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Back to the classroom: language educators learning a language

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Back to the classroom: language educators learning a language

Abstract

As part of our preparation for this presentation, we undertook research into the field of teachers as students etc but there is virtually none irrespective of language or other. Research on the motivation of students and teachers and the differences between teachers' beliefs and their actual classroom practice is ample but there is virtually nothing on teachers as students and the impact that being a student had on their teaching practise etc. In some ways, it seems that once you are a language teacher, you are expected to remember what it is like to study a language – from our experience this is not necessarily the case. WHO?: Our motivations (for participating?) varied among the participants. From just having fun, to forming a stronger group cohesion with colleagues, to challenge yourself being in the “other” side of the classroom experimenting to certain extent what students feel in class., to test and practice your memory skills, to use the acquired skills in an imminent trip to Japan, to satisfied curiosity about other language colleague teaching strategies...

Keywords

educators, learning, language, back, classroom

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Law

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Back to the Classroom: Language Educators Learning a Language

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(supported by CAPSTRANS)



Course Structure

- 1 hour per week for 5 weeks.
- Emphasis on functional language (shopping, time etc.) and cultural awareness for travelling / business



Differences and limitations

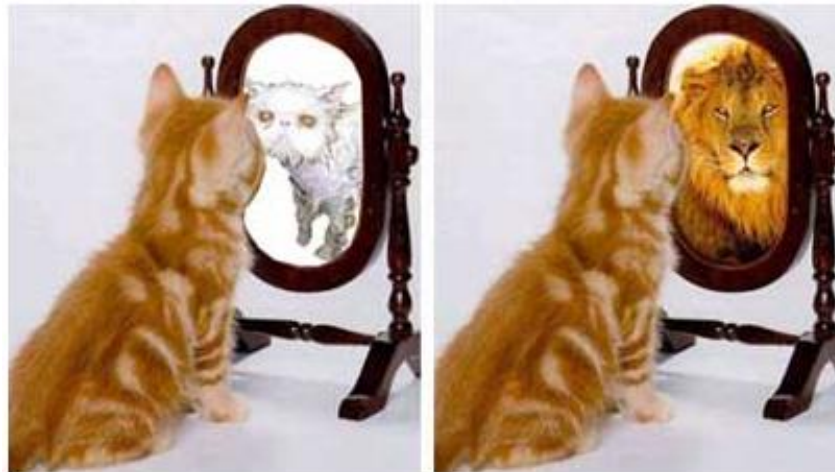
- Triggered reflection about philosophies of teaching / teaching strategies amongst colleagues although it was not the intent.
- As a research project:
 - inadequate literature;
 - a small sample of unusual students (mature; friends; Head of School).



General reflections (1)

Validation of our philosophies / beliefs:

- developing cultural awareness and being reminded of learners' limited prior knowledge;
- acknowledging a range of motivations and anxiety.



General reflections (2)

Power dynamics:

- kinetic 'power';
- loss of power and identity.



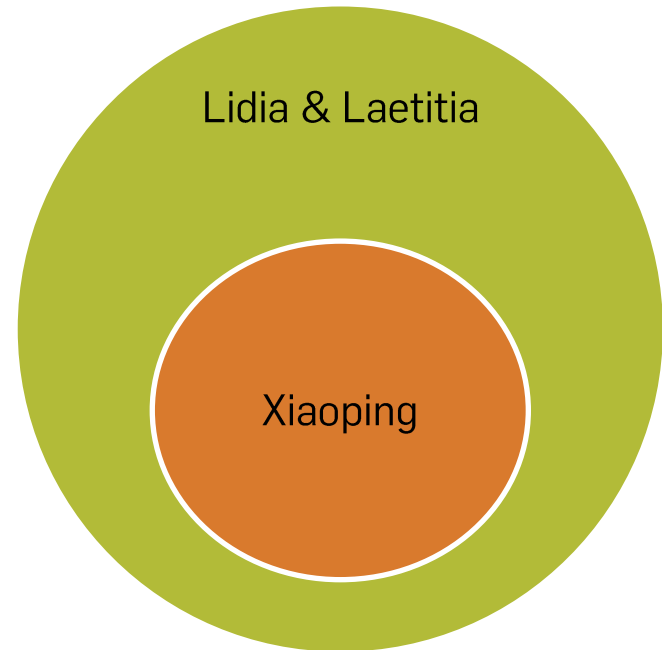
General reflections (3)

Learner identity:

- identity clusters in the group



Participants

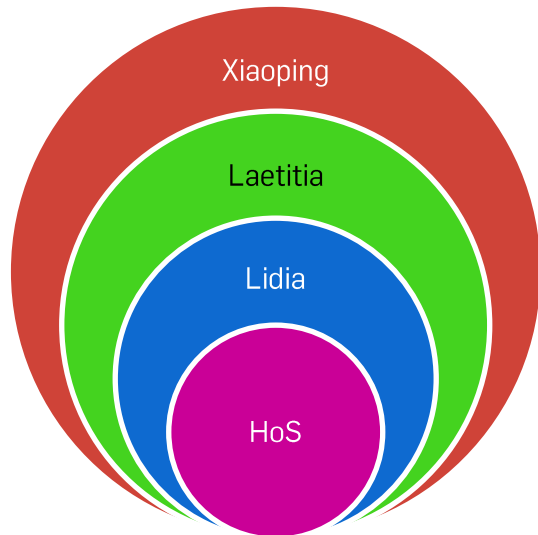


Language teachers

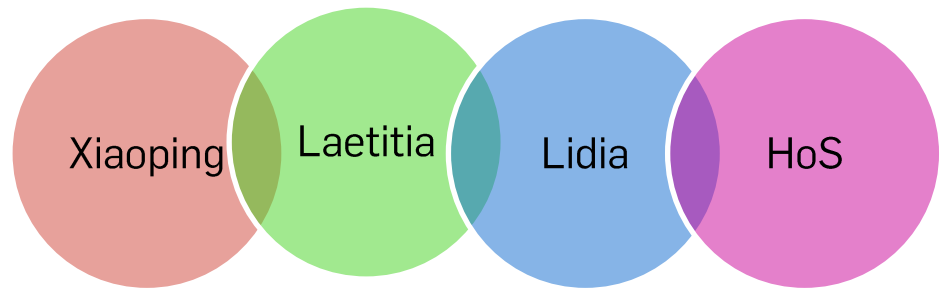
General reflections (4)

Learner identity:

- negotiating membership and identity in the group;



Participants' self-perceptions of competence at the beginning



Reality (according to Rowena sensei)

- reluctance to let go of usual frames of reference.

Impact on learners' teaching

- Challenged a number of assumptions about:
 - learners' background and its impact on learning;
 - how difficult it is to learn a language for our students;
 - how much we rely on grammar.
- Changed:
 - behaviour in class: more empathetic; smiling;
 - language of instruction: incremental use of TL;
 - content (e.g. numbers);



Teacher reflections

- Language learning is not linear
- Language backgrounds / learning experience(s) have an effect
- Part of professional development



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ANY QUESTIONS?