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GRADUATION MINOR THESIS
STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES REGARDING WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

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Finally, I must express my special gratitude to my beloved family, my closed friends and my classmates, who have given me their best regards, helpful advice as well as precious supports for my paper.
ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the perceptions and experiences that students in Class 10 English – Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education have about warm-up activities. The main purposes of this study are to investigate the extent of interest students have in warm-up activities, explore the situations of using warm-up activities, and provide recommendations regarding using warm-up activities. The investigation draws on the data collected from the students’ group discussions on given topics. This research is expected to make some contributions to enhance the quality of warm-up activities in Class 10 English – Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education.
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Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Up to now, English, an important international language, is becoming more and more popular in Viet Nam as one of some main subjects at high school. It has been used for Final Examinations to evaluate students’ level of knowledge. However, many students have difficulties in studying English.

When looking for alternatives to support my students’ studying and motivation, I conclude that the use of warm up activities is a topic commonly mentioned in methodologies suggested for English classes. A warm-up activity is the perfect time to review language skills presented in the previous English lesson. Some students will have mastered these skills since the last session and will be proud to show them off, and others will be happy to have the chance to review material they are not completely comfortable with yet. Reviewing the material in a warm-up activity that is different from the one used to practice the English language skill in the last lesson will also give the students the opportunity to hear and use the material in a new way before moving on to the next lesson.

Nothing can be learned if the students are tense and unwilling to speak, therefore warming up will allow the wheels in their head to start turning and open up the gateway to knowledge. A fun warm-up, on the other hand, raises energy levels. Fun activities also produce relaxed, less inhibited students. With the right warm-up, you will have created a positive atmosphere to practice and experiment with the language.

This is a reason why I choose “Students’ perception and experience regarding warm-up activities” as my research.

1.2. Aims of the Study

The research is aimed at:
a. Exploring the situations of using warm-up activities at Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education.

b. Investigating the extent of interest students have in warm-up activities.

c. Providing recommendations regarding using warm-up activities in English classes.

1.3. Research questions

The thesis was guided by the following research questions:

What perception do students have about warm-up activities given to them in class?

What experience do students have about warm-up activities?

1.4 Scope of the Study

Due to time and space constraints, this study is limited in investigating students' perceptions and experiences regarding warm-up activities in English classes. Furthermore, the data collected are valid for the context, although they can be of reference in wider educational contexts. The study only looks into students’ perceptions and experiences from their own perspectives, without looking into real classroom activities. Thus the data presented in this study are reported data by nature.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized in three main chapters.

Chapter One, Introduction, will present the rationale for the study, its aims and research questions, its scope and the present section, which provides a structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two, entitled Development, consists of four main sections. The first section, Literature Review, it will be theoretical concepts on which
the thesis is mentioned. The foundation will give a deeper insight the topic in consideration.

The second section, Methodology, it will describe the research methodology, which focuses on the context of the thesis, participants, the instrument and data collection procedure.

The third section, Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education, it will give background information about this school, teaching staff, and class 10 English.

The fourth section and the final section, Findings and Discussion of findings, will deal with analysis and some suggestions.

Chapter Three, Conclusion, summarizes the thesis, give limitations, implications of the thesis, and offers some suggestions for further research.
Chapter Two: DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Literature review

It will not be a successful class if the students do not feel interested at the very beginning of a class. So, a teacher should try to start a lesson in a way which keeps his/her students engaged. An interesting way of starting a lesson could be using activities called warm-up activities or icebreakers (Robertson & Acklam, 2000). Different types of warm-up activities such as songs, games and discussion questions can be used to get students’ attention in class (Treko, 2013). Ruiz and Ramírez (2008) state that to improve students’ learning and to get the best from them, it is a must to start a class with a good warm-up session (p.174).

2.1.1 Definition of warm-up activities

A warm-up stage is a preparatory stage which helps the students feel relaxed and also sets a positive mood for learning (Rushidi, 2013). According to Robertson & Acklam (2000) “warm up is a short activity for the beginning of lesson” (p.30). Kay (1995) claims that warm ups are different types of activities which help the students begin to think in English, review previously introduced materials and become interested in the lesson (as cited in Velandia, 2008, p. 11). Lassche (2005) defines that for language learning lesson a warm-up stage is the “initial orientation” (p. 83). So, a warm up activity is used to start a class with an interesting task to help the students be comfortable in classroom setting and to help them start thinking in English.

2.1.2 Procedures of warm-up activities

When preparing your lesson, you start by planning the main items you want to include: the teaching of a new grammar point, or a grammar exercise, or the reading of a text. But once you have prepared the main components of your lesson, and made sure it is learning-rich, varied and interesting, you may
find you still need some extra ingredients to make it into a smooth, integrated unit. You may need, for example:

- A quick warm-up for the beginning to get your students into the right mood for learning;
- An idea for a brief vocabulary review before starting a new text;
- A light filler to provide relief after a period of intense effort and concentration;
- A brief orientation activity to prepare a change of mood or topic;
- A game or amusing item to round off the lesson with a smile.

Besides contributing to routine lesson planning, you may find these activities can be of use in non-routine situations as well: when, for example, you have to fill in for another teacher and need some quick, easily-prepared ideas for instant use; or for supplying extra content for an English club evening or English party; for helping a group of new students to get to know one another; or for keeping students profitably busy when you unexpectedly have extra time on your hands.

Therefore, to begin the new lesson, we often have warm-up activity, or five-minute activity, or playing game. What is a warm-up activity? It means an activity which is entertaining and engaging, often challenging and an activity in which the learners play and usually interact with others.

2.1.3 Value of warm-up activities

Through warm-up activities, learners practice and internalize vocabulary, grammar and structures. Motivation is enhanced, too, by the warm-up activity and the competition. And added benefit is that the learners’ attention is on the message, not on the language. They acquire language unconsciously, with their whole attention engaged by the activity in much the same way as they acquired their mother tongue.
"Activities of a socially infectious nature, where stress is placed on cooperative, rather than the competitive, aspects of some recreation activities, can be used to attract patients' attention and to sustain their interaction. Very simple games played in a small group may serve to encourage participation by making the patient feel an integral and necessary part of the activity." (O'Morrow, The Whys of Recreation Activities for Psychiatric Patients, Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 3rd quarter, 1971).

Warm-ups help your learners put aside their daily distractions and focus on English. If they haven't used English all day, they may take a little while to shift into it. Warm-up also encourages whole-group participation which can build a sense of community within the group. For new groups, see the list of ice breakers further down.


There are many advantages of using warm-up activities in the classroom:

1. Warm-up activities are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class.

2. They are motivating and challenging.

3. Learning a language requires a great deal of effort. Warm-up activities help students to make and sustain the effort of learning.

4. Warm-up activities provide language practice in the various skills-speaking, writing, listening and reading.

5. They encourage students to interact and communicate.

6. They create a meaningful context for language use.
2.1.4 Example of warm-up activities

Following are some example warm up activities:

*What are they talking about?*

Teacher writes a sentence on the board that is a bit conversational. For example: Find it at last! But it is too late now, I can’t afford to, after what you have done, you fool! We’ll never get it back now! Students try to guess what the person is talking about. There is no right or wrong answer. Students are encouraged to say anything (Robertson & Acklam, 2000).

*Back to back*

When a piece of music is played, all students walk around the room and observe others clothes, hairstyles etc. When the music stops everyone makes pair with the nearest person and they stand back to back. Then, they make statements about each other’s appearance without seeing each other. For example, student A: I think, your eyes are brown, Student B: that’s not right, my eyes are black. In this way, when the music again starts, all pairs separate and when the music stops they make different pairs (Kilppen, 1985).

*Question time*

It is a warm up activity which is used to give learners some idea about the lesson topic. Here, the teacher asks some questions to activate learners’ prior knowledge and elicit information. For example, teacher asks some questions such as do you often go to restaurant?, do you like cooking?, what will make you unhappy when you will eat in a restaurant?. After eliciting information teacher tells them to listen a passage where a person is angry about a restaurant (Jun. 2000).

*Jigsaw reading*

Teacher cuts a short text into four pieces. Then, he divides the class into groups of four members. Each member gets one piece of the text. They
are asked to read it first and then discuss with their group members without seeing each other’s text to find out which piece will come first, which will be the second one and so on (Treko, 2013).

*Proverb matching*

It is a warm up activity in which every student gets a half proverb card and has to find out his/her partner for the other half. They together have to come up with a story or situation which illustrates their proverb and others can guess the proverb (Kilppen, 1985).

### 2.2 Methodology

This part discusses the method used by the researcher to collect and analyze data from class 10 English - Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education. The method used for this paper is students’ questionnaire survey. For data collection, questionnaire is one of the most useful methods. This method has a number of advantages. It is easier to interpret the survey result. The respondents can fill up the questionnaire within little time. As the answers are relatively objective, the researcher finds it easy to analyze and discuss (Best & Kahn, 1986).

#### 2.2.1 Research questions

The thesis was guided by the following research questions:

*What perceptions do students have about warm-up activities given to them in class?*

*What experiences do students have about warm-up activities?*

#### 2.2.2 Data collection

#### 2.2.2.1 Instrument

To get the data for this study, the researcher designs a questionnaire. The researcher wishes to find out the answer for two research questions. So, the questionnaire designed is appropriate with the aims of the study. It has
seven questions in the form of multiple-choice. For each question, the researcher designs 4-5 choices, and students will choose the most suitable answer.

2.2.2.2 Participants

The participants of the study are 19 students of class 10 English – Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education. They are at the same age of 16 years old, and are mostly at basic level of English. All of them are native speakers of Vietnamese in Ha Tinh Province.

2.2.2.3 Data collection procedure

The data were collected from students in class 10 English. For collecting data, the researcher had to contact with the principal of Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education and tell him the purpose of the research to get permission. The researcher also had to take permission from the form teacher of class 10 English for conducting students’ survey. There were seven questionnaires I delivered to class 10 English, after giving the questionnaires and guiding students to do in ten minutes, the questionnaires were collected back.

2.3 Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education

2.3.1 Setting

Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education was established in 2016. At present, this school has 2 learning rooms for class 10 English and class 10 Math, a library, three laboratory rooms for three subjects (physics, chemistry, and biology), a computer rooms (about 40 computers and one host computer) for teaching and learning information technology. And there are also many rooms such as a headmaster’s room, vice-principal’s room, one finance room, one teachers’ room, and etc. Especially, all of learning rooms have computers to apply electronic lesson-plans to teach. Besides, the school also has sports
ground for students to play sport. There are many benches and trees in a school yard where students can relax and revise lessons.

Although, Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education is a young school, it attracts many students in whole the province.

2.3.2 Teaching staff

At the moment, there are 35 teachers including 23 female teachers and 12 male teachers in many subjects. Most teachers are lectures of Ha Tinh University. They have much experience of teaching.

In English department, there are 3 teachers (one PhD and two MAs). They are at the same ages of about 35-40 years old. All of them teach both in Faculty of Foreign Languages, and Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education.

2.3.3 Class 10 English

In this school year, Class 10 English has 19 students, with 6 boys and 13 girls.

In terms of learning capacity, the students are generally evaluated positively. Specifically, eight (8) out of 19 students (42%) had a general ‘good’ on average of the subjects learned in the first term. In terms of English grades, a majority of the students performed very well in the first term, with 11 students (58%) being ranked as excellent (from 8.0-10.0).

This class is also positively evaluated in terms of conduct. Specifically, all students (100%) have good conduct in the first term.

2.4 Findings

2.4.1 Students’ perceptions about warm-up activities

Table 1: Students’ opinions about warm-up activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very attracting</th>
<th>Attracting</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Boring</th>
<th>Very boring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Table 1 shows students’ answers to the question “What do you think about the teacher’s method in conducting warm-up activities?”. It can be seen that all the students had positive views about the warm-up activities that their teachers provided in class. Five (5) out of 19 students thought that the activities were “very attracting”, while the rest (14) thought that they were “attracting”. This shows that the students might like the way the teachers conducted the activities, and at the same time, they might have experienced the kind of activities that stimulated their motivation and interest.

Table 2: Extent of students’ interest about warm-up activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Like much</th>
<th>Like</th>
<th>Quite like</th>
<th>Do not like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
<td>26,3</td>
<td>73,7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the results for the question: “To what extent do you like warm-up activities?”. As indicated in Table 2, a vast majority of students said that they like warm-up activities (73,7%), while the rest (26,3%) said that they like warm-up activities much. This shows that students in Class 10 English are interested in warm-up activities, at once, teacher made a good impression on students about warm-up activities.

Table 3: Students’ feeling after a warm-up activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Excited</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Bored</th>
<th>Very bored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Students’ feeling after a warm-up activity.
It can be seen from Table 3 that, students in Class 10 English had positive feelings after a warm-up activity. According to this data, nine (9) out of the 19 students said that they feel very excited, while the rest (10) said that they were excited. It expresses that warm-up activities in Class 10 English produced the good effects on students’ feeling.

Table 4: Students’ feeling during a warm-up activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very enthusiastic</th>
<th>Enthusiastic</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Bored</th>
<th>Very bored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beside the data from Table 3, the researcher designed the question “What do you feel during a warm-up activity?” to inquire into students’ feeling during a warm-up activity. Ten (10) of the 19 students answered that they feel enthusiastic (52.7%). Five (5) answered that they feel very enthusiastic (26.3%). And there are only four (4) students in total 19 students said that they feel normal during a warm-up activity. This result, in company with the results from table 3, represented students in class 10 English have positive feeling, not only after a warm-up activity but also during a warm-up activity.

2.4.2 Students’ experiences about warm-up activities

Table 5: Frequency of starting a lesson by a warm-up activity.
Table 5 shows students’ answers to the question: “How often do teachers start a lesson by a warm-up activity?”. There are 42, 1 percent of students said that their teacher usually starts a new lesson with a warm-up activity. 31, 1 percent students choose “always”, and 26, 3 percent students choose “sometimes”. The number of people said rarely and never is no one. The data indicate that teachers used warm-up activities as popular activities in Class 10 English.

Table 6: Frequency of changing types of warm-up activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
<td>36,8</td>
<td>63,2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown from the table, twelve (12) in the 19 students said that teacher often changes types of warm-up activities (63, 2%); while the rest (7) said that teacher always changes types of warm-up activities. This shows that students in Class 10 English have many chances to join different forms of warm-up activities, because the teacher is active in changing types of these activities.

Table 7: The most popular type of warm-up activities in Class 10 English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Games</th>
<th>Mild Aerobics</th>
<th>Other ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 7, a significant proportion of students in Class 10 English (79%) think that games are the most popular type of activities in their class. The rest (21%) think it is mild aerobics. This data shows that teacher uses games as the most general activities in class.

### 2.5 Discussion of findings

The section discusses the results found in 2.4

#### 2.5.1 What perceptions do students have about warm-up activities given to them in class?

The data from the questionnaire indicated that most of the students have positive views about warm-up activities. To illustrate this, each of the students mentioned in their survey responses about their perceptions (question 1-4). They include students’ opinion about warm-up activities, the extents that students like warm-up activities, and their feeling after/during a warm-up activity. The students answered those questions to point out what perceptions do they have about warm-up activities.

The figures are over 70%, which students think the teacher’s method is attracting, and like warm-up activities. It means that the participants recognized their interest as well as teacher’s investment about warm-up activities.

More than 50% students feel excited after a warm-up activity, while the rest feel very excited. So, we can confirm that all students in Class 10 English had excited feeling after a warm-up activity. It is a great sign to show that the teacher got a good impression on students’ attitude about warm-up activities.
The data show 26.3% students feel very enthusiastic, and 52.7% students feel enthusiastic during a warm-up activity. It means warm-up activities in Class 10 English produced good effect on students’ feeling during the execution.

In conclusion, it can be inferred from the data we got that generally most participants have positive perceptions about warm-up activities given to them in class.

2.5.2 What experiences do students have about warm-up activities given to them in class?

Warm-up activities are used by teachers as good teaching and learning tools. According to the results (question 5-7), we can see the frequency that teacher start a lesson by a warm-up activity, and change its types. Beside, the information reflected the most popular warm-up activity that teacher use in class.

42.1% students chose usually when they answered the question “How often do teachers start a lesson by a warm-up activity?” 31.6% students chose always, the rest (26.3) chose sometimes. It expresses that warm-up activities became familiar with students in Class 10 English.

We can see the number that 63.2% students chose often, and 36.8% chose always, when they answered the question “How frequent do teachers change types of warm-up activities?”. No one chose rarely/never. We can infer from these results that students have many chances to join many different types of warm-up activities, and get their own experiences on it.

When students are asked about the most popular types of warm-up activities in class, nearly 80% chose games. So, games are the most familiar warm-up activities of students in Class 10 English. It is a type of warm-up activities, which students have a lot of experience.
In short, owing to teachers’ flexibility in using warm-up activity, students in Class 10 English usually have opportunities to take part in warm-up activities and get their own experiences on it, especially games.
Chapter Three: CONCLUSION

3.1 Summary of the study

One of the problems here is the warm-up activities in teaching and learning English. The study was done to find out the perceptions and experiences that students in class 10 English have about warm-up activities. The main findings of this study that lasted in ten weeks in second semester of class 10 English at Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education. Through the results, the students saw the warm-up activities are important, they feel excited when the warm-up activities end, and they like teachers’ methods of warm-up activities. Teacher uses games as the most popular activities in class.

3.2 Implications

3.2.1 For students

The data show that the participants in this study revealed significant interest in warm-up activities. It is then suggested that students make the most use of such activities during class to enhance motivation and ice-break to make learning more interesting.

Also, students should make this even more positive by showing interest and positive reactions to the types of warm-up activities they are provided in class. This will make teachers consider preparing more warm-ups in their lessons.

3.2.2 For English teachers

I recommend the teachers should find many new warm-up activities that are different from games, and take full advantages of warm-up activities to raise the quality of teaching lesson.

Through these activities, the learners can be trained in a good environment where they can have chances to participate many multiform types of warm-up activities. Moreover, the learners will probably raise not
only their own perceptions and experiences about warm-up activities, but also their learning quality.

3.3 Limitations

The findings of the study are quantitatively based, thus it is difficult to control all variables affecting the results of the study. Research on opinions is highly subjective. Although the researcher made her best to provide an accurate analysis, something occurred during the study, which was beyond the researcher’s control.

The time of the study was not long enough – just 10 weeks. During the time, there were too many things having to be done. The researcher had to teach, observe, thus there was not enough time to make the study perfect.

The study could apply one class of grade 10 in Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education, so the number of the concerned students may be quite small (19 students).

The researcher has no experiences in research as well as in designing questionnaire, and analysis. Therefore, the methodology of the study, the questionnaires, analysis, and the content of the study still contains some unexpected mistakes.

The study was taken place only in Ha Tinh School of Excellence in Education and there was one researcher. It would be more objective and reliable if being carried out with others teachers and in larger scope.

3.4 Further research

Though the study has been completed with greatest efforts, due to limitation of time, materials, knowledge and experience, mistakes and shortcoming are unavoidable.
In the next time, the researchers need to research a bigger size of participant. It’s about one hundred participants to see more clearly the perceptions and experiences that students have about warm-up activities.

The researchers should investigate clearly on various learning environments. It means that they need compare and contrast on only two learning environments (two classes, two schools, and act).
REFERENCES


10. Ashia Akther, 2014. Role of Warm-up activities in Language Classroom, BRAC University.
APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRES (For students)

Các em học sinh thân mến!

Cô xin chân thành cảm ơn các em!

Choose the most suitable answer:

Question 1: What do you think about the teacher’s method in conducting warm-up activities?
A. Very attracting
B. Attracting
C. Normal
D. Boring
E. Very boring

Question 2: To what extent do you like warm-up activities?
A. Like much
B. Like
C. Quite like
D. Do not like

Question 3: What do you feel after a warm-up activity?
A. Very excited
B. Excited
C. Normal
D. Boring
E. Very boring

Question 4: What do you feel during a warm-up activity?
A. Very enthusiastic
B. Enthusiastic
C. Normal
D. Boring
E. Very boring

Question 5: How often do teachers start a lesson by a warm-up activity?
A. Always
B. Often
C. Sometimes
D. Rarely
E. Never

Question 6: How frequent do teachers change types of warm-up activities?
A. Always
B. Often
C. Sometimes
D. Rarely
E. Never

Question 7: What types of warm-up activities are the most popular in class?
A. Games
B. Mild Aerobics
C. Other ideas