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### THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL GLANCE AT WRITING

Annotation

In the article the development of writing research in the Anthropology of Writing in France and (New) Literacy Studies in English-speaking regions are explored, highlighting their historical isolation. It emphasizes writing's transformative role in contemporary communication and social identity. Various scholarly approaches are reviewed, demonstrating writing as a cultural practice. The article contrasts the diverse themes of francophone research with anglophone perspectives and advocates for a broader anthropological view that includes both ordinary and vernacular texts.

**Key words:** Anthropology of writing, anthropological linguistics, anglophone, francophone, written texts, different perspectives on writing.

### YOZUVGA ANTROPOLOGIK NAZAR

Annotatsiya

Maqolada Frantsiyada Yozuv Antropologiyasi va ingliz tilida so'zlashadigan mintaqalarda (Yangi) Savodxonlik tadqiqotlari bo'yicha yozma tadqiqotlarning rivojlanishi o'rganilib, ularning tarixiy izolyatsiyasiga urg'u berilgan. U zamonaviy muloqot va ijtimoiy o'ziga xoslikdagi yozuvning ahamiyatli roliga urg'u beradi. Turli ilmiy yondashuvlar ko'rib chiqilib, yozuvni madaniy amaliyot sifatida tasvirlaydi. Maqolada frankofoniya tadqiqotining turli mavzulari anglofon nuqtai nazaridan taqqoslanadi va oddiy va mahalliy matnlarni o'z ichiga olgan kengroq antropologik nuqtai nazar keltirib o'tilgan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Yozuv antropologiyasi, antropologik tilshunoslik, anglofon, frankofon, yozma matnlar, yozuvga turlicha qarashlar.

### АНТРОПОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ ВЗГЛЯД НА ПИСЬМО

Аннотация

В статье исследуется развитие исследований письма в области Антропологии Письма во Франции и исследований (Новой) Грамотности в англоязычных регионах, подчеркивая их историческую изоляцию. Он подчеркивает преобразующую роль письма в современном общении и социальной идентичности. Рассматриваются различные научные подходы, демонстрирующие письмо как культурную практику. В статье сравниваются разнообразные темы франкоязычных исследований с англоязычными точками зрения и отстаивается более широкий антропологический взгляд, включающий как обычные, так и народные тексты.

**Ключевые слова:** Антропология письма, антропологическая лингвистика, англофония, франкофония, письменные тексты, разные взгляды на письмо.

**Introduction.** Writing is a social act in the form of both implicit and explicit communication between the writer and the reader. Since writing cannot be excluded from the social context, its aim and meaning are tightly bound to the society, their culture and history [1]. How did writing develop?! Initially two writing-related research traditions developed: The Anthropology of writing was primarily studied in France, whereas scholars, hailing from Britain, North America and other anglophone countries were investigating the (New) Literacy Studies. For several decades these two directions grew independently without much exchange of expertise and cross-referencing work. Thus, little was known in the francophone (someone who speaks French as a first or main language) research about anglophone (consisting of or belonging to an English-speaking population especially in a country where two or more languages are spoken) researchers' work. Likewise, it was for the English-speaking scholars [2].

In modern life there have been huge changes in nature of communication and nature of knowledge which is also impacting the importance of writing in the textually-mediated environment.

**Literature Review.** Anthropology as a discipline in its early development had little interest in writing and written texts. Instead, scholars were keen to study oral genres which did not rely on written communication, such as songs, poems and incantations [2].

It is impossible to neglect writing and written texts and comprehend the cultures of people. Dorothy Smith (1999), the sociologist suggests that we are surrounded by a 'textually-mediated social world' and writing is a means of interaction in societies which previously were solely oral. Therefore, it is reasonable to reckon writing to be a global and cross-cultural phenomenon.

Written texts are a source of light shed onto how social groups are structured, live, work, communicate with each other, gain experience and deal with it. Textualization of social interaction, written policies at workplaces, quality control in production, and in many other aspects of life have brought up huge transition in growth. Writing has even penetrated into private lives of human beings, it has been used when playing video games, for instance, where it serves as a means to communicate, and so, create social bonds among

those with alike interests [2]. Also, writing in anthropology plays a crucial role: for communication, education, doing research [3].

So far writing, as a key cultural practice and a product of culture itself, has been explored by many scholars in their anthropological works. However, only a few scholars such as Behar and Gordon (1996) writing was the major interest. Given that, for many scientists of anthropology, literacy did not seem to suffice to investigate broader cultural phenomena.

As a branch, a linguistic anthropology was studied by a group of scholars, whose main focus was spoken interaction. Among them Foley (1997) and Duranti (2001) considered literacy practices to be an ultimate part of anthropological linguistics. (Although the terms anthropological linguistics and linguistic anthropology are often viewed as being synonymous, specialists often make a distinction between

Interest in research on writing then took various directions:

Various approaches to the study of writing	Scholars who contributed	The focus of the approach
Discourse analysis of texts	Fairclough, 2003; Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008	the role of language in the reproduction and transformation of social processes and structures
Anthropological perspective on writing: the forms and structures of literacy education are an object of study in themselves.	Papen, 2005	Its core interest is to examine the processes of production and use of texts
Literary perspective on writing: highly visible and valued pieces of writing, primarily the work of novelists.	Altick (1957); Boyarin (1993); Eliot and Rose (2007); Colclough (2007)	The focus is on the texts and the practices of producing and using them, providing a history of books and of literary reading
Studies of the book as a cultural object, again	Finkelstein & McCleery, 2002	Focus primarily but not exclusively on literary production
Studies examining daily acts of writing and their significance in relation to private life and to work; writing in areas such as farming, photosharing, childcare work and healthcare; writing in the workplace, writing in public spaces and reading and writing in post-colonial societies	Mbodj-Pouye, 2007; Humery; the Anthropology of Writing group at the EHESS.	how societies operate and to the way individuals relate to each other and to institutions.
Historical writing; Studies of contemporary cultures of written texts	Historians; Roger Chartier; Cressy (1980); Clanchy (1993) [2,7].	the interest in the role of writing in specific social and cultural contexts and the focus on a variety of genres and practices
Educational perspective	Pontille et al.	Only for educational purpose, as a means of learning [2,8].

Examining different written texts produced by people of different social groups means studying unlike forms of writing and what function they are to serve. Since writing is the product of not only the 'social' but the 'cultural' too, the examiner has to study what beliefs, values and behaviors the writers had.

With an anthropological glance, writing can be either 'ordinary' or 'vernacular'. Here, 'ordinary' does not mean that it has mistakes and not considered grammatically correct and unacceptable in official education. Vice versa, 'vernacular' is

them. While anthropological linguistics is considered a subfield of linguistics, linguistic anthropology is generally considered to be a subfield of anthropology). Also, another reason for writing to be a trivial subject to research for anthropologists was that it was an interdisciplinary means in research while the main focus was anthropology itself. Even though there are several anthropologists who contributed on research on writing, the lion's share of research was done by linguists, literary theorists, historians, education researchers, sociologists and psychologists, often drawing upon ethnographic methods derived from anthropology, but not identifying themselves as anthropologists [2]. In 1964 Dell Hymes collects all the works of such scientists in the Reader in linguistic Anthropology. Among them there were Marcel Mauss, Antoine Meillet, Claude Levi-Strauss, Roger Brown, Leonard Bloomfield [4].

not about sophisticated speech of a well-educated man whose speech is skillfully formal. It is more about social interaction, events in the context, social practices in people's ordinary lives that make the writing broad to analyze in terms of cultural and social aspects [2].

**Prominent themes in francophone research on writing.** In comparison with anglophone research, francophone research on writing is by far colorful, full of varieties of spheres and theoretical directions.

Who? The researchers	What? The research\Why? The of the research
Denis and Pontille (2009)	Ethnographic research conducted to understand how the signs of the Paris subway are installed and maintained.
Fabre et al.	Ordinary writing by individuals
Pontille et al.	collective forms of writing (the texts they use and produce). The research of this kind enables to observe and learn the role and function of written texts in work environment and the way knowledge is organized
Lahire (1995); Latour	How writing gives materiality to cognitive processes
Denis & Pontille, 2009, Fraenkel, 2007; 2008	Texts, such as subway signs
Fraenkel & Pontille, 2003; Pontille, 2006	Studies of bailiffs
Pontille, 2004; 2006	Scientific authorship
Joly, 2000; 2004	The role of writing in agricultural work; how new rules introduced by the European Union (EU) have changed farmers' daily writing practices [2,22]. The historical perspective, comparing farmers' traditional diaries with today's bureaucratic registers and forms
The research group 'Anthropologie de l'écriture'(Anthropology of Writing) at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS).	Writing in the workplace From a historical perspective, they were particularly interested in autobiographical writings
Mbodj-Pouye, 2007; Humery	Writing in post-colonial societies They study ordinary forms of writing in contexts where school-based literacy is particularly dominant and where daily writing practices are frequently multilingual, mirroring the coexistence of official and vernacular languages in postcolonial societies.
the Anthropology of Writing group at the EHESS.	Writing in public places and spaces; A related study, also comparative, examines how writing in a variety of urban spaces is regulated and policed [2,23]. Covering cities from around the globe, it examines how urban spaces are shaped by writings, both legal and illegal.

**Conclusion.** In summary, the research on writing has greatly evolved, revealing its critical role in shaping communication and social structures. The contrasting approaches between francophone and anglophone traditions highlight the richness of this field, emphasizing the need for interdisciplinary dialogue. By recognizing writing as both a cultural practice and a fundamental element of human

interaction, scholars can deepen their understanding of its complexities. Future research should continue to explore the intersections of writing with various social, cultural, and technological contexts, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive perspective on this essential aspect of human life.

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