

TEACHERS

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THE STRUCTURE OF THE INSTRUMENTS AND THE RATIONALE

In this chapter we will discuss the data concerning language teachers obtained from the classroom observation schedule, the post-lesson interview with the teachers, the questionnaires for other language teachers and headteachers' interviews. Firstly, we will explain the structure of the instruments and the rationale for using them. Then we will describe the nature of the sample, which will be followed by a detailed account of our expectations and results. Finally, we will draw conclusions and make recommendations.

The Classroom Observation Schedule of Teachers

The classroom observation schedule gathered the following data: type of school, number of years learning the foreign language, number of students per class, skills practised in the class, type of teaching, work management, lesson topics, teaching goals, type of material, time sharing and observers' evaluation.

The rationale for using the classroom observation schedule was to discover how the teachers who had language assistants in their schools organised their lessons. Further we¹ wanted to see which topics were covered and which materials were used. Finally, we included the observers' evaluation on the overall atmosphere during the lesson (see *Appendix 1*).

The Post-Lesson Interview with the Teachers

The post-lesson interview with the teacher was conducted immediately after the lesson by the observer in Slovenian. It was a structured interview with 24 questions. There were Yes–No questions, Likert-type questions and open-ended questions. The teachers were asked about the observed lesson, their assistant's usual work in the classroom, their co-operation with the language assistant, about possible incorporation of the assistant's input in evaluating students' performance, and whether and how teachers and students benefited from having a language assistant.

The reason we held a post-lesson interview with the teacher was to allow the teachers to give their insights into the observed lesson immediately after it had taken place. In this way the observer would be able to determine whether it was an example of a typical lesson. As not only the teacher was interviewed, but also the language assistant and the students, it was hoped that this would enable a clearer picture of how lessons with the foreign language assistants were perceived (see *Appendix 4*).

¹ From now on in this chapter 'we' refers to the Baseline Study Team.

The Questionnaire for Other Language Teachers

Other language teachers are those teachers teaching in the same school where we observed classes, but who were not observed during the Baseline Study. The questionnaire for other language teachers consisted of 16 questions. There were Yes–No questions, with one open-ended question. The other language teachers were asked about their opinion of the idea of having an assistant, planning the lessons, and their attitude towards language assistants.

Our rationale for the questionnaire for other language teachers was to gain their attitude towards the language assistants, as well as those of the headteachers and students. The findings would give a clearer picture of how lessons with the foreign language assistants were perceived (see *Appendix 7*).

The Interview with Headteachers

In the interview with headteachers 16 questions were asked in total, among which were questions about their reasons for having a foreign language assistant in their school, whose initiative it had been and who dealt with the paperwork.

Our rationale was to allow the headteachers to explain their possible reasons for having a language assistant at their school, to evaluate how much the language teachers were involved in getting a language assistant and how involved headteachers were in arranging all the paperwork. (see *Appendix 6*).

THE NATURE OF THE SAMPLE

We observed 34 classes. Among them were five classes in primary schools, eight classes in vocational schools, 17 classes in grammar schools and four classes in mixed schools.

On four occasions the language assistants were teaching in the classroom without the presence of the teacher and therefore there are only 30 samples of the post-lesson interviews with the teachers. Teachers were observed in five primary schools, seven vocational schools, 14 grammar schools and four mixed schools.

In 34 schools, 67 other language teachers (not the observed teachers) completed the questionnaires. In total 65 questionnaires were analysed, two completed questionnaires had to be discarded because one had been completed by a mentor (not the target group) and another had been completed by a group of eight teachers which meant that the opinions were a summary and not easily interpretable.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESULTS

Teachers' Involvement in Getting an Assistant

All the information concerning this question was obtained from interviews with headteachers and questionnaires for other language teachers. We hoped that we would be able to state that teachers encouraged the headteachers to apply for a language assistant. We expected that language teachers had been widely involved in the process of getting a

foreign language assistant for their school and that both their desire to have a language assistant in their schools and their initiative were the decisive arguments for the headteachers to apply for a language assistant.

Although it was expected that the reason why headteachers had applied for language assistants had been as a result of language teachers' encouragement, this was only true in two cases (see Chapter 9, *Table 9.1*). The vast majority of headteachers gave a variety of reasons for applying for language assistants; from the wish to improve the quality of teaching, to the mere opportunity of getting a language assistant.

It should be noted that only 69% of the language teachers had been consulted about applying for a language assistant. It is difficult to say why such a low percentage of language teachers were consulted, but it will be recommended that more teachers should be consulted as well as involved in the process of getting a language assistant.

However, what the results also showed was that language teachers were nevertheless involved in the process of getting the assistant as 61% of the paperwork, according to headteachers, was done by mentor teachers and other language teachers.

The Teachers' Perception of Classroom Activity

All the information concerning the teachers' perception of classroom activity was obtained from the post-lesson interview, which occurred immediately after the observed lesson. We hoped we would discover what the teachers' opinions were about the observed lesson and lessons in general. We wanted to know how the teachers felt about the observed lesson. Teachers answered positively in 90 % of cases. These results are shown in *Table 5.1*.

Table 5.1 The way the teacher felt about the observed lesson

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Excellent</i>	4	13.4
<i>Very good</i>	18	60.0
<i>Good</i>	3	10.0
<i>Went as planned</i>	2	6.7
<i>Bad</i>	1	3.3
<i>Don't know</i>	1	3.3
<i>No answer</i>	1	3.3
<i>Total</i>	30	100

When asked whether the lesson went as planned, 60% of the teachers said it had, while 30% did not answer this question.

We were interested in the teachers' overall evaluation of the observed lesson. Their answers to the questions *'How do you feel about the lesson?'*, *'Was this a typical lesson with this class?'* and *'Are you satisfied with your performance?'* show that we were correct to expect positive reactions. 25 of the teachers interviewed thought the lesson was good, very good or excellent, and only one thought it was bad.

When cross-tabbing the answers to the question *'Was this a typical lesson with this class?'* given by the teachers to those given by the assistants, there was a big difference in the number of those who thought that the observed lesson was a typical one. 15 teachers said that it was a typical lesson while 13 thought it was not or only partly. On the other hand, 26 language assistants, out of 33, thought it was a typical lesson. The reason for this discrepancy might be that the teachers wanted to say that classes do not perform in a usual manner in the presence of visitors.

The answers to the question *'Are you satisfied with your performance?'* clearly showed that teachers were satisfied with their performance during the observed lessons. Out of those 12 who did not answer ten did not participate in the planning of the lesson, so we presume they did not play an active part during the observed lesson.

The answers to the question *'Will you need to supplement the lesson given by the language assistant?'* differed from our expectations. We expected that the majority of teachers would think of summarising, giving additional explanations and revision of topics. Yet 18 answered they would not do this, while 12 said *'yes'* or *'partly'*. Among those 12 the reasons for doing this were mostly revising and checking. In one case the teacher thought that the topic had not been completed and two thought that summary and taking notes as well as picture material were missing.

Classroom Management

The information concerning the classroom management was obtained from three sources: classroom observation of teachers, post-lesson interviews with teachers and questionnaires for other language teachers.

The Baseline Study wanted to discover who did the lesson planning, which topics were dealt with during the lessons, which materials were used, which goals were set, what the time sharing was like, which type of teaching was used, how much team teaching was practised and what it was like. We also wished to discover whether teaching was performed in groups, pairs or whether it was individual.

Planning

We wanted to find out who had done the planning. We expected that most of the planning would have been done by teachers and assistants together, and this was confirmed by the teachers' answers, as 57% of teachers claimed that the lessons had been planned by both the teacher and the assistant. However, 43% said they had not done the planning jointly.

Comparing these results to the ones we got from talking to the assistants, there is an obvious discrepancy as only 24% of assistants stated that planning had been done by both the teacher and the assistant. It is amazing how the results differ. 40% of teachers thought that planning had been done by assistants, while 68% of assistants claimed that planning had been done by themselves. Only one teacher thought that the planning had been done by

the teacher alone, while assistants' opinions differed: three assistants thought that planning had been done only by teachers (see *Table 5.2*).

It is clear that teachers' opinions about planning differed greatly from the assistants' and that they did not always share the same opinion on who did the planning.

We also wanted to know how much time was spent on planning and the results we got were again ambiguous.

Table 5.2 shows the length of time the teacher spent on planning the observed lesson. The length of time spent planning lessons was expected to be between two and three hours but the results showed that it did not take that long; moreover the time needed for planning varied. The average planning time was 30 minutes. Surprisingly, ten people did not answer the question about time spent on planning.

Table 5.2 Length of time spent on planning the observed lesson by the teacher and by the assistant

	<i>Teacher</i>		<i>Language assistant</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>No time</i>	2	6.7	2	5.9
<i>Not much</i>	2	6.7	5	14.7
<i>Less than 30 minutes</i>	4	13.3	8	23.5
<i>30-45 minutes</i>	7	23.4	3	8.8
<i>1 hour</i>	1	3.3	3	8.8
<i>At least 2 hours</i>	4	13.3	13	38.3
<i>No answer</i>	10	33.3	-	-
<i>Total</i>	30	100	34	100

When comparing the time spent on planning by the teachers to the time spent by the assistants, it was obvious that some assistants needed more time for planning a lesson than the teachers did. This could be due to the fact that teachers were more skilled at teaching and were experienced at planning, as 38% of the assistants, as opposed to 13% of the teachers, said that they had spent more than two hours on planning.

Topics

Teachers were also asked about the topics dealt with in the classes, about the materials used and about the skills practised during the lessons.

We expected teachers to concentrate on the topics from the syllabus as well as grammar. In two grammar school classes where team teaching was observed, grammar was the domain of the teacher. What was surprising was that grammar teaching was also observed in solo classes, led by assistants in one primary school and in two grammar school classes.

Table 5.3 shows that none of the teachers challenged stereotypes, which would be expected but one of them reinforced them. The data did not show why two language assistants reinforced stereotypes. Further examination showed that the topics taught by the assistants were focused on target cultural content, comparing cultures, and on current events.

Table 5.3 Topics taught by teachers compared to topics taught by language assistants during the observed lesson

	Teachers	Language assistants
Target cultural content	3	18
Comparing cultures	3	17
Current events	1	9
Other	2	10
Challenging stereotypes	-	7
Local culture content	2	7
Grammar	2	5
Reinforcing stereotypes	1	2

As seen in Table 5.3 teachers did not deal with many topics during the lessons but less teacher input may have been because teaching was mostly performed by assistants only. The teachers did not practise a variety of skills with their students which may have been due to the fact that teachers only spoke when talking to the assistant and when giving additional information or explaining various things to students, or when supporting their assistant in the lesson, and they did not lead the teaching process itself.

Goals

Before the observed lesson the teachers were asked to define the goals set for the lesson in order to find out if they were actually attempted during the lesson. We expected the teachers to pre-set the goals in the sphere of communication rather than e.g. in the field of grammar.

Table 5.4 shows that the main focus of the observed lessons was on acquisition of vocabulary, encouraging speaking, raising intercultural awareness and not so much on grammar and writing. The data shows that the objectives were more in the field of communication than in grammar, although practising grammar was the objective in five lessons. However, as grammar was taught in four cases in grammar schools we presume that a higher number of lessons practising grammar and vocabulary could be due to the *Matura* requirements.

Table 5.4 The intended objectives of the lessons observed

	<i>No.</i>
<i>Acquisition of vocabulary</i>	14
<i>Encouraging speaking</i>	6
<i>Raising intercultural awareness</i>	5
<i>Practising grammar structures</i>	5
<i>Language transfer</i>	4
<i>Essay writing</i>	1

Materials

As far as the use of textbooks was concerned the Baseline Study Team wanted to find out which books were used by teachers as a variety of books was expected.

Table 5.5 shows which books were used during the lessons. On some occasions the data seemed to refer to the usual use of textbooks rather than during the class observed.

Table 5.5 The list of textbooks used for language teaching either in the observed lesson or in general

	<i>No.</i>
<i>Headway</i>	13
<i>Prospectus</i>	1
<i>Project</i>	2
<i>Reward</i>	1
<i>Touchstone</i>	1
<i>Themen neu</i>	2
<i>Moment mal</i>	1
<i>Blick</i>	1
<i>Panorama de la langue française</i>	2
<i>Le Nouveau Sans Frontiers</i>	2
<i>Buon giorno</i>	1

We also expected that teachers would use supplementary material as well as concentrate on textbooks. *Table 5.6* shows that teachers used both textbooks (12%) and supplementary materials (18%) in the observed lesson. (There might be a discrepancy in the interpretation of the question in the classroom observation schedule as it was not clear whether the question was asking about the textbook used in the observed lesson or about the set textbook used generally. Therefore some observers took into consideration the textbook, which was usually used in the class and others the one used during the observed lesson, which later became apparent during discussions at the second workshop.)

Table 5.6 Use of sources by mentors and other language teachers in the observed lesson

	No.	%
<i>Printed supplementary materials</i>	6	17.7
<i>Textbooks</i>	4	11.8
<i>Dictionaries</i>	1	2.9
<i>No materials used</i>	23	67.6
<i>Total</i>	34	100

The way the lessons were organised

We expected that the most frequent organisation would be team teaching because the language assistants were not always qualified teachers and were supposed only to help teachers in the process of teaching. However, the results were surprising (see *Tables 5.7.1* and *5.7.2*). In most cases teachers were mainly observers during the observed lessons and only a few cases, when both the language assistant and the teacher were teaching during the lesson, were observed. After checking the data from the classroom observations the members of the Baseline Study Team were faced with the problem of what *team teaching* really meant. After thorough consideration they decided that any activity of the teacher in the classroom would be considered as team teaching.

It was expected that the interaction among teachers and assistants would be natural and spontaneous but the evidence showed that there was little interaction between them, the reasons for which are unclear. The interaction among students and the teacher was low and appeared only as support to the students' and language assistants' interaction.

Judging from the sociograms (see Chapter 4, *Tables 4.15, 4.16*) teachers were less actively involved in classroom activities than the language assistants. It would appear that there is plenty of scope for increasing the amount of team teaching so that students would benefit even more from having foreign language assistants in their lessons.

We also wanted to find out if there was a difference in the type of teaching between lessons with mentor teachers and other language teachers. We expected that there would be more team teaching with classes taught by mentor teachers than in classes taught by other language teachers. It can also be seen in *Tables 5.7.1* and *5.7.2*, that, in fact, there was more team teaching in classes with mentor teachers than in classes with other language teachers, but the difference was slight.

Table 5.7.1 Type of teaching in classes taught by mentor teachers during the observed lesson

	<i>Solo teaching</i>		<i>Team teaching</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Primary</i>	1	7	2	14
<i>Vocational</i>	-	-	3	22
<i>Grammar</i>	4	29	2	14
<i>Mixed (Vocational and Grammar)</i>	-	-	2	14
<i>Total</i>	5	36	9	64

Table 5.7.2 Type of teaching in classes taught by other language teachers during the observed lesson

	<i>Solo teaching</i>		<i>Team teaching</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Primary</i>	-	-	2	10
<i>Vocational</i>	3	15	2	10
<i>Grammar</i>	6	30	5	25
<i>Mixed (Vocational and Grammar)</i>	-	-	2	10
<i>Total</i>	9	45	11	55

We were interested in the amount of time each, the language assistant or the teacher, spent participating in the lesson. We expected the teachers to be less active than the assistants or to be equally involved. Although we observed 34 classes we have information only for 30 classes, as on four occasions the language assistants were teaching on their own.

Table 5.8 shows that time-sharing within a 45-minute lesson varied from lesson to lesson, ranging from 0 minutes to 45 minutes. During the lessons where team teaching was practised teachers were active 21 minutes out of 45, on average.

Table 5.8 Average amount of time of teachers' participation in the observed lesson

	<i>Time in minutes</i>
<i>Primary</i>	26
<i>Vocational</i>	23
<i>Grammar</i>	14
<i>Mixed (Vocational and Grammar)</i>	20

Work management

During most of the observed lessons more than one type of work management was observed. We wanted to find out whether the number of students in a class affected the choice of work management. For the purpose of this analysis we took between 13 and 20 students to be a smaller class and if there were 21 or more, then it was a larger class. We also expected the teacher would use more frontal work management than the assistant, for example while giving instructions.

Table 5.9 shows that, contrary to our expectations, teachers did very little frontal teaching compared to language assistants, but they were more involved in group, pair or individual student work. There seems to be no difference in the amount of involvement of the teacher between smaller and larger classes. It should be noted that many of the observed teachers were almost exclusively supervisors and not actively involved in the teaching process. On four occasions when we experienced good examples of team teaching, all four types of work management were employed and shared equally between the teacher and the assistant according to the nature of the lesson.

Table 5.9 Work management

		<i>Frontal Teaching No.</i>	<i>Group work No.</i>	<i>Pair work No.</i>	<i>Individual student work No.</i>
<i>Smaller classes (13 – 20 students)</i>	<i>Language assistants</i>	11	4	3	7
	<i>Teacher</i>	3	2	1	4
<i>Larger classes (21 or more students)</i>	<i>Language assistants</i>	18	7	11	10
	<i>Teacher</i>	3	3	1	3

Incorporation of the Language Assistants' Work in Assessment

When teachers were asked about the amount of necessary professional guidance, 20 out of 30 teachers observed said that their assistants did not need much help. Thus it did not surprise us that most teachers did not hesitate when they had to decide whether to incorporate the language assistants' work in assessment or not. Most teachers were planning to incorporate the assistants' input into the next test paper or some other kind of assessment. It was also evident that the majority of students had been informed about this fact (see *Tables 5.10.1* and *5.10.2*). The reason given by the interviewed teachers was that students did not take the lessons seriously if they were not tested.

Table 5.10.1 Whether the teacher plans to incorporate the assistant's input in the next test paper

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Yes</i>	21	70.0
<i>No</i>	6	20.0
<i>Partly</i>	1	3.3
<i>No answer</i>	2	6.7
<i>Total</i>	30	100

Table 5.10.2 Whether the students know this

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Yes</i>	25	83.3
<i>No</i>	1	3.3
<i>No answer</i>	4	13.4
<i>Total</i>	30	100

Teachers' Attitude towards Having a Language Assistant

The Baseline Study Team wanted to find out in what way teachers and students benefited from having language assistants, whether there were any kind of problems in co-operation, why the teachers were not always present during the lessons, and whether teachers and the assistant socialised.

Benefits from having a language assistant

We expected that the majority of teachers would say that they had benefited from the language assistant quite a lot. Benefits were expected in the area of first-hand information on culture and social life as well as from working together on project work.

All the teachers agreed that the language assistants were useful and that students and teachers benefited from having a language assistant.

When considering how much the teacher had benefited from the language assistant, the results matched our expectations in 17 cases, as seen in *Table 5.11*. Seven teachers thought they had benefited some, while five were negative in their answers. Of these five, three said that they did not co-operate enough because things were disorganised and one was an Italian and argued that he was a native speaker himself. One did not give a reason. Most teachers thought that they had benefited in conversation with the native speaker and in enlargement of their own vocabulary. They were also happy to have a language assistant and the opportunity to ask him/her about facts concerning the target language country, e.g. up-to-date information on culture and social life.

Table 5.11 Whether the teacher benefited from the language assistant

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>A lot</i>	17	56.7
<i>Some</i>	7	23.3
<i>A little</i>	4	13.4
<i>No answer</i>	1	3.3
<i>Not at all</i>	1	3.3
<i>Total</i>	30	100

Teachers were also asked to name those areas where the language assistants were better than themselves and in this way a better source of information to the students.

Table 5.12 shows a variety of areas. 17 teachers thought the language assistants would be better in culture, seven thought it was authentic language and nine vocabulary. When comparing the topics taught by language assistants we found, that in 17 observed classes, the language assistants discussed culture, which proved our expectations that the presence of the language assistants could raise the intercultural awareness of Slovenian students.

Table 5.12 What is the language assistant better at than the teacher

	<i>No.</i>
<i>Culture</i>	17
<i>Vocabulary</i>	9
<i>Authentic language</i>	7
<i>Communication</i>	6
<i>Literary texts</i>	1
<i>Role play</i>	1
<i>Spelling</i>	1
<i>Don't know</i>	2

When the teachers were asked to give suggestions of how else they could benefit from having a language assistant most of them did not answer. Those who did suggested the

benefit of everyday conversation and thought that this could be the subject of additional training. We presumed that those who did not answer could not find reasons.

Difficulties working with the assistant

We also expected that there would be some problems when working with the assistant. *Table 5.13* shows that indeed there were problems teachers had to face while organising work with a language assistant.

Table 5.13 Whether the teacher has any problems working with the assistant

	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Yes</i>	11	36.6
<i>No</i>	11	36.6
<i>Sometimes</i>	5	16.8
<i>No answer</i>	3	10.0
<i>Total</i>	30	100

The problems quoted were: *timetable and the organisation of the work, forgetfulness and inconsistency of the language assistant, no proper pedagogical knowledge and sometimes the difficulties arose out of conflicting wishes of the language staff.*

Teachers' presence during the lessons

One of the most important goals of the Baseline Study was to find out the current practice in the classroom.

64% of the teachers admitted that they had left the assistant on their own in the classroom, while 36% said that they had not. The percentage of 'yes' answers was higher than in the headteachers' responses (51%), but it does not match students' responses, which showed that 91% of them had been alone with the assistant in the classroom, at least once. On the other hand, 73% of students said that the language assistant and the teacher were together in the classroom.

Co-operation between non-mentor teachers and language assistants

The data shows that non-mentor teachers and the language assistants planned and analysed their lessons together although 10% of non-mentor teachers never planned the lessons with their language assistants and 13% said that they did not analyse lessons together.

Unfortunately, these figures could not be compared with language assistants' opinions, as language assistants were not asked the same question.

Some time should be organised for the teachers and the language assistant to plan and evaluate their work together.

The positive answers to the question '*Does your assistant help you correct written work (tests not included)?*' were unexpectedly low with only 40 respondents out of 65 answering, 'yes'. Unfortunately, no explanations were given and mentor teachers were not asked the same question.

We were interested in whether non-mentor teachers were familiar with language assistants' work outside classes. When asked, only four language assistants said that they were not involved in any extra-curricular activity, which matched the headmasters' answers. On the other hand, 39% of non-mentor teachers believed that language assistants were not involved. It seemed obvious that non-mentor teachers were less informed about the language assistants' activities outside classes.

Socialising

We wanted to find out what the personal relationship was between the teachers and the language assistants, whether the teachers knew their assistants socially and whether they helped the language assistants outside the classroom.

93% of the teachers were willing to help although at the same time 73% admitted that they did not know their assistant socially. This meant that they could not possibly know their problems. Unfortunately, the teachers were not asked to explain their answers.

96% of the teachers asked considered their language assistants to be part of the teaching staff. This percentage did not differ much from the headteachers' responses as 90% of them said that they considered the language assistants to be part of the team.

Additional Training

The Baseline Study Team expected that most teachers working with language assistants would need special training.

Of the 30 interviewed teachers 22 thought that an additional training session would be most welcome. When they were asked to describe what kind of training they would appreciate, however, the answers were as follows: *exchange of experience and meetings of assistants and mentors (13), courses and seminars (7)*, and two did not know what to suggest. Some would like seminars on methodology, and workshops on necessary information about their work as mentors.

Mentor's Role

We expected that the non-mentor teachers would be familiar with the mentor's work. The data shows that the percentage, of those who were familiar, was lower than expected.

When non-mentor teachers were asked about the role of a mentor teacher 76% of them knew what it entailed. Respondents that answered 'yes' described the role of the mentor teacher as follows in *Table 5.14*.

Table 5.14 Non-mentor teachers' view of the role of the mentor

	No.
<i>Co-ordinates work of assistants with other teachers, headteachers</i>	20
<i>Organises the work of the assistant and prepares the timetable</i>	19
<i>Helps, advises the assistant in the class</i>	17

Table continued overleaf.

<i>Does paperwork, finds accommodation</i>	8
<i>Welcomes the assistant and introduces him/her</i>	8
<i>Organises and plans lessons with the assistant</i>	6
<i>Helps the assistant privately</i>	5
<i>Follows and evaluates the assistant's work</i>	5
<i>Applies for another assistant and co-operates with the Ministry</i>	4
<i>Helps the assistant with extra-curricular activities</i>	4
<i>Exchanges experiences of working with the assistant with other teachers</i>	3
<i>Informs the assistant about the curriculum</i>	2
<i>Attends seminars organised by the Ministry</i>	1
<i>Motivates students for work with the assistant</i>	1
<i>Solves misunderstandings between teachers and assistants</i>	1
<i>Advises teachers on how to work with the assistant</i>	1
<i>Keeps the assistant informed about changes within the school</i>	1
<i>Informs the assistant about rules and regulations</i>	1

13 of those who said they knew what the role of the mentor entailed, gave no description of it. Another four teachers confused mentors of assistants with mentors of trainees.

Other non-mentor language teachers believed that mentors were responsible for a variety of tasks concerning language assistants.

CONCLUSIONS

- Not all language teachers were consulted as to whether they wanted to apply for a language assistant.
- Teachers and language assistants did not agree whether the observed lesson had been a "typical" lesson. The majority of language assistants considered that it had been a typical lesson whereas the teachers were not so certain.
- The teachers' opinion about whose work was put into the planning of the lessons differed notably from the assistants', which meant that either the teacher or the assistant were not critical enough.

- Teachers tended to observe the language assistants conducting the lessons rather than to co-operate actively in the teaching process.
- Textbooks and a variety of supplementary materials were used by teachers and assistants.
- The language assistants' work was regularly incorporated into assessment.
- In most observed classes the atmosphere was relaxed and supportive.
- All teachers agreed that language assistants were of great benefit to the teachers and to the students.
- Teachers stated that the presence of language assistants raised the intercultural awareness among them and the students.
- Teachers said they were willing to help the language assistants although most of them did not socialise outside school.
- Teachers sometimes found it difficult to work with language assistants.
- Some non-mentor teachers did not know much about the language assistants' work outside classes.
- Teachers said that additional training on how to work with language assistants more effectively would be most welcome.
- According to language teachers, mentor teachers were responsible for a variety of tasks concerning the work with the language assistants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ Foreign language teachers should be encouraged to apply, as a language department, for a language assistant.
- ❖ More co-operation between the teacher and the language assistant in planning the lessons needs to be promoted.
- ❖ Team teaching should be organised and encouraged.
- ❖ Some time should be organised for the teachers and the language assistant to plan and evaluate their work together.
- ❖ Teachers should incorporate assistants' work in either written assessment or in the oral part of the assessment in order to add to the credibility and image of the language assistant.
- ❖ Teachers need additional training on how to prepare and use innovative supplementary material.
- ❖ More co-operation among mentor, non-mentor teachers and language assistants should be encouraged.