

Teacher Strategies In Implementing Positive Reinforcement In Indonesian Language Learning For Grade 3 Students Of SDN 2 Kayangan

Suci Cahyani¹, H. Lalu Habiburrahman², Musafir³

¹²Program Studi Pendidikan Guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, STKIP Hamzar

³Program Studi Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, STKIP Hamzar

Article Info

Article history:

Accepted: 30 July 2026

Published: 13 Agustus 2026

Keywords:

Teacher's Strategy;

Positive Reinforcement;

Indonesian Language Learning;

Learning Motivation.

Abstract

This study aimed to describe the teacher's strategy in implementing positive reinforcement in Indonesian language learning for third-grade students at SD Negeri 2 Kayangan and to identify the factors influencing its implementation. This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. The research subjects consisted of the third-grade teacher and students of SD Negeri 2 Kayangan. Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings revealed that the teacher structured positive reinforcement through three main forms: (1) verbal reinforcement via praise and motivating sentences, (2) non-verbal reinforcement through positive gestures such as smiles, applause, thumbs-up, and personal guidance, and (3) giving rewards in the form of star stickers for active students or groups. This strategy was consistently applied from the introductory stage, through the core activities, to the closing of the lesson. Consequently, this strategy significantly improved students' learning motivation, active participation, courage to express opinions, and self-confidence. The factors supporting this success included the teacher's high intrinsic motivation, students' positive responses and enthusiasm, the use of engaging visual learning media, the implementation of group-based activities, and the teacher's astuteness in tailoring reinforcement to individual student characteristics.

This is an open access article under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)



Corresponding Author:

Suci Cahyani

STKIP HAMZAR, Indonesia

Email Coresspondent: sucic3480@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental and crucial role in improving the quality of human resources and promoting the advancement of a nation's civilization. Through a structured educational process, students are expected to develop their potential, thereby significantly contributing to social, economic, and cultural development (Salsabila & Rahayu, 2025). Therefore, education is often conceptualized as a key indicator and determining factor in determining a nation's level of progress. This concept aligns closely with the ideals and objectives of national education, explicitly stated in Article 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. The law defines

national education as serving to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation to enrich the nation's life (Arifudin, 2022). Education is mandated to develop the potential of students to become people who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

In the Indonesian education system, education is delivered through various levels, with elementary school (SD) serving as the primary foundation. Elementary school is the first level of formal education a child undergoes and plays a crucial role in shaping their knowledge base, character, attitudes, and essential skills (Arifudin, 2022). It is at this level that students begin to acquire a variety of structured knowledge exposures that will later serve as the foundation for cognitive and psychomotor development in secondary and higher education. Elementary school education does not solely focus on the transfer of knowledge or subject matter per se, but rather places a heavier emphasis on internalizing character values, developing emotional intelligence, and enhancing students' social adaptability. Therefore, the learning process in elementary school requires a comprehensive, engaging design that pays close attention to the psychological characteristics and cognitive developmental levels of students, ensuring optimal achievement of educational goals in this early age range.

In the dynamics of the learning process, the teacher occupies an irreplaceable central role. Teachers are not merely agents of information transfer (transfer of knowledge), but rather multidimensional figures who control the climate and quality of learning in the classroom. The teacher's role encompasses facilitator, organizer, motivator, innovator, and evaluator (Nurzannah, 2022). This diversity of roles indicates that a teacher's professionalism is measured not only by their mastery of the material but also by their ability to guide, motivate, and support student development in various aspects. This aligns with the view that the instructional strategies adopted by teachers directly influence learning effectiveness (Maylia et al., 2024).

Among the various subjects taught in elementary schools, Indonesian holds a strategic position and an essential role. Indonesian language learning is designed to develop students' language skills comprehensively, encompassing four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Mailida & Wandani, 2023). These four pillars of skills are reciprocal and mutually supportive; they serve as essential instruments for students to absorb information across disciplines and express ideas, thoughts, and feelings both orally and in writing. Indonesian language learning not only targets normative linguistic mastery but also focuses on developing effective, critical, and cultural communication skills (Nadira et al., 2026). Therefore, Indonesian language learning scenarios in elementary schools must be designed in such a way that they are interactive, enjoyable, and relevant, thereby stimulating students' learning motivation (Ali, 2020).

However, the reality on the ground often presents significant challenges. One of the main determinants that frequently hinders the achievement of learning objectives is low student motivation. Motivation to learn acts as a driving force that triggers students' active involvement in absorbing material (Rahman, 2022). Students with high levels of determination and motivation have been empirically proven to demonstrate significantly superior levels of resilience, active participation, and learning outcomes compared to their less motivated peers. Conversely, motivational deficits often manifest themselves in apathy, reluctance to participate in class discussions, lack of initiative, and low self-confidence when asked to present or present arguments. This lack of internal drive ultimately reduces the effectiveness of the overall pedagogical process.

In response to these challenges, the implementation of positive reinforcement is seen as one of the most promising pedagogical maneuvers. Positive reinforcement refers to the deliberate

provision of feedback, whether verbal, non-verbal, or material, immediately following a student's positive behavior, with the intention of increasing the likelihood of that behavior recurring in the future (Deosari & Appulembang, 2022). Through this approach, students are conditioned to feel that their individuality, efforts, and even the smallest achievements receive attention and recognition from the educator. This reinforcement is not merely about rewards, but rather fulfills children's basic psychological needs for appreciation and social acceptance. Practices can take the form of affirmative praise, warm facial expressions, symbolic appreciation such as star stickers, and even certain privileges in the classroom (Bekata et al., 2025). Various contemporary studies confirm that positive reinforcement not only boosts motivation but is also effective in eliminating academic anxiety and boosting students' courage (Amalia, 2025; Syarah et al., 2021).

Based on preliminary observations conducted within the framework of the School Field Introduction (PLP) in third-grade students at SDN 2 Kayangan, a pedagogical phenomenon requiring intervention was revealed. In the Indonesian language learning process, a striking stratification of student activity was observed. A faction of students were passive, reluctant to respond to teacher questions, and exhibited symptoms of a confidence deficit when instructed to read aloud or deliver a speech in front of their peers. These indications highlight the suboptimal level of student engagement, stemming from the lack of uniform learning motivation.

Previous studies provide important evidence regarding the benefits of positive reinforcement, but they also show a research gap that this study addresses. Deosari and Appulembang (2022) examined positive reinforcement in distance learning and emphasized its relationship with student behavioral engagement, while Purba and Putri (2023) focused on students' attention in first-grade elementary classrooms. Syarah et al. (2021) examined the relationship between teacher reinforcement and learning motivation in Indonesian language learning, and recent studies have also discussed rewards as a means of increasing students' motivation (Hasibuan et al., 2025; Putri & Nawangtoro, 2025). These studies generally emphasize the effects or relationships of reinforcement, whereas fewer studies describe in detail how elementary school teachers select, combine, and adapt verbal, nonverbal, and tangible reinforcement according to classroom situations and individual student characteristics. In addition, the specific context of Grade 3 Indonesian language learning at SDN 2 Kayangan has not been sufficiently described. Therefore, the present study contributes a contextual and qualitative analysis of teacher strategies, their implementation across learning stages, and the factors that support their effectiveness.

Recognizing the urgency of this situation, a sharp and systematic analysis is needed regarding the strategy engineering implemented by classroom teachers in distributing positive reinforcement. Precise, timely, and proportional implementation is expected to be a catalyst for the transformation of the classroom climate towards a more dynamic, inclusive, and participatory learning environment. Therefore, this study was designed with the central objective of exploring, describing, and comprehensively analyzing teacher strategies in implementing positive reinforcement in Indonesian language subjects in grade 3 of SDN 2 Kayangan, as well as dissecting the determinant factors that influence the effectiveness of the strategy's implementation.

2. METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative paradigm was deliberately chosen because the primary focus of this research is to deeply and holistically explore and understand a social and pedagogical phenomenon in a natural setting. As emphasized by experts, qualitative research emphasizes meaning-making of the interactions and behaviors of subjects in the field, with the researcher acting as a key instrument (human instrument)

(Safarudin et al., 2023). The case study design was used because the focus of the investigation is on a specific and bounded unit of analysis (bounded system), namely the strategy of applying positive reinforcement by teachers in Indonesian language subjects in grade 3 of SDN 2 Kayangan. This design selection facilitates very detailed, intensive, and meaningful data collection (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022).

This research took place at SDN 2 Kayangan, which is administratively located in Kayangan District, North Lombok Regency. The location was selected purposively based on preliminary observations showing a clear implementation of positive reinforcement and variation in student participation. The research was conducted during one semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The research subjects consisted of one third-grade teacher, Mrs. Iin Novianti, S.Pd., as the key informant and the third-grade students as the student participants. The class consisted of [XX students], while the interview informants comprised the teacher and [XX student representatives] selected purposively to represent students with different levels of participation and responsiveness to positive reinforcement. The student informants were selected based on their direct experience of participating in Indonesian language learning activities and receiving positive reinforcement from the teacher.

Qualitative data collection was conducted through an orchestration of three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation review (Balaka, 2022). Passive participant observation was conducted to observe actual classroom educational interactions, the types of reinforcement implemented by teachers, the appropriate timing of its delivery, and the manifestation of students' behavioral responses. Intensive semi-structured interviews were conducted with class teachers and student representatives. The interview instrument was designed flexibly to explore emic perspectives, the rationale behind strategy selection, and the affective impacts experienced by students as a result of the reinforcement. Meanwhile, documentation techniques were utilized to analyze learning tools (such as the Independent Curriculum Teaching Module), activity records, and relevant class portfolios.

The abundant data corpus was then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive qualitative data analysis framework (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). This procedure includes three simultaneous phases: (1) Data condensation, which involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting raw data sourced from field notes and interview transcripts; (2) Data display, where the condensed data are organized logically and narratively to form meaningful patterns; and (3) Conclusion drawing and verification, which involves formulating the meaning of the findings through iterative cross-validation. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study strictly applies triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by cross-compiling data from teachers and students, while technical triangulation was executed by comparing the consistency of information obtained from observations, interviews, and documents (Nurfajriani et al., 2024).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conditions of Indonesian Language Learning in Grade 3

Field observations and interviews revealed that the Indonesian language learning landscape in Grade 3 of SDN 2 Kayangan has fully adopted the Independent Curriculum paradigm. Within this curriculum architecture, teachers are required not only to transfer knowledge but also to act as flexible facilitators in developing student-centered learning. Mrs. Iin Novianti, S.Pd., the class teacher, covers all subject areas, relying on the Teaching Module as an instructional compass. The learning activities are systematically structured, encompassing opening activities (orientation, apperception, and motivation), core activities (visual media exploration, interactive discussions, and performance presentations), and closing activities (reflection and conclusion). However, classical

challenges such as fluctuating focus and a tendency for inferiority in some students during oral communication sessions remain obstacles that require strategic resolution. Therefore, teachers integrate a positive reinforcement system as a pillar of the learning performance improvement strategy.

Teacher Strategies in Implementing Positive Reinforcement

An in-depth exploration of pedagogical practices in Grade 3 demonstrates that teachers have designed and implemented positive reinforcement strategies in a holistic, structured, and varied manner. Based on data analysis, the positive reinforcement strategies employed are classified into three main domains: verbal reinforcement, nonverbal reinforcement, and symbolic reward systems.

First, verbal reinforcement. Teachers intensively mobilize affirmative and appreciative language as an immediate response to student performance. Words like "good," "great," "very clever," and "amazing answer" are used when students successfully respond to a provocative question, formulate an argument, or simply muster the courage to spell a sentence aloud. This verbal strategy is executed with a warm and enthusiastic intonation, demonstrating the principle of "warmth and enthusiasm," which is a prerequisite for effective praise.

Second, nonverbal reinforcement. Given that elementary school students are highly sensitive to body language, teachers combine speech with positive gestures. Sincere smiles, intense eye contact, two thumbs-up gestures, and classical, rhythmic applause are routinely encountered during observations. Furthermore, for students who are slow learners or who are experiencing confusion, teachers practice reinforcement in the form of a "proximal approach"—walking closer, giving a light touch on the shoulder, and providing personal guidance (tutoring). This step is crucial in reducing students' cognitive anxiety and tension.

Third, tangible rewards. As a final strategy to stimulate a healthy competitive spirit, teachers implemented a simple token economy system in the form of "star stickers." These stickers were not distributed freely but had to be earned through performance, both individually and within the discussion group ecosystem. The distribution of these stickers created a euphoric effect among students. Interviews with student subjects confirmed that star stickers represented trophies of pride; they explicitly stated, "When I get a star sticker, I feel motivated and happy, and I want to study even harder."

Procedurally, this reinforcement integration is not discontinued until the end of the session, but rather spread evenly throughout the learning curve (continuous reinforcement). This begins with apperception in the introductory phase, through the presentation of ideas in the core phase, and ends with the conclusion drawing in the termination phase. Even during the evaluation phase, teachers consistently incorporate constructive feedback coupled with appreciation to ensure motivation doesn't wane when students make elementary mistakes.

Factors Influencing the Implementation of Positive Reinforcement

The successful penetration of this positive reinforcement strategy certainly does not operate in a vacuum. Data synthesis revealed five interconnected determinants that influence the effectiveness of its implementation:

1. **Teacher Intrinsic Motivation:** Teachers' moral dedication and educational vision are the foundation of all initiatives. Interviews revealed that teachers are driven by a strong desire to transform their students' learning mindsets from passive to assertive. This strong will to create a dynamic classroom is what produces teachers' consistency in providing indiscriminating appreciation.

2. **Student Responsiveness and Receptivity:** Psychologically, the operant conditioning scheme requires reciprocal feedback. Affirmations given by teachers trigger the release of positive emotions in students, which then translate into proactive attitudes. This causal relationship creates a virtuous cycle in the classroom.
3. **Utilization of Visual Media:** The use of visual media (for example, in the antonyms and synonyms sub-topic) serves a dual purpose. In addition to demystifying abstract linguistic concepts, visual media successfully capture students' attention. This optimal level of attention facilitates teachers' more precise detection of student engagement, resulting in targeted reinforcement (timing accuracy).
4. **Collaborative Learning Dynamics:** The group work format reshapes the classroom communication architecture. Shy students receive psychological protection from their peers. Teachers navigate this situation by directing rewards at the group level, which brilliantly fosters esprit de corps, collaboration, and collective responsibility.
5. **Diversity of Student Characteristics:** Heterogeneity in cognitive capacities, backgrounds, and psychological profiles demands a differentiated approach. Teachers calculate the type of reinforcement based on character maps; bold students are triggered with competitive rewards, while introverts are fortified with proximal reinforcement and reassuring smiles. Recognizing this differentiation prevents strategies from falling into the "one size fits all" trap.

Theoretical Discussion

The findings of this research affirm and expand the horizons of behaviorist learning theory, specifically the principle of Operant Conditioning, proposed by B.F. Skinner (Hidayani, 2023). Skinner postulated that modification of human behavior is largely controlled by the consequences that follow an action. The findings at SDN 2 Kayangan empirically validate this thesis: the injection of pleasant consequences (praise, stickers) following a target behavior (answering, discussing) exponentially increased the frequency of that behavior. Students internalized the understanding that academic endeavor is directly proportional to social recognition from authority figures in the classroom.

The taxonomy of reinforcement implemented by teachers is also highly equivalent to the theoretical constructs proposed by recent academics. Mantasiah (in Purba & Putri, 2023) breaks down reinforcement into social reinforcement, activity reinforcement, and tangible reinforcement. Practice at SDN 2 Kayangan covers the social reinforcement quadrant through affirmative praise and proximal reinforcement, and touches on the tangible reinforcement quadrant through the star sticker maneuver. Furthermore, the fusion of verbal and gestural reinforcement (Ulfah, 2021) is brilliantly represented through the synchronization of the phrase "awesome" and the thumbs-up, which, according to communication studies, has twice the persuasive effect as a single delivery.

The phenomenal impact of this strategy on the learning motivation curve also resonates with the findings of previous studies. Research by Putri & Nawangtoro (2025) and Hasibuan et al. (2025) converges on one conclusion: reward orchestration in elementary school classrooms is the most superior catalytic instrument for breaking down learning aversion. Rewards stimulate the release of dopamine, which is associated with feelings of appreciation and happiness. Within the framework of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes freedom of expression, instilling self-confidence through positive reinforcement is an essential stepping stone for developing students who are courageous, critical, and communicative (Rofiqoh, 2025; Mulawarni et al., 2026).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the dialectic between field observations, theoretical discourse, and in-depth interview analysis, this study concludes several fundamental points regarding the essence of pedagogical strategies in grade 3 of SDN 2 Kayangan. First, the formulation of teachers' strategies in injecting positive reinforcement is proven to be structured, varied, and sustainable. The reinforcement architecture is built on verbal pillars (appreciation of positive diction), nonverbal pillars (accommodating and empathetic body language), and material pillars (a tokenistic reward system in the form of star stickers). The penetration of this strategy permeates all pores of the learning stages, directly implicating the escalation of learning motivation, courage in articulation, and a healthy climate of student participation. Second, the probability of success of this maneuver is influenced by a matrix of determinants that include: the teacher's internal dedication drive, positive emotional resonance from students, the integration of attention-grabbing teaching media, the catalysis of courage through communal/group work, and the teacher's discretion in adjusting the dosage and type of reinforcement to the heterogeneity of student character. This research recommends expanding the implementation of similar methods institutionally in various educational units, in order to create a humanistic and emancipatory learning ecosystem.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ali, M. (2020). Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia dan Sastra (Basastra) di Sekolah Dasar. Pernik: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, 3(1), 35–44.
- Amalia, N. (2025). Pengaruh Reward Stiker Keaktifan Sebagai Penguatan Positif Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Matematika Siswa Kelas VIII. Polinomial: Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika, 4(4), 1018-1026.
- Arifudin, O. (2022). Perkembangan Peserta Didik (Tinjauan Teori-Teori dan Praktis). Bandung: Widina Bhakti Persada.
- Assyakurrohim, D., Ikhrum, D., Sirodj, R. A., & Afgani, M. W. (2022). Metode Studi Kasus dalam Penelitian Kualitatif. Jurnal Pendidikan Sains dan Komputer, 3(01), 1-9.
- Balaka, M. Y. (2022). Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif & Kualitatif. Kendari: UHO EduPress.
- Bekata, H. M., Dony, P. M. T., Daik, T. Y., Mata, Y., Saetban, A. A., Fanpada, N., & Wabang, Y. S. (2025). Implementasi Keterampilan Guru Memberi Penguatan dalam Proses Pembelajaran di Sekolah Dasar. Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan, 11(2. A), 77-93.
- Deosari, A., & Appulembang, O. D. (2022). Penerapan Penguatan Positif Terhadap Keterlibatan Perilaku Siswa dalam Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh. Johme: Journal Of Holistic Mathematics Education, 6(1), 90-106.
- Hasibuan, J.M., Daulay, M.S., Harahap, N., & Mutiah, E. (2025). Pengaruh Pemberian Reward Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa Kelas V Sekolah Dasar. Sasangga: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran, 3(2), 69-75.
- Hidayani, N. (2023). Hubungan Antara Penguatan Positif dengan Hasil Belajar Matematika Siswa Kelas IV SD Inpres Toddopuli 1 Kecamatan Panakkukang Kota Makassar. Makassar: UNM Repository.
- Mailida, Y., & Wandani, R. R. (2023). Karakteristik Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research, 3(2), 5608-5615.
- Maylia, E. C., Amelia, A. P., Suwarna, D. M., Muyassaroh, I., & Jenuri, J. (2024). Strategi Pembelajaran Inkuiri Terhadap Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Siswa SD. Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dasar: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan dan Hasil Penelitian, 10(1), 32-41.
- Mulawarni, M., Oktrifianty, E., Syifa, S. N., & Dinata, Z. P. (2026). Strategi Guru dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Siswa Kelas III di SDN Gebang Raya 2. Inspirasi Edukatif: Jurnal Pembelajaran Aktif, 7(1).

- Nadira, G. L., Rindu, F. P., Fitri, U. Y., & Ratnasari, L. (2026). Efektifitas Penggunaan Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. *Menulis: Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara*, 2(1), 429-439.
- Nurfajriani, W. V., Ilhami, M. W., Mahendra, A., Afgani, M. W., & Sirodj, R. A. (2024). Triangulasi Data dalam Analisis Data Kualitatif. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 10(17), 826-833.
- Nurzannah, S. (2022). Peran guru dalam pembelajaran. *Alacrity: Journal of Education*, 2(1), 26–34.
- Purba, R. T., & Putri, A. P. D. (2023). Pengaruh Penguatan Positif Terhadap Sikap Perhatian Murid Kelas Satu Sekolah Dasar. *Aletheia Christian Educators Journal*, 4(2), 53-60.
- Putri, A., & Nawangtoro, S. (2025). Peran Hadiah Sebagai Penguatan Positif dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Menurut Teori Skinner. *Jimu: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisipliner*, 3(03), 1587-1593.
- Qomaruddin, Q., & Sa'diyah, H. (2024). Kajian Teoritis Tentang Teknik Analisis Data dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Perspektif Spradley, Miles dan Huberman. *Journal Of Management, Accounting, And Administration*, 1(2), 77-84.
- Rahman, S. (2022). Pentingnya Motivasi Belajar dalam Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar. *Merdeka Belajar Pustaka*.
- Rofiqoh, R. (2025). Strategi Guru PAI dalam Mengelola Kelas untuk Mengatasi Kejenuhan Belajar Peserta Didik di SDN Genuksari 01 Tahun Ajaran 2024/2025. Doctoral Dissertation, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang.
- Safarudin, R., Zulfamanna, Z., Kustati, M., & Sepriyanti, N. (2023). Penelitian Kualitatif. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 3(2), 9680-9694.
- Salsabila, A., & Rahayu, P. (2025). Analisis Penguatan Literasi Bahasa Indonesia pada Siswa Kelas III Sekolah Dasar. *Elementary School: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Ke-Sd-An*, 12(2), 1021-1029.
- Syarah, E., Asdar, A., & Muhamadiyah, M. U. (2021). Pengaruh Pemberian Penguatan Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa pada Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Kelas V SDN Se-Kecamatan Suppa Kabupaten Pinrang. *Bosowa Journal Of Education*, 2(1), 33-39.
- Ulfah, N. (2021). Pemberian Penguatan Terhadap Siswa pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Kelas Vb Sekolah Dasar Negeri 200117 Padangsidempuan Utara. Doctoral Dissertation, IAIN Padangsidempuan.