

Preface

Because of its great influence on everyday and professional life, specialized communication in science, technology or institutions is one of the most important and exciting fields of applied linguistics. Against this background, the two volumes on specialized communication in the series “Handbooks of linguistics and communication science” (HSK) pursue three goals. First, they aim to capture the most relevant current perceptions of specialized languages and professional communication. Second, they explore new linguistic questions and answers on various topics within this fascinating field of research. Finally, they promote international dialogue on central issues, in a context where discussion of both theoretical foundations and everyday practice is urgently needed. The handbook is divided into eight thematic sections, each of which has several chapters: general aspects, functional aspects, methodological aspects, media aspects, communication in professional areas, terminology, historical aspects, and research into specialized communication and languages for specific purposes in the world. In what follows, these eight sections are presented in more detail.

The handbook begins (Section I) with a discussion of some important general aspects. First, various definitions and concepts of language for specific purposes and specialized communication are described and compared, along with different classifications and typologies. Further topics in this essentially theoretically oriented section are: knowledge transfer via or about specialized communication, specialized communication and cognition, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, multilingual and intercultural specialized communication, and *linguae francae* in specialized communication. Overall, the first part of the handbook shows that communication in science, technology and institutions constitutes a field of research of great plurality and complexity, in which languages for specific purposes are themselves only one facet of the overall phenomenon of specialized communication.

Regarding functional aspects (Section II), our focus turns to how verbal and non-verbal elements of text contribute to achieving the participants’ communicative goals in specialized communication. Here we find the characteristics associated with communication in an environment defined by expertise and professionalization and reflected in the means of communication used. The section begins with the functional characteristics of efficiency and exactness, which are traditionally mentioned with regard to verbal and non-verbal means of technical communication. In the following chapters, further functional aspects such as the use of metaphors, metonyms and other rhetorical devices are considered, as well as multimodality, coherence and cohesion, the marking of gender and authorship, and aspects of power and epistemology. In this way, almost the entire state of the art of the discipline is reflected from a functional point of view.

In the section on methodological aspects, the chapters cover the main analytical approaches used to research written and spoken interaction in specialized or professional contexts (Section III). With genre analysis, terminography and lexicography,

corpus linguistics, various didactic approaches, ethnology and ethnography, conversational analysis, needs analysis, sociolinguistic methods, as well as qualitative and quantitative text analysis, the broad field of methodology for analyzing specialized communication research is mapped out. We can see that research into specialized communication not only draws on numerous different methods from linguistics and communication science, but is also able to develop them further in its own way.

Media aspects have gained increasing importance in linguistics in view of a renewed emphasis on orality and the advent of the Internet. For this reason, a separate section is devoted to them in this handbook (Section IV). This begins with considerations about specialized communication in literary texts and also concerning specialized oral communication. After this, we find contributions on specialized communication in journalism, in the mass media, on the World Wide Web and in social media. The section concludes with reflections on artificial languages, the use of signs in logic and the framework of open access publishing. This section shows once again that specialized communication makes use of linguistic and non-linguistic signs in a wide variety of media, with each kind of discipline or medium operating in specific ways.

One of the roots of the study of specialized communication is the analysis of language and communication in professional contexts. In this field of research, the focus is on the relationships between the characteristics of different professional fields and their influence on communication. The chapters in the section on communication in professional areas, the first section in Volume II (Section V), deal with communication in medicine and healthcare, law and administration, business and management, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, trade and commerce, project communication, technical documentation, and translation. Even though only a few linguistically well-recognized fields of professional communication can be considered, this section reflects the complexity and dynamics of professional communication in the workplace.

Not least since Wüster's basic work in the 1930s, terminology has been one of the most traditional topics of research in languages for specific purposes. Numerous practical applications and theoretical considerations are covered and discussed in a separate section of the handbook (Section VI): terminology and conceptual systems, terminological standardization and term formation, automatic term extraction, terminology and frames, and dynamics of terminology. In hardly any other field do system-linguistic, pragma-linguistic and cognitive-linguistic considerations come into such close contact.

Any major handbook on specialized communication must naturally include a section on historical aspects (Section VII). In order to avoid a Eurocentric perspective and to focus on the historically evolved present, this section provides an overview of specialized communication in Graeco-Roman antiquity, in the Chinese Empire, in the German speaking area, in Romania, in Eastern Europe, and in the English-speaking world, including the rise of English as a *lingua franca*. Based on the idea that every specialized human activity is also linked to appropriate communication patterns, this

section presents both universal aspects and cultural specificities of specialized communication in a broad context.

In the last major section of Volume II (Section VIII), the study of specialized communication as a global, world-spanning discipline is presented. Our idea is to show the profile of research on specialized communication in different parts of the world, each of which offers specific conditions, concerns and developmental patterns. For example, the study of technical communication in North America is rooted primarily in the areas of rhetoric and didactics and tends to be carried out with a particular focus on the practice of academic or professional communication itself and with regard to technical documentation. In Europe, on the other hand, this is more of a linguistic discipline, albeit with a strong focus on the applicability of findings in professional situations. Through the contributions to this section we aim to present an overview of different orientational strands from a geographical and cultural perspective.

The editors would like to thank all the authors for their expert cooperation and the publisher for its active support. May this handbook continue to bring together research on languages for specific purposes and specialized communication and provide an impulse for future projects in this fascinating field of research.

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