

# History of language teaching research and theorization: 1945-2015

Tours, France, 2–4 June 2021

Inter-association conference of APHELLE, CIRSIL, HSS, SEHL and SIHFLES



Supported by HoLLTnet (the AILA Research Network for the History of Language Learning and Teaching)



Organized by the EA 4428 DYNADIV of the University of Tours



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Background

Work carried out within SIHFLES, HSS, CIRSIL, APHELLE, SEHL and HoLLTnet deals, among other things, with history of the dissemination and teaching/learning of languages, and history of the policies associated with these, providing necessary and useful documentation in these relatively under-researched areas. At this conference, we propose to explore complementary areas, explicitly focusing on the history since 1945 of forms of *research* and *theorization* in the field of language education, and their evolution as research gradually became institutionalized (via the creation of specialized centres, journals, associations and learned societies, university training courses, research teams, and so on).

### Periodization

A focus on the period 1945–2015 necessarily gives rise to reflection on the status that should or should not be given to 'history of the present time' in the preoccupations of the organizing associations. In 1987, A. Reboullet challenged his contemporaries to engage in historical research in the field of teaching French as a second/foreign language (FLE/S) by highlighting

the relevance of relatively 'old' history. SIHFLES, born at that time, has risen to this challenge in its research during the three decades since. Today, with the benefit of hindsight and in line with the observation that there continues to be a 'lack of history' in the disciplines concerned with the dissemination and teaching/learning of languages, it is legitimate to wonder whether there is not now some relevance in embracing more recent history. In this connection, we can draw inspiration from current historical debates about the nature of the 'past in the present' and the 'present in the past', considering how the present and the future can be informed by historical reflection at the time as reflecting on the extent to which our views of the past are/should be coloured by current political engagements as well as how past developments can be re-viewed in relation to wider social and political trends of which we are still part.

## **Focus**

In-depth and well-argued reflections (and to some extent theorizations) relating to the transmission, appropriation, teaching and learning of languages have been engaged in for several centuries. However, even though *research* in the field of language education did not begin in the twentieth century, it was only after the Second World War that it gradually gained legitimacy, within forms of institutionalized/disciplinized recognition.

With specific reference to French, for example, while research in the field of FLE/S cannot be said to have become fully institutionalized within the relatively autonomous field of 'didactique/didactologie des langues', until the 1980s, it was in the immediate post-war period that reflection on the diffusion of French abroad first became organized, leading to research on modes of teaching and learning deemed appropriate to new social and geopolitical realities. Meanwhile, theories that have emerged in France have of course been received, adapted, and reworked according to very diverse situations in many countries. It is therefore essential to examine how reception and adaptation, outside the French-speaking world, have also contributed to the evolution of choices and theories developed mainly, initially, in France. Furthermore, the field of Teaching French as a Second/Foreign Language has encountered, in different contexts, ideas and research developed for other languages, sometimes within other disciplinary domains (e.g. research into 'applied linguistics' in English-dominant contexts; or more broadly in the humanities in other countries). Such considerations will apply equally to histories of diffusion and traditions of teaching other languages, in interestingly different ways. The last 20 years have seen further change relating to greater internationalization of language education research and theory in connection with growing influence of European institutions (in particular, the Council of Europe).

## **Illustrative themes**

In line with the above brief outline, the conference aims to promote exploration of various lines of inquiry relating to the history of research and theorization in language education during the 70-year period in question, enabling researchers from different backgrounds to explore these areas in relation to their own and others' situations. These lines of inquiry might include (but are not confined to):

- history of the links between language teaching research and so-called 'related' disciplines (linguistics, literature, psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, cognitive sciences, etc.)
- history of the circulation of language teaching theories between different countries and geographical areas during the period under consideration

- major controversies in language education (e.g. the value of utilitarianism, 'basic languages' (Basic English, français fondamental, etc.), functionalism, behaviourism, Audio-Visual Method (SGAV), plurilingualism, etc.);
- relationships of researchers/theorists in the field of language education with official institutions related to languages and to the dissemination and teaching of languages: ministries of education/higher education, European institutions, cultural agencies, etc., and the relationship/conflict between 'dissemination' and 'cooperation' policies
- evolution of conceptions of the relationship between languages and cultures among researchers in language education ('intercultural turn'; indivisibility of language and culture, etc.)
- history of discussions in the field of language education about the nature of language and the way such discussions influence practice
- epistemological trends underlying different research approaches and related conceptions of research (including historical research)
- contextual considerations underlying developments in research and theorization
- considerations relating to language contact and linguistic and cultural plurality/diversity
- evolution of the role, responsibilities and nature/extent of adaptation of the researcher/theorist to realities of language education and social demands

### **Submission of proposals**

Paper proposals, in French or English, should not exceed 3,000 characters, including spaces. Please provide:

- title
- name and surname of author(s), and institutional affiliation(s)
- up to 5 keywords
- abstract
- any essential bibliographical references (5 maximum)

### **Calendar**

Proposals for papers should be sent to **[dynadiv@univ-tours.fr](mailto:dynadiv@univ-tours.fr)** no later than **30 October 2020**.

Notifications of acceptance (decisions of the Scientific Committee) will be sent out at the beginning of January 2021.

Dates of conference: 2–4 June 2021

### **Papers**

Length of presentations: 25 minutes + 15 minutes of questions and answers. Papers can be presented in French or English

### **Registration fees**

Members of APHELLE, CIRSIL, HSS, SEHL, SIHFLES: € 60,00

Others: 80,00 €

Doctoral students: €20.00

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