



Insights for English language education from historical research

Professor Richard Smith, University of Warwick, UK

Inaugural webinar for HELE-India, 22 July 2022

Plan

- Why history? / What kind of history?
- HoLLT, HELT and HELE as fields of research
- Examples of HELT (history of 'global' ELT)
- Examples of HELE (history of English learning/teaching in particular educational contexts)
- Concluding reflections



References, links etc.: bit.ly/HELE-RS

1. Why history? / What kinds of history?

References, links etc.: bit.ly/HELE-RS



Why history?

1) Stern 1983:

- there is little historical research – instead, ‘potted accounts’
- a historical approach ‘is needed if language teaching is not to fall victim to a succession of passing fashions’
- ‘we can gain perspective on present-day thought and trends and find directions for future growth’

2) Smith 2021 (building on Stern):

- ‘developing “historical sense” is an important aspect of language teacher education’ [to develop teacher-learner autonomy]
- ‘historical evidence is needed as a basis on which to build appropriate reform efforts’

Overall: Historical research as a (constructive) antidote to

- over-simplified accounts which falsely claim history is everywhere the same and which therefore bolster universalist thinking
- excessive reverence for top-down / outside-in theory-driven approaches

Potentially, history is a resource for the future, but not in a direct way

What kind of history?

What to research?

'studies of particular aspects' (Stern 1983)

E.g.?

- Individuals
- Particular institutions
- Particular methods or techniques
- Materials

... in different contexts

... practices, not just ideas

How to research?

Many existing overviews are not 'methodologically informed' . Dangers to avoid:

- over-reliance on other secondary sources
- over-literalness (e.g. 'activity')
- anachronism (e.g. 'Reader')
- being over-celebratory or excessively partisan (e.g. Berlitz history)

Some basic 'rules'

- Use but be critical of existing secondary accounts
- Refer to primary sources (do 'original' research)
- Attempt to make only evidence-based assertions
- Explicitly state sources of evidence

Consult *primary* sources

‘Primary sources’ =

‘Documents or artifacts closest to the topic of investigation. Often they are created during the time period which is being studied (correspondence, diaries, newspapers, government documents, art) but they can also be produced later by eyewitnesses or participants (memoirs, oral histories)’

Source: <http://research.library.gsu.edu/primaryhistory>

2. HoLLT, HELT and HELE as fields of research

References, links etc.: bit.ly/HELE-RS



HoLLT (History of Language Learning and Teaching)

- [SIHFLES](#) (Société internationale pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde) – 25-year history
 - [CIRSIL](#) (Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca sulla Storia degli Insegnamenti Linguistici)
 - [APHELLE](#) (Associação Portuguesa para a História do Ensino das Línguas e Literaturas Extranjeras)
 - [PHG](#) (Peeter Heynsgenootschap)
 - [SEHEL](#) (Sociedad Española para la Historia de las Enseñanzas Lingüísticas)
-
- Pan-European conferences: Granada (2008), Gargnano (2011), Nottingham (2014), Faro (2016), Granada (2019)

Joining up HoLLT researchers

Dec. 2012 – Nottingham workshop
(special issue of *Language and History* – 2014)

June 2013 – Warwick workshop
(special issue of *Language Learning Journal* - 2018)

July 2014 – Nottingham conference
(3 volumes of proceedings – 2018)

January 2015 – AILA Research Network on HoLLT – (**HoLLT.net**)
<http://hol.lt.net>



The History of Language Learning and Teaching

VOLUME I
16th–18th Century Europe

Edited by Nicola McLelland and Richard Smith



Modern Humanities Research Association and Males Publishing



The History of Language Learning and Teaching

VOLUME II
19th–20th Century Europe

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VOLUME III
Across Cultures

Edited by Nicola McLelland and Richard Smith



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HoLLT.net -- AILA Research Network for History of Language Learning and Teaching

About

Join

Events

Publications

Resources

Links

more...



Isolated groups / researchers -> HoLLT.net

There's no equivalent of SIHFLES (re. French) for history of English language teaching

Decision not to bring together HELT/HELE researchers in a separate network – maybe begin to rethink now?

Some abbreviations

- **HoLLT (history of (any) language learning and teaching)**

A useful distinction?:

- **HELT (history of 'global' ELT) vs.**
- **HELE (histories of particular educational contexts)**

3. Examples of HELT (history of 'global' ELT)

References, links etc.: bit.ly/HELE-RS



1) Establishing 'global' ELT 'mainstream' history

Roots of ELT

- *A History of English Language Teaching* by A.P.R. Howatt. Published by Oxford University Press in 1984 / 2004 (2nd edition, with H.G. Widdowson).
- Tickoo, Makhan L. 1968. 'A critical study of some developments in, and opinions on, the application of linguistics in language teaching'. PhD thesis, Institute of Education, University of London.
- [The Writings of Harold E. Palmer: An Overview](#), by Richard Smith (1999). Tokyo: Hon-no-Tomosha.

Warwick ELT Archive (2002 onwards) – hopes for linkage with IRLT, CIE(FL)

The Warwick ELT Archive:
www.warwick.ac.uk/elt_archive



Centre for Applied Linguistics

The Centre Research Degrees Learn English Short Courses People CAL Intranet

Collections » **Warwick ELT Archive »** Resources Catalogue Research Publications Hall of Fame Presentations 2005 Archive Launch

The Warwick ELT Archive

The Warwick ELT Archive (www.warwick.ac.uk/elt_archive) is a stand-alone, browsable historical collection of published and unpublished materials relating to the teaching of English as a foreign language and the development of applied linguistics, c.1880–c.1980. Now housed on mobile shelving in the Centre's new Learning Resources Room, this unique collection has been built up gradually by [Dr Richard Smith](#) since 2002, initially on the basis of donations of materials from members and former members of staff in the (then) Centre for English Language Teacher Education (now, Centre for Applied Linguistics), University of Warwick, and latterly on the basis of acquisitions from a wider variety of interested individuals and institutions/organizations (see below for a full list of donors). In March 2005 a substantial existing collection was incorporated, the Edinburgh [Dakin Collection](#), and in December 2010 a significant donation of materials from Dr Charles Forbes (which we have termed the 'Forbes Collection') enhanced our holdings in the areas of U.S. and Middle Eastern publications.

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See tabs above for Catalogue, Hall of Fame, details of Projects and Publications, etc.



[Panel discussion on the History of EAP and of BALEAP](#), BALEAP 2013 Conference, April 2013.

[Interview with John Trim about the History of Modern Language Teaching and Learning](#), 19 September 2013

A Short History of ELT: Talk by

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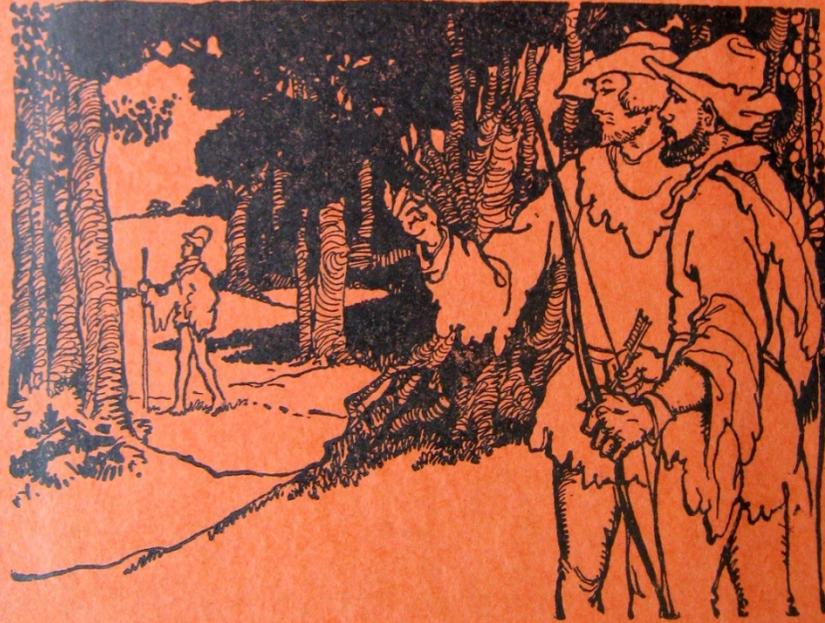
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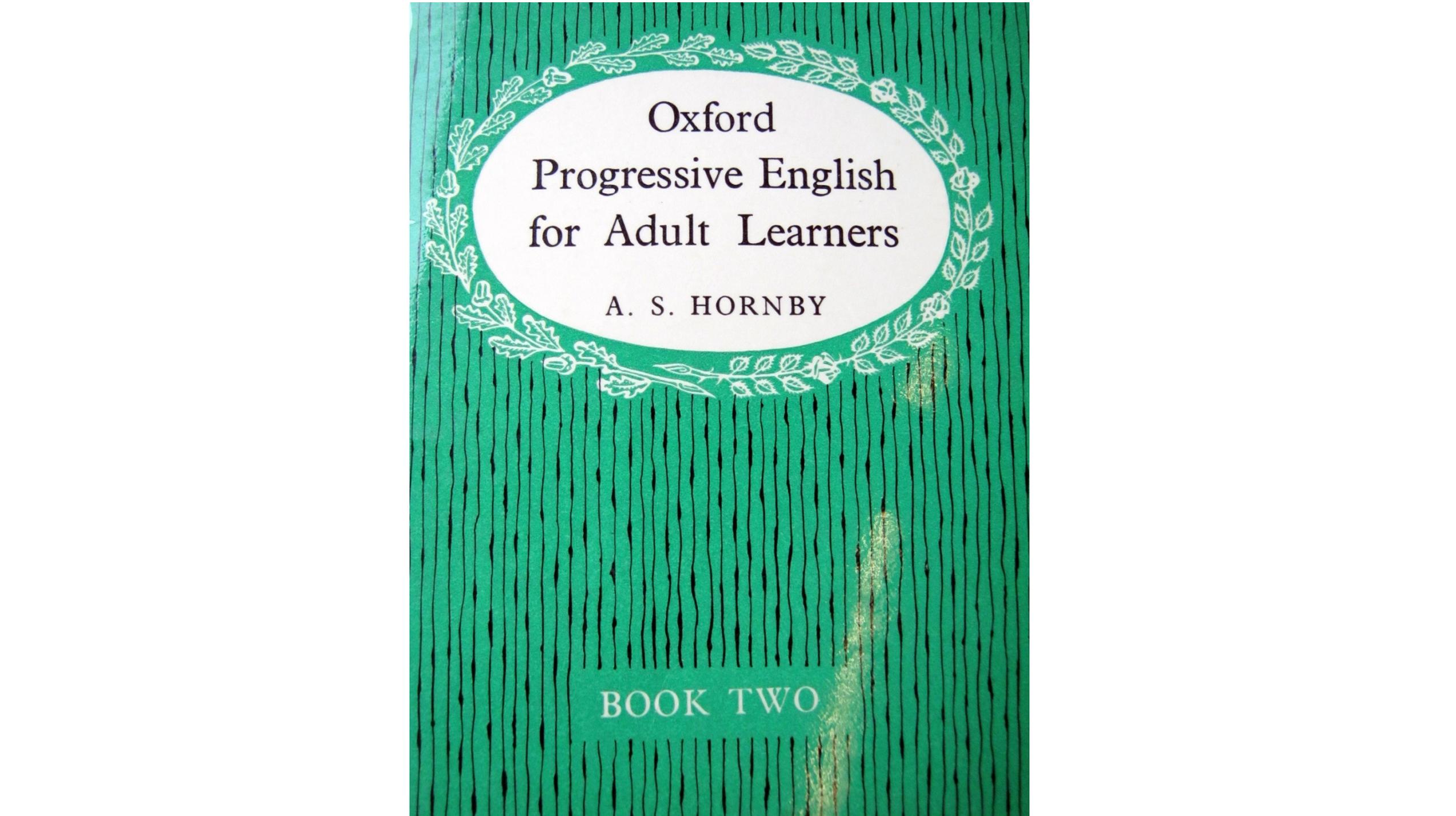
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Streamline ENGLISH

BERNARD HARTLEY & PETER VINEY

CONNECTIONS



HEADWAY

STUDENT'S BOOK

INTERMEDIATE



DR
English Recommended

John & Liz Soars

Some developments in post-war ELT

- *ELT Journal*, British Council, S-O-S, publishers (UK) vs.
- TESOL, Audiolingualism [cf. Tickoo re. the 'structural approach']
- India in the development of ELT / 'invention' of role for the British Council, support for CIE/CIEFL, Madras Snowball - beginning of cascading / state partnerships -> Procedural Syllabus

PhD students

Duncan Hunter

Jason Anderson

Nick White

Moving into oral history / history of CLT

2) 'Side-streams' / Alternative streams within ELT:

- Horace Wyatt (1923) *The Teaching of English in India*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Michael West (1960) *Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances*. Published by Longmans (1960).
- ['Harold E. Palmer's alternative "applied linguistics"'](#) by Richard Smith (2011). *Histoire–Epistémologie–Langage* 33/1: 53-67.
- [HERstory of ELT](#) (blog post)

3) Needs to localize / 'decentre' ELT

- *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context* by Adrian Holliday (1994). Cambridge University Press.
- Prabhu, N.S. (1990) '[There is no best method; Why?](#)' *TESOL Quarterly*, 24(2), pp. 161-176.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. 'Postmethod pedagogy'. Chapter 9 in *Understanding Language Teaching: from Method to Postmethod*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum (2006).
- '[Decentring ELT](#)' (Hornby Trust website)

4) Historically decentring by localizing 'global' ELT

- 'The history of teaching English as a foreign language, from a British and European perspective', by A.P.R. Howatt and Richard Smith (2014). *Language and History* 57/1: 75-95. [Online \(open access\)](#)

['A brief history of *ELT Journal*'](#) by Richard Smith (2021), *ELT Journal* 75/1: 4–13.

Smith, Richard. 2018. ['The role of historiography in decentring ELT'](#). Invited lecture at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University, Delhi, and Keynote paper at ELTAI National Seminar on 'English Language Education: Theory and Practice', University of Hyderabad, India.

THE BULLETIN

OF

THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN
ENGLISH TEACHING

Department of Education, Tokyo, Japan

No. 126

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ENGLISH
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A Periodical devoted to the Teaching
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Volume I

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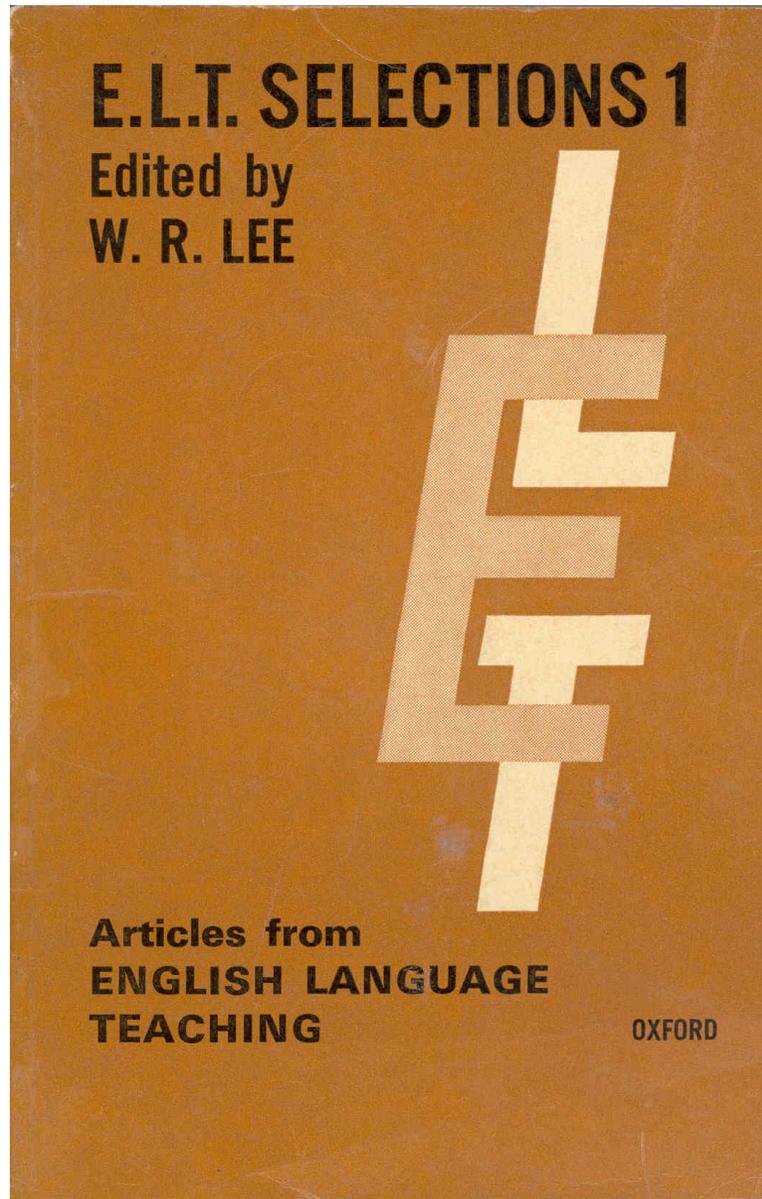
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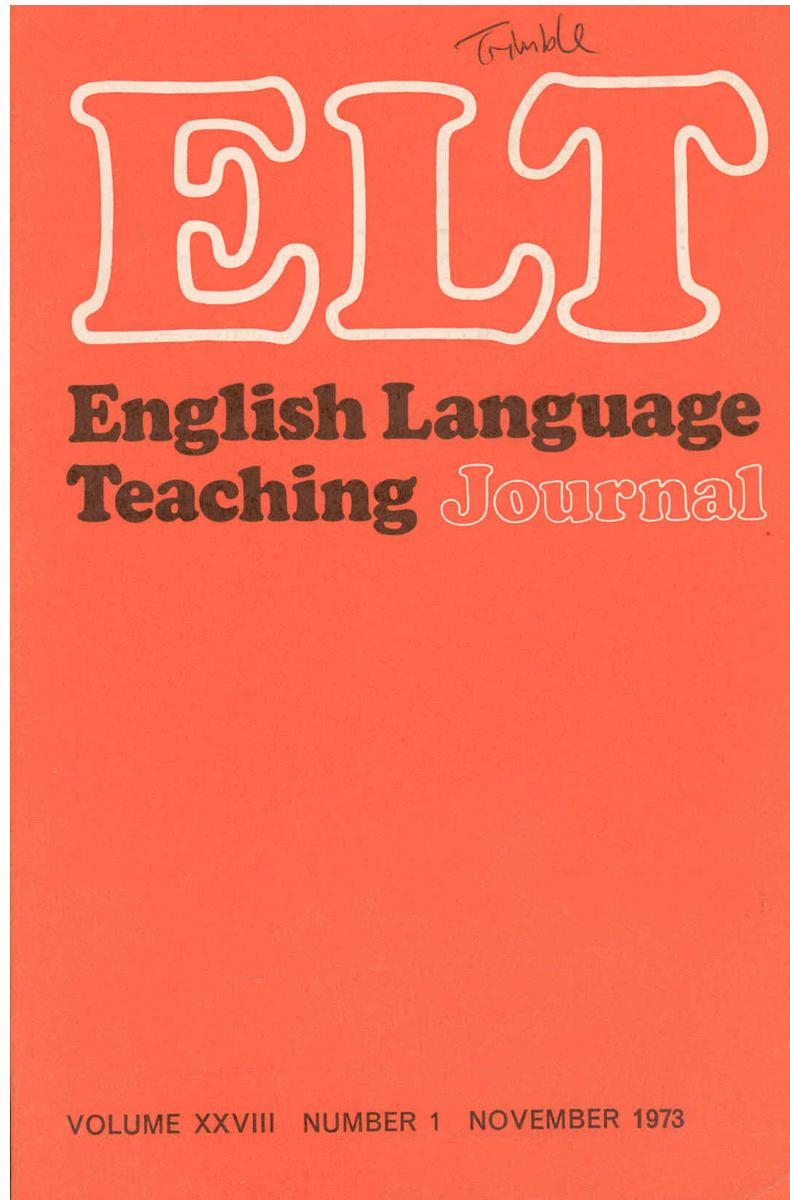
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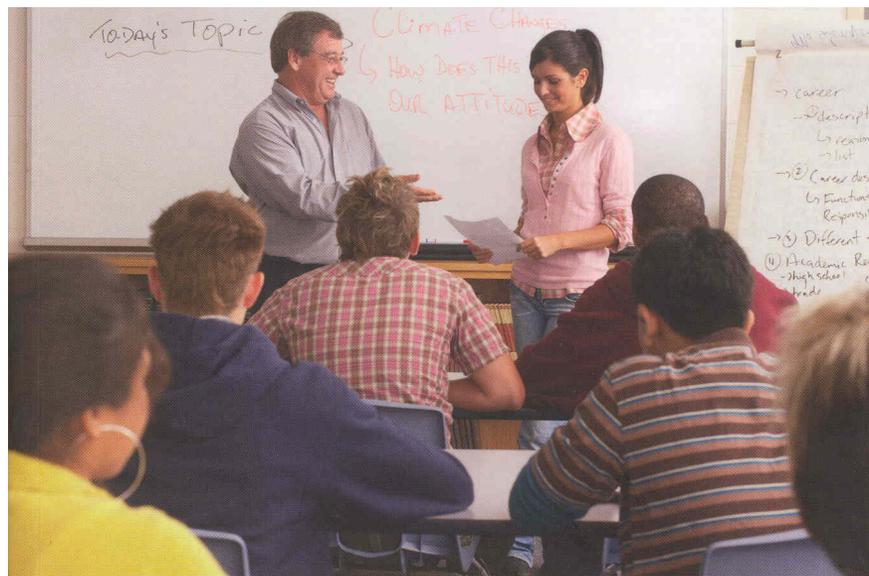
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1973+



VOLUME XXVIII NUMBER 1 NOVEMBER 1973



An international journal for teachers of English to speakers of other languages

Volume
66/1
January 2012

ELT journal

Articles

A.S. Hornby and the Hornby Trust
Learning of routine formulae
The myth of the natural-born linguist
Developing speaking
Developing multiliteracies in ELT
Learner negotiation of L2 form
Culture in ELT
Transnational peer review of teaching
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IATEFL 2010 Harrogate Conference Selections
Shakespeare on Toast
Provoking Thought: Memory and Thinking in ELT
Towards Multilingual Education
Service, Satisfaction and Climate: Perspectives on
Management in English Language Teaching
The Language and Intercultural Communication Reader
Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes

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4. Examples of HELE (history of English learning/teaching in particular educational contexts)

References, links etc.: bit.ly/HELE-RS



History of English Language Education

ELE in Germany (in German) – since 1984

Klippel, 1994; Lehberger, 1986, 1990; and Macht, 1986, 1987, 1990.

Recent PhDs by Doff 2002, 2008; Franz, 2005; Kolb, 2013; Ruisz, 2014; Schleich 2015; Giesler 2018)

ELE in Japan (in Japanese):

Nihon eigakushi gakkai (The Historical Society of English Studies in Japan)

Nihon eigokyoikushi gakkai (The Historical Society of English Teaching in Japan).

- ELE in Germany - e.g. Klippel, Friederike. (1994) *Englischlernen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert: Die Geschichte der Lehrbücher und Unterrichtsmethoden*. Münster: Nodus. See also Giesler, Tim (2019) 'Munich works: German perspectives on the history of language learning and teaching'. *Language & History* 62/3: 265-269.
- ELE in Japan - 'Lessons from the past: traditions and reforms', by Richard C. Smith, with Imura Motomichi (2004). In Makarova, V. and T. Rodgers (eds.) *English Language Teaching: The Case of Japan*. Munich: Lincom Europa

- ELE in India - 'Bilingual English teaching in colonial India: the case of John Murdoch's work in Madras Presidency, 1855–1875', co-authored by R. Smith & R. Vennela (2019). *Language & History* 62(2), 96-118.
- Smith, R. & Vennela, R. 'Countering some myths around Macaulay's Minute and English linguistic imperialism in 19th-century Indian education'. Paper at the 7th International Conference on Late Modern English, University of Catania, Ragusa, Italy, May 2022.

Background

Building on:

Vennela, R. & Smith, R. (2019): ['Bilingual English teaching in colonial India: the case of John Murdoch's work in Madras Presidency, 1855–1875'](#). *Language & History* 62(2), 96-118.

Countering “broad-brush historical accounts which

- fail to describe concrete realities ‘on the ground’ due to the way they (often very selectively) foreground particular policies as opposed to practices,
- over-generalise about the entire nineteenth century and about all school types, and
- consider history to have been everywhere the same in India.” (p. 98)

POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF THE INDIAN EMPIRE

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REFERENCE NOTE

BRITISH INDIA COLOURED — RED

TERRITORIES PERMANENTLY ADMINISTERED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA — PINK

NATIVE STATES AND TERRITORIES — YELLOW

RAILWAYS SHOWN THUS —

Bilingual initiatives have been relatively neglected because:

“colonial historiography has tended to **focus excessively on selected educational documents** – in particular, Macaulay’s infamous (1835) ‘Minute’, with its strong claims for the superiority of English-medium instruction over instruction in Indian languages.” (p. 97)



Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859)

b. 1800, son of colonial administrator / abolitionist Zachary Macaulay

Educated at Cambridge

1826 – called to the bar

1830 – became MP

1834–38: served on Supreme Council of India (its first ‘Law Member’, i.e. legal adviser)

[1835: Minute on Indian Education] ; drafted Indian penal code (implemented 1860)

1838–41 – MP again; served in government

1841–1859: mainly, literary pursuits

[1843 – *Critical and Historical Essays* published – collection of essays for the *Edinburgh Review*]

[1848 – first two vols. of *The History of England from the Accession of James II* published]

[1855 – second two vols. of *The History of England* published]

1857 – raised to peerage (‘Lord Macaulay’)

d. 1859

“Macaulay’s [2 February, 1835] ‘Minute’ very clearly argues for English as the medium of instruction at higher levels, rather than the Oriental languages. **The ‘Minute’ constitutes an example of colonialist and imperialist attitude of superiority.** Macaulay averred that the Oriental languages did not possess any knowledge worth preserving:”

Pingali (2009, 106)

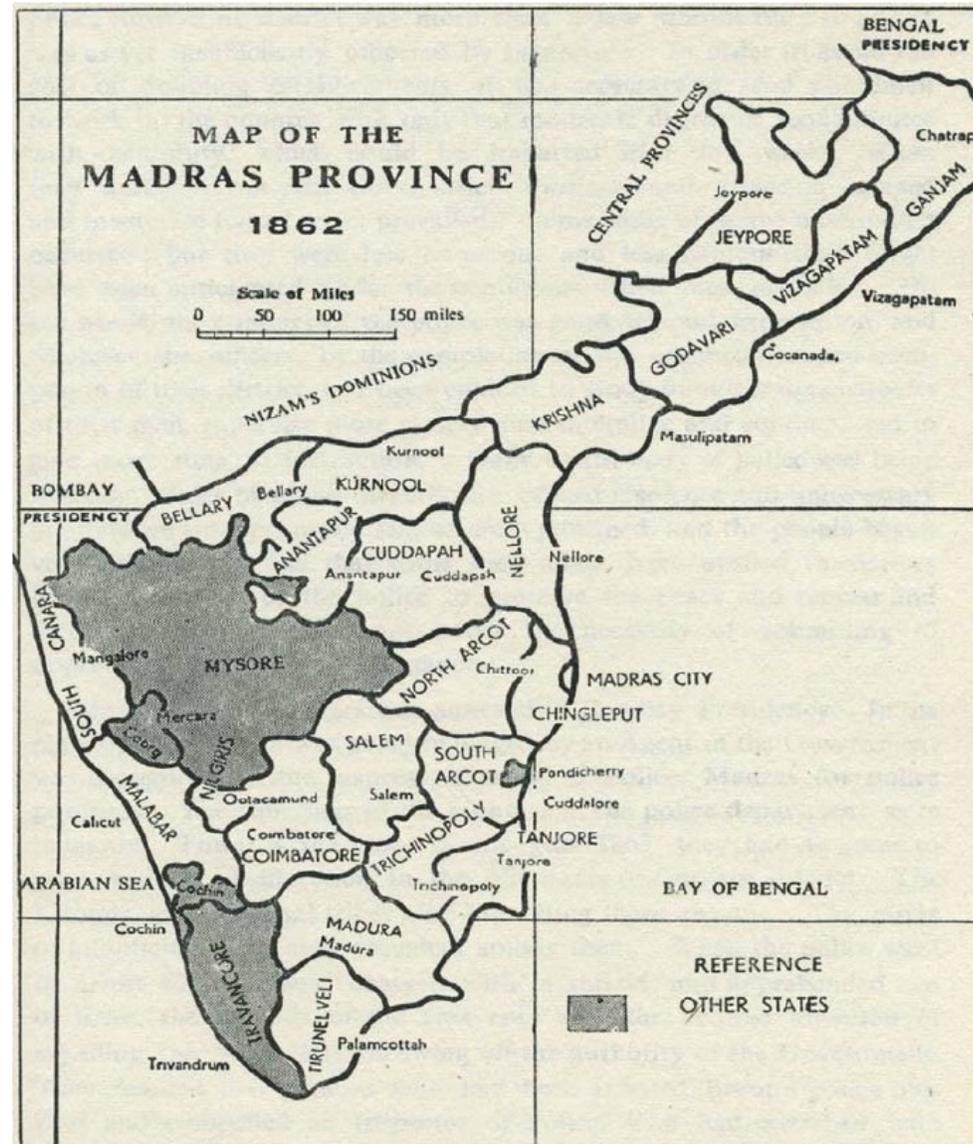
What is 'mythical'?

The “Myth of Macaulay's Minute” (Frykenberg, 1998)

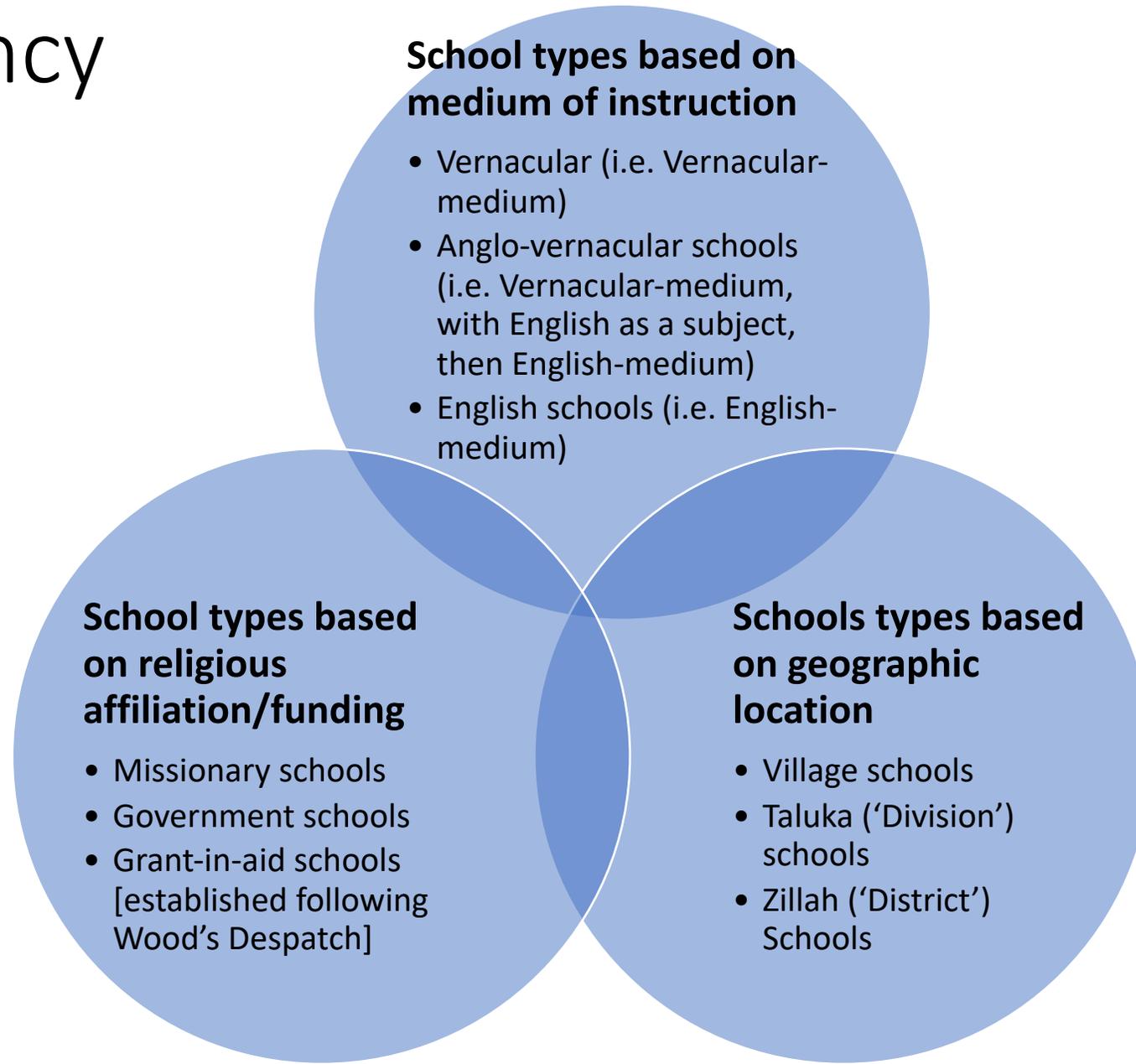
“According to this myth, attitudes of lofty condescension towards India's peoples and their inferior cultures [...] prompted alien rulers to impose an English language educational system upon the subcontinent and, thereby, to neglect and stifle the natural growth of indigenous educational institutions.”

i.e. Here, we are countering only the ‘imposition of English-medium education’ myth

Focus on Madras Presidency



Types of 1854+ colonial school in Madras Presidency



ENGLISH PRIMER.

PART II.

CONTAINING ABOUT

TWELVE HUNDRED EASY WORDS.



STEREOTYPE EDITION.



The Christian Vernacular Education Society for India.

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DIRECTIONS TO THE TEACHER.

The SECOND PART of the ENGLISH PRIMER contains a graduated series of lessons on the principal vowel sounds, diphthongs, and consonants. The Primer includes the great bulk of the monosyllables in the English language.

READING.—Accurate pronunciation is of great importance. It is best taught by the teacher reading the lessons slowly, correctly, and with due emphasis, the pupils trying afterwards to imitate him. The scholars should sometimes be exercised in repeating in this manner without the book.

TRANSLATION.—Every sentence should be translated into the vernacular. The meanings of the different words should be known as well as the general sense. The pupils should frame similar sentences.

EXAMINATION.—The scholars should be questioned on the meaning of each separate term, the sense of the different sentences, and the whole scope of the lesson. Intelligent teachers will give additional information, fitted to interest the pupils and exercise their understanding. The practical bearing of the truths explained should be carefully brought out.

SPELLING AND WRITING.—The pupils should be able to spell the lessons and write them to dictation, as well as read them.

RELIGIOUS LESSONS.—The name of God, or Jesus Christ, should never be pronounced lightly. Religious lessons should, in no case, be used for teaching spelling, or grammar. The teacher should only ascertain, in a becoming manner, that the pupils understand the sense.

46

no man an-y thing. The bor-row-er is ser-vant to the lend-er. Thou shalt not steal. If I steal, God will see it. I must not cheat in an-y way.

87.

There are twen-ty-four Eng-lish hours in a day. There are six-ty In-di-an hours in a day. There are sev-en days in a week. Sun-day, Mon-day, Tues-day, Wed-nes-day,* Thurs-day, Fri-day, and Sa-tur-day are the days of the week. Four weeks make a month. Twelve months make a year.

88.

Shun those boys who cheat, steal, and tell lies. Can you walk in the fire and not be burned? Can you go with bad boys and be safe? The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wick-ed. Thou shalt not fol-low a crowd to do e-vil. If sin-ners en-tice thee, con-sent thou not. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me. Bles-sed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

* Pronounce, Wenz'-day.

CHRISTIAN VERNACULAR
EDUCATION SOCIETY FOR INDIA.

INSTITUTED, 1858.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. M. WATTS, CROWN COURT, TEMPLE BAR.

1859.

We have now to give an outline of our proposed plan of operations, the object of which is, to effect the greatest amount of educational good for India, as quickly and economically as possible. Bearing in mind, then, that the ultimate aim of the Society is the formation of Training Institutions for the preparation of Christian Vernacular Schoolmasters, and to supply them with Christian School-books in their various languages, the question arises, whether some method might not be devised which would enable the Society to begin its work, to some extent, without waiting for a new machinery to be put in action; for it must be remembered that to select, qualify in the vernacular languages, and station at several of the most important central points, a fresh staff of Training Masters, would require considerable time. It has therefore been resolved by the Com- (pg.13)

Michael West, reporting to Calcutta University Commission in 1919:

‘The ordinary method followed in teaching English is as follows`:

The boy is set a certain passage of the English reader to ‘prepare’. Preparation means that he must be able to read the passage, translate it into Bengali, and, occasionally, give English synonyms ...

[a detailed description of classroom procedure follows]

The direct method is a complete failure in Bengali schools. `it asks too much of the teacher; it is useless for the upper classes, where complicated ideas or abstract words are needed’

- *Foreigners and Foreign Languages in India: A Sociolinguistic History* by Shreesh Chaudhary (2009). Delhi: Foundation Books
- *Language Policy and Education in India: Documents, Contexts and Debates*, co-edited by M. Sridhar and Sunita Mishra (2017). Abingdon: Routledge.
- HELE-India research group: contact Prof. Amol Padwad, Centre for English Language Education, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University, Delhi.

5. Concluding reflections

References, links etc.: bit.ly/HELE-RS



HELE in India – a rich, long and complex history to explore

What appears as under-emphasized in 'ELT' / 'TEFL' / 'TESOL', if we see this as 'local' and historically constituted rather than universal / inevitable / taken for granted? What (re)appears, if we focus on the history of 'English language education' (India)?

- written language
- literature
- educational value of language study
- disadvantaged / large classes
- bilingual teachers
- multilingual resources / lingua franca uses of English
- diversity of practices

Q&A

Email address: R.C.Smith@warwick.ac.uk

Home page: <http://warwick.ac.uk/richardcsmith>

References, links etc.: bit.ly/HELE-RS

