

A Comparative Analysis of Standardized Categories of the UN Resolution

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Received: 06/03/2023	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Abstract</i></p> <p><i>The study aims to explore similarities and differences between English versions and Arabic versions/translations of the United Nations resolutions concerning some standardized categories. It also investigates whether or not these similarities and differences are systematic. The study seeks to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the similarities and differences between English and Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions in relation to format and style and 2) Do these similarities and differences seem random or systematic? The research draws on the UN Editorial Manual 1983 which includes the basic guidelines of writing/translating the UN documents, including UN resolutions. The research used a qualitative approach which involves comparing and contrasting different English versions and Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions using a comparative model. The findings of the study showed that English versions and Arabic versions/translations shared some institutionally standardized features that are related to the format (titles, headings and subheadings, and paragraphs and subparagraphs) and style ((abbreviations, acronyms, capitalization, italics, bold print, numbering, punctuation, and order and structure of elements). The versions also differed from each other in the use of some of these features due to the huge linguistic gap between English and Arabic. This work contributes to existing knowledge of UN production/translation of documents by providing a deeper insight into the structure of these documents across two different languages. This issue is an intriguing one which could be usefully explored in further research, especially across the other official languages of the UN.</i></p>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism is very important to the United Nations because it is an important factor that enhances communication within the UN and promotes dialogue, tolerance and mutual understanding. The importance of multilingualism governs the UN policies and procedures related to the production and translation of all its documents in the six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. Of course, English and French are considered the working languages of the UN Secretariat. However, the UN is committed to equal treatment of all the official languages, including Arabic. This study explores some

institutionally standardized categories of the United Nations resolutions. The study examines similarities and differences between the English versions of these resolutions and their Arabic counterparts. It also investigates whether or not these similarities and differences are systematic. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences between English versions and Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions in relation to format and style?
2. Do these similarities and differences seem random or systematic?

The existence of various versions of any UN resolution is a part of the UN policy which puts much emphasis on multilingualism as a means of promoting, protecting, and preserving the diversity of languages and cultures globally. The policy also stresses the importance of the capacity to communicate to the peoples of the world in their own languages. It also underlines the need for effective multilingual communication among representatives of Member States in intergovernmental organs and members of expert bodies of the United Nations equally, in all the official languages of the UN (The General Assembly, 2007). However, despite the importance of the existence of different versions of UN resolutions, few studies have addressed the structure of these documents across different languages, especially features related to format and style. This study should contribute to the understanding of UN resolutions concerning some standardized categories.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purpose of this study, the discussion of legal translation will be limited to the basic features that are relevant to the analysis of the United Nations documents. The following section will address the basic definition of legal translation and its classifications, and the common features of legal texts, with special reference to features of the UN documents.

2.1. Legal translation

Legal translation is a specialized translation which involves transferring legal texts from one language (SL) into another language (TL). This translation process also entails working across different legal systems. In fact, legal translators deal with different types of legal text in various legal settings, such as courts and national and international organizations (El-Farahaty 2015: 6).

Cao 2007 (cited in Cao 2010) stresses that legal translation can be classified into four categories according to different criteria. As shown in Figure 1, in terms of the subject matter of the ST, legal translation can be classified into four distinct types. These are: translating domestic statutes and international treaties, translating private legal documents, translating

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legal scholarly works, and translating case law. On the bases of the status of the ST, legal translation can be categorized into two classes, which are: translating enforceable law and non-enforceable law. Moreover, legal translation may be divided into three main categories depending on the functions of legal texts in the SL: primarily prescriptive, primarily descriptive and also prescriptive, and purely descriptive. Legal translation may also be classified according to the purpose of the TL texts into normative purpose, informative purpose, and general legal or judicial purpose (see Cao 2007).

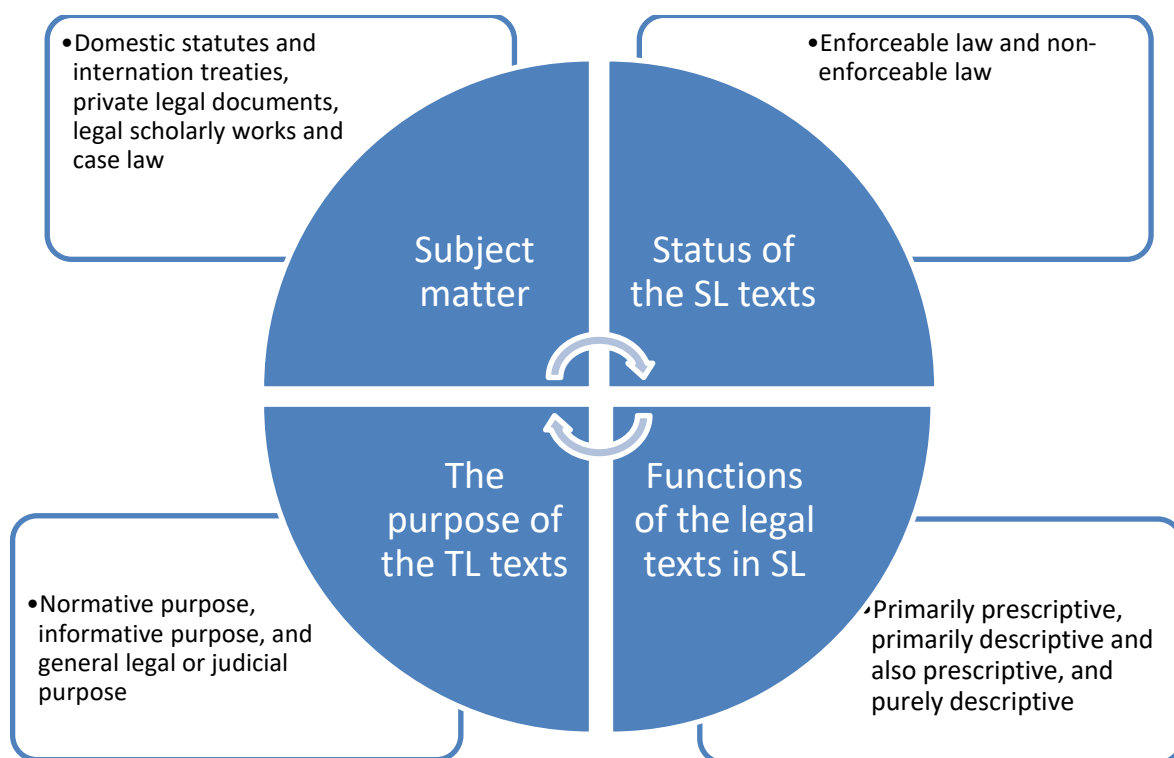


Figure 1. Four categories of legal translation.

2.2.Common Features of Legal Texts

A Legal text has its distinctive features in all languages. These distinguishing features are related to the use of technical terms, linguistic structures and conventions, and punctuations. This section will briefly discuss the lexical, syntactic, and textual features of legal text with special reference to English and Arabic. It will also highlight some of the basic characteristics of the United Nations' legal documents.

The lexical features of the English Legal language involve the use of very specialized terms, which distinguish legal texts from other forms of writing. For instance, a legal English text contains Archaic words; terms such as *hereat*, *herein*, *hereinafter*, and *heretofore* are used for a specific function: to avoid repeating phrases and names. Moreover, Latin and French terms are a common characteristic of legal English. A Latin term such as *Minor*, which refers

to a party in a case, entered the English Legal language as a result of the great influence of the Roman Church whose language was Latin in the Middle Ages (Tiersma 1999: 88, cited in El-Farahaty 2015, p. 21).

In addition, the English legal language tends towards formality. This is evident in the use of antiquated vocabulary by lawyers and judges, such as *imbibe*, *inquire*, *peruse*, *forthwith*, and *impugn*. This tendency, in some cases, is because, in the legal process, references are constantly being made to very old texts (Alcaraz & Hughes 2014, p. 7). Moreover, formality in legal language is normally coupled with long and complex sentences. As argued by Salmi-Tolonen (2004, p. 1173, cited in Abdelmoneim & Zidan 2015), complexity and length of these sentences are common syntactic features of legal texts.

Bahtia (1997, p. 208) stresses that long sentences in legal texts are characterized by the excessive use of qualifications which are “inserted at various points in the syntax of legislative statements” in order to make each statement inclusive, clear and unambiguous. The reasons behind the use of these qualifications, in addition to the use of subordinate devices and the repetition of lexical items, is to convey all the necessary information and to avoid any possible misinterpretation.

Another common syntactic feature of legal language is Nominalization, which, according to Chomsky (1968, p. 2) involves transforming a verb phrase into a nominal. A more comprehensive definition of nominalization was proposed by Mathews (1997, p. 37) who defined it as "any process by which either a noun or a syntactic unit functioning as a noun phrase is derived from any other kind of unit". The following example, taken from a contract, demonstrates the utilization of nominalization in legal texts, the nominal phrases are in italics:

The Tenant shall indemnify and keep the Landlord fully indemnified from and against all *actions proceedings, claims, demands, losses, costs, expenses* (including reasonable legal *costs and expenses*), *damage* and *liabilities* suffered by the Landlord as a *result* of any cheque issued by the Tenant being returned unpaid.

Passivation is also a common syntactic feature of legal language. Abohadi (2019, p. 57) argues that the use of passive voice in legal texts “adds the degree of formality and impartiality”

to these texts. There are some reasons behind the use of passive structure, one of which is to obscure the agent, especially when the stress in a particular sentence is on the action/procedures rather than on the agent. Another reason is to give importance to a particular rule/fact by leaving it unstated. According to (Tiersma, 1999:75, cited in El-Farahaty 2015, p. 40) argues that the obscurity of agents in nominalization and passivation "reduce precision".

Other syntactic features of legal texts may include the use of conditionals, prepositional phrases and restrictive connectors, performative verbs and modals, negation, and binomial expressions/doublets and triplets. These features are beyond the scope of this research paper.

As for the textual features, legal language includes some macro units which are mainly concerned with cohesion. In legal texts, drafters utilize some cohesive devices that link different parts of the text and enable their points to flow fluently. These elements include lexical repetition, conjunctions, and reference. Lexical repetition refers to the process of using synonyms, near synonyms, and general or specific words instead of using pronouns. The main reason behind repeating these elements within a particular legal text is to achieve accuracy and avoid ambiguity, especially when a reference is made to more than one party in the texts. Other reasons for opting for lexical repetition include providing more information about a particular topic and reminding the reader/recipient of something discussed/mentioned earlier in the text (Hassan 2005, p. 87).

In addition to the use of lexical repetition to maintain cohesion within legal texts, other common cohesive devices can be used for the same purpose, including conjunctions and reference. Conjunction involves connecting different parts of the text (i.e., sentences, clauses, and paragraphs) to each other (Baker 2011, p. 200). Some researchers (e.g., Crystal and Davy 1984, Triebel, 2009 & Sharndama 2014) argue that 'and', 'or' and 'and/or' are commonly used in legal discourse "as means of achieving inclusiveness when drafting legal documents", however, this is not always the case in some legal contexts in which, for example, the use of and/or may cause some ambiguity. On the other hand, reference as a device is used to refer to elements in the text in order to create cohesion. It is a way of avoiding repetition and helping readers relate participants, entities, and events to each other (Baker 2011, p. 191). In English, reference items may include personal pronouns (e.g., I, me, she, his, etc.), demonstratives (e.g., this, these, that, etc.), comparatives (e.g., another, other, similar, etc.), and the definite article 'the'. Some of these elements are common in legal language, in addition to archaic terms, such

as 'aforesaid', 'herein', and 'hereinunder'. However, despite the common use of these references, they may create some sort of ambiguity and vagueness in some contexts.

It is worth mentioning that it was not viable for the researcher to review all the lexical, syntactic, and textual features of English and Arabic legal languages due to the limited scope of the current study and the word limitation. For more information about these characteristics please refer to Crystal and Davy (1969), Charrow et al. (1982), Tiersma (1999), Alcaraz and Hughes (2002), Haigh (2004), Cao, (2007), and El-Farahaty (2015).

2.3. United Nations documentation

Unlike other legal text types, United Nations documents have specified purposes and go through a number of processes and phases before they are published. All the documents issued by the UN must be written in or translated into all six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. This publicized policy stresses that all audiences and users of these documents can switch between these versions easily. According to Cao et al. (2008, p. 41), there are nine phases of documentation at the UN, including documentation programming and monitoring, documents control, editorial control, reference and terminology, translation, text processing and typographic style, official records, copy preparation and proof-reading, and publishing.

The drafting, editing, and reproducing of all UN documents should be done in accordance with The United Nations Editorial Manual, which is the primary authority for the UN editorial policy (UN Editorial Manual 1983, p. iii). For the purpose of this study, a detailed discussion of UN resolutions is presented with some emphasis on some aspects relevant to the analysis of the data.

The United Nations resolutions are official documents that express the opinion and will of different organs at the UN. Generally speaking, these documents contain two parts: a preamble and an operative part. The preamble "recites considerations" related to taken actions, expressed opinions, or given directives. The operative part expresses the opinion of a particular organ and the considered action. In addition, the production or reproduction of any text of resolution should conform to the style and instructions specifically stated in the United Nations Editorial Manual and in consultation with editors and officers of the concerned body.

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The Editorial Manual, especially Article D 10 includes some basic conventions related to UN resolutions. These conventions include *titles* (e.g., they're chosen according to agenda item), *order of elements* ([1] name of organ, [2] the preamble [3] the operative part), *numbering and arrangement of paragraphs* (e.g., preamble paragraphs are numbered whereas operative paragraphs are not), *reference to paragraphs, reference to the resolution as a whole, the use of italics* (e.g., the name of the UN organ at the beginning of the text should be italicized), *the use of punctuation* (e.g., semicolon after each paragraph and subparagraph in the operative part), *the use of abbreviation* (e.g., COVAX), *reference to documents* (e.g., A/34/546), *Annexes, and wording of resolutions* (e.g., terminologies). (for more information about these conventions, please refer to UN Editorial Manual).

2.4.Recent studies on the production and translation of UN resolutions

In the past, around 1980, many documents were mainly drafted in English, “with French a distant second for drafting” and little attention paid to other languages (Allen et al. 1980, p. 1). However, since 1995, the production of United Nations documents, especially resolutions, reflects the institution’s effort to maintain multilingualism by eliminating the “disparity between the use of English and the use of the other five official languages” and treating all official languages equitably (Department of Global Communication - DGC).

In the literature on the translation of UN documents, a few studies have addressed the translation and the production of United Nations resolutions and very few studies have tackled the application and utilization of the UN editorial guidelines, format, and style across different languages in these resolutions. In fact, most of these studies are mainly concerned with the linguistic features of the ST and TT, and the translation of terminologies. For example, some research papers investigated the translation of archaic adverbs used in UN resolutions across different languages. Other studies examined the use of lexical repetition, and a few papers explored the difficulties involved in the translation of terminologies and modal expressions.

Ghebaichi and Bendania (2016) discuss the treatment of archaic adverbs in General Assembly resolutions, with particular reference to English and Arabic. The study revealed that Arab translators opted for the strategy of transposition to render English archaic adverbs into Arabic. The reason behind the utilization of such a procedure is the huge linguistic gap between the SL and TL. Another interesting finding of the study is the repetition of words in the Arabic version and the translators' decision to concentrate on conveying the meaning rather than maintaining the same style of the ST. According to Ghebaichi & Bendania (2016, p. 48), the reason behind this choice is to avoid

confusion and any misunderstanding, and achieve cohesion and precision in the resulting translation which is a must in legal translation.

Sijilmassi (2021, pp. 85-86) stresses that in addition to the sensitivity of the legal documents and the norms that should be followed by translators and drafters, the nature of legal discourse and legal translation cause "lexical interference in the target texts during the translation process". In addition, Sijilmassi states that the UN General Assembly resolutions are drafted in English and that Spanish versions are "the product of translation process". Based on the aforementioned factors, he argues that the resulting translation of the UN resolutions are somehow adequate but unacceptable in some cases (2021, p. 86).

The unacceptability or unnaturalness of some translations of the UN documents is sometimes caused by the utilization of literal translation, which according to Kurbanova (2022, p. 126), is the most used and preferable strategy when rendering UN documents. The reason behind this preference is the sensitivity of these documents which require accuracy, which is a priority in legal translation, especially when rendering legal terms and jargon.

Cao (2007, p. 29) argues that, in some cases, the translation of UN terminology is complicated because of the "absence of equivalent terminology" across languages as a result of the huge gap between legal systems in different languages and cultures. Different linguistic features of UN documents (e.g., abbreviations, phrases, and idiomatic fixed expressions) can pose some difficulties in translation, especially when they "reflect the culture and national characteristics" of different countries in the UN (Parkinson, 2018, cited in Demyanchuk 2022, p. 58).

The huge gap between languages and legal terminology across different countries is not the only aspect that affects the resulting translation. In some cases, the quality of the original texts and the quality of translators and terminologists can be key issues in the translation process. According to Robert (2008, p. 387), assessing the quality of the translation and terminology relies heavily on the quality of the ST which reflects the nature of the international organizations "where different legal traditions meet" and the competence of translators and terminologists in the concerned languages and cultures.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study examines similarities and differences between the English versions and Arabic versions/translations of United Nations resolutions in relation to some standardized categories

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(i.e., format and fixed style guide). This section addresses the data used for this study and the methodological approach.

3.1.Data

For the purpose of this study, 30 English versions and Arabic versions/translations of United Nations resolutions were selected and analyzed. These documents are formal expressions of the opinion of the United Nations bodies. They normally call for an action, condemn an action, or impose sanctions on a member state (UN Editorial Manual, 1983, p. 167). Moreover, these resolutions are mostly issued by the Security Council or the General Assembly which is one of the five important organs of the UN and the only body in which all member nations have equal representation (UN website). Its powers are to oversee the budget of the UN, appoint the non-permanent member to the Security Council, receive reports from other parts of the UN, and make recommendations in the form of General Assembly Resolution (Charter of the United Nations).

3.2.Methodological Approach

As stated in the previous section, the corpus for this paper is the United Nations resolutions. The English versions and Arabic versions/translations of these documents were compared and contrasted in relation to some standardized categories. All examples related to these categories are presented in tables.

To address the research questions of this current study, a comparative model is adopted to facilitate the process of identifying similarities and differences between the different aspects of the United Nations' documents. The model helps researchers determine whether these differences and similarities are systematic or unsystematic. Comparative models, as stated by Williams and Chesterman (2002), are very effective for studying shifts and analyzing differences between different versions of the ST. The study draws on the UN editorial Manual 1983 which will be used as a reference when analyzing different features of the UN resolutions. The research uses a qualitative research approach which involves presenting a particular aspect in the English versions of a resolution and its Arabic counterparts in an attempt to decide whether this aspect has been preserved or modified.

4. ANALYSIS

This section provides an in-depth analysis of some standardized categories found in the English versions and Arabic versions/translations of the United Nations resolutions. The discussion of each category along with its examples will be in accordance with the research design explained in the previous section.

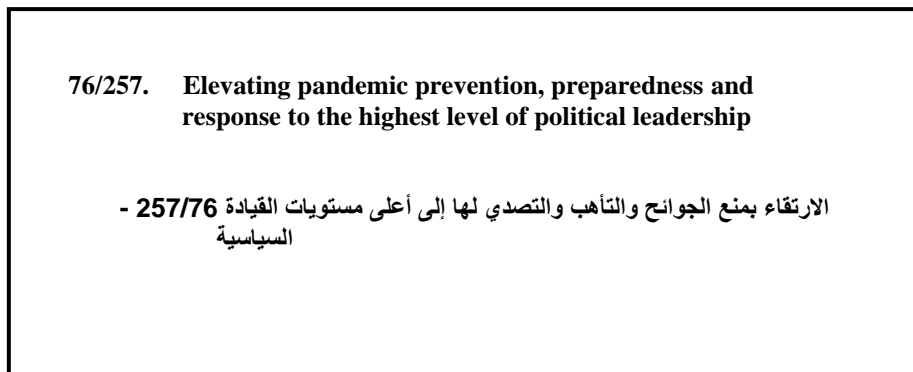
4.1. Standardized Categories

The analysis of the data in this section will be mainly concerned with some elements of the texts and fixed style. These aspects include titles, order of elements, headings and subheadings, numbering and arrangement of paragraph, italics, punctuation, abbreviations, and synonyms. The analysis of these elements will unveil the differences and similarities between the different versions of the United Nations resolutions.

4.2. Titles

Generally speaking, a United Nations document may include one, two, or more titles. These titles can be general, secondary, or descriptive based on the nature of the document. The utilization of titles should be in accordance with some guidelines. The general rules when it comes to titles in all UN documents is that a title should be centred and placed above the main text. Each title should be in bold and begin with a capital letter (UN Editorial Manual, 1983, p. 167).

Example 1



As shown in Example 1, the English and Arabic titles are 'general titles' which are used according to the aforementioned rules, except for capitalization in the Arabic version, as this mechanism does not exist in Arabic. The other slight difference between the use of titles in all selected English versions and Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions is the way of presenting the number of each resolution. In English the number of a resolution (e.g., 76/257.) is followed by a full stop (point) whereas in the Arabic version/translation the number is followed by a dash (-257/76). This procedure is systematically followed in the English and Arabic versions/translations.

4.3. Order and structure of elements

As shown in Example 2, the normal order of the basic elements of the United Nations resolution is as follows: (a) the name of the UN organ, (b) the preamble, if any (c) the operative part (UN Editorial Manual 1983, p. 175).

Example 2

<p><i>The General Assembly,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Reaffirming</i> the purposes and principles..., <i>Deeply concerned</i> that widows in certain parts of the world...,</p> <p>إن الجمعية العامة،</p> <p><i>إن تؤكد من جديد مقاصد ومبادئ...،</i> <i>وإن يساورها القلق البالغ من أن الأراامل في بعض أنحاء العالم...،</i></p> <p>4. <i>Stresses</i> that the cost of all activities that may arise...;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4-تشدد على وجوب أن تمول تكاليف جميع الأنشطة...؛</p>
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The name of the UN organ (The General Assembly), as presented in Example 2, is italicized in the English versions and Arabic versions/translations of the document. However, unlike the English name of the organ, the name (*إن الجمعية العامة*) in the Arabic version is in bold. There is another difference between the name of the organ in English and Arabic versions. In English the definite article *the* is used before the name whereas in the Arabic name the particle (إن) is used. This particle is used at the beginning of the independent nominal sentences in Arabic.

The preambulatory clause is the second elements in the structure of the selected resolutions. The purpose of preambulatory clauses is to state the problem and draw attention to previous attempts to solve it (e.g., previous resolution) and to documents relating to the problem (e.g., protocols). Closer inspection of the data shows that, in English versions of the resolutions, preambulatory clauses begin with a gerund (root verb + ing); words, such as *reaffirming, recognizing, recalling, reiterating, understanding, noting, and acknowledging* are commonly used in the UN preamble (see Table 1). In some cases, a preambulatory part may start with an adjective (e.g., Concerned with...,) or an adverb, followed by an adjective (e.g., Deeply concerned...),. In addition, as can be seen from Example 2, the first word in the preambulatory clauses is always capitalized and italicized. The clauses are unnumbered, and they end with comma.

<i>Reaffirming</i>	<i>Underscoring</i>	<i>Emphasizing</i>	<i>Encouraging</i>	<i>Aware</i>	
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<i>Stressing</i>	<i>Trusting</i>	<i>Noting</i>	<i>Taking note</i>	<i>Acknowledging</i>	
<i>Calling upon</i>	<i>Affirming</i>	<i>Deeply concerned</i>	<i>Concerned</i>	<i>Expressing deep concern</i>	<i>consi</i>
<i>Recalling</i>	<i>Bearing in mind</i>	<i>Reiterating</i>	<i>Realizing</i>	<i>Understanding</i>	
<i>Highlighting</i>	<i>Committed</i>	<i>Taking into account</i>	<i>Mindful</i>	<i>Cognizant</i>	

Table 1. Common first English word(s) in English preambulatory clauses in UN resolutions

Similar to preambulatory clauses in the English versions of the UN resolution, preambulatory parts in the Arabic versions/translations of the resolutions follow the same rules included in the UN Editorial Manual except for capitalization. Also, the first words in the Arabic preambulatory clause are italicized and interestingly in bold – something hasn't been followed in English versions (see Example 2).

Furthermore, the linguistic gap between the two languages forced Arab translators/drafters to extend the Arabic versions/translations in order to convey adequate meaning. Thus, the preamble in the Arabic version begins with the particle (إذ) [As] followed by the present form of the verb (e.g., تؤكد). However, in some cases the, the preamble begins with the particle (وقد) followed by the past form of the verb, as in (وقد درست، وقد نظرت) (see Table 2).

إذ تقرر	إذ تسلم	إذ تنوه	إذ تلاحظ مع القلق	إذ تشير	إذ تؤكد من جديد
إذ تدرك	إذ تعرب عن ثقتها	إذ تلاحظ	إذ تعترف	إذ تشدد	إذ تحيط علماً
إذ ترحب	إذ يساورها القلق البالغ	إذ تعيد التأكيد	إذ تهيب	إذ تكرر التأكيد	إذ تشجع
إذ تسترشد	إذ يقلقها	إذ تلاحظ مع التقدير	وقد نظرت	إذ تعرب عن قلقها البالغ	إذ تضع في اعتبارها
إذ تكرر الإعراب عن قلقها	وقد درست	إذ تشير بقلق	إذ تعي	إذ إدراكاً منها	واقتناعاً منها

Table 2. Common first Arabic words in preambulatory clauses in UN resolutions

It is worth mentioning that an English preambulatory clause may include a word that has different Arabic counterparts/translations. For example, *reaffirming* in the English version has four Arabic counterparts: *وإذ تؤكد من جديد أيضاً، وإذ تعيد التأكيد، وإذ تؤكد من جديد*.

After the preambulatory clauses come the operative clauses that state the action which should be taken (UN Editorial Manual 1983, p. 176). In contrast to preambular clauses, operative clauses in the English version of the UN resolutions are numbered and end with semicolons or colons. Nevertheless, the final operative clause always ends with a full stop. In addition, these operative clauses begin with the italicized simple present form of the verb /s/ or /es/ (e.g., *takes, invites, requests*, etc.). A capital letter is used for the first word in these clauses.

Example 3

<p>6. <i>Takes note with appreciation</i> of the initiatives...;</p> <p>بالمبادرات...، التقدير مع علماء 6- تحيط</p>

Similarly, operative clauses in the Arabic versions of the UN resolutions follow the same UN guidelines. These clauses are numbered and the first word(s) is italicized. However, as can be seen from the data in Example 3, there are two differences between the operative clause in the English and Arabic versions: the first word(s) in the Arabic clause is in bold and the clause ends with a comma or colon instead of a semicolon.

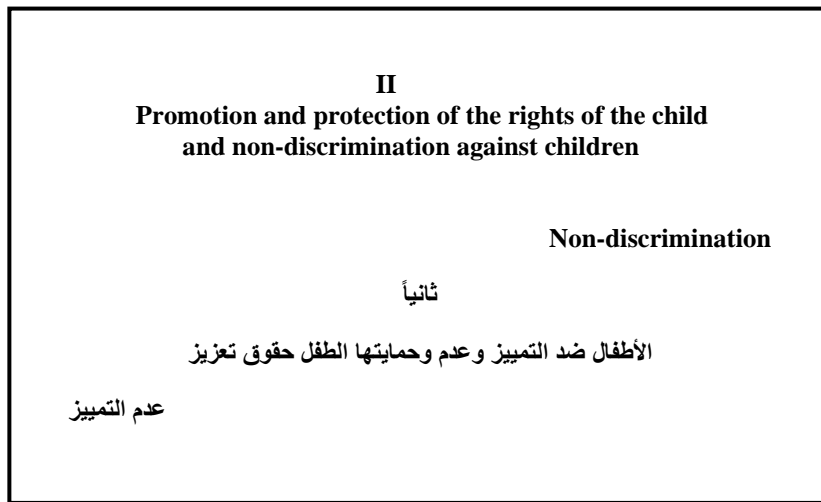
4.4. Headings and subheadings

As stated in the (UN Editorial Manual 1983, p. 209), headings and subheadings in English - usually "nouns or phrases built about nouns - mark logical divisions of the subject at hand. They shouldn't be treated as a part of the main text. In other words, a text "should be complete in itself". However, In French, headings and subheadings can be part of the text. In addition, subheadings shouldn't have the wording of headings. Both headings and subheadings shouldn't end with any final punctuation mark.

In the English versions of UN resolutions, the main headings are aligned to the centre of the page and they are identified by Roman numerals. The main headings and the first-degree subheadings are identified by capital letters (see Example 4). Both headings and subheadings are written in bold and have no final punctuation mark.

On the other hand, headings and subheadings in the Arabic versions/translations follow the same system except for the capital letters, which do not exist in Arabic and for the Roman numerals which are replaced by ordinal numbers (أولاً) [first], (ثانياً) [second], etc. The following example explains this.

Example 4



Numbering and arrangement of paragraphs and subparagraphs

According to the (UN Editorial Manual 1983, p. 400), paragraphs in United Nations documents should be numbered only if the numbers have a specific purpose (e.g., to enhance readability and guide readers). As stated in previous sections, preambulatory paragraphs are not numbered, operative paragraphs are numbered with Arabic numerals (see Example 2), however, a single operative paragraph is not numbered.

The first line in each paragraph should be indented five spaces and all subsequent subparagraphs "indicated by successive indentions of five spaces each" (ibid: 401). Example 5 illustrates this.

Example 5

The General Assembly,

Recalling also that, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹ inter alia, sport was recognized as an important enabler of sustainable development,

إن الجمعية العامة،

وإذ تشير أيضاً إلى أن الرياضة تعتبر في خطة التنمية المستدامة لعام 2030 من بين العناصر التمكينية المهمة للتنمية المستدامة، ضمن جملة أمور أخرى،

Paragraphs in the preamble or the operative clauses are always long in the English version of United Nations resolutions. Preambular paragraphs, as stated before, begin with a gerund (root verb + ing) and end with commas whereas operative paragraphs begin with the simple present form of the verb /s/ or /es/ and end with semicolons or colons (see Example 2). On the other hand, subparagraphs, especially in operative parts in the English version of any resolution, may have four different degrees. The first degree is identified in the following way: (a), (b), (c), etc. The second degree: (i), (ii), (iii), etc. The third degree: a., b., c., etc. The fourth degree: i., ii., iii., etc. (UN Editorial Manual 1983, p. 401). As shown in Example 6, these subparagraphs begin with the infinitive 'to', followed by a verb and end with a semicolon.

Example 6

9. *Calls upon* all States:

(a) To ensure the enjoyment by...;

9- تهيب بجميع الدول أن تقوم بما يلي:

حقوقهم... بجميع الأطفال تمتع (أ) كفالة

Paragraphs of the preamble and operative parts in the Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions are long but divide by commas. As discussed before (see the structure of the preamble in previous sections), preambulatory paragraphs in the Arabic versions of United

Nations resolutions start with the particle (لذ) followed by the present form of the verb or begin the particle (وفد), followed by the past form of the verb. On the other hand, operative paragraphs in Arabic versions/translations begin with the present form of the verb, and subparagraphs, as shown in Example 7, begin with nouns. In Arabic texts, subparagraphs may have also four degrees. The first degree is identified in the Following way: الخ, (ج), (ب), (أ). The second degree: ... 3, 2, 1 (see Example 7). The third degree: الخ, ج, ب, أ. The fourth degree: ... 3, 2, 1 (General Assembly, 2005, 2008).

Example 7

21. *Decides* that paragraph 10 shall not apply to:

(a) supplies of weapons or military equipment or the provision of technical advice, ...or use by:

(i) United Nations personnel, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM);

21- يقرر أن الفقرة 10 لا تسري على ما يلي:

(أ) الإمدادات من الأسلحة أو المعدات العسكرية أو إساءة المشورة التقنية... أو استخدام الجهات التالية:

'1' موظفو الأمم المتحدة، بما في ذلك بعثة الأمم المتحدة لتقديم المساعدة إلى الصومال؛

4.5. Abbreviations and acronyms

The use abbreviations and acronyms, according to the UN Editorial Manual, should be made in a way that allows readers to understand the United Nations documents as these publications address international readership. The UN Editorial Manual includes a list of common abbreviations and acronyms in English. They are also available in the other UN official languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish. The golden rule for using abbreviations and acronyms is to give the full title the first time it appears in the text, then the short form can be used when a title occurs many times in a particular document. Example 8 illustrates this.

Example 8

The Security Council,

Underlining its commitment to support the implementation... the Peace Implementation Council (PIC),...

Reiterating its calls on the competent authorities in Bosnia... as confirmed by the PIC Steering Board communiqués,

There are some restrictions related to the use of abbreviations in the UN documents. For instance, according to the UN Editorial Manual (1983, p. 410), 'United Nations' shouldn't be substituted by its abbreviation (UN). In addition, certain titles should not be abbreviated as well. These titles include Economic and Social Council, General Assembly, Secretary-General, Security Council, and United Nations Office at Geneva. However, the short form of these titles (e.g., GA, SC, ESC) can be used in tables and figures where space is limited.

The United Nations organs use some specialized or regional abbreviations in their publications, but these short forms should be explained within the text to avoid ambiguity amongst intended readers (UN Editorial Manual 1983, p. 412). In additions, some phrases that are included in economic, social, and political texts can be also replaced by acronyms. The use of specialized abbreviations and acronyms is restricted to internal correspondence and informal notes. The following table includes some of these specialized abbreviations and acronyms that were found in the collected data of English versions of the UN resolutions.

Title/phrase	Abbreviations and acronyms
non-governmental organization	NGOs
intergovernmental organization	IGOs
United Nations Office at Geneva	UNOG
general system of preference	GSP
gross domestic product	GDP
least developed countries	LDCs
research and development	R and D
transnational corporations	TNCs
urban data network	UDN

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks	SALT
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Table 3. *Specialized abbreviations and acronyms found in the collected data*

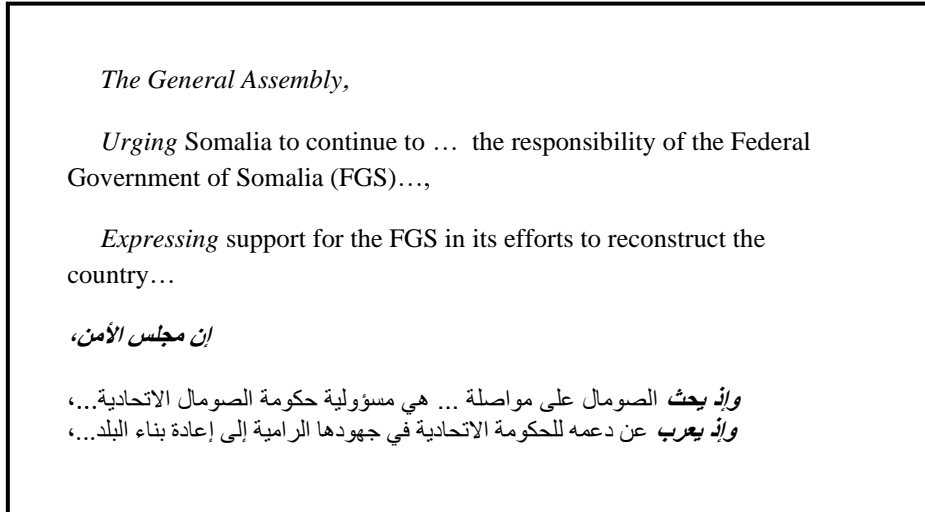
A closer inspection of the data shows that English versions of the UN resolutions are rich in different types of abbreviations and acronyms. These elements are explained when they are introduced in the text for the first time, then their short forms are used afterwards. This is evident, for instance, in Example 9 in which the name of the state: Federal Government of Somalia is introduced in the first preambular clause along with its abbreviation (FGS), and then the abbreviation FGS is used in another clause without its explanation.

Example 9

<p><i>The Security Council,</i></p> <p><i>Urging Somalia to continue to ... the responsibility of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS)...</i></p> <p><i>Expressing support for the FGS in its efforts to reconstruct the country...</i></p>
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On the other hand, Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions include full titles with different use of abbreviations that are in line with the mechanisms of abbreviating titles and phrases in Arabic. As shown in Example 9 and 10, in the first preambular clause in the Arabic version/translation حكومة الصومال الاتحادية is the translation/counterpart of the English title Federal government of Somalia (FGS) – no Arabic abbreviation is used in this clause. However, in the second preambular clause the full title is shortened in the Arabic version: للحكومة الاتحادية (for Federal Government) and used as a counterpart of the English abbreviation FGS.

Example 10



5. DISCUSSION

The current study addressed similarities and differences in legal texts: English and Arabic UN resolutions. The study also examined whether these similarities and differences are random or systematic. The study tried to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences between English and Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions in relation to format and style?
2. Do these similarities and differences seem random or systematic?

As shown in Fig. 2, the analysis in the previous sections focuses on a number of different aspects of the UN resolutions, namely format (titles, headings and subheadings, paragraphs and subparagraphs) and style (abbreviations, acronyms, capitalization, italics, bold print, numbering, punctuation, and order and structure of elements).

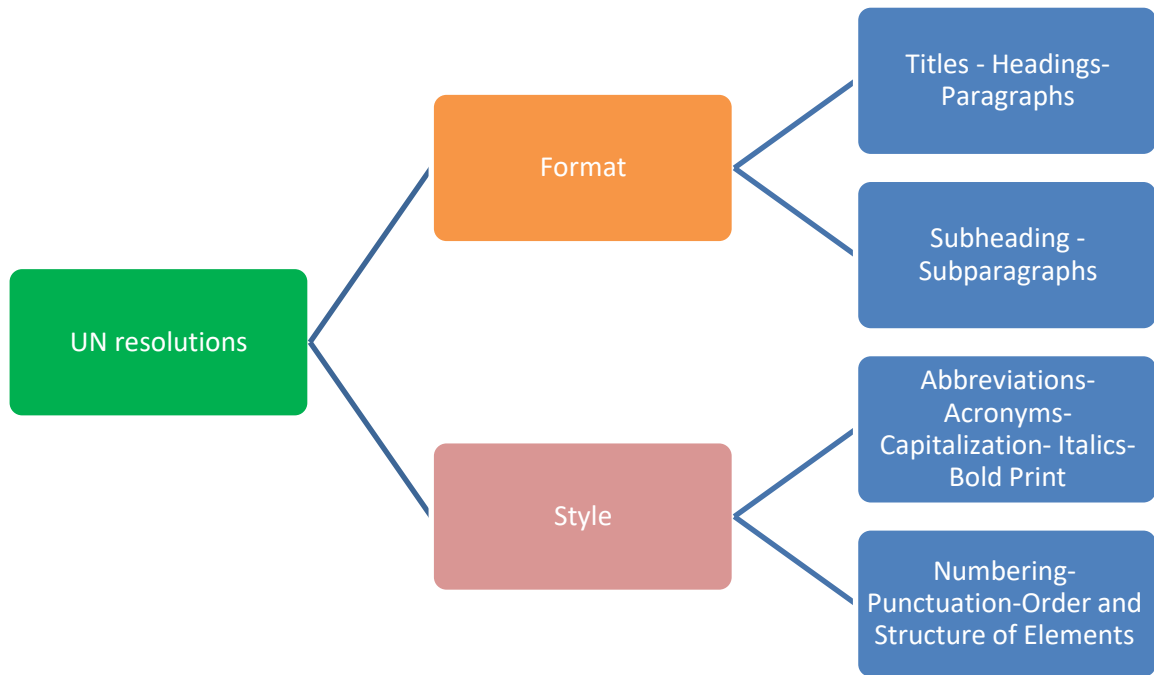


Figure 2. Standardized categories of the United Nation resolutions

With respect to the first research questions, the analysis of the data revealed that there were some similarities and differences between the English and Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions in relation to some standardized categories (format and style). As for similarities, *titles* in UN resolutions in the English versions and Arabic versions/translations almost share the same features. These titles are centred, placed above the main text, and written in bold (see Example 1).

Moreover, *name of organs* and *preambulatory and operative clauses* are italicized in all versions (see Example 2). *Preambulary clauses* in English version and Arabic versions/translations are numbered and end with commas. On the other hand, *operative parts* in all versions/translations are numbered, start with a verb in the present form, and the final clause ends with a full stop.

In addition, the English versions and Arabic versions/translations share some features in relation *headings* and *subheadings*. *Headings* in all versions, as in Example 4, are written in bold, aligned to the centre of the page, and have no final punctuation mark. *Subheadings*, on the other hand, are written in bold and also have no final punctuation mark.

The findings also revealed that *paragraphs* and *subparagraphs* in preambular and operative clauses in English versions and Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions

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share some common features. For instance, as shown in Examples 5, 6 and 7, the first line in each *paragraph* and *subparagraph* is indented five spaces. Furthermore, a single operative paragraph in all versions is unnumbered. As for punctuation, *subparagraphs* in English and Arabic versions end with semicolons.

In relation to abbreviations and acronyms in all English and Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions, full titles/names are used to enhance readability and guide the intended readers. This is evident in Example 10 in which the full name of the country is used in both English version (Federal Government of Somalia) and Arabic one حكومة الصومال الاتحادية.

In addition to the aforementioned similarities between the English and Arabic versions of the UN resolutions, there were some differences between these versions in relation to some elements of format and styles. For example, *titles* in English versions of the UN resolutions begin with a capital letter whereas in Arabic versions/translations, such a mechanism does not exist. Another difference between the versions is the way of presenting the number of each resolution before the title; the number in the English versions is followed by a full stop, but followed by a dash in the Arabic versions (see Example 1).

The study found that there were some differences between English and Arabic resolutions concerning the use of the names of UN organs which are normally used before the preamble. As can be seen from Example 2, the name in the English versions starts with the definite article 'the'. However, the particle *إن* is used before the name of the organ in the Arabic versions/translations. Moreover, unlike the name of the organ in the English versions, the name is bold in the Arabic versions/translations.

The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that the preambular and operative clauses in English and Arabic versions/translations differ in some aspects. For example, a preambular part in the English versions starts with a gerund (root verb + ing) whereas it starts with the particles (*إن*) plus the present form of the verb or the particle (*قد*) followed by the past form of the verb (see Example 5 and Table 2). Moreover, unlike the preamble in the English versions, the first word(s) in the Arabic preambular clause is written in bold.

It is worth mentioning that Arab drafters/translators tend to extend the first part of the preambular clause in the Arabic versions/translations. This is evident, for instance, in using (*وإذ يساورها القلق البالغ*) as a counterpart of the English phrase *Deeply concerned*. This strategy was used because in most cases there is no one-to-one equivalence between English and Arabic.

In the operative clauses, English and Arabic versions differ in three aspects: (1) operative parts end with semicolons or colons in English and with commas or colons in Arabic, (2) a capital letter is used for the first word of the English operative clause - no capitalization in Arabic, (3) the first word(s) in Arabic clause is written in bold - English clause does not use bold print (see Example 2).

Although headings and subheadings in all versions of the UN resolutions share some features, they are different in others. As shown in Example 4, headings in the English versions use capitalization for the first word and they are identified by roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.). However, headings in the Arabic versions/translations are identified by ordinal numbers (e.g., أولاً [First]).

The only difference between the English versions and Arabic versions/translations in relation to abbreviations and acronyms is the mechanism through which the short form of a title/name is used in the two languages. This is evident in Example 10 in which the full name of the country (Federal Government of Somalia) is used along with its short form (FGS) in the first preambular clause in the English version. Then only the short form is included in the second preamble. In contrast, in the first Arabic preambular part, the full name حكومة الصومال الاتحادية is used without using any short form. In the second clause the short form الحكومة الاتحادية (the federal government) is used.

With regard to the second research question, the analysis of the data revealed that the similarities mentioned earlier in this section are systematic, especially when it comes to fixed style and format. In other words, some features in the English versions and Arabic versions/translations are similar and already included in the UN Editorial Manual. These features include the use of italics, the alignment of titles/texts, numbering of operative clauses, the use of comma in preambular clauses, the use of full stop at the end of the final operative clause, the alignment of headings and the use of bold print in headings and subheadings, the indentation of paragraphs and subparagraphs, the non-numbering of a single operative paragraph, and using semicolons at the end of each subparagraph. The utilization and use of these features were systematic in all 30 resolutions of the United Nations.

As for the differences between the English versions and Arabic versions/translations, the features of the Arabic versions/translations that are systematically different from those of the English include: the way of presenting the numbers of the resolutions before titles, the use the particle إن before the name of the organ, the use of bold print for the name of UN organ, the use of the particles (إن) or (قد) plus the present/past form of the verb at the beginning of each

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preamble, the use of bold print for the first word(s) in the preambular and operative parts, the use of a comma/colon at the end of each operative clause, and the use of ordinal number to identify headings. These differences were adopted in all 30 Arabic versions/translations of the UN resolutions.

However, despite the systematic utilization of some features in the English versions and Arabic versions/translations, the data revealed one aspect in the Arabic versions/translation which seemed to be randomly or unsystematically adopted. This feature is related to the Arabic counterparts/equivalence of some English linguistic elements in the UN resolutions. As stated before in the analysis section, Arabic drafters/translators used different equivalents/counterparts for the same English elements. For example, the gerund reaffirming at the beginning of the English preamble had four Arabic counterparts/equivalents that were used in four different Arabic preambles: *وإذ تؤكد من جديد*, *وإذ تعيد التأكيد*, *وإذ تؤكد من جديد* أيضاً.

6. CONCLUSION

The main aim of this research was to study English versions and Arabic versions/translations of UN resolutions issued by the General Assembly and security council and identify some of the features which are institutionally standardized in these documents. The study explored similarities and differences between various English and Arabic documents concerning specific formats and styles. There was an attempt to decide whether or not these differences and similarities are systematic. The findings of the current study showed that English versions and Arabic versions/translations shared some institutionally standardized features. The versions, in some cases, differed from each other due to the inherently different nature of the two languages.

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