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for the Degree of Master in English**

Title:

**Teachers' Implementation of Mastery learning strategies in the
Department of English at MMUTO:
The Case of Third-Year ESP Students**

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To my dear parents: Akli and Nadia

To my husband Said and his family

To my brother Marzek, to my sisters: Nawel, Hanane, and Nadjat

To all my uncles and aunts, their sons and daughters

To my friends, namely: Tassadit, Nassima and Nawel

Razika HAMADACHE

To my beloved family: my father Sadi, and my mother Fatma

To my brothers and sisters

To all my friends

Nawel KEBDI

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Abstract

The dissertation aims to determine whether the strategies of mastery learning are implemented by English teachers in Third-Year ESP classes in the Department of English at MMUTO. To carry out our study, we relied on Bloom's mastery learning theory(1968). To reach such an aim, a mixed method approach was used for data collection and analysis. Thus, a questionnaire was administered to teachers, and classroom observations were conducted. In addition, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used for statistical data analysis. Moreover, qualitative content analysis for the interpretation of the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, and the results of the classroom observations was employed. The main findings of the research indicate that the first element of Mastery Learning; that is teaching through behavioral objectives is not taken into account. Additionally, the findings show that formative assessment is widely used, and students are provided with descriptive feedback but not in a regular and a satisfactory way. Regarding the last strategy, which is providing quick students with enrichment activities, the results show that it is never used.

Key Terms: Mastery, Mastery Learning (ML), Instructional Objectives (IOs), Formative Assessment (FA), Descriptive Feedback (DF), Enrichment Activities (EAs).

List of Abbreviations

- DF: Descriptive Feedback
- EAs: Enrichment Activities
- EF: Evaluative Feedback
- ESP: English for Specific Purposes
- FA: Formative Assessment
- IOs: Instructional Objectives
- ML: Mastery Learning
- QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis
- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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- **Statement of the Problem**

Mastery is one of the main objectives of learners. Thus, any learner who has been engaged in learning a foreign language aims at becoming a competent user of that language. But the problem that most teachers generally encounter is to find appropriate strategies that permit their learners to master what they learn. For this sake, Bloom (1968) has outlined an effective approach labeled “Mastery learning”, in which he developed some strategies allowing students to attain mastery, which are: announcing behavioral objectives, assessing students’ progress during instruction, following each formative assessment with descriptive feedback and finally providing quick learners with enrichment activities.

In fact, each one of these strategies has its benefits and important role in making the teaching learning process more effective. Thus, announcing students behavioral objectives reminds them of the aim of instruction, which is to acquire competencies and reach mastery (Aouine, 2011). This keeps them motivated and actively involved during the lecture. In addition, formative assessment aims at checking students’ understanding, and this certainly helps to guide their learning, in the sense that it provides them with information about their progress (Andrade and Cizek, 2010). Moreover, descriptive feedback is another important strategy, which is viewed as a powerful tool that helps students to improve their learning by making them aware of their strengths and areas of weaknesses, and provides them with steps to follow in order to improve their level (Black *et al*, 2003). Regarding the last technique, which is “enrichment activities”, it concerns only quick learners; since during the assessment phase it is noticeable that this category of students finishes ahead others. Thus, instead of wasting time and disturbing their classmates who are still working, Bloom (1968) suggested providing these students with extra work or activities, as a way to keep them motivated. Also, this is an opportunity for those students to broaden and extend their learning, and reach a higher degree of mastery. Indeed, these activities boost learning because they challenge quick

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students to expand what they have learned and to go further in their studies (Guskey, 1987). All these elements: announcing behavioral objectives, assessing students' progress during instruction, following each formative assessment with descriptive feedback and providing quick learners with enrichment activities form Bloom's approach. Indeed, they are the focus of the present study that is, investigating the implementation of mastery learning strategies in third-year ESP classes in the department of English at MMTO.

A brief glance at the literature reveals that mastery learning (ML) has been the concern of many studies. Indeed, many researchers have turned their attention to different issues such as: what are the essential elements of ML? What are the effects of ML procedures on students' achievements? What is the effectiveness of ML strategies in undergraduate education courses? Among the different researchers who explored this issue: Guskey (1987), Fuchs and Tindal (1986) in northern Minnesota, Clark, Guskey and Benninga (1983) at the university of Kentucky. Moreover, the implementation of ML principles has been already investigated in the Algerian secondary school of Tizi Ouzou, yet, there is no research conducted at the level of the Department of English regarding this issue.

- **Aims and Significance of the Study**

The present study aims at investigating the implementation of strategies allowing students to reach mastery. In more precise terms, it seeks to find out whether ML strategies are used with third-year ESP students of the Department of English at MMUTO. In addition, it intends to make the reader, teacher and student aware of the important role of these strategies in making learning more effective. Indeed, they do not only help students of low abilities to reach mastery, but also they offer quick learners an opportunity to go further and reach a higher degree of mastery. In addition, our research aims at enriching the literature about the subject and help future students to investigate the issue from other perspectives.

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• Research Questions and Hypotheses

The current study is an attempt to answer the following research questions:

- Do teachers of third-year ESP students of the department of English at MMUTO announce their students instructional objectives? If yes, are the students taught through behavioral objectives?
- To what extent are third-year ESP students of the department of English at MMUTO assessed during instruction?
- To what extent are third-year ESP students of the Department of English at MMUTO provided with descriptive feedback?
- To what extent do teachers of third-year ESP students of the Department of English at MMUTO provide quick learners with enrichment activities?

The following hypotheses are suggested as an attempt to predict the results of the research questions:

H1: Teachers of third-year ESP students announce instructional objectives, but the students are not taught through behavioral objectives.

H2: Teachers of third-year ESP students do not announce instructional objectives.

H3: Third-year ESP students are regularly assessed during instruction.

H4: Third-year ESP students are regularly provided with descriptive feedback.

H5: Quick students of Third-Year ESP are never provided with enrichment activities.

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- **Research Techniques and Methodology**

The current study adopts the mixed research method, which means that, it is based on both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. The research data are gathered using two main instruments: a questionnaire for teachers and classroom observation. These tools are the most appropriate ones, since the questionnaire allows us to collect data about teachers' views about mastery learning strategies, and classroom observation will add more detailed and reliable information since it permits us to observe data in its natural context. The participants are teachers of third-year ESP students of the Department of English at MMUTO. In order to analyze the data gathered, we use descriptive statistical method and qualitative content analysis (QCA).

Choosing the third-year level is not done at random. Yet, it is selected taking into consideration the following reasons; the fact that the third-year level is the end of the cycle of license, and normally, students in this stage are supposed to be competent users of language, and able to demonstrate their mastery of competencies. So, they need to be pushed and encouraged to do so. In addition, it is the year before starting the master degree.

- **Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation follows the traditional simple structure which is composed of a General Introduction, four chapters and a General Conclusion. The General Introduction includes a general overview of the topic, the reasons behind choosing it, the issue of the research, the aims and significance and the organization of the dissertation. The first chapter labeled “*Review of the Literature*”, reviews previous works related to our topic, and makes reference to Benjamin Bloom’s mastery learning theory used in the present work. The second chapter is called “*Research Design*”, and it consists of tools of data collection and procedures of data analysis. The third chapter, entitled “*Results*”, presents the findings obtained from the

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questionnaire and classroom observations. The fourth and the last chapter turns around “*Discussion of the Findings*” and its function is to discuss the results got from the research tools. Finally, the General Conclusion is an overall restatement of the key points explored and considered in the research.

Introduction

This chapter consists in the review of the literature to account for the major works related to mastery learning strategies. First of all, it is undertaken to present the key concepts related to our subject which are: “Mastery”, “Instructional Objectives”, “Formative Assessment”, “Feedback”, “Descriptive Feedback” and “Enrichment Activities”. Next, it reviews some important studies related to mastery learning. Finally, it explains the theory underlying our work which is Bloom’s mastery learning. Indeed, it sheds light on its background, major components, and how it works.

I .1. Definitions of the Key Concepts

I .1.1. Mastery

The term *Mastery* is defined in a number of ways. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2001:447) defines it as “*great skill at doing something/control over something/somebody*”. This means that someone who has reached mastery is skillful and has great knowledge to perform better, or he/she has control over something. *Merriam Webster Dictionary* (1978) provides us with a clearer definition. Indeed, it states that mastery is “*knowledge and skills that allow you to do, use, or understand something very well*”. That is to say, mastery means to acquire a higher degree of skills and knowledge which permit someone to do things in a good manner. Another definition is the one given by Mosher (2007), in which he suggests that mastery is simply reaching a certain level of understanding of a particular content. In other words, to reach mastery means to achieve a higher level of performance, to be competent, skillful and to have a great control over something, this is as concerns mastery in general. But in language learning, mastery means to master the four skills of language (reading, writing,

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listening, speaking), and to become a communicatively competent speaker/hearer. That is to say, someone who masters a given language is able to use and understand it very well.

I.1.2.Mastery Learning

The term mastery learning (ML) has been defined in a number of ways. Salvines (1987) defines it as a method of instruction, which focuses on the role of feedback in the process of learning, it establishes a level of performance that all students should attain before moving on to a new unit. In other words, ML emphasizes the importance of mastering a given unit before moving on to a new one. It also gives great importance to the role of feedback in learning. Another definition was given by Block (1971, cited in Clark *et al* 1983:210) in which he defines ML as:

A psychological approach to learning which asserts that all students can master most of what they have taught given the appropriate conditions, which are: "well-planned instruction", "adequate time for students to learn the material and regular checks on learning with immediate feedback and methods for correction inadequacies.

Bloom (1976) provided us with another definition of mastery learning which asserts that mastery learning entails material to be learned over a period of time, which is divided into small units, following instruction on each unit and test is administered, the result is feedback which can be used by teacher and students regarding mastery of the unit and necessary corrective strategies.

I .1.3.Instructional Objectives

The term "*Instructional Objectives*" (IOs) has been defined by different authors. For example, Bloom (1956:14) defines it as a set of explicit formulations of ways in which students are expected to be altered by the instructional process. In other words, IOs are the educational goals through which the teachers intend to cause a change in students at the end of the instruction. Mager (1975) provides us with another definition in which he notes that an

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objective is a description of a performance teachers want students to show before they consider them competent. An objective describes an intended result of instruction rather than the process of instruction itself. That is to say, an objective is about the destination that learners are expected to attain.

According to Popham and Baker (1970), IOs are defined as an intended change that can be brought about in a learner, which means, they are the change that teachers aim to make in learners, and this by introducing them new vocabulary, for instance, or teaching them new functions, such as "how to narrate", "how to ask for permission"...etc. Thus, transferring them new knowledge, and making them able to do things that they were unable to do before. Furthermore, Gallagher and Smith (1989:3) define IOs as specific statements about what students should be able to do following instruction. That is to say, IOs are a set of formulations that describe what students are expected to be able to do at the end of the lesson. Moreover, Mager (1962) provides us with a clearer definition of IOs in terms of what the students should be able to do at the end of a learning period that they could not do before. This means that IOs are a set of statements, which teachers intend to transfer to their students to make them aware of things to learn.

I.1.3.1.The Advantages of the Announcement of the Instructional Objectives

Scholars have indicated that informing students about instructional objectives before instruction has many advantages. First of all, "*announcing the IOs in advance of instruction motivates students to increase their efforts, attention and readiness to learn*" (Dalis, 1997:20). Also, "*announcing the instructional objectives helps the learners to identify the required terminal performance*" (Ibid), that is, it helps them to know what they are expected to do at the end of instruction. Moreover, it makes them aware of what they are going to do,

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and which steps to follow in order to learn. In addition, “*it guides students’ thinking to the learning task*” (Ibid:21), which means that, announcing the instructional objectives makes students focused, and directs their thinking and attention to what needs to be learned. Thus, they will not be lost. Furthermore, it is argued that informing students about the IOs in advance of instruction provides them with guidelines for learning (Mager, 1997; Gronlund and Brookhart, 2009), which means that, when students are informed about the IOs before the lesson started; they will become aware of the right route to follow during instruction to attain mastery of the items being taught.

I.1.3.1.1. Behavioral versus Content Objectives

Bloom’s mastery learning approach emphasizes the inclusion of behavioral objectives during instruction since it seeks for the development of competencies. These objectives are closely related to the real demonstration of competency in concrete situations encountered in real life (cited in Aouine, 2011). There is another type of objectives which turns around content, which is named “content objectives”. They are in the form of lists of items given by the teachers to be remembered for a test or an exam. Contrary to behavioral objectives, these objectives have no relation with the real demonstration of understanding, since they give more importance to the corpus rather than the use of language (cited in Lazili and Leroul, 2013).

I .1.4. Formative Assessment

The term “Formative assessment” (FA) has been defined in a number of ways, Black and Wiliam (1998:7, cited in Andrade and Cizek, 2010:23) define it as

Encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and activities in which they are engaged.

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In other words, FA is a set of activities given by the teacher during instruction in order to get information about his/her teaching, and from this information the teacher can know whether the activities are effective or they need improvements. There is another definition given by Cowie and Bell (1999, cited in Andrade and Cizek, 2010:23) in which they define FA as “*the process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to students’ learning in order to enhance that learning during learning*”. Said differently, FA is a process that enhances learning and makes it more effective. Kahl (2005) also defines FA as a tool that aims to check students’ understanding of a given material, which means that, assessing students during instruction provides teachers with information about students’ understanding. Moreover, Shepard *et al* (2005:275, cited in Andrade & Cizek, 2011:23) give us a more explicit definition of FA. Indeed, they note “*assessment carried out during the instructional process, for the purpose of improving teaching or learning*”. That is to say, FA is a process that takes place during instruction, and it aims at enhancing both teaching and learning. It is noticeable that all these definitions given by different authors come to a common point, that is, FA is a process that takes places during the teaching learning process, its major aim is to improve learning, and it is beneficial for both, teachers and students.

I.1.4.1. The Importance of Formative Assessment

The importance of FA has been acknowledged by many authors. Black and Wiliam (1998, cited in Hatching, 2003:186) maintain that “*formative assessment has a greater positive effect on learning than any other single factor, and that effective formative assessment has its most positive effect on lower achievers*”. In other words, this type of assessment makes learning more effective, since it helps students, and mainly the slow ones to improve their abilities and reach a certain degree of performance. It is also argued that “*formative assessment enhances learning*” (Stiggins, 2007, cited in Andrade and Cizek,

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2010:75). It is effective in promoting students' achievements (Black and Wiliam, 1998). Moreover, *"it provides teachers with information needed to adjust teaching and learning as they are taking place, by informing teachers and students about student understanding and teacher effectiveness at a point when timely adjustment can be made"* (Boston,2002; Davis, 2007, cited in Andrade and Cizek, 2010:75). In other words, FA allows teachers to know whether their teaching is effective, and to check students' understanding while the teaching learning process is taking place. It is a tool for helping to guide students' learning, as well as to provide information that teachers can use in order to improve their own instructional practice. Accordingly, FA is beneficial for both teachers and students (Andrade and Cizek, 2010).

I .1.5. Feedback

It is important to mention that in the context of teaching and learning, feedback can be defined as any form of comment given by a teacher to students as an answer to their performance, attitudes or behavior (Scott and Dinham, 2005). In other words, feedback refers to the information that teachers provide students with as a response to their work. Another definition is given by Winne and Butlter (1994, cited in Hattie and Temperly, 2007:82), in which they describe feedback as *"information with which a learner can confirm, add to, and overwrite, tune or restructure information in memory"*. This means that feedback is a way that allows students to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Sadler (1989:120) also provides us with a clearer definition of feedback. He notes *"feedback...is usually defined in terms of information about how successfully something has been or being done"*. That is to say, feedback is the information that describes something done, and indicates how successful is. Moreover, feedback can be defined as a response to someone's performance or understanding (Hattie and Temperly, 2007).

I.1.5.1. Descriptive Feedback

Descriptive feedback (DF) is generally defined in terms of direct comments on students' performance that can be either written or spoken. It identifies what students have done well and provides them with detailed and specific suggestions for improvement (Walker, 2010). In other words, DF is the detailed information that teachers provide their students with, either orally or in writing to inform them about their strengths and weaknesses, and provide them with steps to follow and suggestions in order to improve their learning. For instance, the teacher describes a student's performance telling him/her what has been done well, and which areas need improvement, and gives him/her the right steps to follow in order to perform better. For example, the teacher may say "*you have very good ideas, but you lack vocabulary, instead of saying this... it's better to say it in this way...*". By doing so, the students will know their strengths, and the areas they need to work on more.

I.1.5.1.1. The Benefits of Descriptive Feedback

Many authors emphasize the importance of descriptive feedback. For instance, Black *et al* (2003) argue that descriptive feedback is the most powerful tool that leads to improve students' learning, because it helps learners to become aware of their weaknesses, and how to overcome them. DF also helps students to learn since it provides them with information about their current level of achievement, and show them the appropriate steps to follow in order to perform better (Stiggins *et al*, 2004; Sadler, 1989). Thus, DF does not identify only what was done well and what needs improvement, but also, it provides students with the right steps to follow in order to improve their learning (Black *et al*, 2003; Dixon, 2005; Hattie and Temperly, 2007). It is also assumed that descriptive feedback provides students with appropriate next steps to follow, based on an assessment of the work an image of what a good performance looks like, so that they will take on the responsibility of self-correcting and self-assessing (Earl, 2003). In other words, DF provides students with detailed and specific

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information about how to improve, and it makes students responsible for their learning, thus becoming more autonomous.

It is stated by Stiggins *et al* (2004) that the quality of feedback is determined by its quality, rather than its existence or absence. This means that, it does not matter whether to provide students with feedback or not, but what matters is the nature of that feedback. It is also argued by Black *et al* (2003) that feedback that focuses on what needs to be done can encourage all students to believe that they can improve their abilities. That is to say, descriptive feedback motivates students because when the student is aware of his /her strengths, he/she will become more confident, since he /she knows what is good in his /her work, thus he/she is motivated to continue performing in the same way. For instance, when the teacher responds to a student saying “*you have a good style!*”, by doing so, the teacher is motivating his/her students to continue their success and to reach a higher degree of performance. The same thing when the student knows what his /her areas of weaknesses are, he/she will try to make more efforts to overcome them and to perform better. This is how DF motivates students. Moreover, it is assumed that “*detailed, specific, descriptive feedback which focuses students’ attention on their work is the most advantageous kind of information that should be provided to students*” (Smith, 2008:39). Furthermore, walker (2010) argue that DF promotes students’ intrinsic motivation and increases their engagement in learning, and it allows them to monitor their work on a continuous basis. In other words, DF motivates students and makes them more engaged in the learning process, as well as it permits them to control their work.

I.1.5.1.1.1. Descriptive versus Evaluative Feedback

It is important to know the distinctions between descriptive and evaluative feedback (EF). On the one hand, descriptive feedback conveys information about how one performs the

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task, and details possible ways to overcome difficulties to improve performance. On the other hand, evaluative feedback is limited in providing students with information about the correctness of their answers; it represents a judgment which often carries “*a connotation of social comparison*” (Linn and Miller, 2005). That is to say, descriptive feedback provides students with a description of their performance, and offers them steps to follow in order to remediate their weaknesses, contrary to EF, which is judgmental, and that leads students to compare themselves against the others. For example, when the teacher says to a student “*very good!*”, and says to another one “*no! This is not the right answer!*”, by saying so, the teacher is favoring some students to the others, since he/she is just giving personal and judgmental feedback, and certainly, this will lead students to compare themselves with their classmates instead of focusing their attention on difficulties in the task given to them, and on making efforts in order to improve (Butler, 1987). Additionally, it is argued that DF focuses on learning goals, but EF focuses on performance goals (Tunstall and Gipps, 1996). This means that DF has the purpose of improving students’ learning, by providing them with the appropriate steps to follow. However, EF is judgmental, and it aims only to measure students’ achievements. Also, contrary to DF, EF can have a negative impact on learning and motivation, in the sense that it convinces students to believe that they lack ability, and thus reducing their desire to make more efforts to learn (Black and Wiliam, 1998). It is also argued that feedback which is simply evaluative does little to improve learning, and actually it can impair this process (Tunstall and Gipps, 1996, cited in Chrisman, 2014). In other words, EF does not really help in enhancing students’ learning, but rather, it may have a negative effect on it, in the sense that it can make students unmotivated, because, when they are not aware of their strengths and weaknesses, they will become careless, since they do not know what is good in their performance, and what needs improvement. Thus, they will not try to make more efforts in order to ameliorate themselves. Moreover, DF is more effective than EF

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because the former describes both weaknesses and strengths and informs how to remediate the weaknesses; whereas the latter just informs how the students did without giving them any suggestions to improve (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996).

Furthermore, DF rather than grades leads to highest improvements in students' performance (Black and Wiliam, 1998). It is also assumed that EF and frequent evaluation can have a negative impact on students' learning since it just judges their achievement, and does neither inform them about their deficiencies, nor encourages them to make efforts to improve themselves (Tunsall and Gipps , 1996; Black and Wiliam, 1998). In addition, it is mentioned that *"feedback comments improved students subsequent interest in learning and performance when compared with controlled situations where grades alone were given"* (Butler, 1988, cited in Dewah *et al*, 2004:12). In other words, providing students with comments that describe their performance has a positive effect on their learning, rather than grades. It is also argued that the feedback that teachers provide their students about their performance should demonstrate to them how it was experienced by the teacher (reader or hearer), these comments should be in a *"non-authoritative tone"*, and where possible, they should provide corrective advice instead of just informing about strengths and weaknesses. It is not enough to tell students that they are right or wrong, but rather, they should be provided with a detailed and a specific feedback about their performance (Lunsford, 1997).

Numerous studies came to a conclusion that descriptive feedback positively affects students' learning. For example, a study conducted by Butler (1988), in which he found that the group that received comments showed a significant increase in scores. Whereas the group that received only grades showed a significant decline, as did the group that received both grades and comments. Similarly, Elawar and Corno (1985) have conducted a research concerning the effect of teachers' feedback to students' homework. They found that the students who received comments performed better than those who received only grades, since

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the latter led to inhibition of students' performance. Another study conducted by Kluger and DeNisi (1996) show that descriptive feedback, rather than personal judgments, led to greater learning, they found that neutral feedback which contains detailed information about someone's performance and detailed ways to overcome his/her strengths, was far more effective than evaluative feedback, in which students are informed about how well they did, without giving them any idea about their areas of weaknesses, and to how remediate them.

I.1.6. Enrichment Activities

The term "Enrichment activities" (EAs) has been defined in a number of ways. For instance, Teare (1997) describes it as a work covered in more depth, a broadening of learning experience, the inclusion of additional subject areas and/or activities, and promoting a higher level of thinking. In other words, EAs or extension activities are the ones which allow students to extend their learning and go further, and give them opportunities to explore their interests, and reach a higher degree of mastery. These activities are designed to quick learners, who show mastery of unit concepts from the first try, and do not need corrective activities. These students finish their work early, and they need to be provided with EAs as an opportunity for them to broaden their learning "*rather than sitting around and biding their time, while their slow classmates are engaged in corrective work*" (Andrade and Cizek, 2010:113).

I .1.6.1.The Importance of Enrichment Activities

Enrichment activities provide gifted students with opportunities to broaden and expand their learning (Guskey, 1987). Moreover, "*Effective enrichment activities provide students with valuable, challenging and rewarding learning experiences; they reward students for their learning success and challenge them to go further*" (Andrade and cizek, 2010:113). Teare (1997) also reports that it is important to give opportunities to students of high abilities

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to broaden their learning and allow them to work together on occasion enrichment sessions outside the classroom. Such sessions can be used as a means to meet these students' particular requirements. In other words, providing gifted students with EAs to do outside the classroom allows them to explore some of their own interests and to go further in their learning by learning things and discovering new language items. Accordingly, quick learners generally have the desire to extend their learning, so it is important for teachers to provide them with such activities.

I .2.Theoretical Framework

I .2.1.Benjamin Bloom's Mastery Learning Theory 1968

In order to explore the issue of implementing mastery learning principles in third year ESP classes in the Department of English at MMUTO, we rely on Benjamin Samuel Bloom's mastery learning theory (1968).

I .2.2. How did Mastery Learning Come into Existence?

Students have various levels of achievement. Thus, there are some quick learners who learn excellently and reach a higher level, and slow ones who attain modest level. These variations were the concern of many researchers who planned studies in order to explain them. Among them Benjamin Samuel Bloom. In the early 1960s, he studied individual differences, and mainly those in students' school learning. He said that factors outside school have an impact on learning (Bloom, 1964, cited in Guskey, 2005), his study indicated also that even teachers affect students' learning. During his classroom observations, he noticed that all students were taught in the same way, and were provided with the same amount of time to study. This means that teachers did not differentiate their instructional methods. As a result, few students learned well, and the largest number learned less well since the instructional practices were not suitable for all students (Ibid).

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In order to solve the problem of variation in students' achievement, Bloom (1968) reasoned that instruction needs to be differentiated by teachers. Bloom believed that teachers had to divide and organize the skills they wanted students to learn into units, then to assess students' learning at the end of each unit. He also claimed that teachers had to use their classroom assessments as learning tools, and then to follow those assessments with feedback and correctives. This means that, instead of using those assessments to measure and evaluate students' achievements at the end of each unit, teachers had to include them as part of their teaching process to give students feedback on their learning and to design remediation procedures. In order to make the use of this feedback and correctives, Bloom planned a strategy labeled "mastery learning" (Bloom, 1971, cited in Guskey, 2005).

I .2.3.How Mastery Learning Works?

In using the mastery learning strategy, teachers organize the instructional concepts into smaller units that require a week or two, then comes instruction, which is followed by formative assessment based on the unit goals. This formative assessment has the purpose of giving students feedback on their learning, and helps them to identify the areas where they have learned well, and where they still need more work (Bloom *et al*, 197, cited in Guskey, 2005).

Formative assessment is paired with corrective activities that help students to remediate their learning difficulties. Using formative assessment as part of teaching learning process is beneficial, in the sense that it prevents small learning difficulties to become big ones. It also enables teachers to differentiate their ways of teaching in order to meet their students' requirements (Bloom *et al* 1981, cited in Guskey, 2005).

When students finish their corrective activities, they take a second formative assessment, which has the purposes of offering students a second chance to succeed and overcome their learning difficulties. Concerning those students who demonstrate mastery of the concepts and

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skills in the first formative assessment, and who do not need correctives, Bloom (1968) suggested that these students need to be provided with special enrichment or extension activities to broaden their learning experiences (Ibid). The following figure illustrates Bloom's mastery learning instructional process.

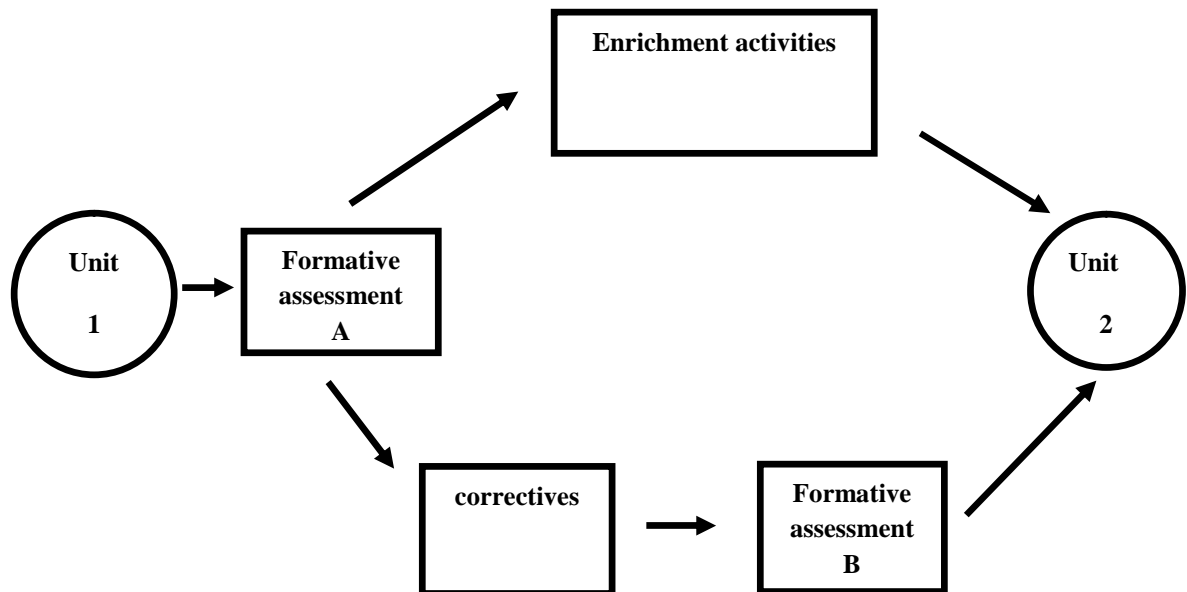


Figure 01: Mastery Learning Instructional Process (R. Guskey,2005).

In the coming paragraphs the components of mastery learning are going to be explained. That is how mastery is made.

I.2.1.3. Mastery Learning Components: Feedback, Correctives, and Enrichment Activities

Many programs sprang up in schools throughout the United States and around the world based on mastery learning principles. Even such programs true to Bloom's ideas differ from

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setting to setting, they include two essential elements: (1) feedback, correctives and enrichment, and (2) instructional alignment (Guskey, 1997 cited in Guskey, 2010).

In mastery learning classrooms, teachers provide their students with specific feedback on their performance through regular formative assessments (Guskey, 2003, cited in Aouine, 2011). In order for this feedback to be effective; it should be paired with corrective activities, which guide students on how to overcome their weaknesses (Allal and Lopez, 2005, cited in Aouine, 2011).

It is noticeable that while using formative assessment, there are some students who will demonstrate their mastery of learning from the first try. Therefore, they will not need corrective activities. These students need to be provided with enrichment or extension activities, as an opportunity for them to broaden their learning rather than wasting their time. Accordingly, *“effective enrichment activities provide these students with valuable, challenging, and rewarding learning experiences”* (Guskey, 2010, cited in Aouine, 2011:52). For example, if some students in grammar demonstrate their mastery of the use of present perfect, and have no need for correctives, the teacher can provide these students with a range of related topics, in this way, they will not lose motivation, and it is an opportunity for them to go further in their learning.

Interestingly, it is important to indicate that Feedback, correctives, and enrichment are extremely important, yet, they alone do not constitute mastery learning. To be truly effective, Bloom (1968) stressed that they must be combined with the second essential element of mastery learning which is *“instructional alignment”* (cited in Guskey, 2005). That is to say, *“there should be linkage (coherence) among the different instructional components”* (Aouine, 2011:52). Indeed, according to Bloom (1971, cited in Aouine, 2011:52) *“the instructional process should include behavioral objectives which announce what students are going to be able to do”*, then comes instruction that, hopefully, results in competent learners, and finally

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comes assessment which, as stated above, can be either followed by correctives or enrichment activities (Ibid).

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the main theoretical points related to mastery learning. It comprises definitions of the key concepts. Then it has considered the most important previous works related to our subject. Finally, it has explained Bloom's mastery learning theory underlying our study.

Introduction

This chapter is methodological; it describes the instruments and procedures of data collection and analysis used in our study in order to answer the research questions asked in the general introduction. The research design consists of two parts. The first one is named: “Procedures of Data Collection” and it mainly describes the methods on which we rely in the present study, the setting and the participants of our investigation, and the instruments of data collection. The second part is called: “Procedures of Data Analysis”. It is devoted to the explanation of the data analysis procedures which are: a statistical method labeled Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and qualitative content analysis (QCA).

II.1. Procedures of Data Collection

II.1.1. Research Method

In order to carry out our study, we opted for the use of a mixed research method for both data collection and analysis. The use of quantitative method allowed us to gather a huge amount of data which are then analysed by descriptive statistical method. The use of qualitative method permitted us to analyse the qualitative data gathered from open ended questions.

II.1.2. Setting and Participants of the Research

The investigation is carried out in the Department of English at MMUTO. The participants involved in our study are teachers of third-year ESP students which are total of eighteen (18). Some of them teach more than one module. The choice of third-year classes was not done randomly. In other words, students in this level are supposed to master the English language since it is the end of the cycle of licence where students need to be ready for the master degree.

II.1.3. Instruments of Data Collection

In order to collect data related to our study, we have used two (02) main research tools. We administered a questionnaire for teachers of third-year ESP students and conducted classroom observations.

1) Teachers' Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data collection instrument that researchers use to collect information about a given subject from a number of participants. Brown (2001) defines a questionnaire as any written instrument which contains a series of questions and statements, which the respondents can answer, either by using their own words or selecting answers from those they are provided with. We have chosen this tool because it facilitates data collection.

The questionnaire we have designed contains seventeen (17) questions, and it is divided into five (05) sections. The first one is about the background information of teachers in terms of years of experience, it contains only one question. The second part is about mastery, it contains two open-ended questions. The third part is about teachers' announcement of the instructional objectives, which is composed of four (4) close-ended questions. As to the fourth part, it deals with teachers' use of formative assessment and descriptive feedback that is composed of six (6) close-ended questions. The last part is about teachers' use of enrichment activities, which contains three (3) close-ended questions and an open-ended one. The questionnaires were distributed on May 23rd, 24th, 25th 2016. In addition, in order to get more reliable data, we have used another research tool, which is classroom observation.

2) Classroom Observation

Classroom observation is the second tool that we have used in our investigation. It has allowed us to have access to data in its natural context. Classroom observation has a great

importance because it allows the researcher to collect more valid data. In our investigation, we have used a checklist of eight (8) items to be observed. These observations were conducted with the teachers of third year ESP students (18 teachers), and they took place from May 4th 2016 till May 26th 2016. We have attended thirty-nine (39) sessions. Indeed, seven (07) teachers with whom we attended three sessions, seven (07) others with whom we attended two sessions, and four (04) with whom we attended one session.

II.2. Procedures of Data Analysis

II.2.1. Descriptive Statistical Method

As mentioned above, quantitative and qualitative methods are used in order to analyse the data. Close-ended questions which will generate numerical data explore the teachers' use of mastery learning strategies. These data are calculated with the help of a computer program named the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

II.2.2. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

. Qualitative content analysis (QCA) has been defined by different authors. For example, Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1278) define it as *“a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data, through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns”*. Patton (2002:453) provided us with another definition, in which he states *“any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings”*. These definitions illustrate that QCA is designed for the analysis of content (texts, messages...); it seeks to decipher the hidden meaning. In fact, this method is used in this study in order to interpret and analyse the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and to describe and interpret the different behaviors and events that we observed in the classrooms.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the research design used in our study. First, it has explained the methods that we opted for when conducting our research. It has presented the setting and participants, as well as the data collection instruments, which consist of a questionnaire and classroom observation. Then, it has outlined the methods used for the analysis of the gathered data. Indeed, SPSS is used as a statistical technique to provide a percentage of the data obtained through questionnaire, whereas the qualitative content analysis (QCA) is used to interpret the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and to describe and discuss the data obtained through classroom observations.

Findings

Introduction

This chapter is about the findings of our research. It presents the results obtained from the research tools which are: the questionnaire addressed to teachers of third-year ESP students and classroom observations that we conducted. The aim of this chapter is to find out whether teachers of the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-ouzou implement the strategies of mastery learning. The findings are presented by percentages and displayed in histograms, pie charts and tables. This part is composed of two sections. The first one is devoted to the presentation of the findings of the questionnaires, and the second part deals with the presentation of the results of the classroom observations.

III.1. Results of Teachers' Questionnaire

In our study, teachers of third-year ESP students were given a questionnaire to answer. Their number is eighteen (18) teachers. The results we obtained are as follows:

Section one: Teachers' Experience

Q1: How long have you been teaching?

The results of this question are arranged from one (1) year to twenty eight (28) years.

Years of experience	1	3	4	5	8	10	21	24	28
Number of teachers	5	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	1

Table1: Teachers' Experience.

Remark: One (1) teacher did not answer this question.

Findings

Section Two: Mastery

Q2: Would you give us the definition of mastery?

This question is an open-ended one by which we gave teachers the opportunity to express their points of view. The data gathered from this question reveal that the majority of teachers define mastery as “*having knowledge and skills in a given field, and mastery of language means to understand and use a language very well*”, while the minority provides us with different definitions, which implies “*the ability and complete control of something*”.

Remark: one (01) teacher did not answer this question.

Q3: what strategies do you use in your instruction to allow your students to reach mastery?

This question also is an open-ended one. It aims at knowing the different strategies that teachers use while teaching their students, so that they will attain mastery. The data obtained from this question show that teachers of third-year ESP students use different strategies during their instruction. This is mainly done by involving the students in the lesson; by training, asking them questions, discussing with them, and assessing their progress.

Remark: two (02) teachers did not answer this question.

Section Three: The Instructional Objectives

Q4: Do you announce your students the instructional objectives?

Findings

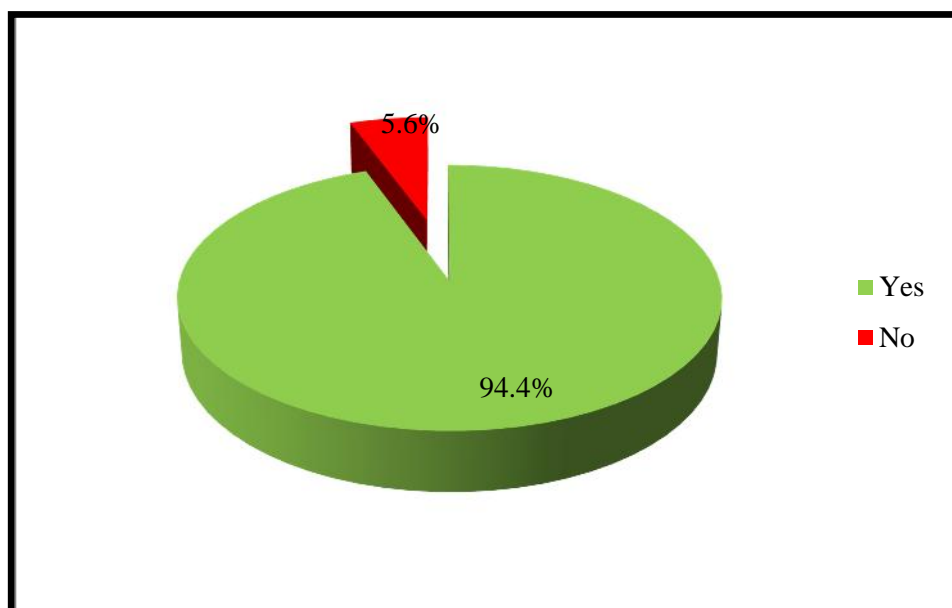


Diagram1: Teachers' Announcement of the Instructional objectives.

If yes, how often do you do that?

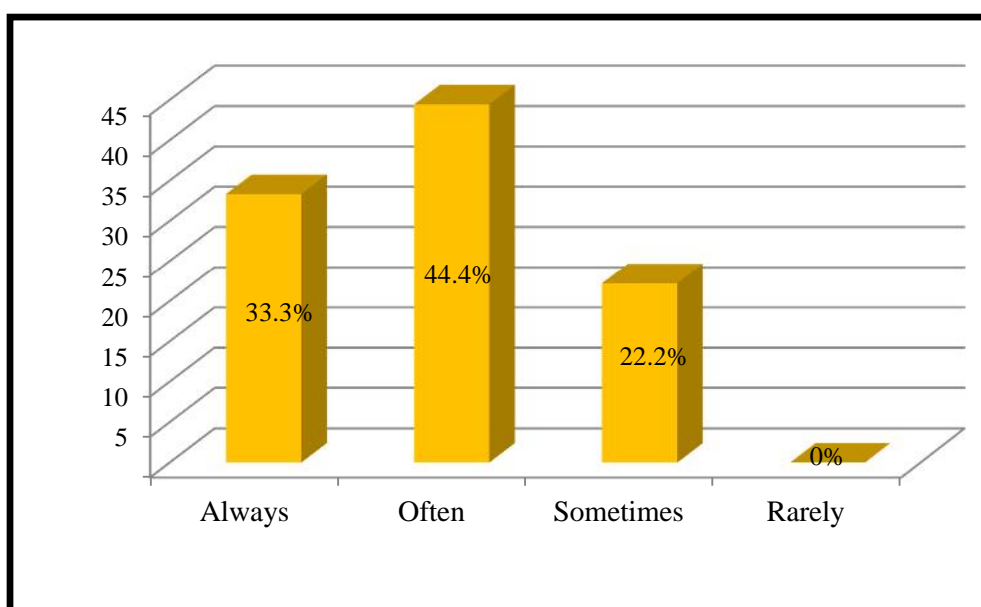


Diagram2: Frequency of the Announcement of the IOs.

From the data gathered, we can see that the majority of teachers (94.4%) announce to their students the instructional objectives. Six of them (33.3%) say that they do this “*always*”. Eight (44.4%) say that they do it “*often*”. Four (22.2%) have answered by “*sometimes*”. No one of them has mentioned the last proposition, which is “*rarely*”.

Findings

Q5: How do you consider the announcement of the instructional objectives?

Would you explain your answer?

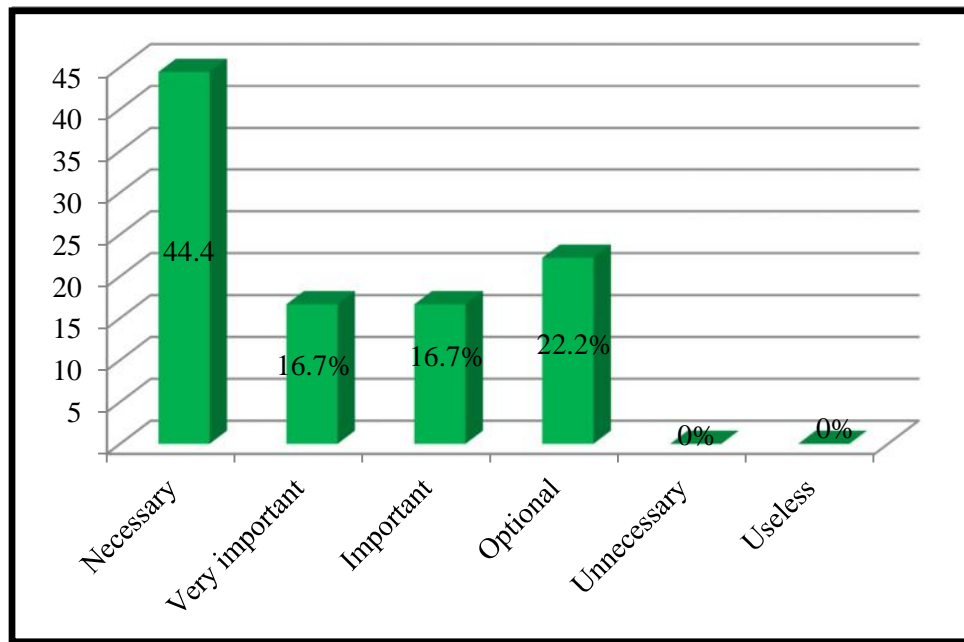


Diagram3: Teachers' Attitudes towards the Announcement of the IOs.

The aim of this question is to know whether teachers give importance to the announcement of the instructional objectives or not. As shown in the diagram, the majority of teachers (44.4%) consider it as being “*necessary*”, and they have justified their answers by saying that students should know what they are learning and why they are learning it, and that this will make them pay more attention during the lecture. Three of them (16.7%) say that it is “*very important*” and three others (16.7%) mention that it is “*important*”. Four of them (22.2%) say that it is “*optional*”, and they justify their answers by saying that it is up to students to sort out the objectives of the lesson, and that this depends on the lecture.

Q6: Do you think that informing students about the instructional objectives will help them understand the lesson? If yes how?

Findings

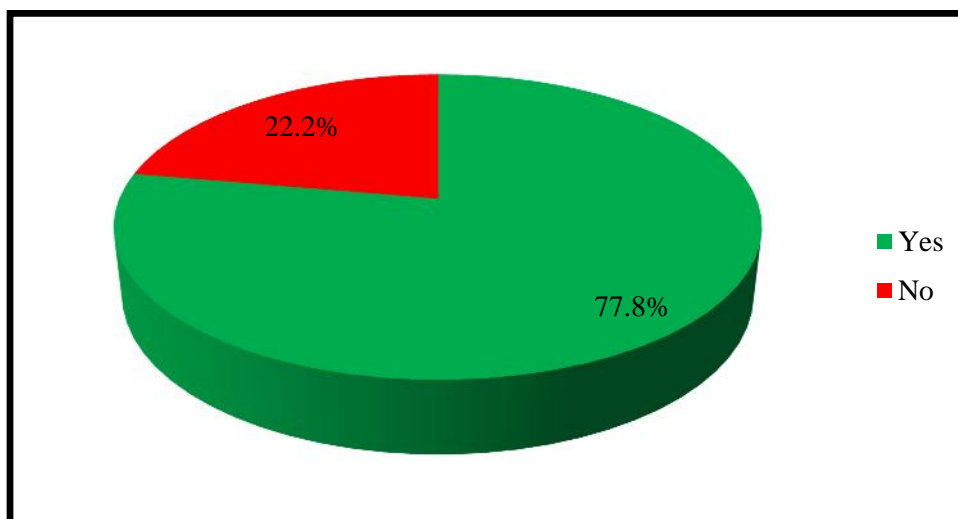


Diagram4: Teachers' Attitudes towards the Role of the Announcement of the IOs in Helping Students Understand the Lesson.

As **diagram 4** shows, the majority of teachers (77.8%) have answered by “yes”. They justify their answers by saying that this makes the students aware of what is required from them; what is the students’ responsibility. The minority (22.2%) of them has answered by “no”, but they did not mention why.

Q7: What is the nature of the instructional objectives that you teach your students?

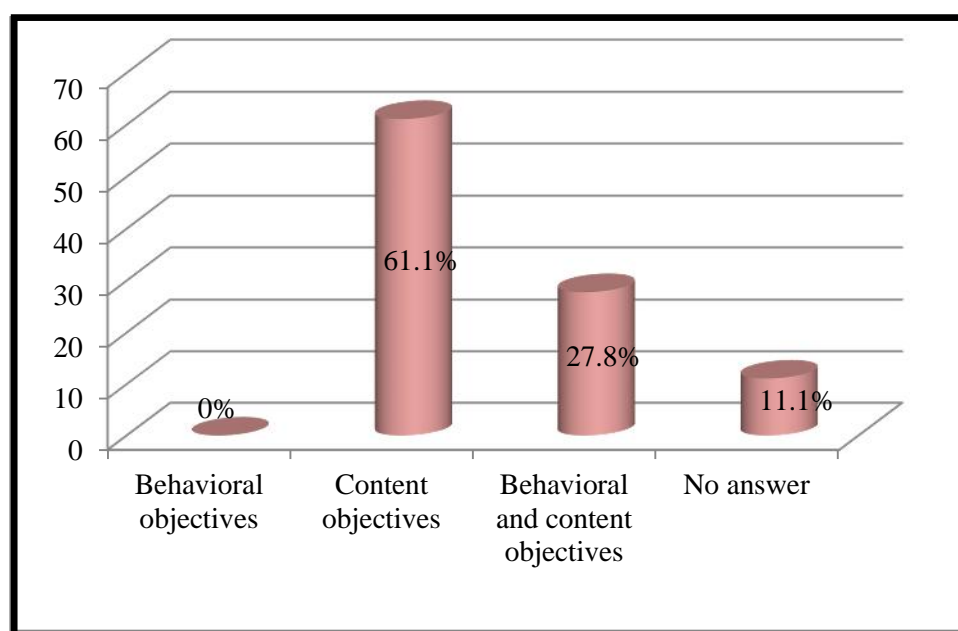


Diagram 5: The Nature of the IOs that Teachers Teach their Students.

Findings

As indicated in **diagram 5**, the majority of teachers (61.1%) teach their students “*content objectives*”. Some of them (27.8%) teach both “*behavioral and content*”, and no one of them teaches “*behavioral objectives*” alone.

Section Four: Teachers’ Use of Formative Assessment and Descriptive Feedback

Q8: How often do you assess your students’ progress during instruction?

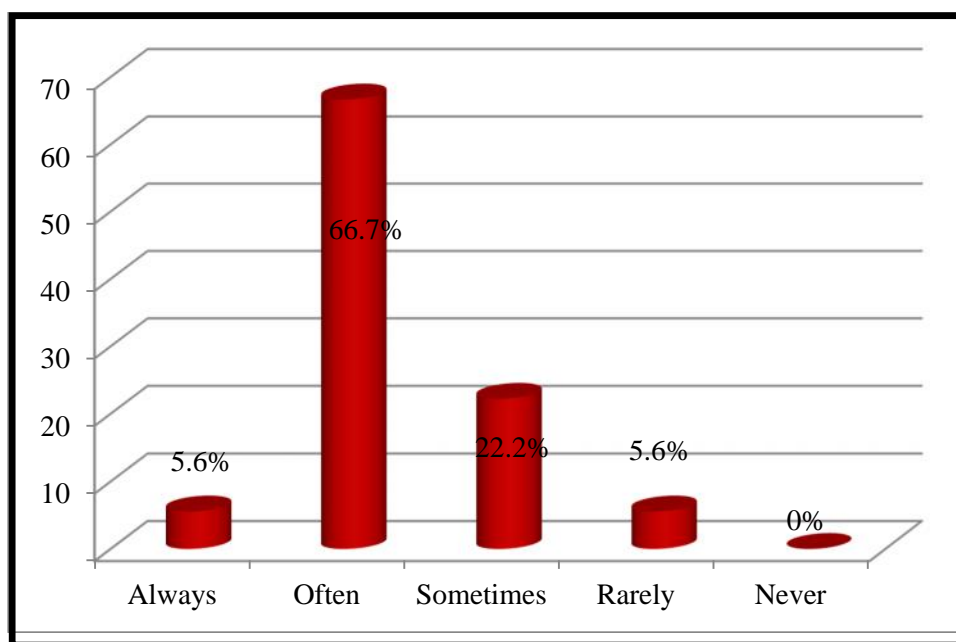


Diagram6: Frequency of the Use of Formative Assessment by Teachers.

As for the frequency of the use of formative assessment by teachers, the majority of the respondents (66.7%) say that they “*often*” assess their students’ progress during instruction. Few of them (22.2) say that they do this “*sometimes*”. One teacher answers by “*always*”, and another one answers by “*rarely*”. No one has mentioned the last proposition, which is “*never*”.

Q9: Do you think that assessing students’ progress during instruction helps them improve and reach mastery?

Would you explain your answer?

Findings

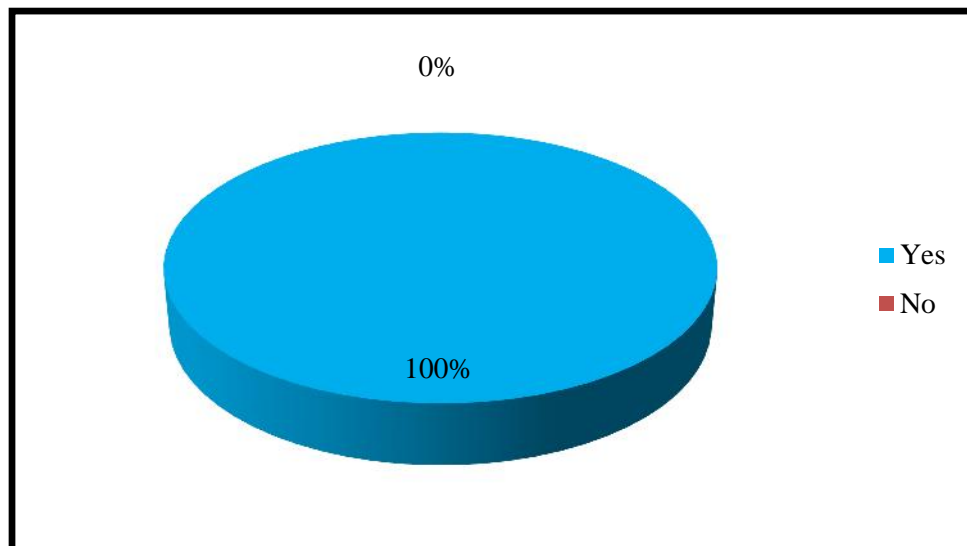


Diagram7: Teachers' Attitudes towards the Role of FA in Helping Students to Improve their Learning and Reach Mastery of Language.

The results gathered from question 7 show that all the teachers have answered by “yes”, which means that they all agree that formative assessment really helps students improve and reach mastery. They explain their answers by saying that assessing students' progress during instruction helps them know their strengths and weaknesses, how well their performance is.

Q10: How often do you provide your students with feedback after assessing them during instruction?

Findings

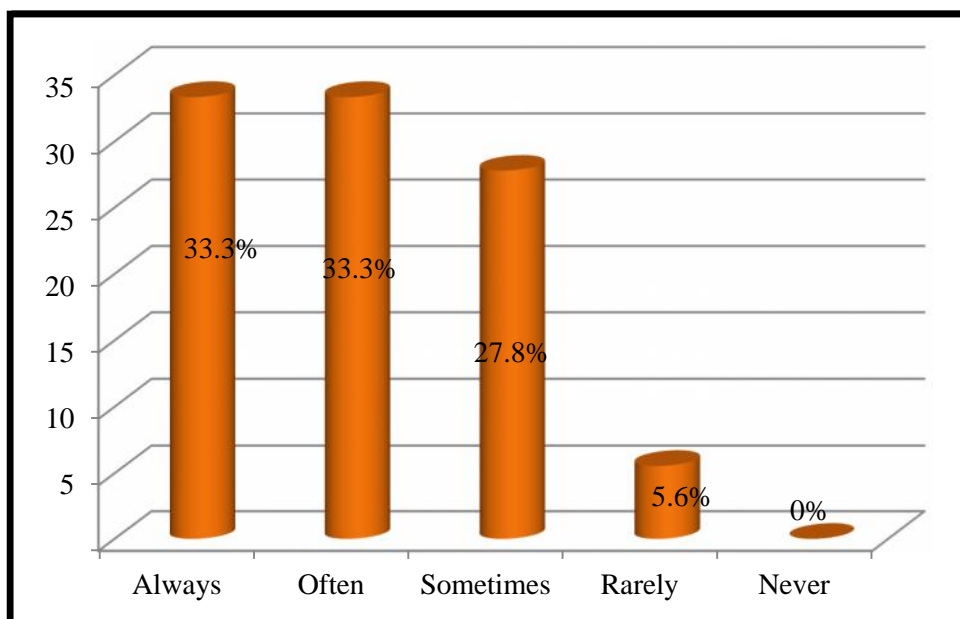


Diagram8: Frequency of Providing Students with Feedback after formative assessment.

As presented in **diagram 8**, six (33.3%) teachers “*always*” provide their students with feedback after assessing them during instruction. The same number (33.3%) does this “*often*”. Some of them (27.8%) have answered by “*sometimes*”, and only one teacher who answered by “*rarely*”.

Q11: When providing your students with feedback, do you:

- Stick to tell them they are right or wrong.
- Provide them with details about their performance.
- Or both.

Findings

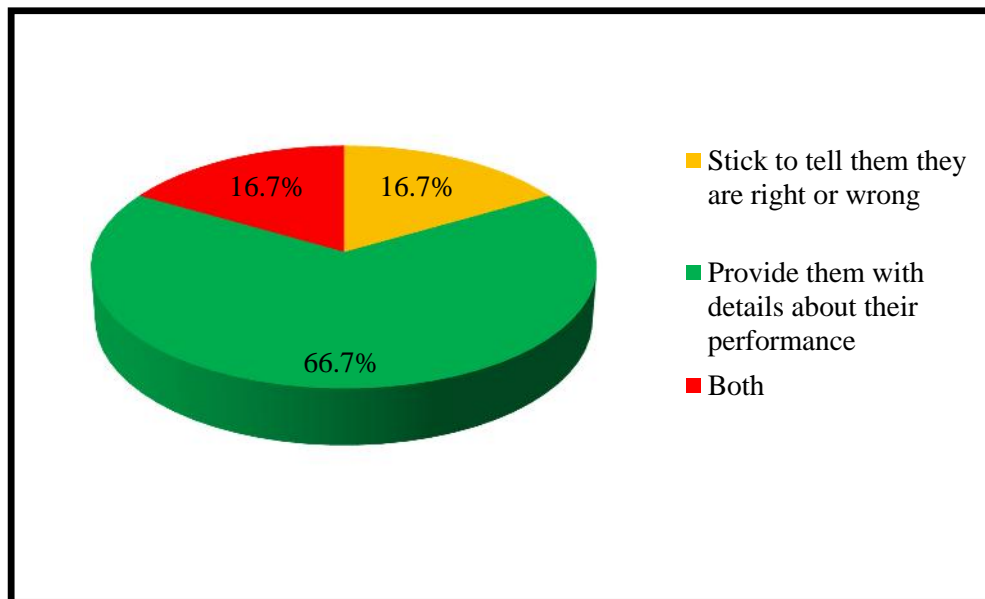


Diagram9: The Nature of Teachers' Feedback.

On the basis of the data gathered, we can see that the majority of teachers (66.7%) provide their students with detailed feedback. Some of them (16.7%) say that they stick to tell their students they are right or wrong. The same number of the participants (16.7%) have answered by “*both*”, that is they tell their students whether they are right or wrong, and provide them with details about their performance.

Q12: Providing students with detailed feedback about their performance is beneficial for them, in the sense that it motivates them.

Findings

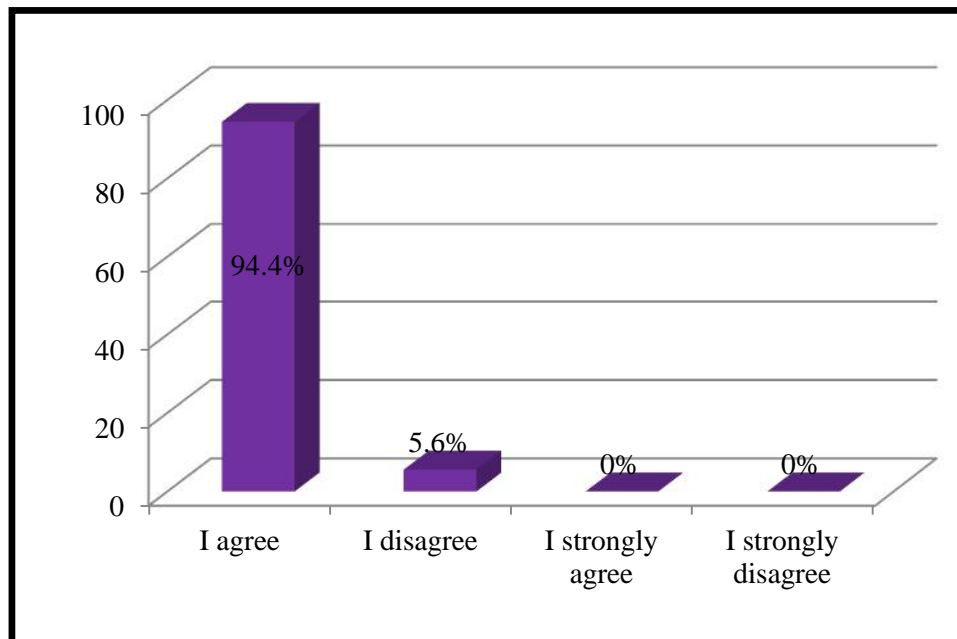


Diagram10: Teachers' Attitudes towards Detailed Feedback.

As seen in **diagram 10**, the majority of teachers (94.4%) agree that detailed feedback is beneficial for students.

Q13: If you do not provide your students with feedback which describes their weaknesses and strengths, do you think that their performance could be impeded?

Would you explain?

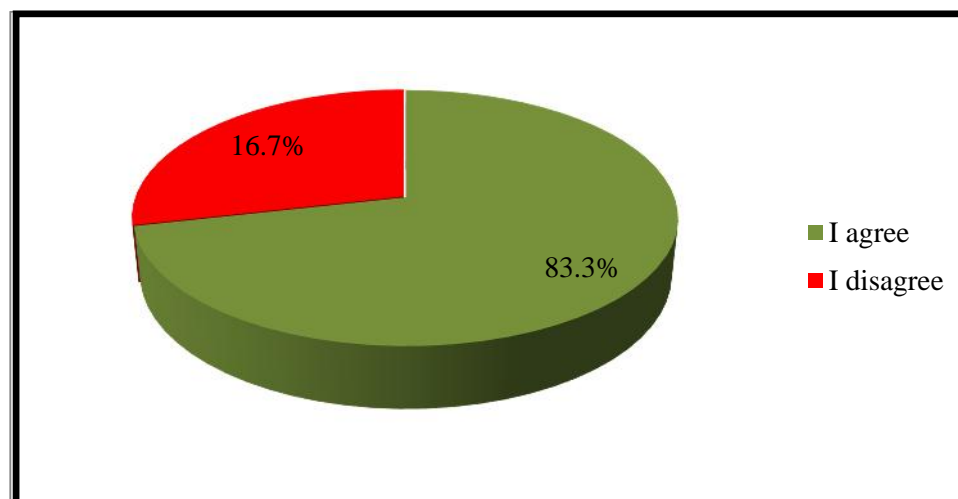


Diagram11: Teachers' Attitudes towards the Negative Effect of not to use Descriptive Feedback.

Findings

Diagram 11 denotes that the majority of the respondents (83.3%) have answered this question by “yes”; they justify their answers by saying that it is necessary for students to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, so that they will know what they have mastered, and where they need to work more. Some of them (16.7%) have answered by “no”, and they explain their answers by saying that it is not possible to provide each student with detailed feedback because of time limitations, few of them did not justify their answer.

Section Five: Teachers’ Use of Enrichment Activities

Q14: During the assessment phase, what do you do if you notice that some students finish ahead others?

Would you tell us why?

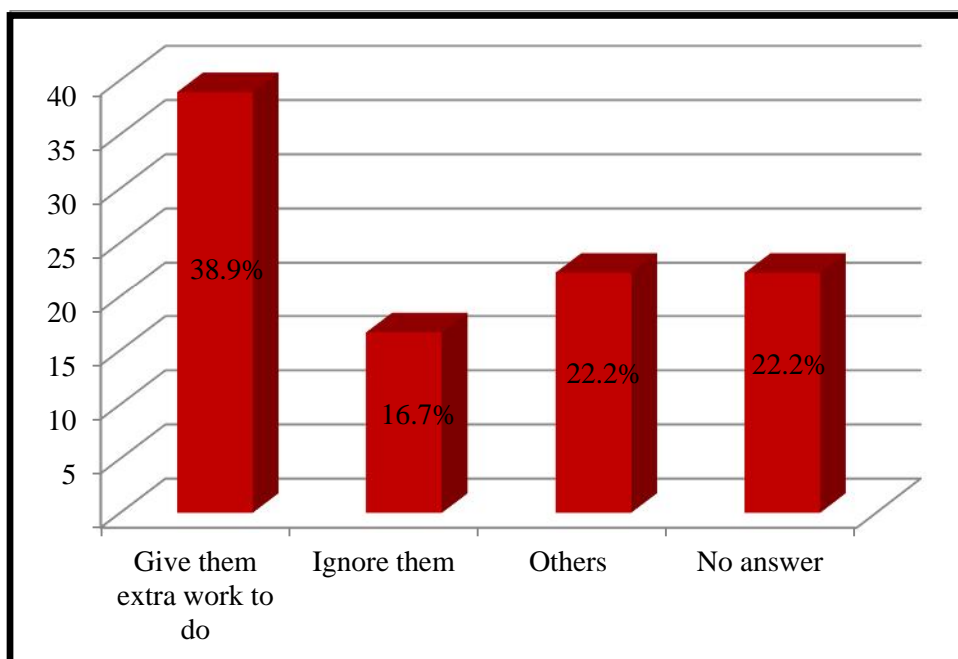


Diagram12: Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Students who Finish their Work ahead Others.

As presented in diagram 12, the majority of teachers (38.9%) provide the students who finish ahead others with extra work to do. They explain their answers by saying that this will keep them motivated, and not to feel bored, also to make them busy rather than speaking and

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disturbing their classmates. Four of them (22.2%) have mentioned other suggestions. For instance, one of them says: “*I ask them to explain for their classmates*”, another one adds: “*I correct their work right they finish*». Three teachers (16.7%) say that they ignore them, but they did not mention why.

Q15: Do you think that ignoring students who finish ahead others will make them unmotivated?

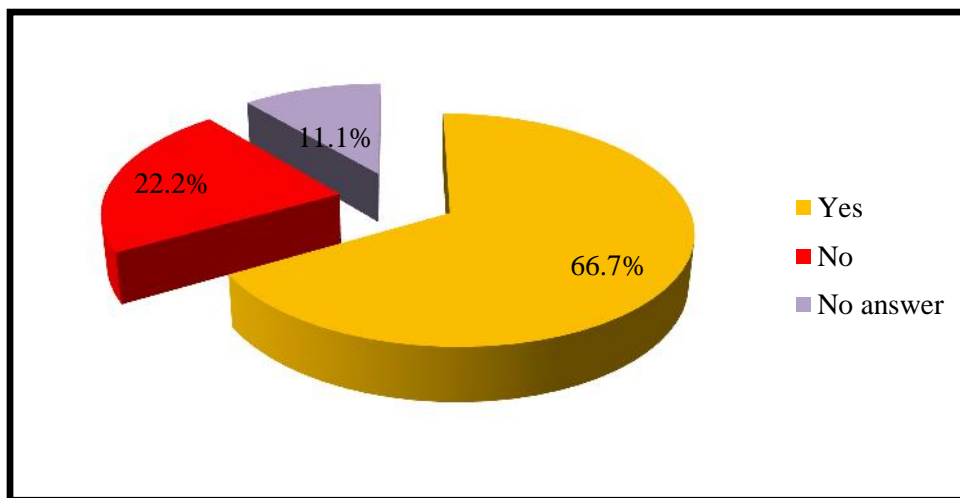


Diagram13: Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Negative Effect of Ignoring Quick Learners.

The results show that while the majority of teachers (66.7%) believe that ignoring students who finish ahead others makes them unmotivated, a considerable percentage (22.2%) rejects this view.

Q16: Quick learners should be provided with extra work or activities to extend their learning.

Findings

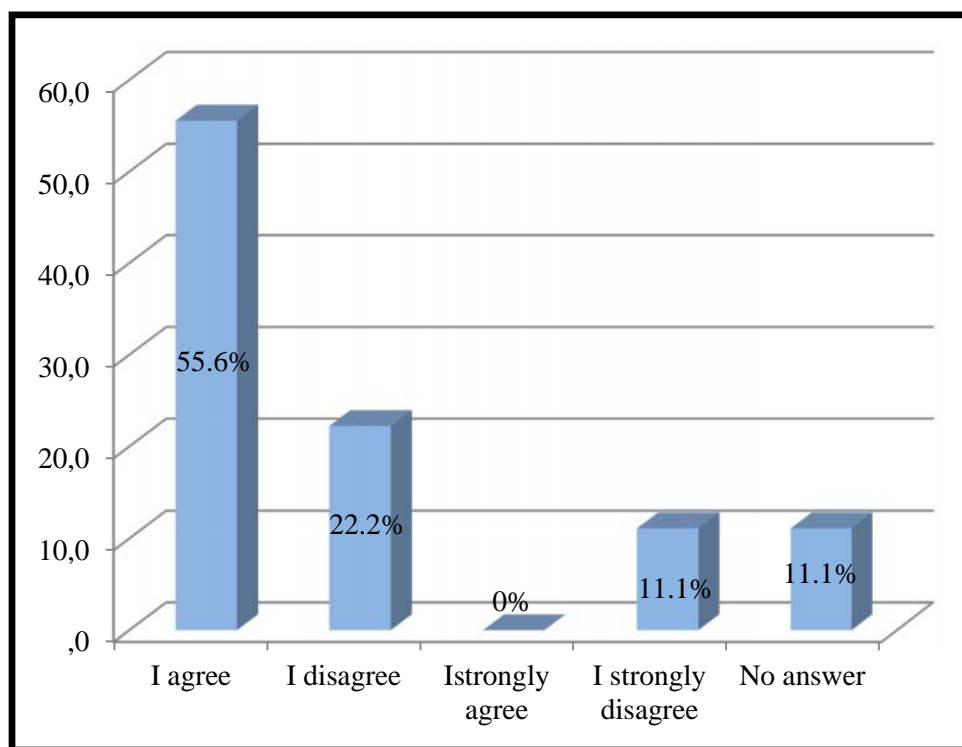


Diagram 14: Teachers' Attitudes towards Enrichment Activities.

The findings clearly show that the majority of the respondents (55.6%) agree on the fact that quick learners should be provided with extra work to extend their learning. Yet, some of them (22.2%) disagree. Few of them (11.1%) have mentioned that they strongly disagree.

Q17: According to you, are there any other strategies that you can use as a way to consider this category of students (students who finish their activities ahead the others)

On the basis of the data gathered, teachers have suggested different strategies that can be used as a way to consider quick learners. Some of them say that these learners can explain to their classmates, or correct their performances.

Remark: seven (07) teachers did not answer this question.

Findings

III.2. Results of the classroom Observations

The classroom observation is the second research tool that we used in conducting our research. The observations took place from May 4th to May 25th 2016. We have attended thirty-nine (39) session with eighteen (18) teachers. Indeed, seven (07) teachers with whom we attended three sessions, seven (07) others with whom we attended two sessions, and four (04) with whom we attended one session. These observations are described in a checklist in form of a table, which contains eight (08) items. These items were observed in terms of frequency, arranged from *always* to *never*.

The results obtained from the observations will be presented in one table that contains the number of teachers according to the frequency of their use of each observed item. This means that, for each item we are going to mention how many teachers use it according to the rank order.

Observed items	Frequency				
	always	Often	sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. Do teachers announce their students the instructional objectives?	4	7	5	0	2
2. Are the instructional objectives behavioral?	0	0	0	0	18
3. The teacher assesses the students during the lesson.	1	10	5	2	0
4. The teacher provides students with feedback.	3	10	4	1	0

Findings

5. The teacher provides the students with descriptive feedback.	0	3	0	10	5
6. The teacher provides the students with immediate feedback.	3	10	4	1	0
7. Students who finish ahead are provided with enrichment activities.	0	0	0	0	18
8. The teacher tells the students whether they have mastered the items or not.	4	12	2	0	0

Table2: Results of the Classroom Observations about Teachers' Use of Mastery

Learning strategies.

The numbers in the table above refer to the number of the teachers who implement the selected items in terms of frequency. Regarding the first item, which is about the announcement of the instructional objectives, it is shown in this table that all teachers announce the instructional objectives, they just differ in frequency. Indeed, four (04) teachers do it *always*, seven (07) *often* and five (05) *sometimes*. As for the second item, which is whether the instructional objectives are behavioral, it is revealed in the above table that behavioral objectives are not taken into account. As concerns the third item, which is about the use of formative assessment, the observed data demonstrate that all teachers assess their students during instruction, but they vary in frequency. Indeed, one (01) teacher does it *always*, ten (10) *often*, five (05) *sometimes* and two (02) *rarely*. As regards the fourth item, it is about teachers' use of feedback. As it is presented in the above table, all teachers provide their students with feedback but their frequency is different. Indeed, three (03) teachers do it *always*, ten (10) *often*, five (05) *sometimes* and one (01) *rarely*. As to the fifth item, it is about teachers' use of descriptive feedback. The observed findings show that this type of feedback

Findings

is used but not in a regular and a satisfactory way. Indeed, three (03) teachers use it *often*, and ten (10) *rarely*. Regarding the next item which is whether teachers use immediate feedback, the observed data indicate that all teachers provide their students with immediate feedback after assessing them they just differ in frequency. Indeed, three (03) teachers do it *always*, ten (10) *often*, four (04) *sometimes* and one (01) *rarely*. As to the following item, it is about teachers' use of enrichment activities. As it is shown in the above table, quick students are never provided with such activities. Regarding the last item, which is about telling students whether they have mastered the items, the results presented in the above table demonstrate that all teachers do this, but they vary in frequency. Indeed, four (04) teachers do it *always*, twelve (12) *often* and two (02) *sometimes*.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings we obtained from the two research tools that we used, which are: the questionnaire addressed to teachers, and the structured classroom observations that we conducted. The results are displayed in histograms, pie charts and tables. The research tools that we have used permitted us to gather a considerable amount of data, which we will clarify and discuss in details in the following chapter.

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the findings of our research which have been obtained from the questionnaire we addressed to teachers of third-year ESP students and the classroom observations we have conducted. The results are going to be analysed by using descriptive statistical method for the close-ended questions of the questionnaire and QCA to analyse the results obtained from the open-ended questions, and classroom observations. This chapter is divided into two main parts; the first one is about the discussion of the results of teachers' questionnaires, whereas the second part discusses the findings of the classroom observations.

IV.1. Discussion of the Results of Teachers' Questionnaire

IV.1.1. Identification of the Participants

This section contains only one question, which is about teachers' experience. Its results are important in our research. The results reveal that our participants' experience is between one (01) and twenty eight (28) years, In fact, teachers' experience plays an important role in the process of teaching and learning because more experienced teachers have great knowledge concerning the best strategies to use in order to make their instruction more effective. Actually, our findings indicate that nine (09) teachers among our respondents have great experience; between five and twenty eight years. Thus, it is likely that those teachers are familiar with the strategies of mastery learning.

IV.1.2. Teachers' Perception of Mastery

This question "Would you give us the definition of mastery?" is an open-ended one. It aims to find out how teachers define mastery. Indeed, they provided us with different definitions. One of them says that "*it is to acquire a certain degree of knowledge and to be able to deal with any subject or activity skillfully*". Another teacher mentions that "*Mastery*

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means the knowledge and skills that an individual has, and which allow him/her to do or understand something very well. Mastery of language means to use and understand language very well". It is noticed that these definitions go with the one given by *Merriam Webster Dictionary* (1978), which states that mastery is the ability to do something in a good way. Accordingly, we deduce that teachers have a great understanding of what mastery is. This means that they know how to make their students competent users of language. In other words, they have an idea of the techniques they should follow to help learners to reach mastery.

As concerns the strategies that teachers use to allow their students to reach mastery, the majority of our participants emphasize the use of formative assessment. Indeed, one teacher says *"to make the students involved in the class and give them work and researches to do by their own and to assess them"*. Another one claims *"the strategies are to ask questions to students and to give them activities and exercises to do"*. Another teacher adds *"various strategies are used, the most important ones are: assessing their progress while learning and making them practice all the time"*. From the above statements, it is noticeable that teachers stress the important role of formative assessment, which is a key strategy in Bloom's Mastery learning theory, in which teachers have to include formative assessment as part of their teaching process (Bloom, 1971, cited in Guskey, 2005). Indeed, formative assessment is a necessary phase during instruction because it permits teachers to gather information about students' performance. It is a way to know if they are on the right way or not. In fact, this question *"What strategies do you use in your instruction to allow your students to reach mastery?"* is an indirect one, which means that by asking teachers about the techniques they use to allow students to attain mastery, we want to know if emphasis is put on the use of Bloom's mastery learning strategies; the results confirm the implementation of one of them which is formative assessment.

IV.1.3. Teachers' Announcement of the Instructional Objectives

From the obtained findings, it appears that the majority of teachers (94.4%) announce their students the instructional objectives before starting the lesson. When it comes to interpret this outcome, we say that teachers stress the importance of announcing the IOs, which helps students to better situate themselves within the teaching learning process. Indeed, informing students about the instructional objectives before instruction provides them with guidelines for learning (Mager, (1997); Gronlund and Brookhart, (2009)). However, this is not the ultimate result; more details will be added after discussing the findings of classroom observations.

As regards teachers' attitudes towards the announcement of the IOs, the majority of them stress its necessity and importance. In fact, 44.4% of teachers say that it is “*necessary*”, 16.7% mention that it is “*very important*”, and the same percentage (16.7%) for those who say that it is “*important*”. Indeed, one teacher justifies his/her answer by saying “*announcing the instructional objectives helps students to get an idea about what they are going to deal with and to understand the importance of any subject*”. Another one adds “*students should be aware of these objectives because they permit them to be aware of what is required from them as the necessary steps to follow*”. These findings fit with the claim of Dalis (1997), in which he states that announcing students the IOs makes them aware of what they are going to do, and which steps to follow in order to learn. As concerns those who consider that the announcement of the IOs is optional, the majority of them justify their answers by saying “*it is up to students to deduce the objective at the end of the lesson*”. When it comes to interpret this outcome, we say that these teachers could have their way of informing the students about the IOs. In fact, when students are not informed about the objectives of the lesson, they may become unmotivated and lose attention, because knowing the objectives makes them

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comfortable, focused and involved in the lecture. The objectives also attract learners' attention and motivate them. Also, it may happen that students who are not informed about the objectives will need much time to understand the lesson, since they do not know what is expected from them. Another interpretation that we can draw from this result is that these teachers give more responsibility to students.

The results reveal that the majority of teachers (77.8%) state that informing students about the IOs will help them understand the lesson. One of them explains *"knowing the objectives helps students to understand why they need to learn the lesson and thus get motivated"*. Another one mentions *"when the students understand the objectives, they will pay more attention and become interested"*. This outcome fits with the claim of Dalis (1997:20), in which he asserts that *"announcing the IOs in advance of instruction motivates students to increase their efforts, attention and readiness to learn"*. When it comes to interpret the results, we can say that teachers stress the important role of announcing the instructional objectives in helping students understand the lesson.

As to the nature of the instructional objectives that teachers teach their students, the questionnaire's results show that the majority (61.1%) teach content objectives, whereas the minority (27.8) teaches both; content and behavioural ones. This means that some teachers include behavioural objectives in their instruction. Indeed, this finding goes with the claim of Bloom (1971 cited in Aouine, 2011:52) *"the instructional process should include behavioural objectives which announce what the students are going to be able to do"*. This means that students should be taught in a way that allows them to become able to use language effectively at the end of instruction. In other words, importance should be given to what students can do with language or with what they have learned, because content language may disappear, but competencies will not. However, this result will be either confirmed or disconfirmed after discussing the findings of the classroom observations.

IV.1.4. Teachers' Use of Formative Assessment and Descriptive Feedback

This section is devoted to discuss teachers' implementation of formative assessment and descriptive feedback in their instruction. It aims to analyse how formative assessment is practised during the teaching learning process.

The obtained findings reveal that the majority of teachers (66.7%) use formative assessment “*often*” during their instruction. This means that teachers stress the value of FA and its important role in the instructional process. Indeed, more details will be found after discussing our classroom observations.

The questionnaire has revealed very positive results concerning teachers' attitudes towards the role of FA in helping students to improve and reach mastery. In fact, all of them (100%) agree with that, and they have advanced different explanations. One participant, for instance, says “*students will be able to know their weaknesses and the points which they have understood, thus, they will be able to improve themselves*”. Another teacher justifies his/her answer by saying “*assessing students during instruction means correcting them, that is to say, it allows them to understand immediately and correct themselves and acquire new knowledge*”. This result fits with the claim of Black and Wiliam (1998), who argue that FA is effective in promoting students' learning.

From the above statements, we deduce that teachers have great knowledge about the advantages of FA; this may lead them to use it during instruction to help their students to remediate their weaknesses, and reach a certain degree of mastery. This also may help teachers to make decisions about their teaching whether it is effective or not, and to adjust it if necessary.

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As concerns providing students with feedback, the obtained outcomes demonstrate that the majority of teachers often follow each assessment with feedback. That is to say, teachers have a broad understanding of the purpose of formative assessment, which is to provide students with information about their progress. This result corroborates with Bloom's claim in which he states that formative assessment has the purpose of giving students feedback on their learning (Bloom *et al*, 1971, cited in Guskey, 2005). In other words, assessment is carried through feedback, if there is assessment without feedback; it will not be beneficial for students, but the kind of feedback that should be provided to students will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Regarding the nature of feedback given to students, the questionnaire's results reveal that the majority of teachers (66.7%) say that they provide their students with descriptive feedback, whereas some of them (16.7%) rely on evaluative feedback. As concerns the rest of teachers (16.7%), they use them both. From these outcomes, we deduce that many teachers highlight the positive effects that DF has on students' learning, in the sense that it provides them with detailed, and specific information about how to improve, and become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and become self-correctors and self-assessors (Earl, 2003). In fact, when teachers describe their students' performance, they correct them indirectly by showing them the way to follow in order to improve their level. Concerning the teachers who provide their students with evaluative feedback, maybe because they encounter obstacles such as time limitations. These outcomes are not the final ones; more details will be added after discussing our classroom observations' findings.

More than 90% of our respondents agree with the fact that detailed feedback is beneficial for students. This finding goes in hand with what was stated by Black *et al* (2003:6) who claim that descriptive feedback motivates students, and it can encourage all of them to believe that they can improve their learning, and with the finding of Walker (2010) who states that

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descriptive feedback promotes students' intrinsic motivation and increases their engagement in learning. For example, when a student answers a question incorrectly, some expressions such as *"No! You are wrong!"* should be avoided. Thus, it is better to say, for instance, *"Think more about it"*. By doing so, students will become confident, and motivated as they receive a psychological support.

Accordingly, the questionnaire demonstrates positive results concerning teachers' agreement with the fact that if they do not provide their students with descriptive feedback, their performance could be impeded. One of them justifies his/her answer by saying *"they will not be able to know to what extent they master the subject; they will not know whether they are doing well or not"*. Another one adds *"providing students with feedback which describes their weaknesses and strengths is necessary especially when the performance is bad, students should know about their weaknesses, this allows them for example to avoid doing the same mistakes in the future"*. From this outcome, we deduce that teachers are likely to be aware of the negative effects of evaluative feedback, as it is claimed by Tunstall and Gipps (1996, cited in Chrisman, 2014), who states that evaluative feedback does little to improve learning, and it can impair this process. Concerning those who disagree with this fact, they argue that *"students have to figure out their weaknesses and to work on them by themselves, of course with some guidance and assistance from the teacher"*. It seems that these teachers prefer to provide their students with evaluative feedback.

IV.1.5. Teachers' Use of Enrichment Activities

In this section, we are going to discuss an important strategy advanced in Bloom's mastery learning theory, which allows gifted students to reach a higher degree of mastery. This strategy is named "enrichment activities". We shed light on its use and teachers' views about it.

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From the outcomes displayed in diagram 12 (p. 36), it appears that the majority of teachers say that they give students who finish their activities ahead others extra work to do, and when we asked them to explain their answers, one of them says *“in order not to be bored, sometimes in order to make them busy rather than speaking and disturbing the others”*. Another one adds *“to keep students working most of the time”*. Another teacher mentions *“otherwise, they will feel bored and lose motivation, learners do not all have the same pace of learning”*. From the above statements, it seems that these teachers are likely to be familiar with enrichment activities and their importance. Concerning those who said that they ignore this category of students (students who finish ahead others), they explain their answer by saying that they work with the whole class and not with individual students, which means that they do not make a distinction between slow and quick students. This may lead quick learners to disturb their classmates, lose interest and waste their time. As regards the rest of teachers, they use different strategies as a way to deal with this category of students. One of them says *“I correct their work right after they finish the task”*. Another one adds *“I ask them to explain to their classmates”*. However, all these outcomes will be discussed in detail through our classroom observations.

The questionnaire reveals positive results regarding teachers’ view about the negative effect of ignoring quick learners, which makes them lose motivation. Indeed, it is noticeable that the big majority of teachers are aware of this fact.

As regards teachers’ attitudes towards the fact that quick learners should be provided with enrichment activities, the findings obtained through the questionnaire demonstrate that the majority (55.6%) agree with that. This means that they are likely to be aware of the importance of EAs in giving quick learners the opportunity to go further in their learning. As mentioned by Guskey (1987) who claims that EAs provide gifted students with opportunities to broaden and extend their learning. When we compare this result with the previous one

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which deals with the implementation of enrichment activities (diagram 12, p.36), we find out that many teachers highlight the importance of enrichment activities, yet, they are not used in many cases. The interpretation that we can draw from these outcomes is that quick students are not provided with EAs, maybe because of time. Concerning those teachers who disagree with this fact, they may think that these activities should be devoted to slow students in order to improve their learning.

As regards the strategies suggested by teachers that can be used as a way to consider quick learners, one of them says “*I can suggest that those learners will correct their classmates’ performances*”. Another one adds “*we can for instance ask them to explain to others*”.

IV.2. Discussion of the Results of Classroom Observations

Classroom observation is the second research tool we have used in our study that we have conducted with teachers of third-year ESP students, which are total of eighteen (18). This tool is very beneficial because it permitted us to gain more detailed and reliable information as it allowed us to observe data in its real setting. In addition, it permitted us to answer the research questions. Our observation checklist is composed of eight (8) items related to mastery learning. In this chapter, we will clarify and discuss the obtained findings in detail.

Informing students about the instructional objectives makes them aware of what they are going to do, and which steps to follow in order to learn (Dalis, 1997). During our observations, we have noticed that the big majority of teachers announce their students the instructional objectives, they just differ in their frequency. Indeed, four (04) of them do it “*always*”, seven (07) “*often*” and five (05) “*sometimes*”. These outcomes confirm the questionnaires’ results, in which we have found that more than 90% of teachers announce the

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IOs. In fact, teachers stress the importance of announcing the instructional objectives, because it facilitates instruction. In addition, by doing so, teachers are helped to solve many problems such as how to keep students motivated and how to attract their attention.

The second item that we have observed is whether behavioural objectives are taught or not. In fact, through our observations, we have noticed that nearly all teachers announce their students the instructional objectives (16 out of 18), but, we have remarked that behavioural objectives are never used. This means that this does not reflect one of the principles of mastery learning: behavioural objectives. Indeed, it is only the content objectives which are stressed, some instances are “*today you will learn about sentence connectors*”, “*today, we are going to deal with Persian semiotics*”, “*in this session, we are going to learn about CLT*”. Hence, in order to make the objectives behavioural, it is possible to use the following statements, for example, “*today you will be able to learn sentence connectors*” which better reflects mastery and closely relates to the real demonstration of competency. Therefore, this reminds students of the aim of instruction which is to become competent and attain mastery (Aouine, 2011).

It is important to mention that our classroom observation results do not corroborate with those of the questionnaire, where it is stated that behavioural objectives are sometimes implemented during the teaching learning process, and this leads us to confirm one of our hypotheses, which states that third-year ESP students are not taught through behavioural objectives. This fact may affect students negatively, in the sense that, they will not be competent users of language, as they will not be able to transfer what they have learned in classroom to the outside.

Formative assessment is a tool for helping to guide students’ learning (Andrade and Cizek, 2010). The collected data through classroom observations indicate that formative assessment is widely used, following different techniques. Indeed, oral questioning is the

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most common strategy used by teachers to assess students, in which they discuss most of the time with them, ask them to give examples, or to explain...etc. By so doing, teachers push and encourage students to demonstrate their understanding and competency. In addition, we have noticed that they use another technique of formative assessment, which is walking around the class, observing students as they work and guiding them. In fact, this strategy is mainly used in reading/writing and oral sessions, where students are given tasks to perform individually. We have also noticed that some teachers assess their students at the end of instruction; by asking them, for instance, to write a summary of what they have understood. These results go with those of the questionnaire where the majority of teachers mention that they often use FA during their instruction. Accordingly, we confirm the third (3rd) hypothesis, which states that third-year ESP students are regularly assessed during instruction.

As far as providing students with feedback is concerned, our observations reveal that all teachers give feedback to students immediately after assessing them, but their frequency is different. Indeed, three teachers (03) do it “*always*”, ten (10) do it “*often*”, four (04) “*sometimes*”, and only one teacher who does it “*rarely*”. We have also noticed that this feedback is generally evaluative in the form of grades such as “*good!*” “*OK! That’s it!*” “*No!*” In fact, the problem is not whether to give feedback or not, but the problem lies on the nature of this feedback, which has to be effective and pushes students to react. As Stiggins *et al* (2004) argue when they say that the power of feedback is determined by its quality, and not by its existence or absence. Accordingly, these outcomes fit with the ones of the questionnaire, in which we have found that all teachers follow each assessment with feedback.

In using the strategy of mastery learning, formative assessment aims to provide students with feedback on their learning, and helps them to identify the areas where they have learned well and where they still need more work (Bloom *et al*, 1971, cited in Guskey, 2005). In other words, students need to be provided with feedback which describes their strengths and

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weaknesses. While conducting our observations, we have found that this type of feedback is not used in a satisfactory way because of classroom management and time, where teachers encounter difficulties to provide each student with a detailed feedback. For this reason, they rely on evaluative feedback, which is less time consuming. But, by doing so, there will be a negative impact on students' learning and motivation in the sense that it convinces them to believe that they lack ability, and thus reducing their desire to make more efforts (Black and Wiliam, 1998). In fact, this is what we have noticed during our observations.

As concerns those teachers who use descriptive feedback, they are very few in number (03), and they are mainly teachers of reading/writing and listening/speaking. Accordingly, in these modules, each student need to be given the opportunity to perform a task, and teachers have enough time to deal with each one of them. Here are some examples of descriptive feedback used by teachers “*problem of structure, make your sentences small, avoid writing as you speak, try to organize your work*”, “*you have good ideas but you have to organize them*”, “*you are fluent, I like your style, but you have problem of word choice*”. When it comes to interpret these results, we can say that this category of teachers has a broad understanding of DF, and they stress its important role in developing the students' four skills. We come also to the conclusion in which we disconfirm the findings of the questionnaire, where we have found that descriptive feedback was widely used. Accordingly, this leads us to disconfirm the fourth (4th) hypothesis, which states that third-year ESP students are regularly provided with descriptive feedback.

As regards teachers' use of enrichment activities, we have noticed during our observations that quick learners are not provided with extra work to do, because teachers work with the whole class and not with individual students. Thus, a distinction between quick and slow learners is not made. In addition, it has been perceived during the assessment phase that students are not given time to think and do their tasks so that there will be time to provide

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those who finish ahead with EAs. Moreover, it has been revealed during our observations that emphasis is put on slow students. Indeed, teachers take all the time to explain for them in order to improve their learning abilities. So, quick learners are completely ignored, and they are not given any opportunity to go further in their learning process. Hence, such a weakness can be remediated by taking into account the category of quick learners; that is, encouraging them to enlarge their learning abilities. Accordingly, after discussing these findings, we deduce that they do not go in hand with those of the questionnaire, in which it is mentioned that quick learners are provided with enrichment activities. Thus, we confirm one of our hypotheses, which states that quick students in third-year ESP are never provided with enrichment activities.

As to the last item which is about telling students whether they have mastered the items or not, we have noticed that all teachers ask their students if they have understood at the end of each session, but they vary in their frequency. Thus, four (04) do it “*always*”, twelve (12) “*often*”, and two (02) “*sometimes*”. We have also observed that teachers generally ask questions such as “*have you understood?*”, “*is it all right?*”. This is a good way to care for the students. In respect to that, asking the students questions such as “*what have you understood?*” would be very interesting. By doing so, students will feel themselves obliged to react and demonstrate their understanding, this also would give each one of them the opportunity to express himself /herself.

Conclusion

This chapter has been devoted to discuss and interpret the findings obtained from teachers’ questionnaires and classroom observations, concerning whether teachers of third-year ESP students of the Department of English at MMUTO use the strategies of mastery learning. After discussing the results, we have confirmed three (03) hypotheses and

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disconfirmed one (01). Thus, the first hypothesis stating that teachers of third-year ESP students announce their students instructional objectives but the students are not taught through behavioral objectives is confirmed. In addition, the third hypothesis, which is Third-year ESP students are regularly assessed during instruction, is confirmed as well. Moreover, the fifth hypothesis stating that quick students of Third-Year ESP are never provided with enrichment activities is confirmed. However, the forth hypothesis stating that Third-year ESP students are regularly provided with descriptive feedback is disconfirmed.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This dissertation was carried out to determine whether third-year ESP students in the Department of English at MMUTO are taught through the principles of Mastery Learning Approach. Indeed, it was set out to investigate the implementation of mastery learning strategies which are: the announcement of behavioral objectives, the use of formative assessment and descriptive feedback, and providing quick learners with enrichment activities.

Our research was carried out using a questionnaire for teachers and classroom observation. The participants consist of eighteen (18) teachers of the third-year level. The study adopted the mixed research method, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches in collecting and analyzing the data, for the sake of answering the research questions asked in the general introduction, and confirming/disconfirming the suggested hypotheses.

The results obtained from teachers' questionnaires reveal that most of them (94.4%) say that they announce to their students the instructional objectives and the majority (44.4%) have stressed the necessity and the importance of their announcement. As concerns the nature of the instructional objectives that teachers teach, the results indicate that the majority of them (61.1%) teach content objectives, whereas only few (27.8%) include behavioral ones. As far as the frequency of using formative assessment is concerned, the majority of our respondents assert that they use it "*often*". As to the frequency of providing students with feedback, some of our respondents (33.3%) answer by "*always*", and some others (33.3%) say that they do it "*often*", and the rest are between "*sometimes*" and "*rarely*". Concerning the nature of feedback given to students, the majority of our informants (66.7%) assert that they use descriptive feedback. The results also indicate that an important number of teachers (38.9%) give extra work to students who finish their work ahead others, some of them (16.7%) say that they ignore this category of students, concerning the rest, they use other strategies which are correcting them right they finish their tasks, or asking them to explain to their classmates.

General Conclusion

. The discussion of the findings showed that teachers have great knowledge about mastery, and they put emphasis on the use of one important technique of mastery learning, which is formative assessment. The discussion also indicates the factors that prevent the use of the other strategies, and the consequences of not using them. Thus, teachers encounter obstacles to provide students with descriptive feedback such as time limitations and classroom management. For these reasons, they rely on evaluative feedback which may negatively affect students. It is also mentioned that when teachers do not teach their students behavioral objectives, there will be a negative impact on them in the sense that they may not become competent users of language. Moreover, the fact that quick learners are not provided with enrichment or extension activities during the assessment phase may make them lose interest. They may also disturb their classmates who are still working.

The discussion of the results of classroom observation leads us to confirm three (03) hypotheses, and disconfirm one (01). Thus, we found that teachers of third-year ESP students announce instructional objectives, but students are not taught through behavioral objectives, and that descriptive feedback is not used in a regular way. In addition, quick learners are not provided with enrichment activities. We have also found that teachers highly assess their students during instruction. Our hope is that our research has contributed to the field of teaching and learning in a way or in another, and that it would open doors for future research in the field.

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ppendix 1: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire seeks to investigate the implementation of the principles of mastery learning in third year ESP classes in the department of English at MMUTO. Your answers are very important in our research. Thus, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions. Your answers will be used for academic purposes.

Please use a cross (\hat{I}) to indicate your answer, or full statement where necessary.

Thank you for your contribution.

Section One: Teachers' Experience

1. How long have you been teaching?

.....year(s)

Section Two: Mastery

2. Would you give us the definition of mastery?

.....
.....
.....

3. What strategies do you use in your instruction to allow your students to reach mastery?

.....
.....
.....

Section Three: The Instructional Objectives

4. Do you announce your students the instructional objectives of the lesson?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how often do you do that?

☐ Always ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely

5. How do you consider the announcement of the instructional objectives?

☐ Necessary ☐ Very important ☐ Important
☐ Optional ☐ Unnecessary ☐ Useless

Would you explain your answer?

.....
.....
.....

6. Do you think that informing students about the instructional objectives will help them understand the lesson?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, would you tell us how?

.....
.....
.....

7. What is the nature of the instructional objectives that you teach your student?

☐ Behavioral objectives
☐ Content objectives

Section Four: Teachers' Use of Formative Assessment and Descriptive Feedback

8. How often do you assess your students' progress during instruction?

☐ Always ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never

9. Do you think that assessing students' progress during instruction helps them improve and reach mastery?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you explain your answer?

.....

.....

.....

10. How often do you provide your students with feedback after assessing them during instruction?

☐ Always ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never

11. When providing your students with feedback about their performance, do you:

☐ Stick to tell them they are right or wrong?

☐ Provide them with details about their performance?

12. Providing students with more detailed feedback about their performance during instruction is beneficial for them in the sense that it motivates them.

☐ I agree ☐ I disagree ☐ I strongly agree ☐ I strongly disagree

13. If you do not provide your students with feedback which describes their weaknesses and strengths, do you think that their performance could be impeded?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you explain your answer?

.....

.....

.....

Section Five: Teachers' Use of Enrichment Activities

14. During the assessment phase, what do you do if you notice that some students finish ahead others?

☐ I give them extra work to do.

☐ I ignore them.

Would you tell us why?

.....

.....

.....

15. Do you think that ignoring those students will make them unmotivated?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. Quick learners should be provided with extra work or activities to extend their learning.

☐ I agree

☐ I disagree

☐ I strongly agree

☐ I strongly disagree

17. According to you, are there any other strategies that you can use as a way to consider this category of students? (learners who finish their activities ahead the others).

.....

.....

.....

Thank you very much for your collaboration!

Appendix2: Classroom Observation Checklist

Observed items	Frequency				
	always	often	sometimes	rarely	Never
1. Do teachers announce their students the instructional objectives?					
2. Are the instructional objectives behavioral?					
3. The teacher assesses the students during the lesson.					
4. The teacher provides students with feedback.					
5. The teacher provides the students with descriptive feedback.					
6. The teacher provides the students with immediate feedback.					
7. Students who finish ahead are provided with enrichment activities.					
8. The teacher tells the students whether they have mastered the items or not.					