Using Positive Feedback to Facilitate Intrinsic Motivation in Tenth-Grade Students

Cristhyan Eduardo Mutis Serrato

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Thesis, Research, and Practicum Advisor

Mabel Cristina Quinchía Monroy

M.A. in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Universidad de Antioquia

School of Languages

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, whose support, love, and guidance have been a constant source of strength during my academic journey. Their belief in me has inspired perseverance in moments of doubt, making this achievement possible. It also represents the result of the time, effort, and commitment I have devoted to my personal and professional development during this important stage of my life

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Abstract

This action research project explores how positive feedback can facilitate intrinsic motivation in tenth-grade students at Institución Educativa Antonio María Bedoya. Classroom observations and an initial focus group revealed that teacher feedback strongly influenced students' motivation, participation, and attitudes. Based on these findings, the first cycle implemented feedback strategies, which were later monitored through observation journals and student comments. In the second cycle, a questionnaire and a progress tracker were used to examine the effects of feedback on students' autonomy and perceived competence. A final focus group was conducted to validate the findings from the earlier data collection methods, incorporating the students' perspectives. Results suggest that positive feedback, when delivered respectfully, specifically, and consistently, fosters a more relaxed and participatory classroom environment. It also encourages self-regulation and improves how students view their abilities. This study emphasizes the value of positive feedback as a pedagogical strategy to strengthen intrinsic motivation and increase student engagement in English language learning.

Key words: positive feedback, intrinsic motivation, autonomy, competence, action research

Resumen

Este proyecto de investigación-acción explora cómo la retroalimentación positiva puede facilitar la motivación intrínseca en estudiantes de grado décimo de la Institución Educativa Antonio María Bedoya. Las observaciones en el aula y un grupo focal inicial revelaron que la retroalimentación del docente influía significativamente en la motivación, la participación y las actitudes de los estudiantes. Con base en estos hallazgos, en el primer ciclo se implementaron estrategias de retroalimentación, las cuales fueron posteriormente monitoreadas mediante diarios de observación y comentarios de los estudiantes. En el segundo ciclo, se utilizó un cuestionario y un registro de progreso para examinar los efectos de la retroalimentación sobre la autonomía y la percepción de competencia de los estudiantes. Finalmente, se llevó a cabo un grupo focal con el fin de validar los hallazgos obtenidos en las fases anteriores, integrando las perspectivas de los estudiantes. Los resultados sugieren que la retroalimentación positiva, cuando se ofrece de manera respetuosa, específica y constante, favorece un ambiente de aula más relajado y participativo. Además, promueve la autorregulación y mejora la percepción que los estudiantes tienen de sus propias habilidades. Este estudio resalta el valor de la retroalimentación positiva como estrategia pedagógica para fortalecer la motivación intrínseca y aumentar el compromiso de los estudiantes en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés.

Palabras clave: retroalimentación positiva, motivación intrínseca, autonomía, competencia, investigación-acción

Introduction

This action research study explores how the implementation of positive feedback can facilitate intrinsic motivation in tenth-grade students at Institución Educativa Antonio María Bedoya, a semi-rural public school in Bello, Antioquia. The study stems from classroom observations where it was noted that students' participation and attitudes toward learning were strongly influenced by the type of feedback received from their teacher. While negative feedback often created tension and reduced participation, positive feedback, although less frequent, tended to foster a more relaxed and motivated learning environment. These insights revealed the potential of positive feedback as a strategy to facilitate intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and competence. The study follows an action research approach, implemented in two parts. The first part, conducted during the second semester of 2024, focused on identifying the problem based on several classroom observations. Once the issue was identified, an action plan was designed to facilitate intrinsic motivation through positive feedback strategies. In the second part, carried out during the first semester of 2025, this plan was implemented over two cycles using strategies and instruments such as observation journals, questionnaires, and focus groups. The aim of the first cycle was to apply positive feedback strategies in order to examine their impact on students' attitudes, sense of competence, and autonomy, make the necessary adjustments, and reapply them during the second cycle. The second part of this project will present the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the different instruments used across both cycles. These findings will be examined in relation to the research question and theoretical framework. Finally, the project will offer conclusions and some recommendations aimed at enhancing classroom practices, particularly through the intentional use of positive feedback to facilitate students' intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and sense of competence in the English learning process.

Description of the Context

This research project was conducted with a tenth-grade students at the school Antonio María Bedoya, which is located in the Vereda Tierradentro in Bello, Antioquia. This institution has undergone a transformation in recent years, from being a rural school to becoming an educational institution after a process of unification with another larger institution. The institution is in a semi-rural environment, reflecting a transition between rural and urban. This school has the sixth to eleventh grades of high school and all grades are scheduled in the morning. Since the institution is small, there is only one group for each grade, except grade eleven, which has two groups (11A and 11B). The Coexistence Manual defines rigorous standards of presentation and discipline, but it is still under construction since key pieces are still missing, such as the school's mission or the final curriculum. The *Manual de Convivencia* emphasizes the importance of school uniform and personal presentation, prohibiting exaggerated accessories, makeup, piercings, and unconventional hair dyes, reflecting a conservative stance on student image. It also outlines protocols for handling disciplinary situations, including student dialogues, parental notification, and, in serious cases, intervention by external authorities. The disciplinary process follows a specific chain: teacher, group leader, coordinator, rector, and finally the coexistence committee.

This institution has very poor resources regarding materials available and facilities. It has a small restaurant that provides free meals, a multipurpose sports pitch, and a single staff room for teacher planning and collaboration. A major challenge is the lack of teaching materials and technological resources, including limited books, outdated computers, poor internet access, and insufficient audiovisual equipment, all of which hinder innovative teaching, especially in foreign language instruction. The school has a small library and a computer lab with only six old computers. Classrooms are basically equipped with fans to manage high temperatures caused by Eternit ceilings, and most include unused television sets. Overall, the facilities show clear signs of wear and a need for government investment. The school's website has a basic design,

displaying the emblem and full name of the institution. It includes a homepage with limited information and a few photos, but lacks common sections like "About us", "Academic programs", or "Events". Key documents such as the PEI and the Manual de Convivencia are not available online. The school does not have an English department; the cooperating teacher is the only English teacher on-site and works with all grade levels. This limits collaboration opportunities, especially given the absence of a defined curriculum and the logistical barriers to working with the only other English teacher, who is based at a different campus.

The cooperating teacher for this project is a graduate of Universidad de Caldas (2014) and has recently completed a master's degree in TEFL at UNIR. She has been teaching at Institución Educativa Antonio María Bedoya since January 2024. Observations and student feedback reveal that she maintains a respectful and good relationship with students and teaches effectively. Her methodology follows the Communicative Language Teaching approach, focusing on one or two skills per lesson and balancing grammar with communication. She uses ludic activities like songs and games, adapts well to limited resources, and occasionally brings her own tools, showing a strong commitment to innovation and motivation through technology.

Regarding the settings, the study was carried out in a tenth-grade group where there are 14 students between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years old. This group is made up of eight girls and six boys, and while observing them, I could see that regarding performance and behavior, female students in this group demonstrate better discipline and superior academic performance compared to their male peers. According to what I observed, the students have good discipline in general, so activities are carried out without interruptions. As the students are teenagers, they show interest in ludic activities, which makes it easier to capture their attention and make the classes more enjoyable. This interest in dynamic activities allows advanced subjects to be introduced, which correspond to their level and age. It is also observed that some students show a high level of interest in the subject and study at home, demonstrating a good level of motivation.

Statement of the Problem

Feedback is considered one of the main sources of information that gives rise to the different motivational regulations that individuals manifest in their behavior. In education and many other contexts, feedback has become a powerful tool for teaching, learning, and motivating students' behavior, whether positive or negative. Throughout school life, teachers send out a multitude of messages to their students about the way students could improve performing a task; however, this feedback is not always appropriate, because it often focuses more on the student's mistakes than on the achievements he or she has made in a specific task. Al-Bashir et al. (2021) stated that:

> Feedback should not be discouraging to the students at any cost. Obviously, it is vital to draw the student's attention to the less successful parts of a coursework; however, the teachers should be cautious in providing "negative feedback" of this kind. Thus, teachers can improve students' learning environment by presenting the feedback in a positive way. (p. 39)

I believe that student motivation plays a crucial role in the learning process and academic development. Thus, positive feedback not only influences academic learning but also the student's intrinsic motivation. Therefore, when students receive positive feedback, they tend to feel more confident and motivated to continue improving. On the other hand, negative feedback can lead to frustration and a decrease in interest in learning. For that reason, it is essential that teachers use positive feedback as a tool to strengthen the student's self-confidence and motivation, since in my opinion, the objective of positive feedback is not only to help the learners become aware of what they are doing and develop strategies for improving his or her performance in similar tasks in the future, but also to increase student motivation, strengthen the interest of students, and foster a positive learning environment. Feedback has been a key component in the teaching-learning process, playing a crucial role in students' academic and personal

development, as it is closely related to motivation and commitment. Dörnyei (as cited in Zhengdong, 2023) highlights that:

> Feedback and motivational processes come together in the L2 acquisition context: 1) motivational feedback can have a gratifying function that can increase learner satisfaction and lift their learning spirit; 2) motivational feedback can promote a positive self-concept and self-confidence among the students; 3) Motivational feedback can prompt the learner to reflect constructively on areas that need improvement. (p. 42)

Thus, we can understand the importance of how feedback affects not only performance but also the motivation and participation of students in the classroom.

During the second semester of 2024, I conducted a series of classroom observations over several weeks at the Antonio María Bedoya School. I observed an interesting dynamic in the tenth grade, in relation to the feedback and motivation of students. Thus, what caught my attention the most was the way the students were affected by the feedback provided and how that feedback seemed to influence their performance and participation. In one of the observations, I saw a clear example of how negative feedback can affect students. After an exam on modal verbs, Feedback was provided to students in front of the class, saying things like “Student ***1***, no te da ni para el 1.0”, “A esta hora y muchos no saben cómo se dice un verbo tan sencillo como: Cocinar, hacer, bañarse,” or “usted no hizo nada”. (Observation #2, August 2, 2024). These types of comments seemed to generate an atmosphere of tension and discouragement among the students. On the other hand, in the same session, I also observed moments of different feedback, although they were less frequent. For example, the teacher said to a student, “Student **2**, Good job, just one mistake”, and “Buen trabajo, Student **3**’’. This type of feedback seemed to have a motivating effect on the students receiving it. Additionally, while observing, I realized that students had a different attitude towards feedback. Certain students were motivated by positive feedback, but others were discouraged by unfavorable comments. One student, who got a good grade on the modal verb

exam, celebrated with her classmates and showed pride and happiness. On the other hand, a different student seemed to lose interest in class and became less engaged after receiving low grades and negative feedback in front of the rest of the class (Observation #2, August 2, 2024). This evidence shows how student behavior and participation showed the influence of feedback on the classroom environment. When the cooperating teacher provided negative feedback aloud in front of the class, the environment became stressful and tense, and students seemed less willing to participate. “After giving the exam grades orally, I see that the atmosphere in the classroom is a little tense, the students are quieter, and the participation has decreased considerably, this possibly due to the grades the students obtained in the exam and the feedback received in front of the class since I observe that the students who were participating before the exam, now are quiet, downcast, and they stopped participation” (Observation #2, August 2, 2024). Those students who got negative feedback aloud appeared demotivated and more inclined to avoid future participation. On the other hand, when feedback was positive, the environment was more relaxed, and students showed more confidence and willingness to participate. These observations raise the need to examine how teacher feedback affects student performance and participation, both positively and negatively, in order to improve teaching practice and the learning of students. Zhengdong (2023) suggested that several studies have explored the connection between feedback and students' motivation to learn (p. 41). Within the classroom setting, engaging in various feedback processes helps students develop a sense of responsibility and ownership over their own learning**.** Through the implementation of positive feedback, this study seeks to analyze whether students show a greater willingness to participate in classes, if their attitude towards learning English improves, and if positive feedback facilitates the achievement of the learning goals. I believe that as teachers, it is important to understand how our words and actions can shape students’ learning experiences. Thus, by refining our feedback approach, we can better support their academic development, facilitate motivation, and foster commitment.

Theoretical Framework

This study seeks to examine how positive feedback can facilitate the intrinsic motivation in tenth-grade English students at Institución Educativa Antonio Maria Bedoya. In this theoretical framework, I will present the theoretical bases that guide this action research: Motivation, the theory for Intrinsic motivation and its components (Autonomy and Competence), important to understand the psychological mechanisms that foster intrinsic motivation, Feedback, and Positive Feedback. Additionally, I will present the Cognitive Evaluation Theory or CET, which explains how external factors like feedback influence students' intrinsic motivation.

Motivation

According to Thohir (2017), "motivation, in general, is defined as the driving force in any situation that leads to action" (p. 26). Following this idea, I can define it as the force that moves a person to act in a specific situation to achieve goals or meet needs. This force can be derived from internal factors, such as personal desires and interests, or from external factors, such as recognition or pressures from the environment. This author also stated the following:

> Motivation is defined as some internal drive that pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something and to achieve success; someone needs to be motivated. Motivation is distinguished into different kinds, such as integrative and instrumental, intrinsic and extrinsic, global, situational and task. However, the most widely cited distinction of motivation is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. (p. 20)

Intrinsic motivation

In education, an intrinsically motivated student enjoys the learning process for its own sake, finds pleasure in acquiring new knowledge and skills, and pursues academic goals out of interest and curiosity. Unlike extrinsic motivation, which depends on external factors such as rewards or recognition, intrinsic motivation arises from personal interest and enjoyment of doing

an activity simply by doing it. Harmer (as cited in Thohir, 2017) points out that “intrinsic motivation is that which comes from within the individual in which a person might be motivated by the enjoyment of the learning process itself or by a desire to make themselves feel better’’ (p. 23). In education, intrinsic motivation appears when a student engages in learning for the pleasure of discovering and developing skills, not for grades or recognition. This curiosity-driven attitude fosters deeper and more lasting learning. Therefore, this research study focuses on using positive feedback to facilitate students' intrinsic motivation and support their academic learning.

Competence

“Competence concerns the feeling of mastery, a sense that one can succeed and grow. The need for competence is best satisfied within well-structured environments that afford optimal challenges, positive feedback, and opportunities for growth’’ (Ryan & Deci, 2020, p. 2). This component is fundamental to intrinsic motivation, as learners need to believe that they are capable of success and progress in their learning. In foreign language learning, this sense of competence becomes particularly relevant as students frequently question their language skills, so this confidence in one’s own abilities is an important factor in foreign language learning, since some students often experience frustration or doubt in the face of new communication challenges.

Autonomy

Ryan and Deci (2020) defined autonomy as “a sense of initiative and ownership in one’s actions. It is supported by experiences of interest and value and undermined by experiences of being externally controlled, whether by rewards or punishments’’ (p. 2). Autonomy is important in the educational context because it allows students to perceive the learning process as a personal choice rather than an external imposition, and instead of relying on external rewards or pressures. Thus, autonomous students may find satisfaction inherent in the act of learning.

Feedback

Feedback is essential in education, as it offers students specific information about their performance, progress, or understanding. It can be formative, guiding improvement, or summative, assessing final outcomes. Feedback may come from teachers, peers, or self-assessment, promoting reflection and continuous learning. The primary purpose of feedback is to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to adjust their study strategies and improve their understanding and skills. According to Phielix et al. (as cited in Al-Darei, 2022) “feedback is used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the students, such that the strengths can be improved while weaknesses can be minimized and corrected’’ (p. 696).

Positive feedback

Positive feedback is a specific type of feedback that focuses on recognizing and reinforcing students' achievements, efforts, and behaviors. It goes beyond simply pointing out what is “right”; it involves providing constructive information that highlights the student’s strengths, recognizes their progress, and offers guidance on how they can continue to improve. Positive feedback seeks to motivate and encourage the student and strengthen their confidence in the learning process. Parsons et al. (as cited in Simonian & Brand, 2022) stated that “feedback typically involves the provision of behavior-specific praise statements for steps/tasks that are performed correctly (i.e., positive feedback)” (p. 2). Positive feedback is an important resource in education, as it not only recognizes the correct achievements or behaviors of students but also promotes a supportive and motivating environment. From my perspective, this type of feedback goes beyond only praise; it seeks to offer specific comments that highlight the students’ strengths and recognize their progress over time. This allows them to understand clearly what aspects of their performance are working well and why. Thus, “High-quality positive feedback is not simply praise or encouragement, but the identification of specific student strengths’’ (Faulconer et al, 2022, p. 260). By implementing positive feedback, the student receives concrete validation of their

effort, which contributes to the continuous development of skills and even increases motivation. One crucial element of this type of feedback is that it fosters intrinsic motivation, as by highlighting achievements and progress, the student feels self-satisfaction and confidence in their ability to learn and improve. Brown (as cited in Thohir, 2017) stated that “the positive feedback that learners perceive can be a boost to their feelings of competence and self-determination, which in its turn can, increase or maintain their intrinsic motivation’’ (p. 25). Positive feedback also has a significant impact on the emotional environment of the classroom, as when students feel recognized and supported, they are more willing to participate, take intellectual risks, and persevere in their efforts, even in the face of difficulties. However, for it to be effective, positive feedback must be specific and authentic. Vague comments like “Good job” or “Keep it up” are not enough, but it is important to detail what aspects of the work or effort stand out and why.

Cognitive evaluation theory

According to the mini theory proposed by Deci and Ryan (1980), Cognitive Evaluation Theory or CET “specifies that events such as positive feedback that lead to perceived competence by supporting the competence need will enhance intrinsic motivation, whereas events such as negative feedback that lead to perceived incompetence will undermine intrinsic motivation’’(p. 418). Therefore, teachers must be aware of the impact that the way and type of feedback they provide to students can have. Cognitive Evaluation Theory studies how external factors influence intrinsic motivation. When students receive positive feedback about their performance, they feel more motivated and develop greater confidence in their abilities, which drives them to learn. Deci and Ryan (2012) stated that “events such as positive feedback that led to perceived competence by supporting the competence need will enhance intrinsic motivation’’ (p. 418).

Research Question

How can positive feedback facilitate the intrinsic motivation in tenth-grade English students at Institución Educativa Antonio Maria Bedoya?

Objectives

General Objective

To examine *how positive feedback can facilitate the intrinsic motivation in tenth-grade English students at the Institución Educativa Antonio Maria Bedoya.*

Specific Objectives

1. To diagnose and identify the level of intrinsic motivation of the students to know how to address this situation with the implementation of positive feedback.
2. To identify changes in students' intrinsic motivation after the consistent use of positive feedback.
3. To collect and analyze students' perceptions regarding the use of positive feedback and how it affects their interest in learning English.
4. To understand how positive feedback facilitates participation, attitudes, and the achievement of learning goals.

Action Plan

This action plan aims to determine how positive feedback can facilitate intrinsic motivation by analyzing student participation, motivation, and the achievement of learning goals. This research project is based on the theoretical concepts of intrinsic motivation as an internal impulse for learning and positive feedback as a tool to facilitate intrinsic motivation proposed by Thohir, L. (2017), and the Cognitive Evaluation Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1980), which explains the effects of extrinsic factors on intrinsic motivation.

This action plan was designed to be conducted in two cycles. Cycle one was intended to be implemented in the first academic term of the year 2025. This cycle primarily focused on gathering data through observation journals and an initial focus group to explore students' perceptions, attitudes, and participation regarding the feedback they had received and its

connection to intrinsic motivation. In the first week, students were informed about this research project, and I got students' consent for this project. The second and third weeks were devoted to class observations. Afterwards, in the fourth week, students participated in an initial focus group activity, where their thoughts and feelings about positive feedback and motivation were discussed. Finally, during the fifth, sixth, and seventh weeks, I implemented some positive feedback strategies. It included the application of four specific strategies: reinforce students' achievement, praise for effort, private correction of errors, and written comments of encouragement. Subsequently, a data analysis was conducted at the end of the cycle to evaluate the outcomes and refine the strategies for the second cycle. Cycle two was carried out in the second academic term of the year. At this cycle, I continued with the implementation of positive feedback strategies. Also, I got data from a questionnaire to analyze the impact of Positive feedback on intrinsic motivation and its components (Autonomy and Competence), and this information was analyzed together with the collected information from my observation journals. Finally, I carried out a final focus group with the students to know their perceptions about the effectiveness of Positive feedback on their intrinsic motivation.

Development of Actions

The implementation of actions in this action research study was carried out in two cycles, each designed to explore and strengthen the intrinsic motivation of 10th graders through positive feedback. The process, implementation of strategies, their connection to objectives, and the theoretical framework, as well as the data collection techniques used, are described in detail below.

In the first week of the first cycle, I presented the research project to the students, explaining its purpose and their participation in it. Considering this, the students were given a consent letter to inform them and their guardians about the process and the specific roles they would play. This step was taken to ensure transparency and ethics in research. Kalmbach and

Carr (2010) stated that “action researchers must be cognizant of the ethical issues of doing research. This includes gaining permission from participants and the participants’ parents if they are going to be included in a research study’’ (p. 96). During weeks two and three, observations were made of the classes given by the cooperating teacher, who at that time was reviewing topics from the previous year. Altrichter et al. (1993) noted, “We believe that there are particular advantages in teachers’ using direct observation as a method of data collection, in particular because it relates well to the complex processes of teaching and learning’’ (p. 83). These observations made it possible to record in a journal the students' attitudes towards the feedback received, their level of motivation, and their participation in the activities. Negative feedback, such as public corrections and discouraging comments, was found to generate tension and decrease participation, while positive feedback, although less frequent, seemed to motivate students. The findings from the classroom observations were useful to diagnose the impact of the feedback provided on students’ levels of participation and their attitudes towards the feedback they were given. In week four, an initial focus group was held with students; this collecting method was chosen to validate the diagnosis made throughout the observations. This action collected qualitative data on how students perceived feedback and its impact on their desire to learn English. Kevern and Webb (as cited in Bourne, 2021) noted that “The focus group discussion is a qualitative method that explores participants’ perceptions, feelings, attitudes or ideas around a given issue or experience” (p. 353). Weeks five, six, and seven were dedicated to the first intervention, during which a set of specific positive feedback strategies was applied in the classroom with the purpose of strengthening intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and perception of competence in students. These strategies involved the explicit recognition of achievements and progress, both orally and in writing, with special emphasis on the use of personalized feedback. Private error correction was also performed to avoid public exposure of errors, and feedback was provided individually. Additionally, some encouraging messages were used in some of their written works to provide positive feedback and suggestions for

improvement. Feedback was provided at key moments in the learning process, such as during class participation, solving exercises, or presenting written activities. Oral interventions included direct comments that highlighted the student's performance, using their names and highlighting specific hits such as: "*Good job! Demostraste un buen dominio del presente continuo en su forma negativa y afirmativa, es evidente que has estudiado" o "S3, congratulations! Has aplicado los verbos modales de manera precisa y correcta, tu dedicación se nota y eso es admirable".* These comments sought not only to validate knowledge but also to generate an emotionally safe climate that would encourage participation and trust. Stefanie R. et al (2022) stated that "There is a direct relationship between meeting the needs of our students through providing a positive learning environment that is rich in social and emotional learning and building a community of learners who want to be engaged in their learning'' (p. 11). In addition, written comments were used on worksheets, homework, and exams, incorporating a fixed section for my comments, intended to provide positive feedback and motivating remarks. In some cases, the positive feedback also included recognition of effort, even in productions with errors, followed by suggestions for improvement and offering additional advice sessions, for instance: *"S4, puedo ver que hiciste un esfuerzo principalmente en el tema de comparativos, te felicito por eso. Lamentablemente veo que aún tienes dificultades con el tema de superlativos, si deseas asesoría, por favor dímelo y buscamos el momento"*. The formulation of the feedback was based on pre-established criteria, such as the correct use of grammatical structures, the relationship with the proposed topic (Concerts or family), and active participation, which were defined through simple scale rubrics, understandable to the students. The systematization of the feedback process was carried out using photographic recordings of the artifacts (Homework, worksheets, quizzes) and the positive feedback comments in them, which were organized in digital folders classified by theme like this: (Present Continuous, quiz) - (Modal verbs, Worksheet) - (Present perfect, Homework) - (Simple past, Homework). This compilation made it possible to document the written comments in an orderly way and to observe the progress of the group. These strategies were aligned with the

theoretical framework, specifically with the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1980), which argues that positive feedback strengthens the perception of competence and autonomy, key elements for intrinsic motivation. In addition, they were connected to the project's objectives, such as diagnosing intrinsic motivation and observing changes in students' attitudes. At the end of this cycle, a comprehensive analysis was conducted using the data collected up to that point. This included the positive feedback strategies implemented by me, reflections recorded in observation journals, used as a reflective tool to examine how the provided feedback affected students' intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and perception of competence. Additionally, students' comments and classroom artifacts were used in that comprehensive analysis. The results highlighted the need to incorporate a progress tracker, understood as student progress monitoring, which is defined as "a practice that helps teachers use student performance data to continually evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and make more informed instructional decisions" (Safer and Fleischman, 2025, pp. 81-83). I believe such a tool fostered greater learner autonomy and provided clearer insights into students' perceived competence during the second cycle.

In week eight, during the second cycle, three data collection tools were used in order to obtain information on the impact of positive feedback on students' intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and sense of competence: a mixed questionnaire, a progress tracker, and a final focus group. The questionnaire was implemented because it allows for the collection of information in a standardized and systematic way from a large number of participants, facilitating quantitative analysis and comparison of responses. According to Anderson (1998), "a questionnaire permits the collection of reliable and reasonably valid data in a simple, cheap and timely manner'' (p. 170). The questionnaire, applied in the eighth week of the process, was designed by me and validated and piloted by my practicum advisor. This tool was administered through Google Forms because of its user-friendly design features and the clarity it offers for organizing and interpreting

responses. The questionnaire consisted of five scale-type questions, six open-ended questions, and four multiple-choice questions. The structure of the questionnaire included an introduction on intrinsic motivation, positive and negative feedback, as well as a note clarifying the confidentiality of responses. Its purpose was to investigate students' perceptions of the type of feedback received and its influence on key motivational factors. Although the questionnaire was shared with the entire group through the cooperating teacher's group chat, only ten students completed it.

Afterwards, during weeks 9, 10, and 11, a progress tracker was implemented as a strategy not only to encourage autonomy, but also to help students become more conscious of the goals they achieve, visualize their progress, and thereby reinforce their sense of competence. This tool, which was developed by the students at the end of each class, consisted of two sections: the first allowed learning and feedback on teaching practice to be recorded; the second presented a list of expected language achievements, for example: *"Sé usar el presente continuo en oraciones afirmativas"*, in which the students were expected to mark with an **X** as they felt they had reached them. This instrument fulfilled a double function: on the one hand, it promoted self-regulation in students. Pintrich (as cited in Sadi, 2013) stated that "Self-regulated learning is defined as the strategies that students use to regulate their cognition (…) as well as the use of resource management strategies which students use to manage and control their environment and also their learning" (pp. 21-33). On the other hand, it provided the teacher with concrete inputs to assess the extent of their feedback strategies from a student perspective. Finally, in week 12 a focus group with eleven students was conducted, moderated by me. This was recorded in audio format and later transcribed, assigning codes (S1, S2, S3, etc.) to the participants to preserve anonymity. The focus group questions were designed in relation to these research categories (intrinsic motivation, positive feedback, autonomy, and competence), and allowed an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perceptions of students regarding the process lived. Questions raised included: *"¿Qué les ha motivado a participar más activamente en clase?", "¿Creen que la*

retroalimentación positiva los impulsa a seguir aprendiendo?", y "¿Se sienten cómodos pidiendo orientación cuando lo necesitan?".

The implemented actions were directly linked to the research objectives. Namely, the initial diagnosis (Objective 1) was achieved through observations and an initial focus group, while changes in intrinsic motivation (Objective 2) were assessed through the questionnaire and final focus group. Student perceptions (Objective 3) were collected in the final focus group, and finally, participation and attitudes (Objective 4) were documented in observation journals. The theoretical framework, based on the Cognitive Evaluation Theory and the concepts of autonomy and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1980), supported the relevance of the strategies. Positive feedback, by focusing on recognition of achievement and effort, satisfied the students' basic psychological needs, which in turn promoted their intrinsic motivation.

Data Analysis

The methodology followed in this study is action research. Albalawin et al. (2022) stated that "Action research is a systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to collect data about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn'' (p. 287). This definition aligns with the principle of this research study, since it was carried out by me as a pre-service teacher within the natural environment of the classroom, with the aim of improving both teaching practices and learning experiences of students. In this case, the focus was placed on the implementation of positive feedback strategies as a means to foster student intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and perceived competence in the English language classroom. Altrichter et al. (1993) stated that "Data have two important features: they are material traces or representations of events [...] and they are regarded as relevant by a researcher, providing evidence with respect to the issue investigated" (p. 70). Aligned to this approach, this research used various data collection methods to analyze the impact of positive feedback on students'

intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and perception of competence. These included class observations, recorded in the form of observation journals. These observations focused on attitudes, participation, and responses to the feedback received. Afterwards, the observation journals were digitized in a spreadsheet in Excel, organizing the information under the key components of the study (Positive Feedback, Intrinsic Motivation, Autonomy, and Competence), and including interpretative comments. In addition, two focus groups were conducted: one at the beginning of the process to validate initial observations and another at the end to understand the effects of positive feedback perceived by students. Both were recorded in audio, transcribed manually, and analyzed by coding with the help of Chat GPT, highlighting the relevant fragments under previously defined categories like this: Positive feedback (PF), Intrinsic Motivation (IM), Competence (CO), and Autonomy (AU).

Furthermore, a digital questionnaire was applied, developed in Google Forms, which combined questions of scale, multiple choice, and open-ended. Once the responses were collected, they were exported to Excel, coded with the same categories used in the focus groups, and complemented with graphs generated by the platform itself, which provided a first visual interpretation of the results. During weeks nine, ten, and eleven, a progress tracker was implemented at the end of each class as an individual reflection tool. The progress trackers were collected, photographed, and entered into a spreadsheet in Excel. Based on this information, a general analysis was carried out focusing on the theoretical components of the study, identifying perceptions related to learning progress and the role of positive feedback. To strengthen the validity and consistency of the findings, this study adopted a combined method: triangulation, as proposed by Altrichter et al. (1993). This approach involved systematically comparing and cross-referencing the data collected through various instruments, including teacher observation journals, student questionnaires, progress trackers, and focus groups. After each stage of data collection, the information was categorized under the core analytical components of the study:

positive feedback, intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and competence. These categories were consistently used across all data sources, allowing for a structured comparison. The triangulation process also considered multiple perspectives, combining the researcher's observations with the students' perceptions. Through coding, organization in spreadsheets, and repeated reading of transcriptions and reflections, the study aligned and contrasted both points of view. This process ensured a more comprehensive and trustworthy interpretation of the educational dynamics observed in the classroom.

Findings and Interpretations

This action research explored how positive feedback can facilitate intrinsic motivation in 10th-grade students at a public school. The results, obtained through questionnaires, focus groups, observation journals, and progress trackers, revealed significant changes in three key components: Intrinsic motivation, perception of competence, and autonomy. These findings showed important changes in their attitude and disposition reflected in an increase in participation, greater confidence in class, and spontaneous expressions of interest in learning. These signs were reinforced by the results of the final focus group, where several students reported feeling more confident, valued, and motivated as a result of the positive feedback received throughout the process. These findings will be presented thematically, supported by quantitative and qualitative evidence, and analyzed in the light of the Theory of Self-Determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Intrinsic Motivation

According to Thohir, (2017), "intrinsic motivation is that which comes from within the individual in which a person might be motivated by the enjoyment of the learning process itself or by a desire to make themselves feel better'' (p. 23). The Questionnaire showed that 80% of students (50% fully agreed, 30% agreed) said they were more motivated to improve their performance when they received positive feedback about their assignments or class participation.

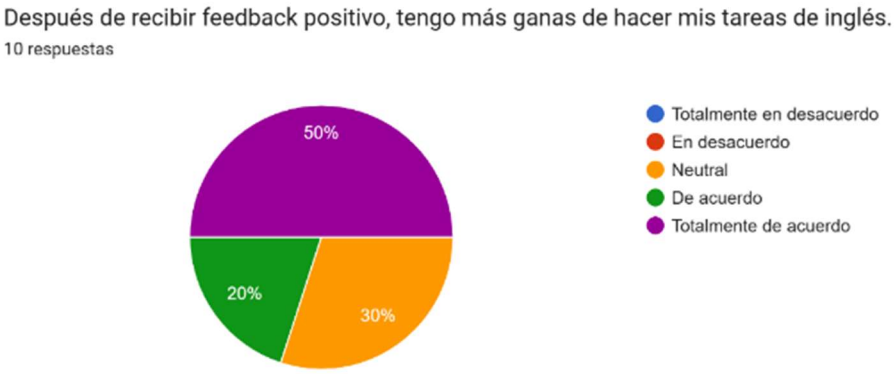
This finding was reinforced by qualitative evidence in the final focus group, contrasting past experiences with current ones. As illustrated by S10: "*Antes había un profesor que no nos daba la retroalimentación, así como para uno motivarse tanto (…) mientras tanto con usted la retroalimentación es un poquito más motivadora"*. In addition, S7 stated: "*Pues a mí me va bien en inglés con usted porque usted nos motiva a seguir adelante, si comentemos errores usted nos corrige en cambio otros profesores no lo hacen, pues a mí eso si me motiva"*. Similarly, journal observations entries documented a noticeable increase in voluntary participation and engagement, further confirming that positive feedback fostered intrinsic motivation, where I observed that students who previously avoided participating began to do so voluntarily, even greeting in English without being asked: ("*Hello teacher, good morning" (Class observation, March 26th, 2025).* Another particular case was that of S9, who, during the final focus group, stated:

> *"Profe, del año pasado a este año, yo me siento más motivada, pues ya que he soltado mucho el miedo de salir al tablero ya que usted nos ha corregido los errores que hemos cometido y nunca nos ha llegado a juzgar (…) si no que usted antes nos motiva: "Hágale que usted si puede", o sea, cada día nos motiva más".*

This, together with further testimonies such as: *"S5: Si vamos a participar (…) al momento de corregirnos cualquier cosa, lo va a hacer de una manera en que no nos va a hacer sentir mal y eso pues obviamente nos ayuda a seguir aprendiendo", "S4: Si me he sentido motivada ya que no como pasa con otros profesores (…) en cambio con el profe Cristhyan, él se dedica a explicarnos bien y eso es lo que me hace sentirme motivada", and "S7: Sí me he sentido motivada porque, es algo que los profesores deberían hacer, (…) si alguien comete un error, deberían de "oye no te achantes" "usted sabe que usted sí puede", es algo que otros profesores deberían hacer"*; illustrate how positive feedback reduced fear of error, a key obstacle to intrinsic motivation according to the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1980). In addition, the questionnaire revealed that 70% of students (50% fully agreed, 20% agree) associated positive feedback with

increased interest in doing homework (*See figure 1*). These findings support the hypothesis that consistent positive feedback fosters a shift from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation.

Figure 1
Feedback and Motivation Questionnaire



Competence

Ryan and Deci (2000) stated that **"**Competence concerns the feeling of mastery, a sense that one can succeed and grow. The need for competence is best satisfied within well-structured environments that afford optimal challenges, positive feedback, and opportunities for growth'' (p. 2). The Progress trackers showed that all students marked with an **X** that mastered grammatical subjects such as modal verbs and present continuous, with comments like "*Aprendí a diferenciar y saber en qué momento se utilizan los modal verbs can, should, could, must" (S7)* or "*Aprendí la manera en que cambian los verbos en el presente continuo"(S4).* The class observations also captured moments where students confidently corrected their peers: "*Eso es superlativo, no comparativo, se le pone EST al final" (Class observation, Feb 28th, 2025),* demonstrating internalization of concepts. These behaviors reflect the premise of Ryan and Deci (2000) on the need for competence: when feedback highlights specific achievements, students develop a self-efficacy that drives their intrinsic motivation. One critical finding was the contrast between the type of previous corrections: "*No te da ni para el 1.0" (Class observación, Aug 2nd, 2024) and the*

positive feedback strategy implemented. S3 stated in the Final focus group: "Sí, porque usted nos lo explica muy bien y a veces me quedan las cosas claras, entonces me siento capacitado en hacer las cosas". This suggests that competence is built not only by success, but also by respectful treatment of error. In addition, the data revealed a significant impact of teacher recognition on students' self-perception of competence. As shown in (*Figure 2*), 80% of the students reported feeling more confident when they received recognition for their achievements, with a remarkable distribution: 60% expressed total agreement with this statement, while an additional 20% expressed partial agreement. This quantitative finding is supported by qualitative evidence, such as:

> *S8: Bueno, sí, pues me ha ayudado mucho la retroalimentación de Cristhyan, ya que por ejemplo si lo vemos desde el año pasado mi rendimiento en el inglés, a pesar de que siempre pues intentaba sacar las mejores notas y nunca pues lo había perdido, este año he mejorado demasiado ya con las evaluaciones con los ejemplos al salir del tablero o cuando me toca exponer algún tema que nos das, pues eso". (Final focus group)*

From these results, it can be hypothesized that positive feedback that emphasizes specific achievements contributes to the development of perceived competence, which in turn strengthens intrinsic motivation.

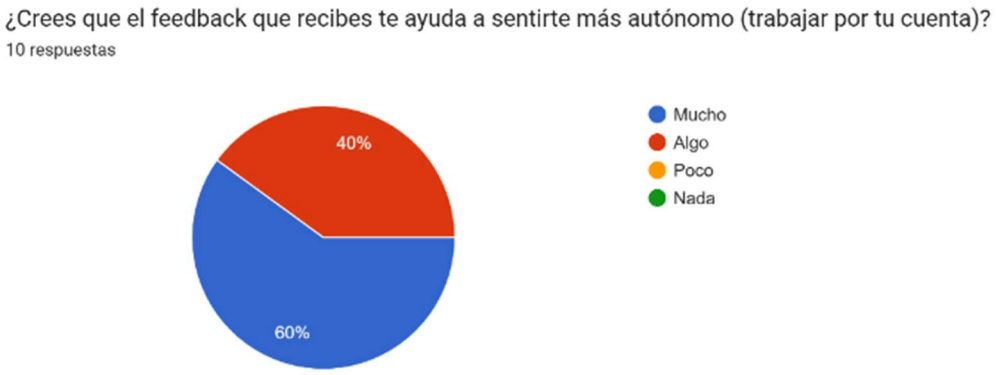
Figure 2
Feedback and Motivation Questionnaire



Autonomy

Ryan and Deci (2000) defined autonomy as "a sense of initiative and ownership in one's actions. It is supported by experiences of interest and value and undermined by experiences of being externally controlled, whether by rewards or punishments'' (p. 2). 60% of the students reported in the questionnaire that they became more autonomous (*see figure 3*). The observation journals documented concrete examples of students like S3 that guided their classmates without teaching intervention: "*Parce mire, es fácil, solo es que le ponga una ER al final de la palabra" (Class Observation Feb, 19th, 2025).* In the final focus group, S5 reflected: "*El 50% es la autonomía y el interés del estudiante y el otro es el profesor"*. This statement highlights the balance between autonomy and teaching support proposed by the self-determination theory.

Figure 3
Feedback and Motivation Questionnaire



These findings confirm that positive feedback facilitated intrinsic motivation to meet two basic psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000): *Competence*: Specific positive feedback: *"Student 1, lo hiciste muy bien! Veo que conoces bien el uso de los comparativos y sabes usar el adjetivo "Tall" para hacer comparaciones" (Journal entry No2)*. Versus general feedbak: "*Good job!"*; And *autonomy*: *"S5: Bueno, la autonomía, en el caso de aprender inglés es muy importante" (Final focus group).*

Conclusions

This research showed that positive feedback, when consistent and specific, can transform the dynamics of the classroom. Students who initially depended on external motivations: "*S7: Aunque la mayoría lo hacen por hacerlo, nada más por la nota" (Initial focus group),* developed a genuine interest in English: "*S2: Sí me ha ayudado la retroalimentación porque aprendí que soy bueno en inglés y no me debe de dar vergüenza y practicar algo que me gusta"* or *"(S9)Profe, del año pasado a este año, yo me siento más motivada, pues ya que he soltado mucho el miedo de salir al tablero ya que usted nos ha corregido los errores que hemos cometido y nunca nos ha llegado a juzgar" (Final focus group).* These testimonies validate the potential of positive feedback as a powerful pedagogical strategy that facilitates intrinsic motivation in students, demonstrating its relevance to improve the English Teaching and learning process.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that future research further explore and refine the use of progress trackers as a tool for enhancing student autonomy and perceived competence. While the implementation of the progress tracker in this study yielded positive results, such as increased self-awareness, engagement, and self-regulation, its design remained relatively simple and manually applied. To expand its impact, future studies should consider developing this instrument in a more technical and structured way. For instance, incorporating digital platforms or applications could allow for real-time tracking, personalized feedback, and clearer visualizations of learning progress over time. Additionally, establishing well-defined performance indicators aligned with learning goals would enable both students and teachers to monitor achievements more accurately and make informed pedagogical decisions. A more robust and systematic version of the progress tracker could offer deeper insights into how students manage their learning process and how this self-monitoring practice interacts with intrinsic motivation. Therefore, refining this tool not only holds promise for improved data collection but also for advancing the development of autonomy and self-regulation in language learning environments.

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