

Enhancing Students' Motivation to Study English Through Organizing English Activities In The Class Meetings

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Abstract

In recent years in Vietnam, learning English has been prevalent and it has become more popular and urgent as Vietnam has one of south-east Asia's fastest-growing economies and has set its sights on becoming a developed nation by 2020. Motivation learning thus plays an essential role and can be seen as a fundamental factor in language learning that no teacher could avoid being concerned with the motivation of the students. This paper discussed the issues further by researching the way of organizing English activities in the class meetings in order to enhance students' motivation to study English in a class at Luong Ngoc Quyen high school. The aim of the class meeting reviews all previous week activities, which is to evaluate student behaviours in the classroom and set out next week's plan. The participants of the study were students at grade 11 at Luong Ngoc Quyen high school at 16 years old. The study collected the English learning motivation problems that students have and suggested solutions to improve and enhance them by applying English activities in class meetings. The findings of the study would be useful for high school students at Luong Ngoc Quyen high school in particular as well as for high schools in general.

Keywords: motivation, learner's motivation, class meeting, language activities

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I. Introduction

English is an international language in the world and the official language in a large number of countries; an increasing number of people are concerned about the purposes of learning English. Especially, when Vietnam is in the process of developing and integrating with other countries in the world, the use of English as a bridge helps learners exchange with foreign partners, associate friends, and exchange experience as well as knowledge with other countries. Therefore, English has become a subject, an important task in the education and training of each country, including Vietnam. Motivation for learning is to encourage, direct and sustain learning practices that have been performed with an internal intensity or mechanism. Learning motivation that there is a dialectical relationship that can motivate learning, and motivation can once again foster learning, as Ausubel (1968) [1] says, there is the typically complementary relationship between motivation and learning. Motivation learning thus plays an essential role in English learning. Students with strong motivation will often do well in the process of studying foreign languages while students lacking inherent motivation are always losers in language learning. In addition, teachers should be familiar with the psychological theory and the process of learning English to encourage and enhance English learning among students. Motivation of the learners plays a crucial role in learning English. Indeed, many researchers who are interested in this subject area have been examining the role of learner motivation in learning. Gardner (1972) [2] seems to support this concept and emphasize that encouragement is of particular importance in language learning. He indicates that the motivation of foreign language learning contains four aspects: a goal, effortful behaviour, a desire to attain the goal and attitude. True, motivation is such a fundamental factor in language learning that no teacher could avoid being concerned with the motivation of the students. Therefore, teachers and students are now paying greater attention to motivation, which can positively motivate students to learn English. The aim of the class meeting reviews all previous week activities, which is to evaluate student behaviours in the classroom and set out next week's plan. Solutions related to the optimal exploitation of the first 15 minutes of the class every day, which means shortening the time of class meetings to discuss and allow time for English activities to enhance the motivation and interest of students to study English. Therefore, in the research paper, the researcher studies "Enhancing students' motivation to study English in class at Luong Ngoc Quyen high school through organizing English activities in the class meetings." with the hope that it can help students at Luong Ngoc Quyen high school to improve their English in general and gradually improve effectively their learning motivations towards English in particular.

II. Methodology

The tools used in this study to collect data were questionnaires and observation. The researcher firstly used the questionnaire to collect information the motivations of students on English learning, their challenges in studying English. The second questionnaire contains six questions on Google Form. The questions in the questionnaire are intended to investigate the current situation of class meetings. The researcher provided some suggestions for students to choose. To exploit more information from respondents, the researcher used open-ended questions. Observation was also used as the main source of collecting data in this study. The observation process was divided into two distinct parts: **pre-questionnaires and post-questionnaires**. Secondly, after the researcher collects pre-questionnaire from students, observation was also used as the main source of collecting data in this study. Two classes will take part in the research, one class is control class and one class is experimental. After that, the researcher also observed another class which has the same curriculum and the same educational level to compare. Checklist results have been synthesized, compared and discussed to gather information more credibly, correctly and reliably.

III. Findings And Discussion

The researcher gave a report in this chapter on the results of analyzing the data collected from the participants' questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Results on the following aspects were shown: (1) results of questionnaire; (2) results of interview; (3) results of observation. At the same time, the researcher presented substantial results-based discussions.

3.1. The results of the questionnaire

Firstly, based on the data collected from the students, the majority of students participating in the survey used only one-third of the class time (15 minutes).

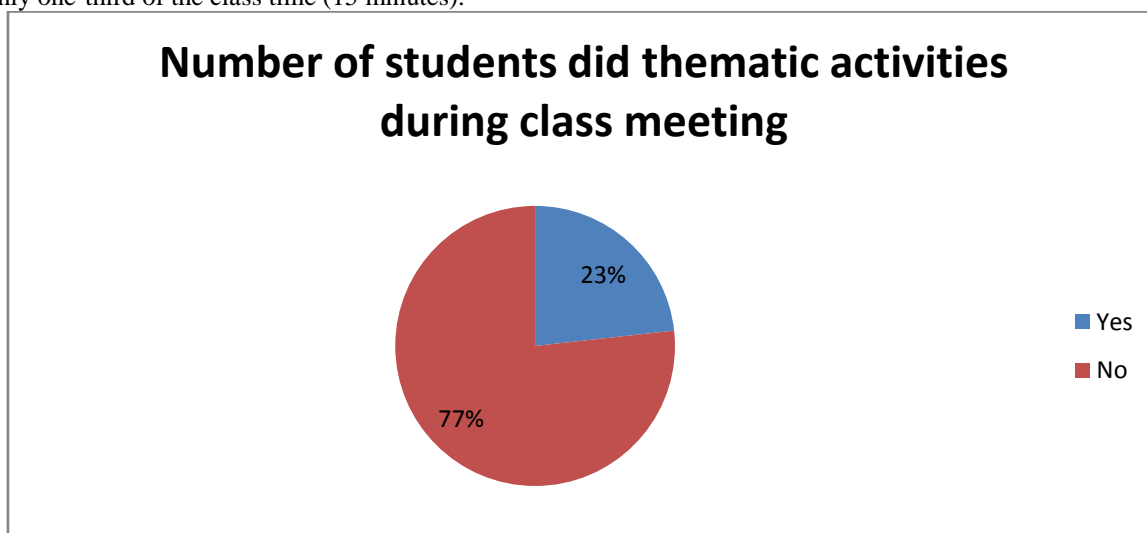


Figure 1. Number of students did thematic activities during class meeting

Based on the information gathered from the student survey, a small number of students have participated in previous enhancement or consolidation activities. The activities organized are activities to enhance or consolidate classroom knowledge, conducted by teachers in a variety of ways to increase student interest in the subject.

Secondly, figure 2 presents the comparison between the pre – questionnaire and post – questionnaire motivation.

Student survey	Pre	Post	Mean
3. Learning English is great.	Moderate	High	1.090909091
5. I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.	Low	Moderate	0.613636364
6. I would feel quite relaxed if I had to give street directions in English.	Low	Moderate	1.477272727
12. I don't bother checking my assignments when I get them back from my English teacher.	Low	Moderate	0.590909091
13. I feel confident when asked to speak in my English class.	Low	Moderate	0.477272727
16. I think my English class is enjoyable.	Moderate	High	1.659090909
17. I don't pay much attention to the feedback I receive in my English class.	Moderate	High	0.931818182
20. I am calm whenever I have to speak in my English class.	Low	High	1.659090909
23. When I have a problem understanding something in my	Low	Moderate	2.250000000

English class, I always come to my teacher for help			
27. I like my English class so much; I look forward to studying more English in the future.	Moderate	High	1.0000000
28. I plan to learn as much English as possible.	Moderate	High	1.113636364
30. I would like to learn as much English as possible.	Moderate	High	1.113636364
33. I look forward to the time I spend in English class.	Moderate	High	1.340909091
34. I can't be bothered trying to understand the more complex aspects of English.	Low	Moderate	1.409090909
35. Students who claim they get nervous in English classes are just making excuses.	Low	High	1.7500000
36. I love learning English.	Moderate	High	1.204545455
38. I would feel calm and sure of myself if I had to order a meal in English.	Low	High	1.5000000

Figure 2. Comparison means Range for Motivation level

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher outlined many aspects that impact students' motivation in order to acquire more about students' current learning motivation. Approximately one-half of the main factors affecting students' motivation in the learning process have been improved. This was also researched and proved by the researcher during observation which researcher attended some random English classes each week. Thirdly, figure 3 which related to students' motivation in learning English as the second language helped the researcher to find that most of the students learn English because they want to get a better job (10.24% students strongly believe that learn English well can allow them to get a good job), as they know English is an international language.

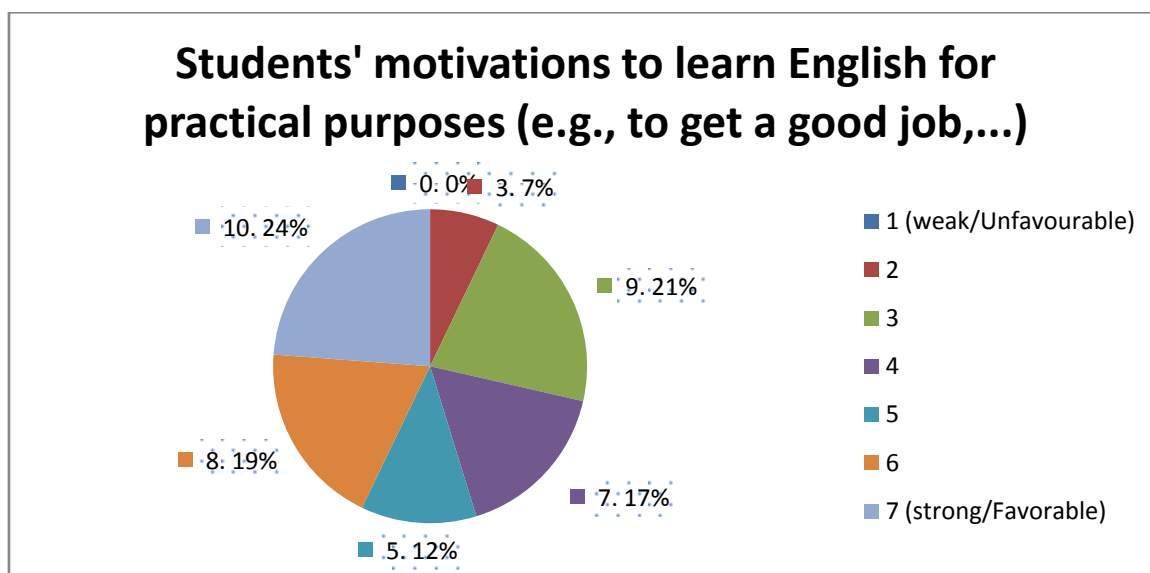


Figure 3. Students' motivation to learn for practical purposes

This motivation refers to instrumental motivation which can influence the success in learning English. However, when the researcher interviewed some random students, those students have a different motivation in learning English. This study tries to investigate the level of students' motivation in learning English and also to know whether they predominantly interactively or instrumentally motivated towards English learning.

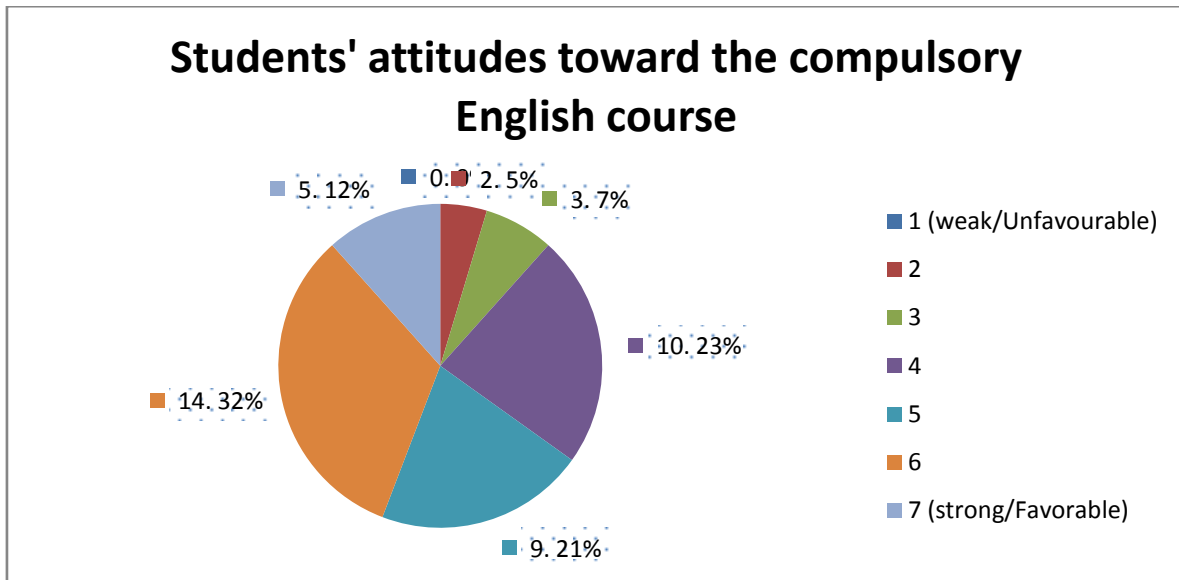


Figure 4. Students' attitudes toward the compulsory English course

Fourthly, the compulsory 11th grade English textbook, in the opinion of students and subject teachers, is a program that specializes in specialized vocabulary and general grammar structures. The goal of each lesson under the guidance of the teacher requires students to acquire all the new knowledge as well as review the knowledge learned and complete the exercises in the book. If the teacher is not creative and uses a variety of activities, it is easy for the student to lose motivation and interest in learning (Figure 4). Most of student found compulsory English course hard to adapt, the number of students accounts for 10.23% and 9.21%, Few students confirm that they hardly are interested in tasks in the textbook (2.5% and 3.7%, respectively). From this research, the researcher wants to find out the effectiveness of organizing English activities for students to improve the learning motivation and quality of student learning.

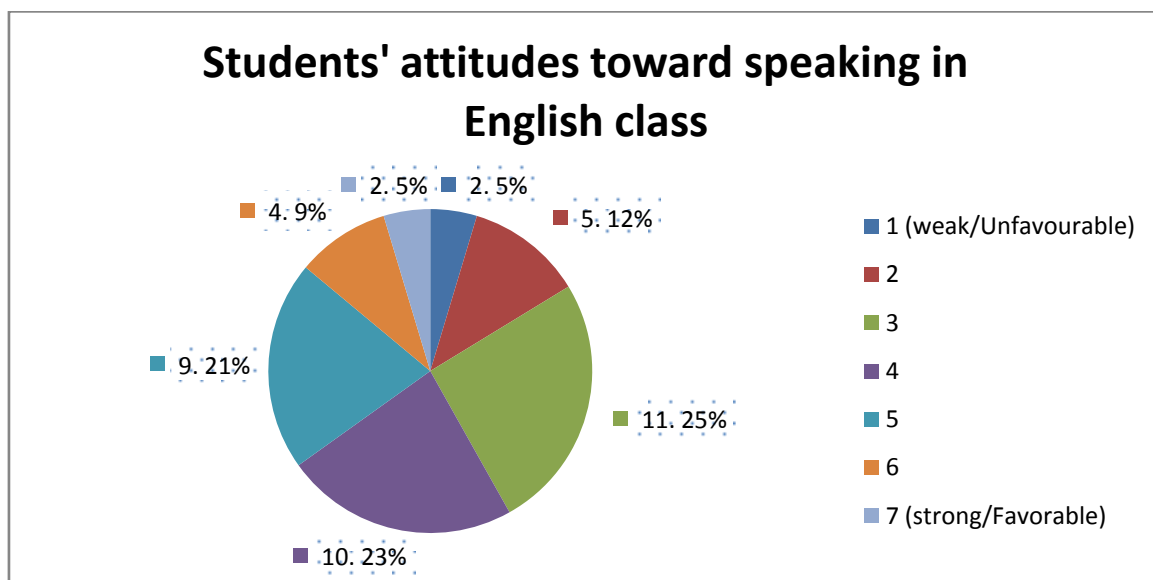


Figure 5. Students' attitudes toward speaking in English class

Fifthly, speaking skills directly affect the learning motivation as well as the learning process of students. Speaking skills are a requirement for students to have the opportunity to interact with teachers in the learning process, as a premise to develop interest in learning. To be motivated to penetrate, students need English speaking skills to improve the quality of learning. However, chart 4.4.a analyzed Students' attitudes toward speaking in English class. Most of the students who have a positive attitude in using speaking skills in English have good English backgrounds (4.9%); most of them also have a higher level of interest and interaction

than others during English classes (10.23% and 9.21%, respectively). However, most students still have a shy attitude when speaking English during class time (11.25%).

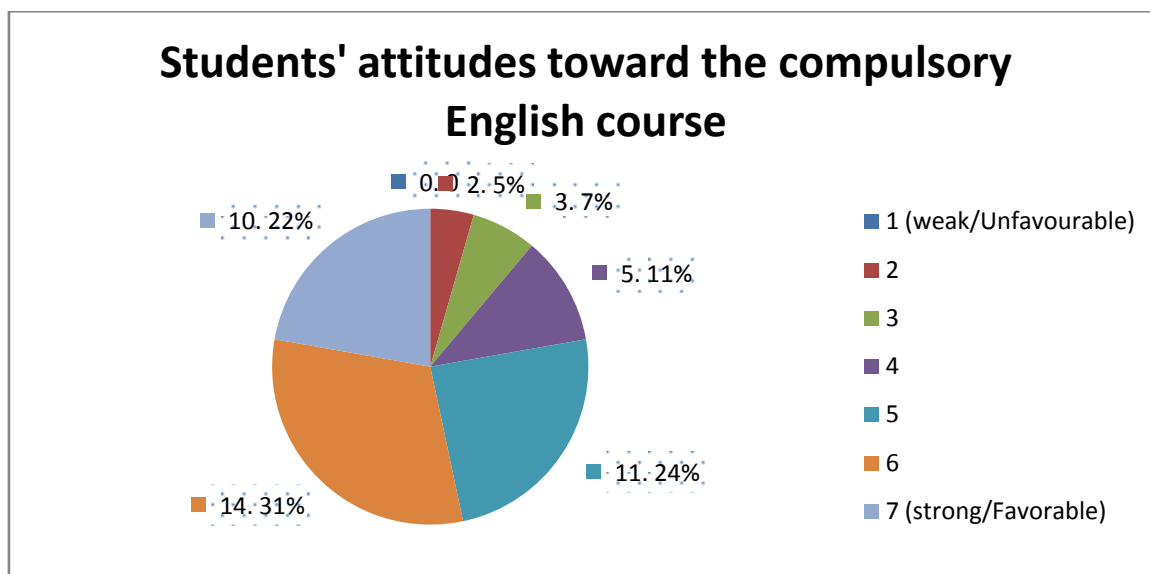


Figure 7. Students' attitudes toward the compulsory English course

Sixthly, after the experimental process, the student's assessment of the English curriculum required a slight change. Most students are more interested in the content of the lesson. Many students have ideas for participating in creating more appropriate learning activities. After the post-questionnaire, the percentage of students, whose attitudes toward the compulsory English course, has raised from 5.12% to 10.22%.

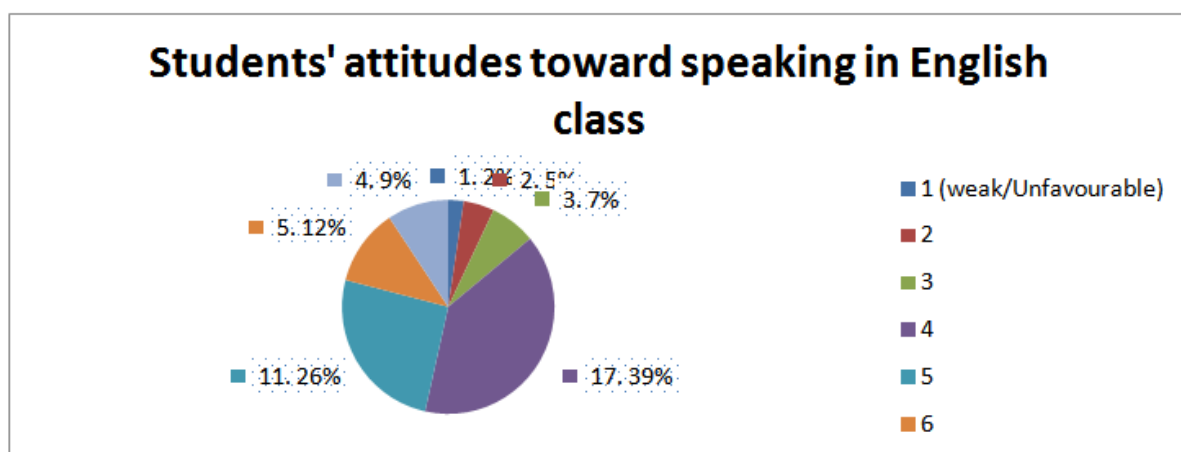


Figure 7. Students' attitudes toward speaking in English class (Part 2)

Seventhly, based on the findings of this question (Figure 7), students' speaking skills seem to have improved (from 11.25% to 17.39%, for students' attitudes at level 4; from 10.23% to 11.26% for students' attitudes at level 5), when they interacted with English teacher more than before. Most students agree that they are tended to remember better when they listened and interacted with the teacher, they can imitate teacher's intonation and pronunciation as well as using words and phrases in the video to form their speech.

3.2. Results of classroom observation

One of the effective strategies was organizing English activities in a class meeting. However, not every student was aware of the role of English activities in enhancing motivation in English learning as well as their English studying. The researcher observed two classes.

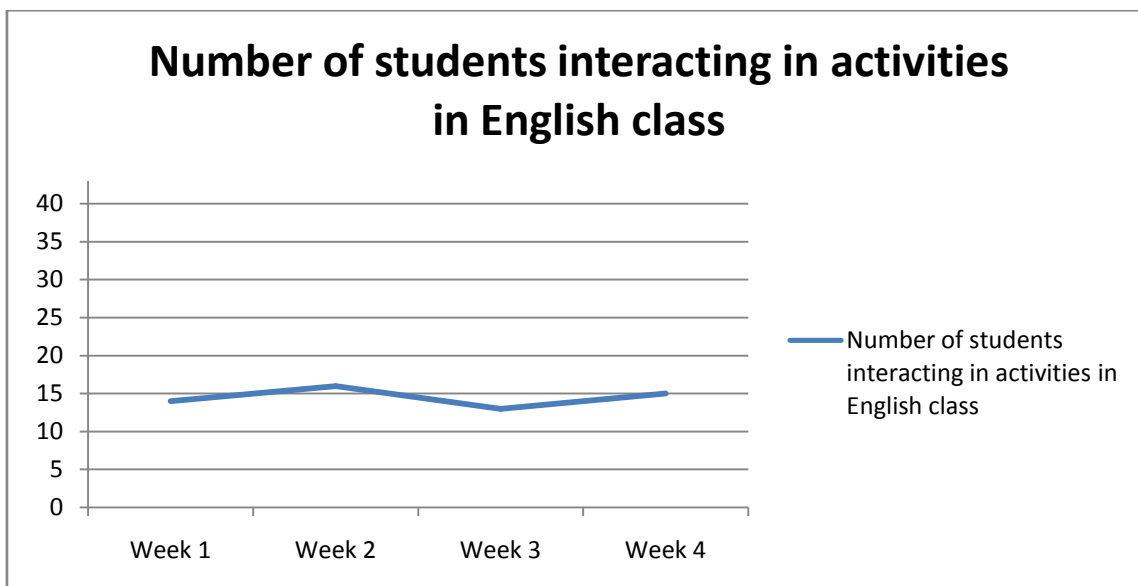


Figure 8. Number of students interacting in activities in English class (control class)

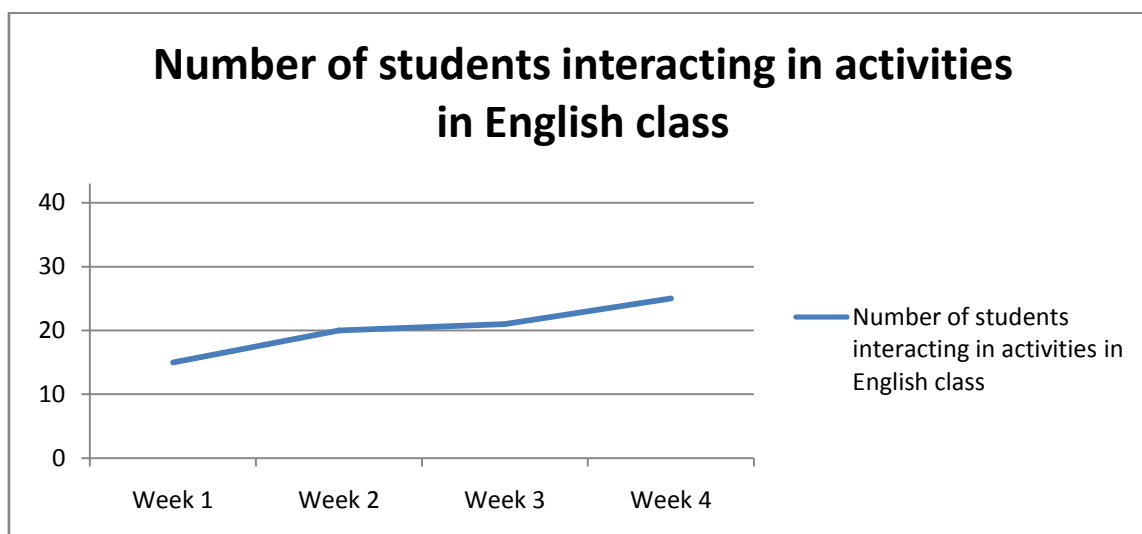


Figure 9. Number of students interacting in activities in English class (experimental class)

After organizing English activities in a class meeting, the result is concerned with the effectiveness and motivation of students in English class through the interaction of students with English teacher as well as English activities in the compulsory English classes. Students are willing to explore among the topics as the researcher had expected and find one they are interested in. The level of interaction between students and learning activities is enhanced. However, this change is not large; the level of students' interaction was slightly improved. The chart has proved this.

IV. Recommendation

Since the sampling method of this research is convenience sampling of the non-random sampling method, the sampled subjects lack diversification, or are too focused on a certain group. For this reason, this research recommends that future researchers choose a different sampling method for their sampling selection, so it helps obtain the result that is closer to the actual situation.

V. Conclusion

For the teachers at Luong Ngoc Quyen high school, English activities bring them chances to improve students' English in many interesting ways. By using these activities, the teachers can create real social contents to help their students learn English in natural ways; this can motivate the students' learning and make their lessons more interesting, more effective.

For the 11th grade students at Luong Ngoc Quyen high school, English activities help them a lot. These activities can make them feel more confident, independent, relaxed, and they can overcome the shame, the feeling of inferiority. That makes them temporarily ignore the pressure of learning English but they still learn it naturally.

However, to deal with the disadvantages of organizing English activities, the teachers should base on textbook and co-operate with other colleagues to design the tasks which must be suitable for students.

In short, this study was conducted to provide some insights into the level and type of motivation of the students at Luong Ngoc Quyen high school. Using the survey method, the questionnaires were proposed by Gardner's (1985) [3]'Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB)'. The study provides useful knowledge and information for the institute to improve their English courses. The findings of the study also provide empirical evidences to help the teachers of English at Luong Ngoc Quyen high school know that organizing English activities is one the most useful ways to enhance the motivation of grade 11 students, and how to make this method more effective in class meetings. In addition, there are valuable suggestions on the group activities that should be used in teaching English in this study. Hopefully, the teachers can reflect upon these instructions and improve their teaching quality to make their students learn English better.

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