

## USE OF MOTIVATIONAL EXPRESSIONS AS POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT PRIMARY LEVEL IN RURAL AREAS OF PAKISTAN

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**ABSTRACT:** *The aim of this study is to examine good changes in learning and behaviour in the students at primary level by the use of motivational expressions within the context of behavioral perspective of Skinner's model of reinforcement. Results can be used as key for seeing the reason behind the misconduct and failure of the students at schools as well in society. For non-native learners of English language most difficult task is to concentrate on learning in the class. The learner is less motivated to learn because he/she has no motivation at all particularly when the learner is at the early age. It is also felt that the teacher's method and teaching style to teach English at primary level are lacking motivation in the learners. This research make hypothesis that Pakistani young learner especially in rural context is less motivated to learn English because teachers do not motivate students in the class. The finding of the research shows that children become more motivated towards learning English language when they are positively reinforced.*

**KEYWORDS:** Motivation, behaviourism, reinforcement, English language teaching (ELT), English as a second language (ESL), Pakistan

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### INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a multi-lingual country where English is taught as a second language (ESL). Now, English is compulsory at primary level but it is observed that the students at early age are not interested in learning English. The children do not feel happy to attend English language class. This paper aims to explore behavioral changing by using motivational expression as 'well done' 'good', 'nice work, excellent, etc. The behaviour changes also help students to make decision for their future because students try to imitate their teachers. A teacher plays a vital role in the life of a student. He/ she plays very important role in the making of a student. They have strong influence on the student's life. Shah (2002) asserted that teacher's attitudes and behaviour are very much important in students learning and teacher qualification and training affects not only teacher attitude but also student learning. Language of a teacher can affect the student behaviour. When children are small, they are eager to be loved and admired by their elders. This encouragement is called reinforcement and is defined as effect on the behaviour. So, reinforcement is a key to make change in the behavior of a student. Environment provides

stimulus to the reinforcement. And in school, teacher makes environment. Positive reinforcement occurs when desired emotions are welcomed by others. According to Witzle and Marcel (2003), the discipline in the class and student's behavior is more important than other things in the school in learning environment.

B.F Skinner is known as one of the most influential figure in the field of behavior modifications (Labrador 2004). Behaviorism was first developed by Watson. During 1930, Skinner expanded Watson's field by laying out the principles of operant conditioning which claims that consequences of a behaviour control of that behavior (Miltenberger, 2008). Motivation has been considered by both teachers and researchers as one of the most important factors that influence the affective learning of second/foreign language. Motivation provides the primary source to start learning English language and later the driving force in the learning process. Motivation plays very important role in learning English at primary level as compared to the other levels of learning because children do not know the scope or objectives to learn English.

Motivation refers to the states within a person or animal that derives behaviour towards some goal. Motivation is seen by many as being fundamental to the process of reinforcement. Changing in the behavior bring a positive change in the behaviour of a person and improve one's life (Miltenberger, 2008). Mather and Goldstein (2001) state that all behaviours consist of certain set of rules. Different methods can be used to measure and improve the behaviour. Miltenberger (2008) points out that there are many parameters to measure behaviour, and it depends on the intensity and times a behavior repeated. The study that deals with the analysis of the changes in human behaviors is called behaviour modification. He also asserted that the regular positive or negative reinforcement to a desirable behavior prolong that behaviour and lessen the possibility of an undesirable behaviour to occur. Behaviour modification shows the situation behind that act or behaviour because it studies the relationship between the environment and that behaviour. So, one can know the reason behind person behaviour and understand it. It helps the people to change undesirable behaviour.

B.F. Skinner's work has great influence in the field of education and psychology. He viewed that positive reinforcement is very much important in improving learning and behaviour. Frisoli (2008) asserted that Skinner's works has pointed out five main obstacles to learning. These include fear of failure, the long and difficult task, the task lacks directions, ambiguous directions, and lack of positive reinforcement. Skinner also considered that learning can be improved by using different techniques. These techniques are positive reinforcement, simplifying tasks, repeating the task many times, going from the simple to the complex tasks, and giving positive feedback.

According to Chitiyo and Wheeler (2009), the teacher can improve student's behaviour by making model class room environment for behaviour. The teacher can make good environment by positively reinforcing desired behaviour. In this way, the environment is good for the students. Over the years researchers have tried to explain the reason why the non-native learner is less motivated to learn English and do not show competency in it. Motivation is the process of arousing the actions sustaining the activity in process and regularity the pattern of activity (young).

The teacher's use of motivation in learning could enhance student's motivation towards learning. They learn more actively (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). It was noticed that the use of meta-cognitive language learning techniques could be more effective in increasing learner's motivation (Wu Man-fat, 2007). Furthermore, it was noted that the classroom atmosphere is very much related to L2 learners' motivation (Wu & Wu, 2008). Finally, the study that was conducted in Nigeria concluded that the use of games, songs and stories might also influence motivation in SLA (Ajibade & Ndububa, 2008).

Ibrahim and Humaida (2012) studied the motivation of students to learn English language in Sudan and concluded that learner's age can not affect the motivation in learning. So, children also have great motivation in learning. Motivation is something internal not external and "...the impact of teachers' motivational techniques on students' academic achievements is very important particularly at primary level" (Abbas & Khurshid). The researcher have studied the overall motivational techniques at Islamabad model college (schools). The present research will explore the affect of motivational expressions only in moulding the behavior of students and in learning English.

Akram (2013) studied the relation of motivation to socioeconomic status in Pakistan. He asserted that learner with high socioeconomic status are more motivated to English as compared to the learners of low socioeconomic status. The data was collected from intermediate students and analyzed through statistical measurement.

Asifa et al (2013) asserted that motivation increases the outcome of learning. Without motivation learning outcome is less. They have studied the impact of motivation in the learning outcome in the secondary school students and teachers of Karachi, Pakistan. The data collected through personal visits and then analyzed it by using percentage method. Rehman et al (2014) studied the role of motivation in learning English for Pakistani learner and their results showed that Pakistani learner's motivation towards English language is instrumental. A quantitative method was used to observe the kind of motivation popular among Pakistani students. For this purpose, 50 students from a private college of Sargodha were taken comprising (25 males and 25 females) from intermediate level.

Researcher takes the nursery class after 1<sup>st</sup> term. Before the 1<sup>st</sup> term the students were less motivated to learn English. The atmosphere of learning is very weak. The children were not disciplined. The researcher noticed that the students avoided attending the English class.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

The problem under consideration was to explore student's less motivation towards learning English language and impact of praise used by the teacher on the learning and discipline of students at primary level.

### **Objectives:**

The objectives of present research are

- 1: To explore the reasons behind the student's failure in learning English at primary school.
- 2: To explore the importance of motivational expressions on the academic achievement of primary students.

**Hypotheses:**

Motivation plays an important role in learning. There are various techniques of motivation, but use of motivational expressions as positive reinforcement is very helpful in learning English. It enhances the learning and also helps to bring positive change in the student behaviour. Negative reinforcement discourages the students. Teachers with higher qualification and professional degree use more motivational expressions to motivate their students.

**Research Questions:**

- 1: What is importance of motivation in learning English language?
- 2: What are main reasons in non-effective English learning at primary level in Pakistan?
- 3: Which motivational technique is most effective in arousing student's interest?

**METHODOLOGY**

This research falls under a number of theories of motivation and class room discourse and positive reinforcement. The mixed method approach was used for the present research. The Skinner's theory of positive reinforcement was used to encourage the students to do more work. Class room discourse was used to manage the class room discipline during 37 days. A case study of a primary school in Jaranwala, district Faisalabad, Pakistan was taken. The data were collected from observation of school for a 37 days in a primary school at Tehsil Jaranwala, district Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. The total students under observation were 50 in which 23 were boys and 27 were girls. A questionnaire was also used in this regard. The questionnaire was given to 28 primary schools teachers of government sector, comprising 15 male and 13 females. Data collected by observation of school and a questionnaire given to the students is used to assess how motivational expressions are helpful in the development of self-system or self-building and in effective learning. This study was delimited to explore the changes occurred in these 50 student under observation and experience of 28 teachers in their schools.

**Data collection:**

The observable study of a class is taken at primary school. The researcher has taken the nursery class for 37 days (03, 09, 2014 to 10, 10, 2014). The students are young ones and English is totally a new thing for them. The researcher has used motivational expressions to make improvement in the learning and behavior of the students. A pre test is taken. Test consists of dodging words or letters of alphabets. The students were also asked to write their name. After 37 days, a post- test is taken. It consists of alphabetical letters and students are also asked to write their names, and difference between the results is analyzed.

The questionnaire consists of three parts.

A- Biographical information of the participants.

B-open ended questions which demonstrated teacher's views on the use of motivational expressions, helpful in the learning or not.

C- Teachers views about the language motivational techniques.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### The Classroom observation

English is compulsory at primary level in Pakistan. The researcher has used mixed method approach and data have been collected from the observation of a class and form a survey questionnaire for the teachers regarding their views and comments about motivational techniques. 50 students have been taken from a public primary school located in Jaranwala. The level of the class is nursery. English is totally a new language for them as most of them have Punjabi as their mother tongue. The researcher has taken the class for 37 days. The researcher has used Skinner's theory of positive reinforcement to motivate students towards English language and get the desirable behaviour. Skinner's theory is more validate in primary level because students have no clear vision about the English language. They have not any motivation towards English language. The observed nursery class is not taking interest in the English language class. The atmosphere of learning is very weak. The surveyed language class teacher was not using motivational strategies. Although she is very competent yet she does not motivate the students. She is MSc in Chemistry. There was no discipline in the class. Students don't observe discipline in the class and also are disobedient to their teacher. They even don't take interest in learning English language. The researcher took the class for 37 days. First of all, she gained the confidence of the students. She has developed a healthy environment. Then she used the motivational expressions such as good, well done, excellent, nice, good try etc to motivate the students towards learning. The results were remarkable. There is a positive change in the behavior and learning of English language in the students.

Students of the class were continuously treated with attention. They are given a pre-test when the researcher started to take the class. They even didn't know the alphabets of English language properly. The learning of students is very weak.

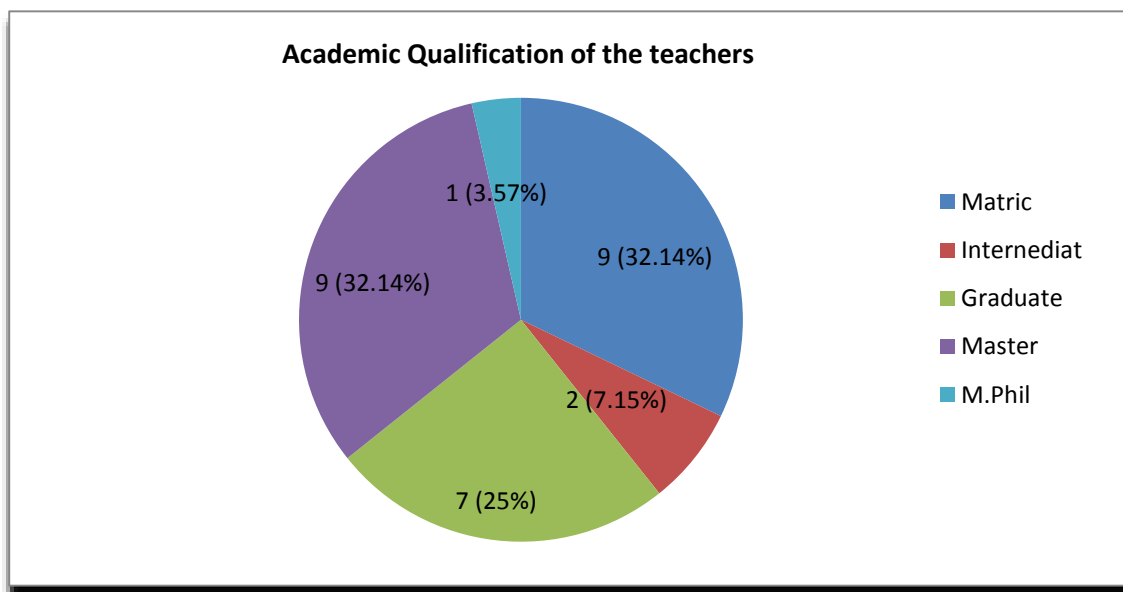
### Use of Motivation expression

The researcher used motivational expressions and a very polite language. The researcher handled the class using Skinner's theory of positive reinforcement. The learning words for example alphabet letters are repeated many times. She made drill of the lesson. She pronounces the word and students asked to repeat the word before her. Students are encouraged to raise their hands to answer the question. The researcher gave instinctive motivation to the students by using motivational expressions as good excellent etc. The student who gave correct answer is praised by clapping. The researcher and all the class clapped for that student. With this act dull students also started making participation in the class. Their learning made good improvement because class room participation is very important in learning. Students felt learning English an interesting and happy experience. In each lesson, the students are given a test. For those students who gained good marks in test had been praised in the assembly before the whole school. The researcher also offered frequent praises to students if they answered questions correctly. She ordered to appreciate weak students, she always said "Good try!" despite their wrong answer. The researchers used positive reinforcement mostly praising the students by using the motivational expressions i.e., well done, keep it up, good student, excellent, good, very good, fair, neat, you have done well, I am proud of you, you are a good student, you can do better, excellent work etc.

The students are also encouraged to come to the white board and write on it. The researcher spoke a word and asked the student to write the word on the board. The student tries to write, and wrote the word on the board. The student was appreciated by the class with the motivational expressions as good, well done, good boy etc. At the end of the second term, the students performed good results. They are now more interested in learning. There is good change in the behavior of the students.

The researchers have collected the data quantitatively; in the form of questionnaire given to the 28 teachers of 28 different schools of Tehsil Jaranwala district Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. The questionnaire consists of 13 close ended questions and 7 open ended questions.

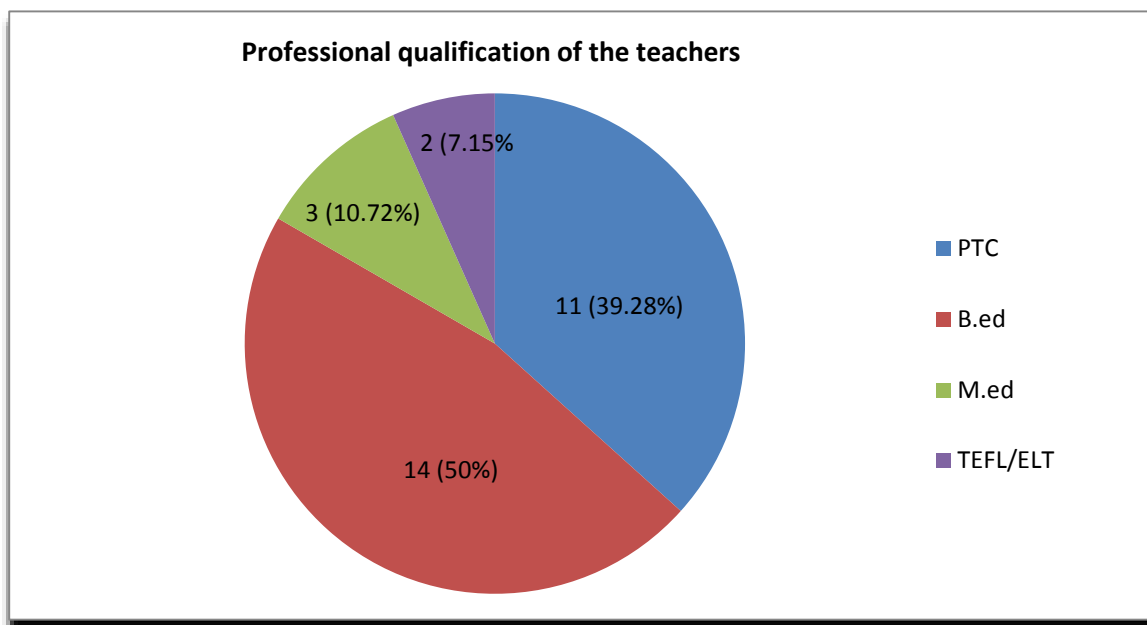
The researchers have collected data from the teachers having different academic and professional qualification. The following table shows the academic qualification of the teachers: Most of the teachers are highly qualified. The teachers who are not highly qualified, they have a lot of experience in the schools and participated in number of trainings. They are teaching English in their respective schools. The following graph shows the academic qualification of the teachers participated. Professional qualification is necessary for the teachers in Pakistan. A teacher must have a professional degree. The following table shows the professional qualification of the teachers.



**Figure 1. Academic qualification of the teachers**

All the teachers participated in the present research have professional qualification. In all the professional education, main focus is to train teachers how to tackle the students. The Figure 2. shows the professional qualification of the teachers.

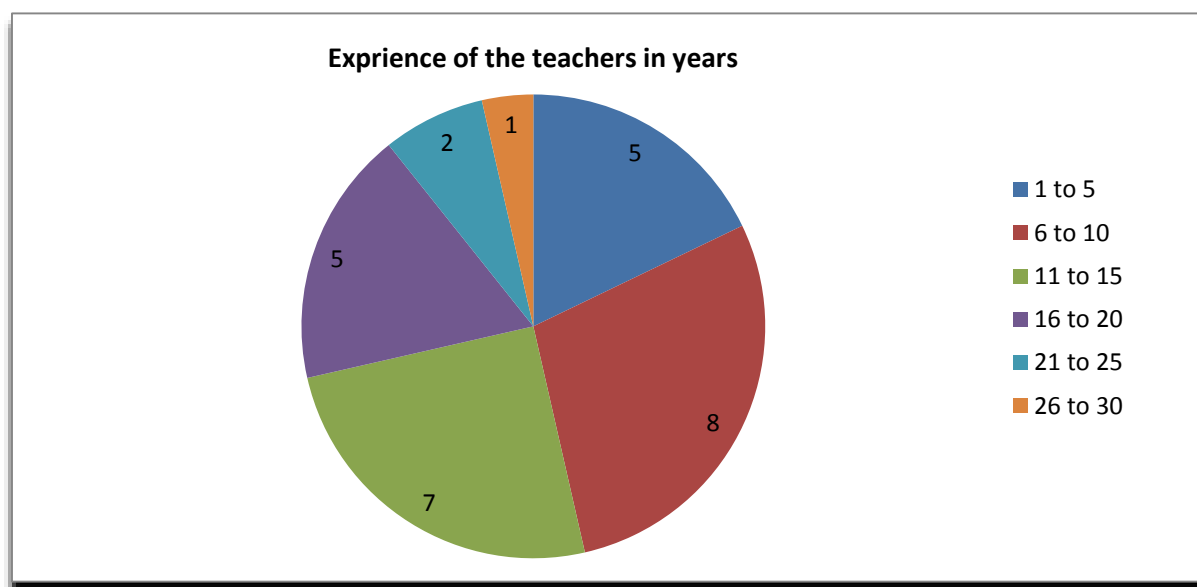




**Figure 2. Professional qualification of the teachers**

Experience of a teacher has positive effect on the learning. The following table shows the experience of the teachers

All the participants have experience ranging from 1 year to 30 years in the teaching profession. The Figure 3 shows the experience of the teachers.



**Figure 3. Experience of the teachers in years**

Their level of experience showed that 18% had an experience of 1-5 years, 29% had an experience of 6-10 years, 25% had served between 11-15 years, 18% had experience of 16-20 years, 7% 21-25 years, 3% were of 26-30 years experienced.

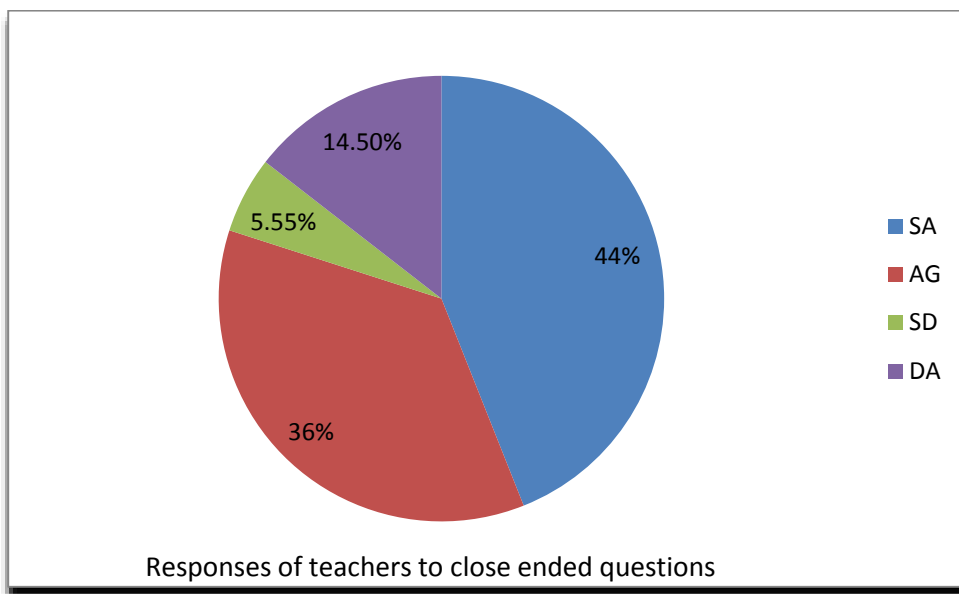
All the teachers have professional qualification. They are teaching English at their schools. All of them faced the same problem that their students are less interested in English.

### **Analysis of the close-ended questionnaire**

In the response of first question 25% of teachers agree and 70% strongly agree that the behavior of a student affect classroom environment while a total of 7% do not agree with this opinion. 68% teachers agree and 21.5% strongly agree that there should be good relationships between the teacher and the student While 7% disagrees and 4.3 % strongly disagree. 28.6 agree and 42.9 strongly agree that the teacher's behavior proves a good source for the student's better career while 17.9% disagrees and 10.7 % strongly. (As shown in point.3) 25% of teachers agree and 39.2% strongly agree that the language of a teacher has strong affect on the students while 32% disagree and 3.5% strongly disagree with the view.42.86% of teachers agree and 10.7% strongly agree that the class room environment should be student centered while 25% disagree and 21.4% with this opinion.21.4% of teachers agree and 3.57% strongly agree that the teacher feels comfortable in teaching English language while 71.4% disagree and 3.57% with this opinion.10.7% teachers agree and 89.3% of them strongly agree that the student's personal background and home environment affect their learning while no one disagree with the view. 7.1% teachers agree, 85.7% strongly agree that students consider English as a difficult language at their early age they have not listened English at their homes. And due to this reason they are less motivated towards learning while 3.57% disagree and 3.57% teachers strongly disagree. 28.6 % teachers agree, 46% strongly agree that self-confidence plays most vital in second language learning while 14.28% teachers disagree and 10.7% strongly disagree. 17.86% agree and 75% teachers strongly agree to the question that if students are encouraged by the teachers, they are more likely to be motivated to learn second a language while a total of 7.14% teachers disagree.

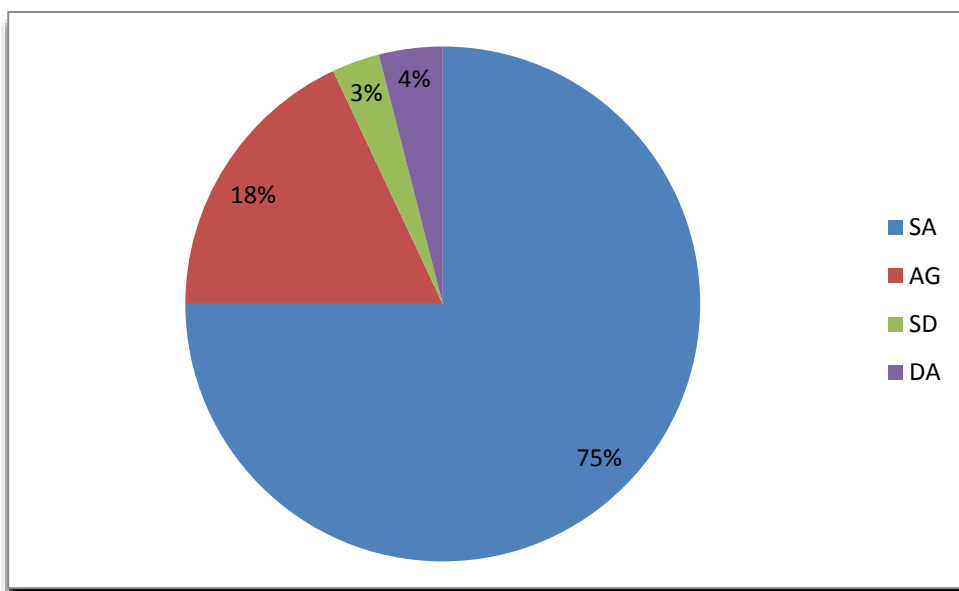
42.86% teachers are agree and 50% strongly agree with the opinion that use different strategies for the understanding of students are helpful in learning English 3.57 % disagree and 3.57% strongly disagree with this opinion. 60.7% teachers agree and 28.57% strongly agree with the view that external praise very much important for a better performance in language learning. And 7.14% teachers disagree while 3.57% strongly disagree with this opinion. 10.7% teachers agree and 89.3% strongly agree with the view that teacher's praise gives more power to a student to do something better while no teacher disagree with this view. Overall responses of teachers to the close ended questions included in the questionnaire are shown in the following table





The results collected from questionnaire given to the 28 teachers of 28 different schools of Tehsil Jaranwala, district Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

75% teachers strongly agree that motivation is the only key to success. They viewed that student as the small child at primary level, he is sensitive and he doesn't know the importance of English in the real sense. They viewed that it is only through motivational expressions as reinforce which is helpful in learning English language. 18% of teachers agree with the view. Only single teacher strongly disagree. Most of disagree said that too much use of reinforces will divert the student and teacher attention from the learning



In Pakistan, there is lack of interest in learning English language particularly among the small children. Research results shows that majority of teachers strongly agree with the view that use motivational expressions as positive reinforcement in learning English is very much helpful in

motivating the students towards English language. Following are some views given by the teachers:

M.S. says that motivational expressions will encourage the students to learn more actively.

R.M. says that all the motivational techniques are useful in learning but language use is much more important among all the technique because language shows the personality. And teacher is a role model for the students.

R.N. says that motivational expressions are very important in maintaining the discipline because students remain engaged in learning.

I.M. says motivational expressions are also helpful in personality development.

Pakistan is an Islamic country. Islam puts great emphasis on the language use. It preaches that children should be treated politely. As one teacher says

“We can motivate students by using polite words. Teachers are role models for their students. If teachers speak politely, students will follow them. Language of the teacher plays important role in learning”

Classroom environment plays an important role in learning. Teacher and student are most contributing factors in the environment. Environment becomes disturbing when students don't take interest in learning. As one teacher says “the only problem I faced when I started my job is to maintain discipline particularly in English language class. Then I made learning interesting and motivated students by giving them toffees and chocolates”.

Questionnaire results showed that children can be motivated towards English language by using motivational expressions in Pakistani context. The teachers are interested to use motivational expressions to motivate their students. They would benefit them in their teaching.

## CONCLUSION

Motivation is very much important in learning. English is taught as foreign language in the Pakistan. The students are less motivated to learn English. Positive reinforcement can do a lot in learning. Students are not interested in learning English at primary level because they are unaware to the true importance of English. They consider English language class as boring class. Motivational techniques are very helpful to motivate students towards English particularly at primary level studied by Maimoon et al. Motivation increase the learning outcome and lack of motivation decreases the outcome observed by Asifa et al. Most of the teachers experience shows that students at primary level in Pakistan are interested in taking language class and environment of learning is weak. Motivational expressions are best source for enhancing student's motivation in learning and bringing good changes in the behavior. The observed class has positive change in learning and behaviour. Students started to take interest in the English language class. The students started to observe discipline. The questionnaire results show that motivational expressions are helpful in motivating students towards English language. 75% teachers agreed strongly with the view that use of motivational expressions as positive reinforcement are very important to motivate students in learning English. Positive reinforcement is very much helpful in positive learning and maintaining the discipline. On the basis of the finding of the studies, I conclude that the teacher's language or motivational techniques are very much important in enhancing learner's motivation in learning English.

Motivational expressions are the best technique as positive reinforcer. So, motivational expressions are very important in learning English.

Teachers may use positive motivational expressions in the teaching to motivate the students towards studies. By using motivational expressions, the teacher can encourage the student to focus on their studies.

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## APPENDIX : Questionnaire for the Teachers

**Introduction:** This questionnaire is designed to find the real thinking of teachers in use of motivational expressions as positive reinforcement in English language learning. Please answer to all questions carefully and honestly. This is not a test and there is no right or wrong answer. Your answers or responses will be kept in secret. Please do not answer in a prejudice way.

### A: Biographical information of the participants:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Gender:** Male / Female **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Academic Qualification:** Matric/ O-level Inter/ A-level Graduation

Masters (Subject: \_\_\_\_\_) M.Phil/PhD (Subject: \_\_\_\_\_)

**Professional Qualification:** PTC CT B.Ed. M.Ed. (other: \_\_\_\_\_)

**English language teaching course:** Dip. ELT Dip. TEFL Dip. Linguistics

**Experience(in years):** 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30

**B:** The following abbreviations have been used for your convenience: **SD**-Strongly Disagree;

**DA**-Disagree; **SA**: Strongly Agree; **AG**-Agree;

Sr#	Item Description	SD	DA	SA	AG
1	The behavior of a student affects classroom environment.				
2	There should be good relationships between the teacher and the student.				
3	If students are encouraged by the teachers, they are more likely to be motivated to learn second a language.				
4	Self confidence plays most vital in second language learning.				
5	Students consider English as a difficult language at their early age they have not listened English at their homes. And due to this reason they are less motivated towards learning.				
6	Use different strategies for the understanding of students are helpful in learning English.				
7	The student's personal background and home environment affect their learning.				
8	The teacher's behavior proves a good source for the student's better career.				
9	External praise very much important for a better performance in language learning.				
10	The language of a teacher has strong affect on the students.				
11	Teacher's praise gives more power to a student to do something better.				
12	Class room environment should be student centered.				
13	The teacher feels comfortable in teaching English language.				

**Open Ended Questions:**

- Q.1. Do you think that disturbing student effect the classroom environment?
- Q.2. What are the main causes that make the student disturbed?
- Q.3. Is the teacher a cause of student's disturbance?
- Q.4. Why the students show less motivation in learning English?
- Q.5. Is the students copy their teachers?
- Q.6. What are motivational techniques you use in your class?
- Q.7. What will help the teachers to enhance the student's attitude towards learning English language?

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