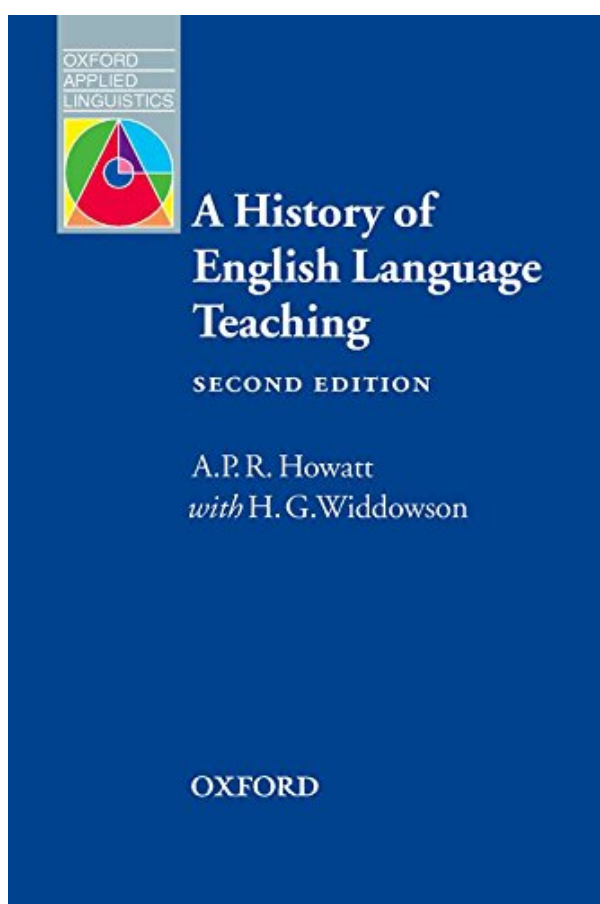


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SECOND EDITION

A.P. R. Howatt  
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## About the Author

A.P.R. Howatt has retired as Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh, of which he is a graduate. Professor Henry Widdowson is an internationally acclaimed authority in applied linguistics and language teaching. His many books, articles, and lectures have been seminal in establishing both the field of applied linguistics and its mode of enquiry.

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This revised and updated history covers the Renaissance to the present day, covering all the important phases of the history of English language teaching from a global perspective.

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A grand sweep through English language teaching history

By Alan Broomhead

A History of English Language Teaching is a remarkable book that traces its subject all the way from the 14th century to the present day, offering a grand sweep through the major trends and events in English language description and teaching, as well as an impressive level of detail on some of the individuals that have shaped this history, and their methods and materials. While Howatt does a fine job of providing the social and political and social context for English teaching - such as the influx of French protestants into England in the 16th century, and the teaching of English in the British empire and in Europe - of greatest interest to teachers (if any get around to picking up this book, which seems doubtful) is the evolution of trends in language teaching from the 19th century on. The story of how the 19th century grammar-translation method eventually gave way to the direct method, is fascinating, and illustrates how much of 20th century English language teaching orthodoxy (such as the exile of the first language from the classroom) came about. Chapters focusing on the work of luminaries such as Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby show how approaches emphasizing oral skills or structures have become folded (or not) into the repertoire of modern English language teachers. Happily, the tragi-comic story of Gouin's attempts to learn German are retained in this second edition.

The book belongs to the Oxford Applied Linguistics series, a series which was spearheaded for several years by Henry Widdowson. The work of the authors in this series, though covering a vast array of topics from language play to linguistic imperialism, English as a lingua franca, and translation in language teaching, nevertheless adds up to a cohesive 'world view' of language teaching and learning, undergirded in large part by Henry Widdowson himself. In the final chapter of A History of English Language Teaching, written for this second edition by Widdowson, he draws on much of the work of the authors of this series, such as Guy Cook, Barbara Seidlhofer, and Robert Phillipson, to present a (typically) modestly titled "Perspective on Recent Trends," which any English language professional would benefit from reading. It is an impressive 'state of the field' essay in which Widdowson ties together English for specific purposes, corpus linguistics, English as a lingua franca and as a global language, localization of decision-making, and various other topics into a unified 'world view.' Like all of Widdowson's writing, it is (if you are interested in these things) an engrossing read, and confirms - if any confirmation were needed - Henry Widdowson as the modern-day philosopher of our profession.

Though parts of A History of English Language Teaching require some sweat and toil (or perhaps some skimming), ultimately it's a satisfying book that can show how those of us in the profession today fit into the grand scheme of things, and gives some direction as to where the field is headed. Its main weakness is its anglocentrism (references to 'this country' and 'the government' need to be interpreted accordingly), and developments in the US, while covered, are not given as much attention as those arising in Britain. But this is a quibble; it is 'a' history, not 'the' history, and as such provides an effective and rewarding summation of a very human activity that has grown into a worldwide profession. The small number of us that read it will be enriched.

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Five Stars

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Wonderful book. Used for research but great reference. Highly satisfied.

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