

‘The History of Language Learning and Teaching’: Final programme

Themed strand of papers at the 2015 Colloquium of the Henry Sweet Society for the History of Linguistic Ideas, Palazzo Feltrinelli, Gargnano del Garda, Italy, 17-19 September 2015
Convenors: Richard Smith (R.C.Smith@warwick.ac.uk) & Nicola McLelland (Nicola.mclelland@nottingham.ac.uk)

Further details of the overall conference: <http://www.henrysweet.org/colloquia/colloquium-2015/>

Paper proposals on any aspect of the History of Language Learning and Teaching (HoLLT) were invited via the newly established AILA Research Network on the History of Language Learning and Teaching (<http://HoLLT.net>). Fifteen papers were selected for the themed strand, including five which had been proposed via normal conference submission procedures. This is the first of a series of yearly events HoLLT.net will support to enhance networking and help build the field of History of Language Learning and Teaching.

Session 1, 11.30-13.00, Thursday 17 September

Chair: Giovanni Iamartino (Milan)

1) Scholiasts’ views on the didactic value of the *Tekhne grammatike* by Dionysius Thrax

Minna Seppanen (Turku)

In my paper, I shall examine the didactic reflections in the Byzantine Scholia to Dionysius Thrax: the Scholiasts’ views on the ultimate teaching and learning goals of the art of grammar, Dionysius’ booklet as teacher’s material, and the role of the teacher. A relevant concept here is *didaskalikoi tropoi*, ‘teaching modes’ or ‘didactic modes’. The origin of this concept is in Plato’s *Cratylus* (435e6), and in Late Antiquity and Byzantium, the didactic modes became something of a standard part of the preliminary discussions in commentaries of works representing various disciplines: philosophy, medicine, rhetoric and grammar. The *tropoi*, most commonly listed as *diaretikos*, *horistikos*, *apodeiktikos* and *analytikos*, are used by the commentators to describe the modes of transmission in a teaching context – the didactic intentions of the source text’s author as interpreted by the commentator.

Sluiter, Ineke 1999 “Commentaries and the didactic tradition”, *Commentaries = Kommentare* ed. by Glenn W. Most. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 173-205.

Robins, Robert Henry 1993 *The Byzantine Grammarians: Their Place in History*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Wilson, N. G. 1996 *Scholars of Byzantium*. London: Duckworth.

2) ‘A multiplicity of puzzling rules’: the role and ways of grammar according to Giuseppe Baretta (1719-1789)

Vilma de Gasperin (Oxford)

This paper will investigate the role and methods of teaching grammar in Britain in the second half of the eighteenth century, focussing in particular on the views and methods of grammar teaching promoted by the Turinese man of letters Giuseppe Baretta (1719-1789). While in England, Baretta acted as language teacher to members of the aristocracy and composed several works for learning Italian ranging from lexicography to dialogues. Through his pupil, the writer Charlotte Lennox, Baretta was introduced to Samuel Johnson, whose 1755 *Dictionary of the English language* and the prefixed ‘Grammar’, were to have a major influence in the development of his own work on lexicography and grammar. This paper will focus on Baretta’s views on grammar in Italian language learning, and in particular on the way in which he deals with what he calls the ‘puzzling minuteness’ of Italian grammar, i.e. the proliferation (or lack) of rules and the abundance of exceptions, which, he claimed, hinder rather than assist the acquisition of Italian as a foreign language. Special attention will be given also to Baretta’s *An Introduction to the Italian language* (1755), where grammar is woven through the apparatus of footnotes to support comprehension.

Taking into account the variegated and far from standardized nature of the Italian language, Baretta advises to balance grammatical rigour with good practical sense, and to search for no rule where none is discernible or indeed helpful.

3) The *Grammatica da Lingua Italiana para os Portuguezes* (1829) by Antonio Prefumo between traditional and conversational method

Monica Lupetti (Pisa)

Although not yet adequately studied, the grammaticographic tradition which connects Italian to Portuguese is quite important, second only to that concerning French and English. Within this tradition, which has its origins in the early decades of the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century is a very fruitful age. In other contributions, I have pointed out how various Portuguese and Italian figures connected to the milieu of the Teatro de S. Carlos in Lisbon act as preceptors, and in relation to this function they compose some grammars which on the one hand contain a strong normative part, and, on the other hand, connect themselves to the equally old-established conversational tradition.

Among these grammars, the *Grammatica da Lingua Italiana para os Portuguezes* by Antonio Prefumo (Lisbon, 1829) plays a central role, since it goes through four editions across almost forty years (2nd ed. 1840, 3rd ed. missing, 4th posthumous ed., 1867). The paper aims to analyse the social and intellectual context from which the need for such a grammar stemmed, and to provide a philological reconstruction of its conversational corpus, considering the legacy of Antonio Michele (author of the preceding Italian grammar, the *Thesouro da Lingua Italiana*, Lisbon, 1807), and studying the other European source which inspired Prefumo, not only as a grammarian, but also as a lexicographer, author of one of two main Italian-Portuguese dictionaries of the mid-nineteenth century. In this way, Prefumo places himself at the core of a historical conjuncture in which the traditional grammatical method was associated to the conversational one, answering the demand of a public which increasingly approached the study of foreign languages for various pragmatic reasons rather than to fulfil the traditional educational requirements of the upper classes.

S. Cardoso, *Historiografia Gramatical*, Porto, Faculdade de Letras, 1994.

M. Lupetti, 'O Thesouro de Antonio Michele: Tradição e Inovação Metodológica na Didática do Italiano para Portuguezes', in *Dos Autores de Manuais aos Métodos de Ensino das Línguas e Literaturas Estrangeiras em Portugal* (1800-1910), Porto, Porto Editora e FLUP, 2014.

Session 2, 15.00-16.30, Thursday 17 September

Chair: Friederike Klippel (Munich)

4) Le rapport entre les événements politico historiques et l'introduction du français dans le système éducatif grec aux débuts du XIXe siècle (Le mouvement philhellène)

Constantin Mytaloulis (Independent Scholar)

Cette communication vise à présenter et analyser les rapports entre la France et la Grèce bien avant et après la création du nouvel État grec et montrer comment ceux-ci ont influencé le choix de l'introduction du français dans le curriculum des écoles grecques. Dans ce contexte nous allons essayer de présenter les événements politiques et historiques de l'époque ainsi que la mobilisation des philhellènes partout en Europe aux débuts du XIXe siècle.

Il importe alors de savoir comment les Européens et surtout les Français s'intéressèrent à la cause de la Grèce en révolte. Des Grecs d'origine, comme Adamance Coray, Dimo Stéphanopoli, ou des Français ayant vécu en Grèce, à l'instar de Charles Hugues Laurent Pouqueville, prennent fait et cause pour le peuple hellène. Avec leurs écrits, ils participent activement à la prise de conscience de l'opinion française en faveur de cette cause. Ils contribuent à la naissance du mouvement philhellène qui s'enracine d'un bout à l'autre de l'Europe, relevant autant d'un sentiment de solidarité chrétienne face à l'Islam que d'un attachement à l'éducation classique.

En présentant ces événements, nous voulons donner un aperçu de la situation en Grèce à la veille et au lendemain de la Révolution grecque de 1821. Notre objectif est non seulement de présenter des faits historiques, mais aussi de préciser les raisons pour lesquelles s'est développé l'apprentissage du français dès le début du système éducatif grec.

5) Learning Arabic in Egypt in the late nineteenth century

Rachel Mairs (Reading)

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with Napoleon's invasion and the subsequent British occupation, ever larger numbers of Europeans visited Egypt. In earlier decades, those visitors who learnt Arabic (and many did not) did so through a combination of formal grammatical study of the language, and immersion and practice with native speakers. In the late nineteenth century, however, publishing houses in the Middle East and Europe responded to the desire of many travellers to learn basic conversational Arabic with a number of dedicated publications, simple in format and reasonably priced. This paper reviews a number of these, including Yacoub Nakhlah's *New Manual of English and Arabic Conversation* (Cairo: the Khedive's Press, 1874) and *Arabic Self-Taught: The Dragoman for Travellers in Egypt* by A. Hassam (first of many editions 1883). A subsequent revision of the latter was undertaken by Rev. N. Odeh, T. E. Lawrence's Arabic teacher. As well as the content of these handbooks, I will review the professional backgrounds of their authors, most of whom were first-language Arabic speakers, and examine contemporary accounts of the experiences of their users,

6) History of Language Learning and Teaching (HoLLT): towards a research agenda

Richard Smith (Warwick) & Nicola McLelland (Nottingham)

This contribution aims to serve as a stimulus for creative and critical discussion of possible rationales, areas of focus, topics and methods in the emerging field of history of language learning and teaching (HoLLT). Attempting to increase scholarly (including potential PhD) interest in the field is one of the tasks the newly formed International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) Research Network on HoLLT has set itself, and to this end the identification of possible research agendas may be a particularly timely and valuable undertaking.

In Anglophone countries, at least, there has not been much HoLLT research or historiographical reflection since Stern (1983) issued an appeal for investigations into 'particular histories' of language learning and teaching, as one important basis for an integrated theory of language teaching. In the present contribution, Stern's suggestions will be revisited and added to; on the basis of an overview of the field, a personal view of what is still lacking in the literature and what kind of work is therefore needed will be offered, with the audience then being invited to offer their own historiographical suggestions.

21.00 – Following the Henry Sweet Society AGM, there will be a HoLLT network meeting to which all are very welcome.

Session 3, 9.30-11.00, Friday 18 September

Chair: Richard Smith (Warwick)

7) Learning French and the problem of the 'oral' in nineteenth-and twentieth century England

Michele Cohen

This paper aims to develop the ideas I began to explore in my earlier work for the History of Language Learning and Teaching Project, about the history of French teaching in England since the eighteenth century. It concerns the problematisation of the French oral in nineteenth and twentieth century British schools.

In eighteenth-century England, the study of French expanded so much that by the end of the century, no gentleman or lady could be considered polite who did not speak French. This was owed in

great part to the status of French as a ‘universal’ tongue and spoken at all European courts. The French tongue was also highly valued because of its unique clarity, precision, softness and elegance. By the early nineteenth century, this perception of the French tongue had lost its currency; being able to converse in French had become problematic for men and a grammar based approach to the language had become the norm. For girls, on the other hand, conversation had become the quintessential fashionable accomplishment. As the century wore on, this gendering became more pronounced and Victorian public schools, the most important educational institutions for the British ruling class, integrated this trend in their curriculum: French was offered, but as a secondary and occasionally despised subject.

This paper aims to address a key question which has been mostly overlooked: in view of the decline in importance of French throughout the nineteenth century, what made it possible for the language to become accepted as a subject in the secondary school curriculum in the late nineteenth early twentieth century? The argument I propose is that French became a subject of the curriculum by sacrificing the oral. This shaped the teaching of French for most of the twentieth century.

8) ‘All the world was on the move’: language and education in England in the 1860s and 1870s

Mark Atherton

This paper will look at teaching of language(s) and the theory of education in Victorian England in the late 1860s and 1870s. In this period, reform was ‘on the move’ (Macan 1929), for instance with Forster’s Education Act of 1870 and the Oxford and Cambridge philologists’ reform of the pronunciation of Latin in the early 1870s. In this context, one ‘school’ or ‘discourse community’ – to use a recently proposed and debated term (Linn 2008; Smith 2009) – certainly contributed to the development of language teaching theory; this was the College of Preceptors under the directorship of Prof. Joseph Payne (1808-1876). At seminars held in the college, papers were presented by leading figures in the fields of English teaching, history of education, foreign language teaching, and phonetics; these were reported along with minutes of the those present and details of the ensuing lively debate, in the *Educational Times*. The reports include Payne himself on the purposes of the college (1868), the textbook writer David Nasmith on popular errors (1867-8), R.H. Quick on foreign language classroom practice (1874-5), and the phonetician Alexander J. Ellis on the acquisition of languages (1875-6). The debates provide a valuable resource for tracing the history of ideas on language and on language study in the 1870s, and cover a wide range of subject matter; as well as the usual suspects of pronunciation and grammar, there is attention paid to comparative analysis of English and other languages, to vocabulary grading and presentation, to ‘words and things’, and generally to the whole purpose and rationale of language in education.

Ellis, Alexander J. 1875-6. ‘On the Acquisition of Languages’. *The Educational Times*, 28: 175- 82.

Howatt, A.P. R. and Smith, Richard. 2014. ‘History of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, from a British and European Perspective’, *Language and History*, 57 (1), 75-95.

Linn, Andrew. 2008. ‘The Birth of Applied Linguistics: The Anglo-Scandinavian school as “discourse community”’ *Historiographia Linguistica*, 35 (3), 342-384

Macan, R.W. 1929. ‘Oxford in the Seventies’, in *The Eighteen-Seventies. Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 210-48.

Nasmith, D. 1867-8. ‘Popular Errors concerning Education and their Influence’ *Educational Times* 20: 215-19 and 246-8.

Payne, Joseph 1868. ‘On the past, present and Future of the College of Preceptors’ *Educational Times* 21: 75-81.

Pennycook, Alastair. 1994 *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* (London: Longman)

Quick, Robert Hebert. 1874-5. ‘The First Steps in Teaching a Language’. *The Educational Times*, 1874-5: 279-82.

Smith, Richard. 2009. ‘Claude Marcel (1793-1876): A neglected applied linguist?’ *Language and History*, 52 (2), 171-181.

9) A late 19th century British perspective on modern foreign learning, teaching, and reform

Marjorie Lorch

The second half of the 19th century saw a great shift in approaches to modern foreign language learning and teaching in Britain. During this period, there was a rise in private foreign language learning. There was also increasing interest in new pedagogical approaches to language teaching in

schools and universities. The innovations contained in Thomas Prendergast's (1807-1886) "Mastery System" (1864) were positively received by both the lay public and educationalists. In contrast to the innovations proposed by his closest British contemporary Claude Marcel (1793-1876) whose work failed to have much impact (Smith 2009), Prendergast can be shown to have had a major influence on approaches to language learning and teaching for several decades. His pedagogical inventions had great uptake amongst individual learners and was discussed widely in educational circles. One influential proponent was Robert Hebert Quick (1831-1891) who was assistant master at Harrow School (1869-1874) and member of the newly formed teachers' training syndicate at Trinity College, Cambridge (1879-1883). Quick wrote extensively on reforms in language teaching, critically examining the ideas of Prendergast's and earlier practitioners, in an effort to develop his own pedagogical theories. Quick's reflections on language teaching and learning and those of his contemporary colleagues such as Charles Colbeck (1847-1903) as documented in their personal recollections, lectures, and essays will be used to illustrate the landscape of modern language pedagogy in Britain at this time.

Prendergast, T. (1864). *The Mastery of Languages; or, the art of speaking foreign tongues idiomatically*. London, Richard Bentley.

Smith, R. (2009). "Claude Marcel (1793-1876): a neglected applied linguist?" *Language and History* 52(2): 171-181.

Session 4, 11.30-13.00, Friday 18 September

Chair: Nicola McLelland (Nottingham)

10) Classroom-oriented teacher research in modern languages in the Reform Movement

Friederike Klippel (Munich)

We tend to think that empirical and classroom-oriented research in the field of language teaching, e.g. in the form of action research or case study, is a comparatively new phenomenon which only began to be undertaken in the late 20th century. However, looking back into the history of language teaching can sometimes lead to surprising discoveries, even with regard to research. The Reform Movement at the end of the 19th century constitutes a phase in the general development of language education, in which – for the first time – experimentation in the classrooms, systematic observation, publication of findings and scholarly discourse played an important role. The reports by three language teachers, Hermann Klinghardt, Heinrich Junker and Hermann Fehse will be presented as examples of early classroom-oriented research, which was motivated by the Reform Movement. My aim is to outline what these teachers were trying to achieve in their language classes and how they report on their teaching. Since historical research quite often pays particular attention to theoretical treatises and "important figures", it is my intention to redress the balance and give voice to the teachers of the late 19th century.

11) War in schoolbooks for German in Spain

Bernd Marizzi (Madrid)

This contribution aims to analyse the way in which war and issues related to military conflicts are treated in manuals and grammars of the German language made in Spain until the sixties of the last century. The central premise which underlies the research is that school textbooks are one of the key elements in the formation of collective identities: in this sense they contribute to the formation of the image of Germany in Spain before and after the Great War and illustrate the relations of Spain with the German-speaking world at crucial moments of recent history.

Despite an apparent impermeability or ideological neutrality, manuals and methods designed to teach a language, like any other form of intellectual production, allow the researcher to analyze the ideological discourse the author is transmitting, consciously or unconsciously, whether sincere or accommodated to external pressures.

Examples, as illustrations of grammatical rules and due to their ability to transmit thoughts, form a privileged field to filter out what we might call discursive premises, which, in this particular area, range from information relating to the attitude and mentality of the author to a particular presentation of the interest conferred to the learning of a particular language. This is the case of the military bias that was associated to the German language, spurred by the historical period from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, when the German-speaking countries maintained a sad prominence in conflicts that took place in the continent.

12) The vilification of English

Andrew Linn (Sheffield)

By the end of the Second World War, the status of English was high in Norway. What would later be called the University of Oslo had become a major European centre for the study of English, thanks to a large extent to the international reputation of Johan Storm as professor of English and Romance philology. English had been increasing in popularity as a university degree subject. By 1943 80% of philology students were choosing English as one of their subjects (Sandved 1998: 321). This latter statistic was in part due to the support that Britain had shown Norway during the war, not least as the home of the Norwegian government in exile. By the 1960s, however, the rhetoric surrounding English had begun to change in Norway. English was increasingly described and presented as a threat to the continued vitality of Norwegian, and Language Council campaigns were soon launched to raise awareness of this perceived danger.

In this paper I will begin by presenting the rise in the teaching and status of English in Norway before charting the process by which English became the ‘enemy’ in language politics. Our focus will be on the work of the Language Council in this regard, and we will consider the ability of official language agencies to influence the linguistic views and attitudes of language users over the course of time.

Sandved, A. O. 1998. *Fra «kremmersprog» til verdensspråk. Engelsk som universitetsfag i Norge 1850-1943*. Oslo: Forum for universitetshistorie.

Session 5, 15.00-16.30, Friday 18 September

Chairs: Nicola McLelland (Nottingham) & Richard Smith (Warwick)

13) Monolingual English learners’ dictionaries: history, development and current issues

Reinhard Heuberger (Innsbruck)

This paper aims to sketch the remarkable history and development of monolingual English learners’ dictionaries, focusing on some salient features, current issues and future trends in the field. More than 70 years have passed since the publication of A. S. Hornby’s *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary* (1942), which was reprinted a few years later by Oxford University Press as *A Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* (1948). Hornby’s lexicographic milestone firmly established a distinct genre of dictionary which has been at the forefront of lexicographical innovation during the past few decades. The parameters of a ‘perfect’ learners’ dictionary have been widely discussed but are not undisputed, be it the question of authentic example sentences vs. invented ones, the coverage of grammatical topics or the selection of the defining vocabulary. One section of this paper investigates the development of such key features of monolingual English learners’ dictionaries, focussing on selected debated issues and areas in which there is still scope for improvement. Though printed learners’ dictionaries will – despite all former prophecies of doom – continue to be published in the years and decades to come, the scope for development is arguably greater as regards the electronic medium. Learners are more and more used to obtaining their information online or through mobile devices, preferably free of charge. Electronic media like the internet have created new opportunities but also new challenges for both dictionary makers and dictionary users, which will also be discussed.

14) Teaching lexis in German EFL classrooms: a historical survey

Laurenz Volkmann (Jena)

In German foreign language teaching, specifically EFL teaching, there has been a time-honored tradition of focusing on grammar to the detriment of vocabulary. The (in-)famous grammar-translation method had a long-term impact on principles and practices of teaching, and the Communicative Turn of the 1970s did little to help foster systematic vocabulary acquisition beyond the word fields needed for everyday communicative situations. However, with the growing demand for ‘intercultural communicative competences’ there has been an increased focus on strategies and techniques for storing and retrieving vocabulary items. Based on the concept of the ‘mental lexicon,’ memorization, self-learning and ‘semantization techniques’ have come into focus, based on holistic, multi-sensory principles; ‘chunks’ (e.g., collocations), false friends, and ‘words in contexts’ as well as incremental learning have also been in the focus of recent research.

This presentation outlines the history of teaching lexis in German EFL teaching/learning with a special focus on key research areas. It will also reveal a certain degree of inertia with regard to the preference of teaching grammar, using examples from current textbooks.

15) Deconstructing an experience of teaching languages 1968-2007: a postmodern approach

John Daniels (Durham)

Any history of foreign language teaching needs to adopt a suitable methodology to deal with the specific problems of history writing associated with the authority of the author, an authority challenged by postmodernism. This problem becomes particularly acute when the history is autobiographical, the personal account of a foreign language teacher.

A postmodern approach means we need to be critical about the narrative we provide, appreciating that this is subject to a number of different influences: what we choose to describe and the weight we give to different experiences. For Evans, postmodernism has ‘forced historians to interrogate their own methods and procedures as never before, and in the process has made them more self-critical,’ (Evans, 1997).

However, this self-critical approach is only one aspect of deconstructing a professional life as a foreign language teacher. Postmodernism is also importantly a ‘form of scepticism about authority, received wisdom, cultural and political norms...’ (Sim, 2005). By challenging the authority influencing the nature of school foreign language learning, we are dealing with the problem of accepted systems which may not always provide the most effective ways to learn a foreign language but rather respond to the demands of the school curriculum and the constraints of classroom learning. This is about the distance separating the pupil in the classroom from the target language and culture and how we can go about reducing this distance.

The next HoLLT-supported annual event will be:

Colloque international SIHFLES 2016

**« Innovations pédagogiques dans l’enseignement
des langues étrangères : perspective historique
(XVI^e-XX^e siècles) »**

Université d’Algarve, 7-8 juillet 2016

Further information: http://fle.asso.free.fr/sihfles/2016-07-APPEL_COLLOQUE_SIHFLES_UALG.htm

Call for papers deadline: 15 March 2016