SSLA, **20**, 387–405. Printed in the United States of America.

PROGRAMMATIC AHISTORICITY IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY

Margaret Thomas
Boston College

Second language acquisition theory conventionally represents itself as having been invented *ex nihilo* in the last decades of the twentieth century. This article investigates the nature of this largely unexamined disciplinary self-concept and questions its validity. I dispute arguments that might be formulated to support the notion that SLA theory has no relevant earlier history, enumerate some of the unfortunate consequences of maintaining this belief, and speculate about benefits to the field that might accrue from abandoning it. Instead of presenting SLA theory as having its origin in the last 20 or 30 years, I suggest that we need to look for ways to identify, investigate, and eventually reconceptualize its true history.

A facet of intellectual culture within the field of second language acquisition theory that fascinates and confounds me is that the discipline sincerely believes it has no past of appreciable depth. The goal of this article is to bring to light this belief, which as far as I know has not been raised as an issue of debate. I first present and analyze evidence of an abiding assumption that the history of second language (L2) acquisition theory begins sometime after the middle of the present century. I then criticize imaginable support for this assumption (support that is only occasionally made explicit in the literature) and speculate as to why the field might, nevertheless, hold to it. I argue that the study of L2 acquisition is damaged by this self-concept and suggest sev-

I am grateful to the National Academy of Education and the Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, whose support made possible the preparation of this text. I also wish to thank Donna Lardiere and three anonymous reviewers for helpful suggestions.

Correspondence concerning this work may be sent to: Margaret Thomas, Program in Linguistics, Department of Slavic and Eastern Languages, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167. e-mail: thomasm@bc.edu.

© 1998 Cambridge University Press 0272-2631/98 $9.50

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

eral potentially salubrious effects that might follow from abandoning it. It is not the brief of this article to present historical evidence contradicting the notion that second language acquisition theory appeared out of nowhere in the last generation. Although references to such evidence will pop up in the text, the historical research that it entails is a separate (and, I believe, quite pressing) task. I focus here on the fact that this assumption exists, its contents, its rationale (putative and real), its consequences, and on ways in which the discipline might be better off without it.

HOW OLD IS SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY, ANYWAY?

In contemporary professional literature, the conventional starting point for discussion of ideas about SLA seems to be sometime between the late 1960s and the mid 1970s. The implied belief—that no one before the last 25 or 30 years has had insight into the nature of L2 learning that is useful to us now—is deeply ingrained in the culture of the field. A remark by Rutherford (1988, p. 404) is representative. His article entitled "Grammatical theory and L2 acquisition: A brief overview" begins, "Serious research in second-language acquisition has a relatively short history. . . . L2 acquisition study would be difficult to trace back more than perhaps fifteen years." Larsen-Freeman (1991, p. 338) recalled that in 1980 she described the field of SLA as "in transition from infancy to adolescence" and wrote that now, in 1991, it "has entered young adulthood." References to "early work" usually look back only to the middle of the twentieth century. For example, before Cook (1993) began narrating the history of L2 research from the 1970s, he noted that before that time "there had already been approaches to L2 learning that made use of ideas from linguistics" (p. 8). But Cook's subsequent account of "early second language acquisition research" winds the clock back only as far as 1953. Ellis's (1994) encyclopedic, 800-page survey of L2 acquisition research contains no discussion at all of the wider historical background of the field. Among its almost 1,700 bibliographical entries, the earliest was published in 1924, with only six others before 1950. Newmeyer and Weinberger (1988, pp. 40–41) stated outright the assumption that the profession harbors implicitly, when they wrote that the study of second language learning has arisen "from total non-existence" in the past 50 years.[1]

It is conventional, then, to dissociate current L2 acquisition theory from any consideration of the topic before the middle of the present century. To be fair, it is necessary to note that many such expositions of the history of L2 theory appear alongside concessive language or qualifications of one or two types. One type of concession acknowledges that there may be more to the story, but prescinds (without explanation) from investigating it. Thus Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 5) began "People have been interested in second language acquisition since antiquity, but . . . " before picking up the historical narrative in the 1960s, after which point they never look back. Gass and Sel-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

inker (1994, pp. xiii–xiv) acknowledged that "scholars for centuries have been fascinated by the nature of questions posed by foreign language learning and language teaching," but they do not develop, or even again advert to, how that fascination may have been expressed or what it may have resulted in.

A second type of qualification narrows the scope of the claim that L2 theory has no past. A line from an article by Gass (1993) entitled "Second language acquisition: Past, present and future" serves as an example. The article opens with a statement that "Second language acquisition . . . is a field which, with its present research goals, has been with us for about 20 years" (p. 99). Assuming that the field's "present research goals" are defined as something like "those goals that belong to, or that have been articulated in, the present," one can't expect present research goals to have existed before the present time. So on this reading, Gass's statement makes itself indisputable, while at the same time gesturing in the direction of historical modesty. Rutherford's (1988) text cited above also illustrates the second kind of concession because he specified that it is "Serious research in second-language acquisition" that "has a relatively short history" (p. 404). This expression keeps alive the possibility that some other kind of work or inquiry may have predated the short history of L2 research, but it implies that it wasn't serious research (or at least wasn't research, or wasn't serious). Rutherford did not specify what, if anything, was produced before the era of "serious research," nor did he address what makes us (now)—but not them (then)—producers of it.

Thus SLA theory publicly represents itself as possessing only a very shallow history. To clarify my critique of this self-representation, and to preempt misunderstanding of that critique, I need to raise two issues. The first issue concerns the role of concessive language or disclaimers as illustrated above. Qualifications of these sorts may plausibly reveal an element of buried doubt in the midst of the field's expressions of its own (non-) history. More likely, such language may simply constitute popular forms of (in the first case) rhetorical flourish or (in the second case) scholarly hedging. Flourishes and hedges are certainly admissible ornaments in academic prose. But their danger here is that they disable inquiry into the history of L2 acquisition by relentlessly bracketing it off into subordinate clauses, thus: "[Although it may have some other early history], L2 theory began in 1974" or "L2 theory, [at least the sort that's worth our attention], is about 25 years old." Passing references like these do little to undermine the field's conviction in its essential novelty. In fact, such references may actually contribute to ahistoric sentiment because they model ways in which whatever came before the present generation can be succinctly dismissed.[2] Therefore, the representation of L2 theory as having no history before the middle of this century is not seriously threatened by qualifications of the sorts illustrated above, regardless of their authors' reasons for articulating them.

A second issue concerns what might be the imaginable role of historical work within the study of L2 acquisition if such work were to be carried out and if the discipline were to value it. The argument is not, of course, that ev-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

eryone needs to be interested in history. Writers are always free to deflect historical matters (or whatever other matters) so they can get on with business they perceive as more urgent. Therefore, none of the examples arbitrarily singled out here is individually responsible for disregarding or suppressing the true history of the discipline (anticipating that it does exist, contrary to popular opinion). The problem is that, with every unexamined iteration, the belief that L2 theory originated in the last generation becomes more compellingly inscribed in informal doctrine. This is true whether that belief is articulated with or without some concession or disclaimer. It is even more true in cases in which that belief is never explicitly articulated but rather encoded, for example, in subsection headings like "Historical Background," wherein a text launches abruptly and without argumentation into contrastive analysis or the work of Corder (1967), Selinker (1972), or Dulay and Burt (1974). By cumulative exposure to many such presentations, absence of consciousness of the past becomes integral to the self-definition of the field. This hardens into an instance of what Amsler (1993, p. 51) calls "programmatic ignorance," that is, "what a discipline or a knower refuses to know." Ahistoricity becomes entrenched, unconscious, and installed widely across the field; in a word, it achieves programmatic status. Programmatic ahistoricity then creates an environment that validates and sustains its own existence: Because L2 theorists consistently ignore the past as discontinuous with the present, no one tries to investigate what knowledge previous generations may have obtained about L2 learning or what questions they may have raised. Absence of such investigation renders the past invisible, and on that basis, the discipline confidently assumes that no relevant past exists. To counteract programmatic ahistoricty we would need, minimally, to stop talking and writing about the field in these terms. Again, this does not mean that everyone has to be interested in history: No one would argue that every L2 talk or article needs to be weighted down with a historical appendix. But reconceiving the history of L2 theory would entail making room for inquiry into the past and, where relevant and useful, incorporating whatever that inquiry turned up. It also would mean getting into the habit of attending (at least passively) to competing versions of the history of the discipline. But this is not more than what scholars in many other fields generally do, because if the study of SLA is a science, part of its business is to persistently question its own antecedents.

Granted, then, that—despite occasional qualifications to the contrary—the modern discipline firmly holds to its modern origin, is there reason to believe that L2 acquisition theory actually does have a history before the middle of the twentieth century? Arguments against the recent invention of L2 theory need to be built on the analysis of historical evidence. I believe that abundant evidence exists for the long history of human reflection on L2 learning, although presenting it is not my aim here.[3] But even in advance of discussion of that evidence, there are reasons to doubt the conventional version of the short history of L2 theory. To see this, we need first to investigate possible senses of the expression "L2 acquisition theory" as it appears in claims that

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

"L2 acquisition theory is 25 (or 15, or 30) years old." This is no easy task, given that the definition of each of the constituent terms "L2," "acquisition," and especially "theory" is, of course, famously tortured. To make things more difficult, some statements of the alleged 25-year history of the field predicate their remarks of diverse expressions like "the study of L2 acquisition," or "L2 research," or "the field of L2 studies." Rather than trying to ascertain the senses of these terms independently, my approach here is to try to define them in the context of programmatic-ahistorical claims. That is, I will to try to reconstruct what it is that is denied to earlier centuries under various potential meanings of "L2 acquisition theory" (or "L2 research," "the study of L2 acquisition," etc.) when the referent of the term is declared to be of very recent origin.

First, consider two narrow, but not unimaginable, senses of the expression. One sense plays it very safe and restricts L2 acquisition theory to its contemporary applied-linguistic incarnation, including its specific present-day methodological and epistemological trappings. If this is what L2 acquisition theory is, then statements that "L2 acquisition theory is 20 (etc.) years old" are true but uninformative. No one imagines that humans approached the phenomenon of second language learning armed with chi-square tests, think-aloud tasks, or constructs like "Type III stimuli" or "indirect negative evidence" until very recently. But are these items really what constitutes L2 acquisition theory? Would the study of L2 acquisition have no existence without them? This definition seems hopelessly narrow, and it mistakes the (present) technology of the field for its content. In doing so, it obscures the whole question of the actual history of L2 acquisition theory.

There is another narrow, but still not inconceivable, sense that expressions like "L2 acquisition theory" or "L2 research" might assume in programmatic-ahistorical statements. Perhaps the alleged birth of study of L2 acquisition in the 1970s is intended to refer only to its institutional, not its conceptual, point of origin. If this is what is meant by references to the beginning of the discipline, then programmatic-ahistorical claims are (again) true but not informative. It is a matter of historical record that much of the institutional paraphernalia dedicated to L2 acquisition—conferences, journals, graduate programs—date back only about 20 or so years. However, I doubt that this is only what is meant, and insofar as more than an institutional starting point is referenced, it is misleading to say the field "began" with the first issue of a particular journal or the first convening of a particular conference.

An analogy with another discipline may be instructive. It was around the same era, the late 1960s into the 1970s, that the field of ecology began to gain an independent institutional identity. Like the study of L2 acquisition, ecology has since developed its own niche in the academic world, encompassing (*inter alia*) faculty appointments, professional organizations, annual meetings, undergraduate and graduate students, and all manner of publications. But unlike L2 acquisition, ecology knows how to recognize and make use of its own past. For example, in their first exposure to the field, students of ecology may en-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

counter fairly elaborate narrations of its history. Although they grant the discipline's recent institutionalization, introductory texts such as those by Smith (1990) or Krebs (1978) pointedly acknowledge the contributions of such diverse *avant la lettre* ecologists as Aristotle, Anton van Leeuwenhoek, Alexander von Humboldt, Charles Darwin, and Gregor Mendel. Discontinuities abound between the goals and assumptions of modern ecologists and, say, Darwin, and those discontinuities are not minimized. Rather, the discipline manifestly learns about itself by probing discontinuities (as well as continuities) within what it has reclaimed as its own history. Otherwise, this material would not occupy such a prominent place in the intellectual socialization of students entering the field.[4] By contrast, L2 acquisition theory conventionally denies that it has such ancestors. But I believe SLA actually has in common with ecology both its recent institutional birth and its long and diversified conceptual history.

So if L2 acquisition theory refers narrowly to the discipline's surface technology or to its institutional being, programmatic-ahistorical claims seem empty. What might claims for the putative 25-year history of L2 acquisition theory mean under a broader definition of the term? More inclusive senses of L2 acquisition theory often invoke some kind of integration or mutual engagement between ideas about language and ideas about language learning. L2 acquisition theory might be defined as inquiry into the nature of L2 acquisition that anticipates its capacity to shape, and be shaped by, inquiry into the nature of language. This broader definition admits that L2 theory might conceivably have existed before the twentieth century, although the conventional view of the discipline's history asserts that it did not. As such, this sense of the term has the virtue of allowing historical arguments and counterarguments to be heard. It licenses investigation into those "people in antiquity" to whom Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) advert and into Gass and Selinker's (1994) scholars from other centuries: Did they only get as far as being "interested" or "fascinated" with L2 learning, without ever building anything that amounted to participation in an L2 acquisition theory? To take a specific case, if L2 acquisition theory means working out mutual accommodations between ideas of language and of language learning, do Augustine's remarks about his acquisition of L1 Latin and L2 Greek (the remarks to which Wittgenstein took great exception) amount to a fourth-century theory of language acquisition?[5] If they do, how does this bear on programmatic-ahistoric claims for the modern origin of L2 acquisition theory? What about Roger Bacon's thirteenth-century exposition of what he defined as three degrees of knowledge of a foreign language?[6] There is, at least, room to doubt that the conventional denial of a past to L2 theory will hold up under this broader definition of L2 acquisition theory.

Another problem that programmatic ahistoricity would have to face if L2 acquisition theory is defined broadly is that second languages have, indisputably, been taught and learned for millennia. As Stern (1983, p. 119) wrote, "it is hardly imaginable that a language could be taught without *some* underlying

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

conception of the general nature of language." Likewise, embedded in every act of language instruction there must be some guiding notion of what it means to learn a language. Therefore, it is not clear how language instruction could take place without there existing, minimally, a rudimentary L2 acquisition theory in this sense. To maintain programmatic-ahistoric claims, it would be necessary to discount or to evaluate out of relevance a great many products of human experience of L2 learning. In short, it is not obvious that belief in the modern invention of L2 theory can be reasonably sustained under this broad definition of L2 acquisition theory.

Finally, I consider what statements about the origin of L2 theory in the past 20 or 30 years would mean under one particular sense of L2 acquisition theory whose scope is neither especially narrow or especially broad. Many statements of programmatic ahistoricity appear in literature that takes a generativist approach. It may be that in these contexts L2 acquisition theory is actually a shorthand for "generative L2 acquisition theory" or "research into L2 acquisition as it relates to generative theory." Study of second language acquisition from a specifically Chomskyan perspective takes as its obvious starting point the dissemination of Chomsky's views of language, beginning in the late 1950s. Insofar as we conceive of the field of L2 acquisition as necessarily yoked to generative linguistics, so far the history of the field can, indeed, only go back to the beginning of generative theory. But when did generative theory start? Chomsky's controversial 1966 book *Cartesian linguistics* locates his intellectual ancestors in the seventeenth century, but since then, others have argued that the defining field marks of generative theory have a considerably longer past. Generative views of language have at their center a version of the idea of Universal Grammar, an idea that has emerged repeatedly in western linguistic thought.[7] (This is not to deny that some aspects of Chomskyan Universal Grammar are genuinely innovative.) The present-day debate about the role of Universal Grammar in L2 acquisition is framed in terms that developed after the middle of the twentieth century, but the questions at the root of that debate have a much longer history. If a notion of Universal Grammar is a cornerstone of the meaning of L2 acquisition theory, then that much of the sense of the expression was certainly not invented in this century.

To summarize so far, contemporary study of L2 acquisition represents itself as having a remarkably shallow history, a self-concept that has achieved wide, uncritical acceptance. But even in advance of historical research into the truth of this assumption, there is room to doubt its validity. If programmatic-ahistorical claims only refer to the surface features of modern study of L2 acquisition or to the institutionalization of the discipline, then those claims are true but vacuous. If what it is that is claimed to be only 25 or 30 years old is defined more broadly, the conventional version of the history of L2 acquisition theory is at least questionable: Is it feasible that no one before the present century tried to conceptualize language learning in its relationship to concepts of the nature of language? And in the particular case in which L2

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

theory subsumes a notion of Universal Grammar, is it feasible that no one before the present century tried to conceptualize language learning in its relationship to Universal Grammar, granted that the latter notion has quite a venerable ancestry?

WHY MIGHT L2 ACQUISITION THEORY BELIEVE ITSELF TO HAVE NO PAST?

Absence of awareness of the past is so ingrained in disciplinary culture that few writers perceive it or try to legitimate it. But occasionally, attempts are made to motivate programmatic ahistoricity. The usual move is to assert that the investigation of second language learning before the middle of this century was overwhelmingly controlled by concern with what it means to teach a language, making such work discontinuous with the definition of the modern field, which focuses on what it means to learn a language.[8] It is true that pedagogical concerns underlie much discussion (both past and present) of L2 learning. And it is true that not every culture has explicitly spelled out its assumptions about L2 learning. But it is not true that the late twentieth century invented the second language learner as an object of intellectual inquiry or even of simple curiosity. Earlier ages have had their own ways of asking and responding to the question, "What does it mean to learn, and to know, another language besides one's native tongue?" As Stern (1983, pp. 77–78) points out, the record of how languages were taught in a particular era is one source of information (albeit an indirect and incomplete one) about what people believed to be the nature of language learning. To get access to notions of language learning via pedagogical records requires interpretive work. For example, early medieval grammarians had to adapt to the needs of L2 learners of Latin the materials that Romans had created 300–400 years earlier to teach children a vocabulary for analyzing their native language. To perform the many steps of this adaptation, seventh- and eighth-century grammarians had to conceive, if only unconsciously, what it means to learn an L2 and how that process differs from the acquisition of metalinguistic skills in one's native language. That is to say, in figuring out how to teach Latin as a second language, early medieval grammarians had to discover and specify to themselves what it is that an L2 learner needs to learn.[9] To dismiss their work and its legacy as merely of pedagogical value would be to define L2 acquisition theory as disembodied from the kinds of contexts from which much of it emerged. In any case, putting aside the false dichotomy between pedagogically motivated versus purely theoretical sources of insight into L2 learning, language teaching was not the unique wellspring of concepts of language learning before the present century. There is information about how people construed language learning and the task of second language learners going back in western history at least as far as Augustine, information that was not part of the pedagogical tradition. Naturally, this information lacks the disciplinary trappings of modern L2 acquisition research. But framed in the diverse terms of diverse

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

times, places, and purposes, it bears witness to generations of interest in and speculation about L2 learning.

If it is not the case that orientations toward teaching versus learning permit a qualitative distinction between pre- and post-theoretical views of L2 acquisition, then why does modern research on SLA define itself as isolated from its historical antecedents? There are at least two plausible reasons that occur to me, both related to the field's attempts to defend its own boundaries, because even the claim of having no past is an act of historical self-assessment and thus constitutes "one way of affirming [a] discipline's identity and autonomy" (Andresen, 1985, p. 359). First, much current L2 acquisition research derives its analytic tools and theoretical assumptions from generative linguistics. The training of generative linguists rarely includes close study of the history of linguistics before the middle of the twentieth century. This probably stems from a conviction that generativism presents such a novel and comprehensive view of language that not much earlier work bears any relation to it—a conviction that appears to depart from some of the views of Chomsky himself.[10] Strozer (1994) exemplifies a widespread opinion among generativists in writing that "with little or no exaggeration we could say that [the study of language] has advanced more in the last ten or fifteen years than in the previous thirty centuries" (p. ix), and further, that with the introduction of the "principles and parameters" framework, the whole of the traditional approach to language of the last couple of thousand years suddenly became obsolete" (p. 94).[11] So, one source of the field's lack of historical awareness may be its alignment with generative linguistics, from which direction research on L2 acquisition has inherited a sense that only the most recent thinking is pertinent.

A second source may lie in the relationship of the field to language teaching. Language pedagogy is a branch of applied linguistics with a comparatively well-developed sense of its own past.[12] Classic texts, such as those by Titone (1968), Kelly (1969), and Howatt (1984), explicitly address the history of language teaching, as does recent work by Musumeci (1997). Overviews of the field of language pedagogy, such as those of Mackey (1965) and Stern (1983), routinely include chapters surveying the historical background. Even teachers' manuals and materials on pedagogical techniques may occasionally contain historical sketches going as far back as the second century before the Common Era (e.g., Bowen, Madsen, & Hilferty, 1985, pp. 3–30). But modern study of second language acquisition views itself and its concerns as distinct from those of language pedagogy, necessarily cut off because of its focus on how languages are learned rather than how languages are (or have been, or should be) taught. Newmeyer and Weinberger (1988, p. 34) again made explicit a crucial but largely tacit assumption. Remarking that "there is a growing body of scholars whose interest in second language learning is not primarily a result of their desire to improve instruction," they asserted that as a result the field "has begun to break away from the position of being no more than an ancillary to the concerns of the pedagogue." The latent image—that of L2 theory as having had to wrest its separate identity away from a parent disci-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

pline—was made graphic later in Newmeyer and Weinberger's text: "The struggle of the field to free itself from ties to pedagogy has been slow and arduous, and is still a long way from being totally achieved" (1988, p. 41).[13] Not everyone in the field shares this opinion of the relationship between L2 acquisition theory and language teaching. But among those who do, raising historical issues about L2 acquisition may be viewed with suspicion, as necessarily associated with the concerns of language teaching and thus as a potential threat to the hard-won autonomy of the field.[14]

I would speculate, then, that two forces conspire to support the ahistoric self-concept of contemporary work on L2 learning: first, because the field cleaves to generative linguistics (a discipline whose lineage, in the eyes of many of its practitioners, goes back only to the late 1950s), and second, because the field has declared independence from language teaching (a discipline that more readily looks back at its own past).

WHAT MIGHT BE GAINED IF L2 THEORY WERE TO REDEFINE ITS HISTORY?

Granted that for these (and for whatever other) reasons contemporary L2 acquisition theory proceeds without reference to its historical context, one might still ask what is to be gained by attempting to recover that context. This is an instance of a general question addressed by Elffers-van Ketel (1991)—namely, to what extent can it be legitimately claimed that work in the historiography of science provides a "wholesome effect" (p. 327) on science? Drawing on work by Kragh (1989), Elffers-van Ketel evaluates three specific benefits that have been attributed to historiographical work, two of which she rejects. She first considers the assertion that "knowledge of the history of science directly yields scientific insights which can be utilized in the present" (p. 327). Elffers-van Ketel doubts the validity of this claim, pointing out that it is hard to find instances in which modern science has benefited substantively by looking back at what has preceded it. She attributes to Kuhn (1970) the view that science, unlike art, "destroys its past." I believe Elffers-van Ketel's skepticism to be reasonable with respect to the case at hand. It is unlikely that examination of the history of L2 acquisition will yield specific data, hypotheses, tools, or results that could be readily incorporated to solve problems presently facing the field. Generative linguistics defines itself as the origin of scientific approach to language (as did American structuralist linguistics before generativism, and as did nineteenth-century historical linguistics before structuralism).[15] With this belief unchallenged, generative linguistics can only see the study of language in previous ages as prescientific and thus essentially irrelevant to current preoccupations. For this reason, examination of the past is unlikely to salvage a critical missing puzzle piece or to prevent "reinvention of the wheel."

As an additional proposal about the benefit of historiography of science, Elffers-van Ketel considers the assertion that such work inculcates a "scien-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tific attitude" of greater tolerance and balance in the evaluation of current ideas (p. 327). Again, there is reason for skepticism: She points out that historical work may indeed have that favorable effect; or, it may nourish self-satisfied glorification of the present state of the field, under the "heroic" assumption that only the current generation has achieved a valid approach to language. But Elffers-van Ketel finds some hope in another purported benefit of historiographical work—namely, the assertion that knowledge of the history of science "yields an analytic instrument for the critical evaluation of present scientific ideas" (p. 327). A real benefit of study of the history of linguistics, Elffers-van Ketel argues, is that it may lead us to reassess our definitions of the discipline itself and of its fundamental notions. Applied to the particular case at hand, examination of the history of L2 acquisition theory may lead us to reassess its constituent terms, "L2," "acquisition," and "theory," and other basic notions like "Universal Grammar," "input," or "language transfer." To put it negatively, as long as contemporary L2 acquisition theory evolves without reference to its historical context, we will miss opportunities to become more perceptively "conscious of what we are doing and why we are doing it" (Hovdhaugen, 1982, p. 11). That is to say, we may fail to appreciate some of the most salient features of current work: We may fail to recognize limits that we have imposed on our own research; fail to see the range of possible solutions to problems that current research presents (or that such research suppresses!); and fail to accurately assess what is, indeed, original in late-twentieth-century perspectives. We may also be unable to foresee (and thus prepare for) the plausible future(s) of the field. In short, we may remain "hopelessly stranded in [our] own epoch" (Kermode, 1996, p. 33). As Elffers-van Ketel cautions, historical study is unlikely to retrieve usable tools or data from the past nor does it necessarily promote an appropriately restrained assessment of present achievements. But it may enhance awareness of how we have defined basic concepts in the field and how the definitions we have crafted relate to each other and to neighboring concepts. Herein lies, I believe, the greatest potential benefit of attempts to bring a historical perspective to contemporary discussion of L2 acquisition.

An example may illustrate what it might mean for historiographical work to contribute to "the critical evaluation of present scientific ideas" within L2 acquisition studies. The prevalent representation of contrastive analysis in current L2 literature allies it with mid-twentieth-century American structuralist linguistics and behavioristic assumptions about language learning. This alliance is warranted, at least within North American linguistics. But work that now goes by the name of "contrastive analysis" was both around before structuralism and has survived it—especially in Eastern Europe—as part of the subfield of contrastive linguistics.[16] In North America, the output of contrastive linguistics is for the most part ignored by L2 theorists, as by linguists in general, probably because of its association with structuralism. An unfortunate result is the loss of an opportunity to observe the kind of relations that might hold between descriptive and theoretical (especially typological) work

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and study of L2 data. Within the tradition of contrastive linguistics, these two activities have evolved side by side and have informed each other for decades. In the programmatic-ahistorical version of the history of L2 studies, acknowledgement that L2 data ought to, and in fact, do, have relevance to linguistic theory is normally presented as an epoch-defining novelty.[17] I would speculate that a look into the ways in which L2 data and linguistic theory have communicated within European contrastive linguistics might be revealing, because in this tradition the two have not suffered the discontinuity that they have in North American circles. Thus, examination of even the very recent past may allow for "the critical evaluation of present scientific ideas"—in this case, evaluation of the idea that the study of L2 acquisition has only in the past decade achieved recognition within linguistic theory.[18]

We can also speculate about the value of increased historical awareness from the opposite direction: What is it that a discipline loses, if it "loses" its history? Continuing to maintain that research on L2 learning has arisen, in Newmeyer and Weinberger's (1988, p. 41) words, "from total non-existence" in the past 50 years distorts the discipline in at least three unfortunate ways. The first two are articulated by Percival (1976) in his discussion of the consequences of extending Kuhn's (1970) influential work on the history of science to the history of linguistics. On a number of counts, Percival finds Kuhn's idea of a scientific paradigm inapplicable to linguistics.[19] Although he acknowledges that the introduction of generative grammar might be characterized as resulting in a Kuhnian revolution within the discipline, he rejects on several grounds the notion that Chomsky's work embodies a new scientific paradigm. (Note that, according to Kuhn, scientific revolutions do not necessarily entail paradigm shifts.) Percival advises that linguists would "be better off if they do not regard their own activities from a Kuhnian vantage point" (p. 292).[20] He closes by citing two possible negative consequences of the view that a paradigmatic change in Kuhn's sense of the word separates generative linguistics from earlier work.

> an unhealthy situation might arise if linguists began to look upon all theoretical disagreements within their own profession as conflicts between rival paradigms, i.e. incommensurate viewpoints, and used this as an excuse not to observe the ground rules of rational discussion. Moreover, since (according to Kuhn) any genuine paradigm is destined inevitably to be accepted by the entire profession, some linguists might feel impelled to give premature assent to any novel theory which they observed gaining wide support, for fear of ending up as isolated adherents of a discarded paradigm. (Percival, 1976, p. 292)

Current work on L2 acquisition not infrequently employs the term "paradigm," sometimes along with "revolution," although it is unclear to what extent this constitutes an invocation of Kuhn's ideas.[21] In any case, it is my sense that L2 research implicitly views itself as encapsulated within a Kuhnian paradigm whose early boundary is sometime in the 1970s. And it is my sense that both unhappy consequences to which Percival refers are exhibited within current

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

work on L2 acquisition. If the discipline has no past before the last 20 years, previous examinations of L2 acquisition necessarily spring from "incommensurate viewpoints" and can be dismissed out of hand as irrelevant. The sense of the incommensurability of past work is embedded in, and perpetuated by, references to the origins of L2 acquisition theory in the late twentieth century.[22] Percival's second consequence is also exhibited in current L2 research: Insofar as one believes oneself to work near the historical edge of a paradigmatic divide (across which conversation is fruitless), one must relentlessly pursue the most up-to-date ideas, accounts, or proposals as representing the essence of the new paradigm, while relentlessly eschewing anything tainted with the incommensurability of the past. Among other results, this fosters a research community within which the shelf life of intellectual commodities (models, theories, approaches) is remarkably short.[23] Aside from yielding social and institutional instability, the outcome within research on L2 acquisition, as within linguistics at large, may well be "a lowering, rather than a raising, of scientific standards" (Percival, 1976, p. 292).

A third unhappy result of the belief that study of L2 acquisition has no relevant past is that it contributes to the field's sense of intellectual isolation. I have suggested that the discipline's disregard of its historical background is in part due to its struggle to define an identity separate from that of language pedagogy. But the larger discipline within which many in the field would prefer to situate their work, linguistic theory, has not been quick to incorporate insights from second language acquisition.[24] To some extent, the field exists in disciplinary limbo, allied neither with language pedagogy nor with linguistics. Gass (1993) and Schachter (1993), among others, have pointed out the intellectual and institutional consequences of such a (non-) position and lamented a lack of commerce between L2 research and disciplines that might be expected to be its natural allies. In part, this isolation is self-imposed: I believe that the field would feel less need to self-consciously "build bridges" to neighboring disciplines (Gass, 1992) if it would stop imagining that it lives on an island. One means by which a field can reassess its position in academic geography is through reassessing its position in time—in other words, through reassessing its own history. Much previous exploration of L2 acquisition has taken place under the aegis of philosophy or rhetoric and, more recently, psychology or education. Discovery of long-existing bridges to these disciplines would follow from attending to the historical record of reciprocal indebtedness between them and the study of L2 acquisition. But so long as L2 acquisition feels that it has no history of appreciable depth, these debts cannot be assessed, and thus, disciplinary self-understanding through historical reflection cannot be achieved. As a long-range antidote to these problems, I submit that we need to reconceptualize the history of L2 acquisition.[25]

WHO MIGHT CARE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF L2 THEORY?

I conclude with the perennial question: Who cares? Or rather, who *should* care that L2 acquisition theory really does have a past before the twentieth cen-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tury? People working directly in the field of L2 acquisition theory should care, for the reasons I have adverted to above: because historical reflection may offer new insight into basic concepts in the field and into the framework within which we do the work of L2 acquisition theory, because it may abate the sense that everything new necessarily supplants everything that came before it; and because it may counteract disciplinary isolation.

Who else should care is linguists. Linguists should care because intellectual curiosity about L2 acquisition goes back to the beginning of western language science, and modern linguistics owes much to that curiosity. An example: Medieval speculative grammar, often characterized as the first attempt at a full-scale linguistic theory, has important ties to L2 acquisition in that it was formulated by L2 learners, in their L2, employing as its metalanguage the terminology of then-contemporary L2 pedagogy, and because speculative grammarians viewed their L2 as the unique embodiment of linguistic features they characterized as language universals. Linguists should care that L2 acquisition really does have a past because that past inverts a conventionally assumed pecking order. What is called "applied linguistics" is not linguistics extended out into "real world" contexts, but rather it is located at the historical basis of theoretical linguistics.

Who else should care is language teachers and teacher-educators, for at least two reasons. First, because ideas about the nature of language and ideas about second language teaching and learning—the concerns of linguists and the concerns of language teachers—can, and indeed have, held various relationships over the years. Recognizing that fact may help prevent language teachers from defining themselves as merely the passive clients of language theorists. Second, language teachers should care that L2 acquisition theory was not invented in the 1970s because (although this probably puts it in overly dramatic terms) the intellectual salvation of language teachers depends on how much, in the urgent hubbub of a classroom, they are able to recognize and put into context their students' very subtle, very complex work of learning a language. The richer and more variegated a set of metaphors teachers have for the nature of that work, the better they may be at perceiving it going on right in front of their eyes. And we humans have been observing the virtuosity of language learners, and we have been meditating on its nature, and we have been spinning out metaphors for it for a very long time. For these reasons, I think it matters that second language acquisition theory really does have a past.

(*Received 24 June 1996*)

NOTES

1. Additional references to the purportedly short history of L2 theory are given by Broselow (1988, pp. 195–198), Eubank (1991, pp. 21–23), Flynn and O'Neil (1988, pp. 5–7), Gass (1988, p. 384), Hoekstra and Schwartz (1994, p. 1), McLaughlin and Zemblidge (1992, p. 61), and Towell and Hawkins (1994, pp. 17–32).

2. Foster-Cohen (1993, p. 140) opens with "Although both first and second language acquisition

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(SLA) have been objects of curiosity for centuries . . . .” She cites Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), presumably in an echo of their remark that “People have been interested in second language acquisition since antiquity, but . . . ” (p. 5). In this way, Foster-Cohen passes on to her own readership Larsen-Freeman and Long’s single, unexamined, reference to the past of L2 studies. That statements like this may circulate, virtually untouched, from hand to hand testifies to their status as empty rhetorical gestures that fail to count as evidence that the field does, indeed, recognize a history prior to the conventional 25- or 30-year interval.

3. Kelly (1969) presents a wealth of evidence against the claims of programmatic ahistoricity, although the author’s goals of differ from those of the present article. See also Thomas (1995, 1996, 1997b).

4. There also exists an extensive literature on the history of environmental science, an umbrella discipline under which ecology sometimes locates itself. Environmental science claims a history going back at least as far as ancient Greece. Literature on that history includes interpretive overviews of the field like that of Bowler (1992) and anthologies of key historical texts like that of Wall (1994). If linguistics is to second language acquisition theory as environmental science is to ecology, then there do exist parallel texts: Robins (1967) gives perhaps the best-known overview of the history of linguistics, and Salus (1969) and Harris and Taylor (1989) offer representative anthologies. But a difference is that the history of linguistics rarely acknowledges that it subsumes the history of L2 acquisition theory in the way that the history of environmental science self-consciously undertakes to narrate the history of ecology.

5. See Augustine’s *Confessions* I, 8 and I, 14 (trans. Sheed, 1942, pp. 7–8; 14), and Wittgenstein (1958, pp. 4; 15–16). Erneling (1993a, 1993b) discusses both Augustine’s and Wittgenstein’s remarks about language learning.

6. See Hirsch (1914), Wukitsch (1942), Bourgain (1986), and Thomas (1996).

7. Robins (1973, p. 17) characterizes the problem of linguistic universals as having “in different forms beset linguists ever since [the Middle Ages].” Itkonen (1991, p. 165) declares that “the history of Western linguistics has to a very large extent been the history of the notion of *universal grammar*” (emphasis in the original). For work that argues that some features of generative grammar antedate what Chomsky has called “Cartesian linguistics,” see Lakoff (1969) and Breva-Claramonte (1977).

8. See Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 5), and Newmeyer and Weinberger (1988) for versions of this rationale.

9. See Law (1984, 1986).

10. Sampson (1980) presents a blunt critique of what he sees as a general “reluctance to acknowledge any virtue in studying the works of predecessors” (pp. 159–160) on the part of generative linguists, who, as a group, he characterizes as “unusually turned in on themselves intellectually” (p. 161).

11. Strozer (1994) echos the judgment of Newmeyer (1980, p. 250). Nevertheless, Strozer is actually exceptional in that she makes occasional references to linguistic work done before the twentieth century, work that not many generative linguists acknowledge. Rutherford (1987, pp. 27–30) is also unusual in showing interest in the historical dimension of research on second language acquisition and linguistic theory.

12. The judgment is relative: Stern (1983, pp. 76–77), for example, considers there to have been inadequate study of the history of language teaching. But Rutherford’s complaint about language teaching is, in my opinion, even more true of L2 acquisition theory: “like so many other professions, [it] is far more preoccupied with where it imagines it is going than where it actually has been” (1987, p. 30).

13. A coming-of-age metaphor frequently crops up in representations of the history of L2 theory, although the exact parentage out of which the field has emerged is not always made clear. See Larsen-Freeman’s (1991) text, and White (1996, pp. 1; 13–14), in which L2 theory is made analogous to an ugly duckling that has only just recently come into its mature identity as a swan.

14. A colloquium on “Theory and Praxis in SLA” held at the 1996 Second Language Research Forum (Susan Gass, organizer; Lynn Eubank, Jacquelyn Schachter, Michael Sharwood Smith, and Elaine Tarone, panelists) debated the relationship that L2 research has, and ought to have, with L2 pedagogy. The panelists made a total of five passing references (all unchallenged) to the 25- or 30-year history of the discipline; there were two additional such references in comments from the audience. This high frequency of programmatic-ahistoric assertions may be related to their function as a means of defining boundaries between L2 theory and L2 pedagogy, which was the topic of the colloquium.

15. Romeo and Tiberio (1971, p. 30) discuss several generations of claims to the invention of “scientific” linguistics.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

16. Fisiak (1984) discusses the history of contrastive linguistics, which he traces back to the late nineteenth century, although he attributes the name to a 1941 work by Benjamin Lee Whorf (Fisiak, 1980b, p. 2). See Gass and Selinker (1992; 1994, pp. 59–66) for additional discussion of the history of contrastive analysis.

17. See, for example, White (1996).

18. Among contemporary L2 researchers, Larry Selinker has been unusual in his sustained attention to contrastive linguistics. He has lamented, for example, that "[m]uch interlingual experience which would be useful for theory building is captured in vast, but largely buried C[ontrastive] L[inguistics] literature" (1990, p. 189). But my point here is not whether, as Selinker seems to claim, the actual data of contrastive linguistics would be useful to current (North American) L2 theorizing. Rather, my point is that this field might benefit from a look at how, within the different Eastern European tradition, a linguistic theory (i.e., contrastive linguistics) has for some time developed in close consort with the analysis of L2 data. For examples of relevant work in contrastive linguistics, see the series *Papers and studies in contrastive linguistics*; Nickel (1971); Fisiak (1980a), and Kastovsky and Szwedek (1986).

19. See also Hymes (1974) for a similar judgment.

20. Chomsky himself would seem to agree with Percival, because he has criticized what he sees as the misappropriation of Kuhn's work: "I think [Kuhn] is wildly misused outside of the natural sciences. The number of real scientific revolutions is extremely small . . . . My own feeling is that linguistics has not even reached anything like a Galilean revolution" (1982, p. 40).

21. For examples, see Gair (1995, p. 13), Gass (1995, p. 7), and Huebner (1991, p. 13). Sharwood Smith (1988, p. 207) depicts the current state of field as "preparadigmatic."

22. I have argued that the sanctioned history of L2 acquisition theory is strikingly truncated. A remark by Kevin R. Gregg suggests that this history may have an additional, quite startling, property. Gregg (1995, p. 90) dismisses Cook's (1993) narration of L2 theory from the 1950s onwards as "the standard historical rehash," commenting that "Frankly, I don't really see the need for this ritual covering of old ground," because, for one reason, it constitutes "dead meat." If Gregg's judgment is widespread, it may be that the discipline's accepted version of its own past is becoming incrementally shorter, rather than longer, as the years pass.

23. See Ferguson (1991, pp. 430–431) for acknowledgment of this feature of L2 studies.

24. For discussion of this point, see Flynn and O'Neil (1988), Gass (1993), and Gass and Schachter (1989).

25. Thomas (1997a) speculates about how some the work of reconceptualizing the history of L2 acquisition might be carried out and reviews its potential benefits.

REFERENCES

Amsler, M. (1993). History of linguistics, 'Standard Latin,' and pedagogy. In V. Law (Ed.), *History of linguistic thought in the early Middle Ages* (pp. 49–66). Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Andresen, J. (1985). Why do we do linguistic historiography? *Semiotica*, *56*, 357–370.

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. (1942). *The Confessions* (F. J. Sheed, Trans.). Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward. (Original work c. 397)

Bourgain, P. (1986). Le sens de la langue et des langues chez Roger Bacon [The meaning of language and languages in Roger Bacon]. In G. Contamine (Ed.), *Traduction et traducteurs au Moyen Âge* (pp. 317–331). Paris, Éditions du CNRS.

Bowen, J. D., Madsen, H., & Hilferty, A. (1985). *TESOL techniques and procedures*. Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.

Bowler, P. J. (1992). *The Norton history of the environmental sciences*. New York: Norton.

Breva-Claramonte, M. (1977). Sanctius's antecedents: The beginnings of transformational grammar: Parts 1 & 2. *Language Sciences*, *44*, 10–18 & *45*, 6–20.

Broselow, E. (1988). Second language acquisition. In F. J. Newmeyer (Ed.), *Linguistics: The Cambridge Survey: Vol. 3. Language: Psychological and biological aspects* (pp. 194–209). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Chomsky, N. (1966). *Cartesian linguistics*. New York: Harper and Row.

Chomsky, N. (1982). *Noam Chomsky on the generative enterprise: A discussion with Riny Huybregts and Henk van Riemsdijk*. Dordrecht: Foris.

Cook, V. (1993). *Linguistics and second language acquisition*. New York: St Martin's Press.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learner's errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, *5*, 161–170.
Dulay, H. C., & Burt, M. K. (1974). Natural sequences in child second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, *24*, 37–53.
Elffers-van Ketel, E. (1991). *The historiography of grammatical concepts*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Erneling, C. (1993a). Why first language learning is not second language learning—Wittgenstein's rejection of St. Augustine's conception of learning. *Interchange*, *24*, 341–351.
Erneling, C. E. (1993b). *Understanding language acquistion: The framework of learning*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Eubank, L. (1991). Introduction: Universal Grammar in the second language. In L. Eubank (Ed.), *Point counterpoint: Universal grammar in the second language* (pp. 1–48). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Ferguson, C. A. (1991). Currents between second language acquisition and linguistic theory. In T. Huebner & C. A. Ferguson (Eds.), *Crosscurrents in second language acquisition and linguistic theories* (pp. 425–435). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Fisiak, J. (Ed.). (1980a). *Theoretical issues in contrastive linguistics*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Fisiak, J. (1980b). Introduction. In J. Fisiak (Ed.), *Theoretical issues in contrastive linguistics* (pp. 1–4). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Fisiak, J. (1984). On the roots of contrastive linguistics. *Folia Linguistica*, *18*, 139–153.
Flynn, S., & O'Neil, W. (1988). Introduction. In S. Flynn & W. O'Neil (Eds.), *Linguistic theory in second language acquisition* (pp. 1–24). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
Foster-Cohen, S. H. (1993). Directions of influence in first and second language acquisition research. *Second Language Research*, *9*, 140–152.
Gair, J. W. (1995). Linguistic theory, L2 acquisition research, and pedagogical applications: Restoring the link. In V. Gambhir (Ed.), *The teaching and acquisition of South Asian languages* (pp. 1–23). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Gass, S. M. (1988). Second language acquisition and linguistic theory: The role of language transfer. In S. Flynn & W. O'Neil (Eds.), *Linguistic theory in second language acquisition* (pp. 384–403). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
Gass, S. M. (1992, April). *The need to win friends and influence disciplines*. Paper presented at the Second Language Research Forum, East Lansing, MI.
Gass, S. M. (1993). Second language acquisition: Past, present and future. *Second Language Research*, *9*, 99–117.
Gass, S. M. (1995). Learning and teaching: The necessary intersection. In F. R. Eckman, D. Highland, P. W. Lee, J. Mileham, & R. Rutkowski Weber (Eds.), *Second language acquisition theory and pedagogy* (pp. 3–20). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
Gass, S. M., & Schachter, J. (1989). Introduction. In S. M. Gass & J. Schachter (Eds.), *Linguistic perspectives on second language acquisition* (pp. 1–9). New York: Cambridge University Press.
Gass, S. M., & Selinker, L. (1992). Introduction. In S. M. Gass & L. Selinker (Eds.), *Language transfer in language learning* (Revised ed., pp. 1–17). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Gass, S. M., & Selinker, L. (1994). Preface. In S. M. Gass & L. Selinker (Eds.), *Second language acquisition: An introductory course* (pp. xiii–xvi). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
Gregg, K. R. (1995). [Review of the book *Linguistics and second language acquisition*]. *Second Language Research*, *11*, 90–94.
Harris, R., & Taylor, T. J. (1989). *Landmarks in lingustic thought: The western tradition from Socrates to Saussure*. London: Routledge.
Hirsch, S. A. (1914). Roger Bacon and philology. In A. G. Little (Ed.), *Roger Bacon: Essays contributed by various authors on the occasion of the commemoration of the seventh centenary of his birth* (pp. 101–151). New York: Russell and Russell.
Hoekstra, T., & Schwartz, B. D. (1994). Introduction. In T. Hoekstra & B. D. Schwartz (Eds.), *Language acquisition studies in generative grammar* (p. 1–19). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Hovdhaugen, E. (1982). *Foundations of western linguistics: From the beginning to the end of the first millenium A.D.* Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
Howatt, A. P. R. (1984). *A history of English language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Huebner, T. (1991). Second language acquisition: Litmus test for linguistic theory? In T. Huebner & C. A. Ferguson (Eds.), *Crosscurrents in second language acquisition and linguistic theories* (pp. 3–22). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Hymes, D. (1974). Introduction: Traditions and paradigms. In D. Hymes (Ed.), *Studies in the history of linguistics: Traditions and paradigms* (pp. 1–38). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Itkonen, E. (1991). *Universal history of linguistics: India, China, Arabia, Europe*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Kastovsky, D., & Szwedek, A. (Eds.). (1986). *Linguistics across historical and geographical boundaries: In honor of Jacek Fisiak on the occasion of this fiftieth birthday: Vol. 2. Descriptive and applied linguistics*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
Kelly, L. G. (1969). *25 Centuries of language teaching*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
Kermode, F. (1996, May 23). The wild goose chase [Review of the book *The search for the perfect language*]. *The New York Review of Books*, *XVIII*, 32–35.
Kragh, H. (1989). *An introduction to the historiography of science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Krebs, C. J. (1978). *Ecology: The experimental analysis of distribution and abundance* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper and Row.
Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Lakoff, R. (1969). [Review of the book *Grammaire générale et raisonnée, ou La grammarire du Port-Royal*]. *Language*, *45*, 343–364.
Larsen-Freeman, D. (1991). Second language acquisition research: Staking out the territory. *TESOL Quarterly*, *25*, 315–350.
Larsen-Freeman, D., & Long, M. H. (1991). *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. London: Longman.
Law, V. (1984). The first foreign-language grammars. *The Incorporated Linguist*, *23*, 211–216.
Law, V. (1986). Late Latin grammars in the early Middle Ages: A typological history. *Historiographica Linguistica*, *13*, 365–380.
Mackey, W. F. (1965). *Language teaching analysis*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
McLaughlin, B., & Zemblidge, J. (1992). Second-language learning. In W. Grabe & R. B. Kaplan (Eds.), *Introduction to applied linguistics* (pp. 61–75). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
Musumeci, D. (1997). *Breaking tradition: An exploration of the historical relationship between theory and practice in second language teaching*. New York: McGraw Hill.
Nickel, G. (1971). *Papers in contrastive linguistics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Newmeyer, F. J. (1980). *Linguistic theory in America: The first quarter-century of transformational generative grammar*. New York: Academic Press.
Newmeyer, F. J., & Weinberger, S. H. (1988). The ontogenesis of the field of second language learning research. In S. Flynn & W. O'Neil (Eds.), *Linguistic theory in second language acquisition* (pp. 34–45). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
Percival, W. K. (1976). The applicability of Kuhn's paradigms to the history of linguistics. *Language*, *52*, 285–294.
Robins, R. H. (1967). *A short history of linguistics* (2nd ed.). Harlow, UK: Longman.
Robins, R. H. (1973). Theory-orientation versus data-orientation: A recurrent theme in linguistics. *Historiographia Linguistica*, *1*, 11–26.
Romeo, L., & Tiberio, G. E. (1971). Historiography of linguistics and Rome's scholarship. *Language Sciences*, *17*, 23–44.
Rutherford, W. E. (1987). *Second language grammar: Learning and teaching*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
Rutherford, W. (1988). Grammatical theory and L2 acquisition: A brief overview. In S. Flynn & W. O'Neil (Eds.), *Linguistic theory in second language acquisition* (pp. 404–416). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
Salus, P. H. (1969). *On language: Plato to von Humboldt*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
Sampson, G. (1980). *Schools of linguistics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univeristy Press.
Schachter, J. (1993). Second language acquisition: Perceptions and possibilities. *Second Language Research*, *9*, 173–187.
Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, *10*, 209–231.
Selinker, L. (1990). [Review of the book *Papers and studies in contrastive linguistics: Vol. 22*]. *Language*, *66*, 188–189.
Sharwood Smith, M. (1988). Applied linguistics and the psychology of instruction: A case for transfusion? In W. Rutherford & M. Sharwood Smith (Eds.), *Grammar and second language teaching: A book of readings*, (pp. 206–223). Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
Smith, R. L. (1990). *Ecology and field biology* (4th ed.). New York: Harper Collins.
Stern, H. H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Strozer, J. R. (1994). *Language acquisition after puberty*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
Thomas, M. (1995). Medieval and modern views of universal grammar and the nature of second language learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, *79*, 345–355.
Thomas, M. (1996, October). The relevance of language study in the ancient Mediterranean world to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press

current research on second language acquisition. Paper presented at the Second Language Research Forum, Tuscon, AZ.

Thomas, M. (1997a). Why second language acquisition theory has no sense of its own past, why we should do something about it, and what we should do. In E. Hughes, M. Hughes, & A. Greenhill (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 21st Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development* (pp. 627–638). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

Thomas, M. (1997b, May). Corder's insight in the context of Medieval and early Renaissance language science. Paper presented at the Conference on Generative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition, Montréal, Québec, Canada. To appear in *McGill Working Paper in Linguistics*.

Titone, R. (1968). *Teaching foreign languages: An historical sketch*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Towell, R., & Hawkins, R. (1994). *Approaches to second language acquisition*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Wall, D. (1994). *Green history: A reader in environmental literature, philosophy, and politics*. New York: Routledge.

White, L. (1996). The tale of the ugly duckling (or the coming of age of second language acquisition research). In A. Stringfellow, D. Cahana-Amitay, E. Hughes, & A. Zukowski (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 20th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development* (Vol. 1, pp. 1–17). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations* (3rd ed.) (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). New York: Macmillan.

Wukitsch, E. O., O. F. M. (1942). *The educational contents and implications of Roger Bacon's* Opus Tertium. Unpublished master's thesis, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198003040 Published online by Cambridge University Press