FUNCTIONAL TYPOLOGY BY CHRISTIANE NORD IN CORPORATE NEWSLETTERS' TRANSLATION (ENGLISH TO SPANISH)

NATALIA SGIBNEVA*
https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0391-163X
COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID

Abstract: This paper revises the implementation of the functional typology by Christiane Nord in the translation and localization of corporate newsletters from English (Great Britain, EN-GB) to Spanish (Spain, ES-ES). Christiane Nord defines the following text functions: referential, expressive, appellative and phatic. At the same time, she distinguishes between documental and instrumental (equifunctional or heterofunctional) texts and their respective translations. Following this typology, the paper analyses different text types that can be found in corporate newsletters and makes an insight on applicability and usability of this theory for the translation of this kind of texts. The examples belong to the corporate newsletters of the British fashion company Burberry.

Keywords: Christiane Nord, translation, localization, functional typology, corporate communication

1. Introduction

Since the end of the 20th century and until now, digital technologies and the Internet have been experiencing an active development. Plenty of information is shared on the web and companies consider having an online presence essential. The digital environment facilitates the communication between companies and their target audiences. Websites, social networks, corporate newsletters and many other means are used for this purpose. Newsletters, in particular, serve to establish contact with customers, to provide necessary information or to encourage an interaction.

The digital communication is especially important for international companies. In this case, we can refer to *localization* as a process of linguistic and cultural adaptation of the content to the particular *locale*. The term *locale* englobes the combination of the parameters that identify the language, the origin and the preferences of a certain group of people (Sandrini 2008: 168). *Locale* can refer to a region, a country or an ethnical community. Usually, it has a letter code assigned, for example, EN-GB for the English language in the United Kingdom or ES-ES for the Spanish language in Spain. The

---

* natasgib@ucm.es

majority of companies use what is known as a centralized localization system. This means that the content is initially created in the corporate headquarters and then localized for each *locale* (Jiménez Crespo 2013: 14).

Corporate newsletters include different kinds of texts with a variety of functions and, to conduct an analysis, we consider it relevant to apply the functional typology by Christiane Nord. Further, we will describe the types of texts included in a corporate newsletter and will offer a comparative study of the source text in English and its translation into Spanish based on examples from the British fashion company Burberry.

The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate how the functional typology by Christiane Nord may be applied to these translations and influence the translational decisions in each case.

2. Functional Typology by Christiane Nord

The background of the functional theory by Christiane Nord lies in the concepts of the *Skopos Theorie* proposed by Hans J. Vermeer and extended and updated further by Katharina Reiss (Reiss and Vermeer 2014). As it can be deduced from the etymology of its name (*skopos* means 'purpose' in Greek), the theory is based on the assumption that the purpose of the translation is the core of the whole translation process. Thus, Vermeer describes three types of purposes: the general purpose of the translation process; the communicative purpose, which depends on the circumstances of the source text, such as how and what it was created for and how it is intended to be used; and the strategic purpose, which refers to the methodology of translation (Nord 2018: 27).

Another principle of the *Skopos Theorie* states that the end justifies the means. In other words, the purpose of the text should determine the translational decisions in each case. Nord extrapolates this idea to the sociologic environment adding that "the receiver, or rather the addressee, is the main factor determining the target-text *Skopos*" (*op.cit.*: 28). Besides, Nord states that the text should be meaningful, acceptable and coherent in the context of the addressee's culture. As the first receiver of the source text, the translator should apply all his or her linguistic, cultural and general knowledge in order to interpret the text according to its original purpose.

Furthermore, Nord describes a variety of communicative functions from the translational point of view. This typology demonstrates how the translation is always influenced by the purpose of the source text.

The theory englobes the following functions (*op. cit.*: 39):

1. Referential function. Refers to the naming of objects and phenomena. If the receiver is not familiar with the described reality, the text is informative. When it refers to a specific language or use of a language, then it can have a metalinguistic subfunction. Texts in manuals or instructions may have a directive subfunction and the educational texts can have a didactic one. This type of texts usually includes many nouns and verbs used to name the objects and inform about events.

2. Expressive function. The sender expresses a particular opinion or an attitude towards an object or a phenomenon. The texts that describe emotions or feelings have an emotive subfunction. If attitude is expressed, the subfunction may be evaluative. The expressive function is sender-oriented, and it is assumed that the sender shares the same values with the receiver, so the message will be understood and agreed to. Emotionally colored adjectives and nouns usually prevail in this kind of texts.

3. Appellative function. This function is widely used in advertisement and marketing. Its purpose is to encourage a reaction or a desired behavior from the receiver, to convince him or her to take an action or to agree with the expressed point of view. Companies use it for selling purposes and adapt the product presentation to the customers' preferences. These texts include imperative verb forms and rhetorical questions (Nord 2018: 42) along with other stylistic means, such as superlative adjectives and positively charged nouns. This function is receiver-oriented and mainly focuses on obtaining the desired results.

4. Phatic function. It is used to establish and maintain a contact or to end an interaction between the sender and the receiver. Linguistic, non-linguistic or paralinguistic means are chosen depending on the situation. The examples include greetings, small talk or proverbs.

Based on this typology, Nord defines two types of translations: documental and instrumental (2018: 45). The documental translation generates metatexts, in other words, texts about texts in such areas as comparative linguistics, encyclopedia translations and scientific research.

Nord subdivides the instrumental translations into equifunctional, when the source and the target text share the same purpose, and heterofunctional, when there are differences due to time, cultural, context or other circumstances.

3. Corporate Newsletters

Corporate newsletters are relatively short messages that companies send to their subscribers with certain frequency by e-mail in order to inform about news or events, to display new campaigns or to encourage some action.

These messages include textual and visual elements that can be constant (always present in any e-mail) or variable. Here are some examples of the constant elements:

- a title (according to the conventional regulations, every email should have a title);
- a disclaimer stating that the user has received this message as a result of a subscription. This message usually appears at the end of each newsletter and varies slightly depending on the sender;
- a link to cancel the subscription. It can be a button, an underlined hypertext or simply an informative text about how to cancel the subscription (for example, sending an electronic or postal mail);
- links to social media pages: the names of these social media platforms or their logos.

The rest of the contents are variable for each company and usually depend on the corporate purposes. Newsletters may also include images, video, links, buttons and other elements to facilitate the communication between the customer and the company.

4. Christiane Nord's Typology in Corporate Newsletters

The typology developed by Christiane Nord (2018: 39-43) becomes relevant for the study of corporate newsletters as it helps to determine and describe different types of texts and to analyze the translational decisions in each case. The examples below come from corporate newsletters translated from English (EN-GB) into Spanish (ES-ES) for the British fashion company Burberry. This company uses a centralized localization model, so its contents are initially created in the corporate headquarters and then translated for other markets all over the world. This localization model allows us to compare the source text and its translation.

In the frame of the functional typology by Christiane Nord, we discovered that the corporate newsletters contain mainly the referential type of texts: they inform the receiver about something unknown before, such as an event, a new product, a promotion, etc. These texts constitute the body of the message and come with supporting images.

Here is the first example for the analysis. This Burberry newsletter from the 1st of June 2021 informs customers about their new bag model Olympia. This information is supposedly new to the reader, so the text has an informative subfunction.

Table 1. Example of referential function.

EN-GB	ES-ES
Created from the world's finest leathers by expert artisans in Italy, our Olympia bag is a showcase of meticulous skill and beauty. OUR FUTURE HERITAGE A new signature by Riccardo Tisci, fusing classicism and modernity. Discover our collection of Olympia bags.	Nuestros expertos artesanos confeccionan en Italia el bolso Olympia con las pieles más refinadas del mundo; un despliegue de belleza y técnicas meticulosas. NUESTRO LEGADO PARA EL FUTURO Un nuevo icono diseñado por Riccardo Tisci en una fusión de clasicismo y modernidad. Descubre la colección de bolsos Olympia.

According to the newsletter, this leather bag is made in Italy and combines classical and modern styles. Nevertheless, the expressive function, very common in the fashion industry texts, is also present here. There are plenty of adjectives, including superlative forms (*finest leathers* / las pieles más refinadas) and a variety of descriptive nouns acting like adjectives (*beauty* / belleza; *signature* / icono; *heritage* / legado).

Other informative texts by Burberry also contain various expressive elements. Here are some examples:

Table 2. Example of expressive function.

EN-GB	ES-ES
Intricate, unique and innovative fabrics are cast across the Spring/Summer 2021 collection by Riccardo Tisci – from sheer ruffled tulle to garment-dyed, sealed cotton canvas. (10/05/2021)	La colección primavera- verano 2021 de Riccardo Tisci da rienda suelta a tejidos intricados, únicos e innovadores, desde detalles avolantados de tul transparente hasta piezas en lona de algodón teñida tras la confección con costuras selladas. (10/05/2021)
Introducing a new perspective on our House check in versatile military green – drawing from our affinity with nature and our heritage of exploration. (30/07/2021)	Presentamos una nueva perspectiva de nuestros cuadros House Checks en un versátil tono verde militar, que nace de la afinidad de Burberry con la naturaleza y su legado de exploración. (30/07/2021)
The striking TB Monogram charts a path across four awe-inspiring landscapes – reimagining our heritage of exploration with innovation and modernity. (25/08/2021)	Con refrescantes accesorios y estampados bañados en un espíritu optimista, la colección de monogramas TB de este verano está pensada para aquellos que sueñan con ir más allá. (25/08/2021)
BOLD AND BRIGHT A fresh take on Lola's rebellious spirit. Discover bright new additions to our Lola bag family – adding colour to a tactile reimagination of our iconic trench coat. (22/09/2021)	EXPLOSIÓN DE COLOR Lola, nuestro bolso de espíritu rebelde, se actualiza. Descubre los llamativos nuevos estilos de la familia Lola, un toque de color para nuestra suave reinterpretación del trench coat. (22/09/2021)

These informative texts express the sender's attitude towards the described facts, so we can talk about an expressive function. As we mentioned before, this function is sender oriented. The source text contains emotionally colored and evaluative adjectives used to awake the same emotions in the receiver: *intricate*, *unique*, *innovative*, *versatile*, *striking*, *awe-inspiring, fresh, rebellious, bright, bold, tactile*.

These adjectives are translated into Spanish using the equivalents: *intricate* – intricado, *unique* – único, *innovative* – innovador, *versatile* – versátil, *rebellious* – rebelde, *bright* – llamativo, *tactile* – suave; different grammatical structures: *awe-inspiring* – «para aquellos que sueñan con ir más allá», *fresh take* – «se actualiza» and other means.

The nouns, in this case, reflect the combination of the informative and the expressive functions. Besides, the concepts they name, such as *heritage*, *innovation* or *modernity,* are key for the brand, and we can find them in the majority of the Burberry corporate contents, such as the company's webpage and promotional materials.

At the same time, we can distinguish an appellative function used to encourage an action from the receiver: open a web page, push the button to look on or to acquire some products, etc. E-mail titles and hypertexts containing the links that allow the user to move to another page are some of these elements.

As mentioned before, the titles have an appellative function and motivate the receiver to open an e-mail. We analyzed some examples of the Burberry messages and discovered that these short texts are usually formed by imperative + direct object: S*ave the Date, Discover our latest ‹…› arrivals; Watch the presentation*. The Spanish

translation uses the same structure ('No te pierdas,' 'Descubre'), and nominal sentences in some cases (*Watch the presentation* – Presentación de…), and in this case, the function is changed to referential.

As for the links, they are usually implemented in the message body and may be represented in different forms, such as hypertexts (hidden links that allow the user to open another page) or buttons. The first ones may appear as a menu in the upper and lower parts of the message:

FREE NEXT DAY DELIVERY   COLLECT-IN-STORE   FREE GIFT PACKAGING

ENTREGAS Y DEVOLUCIONES GRATUITAS   RECOGIDA EN TIENDA   ENVOLTORIO PARA REGALO GRATUITO

Fig. 1. Menus with hypertexts in the Burberry newsletters.

The menus shown above contain links to the company website (https://es.burberry.com). The grammar structures of these hypertexts are not those characteristics of the appellative texts, nevertheless, this function is already included in their nature, as the receiver recognizes them as links and knows that clicking on any of these elements a corresponding webpage will be shown. Here we see the phatic function too, as the reader assumes this interaction results by default.

Titles can also perform as hypertexts. For example, in this case, the word FEMININITY contains a link to the collection site:

FEMININITY

Introducing 'Feminity', Riccardo Tisci's womenswear presentation for Burberry. A love letter to women and a celebration of their incomparable strength.

DISCOVER

FEMININITY

Presentamos "Feminity", la colección de pasarela de Riccardo Tisci para Burberry centrada exclusivamente en la moda para mujer.

Esta carta de amor a todas las mujeres es una celebración de su fuerza inigualable.
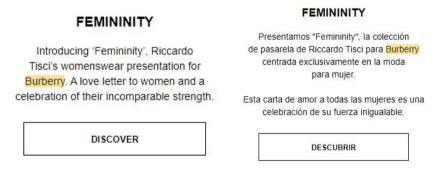
DESCUBRIR

Fig. 2. Titles as hypertexts in the Burberry newsletters.

The buttons may also contain the links. The example above shows a rectangular form with some upper-case text inside. The English imperative '*Discover*' is translated into Spanish as 'Descubrir' and invites the user to push the button and obtain more

information about the collection. Image captions and underlined words can also perform as hypertexts in the Burberry newsletters.

Here are some more examples of these appellative texts from Burberry:

Table 3. Appellative texts in Burberry newsletters.

EN-GB	ES-ES
DISCOVER	DESCUBRIR
DISCOVER MORE	DESCUBRE MÁS
SHOP WOMEN	MUJER
	COLECCIÓN PARA MUJER
SHOP MEN	HOMBRE
	COLECCIÓN PARA HOMBRE
SHOP CHILDREN	NIÑOS
	COLECCIÓN PARA NIÑOS
SHOP NEW ARRIVALS	EXPLORAR
	EXPLORAR NOVEDADES
	NOVEDADES
	VER NOVEDADES
	DESCUBRIR
SHOP THE COLLECTION	COLECCIÓN
SHOP BAGS	EXPLORAR BOLSOS
SHOP SNEAKERS	ZAPATILLAS DEPORTIVAS
SHOP NOW	DESCUBRIR
	COMPRAR
WATCH THE FILM	VER VÍDEO
WATCH ON BURBERRY.COM	VEREN BURBERRY.COM
WATCH ON INSTAGRAM	VER EN INSTAGRAM
WATCH ON YOUTUBE	VER EN YOUTUBE
LEARN MORE	MÁS INFORMACIÓN
DISCOVER THE CAMPAIGN	CAMPAÑA PUBLICITARIA

As we can see, the English imperative is mainly translated into Spanish as an infinitive, thus the direct object in the source text becomes a subject in the translation forming a nominal sentence (*shop women* – mujer; *shop men* – hombre; *shop the collection* – colección; *shop the sneakers* – zapatillas deportivas, *discover the campaign* – campaña publicitaria). The company's decision or the translator's choice can be among the reasons, though an important factor as it is the available space in the case of electronic texts should be taken into consideration. The space inside a rectangular frame is limited, so the shorter alternatives should often be considered for the translation.

As for the phatic function, there are several constant and variable examples. Christiane Nord states that this function is used to establish a contact for future interaction between the sender and the receiver of the message, and this interaction can be formal or informal, symmetric or asymmetric (2018: 43). In this case, the English pronoun '*you*' can be translated into Spanish both in an informal and in a formal way: 'tú' or 'usted.' Burberry uses the informal treatment 'tú' for its clients establishing the base for an informal and symmetric way of communication.

When the user first subscribes to the company newsletter, he or she receives the welcome e-mail created according to the existing canons of business communication in the particular cultural and linguistic environment. The welcoming message from Burberry starts with "*Welcome to Burberry, {user}*," translated into Spanish as "{user}, te damos la bienvenida a Burberry," where the variable {user} is the subscriber's name. The translational decision in Spanish is inclusive in this case: we do not know the gender of the user, so the selected grammar structure is universal and suitable for any of them (see the example below). The body of the message is familiar to the user as it contains a standard welcoming text created according to the existing regulations on each market.

Table 4. Example of phatic function.

DEAR {user}, Welcome to the world of Burberry. We look forward to sharing news with you about our upcoming collections, runway shows, special events and online exclusives.	HOLA, {user} Te damos la bienvenida al mundo de Burberry. Gracias por registrarte para recibir novedades sobre nuestras nuevas colecciones, desfiles, eventos especiales y productos disponibles exclusivamente en línea.

The message titles also have the phatic function: these conventional elements of each e-mail are used to establish a contact between the sender and the receiver. Nevertheless, the referential (informative) and the appellative functions are also present. Thus, we can divide the source texts (EN-GB) and their respective translations (ES-ES) into four groups:

- Informative in both languages. E.g., *Crafting Our Olympia Bag* / La artesanía del bolso Olympia (01/06/2021); *Inspired by Nature* / La naturaleza: nuestra fuente de inspiración (20/08/2021); *Bags and Sneakers in Bold Colour* / Bolsos y zapatillas a todo color (22/09/2021).

The grammar structures are: participle + direct object in the source text and nominal sentence in the translation; participle + direct object in the source text and present indefinite verb + direct object in the translation; or a nominal sentence in both languages:

EN: *Exploring the AW21 Presentation*	ES: La presentación otoño-invierno 2021 (22/04/2021)
EN: *Introducing the Autumn/Winter 2021 Pre-Collection*	ES: Presentamos la precolección otoño-invierno 2021 (25/06/2021)
EN: Stand-out Staples	ES: Básicos increíbles (29/05/2021)

- Appellative in both languages encouraging the user to take an action. E.g.: *Discover Our Latest SS21 Performances and Arrivals* / Descubre nuevas actuaciones y novedades de la colección P/V 2021 (26/04/2021); *Save the Date: Burberry Spring/Summer 2022 Menswear Presentation* / No te pierdas la presentación primavera-verano 2022 para hombre (22/06/2021).

The grammar structure in this case consists of an imperative + direct object in both languages:

EN: *Discover Our Latest SS21 Performances and Arrivals*	ES: Descubre nuevas actuaciones y novedades de la colección P/V 2021 (26/04/2021)

- Informative in the source text and appellative in the translation. E.g.: *B Series 27 August is Now Live* / Descubre la Serie B del 27 de agosto (26/09/2021); *Exploring the SS22 Womenswear Presentation* / Explora la presentación P/V 2022 para mujer (28/09/2021).

The grammar structures are: participle + direct object in the source text and imperative + direct object in the translation; a noun + a verb in present tense in the source text and imperative + direct object in the translation:

EN: *Exploring the SS22 Womenswear Presentation*	ES: Explora la presentación P/V 2022 para mujer (28/09/2021)
EN: *B Series 30 April Is Now Live*	ES: Descubre la Serie B del 30 de abril (30/04/2021)

- Appellative in the source text and informative in the translation. E.g.: *Watch the AW21 Womenswear Presentation* / Presentación de la colección otoño-invierno 2021 para mujer (20/04/2021).

The grammar structure is imperative + direct object in the source text and nominal sentence in the translation:

EN: *Watch the AW21 Womenswear Presentation*	ES: Presentación de la colección otoño-invierno 2021 para mujer (20/04/2021)

According to the typology by Christiane Nord and the examples above, we conclude that the translations of the Burberry newsletters into Spanish are instrumental y heterofuncional, as the functions are often modified in the translation process.

5. Conclusions

This analysis demonstrates that the textual elements of a corporate newsletter are heterogeneous, and each part can have more than one function: referential, expressive, appellative or phatic. The functions are important in the translation process as they help

to achieve that the translated text serves the same purpose as the source one. Christiane Nord's typology can be relevant to decide in each specific case. Nevertheless, the translation often can see itself modified due to other factors, such as grammar structures, available space, stylistic matters or simply the client's choice.

The examples of the Burberry business communications displayed above show their key role in the interaction between the company and its customers. This is the reason why the translation should always intend to facilitate this interaction without changing its purpose.

References

Altanero, T. 2008. "Perspectives on Localization." *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction*, 21(2), 356 p., (ed.) Kieran J. Dunne, John. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. Accessed February 15, 2023. https://doi.org/10.7202/037498ar

Capriotti, Paul. 1999. *Planificación estratégica de la imagen corporativa (Spanish Edition)*. Ariel Comunicación.

Chesterman, Andrew. 2017. "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies." *HERMES - Journal of Language and Communication in Business*, 42, 13–22. Accessed February 12, 2023. https://doi.org/10.7146/hjlcb.v22i42.96844

Crystal, David. 2006. *Language and the Internet* (2nd ed.). UK: Cambridge University Press.

Currás Pérez, Rafael. 2010. "Identidad e imagen corporativas: revisión conceptual e interrelación." *Teoría y Praxis*, 6(7), 9–34. Accessed January 30, 2023. https://doi.org/10.22403/uqroomx/typ07/01

Esselink, Bert, and Arjen-Sjoerd de Vries. 2000. *A Practical Guide to Localization (Language International World Directory)*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Hofstede, Geert. 2003. *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations (Second Edition)*. CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Hofstede, Geert, Gert Jan Hofstede, et al. 2010. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (3 edition). Maidenhead, U.K: McGraw-Hill Education.

Jimenez-Crespo, Miguel A. 2013. "Translation and Web Localization." *Machine Translation*, vol. 28(2), pp. 151-154. Springer.

Katan, David, and Mustapha Taibi. 2021. *Translating Cultures* (3rd ed.). England: Routledge.

Landow, George. P. 2006. *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization (Parallax: Re-visions of Culture and Society)* (3rd ed.). Baltimore, MD: JHUP.

LSP Translation Scenarios: Selected contributions to the EU Marie Curie Conference Vienna 2007. 2008. Books on Demand.

Nord, Christiane. 2018. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained (Translation Theories Explored)* (2nd ed.). NY: Routledge.

Pym, Anthony. 2004. *The Moving Text: Localization, Translation, and Distribution*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Reiss, Katharina, and Hans J. Vermeer. 2015. *Towards a General Theory of Translational Action: Skopos Theory Explained* (1st ed.). NY: Routledge.

Sandrini, Peter. 2008. "Localization and Translation." In *LSP Translation Scenarios: Selected contributions to the EU Marie Curie Conference Vienna 2007*. (2008). Books on Demand.