

# **A study on anxiety in speaking class of the 1st year non-English major students at Hung Yen University of education and technology \ Nghiên cứu về sự lo lắng trong lớp học nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên không chuyên năm thứ nhất trường Đại học Sư phạm Kỹ thuật Hưng Yên. M.A Thesis Linguistics: \ Hoàng Thị Huyền**

## **Introduction**

In recent years, together with the increasing need for English learning, great efforts have been made in order to improve the quality of English teaching. Since 1960s, the research on classroom discourse has grown rapidly. Before that, teaching methodology had been explored and an effective teaching method had been tried to be found. Since teaching methods do not play a decisive role in language classrooms, the focus has shifted from teaching methods to teacher's talk in classroom process, or teacher's instructions.

Giving instructions is particularly important to language teaching. According to pedagogical theory, instructions that the teacher uses in the classroom determines to a larger degree whether a class will succeed or not since almost all of the classroom activities and teacher's help are organized and provided to the students through instructions.

In Vietnam, English has become an international language of communication as well as a compulsory subject at most schools and universities. English proficiency is very necessary for those who want to get a better job or, for the least of it, pass the English exam at the end of their study course. In order to improve the English teaching and learning quality, teachers at Thai Nguyen University, where I work, have been using different techniques, one of which is group work – key features of learner – centered orientation. They believe that group work help to provide their students with more

opportunities to exchange their ideas make them more confident and creative in learning and promote their autonomy by allowing them to make their own decisions in the group. However, many teachers complain that they are facing many challenges in organizing and managing, especially giving instructions for group work. Some teachers do not use English frequently and sometimes not confident in their use of the language. Therefore, the effectiveness of their instructions for group work in class may not as high as being expected. Along with a possible lack on the part of teachers to give instructions in English in the classroom, there may also be a reason on the part of class size. Most of the non-English major classes at Thai Nguyen University are large. Hence, the noise as well as the mixed ability of the students may lead them to an inadequate understanding about the instructions given. Since a better understanding of the teacher's instructions for group work can undoubtedly help students successfully fulfill their tasks in the group and certainly improve their learning, it is necessary to do some research on teachers' instructions for group work from both theoretical and practical perspective. The author hopes to make a modest contribution to an increased understanding of giving instructions for group work in non-English major classrooms at Thai Nguyen University. Basing on which group work can be organized in a more effective way to create variety, dynamism, and freshness in the classroom.

### **Aims of the study**

The study is conducted with a purpose to investigate how instructions are used for group work in 2<sup>nd</sup> year non-English major classrooms. Thus, the specific purpose is to provide reality evidence of the use of instructions for group work in 2<sup>nd</sup> year non-English major classrooms. In this way, the factors that influence to the effectiveness of an instruction will be clarified so that suggestions for better instructions will be discussed in order to help teachers improve their instructions for group work consciously.

### **Scope of the study**

It is a fact that teachers have many ways to divide the class into small groups so that students can work together at the same time in an activity. Thus, to limit the scope of the study, the researcher intends to investigate only instructions for activities in which the teacher divides the class into groups of two, three, four or five since they are the common size of group activities in the classroom at Thai Nguyen University.

Moreover, the respondents of this study are limited to 2<sup>nd</sup> year non-English majors chosen randomly at TNU, therefore, their opinion about teachers' instructions might not be a representative of all students at TNU in particular and students learning English in general.

### **Research questions**

As stated in the introduction, the study is designed to seek answers to the following questions:

1. How instructions are used for group work in 2<sup>nd</sup> year non-English major classrooms at TNU?
2. What facilitates and hinders the teachers when giving instructions to group work in 2<sup>nd</sup> year non-English major classrooms at TNU?
3. What recommendations for improvement are needed to make instructions for group work more effective?

### **Methods and procedure of the study**

In order to examine the situation of the study, the researcher used the following methods:

- Observation of the teachers' classes will be carried out over a period of two months to obtain information about their actual teaching practices. Specific episodes of events observed during the lesson will be used to generate discussion topics during post – lesson interviews.
- The post – lesson interview questions are aimed at obtaining information about the teachers' own judgments on their teaching, particularly on the instructions.

- After each lesson, a questionnaire will be distributed to the students to get information about their evaluation and reasons for their successful or unsuccessful in following the teacher's instructions. The author uses questionnaires for this stage because of the fact that they are easy to construct and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable (Dornyei, 2003).

The informants of the study are:

➤ **The teachers**

The nine teachers involved in the study were coded as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, and T9 and divided into 3 groups. All of the teachers were eager to contribute to the study and did not mind having the author observe their lessons during one semester. Their profiles are described in table 1

Group	Age	Sex		Teaching experience	Educational qualification
		Male	Female		
<b>1 (T1-T3)</b>	40 - 50	2	1	more than 20 years	BA degree
<b>2 (T4-T6)</b>	30 – 40	1	2	10 – 20 years	MA degree
<b>3 (T7-T9)</b>	23 – 27	1	2	2 - 5 years	BA degree

***Table1 . Teacher's profiles (Total number of teacher: 9)***

➤ **The students**

There were about 500 second year non-English majors in nine classes engaged in the study. They were all from Faculty of Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and History. The number of students in each class is about 60 – 70 students with a mixed lever of language proficiency. Many of them had 7 years learning English at secondary schools but some others had only 3 years of exposure to the language. In their first and second year at the University, they learn general English with New Headway – Elementary by John and Liz Soar (1995).

The study was conducted in scientific manner with careful planning. It consists of three main parts:

Part I is the introduction in which rationales, aims, significance, research questions, scope, methods and design of the study are presented.

Part II, development, consists of three chapters.

Chapter 1 comes to basic concepts and knowledge relevant to the study as communicative teaching theory, the use of teacher talk, group work – its advantages and organization, the nature of instructions, and principles for giving instructions when organizing group work.

Chapter 2 provides with an overview of the teachers and students chosen, the classroom conditions, timetable and teachers and students relationship at TNU. Data collection and statistical result are also presented in the chapter.

Chapter 3 discusses the findings of the research and suggests recommendations for the improvement of instruction giving.

Part III, the conclusion, summarizes the major findings obtained from the study. Then it deals with the limitations and puts forward some suggestions for further study.

### **The definition of teacher's instructions for group work**

For most Vietnamese learners of English, classroom is the main place where they frequently expose to the target language. In the classroom, the teacher tries to use English whenever it is possible. The language used by the teacher has “two purposes: it serves both as the subject matter of the lesson and as the medium of instruction” (Willis 1987: 163). The previous purpose of language used in the classroom is obvious while the later has not been fully defined. Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic defines teacher's instruction as a “process of teaching knowledge or teaching given”.

The Longman dictionary of Contemporary English provides the following definition for an instruction: a statement/ order telling someone what they must do. Another definition of instruction is that: It is "the purposeful direction of the learning process" and is one of the major teacher class activities (along with planning and management). Professional educators have developed a variety of models of instruction, each

designed to produce classroom learning. Joyce, Weil, and Calhoun (2003) describe four categories of models of teaching/instruction (behavioral systems, information processing, personal development, and social interaction) that summarize the vast majority of instructional methods. Each model differs in the specific type or measure of learning that is targeted. Therefore, as a teacher make decisions about "best instructional practices" she/he must be certain that she/he connect recommended practices with specific desired outcomes. This point is often omitted; discussion of best practices then becomes a debate about desired outcomes rather than a discussion of how to achieve them.

As stated before, instruction (the purposeful guidance of the learning process) is complex and can take many forms. It is a vitally important classroom activity, but must be considered in the context of such factors as measures of desired student learning (including overlapping objectives taught to objectives tested), controlling student behavior (classroom management activities), individualize differences among students, and school processes.

However, within the small scope of this research, the writer intends to study only instructions which are used for group work. Basing on the discussions before, it is unnecessary to state about the importance of teachers' instructions in organizing group work since the effectiveness of a group work is greatly defined by all the steps that the teacher takes as well as her/his language including instructions, and her/his manner when organizing them. As noted by G.S. Hughes (1981), the teacher almost indifferently uses variety of forms of situation, ranging from commands (Look at page...) to request (Could you open the book at page..., please?) and suggestion (Why not open the book at page....?). Thus, it is certain that the instruction for group work is a wide category of sentences teachers use when organize group works.

In this study, group work is referred to classroom activities, which are in dyads (pairs), in triads, groups of four or even half the class. In other word, within the scope of this

study, the writer try to do a research on how instructions are used for every group activity organized in the classroom.

### **Principles of giving instructions to group work**

It is widely believed that the meaningful, situational use of the language in the classroom may have positive effect on learning because of its communicative potential. Using the class language naturally associates the foreign language to situations where an information gap does occur, such as: a teacher instructs learners to an exercise in their books: “Open your book at page..., please.” then checks their understanding of something (OK, did you get that?), which is indeed exchange real information with the learners. Therefore, it is wise that the teacher justify the amount of new vocabulary and structures used when speaking to the students if she/he does not want to re – explain all his – her words. Jim Scrivener (1994) suggested five steps when giving instructions so as to avoid the problem of quantity and over complexity of language used.

- Become aware of the teacher’s own instruction giving.
- Have a pre-plan instruction: collect essential information, use simple and clear language.
- In class, create silence beforehand, make eye contact with the students before giving instructions, use authority tone and gesture to pace the instructions and clarify their meaning.
- Use demonstration as much as possible.
- Check understanding by getting evidence from the student. Teacher may ask the students to show him/her what they are going to do.

The five steps prepare the teacher with pre - stage, while - stage and post –stage when she/he gives instructions for a group activity. Basing on the suggested stages, the teacher needs to simplify their language and uses natural language without too many commands. She/ he is also encouraged to use gesture and facial expressions as well as changing intonation properly during instructions in order to achieve the highest effectiveness.

Concerning the question of to use or not to use mother tongue in instructions for group works, a common pattern followed by many teachers is the repetition of complex instructions in translation. This pattern means an attempt is made in the L2 first to offer the better pupils an opportunity to try to understand, whereas repetition in the mother tongue will allow the weaker ones to understand the instructions anyway and maybe to start identifying the function of the foreign language used. Students in order to show and check their understanding of what is happening in the activity or to support their peers' understanding classroom events also use the mother tongue. Nevertheless, the task of running an activity in the foreign language is not easy. It is not just the matter of general language competence, but also of the specific needs of classroom language and the teacher's sense of measuring his/ her words so as to provide comprehensible input.

### **How instructions are used for group work in 2<sup>nd</sup> year non – English major classrooms at TNU?**

The result from the observation and survey questionnaires show that the teachers are aware of the importance of a good instruction. They might have some points in their instructions which were not completed or successful, but they all realized the importance of instructions and tried many different ways to complete them. Teachers in group two seemed to be the most successful ones with diverse instructions containing pictures and body movements. They were also confident with friendly eye contacts and appropriate pacing when instructing. They all got M.A degrees and had at least 10 years of teaching experienced. That could be one of the reasons why they could take students' knowledge and understanding into account when designing an activity.

Teachers in the first group were the oldest among the three groups. Two of them were teachers of Russian. It is a fact that at TNU there are some old teachers having the first qualification in teaching Russian. Students of those teachers often complain about their different accent which make them unable to understand. In addition, teacher in the first group did not use body language much. Most of the time during the lesson they sat at their desk and lectured. When there was an activity, they sometimes stood up to give



instruction, but sometimes sat at their desk to instruct. Therefore, they rarely used body language to support their talk. The reason for their inactiveness can be because of their age. People seem to be slower and less active when they get older. For those teachers, who are more than 40 years old, moving around the classroom or standing during giving lectures or instructions seems to be unfamiliar. They showed their preference to sitting while working with the students. As presented in the previous part, the teachers explained that they felt body language unnatural and useless because they could make their students understand their instructions clearly without body language. In fact, they were successful with their instructions. Most students in their class joined their activities. However, the students did not show their excitement when being announced that they were having an activity because activities were somehow similar, the teachers' instructions were somehow stiff and framed, which made their lessons predictable and lack of creativeness. When the teachers gave instructions, many students did not pay much attention but they could still finish their tasks because they were trained to get used to the rules. Moreover, the teachers often made an example or gave a demonstration. Therefore, there was no reason for the students to look at the sitting teacher and listen carefully.

On the contrary, teachers in group three seemed to be interested in organizing activities in class. They were eager to create games or exercises to motivate the students but the results were not as their expectations. Besides, they were often complained about their long utterances and fast speaking speed. The reason may be because they had just graduated and were still familiar with the speed of students' oral tests. They also sometimes forgot attracting the students' attention before giving an instruction. Therefore, many students (especially ones sitting at the back of the class) were busy talking with friends or not ready for a new task. That was why their lessons were often full of creativeness but the results were usually not often high.

It is a certain that these nine teachers were only representatives of teachers of English at TNU. However, they somehow revealed the English learning facts at the University.

### **What facilitates and hinders the teachers when giving instructions?**

Basing on the teacher's post lesson interview as well the survey questionnaire for the students, there are some factors that facilitates the teachers' success in instructing.

The most important factor is the students. The students are ones who bring the teacher the inspiration to create. In the classrooms observed, the author could recognize that most students seriously respected their teachers. They seemed to realize that they were being watched and evaluate. Therefore, during the lesson, they listened attentively and some of them raised their hands when there were ideas coming up in their heads. As a teacher, the author highly appreciates the students' positive attitudes because when working with those ones teachers will certainly be pushed to work, to devote and to create the best lessons.

The teachers themselves are also the important factors contributing to their success. It can be drawn out from the previous parts that there obviously some techniques needed for a successful instruction. Teachers in group 1 and 2 are experienced teachers with many well – organized activities. In their lessons, they mostly followed all necessary steps when giving an instruction, such as waiting for a few seconds to attract the students before instructing, using short and clear sentences in normal speed and making some demonstrations before having the whole class practice. Most instructions utilized by these teachers had the similar structure so the students were gradually familiar with the procedure and followed properly.

### **Cause analysis for the result of the study**

The result of the present study shows that the instructions used in the classrooms under investigation is not really high and created a little interest among the students. There are certain reasons for the ineffective of the instructions.

#### **➤ Cultural background**

The learning situation has not been separated or isolated from the total context (Reid, 2002: 4). In Vietnam, both teachers and students have been greatly influenced by the cultural tradition. The relationship between teacher and student is much more

hierarchical. The teacher is more direct in making decisions about what is going on in the classroom. That is, the teacher is an authority figure and has great power in controlling the class. Students are familiar with the idea that the teacher must know all and present knowledge in class, the students are constrained to accept without questioning or being suspicious. That means students often do not dare to ask questions if they feel ambiguous about what the teacher asks them to do. If not their teacher may assume that they are not well – behave. It is certain that no one wants to make the teacher angry!

➤ **Class size**

In Thai Nguyen University most classes are big. As the author has mentioned previously in this study, all classes in the research are more than fifty students. That will leave no more than about a minute for each student during the average session, so it is hard to arrange the practice of speaking. Besides, certain other rules have to be observed in classroom setting. The classroom is characteristically reluctant to allow overlapping or simultaneous talk because of the requirement for centralizing attention. Some teachers in group one said that they tended to use Vietnamese for the second time of instruction because they were not sure if their students could understand the instructions paraphrased. Moreover, a large class prevented the teachers from recognizing problems from the students if they did not complained. The teachers tended to give instructions to students sitting in the front of the classrooms. Students sitting at the back, in most of the time, could not understand the rules as clearly as they were supposed to do. The reason was because when sitting at the back of such a crowded class the students were likely to be distracted by many small stuffs, such as things happening outside the windows, small talks of other students, etc. which averted them from listening to the teachers' talk. Besides, students who were not really good at learning often chose the seats at the back of the room. Thus, those students could not easily understand what the teacher said right at the first time, even when they paid good

attention. The teacher could hardly take care of more than fifty students at once, so they would let the activity started right after some students said they were ready.

➤ **Factors concerned with the learners**

It is important to remember the teachers have a certain amount of power in the classroom, but the learners also clearly influence the pace and direction of interaction. Learners have their preferences and utilize their own learning strategies and these sometimes run contrary to the teacher's plan. Different students with different personality do not have identical psychological process while learning English. Students' needs, motivation and learning factors influence their learning process. Teacher's instruction is inevitably affected by what the students believe. At TNU, students are used to the instructions in Vietnamese or short and simple ones. Teachers were the ones to be blamed for the students' laziness in trying to understand instructions in English. Many students said that when the teacher said something in English, they would not listen and waited for the translation which would come right afterward. Teachers formed the habit and teachers were the ones who 'ruined' their students.

However, the students themselves were the factor that hindered the success of the instructions. They were too crowded and easily distracted by other factors. Moreover, they were in different levels of proficiency which were of great difficulties for the teachers to differentiate their instructions.

➤ **The limited teaching time**

Through interviewing with the teachers, they complained that the teaching time is so limited and so many teaching contents were required to be accomplished in a rather limited time. Explanation for instructions is time consuming. It was not easy to explain every rule for group work in English and then in Vietnamese or a paraphrase in English. Besides, it is sometimes unable to predict the result of an activity. In other word, an activity may last longer (or shorter) than the teachers' intention. Thus, the teachers are somehow passive, especially the young ones.

### ➤ **Teachers' awareness toward instructions for group work**

For many years, teachers and educational organizations have been interested in finding the right teaching method, and have not realize the importance of instructions in language teaching in general and instructions for group work in particular. When teachers prepare their lessons, traditionally, they always focus on the teaching method, and pay no attention to the instruction for each activity they intent to use. They restricted their talk to classroom language, fluent in saying: “work in pairs”, “answer the questions”...,etc. They do not realize the role of explanation in each instruction such as “please work with the students next to you”, or “answer your friend’s questions”. By the same token, the educational organizations always train teachers to find and use the right method, totally neglect to train them how to talk in classrooms. As a result, many teachers lack the related theories of giving instructions. Besides, most teachers have been used to the traditional way to teach foreign language, which requires few specialized skills on the part of teachers and teachers are regarded as an authority who dominate the whole of the class. If an activity is not successful, then the fault will certainly go to the students. Many teachers may blame for their students’ proficiency or their lack of concentration in the classroom.

### **Recommendations for the teachers**

#### ❖ **Design and select appropriate activities**

A variation of activities that are suitable for students’ life and interest can promote greater participation in lessons. As we have said in the previous sections, the teacher can work less in class but they have to invest time at home in preparing materials and select appropriate tasks, exercises and activities for mix-ability students. The materials and activities chosen for group work should be link to meaningful language use on the part of students and should involve the expressions of their opinions and thoughts. In the context of TNU, when using the course book the teacher should exploit additional materials and design appropriate activities for group work.

There are some major groups of activities structured for language classes that the teacher can apply to their classes, such as: Information gap, Content-focusing, Role play or Jigsaw reading. Each type of activities has its own advantages. For example, in New Headway – Elementary - Unit 14 – pp.110, 111, Reading texts and intended tasks, there are three texts introducing 3 people with a similar slot. It is advisable that the teacher organize an information gap activity in which each student is responsible for the text of one of the characters, they may be asked to do some reading tasks, such as: scanning for the introductory information of the character, skimming certain information about them and answering questions, and so on. Then without looking at others' texts, they are to exchange and compare their character's information with the others for similarities or differences.

Teachers can also apply a game such as noughts and crosses game in to the lessons. Noughts and crosses is a simple game in which two players/ two teams take turns to write Os or Xs in a set of nine squares. The first player to complete a row of three Os or three Xs is the winner. In language practice, cells of the grid are filled with items the teacher wants to test, such as: nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc., or questions.

Another type of valuable activities for students is role playing. It is simultaneously interesting and useful to students because it emphasizes the "real-world" side of science. It challenges them to deal with complex problems with no single "right" answer. In particular, role-playing presents the student a valuable opportunity to learn not just the course content, but other perspectives on it. Below is a example of applying role play for the book: In Unit 12, p91, task 1, teacher can ask students to work in groups of 3 of which A is Rosie, B is Rosie's boss who is going to ask her some questions, C is B's secretary to write down all the questions and answers. The group who first bring the teacher the paper will be the winner. The role play can last 10 minutes.

#### ❖ **Suggested group activities with improved instructions**

As we have mentioned in the previous section, the teacher can work less in class but they have to spend a lot of time before lessons to collect necessary materials for each

activity in the lessons. Moreover, they are suggested to rehearse their instructions, especially the sentences they are going to use before the lessons for better results. As in the discussions of teachers' post – lesson interviews, teachers in group 3 with three inexperienced and just – graduate ones were interested in using academic words in their instructions. For teachers, using complex sentences with academic word may be a good chance to practice their English, but it may cause confusing or misunderstanding. Regarding sentences that can be used for instructions, the author would like to suggest some activities with sentences for instructions which are hoped to contribute to the improvement of the just – graduate teachers.

❖ *Introducing each other (Unit 1 – New Headway – Elementary)*

In this activity, students work in group of three or four in three minutes

**Teacher:** (Stand in the middle front of the class, wait for three seconds).

“Class! We are working in groups of four now. Work with the partners sitting at your table. Huong, who are you working with?”

**Huong:** “I am working with....and....”

**Teacher:** “O.K. You are going to ask your partners about their names and hometowns. What questions are you going to use?, Hoang”

**Hoang:** “We are going to use questions: What’s your names? And Where are you from?”

**Teacher:** “That’s correct. Thank you. And Your answer, Lan?”

**Lan:** “I’m Lan. I’m from Ninh Binh”

**Teacher:** “Excellent! Now you have two minutes to ask you friends. You have to remember all the names and hometowns because I’m going to ask you after you finish. O.K. Let’s start!”

❖ *What computers can do?(Unit 5 – New Headway - Elementary)*

**Teacher:** (Stand in the middle front of the class, wait for three seconds).

“Class! We are working in groups of three now. Work with the partners sitting at your table. Linh, are you working with Binh and Tien (Ss sitting behind Linh)?”

**Linh:** “No, I am working with....and....”

**Teacher:** “That’s right. You are going to discuss with your partners, make a list about what computers can do and cannot do. So, can you tell me what computers can do? Tri”

**Tri:** “I think they can help us connect with our friends”

**Teacher:** “Excellent! What can’t they do? Hue”

**Hue:** “They can’t cook, teacher”

**Teacher:** “Correct! Now you have five minutes to discuss. The group with the longest correct list will be the winner. Let’s start!”

These are only some suggested sentences which can be used for instructions. Besides the appropriate language, the teachers must train themselves to have clear voice and useful and attractive body languages so that they can be pleased with their instructions.

#### ❖ **Improve instruction giving techniques**

Basing on the theories of an effective instruction discussed in the literature review combining with the ideas of the teachers under the investigation, the author would suggest some key points for better instructions.

It is revealed in the case study that the teacher tend to use simple and short instructions. Although some young teachers in group two sometimes used academic words which reduced the effectiveness of the instructions, they did not refuse the usefulness of a simple instructions and said they would tried to use English at the students’ levels. The teachers all said in the post interview that it was better to make instructions as concrete as possible. It would be easier for the teachers and the students to remember and follow the instructions if the teachers had listed a series of steps to be followed the materials needed.

When students are given too many directions at the same time, confusion is inevitable. Therefore, teachers should not pack all instructions into the start of an activity. It is better to divide the activity into several installments, coming together for additional instructions between each episode. For example, they might direct students “work only



through Step two and then we'll talk about your results," to be followed later by "Now complete Steps three through four". This way of dividing lessons will also add interest through varying the kinds of things that students are doing.

Besides, further instruction to small groups might be needed because there may be still some groups or students who are unclear about their tasks. Therefore, during the activities, the teacher should stroll around the classroom, give quick instructions and assistance when necessary, adjudges unexpected behaviors arising in groups, and keeps groups on tracks. At the end of the group work, the teacher should bring the class together to check the work and sum up the main language points having been practiced in the activities or throughout the lesson.

Finally, it is a good step to reinforce the oral instructions with written steps on the blackboard or newsprint. It may be appropriate to uncover only one step at a time as the teacher gives that instruction. Also, teachers should hand out worksheets or things to read only after they have given the instructions because once students have the materials in hand, they will start reading and stop listening.

#### ❖ **Give instructions flexibly**

Giving instructions "different ways" is another key to the success. The technique means to give instructions flexibly - both orally and in writing. They can also be given symbolically, through pictures and diagrams, and concretely, by using sample sets of materials or examples of work to be completed. Some students preferred to read instructions, and still others focus best when they could see what they were to do (through demonstrations or graphic representations).

#### ❖ **Train students group work skills**

An effective group work needs good cooperation between the teacher and students. Therefore, the teacher should train and instruct their students some skills to work in groups. To be more specific, students should be taught some necessary language forms to fulfill the functions required for group work, such as: to agree, to disagree, to explain, to question, to repeat, to interrupt, to compare, etc. Furthermore, teachers

should train their students to obey some rules I group work, for example: start and stop work right after the teachers' command, be quick when moving to another activity, be self discipline, and listen carefully to teachers' instructions.

❖ **Self -train to be effective instruction providers.**

There is a fact that most classrooms of non-English majors are large. Therefore, teachers of large classes are encouraged to be patient and persistent with their effort to make change, not to give up after a single failure. They should believe in the success that will be achieved. In order to be confident of the success, the teachers have to equip themselves with basic characteristics of a communicative language teaching teacher, for instance, be patient and supportive; be a good communicator, be flexible and creative, base their teaching on the needs,... With time and enthusiasm, the teacher is likely to persuade even the most passive students to participate actively in their lessons.

❖ **Improve body language**

The result of the students' survey and teachers' post lesson interview showed that body language is not popular in many classes. The old teachers preferred sitting to talk instead of standing up to use the body to support instructions. The younger ones seemed to realize the importance of body language but said that they felt embarrassed and unnatural when using their body to talk, like a clown performing on the stage. For many reasons, those teachers reduced using their body. Therefore, their instructions lacked vividity.

It is advisable for the teachers to accept the role of body language in communications as well as in classroom instructions. Increasingly some of the lively and even exaggerated facial expressions or behavior can be make classroom atmosphere more active. In order to improve the body language, the teachers should take the following advise in to considerations.

First, the teachers should notice how to sit, how to stand, how to use their hands and legs. They might practice in front of a mirror which will give them good feedback and an opportunity to practise a bit before going to class.

They could also observe friends, or other teachers who has good body language and try using what they can learn from them.

### **Recommendations for the students**

#### **❖ Be attentive in class**

Many students may think that school seems to be designed to make it harder for them to learn. It seems to be all about grades, and tests, and exams, and ticking the right boxes. They may sometimes make the teachers feel as if nobody is interested in answering their questions. But every now and then they should get a notion that this is not the whole story.

Students sometimes forcedly get into a discussion about something that seemed dead dull at first and then find they have been talking about it for nearly an hour and not noticed the time passing. The reason for their reluctance at first may be because of the habit they have fallen into while at school. That is the habit of finding it all too dull to bother with, the habit of not asking questions and keeping on until they get answers or the habit of fitting in with everybody else who's also just marking time till graduation.

Being attentive is one of the essential characteristics to be a successful student. It is also an important factor that contributes to the success of a lesson. The teacher will be happier when having a lesson in a class consisting of active students with positive learning attitude. Staying attentive in the class will help students understand most teachers' requirements, receive every language item explained by the teacher; and therefore, can cooperate with the teacher as well as the partners better. During an activity, students may not know their tasks if they place their mind outside or chat with friends. Thus, being attentive in class is essential for the sake of the students themselves and the teachers as well.

#### **❖ Be cooperative with the teacher**

Students involving in the study are cooperative. They were willing to sit silently to listen to my explanation about the questionnaires they were having. Then after they had finished the monitors quickly collected all the papers to hand in. I could infer from

their attitude that they were eager to share their thoughts about the lectures and the teachers. They did not hesitate to show their expectation for an effective lesson although sometimes their teacher was still in the classroom.

However, the teachers still reported that many of the students were uncooperative. The reasons partly because of the teachers or the lessons. A dull lessons with familiar and simple activities cannot be a motivation for the students to forget chatting with friends. An instruction provided in a flat tone, long sentences and by a far away sitting teacher can not attract their attention. Therefore, the teachers play an important part to make the students cooperate.

Besides, the students themselves have to recognize their roles in the classroom. They must be clear that the success of the lessons partly depend on them. Many students still believe that the lesson's success is for the teachers' own sake. Thus, they may try to break the lesson if something about the teacher does not satisfy them.

In conclusion, as students in a learner – centered class are the ones who are responsible for their success or failure in their learning, they should be aware of their active roles in the process of learning by choosing good learning strategies, and more importantly, cooperating with their teachers to gain success. They should set their goals, be persistent, make a commitment, and participate in the lesson for their own sake.

### **Limitations and further study**

The first limitation of the study comes from the limited population of the subjects. 500 students and 9 teachers involved in the study is a small figure in relation to the whole population of some thousands of teachers and students at Thai Nguyen University. In addition, this research just covered instructions for group work only so it does not provide an insight from all round perspectives.

The following aspects deserve further research:

Firstly, more case studies on a large scale are needed to carry out, so more comprehensive.

Secondly, this tentative research just explores the instructions for group work; instructions for grammar study still needs further research.

Thirdly, it is need to do further researches that is concerned with instructions and how to differentiate instructions.

To conclude, the study does some research on certain aspects of teachers' instructions for group work and the finding of it is hoped to contribute to the investigation of foreign language teaching classrooms, though there exist some limitations in the research.

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