

Application of the Positive Reinforcement to Enhance the Learnability of EFL Learners

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Abstract

The article aims to explore the effectiveness of positive reinforcement in EFL (English as a foreign language) classrooms with the situations of enhancing the learnability of EFL learners. For the concern, I applied positive reinforcement to one section of class 11 for a month, and to another section of the same class, there was no treatment after the treatment post-test was administered in the two groups. From the data, the group in which the treatment applied was found better motivation in learning; as a result, they can enhance learnability and develop a friendly situation in learning English. Therefore, positive reinforcement enhances the learnability of the learners, and they can develop the level of confidence, the horizon of knowledge, and cooperative learning strategies in the EFL situation.

Keywords: Reinforcement, learnability, knowledge, level of confidence, classroom atmosphere.

Background

Reinforcement is a process, which increases the frequency of the desired response. If the frequency of response is increased by using specific means, that means is called reinforcement, and the effect produced by that means is called reinforcement. For example, if the correct response of a learner is rewarded, the frequency of this response will be increased, which will ultimately strengthen this response. Here, the reward is termed as reinforcement, and the function of this reinforcement in strengthening this particular behavior is called reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement is considered as ensuring safety, indicating esteem, and leading to belongings, have their place in motivating the pupil in his initial contacts with an area of knowledge. Because contact is required to build an interest in an activity, idea, or person, records are commendably in the role of making introductions. Rewards for learning should be such that after serving in primary roles, they lead students to learning activities outside the classroom (Hill, 1965). According to Agrawal (2005), positive reinforcement provides incentive for healthy emulation among individuals and groups of individuals. It creates interest among the students and motivates them towards learning. It cannot be

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imagined of achieving the fruitful results of our teaching-learning process without making the students interested and motivated towards the teaching-learning process.

According to Mather (2001), teachers often focus on students' misbehavior, rather than on the reduction or termination of that behavior, which can cause further disruption in the classroom. They suggested that behaviour modification techniques do not fail; instead, they are applied inefficiently or inconsistently, which can lead to less than desired results. Mather (2001) mentioned that reinforcement follows a clear set of fundamental principles. These principles are reinforcement or punishment should always follow a behaviour as quickly as possible, reinforcement or punishment should be appropriate for the behavior and be relevant to the student, and multiple reinforces or punishments are more valuable than single reinforces or punishments. Research has shown that both reinforcement and punishment can be used to reduce undesired behaviour in the classroom effectively; however, reinforcement is much more successful in teaching students alternative behaviors that re considered to be more appropriate and desirable.

Behaviors are maintained, changed, or shaped as a result of the consequences of those behaviors, and with the appropriate set of consequences, all students can function more effectively. Lam (2008) mentioned that positive reinforcement is often used to effectively teach students age-appropriate behaviors and social skills when these behaviors and skills are lacking, as these deficits can disrupt the classroom. Positive reinforcement is the presentation of a reward immediately following a desired behavior intended to make that behavior more likely to occur in the future. Teachers can improve their overall classroom environment, in addition to increasing positive interactions with students by effectively implementing positive reinforcement, including praise. Conroy et al. (2009) found that in order for praise to effectively increase students' behavior, it should contain specific statements about the appropriate behavior students displayed, be contingent upon the desired behavior, provide frequent praise when students are learning a new skill, and decrees the amount of praise given once the skill has been mastered. Additionally, praise should be initiated by the teacher, focus on students' improvement and effort, be sincerely delivered with an affirmative and natural voice, be appropriate for students' ages and abilities, and not be competitive or comparative across students. Students' individual and cultural differences, as well as the different conditions under which prior praise has been given to them, influence the effectiveness of teachers' use of praise. Teachers need to understand how praise can be adequately implemented in their classroom management systems.

As we know that positive feedback affects the achievement of the students. In this study, reinforcement refers to an enhancement strategy in English

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language teaching and learning. English is an essential part of today's life and a part of the school curriculum. So every student should study it and gain better achievement in the future. It shows that there is a need for a study on effective teaching. So, The ELT teacher should develop the motivational technique while teaching. Positive reinforcement occurs when a desirable event or stimulus is presented as a consequence of a behavior, and the behavior increases. Teachers cannot be successful without applying the technique. Hence, the study will show how positive reinforcement affects the learning of students.

Interactions between teachers and students can have a broader impact than the immediate classroom environment. Academic failure, social rejection, drug abuse, and criminal activity in adulthood are all examples of potential long-term, negative consequences of students' problematic behaviors. Teachers have the opportunity to utilize positive reinforcement to help reduce the frequency of negative interactions and possibly reduce the likelihood of these long-term outcomes. Wright - Gallo (2006) mentioned that it is essential for the teacher to establish a classroom environment where all students feel safe, comfortable, and welcome creating a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere is one of the most powerful tools teachers can use to encourage children's learning and prevent problem behaviors from occurring. This tone can be established by teachers' reactions to students' behaviors. Students are more likely to behave in predictable ways in order to gain their teacher's attention. Through this study, the author intends to examine the effectiveness of positive reinforcement in English language learning situation in the second language context.

Methodology

The main objective of this study was to find the effectiveness of reinforcement to enhance the learnability of EFL learners. The present study followed the quantitative approach. The design of the study was the experimental. The study was conducted in Jana Model Secondary School, Birendranagar, Surkhet. I used the primary sources of the data; for the purpose, I took experimentation on class 11 (Education stream sections A and C). I used the test items as the tool for the study. After collecting the required amount of data, I analyzed and interpreted them comparatively between EG and CG holistically by using different statistical tools like; mean, median, standard deviation. The reliability of the research was established by calculating mean, median, and standard deviation, variance, and two-tailed test.

Result and Discussion

The post-test was administered to find out the effectiveness of the use of reinforcement in the EFL classroom. The post-test was administered after providing exposure of one month by using reinforcement to EG to find out the effectiveness of reinforcement. After administering the post-test. The average scores of EG and CG, along with the standard deviation of the post-test is presented.

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Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Comprehension Scores (Mean and SD) of EG and CG in Post-test

Group	No.	Mean	SD
EG	30	10.1	0.90
CG	30	7.1	0.70

Table 1 displays that the mean of EG is 10.1, and CG is 7.1 in the post-test. The standard deviation of EG and CG is 0.90 and 0.70, respectively. It shows that the mean of EG and CG is significantly different. The average score of EG is about to double to the comparison of CG in the post-test. It shows that the significant difference of obtained scores of EG and CG, As the result of using positive reinforcement in teaching found useful to enhance the learnability of the EFL learners.

The statistical calculation on the mean achievement, standard deviation, variance, and two-tailed test of EG and CG on the post-test is presented in table 2.

Table 2
Holistic Comparison of the Post-test Scores

Group	No.	Mean	SD	Var.	Two tailed tests	Level of Significance
EG	30	10.1	0.90	0.754	3.31	0.05
CG	30	7.1	0.70	0.598		

Table 2 shows a holistic comparison of the post-test scores of EG and CG. The analysis of the information tabulated in the above table shows that the average scores of the experimental group are 10.1 and the controlled group has 7.1. Similarly, the standard deviation of EG is 0.90 whereas the standard deviation of CG is 0.70, respectively.

In the same way, the variance of EG and CG is 0.754 and 0.598, respectively at the post-test. When the two-tailed test is calculated, then it is found that the calculated value of 't' is 3.31, which is significantly higher than the tabulated value (i.e., 1.96). This result shows that it is a significant difference in the achievement between the two groups.

The ratio of an increased score of EG is significantly higher than that of

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the CG. The comparison of obtained scores of EG and CG on the pre-test and post-test is that EG has achieved outstanding performance and an excellent score on post-test, but CG has not achieved significantly higher in post-test even more or less ratio is increased. From the data, we can say that positive reinforcement is more effective in the EFL classroom to enhance the learnability of the learners.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that the learners who took advantage of using reinforcement in learning show a meaningful difference due to the treatment effect and enhance their learnability. In other words, it posited that the significant opportunities for reinforcement, reward, and stimuli there are, the more likely acquisition is to happen in the EFL situation.

Conclusion

Based on the finding, this work would be fruitful and beneficial for the curriculum designers, textbook writers, EFL teachers, policymakers, researchers, English language supervisors, experts, school administrators, language teachers, language assessors, and others who are directly or indirectly involved in teaching and learning of the English language. This study is equally useful for all the students who are studying at the secondary level to improve their learnability and level of confidence.

The author undertook this work to identify, analyze, and interpret the effectiveness of reinforcement in reading comprehension in the EFL classroom. She used statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, percentage, two-tailed tests to identify, analyze, and interpret the effectiveness of reinforcement in reading comprehension. Therefore, this study was aimed to answer the question of whether the reinforcement is valid or not in the EFL classroom. On the basis of findings from the analysis and interpretation of data through statistical tools, the author concluded that we could enhance learnability by using positive reinforcement of EFL learners in the Nepalese Context.

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