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The Importance of Praise as a Positive Feedback
Case Of Ben Mana Mohamed First Year Middle School Sirat,
Mostaghanem

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Dedications

This work is dedicated to my dear parents for their endless love and support.

To my lovely friends for their encouragement in moments of stress and difficulty.

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Abstract

The enhancement of students' learning outcomes, maintaining students' motivation and having a suitable learning environment are the major concerns of the majority of teachers. One of the recommended pedagogical methods that is beneficial for teachers' teaching practices is praise. In order to increase motivation and enhance students learning outcomes in EFL classrooms, providing praise is considered as an efficient strategy. Our main objective is to investigate the role of implementing praise as a positive feedback in EFL classrooms and checking whether it fosters students' motivation and promotes the appropriate behaviours. The qualitative approach has been chosen to collect data from the selected sample to prove or disprove the suggested hypotheses. Among the selected tools that have been chosen are a classroom observation and an interview. The results of the study show that to some extent teachers do consider using praise in EFL classrooms, yet the use of praise was limited to using only the general type. In addition, the results demonstrate that praise leads to a considerable increase of motivation in learning English.

Key words: increase motivation, praise as positive feedback, enhancing students learning outcomes.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

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General Introduction

Positive feedback has become one of the most important and significant pedagogical technique in increasing EFL learners' motivation and outcomes in teaching and learning foreign languages, particularly English. since maintaining students' motivation and interest in classroom continuing to be a challenging task to all teachers, this paper sheds light on one of these main pedagogical factors which is praise.Indeed, many scholars argued regarding the great benefits of praise as a positive feedback and motivator in EFL classrooms. furthermore, using praise in EFL classrooms proved to develop students' self-esteem, self-image and developing students' personality toward successful achievements. To this end, this work is devoted to widen teachers' knowledge about providing praise properly in EFL classrooms, in order to achieve higher results.

The source of motivation for this topic specifically is the unawareness and misuse of such an effective pedagogical instrument which is praise. Though it is a simple encouraging words that make a large effect, yet the majority of the teachers do not use it as a constant technique to motivate students and push them toward achieving higher outcomes in learning. To this far, Acknowledging the right ways to use praise, can behelpful to the teachers to avoid most of the obstacles of learning which they constantlyencounter, moreover it can be used as a reinforcer to establish the right behaviour in the classroom as well.

Based on the reasons explained above, the present research work is an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of the EFL teachers' praise on increasing learners' motivation and the learning outcomes. Thus, our research questions are as follows:

- Do teachers praise learners' in EFL classrooms?
- What are the different form of praise?
- Does praise motivate learners to learn English?

Therefore, to answer these questions we suggest the following hypothesis:

- Yes. Teachers do praise learners in EFL classrooms
- General praise is the dominant form in EFL classrooms
- To some extent praise develops learners' motivation

The main aim of this work is to raise EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of including informative praise in their classrooms. the study aims at highlighting the

significance of implementing such a technique in EFL classrooms and demonstrating the large advantages. In addition to that, the study attempts to investigate whether EFL teachers consider using praise as constant technique in their classrooms, besides checking to what extent using praise in EFL classrooms can be effective in increasing motivation and enhancing students' academic achievements.

Theoretically, the present research topic drives attention to three main aspects. First, displaying praise as a reinforcer in relation to supporting it by the behaviourist theories, relying on presenting the similarities between categorising praise as positive reinforcer and providing the behaviourism approach theories to confirm the classification of praise as a reinforcer which act as any other reinforcers. Second, it sheds light on highlighting its importance as a positive feedback and motivator in EFL classrooms by many scholars such as Brophy, Good, John Hattie & Helen Temperle. Finally, it suggests the most effective ways of using praise in EFL classrooms depending on some prominent scholars' views as Carol Dweck and Jere Brophy.

To undertake this study, we selected first-year English middle school students as the population sample to collect data from, since they are beginners in learning English and it is their first encounter with a new foreign language, at Ben Mana Mohamed middle school, Sirat Mostaghanem. Concerning the research methodology, we adopted the qualitative approach in order to collect reliable and validate our data. The approach included two techniques: the first instrument chosen is a classroom observation in order to obtain a thorough data about the use of praise in EFL classrooms. As for the second tool we selected an interview which was conducted with students, for the purpose of investigating learners' perception and attitude toward receiving praise from the teacher and checking whether praise does encourage and motivate students to learn English.

The dissertation work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is devoted to presenting the theoretical framework; it will give more information about the role of praise as a positive feedback and motivator in teaching English as a foreign language and its definitions. The second chapter discusses the research design of our study, the methodology was followed, the data collection tools and the target population. As for the third chapter, it presents the analysis and interpretation of learners' answers in the designed interview and classroom observation. In addition to that, we will suggest some recommendations for EFL teachers in order to raise awareness and consider their use of praise in classrooms.

Chapter One:

Overview

1. Introduction

The purpose of the first chapter is to provide a theoretical overview for this work. First, it presents different definitions to define the term praise. It supports the idea of categorizing praise as reinforcement by the behaviourist theories views. Second, it sheds light on the importance of praise in the classroom, then its role as positive feedback and a motivator in engaging students in the learning process; afterwards, it displays student's perception of the latter; finally, it highlights the effective ways of using praise in the educational field.

1.1 Definition of Praise

Praise means to “*express your approval or admiration for somebody or something*” (Oxford Dictionary, 2003, P.336). Each scholar has defined praise differently according to his/her experience and knowledge such as Baumeister, Hutton & Cairns (1990) defined praise as a “*favourable interpersonal feedback*” (as cited in Dr Abbasi, Ghanbari & Zare, 2015). Another statement by Harmer (2007) sees it as a “*reinforcement of good behaviour and contribution*” (as cited in Katherine Levy, 2014, P.11). According to Prophy (1981), praise indicates a detailed and a strong response from the teacher about a specific behaviour that is produced by the student; also, he noted that this response is accompanied by positive affect expressions such as surprise, delight and excitement. A working definition suggested by Kanouse, Gumpert & Canavan-Gumpert (1981) refer to praise as a favourable evaluation of the goods results or qualities of another person, where the praiser assess the validity of the criteria on which the appraisal is focused (as cited in Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002, P. 775). Thus far, it is obvious that those definitions share the common point of viewing praise as recognition of the desired behaviour.

1.1.1 Types of Praise

Praise is believed to be more than recognizing someone accomplishment, it differs in types and varies in degrees. Three types of praise were identified by Marchant & Anderson (2011) they include general, effective and instructive. First, general praise has the least amount of effect on students in the classroom because it lacks specificity and reasoning. An examples, for general praise are: “good job”, “well done”, “excellent” (P.24). Effective praise includes more specific information about the action being praised, by telling students exactly which action they performed that was pleasing and deserving praising. Instructive praise is the most

effective because it mentions the exact action including the type of reasons leading to a certain positive action.

1.2 Behaviour Reinforcement Theories

Behaviourism refers to “psychological approach” that stresses the use of empirical and objective research methods. The theory concerns only measurable stimulus-response behaviours and notes that all behaviours are taught by interacting with the environment (Mcleod, 2017). Behaviourist emphasizes the role of environmental factors influence, either positive or negative reinforcements in shaping human behaviour. Their focus is on reinforcement as the “primary mechanism” for establishing and maintaining certain behaviour (Jere Brophy, 2004).

C.f. Premack(1965) apply the term“reinforcer” to any consequence that increases frequency of a behaviour when the performance of that behaviour is made contingent upon presentation of the consequence” (as cited in Jere Brophy, 1981, P.6). Statement shows clearly the relationship between the reinforcer and behaviour.It can be concluded that the probability of seeing a certain behaviour repeated is highly dependent on the delivery of the consequence. On the other hand, Brophy (1981) explained that there is always an exception for certain people where consequences may not function as reinforcers for them, since individuals differ and their responses also do.

1.2.1 Praise as a Positive Reinforcement

“Operant conditioning” model that is proposed by Skinner is based on the assumption that understanding and regulating human behaviour is thoroughly relies on studying and analysing the causes and consequences of emerging that behaviour. This theory grew from Thorndike's“law of effect”which stated that a behaviour that is followed by pleasant or desirable positive consequences is likely to be repeated (Mcleod, 2018). According to Courtney E. Ackerman, “*Positive reinforcement refers to the introduction of a desirable or pleasant stimulus after behaviour*”.The statement stresses the significance of delivering a positive stimulus after performing a desirable behaviour,which provides encouragement and increases the possibility of the behaviour to be repeated.

Additionally,Jere Brophy (1981) mentioned, “*praise is widely recommended as a reinforcement method for use by teachers. One reason is that it does not have the disadvantages associated with concrete reinforcers*”. He directed the attention to a very

interesting point which differentiates praise from other concrete reinforcers, that is the latter can be expensive to afford and time-consuming to apply regularly in the classroom. Whereas praise is “free” and considered to be a very desirable statement that builds students’ self-esteem, and strengthens the relationship between the teacher and the student. Besides, it creates a positive learning environment. Moreover, praise has the extra potential advantage in identifying and delivering an instant direct statement for the performed behaviour that is intended to maintain or reinforce it. Also, Lip & Jung (1971); O’Leary & O’Leary (1977) support the idea of addressing praise as a reinforcer since it functions as other reinforcers.

1.2.2 Praise as positive feedback

Feedback is an important method in any learning classroom. Ur (1996) defines it as a piece of information about the performed task delivered to the students, aimed to enhance students’ performance (as cited in Dr. Abbasiet al. 2015). A more precise definition presented by Hattie & Temperle (2007) conceptualized feedback as “*information provided by an agent (e.g. teacher, peer, book, parents, self and experience) regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding*”. Ellis (2008) added the word “corrective” response to the definition of the latter, ending at presenting feedback as a corrective information provided regarding someone work (as cited in Katherine levy, 2014). In addition to that, Davies (2007) claims that feedback helps learners to locate their place in the learning process and assess themselves to fill in the gaps between where they are, and where they should be (as cited in Asmaa Al-Ghamdi, 2017). Marzano, Waters & McNulty (2005) & Hattie (2009) shed light on the large advantages of providing informative feedback and its important role in increasing students learning progress (as cited in *ibid*).

Positive feedback is classified as a vital component in fostering students’ academic achievements and reinforcing the desired classroom conduct. Nicols (1995) sees that “*positive feedback is seen as pleasing complementary and consistent with the learner’s self-image*” (P.289) (as cited in Dr. Abbasiet al. 2015). As the definition indicates, praise is widely recommended as positive feedback because it holds the same meaning as the latter in making students feeling supported and worthwhile. Salili (2001) confirmed the idea of considering praise as a type of positive feedback, pointing out that the latter indicates teacher’ approval of a certain performed behaviour or academic work. Furthermore, it is asserted that praise is not solely a piece of information about the behaviour performed, it goes beyond that

such as showing the value of one's action in a certain situation and its impact on others (Prophy, 1981).

1.3 Teacher Distribution of Praise in the Classroom

The type and amount of praise given to students are determined by many variables and characteristics. Prophy (1981) referred to an interesting point stating that teachers' distribution of praise is random and infrequent. Whereas, it should be systematic and directed to those students whose behaviour needs modification, alongside with the attempt to reinforce good classroom conduct or academic performance. Equally, Luce & Hoge (1978); Thomas, Persland, Grant & Glynn (1978) conclude that "*praise is relatively infrequent in most classrooms*" (as cited in Prophy, 1981). Heller & White (et al. 1975) findings indicating that the rate of using praise is less than using criticism in classrooms (as cited in *ibid*).

Brophy (1981) discovers that the use of praise does not solely depend on students' behaviours; however, a teacher's personality, style and students' personality characteristic contribute to the process of delivering praise. Further studies by Brophy & Good (et al. 1970) have found that teachers frequently praise high achieving students, more than low achieving students (as cited in Brophy, 1981). Whereas Brophy & Good (1974) expected the results to be the opposite, where teachers direct their focus on the low achieving who need encouragement to succeed. Moreover, Jones and Jones (2001) & Brophy (1981) report that "*boys are given more praise than girls*" (as cited in Steven W. Lee, 1951). In contrast, Carol Dweck (1978) reported the opposite stating that boys receive praise only for successful academic works; however, girls also receive it for their "neatness" and well dressing (as cited in Jere Brophy, 1981). Based on the statements provided, it can be concluded that teachers' use of praise is a spontaneous reaction to student's behaviours, mostly affected by the quality of the conduct or the student attempts to have praise.

The personality and characteristics of individual students are one of the variables that determine the type and amount of praise given. Additional findings acknowledge that "*certain individual and certain types of students predictably pull much more praise from teachers than others*" (Hunt et al. 1974 as cited in Prophy, 1981). Jere Brophy (et al. 1981) identified some category of students who somehow prompt their teachers to praise them. Such as the students who bring their work for the teacher seeking approval of a completed task as Prophy label them "*students-initiation approval seeking contact*" (P. 12). Yarrows' (et al. 1971) observation results supported Prophys' suggestions, stating that these

types of students frequently receive much praise than others. Besides, their positive response by smiling and continuously volunteering answers to questions, condition the teacher to give more praise to them and seek contact with them in any available chances.

Recently studies by Stokes, Fowler&Bear (1978) addressed the same issue, resultingwith the conclusion that "the distribution of praise across different students in the classroom, may sometimes depend more on the behaviour of those student eliciting such praise, than it does on attempts by the teacher to reinforce systematically" (as cited in Jere Brophy, 1981). In other words, it seems that teachers praise is controlled by students attempt to have praise rather than teachers try to encourage. Another crucial component in determining the distribution ofpraise is age. Students who are under 8 years old typically seek praise from their teachers and therefore it may have a higher success rate (Brophy, 1981).

1.3.1 Characteristic of Successful Praise

For praise to be successful,O’Leary and O’Leary (1977) categorized "contingency", "specificity", "sincerity, variety and credibility". As the main qualities that make praise effective to function as a reinforcement(as cited in Jere Brophy, 1981).

1.3.1.1 Contingency

Praise has to be delivered only when the behavioural criteria is met (Brophy, 1981). It has to be given only if the student performed the desired behaviour. The effectiveness of the latter depends on thequality ofconnection that links the action and praised results, its success will be represented in recurring the positive behaviour again (Moore-Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver& Wehby, 2010).Jones and Jones (2001) stressed the importance of time duration saying that "*praise must immediately follow the desired behaviour*"(ascited in Steven W. Lee, 1951). Merchant and Anderson’s (2012) research pointed to a remarkable note that in all cases, "*the effects of praise are enhanced when it is delivered immediately and consistently.*"As the research showed the efficacy of the latter relies heavily on the time that assembles the reinforcementand the targeted performance.

1.3.1.2 Specificity

The second characteristic of successful praise lies in its specificity. The praise should specify the exact behaviours that are being reinforced,if praise lacks the specific feedback required, it fails to give students the information they need to guide their learning or

behaviour (Wright, 2012). Anderson's (et al. 1979) studies revealed that only 5 percent of the first grade teachers provided specific praise statements concerning the praised action. Even though, they noted that in most situations, students were aware of the actions being praised for, yet it was not satisfactory for them (as cited in Brophy, 1981). Burnett & Mandel (2010) note that general praise, lacking specificity, was most commonly used in the classroom but was the least effective because it was not linked or targeted to a specific behaviour. Brophy (1981) also discussed a study that addressed the issue of general praise such as "Good girl," and it is unlikely to be effective for the overall development of self. Though it is obvious that general praise lacks effectiveness, yet it continues to be popular in the learning classrooms.

1.3.1.3 Sincerity and Credibility

Thirdly, praise must be sincere and credible (Brophy, 1981). Feldman & Donohoe (1978); Feldman & Orchowsky (1979); Friedman (1976) observed that "*the verbal content frequently is not backed up by or is even contradicted by nonverbal expressive behaviour*" (as cited in Brophy, 1981, P.13). Sometimes, something can be said, but our nonverbal actions reflect the opposite. Students should believe that the praise they are receiving is true and reflects their actual behaviour. Other findings by Brophy and Evertson (1981) revealed that teachers when praising the students whom they like, they often tempt to smile and give "credible and spontaneous" statements of praise for their "genuine accomplishments". Whereas, when praising those who do not like, they generally praise them for "appearance or conduct" (P. 167) rather than good academics works, besides mostly the statements of praise delivered lack affections (as cited in Brophy, 2004).

In the same way Good and Brophy's (1987) findings revealed that teachers often use "vague term" such as "good" and "super" to describe an achievement (as cited in Steven W. Lee, 1951). Jere Brophy (1981) states "The larger conclusion here is that the meaning and function of teacher "praise" will depend not only on the verbal content, but on nonverbal accompanying behaviours which can either reinforce or contradict it, and on situation and context factors with condition student expectations about and perceptions of teacher behaviour" (P. 18).

1.4 The Effect of Praise on Students Learning

Among the obstacles that teachers face in the current classrooms are behavioural discipline problems. Praise is one of the pedagogical methods that can be used to effectively

reduce undesired behaviours in the classroom. A research done by Moore Partin, Robertson, Maggin & OliverWehby(2010) confirmed that praise is an efficient tool for promoting the appropriate behaviours in the classroom, also they found that it leads to an increase in the classroom suitable behaviours, and decreasing the unsuitable one(as cited in Jennifer L. Diedrich, 2010). Other statements by Harmer (2007) suggest that “*praise is an essential tool of assessment in a language classroom, stating that positive praise is a sign of positive assessment for the students*” (as cited in Katherine Levy,2014, P.11).

Another suggestion by Jones and Jones (2001) indicated that teacher praise is an important strategy in making student like learning and school(as cited in Steven W. Lee, 1951). A supportive Research findingfor the statement concludes that when a teacher delivers’ praise frequently in the classroom, 70 per cent of students of that classroom said that they liked coming to school to learn(cited in *ibid*). Besides, Southerland (2000) notes that “*contingent teacher praise increased the number of words students read per minute and decrease the number of errors per minute*”(cited in *ibid*).

An oppositional view by Alfie Kohn (1996) believed that praise can harm students learning. He sees that praise is a “manipulative act” that makes students addicted to the delivery of the latter, which results in decreasing motivation, "stealing the pleasure" of learning and reducing students learning outcomes. He agreed that all expressions of delight do not harm, yet he insists on paying more attention to the purpose of using it and the effects that may create it in a given situation (cited in Matthew R. Hodgman, 2014).

1.5 The Effect of Praise on Students’ Motivation

According to Maehr & Meyer (1997) Motivation is a “*theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behaviour, especially goal-directed behaviour*” (as cited in Brophy, 2004, P. 3-4). According to scholars, motivation describes why a person does something. Another definition depicts it as an internal “*cognitiveprocesses*” that orients a person toward doing an action (Elliot & Covington, 2001; Ryan&Deci, 2000 as cited inBasil Strange, 2017).

Motivation is continuing to be a sensitive component in any learning classroom and educators are confused about how to maintain students' interests and enhance motivations in learning. As a suggestion for the teacher struggle with the latter some researchers proposed praise as an efficient positive feedback in increasing motivation and achieving higher academic goals.Referring to the positive affections that praise causes(DelinandBaumeister,

1994; Ilies and Judge, 2005 as cited in Dr Abbasi et al. 2015). Woolfolk (1995) demonstrates that *“motivation is influenced by the “warmth” and “enthusiasm” displayed by the teacher during interactions with students”* (P. 456) (as cited in B. Scoot Titsworth, 2000).

Another research came to support the same proposal provided by Cameron and Pierce (1994); Dev (1997); Pintrich and Schunk (2002) (as cited in *ibid*). Nonetheless, it is important to remind that the function of praise in increasing motivation lies on the process of delivering the former; if it is misused or overused the consequences will be a reduction in motivation and hindering learning. Brophy (1981) proposes that *“praise delivered to the wrong student, or in the wrong way, or under the wrong circumstances maybe not only ineffective but counterproductive”* (P. 17)

1.5.1 Praise Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation

“Intrinsically motivated activities” are the kind of activities that people enjoy working on them without any external rewards, where the task is the reward its self (Deci, 1975 as cited in Peter D. Bianck et al. 1984). Several studies have shown that people “intrinsic interest” in a certain task can be affected by external rewards; such as “praise” (Peter D. Bianck et al. 1984). Recent studies in education shifted their attention to the role of praise as one of the interventions that enhances intrinsic motivation (Anderson, Manoogian, & Reznick et al. 1976)

In addition, Anderson (et al. 1976); Harackiewicz (1979); Sarafino (et al. 1982); Swann & Pittman (1977) emphasized the function of praise in increasing the engagement and desire in the task being praised for (cited in *ibid*). In addition to this, Sarafino (1982) exploratory research findings displayed that *“the fourth-grade students given strong praise demonstrated greater task persistence during the free-choice period.”* Similarly, Anderson, R. Manoogain, S. T. & Reznick, J. S. (1976) studies revealed the same results with pre-school children (cited in *ibid*). An exception given by Deci (1972, 1975) concerning the effect of praise on female intrinsic motivation, where he claims that praise reduces female's interest in a given task referring to their sensitivity toward “verbal reinforcement” and their over-reliance on it (as cited in Peter D. Bianck et al. 1984).

Shanab & colleagues (1981) research examined the effect of praise on adults’ intrinsic motivations. They found that during a “puzzle-solving task”, verbal praise prompt undergraduate to maintain higher interest and spending more time on solving the task whereas, the candidates who received “neutral feedback” spend less time than the

formers. Another study shows that those who were praised for task completion when they had given a free choice session, displayed higher persistence and engagement during the task. More than those who were given no praise (as cited in Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002).

Many oppositional positions taken by scholars one of them Kohn (1993) who suggested that praise is not necessary for classrooms, and it might undermine “*intrinsic motivation*”. He wrote, “*the most notable aspect of a positive judgment is not that it is positive but that it is a judgment*” (P. 102) (as cited in Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002). Other views articulated by Birch, Marlin & Rotter (1984); Gordon (1989); Holt (1982) & Kohn (1993) notice that praise may put students under pressure to always perform well, decrease “risk-taking” and diminish “perceived autonomy” (cited in *ibid*).

1.5.1.1 Conceptual Variables Influencing the Effect of Praise on Intrinsic Motivation

Several studies suggested many different “mechanisms” that must be considered for the effect of praise on motivation, which has been categorised “beneficial” or “detrimental” based on the limited definition of praise presented by each research (Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002). For better-organized work and ease further future research Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, (2002), summarized these mechanisms into five conceptual variables that determine the effect of praise on children intrinsic motivation, after reviewing all the studies conducted on the term praise from 1970 to 2001, focusing on narrowing the search to “empirical and theoretical sources”, and “studies examining praise and motivation in a “social–cognitive framework”.

1.5.1.1.1 Perceived Sincerity

Perceived sincerity is a crucial variable which functions as a moderator for the effect of praise on the intrinsic motivation (Jennifer Henderlong et al. 1981). Children accept praise only when matching their “self-views” depending on how they see themselves, “competent”, “capable” and worthy, in contrast when contradicting their existing views and believes it is highly rejected (as cited in Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002). Some researchers have argued that “*praise may be perceived as untrue when it is highly effusive or overly general*” (O’Leary & O’Leary et al. 1977 as cited in *ibid*).

Kohn (1993) argued regarding the previous view saying that praise should be oriented to a specific part of the work performed to avoid confusing student, which may lead to creating a gap over what they know about themselves as persons and what they hear. An example of “global praise” maybe “You are such an angel” can be easily discounted if children think about instances in which their behaviour was contrary to the praise (e.g. "I stole cookies earlier, so I can't be an angel" (Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002). Kanouse (et al. 1981) discuss the issue concluding that such praise can lead to "self-criticism" and attempts to ruin future achievements.

In addition, Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper (2002) clarified the importance of corresponding the content of praise with the stage of the learning process, stating that students are more open to believing praise when it reflects their progress over time in developing “certain skills in a domain”. Praise maybe perceived as insincere when it is delivered to students, emphasising effort in accomplishing a task which they may not have worked hard on. Besides, Jennifer Henderlong (et al. 2002) tackle another element of the insincerity of praise which is the quality of the relationship between “the evaluator and the recipient of the praise” saying that the close teacher-student relationship influences praise interpretation and perception.

1.5.1.1.2 Performance Attributions

A formal definition provided by Fiske & Taylor (1991) of attribution theory “*deals with how the social perceivers use the information to arrive at a causal explanation for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to formal causal judgement*” (as cited in Saul Mcleod, 2012). The central point of this theory as claimed by Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper (2002) is that entities are in constant search for the causes of outcomes of successes, especially when it involves failure. Mostly those causes are referenced to themselves and the others.

1.5.1.1.3 Perceived Autonomy

A third key psychological variable concerns learners perceived autonomy which is confined to the reasons for person’s involvement in various activities or tasks (Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002). Jennifer and Mark (2002) distinguish between monetary incentives and praise, by prioritizing the latter on the former. Typically, praise is less influential, expresses more “competence information” and is almost always unpredicted, which make it less likely to be perceived as a powerful force manipulating behaviour and thus

reduce intrinsic motivation. Many empirical studies in comparing between informational and controlling praise revealed that informative praise enhances intrinsic motivation whereas, controlled does not seem to have any effect (Kast & Connor et al. 1988 cited in *ibid*). Jennifer and Mark, (2002) conclude that praise can stimulate autonomy, thereby improving intrinsic motivation when it is informative and spontaneous (Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002).

1.5.1.1.4 Praise and social comparison

The fourth conceptual variable is about the information integrated in praise regarding “competence” and “self-efficacy”. Even though the former is general, yet both are equally relevant to personal belief about the ability to succeed, therefore are addressed as one variable (Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002). A large number of studies using informative feedback about competence revealed beneficial effects of praise in enhancing intrinsic motivation (e.g., Boggiano & Ruble, et al 1979). An example, Harackiewicz (1979) “praised students for their performance on a hidden-figures task by saying, “We’ve found that the average student usually finds four . . . so you did better than the average high-school student on these puzzles” (P.1357). Later, he finds that these rewarded participants demonstrated strong persistence and higher intrinsic motivation during a number of “dependent measures compared to a no-praise control group”. Similar studies conducted with adults and children displayed the same results (Pretty & Seligman, 1984; Anderson et al., 1976 as cited in *ibid*).

Praise for social comparison versus mastery. While there tends to be adequate evidence to infer that the skills boosting properties of praise benefit intrinsic motivation, further consideration may be given to “*the various forms that information about competence can take and how these forms may moderate the effects of praise*” (Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002, P.785). Numerous studies show that messages of praise that contain information about competence increase motivation, in term of both "subsequent time on task" and "enjoyment of the task", especially when it tells learners that they performed better in comparison to their classmate (e.g., Blanck, Reis, & Jackson, et al. 1984). Jennifer and Mark argued regarding the pervious findings stating that such research did not take into account to what extent an emphasis on "normative excellence” would lead to persistence or lack of it, if students continue to depend on social comparison to learn new tasks or measure their success rather than focusing on individual acquisition of skills, in later situation where their peers may exhibit better performance, they may fail to face such situations. They may even face some "negative affects", disappointment, some "degree of helplessness" and anxiety. Comparably,

some scholars suggest avoiding messages of praise that convey informational competence within "social comparison" (Dreikurs, Grunwald, & Pepper, 1982; Kohn, 1986 as cited in *ibid*).

1.5.1.1.5 Standards & Expectations

The last conceptual aspect addresses praise-based "standard and expectation". In particular, praise may represent both the "performance standards" that determine the quality of performance on a specific task and the expectations that must be fulfilled in order to please the praiser (Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002, p.785). Expectation and standard moderating function, many studies highlighted the beneficial motivational results that are likely to emerge when standard and expectations communicate valuable information to help children to manage their "task engagement" (e.g., Deci & Ryan, et al. 1985 as cited in Jennifer Henderlong & Mark R. Lepper, 2002, P.786). Jennifer & Mark (2002) view that such statement may help learners to know exactly where to invest their energies in the future which may serve as a "powerful motivating source" (P.786). Kanouse and his colleagues(1981) conclude that when rational appraisal method has been used, praise that demonstrates precisely what students are being praised for is likely to create a feeling of "deserving" and increase motivation(as cited in *ibid*, P.786).

On the other hand, "*praise that indicates low expectations of ability has harmful effects on motivation*" (Barker & Graham, et al. as cited in *ibid*). Too, Baumeister(et al. 1984) see that messages of praise embracing "unrealistic high expectation" may cause unnecessary future performance burden or outline "external contingencies" that may "undermine intrinsic motivation" (P.786). Evaluating students' performances with a constant higher expectation may overwhelm students' motivations.

1.6 Students' Perception of Praise

Burnett(2001), "Most teachers enjoy delivering praise and most students enjoy receiving it, at least when it is delivered as a spontaneous, genuine reaction to an accomplishment rather than as part of a calculated manipulation attempt"(as cited in Brophy, 2004). Larrivee (2002) notes that even though when teachers administer praise as an intention to reward student, they may not perceive it as one(as cited in *ibid*). Similarly, Ware(1978) indicates that students mostly do not give much importance to teacher praise, and thus they "do not feel particularly rewarded" (as cited in *ibid*). Caffyn(1989) states that many students do not like to be praised in public in "front of their classmates", in contrary they prefer it to be

in “privets” (P.167) (cited in *ibid*). Matthew R. Hodgman(2014) claims that “*Students can be sensitive to comments made about their personal characteristics and thus educators need to always keep students’ feelings in mind when attempting to deploy praise*”.

As a further explanation for the previous statement, Jere Brophy(2004) mentions that the reasons behind students’ preferences of the former to be in private itbacks to their feelings of “embracement “and “humiliation” for being praised for an easy accomplishment or a basic task. Besides, he referred to somepoints where students feel annoyed and uncomfortable when the teacher drives attention to them for ordinary behaviour such as “neatness, punctuality” rather than academic achievements. May be like saying “*I like the way Susie is sitting up straight and ready to listen*”.In this situation she is likely to feel embarrassed because the behaviour does not deserve to be praised. “*It may even alienate her if she is sophisticated enough to realize that the statement is not a praise of her but an attempt to cue the behaviours of some of her classmates*” (P.166).

1.7 Using Praise Effectively

As mentioned above the success of praise is determined by the process of using it. Kast & Connor(1988) affirm that “*Praise should be informative and appreciative rather than controlling*” (as cited in Jere Brophy, 2004). Therefore, forming a suitable statement of praise that is informative rather than evaluative is crucial (Jere Brophy, 2004). Other pointstackledby Brophy(2004) is that “*effective praise should display the value of students effort or noteworthy achievements rather than “their role in pleasing the teacher”*” (P.166)

Comparable statement by carol Dewck(1999) clarifies that “teachers should praise students but in a way that is enthusiastic about students’ strategies, not about how their performance reveals an attribute they may view as unchanging and beyond their control” (as cited in Matthew R. Hodgman, 2014). Consequently, she separated between “person praise” that “*focuses more on the attributes tied to a specific individual*”and “process praise” that “*focuses on the work, efforts and processes endemic to completing a task*”(Cited in *ibid*). Many researchers and studies highlighted the importance of process praise over person praise (e.g. Carol, 1999; Haimovitz & Henderlong-Corpus, 2011; Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi & Vo, 2009as cited in *ibid*).

In addition to, what has been said earlier effective praise must be a genuine reaction directed to an accomplishment that worth to be acknowledged (Brophy, 2004). Nafpaktitis, Mayer & Butterworth (et al. 1985) referred to some types of teachers who “praise poor”

academic answers as an endeavour to “encourage” the “low achievers” (as cited in Jere Brophy, 2004). Brophy 2004 criticized the preceding statement showing that such an attitude may cause the teacher to lose credibility and trust among his student, leading to confusion, depression and making the students feel indifferent.

One more element that contributes to the effectiveness of praise is variety and systematic. Brophy & Good(1986) suggest that “*the most effective teachers are sparing rather than effusive in their praise*”(as cited in Prophy, 2004). Prophy (2004) offered to vary statements of praise because the “overuse” of the same phrases every time may drive the students to think that the teacher is not attentive to their work neither it will seem sincere. Moreover, he also recommended avoiding “ambiguous statements” of praise which may student misunderstood and interpret it as praise. Such as “You were really good today” (P.169). instead, specify the action or accomplishment as saying “I’m very pleased with your reading this morning, especially the way you read with so much expression. You made the conversation between Billy and Mr. Taylor sound very real” (P. 169).

1.8 Conclusion

This overview is designed to provide a comprehensible view concerning the effect of praise in the learning process about enhancing students’ motivation and achievements. As previously mentioned scholars and researchers’ views varied and differed concerning the effect of praise as a positive feedback and motivator in EFL classrooms. Yet, the agreement point here is that praise success relies thoroughly on the process of it use. To make the use of the latter effective expertise examined it function and suggested some qualities and strategies that guarantee its efficiency when applied properly.

Chapter Two:

Research Methodology

2. Introduction

After having presented some theoretical issues related to the effect of praise as positive feedback on enhancing students learning outcomes and boosting motivation in EFL classrooms. The present chapter focus on describing the practical part of the research study and data collection. In other words, it is developed to manage the methodological framework that we have relied on to collect data, including; the approach, steps, methods, context and population sample that were undertaken throughout our work.

2.1 Research Methodology

Research, according to Rajasekar (2006), is a set of “logical” and “systematic” steps to seek useful information concerning a specific topic (as cited in Sam Goudar, 2019). Leedy & Ormrod (2001) argued that research is not enclosed to “gathering information’s” and “documenting facts”. Its meaning is deeper and wider than the previous definition. They define it as *“the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in order to understand a phenomenon”* (as cited in Carrie Williams, 2007). The presented definitions show clearly that research is not merely a followed step to search for new knowledge and gathering information. Also doing research aims at enriching ones understanding about previous knowledge, solving problems, seeking the truth, furthermore research means also deconstructing existing knowledge to build a new one.

To this far, it can be said that research is not a casual process; it comprises an organised methodology that is set to guide the procedure of making the study, alongside to applied methods and techniques to gather information. Therefore; to reach our objective we need to rely on the appropriate methodology and method. However, the choice of the latter is determined by the research topic and nature. On one hand methodology according to Kaplan (1964) refers to *“the identification and utilization of the best approach for addressing a theoretical or practical problem”* (as cited in Jackson II, Ronald L., Drummond, Darlene K. & Camara Sakile, 2007). Furthermore; it is a form of *“systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study”*, it includes the approaches, principles and methods that were undertaken to collect data for a specific study. so it is not set to provide answers, it focuses on offering an understanding of the best methods that are compatible and can be “applied to a specific case” (Irny & Rose, 2005 as cited in Chinelo Lagwenagu, April 2016).

Unlike the methodology, methods refer to “*the tools, techniques, or procedures used to generate data*” (Kaplan, 1964 as cited in R. L. Jackson et al. 2007). In other words, it encompasses the actual techniques that were applied in the field of the study to gather information from the respondent. In short, the relation between the two is that “*methods are about ‘how to’ and methodology is about ‘why to’ collect data a certain way*” both are relevant to the research design (R. L. Jackson et al. 2007). Relying on Kaplan (1964) statement, methodology and methods share a “synergetic” relationship (as cited in R. L. Jackson et al. 2007).

In addition to a suitable methodology for the study, well-chosen methods and approaches are the core of successful and well-conducted research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), the key elements that determine the selection of the methodology are the nature of the research question and the subject being examined. The sensitivity of our topic requires a detailed individual opinion and a thorough investigation. For that reason, we opted for qualitative methods to undertake the study, to gain deeper information and precise personal perspectives. Many scholars mentioned the advantages of the qualitative approach including, Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009), assert that "the main advantage of qualitative data is that it provides a richer and more in-depth understanding of the population under study". Moreover, the qualitative approach involves the kind of tools that seek to obtain a more in-depth individuals' perspectives, opinions and attitudes concerning a specific phenomenon (Kothari, 2004)

2.2 Research Approaches

A research approach, according to Creswell (2009), is a plan of action that gives direction to conduct research systematically and efficiently. He mentioned three main research approaches: 1) quantitative (structured) approach, 2) qualitative (unstructured) approach, and 3) mixed methods research. All researches must involve an explicit, disciplined, and systematic approach to find out the most appropriate results. Our research falls within the second category.

The structured approach to inquiry is usually classified as quantitative research. The latter typically is the choice of researchers who's their research topic demand statistical and numerical data. In this regard, Creswell (2003) states that quantitative research “*employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collect data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data*”, In here the researcher pre-plan for everything that

forms the research process objectives, design, sample, and the questions that s/he plans to ask the participants.

The unstructured approach to the inquiry so-called as qualitative research. In this respect, Creswell (2007) defined the qualitative study as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore asocial or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting”. This approach allows more flexibility in all aspects of the research process. It is more appropriate to explore the nature of a problem, issue or phenomenon as it is in the real world without quantifying it. Researchers select the qualitative approach to respond to research questions requiring textual data.

The mix-methods study is becoming increasingly a trendy and fashionable approach. The latter requires both quantitative and qualitative research skills. Researchers adopt this approach for research questions that want both numerical and textual data (Williams 2007). Leedy & Ormrod (2015) describe the mix-method approach as a combination of “*the two methodological traditions into a research endeavour in which all aspects substantially contribute to a single, greater whole*”. In other words, a good mixed-methods study is one that effectively and convincingly “hangs together”.

2.3 Interpretive Approach

Qualitative researchers primarily concerned understanding human being experiences as Lincoln and Guba (1985) label “*the human as instrument*” approach. R. L. Jackson (et al. 2007) state that “qualitative researcher relies on the participants to offer in-depth responses to questions about how they have constructed or understood their experience. This humanistic is also called “thick descriptive”. It provides detailed information from the participant; in addition, it allows the researcher to have direct contact with the participants and collecting instant answers. Besides here, the researcher has the potential to track the participant reaction and gestures while questioning them. The aim and function of qualitative inquiry are “*to understand the meaning of human action by describing the inherent or essential characteristics of social objects or human experience*” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000 as cited in R. L. Jackson, 2007).

2.3.1 Qualitative Methodologies

The methodology draws the line that guides the research process, showing how the research is going to proceed by “indicating what problems are worth investigating, how to frame a problem so it can be explored, how to develop appropriate data generation, and how to make the logical link between the problem, data generated, analysis, and conclusions/inferences drawn” (R. L. Jackson, 2007). There are several types of qualitative inquiry and modes of qualitative data collection. Choosing a method depends on the “research topic”, “time”, “equipment” and “financial availability”, on top of that qualitative data analysis is considered as a very personal process, with few rigid rules and procedures (Catherine Dawson, 2002).

2.3.1.1 Content analysis

Content analysis, according to Krippendorff (1980), is a “generic name for a variety of ways for conducting systematic, objective, quantitative, and/or qualitative textual analysis that involves comparing, contrasting, and categorizing a set of data primarily to test hypotheses. This type of analysis usually relies on some statistical procedures for sampling and establishing inter-coder reliability” (as cited in L. Jackson, 2007). Qualitative content analysis basic essence is making sense of the data, by deconstructing it into chunks that can be “categorized” and “coded”, and then creating a pattern by constructing the “categories” with each other (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997 as cited in R. L. Jackson, 2007).

2.3.1.2 Conversation analysis

Conversation analysis, or as some researchers call discourse analysis, is a “form of textual analysis that arose out of the sociological approach of ethno methodology based in part on the philosophical tradition of phenomenology. Ethno methodology is interested in how people accomplish every day, taken-for-granted interactions like making promises and negotiating” (Garfinkel, 1967 cited in R. L. Jackson, 2007). This method main interest is analysing and examining speakers’ conversations and social interactions (Silverman, 1998 as cited in R. L. Jackson, 2007). Paying attention to the “*pattern of speech*”, how people talk, how they take turns in conversations and what metaphors they use (Catherine Dawson, 2002). As mentioned the latter is concerned with examining language as it used in a particular context paying more attention to what is said.

2.3.3 Methods of Data Collection

Methods define “*the means or modes of data collection or, sometimes, how a specific result is to be calculated*” (Chinelo Lagwenagu, April 2016). Descriptive research falls into two major categories: quantitative and qualitative studies. In Quantitative research data is collected and analysed in terms of numerical data that it is concerned with the measurement of attitudes, behaviours and perceptions. Whereas; qualitative research is associated with gaining more intimacy and closed insight into people assumptions, attitudes and behaviours without measuring data through numerical statistics.

2.3.4 Advantages & disadvantage of Qualitative Research Approach

Over the years, there has been a controversial debate regarding the appropriateness of qualitative or quantitative approaches in conducting social science research. Berg and Howard (2012) depict “*qualitative research as meanings, a concept, a definition, metaphors, symbols and a description of things*”. Qualitative data instruments, “*observation, open-ended questions, in-depth interview (audio or video), and field notes*”, permit the researcher to have a full description of the research from the respondents in their “natural setting” and originate “*wider understanding of behaviour*” (Eyisi Daniel, 2016). Therefore, De Vaus (2014); Leedy & Ormrod (2014) report that “*qualitative research approach provides abundant data about real life people and situations*” (as cited in Eyisi Daniel, 2016). Qualitative research proved to be a useful tool when talking about collecting thorough and detailed information from participants, especially for its flexible nature. Moreover, it does not follow any strict plan.

As aforementioned, despite its usefulness there are still some criticisms about the efficacy of the qualitative approach. According to Christensen & Johnson (2012) “*qualitative researchers view the social world as being dynamic and not static*” (as cited in Eyisi Daniel, 2016). In explaining this De Vaus (2014) state that “*they limit their findings to the particular group of people being studied instead of generalizing*” (as cited in Eyisi Daniel, 2016). Another criticising view sees that qualitative researcher is heavily involved in the data collection process which makes him less credible and more subjective toward the respondent and the study. For this reason, Catherine Dawson (2002) claim that some researchers acknowledge qualitative research as a non-scientific approach because the researcher here relies on his personal experiences and interpretation while conducting the research. Furthermore, employing qualitative data collection is time-consuming and it holds the possibility of not achieving the required results.

2.4 Procedure

The present study was conducted with the first-year English middle school students at Ben Mana Mohamed middle school, Sirat, Mostaghanem. It took place during the second semester along ten sessions. The first instrument was used is an observation; followed by conducting an individual interview with ten students.

2.5 Context of the Study

The current research was carried out with first-year English middle school at Ben Mana Mohamed middle school Sirat, Mostaghanem, during the academic year 2019-2020. The main goal of the study was to demonstrate the importance of praise in EFL classrooms as an efficient technique in enhancing students learning outcomes and boosting motivation.

2.6 Participant

Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun(2012) demonstrate that the selection of the appropriate sample that contributes to the fulfilment of the research is the first crucial step. Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009) make the difference between the population and the sample, defining the latter as *“the subset of people from the population who will participate in the current study”*. A sampling includes choosing a group of people to represent or generalize a large population. Since is it impractical to study all people.

As far as our research is concerned, and for the sake of testing the hypothesis mentioned previously, that is set to clarify the importance of praise as positive feedback in an educational setting specifically EFL classrooms, and how it could affect positively students' academic performance and motivation. The population we are concerned with embrace ten students of first-year English middle school who belong to Ben Mana Mohamed middle school in Sirat, Mostaghanem. The reason behind our choice is that we are interested in specific characteristics in our participants (level, age and category of students).

2.7 Data Collection Instruments

In this research study, two research instruments were employed for the purpose of obtaining reliable and valid data these include: classroom observation and ten interviews were addressed to the first-year middle school students

2.7.1 Classroom Observation

According to C.R Kothari (2004), observing does exist all around us, but this kind of observation is “not scientific”. It becomes a scientific tool only when it “*serves a formulated research purpose*”; in addition, it is mostly used when the matter is relevant to studying behavioural sciences. Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as “*the systemic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study*”(ascited in Kawulich, 2005). In other words, observation is a useful tool for providing a thorough description and information about the context of the study.

The main advantage of this method is that “*subjective bias is eliminated*” if it is done correctly and accurately (C.R Kothari, 2004). Moreover, the information obtained is relevant and exclusive to what is happening currently (updated), also it does not demand the active cooperation from the participants (C.R Kothari, 2004). In our case, first, we have used a participant’s observation as the first instruments to obtain data; to gain an insightful idea about the use of praise in EFL classrooms. Choosing observation as a tool to collect data, proved to be the right choice for conducting this study. It helped to have a deep understanding and closer look at the phenomena under investigation.

2.7.1.1 Description of Classroom Observation

More accurately, the classroom observation started from February 23rd, 2020 until March 3rd, 2020 during the second semester. Concerning the number of session, students had twelve sessions; the process of observation took place with two teachers and almost all the first-year English classes at Ben Mana Mohamed middle school. This classroom observation was planned to observe certain variables and characteristic pertinent to both teachers and students. These items include the existence of praise in EFL classroom and the dominant type, teacher praise, the words and the use of words of praise used to praise the students, number of times praising student work, behaviour or appearance, the time duration between praise and the praised action, category of students that have much praise, student attempt to be praised and teacher gestures while delivering praise.

The existence of praise in EFL classroom and the dominant type: we focus on checking the availability of praise in the classrooms and the kind of praise used by the teacher if it is general, specific or effective.

Teacher praise: we focus our attention on the teacher use of praise, whether it is a systematic attempt to encourage students to work better in the future, or a spontaneous reaction to student good performance.

The words and the use of words of praise used to praise the students: we draw attention to the words used by the teacher to praise the intended actions, and the use of words if it is the same each session or its changes.

The Number of times praising student work, behaviour or appearance: the focus here is mainly on the teacher intentions of delivering praise. Checking whether the teacher praise student for their good performance or an attempt to get a close relationship with them by praising their behaviours and appearance.

The Time duration between praise and the praised action: we direct our attention to the period of time that gathers between the teacher delivery of praise and the action being praised whether it is conveyed instantly or delayed.

Category of students that have much praise: we pay attention to the category of students that teacher praises the most if it is advanced, average or struggling students.

Student attempt to be praised and teacher gestures while delivering praise: in here the attention is driven to students' attitudes, which actions they make to pull teacher praise such as participating, responding to praise positively and bringing activities for the teacher to correct.

Teacher gestures while delivering praise: we observe mainly the teacher gestures and behaviours when giving praise, whether she/he is sincere, showing satisfaction and smiling.

2.7.2 Interview

We selected the interview as the second tool for data collection to valid and give more credit to our research. According to Silverman (1993), "*Interviews can often yield a rich body of qualitative information*"(as cited in Paul D. Leedy & Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, 2015). Paul & ormrod (2015) describe interview as a friendly and informal conversation, were the respondent engage easily with the researcher and feel at ease to talk. Kalan & Kahn (1968) defined interview as "a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation".

In social science there are several types of interviews, the most used include unstructured, structured and semi-structured interviews. Among the types of interviews, we will call upon a structured interview since it fits with our study. The latter “*involves the use of a set of predetermined questions and of highly standardised techniques of recording*”(Kothari, 2004). In clearer terms, the interviewer during the process of interviewing use already prepared question and electronic devices.

2.7.2.1 Interview Description

As was mentioned earlier, in this work we opted for an interview as the second tool for gathering information from our respondents. The interview was carried out with ten students of the first-year English middle school after finishing with the classroom observation. The questions of the interview were set to discover students’ attitude toward praise and test the validity of our hypothesis concerning whether praise motivates learners to learn English. The interview is composed of ten questions as follow:

The first question in the interview is set to know students’ opinions toward receiving praise from the teacher in the classroom, whether they like it or not.

The second question embraces in the interview seeks at discovering student feelings when being praised, which kind of affections or emotions they have when they hear those words of praise. Our participants are asked if they feel motivated when receiving praise from the teacher or not. It is demanded by our respondents to justify their answers and provide more explanation.

The third question included in this interview aims at investigating to what extent receiving praise from the teacher make students like studying and attending English courses.

The next question that takes part in this interview intended to know if praise does develop feelings of interest in the subject, lesson or task. It is required from our candidates to explain their answers.

The other question is directed to find out if receiving praise from the teacher engages students in the learning process, make them more attentive to the teacher and encourages them participating during the lesson.

The sixth question designed in the current interview is administered to the students to discover, whether receiving praise encourage students to make an effort for accomplishing

difficult tasks. In addition, our informants are asked to justify their answers and provide more detail with examples.

The seventh question presented in this interview attempts to investigate, whether receiving praise develops student persistence and resilience when asked to work on free activities at home, moreover they were asked to justify why they will do. The second part in this question is intended to figure out if praise pushes students to work on difficult a task which is free. They were also asked if they would do or not, besides providing justification and examples.

Another question in this interview is intended to discover if praise makes students motivated, whether they look for other activities at home to develop a deep understanding of the lesson being done. The other part in this question seeks to know if students do bring these activities to the teacher to check. If they do, our respondents are demanded to justify their answers.

The ninth question concerns are to investigate students' self-image after having praise, on one hand, whether praise makes student work hard and making efforts when encountering more difficult activities. On the other hand, if facing difficulty make students doubt their intelligence or ability to do and then give up. In each part, it was recommended from our participants to justify their answers.

The last question is intended to investigate if student when asked to do a certain task, take their time to accomplish it correctly or doing it quickly in order to receive praise from the teacher. Our respondents were asked to explain their answers.

2.8 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have presented the research methodology followed in conducting this work, the context in which the investigation took place, and the included respondents that took part in the fulfilment of the research study. As well the data collection instruments which were adopted to gather sufficient, reliable and credible data, that allow us to investigate thoroughly our research objective concerning the role of praise as positive feedback and efficient technique in enhancing student learning outcome and boosting motivation in EFL classrooms.

Chapter Three:

Data Analysis and Results

3. Introduction

In the previous chapters, we have presented an overview concerning the importance of praise as positive feedback and an efficient technique to motivate the students in EFL classrooms, which was tackled in the first chapter. The second was devoted for the methodology that we have followed in our study, in which we have tackled the full description of the research tools including the research approaches, instruments, techniques and population sample that were used to collect data and its administration. In the same way, this section is delineated for analysing and discussing the generated data that were collected to answer the proposed questions.

3.1 Data Analysis

Our data collection instruments included two techniques, an interview and classroom observation, after collecting data from the informants of first-year middle school students. In this part, we focus on analysing and interpreting the data obtained from the observation and interview. However, to validate or invalidate our hypothesis; data analysis will cover the main questions that will direct us to answer the research questions mentioned previously. Besides, the researcher will shed light on the limitations and the shortcomings faced during this research.

3.1.1 Analysis of the classroom observation

As mentioned previously, since the researcher is involved in the process of collecting data as an observer, it highly recommended that the results will be less credible and more subjective. For this reason, analysing and interpreting data from a purely objective view is difficult to maintain.

Existence of praise in EFL classrooms

During the observation sessions, it was noticed that teachers do use praise in some classrooms. Yet it was noticed that teachers praise depends largely on students' actions that pull praise from the teachers. In addition, it has been seen that in some classes there was no single word of praise. Besides since the observation included two teachers it has been noticed that the first teacher does used words of praise in all the attended sessions, whereas the second teacher used praise only in some classes.

Type of praise most used

It was noticed that teachers in all the observed sessions used only the general type of praise. Moreover, thank you, good and very good were the most reluctant words used in the classrooms. Also was noticed that in cases of writing expression sessions, the students who volunteer to read their paragraphs, they got applause by the entire class and extra points.

The following table demonstrates the kind of words used by the teachers in classrooms to praise students' works or conducts:

	Thank you	good	Very good	excellent	applause
percentage	26%	50%	20%	2%	2%
number of words used in an hour	9	18	7	1	1

Table 3.1: Praise Words used in classrooms

It was noticed that teachers praise was not systematic, but only a spontaneous reaction to someone good work, besides it was noticed that teachers' reactions while giving praise were not always associated with positive affections such as showing sincere emotions toward the praised actions. Moreover, it has been noticed that most of the praised actions were directed to students' correct answers to questions, students who volunteer to read, students who participate, students who write on the board, students who bring their books and copybooks.

It was noticed that advanced students were the most praised category in classrooms; they received praise for doing their homework, volunteering to write on the board, volunteering to answer questions, participating and reading. While praising struggling and average students were rare and mostly not existed. Mostly this latter category received praise for bringing their books, copybooks and writing correctly with the teacher or repeating correctly after the teacher or their classmate when being asked, such as in learning vocabulary and reading sessions.

The following table demonstrates the category of students who receive much praise from the teacher in classrooms:

Category of students	Advanced	average	struggling
percentage	89%	7%	4%
Number of times were praised in classroom	32	2	1

Table 3.2: Praised Category of Students

3.1.1.1 Discussion of the observation

Based on the collected data from the observation, it has been proved that to some extent the previously mentioned hypothesis is valid. First, it has been found that teachers do use praise in EFL classrooms. Yet there were some exceptional cases where teachers in some classes did not use praise at all. Since the process of observing included two teachers, it has been noticed a great difference between the two teachers. Where the first teacher used to use praise words in almost all the observed classes, yet the words that were used mostly were general words of praise such as thank you and good and sometimes applause for the students who do a very good job. In addition, advanced students in the first teacher class were the only praised category every time.

Whereas the second teacher did not use praise much, and in some classes, there was no praise at all, and the only words of praise used were good and very good and rarely excellent. Yet the second teacher used to give opportunities for struggling and average students from time to time and deliver praise to them even if their performance were not good, so this action somehow prompt those students to show themselves, because from time to time they were engaged in the lesson, participating and showing interest.

3.1.2 Analysis of the student's interview

The population sample that was selected for conducting the interview is the first-year English middle school students, in order to collect data and investigate students' perception and attitude toward receiving praise from the teacher, for this reason, the interviewees that take part in this interview were from different categories (advanced, struggling, average). In addition, the questions of the interview were translated in Arabic to fit the level of first-year students. Moreover, the interview was designed to get deep information from the interviewees regarding their emotions and feelings when being praised by their teacher.

Background information about the informants

The following table shows the candidates' age:

Students age	11	12	13	14
number	18	9	7	2
percentage	50%	25%	20%	5%

3.3: Students' age

Question 2: do you feel motivated when receiving praise from the teacher? Can you explain why?

the question aimed to discover whether receiving praise from the teacher prompt and encourage learners to work harder in order to succeed. All the students who have been interviewed replied with positive answers, that they do feel motivated when receiving praise from the teacher. The following statements are provided as an explanation for respondents' answers:

“Yes, receiving praise from the teacher makes me feel encouraged to work harder because I feel proud and happy whenever my teacher acknowledges my hard work in front of my classmates”

“Yes, of course receiving praise from the teacher makes me feel proud of myself and give me the feeling that I am good student, which make like to study harder to get good marks in English”

“Yes, definitely receiving praise from the teacher makes me feel that I am an intelligent person, and encourage me to do more efforts in the future to show my teacher that I love learning English”

“Yes, receiving praise from the teacher makes me feel that am doing good work and I feel happy”

“Yes, receiving praise from the teacher makes me feel excited, encouraged and more interested in learning more about English”

“Yes, receiving praise from the teacher makes me feel that my teacher loves and it gives me the feeling that I am a special person”

Question 3: does receiving praise make you feel more interested in the subject, lesson or activity? Yes/no. can you explain how?

The purpose of the question was to find out if receiving praise from the teacher builds an interest or likeness in the subject or lesson being learning. The majority of the students replied with positive statements, that receiving praise from the teacher make them feel more interested in the subject, lesson or activity. Only two students said that receiving praise is not the main reason for their interest in learning English. These are some of the respondents' answers when asked to explain.

“Yes, receiving praise from my teacher makes me like to learn more about English, and from time to time I learn new words from YouTube and come to class to surprise my teacher”

“Yes, receiving praise from my teacher make me more interested in studying English. And whenever we have an English session I look for some activities about the lessons we already dealt with and I bring it to my teacher to do at classroom”

“Not really, I like studying English even without being praised by my teacher”

“No, receiving praise from the teacher is not the only reason for me to like studying English, because even without praise I work hard in the entire subjects”

Question5: After receiving praise, do you focus with the teacher and try to participate?

The majority of the students acknowledged that receiving praise from the teacher prompt them to focus and participate during the lesson. Three students show no interest in giving the credit for their attentiveness and participation in the classroom to receiving praise from the teacher. The following statements are some of the students' answers:

“Yes, hearing praise from my teacher prompt me to participate and follow with my teacher to show him/her that I am interested in learning English and be happy with me, to praise me again”

“Well I do focus and participate with my teacher even without receiving praise from my teacher because I love studying and I respect all my teachers”

Question 6: does receiving praise encourage you to make more effort for accomplishing difficult tasks? Why? Can you provide some examples?

Given the fact that the aim of this question was to investigate whether praise motivates students to work harder and make an effort in the face of difficulty or not. All students said that receiving praise from the teacher encourages them to work hard when given difficult tasks to do. The following statements are some of the interviewees' answers.

“Yes, it does encourage me to make more effort in order to be praised by my teacher and show off front of my classmates”

“Yes, I try to work harder in order to make my teacher love me and be proud of me. An example, once our teacher assigned us some challenging activity to do in classroom which required me three times of trying to solve it until I reach it to the correct answer”

“Even without receiving praise I always work hard, but yes, I think with praise I would love to make more effort”

Question 8: When you are praised for accomplishing some activities in the classroom, do you search without being asked by the teacher, for more activities related to the lesson to do at home? If you do, why? And do you bring it to the teacher to check it? Why?

The purpose of the question was to find out if receiving praise from the teacher encourages students to search out of school for more activities, related to the lessons being dealt with to extend their knowledge or develop themselves. The majority of the students admit that to some extent receiving praise encourage them to look for more activities to impress their teacher. Only three students replied negatively to the question. These are some of the respondents' answers:

“Yes, I do look for other activities related to the lesson and bring it to my teacher to correct, in order to show her/him that I am interested in learning English and I would like to learn more to develop myself”

“Yes, of course, I do search for further activities at home and bring it to my teacher to check to impresses her/him and receive praise for my hard work and extra points”

“Not really, I have never tried it”

“Yes, I do look for another activity in my free time and show it to my teacher to make her happy”

“No, I have never done it”

Question 9: After being praised for accomplishing a certain activity, and then you are given another activity to do which is difficult. In here do you make more effort to accomplish it or you just give up? Why? And do you feel disappointed or stupid if you could not do?

The goal of the question was to investigate whether receiving praise motivate students to overcome the difficulty in the future when they face it, or it drives them to be demotivated and doubt themselves when they fail to accomplish difficult activities. The majority of the students declare that receiving praise from the teacher is not the main reasons which make them do more effort when facing difficulty in learning. Only two students said that s/he will work hard to solve it to receive praise from the teacher. The following answers are some of the students' responses:

“Yes, I will make more effort to solve the activity but even without being praised by my teacher”

“I will try to solve it if I could not, I will ask my teacher to help me. And no, I will not feel disappointed or stupid if I could not solve it”

“I will work hard to accomplish it if I could not. I will just wait for the final correction”

“Yes, I will make more effort to solve it even if it was difficult, so my teacher will feel proud of me and praise me for my hard work. And if I could not I will ask my teacher help and do more effort to accomplish it. And no, I will not feel stupid or disappointed if I could not do it, I will just do my best”

3.1.2.1 Discussion of the results

Students' answers in the interview from advanced, average and struggling revealed how does praise build a positive self-image. Since the majority of the respondents acknowledge that praise makes them happy, proud, excited, encouraged, intelligent and feeling as good students. Moreover, they talked about how praise makes them love learning English and motivated to work harder in order to have good marks and succeed. As in any situation there is always contradicting point of views, this case is no different because few students' answers depicted that praise has no role with their performance. Saying that receiving praise is not the main reason for their love of studying English or working hard, yet they also have not rejected the positive feelings that praise develops which encourage them to do better in learning.

Most importantly, the majority of students answers unwarily referred to the positive relationship that praise develops between the teacher and the students. As stated previously many learners said that they like to work hard and make an effort to learn in order to make their teacher happy and proud.

Another crucial point, raised by the students that receiving praise from the teacher plant in them the desire and interest toward learning more about English, to the extent in which push them to search for further activities related to the lessons they have studied, besides the example given by him/her concerning learning new vocabulary to develop their abilities in learning English. Without forgetting to mention the exceptional views of average and struggling students related to the demand asked concerning which action or effort is done for showing interest, ending saying that they have never do anything really to develop their abilities in English.

Finally, concerning the last question, the majority of students' responses were negative. Which demonstrate that students do not rely on praise as an encouraging or motivating technique that helps them to overcome the difficulties which they face in learning, in addition most of the answers were the advanced students' opinion. Whereas the surprising positive answer was provided by a struggling student, which rarely receive praise from the teacher.

3.2 General Discussion of the Results

Depending on the generated data gathered from the classroom observation and the interview, we have reached the following findings:

First, the results have demonstrated that praise to some extent exists in EFL classrooms. Yet there were some classrooms where praise did not exist, and since the observation embraced two teachers we conclude that Jere Brophy hypothesis concerning the critical role of teacher personality and students character support the findings. Because there was a great difference between the two teachers, were the first teacher found to use praise in all his/her classrooms, whereas the second teacher use of praise was rare. Moreover, students character is another crucial element where it has been found that students, advanced, pull praise from their teacher by their actions such as: participating, volunteering to read to write and doing their home works. The latter point was also tackled by Jere Brophy (1981) were he label this category of students as "*students-initiation academic contacts*".

Secondly, teachers in EFL classrooms tend to use mainly general words of praise such as good, excellent, thank you, which fall into confirming the second hypothesis suggested previously that general praise is the dominant type in EFL classrooms. general praise is considered to be an inefficient type of praise because it lacks informative details about the positive action being done. This latter point was acknowledged by Marchant & Anderson (2011) & Brophy (1981) who insisted on avoiding delivering vague terms since it has less effective results.

Additionally, the interview findings to some extent support the last hypothesis suggested, that praise develop learners' motivation. Students answers demonstrate that receiving praise from the teacher encourage learners to maintain motivation and interest in learning English. Moreover, the majority of the students admit that receiving praise fuel them with positive energy and a large desire to make more effort to develop their abilities and learn more. Jere Brophy also was the one who talked about the role of praise in boosting motivation. Though many scholars classified general praise as the less effective type, yet the results show that to some extent it has a certain effectiveness degree. Since many students declare that receiving this kind of terms of praise is satisfactory to make them feel happy, excited, proud, encouraged and motivated to learn English.

3.3 recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, we provide some suggestions for teachers as helpful aspects for effective praise in order to increase learners' motivation and academic achievement. They are as follows:

Raising awareness of using praise

Teachers have to be aware of the benefits of using praise as positive feedback in classrooms since it has been acknowledged by many scholars as a beneficial pedagogical technique. Thus teachers have to take it seriously and use it to increase students' progress.

Informative praise

Teachers have to avoid using general words of praise which has no effect on students instead, they have to start using informative praise which includes providing positive details about the action praised. Marchant & Anderson (2011) classified Effective praise and instructive praise as the large efficient types, which the first includes more specific information about the action being praised, by telling student exactly which action they

performed that was pleasing and deserving praising. Whereas the second is considered as the most effective because it mentions the exact action including the type of reasons leading to a certain positive action.

Training programme

Jere Brophy (1981) recommended creating a special training programme that focuses on using praise as a technique to modify students' undesirable behaviours, in addition to how to use praise effectively and consistently to have effective results.

3.4 Conclusion

The final chapter in this dissertation was specified for analysing and discussing the generated data that were collected from our informants. Relying on the obtained findings we have attempted to answer the questions suggested previously. It has been found that EFL teachers to some extent do use praise in classrooms. Yet it was discovered that EFL teachers are not aware of the fact that praise is also an efficient technique for enhancing students' achievement and motivation. The gathered data also revealed that general praise is the dominant type in EFL classrooms, which is considered to have the least amount of effect on students. Thus we ended concluding that general praise to some extent increase students' motivation. At the final part of this dissertation, we presented some recommendations that we saw they may help the teachers to be aware of using praise effectively in classrooms.

General conclusion

Learning a foreign language is a crucial encounter especially for beginner. Therefore, increasing students interest and maintaining motivation in learning English in EFL classroom is considered as a difficult task for teachers. To this far, including praise as a technique in learning English as a foreign language helps overcome these obstacles. Thus, in order to aide educators praise is recommended as an effective strategy to encourage students learning English and increasing motivation. In addition to that, it enhances students learning outcomes and push them toward developing a high self-esteem and a better self-image.

Throughout our research, we have focused on two objectives. the foremost one was investigating whether teachers are aware of the effective role of using praise in EFL classroom. also the study aimed at discovering whether receiving praise develops students' motivation and increase interest toward learning English.

The first chapter covered the theoretical background of the research topic. It begins with presenting some definitions and behaviourist theories to display the relation between praise and the positive reinforcement for the purpose of introducing the former as a reinforcer. Then, it highlights the significance role of implementing praise in EFL classrooms at increasing students learning outcomes and boosting motivation. finally, it recommends some of the effective ways of using praise to gain ultimate results.

As for the methodological part, it is devoted for providing the methodology followed in undertaking this research which was included in the second chapter. As for the methods, we adopted the qualitative approach solely to meet the nature and demands of our research questions. As for the participants we selected the first-year English middle school students at Ben Mana Mohamed middle school Sirat, Mostaghanem. The first step included conducting a classroom observation to investigate teacher use of praise in EFL classrooms. second, we conducted an interview with the students of first-year English middle school to obtain deeper information regarding their perception and attitude toward receiving praise.

The last chapter tackled the analysis and interpretation of results. First, we analysed and discussed the obtained data from the classroom observation. Then, students' responses that were gathered from the interview were analysed and discussed thoroughly. At last and not least, a general discussion of all the results take place followed by providing some recommendation concerning raising awareness and the effective ways of using praise in EFL classrooms.

Based on the analysis of the data gathered, the results demonstrate that teachers at EFL classrooms do not consider praise as pedagogical strategy to increase student learning outcomes. Since the findings display that the use of praise is infrequent in EFL classrooms. in addition, it has been found that teachers of English as a foreign language limit their use only to general expression of praise. Moreover, the interview results supported to some extent the suggested hypothesis concerning praise develops' motivation. since the majority of the students acknowledge their enjoyment and happiness while receiving praise from the teacher which encourage them to work hard and produce effort to learn English.

To this far, we conclude that the previously mentioned hypothesis is proved to be true. We assumed that teachers do use praise in EFL classrooms. we also suggested that the dominant form of praise used in EFL classrooms is the general type of praise. Finally, we expected that praise does develop learners' motivation to learn English.

Eventually, it should be admitted that we faced some obstacles while working on this topic and that have negatively influenced this research. First, time factor was a critical problem especially during the corona virus pandemic and the lock down that was imposed which closed all the doors front of us to carry on conducting this work. Second, the participant level also makes a great challenge for the researcher to conduct the study, since they were beginners in learning English as a foreign language. Though the questions of the interview were translated into Arabic, yet the answers collected were not as expected or sufficient for the study.

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Appendices

Appendix (1) : students' interview

1. Do you like to be praised when doing good work?
2. Do you feel motivated when receiving praise from the teacher? can you explain why?
3. Does receiving praise from the teacher make you like studying and coming to school?
4. Does praise make you feel more interested in the subject, lesson, task or activity? Yes/No. Can you explain how ?
5. After receiving praise, do you focus with the teacher and try to participate?
6. Does praise encourage you to make more effort for accomplishing difficult tasks? Why? Can you provide some exemples ?
7. After being praised for accomplishing a certain task, and then the teacher assigns you more activities to do at home, which is free activities, would you do it or not? If you do, why? What if it was difficult? Would you still do it? Why?
8. When you are praised for accomplishing some activities in the classroom, do you search without being asked by the teacher, for more activities related to the lesson to do at home? If you do, why? And do you bring it to the teacher to check it? Why?
9. After being praised for accomplishing a certain activity, and then you are given another activity to do which is difficult. In here do you make more effort to accomplish it or you just give up? Why? And do you feel disappointed and stupid if you could not do?
10. When you are asked to do a certain task. Do you take the full time given by the teacher, or you finish it quickly to show it to the teacher? If you do it quickly then why?

Appendix (2): Checklist Observation

Does praise exist in classroom	Yes	no				
Type of praise	General	specific	Effective			
Teacher praise	systematic	spontaneous				
Words of praise that are most used	Good	excellent	Super			
The use of words of praise	The same words each session	There is change				
Number of times praising good work						
Number of times praising good conduct						
Time duration between the good work or conduct and praise	instant	delayed				
Number of times praising students' appearance	neatness	Clothing				
Category of students that have much praise	Advanced	Average	Struggling			
Students attempt to have praise	bringing activities for teacher to correct	Responding to praise positively	Participating			