



University of Mosul
College of Arts
Department of English Language

Translation from English to Arabic
Third Year
2024-2025

Assistant Professor Dr. Iman I. Khudhair
Lecture 1

Translating Tense Differences Between English and Arabic

Introduction to Verb Tenses

- - English has 12 main tenses.
- - Arabic has two basic tenses: past and non-past.
- - This causes challenges in accurate translation.

English Tense System Overview

- - Present, Past, Future
- - Simple, Continuous, Perfect, Perfect Continuous
- - Example: 'He has been working.'

Arabic Tense System Overview

- - Past (الماضي), Non-past (المضارع), and Future (using سوف or سـ)
- - Less emphasis on aspect.
- - Example: 'كان يدرس' for continuous past.

Present Simple Tense

- - English: I eat lunch at noon.
- - Arabic: أتناول الغداء في الظهر.
- - Challenge: Easy to translate, but habitual use needs context.

Present Continuous Tense

- - English: She is reading a book.
- - Arabic: هي تقرأ كتابًا.
- - Challenge: Arabic uses present tense with context or adverbs like الآن.

Present Perfect Tense

- - English: They have arrived.
- - Arabic: لقد وصلوا.
- - Challenge: Arabic lacks a direct equivalent and often uses adverbial markers.

Present Perfect Continuous

- - English: He has been studying for hours.
- - Arabic: يدرس منذ ساعات.
- - Challenge: Expressed with simple present + time phrase.

Past Simple Tense

- - English: We visited Egypt last year.
- - Arabic: زرنا مصر العام الماضي.
- - Challenge: Generally straightforward.

Past Continuous Tense

- - English: I was watching TV.
- - Arabic: كنت أشاهد التلفاز.
- - Challenge: Uses 'كان' + present tense verb in Arabic.

Past Perfect Tense

- - English: She had finished the work before I arrived.
- - Arabic: كانت قد أنهت العمل قبل أن أصل.
- - Challenge: Requires auxiliary verb constructions.

Future Tense (Simple)

- - English: I will go tomorrow.
- - Arabic: سأذهب غدًا.
- - Challenge: Similar structure, but Arabic uses prefixes (سوف or سـ).

Future Perfect Tense

- - English: By 5 PM, he will have finished.
- - Arabic: سيكون قد أنهى بحلول الساعة الخامسة.
- - Challenge: Arabic uses 'سيكون قد' + past verb.

Tense Ambiguity in Arabic

- - Arabic verb forms are more flexible.
- - Context determines tense and aspect.
- - Challenge: Translators must infer implied meanings.

Conclusion

- - English and Arabic differ significantly in tense use and structure.
- - Accurate translation requires:
 - * Understanding tense usage in both languages
 - * Contextual interpretation
 - * Avoiding literal translation when inappropriate.



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Difficulties in Translating Passive Structures from English to Arabic

Introduction to Passive Voice

- - In English, the passive voice is formed using 'to be' + past participle.
- - Example: The book was written by the author.
- - Arabic favors active voice and uses passive less frequently.

Structural Differences

- - English: Subject + be + past participle
- - Arabic: Often uses الفعل المبني للمجهول
- - Example:
- English: The window was broken.
- Arabic: كُسِرَتِ النافذة
- - Challenge: Arabic uses verb morphology instead of auxiliary verbs.

Challenge 1: Verb-Based vs. Auxiliary-Based Structures

- - English: The cake was eaten.
- - Arabic: أَكَلَتِ الكعكة
- - Difficulty: Arabic verbs must be conjugated into the passive, requiring morphological knowledge.

Challenge 2: Omission of the Agent

- - English: The decision was made by the manager.
- - Arabic: اتَّخَذَ القرار (Agent often omitted)
- - Challenge: Arabic frequently omits the agent, which may affect clarity or emphasis.

Challenge 3: Formality and Style

- - Passive structures in Arabic are more common in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) than in dialects.
- - Example:
- English: The letter was delivered yesterday.
- Arabic: وَصِلَتِ الرِّسَالَةُ أَمْسًا
- - Challenge: May sound overly formal in some contexts.

Challenge 4: Translating Long Passives

- - English: The report was written and submitted by the students.
- - Arabic: كُتِبَ التقريرُ وقُدِّمَ من قبل الطلاب
- - Challenge: Maintaining sentence balance and clarity in Arabic.

Challenge 5: Ambiguity and Interpretation

- - English: Mistakes were made.
- - Arabic: أُرْتُكِبْتُ أخطاء OR اُرْتُكَابُ أخطاء
- - Challenge: Choice of construction can influence tone or perceived responsibility.

Strategies for Translation

- - Use active voice in Arabic when more natural.
- - Understand context to determine whether to preserve or adjust passive form.
- - Be aware of stylistic norms in MSA vs. dialects.

Conclusion

- - Translating passive voice from English to Arabic requires:
 - * Grammatical knowledge of Arabic passive forms
 - * Contextual sensitivity
 - * Stylistic awareness
- - A flexible, context-driven approach is key to accurate translation.



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Lecture 3

Challenges in Translating English Phrasal Verbs into Arabic

Introduction

- - Phrasal verbs are idiomatic expressions combining verbs with prepositions or adverbs.
- - Their meaning is often non-literal and context-dependent.
- - Arabic lacks direct equivalents for many phrasal verbs.

Translation Challenge Overview

- - Literal translation leads to loss of meaning.
- - Cultural and grammatical differences widen the gap.
- - Phrasal verbs often need to be paraphrased or replaced by single Arabic verbs.

'Abide by' & 'Account for'

- - Abide by (e.g., abide by the rules): يلتزم بـ
- * Challenge: Formal expression; not a natural Arabic structure.
- - Account for (e.g., account for the expenses): يفسر / يوضح
- * Challenge: Context-sensitive; may imply explanation, justification, or proportion.

'Add up' & 'Advise against'

- - Add up (e.g., the numbers add up): تكون
تجتمع / منطقية
- * Challenge: Literal meaning (جمع) vs.
idiomatic (make sense).
- - Advise against: ينصح بعدم
- * Challenge: Requires paraphrasing; Arabic
doesn't use a verb-particle structure.

'Agree with' & 'Allow for'

- - Agree with: يتفق مع / يوافق
- * Challenge: Semantic overlap; verb agreement in Arabic varies by context.
- - Allow for: يأخذ في الاعتبار
- * Challenge: Translation requires explanation or expansion to sound natural.

'Appeal to' & 'Apply for'

- - Appeal to: يروق لـ / يستأنف / يناشد
- * Challenge: One verb, many meanings; context heavily affects translation.
- - Apply for: يتقدّم بطلب لـ
- * Challenge: Often requires expansion into a formal Arabic expression.

'Back away' & 'Back down'

- - Back away: يتعد / يتراجع
- * Challenge: Physical vs. metaphorical meanings.
- - Back down: يتراجع / يتنازل
- * Challenge: Idiomatic; hard to convey tone and implication.

'Back up'

- - Back up: ينسخ احتياطياً OR يساند / يدعم
- * Challenge: Multiple meanings (support, reverse, copy); needs contextual clarification.

Conclusion

- - Phrasal verbs pose significant translation challenges due to idiomatic, cultural, and grammatical factors.
- - Successful translation into Arabic requires:
 - * Understanding of context.
 - * Use of functional equivalents or paraphrasing.
 - * Sensitivity to idiomatic expressions in both languages.
- - Further study is needed in pedagogical strategies for teaching these forms.



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Lecture 4

Challenges in Translating Arabic Proverbs into English

Why Proverbs Are Hard to Translate

- Proverbs are deeply rooted in culture
- Literal translations often miss meaning
- Figurative language and idioms don't always match
- Wordplay, rhyme, or sarcasm may be untranslatable

Example 1

القناعة كنز لا يفنى

English: "Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure."

Difficulty:

- Metaphor is understandable, but may sound archaic in English
- English culture emphasizes ambition more than contentment

Example 2

كالإبرة تكسي غيرها وهي عريانة

English: "Like a needle that clothes others while it is naked."

Difficulty:

- Strong imagery, not idiomatic in English
- Cultural connotation of self-sacrifice hard to replicate

Example 3

الكذب داء والصدق دواء

English: "Lying is a disease and truth is the cure."

Difficulty:

- Medical metaphor may sound exaggerated in English
- Lacks the moral weight it carries in Arabic

Example 4

لا تؤجل عمل اليوم إلى الغد

English: "Don't put off today's work until tomorrow."

Difficulty:

- Exists in English, but tone and formality vary
- Different contexts can require different phrasing

Example 5

لسانك حصانك إن صنته صانك، وإن هنته هانك

English: "Your tongue is your horse: if you care for it, it protects you; if you insult it, it throws you."

Difficulty:

- Rhyme, rhythm, and metaphor lose poetic value in translation
- Needs explanation to capture original impact

Example 6

اللي استحو ماتوا

English: "Those who felt shame have died."

Difficulty:

- Sarcastic or critical tone unclear without cultural background
- Could be misunderstood as literal

Example 7

الناس أعداء ما جهلوا

English: "People are enemies of what they are ignorant of."

Difficulty:

- Philosophical depth may sound accusatory in English
- Often needs simplification or rephrasing

Conclusion

- Proverbs reflect values, history, and worldviews
- Translation must preserve meaning, not just wording
- Some proverbs need adaptation, not direct conversion
- Cultural literacy is key for accurate translation



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Difficulties of Translating Social Media Posts from Arabic to English

Introduction to Social Media Language

- Informal, fast, and emotional
- Filled with slang, abbreviations, emojis
- Heavy use of dialects, not Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)
- Context often assumed, not explained

Challenge 1 – Dialect vs. MSA

Example: الجو يخبل

- Literal: “The weather is crazy”
- Intended: “The weather is amazing”

Challenge: English lacks equivalents for dialect words like “يخبل”

Fix: Use tone-appropriate synonyms: “The weather is gorgeous!”

Challenge 2 – Emotional Intensity

Example: ألف ألف مبروك، تستاهل كل خير

- Literal: “A thousand congratulations, you deserve all good.”
- Intended: Deep, enthusiastic praise

Challenge: Emotional exaggeration is normal in Arabic, may sound unnatural in English

Fix: “Huge congrats! You truly deserve it!”

Challenge 3 – Religious and Cultural Phrases

Example: إن شاء الله، الله يخليكي، الحمد لله

- Literal: “God willing”, “May God protect you”, “Thanks to God”

Challenge: These are routine in Arabic but may sound overly religious or unfamiliar in English

Fix: Translate meaning or skip if not essential

Challenge 4 – Sarcasm and Tone

Example: اللي استحو ماتوا

- Literal: “Those who had shame died”
- Meaning: “There’s no shame left nowadays” (sarcastic)

Challenge: Sarcasm is tone-based; literal translation can confuse

Fix: Rephrase for tone: “Shamelessness is the new normal.”

Challenge 5 – Incomplete Sentences

Example: يمكن أنا الوحيدة يلي ما بتحب الفواكه

- Literal: “Maybe I’m the only one who doesn’t like fruit.”

Challenge: Arabic leaves out subjects, adds emojis, uses fragments

Fix: Add clarity: “Am I really the only one who hates fruit?”

Challenge 6 – Multiple Layers of Meaning

Example: شنو هذا الحقد؟

- Literal: “What is this hatred?”

Challenge: Could be serious or playful; tone changes meaning

Fix: Add context or use emojis or tone markers when needed

Key Strategies for Better Translation

- Understand dialects and cultural cues
- Translate **intent**, not just words
- Watch for tone: sarcastic, emotional, humorous
- Choose fluent over literal translation
- Ask native speakers if unsure

Conclusion

- Social media Arabic is informal, expressive, and deeply cultural
- Literal translation often fails
- Successful translation = context + emotion + culture
- Translators must interpret, not just convert