

## What is Real Transcreation? A Case Study of Transcreation in Corporate Communication Writing

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARSS/v11-i12/11686> DOI:10.6007/IJARSS/v11-i12/11686

**Published Date:** 10 December 2021

### Abstract

Transcreation, a term merging “translation” and “creation”, has become a buzzword in the language service industry as well as in translation studies. However, pertinent questions with regard to it are: “what is transcreation?” and “what kind of text is a transcreated text?” This paper addresses the first issue by a systemic functional linguistics based survey of definitions from professional translators, language service providers and scholars in translation studies respectively for a real definition of transcreation with descriptions of its metafunctions. Further, by textual analysis in the case study of the Chinese and its English translation corporate profiles of Huawei, a multinational information and communication technology company of China, the paper studies the application of transcreation in corporate communication writing by examining its metafunctions. It is concluded that transcreation requires multi-party’s interplay and produces new constructs in the transcreated texts, which poses both challenges and opportunities to translators. The research findings prove transcreation’s effectiveness and flexibility in corporate communication and showcase the challenges and opportunities it brings to the translation profession by linking its real definition with its practical use.

**Keywords:** Transcreation, Real Definition, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Corporate Profile Metafunction.

### Introduction

As a “buzzword” in recent years (Benetello, 2017: 237), transcreation is used more and more by “advertising and marketing professionals” (Fang & Song, 2014: 72) as it is well aware that traditional translation could hardly meet the changing demand of translation “across business worldwide” today (Feroose et al., 2018). Nevertheless, as to what exactly transcreation is, there is no “unanimous” definition (Benetello, 2017, p. 237). Professional translators, language service providers (hereafter referred to as LSPs) and even scholars in translation

studies give different answers in describing what transcreation is. Professional translators view transcreation as something not so new in that they think they have been doing the same thing under different names for years, while LSPs emphasize the complexity and creativity of transcreation claiming that it is a more advanced and demanding service compared with traditional translation. Even some scholars consider “a one-size-fits-all definition of it is an arduous endeavour” (Gaballo, 2012: 103). With no regularized definition of transcreation, confusion arose both in language service business and translation studies as there is no clear boundary between transcreated texts and texts translated in the traditional sense.

In Chinese language service industry, the gap between translation practice and translation studies has incurred a lack of expertise and innovation (Wang 2017: 55), especially when it comes to the term “transcreation”. While many top international LSPs such as *TransPerfect* (US) and *RWS* (UK) are listing transcreation on their websites as a service (“Introducing the RWS Moravia Go Global Model - RWS,” 2018; “Multicultural Marketing | TransPerfect,” n.d.), most of their Chinese counterparts such as *Transn* and *GTCOM* make no mention of it. In the *Blue Book of Language Service for Chinese Enterprise Globalization (2016)* by University of International Business and Economics Press, a key university press of China, transcreation is not listed as one of the language services. There is even no word about transcreation in the whole book. The disparity between the strategy of “going global” for Chinese multinational companies (*China Going Global: between ambition and capacity*, 2017) and the insufficient knowledge of transcreation in translation of corporate communication “has long been ignored”, despite “the huge demand for high-quality services under the guidance of a mature theoretical translation system” (Wang et al., 2020). Therefore, the questions to be addressed in this study are: “what is real transcreation?” and “what kind of text is a transcreated text?”

As a merger of the two terms “translation” and “creation”, transcreation has been agreed by most scholars as “more than translation” (Pedersen, 2014). But its definitions are abundant. By revisiting the various definitions of transcreation from the view of metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal and textual) in the first part, this research concludes the metafunctional features of transcreation from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics and thus form a real definition of transcreation. In the second part, with a case study of determining whether the English version of Huawei’s corporate profile is a work of transcreation from the Chinese version or not, the paper examines how transcreation with its three metafunctions is applied in corporate communication writing of Chinese multinational companies. In answering the two research questions, this study links the ontological understanding of transcreation with its practical use in the translation industry.

## Defining Transcreation

### *Nominal and Real Definitions*

Definition states the meaning of a term (Bickenbach, 1996: 49). However, a term “may have many different senses and multiple meanings, and thus require multiple definitions” (Dooly, 2006: 48). Among various categories of definitions, nominal and real definitions are a primary one, firstly proposed by John Locke (Locke, 1999: 407). Being connotative and denotative respectively, nominal definition states “the abstract Idea to which the Name is annexed”, whereas a real definition is “the constitution of the insensible parts of that Body” (Gupta, 2019).

Take the term “transcreation” as an example. One of its most commonly accepted nominal definitions is that it is basically “a fusion of the two words translation and creation” (Pedersen, 2016, p. 231). In other words, nominal definition of transcreation states what the name “transcreation” is annexed. Meanwhile, a real definition of transcreation should clarify the meaning by stating the properties or qualities a transcreated text must have, such as the use and the functions (Locke, 1999: 426).

Since functions are considered to be a “fundamental property” of language itself (Halliday & Hasan, 1987), this research will take a survey towards definitions of transcreation to find a real definition describing its metafunctions before viewing transcreation in translation practice.

### *Metafunctions*

According to systemic functional linguistics, language is a stratum from meaning (semantics) to wording (lexicogrammar) and to sounding or writing (phonology) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). It is an act of expressing potential meaning (Li, 2007, p. 11). Different from child language or primitive proto-language, common language has a higher-order semiotic system creating more than one mode of meaning simultaneously (Li, 2007, p. 11). In this way, transcreation in corporate writing, as a text pattern, should convey more than one mode of meanings simultaneously for the target audiences. These modes of meanings are called metafunctions in systemic functional linguistics, namely ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. Briefly speaking, metafunctions are the “fundamental” functions of any language “in relation to our ecological and social environment” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 30). The details of the three metafunctions are as follows:

Ideational metafunction refers to “what is happening?” by construing experience in terms of what is going on around us and inside us (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 30). In the case of transcreation in marketing, it refers to what types of corporate communication is created during transcreating.

Interpersonal metafunction indicates “who is involved?” as an exchange of information with the social world by negotiating social roles and attitudes. For transcreation, the interaction between transcreators and all the other parties involved -- corporate executives as their clients, transcreating managers as their coordinators, and most of all, targeted consumers -- is its interpersonal metafunction.

Textual metafunction refers to “how is it happening?” by creating messages with which we can package our meanings. Different from the first two metafunctions with non-linguistic concern, textual metafunction deals mainly with how lexicogrammatical choices affect the messages conveyed in transcreated text. In other words, textual metafunction relates to “the construction of text” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 30).

### **Diversified Definitions of Transcreation**

To clarify what transcreation is by its functions, it is inevitable to refer to the diversified definitions given by different groups involved first, such as professional translators, LSPs and scholars in translation studies, because it is believed that “a definition is an ending point (a conclusion) of a discussion” (Kublikowski, 2009: 235).

*Transcreation in Professional Translators' Eyes*

Professional translators are the first among others who sense the transcreation turn in this business. According to an interview by Gaballo (2012) of professional translators about their views on transcreation, most translators considered that transcreation was just another approach of translation mainly used for sales copies, brochures, slogans and so on. It was beyond a simple translation as it was more creative and translators were given more freedom to "add, rearrange or create". Transcreation, from their perspective, aims at fitting into the local context by cultural insertion and ignores the linguistic accuracy (Gaballo, 2012: 98).

As the first-hand information, translators' view is far from being a systemic definition. It fails to include the ideational metafunction of transcreation because there is no mentioning of what experience transcreation construes. It states, but in an ambiguous way, how the interpersonal metafunction works among different parties. What is more, to other questions concerning its textual metafunction such as how to achieve cultural insertion and to what extent can the adding, rearranging or creating go exactly, translators have not given a definite answer other than linguistic inaccuracy in transcreation.

In general, translators' view reflects interpersonal and textual metafunctions of transcreation, but it does not include its ideational metafunction.

*Transcreation in Language Service Providers' Eyes*

Quite different from translators, as soon as LSPs spot it as a niche in the market, they respond simultaneously to the transcreation turn by emphasizing that transcreation is a service, unlike translation as a commodity in the traditional sense (Yunker, n.d.), which indicates the ideational metafunction of transcreation as they see it. Examples can be found on the websites of top LSPs such as *Moravia*, *Verbalizeit*, *Wordbank*, and *Welocalize*.

Among others, *Welocalize*, the world's largest online translation agency, lists three key differences between transcreation and traditional translation on its website (Law, 2017), which defines in detail the transcreation's interpersonal metafunction from LSP's perspective. First, it maintains that source content for transcreation and translation is different. Transcreation deals with more creative texts like "marketing and advertising collaterals" (Donkor, 2015). These texts could be more complicated multimodal ones interacting with the consumers through more than one media, not merely in written forms like what translation in traditional sense deals with. This difference demonstrates well the way transcreation interacts with the target market. Secondly, given the complexity of transcreation, *Welocalize* claims that people working in transcreation are not translators in common sense but in-house copywriters or linguists. It states the difference between the two in timing as well for the same reason. Translation is usually billed by word, which renders a concrete way for timing. Nevertheless, transcreation might take longer time because transcreators have to work in a team or negotiate with customers in several rounds to finish the job, which makes it harder to tell the accurate timing of it (Law, 2017).

LSPs define transcreation from the business angle and try to make it understood by the customers that transcreation is effective and qualified in conveying their messages to the target audience. However, covering the use and conditions of transcreation work only is not enough. The notion here focuses on the interpersonal metafunction and part of the ideational

function of transcreation but fails to discuss the transcreated text itself in that it goes without mentioning what textual metafunction transcreation has to make it more effective. This is the reason why we need to turn to scholars' views on transcreation to get a fuller picture.

### *Scholars' Definitions of Transcreation*

Though figures suggest that application of transcreation in corporate writing is on the rise (Yunker, n.d.), scholars in translation studies are taking very cautious attitudes towards defining it. Some of them simply refer to the definitions from LSPs (Katan, 2014: 13) while some others give it a tentative try in literary areas (Vieira 1994: 70). Taking views from "diverse contributions" into consideration (Gaballo, 2012: 110), Viviana Gaballo defined transcreation as:

an intra-interlingual re-interpretation of the original work suited to the readers/audience of the target language which requires the translator to come up with new conceptual, linguistic and cultural constructs to make up for the lack (or inadequacy) of existing ones. (Gaballo, 2012: 111)

Gaballo's definition states the key feature of a transcreated text, that is, there should be "new" conceptual, linguistic and cultural constructs in it, compared with the source text, to replace the original untranslatable constructs. This is an attempt to explain the properties of transcreation given its textual metafunction. Meanwhile, it also stresses that these new constructs must be able to convey messages suitable to the target audience, which is a reflection of interpersonal metafunction. The ideational metafunction is included as well in that the definition refers to transcreation as an "intra-interlingual re-interpretation of the original work" in the very beginning of it (Gaballo, 2012: 111).

Complete as it is in stating three metafunctions of transcreation in one definition, Gaballo's definition is not inclusive enough in translation practice, especially when it comes to specialised translation. For example, in corporate communication, the interpersonal function of transcreation should be more complex because more parties are involved in transcreation process than just "the readers/audience of the target language" (Gaballo, 2012: 111). Transcreation was primarily applied to "marketing and advertising materials" (Morón & Calvo, 2018: 132). Hence coordination among transcreators, managers, and clients cannot be ignored in that "client's identity, commercial image and branding" are elements that transcreators have to "respond to" (Morón & Calvo, 2018: 135). Therefore, besides language efficiency, other skills such as cultural awareness, teamwork, and professional communication skills are required of transcreators in the coordination (Morón & Calvo, 2018).

After a brief review of the notions of transcreation given by different groups involved in the translation industry, the focus and limits of each definition are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1.

*Metafunctions of Transcreations in Definitions from Different Sources*

Definitions by	Metafunctions		
	Ideational	Interpersonal	Textual
Professional translators		√	√
LSPs	√	√	
Translation studies scholar (Viviana Gaballo)	√	√	√

**Real Definition of Transcreation**

Though Gaballo's definition is more academic than practical in the translation industry, it includes all the three metafunctions of transcreation. If we make supplementations to it by referring to the previous two kinds of definitions from professional translators and LSPs, we can get a real definition concerning three metafunctions of transcreation both in academia and business.

Transcreation is a translation service mostly used for making corporate communications acceptable to the target context. As different parties are involved, transcreation requires more than just an individual transcreator's work and takes longer time. Transcreated texts contain new linguistic, conceptual and cultural constructs to convey messages not existing in the Source Text. Thus linguistic equivalence in transcreation is not essential.

This definition can be divided into three parts according to three metafunctions of transcreation:

- 1) Ideational metafunction: Transcreation is a translation service mostly used for making corporate communications acceptable to the target context.
- 2) Interpersonal metafunction: As different parties are involved, transcreation requires more than just an individual transcreator's work and takes longer time.
- 3) Textual metafunction: Transcreated texts contain new linguistic, conceptual and cultural constructs to convey messages not existing in the Source Text. Thus linguistic equivalence in transcreation is not essential.

Real definition states the "real essence" of a term, which renders a way to identify an object through evaluating whether it possesses the quality or properties stated in its real definition. This study is to conduct a case study of the application of transcreation in corporate communication of Chinese multinational companies according to this real definition. By examining the metafunctions of the sample to see if it is a work of transcreation or not according to the benchmarks set by the real definition, this study aims to showcase the metafunctional features of a transcreated text in corporate communication.

**Material and Method***Research Material*

Globalization at present has promoted the in-depth communication between the world and China, during which multinational enterprises of China keep speeding up their internationalization by following the "Going global 2.0 strategy" (*China Going Global: between ambition and capacity*, 2017) proposed by the government. Although to date daily

intra-lingual translation no longer poses any obstacles in corporate communication, one of the problems in the globalization of Chinese companies is that “management of cultural differences still needs to be improved” (Wang & Miao, 2016: 48). Traditional translation can hardly meet the requirement of the market in that nowadays translators should “become reviewers (rather than post-editors), transcreators, data analysts and content marketers” (Meer, 2018). According to the statistics in the *Blue Book of Language Service for Chinese Enterprise Globalization* (2016), though traditional translation and interpretation rank as top two in the overall demand for language service in 2016, their share in the modern language service industry in China has declined. New forms of translation have become more in need, taking up 30.5% of the share in language service, and are still on the rise (Wang, 2017: 18).

Further, of all the industries in China which have been investigated in the survey of the *Blue Book*, information and communication technology (ICT) industry is taking the lead in the management of language services in its marketing materials. Figures show that 51.4% of information and communication technology companies have their own language service administration organizations and 70.4% of them have in-house proof-readers to evaluate the quality of marketing and technical material translation, which is a sign of maturity in administration of language service in this industry (Wang, 2017: 51).

Corporate profile is “a professional introduction of the business and aims to inform its stakeholders about its products and services” (Black’s Law Dictionary, n.d.; BusinessDictionary.com, n.d.). Compared with other forms of corporate communication such as corporate branding, crisis communication and employee communication, corporate profile is a more “suitable combination of all the communication resources” (Capriotti, 2007: 85) in that it presents what the enterprise stands for, including its views, values, strategies, structure, properties and so on.

Therefore, this paper takes the English and Chinese corporate profiles of Huawei, the top information and communication technology company in China, as the research material for the case study to examine the metafunctional features of transcreated texts in practice listed in the real definition of transcreation concluded in the previous section.

### **Research Method**

The corporate profiles of Huawei fulfils the first two metafunctional features mentioned in the real definition. Firstly, it is a typical example of corporate writing to deal with relations with targeted public as its ideational metafunction. Secondly, as for its interpersonal metafunction, in-house transcreators work jointly with other parties in Huawei Translation Service Center with clearly defined jobs outweighing most of the traditional translation. The workflow of a translation task includes translation process, quality control and evaluation mechanism involving translators, supervisors, proof-readers, foreign editors, and reviewers (Lu, 2014: 13), strictly following the hierarchy of communication -- from purpose to objective, planned approach and research and then to write and rewrite.

Consequently, what this paper is going to proceed with next is textual metafunction of Huawei’s Chinese and English corporate profiles, that is, whether there are new linguistic, conceptual and cultural constructs in the English text which better convey the message to the target audience and which make it a qualified transcreated text.

*Lexicogrammatical Choices*

Systemic functional linguistics claims that language is a stratified semiotic system with three layers which embody the realization of meaning in a clause, to wit, phonetics or phonology, lexicogrammar and semantics (Figure 1). Lexicogrammar, the unity of lexis and grammar, accounts for the process from wording to meaning and is considered to be both the enactment of social process and the construing of experience. In other words, changes in lexicogrammar will bring about changes in the meaning of a clause. Therefore, new linguistic constructs are the prerequisites for new conceptual and cultural constructs in a text.

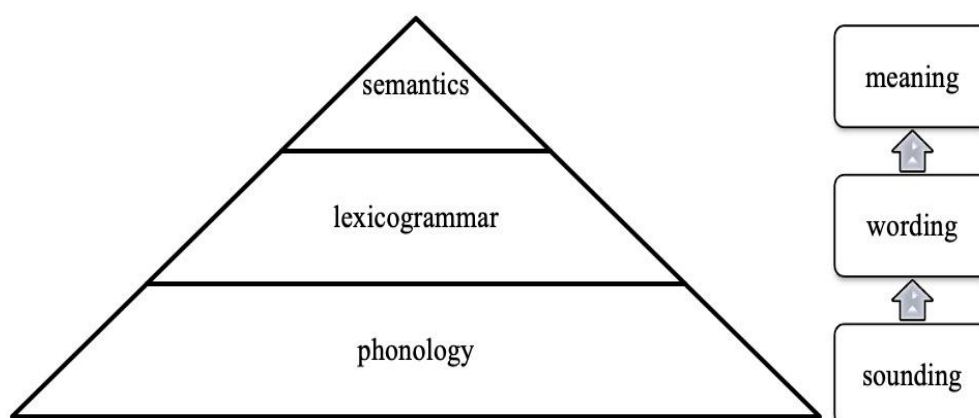


Figure 1. Stratified Semiotic System in Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Thus through analysis of lexicogrammatical choices in a transcreated text, tailor-made new messages to be conveyed to the target audience would be more evident. Those new messages embody the textual metafunction of the transcreated text, as is mentioned in the real definition. Thematic structures in clauses of the sample texts are to be examined for new messages in this paper.

*Thematic Structure: Marked and Unmarked*

In systemic functional linguistics, textual metafunction, as one of the three metafunctions of language, concerns messages of a clause. This function is achieved by the thematic structure of each clause: Theme ^ Rheme. Theme refers to the element serving as “the point of departure of the message” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 89). It always starts from the beginning of the sentence guiding the flow of information and setting the scene. The remainder of the clause, the Rheme (focus), is “the part in which the Theme is developed” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 89). Themes fall into two categories: a theme which is also the subject of a clause is named “unmarked theme”. Meanwhile, the one which is something other than the subject, usually an adverbial group or prepositional phrase (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 98), is named “marked theme”. The difference between the two themes can be seen from the two examples taken from Huawei’s English corporate profile online.

Eg. 1. We are committed to bringing digital to every person, home and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world. (Huawei, n.d.)



“We” in the beginning part of the sentence is the unmarked theme because it is both the subject and theme of the clause. The part following “we” is the rheme of the sentence, which carries the focus of information. This type of thematic structure is the most commonly seen one in both English and mandarin and therefore, most expected one.

Eg. 2. *For the past 30 years*, hundreds of thousands of Huawei people have maintained an unwavering focus on our core business, refusing to cut corners and rejecting opportunism. (Huawei, n.d.)

“For the past 30 years” at the beginning of the sentences is the marked theme because it is an adverbial, not the subject of the clause, which is less expected. What Huawei people have been doing is the rheme of the sentence.

Markedness of a theme influence the meaning of a sentence, because “meaning, choice and markedness are interrelated concepts” (Baker, 1992: 141). Since “unmarked theme” is the default case in thematic structure, used when there is “no reason to choose differently”(Li, n.d.2007: 164), “marked theme” relates closely to the method of text development and is stronger in meaning. What is more, inside the category of “marked themes”, the degrees of markedness vary according to the degree of unexpectedness of different parts fronted in a clause. Therefore the degrees of strength in meaning vary accordingly. Based on a Hallidayan overview of information flow, Baker (1992) arranged the rank of strength in thematic structures according to markednesses. The rank of strength in declarative clauses’ thematic structures is shown in the following Figure 2. Unmarked themes (subjects) in the beginning of sentences are in the least degree of strength. Adjuncts at the beginning of sentences are stronger, but not so much as objects or complements placed at the beginning. Predicators in the beginning of sentences indicate utmost strength in meaning.

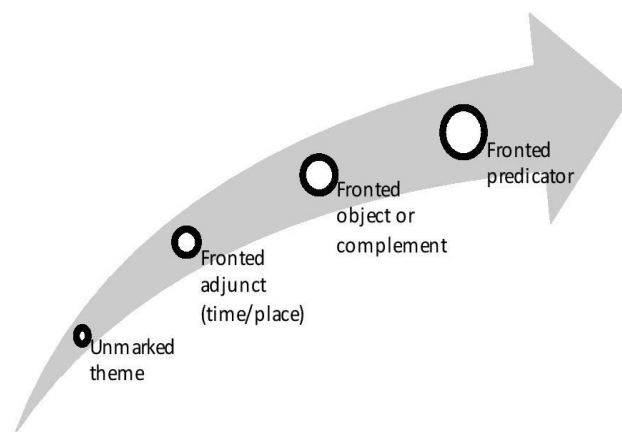


Figure 2. Degree of Strength in Themes

Take the above two sentences taken from Huawei’s English profile as an example. The first example has an unmarked theme, whereas the second one has the fronted time as its marked theme. Therefore, the latter is stronger in meaning than the former.

#### *Corpus Description*

With a simple parallel corpus (1377 characters in the Chinese text and 972 words in the English text) established, this paper collects and examines the changes of thematic structures

in the clauses of the English corporate profile of Huawei which make clauses different from its Chinese equivalent. The comparison among two different languages is not easy because a sentence in English is always marked with a full stop, whereas a Chinese sentence could be of several meaning clusters sharing the same subject with commas. Therefore, "it is necessary to break and reconstruct the Chinese sentence in English translation" in comparison (Xiao, 2015: 31). Table 2 below shows the comparison of the features of the corpus:

Table 2.

*Design Features of the Corpus*

Design feature	Chinese sub-corpus	English sub-corpus
Title	华为公司简介	Corporate Information
Genre	Corporate profile	Corporate profile
Date	November 16, 2019	November 16, 2019
Language	Simplified Mandarin	English
Status	Source text	Target text
Source	<a href="https://www.huawei.com/cn/about-huawei/corporate-information">https://www.huawei.com/cn/about-huawei/corporate-information</a>	<a href="https://www.huawei.com/en/about-huawei/corporate-information">https://www.huawei.com/en/about-huawei/corporate-information</a>
Size	1377 characters/33 sentences	972 words/65 sentences

Manual comparison of the parallel texts and analysis of the differences in thematic structures will be conducted to answer the following questions:

- (1) In how many sentences in the target text are the thematic structures changed? What are the changes?
- (2) How do these changes convey new messages to suit the target context?

**Coding of Thematic Structures**

The coding steps of the thematic structures in the target text are in the following order.

First, by manually comparing the English sub-corpus with Chinese sub-corpus with every clause as a sampling unit, thematic structures in the English version different from the Chinese source text are spotted and recorded. Secondly, the themes in the newly appearing thematic structures in English are coded according to its markedness. Then clauses will be examined to see if the changes in thematic structures made during the transcreation process have influenced the messages to be conveyed.

After the comparison of thematic structures of the source text and target text as the first step, we get a distribution of changed and unchanged themes in the English profile shown in Figure 3 below:

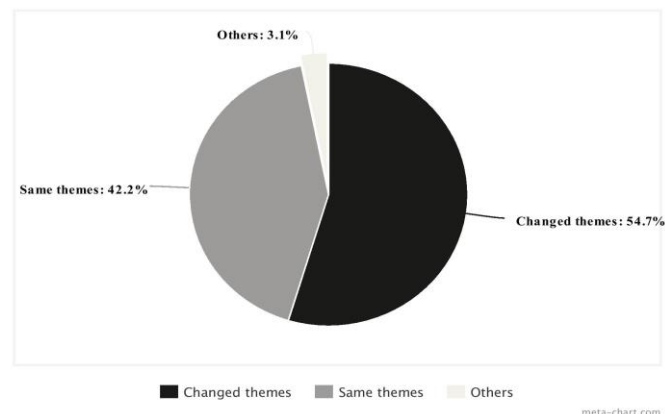


Figure 3. Changes of Themes in Clauses from Chinese to English corporate profile of Huawei.

Though the two texts are short, through manual comparison with source text in Chinese, of the 65 clauses in the English text, 27 clauses keep the unchanged themes from source text while 35 are spotted with new themes, taking up 42% and 55% of the pie chart respectively. The latter constitutes a majority in the target text. Apart from that, there are two clauses in the target text, 3% of the total number, which do not fall into either of the two groups. Neither of the two has a changed or an unchanged theme. In other words, they do not have any equivalent themes in the source text. Their themes in the target text are new.

Further on, among the 35 changed themes, 14 unmarked themes in Chinese text are changed into new unmarked themes. Twenty-one unmarked themes in Chinese text are changed into marked themes with fronted adjuncts. Besides, two findings are notable here: no marked themes in Chinese text are changed into unmarked themes in English text, and no fronted objects or complements are found in the English text as themes.

## Analysis and Results

### Analysis

As is shown in Figure 3 above, the changed themes found in the English texts take up most of the themes in all the clauses. If they are also the theme of the clause, they are “unmarked Themes”. If not, they are “marked themes”. These changes are to be analysed in this section to decide if they fulfil the requirement of the real definition by conveying “messages not existing in the Source Text”.

Below are the analyses of changes in the markedness of themes in the English text with the Chinese text. According to the degrees of markedness of different themes shown in Figure 3 above, changes found in themes in the English profile of Huawei are categorized and arranged from stronger to weaker to show strengths in meanings, namely, changes from unmarked themes to fronted adjuncts as marked themes and from unmarked themes to a different unmarked themes. Neither of the two kinds of changes are strongest in conveying meanings.

Examples of the two different changes in themes will be examined below to trace the changes in messages of the text. The themes in examples are in bold. In order to help the reader understand the original text in Chinese better, back translation which is literal to the source text is offered here for better understanding of the Chinese text.

## (1) From unmarked themes to fronted adjuncts as marked themes:

Putting adjuncts indicating time, space, and so on in the initial place is a common thematic structure in English clauses because adverbials are very flexible and mobile. Twenty-three sentences in Huawei's English profiles have adjuncts in the theme place. However, it is worth noted that 14 themes out of 23 are the fronted adjuncts used for modifying verbs in rheme of the sentence. Fewer time or space adjuncts are fronted. Below is an example of this case.

Source text: (华为) 与客户、伙伴合作创新、扩大产业价值, 形成健康良性的产业生态系统。 ((Huawei) yu kehu, huoban hezuo chuangxin, kuoda chanye jiazhi, xingcheng jiankang liangxing de chanye shengtai xitong.) (华为, n.d.) (*Unmarked Theme*)

Back translation: (*Huawei*) with our customers, partners, and peers cooperate and innovate, expand the value of information and communications technology to form a more robust and symbiotic industry ecosystem. (*Unmarked Theme*)

Target text: *Through joint innovation with our customers, partners, and peers, we are expanding the value of ICT to develop a more robust and symbiotic industry ecosystem.* (Huawei, n.d.) (*Fronted adjunct as marked theme*)

In the Chinese source text of this example, there are multiple verbs like “合作创新 (hezuo chuangxin)”, “扩大(kuoda)”and “形成 (xingcheng)”arranged in a row making the development of the clause quite steady, which is common in Chinese language. However, to fit into the language pattern in the target context, the translator foregrounds the adjunct as the starting point of the clause and rearranges the actions in this clause. The message to be conveyed here is: based on the joint innovation, the expanding of the value is what Huawei does, and the robust and symbiotic industry ecosystem is what Huawei targets at. In this way, the language barrier is removed, and readers can understand the sentence better.

Adjunct as the marked Theme in a clause is very common in the English version of Huawei's corporate profile. Though we have to take the generally accepted rhetorical features of Chinese and English into consideration, that is, Chinese language prefers to put the adverbial expression after the subject of the clause more, it is still pronounced that the transcreators make purposeful lexicogrammatical choices. More adverbial phrases set the way of developing the information and guide the audience to pay attention on “what Huawei does” instead of “how is it”. A down-to-earth and low-profile image of Huawei is created, which is different from what is shown in the original text.

## (2) From unmarked theme to unmarked theme:

The change from one most expected theme to another equally expected theme but in different forms is very common here. With only the starting point of a clause changed, the flow of information remains intact as before, which is shown in the example below.

Source text: (华为) 以责任贡献来评价员工和选拔干部。 ((Huawei) yi zeren gongxian lai pingjia yuangong he xuanba ganbu.) (华为, n.d.) (*Unmarked Theme*)

Back translation: *Huawei* assesses employees and selects managers based on their performance results, as well as the extent of their responsibilities. (*Unmarked Theme*)

Target text: *We assess employees and select managers based on their performance results, as well as the extent of their responsibilities.* (Huawei, n.d.) (*Unmarked Theme*)

The change in the first example is not apparent. The unmarked theme in the source is a noun (Huawei), which is changed into the plural form of first-person (we). Nevertheless, still, the two are referring to the same thing. It is just a shift from lifeless “Huawei” to “we” to make the theme in target text closer to the listener to arouse empathy.

However, in another example, the change from unmarked theme to another unmarked theme could indicate more than just a shift of the forms of the subject.

Source text: 华为坚持“以奋斗者为本”。(Huawei jianchi “yi fendouzhe weiben”.) (华为, n.d.) (*Unmarked Theme*)

Back translation: Huawei insists on “inspiring dedication”. (*Unmarked Theme*)

Target text: “*Inspiring dedication*” is one of Huawei’s core values. (Huawei, n.d.) (*Unmarked Theme*)

In this example, the target text in English ignores linguistic equivalence and changes the object of the source text into its subject. By putting it at the start of the clause, this new subject becomes the unmarked theme, the starting point of the message of the clause. The remaining part of the sentence becomes the rheme, the focus of the sentence, which follows the theme. Unmarked as it is, the shift of theme from “Huawei” to “inspiring dedication”, regardless of linguistic accuracy, shows the change of the whole sentence structure as well. Though the original sentence tells the spontaneity of Huawei in insisting on the slogan, the English target text conveys the message that the slogan “inspiring dedication” is where everything originates.

### (3) Others

Besides the two kinds of changes above, there is another one small group of sentences which does not fall into either of the above categories. They are two new sentences in the English profile which do not exist in the source text at all. The number of them is few, but their existence is meaningful.

For example, in the paragraph depicting how Huawei enables sustainable environment, “We are keenly aware of the importance of telecommunications in emergency response situations” (Huawei, n.d.) as a new sentence is added. This sentence conveys new message that cannot be found in the source text. If viewed independently, it is a newly written sentence. However, put in the context of the profile, it does not come out of nowhere. As a supplement of the message in this paragraph stating sustainable development, it originates from the source text and fulfils the aims of transcreation. In this way, newly composed sentences with supplementary messages can be part of the transcreation.

From what has been discussed and analysed above, a conclusion could be drawn that the English text of Huawei’s corporate profile conveys new messages to fit into the target context by changing the thematic structures in the text and therefore it fulfils the textual metafunctions of a transcreated text.

## Results

With all the three metafunctions of this sample being examined in this paper as listed in Table 3 below, it could be concluded that Huawei renders an example of transcreation in corporate communications following the real definition of transcreation as defined previously.

Table 4.

*Metafunctions of the English Profile of Huawei.*

Metafunctions	English Profile of Huawei
Ideational	A product of language service as a way of corporate communication.
Interpersonal	In-house transcreators, project managers, proofreaders and so on work jointly in Huawei's Translation Service Center with clearly defined jobs.
Textual	New constructs are made to convey new messages acceptable to the target market.

However, in Chinese language service industry, not every multinational company attaches importance to transcreation or even translation in corporate communication. Despite that, Huawei's corporate profiles have set a positive example for other companies. More and more companies such as ByteDance and DJI are following its suit by organizing their own in-house language service agencies or keeping their own proof-readers, quality assurance editors, translation project managers and so on to cooperate with language service companies ("Job Description-DJI Recruits Genius," 2019; "Translation Project Manager," n.d.).

### Discussion

Transcreation deals with more creative and demanding text and is usually done by teamwork and rounds of negotiations with customers and proof-readers. Meanwhile, by transcreation, new linguistic, conceptual and cultural constructs are created to convey new messages which do not exist in the source language in order to suit the target context. The case study of Huawei's corporate profiles is based on the evaluation of the three metafunctions described in the real identification of transcreation. The research findings indicate transcreation's advantages in corporate communication and the challenges and opportunities it brings to the translation profession, which has implications in academic study and in translation industries.

To begin with, it sets an example for researchers and translators to determine whether a text is a work of transcreation or not. Besides, as is seen from the case study, with new messages conveyed, transcreation informs the target readers in a way which traditional translation can hardly be compared to. This finding proves transcreation's effectiveness and flexibility in conveying messages to target customers.

Further, since a company needs the right marketing communication mix to reach out to its customers — "advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing that companies use to implement their targets for advertising and marketing" (Todorova, 2015: 329), the study of transcreation's metafunctions applies to different registers in corporate writing besides corporate profiles as well.

On the other hand, translators are facing both challenges and opportunities as they are the ones directly involved in the turn of transcreation in translation industry. Language system with the three metafunctions is delicate, which challenges the translators' job. What has been discussed here is just only one drop in the bucket. It is expected that from the study of metafunctions of transcreation, translators would be aware of the instantiation of language, that is, the relation between system and text, and get familiar with their interplay in the creation of meaning during transcreation. As for the opportunities, the interpersonal

metafunction of transcreation keeps transcreation beyond the reach of machine translating for the time being, which makes translators, transcreators or even language service managers indispensable in the process.

However, since this is a preliminary study of metafunctions of transcreation, it should be noted that more need to be done to make the study complete. New perspectives in translation studies could be taken about transcreation in company profiles other than thematic structures, for example, the framing of narratives in transcreation of corporate profiles, or the strategic crisis communication management in the updating of corporate profiles.

What is more, a case study has its limitations in that the generality of a case study is unclear, but on the other hand, it “may inform subsequent quantitative, deductive research and potentially generalizable results” (Simon & Goes, 2013). Huawei’s corporate profile as the research sample is not representative enough in the study of transcreation’s metafunctions in corporate communication because it is the top ICT multinational company in China. But this study offers a qualitative and inductive attempt in understanding transcreation. Based on this case study, for a fuller view of the application of transcreation in the corporate communication writing, more samples should be included in the subsequent researches.

### **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank the reviewers and editors for their valuable comments and recommendations to improve this article.

### **Conflicts of Interest Statement**

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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