

The Sentence In Arabic And English Political Speeches: A Contrastive Study

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Abstract

This study compared and contrasted some syntactic aspects of the sentence in Arabic and English political speeches, namely sentence length, frequency of sentence types, and forms. It also aimed at determining the roles or functions of these features and the ideological goals they serve in the speeches. Twenty political speeches in Arabic and twenty political speeches in English were collected from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meetings between 2015 and 2019. The analysis revealed that the sentence in the Arabic political speeches is slightly shorter than its counterpart in English. It was also found that the complex sentence is more frequent in the Arabic speeches, while the simple sentence is more frequent in the English speeches. The analysis also revealed that these syntactic features were used to perform several functions in the text to serve ideological goals such as promoting ideas and maintaining political neutrality.

Keywords: ideology, political speech, sentence length, sentence type.

Introduction

Words have a momentous power that can sometimes influence or change our attitudes and behaviors. If skillfully used, such a linguistic power may represent a magic wand for manipulation, persuasion, inducement or obfuscation. These are usually the purposes politicians seek to achieve when they deliver a speech or participate in debates, interviews or political activities in order to maintain power. This could explain why the relationship between politics and language throughout history has been so close and intertwined.

Chilton (2006) points out that politicians are aware of the role of language because “its use has effects, and because politics is very largely the use of language” (p.14). Employing the capabilities of language in politics could be used in two different ways: “either to represent or misrepresent realities” to serve unjust power relations (Fairclough, 2006, p. 140). This means that language use in politics could serve different goals at opposite poles: one that seeks to reveal and reflect the truth and another that seeks to obfuscate or hide the truth. The space between the two poles is so vast that it allows politicians to choose when and how to represent their version of the truth in a way that serves their goals better. Moreover, it allows politicians to switch or change their techniques to choose when to be implicit or explicit, when to use passive or active voice, when to use inclusive or exclusive pronouns, or when to promote a positive or negative image, etc. This is the place where ideology and hidden agenda are activated in the text. In short, language provides politicians with the tools they need to retain “the freedom of maneuver.”

Jones and Peccei (2004) view language in politics as a means to steer and control emotions and beliefs (p. 38), while Orwell (1946, p. 7) describes such a case where language is used to manipulate thoughts as “defence of the indefensible” Defending the indefensible, unjust power relations, and misrepresenting realities are the reasons why political language is considered the language of power, and this is why such a language has “a reputation of being ambiguous” (Goshgarian, 2011, p. 426). Furthermore, this explains the growing interest in research in political discourse in general and political speeches in particular. The reason behind this interest largely lies in the need to investigate how language can be used in politics to control minds, steer emotions, and manipulate thoughts to maintain or abstain power. Lakoff (1990) formulates the relationship between language and power in a simple way stating that “language is politics, politics assigns power, and power governs how people talk and how they are understood” (p. 7).

Investigating the use of language in politics includes analyzing a number of syntactic, lexical, stylistic, pragmatic and textual linguistic features. In the syntactic analysis, the sentence plays a major role because it represents the basic unit of language that expresses a complete thought. Furthermore, the structure of the sentence in political speeches can contribute to infiltrating and reinforcing ideologies in texts. Comparing the written sentence in Arabic and English is a challenging task, because the sentence in Arabic is considered a problematic entity that has no criteria to mark its boundaries. This explains why it is usually avoided in modern Arabic studies (Alkohlani 2015). On the other hand, the boundaries of the English sentence can be easily marked; it begins with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark such as a full stop, a question mark, or an exclamation mark based on the type of the sentence (declarative, imperative, interrogative, or exclamatory). This study provides quantitative and qualitative data to compare and contrast the sentence in Arabic and English political speeches. Quantitative data in this field, especially in Arabic, are either nonexistent or rare. Providing statistical information to support the qualitative analysis may contribute to more credible and reliable results.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to identify some features of the sentence in English and Arabic political speeches in terms of length, type, and form to determine to what extent these features are similar or different in the two languages. The study also aims at determining the roles or functions of these features and the ideological goals they serve in the speeches.

Research Questions

The study aims at answering the following questions:

1. How do Arabic and English sentences differ from each other in political speeches in terms of length, type, frequency and form?
2. What functions do the examined features serve in Arabic and English political speeches?

Literature review

Political speeches are usually intentional, functional, well-organized, and rich in figurative language (Chilton & Schaffner, 2002, p. 30). These features represent a fertile ground for analysis and interpretation because political speeches are usually written by professional speechwriters.

In his study, ElShiyab (1990) adopted the clause as a unit for analysis instead of the sentence to avoid the difficulty of “delimitation and demarcation of the Arabic sentence.” He justifies this by asserting that Arabic

contains many adverbial clauses and does not have capital letters to facilitate differentiating between the clause and the sentence (p. 149). One of the reasons for this difficulty is the unreliability of the punctuation system in Arabic (Ditters 1991; Meiseles; 1979). Holes (2004) claims that “until perhaps the latter part of the nineteenth century, much Arabic writing contained no punctuation at all and no fully standardized system of punctuation exists even today” (p. 251). This may explain why the punctuation system in Arabic is used erratically and idiosyncratically (Attia & Abu Assiyda 2018, p. 115). The lack of a standardized punctuation system in modern standard Arabic (MSA) resulted in, as Ghazala (2004, p. 230) argues, disregarding the system completely by Arabic writers or the poor and haphazard use of that system.

Nonetheless, Lyons (1977) affirms that the native speakers of any language can recognize the written sentence in their language if they pay attention to the signals provided by the grammatical system in that language. Hence, identifying the boundaries of the Arabic sentence might be hectic and onerous, but it is attainable. Mukattash (2001) proclaims that most Arabic-English Contrastive Studies tend to “impose grammatical categories postulated for the description of English onto Arabic” (p. 121), which leaves some Arabic facts unaccounted for or forces a category of English onto Arabic.

Okasha (2005) examined four famous speeches of two Egyptian presidents and the findings revealed that the simple sentence was the most frequent type in all the speeches. Three of these speeches were directed to the local public in Egypt, while one speech was delivered in The Knesset after stopping the war between Egypt and Israel. Simple sentences were used to convey clear and easy-to-understand messages to the public. Okasha points out that international communication, as UNGA speeches, is the most difficult type of political communication because of the different languages, religions, nationalities, cultures, and political affiliations of the audience that have to be known and taken into consideration by the speaker. Okasha’s study provides qualitative and quantitative analysis of some features like pronouns, collocations, verbs, nouns, repetitions, and idioms; however, quantitative analysis of sentence forms or sentence length is not available. This study provides a quantitative analysis of sentence length, form, and type in Arabic and English political speeches. We could not find background information or studies with quantitative analysis on sentence length in the Arabic political speeches. This study might be the first to provide quantitative data in this regard. This is where this study situates itself.

Methodology

Date collection

The corpus employed in this research consists of 40 speeches (20 English and 20 Arabic) delivered in the UNGA meetings between 2014 and 2019. The total number of words in the corpus is 87,619 words (57241 English words and 30378 Arabic words). The speeches were downloaded from the official records of the general assembly meetings available at the United Nations website. Although a number of speeches are delivered in English in the UNGA meetings, only English speeches delivered by English-speaking countries are selected, namely the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland.

Geographical and cultural distribution of the Arab world was taken into consideration in selecting the Arabic speeches to ensure diversity and objectivity. Speeches delivered by an Arabic speaking country in different languages are excluded (Jordan and Somalia deliver their speeches in English, Djibouti and Comoros deliver their speeches in French). Some countries are represented by more than one speech in Arabic, while each country is represented by four speeches in English.

Method of analysis

After downloading the speeches, we analyzed, categorized and processed them manually with the help of software MAXQDA linguistic analysis software, Microsoft Word, Word counter and Analyze my writing. The Arabic speeches were dealt with manually because we could not find reliable software that supports Arabic as a language for analysis. Every speech was carefully read, re-punctuated, and categorized to identify the number, type, and form of the sentence. Because of the unreliability of the punctuation system in Arabic, the Arabic texts were re-punctuated following the model proposed by Alkohlani. Alkohlani (2015) suggests a model that relies on the Arabic language system to mark the sentence boundaries. Her model adopts syntactic-semantic criteria to identify the sentence and mark its boundaries. The syntactic criterion is determined by the structural independence of the sentence, whereas the semantic criterion is determined by the capability of the sentence to communicate a complete thought. The structural independence of the sentence means that the sentence candidate should have the minimum obligatory constituents of a sentence, i.e. the subject and its predicate and the verb and its agent. Furthermore, the sentence candidate must be omissible leaving behind no non-sentence. Semantically, the sentence candidate should convey a complete thought, and it should have a rhetorical function that contributes to the text overall communicative goal. The rhetorical function of the sentence controls the length of the sentence and determines the kind of relationship it has with respect to adjacent segments, e.g. explanation, elaboration, comparison, etc.

Alkohlani's model seems to provide a common ground for the Arabic sentence to be compared and contrasted with its English counterpart applying the same criteria; structural independence and communicating a complete thought. Therefore, Alkohlani's model will be adopted in this paper to mark the boundaries of the Arabic sentence.

All the English translations in this research are taken from the official records of the UNGA meetings. In certain cases, we had to provide a literal translation or rearrange the sentence constituents for clarification purposes only. The changes we made are included between curly braces { }.

Findings

In this part of the paper, sentence length, sentence type and sentence form will be examined by providing statistical analysis for each feature. The statistical analysis will provide evidence-based and reliable information to make generalizations about the features examined in this study.

Sentence length

Sentence length refers to the number of words in a sentence that plays a significant role in determining the sentence readability. In English, many studies suggest or indicate that the average number of words in a sentence is/should be around 20 words (Sanyal 2006; Cutts 2004; The Acropolis 2017; and Plain English Campaign Guide). Similarly, many studies from the political field indicate that the average number of words in the sentence is around 20 words (Lim 2008; Nordquist 2018). The average sentence length of "I have a dream", which is one of the most famous speeches in history delivered by Martin Luther King Jr., is 20.2 words (Smith,1980). The inaugural speech of the American president Barrack Obama in 2009 has a sentence length of 21.3 words (Wang, 2010). All these examples validate that the average sentence length in political speeches is in the order of 20 words.

Because of the reasons mentioned earlier pertaining to the difficulty of marking the Arabic sentence boundaries, we could not find background information or studies that include statistical data regarding the sentence length in Arabic, particularly in the political field. In his analysis of the long sentence problem in Arabic, Bachoudh (2016) states that there are no criteria to classify short and medium sentence length; however, long sentences can be classified as (a) long sentences, which consist of around 25 words; and (b) very long sentences, which consist of 27-42 words. This classification seems unreliable because it is unsubstantiated and because the margin in the “very long sentence “is very vast; 15 words. Table 1 below shows the average number of words in the Arabic sentence.

Table 1: Average number of words in the Arabic sentence

Country	No. of speeches	No. of words	No. of sentences	Average no. of words in a sentence
Palestine	2	4055	273	14.9
Syria	1	1488	89	16.7
Iraq	2	3476	187	18.6
Lebanon	1	1096	58	18.9
Libya	2	3793	200	19.0
Sudan	1	1252	65	19.3
Algeria	1	1169	55	21.3
KSA	2	2000	94	21.3
UAE	2	2823	131	21.5
Tunisia	1	974	45	21.6
Morocco	1	1856	82	22.6
Yemen	2	3100	130	23.8
Egypt	2	3296	138	23.9
Total/Average	20	30378	1547	19.6

The average number of words in the sentence was calculated by dividing the number of words in the speech by the number of sentences in that speech. As table 1 elucidates, the average number of words in the Arabic sentence is about 20 words. Palestine has an average of 14.9 words in a sentence, while Egypt has an average of 23.9 words in a sentence. This means that the difference between the highest average of words in a sentence and the lowest one is 9 words. About 54% of the Arabic speeches have an average of 21 words or more in a sentence.

Sentence length in the English speeches

Table 2: Average number of words in the English sentence

Country	No. of Speeches	No. of words	No. of sentences	Average no. of words in a sentence
New Zealand	4	8323	454	18.3
USA	4	17648	896	19.7
Australia	4	8831	426	20.7
Ireland	4	12636	558	22.6
UK	4	9803	411	23.9
Total/average	20	57241	2745	20.9

The average number of words in the English sentences is about 21 words. The sentence in New Zealand's speeches is the shortest (18.3 words), while the sentence in the UK's speeches is the longest (23.9 words). The difference between the highest average of words in a sentence and the lowest one is 5.6 words. In general, there is no big margin between the English speeches when it comes to sentence length.

Sentence length: Arabic and English

Before comparing sentence length in Arabic and English, we should take the language system into consideration when comparing the two languages, because what constitutes a word in Arabic and English is different. In Arabic, connectives, the definite article, pronouns, and prepositions can be affixed to nouns, adjectives, or verbs and they are calculated as one word. Moreover, the subject can be an implied pronoun, and prepositions and pronouns can be combined to form one word. Such affixation and combining is not possible in English, so the aforementioned affixes are dealt with as a single word. Consider the following examples:

قَابِلُ الطَّلَابِ وَتَحَدَّثَ مَعَهُمْ حَوْلَ مَخَافِهِمْ (1)

(He met the students and he talked with them about their concerns).

In this example, the Arabic sentence is 6 words long, while the English one is 12 words long. Each underlined word in the Arabic sentence represents one affixed word that is equal to two words or more in English:

قَابِل = he met → The pronoun in Arabic is implied.

الطَّلَاب = the students → The definite article ال (the) is prefixed to the noun طَّلَاب (students).

وَتَحَدَّثَ = and he talked → The connective و (and) is prefixed to the verb تَحَدَّثَ (talked), the pronoun in Arabic is implied.

مَعَهُمْ = with them → The pronoun هُمْ (them) is suffixed to the preposition مَعَ (with).

مَخَافِهِمْ = their concerns → The pronoun هُمْ (them) is affixed to the noun مَخَافٍ (concerns).

This simple example demonstrates that affixation and combining in Arabic reduce the number of words in the sentence significantly; reduced by half in the example above.

On the other hand, English commonly favors the employment of reduced lexical forms (abbreviation and acronyms), while the use of such forms is rare in Arabic (Al-Hamly & Farghal 2012). Some of these forms are commonly used; this is why they are usually transliterated into the Arabic alphabet and pronounced as an ordinary Arabic word like يونيسيف (UNICEF), أوبك (OPEC), and فاو (FAO). However, Most of the reduced lexical forms are written in their complete form. This means that one reduced lexical form in English might be stated in more than one word in Arabic, which makes the Arabic sentence longer than its English counterpart.

Statistically, sentence length in both languages is extremely close, 19.6 and 20.9 respectively, with the Arabic sentence shorter by 1.3 words. However, when considering affixation and blending in Arabic and reduced lexical forms in English, the results may be different. This is because the frequency of pronouns, articles, prepositions, and connectives in Arabic is far more than the frequency of reduced lexical forms in English.

Sentence types – Arabic

The syntactic-semantic model adopted in this paper to identify the boundaries of the Arabic sentence allows for applying the classification of sentences into four types:

- 1- Simple sentence: consists of one independent clause that has a complete thought.
We must step up the fight against the global scourge of violence against women and girls.
- 2- Compound sentence: consists of two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) or a semicolon:
We may feel afraid, but as leaders we have the keys to create a sense of security, and a sense of hope.
- 3- Complex sentence: consists of at least one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.
It means being united and relentless in destroying networks like ISIL, which show no respect for human life
- 4- Compound-complex sentence: consists of at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.
Oppressive regimes cannot endure forever, and the day will come when the Iranian people will face a choice.

The following table shows the number, the percentage, and the average of each sentence type in the Arabic speeches.

Table 3: Frequency of sentence types in the Arabic speeches

Country	Simple sentence		Compound sentence		Complex sentence		Compound-complex sentence		Total No. of sentences
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Algeria	8	14.5%	4	7.3%	19	35%	24	43.6%	55

Egypt	45	32.6%	6	4.3%	51	37%	36	26.1%	138
Iraq	67	35.8%	35	18.7%	47	25%	38	20.3%	187
KSA	41	43.6%	6	6.4%	35	37%	12	12.8%	94
Lebanon	19	32.8%	12	20.7%	22	38%	5	8.6%	58
Libya	64	32.0%	19	9.5%	94	47%	23	11.5%	200
Morocco	37	45.1%	6	7.3%	31	38%	8	9.8%	82
Palestine	135	49.5%	34	12.5%	80	29%	24	8.8%	273
Sudan	14	21.5%	9	13.8%	23	35%	19	29.2%	65
Syria	22	24.7%	13	14.6%	42	47%	12	13.5%	89
Tunisia	14	31.1%	2	4.4%	24	53%	5	11.1%	45
UAE	49	37.4%	12	9.2%	57	44%	13	9.9%	131
Yemen	39	30.0%	17	13.1%	44	34%	30	23.1%	130
Total/Average	554	35.8%	175	11.3%	569	36.8%	249	16.1%	1547

Table 3 shows that the complex sentence has the highest frequency, followed by the simple, compound-complex, and compound sentences. The difference between the frequency of complex sentences and simple sentences is 1%. It can be noted that the complex sentence is the most prevalent type in the Arabic political speeches with 36.8%, while the compound sentence is the least prevalent type with 11.3% only. This is contrary to the belief that Arabic favors compound sentences through the use of conjunctions. Compound-complex sentences rank third in sentence type and represent 16.1% of the Arabic speeches.

The percentage of simple sentences in the Palestinian speeches is noticeably higher than the percentage of the complex ones. The simple sentences represent 49.5% of the Palestinian speeches, while the complex sentences constitute 29%. The difference between these two percentages and their indications will be discussed in the discussion section.

Sentence types- English

Table 4 below demonstrates the number, the percentage, and the average of each sentence type in the English speeches.

Table 4: Frequency of sentence types in the English speeches

Country	Simple sentence		Compound sentence		Complex sentence		Compound-complex sentence		Total No. of sentences
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Australia	201	47%	21	4.9%	170	39.9%	34	8.0%	426
Ireland	274	49%	27	4.8%	238	42.7%	19	3.4%	558
New Zealand	222	49%	35	7.7%	177	39.0%	20	4.4%	454
UK	160	39%	26	6.3%	213	51.8%	12	2.9%	411
USA	423	47%	52	5.8%	394	44.0%	27	3.0%	896

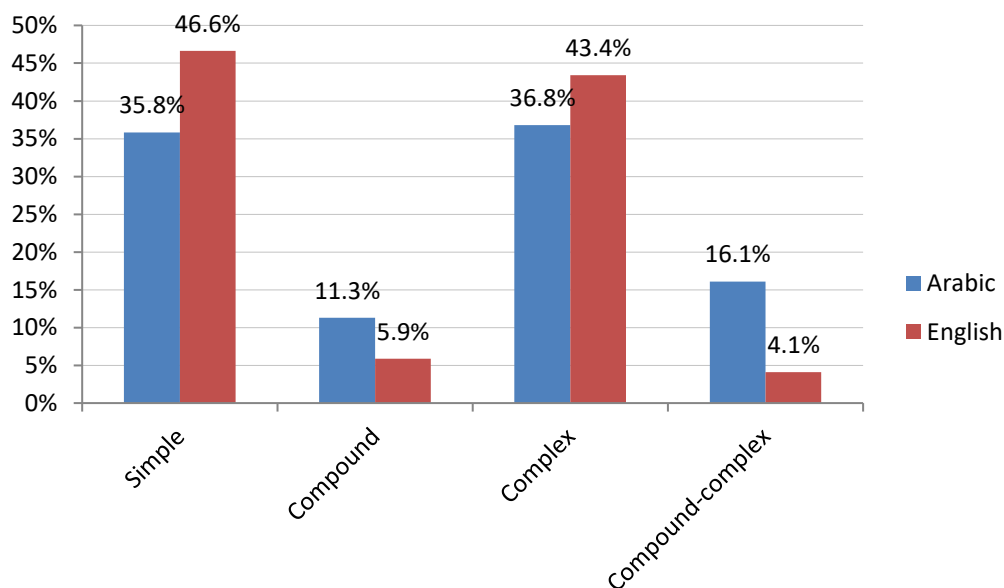
Total/Average	1280	46.6%	161	5.9%	1192	43.4%	112	4.1%	2745
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In all English speeches, except the UK, the percentage of the simple sentence is the highest. In total, the average of the simple sentences is 46.6% being the highest, and the average of the compound-complex sentence is 4.1% being the lowest. Complex sentences rank second with 43.4%, and the compound sentences rank third with an average of 5.9%. This means that the simple sentence is the most prevalent type in the English political speeches. In general, the approximate numbers show consistency in all the English speeches.

Sentence type – Arabic and English

To facilitate comparing the frequency of sentence types in Arabic and English based on their structures, we will present the analysis results in a bar chart.

Figure 1: Frequency of sentences types in the Arabic and English speeches



As figure 1 shows, the rank order of sentence types in the English speeches from most frequent to least frequent is simple, complex, compound, and compound-complex sentences. On the other hand, the rank order of sentence types in the Arabic speeches is complex, simple, compound-complex, and compound sentences. Simple sentences represent 46.6 of the English speeches, while they represent 35.8% of the Arabic ones, which means that in English there is a tendency to make the sentence easier to understand. The biggest difference between the frequencies of sentence type in both languages is in the compound-complex sentences; 16.1% in Arabic versus 4.1% in English.

Sentence forms in Arabic and English

Sentences can be classified based on their forms into:

1. Declarative sentence: used to make a statement to give information, and it normally ends with a full-stop: Messi is a famous soccer player.
2. Interrogative sentence: used to ask a question to request information, and it always ends with a question mark: Where are you from?
3. Imperative sentence: used to give a command, and it ends with a full-stop or exclamation mark: Give me the book. / Stop!
4. Exclamative sentence: used to express emphasis and feelings, and it always ends with an exclamation mark: How fast they can run!

It is worth mentioning that sentence form and function do not always coincide; a change in intonation can change the function of the sentence regardless of its form. For example, a declarative form can be used to give a command, (A teacher to his students: you can start the test now). An interrogative form can be used to express exclamation (a security guard spoke to a man rudely. The man says: I am the minister. The guard replies: Who are you!). A declarative form can be used to ask a question: the election is in May?

The following tables represent the numbers and percentages of sentence types based on their forms in the Arabic and English speeches.

Table 5: Number and percentage of sentence types based on their forms in the Arabic speeches

Country	No. of sentences	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative	Exclamatory
Algeria	55	55	0	0	0
Egypt	138	136	2	0	0
Iraq	187	187	0	0	0
KSA	94	94	0	0	0
Lebanon	58	58	0	0	0
Libya	200	199	1	0	0
Morocco	82	82	0	0	0
Palestine	273	250	3	20	0
Sudan	65	63	2	0	0
Syria	89	80	1	8	0
Tunisia	45	44	1	0	0
UAE	131	131	0	0	0
Yemen	130	127	2	1	0
Total	1547	1506	12	29	0
Percentage %		97.3%	0.8%	1.9%	0%

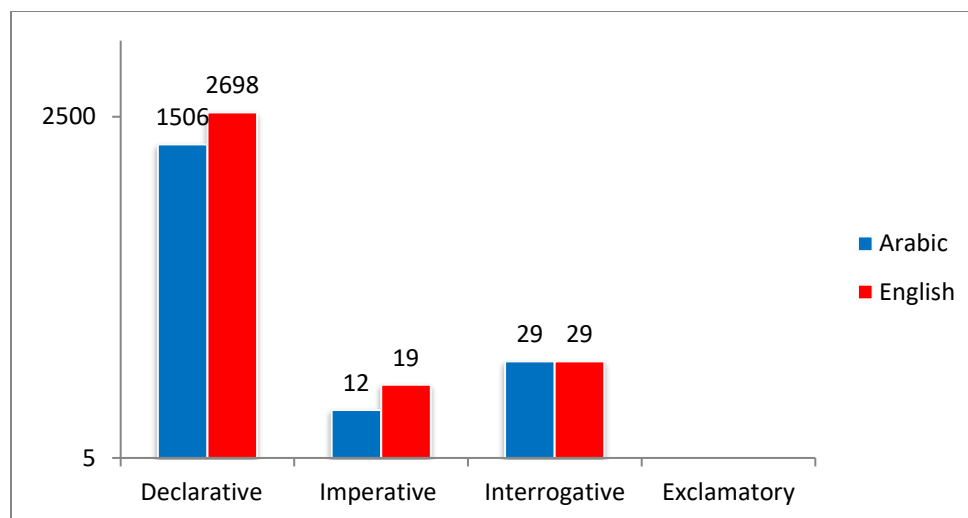
Table 6: Number and percentage of sentence types based on their forms in the English speeches

Country	No. of sentences	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative	Exclamatory
Australia	426	423	2	1	0

Ireland	559	553	2	4	0
New Zealand	454	450	0	4	0
UK	411	392	6	13	0
USA	896	880	9	7	0
Total	2746	2698	19	29	0
Percentage		98.3%	0.7%	1%	0.0%

The following bar chart summarizes the information included in tables 5 & 6 above.

Figure 2: Frequency of sentence types in Arabic and English speeches based on their forms



As figure 2 above shows, the frequency of sentence form is declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory respectively in both languages. The percentage of each sentence form in Arabic and English speeches is very close and the difference between them is insubstantial. The only difference can be noticed in the frequency of declarative sentences; 1506 in Arabic against 2698 in English. This can be attributed to the total number of sentences in each language 2745 in English vs. 1547 in Arabic. Exclamatory sentences were not used in both languages.

Discussion and conclusion

The analysis of the data reveals that the average length of the Arabic sentence in political speeches is 19.6 words compared to 20.9 in the English speeches. This means that the Arabic sentence is shorter than the English one by 1.3 words only. Shorter sentences are generally more memorable and easier to process than longer ones.

There are no rules or formulas to indicate the adequate length of a sentence. Switching between short and long sentences may help the speaker maintain momentum that serves his/her goals better and avoid being monotonous or irksome. Scott (2019) believes that too many short sentences in writing becomes too dull and repetitive, while sentences that are too long are difficult to follow and are likely to be confusing. Short sentences may create a rhythm and add vivacity to describe dramatic events or actions, whereas long

sentences may help the speaker include descriptions and explanations to support the idea. In general, the length of the sentence should be adapted to match the topic or the goal.

In political speeches, politicians usually employ sentence length in the interest of their goals and intentions. For example, when politicians desire to convey a clear and accurate message to the audience or when they want to focus on one idea they opt for shorter sentences as in:

(2) نحن دعاءة سلام وتوافق.

(We want peace and accord)

(3) The international system matters to us.

On the other hand, when politicians desire to convey an indirect message to obscure the intent, avoid full responsibility, or highlight part of the message by adding more subordinate clauses, they opt for longer sentences as in:

(4) We will continue to seek opportunities to test ourselves against what we aspire to be, including the achievement of the requirements of a new paradigm that combines ecology, social justice and economy – and I add cultural diversity – in a way that achieves sustainability, social cohesion and global needs sufficiency.

(5)

وهذا يقودنا جميعا الى تحمل المسؤولية في دعم وتشجيع سياسات التنمية في البلدان الفقيرة، وتشجيع البلدان التي تعتمد في دخلها على سلعة واحدة ومساعدتها في تنويع مصادر دخلها من خلال دعم ما ترسمه من برامج لإعادة هيكلة مؤسساتها الاقتصادية، وتأهيل كوادرها البشرية، وإيجاد البيئة المناسبة للاستثمار الأجنبي المباشر الذي يركز على الاستثمار في قطاعات الإنتاج، وتحسين مستوى أداء القطاعات.

(This means that we are all responsible for supporting poorer countries in their policies and development, particularly those that depend on a single product for their financial resources. We must support them in diversifying their sources of income and in ensuring that their economic institutions reach the necessary level of competence. We must create an environment that is conducive to business)

In example (4), the speaker wishes to say that the goals set by his/her country are of a global trait. The long sentence is deliberately used to send an indirect message that Ireland has a global vision, which obscures the speaker's intent revealed later; candidature for the UN Security Council for the 2021-2022 term.

Sentence type

The speakers in both languages made use of the four kinds of sentence types with some differences. Simple sentences are the prevalent type of sentence in the English speeches. Because simple sentences are generally short, reliance on them enables the speaker to communicate a clear and concise message that has a limited amount of information, drag the audience attention to one topic, and display a simple list. It also indicates that the speaker does not heavily rely on subordination or coordination, so the speech is less descriptive and

explanatory. The following table illustrates some functions of the simple sentence in the Arabic and English political speeches examined in this research:

Table 7: Functions and usages of simple sentences

Function	Examples from the Arabic speeches	Examples from the English speeches
Introducing a short descriptive statement that includes a metaphor	(7) يمر العالم بمفترق طرق. (The world is at a crossroads)	(8) Data is the crude oil of the modern economy.
Expressing an official stance of commitment, reiteration, support, invitation, or rejection	(9) معاً نحو المصالحة والبناء. (let us move towards reconciliation) (10) نحن نرفض هذا الإعلان رفضاً قاطعاً (We categorically reject that announcement)	(11) The United States is committed to a future of peace and stability in the region. (12) We call for the full restoration of democracy and political freedoms in Venezuela. (13) We will no longer tolerate such abuse
Asking a question	(14) ما هي حدود دولة إسرائيل؟ (What are the borders of the State of Israel?)	(15) Will they continue down the path of poverty, bloodshed, and terror?
Displaying a list	(16) تعمل حكومة بلادي على تجاوز الأزمة الاقتصادية عبر الاستخدام الأمثل للموارد، وبناء شراكات اقتصادية، والعمل على خلق بيئة استثمارية جاذبة؛ بهدف الاستفادة من الفرص، وتحقيق التنمية الاقتصادية المستدامة (My Government is working to overcome the economic crisis by making the best possible use of its resources, establishing economic partnerships and creating an environment favorable to investment in order to benefit from available opportunities and achieve sustainable economic development)	(17) Sustainable economic development is a key driver of global growth, prosperity and stability.
Expressing future intentions		(18) For similar reasons, the United States will provide no support in recognition of the International Criminal Court.

		(34) Rather than denying problems – we will seek to identify them, address them and learn from them.
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Table 7 shows that using simple sentences to express future intentions applies to the English speeches only. In the Arabic speeches, simple sentences are not used to express future intentions at all; other sentence types such as compound or complex sentences are used to perform this task. This means that the English speakers tend to make their future intentions clearer, plainer and more comprehensible to the audience. Declaring future intentions through the use of simple sentences may be interpreted in light of the notion of power as follows: stating your intentions clearly reflects an exercise of power. When you have power over someone, you can be direct and concise, but when you lack such power, you might avoid being direct and try to keep part of your sentence obscured or general to avoid any embarrassment or consequences. Consider the following examples:

وسوف لن تدخر الجزائر أي جهد لمساعدة طرفي النزاع والأمم المتحدة على تذليل الصعوبات من أجل الإسراع بإنجاز هذا الحل (19) الذي طالما انتظره الشعب الصحراوي والشعوب المغاربية الأخرى.

(Algeria will spare no effort to assist the parties to the conflict and the United Nations, with a view to an early implementation of the solution for which the fraternal Saharan people and other peoples of the Maghreb have been insistently calling).

(20) Australia will invest \$167 million in an Australian Recycling Investment Plan.

Future intentions are expressed differently in (19) and (20) above. In the Arabic example, the intention is expressed using a complex sentence including general information; “spare no efforts” is immeasurable, how will Algeria “assist the parties” is not specified. In contrast, the future intention is expressed using a simple sentence with specific information in the English example; “\$167 million” and “Australian Recycling Investment Plan” clearly state how much money will be invested and in what field.

Compound sentences ranked fourth in the Arabic speeches in terms of frequency with a percentage of 11.3%, whereas they ranked third in the English speeches with a percentage of 5.9% only. Compound sentences are used mainly to link two independent ideas. The following table shows the functions of the compound sentences in the Arabic and English political speeches examined in this paper.

Table 8: Functions and usages of compound sentences

Function	Examples from the Arabic speeches	Examples from the English speeches
Joining similar or related ideas	إننا نعلن التزامنا مكافحة هذه الآفة (21) بمختلف وجوهها ومظاهرها، ونشدد على أهمية التعاون الإقليمي والدولي في التصدي لها. (We declare a commitment to fight the scourge in all its forms,	(22) We've started the construction of a major border wall, and we have greatly strengthened border security.

	and we stress the importance of regional and international cooperation in that fight)	
Joining two different/contrasting ideas where the second idea seems surprising after the first one	(23) أجرينا انتخابات في عام 1996، وفي عام 2005، وعام 2006، لكن توقفت بعد ذلك بسبب انقلاب حماس عام 2007. (We held elections in 1996, 2005 and 2006, but they came to a halt in 2007 due to the Hamas coup)	(24) Ireland is a small player in all of this, but we will continue to advocate honestly for progress and justice as a friend of both Israel and Palestine.
Demonstrating cause and effect/result	(25) مصلحتنا، بل مصلحة المنطقة، نُحْتَمِ أن يَكُون العراق جسراً للتفاهم بين اشقائيه وجيرانه، لذلك نُجددُ من هذا المنبر الدعوة الى بناء منظومة أمنية مُشتركة في الشرق الاوسط (Our interests and those of the region make it imperative for Iraq to become a bridge to build understanding between its brothers and neighbors. From this rostrum{so}, we emphasize our call to establish a joint security system in the region)	(26) The Pacific is at the forefront of vulnerability to the effects of climate change, so we are pleased to support Fiji's Presidency of this year's climate change Conference of the Parties.
Adding rationale or personal comment		(27) The terrorists did not win, for we will never let anyone destroy our way of life. (28) OPEC and OPEC nations, are, as usual, ripping off the rest of the world, and I don't like it.

In general, the functional use of compound sentences is similar in the Arabic and English speeches. The only difference is the use of compound sentences in English to add a rationale or personal comment. In (19) above, the speaker wishes to focus on the result more than the reason, so he/she started with the result using a past tense and then moved to the reason using the future tense. Such an order is deliberately used to send a memorable message of defiance to everyone that any threat to the country's way of life will face the same result. In (28), the compound sentence is used to introduce an accusation statement followed by a personal comment (and I don't like it). Combining the accusation and the personal comment in one compound sentence makes it difficult to tell whether this is an official or personal position on OPEC and OPEC nations. Such vagueness is intentionally used to avoid any political reaction to this accusation at the international level. If OPEC decides, for example, to stop dealing with the US because of this accusation, the US government may claim that the president's comment represents his personal point of view not the official point of view of the US government.

The use of compound sentences for contrast plays a significant role in shifting the attention to the clause that occurs after the coordinator but. In example (23), the speaker started with the statement (we held elections in 1996, 2005 and 2006) which sounds positive; however, the use of (but) immediately after this positive statement attracts the attention of the listeners/readers and makes them expect a contradicting idea. This process paves the way for introducing the message that the speakers intend to highlight more efficiently and leaves the reader in suspense until the end of the sentence. In the previous example, the clause that follows but (they came to a halt in 2007 due to the Hamas coup) represents a contradicting idea to the positive one stated in the first clause, which creates a link between the negative image and the one/party associated with it, i.e., the Hamas. The speaker succeeded in representing his/her version of the truth (blaming Hamas for the election halt) through the use of a compound sentence.

Complex and compound-complex sentences

Some ideas cannot be fully or properly expressed using simple or compound sentences only; therefore, ideas that include or require a sort of explanation, description, listing, and creating relations between clauses can be better expressed using complex and compound-complex sentences. The following table shows the functions of the complex and compound-complex sentences in the Arabic and English speeches examined in this paper.

Table 9: Functions and usages of complex and compound-complex sentences

Function	Examples from the Arabic speeches	Examples from the English speeches
Showing the relationship between clauses (cause and effect, contrast, time)	<p>(28) ولان أمن واستقرار المنطقة العربية جزء لا يتجزأ من أمن واستقرار العالم، فإننا ندعو إلى إيجاد تسويات سياسية عاجلة لقضايا المنطقة وفي مقدمتها القضية الفلسطينية التي تحتاج إلى حلٍ عادل وشامل يُنصف الشعب الفلسطيني ويضع حداً لمعاناته ويُمكنه من استرداد حقوقه التار يخية المشروعة لاسيما إقامة دولته المستقلة وعاصمتها القدس الشريف وفقاً للمرجعات الدولية ذات الصلة.</p> <p>(The lack of stability in the Arab world is just a part of the instability found throughout the world. Therefore, we call upon everyone to find urgent political solutions to all the issues concerning the region. First and foremost is the Palestinian question, which requires a fair, comprehensive solution that will provide justice for the Palestinian people, bring an end</p>	<p>(29) I have great respect and affection for my friend, President Xi, but I have made clear our trade imbalance is just not acceptable.</p>

	to their suffering and allow them to obtain their historic legitimate rights, in particular the establishment of an independent State, with Al-Quds as its capital, in conformity with related international decisions)	
Streamlining complicated thinking required to understand certain kinds of ideas	<p>(30)</p> <p>نحن نتطلع إلى مواصلة هذه الجهود حتى نتمكن من استكمال استحقاقات المسار الديمقراطي، وصولاً إلى بناء مؤسسات مستقرة، تحقق الطموحات والأمني التي خرج الشعب الليبي من أجلها في فبراير 2011.</p> <p>(We call for follow-up efforts to continue the democratic process and establish stable institutions, so that we can realize the aspirations of the Libyan people, who have been waiting for this outcome since February 2011)</p>	(31) If this system we have created is found no longer to be capable of meeting the challenges of our time then there will be a crisis of faith in multilateralism and global cooperation that will damage the interests of all our peoples
Providing flexibility and allow a wide range of different links between situations or ideas.	<p>(32)</p> <p>إن القضية الفلسطينية تشكل بندا دائما في جدول أعمال الجمعية العامة للأمم المتحدة، رغم كل الأفكار والمبادرات التي جرى طرحها حتى الآن، مما ترتب عليه استمرار معاناة الشعب الفلسطيني، الذي ما زال محروما من حقه في العيش بكرامة، في تحد سافر لمبادئ القانون الدولي وقرارات الشرعية الدولية.</p> <p>(The Palestinian question has become a permanent item on the General Assembly's agenda. Today, despite all the initiatives and opinions that have been put forward, the Palestinian people continue to suffer and to be deprived of their right to live in dignity, in flagrant defiance of the rules of international law and internationally legitimate resolutions).</p>	(33) When you undermine border security, you are undermining human rights and human dignity.
Introducing long sentence that includes descriptions, lists, or subordinate clauses.	<p>(34)</p> <p>إن مبادئ السياسة الخارجية لدولة الإمارات المتسقة مع ميثاق الأمم المتحدة وأحكام القانون الدولي والقائمة على</p>	(35) Ireland also calls for a

	<p>الشراكة ودعم سيادة القانون واحترام قواعد حسن الجوار وعدم التدخل في الشؤون الداخلية للدولة هي الدافع الأساسي لسعيها إلى تعزيز دور المنظمة وإصلاحها بما يمكنها من الاضطلاع برسالتها في صون السلم والأمن الدوليين وتحقيق التنمية والازدهار.</p> <p>(The foreign policy of the United Arab Emirates is guided by principles consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law — a spirit of partnership, support for the rule of law, good neighborliness and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. They lead us to support a stronger role for the United Nations, along with reform of its entities and systems, so that it can fulfill its mandate to maintain international peace and security and help countries achieve development and prosperity)</p>	<p>transparent, accountable and human-rights based resolution to the numerous conflicts in African countries, such as South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which are severely hampering sustainable development in the continent and creating enormous humanitarian burdens for the affected countries, neighboring countries and the international community.</p>
<p>Asking long rhetorical / stimulus questions</p>	<p>فلماذا كل هذا العداوة المستحکم (36) للشعب الفلسطيني الذي يرزح تحت احتلال تدعّمه الولايات المتحدة؟</p> <p>(Why is there then such animosity towards the Palestinian people, who are suffering under the yoke of an occupation that is supported by the United States?)</p>	<p>(37) Or do we have enough strength and pride to confront those dangers today, so that our citizens can enjoy peace and prosperity tomorrow?</p>

As noted above, complex and compound-complex sentences provide more maneuverability for speakers to represent their ideas. Such freedom allows sentences to be arranged or constructed in various ways based on the choice of the speaker/writer. In examples (32) and (33), the speakers have a choice whether to start with the independent clause or the dependent clause. The speakers' choices depend on the goal they are trying to achieve. In (33), the speaker tries to connect border security to human rights and human dignity using the conjunction when. The speaker choice to start with the independent clause (when you undermine border security) signifies the importance of such a topic for the speaker and his view about it. This example

is taken from the speech of the US president, Donald Trump, delivered before the 74th UNGA session in 2019. In this speech, Trump declared that future belongs to “patriots” not to “globalist” and he focused on the importance of pursuing national interests to hold on to sovereignty. This point of view is clearly reflected in the arrangement of his complex sentence by introducing the dependent clause first to give it more weight and attention.

In (32), the speaker could start with the dependent clause *رغم كل الأفكار والمبادرات التي جرى طرحها حتى الآن* (despite all the initiatives and opinions that have been put forward) then introduces the independent clause *إن القضية الفلسطينية تشكل بندا دائما في جدول أعمال الجمعية العامة للأمم المتحدة* (The Palestinian question has become a permanent item on the General Assembly’s agenda). Nonetheless, the speaker chose to begin with the independent clause so he can create a link between the contrasting status quo in the present and the efforts that have been made so far, then describe the consequences of such situations in the past and the present in one sentence. This movement between the past and the present and the contrast relationship between the clauses can be conveyed accurately in Arabic using one sentence only, yet, it is difficult to do so in English using one sentence. This explains why the translation technique of splitting the Arabic sentence into two English sentences was used, but at the expense of maintaining accuracy. The Arabic sentence in this example could be semantically translated into English as:

The Palestinian question has become a permanent item on the General Assembly’s agenda despite all the initiatives and opinions that have been put forward so far, resulting {which resulted in} in the continuous suffering of the Palestinian people who continue to be deprived of their right to live in dignity, in flagrant defiance of the rules of international law and internationally legitimate resolutions.

In the Arabic sentence, the speaker proclaims that the Palestinian question continues as a permanent item on the UNGA agenda despite all the initiatives and opinions that have been put forward so far, which means that all previous solutions were unsuccessful. In the official English translation of the UN, the sentence (Today, despite all the initiatives and opinions that have been put forward, the Palestinian people...) suggests that only the recent initiatives and opinions were unsuccessful while the previous ones were successful. The difference in meaning might be attributed to splitting the long Arabic sentence into two English sentences with the word *اليوم* (today/so far) being moved from one clause to another causing such inaccuracy. Mistranslation or accuracy of translation is not part of the topics examined in this paper, but this example is used to illustrate how the translation of complex sentences can be problematic and unhelpful in conveying the ideological ideas of the source text.

The functional use of the interrogative form in the examined speeches is one of the key differences between Arabic and English with regard to using complex and compound-complex sentences. In Arabic, complex and compound-complex questions are used to create a sort of dramatic effect on the audience to think about contradicting ideas or to criticize double-standard policy as in (36). While in English, complex and compound-complex questions are used to motivate the audience to adopt certain policies or actions as in (37)

Sentence form

As is well-known, declarative sentences are the most common type of sentence, and political speeches are no exception in this regard. The results show that the highest frequent sentence form is the declarative,

followed by interrogative and imperative in Arabic and English. The functions of interrogative sentences in the speeches delivered at the UNGA are slightly different than the primary purpose of such a type of sentence, i.e., asking questions. The speakers are aware that the UNGA meetings are not one-on-one or party-to-party discussions where they can get immediate answers to their questions and inquiries, so interrogative sentences were used to express other illocutionary forces. Some of the questions are rhetorical and they are posed to bring up a topic or a situation to think about for sympathy, support, or underestimation as in:

(38) Do we love our nations enough to protect their sovereignty and to take ownership of their futures?

(39) What does it take for a child to feel safe?

(40) فماذا تبقى لدى هذه الإدارة لتقدمه للشعب الفلسطيني: هل هي فقط حلول إنسانية؟

(What is there left for the Administration to offer the Palestinian people? Humanitarian solutions alone?)

Some of the questions were asked to point to or warn of serious situations, especially in the future, as in:

(41) Will nanotechnology help us to beat disease, or will it leave tiny robots to replicate in the crevices of our cells?

Other questions were used to introduce a suggestion or an invitation as in:

(42) My question is will you join us?

(43) ...and he (or dare I suggest, perhaps, she?) will have to head a more efficient organization.

Interrogative sentences were also used to introduce two opposite ideas to achieve a contrasting effect through antithesis. The goal is to encourage the adoption of a certain path as in:

(44) Will they continue down the path of poverty, bloodshed, and terror? Or will the Iranian people return to the nation's proud roots as a center of civilization, culture, and wealth where their people can be happy and prosperous once again?

Imperative sentences are usually used to give direct commands or instruction, but such a function is rarely used in high level meetings like the UNGA ones. Alternatively, imperative sentences are used as a polite way of requesting permission or making suggestions using words like let or allow. When these verbs are followed by the first person singular me, they are used as a polite way of commenting on a topic, paying tribute, extending gratitude, or expressing sympathy, as in:

فاسمحوا لي من هذا المنبر المهم أن أستعرض تلك الرؤى والمساهمات. (45)

(Allow me here, from this important rostrum, to present these visions and contributions)

(46) Let me take each in turn.

(47) On behalf of the United Kingdom let me begin by paying tribute to an outstanding leader of this United Nations, who sadly passed away this summer.

(48) اسمحوا لي أن أتوجه في البداية الى السيد بيتر تومسون, الصديق بخالص التهاني.

(Allow me, at the outset, to express to President Thomson our congratulations)

(49) Allow me at the beginning of my statement to offer Ireland's sympathy to all those in Mexico affected by the devastating earthquake earlier this week.

Nonetheless, when let or allow are followed by the first person plural us, they are used to make a suggestion and invite others to be involved, as in:

(50) فَلْنَعْمَلْ عَلَى تَهْدِئَةِ الْأَوْضَاعِ وَتَبْنِي الْعَمَلِ الْبِنَاءِ

(Let us work to calm the situation and work constructively)

(51) Let us choose peace and freedom over domination and defeat.

The last sentence type is the exclamatory one, which is usually used to express strong feelings about a situation with an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence. The analysis shows that this type of sentence was not used in both languages. Nonetheless, there are 7 occurrences in the Arabic speeches that are structurally interrogative, but they share one function: expressing a strong feeling of disapprobation of contradicting actions, as in:

(52) هناك اتفاقات مع الإدارة الأمريكية، فلماذا نقضتها جميعاً، وماذا علينا أن نفعل إزاء ذلك أجيبوني بالله عليكم؟

(We have entered into agreements with the United States Administration, but why did it renege on all those agreements?! Answer me for goodness sake!)

This is why an exclamation mark is used at the end of the translated sentence in English. This example is structurally interrogative, but it was not used to get information; it was used to highlight obvious contradictions.

Conclusion

In spite of the challenging task to mark the Arabic sentence boundaries, the present paper has answered its two questions:

1. How long is the sentence in Arabic and English political speeches and what are its common types and kinds? The results have shown that the average sentence length in the Arabic political speeches is 19.6 words compared to 20.9 words in the English political sentences. The highest percentage of sentence type in Arabic is that of the complex sentence followed by the simple, compound-complex, and compound sentences, while the highest percentage of sentence type in English is that of the simple sentence followed by complex, compound, and compound-complex sentences. This means that the most prevalent sentence type in Arabic political speeches is the complex sentence whereas the prevalent sentence type in the English political speeches is the simple one. The highest frequent sentence form is the declarative, followed by interrogative and imperative in Arabic and English.
2. What functions do the examined syntactic features serve in both Arabic and English political speeches? The analysis shows that political speakers 'tailor' sentence length to their goals. Short

sentences are usually used to convey a clear and accurate message to the audience or to draw the attention to one particular idea. On the other hand, long sentences are used to convey an indirect message, obscure the intent, avoid full responsibility, or highlight part of the message by adding more subordinate clauses.

With respect to sentence type, the analysis shows that the simple sentence is used in both languages to introduce short descriptive statement; express direct statement of commitment, support, invitation, or rejection; display a list; or pose a question. Regarding the dissimilarities, simple sentences were employed to express future intentions, but this applies to the English speeches only. Compound sentence were employed in both languages to joint similar or closely related ideas, to join two contrasting ideas by adding the conjunction “but” to create a surprising effect, or to express cause and effect relationship between sentences. The only difference between the two languages is that the English speeches employed the compound sentences to add rationales or personal comments. Such a use was not detected in the Arabic speeches. Complex and compound-complex sentences together represent almost half of the speeches in both languages. This may be attributed to the fact that such types of sentences provide more flexibility to highlight part of the sentence, allow different arrangements of the sentence constituents, and include many subordinate clauses for illustration. Both languages meet in using complex and compound-complex sentences to show the relationship between clauses, especially when the sentence is long, complicated, or includes lists or subordinate clauses. Complex and compound-complex sentences were also used to ask questions; however, the functions of these questions are different. In the Arabic speeches, the questions were rhetorical and they were used to show contradicting ideas to make the listener think or reconsider a certain situation. In English, the purpose of such questions was to encourage the audience to adopt certain ideas or be part of certain initiatives.

Interrogative sentences were used to touch upon topics that show sympathy, warn of serious future situations, or encourage readers/listeners to join the speaker. Imperative sentences were used to express a polite request to make a suggestion, show sympathy, pay attribute, or show strength. Structurally, exclamatory form is absent in all the speeches, but it exists in the Arabic speeches functionally. The interrogative sentences were used to perform an exclamatory function to express disapprobation of contradicting actions.

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