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Communication as a Cultural Construct at the United Nations Arabic Translation Service

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Communication as a Cultural Construct at the United Nations Arabic Translation
Service

by

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Dedication

To my parents, Brahim Iraqi and Nour El Houda Kettani, whose strong guidance and continuous support highly pushed me to realize my goals. To my two sisters, Bousayna and Oumayma, in recognition to their love and encouragement…I dedicate this thesis, to them all.

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine the practical challenge of constructing communication at the Arabic Translation Service (ATS) of the UN through the process of translation. Unlike in English in which "communication" has only one equivalent, in Arabic it has many depending on the context. My analysis focuses on analyzing the occurrence of two translation equivalents, namely *ittissal* and *tawassul* given that their use in translation sometimes proves to be cultural.

I conducted participant observation over the course of a two-month internship at the UN Headquarters in New York. Using grounded theory, I pieced together insights from a database of occurrences of the term "communication," interviewed staff members about their opinion about previous translations of "communication," witnessed staff interactions during their weekly meetings, and participated in a communication framework to create closer relationships between the ATS and other duty stations outside the UN. The way this framework is designed helps define how communication is understood as both theoretical concept and word used for translation purposes. Adopting an ethnography of communication approach, I illuminate the cultural differences involved in translating the term "communication" into Arabic in UN documents by an Arab multicultural team. By means of exploring translation issues, I aim at defining the prominent model of communication in the UN ATS community, and showing how this community's talk reflects tensions between different culturally embedded models.

My conclusion is that *ittissal* is preferred over *tawassul*, the first involving more technical meaning and less contact among people. Some translators disagree with some translations. The UN ATS has its own language, given that it communicates to particular audiences. I aim at finding out why *ittissal* is the preferred

term, why is standard Arabic not used for communication among the staff, and what aspects during translation are cultural.

Chapter 1: The cultural construction of communication in the Arabic Translation
Service

The two-month summer internship at the United Nations headquarters in New
York was both a learning experience and a research opportunity in an organization
that carries a lot of weight in today's political and humanitarian world. The models of
communication used in the Arabic Translation Service (ATS) and the extent to which
these models prove to be successful in ensuring a good flow of communication among
the ATS staff members greatly intrigued my intellectual curiosity. Also, the richness
of Arabic language, the beauty of Arabic, and its importance in the UN makes the
ATS an interesting service to examine in the UN. The fact that the ATS has a
multicultural team of Arab translators who are all combining their efforts to produce
high quality translations of UN documents calls for special attention to the linguistic
cultural variations during terminology decision-making. Being a student of
communication, the cultural dimension of the translation of the term
"communication" into Arabic mostly as either *ittissal* or *tawassul* was the first
element I noticed. Though each of the terms *ittissal* and *tawassul* has different
nuances and particular contexts in which it gets used, I noticed that there are some
contexts in which the use of either equivalent becomes a matter of personal choice. It
is this aspect which I investigate through this research, attributing it to the cultural
differences of the ATS translators. The way translators engage in the decision-making
in the ATS, either through their terminology meetings or through taking the initiative
to design communication frameworks for developing the quality of their
communication, all reflect the models and metaphors of communication that they use.
The way the ATS looks at the communication process and its willingness to improve
reflects the importance of effective communication within the ATS, as it is the case
for any other organization.

In the first chapter, I start by giving some interesting accounts from my
internship experience at the UN ATS, and I also include an interview which highly
impacted this research as well as a literature review. In the second chapter, I describe

my data and the methods that I used in analyzing it. In the third chapter, I analyze my textual data. I provide the etymology of the term "communication" both in Arabic and English, using some leading dictionaries. I then analyze the occurrences of the translation equivalents *ittissal* and *tawassul* from the UN terminology databases: ARABTERM, UNTERM, and the DtSearch. Additionally, I point out to some particular contexts in which *ittissal* and *tawassul* have been used in UN documents. It is in the fourth chapter that I move to analyzing the interviews I conducted with the ATS translators pointing out to the themes that emerged out of these interviews, such as: the cultural differences of these translators, their way of understanding communication, their differences of opinions during translation, the UN translation restrictions on these translators, and the process of terminology unification that they are going through. The fifth chapter is about my analysis of the weekly ATS meetings where I show some translation issues encountered by the ATS translators. I then talk about the translators' interactions in their meetings, and their process of terminology decision-making. Finally, the sixth chapter has my analysis of a communication framework that was designed at the ATS in order to improve the communication between the ATS and the contractory translators who are outside the UN main headquarters. I show how this communication framework follows the transmission model of communication that was suggested by Shannon and Weaver (1969). By this, I aim at finding out how the ATS constructs communication, starting from pointing out to the models and metaphors of communication that it makes use of to analyzing the cultural manifestations involved during the translation process.

Getting into the ATS

On my first day of the internship at the United Nations Arabic Translation Service, located on the 17th floor of the UN secretariat building, I was directed to the office of the chief of the ATS, an Egyptian and a highly-experienced translator. During my first encounter with the chief, he asked me about my educational background, my area of study, and the name of the university where I was studying. He then asked me if I knew how to talk and write well in standard Arabic. I answered that I was good at the Arabic language both in writing and speaking. But when I said that I was studying *tawassul* in University of South Florida, he corrected me that I

should rather use *ittissal,* given that *tawassul* refers to relationships among people, such as love and emotions.

This remark suggested that the chief was correcting my mistake in the use of the Arabic language when I did not pay attention to the nuance between *ittissal* and *tawassul*. I thought that his statement about *tawassul* was interesting given that he is a well-experienced and talented translator. I felt that the choice of this term is cultural because *tawassul* was the common term people use in Morocco to refer to communication studies.

On the second day of the internship, I was assigned a nice and very spacious office, and translators started knocking at my door in order to greet me and show their readiness to help whenever I needed anything. The translators are very friendly and their daily interactions include smiles, laughs, greetings, and various signs of respect in the different local languages of the Arab countries they come from. The chief was also very nice when he expressed to me that he wanted me to get a feel for what the staff is doing in the ATS. He added[1]:

> I want you to be part of this place. Now, just go and <u>communicate</u> ((smile)) with the people and have an idea about the work they are doing.

He then was precise in expressing that I should communicate with people with the meaning of *tawassul,* as a way to be introduced to them and know about their work.

The first location at the ATS is an open office of the chief secretary of the service, and it has among other things a computer, a printer, a phone and basically a time sheet where translators sign their names upon their arrival and exit every day. The ATS has a library with various dictionaries and glossaries in many languages. The ATS is also made of a long corridor with different offices on the right and left, each occupied by two staff members. Lastly, the ATS has a processing unit where translations are technically revised and printed.

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[1] Transcription notation symbols:

<u>Underlining</u> of speech marks emphasis.

(( )) mark non speech features of talk.

After expressing my research interest about the cultural meaning in translating "communication" into Arabic when it comes to *ittissal* or *tawassul*, a translator whose name is Mr. Samir related the following:

> Mr. Samir: We encourage people to look at our documents in the UN database. All these documents are public. This database is a sophisticated way of showing data. We encourage people to use our documents.

These documents come from the meetings of the General Assembly, the report of the Secretary General, committee reports like the International Law Committee, the Committee of Human Rights, summary of meetings, reports from different countries about their adherence to Human Rights Issues, reports from NGO's, etc. About eighty per cent of these documents are originally in English. The ATS translates these documents from the other languages into Arabic. I started wanting to know if all the translators agree on the translation of the term "communication" into Arabic. After asking a translator about how he would translate the term "communication" into Arabic. The following dialogue emerged:

> Amina: How do you translate the term "communication"?

> S: It is difficult to say. It comes either as "communication" or "communications" or "telecommunications." If it is "telecommunications," we use *ittissal*. In the Maghreb, we prefer the word *tawassul,* but it is less used in the Middle East. For you as a student of communication, you should say: I am studying علم الاتصال [ʕilm al ittissal], i.e. the science of communication.

> A: I say *tawassul*

> T: I know (smile)

> A: Why?

> T: Because in the Maghreb, we have this thing. We have regionalism. For example:

1- *Gestion* (a French word meaning management in English), we in the Maghreb say التسيير [al-tassyir], but in the Middle East people say ادارة [?idara].

2- لائحة [la?iha]: In the Maghreb, people say "*une liste*" but in the Middle East, people say "regulations". But, whenever we have "*liste*" we translate it, as قائمة [qa?ima] and not [la?iha] because we try to unite the terms of the Maghreb and the Middle East. There are some words used in the Maghreb which makes it difficult for the Middle East to understand. Also, in the Maghreb, we use مسطرة [mistara] for "*une regle*" which in English means a rul*e,* but in the Middle East people use الاجراءات او القواعد الاجرائية [al-ijra?at or alqaw?id al-ijra?iyya], which means "the regulations" or "the regulation rules" in English.

Thus, being from the Maghreb region, Mr. Samir is aware that the Maghreb people generally use *tawassul* to refer to the process of communication. He is also aware of the cultural differences that exist in translation. But still in his opinion, I should rather use *ittissal* to refer to my studies of communication. This suggests that cultural differences are overcome in the translation of UN documents. Mr. Samir also refers to a process of terminology unification that the ATS is going through. From his reply, this unification process will create more understanding between the language of countries of the Maghreb and those of the Middle East. Mr. Samir then recapitulates by saying:

S: So we use *ittissal* for any mechanical operation, telephone cable, etc, but we use *tawassul*, whenever there is exchange of communication with people. But they don't understand it like that in the Middle East.

Yet, the answer of the Egyptian chief of the ATS did suggest an understanding that *tawassul* is used for an exchange of messages among people and that *ittissal* is used for the technical aspect of the communication process. However, from this Mr. Samir's response, there appears to be no rule for using either *tawassul* or *ittissal* in relationships, except for the technical aspect which is the context where *ittissal* is clearly the term to use. This pushed me to ask Mr. Samir about how the UN manages to overcome the cultural differences in language during translation.

A: How do you go about that in the UN? How do you make a decision to choose the most common term both in the Maghreb and in the Middle East?

S: In the IT, it is difficult to put *tawassul*, but in general it is not understood. Sometimes there are things that are understood only in your region. You should be aware of regional use which is problematic. And the solution is both easy and difficult. This service started with Orientalists; that is why the problem was not big. There was a problem in terms of use between Egypt and Syria and between Morocco and Tunisia. For example, for the term "training", Moroccans use تدريب [tadrib], but Tunisians use تربص [tarabbuss] and in any domain. For instance, to say that you are an intern in Morocco, you say انا متدربة [ana mutadarriba] but in Tunisia you will say انا متربصة [ana mutarabbissa]. In Morocco, you will say معهد التسيير [ma?had attasyyr], but in Tunisia you will say معهد التصرف [ma?had attasarruf]. Historically, the corpus did not have much difference because the language of the Middle East was the one which was spread. After that the people of the Maghreb came and a different perspective started. The debate is still going on. A good example is the weekly terminology meeting in which there are limitations of regional usages.

Thus, it is after translators from the Maghreb region were recruited that cultural differences in language started to emerge. Mr. Samir raised a very interesting point that emphasizes the reason why some terms are avoided in some cultures. In his words:

S: Sometimes the term is related to dialectal usage like:

"Une interrogation", French of *interviewing*, we use in the Maghreb استنطاق [istintaq], but in Egypt it has the meaning of "to vomit." So the equivalent [istintaq] was completely erased from our documents. In the UN, we use استجواب [istijwab] instead of it.

This translator then moved to another aspect which is the different forms that the term "communication" appears in and which results in a change of meaning:

S: For "communication," there are ranks. It might be used in singular or plural or as an adjective and when a rank shifts the meaning might also change.

Mr. Samir concludes by saying that *ittissal* refers to the phenomenon of communication and that *tawassul* refers to the act itself. For him, it is for this reason that I should say that I am studying *al-ittissal* rather than *al-tawassul*. This suggests that *ittissal* is the science of communication in general, whereas *tawassul* is when this science is put into practice.

I aimed through this long excerpt at giving an overview about some major translation issues that I will be discussing in the chapters about interview analysis and textual analysis.

<div align="center">Literature Review</div>

Writing about communication as a cultural construct at the ATS was both easy and difficult to me because communication is a so abstract and broad concept whose components need to be specified by the researcher. James Carey writes that one of the major problems one encounters in talking about communication is that the noun refers to the most common, mundane human experience (Carey, 1989, pp.23-24). This was revealed to me through the reactions to some of the staff members to my questions about communication at the ATS. For them, the concept of communication was a clear and very simple aspect of everyday life that maybe did not require all the attention I was giving it. However, researching communication at the ATS proved to be complex given the multiplicity of aspects that need to be analyzed starting from everyday interactions and meetings to translated documents and terminology databases. These simple daily interactions reveal a lot about the nature of work at the ATS.

My research approach is based on grounded theory, which is the use of data to generate a theory. Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) define grounded theory as consisting of "flexible strategies for collecting and analyzing data that can help ethnographers to conduct efficient fieldwork and create astute analyses" (p. 160). These authors mention various strategies of grounded theory. First, the researcher should collect data and analyze it simultaneously. Second, the researcher should extract themes out of the

data and relate the social processes that emerge from the data. Third, the process of this type of research is inductive, as the researcher has to construct, define and summarize these social processes. Fourth, the researcher should also construct a theoretical framework under which he or she should include these categories and point out to the results of these processes. Additionally, using grounded theory, the researcher has to be open to the social atmosphere of the data, considering every piece of data to be meaningful.

Adopting a grounded theory approach, I exposed myself to the social atmosphere at the ATS, considering everything to be meaningful. My simultaneous analysis to the data allowed me to pay attention to more aspects in the field. The terminology unification process, the translation issues and the cultural dimensions of translation were all themes that emerged out of the data. I started by gathering textual data in the form of translation occurrences of the term "communication" in the DtSearch to find myself interviewing translators and analyzing interactions during translators' meetings.

In their book, B. Glaser and A. L. Strauss (1977) describe qualitative research as being an 'adequate' and 'efficient' way to obtain data and overcome the difficulties of empirical research. The authors also mention that grounded theory has four conditions of applicability: First, it should "fit the substantive area in which it will be used". Second, it has to be "*understandable* by laymen concerned with this area". Third, it has "to be *general* to be applicable to a multitude of diverse daily situations within the substantive area". Fourth, "it must allow the user partial *control* over the structure and process of daily situations as they change through time" (B. Glaser and A. L. Strauss, 1977, p. 237).

Charmaz (1990) conducted a study in which she applied grounded theory on analyzing the behavior of people having chronic illnesses. Charmaz argues that grounded theorists proceed in the following way:

> By starting with data from the lived experience of the research participants, the researcher can, from the beginning, attend to how they construct their worlds. That lived experience shapes the researcher's approach to data collection and analysis (p. 1162).

This reminds me of the accounts that translators at the ATS gave me about their job experience during the interviews I had with them. Most of them were very expressive, which made me get an overall idea about the extent of their satisfaction with their jobs as translators. Charmaz (1990) also mentions how grounded theorists "begin with general research questions rather than tightly framed pre-conceived hypotheses" (p. 1162). This means that the grounded theorist starts as a Tabula Rasa, and that the categories only emerge after the data are gathered. For instance, there are some aspects that some translators raised to me during the interviews which I did not ask them, which is the case for the translators' satisfaction aspect about their jobs. Thus, I did not start the data gathering process with, as Charmaz calls them, pre-conceived hypotheses. Rather, findings emerged from my data.

> Charmaz (1990) also argues that Glaser and Strauss
>
> developed grounded theory when formal theory was becoming more arid and distant from the worlds of interacting people, when the primary value of qualitative research lay in sharpening later 'rigorous' quantitative research, and when field research studies generally remained ethnographic or consisted of analytic descriptions (p. 1163).

Thus, grounded theory came as a better substitute for some previous research methods.

My finding through the data is about the difference in the use of *ittissal* and *tawassul* in the ATS. I believe *tawassul* to invoke the ritual model of communication "in which communication is linked to terms such as 'sharing', 'participation', 'association', 'fellowship' and 'the possession of a common faith'. This definition exploits the ancient identity and common roots of the terms 'commonness', 'communion', 'community', and 'communication' (Carey, 1989, p. 18). This model is so little used by the ATS because it is not needed in its context and domain and is not directed towards its audience of professional politicians.

Carey (1989) also mentions that "communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed" (p.23). The process of terminology unification is geared towards repairing the terminology

databases of UNTERM and ARABTERM and transforming it in a way that produces a better version. This is also part of the ATS culture of maintaining high standards of professionalism in translation.

In an effort to locate the elements of the speech patterns of the ATS community, I found Philipsen's (1992) article entitled: "Speaking like 'a man' in Teamsterville" to be a great resource for that. In this article, Philipsen locates these speech patterns of the Teamsterville's community and mentions the cultural values of this speech community through which a person is considered a man. Using an ethnography of communication approach, this author shows how being a man in Teamsterville is more of a social category defined by cultural values. Philipsen also (1992) notes that the Teamsterville community is similar to "a universe of discourse with a finely organized, distinctive pattern of meaning and action" (p.4). Thus, through analyzing the speech of the translators at the ATS, I attempt to show how speaking is a deep cultural activity in the ATS. For the ATS translators, issues about work, translation unification, communication models, provides an idea about their values, motives, and goals. Their translation is directed to an audience of diplomats, delegates and other politicians. For the ATS translators, speech is the accurate translation of documents using a unified language understood by politicians. Speech is for them also a reflection of the UN language and a preservation of the UN image and reputation.

Philipsen (1992) also believes that "to understand speaking in a particular speech community, one must come to understand how it is culturally shaped and constituted" (p.7). Understanding the translation rules at the ATS necessitates an understanding of the ATS culture and goals. To this aim, I started with observing the speech of the ATS community, mainly through the meetings and through the interviews I had with the translators. I also paid attention to the pattern of frequency of the ATS speech behaviors. I observed the jargon and the language(s) that the translators use while speaking. These languages are mainly the local Arabic languages, such as Egyptian for Egyptians, Syrian for Syrians, Moroccan Arabic for Moroccans, etc. Some words in languages, such as French and English, appear as well in the speech of this community depending on their cultural reference. Moroccans, for instance, tend to use some French words while speaking while Egyptians or Syrians

tend to use some English. This is mainly due to the colonial past in these countries which included these two foreign languages in the educational system. However, my remark is that a foreign language is rarely used at the ATS and that what I heard is the exception. Walking in the corridor of the ATS reminded me of walking in Arab corridors. The ATS has a purely Arab culture to the extent that it becomes difficult to realize that one is in an organization in the United States.

The ATS meetings were very helpful to understand the ATS culture. The preferred translation and producing the right version of a translation are perceptible in these meetings. As Philipsen (1992) also notes, "wherever there is a spoken life, there is a distinctive system of predicables, preferences, and practices for spoken conduct" (p.11). Also, translators of the ATS are all linked through a social relationship within the work domain that makes them similar and united towards achieving the same goals of making successful translations to sometimes problematic terms. Thus, their speaking is structured, distinctive and social.

Philipsen (1992) also argues that "not every social moment is a speaking moment, but every speaking moment not only occurs in, but also contributes to, a particular moment of sociality" (p.13). It might happen that translators call each other to discuss translations of certain terms. This moment of discussion is not only a speaking moment, but also a social moment that makes these translators communicate with the meaning of *tawassul* rather than *ittissal*. I further discuss the difference in the use of *ittissal* and *tawassul* in the textual analysis in chapter 3. The nuance of *tawassul* is very similar to what Philipsen (1992) calls as *close/distant* dimension of communication.

   "Communication" is the medium of intercourse between those who are "close," such as "close friends" and intimates. Although the spatial metaphors of proximity and similarity are relevant here, perhaps of most relevance is the spatial metaphor of penetration. Specifically, "communication" is high on interpenetration of the interlocutors' unique psychologic worlds (p. 74).

What is intimate, close, interchanged and no longer private among people is more referred to as *tawassul* in Arabic. This explains why this equivalent of communication is not very used in the translation of UN documents. It is, however,

used in the Arabic Language Center of the UN given that communication in the context of language learning refers to interchanged conversations and learning. It is also similar to what Philipsen also calls as 'openness'. "By openness is meant a willingness to listen to and acknowledge the other's presentation of self, to listen to and actively try to understand the other's evaluation of oneself, and to be willing to consider changing one's perception of self and the other, contingent upon the meanings that emerge in the speech event" (p. 74). This kind of reality often occurs in language centers and during language learning.

The ATS community also has a code of speaking, a system of meanings and symbols that define its culture. The code of honor is a very common speech code at the UN ATS. According to Philipsen (1992), "honor refers to the worth attached to individuals by virtue of their attained social identity, as that identity is found to be valued in a particular community. It is concerned with the persona built up out of heritage, residence, and valorous past conduct" (p. 103). Translators are always cautious not to make any mistake in translation that would affect the image of the ATS either by politicians or even by the future generation of ATS translators. This suggests that these high standards of professionalism in translation are what is considered honorable in the ATS. The value of these standards is reflected in the promotion of the staff members who show commitment to the UN work and continuous hard-work. Such a promotion is announced along the ATS corridors for all the staff to know. It also suggests an incentive for other translators to work similarly to get the same reward. Every staff member congratulates the promoted translator for his/her achievements. According to Philipsen, "communication [under the code of honor], is considered the means by which socially different people coordinate their activities and cognitively similar people link themselves to each other" (p. 103).

Similarly, Katriel & Philipsen (1981) discuss the differentiation between communication and mere talk in American everyday life. Through two case studies, these authors show the meaning of communication for Americans as being either a way of constructing the self, "open communication" with people, "supportive communication", and talk about talk. One of the dimensions the authors found out about communication is that it is "high on interpenetration of the interlocutors' unique psychological worlds. To the extent that each interlocutor makes public what was

previously private information about his or her unique self image, *closeness*, one feature of "communication," is manifested. "(p. 308). This suggests that not all talk is considered as communication.

The authors then move to an analysis of an American TV show called The Phil Donahue Show, in which the process of communication is portrayed as a way of getting in touch with others. The show also embodies the communication ritual as a performance which is more linked to the closeness with others. The authors mention that their ethnographic study of American culture led them to "think of ethnography less as a journey into a foreign land or culture, and more as a journey into a no-man's land, which is neither the territory of the self nor of the other" (p. 316). In this way, adopting an ethnographic approach to communication allowed the authors to know about people's ideas but also their own ideas. Thus, it is through hearing translators' accounts about what communication means for them as Arab people that I personally had more insight about what communication means for me as an Arab.

The Arab culture is revealed in the ATS through the Arabic language that translators use more than any other language that they use in translation. Language in this context emphasizes the common aspects shared among the ATS community, and their identity and sense of belonging. Aoki (2001) conducted a study about how Mexican Americans construct their identity and convey their ethnicity through their codes of speaking. Social acts contribute in establishing an identity and a sense of belonging within the Mexican community given the existence of similarities in the way of life, language, and culture. This study shows how hard work, religion and family life are characteristics of this Mexican American community. Similarly, the ATS translators share an Arab culture that shapes their interactions in the ATS.

I also realized that there are some tensions between different communication models within the ATS. This notion of tension also appears in Rudd's (2001) study about the tensions within an artistic group of musicians during their performance. In the same way that Rudd (2001) discusses a tension between the artistic code of the symphony and the business code, there is tension between two communication models at the ATS, namely the transmission model and the control metaphor of communication. The fact that the ATS urges translators to follow the unified

terminology can also be interpreted as a type of control over them. Thus, there is a tension between the ATS attempt of terminology unification and the communication of values of unification to the staff. The ATS sees its attempt to unify terminology as a good aspect that will improve the quality of its translation although some translators still seek more explanations to why the unification is important, especially when they are asked to unify even linking words.

This also refers to a whole ideology imposed on the ATS that affects the organizational interactions, exactly as was mentioned in Rudd's (2001): "The dialectic tension between the business and artistic codes as it is expressed in the routine speech of symphony members demonstrates how ideological differences impact the nature of organizational interactions" (p. 128). Rudd further maintains that cultures and organizations are never in harmony although he believes that "a cultural system, when applied to organizations, suggests a coherency, purpose, and particular pattern of symbolic action that functions to bond organizational members in some meaningful and lasting way" (p.119). The staff at the ATS is caught between the transmission and control models in an attempt to reconstruct the ways they are used in the translation process. Some translators feel a restriction to follow UN terminology and language and are not allowed to be creative during their translations. In fact, this is the first rule that translators of the UN learn when joining the organization. The ATS considers the fact of abiding by UN terminology very helpful in improving the UN work and any opposition to that is silenced. The UN has its own language.

Talking about communication and power within organizations, Richmond et al (1984) argue that "supervisors are responsible for directing, coordinating, and guiding subordinates' activity so that organizational objectives may be reached" (p.86). According to these authors, one of the strategies that supervisors use to convince their subordinates to act in particular ways is the *Legitimate-Higher Authority*, namely "Do it, I'm just telling you what I was told. It is a rule, I have to do it and SO do you" (p.9). My interviews with translators, both the highly-experienced revisers and the newly-recruited translators showed this aspect of power relations. The revisers supervise the translators by showing them the rules of translation within the UN. Two of my interviewees said -in a surprised tone- that revisers tell them to follow terminology unification even in the translation of linking words. It also came in the

speech of a reviser that there is no space for creativity in translation at the ATS. The reason behind this is that this is UN language and that the process of unification will make it understood by everybody.

Thus, organizational culture of the ATS is embedded in the discourse of the ATS translators. However, I believe the tensions that occurred between the artistic and business codes in the case of the symphony to be different from the tensions between the control metaphor and transmission model of communication in the ATS. The transmission model is how people have been perceiving communication through history and the control metaphor comes to improve this transmission. In a way, the transmission and control metaphors complement each other although they prove to be in tension at the ATS. Such a tension might be a temporary condition, given the newly launched procedure of unification. Thus, tension may prove to be positive rather than negative in the ATS, as it is a tool of organizational improvement and proper functioning.

If people constructed metaphors of communication, it is because these metaphors are important to help them articulate some concepts that are difficult to articulate either because they are too abstract or not defined through our personal experiences. So it is the concrete examples of the metaphors that come to explain these concepts (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Lakoff and Johnson further mention that "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (p. 3). Thus, metaphor is not only language and words that organize cognition about the world, but also thoughts. One way of looking at metaphors is through arguments with the others which are usually structured in terms of war. For example, one might say to the other "your claims are *indefensible*" or "He *shot down* all my arguments" or "you disagree? Okay, *shoot*!" (p. 4). The war metaphor structures people's arguments and helps them understand their interactions with others.

In his article "Major Metaphors of Communication and Some Constructivist Reflections on their Use," Krippendorff (1993) points to some metaphors of communication that people encounter in everyday life, such as the container metaphor, the conduit metaphor, the control metaphor, the transmission metaphor, the war metaphor, and the dance-ritual metaphor. Krippendorff's argument is that these

metaphors play an important role in structuring our thinking about communication, According to Krippendorff, "the expression '*her thoughts were locked in cryptic verse'* depicts language as a container of particular objects, here thoughts, to which access seems complicated by the absence of a key" (p. 4). However, Krippendorff mentions that this metaphor is unequal, favoring the container over the message itself. Another entailment of this metaphor is that it conceptualizes communication as transportation of messages and information from one place to another. Second, there is a big similarity between the container metaphor and the conduit metaphor because the latter involves the notion of channels of communication which depicts communication as "a flow of certain substances through complex networks" (p. 7). Third, the control metaphor calls for "the invention of forces presumed capable of causing desired effects" (p. 8). It involves a controller and a controlled. In Krippendorff's words:

> With the aid of control metaphors, controllers, authors, and producers of communications assume the privileged position of *knowledgeable agents* capable of conceptualizing the process of communication, setting their goals, and judging the success of their own activities. From their point of view, the targets of communication, listeners, readers, or viewers become means (p.8).

The control metaphor is very important in analyzing the tensions that occur within the ATS, as there is some control over the translators to follow certain translation rules that are followed by the UN. Fourth, as far as the transmission metaphor is concerned, Krippendorff notes that "here, the problem is to *encipher* a perfectly understandable message, also called 11 clear, "into a form, also called "cipher," that unauthorized interceptors can not make sense of but authorized addressees could decipher and read" (p. 9). In this way, the message will not be received except by the right addressees. Fifth, the war metaphor, as I previously defined, involves defending one's argument which is the case in terminology meetings where translators suggest their equivalents to certain terms and account for these suggestions using convincing and strong arguments. Sixth, Krippendorff also mentions the dance-ritual metaphor which gets manifested during conversation, involving taking turns during talk and keeping people into one community. Under the ritual metaphor, talk can always be reproduced with so many people.

Thus, these metaphors of communication will reappear throughout this thesis, as they shape the life of the ATS speech community in so many aspects. The transmission model of communication that emerged in my interview talk with the translators at the ATS is connected to the conduit metaphor identified in Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in which "the speaker puts ideas (objects) into words (containers) and sends them (along a conduit) to a hearer who takes the idea/objects out of the word/containers" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.10).

However, the conception of communication as a sender-receiver relationship is questionable given that it reduces human relationship to a sender and receiver relationship only. At first, Shannon & Weaver's transmission theory started from the domain of engineering and then was applied to the domain of human communication. In their article "Shannon and Weaver: Unravelling the Paradox of Information," Ritchie, D. (1986) mentions that

> The most straightforward way of applying a theory into a new domain is to analyze its assumptions, compare them to the new situations, and determine whether the new situation satisfies the assumptions (p. 293).

Thus, it is unfounded to say that the action of a machine sender-receiver is similar to the action of a computer sender-and receiver. This means that the sender-receiver aspect of communication that was constructed in the talk of ATS translators is not to be considered a characteristic of human communication as this reduces human communication and gives it a mechanical aspect.

In the chapter about the analysis of meetings, I shed light on some problematic terms in translation encountered by translators. Becker's (1998) *Beyond Translation* touches on this problematic aspect of understanding what is beyond the language of a different speech community. Becker (1998) narrates his experience as a Fulbright scholar in Burma learning and teaching Southeast Asian languages. He is surprised that even after spending twenty year studying these languages and teaching them, he still could not master them. Becker argues that each person learns aspects of the host community depending on whether he or she is "a philosopher, a linguist, a language teacher, an ethnographer, a translator, a poet, or some other such category of person who does not simply *use* language but is compelled, for one reason or another, to

think carefully and repeatedly *about* it" (p. 3). Thus, it is depending on one's area of interest that we manage to memorize some particularities of a language. Becker also believes that it is through what he calls "the particularity" of certain patterns in a speech community that the person learns specificities of a certain language. An interesting point that Becker makes is that translation is not the end but the beginning of a further meaning, which explains his title *Beyond Translation.*

Becker further points out to the problematic aspect of translating from Burmese into English, mainly because Burmese is characterized by silence which makes the precise meaning difficult to be expressed during translation. Becker attributes this fact to the deficient aspect of languaging which "says less than we wish it to" (p. 5). In Becker's words:

> In considering these silences, we come to some of the limiting factors of languaging---whether we are languaging in our own native language or translating across languages (p. 7).

For Becker, learning a language is more than learning its words and grammar and that an utterance never reveals the whole meaning. Becker also mentions that silence is a part of the deficiencies of language, and at that translation is about finding out the meaning including the silence part. Therefore, translating the meaning of the silence part in Burmese would necessitate an understanding of the Burmese culture. Another option would be that the translator consults a Burmese person about the meaning of silence in a certain context. The ATS translators often consult with specialists in many domains in order to understand more about certain terms, especially in the scientific, medical, or judicial domains. The following quote explains another translation issue mentioned by Becker:

> I can say with real assurance that if we compare any sentence of Burmese and a translation of it in English, at least half of what is there in English will have no counterpart in the Burmese original and at least half of what is conveyed by the original won't make it into English (p. 7).

Not finding a counterpart of a term in a language is a very problematic case that reveals some major difficulties that translators might encounter. Hatim & Mason

(1997) argue about the nature of translators' work, describing it as being intensive, necessitating a close reading to the text and a good concentration and focus.

> The translator is, of course, both a receiver and a producer. We would like to regard him or her as a special category of communicator, one whose act of communication is conditioned by another, previous act and whose reception of that previous act is intensive. It is intensive because, unlike other text receivers, who may choose to pay more or less attention to their listening or reading, translators interact closely with their source text, whether for immediate response (as in the case of the simultaneous interpreter) or in a more reflective way (as in the translation of creative literature) (p. 2).

The authors believe that a translator's reading and understanding of the text is in itself a communication. They consider the translator as being a communicator of meanings and ideas. Hatim & Mason also give the example of creative literature in which translators can be creative in reflecting upon what they read and express themselves. Thus, each text can follow certain criteria of translation depending on the nature of the language used in it, i.e.: either poetic, juridical, political, etc. This explains why in the ATS, creative and expressive translation is totally not accepted given that the ATS documents are mainly directed to an audience of countries' delegates.

There is a difference between studying translation in the university and applying the knowledge gained from there in the professional environment. Schon (1983) notes that there is an attempt to purify and restructure professions in a way that makes them contribute in societal development. For him, professionals should be asked to perform tasks in which they were previously taught how to perform. Their profession should also match the education they received in school. They should be aware of the complexity of the system that they are working in. Otherwise, any misunderstanding of their employers' expectations would engender their failure to better contribute to their professions. Thus, although translators learn the translation skill from their universities, they have to apply these skills using some specific standards of translation imposed by the ATS. They have to become accustomed to the UN language and to be bound by it. Most of their success in translation would depend

on how much they followed terminology unification. The ATS translation is different from the translation in any other translation office. The ATS speech community has unique translation practices and is bound by certain translation rules. As the interviews will show, it is not allowed to be creative during translation at the ATS or to keep changing translation equivalents to certain terms. Once a term is set to be translated in a certain way, then the UN translator has to abide by that term in a way to help unify UN terminology. It is through this unification of terminology that the ATS aims at improving translation.

There is also a big difference between the ideals that the ATS wishes its staff to apply and the tensions involved while the staff attempts to put these ideals into practice. The ATS translators' talk that emerged in my interviews resembles the talk in Tracy's (1997) academic colloquium in its dilemmatic aspect. Tracy (1997) describes academic colloquia as being "a dilemmatic situation-a communicative occasion involving tensions and contradictions" (p.4). Tracy talks about how these dilemmas can affect understanding of the act of conversation in a positive way as to help highlight hard ideas. The training sessions held by the revisers of the ATS to the translators reveal how the ATS is constantly teaching its staff the rules of UN translation. It is the fact that certain staff members find it too restricting to follow these translation rules that creates a tension within the ATS, a tension in applying the rules and in being totally convinced with them.

In the same way that Tracy (1997) defines the talk in the colloquium as an intellectual discussion, the talk of the ATS translators about their issues during translation and their opinions concerning previous translations of terms can be seen as an intellectual discussion for the reason that it is a discussion over ideas. Additionally, the interviews I had with the ATS translators reconstruct the problems of these translators and highlight them. Interviews were communicative events about translators' issues, opinions, and preferences.

Chapter 2: Data and Methodology

I: Data

I collected two kinds of data. First, textual data in the form of UN translations of "communication" in its terminology databases, namely UNTERM and ARABTERM. Additionally, I took excerpts of UN documents having the term "communication" translated into Arabic in different ways and contexts. I gathered these from the DtSearch, which is a sophisticated search engine at the UN that enables translators to look at how certain terms have been previously translated in UN documents.

Second, I have conversational data, both formal in the form of interviews with ATS translators[2] and informal in the form of everyday conversations with the translators. I interviewed the ATS translators taking into consideration the importance of choosing informants from both the Middle East and from the Maghreb region, (the region of North Africa that has Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania). I had eight interviews with both newly recruited and highly experienced translators, both male and female, young and old. For the sake of confidentiality, I do not give the real names but rather nicknames to my interviewees. One of the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) exemption instructions is that "the investigator is responsible for ensuring that the rights and welfare of participants in the research are protected and that the methods used and the information disclosed to participants gain their voluntary participation and are appropriate to the activity" (p.1). Before attempting to have these interviews with staff members, I had to apply for IRB approval. After explaining that my topic does not incur any risk for participants given that it involves participants' analysis of textual data, I was asked to apply for IRB exemption.

My interviewees were: Leila, Arif, Samir and Safae from Morocco; Bilal from Syria; Karim from Palestine; and Mohamed and Fihr from Egypt. I received their consent before interviewing them. In these interviews, I focused on the extent that these translators agree with previous translations of the term "communication" in

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[2] See appendix A for a list of questions asked during interviews.

certain UN documents that I selected from the UN databases. I drew these examples from the DtSearch database. The interviews were for half an hour, and I was mainly taking notes. I was not authorized to tape record in the ATS given that the ATS chief wrote to me that "statements for outside consumption are only done through the Department of Public Information (DPI) who has the specifics of what can and cannot be said or done." Yet, the chief highly encouraged me to talk to translators and to take notes. The main point that emerged out of these interviews is that the UN language is different from the language used in other translation stations. Translators are obliged to stick to the unified terminology at the UN. I analyze these interviews using Krippendorff's (1993) analysis of metaphors of communication to find out which model is used within the ATS and to account for this use. This author argues that a major part of human communication is composed of metaphors that give logic to everyday interactions. The following is one of the examples given by Krippendorff:

> "There is no chemistry" is a metaphorical statement, but its very utterance can create or *constitute the fact* it states, which happens here to be a social phenomenon (p.3).

Thus, these metaphors of communication construct a certain reality and influence people's actions. The behavior of people among each other borrowed the idea of the behavior of scientific substances in relation to each other, and this human relationship started to be understood in terms of chemistry.

Throughout the internship, I was taking field notes that included common interactions at the ATS, my remarks and opinions about some translations, and the list of events I attended. I noted down staff interactions during the weekly meetings in which they discussed terminology issues. Every translator wrote down any term he or she found problematic during translation and suggested them to be discussed during this meeting. I consider staff interactions during these meetings to be interesting as they give rise to cultural issues encountered during translation. They also give an idea about the staff members' communication, since this meeting is the translators' chance to professionally communicate as a team about terminology.

I also participated in a communication framework designed to create closer relations with the ATS and other duty stations outside the UN. I consider that the way

this communication framework is designed will clarify the model of communication used by the UN ATS. I will include it in a separate section, pointing to how this model is used by a specialist to improve the communication between the ATS and its contractory translators.

As an intern, I participated in the ATS attempt to unify the terminology databases. My task was to see if the translation of certain terms exists in the ARABTERM, UNTERM and DtSearch databases, and see if the term was translated in one way or in different ways. I searched for various terms through writing down all the equivalents about a given term that I found in these databases. This task helped me visualize the future goal of the ATS to unify the translation these terms and to include them in the UN official terminology databases.

II: Framework

I consider the talk of the ATS translators about their translations to be a reflection of the different Arab cultures they come from. Therefore, I use Philipsen's (1975) ethnography of communication as a theoretical framework for my thesis. In the same way that Philipsen (1975) talks about the cultural values of the Teamsterville community in Chicago, by deducing facts about this community's views about talk and silence in relation to gender power relations, I show through my interviews what the talk of Arab translators reflects about their own culture and about their own understanding of communication. I also examine, through the process of terminology unification, how the UN directs its translators, regardless of the differences of their Arab cultures, in following certain rules of unification in their language that excludes cultural manifestations.

My research is based on grounded theory as a research methodology that focuses on using data to generate theory (B. Glaser and A. L. Strauss, 1977). Thus, using grounded theory, the researcher starts from an inductive point of view, considering data as a way of making research statements. Since my first day at the internship, I exposed myself to people's ideas and thoughts and took notes of various interactions of the staff members at the ATS. The complexity of Arab culture lies in the fact that it is not homogeneous given that Arabs of each country might have similarities but also differences within their cultures. There are many Arabic

equivalents to the term "communication," which is related to the richness of the Arabic language in the sense that each difference in the nuance referring to the term "communication" has a specific equivalent in Arabic. Thus, I got very interested in looking at the multiplicity of these Arabic equivalents to the term communication during translation, particularly the two terms *ittissal* and *tawassul,* which are used interchangeably in some contexts, but in other contexts one appears to be preferred over the other. In general, *ittissal* is preferred as a generic equivalent rather than *tawassul*. The latter is usually avoided, as it suggests closeness of relationship among people while they are communicating.

The fact that I was an intern made my research easier because I had access to a database called DtSearch through which I could find all the occurrences of the term "communication" in UN documents. The database lists the paragraph or sentence in which the term "communication" appears in UN documents together with an Arabic translation. In addition to the DtSearch, I paid special attention to the translation of the term "communication" in the UN online translation databases, called ARABTERM and UNTERM. I consider ARABTERM to be very interesting given that it is the terminology database of the ATS, and therefore displays the terms that have already been decided upon as accurate translations during the weekly ATS terminology meetings. After gathering a large number of the equivalents of the term "communication," I analyzed the contexts in which *ittissal* and *tawassul* are used in an effort to give a general statement about their contexts. While it is true that *ittissal* and *tawassul* both refer to the same phenomenon of communication and that there exists a nuance in meaning between them, my research shows how the use of these two terms is a cultural choice. Philipsen (1975) mentions that "each community has its own cultural values about speaking and these are linked to judgments of situational appropriateness" (p.13). Translators from the Maghreb region tend to refer to the process of communication as *tawassul* while translators from the Middle East tend to refer to it as *ittissal*. Note that this is a tendency, not a rule, as I encountered many exceptions during the interviews. However, the UN is going through a process of terminology unification in which it aims at choosing *ittissal* as the major equivalent to communication in UN documents regardless of cultural differences. I also provide definitions of communication (*ittissal* and *tawassul*) from Arabic dictionaries as well

as their etymology to clarify this multiplicity of equivalents for non-Arabic speakers. I use dictionary definitions to provide the nuances among different equivalents and to account for the choice of each equivalent in specific contexts in UN documents. I show in my chapter of textual analysis how, even if the context is the same, the equivalent might not be the same, which is due to cultural choice.

Chapter 3: Textual Analysis

In this chapter, I will examine the etymology of the term "communication" both in Arabic and English in an effort to find out any nuances in meaning that exist concerning communication as a concept in both languages. Being aware that there is a slight difference in meaning between *ittissal* and *tawassul* as two equivalents of the term "communication," I will choose from my data the terms of the highest frequency and the most problematic ones during translation. I will also analyze the contexts in which each translation equivalent is used and point out to the problems that occur during the translation at the ATS. This will allow generalizing over terms used in specific contexts as well as highlighting some cultural aspects in the use of certain terms.

The Etymology of the Term "Communication" in Arabic

The term "communication" is translated into Arabic as:اتصال *ittissal,*تواصل *tawassul,* ابلاغ*iblagh,*نقل*Nakl*, etc, depending on the context in which it appears. There is the meaning of a continuity and link in all the Arabic definitions. Jamaluddin Muhamad Bin Mukkarram Ibn Manzour, the author of the most comprehensive dictionary of Arabic, *Lisan al Arab* (2000), translates the term "communication" as the following:

> *Tawassul* and *Ittissal* are both nouns derived from the verb وصل
> [*wasala*]*whose noun is* وصل [*wasl*] means a link, a non-interruption, and a
> non-detachment. It is the opposite of forsaking and breaking a relationship,
> detachment and separation. This term is also stated in the Quran with the
> meaning of reporting a message. The message should reach the audience. The
> *wasl* root also refers to the descendence from a certain family or having a link
> to it. It has the meaning of belonging to this family. Also, the last night of the
> month is called the night of *al-wasl* because of being directly linked to the first
> day of the following month. Al-*tawassul* is the opposite of *breaking apart*.
> The *wasl* within family ties refers to family constantly visiting each other to

stress the continuity of the family tie and blood-kindred. It also reflects the love and care of family members even if they prove to be distant.

So *tawassul* reflects this link as well. It appears to be more emotional, and more used in contexts involving feelings and relationships. Note that in this definition, both *ittissal* and *tawassul* tend to overlap and it becomes difficult to differentiate between exact contexts when to use each equivalent especially in the case of people who are not very knowledgeable in Arabic language or for foreign people of non-Arab cultures. This is because the author Ibn Manzour (2000) started defining the term communication as having the two forms *ittissal* and *tawassul* at the same time. He then moved to defining *tawassul* separately, pointing out to the act of breaking apart which the root *wasl* already conveys. However, the fact that *tawassul* involves more feelings and close relationship is openly expressed in the context of *tawassul*. In other words, the difficulty in translating the term as either *ittissal* or *tawassul* manifests itself in non-emotional contexts as it becomes clear from the definition that *tawassul* has to be more used in emotional contexts.

In his *Al-Mawrid **al**-akbar*: *Qamus Inkilizi-Arabi Hadith* (2005), Munir Al-Balabakki translates communication as: *ittissal*, communicated information, and as *tawassul*: exchange of ideas or opinions or information through talk, writing, or gestures, personal communication (*ittissal*), and as communications: various means of communications like road networks, phone, telegraph, radio, etc. In this definition, *ittissal* and *tawassul* appear to mean the same thing. But, in the case of *tawassul*, some more expressive ways are involved, such as: ideas, opinions, gestures and personal information. Thus, *tawassul* involves more expressive talk than *ittissal*.

I found another definition of communication in *A New Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terms* (2005) by Ahmad Shafiq Al khatib who translates communication as *ittissal*, transmission, wire or not wired transfer, means of communication, and informing. It is interesting that in this scientific dictionary, the equivalent *tawassul* is not mentioned given the technicality of the terms that it has.

I also looked up the term communication online and got various translations depending on the meaning conveyed and the contexts in which it is used. Thus, I see this term as being polysemic. *Sakhr*, a well-trusted online bilingual dictionary that

defines communication as "the act of passing on (news, information, heat, motion, an illness, feelings, etc) or means of communicating; roads, telephone, etc". Sakhr provides thirty ways of translating the term communication into Arabic, examples are:

بلاغ [Iblagh], اخبار [ikhbar], خطار [ikhtar], شعار [ishʔar], علام [iʔlam], علان [iʔlan], انباء [inbae], بث [beth], بلاغ [balagh], تبليغ [tabligh], تحديث [tahdith], خطاب [khitab], توصيل [tawssil], تنبيه [tanbih], تكاتب [takatub], تعريف [taʔrif], تراسل [tarassul], خطبة [khutbah], رسالة [rissala], راسل [rassil], [sawk], كتاب [kitab], مؤلف [mouallaf], مراسلة [mourassalah], [mussattar], مكاتبة [moukatabah], موافقة [mouwafakah], and نقل [nakl].

The multiplicity of the equivalents provided in this dictionary can be due to the general way that the process of communication is explained, i.e. the act of passing on everything.

It is interesting that another online dictionary, *Dr. Mohammad Imam Terms*, translates the term 'communications' into Arabic as رسائل [rassael], referring to communications through letters.

Al-Awwal English Arabic Dictionary has nine entries to the term communication. What is interesting is that in one entry communication is translated as *ittissal,* but in another entry it is suggested that the term can be translated either into *ittissal* or *tawassul*. This is another instance of how the reader has to decide about which equivalent to use in a given context. The first entry has a defined context for communication to be translated as *ittissal*. The second entry suggests that both equivalents can be used interchangeably.

Sometimes *ittissal* and *tawassul* are defined as being exactly the same despite being two different terms. The Arabic-English Dictionary called *Al-faraidou Al-dourya Fi al-louratayn Al-alarabya Wa Al-anjalizia* (J. G. Hava, 1951) defines تواصل [tawassala] (the verb derived from تواصل *tawassul*, third person masculine singular) as being friendly, and connected. However, اتصل [ittassala] (the verb derived from the noun *ittissal*) is defined here as a thing which is continuous and uninterrupted. اتصل [ittassala] *with* is to be connected with, to communicate to, to be contiguous, and

adjoining to.وصل [wasl] in this dictionary is union of friends, connection of sentences, conjunction, match, fellow of a pair, a receipt, etc.

Additionally, *tawassul* involves love among people and dictionaries always mention it in the context of strength of family ties, language, and nation. People from different languages cannot communicate if they do not know each other's language. *tawassul* also involves people acquainting each other. On the other hand, *ittissal* was mentioned as the opposite of breaking apart. Additional meanings related to *ittissal* are similar to those that were given to *tawassul*. So some meanings given to *tawassul* exist in *ittissal* as well.

These dictionary definitions for both *ittissal* and *tawassul* reveal that there is no clear separation in the definition of these two terms. It is implied from the definitions that readers should find out which term to use depending on the context and the meaning they would like to convey. I sometimes found it difficult to show the exact precise nuance between *ittissal* and *tawassul*. There are contexts in which both terms could be used interchangeably, but there are other contexts in which *ittissal* appears to be more effective in conveying the meaning than *tawassul,* and vice versa. This might be due to the richness of Arabic language given that one generic term in English, such as "communication," could be translated in various different ways into Arabic. It is however very clear that *ittissal* refers to the generic aspect of communication and includes even the technical aspect of the communication process. *Tawassul*, on the other hand, involves more close contact, more emotions, and fewer technicalities.

The term "communication" etymologically in English

The New Thesaurus defines "communication" as a noun which refers to the exchange of ideas by writing, speech or signals. The synonyms in this case will be "communion," "intercommunication" and "intercourse." The same dictionary also explains "communication" as "information being communicated". The synonyms here are "message" and "word." Other synonyms that this online dictionary provides are: "bulletin," "call," "connection," "contact," "conversation," "directive," "exchange," "fax," "impartment," "intelligence," "kinesics," "language," "letter," "liaison," "link," "message," "news," "note," "radiogram," "report," "telegram," "telepathy,"

"telephone," "telex," "transmission," "wavelength," and "wire." Thus, in English communication is expressed in only one term in various contexts, both technical and emotional.

"Communication skills" is an expression used to improve one's skills in specific work areas like management, business and IT. "Effective communication" refers to the capability of thinking clearly and conveying meaning. In English, there is the term "telecommunication" which refers to the technical aspect of the communication process, such as: "high speed internet", "digital phone", "digital cable TV & Ethernet service". Although "communication" does refer to the technical aspect of communication, telecommunication is a more specialized term to refer to the technical domain. In these cases "communication" as a term here might be seen as a very generic term having other terms as subcategories that refer to the specialized communication domains that are part of the overall process of communication.

Krippendorff (1993) notes that "communication" "has the same root as "common," "commune," "community," even "communism," all of which construct individuals as being in some respects the same, for example, regarding habits, world views, or language competence"(p.5). This definition calls attention to the *wasl* root of the term communication in Arabic. Thus, in both Arabic and English, the reference to communication as a process is the same.

In both Arabic and English, "communication" refers to the human process of communicating ideas, messages, feelings, information, etc, in a continuous, non-interrupted way. The difference between the two languages lies in the degree of richness of their vocabulary. The fact that Arabic has a specific equivalent for each nuance in meaning that the process of communication involves makes of it a very rich language. The general rule is to use both *ittissal* and *tawassul* to refer to the overall process of communication, but to use *ittissal* only in the technical domain and *tawassul* only in the emotional domain. In the next section, I will look at the use of these two equivalents in UN language and find out the cultural dimensions behind the use of each one of these two equivalents.

"Communication" for the UN ATS Service

The ARABTERM Database

The ARABTERM database is the United Nations multilingual database for the Arabic Translation Service. It has 42 000 entries in 4 official languages of the UN, namely Arabic, French, Spanish and English. After searching the term "communication" in the database, I found 419 occurrences of the term in UN document. What is interesting is that all these occurrences have *ittissal* as equivalent. No *tawassul* is found. This reflects the efforts I mentioned in the interview analysis section about unifying the terminology databases. It appears very clearly that the term communication is set to be translated as *ittissal*.

Ittissal is used as an equivalent in the following cases: "Communication programs," "communication services," "communication channels," "communication officers," "transport," "communication committees," "satellite communications," "lines of communication," "centers of communication," "networks of communication," "sections of communication within administrations," "policies of communication," "systems of communication," "communication units," "mass communication media," "communication planning," "communication skills," "communication zones," "broadcasting and electronic communication," "communication technicians and coordinators," "ad hoc working groups on communication," "offices of communication and public information," "written communications," "visual communication," "space communication," "oral communication," "mass communication," "communications," "right to communicate," "interpersonal communication," "intercultural communication," "global communication support fund," "digital communication," "technologies of communication," "communicable diseases," etc. Thus, *ittissal* is used in working life contexts, in the official labeling of work divisions, in the technical and administrative context, and to refer to types of communication.

There are terms in this database that get translated as *ittissal* given the link and continuity they suggest. Examples are: "liaison," "channel," and "connection." This further suggests the generic nature of using *ittissal* for other terms involving a communicative process.

The UNTERM Database

The UNTERM is the United Nations multilingual terminology database. It has 80 000 entries in all the six official languages of the UN: Arabic, English, French, Russian, Chinese and Spanish. The database displays the term "communication" in 1000 UN documents. Thus, it is much larger than ARABTERM. The ATS attempts to unify the terminology of both ARABTERM and UNTERM. Like in ARABTERM, most communication terms are translated into *ittissal* (sing.)/ *ittissalat* (pl.). An example about how the databases are not yet fully unified is when "communication" gets translated into *tawassul* in some contexts. The translation of the term "communication" proves to be problematic when translators do not agree on its unification. In the context of learning a foreign language and its communication skills, the Arabic Language Center prefers *tawassul*. However, there are exceptions which I consider problematic given that they reflect a difference in views concerning *tawassul*, such as:

- Language and Communication Learning Program   برنامج تعلم اللغات ومهارات التواصل

  [barnamaj taʕaloum allourat wa maharat al-tawassul]. Here, communication is seen as *tawassul*. Yet, in another UN document, communication in the context of language learning rather gets translated as *ittissal*, as in:

- Language and communication program برنامج اللغات والاتصالات[Barnamaj alloughat wa al-ittissalat].

After interviewing Mrs. Alia, the director of the Arabic language Center at the UN, she informed me that each division in the UN has its own language that achieves its goals depending on its own audience. She pointed out that the audience of the ATS includes members of diplomatic corps and other translators at the UN who are used to the type of language of UN documents. However, some translations might appear wrong for the Arabic Center although it is correct for the translation service given the differences in the criteria followed by each division. Mrs. Alia preferred *tawassul* as an equivalent in the context of teaching Arabic language.

Other examples of differences in translations and lack of terminology unification are:

- In "operating language" لغة الاتصال / لغة العمل [Loughat al-ittissal/ loughat al-ʕamal], *ittissal* is used. This might reflect the difference in views concerning translating the term communication. Another instance of this is:
  - "National Information," "Monitoring and Outreach Branch" الفرع الوطني للعلم والرصد والتواصل [Alfarʕ Alwatani liliʕlam wa al-rassd wa al-tawassul]: Here, it is not the term communication which is translated into *tawassul*, but rather the term outreach.
- "Global e-school and community initiative": no translation of this term into Arabic was agreed upon so far.
- "Communication skills" مهارات التواصل/ مهارات اتصالية [maharat al-tawassul, al-maharat al-ittissalya]: Here it is suggested that both *tawassul* and *ittissal* can be used.
- The translation of "communication skills" as: المهارات الاعلامية [al-maharat aliʕlamya].

It appears from these examples that the process of unification is not easy and is a long term project that necessitates enormous efforts and lack of opinions' conflict among translators. Although the ATS agrees that "communication" be translated as *ittissal*, this translation is still problematic. Thus, *ittissal* and *tawassul* can be seen as not yet unified terms in UN translation databases.

The UN DtSearch

The UN DT-search database enables to search for all the occurrences of a certain term in UN documents and archives. It also provides the bi-texts, i.e.: each term appears with a translation into the language selected. I tried to search for *communication* both from English to Arabic and from Arabic to English to get as many contexts as possible. In this section, I will analyze the different contexts in which both *tawassul* and *ittissal* have previously been used in UN documents and come up with some deductions about its use. The question that I will address here is whether there are really agreed upon contexts where either *ittissal* and *tawassul* are used or whether their use depends on the cultural background of the translator and his opinion.

Tawassul

My sample includes 254 occurrences of the term *tawassul* in UN documents. I selected this term from LEO-English-Arabic-Bi-texts, LEO Arabic Terminology, and LEO-Arabic 07-08. LEO stands for Language Exchange Operations. *Tawassul* is used as an equivalent for *communication* in the following contexts:

Humanitarian context

Tawassul is used as a translation equivalent to "communication" in the humanitarian domain, as in communication among family members with disabilities, and for using sign language for instance. By humanitarian, I emphasize the idea that *tawassul* is used to express close relationships and in humanitarian issues. In these cases, it is also used to convey the meaning of having contact between the secretariat and other countries concerning conflict situations and children's rights. Additionally, it is used as an equivalent for 'to pursue' efforts and increase funding resources. In addition, families that need skills in communication are in need of *tawassul*.

Networking context

Tawassul is used in the context of communication as networks. It is also an equivalent of "knowledge networking," "networking with central governments," "linking up with other institutions," and "assisting in networking and experience sharing." At first, I was typing the term "communication" in order to get its occurrences in UN documents and see which equivalents were used in translating it. However, given that the DtSearch was not retrieving the translation equivalent as *tawassul* as much as it was retrieving it as *ittissal*, I typed *tawassul* in particular rather than the term "communication" in order to get most of the occurrences of *tawassul* in UN documents and study its contexts. Thus, I put strong focus on studying the networking equivalent as *tawassul* rather than *ittissal* for the sake of examining the reasons *tawassul* in particular is used in the networking context. I analyzed 193 occurrences of networking in UN documents. My search was in LEO-English-Arabic-Bi-texts, LEO Arabic Terminology, LEO-Arabic 07-08, and in documents from 2006-2007-2008. "Networking" gets translated in three ways:

- Literal translation as in: انشاء الشبكات [Inshae al-chabakat], الربط الشبكي [Al-rabt al-chabaki], اقامة الشبكات [Iqamat al-chabakat].
- *Tawassul*: contexts are: (faculty and students networking to implement a project, knowledge networking, and networking activities to ensure access to a vast store of UN knowledge).
- التواصل الشبكي [Al-tawassul al-shabaki]: this is a blend between *tawassul* and *inshae al-shabakat*.

For example[3]:

ENG	ARA
ENG] 116. The Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS initiative continued to provide an important mechanism for stronger collaboration and <mark>networking</mark> on children at all levels. E/ICEF/2008/10	116 - وواصلت مبادرة اتحدوا من أجل [ARA] الأطفال، اتحدوا في مواجهة الإيدز توفير آلية هامة من أجل تعاون وتواصل أقوى بشأن الأطفال والإيدز على جميع المستويات.

ENG	ARA
[ENG] To achieve these objectives, all regional commissions, through their convening power, will continue to generate multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and <mark>networking</mark> at the regional level, and will work together to promote intraregional and interregional cooperation, both among themselves and through collaboration with other regional organizations.	ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف، ستواصل جميع [ARA] اللجان الإقليمية، من خلال قدراتها على عقد الاجتماعات، تنظيم إجراء حوار متعدد الأطراف، وتقاسم المعارف وإقامة الشبكات على الصعيد الإقليمي وستعمل معا على تشجيع التعاون داخل المنطقة والتعاون الأقاليمي، فيما بينها ومن خلال التعاون مع منظمات إقليمية أخرى على حد سواء. A/63/6 (Prog.16)
ENG] We need to enhance <mark>networking</mark> capacities and coordination for international joint action. A/62/PV.80	ويجب أن نعزز قدرات التواصل وتنسيق [ARA] العمل الدولي المشترك

ENG	ARA
[ENG] 10. In the same resolution, the Economic and Social Council noted the work undertaken by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on defining basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration and the input by the Committee on the theme of the annual ministerial review, held during the 2007 high-level segment of the Council, and the proposals for themes for the review for 2008; and requested the Secretariat to continue to expand the reach of the United Nations Public Service Awards and the United Nations Public Service	وفي القرار ذاته، أحاط المجلس علما بالعمل [ARA] الذي تقوم به لجنة خبراء الإدارة العامة في تعريف مصطلحات الأمم المتحدة الأساسية في مجالي الحوكمة والإدارة العامة، والإسهام الذي قدمته اللجنة فيما يتصل بموضوع الاستعراض الوزاري السنوي الذي أُجري خلال الجزء الرفيع المستوى من دورة المجلس لعام 2007، والمقترحات المتعلقة بمواضيع الاستعراض الوزاري لعام 2008؛ وطلب إلى الأمانة العامة أن تواصل توسيع نطاق جوائز الأمم المتحدة للخدمة والجوائز المقدمة بمناسبة يوم الأمم المتحدة العامة للخدمة العامة بغرض تعزيز التميز في الإدارة العامة وتوسيع قاعدته، بالإضافة إلى توسيع نطاق بوابة شبكة الأمم المتحدة الإلكترونية للإدارة العامة والمالية على الصعيدين الإقليمي ودون الإقليمي، وذلك باعتباره مركزا جامعا لتعزيز إدارة المعارف والتواصل الشبكي

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[3] I retrieved all these two-column tables from the DtSearch database.

Day to foster and disseminate excellence in public governance and to expand the outreach of the portal of the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN) at the regional and subregional levels as a one-stop shop in promoting knowledge management and <mark>networking</mark> among public sector leaders around the world.	فيما بين قادة القطاع العام في شتى أنحاء العالم. {E/C.16/2008/4}}

The multiplicity of referring to networking in Arabic and the non-unification of its translation in UN translation databases is similar to that of translating communication. The only difference lies in the fact that networking is a new concept that modern life started witnessing unlike communication which is a general process. Networking might also be considered as a category of communication.

Communication strategies

Tawassul is used to convey the meaning of reaching agreements. It is used to refer to the communication among organizations, the communication that involves transparency between the director of an office and a certain committee. Improving the communication with delegations is also *tawassul*, and the suggested strategies for that are: internet access iSeek that only UN staff can have access to from their computers at UN headquarters. It is useful in order to have news about UN events, conferences, the Secretary General's speech, other staff's UN contact information, resources for new staff to familiarize them with UN procedures, etc.

 For example:

[ENG] 17. In order to improve communication with delegations, a key component of knowledge-sharing, the Department of Public Information and the Department of Management have been working jointly to identify cost-neutral	[ARA] 17 - ولتحسين <mark>التواصل</mark> مع الوفود، الذي يشكل عنصرا أساسيا من عناصر تبادل المعارف، تتعاون إدارة شؤون الإعلام وإدارة الشؤون الإدارية لتحديد تدابير لا تستتبع أي تكاليف من أجل تمكين الدول الأعضاء من الاطلاع على المعلومات التي تهمّها، والتي تنشر على الشبكة الإلكترونية الداخلية

measures to enable relevant information posted on iSeek to be made available to Member States; iSeek content will be included on the Member State portal accessible only to the permanent missions.	)؛ وسيُدرَج محتوى هذه الشبكة iSeekللأمانة العامة (في البوابة الإلكترونية للدول الأعضاء التي يقتصر إمكان الوصول إليها على البعثات الدائمة. }}E/2008/65{{

In addition, *tawassul* refers to improving communication in organizational and procedural aspects of meetings, to clear communication, to deficiencies in communication, to developing communication among ministries, and to dialogue as in:

[ENG] – Methodological assistance is provided for the development and implementation in general and vocational education institutions of variable models for fostering a culture of inter-ethnic dialogue;	[ARA] ـ تقديم المساعدة المنهجية للمؤسسات التعليمية في إعداد نماذج متغايرة للتربية الثقافية في مجال <mark>التواصل</mark> بين القوميات المختلفة، وتطبيقها في مؤسسات التعليم العام والتعليم المهني؛ }}E/C.19/2008/5/Add.8{

Dissemination of Information

Tawassul refers to disseminating information and concepts through communication. It also refers to direct engagement with governments and stake holders and to the enhancement of communication among member states in a conference. It is also used in the context of an engagement with international partners as one of the responsibilities of the chief mediator within his role in the Joint Mediation Support Team. It is also used to convey the meaning of communication and information exchange to members of the council in a systematic and transparent way, and the meaning of having access to an entity and the communication and interaction with a certain population. It also refers to communication through developing and disseminating information and sharing of experience about forest management, to the

contact with nature, to channels for communication. Being in touch with somebody is also referred to as *tawassul*.

Outreach efforts

Tawassul is used as the equivalent of a mission outreach through maintaining a good presence in a country. It is also used to convey the meaning of a leader reaching out to the other leaders of that country, to the contact between mission personnel and host communities, and to facilitating interface.

For example:

[ENG] The existence of a central coordinating government mechanism would greatly facilitate interface and coordination with UNDP for substantive policy dialogue and for ensuring alignment between national priorities and areas where UNDP can bring clear added value.	[ARA] وسييسر وجود آلية حكومية مركزية للتنسيق <mark>التواصل</mark> والتنسيق مع البرنامج الإنمائي من أجل الحوار بشأن السياسات الموضوعية ومن أجل كفالة الاتساق بين الأولويات الوطنية والمجالات التي يمكن أن يقدم فيها البرنامج الإنمائي قيمة مضافة واضحة. {{DP/2008/27}}

Tawassul also refers to people to people contact, a government reaching out to its provinces, outreach activities, the lack of good information technology does not support communication, reaching out to neighboring countries, video outreach, and to the communication between sessions individually or in teams.

Technical context

Tawassul is used in the context of improving ICT communication, when referring to electronic communication and to the lack of good information technology does not support communication.

Language learning context

Tawassul is used to refer to effective multilingual communication.

Ittissal

My sample includes 265 occurrences of communication in UN documents. Out of these, 8 only were translated as *tawassul*. All others were translated as *ittissal*. Contexts are:

The names of communication departments

Ittissal is the equivalent used in translating the names of communication departments, such as: "communication and Information Technology Section," "Department of social communication," "The Higher Communication Council," "Global Communication Fund Unit," "Mass communication research."

Al-tawassul was rather used in contexts like: peer communication among adolescents, facilitating communication with local populations, a more timely communication regarding discharges dates for mother and baby, the implementation of realignment plan is governed by clear communication, the consolidation of communication platforms in Latin America. It is also in the context of Liaison, communication and exchange of information with both parties, to convey the meaning that communication and outreach should be emphasized, to encourage communication and networking among centers, etc.

Apart from these exceptions, it is *ittissal* which is used. There are many contexts in which either *ittissal* and *tawassul* can be used as equivalents to communication, and this could be due to the lack of terminology unification that the UN aspires to achieve given that informants already expressed their preference to using *ittissal* as an equivalent and given the findings from the database which show a huge number of occurrences of *ittissal* as opposed to *tawassul*.

I also looked at 220 occurrences of the term communications and found no *tawassul* as an equivalent. It is translated as اتصالات [ittissalat], as the following example:

| [ENG] Recognizing that population and development issues, education and training, health, nutrition, the environment, water supply, sanitation, housing, <mark>communications</mark>, science and technology, and employment | [ARA] وإذ تسلم بأن قضايا السكان والتنمية والتعليم والتدريب والصحة والتغذية والبيئة وتوفير المياه والصرف الصحي والإسكان والاتصالات والعلم والتكنولوجيا وفرص العمل تمثل عناصر مهمة للقضاء بشكل فعال على الفقر وللنهوض بالمرأة وتمكينها، |

| opportunities are important elements for effective poverty eradication and the advancement and empowerment of women, | }}A/RES/62/206 |

Here, *tawassul* is not used given that it is never put in its plural form. It is impossible to say: تواصلات[tawassulat], which explains the use of [ittissalat].

Also, I gave special attention to the translation of the term "electronic communication" into Arabic given that I could see that *ittissal* is mostly preferred in technical contexts. I was very interested in looking at those exceptions when *tawassul* or خطاب [khitab] is used in this electronic context.

| [ENG] (g) Noting the progress made in establishing the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal, urged the Executive Secretary to fully operationalize the Portal to further facilitate effective participation of indigenous peoples through the provision of <mark>electronic</mark> <mark>communication</mark> mechanisms. [*tawassul*] | [ARA] (ز) ملاحظة التقدم في إنشاء بوابة المعلومات الخاصة بالمعارف التقليدية، وحث الأمين التنفيذي على تشغيل تلك البوابة بصورة كاملة بما ييسر بقدر أكبر المشاركة الفعالة من جانب الشعوب الأصلية من خلال توفير آليات التواصل الإلكتروني. E/C.19/2007/8 {{ |
| [ENG] (d) "Originator" of an electronic communication means a party by whom, or on whose behalf, the <mark>electronic communication</mark> has been sent or generated prior to storage, if any, but it does not include a party acting as an intermediary with respect to that electronic communication; [*khitab*] | [ARA] (د) يقصد بتعبير "منشئ" الخطاب الإلكتروني الطرف الذي أرسل الخطاب الإلكتروني أو أنشأه قبل تخزينه، إن حدث تخزين، أو من قام بذلك نيابة عنه، ولكنه لا يشمل الطرف الذي يتصرف كوسيط فيما يخص ذلك الخطاب الإلكتروني؛ A/RES/60/21{{ [~] }} |

[ENG] In this context, emphasis will be placed on support for national and international scientific and technological data centres with appropriate <mark>electronic communication</mark> links between them. [*ittissal*]	وفي هذا السياق، سيتم التأكيد على دعم المراكز [ARA] الوطنية والدولية للبيانات العلمية والتكنولوجية بحلقات اتصال الكتروني مناسبة فيما بينها

Here, as well, the term "electronic communication" is translated in different ways.

Conclusion

In most cases, *tawassul* and *ittissal* get used in similar contexts, to refer to technical communication, quality of information dissemination and communication strategies. However, it appears from the number of results given in the translation databases that there is more use of *ittissal* than *tawassul*. *Tawassul* is used in those sentence constructions which do not accept *tawassul* and is more preferred in the humanitarian context and networking.

Chapter 4: Interview Analysis

My aim in this section is to address the implications of adopting *ittissal* rather than *tawassul* for the purpose of unifying UN terminology, as well as the cultural dimensions that this choice involves. I interviewed eight ATS staff members who occupy positions as translators to generate their accounts of "communication" in UN documents. I selected a set of paragraphs from different UN documents each having a different Arabic equivalent. I also chose those paragraphs that would enable respondents to compare different translations, most of which having a similar meaning but a different equivalent referring to "communication" like نقل [naql], اتصال[ittissal], تواصل [tawassul], ايصال [issal], التواصل الالكتروني [al-tawassul al-iliktrouni], i.e. "electronic communication," الابلاغ [al-iblagh], مهارات الاتصال [maharat al-ittissal], i.e. "communication skills", تقديم[taqdim], and الاتصالات [al-ittissalat], i.e. "communications". I also asked my informants if they encounter any cultural issues in their translation. The people I interviewed are from different Arab countries: Mohamed and Fihr are from Egypt; Leila, Arif, Samir and Safae are from Morocco; Bilal is from Syria, and Karim is from Palestine. It is this cultural variety that will highlight some cultural issues in translation that I will discuss in this section. Given that I was not allowed to tape-record the interviews in that service, I was only taking notes during interviews. The interviews were face-to-face. I was showing my respondents the passages that I selected while asking them about their opinions about the previous translation of the term "communication" in these passages.

In the following examples, "electronic communication" is translated as "electronic *ittissal*," and in another document is referred to as "electronic *tawassul*:"

Document 1:

The annual staff retreat has become a lessons learned exercise to discuss planning and report preparation, working paper documentation, the use of electronic communication and information tools, and the monitoring of recommendations. A/62/34/Add.1 [tawassul].

Document 2:

In addition to securing a greater total amount of resources from a larger number of Member States, UNIFEM hopes to secure more resources from non-traditional sources. UNIFEM plans to invest in mobilizing these sources, including through more strategic use of media and electronic communication to support grassroots fundraising; scaling up efforts with its Goodwill Ambassadors; and expanding partnerships with foundations and socially responsible private sector sources. DP/2007/45 [ittissal].

Mr. Karim from Palestine, Mr. Bilal from Syria, and Mr. Mohamed from Egypt think that the translation with *tawassul* as an equivalent is the right one given that it is pertinent to the context and has more sense of interactivity among partners. The term *ittissal* in their view does not have this sense of interactivity, and thus it does not convey the same meaning in this context. These translators base their opinion on the stem of the term *tawassul*, which is *wassala* (the verb) and *silah* (the noun) meaning: link. Another argument they give is the term *wissal* derived from the verb *wassala*, which refers to an active relationship between partners (love). Another important derivation is coming from تفاعل tafaʕala and hence *tawassala*, i.e.: *tawassul*. On the other hand, افتعل [iftaʕala] is the origin of اتصل [ittassala], hence *ittissal*. However, some translators, like Samir and Safae from Morocco preferred *ittissal* basing their argument on the fact that *tawassul* is not common in the domain of electronics.

Cultural Differences

Philipsen (1975) notes that "cultures are not only varied but are also internally diverse in the emphasis they place on the value of talk" (p.13). Some important cultural differences emerged during my interviews, between informants of the Arab countries of the Middle East and those from the countries of the Maghreb region. The term الريف [*al-rif*] refers to either the countryside in Morocco or to an area in the North. In Egypt, however, the plural الارياف [*al-ariaf*] is used to refer to the inhabited areas of the desert. Thus this term is usually avoided so that no confusion is incurred.

The term "training" in the Middle East gets translated as التدريب [al-tadrib]. However in Tunisia, it gets translated as التربص [al-tarabus]; and in Morocco as التكوين [al-takwin]. The reason behind this difference is the linguistic reference of this speech community. In Morocco, the linguistic reference is French. Thus, التكوين [al-takwin]is a translation done through French.

Another example is the translation of "information technology" into Arabic. In Morocco, it is translated literally as تكنولوجيا المعلومات [tiknologia al-maʕloumat]. In the Middle East, it gets translated as تقنيات المعلومات [tiqniat almaʕloumat]. Note that the Middle East one is closer to Arabic than the Moroccan one because تقنيات [tiqniat] is the Arabicized version of the term "technology."

The translation of "students" into Arabic is also cultural as indicated by one of my participants. In Morocco, طلبة [talabah] is used for the masculine plural "students," and طالبات [talibat] is for the feminine plural. However, in the Middle East طلاب [toullab] is used as the plural referring to both masculine and feminine forms. Not all people from the Middle East agree with the plural طلبة [talabah]. It is necessary to note here that Arabic dictionaries list all these forms as correct. It is the use of these terms which is cultural.

Translators are always referring to multiple dictionaries to make sure they are using the right equivalent to the terms they use and that these equivalents are the closest to the desired meaning. When asking one of my informants about his opinion about one of the translations of the term communication into Arabic, he expressed how he found the given translation 'okay' and then started suggesting some other possible translations to the given term. He then had to refer to an online dictionary in order to be more precise.

What is more interesting is when the cultural background affecting the language use of the ATS speech community plays a role in deciding over the terms to be used in the final UN documents. It is senior revisers that seem to have more credibility in deciding over final translations to terms and documents. At the same time, many informants maintained that there is no particular person who decides over the terms to be used in UN documents. According to them, this is generally done through the terminology meetings in which most translators exchange their opinions and agree on certain terminologies.

In an exchange about linguistic and cultural issues in translation, Mr. Fihr, who is a very experienced Egyptian staff member criticized cultural differences in terminology use within the ATS. The exchange went as follows:

A: How do you know if a term is common or not? A term might be common in a culture but uncommon in another? And, if these terms are correct in dictionaries, why would they not be used?

T: Each culture imagines that it has the right to find its own expressions and its own language as part of the language of UN documents, even when these terms are not common and spread. If a certain term is not common, I prefer not to use it even if it is in classical Arabic. For instance, جهبذ [jahbad] and the plural جهابذة [jahabidha], referring to powerful people is an uncommon term which should never be part of UN terminology even if it is a correct word in classical Arabic.

As we can see from the transcript, the UN language does not allow cultural differences in translation, and only common terms should be used. The speech of Mr. Fihr reveals themes of patriotism and pride connected to the Arabic used in Egypt. The fact that this participant questioned how each culture thinks to have the right to have its own terminology in UN documents when he expressed how the ATS prefers commonly used terms, made me think that there are terms which are common in the media of a certain culture but are uncommon for another. Being from a certain Arab country, this translator would not find terms of the other Arab country as common although they are correct in classic Arab dictionaries. It seems that he has the power for decision making and that he is afraid that these cultural differences affect the language of UN documents.

Further, Mr. Fihr maintains that it is through Egyptian media, cinema, newspapers, etc, that Egyptian language got spread in the Arab world. He also refers to the political leadership of Egypt, the media, and the Egyptian literature as having an impact over the spread of Egyptian language. Some prominent Egyptian literary figures that he mentioned are: Taha Hussein, Najib Mahfoudh, tawfik Al-Hakim, Al-Akkad, etc. This is shown in the following transcript:

It was in 1975 that Arabic language first entered the UN. The first Arabic UN documents were translated by Egyptians. Egyptians were the people who put terminology from English to Arabic and the first basic foundation for Arabic in the UN. The history of Egypt, its political leadership, the Egyptian newspapers and Egyptian literature all contributed in making Egyptian language spread in the Arab world.

Also, by saying that Egyptian Arabic is the closest language to *al-fusha*, i.e. standard Arabic, Mr. Fihr confounded the standard Arabic used in writing with the Egyptian language which is mainly a spoken language only in Egypt, and which Arab people understand in general given the reasons this informant mentioned about this spread, i.e. the literary achievements, the media and Egyptian leadership. This is shown in the transcript below:

> Until recently, it was the Arabic terminology used in Egypt that was used in UN documents. However, this started to change when a big number of translators from the Arab Maghreb and Syria were recruited. It is from this point that the problem started, and we felt obliged to keep the correct language only. The Arabic Egyptian language is the closest language to the *fusha*.

Thus, the fact that Egyptians were the first people to be staff members of the ATS is tied to the rules for appropriate speaking within the ATS (Philipsen, 1975). Egyptians put the first foundations for UN translations. It is after appointing translators of other Arab countries that language differences started emerging. Mr. Fihr considers these differences as being a "problem."

Communication as a Construct

In the course of my interviews, one of my interviewees Mr. Mohamed from Egypt looks at communication as "a circle," which involves a sender, a receiver, a message, a channel, and feedback. As the informant said:

> For the communication to be effective, the message should be formulated according to the receiver and the means should be chosen in a way that brings the desired effects. If the audience, for instance, is children the message and the means should be carefully chosen. The sender should have the knowledge and expertise that enable him to choose the right message for the right audience. Feedback is very important for the effectiveness of communication.

Similarly, Krippendorff's (1993) control metaphor which describes communication as "*a means*" or *"instrument"* to reach one's objectives and intentions (p. 8) does involve this idea of a "circular causal network" (9). It necessitates a controller sending messages that "*direct* or *cause* particular effects and the (feedback) messages returning to *inform* the controller of successes and failures" (9).

Mr. Mohamed argued that the translation for computer-mediated communication is better to be as *tawassul* because it is a two-way communication involving a give and take. However, he believes that not any computer-mediated communication can be *tawassul*. Further, he argued that "electronic communication" in a list-serve to two thousands people is to be translated as *ittissal* as it is not expected that all these 2000 people will respond. The fact that the interlocutor might not respond strongly emphasizes Mr. Mohamed's argument that *tawassul* has to involve two people. Therefore, any communication involving more that two people, notwithstanding the means of such a communication, will be considered *ittissal* rather than *tawassul*.

Many participants have the idea that communication involves an exchange and that it is a mutual act. Many informants mentioned the example of communication in instant messaging which involves this idea of a give and take between two people. Also, they agree that each of these equivalents of communication have nuances in meaning that differentiate it from each other.

As I mentioned in the first chapter, "networking" is a term that gets most of the time translated as "communication" with the Arabic equivalent *tawassul*. Yet, in the following example, networking comes close to communication which does not allow that the term communication gets translated as *tawassul*:

> Encourages communication and networking among existing fistula centers to facilitate training, research, advocacy and the development of universal standards and fund-raising, and urges the international community to address the shortages of trained doctors, space and supplies that limit the capacity of most of the fistula centers. A/62/435.

"Networking" is in some cases translated literally into Arabic as الربط الشبكي [*al-rabt achabaki*], i.e. network connection. Mr. Karim from Palestine admitted that he preferred a literal translation and thought that the equivalent "communication" as *tawassul* should be avoided given that such a context relationship does not involve two people. In this case, Mr. Bilal preferred a model of communication close to a transmission model (Shannon and Weaver, 1949) in which a sender transmit information to a receiver through a channel. This theory focuses more on the process of transmission rather than on the information to be transmitted. For this reason,

communication for these translators is a simple, logical and general process. According to this model, communication is a transmission of information by which the people within the fistula centers communicate among themselves in a way that causes a facilitation of training and send messages that would influence the international community to deal with social problems. The people of these centers transmit "understandable" messages that act as signals. The audience to whom the message is transmitted therefore "translate" these signals according to their understanding of the situation. Similarly, Krippendorff (1993) maintains that meanings reside in human understanding, not in the signals transmitted"(10). Thus, it is the way signals are understood that affects their process of communication.

<div align="center">Differences of opinions</div>

For translators, *tawassul* involves a give and take between two people but it might extend to more people or to even teams in previous translations, as shown in the following example:

> Members of the advisory committee are encouraged to communicate between sessions, individually or in teams. A/62/434.

Mr. Arif from Morocco disagrees with "communication" being translated as *tawassul* in this document. He believes that the list of agreed terms found in ARABTERM and UNTERM should strictly be followed. He further argues that the translator here did a mistake and did not abide by the terminology in ARABTERM and UNTERM. This will help in the unification of UN terminology. For Mr. Arif, a term should never change according to the context. This is what Krippendorff (1993) calls as the container metaphor of communication which looks at communication as "transportation, as a problem of getting the content of messages, thoughts, feelings, meanings, information, and other entities from here to there"(5). Thus, Mr. Arif believes that UN translators should abide in their translation to terminology databases and never change the translation of certain already approved upon terms. In addition, the UN terminology databases might be well seen as what Krippendorff (1993) calls the conduit metaphor of communication, which conceptualizes communication as having channels and networks from which messages flow.

The annual staff retreat has become a lessons learned exercise to discuss planning and report preparation, working paper documentation, the use of electronic communication and information tools, and the monitoring of recommendations. A/62/34/Add.1 [tawassul].

In UN documents, *ittissal* is used in a technical sense in the case of telecommunication domains. *Tawassul*, however, is used to establish links between people and different civilizations. According to Mr. Arif, there is no difference in the Arab world in the translation of *ittissal* and *tawassul* into Arabic language. It was interesting to me that this opinion was expressed by a very experienced staff member like Mr. Arif.

However, the fact that Mr. Arif believes that the translator has made a mistake in translating the term "communication" as *tawassul* is interesting. Becker (1998) mentions that "beyond the last word of the translation has not been a neutral, painless act. It has been necessarily full of politics and semi-intended errors of exuberance and deficiency" (p. 19). Thus, my understanding to what Mr. Arif expressed is that for the sake of abiding by the policy of unification, translators should use *ittissal* instead of *tawassul* despite the fact that *tawassul* might be more effective in conveying the meaning. Becker then points out to the importance of what he calls a "confession of failure" in translation fidelity. Mr. Arif made a "confession of failure" by certain translations, and this only reveals his professionalism.

However, Mr. Samir from Morocco who is a new staff member believes that context is the most important thing to consider in any translation of a particular term. According to Mr. Samir, translation is not 'a precise science', but is rather a personal effort from translators depending on their cultural backgrounds, knowledge, style and richness of their vocabulary. He disagrees with the above translation of "communication" as *tawassul* given that the use of *tawassul* for an electronic communication context is uncommon in the media. He believes *ittissal* to be better.

Mr. Mohamed who is an experienced staff member also disagrees with the above translation of "communication" as *tawassul*. This is because if there were communication between the staff and one of them did not respond, then there would be no *tawassul*. For him, *tawassul* does not occur unless there is explicit interaction with the other. He further argues that *tawassul* is an equivalent for the term interaction

and that using it for communication would not leave any other equivalent for interaction. Thus, interaction and communication for him should not be translated in the same way. However, for Leila from Morocco, *tawassul* is used in literary contexts while *ittissal* is used in more scientific contexts.

This difference in accounting for translation exists more between the experienced staff members and the newly recruited ones who are still learning about the rules of translating UN documents. From here there emerge many divergences in the translators' accounts. One of the divergences was illuminated when Mr. Arif who is an experienced staff member informed me about how the term should not change depending on the context. Mr. Samir who is a new staff member, however, considers that context is the criterion according to which a term should be translated. The latter further assumes that translation is not a precise science and that it depends on the cultural background of each translator, the richness of his vocabulary, his knowledge and style. For him, each translator has his own language. However, the fact that the experienced translators have always expressed to me that the UN has its own rules of translations and that it has its own language explains how the UN is undergoing a process of teaching the new translators these UN rules.

Translators sometimes express their disagreement with certain previous translations and think that this is 'human error'. If it is not due to human error, then this translation depends on the translator's own understanding of the English context of the term. Given that translators have to follow UN rules of translation, they are not free in their use of terminology.

UN Translation Restrictions

Many informants believe that translation should always depend on common sense and context. As soon as a certain translation of a specified term gets approved, translators at the UN should only translate it in that way. Informants further maintain that translations have to be regular and to follow the UN standards. Translation should also depend on the way the translation understands the context in English and the way they demonstrate their argument about a certain translation. Mr. Karim argues that:

Some translations started becoming like a model for us to follow. We've been translating for 20 years now and there are terms that have to be translated in

only one way. In some other contexts, we are not free to express our personality during translation. There are restrictions.

One of the questions I asked my participants was about their opinion concerning the equivalent they believe to be correct for my studies of communication. I got several responses. Mr. Mohamed thought that *ittissal* should be the right equivalent given that it is the term used academically. He further argued that *tawassul* rather refers to a more general meaning which is the communication among people, relationships and ties, connections, etc. He also thought that *tawassul* is limited to interactions between two people unlike *ittissal* which makes him think about one side only.

Another account by Mr. Karim was that he was not sure what I am studying in communication, which I thought was a logical answer given the broad aspect of the field. After explaining to him that my program is about the theories and research in human communication and interaction in everyday life, family and organizations, rather than telecommunications and systems, he then thought *tawassul* to be the right equivalent. This is because I am studying the whole process of human communication. From this exchange, I understood that the term communication is set to be translated as *ittissal*. Exceptions occur in very few cases involving relationship between people.

<center>Unification of Terminology</center>

During terminology meetings, translators of the ATS agree upon certain terms for future use in UN documents. Once a term gets approved, it gets added to the online database. Translators at the UN have to abide by that specific equivalent. Differences in opinion among translators might exist given that they come from different Arab countries. However, this should not affect the specific use of equivalent terms that have already been agreed upon in meetings.

An interesting point raised by some other translators is the use of either *ittissal* or *tawassul* in the examples above does not affect the meaning because they both mean the same act of "communication" in those examples. However, informants believe that it is better to use *ittissal* for the sake of unification. They prefer to use the technical equivalent *ittissal* over *tawassul* just for the sake of avoiding differences and

confusions in the use of these terms together. In other words, informants believe that communication should better be translated only as *ittissal* as there is a risk in using *tawassul* instead of *ittissal* in some contexts and vice versa.

Another aspect of unification includes going as far as linking terms. The ATS believes that this would further unify the terminology of UN documents. Mr. Karim believes this to be an over-restriction by the ATS as this will affect the richness of the language.

Mr. Fihr believes this unification to be highly necessary despite the possibility of having a better language. Change should be made only in cases where there is an error in translation. He does not believe that unification is cultural. Unification involves discipline according to one of my informant. The more the translator sticks to unification, the more discipline and professionalism is reflected. The most important thing is correct and precise translation regardless of one's culture. For him, creativity should not be welcomed as only authors can be creative. A similar statement was articulated by Becker (1998) in his *Beyond Translation* where he argues that translation is a very profound process that can result either in enrichment of the text if the translator is translating into his native language or in impoverishment if the translator is translating from his native language. Talking about his on personal experience while he was translating into Old Javanese, Becker says:

> *For many years I have tried, without success, to write an essay called "Going Out and Coming Back" in which I want to argue that translating into one's own language is a profoundly different process, at all levels, from translating out of it. Enrichment versus impoverishment, gain versus loss* (p. 297).

Thus, sticking to what Mr. Fihr calls as unification when translating UN documents into Arabic without the creativity in expression can cause an impoverishment of language as was mentioned by Mr. Karim.

An example of the terminology unification in the ATS is the attempt to translate some linking words in one way throughout UN documents. Linking words are those parts of speech that connect ideas, add information (in addition, as well as, furthermore), summarize (to conclude, to sum up), and generally mark transitions. For

instance, "as well as" could be translated as both فضلا عن[fadlan ʕan] and اضافة الى[idafatan ?ila]. It has been decided to unify it as [fadlan ʕan] in all UN documents. Another example is the translation of "through" into Arabic. Through can be translated as ب[bi], من خلال [min khilal], عن طريق [ʕan tariq] and عبر [ʕabra], but it has been agreed to translate it into [ʕan tariq]. This informant believes that this attempt of unification will affect the richness of Arabic language. According to this informant, the people who have the final say in terminology translation are the revisers, most of whom are Egyptians.

On the other hand, Mr. Arif maintains that in translating the linking word adverb *through*, translators are rather not obliged to follow a certain equivalent. He further maintains that "We are a free community and we try to utilize our rich language in our writings". I found that this difference in my informants' accounts is interesting in the sense that some translators believe they are free in their translations while others believe they are not. A third category of translators believes that they are free in translation of certain terms but not free in translating other terms, particularly those which have already been agreed upon in terminology meetings and which are part of the UNTERM and ARABTERM databases.

Mr. Bilal from Syria believes that it is 'unfortunate that UN documents are not unified and are incoherent and that there are differences in understanding terms'. This informant refers to the problem of counting Egypt as one country of the Middle East rather than part of North Africa. In his view, there is more agreement among people of Syria, Lebanon and Morocco rather than with people of Egypt. An ideal position is when the primary text in English is very clear and perfectly understood by the translator. This informant finds it unfortunate that this is not the case because more than 50% of English UN documents are written by non-native English speakers.

The conclusion is that for the sake of unification, it is always believed to be better to use *ittissal* instead of *tawassul*, *tawassul* being not very common in certain contexts by some Arab cultures. There are always continuous corrections, modifications, and additions to the UN language basically through terminology meetings. It is not a static language.

Krippendorff (1993) points out to the control metaphor of communication which "subordinates all aspects of communication, messages, contents, individual involvements, truths, and social consequences to rational pursuits governed by particular aims" (p.8). The attempt of unifying the UN terminology use can very well be seen as a control metaphor whose aim is to produce a very clear, common and correct UN language. This unification might also be seen as an attempt to remove the cultural associations of certain terms. Given that the control metaphor necessitates "knowledgeable agents capable of conceptualizing the process of communication" (8), the agents of the ATS are the revisers who goals is to make sure all terms are the right ones.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

My research about the cultural dimensions of translation within the ATS was one of the big issues that translators at the ATS encounter and that makes them feel perplexed. However, Mr. Fihr who is the highly experienced translator from Egypt expressed how my research should focus on how the ATS in the UN tries to be aware of the cultural differences in different Arab countries and tries to overcome the problems that arise out of these differences through helping the staff members to get immersed in the spirit of the UN language. This further emphasizes the unique characteristics of the translation at the UN as opposed to translation in any other organization.

Many translators expressed to me that the term *tawassul* is preferred in the Maghreb and that *Ittissal* is the preferred term in the Middle East. However, my interviews showed how this assumption cannot be generalized, nor is it a characteristic of a specific country to prefer either *ittissal* or *tawassul* as a translation to "communication". Most translators appeared to rely on the context and on the commonality aspect of terms.

It was difficult for translators to answer my question about the lack of using standard Arabic as a language of communication among the ATS staff members. Answers included the fact that standard Arabic is not the language with which these staff members communicate among themselves in their countries, and that maybe English acts as a lingua-franca even inside the ATS. There was a final reflection about

this issue: the answer was that 'yes, classical Arabic should be used in our everyday communication'.

The ATS community perceives communication as composed of two models: the transmission model and the control model which I will further analyze in chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 5: Analysis of ATS Meetings

When each translator encounters a problematic term while working on his/her daily translation, he/she suggests this term to be discussed in the course of weekly meetings. In this section, I analyze the interaction between translators in three meetings I attended. The terminologist officer is the person in charge of combining all the terms suggested by translators and of putting them in a chart. Charts are composed of five columns: a column with the name of the translator who suggested the term to be discussed in the meeting, another column with the term itself, a third column with the suggested Arabic translation, a fourth column with the context in which the term occurred and its different examples, and finally the fifth column has a definition of the term. Meetings might start with jokes, creating a friendly atmosphere. No drinks are served during the meeting which reflects Arab culture during work. This is despite the fact that the UN is in the USA, a culture that favors having drinks during meetings or in classrooms. Translators express the importance of looking at various nuances in meaning and of conducting research about terms. There are terms which might sound awkward after their translation into Arabic. I also provide in this section illuminations of some problematic terms, together with an analysis of the translators' interactions, and their decision-making process.

Example 1: *Arbre de décision*

Translators defined the phrase *arbre de décision* in the handout distributed at the beginning of the meeting as:

> "Pictorial representation of a decision situation, normally found in discussions of decision-making under uncertainty or risk. It shows decision alternatives, states of nature, probabilities attached to the state of nature, and conditional benefits and losses. The tree approach is most useful in a sequential decision situation". (Terminology meeting hand-out, p. 2).

The fact that this phrase is "a pictorial representation of a decision situation" makes it problematic during translation. Without understanding this pictorial meaning, the translator might not be successful in giving an accurate translation to this phrase.

A translator, Mrs. Safae, mentioned this example in the meeting, and her translation was شجرة القرار [shajartu al-qarar]. However, comments in the meeting were that this translation was strange and inadequate because it is literal. Mr. Samir, suggested trying to understand the concept of this phrase and context in which it was written. He added that it is used in statistics and the social sciences. It is an image in which each decision is represented as a branch that takes to another branch. It is a whole process by which we arrive to a conclusion. He also suggested looking at how the French and Spanish translate this term. If this term has an image, then this translator believes that the translation should be also in the form of an image, rather than being literal.

Table 1: Example of a term translated in the UNTERM database.

Card	Subject(s)	English	French	Spanish	Russian	Chinese	Arabic
📁	science and technology	decision tree	arbre de décision; diagramme de décision binaire	árbol de decisions	диаграмма процесса приняти решения	决策树	شجرة القرارات

This chart from UNTERM shows the translation of the phrase *Arbre de décision* into the UN six official languages. Finding this term in this database reflects that it has already been used in UN documents. Yet, some translators disagree with this term and want to improve it and choose the best possible translation to it. Thus this example reflects the ATS dissatisfaction with some Arabic translations in this database, and its desire to improve on it.

Sometimes translators express their shock upon hearing some translations and laugh while expressing their shock. Nelson (2008) mentions that laughter is a discharge behavior that results from a humorous exchange among people. Nelson maintains that "in the conflict/ appeasement system [laughter] indicates, 'I am making light of this so I am not a threat' or deliver the message as 'I am no longer angry' " (p.45). Thus, ATS translators' laughter may be seen as an appeasement or mitigation of their critiques to each others' translations and an affirmation to the fact that they pointed out the awkwardness of a certain translation without offending anybody.

It is also common that translators use some expressions when they care about how the reader will respond to certain translations. For instance, one translator commented about a certain translation that it will make the reader "tired".

Example 2: "Statement of Interdiction Principle"

Translators found different translations of this phrase in UN documents and pointed out to the importance of unifying the way this phrase gets translated. Translators did not provide a definition to this phrase, but rather noted down all the contexts in which this phrase appears in UN documents as well as all the meanings of the term "interdiction". This term mostly appears in the context of illegal trade. Translators suggested that the term be translated as: بيان مبادئ الحضر [bayan mabadi' al-ħadr]. Although الحضر [al-ħadr], i.e. interdiction, means also المنع [al-manʕ], Mr. Arif prefers المنع [al-manʕ] because it is more common and closer to "practicality" as he calls it. He added that it would be better if they could see the extent to which this term gets repeated because it seemed to him that there is a kind of insistence on using الحضر [al-ħadr] instead of المنع [al-manʕ]. He also commented that [al-ħadr] carries with it the meaning of danger. However, Mr. Samir interferes by saying that interdiction itself is not a trivial term and that it has a cargo of meaning. This term was translated differently and translators call for its unification, given the terminology unification attempt.

Translators check dictionaries during meetings. They also conduct research in different websites, encyclopedia, specialized dictionaries, UN documents, etc, to look for domains and contexts of the term. Translators take into consideration the meaning and context of the term.

Example 3: "Drug Dependence"

Translators provided online definition to this phrase looking at the various contexts in which it appears. Mr. Samir suggested the following definition which he took from about.com (2008):

Habituation or addiction to the use of a drug or chemical substance, with or without physical dependence.

Here, translators suggested الادمان على المخدرات [al-idman ala al-moukhaddirat]. However, another translator, Mr. Arif, suggested الارتهان بالمخدرات [al-irtihan bi al-moukhaddirat]. He maintains that it is better to use the term الادمان [al-idman] in the context of drug addiction and not in the context of drug dependence. He supports his view by the fact that, in 1964, the World Health Organization stopped using the terms "addiction" or "habituation" and started using "drug dependence," given that the term "addiction" created a problem. Thus, it is better that the terms of the ATS be in unification with the terms used in other UN related organizations. Many translators expressed their approval to الارتهان[al-irtihan] because it is smooth and it is a noun that comes from the verb ارتهن [irtahana] which refers to being "at the mercy of the pills." A counter argument asked if the term "dependence" was used as a euphemism to be used in what he called "well-mannered societies". He wondered how the ATS could use الارتهان [al-irtihan]. Another opinion was that the ATS should have translation equivalents for any terms and these equivalents should be smooth. The final decision was الارتهان بالمخدرات [al-irtihan bil moukhaddirat].

Direct criticism is sometimes an aspect of the ATS meetings, especially when meetings do not end with decisions on many terms. The ATS encourages translators to be more productive in these meetings. The ATS translators make huge efforts to correct ARABTERM and UNTERM based on the discussions in these meetings. This team of translators also has a sense of mutual accountability and appreciates each others' efforts and contributions.

One of the issues that the ATS translators have concerns the translation of new terms which do not yet exist in UNTERM and ARABTERM or even in UN documents. The translators in this case suggest various equivalents to these terms and then suggest that their translations be discussed in the meetings. The ATS never adds the terms to the UN terminology databases that have not yet been discussed during meetings. The terminology officer sends emails to translators reminding them to attend. Attendance is not compulsory but is always appreciated.

Translators openly express their worries during meetings. The ATS translation team proves to be highly professional when it looks for precise translations and conducts research to look for the right translation for the right nuance in meaning for

each term. Mr. Samir expressed that his team should avoid the risk of possibly being criticized by the coming generation of ATS translators. Thus, translators look many times at specialized dictionaries, articles and research which have the terms that they are translating. Sometimes translators decide to ask specialists about certain terms before deciding on their translation, such as: the agricultural context, nuclear context, etc.

Each translator gives his/her opinion until everybody reaches a consensus. Sometimes there is a vote. Sometimes there are differences in opinion: One translator might look at the Latin root of a term, especially in French, English and Spanish, to facilitate translation of a certain term while another translator believes that the root does not help at all in that case. Example: The English term "Operational" can easily be translated into French as *opérationel* given that the root in Latin. But its translation becomes more difficult when it comes to Arabic.

It is possible that not many translators may attend a particular meeting which means that not all translators may contribute to a translation decision. Flexibility in translation is appreciated. Also, short translations are always preferred over long ones, as in translating the expression "late-developing countries". There were some suggested translations. Comments about translating this term were: first, it is a process describing the timely development of these countries. Second, a translator in the meeting asked the following question: compared to which country is the development of this country late? The third comment held that is translation of this term should not be made complicated. Then decision over this term was postponed to the following meeting.

 There are also some tricky terms, such as: "early" in the phrase "early developing countries". A translator expressed that early developing always triggers late developing, and that it is difficult to classify a country as being developed or less developed. He added that if "early" has to be applied to childhood. It is meaningless to say "early childhood" or "late childhood" as there is no late or early childhood. Finally, another translator suggested putting a temporary term as a translation.

Given the high professionalism of the ATS translators, they often judge the quality of certain translations and even refer to some as being bad. Making sure a

translation is very precise reflects the good communication that translators at the ATS emphasize.

Example 4: "Non-entrant country"

This phrase was used in one UN document in a political context. When this phrase was translated into Arabic as بلد ممنوع من الدخول [balad mamnouʕ mina doukhoul], Mr. Samir expressed how the Arabic translation shocks the Arab reader. He added that "their language allows this translation but Arabic does not". He calls for finding an accepted formulation in Arabic. This is another example of translators unhappy with current translations in their database.

Card	English	Arabic	French	Spanish
📂	Non-entrant country	بلد ممنوع من الدخول -	-	-

Table 2: Example of a translation of a term in ARABTERM database.

Note here that no French and Spanish translation was given to this phrase, which emphasizes its problematic nature. I wonder here the reason why this phrase was first coned in English, as this term sounds awkward even in its English form. It is an example of how translators have to cope with the new terms coined as a result of some political, social, etc, challenges that face the world nowadays.

Conclusion

The ATS team is made up of very professional translators and linguists who can translate from at least two languages into Arabic. Translators value preciseness, terminology unification, short, succinct, smooth, and preferably common translations. Meetings are an opportunity for translators to communicate their views, worries, and differences in perspectives. Interactions are friendly with an equal and shared contribution in decision-making of terminology translation and on enriching the UN Arabic terminology databases. Translators seem to hold the idea that Arabic translation will reflect the image of their team and therefore it should follow the highest standards of translation.

Chapter 6: Communication in the ATS Communication Framework

In addition to the seventy staff members working in the Arabic Translation Service (ATS), there are other translators recruited at translation offices outside the UN main building. Currently, the ATS is organizing a communication structure to establish good contact between the UN main building in New York and these outside offices related to it. It is also planning to have a focal point dealing with these people regularly. The goal is to create a structured communication process in order to ensure that the ATS traditions are maintained by these outsiders. In the UN ATS, a communication framework was designed to develop closer relations with Arabic language services in other duty stations. The way this framework is designed reflects how the ATS community looks at communication as a process. In the course my interactions with the designer of this framework, Mr. Mohamed, I realized that communication is constructed in terms of a conduit (Krippendorff, 1993) or transmission (Shannon and Weaver, 1963). In this section, I describe the elements and components of the ATS communication framework and show in what ways communication is seen as a conduit metaphor which I already defined in the literature review chapter.

Components of the ATS Communication Framework

According to the designer of the ATS communication framework, Mr. Mohamed, the contractory translators are retirees spread both in their countries and in New York. They are working from their homes because they are not affiliated with an organization. They are non-UN staff. They translate some work, and they therefore need to be guided to useful references. They need to be given advice that would facilitate their work and need be introduced to the latest technology available. They also need to improve the quality of their work because the quality of these people's work would reflect the quality of the ATS work, although they are working from the outside. The contractor translators have a long experience and the UN cannot afford to loose them. They are some kind of an asset to the organization. Part of the UN work is done internally in the ATS and the other part is done externally. For the internal work, it is the in-house staff that is needed to do the work. However, when there is a lot of work, then external staff is recruited, most of whom are retirees. This is called work through the contractory unit.

Mr. Mohamed relies on electronic communication like building websites, emailing, etc, in order to contact these contractor translators. He started the communication with these translators through the mailing list. From time to time, he used to send them messages about terminology, circulars, useful websites and other references which they can use in their work. Mr. Mohamed always received phone calls and messages from them containing questions about terminology and other things in their work and responded to their questions. He also sent them the links of the terminology databases that the UN staff have. Mr. Mohamed has created a website for this reason as well, so email and the website are both used to contact them.

The goals of the ATS communication project are to improve the quality of contractory translation, to show to these outside translators that their work is under evaluation, and that consistency is needed in the translation, and to facilitate their work.

In their *Mathematical Theory of Communication*, Shannon and Weaver (1969) have pointed out to three levels of communication problems. First, there is the technical problem which addresses how "accurately" communicators could transmit the message. Second, the semantic problem addresses how "precisely" a message can represent the intended meaning. Third, there is the effectiveness problem, and this addresses how effective the message is causing the desired effect.

The ATS choice of electronic communication as a basic means for communicating with the outside translators reveals the ATS conclusion of the possibility of encountering technical problems with the accuracy of message transmission. Emails, phone calls, and websites are efficient ways of transmitting messages. In the case of phone calls, the caller, is sure that the interlocutor is with him on the phone. As far as emails are concerned, there is usually an email notification if the email did not reach the recipient. The website is also an efficient way of transmitting information given that the creator of the website can easily make sure if it working without technical difficulties. Thus, these technical ways of communication chosen by the ATS can prove to be accurate in transmitting messages. According to Shannon & Weaver (1969), any potential errors in transmitting the message or changes and distortions of the required message are considered as noise. However, it

is interesting that noise can be beneficial given that it breeds more information. Shannon & Weaver (1969) mention:

> If noise is introduced, then the received message contains certain distortions, certain errors, certain extraneous material, that would certainly lead one to say that the received message exhibits, because of the effects of the noise, an increased uncertainty. But if the uncertainty is increased, the information is increased, and this sounds as though the noise were beneficial!! (p. 19).

Through this communication project, the ATS aims at making translators feel comfortable in their jobs by providing them with all the means of translation that they need, such as websites, online dictionaries, etc. Noise at the ATS can be interpreted as the lack of good communication between the main station and the other duty station, an issue which this communication design is trying to solve. The ATS' is making good efforts in helping contractory translators to improve in their work.

Conclusion

This research about communication at the ATS pointed out to some major cultural differences in the talk of Arab translators and to the models of communication used in an Arab multicultural context. My analysis of the implications of using *ittissal* and *tawassul* is also fundamental in differentiating between the use of the two equivalents in writing or formal talk. Although they refer to the same process of communication, *ittissal* and *tawassul* differ in their use depending on who the audience is. The ATS adoption of a transmission model of communication rather than a ritual model also reflects its intent in disseminating information to the translators, both the full-time staff and the temporary ones. The control metaphor used during the transmission of communication among the staff is highly necessary in ensuring that the improvement agenda of the ATS is going in a smooth way.

If I were allowed to tape record and to have transcribed interviews, this would have revealed more about translators' opinions, frustrations, reactions to my questions, and tone of voice while they are responding. Additionally, each part of this research can be further extended as I touched upon some major issues encountered in the Arab world. For example, the intercultural communication among Arab countries, the implications of viewing communication as a transmission model, and the right communication strategies to use in the ATS all deserve further study within the frame of the ethnography of communication. Another issue disseminating further research is the use of standard modern Arabic in daily communication among the Arab staff. Although standard Arabic is normally only written, it could be a language of communication in the ATS, especially when Egyptians do not fully understand Moroccan Arabic and when Moroccans try to make their language sound closer to standard Arabic in order to be understood. My belief is that Standard Arabic should be the language of communication at the ATS.

The interview analysis showed how the cultural differences among translators can be revealed during their translations, a fact which the ATS is trying to overcome through holding the weekly meetings, the terminology unification attempt, and the training sessions given to translators by some very experienced translators. Additionally, the terminology unification attempt reveals the control metaphor of

communication that exists at the ATS. This further emphasizes how the UN has its own language characterized by unified terminology and commonality of terms.

It is the textual analysis chapter that revealed how Arabic language has a lot of terms which refer to communication and which are used depending on the context. This chapter also shows how *ittissal* is the translation equivalent that the ATS prefers for the term "communication". The term *tawassul* is rather used in the humanitarian context, the context of networking, and the outreach efforts.

The analysis of ATS meetings showed how translators try to overcome the issues that they encounter in translation, such as the translation of tricky terms or the correction of certain awkward translations. The ATS meetings are an open atmosphere where translators communicate their opinions and reach a consensus.

Finally, the analysis of the communication framework stressed the fact that the translators at the ATS view communication as the transmission model. At the same time, they try to find strategies to successfully convey their information and ensure a good flow of communication. These are all attempts to have a high quality translation. Communication at the ATS can be summarized as follows:
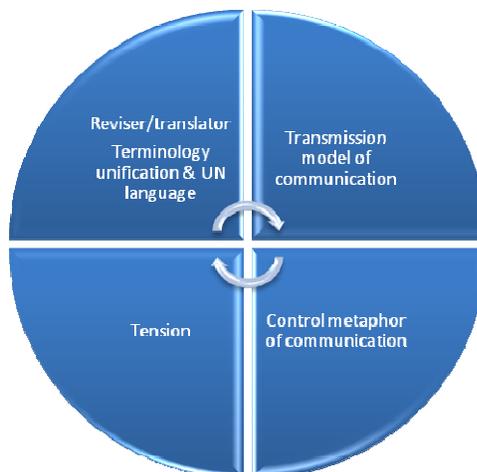

Figure 1: Diagram summarizing the process of communication at the ATS

This diagram shows how the relationship between the revisers and the translators is a sender-receiver relationship. Revisers give training sessions to translators, showing them the rules of translation at the UN. The diagram further depicts how the transmission model of communication functions as a circle involving a sender and a receiver of information. The transmission model goes in parallel with the control metaphor, creating a tension for positive outcome. The control metaphor is constituted in the UN terminology unification attempts and creation of a language free from cultural manifestations.

In studying the work of the translators at the ATS by means of participant observation and interviewing, this thesis reconstructed the cultural dimensions of translation. Specifically, I focused on the importance of differentiating between *ittissal* and *tawassul* when referring to communication in Arabic. The preference that the UN has to *ittissal* reveals how the ATS speech is situated and contingent on the speech community's construction of its own work with respect to an audience. A translation service whose audience is composed of politicians is different from another service whose audience is language learners. In this respect, my contribution was to raise questions about the use of either *ittissal* or *tawassul* for the translation of the term "communication" and to point to some cultural dimensions involved in the use of each of these equivalents.

That which emerges as cultural manifestations during translation become major issues that the translators encounter, which is itself a manifestation of the dynamic of a multicultural organization. The thesis also contributes to highlighting the models and the metaphors of communication that the ATS translators use without necessarily being aware of them. It is this embeddedness in everyday languaging of often incommensurate models and the difference between ideals and everyday practice (Tracy, 1997) that is considered by participants as miscommunication; one powerful example of this is the translators' tension between maintaining a term's uniqueness and the ATS unification policy.

It is always a first step to find out what the problem is in order to seek ways of solving it. Thus, there might be a possibility of creating sessions in which translators could reflect on their own practices, perhaps using this thesis as a catalyst. These

sessions would be an opportunity in which translators communicate to each other about work problems. After all, communication was one of the reasons why human beings were created. "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other" (Qur'an, V.55:13).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1- What do you think about the following Arabic equivalent of the term "communication"? Do you think it is accurate? Please justify.

2- Are there any cultural issues concerning translation that arise in this service? If yes, what are they?

3- Who decides over which term to be used by the ATS as an equivalent?

4- What does communication mean for you? How do you see it as a process?

5- Why is standard Arabic not the language of communication between the ATS staff members?

6- What do you think about my research topic? Do you have any suggestion that I can investigate in during this research?

Appendix B: Arabic Phonetic Alphabets

[ʔ] glottal stop.

[ħ] pharyngeal fricative.

[q] uvular consonant.

[ʕ] pharyngeal fricative.