

IMPACT OF POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT STRATEGIES (PRSS) ON ESL LEARNING AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL IN MAILSI

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ABSTRACT

Investigating the impact of positive reinforcement strategies on students was the goal of this study. This quantitative study set out to investigate the effects of positive reinforcement on students' academic, behavioral, and social engagement in the classroom. Students who receive positive reinforcement have better mental development for learning English language. All linguists agree that providing positive reinforcement strategies to students throughout ELL classroom activities can enhance their ability to learn English. The study explores the increasing use of Positive Reinforcement Strategies in ESL learning, highlighting their importance in modern education. The study employs a quantitative research method, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather data from students at the Intermediate level in Mailsi, Pakistan. The questionnaire focuses on student's interest and the effectiveness of Positive Reinforcement Strategies in their ESL learning process. The purpose of this study was to investigate how students' academic performance is impacted by positive reinforcement. For this study, a sample of 400 participants 249 females and 151 males who shared the same socioeconomic background and was culturally homogeneous was chosen. The average age of the individuals, who were all drawn from colleges, ranged from 18 to 20 years old. The findings indicate that the majority of participants showed positive responses towards the use of Positive Reinforcement Strategies in their ESL learning. Students reported that these strategies helped them in understanding complex language concept. According to survey results, in-class student engagement is raised by positive reinforcement. The study concludes that Impact of Positive Reinforcement Strategies in ESL learning at the intermediate level in Mailsi is beneficial for students. The positive responses from participants underscore benefits of positive reinforcement strategies to revolutionize language learning. Educational institutions are encouraged to adopt and expand the use of these strategies to further enhance ESL education. Future research should explore the longterm impacts of these strategies on language acquisition and academic performance.

Key Terms: *Positive Reinforcement, Negative Reinforcement, Rewards, Verbal Praise, Social Reinforcement, Attitude etc.*

1) INTRODUCTION

The English language is very important to students' daily lives and academic endeavors. Because of their varied cultural backgrounds, students find it challenging to learn a new language because its structure, vocabulary, and grammar are different from their native language. Tactics, learner incentives, and language learning methodologies are a few of the difficulties that come with learning English as a second language. More importantly, students also struggle with lack of enthusiasm and motivation. One way to ensure the best learning outcome is to encourage our learners through positive reinforcement. According to Hasibuan and Moedjiono (2009:45), "reinforcement is teacher's behavior in responding positively to a student's particular behavior that enables the behavior to occur". Wubbels, et al. stated that effective classroom management is generally based on the principle of establishing effective teacher-student relationships. Without interaction, the teaching learning process will not

occur as good as expected. Research has shown that while students are learning a second language, Burrhus Frederic Skinner's reinforcement theory is crucial. The learning method of behaviorism known as operant conditioning, which Skinner investigated, gave rise to reinforcement theory. Many academicians have explained that the key to how humans learning skills and perform competently is reinforcement. In reality, the reinforcement theory places a strong emphasis on raising the likelihood that a behavior will cause a response or a stimulus event, which has a significant impact on the facilitative effect on teaching and learning. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how 2 different classroom reinforcement techniques affect student's levels of engagement in English as a second language (ESL). A typical positive reinforcement system consists of teachers reinforcing positive behaviors displayed by students, while focusing minimal attention to inappropriate or negative behaviors (Babyak, Luze, & Kamps, 2000). Zamir et al. (2023) are of the view that factors such as lack of competence, inadequate training, insufficient educational preparation, absence of positive reinforcement, and carelessness have collectively accelerated the deterioration of language quality in English publications in Pakistan. Praise, or positive reinforcement, comes from the operant learning theory that focuses on consequences and their effects on future behaviors (Tauber, 1991). Moreover, Javed & Karim (2024) states that the curriculum emphasizes the development of basic linguistic competence and the enhancement of critical thinking and creative abilities. However, the content of the textbooks provides little scope for learners to engage more profoundly, critically, and independently. that indicates limiting opportunities for positive reinforcement in the learning process.

Positive reinforcement strategies are most effective when introduced and applied throughout the school, but they can be used successfully in the classroom if the expectations are clear and consistent. This is an effective strategy to help all students contribute in the classroom. It also teaches students that they must work hard consistently demonstrating great behaviors in order to obtain a reward. Praising students verbally when they exhibit desired behaviors and show some extra effort to finish assignments is another technique to use positive reinforcement. Students respond well due to their increased desire to please teachers and seek approval from others throughout the day. Another study conducted by Sattar et al (2025) revealed that the inclusion of video media to provide reinforcement in ESL listening comprehension tests does indeed have a positive effect on performance, that caused a stimulus event.

1.1 Strategies of Positive Reinforcement

- ❖ **Positive Feedback:** The teacher can offer constructive and positive feedback to acknowledge and encourage progress.
- ❖ **Comments and Complements:** The teacher can use positive comments, complements and encouraging words to boost confidence and motivation.
- ❖ **Allow Choice:** Let individuals have choices within certain limits to give them a sense of control and autonomy.
- ❖ **Natural Consequences:** The teacher allows the individuals to practice the natural significances of their actions when appropriate.
- ❖ **Interest-Based Rewards:** The teacher offers rewards related to the individual's interests or hobbies.
- ❖ **Peer Reinforcement:** It encourages positive behavior through student interactions and group dynamics.
- ❖ **Time-Based Rewards:** The teacher needs to set time-based goals and reward individuals for consistent good behavior.

- ❖ **Rewards:** The teacher should occasionally surprise individuals with rewards to keep them motivated.
- ❖ **Use of Non-Verbal Communication:** It is the strategy to engage students in lessons by adding actions and visual aids. It also improves student's attentiveness, which helps to prevent misbehavior. Preventing misbehavior is much easier than regaining control of a classroom.
- ❖ **Social Reinforcement:** Inform parents about their children's academic achievement or behavioral development by sending encouraging letters or making polite phone calls. Hopefully, parents will share the accomplishment with their son or daughter, serving as social reinforcement. Remember that the effectiveness of these strategies can vary depending on the individual, their age, and the specific behavior we want to reinforce. It is essential to choose the most appropriate strategy for the situation and be consistent in its application.

2) Statement of Problem

Positive reinforcement is very effective in education because it increases the motivation of students, improves the academic performance and promotes positive behavior. Positive reinforcement when used incorrectly can contribute to undesirable behaviors. Waiting for too long to deliver reinforcement can lead to the wrong associations. While it is generally effective but it has many challenges. English language learning. It also increases the demonstration of appropriate behavior. Therefore, a thorough exploration of positive reinforcement strategies in ESL education at the intermediate level in Mailsi is essential for effective language learning environments. It is important to know how can positive reinforcement strategies effectively helpful to enhance English language learning among language learners, considering benefits and challenges associated with strategies of this approach.

3) Significance of Research

In East Asia, where English is not the national language, there is a gap between theory and practice when it comes to teaching and learning second languages. As a result, this research is significant and will help to broaden the field of this kind of study. This study looks at how teachers perceive the application of positive reinforcement techniques in the ESL classroom. In other words, this study adds something new to the body of knowledge regarding the use of classroom reinforcement strategies by offering a thorough review of the many forms of positive reinforcement. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to ascertain how classroom reinforcement strategies are applied and how students view these strategies. The main reason behind this research study is to understand the impact and effect of positive reinforcement strategies on learning English at intermediate level.

4) Research Objectives

This study is designed to find out following objectives:

1. The impact of positive reinforcement strategies on ESL learning.
2. The impact of verbal praise on ESL learning.
3. The impact of rewards on ESL learning.
4. The impact of compliments and comments on ESL learning.
5. The impact of social reinforcement on ESL learning.
6. The impact of non-verbal communication on ESL learning.
7. The impact of paralinguistic on ESL learning.
8. The impact of clever joke on ESL learning.

5) Research Questions

1. What is the impact of positive reinforcement strategies on ESL learning?

2. What is the impact of verbal praise on ESL learning?
3. What is the impact of rewards on ESL learning?
4. What is the impact of compliments and comments on ESL learning?
5. What is the impact of social reinforcement on ESL learning?
6. What is the impact of non-verbal communication on ESL learning?
7. What is the impact of paralinguistic on ESL learning?
8. What is the impact of clever joke on ESL learning?

6) Research Methodology

In this part, the researcher explained about research design, research variables, population and sample, data collection, the instrument and data analysis.

6.1 Population

A population is a complete group of items (person or object) that share some common trait determined by the researcher's sampling criteria. There were 1200 students as a population. In the present study, the population consists of students enrolled in ESL classes at the intermediate level in Mailsi.

6.2 Sample

A sample is a particular kind of population that is employed as the study object. The researcher took 400 college students with an average age from 18 to 20 years who have learnt English as ESL. The researcher explained the benefits of participating in the study for students' in English language learning and all participants were informed that all test data would be kept strictly confidential.

6.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument that was used to collect the data was a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 31 items, which was meant to know the impact of positive reinforcement strategies on students attitude for learning English. In this 8 study researcher used questionnaire as instrument with a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire used five points Likert scale as follows:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

6.4 Procedure

Written permission was taken from the principals of the college concerned prior to the start of the study. Before the actual collection, the researcher randomly divided questionnaire to two groups (Boys and Girls) to collect data from following colleges:

1. Aspire Group of Colleges Mailsi
2. Star Group of Colleges Mailsi

6.5 Data collection

The researcher visited two institutions in Mailsi to distribute the questionnaire among the participants. After collecting the data, it was analyzed using SPSS software. Subsequently, the data was organized into tables and graphs based on the headings outlined in Chapter Four.

6.6 Data analysis

After collecting data from two colleges at Mailsi, the data was entered into SPSS. To display the quantitative data of the students, statistical analysis techniques like value of mean, standard deviation, frequency and simple percentage were used and the results were also shown through graph.

6.7 Research Design

The research design is quantitative. The research instrument utilized in this study is a closed-ended questionnaire, from which data were collected. Participants included both male and female individuals, selected from two institutes in Mailsi. The researcher distributed the questionnaires among the participants during visit to these institutes, and upon completion, retrieved them for data analysis.

6.8 Research Variable

- **Independent Variable:** Positive Reinforcement Strategies (PRS) are selected as independent variable for this study. Independent variable of this research is supposed to influence ESL learning of the students
- **Sub-variables:** The sub-variables of this research are subtypes of Positive Reinforcement Strategies (PRS). These include: verbal praise, rewards, compliments and comments and social reinforcement, non-verbal communication, paralinguistic and clever joke. 1.12.2
- **Dependent Variable:** ESL learning is supposed to be affected by the use of PRSs. Therefore, ESL learning of the intermediate students is selected as dependent variable for the study.

7) Findings

7.1 Finding according to Demographic Information

Demographic analysis of the participants is presented under this heading. It highlights the gender and qualification and institutions of the participants.

Gender

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Male	151	37.75%	37.75%
Female	249	62.25%	62.25%
Total	400	100%	100%

The table shows gender description of the participants reveals that male 37.75% and 62.25% female make total 100% of the participants. The education of the participants was intermediate level in English.

7.2 Finding according to Research Questions

Research Question No: 1

What is the impact of positive reinforcement strategies on ESL learning?

Overall Impact of PRSs (Questionnaire item-1 to Questionnaire item-9)

	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
Frequency	54.11	75.33	297.67
Percent	14.4%	21.08%	66.88%
Valid Percent	14.4%	21.08%	66.88%

Almost 66% students showed high impact, 21% students showed neutral impact and 14% students showed low impact of Positive reinforcement strategies. Most of the students expressed high impact towards the statements PRS-1 to PRS-9. Overall these strategies increase the interest and confidence level of students. Student's response showed that these strategies modify their behavior positively and they overcome their obstacles in learning English language. Medium impact shows that some students have neutral views on positive reinforcement strategies while low impact shows that some students cannot avail the advantages from these positive reinforcement strategies.

Research Question No: 2

What is the impact of Verbal Praise on ESL learning?

Overall impact of Verbal Praise (Questionnaire item 10 to Questionnaire item 14)

	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
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Frequency	38	79.2	282.8
Percent	9.56%	19.82%	70.62%
Valid Percent	9.56%	19.82%	70.62%

Almost 70% students showed high impact, 19.8% students showed neutral impact and 9.5% students showed low impact of Verbal Praise. Most of the students expressed high impact towards the statements VP-1 to VP-5. Student's response showed that this strategy modifies their behavior positively and they overcome their obstacles in learning English language. Medium impact shows that some students have neutral views on this positive reinforcement strategy and low impact shows that some students cannot avail the advantages from verbal praise.

Research Question No: 3

What is the impact of Rewards on ESL learning?

Overall impact of Rewards (Questionnaire item 15 to Questionnaire item 20)

	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
Frequency	61.33	80	258.66
Percent	15.28%	20.03%	64.58%
Valid Percent	15.28%	20.03%	64.58%

Almost 64.5% students showed high impact, 20% students showed neutral impact and 15.2% students showed low impact of Rewards. Most of the students expressed high impact towards the statements R-1 to R-5. Reward increases the confidence and motivation of students. It also increases the excitement level of students to take a reward. Student's response showed that this strategy modifies their attitude positively and they overcome their obstacles in learning English language. Medium impact shows that some students have neutral views on this positive reinforcement strategy and low impact shows that some students cannot avail the advantages from rewards.

Research Question No: 4

What is the impact of Compliments or Comments on ESL learning?

Overall impact of Compliment and Comment (Questionnaire item 21 to 24)

	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
Frequency	43.25	76.5	280.25
Percent	10.85%	19.1%	70.02%
Valid Percent	10.85%	19.1%	70.02%

Almost 70% students showed high impact, 19% students showed neutral impact and 10% students showed low impact of Compliments and Comments. Most of the students expressed high impact towards the statements C-1 to C-4. It increases the confidence and motivation of students. It also increases the satisfy level of students after compliment. Student's response showed that this strategy modifies their attitude positively. Medium impact shows that some students have neutral views on this positive reinforcement strategy and low impact shows that some students cannot avail the advantages from compliments and comments.

Research Question No: 5

What is the impact of Social Reinforcements on ESL learning?

Overall impact of Social Reinforcement (Questionnaire item 25 to Questionnaire 27)

	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
Frequency	47.33	98.33	254.33
Percent	11.97%	24.6%	63.43%
Valid Percent	11.97%	24.6%	63.43%

Almost 63.4% students showed high impact, 24.6% students showed neutral impact and 11.9% students showed low impact of Social reinforcement. Most of the students expressed

high impact towards the statements S-1 to S-3. It increases the confidence and motivation of students. It also increases the positive behavior of students after interaction with each other. Student's response showed that this strategy modifies their attitude positively. Medium impact shows that some students have neutral views on this positive reinforcement strategy and low impact shows that some students cannot avail the advantages from social reinforcement.

Research Question No: 6

What is the impact of Nonverbal Communication on ESL learning?

Overall impact of Non-Verbal Communication (Questionnaire item 28 to Questionnaire item 29)

	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
Frequency	42.5	84	273.5
Percent	10.65%	21%	68.35%
Valid Percent	10.65%	21%	68.35%

Almost 68.35% students showed high impact, 21% students showed neutral impact and 10% students showed low impact of non-verbal communication. Non-Verbal Communication includes gestures and postures including nodding and smiling. Most of the students expressed high impact towards the statements C-1 to C-2 which, increase the confidence and motivation of students. It also increases the positive behavior of students after interaction with each other. Student's response showed that this strategy modifies their attitude positively and they overcome their obstacles in learning English language. Medium impact shows that some students have neutral views on this positive reinforcement strategy, which means students avail moderate advantages from this strategy and low impact shows that some students cannot avail the advantages from non-verbal communication.

Research Question No: 7

What is the impact of Paralinguistic on ESL learning?

PL-1 I participate in my English language learning class when the teacher's voice is lively.

	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
Frequency	35	74	291
Percent	8.8%	18.5%	72.7%
Valid Percent	8.8%	18.5%	72.7%

Almost 72% students showed high impact, 18% students showed neutral impact and 8.8% students showed low impact of Paralinguistic. Most of the students expressed high impact towards the statement PL-1 which indicate that students have advantages regarding the use of this strategy. It increases the confidence and motivation of students. It also increases the positive behavior of students after interaction with each other. However, medium impact shows that some students have neutral views on this strategy and low impact shows that some students cannot avail the advantages from paralinguistic.

Research Question No: 8

What is the impact of Clever Joke on ESL learning?

CJ-1 My attention is increased during the class discussion when the instructor tells a clever joke that is relevant to the subject in my English learning class.

	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
Frequency	32	66	302
Percent	16%	16.5%	67.5%
Valid Percent	16%	16.5%	67.5%

Almost 67.5% students showed high impact, 16.5% students showed neutral impact and 16% students showed low impact of Clever Joke. Most of the students expressed high impact towards the statement CJ-1, which indicate that students have advantages regarding the use of this strategy. It increases the confidence and interest of students. It also increases the positive behavior of students after interaction with each other. However, medium impact shows that some students have neutral views on this strategy and low impact shows that some students cannot avail the advantages from clever joke.

8) Conclusion

8.1 Conclusion according to Demographic Information

Positive reinforcement is a controversial behavior support strategy because, like all topics in education, it has benefits as well as flaws. Overall, using positive reinforcement strategies can lead to a secure, Positive learning environment where students feel that they are valued. It also allows students to develop a sense of self-control and responsibility for their actions. The study aimed to explore the impact of Positive Reinforcement Strategies (PRSs) on ESL learning at intermediate level. Additionally, demographic information of the participants was analyzed to provide context for the findings.

8.2 Conclusion according to Research Questions

- i. Addressing to first research question of positive reinforcement strategies on ESL learning, the findings of the present study reveal that students exhibit a generally neutral attitude onwards strategies in enhancing their English language learning experience. Despite this neutrality, there is a slight inclination towards positive attitudes in certain areas.
- ii. Addressing to the second research question of verbal praise on ESL learning, the findings of the present study indicate that students generally hold positive attitudes towards the impact of verbal praise in learning English language. These results suggest that verbal praise is viewed positively by students as a supportive and effective tool for English language learning.
- iii. The third research question of the study highlights several key to impact of rewards on ESL learning has positive response. The findings reveal that a significant portion of learners experience positive impact. Additionally, concerns about the reliability and accuracy of the motivation of learning English language through rewards.
- iv. The fourth research question of the study identifies impact of comment and compliment on ESL learning for educational purposes. This indicates that a substantial number of learners are encouraged by giving positive compliments and comments. Additionally, when teacher gives positive comment on students work, students give effective communication and learning.
- v. According to the fifth research question of the study highlights several keys to implement social reinforcement for English language learning. These statements indicate a positive response towards the use of these social reinforcement for enhancing language learning.
- vi. Now it is the study's sixth research question about the impact of non-verbal communication on ESL learning. It indicates that learners have a positive attitude towards the non- verbal communication impact on language learning. Additionally, learners appreciate the immediate feedback through non-verbal communication. These statements reflect a more positive response for impact of non-verbal communication.
- vii. Addressing to the seven research question of the study, the study's conclusion on the impact of using paralinguistic impact for learning English. Learners expressed that learners engage to learn English more effectively when teacher gives full live attention to the students.

- viii. It is the last research question of the study on the impact of clever jokes on learning English language effectively. Furthermore, with the clever jokes student's attention will increased because these jokes are more relevant to learn English language more effectively.

9) Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the researcher show following recommendations:

1. The teacher should keep use of Positive Reinforcement Strategies and improve their competence in study English in order to raise the student's learning.
2. The English teacher should know the student's interest towards their teaching strategies in the class to decide what the best for the students.
3. The Verbal Praise and reward system should be most common in the classroom for learning English Language.
4. English teacher should use Non-Verbal Communication to motivate students for English Language Learning.

Use of Social Reinforcement in the classroom is highly recommended for learning English in a better way.

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