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Positivity in the English language learning classroom

Analyzing teacher-student moments of contact

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Positive Psychology was introduced in Second Language Acquisition research in order to explore how positivity can be experienced in the classroom so that learners can flourish in their language learning processes even in aversive circumstances (see MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Drawing on theories from Positive Psychology (Fredrickson, 2001, 2013), this study explores moments of positive contact between teacher and students (see Korthagen et al., 2014) via (1) students' self-reported accounts of their experiences in English learning contexts through four interviews and three focus groups; and (2) observable classroom practices through audio/video recordings of six class sessions. Findings reveal that positive emotion, which is co-constructed by both teacher and student(s) in in-situ interaction, seems to benefit the learner at multiple levels (emotionally, behaviorally, motivationally and cognitively), to contribute to creating rapport between them, and to help fulfill various foreign language learning-related goals.

Keywords: English language learning, foreign language learning, language learner's emotions, moments of contact, teacher-student relationships, positive psychology, positivity, classroom interaction, classroom environment

1. Introduction

Teaching involves much more than having content knowledge and transmitting it to your students. As Day (2004) points out, good teaching requires commitment not only at an intellectual level, but also at an emotional one. Despite this, the tradition in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has given more weight to cognitive variables –which are easier to manipulate and quantify– than to the emotional ones. Most research on the emotional dimension of language learning has

focused until fairly recently on negative emotions and their detrimental impact rather than on the beneficial outcomes of positive emotions (Gregersen et al., 2016; Dewaele et al., 2019). Nevertheless, with the introduction of Positive Psychology in the field of SLA (see MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012), there has been an increased interest in exploring ways to develop tools that can contribute to fostering positivity in class and, in turn, to sustaining learner's engagement.

As it is within the language teacher's power to address the emotional concerns of their students (Horwitz, 1995) and to provide more caring classrooms with more positive emotions and connections (Barcelos & Coelho, 2016), the aim of the present study is to analyze teacher-student interaction taking into account the experience of positivity in the classroom. To this end, the co-construction of positive emotions in the classroom is analyzed in teacher-student moments of contact (Korthagen et al., 2014) or moments of positivity resonance (Fredrickson, 2013) in order to identify the function(s) and the influence that positive emotion and teaching practices might have on the language learner.

2. Literature review

2.1 Emotions and Positive Psychology in SLA

The social turn (Block, 2003) was marked by studies that emphasized the social and contextual dimension of second/foreign language learning and paved the way for the development of subsequent turns, such as the emotional one. This development in the field of SLA also led to new and more complex and dynamic understandings of the learner, of the learning process and of relevant constructs such as learner's identities, beliefs or emotions (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). With the emotional turn, emotional experiences in the language learning classroom have been increasingly studied in order to comprehend the role that they play in language learning processes (see Prior, 2019). Although emotions have been inquired as well in other educational settings and areas, such as mathematics (e.g. McLeod, 1992), they appear to be particularly relevant in the acquisition of a new language, due to the fact that a lack of full mastery of the vehicle of expression can create more vulnerable self-concepts (Arnold, 2009).

Whereas past research on emotions, or 'affect', had almost exclusively focused on anxiety (e.g. Horwitz et al., 1986), with the advent of Positive Psychology in SLA in the last years, positive emotions (mostly enjoyment) and related concepts (such as hope, well-being, flow, love, emotional intelligence or self-constructs) are becoming the center of many empirical studies. Positive Psychology explores the ways in which individuals can function optimally, flourish and thrive even in

averse situations (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and one of its key propositions is Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. This theory posits that positive emotion has a different function from negative emotion: whilst negative emotion narrows one's perspective in order to overcome a particular threat and generates specific action tendencies such as fight or flight, positive emotion broadens a person's thought-action repertoire (through play, exploration, interest, etc.) and promotes discovery of novel and creative actions or ideas which, subsequently, build enduring personal resources which can be drawn on to cope with unfavorable circumstances. Applied to language learning, this means that positive emotion facilitates the building of learning and personal resources to endure difficult situations in the learning process and that, thanks to its broadening effect, opens the individual to absorb the target language (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012).

Within this positive perspective, recent research on additional language learning indicates that the teacher plays a significant role in learners' positive emotions such as enjoyment. For example, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) used a mixed-methods approach to identify the most frequent causes of learners' enjoyable episodes in class, in which the teacher was mentioned frequently (e.g. by recognizing student's successes and efforts, making jokes and teasing in an amicable fashion, being kind, being able to foster a positive learning atmosphere, etc.). Similarly, the figure of the teacher appeared to be "at the heart of the issue" in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016, p. 226), as students highly valued the teacher's ability to create a supportive atmosphere that welcomes humour as well as a positive relationship with them. In fact, results from several studies (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017, 2020; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019) suggest that the learner's enjoyment in the foreign language classroom is highly dependent on the teacher –whereas foreign language classroom anxiety is most frequently connected to the self.

2.2 Teacher-student contact and positivity resonance

Teaching is innately interactive since it entails "making connections with an active, growing mind" (Tiberius, 1993–94) and, especially in language learning, it is through interacting, negotiating, collaborating and dialoguing with others that we learn (Barcelos & Coelho, 2016). This interpersonal side of language teaching began to be studied through research drawing on sociocultural approaches which understand teaching and learning as socially situated and which explore language learners in context, with a focus on relationships with people with whom they learn and use the language (Mercer, 2016). In the classroom, these relationships involve mainly student-student and teacher-student relationships. As Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) point out, interactions between the teacher

and the learner affect the dynamics of the complex system of the classroom and construct (or constrain) learning affordances (van Lier, 2000), depending on the nature of such interactions. As shown in Diert-Boté and Martin-Rubió (2018), the role of the teacher and how they relate to the students plays a fundamental role in the emotions that students experience in the language learning classroom. In this line, evidence from educational research also shows that teacher-student relationships play a fundamental role in learning because, as Hamre and Pianta (2006, p.71) emphasize, positive teacher-student relationships are “fundamental to [students’] success in school, and as such, these relationships should be explicitly targeted”.

However, teacher-student relationships research, which comes from various educational and psychological theories (mainly self-determination theory and attachment theory), does not directly deal with contextualized and in-situ *contact*. Whereas relationships refer to a more enduring phenomenon, *contact* is defined as a “momentary phenomenon” which has to do with “encounters between teachers and students in the here-and-now” (Korthagen et al., 2014, p.24). Contact moments are situated in a continuum from superficial (e.g. saying hello to a student) to more intense contact (e.g. sharing a serious personal problem) and accumulate over time; therefore, they are the basis for relationships. Good contact between teacher and student requires a connection in the here-and-now and a willingness and openness to experience this connection (Korthagen et al., 2014). Korthagen et al. (2014) conclude that teacher-student contact is a two-way process in which both parties influence each other’s responses. An indicator of good contact is the positive effect on the students’ active learning behavior and on their emotional and motivational states. The teachers participating in Korthagen et al. (2014) perceived an effect on their students which they considered positive, like a cognitive insight, a positive feeling, increased motivation and/or a behavioral impulse. In the field of SLA, only Henry and Thorsen (2018) analyze teacher-student interaction through moments of contact. This research provides conceptually grounded explanations of how here-and-now connections have an impact on language students’ engagements and motivation, and reveals how moments of personal contact and their influences seem to differ in emerging and mature teacher-student relationships.

Moments of contact share many similarities with Fredrickson’s (2013) notion of micro-moments of positivity resonance, i.e., moments in which two or more individuals experience shared positive affect, mutual care and even synchrony in behavior, which Korthagen et al. (2014) allude to. It has to be pointed out that both references are important here, because, whilst Fredrickson (2013) micro-moments are applied to love and human connection in general, Korthagen et al.

(2014) focus on how these connections occur in classroom settings by focusing explicitly on interaction between the teacher and the students.

Fredrickson discovered that our brains and bodies respond positively to connection with other human beings, regardless of the extent to which we know the other person, although spending more moments with the other person increases the possibilities of experiencing micro-moments of positivity resonance. The basis for positivity resonance, or positive contact, is love, which Fredrickson (2013) identifies as the most experienced positive emotion. Following this line of thought, Barcelos and Coelho (2016) argue that love is crucial and a strong driving force in language learning and teaching, as shown in Pavelescu and Petrić (2018); Barcelos and Coelho (2016) explain that students and teachers tend to co-construct a supportive classroom environment by changing and adapting to each other's emotional states, for instance, by means of jokes and casual conversations. Henry and Thorsen (2018) found that the positive emotion aroused during positive resonance produces "unconscious incentives that shape subsequent behaviors" (Henry & Thorsen, 2018, p.220), similar to the positive effects of good contact identified in Korthagen et al. (2014). Similarly, Li and Rawal (2018) found that love between teachers and learners was displayed in the form of mutual understanding and support during classroom interactions, and that love was communicated through teacher's care for students and the joint creation of a supportive learning environment.

These micro-moments of positivity enhance mutual care over time and help build bonds and community (Fredrickson, 2013). In this sense, positivity resonance is conceptualized as socially and interactionally constructed, which implies adopting a conceptualization of emotions as emergent, dynamic and contextually co-constructed processes which are constantly shaped through interactions with individuals from the social world (e.g. Barrett, 2017; Boiger & Mesquita, 2012; Ratner, 2000), rather than being understood as abstract mental phenomena that develop as innate maturing programs. In this sense, this study offers a contextualized view of interactions in the classroom milieu, an aspect which, as pointed out by Oxford (2016), has not been much taken into consideration in positive psychology studies, as very little information about the classroom contexts and the teacher-student interactions tends to be provided. Following this socio-psychological constructionist framework of emotional experiences, and drawing on Positive Psychology principles, the following study attempts to address the following two research questions inspired by Barcelos and Coelho (2016):

RQ1: What teacher-student moments of positive contact are there in the English language classroom?

RQ2: In what ways does the positivity constructed during these moments of contact appear to affect the learner?

3. Method

3.1 Context and data collection

The data used in this study were collected from an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) subject offered in the spring semester 2016–2017 of the first year of a Social Science degree at a Catalan university. This study is part of a bigger project which explored and compared a translanguaging and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) approach and a traditional monolingual approach in English language learning. In this study, only data from students from the ‘monolingual group’ was used because, despite employing a monolingual, native-speaker approach in terms of language policy, students reported high enjoyment and comfort in the classes, something which they attributed, to a large degree, to the way the teacher behaved with them.

The participants of the study were informed about the project and voluntarily provided their written consent so that the members of the project could use their data for research purposes. Their names have been replaced by a pseudonym to preserve anonymity. This study combines self-reported and classroom observation data. Self-reported data consists of (1) four individual semi-structured interviews carried out in April (week 10); and (2) two group discussions in March (week 7), one with seven local students and another one with four international students, and one group discussion in May (week 15) with five local students (the same from the previous interview except for one). The teacher of the course chose the students for the qualitative data set based on their willingness to participate in the interviews and focus groups and on their class attendance. Classroom attendance was important because in the interviews and focus groups they were inquired about their viewpoints about several aspects of the class, so it was necessary that the students were acquainted with them. Observational data include six class sessions from February to May 2017 (weeks 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 14) with a duration of 1.5 or 2 hours, depending on the day. The classes were video-recorded with two cameras (one at the front and one at the back of the classroom) and several audio-recorders were distributed among the students. Moreover, field notes were taken by two researchers of the team during each session. Altogether, the overall size of the corpus for this class group includes: 12 video-recordings of sessions (including the two cameras), 12 field notes files, 120 audio files from the students’ recorders, 3 group discussions and 4 interviews with students.

3.2 Data analysis

Most research on teacher-student relationships or interactions is quantitative in nature, both for classroom observations of teacher behaviors and relationships with the students (e.g. Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004), and for the analysis of either students' or teachers' perceptions on the issue (e.g. Farmer, 2018; Spilt et al., 2010). Furthermore, most of the few qualitative studies which have analyzed students or teachers' perceptions on teacher-student relationships have most frequently relied on self-reported data rather than on classroom observations. In order to offer a new perspective on teacher-student interactions in class, this article adopts a qualitative approach and explores not only students' self-reported accounts on contact with their teacher but also actual episodes of interaction so as to provide a micro-level analysis of in situ teacher-student contact.

The analysis of the teacher-student contact moments and their effects on the students is twofold. Firstly, the individual and group interviews were transcribed in whole and the parts in which students talked about their teacher were assembled in a single text document. Secondly, the transcripts from the text were codified using Atlas.ti, specialized software to analyze qualitative data, by means of structure and process coding (Saldaña, 2015): structure coding allows gathering topic lists by codifying data that represent a topic of enquiry directly related to a research question (e.g. 'what types of teacher-student contact moments do students mention?'), whereas process coding uses gerunds ('-ing') to capture ongoing action in the data while simultaneously searching for consequences of this action. Once the structure and process coding was finished, two external researchers were asked to codify independently the transcripts to increase the reliability of the analysis. The inter-rater reliability was 92%, which was calculated by adding the number of equally coded items, and then the percentage of equal answers out of the total was computed. After the codification process, the coded segments were collected together and a list of more detailed themes was created (e.g. from the code 'engaging in casual conversations' the theme 'engaging in casual conversations to encourage speaking' appeared) and their consequences/effects were assembled within each theme based on the classification used in Korthagen et al. (2014), in which the effects of teacher-students contact are classified into emotional, cognitive, motivational and behavioral. Ultimately, the contact moments were classified into 'good' or 'bad' contact depending on the effect on the learner (Korthagen et al., 2014).

On the basis of the learners' reported positive contact moments during the individual and group interviews, an analysis of teacher-student contact moments in situ was deemed necessary, particularly because "classroom-based research is surprisingly rare" (Henry & Thorsen, 2018, p.219). It has to be noted that all the

contact identified in the class was positive, as bad contact examples reported by students came from past English language teachers. First of all, the field notes were read carefully in order to have a general idea of what occurred in each session. Then, the six class videos were watched from beginning to end and notes were taken on moments of contact, indicating the minute of the video when they occurred. Afterwards, these moments of contact were transcribed multimodally using Norris' (2004, p.59; see Appendix 1) conventions, and thus including not only the words uttered and the pauses, but also the teacher's and students' kinesics (gestures, facial expressions, head movement and gaze). Once the interactions were transcribed, the types of contact moments were codified and classified with the method employed in the individual and group interviews, and the possible effects of the positive contact moment on the learner were described. It is important to highlight that in the analysis of these contact moments observed in the classroom, the classification of the four clear-cut levels provided by Korthagen et al. (2014) was not eventually employed. Although the classification was tried to be applied in a first version of analysis, it resulted to be inefficient and highly tentative given that students' voices and reflections after the episodes could not be collected. In view of this situation, a more integrative perspective of the learner has been adopted, and instead of attempting to identify whereas a particular action affected the students, say, motivationally, such effects have been described in more holistic terms.

It has to be noted that the classroom interactional episodes included in the analyses are not anecdotal or sporadic, but illustrative of the amount of moments of positive contact that took place in class between the teacher and the students.

4. Findings

4.1 Teacher-student contact in self-reported accounts

This section is devoted to the results of the analysis of self-reported data in the group and individual interviews regarding teacher-student contact. When the participants were asked about the activities or the materials of the ESP course, they often related them to the positive actions and practices carried out by their teacher which made them like and enjoy the subject. Consequently, their statements directed the researcher's attention towards some remarkable moments of contact that the participants recalled having with their ESP teacher and other past English language teachers. Due to space limitations it is not possible to provide the analysis of all the complete excerpts; thus, the results of the analysis are summarized in Table 1 (see below).

Table 1. Teacher-student contact moments and effects

	Contact moments	Effects on the students/classroom	Type of effect
POSITIVE	Correcting in a helpful way	"it makes me happy"	Emotional
	Correcting students so that they learn and improve	"it gives you confidence"	Emotional
	Correcting what is necessary	"it doesn't make you feel bad or lose face"	Emotional
	Correcting in a friend-like and kind manner	"I feel comfortable during corrections"	Emotional
	Being close	"you participate more"	Behavioral
		"you greet and talk to the teacher outside class"	Behavioral
	Showing interest in students' progress	"it motivates you"	Motivational
	Showing interest in that students understand	"you learn more things"	Cognitive
	Explaining well		
	Explaining in different ways until students understand	"the class is more productive"	X
Being at students' disposal			
Making students speak and participate	"you are constantly attentive"	Motivational	
Looking after all the students	"the class is more dynamic"	X	
Asking students	"people are more active"	Motivational	
	"people try to participate more"	Behavioral	
Paying attention to students	"I always go to class"	Behavioral	
NEGATIVE	Correcting in a serious manner	"it makes us afraid"	Emotional
	Ignoring students	"I stopped going to class"	Behavioral
	Not answering, not saying and not doing anything	"we went there to pass the time"	Behavioral
	Not making students participate	"you participated if you wanted"	Behavioral
	Not speaking students' L1	"if you don't understand you stop paying attention"	Behavioral Motivational
	Acting in a strict way	"people would change their attitude and will lose interest in the subject"	Motivational
		"I find it tiresome"	Emotional
		"you are afraid"	Emotional
	Not congratulating students on their good performance	"it doesn't motivate you"	Motivational
Speaking in Catalan and Spanish mostly	"I feel English is boring"	Emotional Motivational	
Explaining in a way that students do not understand	"I didn't get the content"	Cognitive	

The results from this analysis show that, as reported by students, there is evidence that the actions performed by teachers tend to have an impact on the learner, either a positive or a negative one. The practices which show genuine interest in students elicit positive responses, whereas the actions that display a lack of care for students and their learning process have a rather negative effect on them. As found by Korthagen et al. (2014), effects on the learner seem to be multiple in nature by impacting their emotions, their actions or behaviors, their motivation and their cognition or learning. The analysis also reveals that only two responses of all the contact moments were classified as purely cognitively, whilst most of them are emotional. This finding suggests that students place more importance, either consciously or unconsciously, to the way the teachers' actions make them feel (emotional effect) than to whether their actions help them learn or understand better (cognitive effect). Findings also reveal that positive teacher-student relationships elicit positive emotions on students (happiness, confidence, security, comfort and enjoyment), while negative relationships evoke negative emotions (fear, weariness and boredom).

It has to be noted that these findings do not imply that there is a direct causation between one moment of contact and one type of effect, or that the Self is easily fragmented into clear-cut dimensions. In fact, these results point to the difficulty of dividing the learner into differentiated parts, as in some cases more than one type of response has been identified and, consequently, it is more realistic to adopt a holistic vision of the learner and of the learning process (see Dörnyei, 2010; Mercer, 2015; Ushioda, 2009). Therefore, these findings should rather be interpreted as an indication that (a) both positive and negative contact seems to play a role at multiple dimensions of the self (cognitive, emotional, motivational and behavioral); and that (b) positive contact generates more positivity on the learner, whereas negative contact elicits negative responses of various types from the student.

4.2 Positive teacher-student contact in classroom-observed interaction

This section encompasses several instances of moments of positive contact identified in the video- and audio-recordings of the classroom sessions. Some moments of contact coincide with those reported by the students in the individual and group interviews ('correcting and providing feedback with kindness', 'explaining and helping' 'paying attention to students and caring about them'), whilst some others were not mentioned ('praising and motivating students' and 'engaging in casual conversations and using humor to encourage speaking'), but were observed on several occasions in class. It has to be pointed out that apart from the five aforementioned types of teacher-student contact, two other kinds were iden-

tified throughout the analysis of the class sessions: memorizing students' name, and showing flexibility and negotiating with students. Nevertheless, due to space constraints it was not possible to analyze all types of contact, and given that these two were the least frequently observed in class, they have not been reported in this study.

4.2.1 Correcting and providing feedback with kindness

There exist several examples in the dataset which show examples of corrections and assessments of learners' productions and these corrections are never made in an intimidating or authoritative manner, as it can be seen in the following contact moment:

Excerpt 1.

(week 10/01:30:20)

Teacher have you finished Raquel?
 Raquel yeah (nods)
 Teacher can I have a look at your letter?
 Raquel (shows her the letter)
 Teacher (reading) it's better to use a comma than a colon
 Raquel oh (0.2) yeah (smiles)
 Teacher dear Mr. Robins, OK (.) eh try to avoid contractions
 Raquel yeah (nods)
 Teacher (reading) (5) same here
 Raquel mhm
 Teacher (reading) em I'm thinking about that it is possible (.) that's not correct (.) instead of that you can say (0.5) because I wonder if it's possible
 Raquel mhm OK (nods)
 Teacher (10) (reads and nods) instead of thanks it's better it's mo:re formal to say thank you
 Raquel hm hm OK (smiles) thank you
 Teacher and the::n (.) instead of best regards which is kind of informal (.) you can sa:y yours sincerely
 Raquel (points to the notebook where she had written 'yours sincerely')
 Teacher a::h OK sorry I hadn't seen that (smiles) (touches Raquel's shoulder)
 Raquel hahaha
 Teacher OK (smiles) so that's OK (smiles)
 Raquel (smiles) thank you
 Teacher thank you (smiles)

This moment of positive contact is an example of some of the teacher practices mentioned in the self-reported data: correcting what is necessary in a helpful, friend-like and kind way so that students learn and improve. First of all, it has to be noted that the correction is not done straight away, for the teacher asks for permission to the student. Five corrections are made in total (or six if we also consider "same here"); out of these five, only one is a direct correction ("that's not correct"), whereas the rest are formulated in a more indirect way, as many of them are expressed in the form of suggestions: "it's better", "try to avoid", "instead of... it's better", "instead of... you can say". Making use of these constructions lowers the dogmatic tone in the corrections, which can rather be taken as recommendations to improve the final product. Furthermore, when the teacher does not see that the student had written "yours sincerely", she apologizes for her mistake both verbally ("a::h OK sorry") and non-verbally (by touching the student's

shoulder), which triggers Rachel's laughter; the humbleness expressed by apologizing and thanking the student, and the closeness evoked from the physical contact are actions which might make the teacher more approachable to students and more "friend-like".

In the self-reported data, students mentioned that they felt happy, confident and comfortable during corrections and that they did not feel bad or lose face. This positive affective response can be observed in this episode, as Raquel does not seem to be uncomfortable or humiliated by being corrected: she seems to acknowledge her mistakes, she smiles throughout the conversation and even laughs at the end, and she thanks her teacher twice. At the end of this episode is when the positive resonance between the teacher and the student is more evident because they synchronize behavior by smiling and thanking each other. This positive contact moment shows that correcting and providing feedback is a necessary teacher practice and that, even though some instructors might feel reticent to corrections for fear of discouraging or demotivating students, learners can in fact be glad to accept corrections if these are managed skillfully.

4.2.2 Explaining and helping students while promoting self-sufficiency

Explaining carefully and in different ways together with providing help to students is a type of contact which the participants already mentioned in the interviews and focus groups and which has been observed in the videos on countless occasions. When students are carrying out an activity, the teacher usually goes around to every student/group to check their work and help them in case they have any questions. Some of the sentences which the teacher utters are: "if you have any questions, raise your hand and I'll help you", or "(student's name), do you understand?". When helping students, the teacher also tends to provide them with different ideas and views, to give them various examples or options and to offer several explanations until students understand. In the following episode, a student asks for the teacher's help and this is how she assists him:

Excerpt 2.

(week 14/01:09:00)

Pol (L1 cat) com es diu les primeres cent-
how could you say the first hundred

Teacher (approaches the student) -in English (smiles)

Pol how could you say the first- (L1 cat) però si t'ho dic (/L1 cat) in English (L1 cat) i no sé allò:
(smiles)

Teacher (L1 es) bueno (smiles) then tell me in Catalan what you cannot say in English haha
well

Pol (L1 cat) les primeres cent persones
the first one hundred people

Teacher (L1 cat) les primeres cent persones? (leans towards the student)
the first one hundred people?

Pol mhmm

Teacher OK it's like: remember that we did this exercise: eh (L1 cat) els tres primers dies

the first three days

Pol yeah
 Teacher how would you say that? how would you say (L1 cat) els tres primers dies?
the first three days?

Pol the first three days
 Teacher OK so (L1 cat) les primers cent persones?
the first one hundred people

Pol (1) the first a hundred persons
 Teacher the first one hundred people
 Pol (nods) yes: (smiles) yes yes
 Teacher (1) or clients (2) see the connection with the exercise? (smiles) it's the same
 Pol thanks (repeats the answer to a classmate)

The moment of contact between the teacher and Pol is not simply an exchange of knowledge: first of all, a positive and friendly environment is created when the teacher asks him to speak in English and he responds that he does not know how to say it in English (otherwise we would not be asking); this situation makes him smile and provokes the teacher's laughter. Moreover, when Pol formulates the question, the teacher shows approachability by leaning towards him. Leaning towards a student or even crouching in a way that both are physically at the same level is an action which the teacher tends to do when solving doubts, like in this episode. This conveys a sense of equality of power and positions the teacher as a peer, similar to what occurred in the previous excerpt when the teacher showed humility for her mistake and apologized to the student. Finally, by scaffolding but not providing an immediate answer to the student, the teacher fosters the learner's self-sufficiency, one of the main objectives of instruction (Bruner, 1966), which helps him find the answer by himself. When Pol says "the first a hundred persons" and the teacher corrects him, he does not seem to feel bad or to be offended: he says "yes", smiles, and says "yes" twice more, so in this sense this positive response to the teacher's corrections resembles that of Raquel during the previous episode.

This contact with the teacher is interesting because it illustrates that any moment provides a good opportunity for the teacher not only to help the student (for instance by simply providing the answer to his question), but also to strengthen ties through the co-construction of a friendly atmosphere through the skillful use of joking and teasing as ice-breakers. As it occurred in Excerpt 1, both the teacher and the student appear to mimic each other's behavior by exchanging smiles at the beginning, and this ambience becomes breeding ground for the promotion of scaffolding strategies and, ultimately, for attempting to achieve learner's self-sufficiency and autonomy. This positivity during the exchange also appears to inspire confidence in the student because the classroom becomes a safe space where he will not be judged for his mistakes. The teacher could have opted for a shorter interaction to help Pol, for instance by means of a question-answer sequence; nevertheless, by spending some time making him think of the answer, she demonstrates genuine interest in that the student learn that type of grammatical structure while furnishing him with the necessary resources to

establish linguistic connections in the future so as to become a more autonomous learner. As a matter of fact, at the end of the interaction, Pol is able to repeat the answer to a classmate, which suggests that this contact with the teacher seems to have effective in making the student understand (and hopefully learn) this type of construction.

4.2.3 Praising and motivating students

Two of the most frequent practices which can be observed in this ESP class are motivating and praising students. When students get the right answer or when they speak in English rather than in Catalan, a practice which seems to be successful in rapport building is acknowledging their effort by saying sentences like: “I’m proud of you”, “well done!” or “(very) good!”. This positive feedback tends to generate positive emotional responses, such as smiling proudly and thanking the teacher. By way of illustration, in week 3, a male student is listening attentively to the teacher’s explanations, so the teacher tells him: “I’m proud of you [Name], well done! (smiles)” and the student smiles back and thanks her (00:58:29). Similarly, in week 14, a female student is speaking with a peer in English, and the teacher says smiling to her “very good, [Name], I’m proud of you” (00:11:20).

In addition to praising the students’ performance, motivating strategies when they do not seem to feel confident enough with themselves or with their English level are also frequent. The following two excerpts take place during the performance of the same exercise, in which students had to define in English some business-related words:

Excerpt 3.

(week 12/00:12:11)

Ramon (raises his hand)

Teacher yes

Ramon (L1 cat) jo no no no ho veig (frowning)

I don't I don't I don't see it

Teacher (reading Ramon's answer) it's the person who's working (1) m: yes (.) that's correct (.) sales pitch (reading) that's correct yes

Ramon (L1 cat) sí? (opens his eyes wide)
yes?

Teacher yes (.) that's correct (smiles) (.) yeah (.) you're doing well (smiles) (leaves)

Ramon okay (3) (L1 cat) però és que (1) jo sé el que és però no ho sé definir
but (1) I know what it is but I don't know how to define it

Teacher (comes back) m: well in this case maybe: (1) try try to define it (1) what you've written so far

Ramon is right so keep doing that (1) and if you need more help afterwards let me know (leaves to help other students)

Ramon (keeps writing in his dossier)

Excerpt 4.

(week 12/00:14:33)

Jaume (to the teacher) refund? what's the meaning?

Teacher well (.) I can=

Eloi (L1 cat) =devolució
refund

Teacher VERY GOOD Eloi! (.) but how do you say that in English? how do you explain that in English?

- Eloi (L1 cat) ui (.) millor que no (1) my English is too bad
o:h (.) I'd rather not
- Teacher Eloi you need to change your mentality (1) you cannot say my English is too bad (.) your English is good enough to do this exercise so you should be trying hard to do the exercise and then you will be more motivated (smiles) (leaves)
- Eloi okay (looks at Jaume and chuckles)
- Jaume (smiles to Eloi)
- Eloi (to Jaume) the price you pay (.) the price you pay for something and then (.) they return it

In these two excerpts, strategies to give support and motivation to students are used. These strategies are closely connected in turn with the teacher's recurrent interest in helping students become independent and self-sufficient learners, as it was already mentioned in Excerpt 2. In the first case (Excerpt 3), Ramon appears to be stuck in the activity, so the teacher lets him know that he is doing well, something which comes as a bit of a surprise to him. He tries to continue with the exercise but claims not to be able to define a word, so he calls the teacher again. At this point, however, the teacher chooses not to provide further assistance to Ramon, although she hesitates in her decision ("m: well in this case maybe: (1) try try to define it"). This vacillation and the physical approaching of the teacher towards Ramon appear to reveal that the teacher might have been initially inclined to helping him further, but she reconsiders it. Her ultimate decision might have been based on her trust in the student's capabilities to finish the exercise on his own and, on the other, on the pressure of having to help other students who seemed to have problems with the exercise as well. In order to compensate the student for not helping him further, the teacher attempts to reassure the learner and to encourage him to "keep doing" that way because he has shown that he can do the activity correctly by himself; furthermore, the teacher lets Ramon know that if he eventually needs more help, she will be at his disposal, although Ramon keeps working without asking ask for her help again.

The second extract illustrates a similar situation as Excerpt 3. In it, another student, Jaume, needs to know the meaning of 'refund' in order to provide a definition in English. His classmate Eloi translates the word into Catalan. The teacher seems rather proud to hear that Eloi knows the meaning, so she asks him to explain the meaning of the word in English; yet, Eloi refuses to do it because he seems to believe that his level of English is "too bad" to provide a definition. Similarly to Excerpt 3, the teacher tries to encourage him by telling him that he needs to change this negative-oriented mindset in which he perceives himself as lacking the necessary abilities in the language to perform a given exercise are. On the contrary, the teacher's statement attempts to direct him towards the other end of the continuum, that is, towards a more positive and motivational mindset so that he feels and believes "[his] English is good enough to do the exercise". Interestingly, the teacher was right about Eloi's abilities in the language because when the conversation between them is over, Eloi is able to give the definition of 'refund' to Jaume in quite accurate and intelligible English.

These two episodes exemplify how the teacher is concerned with making students more autonomous and less dependent on her help. As a matter of fact, throughout the classroom sessions observed, some students tend to rely on her too much and they expect her to provide them with the answer immediately so as to avoid making an effort to find it by themselves. Nonetheless, the teacher attempts to stimulate and motivate learners with this type of positive moments of contact, during which she attempts to reassure their English language self-concept by challenging their negative self-beliefs and insecurities with regards to their own perception of knowledge or abilities in the language.

4.2.4 Engaging in casual conversations and using humor to encourage speaking

Participants indicated in the self-reported data that a practice carried out by the teacher was asking students and making them participate. They also stated that teacher was close to them, and that this increased their participation in class. Through the analysis of the classroom video recordings, it was observed that, apart from asking students directly –which is a typical activity in a classroom– the teacher fostered students’ participation and oral production through casual conversations and humor. It has to be noted that this has been the most recurrent type of positive contact identified across the six class sessions. An example of this type of conversation is presented in Excerpt 5 below. In this episode, the teacher approaches Pol and Miquel, who are doing an activity about tips for giving oral presentations, and asks them if there is something about the text that has caught their attention:

Excerpt 5.

(week 3/00:38:00)

Pol no
 Teacher why?
 Pol I think that (.) since we are childs always [tea-]
 Teacher (smiles) [chi:lds:??]
 Pol er we:ll: (.) young (1) (L1cat) no sé:
I don't know
 Teacher (.) children.
 Pol children (.) all the teachers a:re (1) focusing on: (1) presentations and presentations and presentations
 Teacher really?
 Pol and we all know how (0.5) to presentate (1) [another thing]
 Teacher [really?]
 Pol is that we don't want [to: do it properly.]
 Teacher [Pol (.) I don't agree] because I have the: I have the feeling that many people are not used to presenting (.) to giving presentations (.) have you ever done it? (1) have you ever done a bad presentation knowing ho- knowing how to do a good one?
 Pol (2) no 'cause I: do i:t (0.5) good (smiles)
 Teacher (smiles) oh you always do it good (0.5) right (smiles)
 Pol not always but (.) I try my best (smiles)
 Teacher is there anything that caught your attention from the text?
 Pol no (.) nothing in special
 Teacher OK mhm (leaves to another group)

Miquel (to Pol) but it's difficult express emotions (.) and have and have a natural talent to speak ...

The teacher approaches Pol and Miquel so that they explain to her something from the text that has caught their attention, and Pol develops his point that students already know how to make a good oral presentation. The teacher takes advantage of Pol's statements and starts a discussion with him, instead of just ceasing the conversation there because of the student's negative answer. What is remarkable is that, by encouraging the discussion with the student, she achieves two objectives: on the one hand, she is fulfilling a language-oriented goal, as she provides him with the opportunity of developing his speaking skills and she even emphasizes a language error ("childs?"); on the other hand, she builds rapport with him by showing interest in his opinions and they end up joking when Pol says that he always makes good oral presentations. At this point, this conversation resembles an informal chatting between friends that tease each other, and something to note here is that both the teacher and the student feel free to share their opinions without losing face or feeling threatened. This fact denotes certain trust between them, developed after a series of good contact moments which have been observed in the classroom recordings; that is the reason why even if the teacher interrupts him to correct a language issue ("childs") and she disagrees openly with his opinion, Pol does not show signs of annoyance or offence, but instead they joke around. After the joking together, the teacher redirects the conversation to the initial question, which results in Miquel telling Pol the aspects from the text that were striking for him.

This type of positive contact is rather recurrent in the classroom dataset. The following episode is another example of a casual conversation in which a joke is the starting point of an interaction with two students, Tània and Aitor:

Excerpt 6.

(week 8/00:22:49)

Tània (picks the audio-recorder and plays with it)

Teacher (stops next to her) is it working Tania?

Tània (0.5) yes haha

Teacher don't touch it eh? (points at her) (.) I don't trust you (points at her) (smiles)

Tània ha[hahahahaha]

Teacher [haha] (1.5) come on (1.0) you should be discussing about the video that you just saw did you understand the most relevant information?

Aitor yes

Teacher yeah? so now (0.5) what do you think was missing how could it be improved?

Aitor sports

Teacher sports for example (.) they don't say anything I think (.) OK so (.) (looks at Tània) you should be speaking Tània okay? haha

Tània yes haha

Teacher in English yes haha but [not looking at me (.) speaking with Aitor in English]

Tània [hahahahahaha]

Teacher OK? haha she's looking at me and laughing (2.0) OK he says sports he's right they didn't say anything (0.5) Aitor for example eh what information did you miss about sports?

Aitor yeah university teams and like that I think that are mentioned quickly or not mentioned in the video

Teacher OK (0.5) what else? (1.0) what other information for example Tània you think it's important to mention in your final presentation

Tània (6) (L1 cat) no sé
I don't know
 Teacher you don't know? (smiles) (3) OK I'll leave=
 Tània =they wou- they
 Teacher yes?
 Tània (L1 cat) és que...
but...
 Teacher yeah? no no say that
 Tània the video
 Teacher yeah
 Tània is during (1) (L1 cat) és que ara no sé com dir-ho (0.5) dura massa
I don't know how to say it it lasts too much
 Teacher the video is too long it should be shorter?
 Tània yes and the information (1) very visual
 Teacher OK there should be more visual information. what else?
 ...

This contact moment is an example of how humor is dexterously introduced to break the ice and build rapport, but also it is used as a wake-up call when students are distracted from the task. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016, p.227) stress that “a classroom atmosphere that can accommodate teasing and other forms of humor must be handled adeptly”, and this episode shows that the teacher manages to make students focus on the task and speak in English by initiating the conversation with a joke. In order that students speak, though, the teacher has to insist by asking questions and addressing them directly, and it takes a few minutes to get them talking, especially Tània. Teacher’s interest and care for the students is not only evident in the way she decides to tackle the situation (by joking instead of scolding), but also in the fact that she encourages Tània to speak throughout the conversation, and she stays with them until Tània provides an answer. Tània does not seem very comfortable speaking in English, perhaps because her level is not very high, and the teacher seems to be aware of it, so she refuses to give up on her by using different strategies (joking, rephrasing the question, translating, etc.) to make her speak.

These two contact moments show that the positivity arising from casual conversations and from jokes can be employed to engage students in conversations in order to practice the target language, as well as to take a short break and create a bond with students; nevertheless, it is also important to keep the task as the central point of the conversation and to prevent the discussion from going off-topic –and to refocus it if needed– so that students do not deviate in excess from the task at hand. In the self-reported accounts, participants mentioned that asking and making students participate motivated them as they claimed to be more attentive, active and to participate more; likewise, these episodes indicate that, if used deftly, casual conversations and humor might have the same effect, as an order to get back to work might be more welcome by students in a supportive and friendly climate.

4.2.5 Paying attention to students and caring about them and their opinions

Showing concern and interest in the students' learning process is especially important to make students feel that their instructor cares for them. Sometimes, the teacher asks to the whole class questions like: "was it difficult for you to understand the main idea? Not the whole text but the main idea" or "have you understood this?". However, these general, unfocused questions do not appear to be effective, as students tend to remain silent and uninterested, as shown also in Korthagen et al. (2014). Nevertheless, when the teacher addresses students directly (as opposed to the class in general) and when she shows interest and care for their learning and opinions, students appear to be engaged in the conversation. In the following episode, the teacher overhears some students (Ramon amongst others) speaking in Catalan instead of in English:

Excerpt 7.

(week 10/00:53:20)

Teacher now can I ask you (.) why is it so difficult for you to speak in English? (1) why?
 Ramon [it's not difficult]
 Carles [I speak Spanish]
 Teacher it's not difficult but no:body turns into English I have to keep insisting on the use of English in the class (1) why is it so difficult for you?
 Ramon we use English (.) to speak with you:
 Teacher yes
 Ramon but with us no
 Teacher why not? if I ask you to use English=
 Ramon =it's not necessary
 Teacher who says that? do you want to improve your English Ramon?
 Ramon m: well (smiles)
 Teacher your English is good enough right? (smiles) (1) you don't even need to come to class (chuckles)
 Ramon I don't need more (laughs)
 Teacher you what? (chuckles)
 Ramon I don't need more
 Teacher you don't need more? (smiles) now seriously (.) if you try to use English as much as possible in the classroom (1) probably your English level will improve more (2) because do you use English outside the classroom? (1) any? anyone here? do you speak [English]
 Ramon [yes]
 Teacher Ramon who do you speak English with (.) outside the class?
 Ramon with my friends
 Teacher where are your friends from? (.) (Ramon's town name)? (laughs)
 Ramon no (laughs) Ireland
 Teacher and how often do you speak with them?
 Pol (L1 cat) un cop a l'any (laughs)
 once a year
 Ramon yes (laughs)
 Teacher (laughs) OK so as you can imagine if you speak with them once a year (.) this doesn't make much difference (.) OK? (.) if you speak twice a week here in class (.) assuming you come to class twice a week (smiles)
 Ramon I COME!
 Teacher (smiles) then (.) then (1) maybe your English level will improve
 Ramon (1) OK (smiles)

What can be observed in the episode above is that the teacher is scolding the students for not speaking in English; yet, she is not simply rebuking them; she is attempting to understand why it is so hard for them to speak in English, and this is why she initiates the discussion with Ramon. Perhaps the teacher thought that

this was a good opportunity not only to understand students' views and interests better, but also to hold a conversation in English for a while, given that students do not speak it willingly. The teacher seems entirely focused on the conversation, and students appear to be as engaged in it as the teacher, as many of the students are paying attention to the conversation. Instead of simply reprimanding students and leaving, the teacher creates an agreeable tenor in the interaction by teasing Ramon, probably because he is constantly teasing her as well, an act that displays a certain degree of mutual trust and playfulness. Both the teacher and the students appear to be enjoying the conversation, as it can be perceived through the multiple smiles from the teacher and the students (those involved in the conversation and those listening to it), as well as from the common joking. After this contact moment, the teacher leaves the group to help two other students. Two of Ramon's classmates tease him by telling him that the teacher was right, and he admits that he did not know what else to reply because what she was saying was true.

What is remarkable from this positive contact moment between the teacher and the students is that the teacher achieves her objective of making students speak in English by starting a conversation which is not related to any activity or task that the students are performing at the moment. The teacher is intrigued by the fact that many of the students do not use English in class, and she is genuinely interested in understanding the reason why. During the conversation, she creates a positive, informal environment in which students feel confident to share their views and in which some touches of humor and teasing are welcomed. Given that students report that they value positively when the teacher shows interest and pays attention to them, this type of positive contact points to the fact that the experience of positivity in the classroom can also be effective to achieve certain learning goals without creating a negative, uncomfortable environment that might have detrimental effects on the learners (and perhaps also on the teacher) and which might jeopardize the trust and rapport developed between them.

5. Discussion

The language classroom is a complex system in which many elements and processes coexist, interact and mutually affect each other (see Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Amongst all the elements of the classroom, this study has focused on moments of teacher-student interaction to gain insight into how momentary connections with their teacher might affect students at multiple –and perhaps even simultaneous– levels. Therefore, the first question that this study proposed to address was: 'What teacher-student moments of positive contact are there in the English language classroom?' The findings from this research have

shown that there are many moments of positive contact, or micro-moments of positivity resonance, between teacher and student in the classroom setting analyzed. These contact moments are similar to the self-reported practices mentioned in other studies of rapport and teacher-student relationships (see Frisby & Martin, 2010; Gallardo & Reyes, 2010; Krzemien & Lombardo, 2006), although this research has gone one step further by including not only self-reported account of students (like the aforementioned studies), but also an accurate description and examination of actual teacher-student classroom interaction through observational data. Furthermore, although most of the attention has been directed to positive contact moments, this study also sheds light upon instances of bad contact reported by students, which also appear to have an impact on students' responses towards the teacher and towards the subject altogether. In this vein, findings go in line with Gallardo and Reyes (2010, p.105), as they show that "the presence of any form of bad treatment or lack of care for students will lead to the generation of a bad teacher-student relationship" (own translation).

The analysis suggests that teacher-student interaction appears to be essential in order to experience positivity. As also shown in Swain (2013) and Imai (2010), findings reveal that emotions (in this case positive ones) are not private and inner reactions to external stimuli from the world, but rather interpersonal processes, whose meanings are socially and culturally derived (see Barrett, 2017; Ratner, 2000), and which are dialogically and interactionally co-constructed through verbal and non-verbal means of communication (words, tones, gestures, gaze, smiles, laughter, etc.). In these interactional events, it can also be observed that co-adaptation processes between the teacher and the learner come into play, as they both adjust their behaviors to each other (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) –and even sometimes synchronize them in moments of high positivity (Fredrickson, 2013)– for the sake of learning or rapport-building, for instance.

This momentarily positive connection can be achieved, as shown by the data, by means of contact that reflects respect, humility, motivating and praising feedback, and touches of humor through casual conversations with students. These findings are also closely connected to results obtained in research on enjoyment and love in additional language learning contexts. Hence, as shown in previous studies, learners are more likely to feel enjoyment when the teacher is supportive and friendly to them, when they appreciate their triumphs and when they are willing to build a relationship of trust and care that includes some forms of humor –always in an amicable way (see Barcelos & Coelho, 2016; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016; Li & Rawal, 2018). Therefore, although enjoyment was not specifically the focus of the present study, data indeed suggest that language learner enjoyment is intimately linked to the figure of the teacher, as shown in Dewaele and Dewaele (2017, 2020), and Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019).

As insights from the analysis unveil, moments of positive contact might take various forms, but they appear to be primarily useful to (a) build rapport or a positive bond with students, but also to (b) fulfill language learning-related objectives. With respect to the objectives related to language learning (or even learning in general), positivity during moments of contact seems to be advantageous inasmuch as it can help the teacher to: (i) make students practice oral production; (ii) give feedback or corrections on their output; (iii) to promote autonomy and self-sufficiency; (iv) to explore their (self-)beliefs, insecurities or views regarding the learning of the language; and, consequently (v) to provide necessary advice, motivation, or alternative perspectives that might help students overcome uncertainties and construct more positive mindsets.

The second research question that this study sought to answer was: ‘In what ways does the positivity constructed during these moments of contact appear to affect the learner?’ In this sense, results show on the whole that positive interpersonal connections with the teacher appear to be beneficial for the learner at least in the moment in which this positivity is experienced at multiple levels (e.g. emotionally, motivationally, cognitively and behaviorally). However, Fredrickson (2001, 2013) points out that, despite being brief, the accumulation of micro-moments of positive emotional experience help build enduring resources for life survival, broadening awareness and setting individuals on trajectories of growth. More specifically in foreign language learning, insights from the data point to the fact that the experience of positivity is likely to facilitate the absorption of the target language, as during these moments students appear to be experiencing low stress levels (see MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012). As a matter of fact, having a positive classroom atmosphere, in which the teacher –and thus teacher-student relationships– play an essential role, has been identified as an important factor in foreign language classrooms (e.g. Arnold & Fonseca, 2007; Cuéllar & Oxford, 2018; Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele & Li, 2018; Saito et al., 2018).

It is important to note that moments of positive contact might take various forms and expressions, and so do their effects. Therefore, findings should not be interpreted causally, but rather from a complex perspective which acknowledges that every interaction can be constructed and interpreted differently both by the teacher and the students, and therefore it might affect each of them in various ways depending on the continuous interplay of the myriad elements of the context. Similarly, the analysis shows that the use of clear-cut responses categories employed in Korthagen et al. (2014) (i.e., emotional, motivational, behavioral and cognitive responses) can be problematic because although these categories can be more easily used in self-reported statements, as we can rely on students’ testimonies, dividing the ways the Self relates and communicates with the social world into defined categories appears to be inefficient and highly tentative in actual

here-and-now interaction, particularly if there is a lack of follow-up data with the students involved that can specify at what level(s) they were influenced.

Despite its intricacies and difficulties, it is precisely the analysis of these classroom interactions that makes moments of teacher-student contact a valuable theoretical and methodological framework to grasp how the “real world of the classroom operates” (Larsen-Freeman, 2016, p.389) and to explore the significance and the function of positivity in the foreign language classroom.

5.1 Limitations and further research

This research has made use of both self-reported accounts and observable classroom practices; yet, despite its complexity, there are some limitations to be mentioned. The first one, and probably the most important, is that the data collection was designed to gather information regarding students’ beliefs and attitudes regarding many different aspects of language learning, but no specific questions were thought to address issues of teacher-student contact; rather, these issues appeared as the interviews and group discussions unfolded. Another limitation is that the design of the study does not permit to have access to the students’ (nor the teacher’s) perceptions from a moment of close interaction with the instructor, as no follow-up interview was performed. This means that the development of the interaction and the emergent positivity have been interpreted by the researcher as an external observer, but it is impossible to have a certainty of the participants’ own experience of that moment of contact. Ultimately, it has to be highlighted that the teacher of the course was highly conditioned by the teaching methodology and the materials imposed on her, and that students’ attendance and participation were crucial for the research project. Thus, we do not know to what extent the teacher’s performance might have been conditioned by the methodology and the research needs.

In future studies it would be especially interesting to (1) use stimulated-recall interviews with both students and teachers in order to compare and contrast their views and emotions of contact moments as well as to ensure that the researcher’s interpretation of such contact is close to the participants’ actual experience; to (2) gather data involving bad teacher-student contact, not only in self-reported accounts, but also in classroom interaction; although it might be a sensitive topic, it would be extremely interesting to investigate how these moments are constructed and effects (immediate or long-term) might negative teacher-student contact produce on both parties; and, finally, to (3) analyze micro-examples of classroom interaction in other classroom contexts to see if moments of positive (or negative) contact are similar to those identified in this study and to explore

the ways in which positivity derived from positive contact appear to benefit both parties.

6. Conclusions

This study has focused on teacher-student moments of contact through the analysis of data obtained from both students' self-reported accounts and from classroom observed interactions. Adopting positive psychology lenses, this research has explored the role that positive emotion plays in teacher-student interactions in the English language learning classroom. Although the study acknowledges the complexity of the classroom system, findings reveal that positive momentary connections between the teacher and the student contribute to creating a supportive and relaxed environment that fosters rapport development and that might contribute to achieve learning goals. Broadly speaking, the teacher needs to guide students along their language learning process in the most effective way possible. In order to make it effective, thus, the learners' emotional well-being needs to be taken into account. As our analysis shows, any action performed by teachers is likely to have an influence on the learner, either a positive or a negative one. Perhaps there is not an exact formula for developing positive teacher-student relationships, but this micro-analysis of moments of contact has pointed out the relevance of establishing a positive emotional learning context and has produced insights into the role that positivity plays in the foreign language learning classroom.

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Appendix 1. Transcription conventions

Symbol	Meaning
(text)	Non-verbal information
?	Rising intonation
(.)	Brief pause (less than half a second)
(1)	Longer pause (the number indicates the seconds)
mhm/hm	Backchannel cues
:	Lengthened sound
m:/eh	Fillers or hesitation cues
=	Other continuation
[]	Overlapping speech
-	Truncation or word fragments
haha	Laughter
CAPITALS	Emphasis or prominence
(L1 cat)	Original speech in Catalan
<i>italics</i>	Translation of original speech
...	Unfinished interaction (interaction continues)

* Based on and adapted from VOICE (2007) mark-up conventions

Positividad en la clase de lengua inglesa: Analizando momentos de contacto profesor-alumno

Resumen

La Psicología Positiva se introdujo en la investigación sobre adquisición de segundas lenguas para explorar cómo se puede experimentar la positividad en el aula con el fin de que los alumnos puedan prosperar en sus procesos de aprendizaje de idiomas incluso en circunstancias adversas (véase MacIntyre y Gregersen, 2012). Basándose en las teorías de la Psicología Positiva (Fredrickson, 2001, 2013), este estudio explora momentos de contacto positivo entre la profesora y los estudiantes (ver Korthagen et al., 2014) a través de (1) los relatos de los estudiantes sobre sus experiencias en contextos de aprendizaje de inglés a través de cuatro entrevistas y tres grupos focales; y (2) las prácticas observables en el aula a través de grabaciones de audio/video de seis sesiones de clase. Los resultados revelan que la emoción positiva, la cual es co-construida por la interacción in-situ de la profesora y los estudiantes, beneficia al alumno a múltiples niveles (emocional, conductual, motivacional y cognitivo), contribuye a crear una relación entre ellos, y ayuda a cumplir varios objetivos relacionados con el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje de lengua inglesa, aprendizaje de idiomas extranjeros, emociones del aprendiz de idiomas, momentos de contacto, relaciones profesor-alumno, psicología positiva, positividad, interacción en el aula, ambiente del aula

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