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Stern (1983) offers a good review and summary of early studies of the history of language teaching. He also sets out reasons why, in his view, historical research is essential to the development of language teaching theory. He states as a primary reason that a historical approach ‘is needed if language teaching is not to fall victim to a succession of passing fashions’ (p. 517) and he presents a more positive corollary of this elsewhere in the same book: ‘Through studying the history of language teaching we can gain perspective on present-day thought and trends and find directions for future growth’ (p. 76). Smith (2016) recaps and adds to these arguments, suggesting that ‘developing “historical sense” is an important aspect of language teacher education’ and that ‘historical evidence is needed as a basis on which to build appropriate reform efforts’ (p. 76).

Thirty years after Stern’s review, McLelland and Smith (2014) brought together updated overviews of historical research into the teaching of English, French, German and Spanish in a special issue of the journal *Language & History*. As they note in their introduction, research relating to the history of learning/teaching specific languages is still comparatively rare, making the history of language teaching a rich area for potential doctoral and other primary research-based explorations.

Applied linguistics itself now has a 70-year history as a properly constituted field and is also ripe for historical treatment, both of relatively recent work (cf. de Bot, 2015) and of longer-term developments (cf. Linn et al., 2011; Smith, 2009, 2016). Most applied linguistic topics can be explored historically, and this can place present-day conceptions in perspective, revealing historically constituted limitations and indicating possible alternatives.

A positive development in recent years has been the construction of a mutually supporting community of researchers (HoLLT.net n.d), enabling comparisons to be

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drawn between different language-based and regional traditions which have hitherto been considered in separation. Building on the *Language & History* special issue, Smith and McLelland (2018) brought together overviews of language teaching history in different regions of Europe, while their three-volume edited collection, *The History of Language Learning and Teaching* (McLelland & Smith, 2018) offers many examples of the kind of ‘in-depth studies of [...] restricted scope, treating specific problems, settings or periods, or [...] events and persons’ which Stern (1983, p. 83) identified as necessary for the development of the field. In their introduction to these volumes (freely available online via the publisher’s website: <http://www.mhra.org.uk/pdf/HoLLT-Introduction.pdf>), McLelland and Smith sum up the progress that has been made, characterizing History of Language Learning and Teaching (HoLLT) as a ‘newly emerging interdisciplinary, intercultural and plurilinguistic field of enquiry’ (p. 1), while highlighting also that many areas—including histories of language learning and teaching practice beyond Europe—remain to be researched.

Smith (2016) provides further guidance for researchers new to the field. In particular, drawing a distinction with Linguistic Historiography, he calls for a greater focus—in Applied Linguistic Historiography—on contexts for production and reception of ideas, in other words on ‘histories of practice’ as well as ideas.

The Research Questions

1. What do local histories of practice in different contexts contribute to an understanding of the nature of appropriate innovation?
2. What traditions of language teaching are dominant and can be built upon in different contexts?
3. In what ways can histories of practice grounded in particular contexts counteract received notions and contribute to revised conceptions of language learning and teaching?
4. What can we recover of value from forgotten or neglected practices or ideas, and why have they been ignored?
5. When and why have monolingual ideologies and bilingual practices been dominant in the history of language learning and teaching?
6. When and why have notions of learning through communication and learning through focus on form (s) been dominant in the history of language learning and teaching, and with what effects?
7. What have different traditions of language teaching shared and how have they differed in different contexts and languages, and what can be learnt from such comparisons?

8. What different conceptions of the roles of theory, research and practice have there been in the history of applied linguistics, and what could this contribute to current understandings?
9. What can historical research into (neo) colonial ideologies and practices contribute to current understandings in the fields of applied linguistics and language teaching?
10. How can ‘historical sense’ (critical perspectives and teacher autonomy which come from an awareness of history) be developed via an emphasis on history in language teacher education programmes?

Suggested Resources

Linn, A., Candel, D. & Léon, J. (Eds). (2011). *Linguistique appliquée et disciplinarisation*. Special issue of *Histoire-Epistémologie-Langage*, 33 (1). **Open Access:** http://www.persee.fr/issue/hel_0750-8069_2011_num_33_1?sectionId=hel_0750-8069_2011_num_33_1_3206.

A ground-breaking collection of articles on the post-World War II history of applied linguistics in various countries including Britain, France, Germany and the USA, with contributions also on its ‘pre-history’ (eg. the late-19th-century European Reform Movement and the work of Harold E. Palmer (1877–1949) in Britain and Japan). Varying conceptions are revealed regarding the links between practice and background disciplines, and new information is presented regarding the institutionalization and ‘disciplinarization’ of applied linguistics in different countries. The collection also contains several articles on the history of teaching English in Scandinavia and the introduction provides details of archives which can be consulted by historians of applied linguistics.

McLelland, N. & Smith, R. (Eds). (2014). *Building the history of language learning and teaching*. Special issue of *Language & History*, 57 (1). **Open Access:** <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ylhi20/57/1?nav=toCList>.

This is a collection of historical overviews of second/foreign language teaching in Europe. Separate articles consider the parallel overall histories of French, German, Spanish and English learning and teaching, and survey research into these different language traditions. The four papers here by Henri Besse (research on the history of teaching and learning French), Helmut Glück (German), Aquilino Sánchez (Spanish), and Howatt and Smith (English) are by the leading authorities in their respective language disciplines, each written in response to the request to provide an ‘overview of the field’. An introduction by the special issue editors reviews previous research into the history of language learning and teaching overall and indicates points of comparison between different language traditions.

McLelland, N. & Smith, R. (Eds.) (2018). *The history of language learning and teaching*, 3 volumes (Vol. I: *16th–18th century Europe*; Vol. II: *19th–20th century Europe*; Vol. III: *Across cultures*). Oxford: Legenda (Modern Humanities Research Association).

This three-volume set brings together current research in the history of language learning and teaching. Volume I presents the history of how languages were learnt and taught across Europe, from Russia and Scandinavia to the Iberian peninsula, up to about 1800. Case studies deal with the teaching and learning of French, Italian, German and Portuguese, as well as Latin, still the first ‘foreign language’ for many learners in this period. The chapters in Volume II consider 19th-century innovations in Europe including the Reform Movement and its precursors, as well as developments in policy and practice in the twentieth century. Volume III specifically examines the history of how ‘foreign cultures’ have been presented and it also contains studies of the history of language learning and teaching beyond Europe, including in the Middle East, China, Japan, India and New Zealand. The overall introduction to the three volumes is downloadable here: <http://www.mhra.org.uk/pdf/HoLLT-Introduction.pdf>.

Smith, R. (2016). Building ‘Applied Linguistic Historiography’. *Applied Linguistics*, 37 (1), 71–87. Open Access: <https://academic.oup.com/applij/article/37/1/71/1741459>.

This article argues for the establishment of ‘Applied Linguistic Historiography’ (ALH), that is, a new domain of enquiry within applied linguistics involving a rigorous, scholarly, and self-reflexive approach to historical research. Considering issues of rationale, scope and methods in turn, the article provides reasons why ALH is needed and argues that, while this new field can borrow from *Linguistic Historiography*, it should also distinguish itself, for example by paying more attention to histories of practice as well as ideas, with corresponding methodological emphases and challenges. Making specific reference to the histories of applied linguistics and language learning and teaching, the article identifies ways in which theories, theory–practice links, and practices themselves can be investigated historically in a more rigorous and ultimately useful manner.

Smith, R. & McLelland, N. (Eds.) (2018). *Histories of language learning and teaching in Europe*. Special issue of *The Language Learning Journal*, 46 (1). Open Access: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rlj20/46/1>.

The articles in this Open Access special issue consider the history of learning and teaching languages within particular European countries or regions. The papers provide accessible, state-of-the-art overviews which cover similar facets of history, enabling comparisons to be usefully drawn and interconnections to be identified. The collection is a counterpart to the *Language & History* special issue above, ‘cutting the cake’ of the European history of language learning and teaching in a different, more situated, socio-cultural and multilingual way, viewing history according to geographical location of the learners, classrooms and teachers, rather

than according to specific target language. Thus, it contains separate historical overviews of language teaching in Britain (going back to the Norman conquest), the Netherlands (1500–2000), the German-speaking parts of Central Europe (Middle Ages to the present day), France and francophone Switzerland (1740–1940), Spain (sixteenth–eighteenth centuries) and Portugal (eighteenth–nineteenth centuries).

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