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**Analytical Study of Determiners and Pronouns in International Law as  
Represented by UN Human Rights Treaties in 2006**

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## Abstract

The language of law has distinct grammatical features that make it different from the other varieties of language. This paper examines two of the function word classes that can be compared according to their function: determiners and pronouns. The corpus used for analysis is an instance of public international law. It is the recent UN human rights treaties of the 2000s, which are Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006 and International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED) in 2006. The analysis uses Biber et al.'s Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE) as a framework for the qualitative and functional analyses, and corpus linguistics for the quantitative analysis. The results generally reveal and confirm that the language of law is formal, impersonal, and gender-neutral. In addition, it seeks precision and clarity.

**Key words** determiners – pronouns – UN Human Rights treaties – the language of law – corpus linguistics

## مُلخَصُ البَحْث:

تتميز لغة القانون بوجود خصائص نحوية متميزة تجعلها مختلفة عن الأنواع الأخرى من اللغة. يستعرض هذا البحث اثنين من أنواع الكلمات الوظيفية اللذان يمكن مقارنتهما وفقا لوظيفتهما وهما: المحددات والضمائر. ويعتبر النص المستخدم في التحليل نموذجا للقانون الدولي العام، ويشمل هذا النص معاهدات الأمم المتحدة الحديثة لحقوق الإنسان الصادرة في الألفية الثالثة وهما اتفاقية حقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة في ٢٠٠٦م والاتفاقية الدولية لحماية جميع الأشخاص من الاختفاء القسري في ٢٠٠٦م. يتم تطبيق نظام العمل المستخدم في كتاب بايبر (Biber) وآخرين "قواعد لونغمان للغة الإنجليزية المنطوقة والمكتوبة" للتحليل النوعي والوظيفي ويتم استخدام لسانيات المتون (Corpus Linguistics) للتحليل الكمي. وتظهر النتائج وتؤكد على وجه العموم أن لغة القانون هي لغة رسمية وغير شخصية ومحيدة بين الجنسين وأيضاً تسعى لأن تكون دقيقة وواضحة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المحددات – الضمائر – معاهدات حقوق الإنسان للأمم المتحدة – لغة القانون – لسانيات المتون

## **1. Introduction**

Life is governed by law in every aspect (Gibbons, 2004, p. 1). The actual comprehension of the meaning of laws can be assisted by linguistic realization. Furthermore, the information gained from legal interpretation, in particular statutes interpretation, may be the most influential relating to language and linguistics (Tiersma, 2009, pp. 19-20). Legal language is needed to be investigated not only by its professionals, researchers, interpreters, or translators, but also by lay people because they need to be able to understand the content of wills, contracts, statutes, etc.

International Law is divided into public international law and private international law. Public international law regulates the States actions when dealing with each other. It is the same for every State, whereas private international law relates to the actions of the individuals (Verma, 1998, p. 3).

This paper aims at exploring the determiners and pronouns of the language of the UN human rights treaties in 2006, as instances of the language of public international law. Exploring them is to prove that the language of law is really distinguished from other varieties of language. It has distinct grammatical features.

## **2. Methodology**

In this paper, Biber et al.'s the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE) framework is used for the qualitative and functional analyses, whereas corpus linguistics is employed for the quantitative analysis. For the corpus approach, AntConc software is adopted, which reveals the frequency list and concordance of the words in question. However, some of the results are examined by hand to get accurate results. The corpus used for analysis contains 16598 tokens. It is confined to the recent UN international human rights treaties of the 2000s. This includes the two treaties: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006 and International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED) in 2006.

## **3. Theoretical background**

### **3.1 The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE) Framework**

The LGSWE book is a complement to Quirk et al.'s earlier work "A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language (CGEL)" (1985). The grammatical framework of concepts and terminology in LGSWE is largely borrowed from CGEL (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999, p. 7). LGSWE is divided into three sections: (1) the structural description of the

grammatical features in question, (2) ‘Corpus Findings’ (presenting the distributional patterns for the grammatical feature), and (3) ‘Discussion of Findings’” for functional analysis (Biber et al., 1999, p. 41). The Longman of Spoken and Written English (LSWE) corpus contains over 40 million words in about 37,000 texts (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 24-25). LGSWE describes the actual use of grammatical features in four main registers: conversation, fiction, newspaper language and academic prose, and two supplementary registers: non-conversational speech (e.g. lectures, public meetings) and general written non-fiction prose. It also uses two dialects: the American and British English dialects.

In LGSWE framework, determiners and pronouns are described as follows:

### 3.1.1 Determiners

A determiner is a function word that is used to name or mention the reference of a noun exactly and clearly (Biber et al., 1999, p. 258). The determiners are:

#### 3.1.1.1 The definite article ‘the’ and the indefinite articles ‘a’, and ‘an’.

They are the most common (Biber et al., 1999, p. 260).

**3.1.1.2 Possessive determiners.** They are followed by noun phrases to specify them. They are ‘my’, ‘our’, ‘your’, ‘his’, ‘her’, ‘its’, and ‘their’. They correspond to possessive pronouns (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 271, 284). The determiner ‘own’ can be put after the possessive determiner to give importance to something in particular (Biber et al., 1999, p. 271).

**3.1.1.3 Demonstrative determiners.** The singular demonstrative determiners are ‘this’ and ‘that’, whereas the plural ones are ‘these’ and ‘those’. They are followed by noun phrases and correspond to demonstrative pronouns (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 272, 284).

**3.1.1.4 Quantifiers.** They are determiners used before noun phrases to indicate quantity. When they occur with definite noun phrases, they are generally followed by ‘of’, as in: ‘all (of) the money’, and ‘some of the girls’. They correspond to indefinite pronouns (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 275, 284). There are four main groups of quantifiers:

1. **Inclusive.** They are ‘all’, ‘both’, ‘each’, and ‘every’.
2. **Large quantity.** They refer to large quantities such as ‘many’, ‘much’, ‘a great/good many’, ‘a great/ good deal of’, ‘plenty of’, ‘a lot of’, and ‘lots of’.
3. **Moderate or small quantity.** ‘Some’ is used to refer to a moderate quantity, whereas ‘a few’, ‘few’, ‘several’, ‘a little’, ‘little’, etc. are used to refer to a small quantity.
4. **Arbitrary/ negative member or amount.** The determiner ‘any’ is used to refer to a person or thing that is arbitrary, not particular

or specific. The meaning of the determiner ‘either’ is similar to that of ‘any’, but it is used to speak about one and/ or the other of two. The negative determiner ‘no’ has a general reference, but ‘neither’ refers to two (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 275-276).

### 3.1.2 Pronouns

**3.1.2.1 Personal pronouns.** They are function words, used to refer to the speaker/ writer, the addressee, or other identifiable things or persons. Table 1 combines the nominative and accusative personal pronouns with their corresponding possessive and reflexive forms.

**Table 1.** Personal pronouns with their corresponding possessive and reflexive forms.

Person		Nominative personal pronouns	Accusative personal pronouns	Possessive pronouns	Reflexive pronouns
1 <sup>st</sup>	Singular	I	Me	Mine	Myself
	Plural	We	Us	Ours	Ourselves
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Singular	You	You	Yours	Yourself
	Plural	You	You	Yours	Yourselves
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Singular	He	Him	His	Himself
		She	Her	Hers	Herself
		It	It	...	Itself
	Plural	They	Them	Theirs	Themselves

Although they are called ‘personal pronouns’, ‘it’ generally has non-personal reference, and the plural pronouns ‘they’ and ‘them’ can have personal and non-personal reference (Biber et al., 1999, p. 328).

**3.1.2.2 Possessive pronouns.** They are mainly used where the head noun is recoverable from the preceding context, which is the typical use, or from the following context, which is rarely used (Biber et al., 1999, p. 340).

**3.1.2.3 Reflexive pronouns.** They refer to a preceding noun phrase, which is usually in the subject position (Biber et al., 1999, p. 70).

**3.1.2.4 Reciprocal pronouns.** They are ‘each other’ and ‘one another’. They refer to a preceding noun phrase within the same clause, which is usually in the subject position (Biber et al., 1999, p. 346).

**3.1.2.5 Demonstrative pronouns.** They determine whether the thing is near (this/ these) or far (that/ those) (Biber et al., 1999, p. 347). For example, ‘Look at **this**!’ (Biber et al., 1999, p. 70).

**3.1.2.6 Indefinite pronouns.** They refer to people or things without mentioning exactly who or what they are. They are divided into four main groups, each one is derived from a quantifier:

1. The first group includes ‘every’: everybody – everyone – everything
2. The second group includes ‘some’: somebody – someone – something
3. The third group includes ‘any’: anybody – anyone – anything
4. The fourth group includes ‘no’: nobody – no one – none – nothing (Biber et al., 1999, p. 351).

#### **The pronoun ‘one’:**

Pronominally there are two main uses of ‘one’:

1. Substitute ‘one’, which may be used in the place of a countable noun mentioned or inferred from the context. ‘One’ replaces a singular noun, whereas ‘ones’ replaces a plural noun. It frequently occurs after adjectives and determiners. However, it also goes with premodifying nouns, as in ‘the group one’.
2. Generic ‘one’, which refers to people in general (Biber et al., 1999, p. 353).

Sometimes the impersonal style is used in which ‘one’ refers to the author (Biber et al., 1999, p. 354).

## **3.2 Corpus linguistics**

Studies of language are divided into two ways: the traditional way of studying structure, i.e. identifying and describing the structure of a language, and the way of studying the use of a language, which studies the language that occurs naturally in texts instead of the theoretically possible language (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998, p. 1).

‘Corpus’ is a Latin word that means ‘body’. It is “any collection of more than one text,” (McEnery & Wilson, 2004, p. 29). It is more accurately defined as “a finite-sized body of machine-readable text, sampled in order to be maximally representative of the language variety under consideration.” (McEnery & Wilson, 2004, p. 32). Therefore, corpus linguistics is defined by McEnery and Hardie (2012) as “dealing with some set of machine-readable texts which is deemed an appropriate basis on which to study a specific set of research questions” (p. 1).

When a researcher deals with a large corpus by hand, it is very difficult to be sure that the results are all correct. However, by using computer software, the results can be rapid and some of them are trusted. Corpus linguistics makes it easy and possible to examine different theories of language.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1 Determiners

#### 4.1.1 Definite and indefinite articles

Definite and indefinite articles are highly used in the corpus. They appear in 1570 occurrences. Their frequency distribution is shown in table 2.

**Table 2.** Frequency distribution of definite and indefinite articles.

Definite article	Indefinite articles	
The	A	An
1279	190	101

The definite article ‘the’, 1279 occurrences, is noticeably more common than the indefinite articles ‘a’, 190 occurrences, and ‘an’, 101 occurrences. This is due to the fact that ‘the’ can be used with a singular or plural form, and with a countable or uncountable noun, whereas, the indefinite articles are confined to just singular countable nouns. In addition, ‘the’ is employed to refer to a particular known referent or a new referent. On the other hand, ‘a’, and ‘an’ are only used to modify new non-specific noun phrases.

The definite article ‘the’ is marked as the most common word in the whole corpus, as seen in figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Position of ‘the’ in the rank order frequency list of the corpus.

Rank	Freq	Word
1	1279	the
2	939	of
3	706	and
4	671	to
5	344	in
6	341	with
7	300	shall
8	247	or
9	236	a
10	210	persons
11	193	disabilities
12	163	states
13	157	for
14	153	parties
15	150	article

It is used with both the anaphoric reference and the cataphoric reference. Consider the following example:

*A Committee on Enforced Disappearances (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") shall be established to carry out the functions provided for under this Convention. (CPED, emphasis added)*

In the first occurrence of ‘the’, it has an anaphoric reference that comes from the preceding context ‘A Committee on Enforced Disappearances’. However, the reference of the second ‘the’ is established through the



following clause ‘*provided for under this Convention*’, which is a cataphoric reference.

Moreover, the frequency of the articles indicates the frequency of the nouns. Therefore, as the corpus has a large number of articles, it also includes a great number of nouns.

#### 4.1.2 Possessive determiners

Possessive determiners are combined with the noun phrases that follow them. They are relatively frequent in the corpus. Their frequency distribution is shown in table 3.

**Table 3.** Frequency distribution of possessive determiners.

Possessive determiner	Frequency
My	0
Our	0
Your	0
His	15
Her	15
Its	59
Their	116

The lack of the first and second person determiners in their singular and plural forms affirms the impersonality of the language of law. Furthermore, the third person determiners ‘his’ and ‘her’ in fourteen of their occurrences are used in the phrase ‘*his or her*’, and once in ‘*her or his*’, without determining one gender, and without choosing the plural form. The idea of using gender-neutral language is discussed in section 4.2.1 below. The plural references are markedly more common than the singular references, with 116 occurrences of ‘their’, and 59 occurrences of ‘its’.

The word ‘own’ sometimes occurs after possessive determiners. It is used to add emphasis to a particular entity, not others, and this is related to precision. Table 4 presents the frequency distribution of the seventeen occurrences of ‘own’ after possessive determiners and after (’s).

**Table 4.** Frequency distribution of the word ‘own’.

	Frequency
‘Own’ after possessive determiners	14
‘Own’ after (’s)	3

The word ‘own’ is more frequent with the possessive determiners, fourteen occurrences, than with the possessive (’s), three occurrences. In only one instance of using ‘own’ after a possessive determiner, it is not followed by a noun phrase: ‘*Are free to leave any country, including their own*’, in which the selection of the possessive determiner ‘their’ followed by ‘own’ is preferred to the choice of the possessive pronoun ‘theirs’.

#### 4.1.3 Demonstrative determiners

Demonstrative determiners occur 159 times in the corpus. They indicate that an entity is known, and they are followed by noun phrases. Therefore, they reflect the tendency of the language of law to be precise and indicate the abundance of noun phrases. Their frequency distribution is presented in table 5. The singular determiners ‘this/that’ are more frequent than the plural determiners ‘these/those’.

**Table 5.** Frequency distribution of demonstrative determiners.

Demonstrative determiner	Frequency
This	114
That	17
These	17
Those	11

The demonstrative determiner ‘this’, 114 occurrence, is the most common. It is combined with different noun phrases. However, in 55 occurrences of ‘this’, it refers to the present ‘Convention’, distinguishing it from the other conventions, and in thirty occurrences, the referent is ‘article’, especially when it indicates a particular paragraph in the present article. The other referents include ‘right’, ‘end’, ‘regard’, ‘information’, ‘State Party’, ‘purpose’, ‘report’, ‘rule’, ‘offence’, ‘list’, and ‘declaration’. With regard to the determiners ‘that’ (seventeen occurrences), ‘these’ (seventeen occurrences), and ‘those’ (eleven occurrences), they are followed by various noun phrases.

#### 4.1.4 Quantifying determiners

In the language of law, this type of determiners is needed to specify the quantity of nouns. Following LGSWE, quantifiers that occur as pronouns are covered along with the determiner function of such forms. The frequency distribution of each quantifying determiner from the four major categories is shown in table 6.

**Table 6.** Frequency distribution of quantifying determiners.

Quantifying determiner		Frequency
Inclusive	All	110
	Each	42
	Every	6
	Both	5
Large quantity	Many	0
	Much	0
	More	3
	Most	0
	A great/good many	0
	A great/ good deal of	0
	Plenty of	0
	A lot of	0
	Lots of	0
Moderate or small quantity	Some	0
	A few	0
	Few	0
	Several	0
	A little	0
	Little	0
	Less	0
	Least	1
	A couple of	0
	A number of	1
Arbitrary/ negative member or amount	Any	87
	Either	0
	No	11
	Neither	0
	None	0

There are wide differences in the distribution of the four categories, and even of each quantifier separately. The high frequency of inclusive quantifying determiners (163 occurrences), and the relatively high frequency of arbitrary/ negative quantifiers (98 occurrences) compared to the far less common use of both large quantity determiners (three occurrences), and moderate or small quantity determiners (two occurrences) is due to seeking precision in the language of law by reducing the use of quantifiers that do not specify an exact amount or number.

Concerning the inclusive quantifying determiners, ‘all’ is the most common with 110 occurrences. It is used to include every person or thing in a group, and hence ensuring accuracy. The quantifier ‘each’ occurs 42 times. In 34 instances, it is followed by ‘*State Party*’, which is a highly frequent noun phrase in the whole corpus. The phrase ‘*State Party*’ occurs 110 times, ‘*States Parties*’ occurs 147 times, and ‘*State Parties*’ occurs only once. The importance of such a phrase in its singular and plural forms lies in that these treaties are between parties, and each party is a state. So they are often referred to. ‘Each’ includes every one of two or more people or things, but emphasizes at the same time that they are considered individually.

The quantifier ‘every’ occurs six times. In four occurrences, it includes all people or things in a group: ‘*every country*’, ‘*every human being*’, ‘*every person with disabilities*’, and ‘*every effort*’, whereas in two occurrences, it describes how often something happens: ‘*every four years*’, and ‘*every two years*’. The quantifier ‘both’ (five occurrences) is the least frequent because it is restricted to the reference of two things.

The only large quantity quantifier that is found in the corpus is ‘more’, which occurs three times. It is used as an alternative in the forms ‘*half or more*’, ‘*one or more*’, and ‘*two or more*’. It is followed by ‘of’ in two occurrences. The noun phrases that ‘more’ specify are ‘*the States Parties*’, ‘*its members*’, and ‘*States Parties*’.

The only quantifier that ends in ‘of’ is ‘a number of’, which occurs once in the corpus. It is used to indicate a limited number that is modified by the following clause ‘*a number of votes equal to the number of their member States that ...*’. The absence of the use of the other words that end in ‘of’: ‘a great/ good deal of’, ‘plenty of’, ‘a lot of’, ‘lots of’, and ‘a couple of’, can be interpreted by the fact that such words are developed lately from quantifying nouns (Biber et al., 1999, p. 277). This fact reinforces the idea that the language of law is archaic. The small quantity determiner ‘least’ appears once to modify ‘*cost*’.

The arbitrary member or amount quantifier ‘any’ (87 occurrences) is somewhat frequent. It is used not to specify an exact number or amount, but to indicate an indefinite quantity or an unlimited entity, which gives precision. The absence of ‘either’ and ‘neither’ is due to their particular use as they refer to two or one of two people or things. ‘None’ also did not occur, but to refer to the negative, the quantifier ‘no’ is preferred, with its eleven occurrences.

## 4.2 Pronouns

### 4.2.1 Personal pronouns

The frequency of personal pronouns in the corpus is 105. The frequency distribution of the nominative and accusative personal pronouns is shown in table 7.

**Table 7.** Frequency distribution of the nominative and accusative personal pronouns.

Person		Nominative Personal pronoun	Frequency	Accusative Personal pronoun	Frequency
1 <sup>st</sup>	singular	I	0	Me	0
	plural	We	0	Us	0
2 <sup>nd</sup>	singular	You	0	You	0
	plural	You	0	You	0
3 <sup>rd</sup>	singular	He	7	Him	6
		She	7	Her	6
		It	31	It	15
	plural	They	14	Them	19

The corpus does not contain the nominative first person singular and plural pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’, the second person singular or plural pronoun ‘you’, and their accusative forms ‘me’, ‘us’, and ‘you’. This reflects the impersonal characteristic of the language of law.

The nominative third person singular pronouns ‘he’ and ‘she’ are only used in the coordinated pronoun form ‘*he or she*’ (six occurrences), and one time in ‘*she or he*’ which reveals the avoidance of specifying one gender. The same issue is found in the use of the accusative pronouns ‘him’ and ‘her’ that are only used in the form ‘*him or her*’ (six occurrences). These results support the notion stated by Fischer (2009, p. 482) that legal professionals have seen that gender-neutral language provides fairness and clarity. The treaties do not follow the historical model of using the masculine pronoun forms ‘he’ and ‘him’. Although masculine pronouns can have dual reference, they attracted a lot of criticism (Biber et al., 1999, p. 316). The plural form is not opted, either. This reflects concern with precision.

Besides pronouns, words for masculine or feminine gender are not used in their singular or plural forms except in few cases, as seen in table 8. It might be surprising that the female-gendered words occur more than the

male-gendered ones. The sole occurrence of ‘men’ comes with ‘women’ to speak about the equality between them. Moreover, the noun ‘father’ is accompanied by ‘mother or legal guardian’. So, in these two cases, both genders come together. In the case of ‘chairman’, it occurs once to refer to both genders. However, it is the only instance that could be considered as biased. In a similar sentence, the unbiased word ‘chairperson’ is used once. ‘Girls’ instances and six instances of ‘women’ are used to focus on their rights that might be taken from them. The other two occurrences of ‘women’ convey special meanings, to refer to pregnancy, and to refer to the name of a specific convention ‘the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women’. In the second occurrence of ‘mother’, it is also used to specify something that is only related to women, which is delivering children during the captivity of a mother.

**Table 8.** Frequency distribution of masculine and feminine gender words.

Masculine	Frequency	Feminine	Frequency
Men	1	Women	9
Father	1	Mother	2
Chairman	1	Girls	3

On the other hand, the impartial words are widely used instead of the gender-specific words. For example, the word ‘person’ (77 occurrences), and ‘persons’ (210 occurrences).

The pronoun ‘it’ is the most common personal pronoun. It occurs 31 times in its nominative form, and fifteen in its accusative form. It has a non-personal reference in 44 occurrences. The reference occurs in the preceding text or the following text after ‘it’, as in ‘*As it discharges its mandate, the Committee shall ...*’. In the other two instances, ‘it’ is used as an anticipatory subject in one occurrence in ‘*whether it is appropriate to transfer to another body - ... - the monitoring of this Convention,*’, and as an anticipatory object in the other occurrence in ‘*make it possible to clarify cases of enforced disappearance or to identify the perpetrators of an enforced disappearance;*’.

The nominative pronoun ‘they’ is seen in fourteen instances, whereas the accusative pronoun ‘them’ appears in nineteen instances. They are used to refer to plural noun phrases.

#### 4.2.2 Possessive pronouns

No possessive pronouns are used in the corpus. This can be interpreted by the fact that the recoverable head nouns that possessive pronouns require

and refer to do not come in the preceding context. However, instead of the possessive pronouns, the possessive determiners are preferred in which the noun phrase follows the determiner.

#### 4.2.3 Reflexive pronouns

Only three reflexive pronouns show up in the corpus, as shown in table 9. The reflexive pronoun '*itself*' marks co-reference with the subject '*it*'. Concerning '*themselves*', it refers to the subject '*States Parties*' in '*States Parties which . . . shall recognize the offence of enforced disappearance as an extraditable offence between themselves*', whereas '*themselves*' in its second occurrence refers to '*persons with disabilities*', in '*States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves . . .*'. The co-referent noun phrases appear in the same clause to avoid ambiguity. The absence of '*myself*', '*yourself*', '*ourselves*', and '*yourselves*' is due to their personal style. Moreover, the lack of '*himself*' and '*herself*' is related to the few occurrences of '*he*' and '*she*', and, in general, the reflexive pronouns are much less frequent than the personal pronouns on account of their more specialized uses.

**Table 9.** Frequency distribution of reflexive pronouns.

Reflexive pronoun	Frequency
Myself	0
Yourself	0
Himself	0
Herself	0
Itself	1
Ourselves	0
Yourselves	0
Themselves	2

#### 4.2.4 Reciprocal pronouns

As the reflexive pronouns, reciprocal pronouns are much less frequent than the personal pronouns because they have a specialized use; they refer to plural referents. In the corpus, they all refer to the subject '*State Parties*' (see section 4.1.4 for the analysis of the use of '*State Parties*'). The frequency distribution of the four reciprocal pronouns is shown in table 10.

**Table 10.** Frequency distribution of reciprocal pronouns.

Reciprocal pronoun	Frequency
Each other	1
One another	3

#### 4.2.5 Demonstrative pronouns

There are six demonstrative pronouns that refer to singular forms (this/ that), and thirteen that refer to plural forms (these/ those). Table 11 shows their frequency distribution.

**Table 11.** Frequency distribution of demonstrative pronouns.

Demonstrative pronoun	Frequency
This	4
That	2
These	1
Those	12

In the corpus, the singular form ‘*this*’ is not used cataphorically, but it is used to refer to something preceding. ‘*That*’, in its second occurrence, refers to a preceding clause, whereas in its first occurrence, the preceding reference is clarified by the postmodifying phrase ‘*of their relatives*’. In this case, ‘*that*’ means ‘the one’.

The reference of the plural form ‘*these*’ is clear: ‘*such suggestions and general recommendations on the report*’. In all its twelve instances, the demonstrative pronoun ‘*those*’ is followed by a postmodifying clause, which makes the meaning clearer. ‘*Those*’ does not have its usual demonstrative force, but it has the meaning of ‘the people’ in eight of its occurrences, and the meaning of ‘the ones’ in four occurrences.

#### 4.2.6 Indefinite pronouns

Only ten indefinite pronouns occur in the corpus. Their frequency distribution is shown in table 12.



**Table 12.** Frequency distribution of indefinite pronouns.

<b>Indefinite pronoun</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Everybody	0
Everyone	1
Everything	0
Somebody	0
Someone	0
Something	0
Anybody	0
Anyone	0
Anything	0
Nobody	0
No one	4
None	0
Nothing	3
One	2

These indefinite pronouns refer to indefinite persons or things. The choice of the words ‘everyone’ and ‘no one’ instead of ‘everybody’ and ‘nobody’ is because the latter are more casual (Biber et al., 1999, p. 353). This affirms the formality of the legal language. Compared to the other indefinite pronouns, there is a slight preference of the use of the negative forms ‘nothing’ and ‘no one’. ‘One’ occurs twice in the possessive form ‘one’s’. In both cases, it is used as a ‘generic one’ to refer to people in general.

### 4.3 Determiners that correspond to pronouns

#### 4.3.1 Comparison between the definite article and personal pronouns

The comparison of the frequency between the definite article and personal pronouns is shown in table 13.

**Table 13.** Frequency of the definite article compared with personal pronouns.

<b>Definite article</b>	<b>Personal pronouns</b>
1279	105

The high frequency of the definite article implies that there are frequent noun phrases. The less use of personal pronouns is related to the total absence of the first and second personal pronouns ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘we’, ‘us’, and ‘you’, and the limited use of ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘him’, and ‘her’ that occur only in their gender-neutral forms ‘he or she’, ‘she or he’, and ‘him or her’. In

addition, the definite article followed by a noun phrase gives more sufficient specification than that of personal pronouns. Also it would be difficult to follow the referent of a personal pronoun when the sentence is long and complex, as seen in the example below, in which the definite article followed by a noun ‘*the proceedings*’ is used instead of the accusative personal pronoun ‘them’.

*Any person against whom proceedings are brought in connection with an offence of enforced disappearance shall be guaranteed fair treatment at all stages of **the proceedings**.* (CPED, emphasis added)

#### 4.3.2 Comparison between possessive determiners and possessive pronouns

Although possessive pronouns do not occur in the corpus, possessive determiners are relatively common, with the frequency of 205, as shown in table 14.

**Table 14.** Frequency of possessive determiners compared with possessive pronouns.

Possessive determiners frequency	Possessive pronouns frequency
205	0

This result shows the preference of using possessive determiners which are followed by noun phrases. This reinforces the idea of using frequent noun phrases in the legal language.

#### 4.3.3 Comparison between demonstrative determiners and demonstrative pronouns

The frequency distribution of the demonstrative determiners when compared with demonstrative pronouns is shown in table 15.

**Table 15.** Frequency distribution of demonstrative determiners compared with demonstrative pronouns.

Demonstrative	Demonstrative determiner frequency	Demonstrative pronoun frequency
This	114	4
That	17	2
These	17	1
Those	11	12

Demonstrative determiners occur 159 times, whereas demonstrative pronouns occur 19 times. The high frequency of demonstrative determiners may be assigned to the fact that they are followed by specific nouns to avoid the ambiguity of searching for the referent in long legal sentences, and hence seeking precision. On the other hand, the frequency of the use of ‘*those*’ as a determiner is less than its use as a pronoun. The corpus reveals that when using it as a pronoun, it is always followed by a postmodifying clause to be clear.

#### 4.3.4 Comparison between the quantifying determiners and indefinite pronouns

The common use of the quantifying determiners (266 occurrences) as compared to the much less frequent use of the indefinite pronouns (10 occurrences) is related to two factors. First, the quantifying determiners themselves are more than the indefinite pronouns. Second, the quantifying determiners are followed by noun phrases to determine various things or people. For example, instead of using the indefinite pronoun ‘anyone’, different quantifying determiners can be used such as ‘any person’, ‘any victim’, and ‘any individual’. The frequency of quantifying determiners and indefinite pronouns is presented in table 16.

**Table 16.** Frequency of quantifying determiners compared with indefinite pronouns.

Quantifying determiners	Indefinite pronouns
266	10

## 5. Conclusion

When the occurrences of determiners in the corpus have been investigated with the support of the AntConc software, it is revealed that there are very frequent definite articles (1279 occurrences), relatively frequent indefinite articles (291 occurrences), possessive determiners (205 occurrences) with the exception of ‘my’, ‘our’, and ‘your’, and demonstrative determiners (159 occurrences). Concerning the quantifying determiners, the inclusive ones (163 occurrences) are highly frequent, the arbitrary/ negative quantifying determiners (98 occurrences) are less frequent, and the large quantity (3 occurrences) and moderate or small quantity determiners (2 occurrences) are very few.

With regard to pronouns, they are less common than determiners. For personal pronouns, the first and second persons do not show up. Specifying one gender is generally not found. Possessive pronouns do not occur either. Reflexive pronouns (3 occurrences) are very few occurring only in the two

forms ‘itself’ and ‘themselves’. Reciprocal pronouns (4 occurrences) are also very infrequent. Demonstrative pronouns (19 occurrences) and indefinite pronouns (10 occurrences) are relatively infrequent.

The corpus findings show the tendency of the language of law to be precise, and clear by choosing specific words, adding phrases and lists to clarify the meaning, and using gender-neutral language. The findings also indicate the frequent use of noun phrases. The style of the language of law is formal, and impersonal. In addition, it tends to be archaic in not using most of the quantifiers that are developed recently from quantifying nouns, such as ‘plenty of’, ‘a lot of’, ‘lots of’, and ‘a couple of’.

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