ON PROBLEMS WITH MANAGING
A LANGUAGE CLASS

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The idea of writing this paper was actually inspired by a number of questions posed by in-service students of applied linguistics who wished to become successful language teachers. They were seeking advice on how to manage their classrooms and what solutions to adopt to make their teaching effective. The students were all BA degree holders, who had graduated from institutions preparing them for the language teaching profession, chiefly from Polish Teacher Training Colleges. However, they had little didactic practice and lacked sufficient pedagogical experience. These young teacher-students were genuinely dedicated to the profession and were eager to develop as language teachers – discussions held during our MA seminars revealed their deep concern about establishing good rapport with their pupils. Although they had studied foreign language teaching methodology for three years prior to taking up postgraduate studies, they seemed to be preoccupied mainly with the problem of classroom order and discipline. This was apparently linked to the instances of their students' occasional disruptive behaviour. Open discussions revealed that this concern stemmed from their inexperience and young age – some of them were only four or five years older than their students, and, as a matter of fact, their emotions were tested most acutely in the classes attended by pupils about to graduate from higher secondary schools, aged 18–19 (or even older, as occurs in vocational schools). The discussions proved that what these young teachers actually needed was strengthening their self-assurance and assertiveness.

Problems concerning order and discipline are important but should not be exaggerated. The aforementioned discussions stirred the young teachers' views on classroom management and helped them to arrive at a number of rele-

vant conceptualizations. Most importantly, it should be emphasized that "managing a class" does not solely concern students' troublesome behaviour, as many teachers imagine. In fact, it generally relates to planning the teaching process, organizing the learning process, and establishing the teacher's leading role in these basic processes. It has to be understood that classroom management involves the teacher's responsibility for the decisions she makes with regard to what is to be done by whom, when it is to be done, and how; moreover, it relates to the assessment of the degree of fulfilment and success of the planned or intended goals. If the goals have not actually been achieved, management involves decisions concerning what measures or steps can or should still be taken, with what means, and how long they ought to be employed. It has to be realized that classroom management can only be effective if the teacher is skilful in coping with various didactic questions that arise in the classroom and how clever she is at handling a number of areas that embrace, among other things, lesson planning (including possible solutions for unexpected situations), establishing rules of conduct and of mutual respect, the ability to control pupils' behaviour, etc.

Conditions for effective management

Management can be considered effective when the teacher gets students actively involved in the learning process, which is best visible in their doing class work. Generally speaking, students' active involvement is manifested through the signs that show they are participating in the on-going learning events; e.g., students exhibit interest in the material being studied, contribute to class discussion, and are attentive when called on. Management is executed by monitoring the classroom, that is by careful observing students' behaviours and responding appropriately. On the other hand, the absence of such signs should alert the teacher that her management is ineffective and that she should undertake some action to avert problems. Thus effective managers control the classroom and see what is happening; as a result, students sense the physical closeness and mental engagement of the teacher, especially when she also maintains eye contact with them.

To make classroom management effective it has to be executed in accordance with certain didactic principles. Their implementation requires that lessons be well structured and organized. This involves a few basic steps that are indispensable, even if some are regarded as routine. A good, typical lesson begins with an opening, is sequenced with each part linked logically and coherently, has a sensible pace, and closes adequately. In the first place, managing a class requires rational and conscientious planning of the teaching process and of particular lessons. Although planning normally takes place before actual teach-

ing, the teacher must be prepared to make adjustments or modifications to the plans in case unexpected events occur (and they often do!). As is generally admitted, rational planning concentrates on classroom activities and requires that the teacher should consider such important issues as:

– setting up the goals and objectives of instruction;
– foreseeing potential problems that enforce changes or modifications during classroom activities dependent on the feedback received;
– allocating appropriate portions of time for particular tasks and activities;
– using available space in accordance with the size of the group;
– providing opportunities for involving pupils in classroom interaction;
– deciding when and how often to check pupils' progress or achievement.

The second condition that effective classroom management depends on is appropriate organization of the learning process. It is dependent on prior planning and consists of making arrangements to put into practice the tasks which have been planned. When planning what is to be learned next, one must consider the goals of teaching and the kinds of activity which achieve them; also students' current language knowledge and the skills attained so far need to be taken into account so as to engage them for further linguistic development.

Clearly, emphasis should be placed on verbal interaction and problem-solving tasks used for language learning. It follows that tasks, in the sense proposed by Breen (1987: 23)[1], when coped with by students facilitate language learning processes. A substantial number of teaching/learning activities can be implemented in the classroom. Depending on the learning goal the list includes such activities as those used for the presentation of the learning material, for practice, for memorizing, for comprehension, and for consolidating the learned and practiced material. Performing them, the learner gets involved in deciding on the feasibility of the task, learning objectives, content, and methodology used in the classroom. This is in clear contrast to traditional management, in which tasks are thoroughly controlled by the teacher and the learner is given little choice among the tasks or how to approach them.

Efficient organization of language learning concerns ensuring that the classroom takes the shape of a consistent, cooperative, and sociable whole; it follows that organizing learning aims at making all group members equal in learner status, with no disruptors or timid pupils. Furthermore, it also entails providing and assigning tasks to pupils, individually or in groups, and supervising and sustaining their willingness to make contributions and their efforts. Thus the important issues involved in organizing learning include:

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[1] "Task is […] assumed to refer to a range of workplans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning – from the simple and brief exercise type to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulation and decision-making".

    – accomplishing planned objectives;

    – facilitating language learning processes ("making the learning burden lighter");

    – taking care of developing and maintaining a friendly classroom atmosphere;

    – rational administration of time and space;

    – coordinating individual and group leaning efforts;

    – making sure that pupils understand what they are learning.

The above are the conclusions that emerged from the exchange of the teachers-students' varied, though scanty, experience; the group accepted them unanimously.

It needs to be emphasized that effective management means that learners are attentive and emotionally engaged in the learning process. They also have to perceive themselves as partners and subjects, not objects, of the teacher's teaching activities and are willing to interact and participate in doing tasks; this, in consequence, also curbs potential misbehaviour and gives the teacher opportunity to focus undisturbed on carrying out the lesson according to the intended plan, and allows for meaningful interaction between her and the pupils on the one hand, and between pupils in pairs or groups, on the other. Naturally, all this leads to higher learning achievement. Among the issues pertaining to classroom management time and space occupy an important position.

Time management is seen as rational use and control of the time available for performing the assigned tasks and practice activities. For the language teacher it means, among other things, preparing and executing lesson plans, determining goals and distributing tasks among students, supervising and monitoring their performance, and checking their progress. Proper time management evokes in the teacher the feeling of having good control over the class (cf. Coetzee, 2008). Administering time involves making decisions on the amount of time to be allotted to particular activities and on teaching priorities. Naturally, all decisions depend on the teacher's discretion. Inappropriate utilization of time available in the classroom may lead to irrational waste of time and energy as well as to students' frustration and stress. Although it is acknowledged that a certain amount of stress can be useful in some cases (in accordance with Yerkes-Dodson's law), it is also clear that performance lags under excessive pressure[2].

Space management concerns grouping arrangements that the teacher decides on to organize in the classroom. Particular tasks can be performed and various learning goals can be achieved only through adequate activities and these require different arrangements or groupings all of which have both advan-

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[2] "Performance is enhanced with mild levels of anxiety but begins to suffer if the anxiety becomes too great (MacLeod, 1998: 548).

tages and disadvantages[3]; the tasks and goals determine the frequency with which the teacher decides to use a given arrangement in teaching particular aspects of language or skills; this, in turn, relates to the length of time the arrangement lasts during a lesson. It is well known that the arrangements that are routinely practised are used for whole-class teaching (i.e. lockstep), individual work, pair work, and group work. The actual choice of a grouping depends on various factors or situations that are more or less conducive to a given grouping; for example, learning in a group encourages shy pupils to talk to classmates. Also, changing particular groupings and shuffling students in groups diversifies work in the classroom; this overcomes possible monotony or calms pupils down after a vigorous activity or a demanding task. Naturally, arrangements also determine the roles that the teacher has to assume for each one.

Teaching strategies

Teachers, like everybody else, are individuals who differ from one another. Their individual differences can have a serious impact on their preferences in dealing with students and on the ways they teach regardless of the teaching method chosen. The differences also influence the strategies or teaching styles adopted by teachers in their didactics. This can be done deliberately or not and usually results from the teachers' experience and desire to establish and sustain good rapport with students. However, the style of teaching and thus classroom management depend mostly on the teacher's personality traits.

The choice of a teaching strategy is also conditioned by the teacher's educational orientation – it can be either process oriented or product oriented. In the first approach, the focus is on skills and processes that are involved in language learning, and is concerned with processing input data contained in the teaching materials, whereas in the latter the teaching focus is on accomplishing acts of communication (the outputs) and is concerned with enabling the learner to acquire new linguistic knowledge (i.e., the product).

According to Komorowska (1999: 109–112), the adopted orientation drives the teacher towards either fulfilling the curriculum and exploiting the coursebook or establishing and sustaining a positive learning atmosphere. On the basis of this distinction Komorowska discriminates between three process oriented teaching strategies; since these are seen on the whole to be negative, she calls them "occupational therapy", "routine", and "withdrawal", respectively.

The first of these strategies consists in intensifying classes through imposing high pace and using lesson time up to the limit. It is not really to students'

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[3] For details on groupings see, e.g., Harmer (2001: 114ff).

delight but it has some advantages; the most important one is the multiplicity of learning tasks and activities which keep students busy, and prevent weariness and distraction. Involving students in performing assignments disciplines them so the strategy is favoured by the teachers who want to "live in peace" in the classroom and who have (probably) low empathy. However, its most serious disadvantage is the teacher's dominance, which is quite contrary to contemporary didactic principles where emphasis is placed on establishing partnership-based relations with students – this is a prerequisite of creative and autonomous behaviours indispensable for effective language learning.

The strategy of routine is characterized by the teacher's established and automated acting in the classroom. This means that every lesson is conducted in exactly the same way according to an accepted pattern, which secures order in the classroom and protects the teacher against unexpected events. It also provides students with some emotional comfort, enabling them to predict the teacher's successive steps and moves. However, such a run-of-the-mill manner of structuring lessons and conducting classes makes them highly monotonous. Consequently, the learning process becomes negatively affected so it is surprising that such teachers do not understand that they themselves are responsible for their students' lack of success when they are taught in this way.

The strategy of withdrawal can be used occasionally when the teacher happens to be indisposed physically or psychically. She thus gives up her active involvement in appropriate managing the class just to "survive" the lesson; clearly such a stance is unacceptable.

There are three other strategies distinguished by Komorowska (ibid.), qualified as power, fraternization, and negotiation strategies. They are student oriented and aim at establishing proper relations with the students and among the students themselves.

The strategy of power is used by principled and demanding teachers. These are certainly bad teachers who compensate for their weaknesses by abusing their authority. Perceived as a tyrant this type of a teacher creates the atmosphere of terror and kills learners' initiative and motivation for learning.

The strategy of fraternization denotes behaviours which aim to establish peaceful relations among all in the classroom. Contrary to the power strategy, it stems from the teacher's desire to be accepted by her students. She is lenient toward them with regard to their learning and behavior, which may gain her their sympathy but deprives her of their respect. Her indulgence evokes a too relaxed atmosphere in the classroom – in consequence learning results are generally poor with this strategy.

Similarly to the studies on language learning strategies which were incited by an interest in the learning behaviours of the so called "good language learner," attempts were made to identify the features characteristic of the "good

language teacher". It turned out that the best results are attained by the students who are taught by the experienced teacher that uses the strategy of negotiation. This strategy consists of judiciously involving students in making decisions concerning some didactic activities and moves. Obviously, it is at the teacher's discretion to determine the limits of students' intervention into her plans or the syllabus so as not to let them take excessive initiative.

Managing styles

Effective language teaching is also determined by the teaching style the teacher applies in dealing with the class. Classroom management style is assumed to be "a system of values and priorities for attending to the multitude of classroom control functions that structure educational activities. Educators use authority and power to implement their management plans and to meet their expectations" (Coetzee et al., 2008: 164). Komorowska (1999: 106–109) has distinguished the following managing styles and characterizes them accordingly[4]:

– Autocratic; the teacher assumes full responsibility for the class and decides about the goals and plans; imposes her decisions on the class authoritatively.

– Laissez-faire; this is the reverse of the above; students are given full autonomy and hardly any restrictions; classes are conducted mostly in L1; the teacher intervenes hardly ever.

– Paternalistic; it attempts to reconcile the two styles mentioned above; the teacher instructs and controls tasks performed by pupils; provides explanations and justifies her actions and cares for all pupils.

– Consultative; the teacher tries to use the students' ideas to make them feel they are co-responsible for the choice of classroom activities, tasks, and achievement; it aims to build an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.

– Participative; it encourages students to participate in decision making with regard to their work in order to involve them in the learning process and motivate them to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

– Democratic; highly recommended, though relatively rare; it is characterized by setting strict boundaries and rules of conduct which students must not breach. Still, they can articulate their opinion and participate in the decision-making process; this evokes in them the sense of belonging and better understanding between all members of the group.

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[4] For details and comments see Komorowska (1999: 106–109).

Disruptive behaviour and its causes

Effective management is not only determined by the role/roles that the teacher adopts in the classroom. Among other questions it also depends on how thoughtful and skilful she is at employing appropriate ways of preventing students' disruptive behaviour. She also has to respond to students' misbehaviour firmly but carefully and tactfully so as not to threaten their „face," i.e., not to harm their dignity, embarrass them, or humiliate them.

First of all, the teacher needs to be aware of the causes that trigger or provoke unacceptable behaviour. One of them can be the teacher herself – the role or strategy she has wrongly adopted may be entirely unsuitable for the group, thus inciting a clash, be it hidden or overt. The teacher must give her full attention to the class all the time and treat all learners equally, and not discriminate any individual. Unfortunately, there happen to be teachers who should never have entered their profession: their sins include frequent criticism, insults, lack of interest in pupils, not being prepared, a monotonous voice, uninteresting lessons, etc. Unattractive lessons are serious causes of boredom; they affect students adversely in not engaging them in the learning process and ultimately make them passive. Lack of attention distracts them and incites disruptions. This can also occur due to the pace followed by the teacher: no matter whether it is too fast or too slow, learners lose their interest and patience. To secure students' attention the teacher should keep them busy providing successively a number of short tasks – smooth transition from one task or activity to the next one best prevents inattention. According to Komorowska (2003: 55), lessons become attractive when learners are involved in deciding about the content of a lesson together with the teacher. Also a variety of teaching aids brought to the classroom will broaden the possibilities of attracting learners' attention and drive them away from misbehaving.

Disruptive behaviour may be due to a student's desire or need to stand out and be recognized (cf. Robertson, 1998). This is particularly noticeable among young students who feel neglected or lack a warm and friendly environment at school and/or home. They prefer to be conspicuous rather than go unnoticed, even if they gain recognition at the risk of being penalized for it. In this case, misbehaviour stems from the erroneous conviction that improper acts are a way to attract others' attention.

Another factor that exerts possible influence on a student's behaviour in the classroom is self-esteem. Badura (1981) maintains that critical remarks and negative attitudes of the teacher and the classmates toward an individual in the classroom may result in lowered self-esteem and confidence in one's cognitive potential. This, in turn, may lead to frustration and aggressive reactions, hence disruptions.

Robertson (op. cit.: 111) maintains that some students may want to assume power and control over a group of classmates. A student who aspires to be the leader needs to show off in order to demonstrate his independence of authority, such as that of the teacher. Open defiance, which results in impolite behaviour, is not only intended to gain recognition and obedience on the part of the "subordinates" but also increases self-esteem, which makes these students tough and arrogant.

Still another reason for misbehaviour can occur; the learner may wish to take revenge on the teacher for alleged harms previously inflicted: unjust criticism, revealing deficiencies, lack of praise, bad marks, etc. All this can evoke behaviours that take the form of annoying and teasing the teacher or, on the other hand, withdrawing from active involvement in class work and passivity.

There are certainly many more causes of disruptive behaviour and other specific aspects of classroom discipline. The abovementioned ones, however, seem most frequent. Consequently, the important thing for the teacher is not only to understand their etiology but to get to know how to approach them in actual teaching practice.

Forms of misbehaviour

According to Fontana (1992: 317), disruption is "behaviour that proves unacceptable for the teacher". It typically manifests itself in some action that the teacher considers improper and evokes her disapproval; however, zero action on the part of the student can also regarded as problem behaviour, as a passive stance obstructs the teaching process. It needs to be noted that misbehaviour can take various forms and its gravity is assessed differently by individual teachers, depending on their teaching strategy, managing style, understanding of the concept of misbehaviour itself, pedagogical experience, personality, etc.

Teachers complain that the most frequents misbehaviours are:
– taking turns at students' own discretion (interrupting the teacher and/or other students)
– mocking classmates verbally
– teasing (taunting?) the teacher (making undue comments)
– fidgeting or moving about.

The forms occur with different intensity and frequency depending on the students' age and involvement in the classroom activities being performed. Fidgeting or moving about in the classroom is typical of young learners (young teachers find it the most troublesome and worrying); arbitrary turn-taking is most typical of adolescent students, whereas mocking and teasing occurs most often in the higher classes of upper secondary schools.

Other forms of misbehaviour that teachers fairly commonly identify and complain about include the following:

– impudence toward the teacher
– ignoring the teacher's instructions/demands/expectations
– chatting to others
– intimidating weaker students
– negligence (not doing own homework, copying others' homework)
– cheating on tests or class work
– inattention in the classroom
– using indecent/vulgar language
– using electronic devices.

The student's behaviour in the classroom also depends to a large extent on how they have been educated in their families and on their ordinary behaviour at home.

Preventing misbehaviour

Clearly, it is always better to take precautions against undesired problems than solve them when they have appeared. By taking appropriate steps, problems will not be eliminated entirely but can at least be diminished. An important maxim to be borne in mind and observed is to base teaching on the positive attitudes of all participants of the learning situation toward one another, in order to keep students engaged in the learning process and to build a constructive learning atmosphere and mutual confidence. Once the desired atmosphere has been established, students can be drawn in by the teacher's personal involvement in teaching them and let themselves become involved in the learning situation, too. Harmer (2004: 4) notes that the teacher's enthusiasm can be contagious and students are normally attentive when classes are interesting. The ability to keep students' attention is actually an art that characterizes good teachers. This can only be said about those who are keen, vigorous, and passionate about their profession.

With regard to averting indiscipline, experienced teachers bring students under control right from the first encounter with them. Komorowska (1999) suggests that at the beginning of the school year the teacher should propose a code of conduct – once it is established and accepted by the students its principles are expected to be consequently abided. As for the rules, it is up to the teacher to propose them and discuss them with the students; however, when students oppose some rules which the teacher considers fundamental, she has to be firm on them so as to show what they can expect. The rules may relate to

such prosaic issues as, e.g., a student asks for permission to leave the classroom for a while or raises a hand first to be allowed to speak; on the other hand, they should also concern possible consequences of violating the rules.

Dealing with misbehaviour

Since prevention is not always effective, teachers cannot ignore misbehaviour – they have to cope somehow with instances of breaching the code of conduct. This means they should react if they are not to be perceived as acquiescent or even weak and unprofessional; lack of reaction may not only harden the naughty student but can encourage others in the classroom to behave similarly. On the other hand, overreaction is likely to intimidate the student as well as to evoke his estrangement from the teacher and the classmates. Thus the steps undertaken ought to be judicious and commensurate to the gravity of the given misbehaviour. He can react non-verbally or verbally (cf. Komorowska, 1999: 95–99). It will often suffice for the teacher to signal his noticing the misbehaviour: making eye contact with the student or students in question, lowering the voice to whispering, or making a short pause in talking (cf. Harmer, 2001: 129). Non-verbal reactions are, on the whole, tactful and have a number of advantages: they do not interrupt the lesson, do not humiliate, indicate willingness to cooperate rather than to punish, etc. If non-verbal reactions fail, the teacher has to resort to verbal reprimanding or warning. However, the teacher should be very careful to stay calm because public criticism can be taken as harassment (Robertson, 1998: 150); consequently, to maintain good rapport with students it will be advisable to admonish students in private (Harmer, 2001: 130).

A survey of teachers

Since teachers face a variety of problems pertaining to classroom management it seemed worth verifying the suggestions, recommendations, and assumptions about classroom management that can be encountered in the literature and relating them to the actual situation in Polish language classrooms.

In order to determine how language teachers actually manage their classrooms and how they experience adverse situations, research was carried out.

Aims

The investigation aimed to find out what major problems teachers have to tackle in their classrooms, how frequently they experience them, how sensitive they are to them (whether they are bothered by them and how strongly), and

what steps they take to solve the problems; since misbehaviour is of considerable concern to teachers, other aims of the survey were to identify the factors that affect students' misbehaviour. Consequently, the research was oriented towards two aims: first, to obtain information on how teachers experience management and how they are actually affected by indiscipline, and second, to find what moves they undertake in response to students' disruptive behaviours.

Instruments

The above aims were examined by means of positing relevant questions[5]. Two modest questionnaires were designed for the purpose of this paper and given to the subjects to answer. In order to accomplish the first aim of the paper, both closed and open questions with optional answers were given, whereas the second aim was to be attained by just one open-ended question (cf. Findings and discussion, below).

Subjects

The research was carried out on two groups of teachers of English (174 in total). The criterion for dividing the subjects was their length of employment in the language teaching profession; group A consisted of 96 young teachers who were actually beginners (with only 1 to 2 years of practice); group B amounted to 78 teachers who had been teaching for 5 to 9 years). All the teachers were teaching in state or private secondary schools in the central, north-eastern, and south-eastern regions of Poland. It is believed that the sample was large enough to ensure that the findings should be considered fairly representative. However, it should also be remembered that lower secondary schools are attended by adolescents, i.e., students who are 14–16 years old, which is the age of transition to adulthood during which students can be particularly troublesome and difficult to deal with.

Findings and discussion

The subjects' answers reveal that management is a vital issue for all teachers. However, only in group A, all of them admit – without exception – that

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[5] Questionnaires are generally considered reliable research instruments as they call for retrospective accounts of respondents; they also have other advantages (cf., e.g., Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 172; Dőrnyei, 2007: 101).

they do experience problems with regard to dealing with their classes and students; 67% of these teachers experience problems always, and the remaining 33% do frequently. Conversely, in group B the majority of the teachers declare that management is not of greatest concern to them: only 23% admit it is, while the remainder in this group find it problematic only rarely. The effect of the teachers' experience is reflected in their impressions concerning the extent to which students' misbehaviour affects their managing skills. 63% of the teachers in group A feel they are seriously affected, 31% are affected considerably, and only as few as 6% are affected only a little. In group B the proportions are the reverse: no teachers are seriously affected in their managing skills by their students' behaviour; only 8% are affected considerably, and the remaining 92% are hardly affected. The above findings allow one to formulate the conclusion that it is experience that determines teachers' approaches to the problems of discipline in the classroom: experienced ones regard and handle instances of misbehaviour in a more mature way and with an appropriate detachment. The answers show that inexperienced teachers need further guidance, as they often fumble about when making decisions.

The teachers' answers suggest first that teachers rate discipline differently; secondly, on the whole misbehaviours do bother and disturb them, even if they occur only occasionally. Among the most troublesome instances they identified the following ones: talking out of turn, talking back, talking to/disturbing others, cheating, using mobile telephones (writing/reading messages), copying others' homework/assignments, or working on another subject.

To explore the second objective of the survey, the open question "What do you do to admonish your students?" was posed. The answers were expected to provide a spectrum of the ways in which teachers deal with their students' behaviour and to find out what preventative measures teachers take in the classroom to secure proper classroom discipline. The answers again differed significantly across the two groups. The differences manifest themselves first of all in the teaching strategies used by the teachers (and in their reaction to misbehaviour); teachers in A tend to be autocratic and in B are often more paternalistic. All the teachers enumerated the ways in which they react to disruptions nonverbally or verbally. Their reactions were identified and recognized as typical and most frequent; what they do is listed below.

Non-verbal:
– take note for further consideration and notify the student of it
– warn disruptors using manual gestures or looking sternly
– in case of cheating on tests – mark the fact on the test form to lower the score
– in case of copying another's homework or doing work for another subject – take away the notebook

Verbal:
– reprimand publicly
– come up to the student and reprimand in private
These moves are practiced by all teachers – both in Group A and Group B.

Conclusions

The subjects' answers show that despite their preparation for performing the profession young inexperienced teachers do not quite follow the principles they study in their language teaching methodology courses – it is their inexperience and lack of self-confidence and/or assertiveness that makes them preoccupied with discipline problems. A conclusion can be drawn that something has gone wrong in the system of preparing young students to the profession; also the policy of assigning young, inexperienced teachers to teach 19 year olds seems irresponsible – novices need practice – they need care, support and advice from senior teachers and headmasters. Young teachers, especially those employed in small cities or villages, seem to be left to themselves and can only count on their own potential – the impression is that they fumble about in their good intentions to become effective language teachers.

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