



Pre-service English Teachers' Use of Reinforcement Strategies in Microteaching

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Abstract

This article investigates the reinforcement strategies used by pre-service English teachers in a microteaching class. The researchers employed a case study. Twenty-two students participated in this research. Observation, interviews, and video recording were used to gather the data. The data were then organized, coded, interpreted. The findings revealed that four types of reinforcement were used by pre-service English teachers in microteaching, namely positive reinforcement (81.93%), negative reinforcement (17%), punishment (3.36%), and extinction (2.94%). Moreover, the pre-service English teachers delivered reinforcement strategy by using warmth and enthusiasm expressions of praise, avoiding the punishment, and using non-variety usage of positive reinforcement. In conclusion, pre-service English teachers mostly used positive reinforcements in their teaching practice. They delivered the reinforcement strategy by using warmth and enthusiasm expressions of praise, avoiding the punishment, and using non-variety usage of positive reinforcement.

Keywords: microteaching; pre-service English teachers; reinforcement strategy

Introduction

Reinforcement has become an important aspect of English language teaching in Indonesia due to three reasons. First, reinforcement that teachers provide is one form to help students to fulfill themselves in the needs of esteem, love and belonging, self-actualization, and psychological needs (Maslow, 1943). Second, according to Sumantri and Permana (1999), reinforcement is an effective way to generate student motivation. The use of positive reinforcement in the form of praise has been proved to be effective in increasing students' desirable behaviors (Cossairt, Hall, & Hopkins, 1973; Masruddin, 2019; Shanty, 2018). Third, Afirm (2015) states that reinforcement can be used to teach skills, teach a replacement behavior for an interfering behavior, increase appropriate behaviors, and increase on-task behavior. Based on those reasons, teachers should master reinforcement skills to encourage students to actively participate in the learning process.

Several researchers have studied reinforcement in English language teaching. First, Stasia (2013) conducted a study about microteaching students' perception on the use of reinforcement skills in a microteaching class. The results revealed that microteaching students had a positive perception of the use of reinforcement skills in microteaching. The teacher candidates implemented reinforcement skills in their teaching practices using verbal and non-verbal forms. Second, Kirana (2018) examined the benefits of the positive reinforcement that was given to increase students' motivation in learning English. The results showed that positive reinforcement was used in the forms of learning praises and extra scores to motivate students to learn English. Third, Zebua (2017) conducted a study on the use of verbal reinforcement to motivate students in speaking English. The results showed that the students were motivated to speak English when they were praised. Fourth, Adamson, Kilpatrick, Smith, and DePaepe (2015) found that positive reinforcement was an effective way to identify and teach appropriate behaviors to the students by using encouragement and reward systems. Lastly, Oktarine (2012) examined the effect of giving reinforcement on students' motivation in structure classes. The research showed that the students became more enthusiastic about class activities and they had better preparation before the class. They became more confident in the class activities, and they tried to do their best in the class.

Although the previous studies on reinforcement have been conducted in English language teaching, only a few attention has been paid to the use of reinforcement by pre-service English teachers in the teaching practice. Pre-service English teachers need to master basic teaching skills (see Asmin, 2019; Sudirman, 2018), including how to give reinforcements to the students. Turney et al. (1973) mention eight skills playing an important role in teaching and learning activities, one of which is the reinforcement skill. Mastering reinforcement skills, pre-service English teachers can maintain students' learning motivation to achieve the optimal

results in the learning process. Reinforcement is delivered by the pre-service teachers shortly after the students participate in the learning process. Various forms of reinforcement can be combined by the pre-service teachers so that they do not seem far-fetched, unnatural, or not spontaneous.

This present research aims to investigate the reinforcement strategy used by the pre-service English teachers in a microteaching class of English Language Education Study Program at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The researchers also intend to investigate the delivery of reinforcement strategy by the pre-service English teachers in their teaching practice.

Method

Since this research was intended to investigate the reinforcement strategy that was used by the pre-service English teachers in the microteaching class, the method used was a case study. Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) stated that a case study focuses on a single unit, such as one individual, one group, one organization, or one program. The goal of a case study is to provide a deep explanation and understanding of the case (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Twenty-two pre-service English teachers in a microteaching class at Sanata Dharma University participated in this study.

The researchers employed three instruments, namely observation, interview guidelines, and video recording. The researchers employed observation sheets to obtain the first data about the types of reinforcement strategies used by the pre-service English teachers in the microteaching class. In collecting the data, the researchers conducted observations. To support and verify the data from observation sheets, the researchers also used the data obtained from the video recording and interview.

According to Ary, Jacob, and Sorensen (2010), observation is collecting information through human senses, namely hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting. The researchers used an observation checklist as a tool to obtain the data. This observation checklist served as a guideline in observing the situation in the classroom and the learning process. Moreover, the researchers used video recording to recall the thoughts about the classroom actions, movements, sounds which could not be remembered, seen, or heard in the observation checklist and interview. There were 22 video recordings. Each video took 20-25 minutes.

Generally, an interview is a set of questions that are used to understand the phenomenon in our surroundings. It aims to gather people's original opinions, beliefs, and feelings about a phenomenon that happens in the environment (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). When conducting an interview, the researchers recorded information by taking notes or taping audio and video. The results of audio or videotaping were used to complete the notes. A personal interview is

often conducted one on one. There are many advantages to this method. It allows the interviewers to develop a rapport with respondents, increase trust from respondents, and get more honest answers (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). In this research, the purpose of the interview was to find out the reinforcement given by the pre-service teachers to their learning process.

After collecting the data, the researchers organized the data. To avoid some errors, the researchers carefully read the data. The data were described and interpreted. The researcher used the qualitative data analysis procedure by Ary, Jacob, and Sorensen (2010) as the data analysis techniques. The steps included organizing and familiarizing, coding, reducing, interpreting, and representing.

After observing and watching the video recording of students' classroom activities, the researchers transcribed all of the recorded data to the written text. In this study, the transcription convention by Roberts (2006) was used as a guidance to transcribe the recorded data. The transcription conventions consisted of various symbols without changing the words. The researchers transcribed the data soon to prevent the misunderstanding that may occur during the transcribing process (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). One video recording transcription was around 25 minutes. The interview transcriptions needed a day to finish with 6 pages in total. In this stage, this research took much time to listen to the video recording. The second stage was coding and reducing. Wiersma (2000) suggests that coding is about developing concepts from the raw data. After the raw data of the instruments were organized, the data were coded and then reduced based on the category. This stage is the core of qualitative research because the researcher must identify the category of the data (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Coding is a common procedure for qualitative data analysis. Hence, the researcher decided to use coding as one of the processes to analyze the data.

Cohen et al. (2011) argue that coding is the process of grouping similar information so that it makes the researchers easy to organize the data. In this stage, the researchers created codes that represent the information to break apart the data. Then, the researchers sorted out the data by eliminating the data that did not belong to any categories. The researchers had to categorize and organize the types of reinforcement from the transcripts by coding. As interpretation is about bringing out the meaning, telling the story, providing an explanation, and developing plausible explanations, in this stage, the researchers focused on interpreting and presenting the research results and finding of this research by connecting the data with the related theories. In interpreting the data, the researchers had to explore the meaning and provide an explanation (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010).

Results and Discussion

The Types of Reinforcement Strategy Used by Pre-service English Teachers

Figure 1 showed the findings of this research. It is shown that positive reinforcement (81.9%) was the highest type of reinforcement used by the pre-service English teachers in the microteaching class and then it was respectively followed by negative reinforcement (17%), punishment (3.36%), and extinction (2.94%). The researchers described each type of reinforcement appearing in the teaching practices as follows.

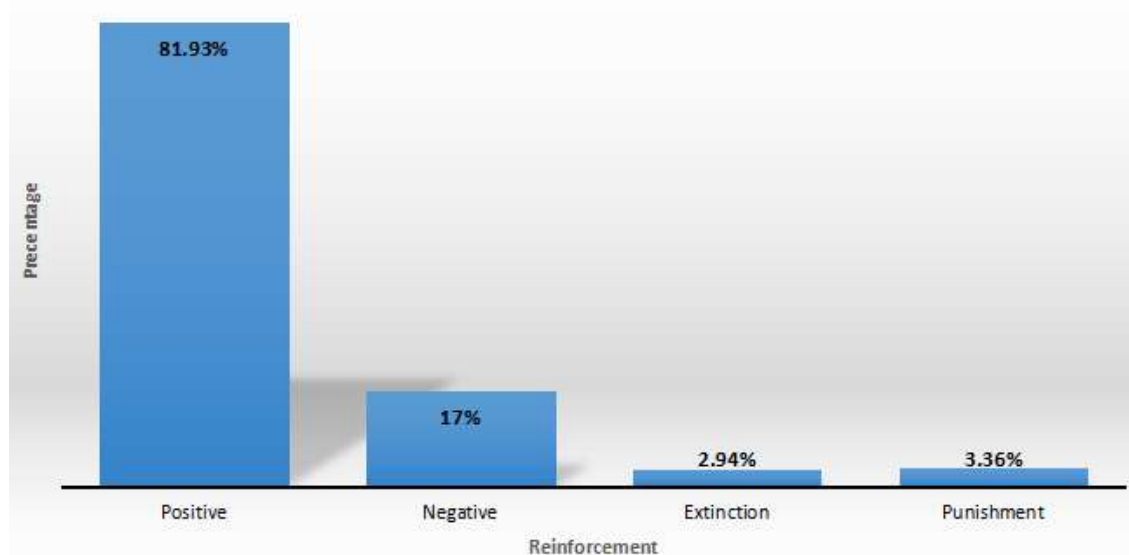


Figure 1 Reinforcement Strategy

Positive Reinforcement

After conducting twenty-two observations in the class, the researchers found that positive reinforcement was the reinforcement which was mostly given to the students with 81.93% out of 238 reinforcements. In the process of giving positive reinforcement, the pre-service English teachers used positive feedback to the students. Here are some of the excerpts which include the positive reinforcement taken from the transcript of the video recording.

Excerpt 1 (Teaching Practice 1 on 2 April 2019)

T5 : Thank you for S2 and S3. That's a really good explanation about this text.

S2 : Thank you, Miss

Excerpt 2 (Teaching Practice 2 on 4 April 2019)

T4 : Can you guess what kind of text that we will learn today?

S2 : Narrative!

T4 : Yeah, you are great. Excellent. Give applause to S2.

(everybody gives applause)

Excerpt 3 (Teaching Practice 3 on 9 April 2019)

T4 : Class, what do you know about narrative text?

(everybody tries to answer)

S2 : Folktale!

T4 : Yeah! S3, you got the best answer.

(everybody cheers up)

Excerpt 4 (Teaching Practice 4 on 11 April 2019)

T2 : Okay class, what is the generic structure? S2?

S2 : Re-orientation, complication, resolution and coda.

T2 : Okay great job S2!

S2 : Thank you, Sir

Excerpt 5 (Teaching Practice 5 on 16 April 2019)

T5 : I have some conversations. Who wants to be Jessy and Justin?

(many students raise their hands)

T5 : Okay, S2 will be Jessy and S3 will be Justin.

(S2 and S3 read the conversation text)

T5 : Okay thank you S2 and S3 for reading the sentence.

S2 : You are very welcome miss!

Excerpts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 showed the positive reinforcement that the pre-service English teachers used during their teaching practice. From the examples, the pre-service English teachers mostly gave praise to the students. In Excerpts 1, 2, 3, 4, the pre-service English teachers gave praise through the expression “you are excellent, great job” after the students answered the questions given by the pre-service English teachers correctly. As seen in Excerpt 5, saying “thank you” was also commonly used by the pre-service English teachers as the form of appreciation. As a consequence, the pre-service English teachers expected that the students would try to do the same thing next time and she probably increased the frequency of her behavior in the future. In the research results, Oktarine (2012) stated that the students became more active and confident to participate in the class after they were praised by the teacher. In the interview session, the pre-service English teacher said:

... in my opinion, reinforcement strategy is a tool for a teacher to make the students more enthusiastic. For example, if we praise the students, then they will think that “I am good then I have to be better next time”. For the

type of reinforcement, I only know about giving praise like “good job” and “excellent” so far. (Participant 2).

Positive reinforcement refers to a stimulus that increases or maintains the students’ behavior (Walker, Shea, & Bauer, 2007). The improvement of an expected behavior can be done by reinforcing it with a reinforcement that is appropriate and meaningful to the individual (Dwoning, Moran, Myles, & Ormsbee, 1991). Based on the interview, the pre-service English teachers believed that positive reinforcement increased the students’ expected behavior. Therefore, pre-service English teachers tried to trigger the students’ expected behavior through positive reinforcement.

Negative Reinforcement

Based on the findings, negative reinforcement (17%) was used by the pre-service English teachers in their teaching practice. Negative reinforcement was the second dominant type of reinforcement used by the pre-service English teachers. The examples taken from the video recording transcript are shown as follows.

Excerpt 6 (Teaching Practice 1 on 2 April 2019)

T5 : Since everyone is doing a good job today so there will be no home work for next meeting.

(everybody is saying “yee thank you miss”)

Excerpt 7 (Teaching Practice 2 on 4 April 2019)

T2 : S2, can you help to read those sentence?

S2 : I’m sorry miss, I cannot see the text clearly.

T2 : It’s okay, you may move forward then.

S2 : Okay miss.

Excerpt 8 (Teaching Practice 3 on 9 April 2019)

T3 : I think there will be no homework for you guys.

(everybody yells happily)

Excerpt 9 (Teaching Practice 4 on 11 April 2019)

T3 : Class, I see many of you are not finished answer the questions, why? Is it difficult?

S2 : Yes, miss, it’s very difficult.

S3 : I’m confused miss.

T3 : Okay, let we fill the blank space together class.

Excerpt 10 (Teaching Practice 5 on 16 April 2019)

T1 : Do you know the definition of advertisement?

S2 : To inform something

T1 : Maybe S3 wants to add something?

S3 : To persuade people

T1 : Exactly. Thank you S2 and S3.

Excerpts 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are examples of negative reinforcement. This type of reinforcement aimed to reinforce the students by removing the operating aversive stimulus. Excerpt 1 and 3 are examples of negative reinforcement by removing action that the students do not want. The pre-service English teachers gave no homework for the following meeting because the students did a good job on that day. As a consequence, the students were happy and cheering up. In Excerpt 7, 9, and 10, the pre-service English teachers found that one of the students cannot answer the blank space correctly. The pre-service English teachers asked another student to complete the imperfect answer. The pre-service English teachers still gave the students a chance rather than correcting them directly so that the students did not feel shame and down during the learning process (Walker, Shea, & Bauer, 2007). Here is the evidence of the pre-service English teacher statement taken from the interview transcript.

Yes, it is important. That is an act of respecting students too. Even though they were wrong but they were encouraged to try again if we say good job or nice try. It is more likely to motivate the students even though they are wrong, they also need to be given reinforcement. (Participant 3)

Negative reinforcement aims to remove the aversive stimulus that is already placed to change the behavior's frequency (Walker, Shea, & Bauer, 2007). As a consequence of giving negative reinforcement, the target behavior will be strengthened (Walker, Shea, & Bauer, 2007). Therefore, the students were expected not to be afraid of doing exercises in front of the class even though they would make mistakes.

Punishment

The punishment took part in the pre-service English teachers' teaching practice with 3.36% as the lowest runner up percentage. The pre-service English teachers rarely used punishment in their teaching practice. The examples of punishment taken from the video recording transcript are as follows.

Excerpt 11 (Teaching Practice 1 on 2 April 2019)

S2 : *(doing chit chat while the teacher explains the material)*

T1 : S2, you seem very excited about the materials. Can you read those sentences?

S2 : I'm sorry Sir. Yes, of course.

Excerpt 12 (Teaching Practice 2 on 4 April 2019)

S2 : Sir, S3 used *basa jawa*.

T3 : Okay, I will give minus 10 for it.

Excerpt 13 (Teaching Practice 3 on 9 April 2019)

T3 : Good morning S2, how was your sleep?

S2 : Sorry sir I'm late.

T3 : It's okay, but I think you should read the entire sentences for the class.

S2 : It's okay miss. Thank you

Excerpt 14 (Teaching Practice 4 on 11 April 2019)

T2 : S4, are you sleepy?

S4 : Yes, Sir. I'm sorry.

T2 : Okay class, because our friend is sleepy so let him read it.

Excerpt 15 (Teaching Practice 5 on 16 April 2019)

S2 : (*doing discussion with his friend while the teacher plays the video*)

T2 : Hey S2, you how were your discussion? Maybe you would like to share
about the video?

S2 : I'm sorry miss.

In Excerpts 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, the punishment was done by the addition of stimulus, such as giving an additional task to the students who are not doing the task. The addition can be reading a sentence or describing the material to the entire class (McDaniel, 1980). Meanwhile, in Excerpt 12, the pre-service teacher gave punishment by reducing points which were liked by the students. Although punishment was seen in the teaching practice, actually the pre-service teachers were lack of knowledge about punishment as a type of reinforcement. In the interview, the teacher said:

I'm not yet familiar with reinforcement. But when I joined the microteaching class, I just found out about reinforcement. Reinforcement is like capturing students so they are interested in learning. For the type, I only know like saying good jobs, excellent, that's it, sis. (Participant 6).

It is clear from the interview that the pre-service teacher did not know about the theories of the type of reinforcement completely. Walker et al. (2007) state that punishment is used to decrease certain behaviors that do not support the

learning process. The pre-service teacher did the punishment as the type of reinforcement in the teaching practice but he did not know that he was doing the function of punishment as reinforcement.

Extinction

Extinction was the last type of reinforcement that can be found in the teaching practice. As shown in Figure 1, extinction (2.94%) was the lowest type of reinforcement used by the pre-service English teachers in the microteaching class. The examples of extinction taken from the video recording transcript are as follows.

Excerpt 16 (Teaching Practice 1 on 2 April 2019)

T1 : S2 please read the sentences.
S2 : Okay Sir
S3 : Ciiiiiiiiiiiiiiii
T1 : *(does not give any responses to S3 then thank S2)*

Excerpt 17 (Teaching Practice 2 on 4 April 2019)

T3 : Okay, let's move to the next slide.
S2 : *Melek sik pak!*
(everybody laughs)
T3 : *(no response)*

Excerpt 18 (Teaching Practice 3 on 9 April 2019)

T3 : So, let's watch the video.
(everybody cheers up by saying "yee")
S2 : *(yelling "yee" 4 times)*
T3 : *(no response and play the video)*

Excerpt 19 (Teaching Practice 4 on 11 April 2019)

T2 : I'm fine too, thank you.
S2 : *aww, manis banget*
T2 : *(say nothing and continue asking questions to the class)*

Excerpt 20 (Teaching Practice 5 on 16 April 2019)

S2 : *sstt! Hey diem. Kalo menurutku kamu baca CCU aja hahaha*
(talking loudly to her friends in front of the class)
T1 : *(give no response and continue the material)*

In Excerpt 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, the pre-service English teachers gave similar responses to the students who perform some unexpected behaviors or bad

behaviors which do not support the learning process. From the excerpts, it was clearly shown that the teacher tried to ignore students' unexpected behaviors that disturbed the learning process (Dwoning, Moran, Myles, & Ormsbee, 1991). In conclusion, the types of reinforcement used by the pre-service English teachers were positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment, and extinction.

The Delivery of Reinforcement Strategy in Micro Teaching Class

Based on the findings, the pre-service English teachers delivered the reinforcement strategy by using the principles of reinforcement by Turney, et al. (1973). There are three principles of reinforcement, namely warmth and enthusiasm, avoiding the punishment, and various usage.

Warmth and Enthusiasm Expression of Praise

Rosenshine (1970), as cited by Turney, et al. (1973), states that enthusiasm is the frequency of teachers' movement, gestures, variation in voice, and eye contact. A reinforcement that is given enthusiastically can make students' expected behavior come more often. The following excerpts are examples of warmth and enthusiasm principles that the pre-service teachers used in the teaching practice.

Excerpt 21 (Teaching Practice 1 on 2 April 2019)

T5 : I'm really glad that you are really enthusiastic to join this class today.

S2 : *(the class yells happily)* of course miss. I can't wait to start the lesson!

Excerpt 22 (Teaching Practice 3 on 9 April 2019)

T4 : Okay nice to meet you, S2. I hope you enjoy this class well. *(smiled to the students and made the eye-contact)*

S2 : Okay thank you miss!

Excerpt 23 (Teaching Practice 5 on 16 April 2019)

T5 : Who wants to lead the prayer?

S2 : Me!

T5 : Great! *(gave the thumbs up)* Thank you to see your happiness today!

S2 : My very pleasure miss.

Excerpt 21, 22, and 23 showed that the pre-service English teachers demonstrated several movements, gestures, and eye contact. In Excerpt 21, the pre-service English teachers reinforced students cheerfully with the high intonation of voice so that it made the students respond to the statements enthusiastically. Meanwhile, the pre-service English teachers in Excerpt 22 and 23 showed the enthusiasm to the students by the gestural aspects, such as smiling and giving the thumbs up. Rosenshine (1970) stated that both warmth and enthusiasm

play an important role when the teacher delivers reinforcement. In the interview, the pre-service English teacher said:

... so that students are not afraid to study. So, when the students are encouraged and corrected with the correct language, they are also more enthusiastic to learn. (Participant 5)

Demonstrative gestures, varied, dramatic body movements, or uplifting vocal delivery can hold the attention of students more effectively than less enthusiastic behaviors (Bettencourt, Gillett, & Hull, 1983). To reach an effective point, the pre-service English teacher must know how to direct the reinforcement so that the students can perceive and relate it to the behavior exhibited.

Avoiding the Punishment

Although punishment is an effective method of reinforcement, it is still controversial (Lipe & Jung, 1971). Skinner (1938) states that positive reinforcement can simply be more effective, especially in the long-term. Learning accompanied by positive feelings and associations is more likely to be remembered. The following excerpts are the excerpts of avoiding punishment that the pre-service English teacher used in the teaching practice.

Excerpt 24 (Teaching Practice 1 on 2 April 2019)

T5 : You guys seem very understand about the material, I would like to give you applause first. Then, I don't want to give you homework today.

Ss : Yeay! (*happy and clap*)

Excerpt 25 (Teaching Practice 5 on 16 April 2019)

T5 : Okay thank you S2 and S3 for reading the sentences.

S2 : My pleasure miss

S3 : You're very welcome miss

Excerpt 26 (Teaching Practice 1 on 2 April 2019)

T5 : Thank you for S4 and S5, that's a really good explanation about narrative text.

S4 : Thank you so much miss.

Excerpt 24, 25, and 26 showed that the pre-service English teachers appreciated the expected behaviors of the students by saying "thank you" and giving applause. The effects of using positive reinforcement are more predictable rather than negative reinforcement (Meacham & Wiesen, 1969). In the interview,

the pre-service English teacher said:

As the expectations, they want to answer again in the future. So. they become active students because they were allowed to answer previously, already valued. Then in the future, they will think that they will continue to be respected even though they are wrong they will be allowed to try again. (Participant 3)

Praise can improve children's intrinsic motivation and help them develop feelings of competence and better learning outcomes (Skinner, 1938). By giving praise as the avoidance of punishment, the students are expected to keep doing the expected behaviors in the future.

Variety Usage of Positive Reinforcement

In the use of reinforcement, the pre-service English teachers should provide flexible and various manners to develop reinforcement skills and the expected behavior. The following excerpts are the examples of reinforcement used by the pre-service teachers in the teaching practice.

Excerpt 27 (Teaching Practice 2 on 4 April 2019 minute 05:05)

T4 : Okay thank you, everyone, you may have a seat.

(everybody says "yeay" then gives applause)

Excerpt 28 (Teaching Practice 2 on 4 April 2019 minute 19:48)

S2 : Narrative text is an imaginative story.

S3 : Narrative text is an imaginative story to amuse the readers.

T4 : Okay. Good everyone!

(several student gives applause)

Excerpt 29 (Teaching Practice 5 on 16 April 2019 minute 22:12)

T5 : Can you make a sentence use simple present tense?

S4 : I study English every Tuesday.

T5 : Yes. You are so excellent!

S4 : Thank you, Miss.

Excerpts 27, 28, 29 showed that the pre-service English teachers tried to reinforce the students with positive reinforcement and several expressions of praises. In Excerpt 27, all the students were feeling happy by saying "yay" and giving applauses. As time went by, the behaviors of the students were decreased as could be seen in Excerpts 27, 28, and 29. The pre-service English teacher repeated to use reinforcement in the form of praises. According to Turney et al. (1973), a repetition of verbal or token (stars) can lessen the effectiveness of the

reinforcement. However, the pre-service English teachers realized that the various usage of reinforcement was very limited. One admitted:

In my opinion, the vocabulary that I use is just that. For example, "okay good job, great job, excellent" only the trivial things like that. So, I have used it but it is still in a very passive way and the words are just fixed. (Participant 1).

According to Larriba (2017), to avoid satiation, a variety of reinforcement should be used and new ones should be introduced. In this part, the pre-service English teachers did not use the significant variation of reinforcement. Hence, the expected behavior of the students did not work maximally.

Conclusion

There are two major conclusions in this research. First, the types of reinforcement strategies used by the pre-service English teachers in the microteaching class were positive reinforcement (81.93%), negative reinforcement (17%), punishment (3.36%), and extinction (2.94%). From the findings, it can be concluded that the pre-service English teachers mostly used positive reinforcement in the teaching practice in the microteaching class.

Second, the pre-service English teachers delivered the reinforcement strategies by using warmth and enthusiasm, avoiding punishment, and non-variety usage in the microteaching class. The delivery of reinforcement used by the pre-service English teachers was mostly focused on the positive form. The interview transcript also supported the fact that the pre-service English teachers lacked various expressions in using the reinforcement. The pre-service English teachers need to study and explore more about the types and the delivery of reinforcement strategy in the microteaching class.

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