Conversation Analysis and Language for Specific Purposes

Hugo Bowles & Paul Seedhouse (eds).
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Scholars involved in the field of Applied Linguistics should appreciate this volume. *Conversation Analysis and Language for Specific Purposes* is a collection of articles originated in a panel session convened at the 2005 AILA Conference. The title of the conference was "New trends in specialised discourse" and this volume is an evidence of such new tendencies. In Conversation Analysis (CA) and in Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) spoken discourse has been the focus of recent research; the former because it is its aim and the latter because it has become a new trend in the last decade. However, the idea shown all through the volume is that not much has been done linking CA methodology to LSP studies and teaching. As BOWLES and SEEDHOUSE point out at the end of their introduction, the purpose of this volume is to help LSP practitioners and applied linguists, as well as conversation analysts, to see that both fields can be complementary.

This well-structured volume is made up of an introductory section and ten chapters divided into three sections: "CA Approaches to LSP", a theoretical section laying the foundations of the relationship between CA and LSP; "CA and LSP in Specific Domains", a section illustrating the research of CA applied to traditional LSP contexts (academic and business-related settings); and "CA and LSP Pedagogy", a final section focusing on pedagogical applications of CA in the LSP classroom. There is an insistence on the implications of the CA research in the LSP classroom in most chapters; in fact authors refer to the relevance of CA in LSP or how to apply the results of CA research in the LSP classroom. Likewise, the need to conduct further research on LSP oral discourse is a recurrent issue throughout the book. Nevertheless, there seems to be a gap regarding recent research about spoken discourse in specific fields based on freely available corpora (i.e. MICASE, BASE or MASC for academic spoken discourse, HKCSE including academic and professional spoken English, or CORLEC involving a diversity of Spanish spoken discourses).

The first section includes three contributions. Probably the first two chapters can be more valuable for those scholars, researchers and students who are not familiar with Conversation Analysis. SEEDHOUSE and RICHARDS start the volume by referring to the issue of context and how to better analyse and use the data gathered, or what they define as the institutional varieties of interaction. To analyse the institutional context they describe a tri-dimensional model which results in an interesting proposal to be later applied to LSP research. Some readers may find more clarifying reading first the second chapter by PALLOTTI. She describes CA for inexperienced readers, explaining its theoretical basis, its methodological aspects and certain lexicon and concepts which are useful for those closer to LSP than to CA. She finishes with examples of CA research applied to professional settings and the methodological problems derived from such studies. Certain criticism towards the research carried out in the LSP field in relation to spoken discourse is a recurrent idea in different chapters. This happens in the third chapter of this initial section. RICHARDS argues that LSP research should move to the backstage talk rather than to the frontstage one ("insider-outsider encounters"). Next, he shows how a specific study based on a limited data set can lead to some valuable pedagogical implications for ESP teachers and material writers.

The second section is initiated with WALSH and O'KEEFFE's article on lectures. They explain and illustrate four classroom modes from the CA perspective. Interesting, though not new for most LSP practitioners, is the additional methodology used in their study: corpus linguistics (CL). They explain it in short to later prove the complementation of both methodologies: CA to interpret results qualitatively and CL to do it quantitatively. The final part of the chapter deals with suggested classroom applications for teachers, teacher educators and material designers. The following chapter focuses on the language of interpreters in two business settings (in-house business negotiations and business exhibitions) and the different interactive roles they can play when mediating between speakers. Here, GAVIOLI and MAXWELL provide an analysis of dialogue interpreting in the business environment with a clear final purpose: to show possible implications for interpreter training in business contexts. In chapter 6, BURNS and MOORE apply CA to simulated professional-client exchanges in an accounting post-graduate academic setting. The situation consists in giving advice on taxes as they consider accountants as communication facilitators. The main purpose of the chapter is to provide some pedagogical

implications for LSP teaching, in addition to a justification of simulations as an alternative to real data, when no real data can be obtained. In the final chapter of this section, VARCASIA deals with interactions in telephone calls in service and retail businesses and in three different languages (English, German and Italian). By means of CA, she analyses the response to requests for information in those telephone service encounters; her results show the relevant role that different cultures and the degree of professional involvement of the speakers play in the encounters. She also pays attention to the consequences for LSP teaching, such as the use of apologies or the sequencing patterns in conversations.

The third section is on LSP pedagogy. PACKETT starts by trying to explain how to link the findings of CA and the content of LSP courses and materials. His article is based on the research carried out to teach students of Journalism how to perform broadcast interviews as a form of institutional talk. Among other aspects, he emphasises the value of raising students and teachers' awareness of the features of this specific talk. He points out that this analytical model can be useful to improve students' performance. The following chapter is authored by WONG. She focuses on telephone closings by means of comparing some English as a second language textbook dialogues and what the literature in CA has found out about real talk. As in her previous studies, she finds a mismatch between both sources, especially when negotiating or moving out of closings. Thus, she recommends the use of CA and reality-based examples in LSP teaching or when writing LSP material. Finally, BOWLES and SEEDHOUSE complete the section and the volume. After identifying some problems found in LSP research to analyse speech data, they provide a model so that LSP practitioners "can apply research, CA and pedagogical procedures to enhance speaking skills" (page 305) or interactional competence. They explain the complex model, its basic components (practitioners, areas, practices, and products) and the relationship among them, and conclude by suggesting certain support needed by LSP practitioners to make use of CA.

The final paragraph of the editors' last chapter summarises the idea remarked all through the book: LSP and CA research needs mutual collaboration. Any of the chapters could raise LSP practitioners' interest to read more on CA and try to complement their own studies. I strongly recommend the book for those LSP practitioners interested in knowing more about CA, but only as an initial step, as further reading and basic research is required to acquire certain expertise in the CA field. I also

recommend the book to those CA analysts who want to see how this approach can be applied to the LSP field.

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