

# MUTATIS MUTANDIS

Mutatis Mutandis. Revista  
Latinoamericana de Traducción

E-ISSN: 2011-799X

revistamutatismutandis@udea.edu.co

Universidad de Antioquia  
Colombia

Nord, Christiane

Francisca Suau Jiménez (2010) La traducción especializada (en inglés y español en  
géneros de economía y empresa) Madrid: Arco/Libros. 150pp.

Mutatis Mutandis. Revista Latinoamericana de Traducción, vol. 3, núm. 2, 2010, pp. 384-  
387

Universidad de Antioquia  
Medellín, Colombia

Disponible en: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=499267777002>

- Cómo citar el artículo
- Número completo
- Más información del artículo
- Página de la revista en redalyc.org

redalyc.org

Sistema de Información Científica

Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina, el Caribe, España y Portugal

Proyecto académico sin fines de lucro, desarrollado bajo la iniciativa de acceso abierto



**Francisca Suau Jiménez (2010) *La traducción especializada (en inglés y español en géneros de economía y empresa)* Madrid: Arco/Libros. 150pp.**

Christiane Nord

*European Society for Translation Studies*

[cn@christiane-nord.de](mailto:cn@christiane-nord.de)

In professional translation between English and Spanish, economic and business texts come second in importance to technical and scientific texts. This is why the new book by Francisca Suau Jiménez, professor for specialized translation at the Faculty of English Philology of the University of Valencia, Spain, comes in handy for practitioners, students and teachers of economic and business translation. The book presents a theoretically well founded and descriptive approach to the intercultural comparison of economic and business genres which are most frequently translated from English into Spanish and vice versa. Drawing on her vast experience with the material both in practice and in teaching, the author offers the reader useful hints and strategies for a translation-oriented linguistic source-text analysis, placing particular emphasis on the aspects of genre, register and meta-discourse.

The 150 page book is divided into six chapters, each framed by an introduction and a conclusion, as one would expect from a book intended as a manual for university teaching. The first chapter (pp. 17-25) presents the theoretical foundations of the text, progressing from the more general aspects of the theory to the more specific. The author discusses the following questions: "What is specialized translation?" How can we define "economic and business translation?" and "What is its role and function in the existing classification?" What is translated, by whom, and for what purposes?

The second chapter (pp. 37-36) deals with the concepts of genre and register and applies them to specialized translation. As far as genre is concerned, the author draws mainly on the sociolinguistic theories of Dell Hymes (1974), and draws on M.A.K. Halliday's functional grammar theory with respect to the definition of register, a concept which in other models is regarded as comprising text-type norms and conventions. If we define a text as "communicative occurrence", we open up the field for the analysis not only of linguistic forms but also of the situational conditions in which the interaction takes place, including "communicating partners", i.e. sender and receiver and their respective communicative intentions. It is well known that texts which are used in similar situations and for similar communicative purposes develop, over the course of time, into relatively standardized, conventionalized forms of syntax and style which tell the receivers what to expect with regard to pretended communicative functions and genre. These conventions do not represent a model that text producers *must* use in all situations, but with the analysis of a corpus of texts belonging to the same genre we may

identify at least certain tendencies toward the higher or lower frequency of some linguistic forms or even style patterns.

It soon becomes evident that the author is particularly interested in metadiscourse, which, according to her, is the third most important factor, following genre and register. This aspect is dealt with in chapter 3 (pp. 37-53). Metadiscourse embraces all the elements affecting the interpersonal relationship between the sender and receiver (that is, precisely those aspects which in my four-function model are attributed to the phatic function, cf. Nord 2007). According to the author, the elements of metadiscourse, such as lexical discourse or attitudinal markers or certain modes and tenses or rhetorical questions, in the area of syntax, "are located on a higher level than the propositional content or discourse in the strict sense because they do not carry essential information. Rather, they are used to catch the readers' attention so as to persuade, convince or entertain them by entering with them into a particular kind of dialogue" (p. 38). In this respect, I do not entirely share the author's view. Her concept of metadiscourse is so broad that it covers aspects which I would include in the expressive function (e.g. evaluative adjectives or relatives like in *las mejores obras de arte*, p. 41) or appellative function (e.g. directive verbs or expressions like *we recommend you follow...*, *ibid.*). But of course, the place we attribute to each subfunction depends on the general concept system we are drawing on, and the author's conceptual groundwork is consistent and coherent in itself. She is also entirely right to emphasize the importance of these aspects for translation. Although we might hypothesize that functions or subfunctions themselves are universal, or at least transcultural, the way they are verbalized is more culture-specific than language-specific. To make a translation work in the target culture it is indeed recommendable to use the patterns that readers of that culture are able to recognize. In that respect, the author offers a comparison of metadiscursive elements in English and Spanish, using numerous examples provided by her corpus of economic and business parallel texts (pp. 43-53) ("parallel texts" in the sense of authentic, non-translated texts of two cultures, representing the same genre, but also in the sense of texts and their translations). One aspect I had previously missed in this context that of the cultural varieties in the English-speaking world. As we all know, in spite of globalization, there is still no such thing as a homogeneous "English" (or "Globish", as some people call it ironically) culture, and it would be interesting to discuss the question of whether or not the differences between the various English-speaking cultures have actually disappeared in the global internet world (almost all the texts used as examples in the book come from this globalized source), or whether there are still some differences (for example, with regard to the frequency of certain patterns) between texts of different geographical or cultural origins. However, I am very aware of the fact that might be difficult to spot.

In chapter 4 (pp. 55-79), the concepts of genre, register and metadiscourse are applied to the use of language in economic and business contexts. The author classifies the typical activities of companies, correlating them with the linguistic skills needed to put them into practice and the speech acts or rhetorical functions

C. Nord/Francisca Suau Jiménez (2010) *La traducción especializada (en inglés y español en géneros de economía y empresa)*. Madrid: Arco/Libros. 150pp.

used for this purpose. The most frequent genres analyzed are the minutes of meetings, business correspondence, annual reports, and incoterms.

This English-Spanish contrastive analysis by genres is the main topic of chapter 5 (pp. 81-136), which in my view is the most useful part of the book, especially for students. The chapter is divided into two parts, one concerned with printed genres and the other with genres typical of internet sources (cyber-genres). In the first half, the author looks at business correspondence (e.g. letters of applications, acknowledgement of instructions modification and cheque submission, offers of products and services), economic reports, internal notes, and the information leaflets a company, as well as articles in specialized journals. In the second part, we find examples of email correspondence, web pages and blogs. A third section is dedicated to job offers, which appear in both traditional and electronic media.

Chapter 6 is very concise and presents a model for translation-oriented text analysis guided by the three aspects discussed in the previous chapters: genre, register and metadiscourse. It comes as a bit of a surprise that the sub-factors of register distinguished by Halliday (*field*, *tenor* and *mode*), which had been mentioned only in passing in section 2.3 (p. 31) come to play a rather prominent role in the model of analysis. To my mind, this brings some inconsistency into the scheme because some of the aspects mentioned under *tenor*, will afterwards reappear in the metadiscourse section. However, this is more a personal remark than a criticism. I also found the author's emphasis on the functional aspects of translation to be very helpful even though she seems to assume, without questioning the assumption, that these texts should always be translated for the same function or functions of the source text or, to put it in my terminology, that this kind of texts would require an instrumental (and here: equifunctional) translation mode. For some of the included genres, I can imagine other modes and forms of translation, but I admit that in professional practice, an equifunctional translation or, in Nida's terms, functional equivalence will certainly be what is most often asked for.

On the whole, this book is a very valuable contribution to translation teaching (perhaps not even only of economic and business texts, since the model might be transferred to other domains as well), and to translation practice. It is clear, concise, pedagogical and practical, and offers a large number of examples. I congratulate the author for having made the effort to compile it, and wish the book "many happy re-editions" recommending only that in one of these, one might even include an index of the most important concepts and terms with short definitions, which would add even more didactic value to this publication.

C. Nord/Francisca Suau Jiménez (2010) *La traducción especializada (en inglés y español en géneros de economía y empresa)*. Madrid: Arco/Libros. 150pp.

## References

Halliday, M. A. K. (1994): *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Londres: Edward Arnold.

Hymes, D. (1974) *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: an Ethnographic Approach*. Filadelfia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nord, Christiane (2007) The Phatic Function in Translation: Metacommunication as a Case in Point. Willy Vanderweghe, Sonia Vandepitte, Marc van de Velde (eds): *The Study of Language and Translation* (Belgian Journal of Linguistics 21/2007), Amsterdam: Benjamins, 171-184.