



Ain Shams University  
Faculty of Al-Asun  
Department of English

# **A Register Analysis of the Constitution of the United States of America and its Arabic Translation**

MA Thesis

Submitted by

**Farnas Faisal Saeed Noman**

Under Supervision of

**Dr. Soheir Mohamed Gamal Ed-Din Mahfouz**

Associate Professor of Linguistics, Translation  
and Interpreting Studies  
Department of English  
Faculty of Al-Asun  
Ain Shams University

**Dr. Amal Abdel Maqsoud**

Lecturer in Translation Studies and Linguistics  
Department of English  
Faculty of Al-Asun  
Ain Shams University

2014



## Table of Contents

	Page
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Notational Conventions and Abbreviations</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Research Methodology	3
Research Questions	4
Organization of thesis	5
<b>Chapter One: Register Analysis and Realization in Translation</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Elaboration of the levels of meaning included in the Hallidayan system	10
1.1.1 Experiential Metafunction	10
1.1.2 Logical Metafunction	20
1.1.3 Interpersonal Metafunction	26
1.1.4 Textual Metafunction	35
1.2 Translation studies and systemic functional analysis: In search of a model	41
<b>Chapter Two: Legal Language with Reference to the U.S. Constitution</b>	<b>51</b>
2.1 Established linguistic features of legal language relevant to the U.S Constitution	57
2.1.1 Lexical Features	57

2.1.2 Syntactic Features	63
2.2 Contrastive English/Arabic study of the linguistic features of legal language with a specific reference to the U.S. Constitution: Problems of Equivalence	72
2.2.1 Lexical Problems	76
2.2.2 Syntactic Problems	82
<b>Chapter Three: Text Analysis</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>3.1 Realization of Ideational Meaning</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>3.1.1 Realization of Experiential Meaning</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>3.1.2. Relization of Logical Meanaing</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>3.2. Realization of Interpersonal Meaning</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>3.3. Realization of Textual Meaning</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>Appendix 1: The U.S. Constitution and its Arabic Translation</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Analysis of the Logical Meaning of the U.S. Constitution</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Analysis of Experiential and Interpersonal Meanings of the U.S. Constitution</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Analysis of Textual Meanings of the U.S. Constitution</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>331</b>

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Soheir Mahfouz who undertook to act as my supervisor despite her many other academic and professional commitments. I am sincerely grateful for her illuminating remarks, patience, tremendous effort, and the time she has devoted to the whole journey of this thesis. She has been generous with advice that was both guiding and enlightening. I have also been blessed by her support and understanding, with her being there in each and every step.

My profound appreciation goes to my thesis co-supervisor Dr. Amal Abdel Maqsoud for her, immense knowledge, experience, and commentary. I truly appreciate her time, keen advice and close supervision which yielded determination on my side to do my best.

Furthermore, I would like to extend my thanks to Professor Karma Sami and Professor Fadwa Kamal Abdel Rahman for their valuable support.

Finally, due thanks and much love to my family and friends who were patient and supportive, and most of all for believing in me.



## **Abstract**

Based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory (1985, 1994, 2004), the thesis aims to investigate the register of the U.S Constitution and its Arabic translation. The Constitution of the United States of America is the supreme and fundamental law of the United States of America. Its language has the function of establishing a framework for the organization of the United States federal government and for the relationship of the federal government with the states, citizens, and all people within the United States. Thus, it has been selected with its Arabic version as the corpus of analysis. The analysis is conducted first on the constitution's lexico-grammatical features, then it attempts to reconstruct the Context of Situation activating the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings of the text through a description of the three components of the Context of Situation: Field, Tenor and Mode. Secondly, it aims at examining the options the translator opted for to realize the lexico-grammatical features of the text in Arabic. Halliday's SFL theory attempts to uncover the general principles which govern how language varies according to its different functions and the type of situation. It develops an analytical methodology which permits the detailed and systematic description of Register. It provides a set of resources for describing, interpreting and analyzing meaning. According to Halliday's SFL theory, language has three metafunctions (meanings): ideational, interpersonal and textual; they are motivated by the three variables in the context of situation: field, tenor and mode respectively. Register analysis that could activate the three metafunctions helps in distinguishing and deciding what types of meanings are being encoded in the text by identifying register indicators, and then it guides the translator in selecting the proper linguistic options in the target language reconstructing the same situational context.





## Notational Conventions and Abbreviations

Notational Conventions relevant to logical metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004:10):

	clause complex	$\alpha, \beta, \gamma \dots$	Hypotactic clauses
	clause	1 2 3...	Clauses in paratactic sequence
[[ ]]	embedded clause	=	elaboration
<< >>	Enclosed clause	+	extension
< >	Enclosed phrase	×	Enhancement

Abbreviations relevant to experiential metafunction (Eggins 2004: 353):

Process Types		Participants Types	
Pm	Material	A	Actor
Pme	Mental	G	Goal
Pb	behavioural	B	Beneficiary
Pv	Verbal	R	Range
Pe	Existential	S	Senser
Pi	Intensive	Ph	Phenomenon
Pec	Circumstantial	Sy	Sayer
Pp	Possessive	Posr	Possessor
Pc	Causative	Posd	Possessed
Circumstance Types		Rv	Receiver
CI	Location	Vb	Verbiage
Cx	Extent	Be	Behaver
Cm	Manner	Bh	Behaviour
Cc	Cause	X	Existent
Ca	Accompaniment	T	Token
Ct	Matter	V	Value
Co	Role	Cr	Carrier
Cg	Contingency	At	Attribute

Abbreviations relevant to interpersonal metafunction (Eggins 2004: 356):

		Adjunct Types	
S	Subject	Ac	Circumstantial adjunct
F	Finite	Am	mood adjunct
Fms	Modalized Finite	Ap	Polarity adjunct
Fml	Modulated finite	Av	Vocative adjunct
P	Predicator	At	Continuity adjunct
F/P	fused Finite and Predicator	Aj	Conjunctive Adjunct
C	Complement	Pml	Modulated predicator
Ca	attributive Complement		

Keys relevant to textual metafunction((Eggins 2004: 353) :

Theme	<u>underlined</u>	Textual Theme	<i>in italics</i>
Topical Theme	<b>in bold</b>	Dependent Clause as Theme	<b>whole clause in bold</b>



## List of Figures

FIGURE 1: TYPES OF PROCESSES IN THE TRANSITIVITY SYSTEM (HALLIDAY 1994: 108) .....	11
FIGURE 2: CLAUSE AS A PROCESS, PARTICIPANTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES .....	12
FIGURE 3 : THE SYSTEM OF VOICE (AFTER HALLIDAY 1994: 169).....	19
FIGURE 4: MOOD SYSTEM (HALLIDAY & MATTHIESSEN 1997: 4) .....	28
FIGURE 5: THE TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH DECLARATIVE CLAUSE AS AN EXCHANGE.....	30
FIGURE 6: TYPES OF ADJUNCT (MATTHIESSEN <i>ET AL</i> 2010: 47) .....	33
FIGURE 7: SYSTEM OF CONJUNCTION (HALLIDAY AND MATTHIESSEN 2004:541).....	40
FIGURE 8: PARAMETERS OF LANGUAGE BASED ON (HALLIDAY 2001) .....	44
FIGURE 9: BELL MODEL OF TRANSLATION PROCESS (1991: 40) .....	46
FIGURE 10: NETWORKS AND SYSTEMS (BELL 1990: 122) .....	48
FIGURE 11: GENRES IN LEGAL WRITING (BHATIA 2006) .....	54
FIGURE 12: COGNITIVE STRUCTURING IN LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS (BHATIA 1994:154).....	67
FIGURE 13 DISTRIBUTION OF PROCESSES IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	94
FIGURE 14 DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	95
FIGURE 15 DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	95
FIGURE 16: REALIZATION OF MATERIAL PROCESSES IN THE TT.....	98
FIGURE 17: DISTRIBUTION OF RELATIONAL PROCESSES IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	101
FIGURE 18: REALIZATION OF RELATIONAL PROCESS 'BE' IN THE TT .....	107
FIGURE 19: REALIZATION OF MENTAL PROCESSES IN THE TT .....	111
FIGURE 20 DISTRIBUTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	112
FIGURE 21: REALIZATION OF PASSIVE IN THE TT.....	121
FIGURE 22: FREQUENCY OF CLAUSES IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	127
FIGURE 23: REALIZATION OF MODAL VERB 'SHALL' IN THE TT .....	171
FIGURE 24: REALIZATION OF NEGATIVE MODAL VERB 'SHALL NOT' IN THE TT .....	175
FIGURE 25: REALIZATION OF MODAL VERB 'MAY' IN THE TT .....	176
FIGURE 26: GRAMMATICAL PROPERTIES OF THE SELECTED THEMES IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTIONS.....	183
FIGURE 27: GRAMMATICAL PROPERTIES OF THE SELECTED THEMES IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTIONS.....	184
FIGURE 28: GRAMMATICAL PROPERTIES OF THE SELECTED THEMES IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTIONS.....	184
FIGURE 29: DISTRIBUTION OF TEXTUAL THEMES IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	188
FIGURE 30: EXPERIENTIAL CONTENT OF TOPICAL THEMES IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	189
FIGURE 31: DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL REFERENCE IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	196
FIGURE 32: DISTRIBUTION OF DEMONSTRATIVES AND DEFINITE ARTICLE IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION.....	198



## List of Tables

TABLE 1: RELATION OF THE TEXT TO THE CONTEXT OF SITUATION (HALLIDAY 1989: 26).....	9
TABLE 2: TYPICAL FUNCTIONS OF GROUP AND PHRASE CLASSES (HALLIDAY: 1994: 109) .....	11
TABLE 3: THE PRINCIPLE TYPES OF RELATIONAL PROCESSES (HALLIDAY 1994: 119) .....	14
TABLE 4: CATEGORIES OF EXTENSION AND PRINCIPLE MARKERS (HALLIDAY & MATTHIESSEN 2004: 405) .....	25
TABLE 5: FINITE VERBAL OPERATORS (HALLIDAY AND MATTHIESSEN 2004: 116) .....	30
TABLE 6: METAFUNCTION AND TYPE OF ADJUNCT (HALLIDAY AND MATTHIESSEN 2004: 127) .....	34
TABLE 7: KINDS OF LEXICAL RELATIONS PLAYING A ROLE IN LEXICAL COHESION (HALLIDAY AND MATTHIESSEN 2004: 572) ...	41
TABLE 8: COMMON WORDS WITH UNCOMMON MEANING .....	58
TABLE 9: LATIN TERMS USED IN THE U.S CONSTITUTION .....	59
TABLE 10: SOME OF THE TECHNICAL TERMS USED IN THE U.S CONSTITUTION .....	61
TABLE 11: ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF ARAB-SPEAKING COUNTRIES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING ADOPTED LEGAL SYSTEMS.....	75
TABLE 12: MATERIAL PROCESSES REALIZED IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	96
TABLE 13: TYPES OF POSSESSIVE RELATIONS ( HALLIDAY AND MATTHIESSEN 1999: 146).....	106
TABLE 14: TYPES OF TACTIC RELATIONS IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION.....	129
TABLE 15: DISTRIBUTION OF LOGICO-SEMANTIC CATEGORIES OF EXPANSION WITH RESPECT TO TAXIS IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .	131
TABLE 16: DISTRIBUTION OF EXTENSION RELATIONS WITH RESPECT TO TAXIS IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	131
TABLE 17: DISTRIBUTION OF ENHANCEMENT RELATIONS WITH RESPECT TO TAXIS .....	135
TABLE 18: DISTRIBUTION OF ELABORATION RELATIONS WITH RESPECT TO TAXIS IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	141
TABLE 19: SYNTACTIC DISCONTINUITY IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	159
TABLE 20 DISTRIBUTION OF MODAL VERBS IN U.S. CONSTITUTION.....	166
TABLE 21 POSITION OF 'SHALL' IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION FREQUENCY LIST .....	167
TABLE 22: DISTRIBUTION OF ADJUNCTS IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION .....	179
TABLE 23: CONTENT OF MAJOR PARTICIPANTS SELECTED AS THEME IN EACH ARTICLE IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION.....	191



“So much of the law is simply a matter of linguistics that the transition from thinking about linguistic theory to thinking about legal matters should be a natural one”

**LAWRANCE M. SOLAN**  
**THE LANGUAGE OF JUDGES (1993:10)**