whole group works together. Students can recognize the heroes so fast and easily. The activity finishes on time. Students work very fast and finish the activity before the limited time
Cons	The activity does not finish on time. Students try their best but cannot guess the correct answer. The phrases are a little difficult to mimic. Teacher pays much attention on time limitation, so she does everything too quickly.	None.

It can be said that after *Mimic* was adjusted, it brought the students a lot of goof effects. The notes from the observation sheet also showed that students felt extremely interest in the activity and enjoyed the speaking lesson a lot. Although the topic “*Great people*” was too difficult for students in *Remembering pictures*, it became quite easy this time thanks to the familiar superheroes mentioned in the activity. After every benefit was mentions, this activity obviously had good effects on students' attitude and participation level.

Data analysis of tests

TABLE 16. THE RESULTS FROM THE PRE-TEST

Score	Class A (20 students)	Class B(23 students)
9.0 – 10 (A)	3 (15%)	2 (8.7%)
8.0 – 8.9 (B)	5 (25%)	5 (21.7%)
6.5 – 7.9 (C)	8 (40%)	8 (34.8%)
5.0 – 6.4 (D)	1 (5%)	5 (21.7%)
4.0 – 4.9 (E)	3 (15%)	3 (13.1%)

At the beginning of the course, class A had 15% of the students in band A while class B had 8.7% of the students in this band. Second, about the number of students in band B, class A had 25% of the students but class B had 21.7% of the students. Third, in band C, class A had 40% of the students, whereas class B had 34.8% of the students. Next, class A had 5% of the students in band D, however, class B had 21.7% of the students in this band. Finally, the numbers of students in band E from both classes are nearly the same.

TABLE 17. THE RESULTS FROM THE POST-TEST

Score	Class A(20 students)	Class B(23 students)
9.0 – 10 (A)	0	2 (8.7%)
8.0 – 8.9 (B)	9 (45%)	9 (39.1%)
6.5 – 7.9 (C)	7 (35%)	11 (47.8%)
5.0 – 6.4 (D)	3 (15%)	1 (4.4%)
4.0 – 4.9 (E)	0	0

At the end of this course, class A did not have any students in band A while class B had 8.7% of the students in this band. Next, band B had 45% of the students from class A, but only 39.1% of the students from class B. Then, class A only had 35% of the students in band C but 47.8% of the students in class B were in this band. In band D, there were 15% of the students from class A and 4.4% of the students from class B. Surprisingly, there were no students from both classes in band D. Generally speaking, class B had better results than class A at the end of the course.

Discussion

The data collected and analyzed in this chapter were used to answer three research questions of this study.

The researcher has realized that the revised warm-up activities has had very little impact on improving her students' speaking skills. It may be because of some following reasons. First, some of the students were cheating while

participating in the warm-up activities. The competition in warm-up activities may encourage students to take part in the activities but the students might cheat to be the winner. So, some students did not get the necessary knowledge for the main speaking lessons. Next, the final results might not present for all students because there were only 20 students studied English speaking skills with revised warm-up activities. If this study had been conducted on a larger scale, it would have had been different. Last but not least, the revised warm-up activities could not create more opportunities for the students to speak due to the time limitation. Students only had more time to speak when they took part in the main speaking activities. Therefore, the revised WAS had very little impact on the students' speaking skills.

Next, class B (without warm-up activities) had better final results than class A (with warm-up activities). It seemed that their inside motivation has encouraged them to study a lot. During the teaching process, the researcher found that the students in class B really like to speak in English. Although they did not have warm-up activities, most of them always participate in the main speaking lessons positively. Moreover, it might be the students' self – study at home. They always prepared the lessons in advance. For example, they looked up for the new vocabularies and found out the information related to the topics they would learn.

In summary, the results of this study are quite similar with the final findings of the previous researches which were presented in chapter 2. It showed that the revised warm-up activities only motivate students to take part in the main lessons and the revised warm-up activities could not help students improve their speaking skills. The researcher hope that these results are somehow useful to those who are interested in investigating and concern with these problems.

CONCLUSION

The research aimed at discovering how the students at DNTU felt about English speaking skills, their difficulties in speaking lessons, and the effects of revised warm-up activities on the students' speaking performance.

First, although the teacher had created many opportunities for her students to practice speaking English, most of the students not only found English speaking hard but also had several different difficulties in the speaking lessons. The most frequency problem was not having enough English to express their ideas. The next was group members used Vietnamese when discussing. They also felt nervous or afraid of making mistakes when they spoke English. Lacking knowledge about the given topics was another difficulty.

Second, more than half of the students felt like warm-up activities, however, they still found the warm-up activities used in English speaking lessons not effective. The reasons behind were varied among the students. Most of them lacked the ideas when joining the warm-up activities. Group members did not cooperate with each other was also a factor causing the ineffectiveness of warm-up activities. The teacher sometimes used the activities which were too hard or boring for students to enjoy. Some other minor reasons were time consuming, chaotic and noisy class, and not understand the rules or the instructions.

Finally, most of the revised warm-up activities had good effects on students' participation in English speaking lessons. In the first cycle, the warm-up activities were not effective enough because they had several weaknesses according to

students' comments and the observer's notes. Therefore, the number of students who enjoyed the main speaking lessons was not big. However, most of the redesigned warm-up activities were highly evaluated by the students in the second cycle and their participation was more positive in general. In addition, the results from the tests shown that warm-up activities did not affect students' speaking skills. Students from both classes had better results at the end of the course in comparison with that at the beginning. Surprisingly, students from class B had better results than students in class A although they did not have warm-up activities in their speaking lessons.

Implications

The major findings of this study have proved several things. Although students like speaking skills, they still have some difficulties in speaking lessons. Moreover, most of the students enjoyed warm-up activities. The revised warm-up activities could not improve the students' speaking skills but they improved the students' participation level. Therefore, if the teacher wants to improve the students' speaking skills, she should choose more appropriate speaking tasks in the main lessons.

Limitations and suggestions for further studies

The study was conducted successfully, however, there are still some limitations. The data related to students' attitude and students' participation level has relied much on students' opinions and comments. There need further efficient methods.

In addition, this is a specific case perceived by the researcher and her students at DNTU. Thus, the results could be correct for the researcher and her classes only. It is hard to make a generalization from the finds for other cases.

Finally, because of the time limitation, the researcher could only carry out three warm-up activities preferred by students and the study was only two cycles.

The findings of this study provide a good foundation for the researcher to design and conduct either a quasier experimental study in the next cycle of the action research. In a nutshell, more comprehensive investigations and further explorations are needed.

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