

A cognitive-axiological approach to the chairman's letter of the leading civil aircraft manufacturers¹

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Abstract

In this paper our aim is to look into the dominant axiological values in the aeronautical discourse through the Chairman's letters included in the annual reports published in 2014 and 2015 of some leading civil transport aircraft manufacturers: *Airbus*, *Boeing*, *Bombardier*, *Embraer* and *Textron Aviation*. We will analyse the positive qualities and the way in which they are introduced in this type of discourse through cognitive tools such as metaphor, metonymy and image schemas. This work has been structured according to the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor and Metonymy (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999) and extended to axiological semantics (Krzyszowski, 1997, 2004) and to specialized discourse (Adams & Cruz García, 2007; Cortés de los Ríos, 2010; Nicolae, 2010), among others. However, the specific approach to a technological manufacturing sector does not seem to have been carried out so far and, consequently, this study tries both to bridge this gap and to show new evidence for the correct interpretation of this genre. The results show that the source domains that are regularly used to highlight the positive qualities of the new planes and their manufacturing companies are extremely diverse. Consequently, source domains such as LENS, JOURNEY, CONSTRUCTION, GAME and LIVING ORGANISM, among others, can be found in these corporate letters. However, only two metonymies (INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE and PART FOR THE WHOLE) are used to communicate positive attributes in this sector and the number of relevant image schemas in the corpus (attribute, space, container and balance) is also limited and occasional.

Keywords: axiological linguistics, cognitive semantics, metaphor and metonymy, aeronautical engineering discourse.

Resumen

Una aproximación cognitivo-axiológica a la carta del presidente de los principales fabricantes de aviones civiles

En este trabajo nuestra intención es investigar los valores axiológicos dominantes en el discurso aeronáutico a través de las cartas de los presidentes incluidas en los informes anuales publicados en 2014 y 2015 de algunos de los principales fabricantes de aviones de transporte civil: *Airbus*, *Boeing*, *Bombardier*, *Embraer* y *Textron Aviation*. Analizaremos las cualidades positivas y la forma en que se integran en este tipo de discurso mediante herramientas cognitivas tales como la metáfora, la metonimia y los esquemas de imagen. Este trabajo ha sido estructurado de acuerdo con la Teoría Cognitiva de la Metáfora y la Metonimia (Lakoff y Johnson, 1980, 1999), y extendida a la semántica axiológica (Krzyszowski, 1997, 2004) y al discurso especializado (Adams y Cruz García, 2007; Cortés de los Ríos, 2010; Nicolae, 2010, entre otros). No obstante, una aproximación concreta a un sector de fabricación tecnológica como es éste parece no haber sido efectuada hasta ahora y, por consiguiente, intentamos dar cobertura a esta ausencia y aportar una nueva evidencia para la correcta interpretación de este género. Los resultados indican que los dominios fuente que se utilizan regularmente para destacar cualidades positivas en los nuevos aviones y las empresas que los fabrican son extremadamente diversos. En consecuencia, dominios fuente tales como LENTE, VIAJE, CONSTRUCCIÓN, JUEGO y ORGANISMO VIVO, entre otros, aparecen en las cartas seleccionadas. Sin embargo, únicamente dos metonimias INSTITUCIÓN POR PERSONAS RESPONSABLES y PARTE POR EL TODO se emplean para comunicar los atributos positivos en este sector y el número de esquemas de imagen identificado en el corpus (atributo, espacio, contenedor y equilibrio) es también limitado y ocasional.

Palabras clave: lingüística axiológica, semántica cognitiva, metáfora, metonimia y discurso de la ingeniería aeronáutica.

1. Introduction

This paper intends to analyze the dominant axiological values in the aeronautical sector discourse through the Chairman's letters² included in the annual report of the five leading civil transport aircraft manufacturers: *Airbus*, *Boeing*, *Bombardier*, *Embraer* and *Textron Aviation*. In other words, we propose to find out the most prominent aeronautical management qualities through cognitive tools such as metaphor, metonymy, image schemas and

the way in which they are introduced into this type of discourse following a cognitive-axiological approach. With this purpose in mind, this analysis has been structured according to the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor and Metonymy proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) and extended to specialized discourse by Adams and Cruz García (2007), Cortés de los Ríos (2010), Nicolae (2010), Silaški and Kilyeni (2014). The connection between this cognitive theory and axiology has been explored and applied to other varieties of discourse by Krzeszowski (1997), Kiełtyka (2008), Hart (2008), Felices Lago and Cortés de los Ríos (2009), Pérez Hernández (2011), Fornalczyk and Biela-Wolonciej (2012), among others. To this end, we propose the analysis of the aforementioned cognitive tools in the 2014 and 2015 chairman's letters included in the annual corporate reports of the five aeronautical manufacturers selected, which are generally addressed to their shareholders, stakeholders and/or potential investors. The combined cognitive-axiological approach we propose seeks to reveal the dominant values in a crucial section of the business report genre (CEO and/or chairman's letter) in connection with the aeronautical discourse. This is a type of approach, which does not seem to have been conducted so far and, consequently, this study tries both to bridge this gap and to show new evidence for the correct interpretation of this genre.

This article has been structured as follows: Section 2 offers an overview of the theoretical background for this study. Section 3 deals with the selected sample data and the methodology employed. Section 4 shows the sample analysis and the results. Section 5 offers some conclusions.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. A cognitive-axiological approach

The theoretical underpinnings of this paper are based on a cognitive-axiological approach. Some relevant contributions have laid the foundations of axiological linguistics, particularly in Cognitive Semantics. Cognitive-axiological linguistic research was initiated and developed by Krzeszowski (1990, 1993, 1997) and continued by Pauwels and Simon-Vanderbergen (1995). Krzeszowski created a new field of cognitive axiology where the dichotomy with poles good – bad is equally and may be more important than the dichotomy true – false. This linguist provides evidence that the axiological parameter seems to play a much more important role in meaning

analyses than previously conceived. Krzeszowski (1990) did not only introduce the key principles of this new perspective, but also pointed out the dominant function that values perform in the structure of concepts. Krzeszowski's (1990: 150) axiological principle maintains that:

Words have a tendency to be axiologically loaded with 'good' or 'bad' connotations in proportion to the degree of the human factor associated with them. The idea behind this principle is that metaphorical expressions are more prone to axiological polarity than non-metaphorical ones.

Krzeszowski (1993, 1997) justifies the metaphorical nature of the good-bad polarity and empirically bases the integration of the axiological component on the idealized cognitive models. Similarly, this linguist states that preconceptual image schemata should include the axiological parameter MORE-LESS or the positive-negative scale. Pauwels and Simon-Vanderbergen (1995) have researched into the role of values, using a different approach to that of the Polish linguist. They identify the elements that determine a positive or negative value judgement, concentrating on the metaphorical projections from the domain of the parts of the body to that of the linguistic action. An important aspect, in our view, is the emphasis that they place on context. Metaphors expressing value judgements can be grouped into two main classes: (1) context-independent value judgements, that is, prototypically positive or negative and (2) context-dependent value judgements. Other contributions which follow a cognitive-axiological approach to specialized discourse correspond to Cortés de los Ríos (2001), Velasco Sacristán and Cortés de los Ríos (2009), Felices Lago and Cortés de los Ríos (2009), Koller (2009), Ortíz (2010), and Pérez Hernández (2013, 2014). It is also particularly relevant how previous research in the field of cognitive semantics has demonstrated that cognitive tools such as metaphor and metonymy play an extremely important role in communication both independently or in interaction patterns. Metaphors based on metonymies and metonymies based on metaphors are also common (Ruiz de Mendoza & Díez, 2002). In this sense, both are considered to interplay and interact, making it more difficult to differentiate them (Barcelona, 1998). Other patterns that are also used to persuade readers are image schemas. They are abstract representations of recurring dynamic patterns of bodily interactions that structure the way we understand the world. They are schematic and exist beneath conscious awareness (e.g. container, part-whole, front-back, up-down, source-path-goal, link, balance, forward-backward, cycle) (Johnson,

1987). Image schemas provide the basis for a large number of metaphoric and metonymic mappings and underlie metaphor-metonymy interaction (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Johnson, 1987).

2.2. The genre of the chairman's letter

The Chairman's letter or the CEO's (Chief Executive Officer) letter is a written business genre and is unanimously considered as an outstanding part of the annual report (Jameson, 2000). Most previous contributions highlight and investigate the way in which these letters address the target audience, how corporate values and ethical concerns are conveyed to the reader or how the performance targets are reached by the company during the yearly period (Garzone, 2004; Nickerson & De Groot, 2005). Consequently, the Annual Report (AR), which is distributed among shareholders, investors, employees and analysts, describes the company's operations, its balance sheet, future prospects and other relevant information (Jay, 1995). Annual reports are "overtly and prominently informative, their latent promotional nature can be perceived throughout the texts and more patently in their narrative and discretionary parts" (Malavasi, 2007: 173). To this respect, Watson (2005: 3) stated that "a narrative text is the chairman or executive's letter, within the AR". Malavasi (2007) affirmed that the CEO's letters pursue informative goals and attempt to create strong and trust-based relations with their audience, to establish a favourable image and promote themselves and their services. As a result, these texts are both informative and persuasive (Anderson & Imperia, 1992). A letter to shareholders often sets the tone of ARs prepared for publicly held companies. The chairman of the board of directors or the chief executive officer usually signs the letter on behalf of company management. Bhatia's (2004) theory of genre colonies offers an interesting contribution to the study of corporate reports from a generic and discursive perspective. He argued that one of the current dominant characteristics of professional and academic genres is the invasion of promotional values in most forms of discourse, creating a constellation of closely related genres with overlapping advertising purposes. The chairman's letter is widely seen as "a promotional genre, designed to construct and convey a corporate image to stockholders, brokers, regulatory agencies, finance media, and the investing public" (Anderson & Imperia, 1992: 114). This genre has been already reported to rely on a highly rhetorical architecture. Nicolae (2010: 52) affirmed that "it is a welcome addition to the dry, factual, numerically rich financial reports, being the main

discourse product in this frame that has a publicity function”. Despite some evident differences with the letter prototype, the chairman’s letter also has a number of indicators that link it to the letter macrogenre; it has the opening address, the closing, and the body of the letter. Bhatia (2004: 170) identified seven main moves in his analysis of the chairman’s letter to shareholders in corporate disclosures:

Move 1: Looking back (overview of the review period)

Move 2: Identifying important themes (claims made)

Move 3: Elaboration on themes (evidence for claims)

Move 4: Expectations and promises (projections for future)

Move 5: Expressions of gratitude (thanks to staff and shareholders)

Move 6: Looking forward (revisiting Move 1)

Move 7: Positive and polite closing

This author also noticed that the amount of engagements with past events depends on the company’s performance in the preceding year. When it has performed financially well, we are more likely to find a clear explanation of the achievements, but if the company has gone through a bad period, it tends to include fewer mentions of past events and to be instead more forward looking.

Von Berg (2013: 27) previously explained:

When addressing internal audiences, CEOs presumably lead the way and devise the policies of the organization in regard to the future. We think and many authors have claimed that CEOs not only need to implement companywide strategies and values, but also need to communicate them effectively, so as to persuade the organization’s workforce to follow the directions the CEO wishes the organization to take.

The metaphors, metonymies and image schemas identified by means of values in the selected letters in section 3.1 are presumably intended to construct a corporate image, build credibility, refer to corporate governance and convince the audience (shareholders and potential investors) that the company is undertaking a profitable performance. This is not surprising, because these cognitive tools are supposed to be designed for achieving rhetorical and persuasive purposes in accordance with the conclusions reached by Bhatia and the other sources quoted above in the domain of genre analysis.

2.3. Cognitive tools

The chairpersons of the aeronautical manufacturers often tend to present the positive or negative aspects of their company performance by verbalizing how well or how badly the business period has been evolving.

As for metaphor, our approach focuses on a metaphorical link with a domain conventionally representing the desired quality that the chairman wants to highlight, such as innovation for the design of an aircraft or the cutting-edge technology of new planes. The use of diverse metaphors leads to a better understanding of companies perceived as complex entities. Some metaphorical themes, which are commonly used in business or economics have been previously identified by cognitive semanticists and have inspired our methodological choice. The most widely used business metaphors were initially classified into six categories: JOURNEY, MACHINE, ORGANISM, WAR, GAME, and SOCIETY (Clancy, 1989). Later, Boers and Demecheleer (1997) analysed the metaphorical concepts of JOURNEY, HEALTH and WAR in the Western economy discourse. LIFE CYCLES, CHAOS and ZOOM LENSES are conceptual metaphors in the discourse of entrepreneurship theory (Arleo, 2000). PERSON, BURDEN, GARMENT, MECHANICAL ASPECTS and COMPETITOR were identified in financial advertising (Cortés de los Ríos, 2007). Herrera Soler (2008) identified the following source domains in the business press headlines: PLANT LIFE, WAR, MECHANICS, HEALTH, LITERATURE, RELIGION, HUMAN/ANIMAL LIFE, JOURNEY, SPORTS and NAUTICAL. A highly recurring source domain to describe economy and finance is LIVING ORGANISM (Wang et al., 2013). LIQUID, WAVE and MOVEMENT, FIGHTING and CONTRACTION MOVEMENT, GROWTH, RISE and BIG, DEPTH, RISE and MOVEMENT are used in financial analyst reports to describe emotions (Ho & Cheng, 2016). Other contributions, although scarce, highlight the importance of using cognitive metaphors in letters to shareholders. For instance, in her analysis of a corpus of chairman's letters from diverse companies, Nicolae (2010) identified the following ones: LIVING ORGANISM, SOLDIER, WILLFUL HUMAN BEING, FRIEND, SERVANT, ACTOR, VEHICLE, CONSTRUCTION, PROCESSUAL ENTITY and CULTURE. Later, Bujaki and McConomy (2012) also revealed key source domains in this type of letters: SCIENCE, JOURNEY, VISION, CONSTRUCTION and THEATRE.

With reference to metonymic patterns, THE INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE metonymy (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) is the main tool used as a hedge by the chairperson to communicate with the audience and diversify the responsibility for events or results. Speakers may choose a metonymic expression depending on their communicative purpose: to intensify the role of the responsible people or to keep the profile of the person in charge as low as possible. THE PART FOR THE WHOLE is the other widely used metonymy (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) in which the reference to a characteristic or important part is used to stand for the corresponding whole. Both choices are made from the perspective of pragmatic intention. As can be seen in the examples selected below, these metonymies function systematically. This cognitive structure is basically used to link conspicuous aspects of the company such as leadership or relevance in the civil aerospace sector with values emphasized by the chairman: ([being] good, outstanding, etc.). In addition to that, as can be observed in section 4 below, the number of image schemas identified in the corpus (attribute, space, container and balance) is restricted to a limited number of values.

3. Sample data and methodology

3.1. Sample data

The data collection for our analysis consists of a sample of ten chairman's letters³, which can be found in the following links and websites.

The ten selected letters, totalling 12,379 words, tend to boast good results once the global economic crisis, which started in 2008 has begun to fall behind. The sample letters are always authored by a single management representative, the chairman or president of the board. As the companies selected are all leading and successful actors in their field, all the cognitive tools under scrutiny tend to convey positive qualities.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Airbus 2014 | Ranque, D. <i>Chairman. Letter to shareholders</i> . Retrieved 7 September. 2016 from file:///C:/Users/usuario/Downloads/Airbus%20Group-AR%202014-eaccessibility_EN.pdf (707 words) |
| Airbus 2015 | Ranque, D. <i>Chairman. Letter to shareholders</i> . Retrieved 7 September 2016 from file:///C:/Users/usuario/Downloads/Airbus-RA2015-EN_03%20(1).pdf (980 words) |
| Boeing 2014 | McNerney, W. J. <i>Chairman & CEO. Letter to shareholder and employees</i> . Retrieved 7 September 2016 from http://www.annualreports.com/HostedData/AnnualReportArchive/b/NYSE_BA_2014.pdf (2,529 words) |
| Boeing 2015 | Mullenburg, D. <i>Chairman, President & CEO. Letter to shareholder and employees</i> . Retrieved 7 September 2016 from http://s2.q4cdn.com/661678649/files/doc_financials/annual/2015/2015-Annual-Report.pdf (2,392 words) |
| Bombardier 2014 | Bellemare, A. <i>President & CEO. Letter to stakeholders</i> . Retrieved 7 September 2016 from http://www.bombardier.com/content/dam/Websites/bombardiercom/supporting-documents/Sustainability/Reports/CSR/Bombardier-Activity-Report-2014-en.pdf (741 words) |
| Bombardier 2015 | Bellemare, A. <i>President & CEO. Letter to stakeholders</i> . Retrieved 7 September 2016 from http://ir.bombardier.com/var/data/gallery/document/11/98/03/65/14/Bombardier-Activity-Report-2015-en.pdf (580 words) |
| Embraer 2014 | Fleury, F. <i>President & CEO. Letter to shareholders</i> . Retrieved 7 September 2016 from http://www.embraer.com/annualreport2014/en/mensagem.html (819 words) |
| Embraer 2015 | Fleury, F. <i>President & CEO. Letter to shareholders</i> . Retrieved 7 September 2016 from http://www.embraer.com.br/annualreport2015/en/o-voo-de-2015.htm (873 words) |
| Textron aviation 2014 | Donnelly, S. <i>Chairman & CEO. Letter to shareholders</i> . Retrieved 7 September 2016 from http://s1.q4cdn.com/535492436/files/doc_financials/2014/2014_Textron_Annual_Report.pdf (1,276 words) |
| Textron aviation 2015 | Donnelly, S. <i>Chairman & CEO. Letter to shareholders</i> . Retrieved 7 September 2016 from http://s1.q4cdn.com/535492436/files/doc_financials/2015/2015AR.pdf (1,472 words) |

Table 1. Links and websites of the selected letters.

3.2. Methodology

Due to the nature of these letters, the information is studied on the verbal mode. Our analysis consists of identifying the metaphors whose source domain is at least one of the metaphorical themes identified above by previous contributions and new metaphors that could be found as a result of our data scrutiny. The Pragglejaz method has been used to recognise metaphorically used words in discourse, which involves the canonical case of metaphor identification in cognitive linguistics (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). This procedure consists of: (1) reading the whole text or transcript to understand what it is about; (2) deciding about the boundaries of words; (3) establishing the contextual meaning of the examined word; (4) determining the basic meaning of the word (most concrete, human-oriented and

specific); (5) deciding whether the basic meaning of the word is sufficiently distinct from the contextual meaning; and (6) deciding whether the contextual meaning of the word can be related to the more basic meaning by some form of similarity. With reference to metonymies, we follow Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) classical classification adapted to specialized contexts. Finally, we will adopt Evans and Green’s (2006) list of image schemas for our study purposes.

4. Sample analysis and results

In the following lines, an account of the metaphors, metonymies and image schemas linked to values will be given, particularly those in connection with the corporate image, the financial performance and the corporate governance of the selected aircraft manufacturing companies. A discussion on the way in which these cognitive tools are introduced and interact with each other will be added. The results will show that *innovation, leadership, progress, efficiency, pro-activity, profitability, customer attention* and *environmental protection* are updated as positive axiological qualities in the selected texts⁴. Most of them might also be considered as context-dependent values⁵ (except for “efficiency” or “profitability”) and can be quickly detected after skim-reading the sample letters (see Table 2).

A summary of the target values with their corresponding source domains can be seen in Table 2 below:

| Key values | Source domains |
|--------------------------|---|
| INNOVATION | LENS, PATH, MEDICAL TREATMENT, CULTURE, GARMENT |
| LEADERSHIP | LENS, GAME, CONSTRUCTION, PROGRESS, PATH, PROCESSUAL ENTITY, MOVEMENT, LIVING ORGANISM, MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURE |
| PROGRESS | WAR, RISE, MEDICAL TREATMENT |
| EFFICIENCY | GAME, JOURNEY, LENS, VEHICLE, LIVING ORGANISM |
| PROACTIVITY | JOURNEY, GAME |
| PROFITABILITY | HEALTH, VEHICLE |
| CUSTOMER ATTENTION | LENS, CONSTRUCTION, LIVING ORGANISM, SERVANT |
| ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION | DOWN, CONSTRUCTION |

Table 2. Target values with their corresponding source domains.

In the following sections, we collect the examples of the metaphorical expressions taken from the sample letters and the way they behave as vehicles for the corporate values. Table 3 below also shows the occurrence frequency of the expressions representing the source domains in the ten sample letters. For reasons of space in sections 4.1 to 4.8 we can only include one example of each metaphorical expression from the corpus.

| Source domains | Metaphorical expressions | Frequency of occurrence in the sample letters |
|---------------------|---|---|
| LIVING ORGANISM | growth, grow | 33 |
| GAME | win, earn a position, play a role, competitive, compete, champion | 22 |
| WAR | fronts, strategy, battlefield | 20 |
| VEHICLE | drive, steer, accelerate, speed | 13 |
| LENS | focus | 13 |
| HEALTH | healthy, recover | 10 |
| CONSTRUCTION | strong foundation, build | 6 |
| MOVEMENT | lead ahead, move forward, move quickly | 5 |
| PATH | cross a frontier, road, route | 4 |
| JOURNEY | embark, journey | 3 |
| MEDICAL TREATMENT | injection, injuries | 2 |
| RISE | height, higher | 2 |
| PROGRESS | bright future, headway | 2 |
| GARMENT | tailor | 2 |
| PROCESSUAL ENTITY | shape | 1 |
| MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURE | giant | 1 |
| SERVANT | serve | 1 |
| DOWN | reduce | 1 |
| CULTURE | heritage | 1 |

Table 3. Distribution of metaphors in the chairman's letters.

As can be seen above, a total of 142 metaphorical expressions were extracted. The most recurring source domains are LIVING ORGANISM followed by GAME and WAR.

4.1. Key value: INNOVATION

The innovation value is based on the following cognitive tools:

(a) Metaphors

This value is conveyed by means of the following source domains: LENS, PATH, MEDICAL TREATMENT, GARMENT and CULTURE. This is shown in the subsequent examples taken from the corpus⁶:

| SOURCE DOMAIN: INNOVATION | EXAMPLES |
|---------------------------|---|
| lens | In 2014 we maintained our <i>focus</i> on innovation and created the Aerospace Investment Fund (FIP), the first of its kind in Latin America. (Embraer, 2014) |
| path | With each decade, aerospace technology <i>crossed another frontier</i> , and with each crossing, the world changed. (Boeing, 2015) |
| medical treatment | This year, we welcome three new Board members, Catherine Guillouard, Claudia Nemat and Carlos Tavares, who bring a <i>fresh injection</i> of highly relevant competences and skills. (Airbus, 2015) |
| garment | By listening closely to our customers, and <i>tailoring</i> proven innovation to meet their needs, we have de-risked a decade of new product development, while at the same time expanding the performance and efficiency advantage of our airplanes in every segment. (Boeing, 2014) |
| culture | Bombardier's <i>heritage</i> is rich with entrepreneurship and innovation. (Bombardier, 2014) |

Table 4. Source domains that introduce the innovation value.

The chairmen of these companies refer to this value using five metaphorical themes. All these source domains, despite its diversity, are used to highlight the innovative trend of the aerospace sector and its products, the cutting-edge technology employed and the creativity of certain staff members. The selected corporations also have a long tradition in the continuous improvement of the technological input and output.

(b) Metonymies

Examples of metonymies used by the chairman to reinforce the innovation value have been collected as follows:

- (1) *The idea* for the fund started with our Innova program, which encourages Embraer’s teams to constantly develop innovative projects. (Embraer, 2014).
- (2) Market demand for the 787 is extensive and broad based as its game-changing capabilities continue to improve the way *the world* flies. (Boeing, 2015)

As can be seen in the following table, Example 1 is a metonymy-based metaphor interaction. Example 2 above includes a metonymy which interacts with the image schema: containment-in-out. The container (company and the world) stands for its contents:

| Source | stands for | target |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| idea (example 1) | person (via THE PART FOR THE WHOLE) | |
| the world (example 2) | people flying by plane | |

Table 5. Metonymies that introduce the innovation value. A

Metonymy is widely used in our corpus to communicate the image of innovation, viewed as a process to achieve project differentiation as well as sector improvement.

4.2. Key value: LEADERSHIP

This value is based on the following cognitive tools:

(a) Metaphors

The leadership value is conveyed by means of the following source domains: LENS, GAME, CONSTRUCTION, PROGRESS, PATH, PROCESSUAL ENTITY, MOVEMENT, MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURE and LIVING ORGANISM. This is shown by the subsequent examples:

| SOURCE DOMAIN: LEADERSHIP | EXAMPLES |
|------------------------------|---|
| lens | On the operational side, management's sharp <i>focus on</i> programme execution is paying off. In 2015, commercial aircraft deliveries reached a new record of 635 units, the A380 reached its breakeven target and the A350 ramp-up advanced in line with plans. (Airbus, 2015) |
| game | As we approach the start of our 100th year in business, we do so with renewed confidence in our capabilities, <i>winning</i> strategies for our markets and time-tested resolve to continue leading our industry through innovation inspired by our customers' needs, and fueled by the talents, technologies and teamwork of our employees and global partners. (Boeing, 2014) |
| construction | We're looking forward to 2015 and beyond as we build on this <i>strong foundation</i> and create long-term value for our customers, our employees and our shareholders. (Textron Aviation, 2014) |
| progress | Bombardier is a company with a phenomenal history of achievement and a <i>bright future</i> . (Bombardier, 2015) |
| path | <i>The road</i> we are on is the right one to make Bombardier strong again, to be a great employer, a consistent generator of shareholder value, a champion of our communities and the leading market of sustainable mobility solutions. (Bombardier, 2015) |
| processual entity? | Our mission of creating better ways to move the world has <i>shaped</i> Bombardier into a company with an impressive product portfolio and talented people. (Bombardier, 2014) |
| movement | <i>Leading ahead</i> (Bombardier, 2015) |
| mythological figure | A special word should be reserved for our third departing member, Manfred Bischoff, a <i>true giant</i> of the <i>aerospace world</i> by any standards. (Airbus, 2015) |
| living organism | Overall, we project demand for 36,770 new airplanes over the next 20 years at a total value of \$5.2 trillion – a highly attractive market in which our superior products and technologies have us poised for sustained <i>growth</i> in the years ahead. (Boeing, 2014) |

Table 6. Source domains that introduce the leadership value.

Leadership is one of the most recurrent values in the aeronautical engineering discourse. The chairmen tend to project this value using extremely diverse source domains which apparently have no evident connection. The relevant metaphorical themes have also been used to highlight the dominant position of their company's products in this sector and, at the same time, they try to build a positive corporate image. On the one hand, the MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURE source domain is used in this context to refer to an exceptional person who attracts attention due to his professional commitment and becomes a paragon for the rest of the staff. This example is also a metonymy-based metaphor interaction which rests on the following image schema: attribute (big-small), big being valued positively. In addition, the last metaphorical expression interacts with the balance schema: "... our superior products and technologies have us *poised for sustained growth* in the years ahead" (Boeing, 2014). In our opinion, this special link can be understood as the financial and productive equilibrium reached by a company when there is a sustained demand for the products and technologies it offers.

(b) Metonymies

The leadership value is also conveyed by the corporate executives using the most common metonymies which characterize this type of discourse. Three examples are taken from the corpus:

- (1) As we recognize our accomplishments of the past year, and review our strong financial and market positions, our *eyes* are fixed on the future and our commitment to build an even bigger, better Boeing and an even stronger team for winning in our second century. (Boeing, 2015)
- (2) *Boeing* extended its leadership of the aerospace industry in 2015 with record deliveries and revenues at Boeing Commercial Airplanes and solid sales and healthy margins in Boeing Defense, Space & Security. (Boeing, 2015)
- (3) *Embraer's recognition* in 2014 largely reflects its high employee satisfaction ratings; these reached 86% in 2014 and contributed to the Company being declared one of the Best Places to Work in Latin America (Great Place to Work Institute) and receiving special mention in the Best Places to Start a Career prize (Você S/A magazine). (Embraer, 2014)

As can be seen in the following table, Example 1 is a metonymy-based metaphor interaction. It is also based on the following image schema:

attribute (strong-weak, big-small), being strong and big valued positively. “Big” interacts with the primary metaphor IMPORTANCE IS SIZE (Grady, 1999):

| source | stands for | target |
|----------------------------|--|--------|
| eye (example 1) | person (via THE PART FOR THE WHOLE) | |
| company (examples 2 and 3) | employees (via INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE) | |

Table 7. Metonymies that introduce the leadership value.

Examples 2 and 3 refer to a metonymy-based metaphor interaction between an ontological metaphor and a metonymic concept: INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE. This metonymy also interacts with the image schema: containment-in-out. The container (company) stands for its contents.

As previously stated in section 2.3, metonymy is widely used in our corpus to communicate the image of leadership and relevance in the civil aerospace sector.

4.3. Key value: PROGRESS

This value is based on the following cognitive tools:

(a) Metaphors

As can be observed in the following examples, the progress value is conveyed by means of the WAR, RISE and MEDICAL TREATMENT source domains:

| SOURCE DOMAIN: | EXAMPLES |
|-------------------|---|
| PROGRESS | |
| war | Our businesses made progress on a number of <i>fronts</i> (Textron Aviation, 2014) |
| rise | I am energized by this new beginning and look forward to <i>bringing</i> <i>Bombardier</i> to <i>new heights</i> . (Bombardier, 2014) |
| medical treatment | Progress in strengthening our safety culture included reducing hazards that cause the most serious <i>injuries</i> and implementing new enterprise standards for safety tools and equipment. (Boeing, 2014) |

Table 8. Source domains that introduce the progress value.

Progress is an important corporate value which may refer to existing commercial opportunities or to the implementation of new tools or

equipment. In this case, source domains such as WAR, MEDICAL TREATMENT and RISE are used to transfer this positive quality. It should be taken into account that the selected manufacturers also make military planes and their chairmen refer figuratively to war scenarios to highlight that it serves as a catalyst for technological development. The WAR metaphor is also used to focus on the fight against adversities. In the same vein, the MEDICAL TREATMENT metaphor is implemented to improve safety and prevent real or imaginary damages. Albrighton (2013) has already linked the concept of rise or elevation to the PROGRESS metaphor.

(b) Metonymies

As can be observed in the following examples, the progress value is also conveyed by some metonymies:

- (1) Our *company continues to make sound progress* on numerous fronts, operational and strategic, but also from a governance perspective. (Airbus, 2015)
- (2) Throughout 2015, *the Board* closely monitored the technical and commercial progress of the Group’s major programmes. It reviewed Enterprise Risk Management results, the internal audit plan and reoriented the Group’s compliance programme by implementing a reinforced anti-corruption policy. (Airbus, 2015)

| Source | stands for | target |
|----------------------------|--|--------|
| company (examples 1 and 2) | employees (via INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE) | |

Table 9. Metonymies that introduce the progress value.

As can be seen in Table 9, examples 1 and 2 are a metonymy-based metaphor interaction between an ontological metaphor and a metonymic concept: INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE. In addition, this metonymy interacts with the containment-in-out image schema. The container (company) stands for its contents.

This cognitive tool is used for highlighting the technological progress as the basis for competitiveness and improvement in the aeronautical sector.

4.4. Key value: EFFICIENCY

This value is based on the following cognitive tools:

(a) Metaphors

This value is conveyed by means of the following source domains: GAME, JOURNEY, LENS, VEHICLE and LIVING ORGANISM. This can be observed in the subsequent examples:

| SOURCE DOMAIN: | EXAMPLES |
|-----------------|---|
| game | <i>Winning such a competitive commercial airplane program demonstrates the confidence that customers have in TRU to deliver sophisticated flight training requirements for their operations.</i> (Textron Aviation, 2014) |
| journey | And importantly, we devised and <i>embarked</i> on a new <i>strategic roadmap</i> focused on four catalysts to improve performance. (Bombardier, 2015) |
| lens | And importantly, we devised and embarked on a new <i>strategic roadmap</i> <i>focused on</i> four catalysts to improve performance. (Bombardier, 2015) |
| vehicle | ... our employees are working together with a One Boeing mindset <i>to drive</i> incremental and step-function improvements in quality, productivity and safety. (Boeing, 2014) |
| living organism | In 2014, Boeing delivered another strong year of <i>growth</i> and improved operational performance. (Boeing, 2014) |

Table 10. Source domains that introduce the efficiency value.

The shareholders understand the importance of efficiency in a company. The chairpersons introduce this value frequently by means of the GAME source domain to communicate the capacity and competitiveness of employees. Also the top executives occasionally adopt other metaphorical themes such as JOURNEY, LENS, VEHICLE and LIVING ORGANISM to communicate this value.

(b) Metonymies

The efficiency value is also conveyed by some metonymies as we can see in the following examples:

- (1) *Thanks to the Group's continued financial success*, we are able to propose a dividend increase for the sixth year in succession at € 1.30 per share, an amount which, based on earnings per share of € 3.43, is in line with our policy of a payout ratio of between 30% and 40%. (Embraer, 2014)
- (2) With our focus, passion and discipline, *Bombardier is poised for success*. (Bombardier, 2014)
- (3) *Airbus Group has ambitious plans*. As we look to the time ahead, I believe shareholders can continue to count on the support of a strong and dedicated Board. (Airbus, 2014)

| source | stands for | target |
|-------------------------------|---|--------|
| company (examples 1, 2 and 3) | employees (via INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE rests on an ontological metonymy) | |

Table 11. Metonymies that introduce the efficiency value.

As shown in Table 11, examples 1, 2 and 3 are a metonymy-based metaphor interaction between an ontological metaphor and a metonymic concept: INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE. In addition, this metonymy interacts with the image schema: containment-in-out. The container (company) stands for its contents. Example 2 is also a case of metonymy based on the balance schema.

The chairpersons consistently underline and link success, good results or improvements to the concept of efficiency. This helps to offer a positive corporate image and meet shareholders expectations.

4.5. Key value: PROACTIVITY

This value is based on the following cognitive tool: metaphor. It is conveyed by means of the JOURNEY and the GAME source domains as can be observed in the following examples:

| SOURCE DOMAIN: PROACTIVITY | EXAMPLES |
|----------------------------|---|
| journey | In 2016 we will continue to develop projects, innovate in our products, invest in our people, seek excellence in management and advance in cutting edge technology. Throughout this <i>journey</i> , we would like to truly thank the contribution of all our stakeholders. (Embraer, 2015) |
| game | We must <i>earn our position</i> every day by constantly asking as much of ourselves as all those who came before us. (Boeing, 2014) |

Table 12. Source domains that introduce the proactivity value.

The JOURNEY and GAME source domains (Lakoff & Jonhson, 1980) are used in the examples to communicate the proactivity values⁸ that embody them. Some companies around the world have adopted formal statements of corporate values, and their chairpersons identify their international presence, competitiveness, long-term sustainable growth, innovation in products, investment in people and innovation in technology as top issues on their companies’ agendas, which can only be reached by the proactive implication of all the personal and entrepreneurial energy involved. Proclaiming these corporate values is a rhetorically effective strategy due to its potential to

enhance the stakeholders' emotional involvement. *Embraer*, a leading company and an emblem of South America, is one of the companies that puts it into practice.

4.6. Key value: PROFITABILITY

This value is based on the following cognitive tools:

(a) Metaphors

Profitability is conveyed by means of the HEALTH and VEHICLE source domains, as can be seen in the following examples:

| SOURCE | DOMAIN: | EXAMPLES |
|---------------|---------|---|
| PROFITABILITY | | |
| health | | ... we expect to see profitability <i>recover</i> meaningfully and sustainably. (Bombardier, 2015) |
| vehicle | | Our imperative now is to execute to deliver on our lower-risk development agenda and to <i>accelerate</i> the conversion of our record backlog into cash and earnings to fund those projects and provide increasing returns to all stakeholders. (Boeing, 2014) |

Table 13. Source domains that introduce the profitability value.

Profitability is an essential value for any private company. HEALTH and VEHICLE source domains are the tools used here to introduce this value. The chairpersons use them in their communication since they must show “a good financial health” to gain the confidence of customers, stakeholders and investors and, as a result, their company must be viewed as a vehicle, which has to “accelerate” to achieve positive results.

(b) Metonymy

The profitability value is also conveyed by the INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE metonymy as can be seen in the following example:

- (1) *Bombardier is already significantly better prepared* in 2016 to deliver a profitable future. (Bombardier, 2015)

| source | stands for | target |
|---------|---|--------|
| company | employees (via INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE rests on an ontological metonymy) | |

Table 14. Metonymy that introduces the profitability value.

In Table 14 this metonymy interacts with the image schema: containment-in-out. The container (company) stands for its contents company.

4.7. Key value: CUSTOMER ATTENTION

This value is based on the following cognitive tools:

(a) Metaphors

The customer attention value is conveyed by means of four source domains: LENS, CONSTRUCTION, LIVING ORGANISM and SERVANT as can be seen in the following examples:

| SOURCE DOMAIN: CUSTOMER ATTENTION | EXAMPLES |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| lens | As we add new capabilities to our company, we've continued a relentless <i>focus on</i> our customers to anticipate their requirements, address their needs with leading-edge products and provide them with outstanding support throughout the entire product life cycle. (Textron Aviation, 2014) |
| construction | Over the past year, Textron Aviation's 21 company-operated service centers have received certifications to expand their capabilities and service Beechcraft, Cessna and Hawker customers. This represents another way we are <i>building and growing our relationships with customers</i> . (Textron Aviation, 2015) |
| living organism | Over the past year, Textron Aviation's 21 company-operated service centers have received certifications to expand their capabilities and service Beechcraft, Cessna and Hawker customers. This represents another way we are <i>building and growing our relationships with customers</i> . (Textron Aviation, 2015) |
| servant | We are here <i>to serve</i> our customers. (Embraer, 2014) |

Table 15. Source domains that introduce the customer attention value.

The chairpersons can communicate and share this leading conceptual tool by means of the LENS, CONSTRUCTION and LIVING ORGANISM source domains, which are frequently used in the specialised literature. The product life cycle, for example, is perhaps one of the most widely used metaphors in the area of marketing. It serves as the model by which managers can understand how products progress in the market place and it is used particularly in advertising to gain customer attention (Palmer & Lindgreen, 2008). In addition, the SERVANT source domain was previously identified by Nicolae (2010), who also affirmed that “metaphor is a rhetorical tool that is used not only to convince the readership about the strength, readiness and zeal of the company run by the CEO, but also a means of attaining consensus of views based on relationship correspondences” (Nicolae, 2010: 57), and the SERVANT metaphor illustrates this.

(b) Image schema

The customer attention value is mainly shown by means of the following space image schema: center-periphery, center being valued positively, as we can see in the subsequent example:

- (1) I always want employees to remember that customers are at the *centre* of everything we do. (Bombardier, 2015)

This value is particularly relevant in the corporate world since the chairpersons generally focus on the company commitment with the customers.

4.8. Key value: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

This value is based on the following cognitive tools:

(a) Metaphor

Environmental protection is conveyed by means of the DOWN and the CONSTRUCTION source domains, as can be seen in the following examples:

| SOURCE | DOMAIN: | EXAMPLES |
|--------------------------|---------|--|
| ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION | | |
| down | | We also advanced global development of sustainable aviation biofuel with partners across six continents, and we tested more than 25 new technologies to <i>reduce</i> airplane noise and carbon emissions on the 787 ecoDemonstrator. (Boeing, 2014) |
| construction | | We <i>build</i> a sustainable future. (Embraer, 2014) |

Table 16. Source domains that introduce the environmental protection value.

The lexical item “reduce” evokes the metaphor LESS IS GOOD or REDUCTION IS GOOD. This is paradoxically, conceptualized as a clearly appreciative schema on a positive-negative scale in the eco-discourse (Felices Lago & Cortés de los Ríos, 2009). On most occasions, MORE IS UP (GOOD) and LESS IS DOWN (BAD) are well grounded in our experience in Western culture (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In addition, the CONSTRUCTION metaphor is also used to communicate this value. Nowadays, it is a corporate policy to contribute to environmental protection. This is positively perceived by the customer since the industrial sector has

been traditionally associated with pollution and depletion of natural resources.

(b) Image schema

The attribute image schema (big-small) is used to reinforce this value, big being valued positively, as can be observed in the following example:

- (1) *Building a better planet goes hand-in-hand with building a bigger, better Boeing.*
(Boeing, 2014)

5. Conclusions

It is a fact that the chairman's letter linguistic and discursive features have been widely scrutinised in previous research, particularly by genre analysis specialists, but it is also true that, to this date, and as far as we know, only one contribution from Lakoffian semantics has been made (Nicolae, 2010). All experts from the linguistic models concerned have concluded that this type of letter, to a large extent, attempts to create a strong and trust-based relationship between corporate executives and their audience, to establish a favourable corporate image and, at the same time, to promote themselves and their services. Nicolae (2010) also found a diverse typology of metaphors across a set of chairman's letters from various economic sectors. Consequently, a similar approach to this type of text from a specific industrial and/or technological sector was missing. We also found that the metaphorical tools employed are generally aimed at reinforcing the positive axiological load inherent to the promotional nature of the chairman's letter, especially in dynamic, innovative and high tech sectors such as aeronautical engineering and/or manufacturing. To this end, we have retrieved the documents from the websites of the five leading companies corresponding to the annual reports of 2014 and 2015. After that, we have mapped out the dominant axiological values combining the resources and methods of the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor and Metonymy with those of axiological semantics.

The results in section 4 show that well-known corporate values such as *innovation, leadership, progress, efficiency, proactivity, profitability, customer attention* and, more recently, *environmental protection*, can be perceived by the readership with the help of cognitive tools such as the metaphor, the metonymy and, occasionally, the image schema. As shown in Table 2, as many as nineteen

source domains are the vehicles in the ten sample letters, showing a great cognitive diversity and the complexity of the corporate values under scrutiny. LENS, JOURNEY, CONSTRUCTION, GAME and LIVING ORGANISM are found in at least three values and become the leading source domains; they are followed by MEDICAL TREATMENT and VEHICLE, which are linked to two values. CULTURE, GARMENT, HEALTH, PROGRESS, PROCESSUAL ENTITY, WAR, RISE, SERVANT, PATH, DOWN, MOVEMENT and MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURE occur only once. However, only two metonymies (INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE and PART FOR THE WHOLE) are used to communicate positive attributes in the civil aerospace sector and the number of image schemas identified in the corpus (attribute, space, container and balance) is also limited and occasional. Our analysis can also point out the strong persuasive and rhetorical power of these cognitive tools and their ability to transmit messages and to influence existing or potential shareholders. To conclude, we are aware that although this sample may be limited, there is room for further research in other technological sectors, which will provide us with more information about metaphors, metonymies and image schemas in connection with positive or negative axiological values.

Article history:

Received 28 January 2017

Received in revised form 12 May 2017

Accepted 14 May 2017

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NOTES

¹ This article is based on research carried out within the framework of the Project FFI2014-53788-C3-1-P, which is funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

² In this article, when we refer to the Chairman's letter we also cover similar types of texts, particularly the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) letter. The structure, the target audience and the communicative goals tend to be identical. Consequently, we will use both terms depending on the preferences expressed by other authors in their original contributions.

³ As previously mentioned in the introductory chapter we have selected a sample of the chairman's letters included in the annual corporate reports published in 2014 and 2015 of the following aeronautical manufacturers: *Airbus*, *Boeing*, *Bombardier*, *Embraer* and *Textron Aviation*.

⁴ Some of these common corporate values have been collected by Wenstøp, F. & A. Myrnel (2006) from diverse sources.

⁵ Context-dependent refers here to the fact that values such as innovation, leadership etc. are values basically activated in the corporate discourse, but cannot be considered as context-independent values such as truth, generosity, etc., which are positive values regardless of the discourse type.

⁶ Henceforth, all metaphorical expressions in the examples will be italicized.

⁷ This source domain was identified by Heimbürger (2009) in the context of meetings and negotiations and also by Nicolae (2010) in CEOs letters.

⁸ The proactivity value includes a combination of positive axiological features commonly integrated in what is known as corporate excellence: active commitment, breaking through new markets and challenges, optimistic and/or forward-looking attitude, management involvement searching for success, etc.