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RÉFÉRENCE

Wozniak, Séverine. 2019. *Approche ethnographique des langues spécialisées professionnelles*. Bern: Peter Lang, 189 pp. ISBN: 978-3-0343-3242-2.

- 1 This book addresses the issues involved in implementing ethnographic methods to study specialized professional discourse, and is specifically oriented to reflect the concerns of the French ESP community, *anglais de spécialité* (ASP). In addition to being thorough and engaging, it is a timely response to disciplinary developments. Overall, the use of ethnographic perspectives in applied linguistics studies to describe situated discourse is on the rise (Swales 1998; Lillis & Curry 2010; Starfield 2011; Pérez-Llantada 2012; Dressen-Hammouda 2014; Paltridge, Starfield & Tardy 2016), with researchers seeking to develop an insider's account of specialized communities in order to better understand the conditions in which the discourse is created and maintained, how it changes over time, and what the implications for social identity construction and group membership are. The drive to better understand the social influences on language has a long history in ESP research, starting with Selinker's (1979) recommendation to consult "subject-matter specialists" to gain more insight into specialized language. It is further reflected in Swales' (1985: 219) observation that ESP practitioners should seek not only to describe and understand specialized texts, but also the roles they play in their environments, the values they portray in corresponding "occupational, professional and disciplinary memberships", and resulting expectations about genre patterns. Since then, of course, studies adopting ethnographic approaches have become more grounded in both practice and epistemology, and Wozniak's contribution joins a growing number of serious works on ethnography. At the same time, while ethnography-informed characterizations of academic and scientific discourse have become more widespread, less attention to date has been paid to the professions. The attention this book draws to the professions is therefore opportune because of their tendency to be somewhat 'wilder' in nature. A case can be made that because they are strongly filtered through the specific environment of each company's culture, the norms, standards and gatekeepers needed to define shared practices and regulate genres operate differently than in science and academia. Wozniak skillfully provides the groundwork for addressing this need, all the while showing how qualitative and ethnographic approaches have a natural place in ASP, and contribute to the field's epistemology and current state of knowledge.
- 2 The book, an approachable 150 pages plus bibliography and index, is a highly accessible read for both researchers and students in ASP. After a brief introduction, Wozniak builds the case for implementing an ethnographic approach in ASP research in three, equally-balanced chapters. She covers the following topics, each of which frames the answers to some of the questions readers might have about carrying out research in LSP, ESP and ASP in general, and on specialized professional discourse in particular

(Chapter 2); about how to devise an ethnographic approach (Chapter 3); and about methods for analyzing professional discourse (Chapter 4).

- 3 Chapter 1 opens with a passage on methodology from Jean-Claude Passeron (1996) as a way into her main goal, devising an applicable method for ASP. In order to get at the epistemology underlying a researcher's scientific reasoning, she argues that it can be useful to examine and characterize the approach used. In turn, it becomes possible to reduplicate it, reconstituting it as a methodology which can then be used to investigate other disciplines or professions.
- 4 In the beginning of Chapter 2, Wozniak establishes the context for her methodological framework, which she firmly situates within the field of LSP and specialized discourse. As she points out, studying specialized discourses requires paying close attention to the relationship between the 'field' (in other words, context) by borrowing and integrating multidisciplinary methods from the social sciences, and 'discourse', which must be observed through discursive and social events. The use of the term 'field' here, rather than the more commonly used term 'context', prepares the reader for entering into the specific realm of ethnographic studies and the practice of fieldwork, discussed in Chapter 3. A point of particular interest in Chapter 2 is the grounded effort made to define the terms, concepts and debates that are uniquely specific to the French ASP community, such as 'langue spécialisée' in French rather than the more commonly used 'langue de spécialité' found in other academic and professional fields. Another key explanation, drawing on van der Yeught (2009) and Petit (2010), is the emergence of the concept 'le spécialisé', which Wozniak defines as specialists' know-how and situated knowledge (p. 17). It is in the drive to characterize 'le spécialisé' that Wozniak partly situates the specificity of the French approach to ESP, in contrast to other ESP and EAP approaches which tend to focus more on technical descriptions of the target discourse, using corpus analysis, move analysis, analysis of collocations, clusters, etc. Another important distinction between ESP and ASP is found in ASP's angle on 'SVE', or Specialized Varieties of English. Finally, as she also notes, French studies of professional, scientific and academic discourses tend toward intercultural comparisons of French- and English-speaking specialist communities.
- 5 The final part of Chapter 2 (pp. 40-54) establishes what the author means by professional discourses. Drawing from a wide range of relevant publications, she describes professional discourses as situated within a community's practices, history, culture and participants, as being both written and oral, multimodal, explicit and implicit, often incompatible with organizational goals, characterized by a wide range of language interactions, and reflective of the ongoing tension between professional know-how and corporate identity. Although the study of professional discourses in ESP has been dominated by the genre approach (Bhatia & Bremner 2014), as Wozniak observes, the complexity of professional discourse is not best accounted for by genres, but rather, following Bhatia (2004), by "interdiscursivity". To end the chapter and round out her discussion of approaches to professional discourse, she makes reference to related work in French for Specific Purposes (or '*français langue professionnelle*') and to the approach developed by Mourlhon-Davies, for whom "Le discours ne 'représente' pas l'action, il est l'une des modalités d'exercice de la professionnalisation." (cited p. 52).
- 6 In Chapter 3, Wozniak then moves on to develop a framework for ethnography-informed ASP research. She argues for making fieldwork (what she calls "*le terrain*")

both the place (*lieu*) and the practice (*pratique*) of doing *in situ* studies. Once again endeavoring to set the stage prior to describing her approach, she explores the area of cultural studies, or ‘*civilisation*’, one of the traditional pillars of language study in the French research community (pp. 56-59). Despite extensive variation in research methods from discipline to discipline, and from one language to another, ASP’s foundation in cultural studies, Wozniak argues, is a natural and logical starting point for making the case that ethnographic approaches have a rightful place in ASP. To make this argument, she explains how the French tradition of cultural studies has intellectually prepared ASP researchers to carry out fieldwork, by leading them to adopt an interdisciplinary approach drawing on social science methods from geography, history, sociology, economics, or demographics. However, as she notes, citing Fohlen (2001, p. 307, cited p. 61): “*La pluridisciplinarité a cependant ses limites et ses exigences, dans la mesure où chaque discipline relève d’une formation spécifique: on ne s’improvise pas plus historien que sociologue ou démographe.*” In this regard, it is crucial for ASP researchers to be clear on their motivations, procedures and tools before engaging in fieldwork.

- 7 The next part of Chapter 3 works to establish just that, and Wozniak describes the tools used to scientifically validate fieldwork (pp. 62-73). As she argues, ethnography is a precise scientific method, and in the past has received less attention in the ASP community likely because of its long-standing practice of using a cultural studies approach. One of Wozniak’s purposes in this chapter is therefore to describe a framework to help ASP researchers and students put ethnography into practice in their own research projects. To this end, she suggests that researchers might begin by exploring the epistemology underlying fieldwork, and deciding whether the approach would truly be a useful and viable method for their own scientific needs. She comments, referring to Brice Heath and Street (2008), on how some researchers seem drawn to the practice of ethnography, as much a question of personal affinity as it is of natural curiosity. The first task is therefore to explore the reasons behind one’s own inclination to engage in fieldwork, as part of the reflexive perspective developed in ethnographic approaches. She further cites Beaud and Weber’s (2010; cited p. 64) list of questions researchers in ASP can ask themselves in deciding whether or not to invest in the method, for example: Why do they want to focus on a particular community in a particular place? And interestingly, what might they actually be trying to ‘avoid’ by doing fieldwork ‘instead’? As much as fieldwork is non-negotiable in disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, in ASP adopting an ethnographic approach is really a matter of choice. For this reason, Wozniak argues that it is all the more relevant to ask oneself what fieldwork adds to research in ASP, and especially, whether the proposed study is feasible. She mentions difficulties in obtaining funding and time – clearly one of the reasons why many extensive field studies published in ESP today have been carried out as doctoral research projects, her own study included.
- 8 She gives sound advice about structuring the study in order to ensure its quality: choosing the target community, identifying the observables and artefacts, satisfying requirements for data analysis (coding), creating the corpus, engaging in self-reflexivity, and choosing the field to study while taking into account its institutions, history, training and professional organizations, and members’ identities. After providing the reader with a good description of what fieldwork could look like (pp. 70-74), she proposes a framework for carrying out an ethnographic approach (p. 91), but which is actually organized around three project phases discussed in this earlier

section, namely: gaining access, field immersion, and study closure with restitution ('accès', 'implantation dans le terrain', 'sortie du terrain et restitution', p. 70). The remainder of Chapter 3 describes these three phases while working toward the framework.

- 9 In terms of access, Wozniak talks about the importance of preparation: planning the field notebook and for field immersion by reading professional journals, carrying out preparatory interviews and doing extensive literature reviews so as to be ready to ask the right questions in real-time. She acknowledges that gaining access to the field is one of the most significant difficulties met by field researchers, also discussed by Bhatia (2004), who has indicated how useful it can be to have insider connections to gain entry to a targeted community. Wozniak suggests a couple of ways of getting around this difficulty, creating access by proposing tasks deemed useful by the target community, such as carrying out a language needs analysis. As the researcher gains access to the professional network, they become "known", allowing them to be more easily accepted as a legitimate observer. Other tactics (following Cefaï 2010, cited on p. 73) include responding to some pre-identified social need, doing extensive reading to identify the community's gatekeepers, and finally, reflecting on one's own behavior so as to decide upon the most desirable way to act, or not, in order to better assimilate into the community.
- 10 Before describing the second and third phases of a fieldwork study, Wozniak first provides a historical exploration of how researchers in applied linguistics came to integrate ethnographic approaches. While she remarks that sociolinguistics would appear very close to ASP needs, given its focus on language in the socio-cultural context of its production, she concludes that sociolinguistic practices in ethnography are probably less relevant because of the focus on macro-structures (p. 75). In contrast, typical research aims in ASP are to observe language interaction, to collect data so as to construct oral and written corpora, and gather sociocultural, historical and institutional information about the targeted professional communities. As a result, she argues that ASP needs are much more closely aligned with practices in ethnolinguistics. Nonetheless, careful as always to acknowledge the epistemological background for the terms she uses, she takes pains (pp. 75-77) to distinguish "ethnolinguistics", the study of the relationship between a language and the culture of those who speak it (in the tradition of E. Sapir), and linguistic anthropology (Hymes, 1964), although one could argue that work by Boas, and later by Sapir and Mead, was also the precursor to Hymes' approach to linguistic anthropology, as formalized in his work on the ethnography of communication.
- 11 Wozniak's argument about the usefulness of ethnographic approaches for ASP research practices draws on one of ethnography of communication's key underlying assumptions: it is ethnography, not linguistics, and communication not language "which most provide the frame of reference within which the place of language and culture in society is to be described" (Hymes, 1964, p. 3, cited p. 77). Likewise, ethnography of communication shifts the language researcher's attention away from language *per se* to an exploration of language-use-in-social-context. To take ethnography of communication as the cornerstone of one's epistemological assumptions is revealing, because it inherently suggests that expectations about the primacy of language and discourse over social context are refuted. This is, of course, a debate of significant relevance in the fields of applied linguistics and writing research, and has long occupied a place of prominence in the literature (Russell, 1997; Swales,

- 1998). In effect, the epistemological stance one adopts at the outset influences the researcher's choice of methodology and research design, and ultimately, the significance they accord to language and/or social context in their analysis of the data. Lillis (2008), for example, describes these effects in current studies in applied linguistics, which develop various qualitative research orientations depending on this initial assumption: talk-around-text or ethnography as method, ethnography as methodology, and ethnography as deep theorizing. Wozniak concludes this part of the chapter by summarizing some of the key studies carried out in ESP and ASP in this area.
- 12 In the end (pp. 92-93), despite the obvious interest she shows for ethnography of communication in terms of practice and ethos, Wozniak appears to firmly orient her ethnographic approach to fit the concerns of the ASP community, thus resituating her framework along more ethnolinguistic lines, as one interested in the relationship between 'Culture' and language, rather than 'Society' and language. This is because ASP researchers often carry out comparative analysis between French and English, both at the start of the study (e.g., first characterizing the French specialist community, and then the same community composed of English speakers), and at the end, where the researcher takes into account the external factors associated with the geographical location and its varieties of English – broadly speaking British English, American English, Australian English, Canadian English, and the various regional subdivisions (other varieties also include BELF). In effect, the French speakers for whom ASP materials and teaching approaches are ultimately designed must be able to master both the French socio-communicative context as well as its counterpart situated in the variety of English needed during interactions in English. The two concluding subsections of Chapter 3 provide an overview of the two final phases of the field study: the immersion (pp. 93-97) and closure/restitution phases (pp. 97-100), which are less detailed than the discussion about access, but sufficiently thorough and interesting nonetheless.
- 13 Chapter 4, a presentation of the discourse analytical tools ASP researchers can use to construct their approach, begins once again by establishing the epistemology underlying discourse analysis in the French tradition (pp. 102-107), and describes techniques which can be used to analyze professional discourse, whether synchronically or diachronically (pp. 107-113). Wozniak identifies three discourse analytical approaches that have been used in the ASP research community: a contextual approach, a global approach, and a microlinguistic approach. The contextual approach draws on Gunnarsson's (2009) model which aims to reveal how professional discourse is linked to cognitive, pragmatic and macro-thematic contexts, and belongs to one of six discoursal types (informative, explanatory, expressive, argumentative, directive and metacommunicative). In describing what has been termed the "global approach" to discourse analysis, she calls on work by Petit (2010); however, this approach is less detailed than either the contextual or the microlinguistic approach, which focuses on grammar, lexis, sentence complexity and impersonality.
- 14 One of the last issues Wozniak addresses in Chapter 4 is genre analysis (pp. 113-118). Her opening emphasis on Bhatia (1993) is noteworthy and reflective of her own epistemological positioning: "Why do members of a specialist community write the way they do?" (Bhatia, 1993: 1, cited p. 116). Framing one's study with this initial question, which requires going into the community itself (i.e., the field) rather than starting off with preconceived ideas, allows the analyst to work toward an *a posteriori* analysis,

more closely representative of actual discourse practice. In addition, such an approach allows the analyst to determine whether or not the discourse features observed are actually significant for the community being studied (i.e., whether they have socio-cultural reality, or are just analytical artefacts). Such questioning goes to the heart of why integrating ethnographic approaches can be rich and meaningful in ASP research. The final section of Chapter 4 (pp. 136-146) reviews approaches to terminology studies, another strongly developed area of research in the ASP community.

- 15 Overall, Wozniak's volume on ethnographic approaches in ASP is an enjoyable and thought-provoking read. It is always useful to pore over a thorough and up-to-date discussion of research practices. The work that has gone into the framework, techniques and methodology she proposes for doing fieldwork is solid, well-researched and frankly quite helpful, either as a point of reflection for researchers who already integrate ethnography-informed approaches into their research, or as a starting point for those who wish to begin. Wozniak describes an ambitious research program in a relatively short volume, and this perhaps inevitably leads to difficulties a reader might encounter. Sometimes the development of key ideas are somewhat hard to follow in the overall organization, such as in the discussion of the three phases underlying the framework: access, immersion, closure/restitution. The discussion of the access phase begins on page 70 in Chapter 3, which the reader discovers 'by chance' as it is not identified in a chapter subheading, yet who then has to wait nearly twenty pages to learn more about the immersion and closure/restitution phases, which at first sight, appear to have been forgotten. Granted, the reader can find mention of them in the table of contents, but keeping the book's overall structure in mind while reading can be challenging. Another challenge posed to readers may be the ease with which the author wields both the French and English-language literature. As repeatedly observed in this review, Wozniak often takes pains to describe the ASP and other French schools of thought, only to sometimes end the discussion with a decontextualized quote from an Anglo-Saxon author, requiring an advanced level of mental gymnastics. Such challenges, however, encourage a healthy level of engagement and dialogue with her readers, which is after all the sign of a successful publication.

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