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RÉFÉRENCE

Bhatia, Vijay & Stephen Bremner (Eds.). 2014. *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Professional Communication*. Oxon & New York: Routledge, 584 pp. ISBN: 978-11-382-8178-3.

- 1 Professional domains and discourses have become a fully-fledged field of study for many ESP researchers and GERAS members, following Michel Petit (2010) and Michel Van der Yeught's (2016) focus on professional and disciplinary specialization. In this book, **Vijay Bhatia** and **Stephen Bremner** provide an overview of the field of language and professional communication, by giving the floor to scholars from various disciplines (English for specific purposes, discourse and genre analysis, business communication, corporate communication, management communication, organisational communication, language learning, among others), but also to professionals in banking, law, accounting and public relations (PR). The purpose of the book is to "introduce current research and practice in the field of language teaching and learning in professional contexts to a wide audience" (xvi) and to propose an "integrated view of professional communication" (xvii).
- 2 This general overview proves all the more necessary as professional communication is defined differently depending on the fields of study (xvi). However, the two editors claim that studies of professional language and communication all aim to

[...] understand and appreciate how professional communication is used in their specific contexts, and how best they can teach and train professionals to communicate appropriately in their specific context to achieve their disciplinary and/or professional objectives. (xvii)
- 3 The 584-page handbook is divided into four main sections – some of them including subsections – ranging from general to specific considerations on language and professional communication: the sixteen chapters of Section 1 focus on the different approaches to professional communication by presenting general theoretical frameworks, broad disciplinary frameworks and specific disciplinary framework. In section 2, the authors of the ten articles discuss practical aspects of language and professional communication, by proposing pedagogical and disciplinary perspectives. The five studies included in section 3 address issues related to the acquisition of professional competence. In addition to an impressive amount of research articles by major authors in the field (V. Bhatia and S. Bremner, but also Priscilla Rogers, Catherine Nickerson, Bertha Du-Babcock, Michael Goodman, Michael Handford, among others), four professionals have been interviewed "to balance what academics think and claim about [...] professional communication with reactions, views and perspectives of practitioners from the profession" (xxvi). The list of questions used in Section 4 is transcribed after the interviews, and followed by the general index. The lists of figures and tables, and notes on the authors can be found just before the introduction.

- 4 The general theoretical approaches presented in **the first section** are particularly useful to better understand key aspects and recent evolutions in professional communication.
- 5 The first subsection of the handbook, which examines theoretical and disciplinary frameworks, opens with an article by **Bhatia** on discourse variation in professional contexts. Bhatia explains the evolution in research on professional discourse. The latter has shifted from register analysis – only focusing on text – to genre analysis, which integrates discourse to understand the purpose of the disciplinary or professional community. Bhatia reminds the readers that genre is both dynamic and built around specific communicative goals. Although the two aspects might seem contradictory, “tactical freedom” (p. 6) allows some flexibility regarding generic conventions. The author also argues that more attention should be paid to interdiscursivity in professional communication, which he describes as the foundation of a “critical genre analysis” (p. 8). The latter takes into account not only the specific intentions of each speaker, but also technical changes that can affect professional discourse and practices. In his concluding remarks, Bhatia draws attention to the research gap in understanding the specific use of language in different professional fields and how it relates to expertise. He also advocates for the integration of ESP with “current research in other areas of professional communication” (p. 10).
- 6 The second article focuses on another approach to professional communication, often used in combination with genre analysis: corpus linguistics. **Winnie Cheng** first describes the variety of methods and applications of corpus linguistics and makes the distinction between general language and specialised corpora. She then moves on to professional genres and corpora, written and spoken, in the fields of business, politics, health care, public policy, the media and law. A variety of studies, focusing on different corpora (the Business English Corpus or BEC, the Wolverhampton Corpus of Business English or WBE corpus, the Corpus of EU English or CEUE, among others) are reviewed. The applications of corpus analysis include helping non-native speakers get familiar with specialized language or using the results of corpus analysis in teaching. In recent years, corpus linguistics research has integrated critical discours analysis (CDA) to better understand the framing and perception of professional discourse in various fields. The author concludes on the need to extend corps linguistics research to multimodal corpora to fully understand the use of language in professional contexts.
- 7 Context is also a major issue in **Yunxia Zhu**’s article about business communication education in cross-cultural contexts. Zhu advocates for “cross-cultural discursive competence” (p. 26), which may prevent cultural bias or generalization. To do so, “new models to promote situated learning for professional communication” (p. 27) should be implemented. Zhu thus proposes a situated genre approach to business communication education and focuses on the teaching of written business communication. After a theoretical section discussing genre theory and cross-cultural learning models, the author explains how she applies a situated genre model with Chinese students, by having them rewrite sales Expo letters in English. The experiment comprises four steps: (i) experiencing cross-cultural challenges during an internship; (ii) understanding communicative purposes; (iii) using intertextuality when writing texts; (iv) adding authentic data. In her concluding remarks, Zhu insists on the need for dialogue between students, practitioners and instructors and the use of authentic data, to avoid prejudice and bias in cross-cultural professional education.

- 8 In the fourth and last chapter of this theoretical subsection, **Carmen Daniela Maier** underscores the impact of new communicative tools on professional roles and identities. She applies a multimodal approach to the multi-resource kits launched by Kodak Company and Konrad Wolf, to share the knowledge of professionals in the domain of filmmaking and TV. These kits are inherently multimodal, as they comprise several media like digital video discs or booklets, which themselves include music, photographs, films or hyperlinks. The different media are linked to a variety of genres, whose generic boundaries are sometimes blurred (e.g. filmed interviews of expert professionals, p. 43). Although these kits communicate “highly specialized knowledge” (p. 44), the variety of media and genres makes them accessible to specialists and non-specialists alike, as the experts sometimes become educators. Consequently, Maier insists that multimodal approaches be adopted in other contexts and frameworks, to better understand professional identities and how they evolve.
- 9 The second subsection of Section 1 focuses on broad disciplinary frameworks, with the first two articles on business communication (BC). As already mentioned, **Catherine Nickerson** defines BC as a broad disciplinary framework, but also as an academic discipline. In her article, she provides an overview of the field of BC, starting from its origins and moving on to seminal works in the field, published in the *Journal of Business Communication* and in the *Business Communication Quarterly*. The different theoretical and methodological frameworks used by BC scholars in various parts of the world are reviewed, both in academic research and pedagogical applications. Among the most relevant BC topics in the future, Nickerson stresses the importance of multimodality and corporate discourse, especially on sustainability. Globalisation and cohesion among researchers, in addition to an increased focus on teaching are also mentioned.
- 10 **Bertha Du-Babcock** elaborates on the current challenges in BC research and teaching, as the field “is in the midst of a period of transition” and “is beginning to resemble a theory jungle” (p. 69). She also proposes a historical view of BC but then focuses on the different organisational approaches to the field (linguistic, cultural, empirical, interpretative, operational) to explain how BC research and teaching is shifting from silos (a “theory jungle” p. 76) to integration (“an orchard” p. 76). She finally advocates for a shared framework and “collaborative practices across the disciplines and across the globe” (p. 79) to facilitate the development of the field in research and teaching, but also collaboration among BC researchers.
- 11 Chapter 7 focuses on the use of theoretical resources “for framing, data analysis and further theory-building” (p. 85) for postgraduate students and newcomers in research on professional discourses. **Graham Smart**, **Stephani Currie** and **Matt Falconer** provide a review of qualitative empirical studies of knowledge making in the natural sciences. After a review of key concepts like epistemology, ethnography and rhetoric, the authors discuss the different disciplines and topics that have been used to explore the creation of scientific knowledge. Three methodological approaches to this topic are then described, based on a corpus of ten studies: text-based analyses; case studies and ethnographic research. In their final comments, the authors suggest that the frameworks presented in this chapter could be applied to other professional discourses, to better understand how theory can be used in qualitative research on professional communication.
- 12 **Saul Carliner** shifts to technical communication, another field of professional communication. After a historical perspective on technical communication, the work of

technical communicators and their main functions are described, before moving on to the main theories and their application by practitioners. Carliner identifies three disciplines as the roots of technical communication: humanities; education or psychology; Applied Linguistics. To produce content, technical communicators rely on several theories, among which “user-centred design, [...] performance-centred design [and] reading theory” (p. 105). In addition, new technological developments have made their task more instantaneous but also more complex. All these characteristics lead to the following question: to what extent is technical communication a fully fledged profession? Although professional organisations, scientific journals and academic programmes now exist, the issue of certification is still debated and the boundaries of technical communication are still evolving.

- 13 **Janet Holmes and Meredith Mara** adopt a broader view and propose a review of the main theoretical orientations, issues and methodologies used in the field of workplace communication. The latter is defined as

[...] covering a wide range of types of written and spoken interaction from large and small business meetings, through professional-client consultations and call-centre interactions, to water-cooler chat, letters, memos and email messages. (p. 112)

- 14 Among these interactions, Holmes and Mara focus more specifically on spoken interactions and issues related to “power and politeness, and the construction of professional and social identities” (p. 113). After a review of the different theoretical approaches to workplace communication, including Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS), politeness theory, Rapport Theory, CDA, post-structural theory and a social constructionist approach, the main methodologies are presented. Questionnaires, surveys and interviews are frequently used to collect data, which can be analysed via different frameworks. Interaction Sociolinguistics and CDA are described but the authors insist on the variety of tools that can be implemented. In their concluding remarks, Holmes and Marra stress the growing number of studies devoted to multilingual business settings, but also the need for a dialogue between researchers and instructors. Once again, multimodal discourse analysis is also seen as a promising field for the study of workplace communication.

- 15 **Michael B. Goodman and Peter B. Hirsch** discuss the role of electronic media in professional communication, which has already been mentioned in other chapters. The authors highlight the paradox linked to the use of digital and computer-mediated tools in professional communication. They represent a major opportunity as they ensure power and efficiency, but also a major challenge in terms of transparency and connectivity. After a description of the electronic media on the web (blogs, mash-ups, microblogging, podcasts, prediction markets, rating tools, RSS, social networking, tagging and wikis), Goodman and Hirsch describe the global challenges faced by practitioners. They include the posting of hostile comments or videos by external users, but also internal challenges linked to social media and company policies, social media strategies, networks of employees or online collaboration. News aggregation and automation are also described as a key challenge for reputation management, which can be dealt with through the implementation of risk alert systems. Finally, electronic media play a major part in investor relations: eXtensible Business Reporting Language make financial data easily accessible, and blogs and electronic forums can be used to monitor what is said about the company. The authors suggest that all companies experiment the different tools reviewed to create long-term value.

- 16 In the last chapter, **Marta Cromá** focuses on the role of translation in three different domains of professional communication – engineering, commerce and law. After a definition and historical and theoretical perspectives on translation as a discipline, M. Cromá discusses the importance of interpretation, cognitive factors and equivalence in the translation process. The specific aspects of translation within an organisation are then presented, with a focus on objective and subjective factors. Depending on context, translation can have an in-house or external purpose, each of which relies on different genres and requires different skills. In conclusion, the author insists on the major shift in translation theories over the last six decades, as they now focus on the target text, recipients and their expectations, rather than on the source text. Yet, the very practice of translation in professional contexts has not been subject to major changes: despite globalisation, local cultures still require human translators, who are not likely to be replaced by PC translators any time soon.
- 17 The first subdisciplinary framework discussed in the third subsection of Section 1 is management communication. **Priscilla S. Rogers** defines her analysis as “descriptive rather than empirical” (p. 165); she uses journal articles, publications related to the Association for Business Communication Outstanding Research Award and descriptions from the *Financial Times*’ top business schools to describe the history of management communication, how it differs from other fields in professional communication and what it actually consists in as a professional activity. Rogers points to the importance of speaking and writing skills for management professionals, whose specificity lies in their ability to “get work done with and through people” (p. 184).
- 18 The next two chapters focus on organisational communication. **David Grant** and **Daniel Nyberg** present a framework to analyse organisational discourse and apply it to business discourses on climate change and sustainability. They examine three main properties of their framework which they believe make it particularly relevant to analyse organizational discourse: (i) discursive constructs; (ii) relevant subjects; (iii) the framing of objects. The combination of the three aspects helps understand the framing of issues by organisations, in order to serve a specific purpose and to influence the perceptions of society members.
- 19 **Patrice M. Buzzanell**, **Jeremy P. Fyke** and **Robyn V. Remke** discuss “organisational communication for scholars in professional communication” (p. 208). They start with a theoretical overview of the field and its recent developments, before moving on to more recent and emerging research and how they can be of interest to practitioners. The use of internet and social media; the growing importance of work-life balance; the meaning and meaningfulness of work and leadership are seen as key elements for professional culture. Suggestions for future research include communication as constitutive of an organisation and a discursive approach to difference.
- 20 The last subdiscipline is corporate communication. After explaining how corporate communication has become a fully fledged academic discipline, **Finn Frandsen** and **Winni Johansen** distinguish it from other related fields, like organisational, marketing or business communication. Core themes in the research on corporate communication, including identity, image and reputation, integration and stakeholder relations are examined, before a discussion of the main criticisms levelled at corporate communication. To some scholars, the concept of integration may lead to corporate communication becoming a simple “umbrella term” (p. 232). As such, a more flexible and decentralized model of corporate communication may be implemented.

- 21 **Elizabeth de Groot** adopts a more practical view on corporate communication, by reviewing research works on the role of annual reports in investor relations. A key trend in the field of corporate reporting has been to define the specificities of the genre and to explain how annual reports serve the corporate story. Multimodality has also been studied extensively, through visual elements like logos, typography, colours or pictures. Other papers have focused on the target audience, that is, how shareholders react to annual reports. Finally, the influence of cultural values and norms represents another analytical issue for scholars working on annual reports. In conclusion, E. de Groot calls attention to the highly rhetorical potential of the genre and the need for future interdisciplinary approaches.
- 22 **The second section** of the handbook is complementary to the first one in that it focuses on practical aspects from a pedagogical and disciplinary perspective. The three chapters in the first subsection highlight the need for specific methodologies, tailored to the needs of future professionals.
- 23 **Jane Lung** proposes to blend critical genre analysis (CGA) and needs analysis to better understand learners' needs in a professional context. She applied this "blended analysis" (p. 257) by distributing a questionnaire to students in the hotel industry in Macao. The survey addressed questions related to English language use in the profession, the skills required and perceived language ability of the students. Results show that a blended approach to needs analysis helps better understand students' needs, in order to design tailored courses. As such, CGA and needs analysis should be seen as complementary in ESP teaching.
- 24 The chapter by **Sujata S. Kathpalia** and **Koo Swit Ling** is also based on a survey, this time distributed to practitioners. They aim to better understand the impact of technological advances on the changing landscape of business communication, to better train current and future professionals. The discussion focuses on five major tools: company websites; Internet communication; channels of communication; the efficiency of channels and the relationship between channels and audience. The pedagogical implications of the research highlight "the lack of emphasis on some [...] digital modes of communication" in the current business communication courses in Singapore. Consequently, the authors suggest that students be better equipped with knowledge related to the variety of communication channels in different settings. Several activities are also proposed to help students understand that business communication is a field that is evolving constantly.
- 25 **William Littlewood** proposes a broader approach to the methodology for teaching ESP and wonders to what extent it can be seen as distinct from EFL teaching. He concludes that although many techniques are particularly adapted to the teaching of ESP, most methods are actually part of the general EFL curriculum. In order to better serve the specific needs of future professionals, Littlewood urges pedagogical researchers to help teachers "bridge the gap between the ideal world of the classroom and the real world of professional practice" (Bhatia 2008: 171).
- 26 The second subsection (**Disciplinary perspectives**) shows how professional communication is implemented in specific fields and what skills are needed for future professionals in the fields of science and technology, accounting, law, the construction industry, offshore outsourcing, media communication and public relations.

- 27 In Chapter 20, **Lindsay Miller** reviews past, present and future trends in English for Science and Technology (EST). After a historical review of EST teaching, the author uses several case studies focusing on various topics (the academy, the workplace, career development) and concludes that EST students could benefit from other approaches to teaching, including learner autonomy, project-based learning, multi-literacies, genre and ethnography.
- 28 **Alan Jones** insists on the evolutions in the accounting profession, which have led to “new and largely cross-functional roles being assumed by accountants” (p. 321). Although communicative and interactional abilities have become key to exercise the profession, it is still seen as optional in graduate programs. By “describing the type of work accountants do, what they need to know [...] and the [...] socio-institutional problems they engage with [...]” (p. 322), Jones adopts a top-down, functional perspective to show that communication is now essential in professional practice in general. In conclusion, he advocates for “a systematic and comprehensive model accounting for professional practice, development and expertise” (p. 339).
- 29 In Chapter 22, **Christoph A. Hafner** underscores the variety of professions and interactions that characterize the legal domain. As such, a review of the research on legal communication requires to “go beyond a focus on texts and take into account the full sociocultural context” (p. 349). After a brief presentation of this context, the author describes three main areas of research in legal communication: (i) descriptive studies of the written genres used by professionals, (ii) interpretive studies of spoken interactions in the legal profession, (iii) studies of multilingual and multicultural contexts. His concluding remarks underscore the generally acknowledged need to resort to “plain language” (p. 358) to simplify interactions. Globalization also appears as a major challenge, as law professionals have to develop intercultural skills. Finally, not enough attention is paid to technological innovations and their impact on legal communication practices.
- 30 **Michael Handford** focuses on the construction industry and also proposes a review of the main studies in construction communication (CC), coupled with a presentation of a discourse-based project. The theoretical section starts with an overview of the structure of the construction industry, a literature review of CC and an application of Christopher Candlin’s work to CC. The practical section discusses a methodology to implement Candlin’s recommendations to a collection of audio, video and ethnographic data on a Hong Kong construction project. Handford concludes on the possibilities and challenges offered by studies of CC for discourse analysts, as the field is still emerging.
- 31 **Gail Forey** elaborates on the need for discourse analysis in professional domains, by discussing the differences between spoken and written discourse in the Business Process Outsourcing industry. Her analysis uses the tools of Systemic Functional Linguistics and actual data collected from the industry to show that the training programmes of Customer Service Representatives should focus on oral, rather than written communication skills.
- 32 In her chapter on media communication, **Isabel Corona** starts by insisting on the diversity of the field. She aims to address this complexity by adopting a threefold perspective: (i) media as a discipline for students and educators, (ii) media as a professional practice for workers, (iii) media as an object for researchers. In her conclusion, Corona insists that media scholars adopt a more practical approach, take

into account the challenges linked to globalization and rethink the jargon they use in their research.

- 33 Language is also key to the public relations (PR) industry, as **Anne Peirson-Smith** shows in the last chapter of this subsection. Just like the media industry, the PR field is diverse and involves a “complex professional communication” (p. 419). Peirson-Smith thus aims to define PR, but also its origins and role in marketing communication, and why it is needed. She also stresses the rapid changes in PR communication, due to new technology and their impact for the education and training of future PR professionals.
- 34 Several chapters in Sections 1 and 2 refer to the challenges linked to the acquisition of professional skills. Consequently, **the third section** of the handbook “addresses the varied ways in which people become competent performers in professional settings” (xxiv). The first chapter in this section discusses the notion of community, which is essential in the field of Applied Linguistics and has particular importance in ESP and corporate communication teaching. More specifically, **Becky S. C. Swan** presents the origins and the characterization of the three notions of *discourse community*, *community of practice* and *scientific community*, which are prevalent in the literature on professional communication. The three notions have given rise to several types of research on genres, intertextual writing practices, collaborative writing and specific discursive practices in communities. All the notions can be used by ESP instructors, to make students familiar with the main requirements of professional communication.
- 35 **Natasha Artemeva** and **Janna Fox** elaborate on the reflection on future professionals’ needs, by proposing a socio-rhetorical approach to professional communication training. Using the notion of “portability” (p. 461), the authors examine how students can translate academic knowledge into practical skills. Theoretical approaches to research in the transition from academic to professional context and the empirical research derived from these theories are first presented. The authors then review current studies and provide suggestions for future research, stressing the importance of multimodal perspectives on professional communication.
- 36 Another key aspect of professional communication lies in teamwork. **Stephen Bremner** claims that collaborative writing can be a useful tool for teams to interact in the workplace. After presenting the main definitions and taxonomies of academic writing Bremner describes the contexts in which it is used. Moving on to the implications for the teaching of collaborative writing, the author concludes on the importance on technology and globalization for future of collaborative writing.
- 37 **Jane Lockwood** focuses on the profession of call centre customer-service representatives (CSR) and explores their communication needs to define what is required of English language communication trainers. Her study is based on interviews of CSR professionals and trainers in Manila, Bangalore and Hyderabad. An overview of the working context of CSRs and of their English training is provided, using the ESP framework. However, the author broadens the scope to business management research, to underscore the specific business requirements for CSR communication. Lockwood finally identifies ten key theoretical and practical areas that she deems relevant for trainers of CSR professionals.
- 38 The last chapter of Section 3 also provides insight into the training of practicing professionals, by discussing their credentials. **Saul Carliner** examines the specific challenges linked to the credentialing of professional communicators. Using his own experience in the certification domain, Carliner questions the pros and cons, but also

the long-term and short-term practical implications of certification, which is still an emerging field.

- 39 **The final section** of the handbook offers a particularly relevant insight into the notion of professional expertise and its implications for professional communication. The four practitioners interviewed were expected to share “narratives of experience”, in order to put in perspective the various theoretical approaches presented in the 31 chapters. The questions range from general to specific considerations, first discussing the notions of expert behaviour and professional competencies. More specifically, the interviewees were asked about the role of discursive competence and the way professional competencies are acquired and measured. More specific questions about teamwork, collaborative writing, qualifications and experience or the view of the profession by other members of society were also asked, reflecting the specific findings of some of the chapters.
- 40 The variety of topics and approaches presented in the handbook make it a comprehensive account of a rich and diverse field, which is constantly evolving.
- 41 The structure, ranging from general theoretical and disciplinary considerations to practical approaches for instructors or professionals, is logical and well adapted to such a complex topic. The theoretical section, which summarizes the key studies in the fields of genre analysis, corpus linguistics and multimodality, is particularly relevant and complete. The mix of theoretical and practical approaches makes it pleasant to read and also demonstrates a will to reconcile academic research and practice, not only in terms of teaching but also to respond to the needs of professionals. The theoretical and practical approaches to key concepts like multimodality, interdiscursivity, critical genre and discourse analyses, among others, help readers understand how these concepts can be used in research and teaching. Other less well-known concepts like those of tactical freedom, portability or credentials provide relevant perspectives for ESP researchers and instructors. In addition, the variety of pedagogical experiences described in Sections 2 and 3 can be inspiring for the design of ESP courses in different disciplines.
- 42 For each paper, the references include a “Key readings” section with three to five key articles in the field, in addition to all the other sources. This might be particularly useful to colleagues who want to quickly find information on a specific topic. However, and although the names of the major authors in the field are included in the index of notions, it seems that an index of authors could have been added to facilitate bibliographic research.
- 43 In addition, although ESP is considered as one of the two major branches that have influenced professional communication (xvi), too little is said about the theoretical foundations of the discipline and what it actually consists in. This could help readers understand how an inclusive view of ESP, which should be integrated with “current research in other areas of professional communication” (p. 10) can be implemented. I also wonder if the Corpus of American Soap Operas (p. 14) should be considered as a specialized corpus, but as the very concept of specialization has not been specified, it is hard to tell.
- 44 To conclude, this book is a must-read for any reader interested in the field of professional communication in general, or focusing on researching or teaching a specific profession.

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