

Translation

2nd semester

Text book :introduction to translation / part 2

In the 1st semester we studied how to translate from English into Arabic. In this semester we are going just to reverse the process. As a rule, when we translate we translate the meaning and not the structure of the sentence. We read the Arabic sentence and we don't have any problem in understanding the meaning since it's written in Arabic. To start translation, we ask ourselves the following question: how the meaning of this sentence is expressed in English by taking into account the type and the tense of the Arabic sentence. This will be illustrated when we start talking about the translation of the different kinds of translation.

For example, consider the following sentence:

على تلك الشجرة طير جميل

We do not translate it into: on that tree a beautiful bird.

But into : there is a beautiful bird on that tree since this is the usual English way to express the meaning of the Arabic sentence.

Another example:

الحياة جميلة. though الحياة begins with the definite article ال , still has a generic reference. And this generic reference is expressed in English by using zero article. Hence, the equivalent translation is:

Life is beautiful. And NOT the life is beautiful.

الجملة الاسمية the nominal sentence

Arabic sentences are of two types: verbal (containing a verb) and non verbal/ nominal (containing no verb). Since English sentences are verbal, therefore, Arabic nominal sentences, when translated into English, must be changed into verbal English sentences.

A nominal sentence is made up of two elements: المبتدأ subject and الخبر predicate.

eg. محمد رسول الله Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.

الخبر may be 1.noun, 2.adjective, 3. pronoun, 4.adverb, 5.nominal clause, 6.verbal clause, 7.prepositional phrase

1. علي فلاح Ali is a farmer.
2. علي ذكي Ali is clever.
3. هذا انا This is I/me.
4. علي هنا Ali is here.
5. علي ابوه كريم Ali's father is generous.
6. علي سافر ابوه Ali's father travelled.
7. علي في البيت Ali is at home.

NOTE

الرجل في الحديقة (The man is in the garden) BUT رجل في الحديقة (There is a man in the garden)

When the subject is definite, it often precedes (come before) the predicate. When the subject is indefinite and the predicate is a prepositional phrase, it must follow (come after) the predicate.

See page (9-11) in your text book.

Try to translate some nominal sentences on page 11.

Temporal aspects of nominal sentences

Since Arabic nominal sentences have no verb, their temporal aspects are either identified by the context or by the time adverb time. Hence, the translator must be aware when he translates sentences like these. He must choose the appropriate tense for the English sentences which is equivalent to that of Arabic sentences.

Consider the following examples:

1. الجو ممطر في الشتاء
2. الجو ممطر الان
3. الجو يومئذ ممطر
4. الجو ممطر غدا
5. لو هي ثرية
6. لولا هذا الطفل الصغير

1. It rains in winter.
2. It is raining now.
3. It was raining at this time.
4. It will rain tomorrow.
5. If she were rich. (hypothetical)
6. If it were not for this little boy/ Were it not for this little boy.

Agreement of subject and predicate

Unlike English, In Arabic there is agreement between subject and predicate in:

1. Gender: masculine الطالب ذكي / feminine الطالبة ذكية
2. Number: singular, dual, plural الطلاب اذكيا / الطالبان ذكي الطالب / ذكيان

English does not show this kind of agreement

1. The student is clever (whether male or female)
2. The (two) students are clever.
3. The students are clever.

Word order in nominal sentences

In nominal sentences, the subject often comes before the predicate unless the subject is indefinite and the predicate is a prepositional phrase or an adverb. In this case the predicate precedes the subject, and when such constructions are translated into English, there (be) is used.

Consider the following examples:

1. الكتاب على الرف

2. على الرف كتاب

3. عندي كتاب

1. The book is on the shelf.
2. There is a book on the shelf.
3. I have a book.

Note: "على الرف كتاب", when negated, it becomes لا كتاب على الرف

There is no book on the shelf.

Please read the subject in your text book (9-17) and then try to translate some of the sentences on page (17-19)

Chapter two

The verbal sentence

A verbal sentence is a sentence that contains a verb, and since there is a verb, there must be a tense. English tenses are wider and more complex than Arabic tenses. Actually these differences in tenses represent a problem in translation. When translating from Arabic into English, the translator must choose the suitable tense. Furthermore, he must also decide whether to use passive or active.

Means of expressing future time in English

There is no future tense in English, but only means of expressing future time. Actually, there are several ways for expressing future time but as far as translation is concerned, we explain just three ways;

1. Shall/ will + infinitive

I shall try to be there tonight.

She will be back tomorrow.

2. Be+ going to+ infinitive

This construction expresses future of present intention or present indication

I am going to pay the bill next week (intention)

It is going to rain soon (indication- clouds)

3. Be to+ infinitive

This construction denotes future with present arrangement or command

1. We are to meet here at six o'clock. (arrangement)

2. You are to pay for the whole damage. (command)

Means of expressing future time in Arabic

There is no future tense in Arabic, just means of expressing future time.

1. The bare imperfect المجرّد المضارع

اسافر الى بغداد غدا I'll travel to Baghdad tomorrow.

2. سوف, س with the imperfect

They are confined to affirmative sentences and not used in negative sentences.

يأتي سوف He will come.

نفسه المكان في سنلتقي We shall meet at the same place.

Note: Do Not use سوف, س with negative sentences like the following one: يأتي لن سوف . this is unacceptable; just say:

يأتي لن

Perfective aspect

This aspect is used with actions happened in the indefinite past but still have effect in the present time

Consider the following example:

تصرف علي بحكمة حتى الان

تصرف is an action that happened in the past but is connected to the present time حتى الان. So, when this sentence is translated into English, perfective aspect will be suitable for the sentence.

Ali has acted wisely up to now.

هل تناولت طعام الافطار؟

Have you had breakfast? (before noon)

Did you have breakfast? (after noon)

Simple past is used to talk about completed action that have no connection with the present

غادر البيت قبل خمسة دقائق

He left home five minutes ago.

Progressive aspect

This aspect is used to talk about actions happening at the moment of speaking or temporary actions.

تساعد ليلى أمها

Layla helps her mother. (expresses habit or repeated action)

تساعد ليلى أمها الآن

Layla is helping her mother now.

كان يقيم في فندق حديث

He was staying in a new hotel (temporary, during his visit only)

يقيم في بيت صغير

He lived in a small house (his permanent place of living)

البقر يأكل التبن

Cows eat hay. (expresses a fact , zero article)

البقر يأكل التبن الآن

The cows are eating hay (cows are preceded by a definite article)

Note: progressive aspect is not used with verbs of sensation: see, hear, smell, notice, recognize. Furthermore, it is also not used with other verbs (see page 33-34 on your textbook)

Active and Passive Voice

Voice is a grammatical process which helps to view the action of a sentence in two ways while keeping the basic meaning.

These two ways are:

1. Active: Ahmad has painted the house. (the agent is involved)
2. Passive: The house has been painted. (the agent is unknown)

Voice in English

The active-passive relation in English involves the verb, the subject (agent), the object (goal) and the word order. The verb phrase comprises two parts: the auxiliary element Be and the past participle of the lexical element.

Active and Passive transformation

Write (s) is (are) written

Is (are, etc) writing... is (are, etc) being written

Have (has) written ... have (has) been written

Have (has) been writing ... have (has) been being written

Wrote ... was (were) written

Was (were) writing ... was (were) being written

Had written ... had been written

Had been writing ... had been being written

Will write ... will be written

Will be writing ... will be being written

Will have written ... will have been written

Will have been writing ... will have been being written

Must, may, ought, etc write ... must, may, ought, etc be written

The object (goal) of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive. The subject (agent) of the active is either omitted altogether or placed at the end preceded by the preposition 'by'

Two types of passive may be recognized in English: agentive and agentless. The agentive passive mentions the agent preceded by the preposition 'by'.

Examples of agentive passive

1. The travelers were attacked by a black bear.
2. The old man was being watched by a fierce shark.
3. The children will be accompanied by their parents.

Examples of agentless passive

1. The letter was posted in Manchester last month.
2. The bridge has been completed .
3. The book will be published next year.

Note: unlike Arabic, passive is widely used in English. The only case in which passive is used in Arabic is when the agent is unknown i.e. agentless passive only.

The next lecture will be 'voice in Arabic'

Voice in Arabic

The passive voice in Arabic is used when the subject (agent) of the active sentence is not known. The active-passive transformation involves the verb, the subject (agent) and the object (goal) of the sentence. There is usually no change in the word order.

The passive verb in Arabic is basically a simple phrase like that of the active sentence, and the transformation from active to passive is morphological. The imperfect passive form is يُفَعَّلُ , the perfect passive form فُعِّلَ .

The subject (agent) of the active sentence is omitted and does not appear in the passive sentence. The object (goal) becomes the subject of the passive verb, but it is kept in its position. There is no change in the order of the elements as a result of this process.

Consider the following examples:

كتب ملتن هذه القصيدة عام 1671

Milton wrote this poem in 1671.

كُتِبَت هذه القصيدة عام 1671

This poem was written in 1671.

يأخذ الفلاح القطيع إلى الحقل في الصباح

The farmer takes the herd to the field in the morning.

يُؤَخَذ القطيع إلى الحقل في الصباح

The herd is taken to the field in the morning.

ستبني الحكومة جسرا آخر على دجلة

The government will build another bridge on the Tigris.

سيُبنى جسر آخر على دجلة

It should be noted that the subject of the passive sentence (usually termed by Arab grammarians 'acting subject' نائب الفاعل is placed in the subjective case حالة الرفع . certain verbs undergo considerable morphological change in the passive. بيع = باع , بويع = بايع , قيل = قال

Agentless passive

The agent of the active sentence is normally omitted in the passive; the passive in Arabic is agentless.

If the agent has to be mentioned as in English:

The thief was caught by the police.

Arabic normally uses the active voice:

قبضت الشرطة على اللص

Do NOT translate it into:

فُيِّضَ على اللص من قبل الشرطة. This is NOT acceptable in Arabic.

Another example:

The guest was received by the mayor of the city.

استقبل رئيس البلدية الضيف

But NOT أُسْتُقْبِلَ الضيف من قبل رئيس البلدية

This city was built by the Abbasid Calif, Harun Ar-Rashid.

هذه المدينة بناها الخليفة العباسي هارون الرشيد OR

بنى الخليفة العباسي هارون الرشيد هذه المدينة

But NOT بُنِيَتْ هذه المدينة من قبل الخليفة العباسي هارون الرشيد

Chapter Four

Hypothetical sentences

To begin with the three main types of if-clause in both English and Arabic:

English if-clause

1. Likely to happen
If you **study** hard, you **will succeed**.
2. Unlikely to happen
If you **studied** hard, you **would succeed**.
3. Impossible to happen.
If you **had studied** hard, you **would have succeeded**.

Similarly, in Arabic there are also three types of if-clause:

1. Likely to happen
إذا تدرس تنجح
2. Unlikely to happen
إن تدرس تنجح
3. Impossible to happen
لو درست نجحت

The hypothetical form

أتمنى أن أحصل على مزيد من دروس اللغة الفرنسية

I wish I **took** more French.

The **past form** of the verb 'take' is used to express a wish at present or in the future.

أتمنى لو حصلت في الأعوام الماضية على مزيد من دروس اللغة الفرنسية.

I wish I **had taken** more French in the past years.

The past participle of the verb 'take' is used to express a wish in the past.

Wish + that-clause

Here, wish refers to situations that are unreal, impossible or unlikely.

Tenses are similar to those used with 'if' and 'that' can be dropped.

I wish (that) I **was** better looking.

Don't you wish (that) you **could** fly.

We all wish (that) the snow **would** stay forever.

Note: wish + that-clause is **NOT** generally used for wishes about things that seem possible in the future. We often use **'hope'** in this case.

I hope you pass your exams.

I hope you feel better tomorrow.

'wish' is translated into يُتمنى whereas 'hope' into يرجو

Chapter Five

The translation of questions (interrogative sentences)

Questions are usually divided into two kinds:

1. Yes/ No or polarity questions.
2. Wh or content questions.

Questions in English

Questions in English are realized by one or more of these rules:

1. Inversion: this means placing the operator before the subject.
2. Placing the question word in the initial position.

Polarity questions

Polarity questions are usually answered by yes or no. these questions are realized by placing the operator before the subject.

The verb Have in British English functions as operator when it means possession.

They have a large house.... Have they a large house?

She has a lot of money.... Has she a lot of money?

When it has other meanings, Have is lexical and requires the use of Do.

I have to see him.... Do I have to see him?

He has his breakfast.... Does he have his breakfast?

In sentences which contain no operator, the verb Do is used with the appropriate tense and person.

My brother likes classical music... Does my brother like classical music?

Mr. Hill came to the party... Did Mr. Hill come to the party?

Note: Have in American English is always lexical and requires Do.

Negative oriented questions

Negative questions, questions with a negative word, have negative orientation. Besides, such questions convey the additional meaning of surprise, disbelief, disappointment or even annoyance.

Haven't the guests arrived yet?

Can't you suggest a way out?

Didn't they tell you?

Note: when the full form of NOT is used, it follows the subject.

Did they not tell you?

Content questions

Content questions begin with one of the following wh-words (hence, they are sometimes called wh-questions): who whom, whose, what, which, when, where, how, why.

Who and *what* when used as subject do not require inversion (hence, there is no need for operator).

Who wrote this play?

What happened?

When did they arrive?

Where were you yesterday?

Whom often appears in colloquial style as *who* but it requires inversion and operator when it asks about the object.

Who(m) did you meet?

Who did you give the book to?

To whom did you give the book?

What did she suggest?

What did John buy?

Whose book is this? Whose is this book?

Which of you is Peter?

Which is your bag?

Note: the interrogative *which*, unlike the relative *which*, may be used for both persons and things.

How does she feel?

Why is he late?

How often do you visit your uncle?

How long is he staying here?

How far is the bus station?

Questions in Arabic

Arabic questions are realized by means of certain particles. There is normally no change in word order.

Polarity questions

Polarity questions (yes/No questions) are realized by means of the two particles: هل and أ

The particle هل is restricted in its use. It is used:

1. In the neutral VS structure, positive sentences.
هل وصلت الطائرة؟ Has the plane arrived?
هل تتحدث الفرنسية؟ Do you speak French?
2. With the perfect ماض to indicate past time, and with the imperfect مضارع to indicate future time.
هل رأيت صديقك بالأمس؟ Did you see your friend yesterday?
هل تحضر الاجتماع هذا المساء؟ Will you attend the meeting this evening?

The interrogative particle أ is less restricted in its use. It can be used in all the cases where هل is not possible. Thus, it can be used:

1. In negative sentences
ألا تعرف معنى هذا؟ Don't you know the meaning of this?
ألم تقل ليلي ذلك؟ Didn't Layla say that?
2. In the marked SV structure
أ خالد قال هذا؟ Did Khalid say this?

Negative oriented questions

Negative questions have negative orientation. Such questions may have additional meanings of surprise, displeasure, etc.

لم يخبرك بذلك Didn't he tell you that?

أليس لهذه المشكلة حل؟ is there no solution for this problem?

Word order in polarity questions

Questions in Arabic have normally the same word order of the statement. The neutral (unmarked) word order in Arabic is VS where both هل and أ are used.

أ أمحمدا رأيت؟ ... Was it Muhammad that you saw?

أ في الدار رأيت محمدا؟ ... Was it in the house that you saw Muhammad?

أ يوم الأحد رأيت محمدا؟ ... Was it on Sunday that you saw Muhammad?

Content questions

Content questions ask about one of the elements of the sentence. They begin with one of the following questions words:

1. من (who). This word is used for persons, it may function as subject or object (whom).

من أتى بهذه الرزمة؟ ... Who brought this parcel?

مع من بحثت اللجنة الأمر؟ ... With whom did the committee discuss the matter? OR who did the committee discuss the matter with?

2. ما (what). ما هذا؟ ... What is this?

ما قولك في هذه المشكلة؟ ... What do you say about this problem?

3. ماذا (what). This word is often used instead of ما.

ماذا تقول في ذلك؟ ... what do you say about this?

ماذا is probably preferred to ما where there is the risk that the latter may be confused with the negative ما as in the following clause beginning with a verb.

ماذا رأى احمد في الحديقة؟ ... what did Ahmad see in the garden?

4. أي (which). أية (feminine). This word is used with a genitive definite or indefinite noun in the singular, dual or plural.

أي رجل تعني؟ ... Which man do you mean?

- أي الرجلين قريبك؟ ... Which of the two men is your relative?
- أية قصائد قرأت؟ ... Which poems have you read?
- أي القصائد تحب؟ ... Which of the poems do you like?
5. أين (where). This interrogative word inquires about place.
أين دائرة البريد؟ ... Where is the post office?
6. متى (when). It is used to ask for time.
متى يصل الوفد؟ ... When will the delegation arrive?
7. كم (how many, how much, what).
كم كتابا قرأت؟ ... How many books have you read?
كم كتابا قرأت في الفصل الأول؟ ... How many books did you read in the first term.
كم ثمن هذه السيارة؟ ... How much is this car?
كم الساعة الآن؟ ... What time is it now? OR What's the time now?
8. كيف (how). It inquires about a state or manner.
كيف حالك؟ ... How are you?
كيف تغلب الفريق على هذه الصعوبات؟ ... How did the team overcome these difficulties?
9. لماذا (why). It inquires about reason.
لماذا لا نقر بحقيقة الأمر؟ ... Why don't we admit the truth?

Discussing your class work

The following translations contain some mistakes which are shown by underlying them.

1. في السيارة رجلان

- . There is two men in the car. (are)
- . Two men are in the car. (grammatically correct but not natural)
- . Two men, in the car. (verb be is missing)
- . Two mans are in the car. (men)
- . Two men in the car. (verb be is missing)

In Arabic we say:

الرجلان في السيارة since the subject (مبتدأ) is a definite noun, it precedes the predicate (الخبر), and the sentence is translated into: The two men are in the car.

في السيارة رجلان in this case (رجلان) المبتدأ is indefinite and it must follow the predicate, and the sentence is usually translated into: There are two men in the car.

The use of 'there is'

In sentences which say that something exists (or does not exist) somewhere, we usually use 'there' as a kind of preparatory subject, and put the real subject after the verb.

There is ice on the lake. (more natural than Ice is on the lake)

There is a man in the car (more natural than A man is in the car)

'There are' is used with plural subjects.

There are two birds on the tree.

2. للبيت بابان

House has two doors. ('the' is missing)

Since we are describing a specific house, it should be preceded by 'the'.

3. القصيدة الثالثة كتبها شاعر آخر

. The third poem written by another poet. (verb be is missing)

4. الوقت من ذهب

. Time is like gold. (it is equivalent to كالذهب الوقت)

. Time is of the essence. (meaningless)

. The time of gold (this is a phrase and not a sentence)

. The time is golden ('the' must be omitted and 'gold' is better than 'golden')

الوقت has a generic reference. This means that we are talking about time in general and not about a particular time for example, 'the time we spent watching TV'. For generic reference zero article is used with uncountable nouns. The sentence must be translated into: Time is gold/ high/ money.

5. الماء والحرارة ضروريان للحياة

. The water and the heat are important. (water and heat)

The definite article 'the' must be deleted since the sentence has a generic reference. Zero article is used in this case: water and heat are important.

. water and heat are necessary for modernization. (life)

6. الاقتصاد السليم هدف جميع الحكومات.

. Sound economy is the goal of all governments.

Since 'economy' is countable, it must be preceded either by 'a' if it has a generic reference or 'the' if it has a specific reference. This sentence talks about sound economy in general, so it must be preceded by 'a'.

. the pure economy is the goal of all components. (a.... governments).

. the sound economy is goal all the governments. (--, is the goal of).

. good economy is goal for all the governments (a good, is the goal of).

7. حبه لها أوشك أن يهلكه

- . His love to her is about to destroy him. (was)
- . His love for her is about to destroy him. (was about to)
- . His love for her is almost to destroy him. (almost destroyed)
- . His love towards her is around to perish him. (was about)
- . His love for her nearly to perish him. (perished).
- . His love for her is about to be consumed. (was about to perish him)

8. الامتحان يوم الاثنين

Examination on Monday. (The examination is on Monday)

Monday exam (The exam is on Monday)

9. فلسطين لن يتخلى عنها العرب

- . The Arabic people won't let down Palestine. (Arab)
- . Palestine is the Arab's issue. (not equivalent to the Arabic sentence)
- . Palestine will not be abandoned by Arabic people (Arab)

10. على الشجرة طيور غريبة

- . on the tree strange birds (verb be is missing)
- . strange birds are on the tree. (grammatically correct but not natural)
- . on the tree strange birds (containing no verb)
- . the tree has a strange bird. (not equivalent to the Arabic sentence).

This sentence resembles sentence number one. It is better to be translated into : There are strange birds on the tree.

General notes:

avoid shift in tense, shift in number

Compare your translations with the following ideal ones:

1. في السيارة رجلان.

There are two men in the car.

2. للبيت بابان.

The house has two doors.

3. القصيدة الثالثة كتبها شاعر آخر.

The third poem was written by another poet.

4. الوقت من ذهب.

Time is high / money / gold.

5. الماء والحرارة ضروريان للحياة.

Water and heat are indispensable / necessary/ important/ essential for life.

6. الاقتصاد السليم هدف جميع الحكومات.

A sound economy is the goal of all governments.

7. حبه لها أوشك أن يهلكه.

His love for her was about to perish/ destroy/ finish him

8. الامتحان يوم الاثنين.

The exam is on Monday.

9. فلسطين لن يتخلى عنها العرب.

Palestine will not be abandoned by Arabs.

10. على الشجرة طيور غريبة.

There are strange birds on the tree.

Ideal renderings

Compare your translations with the following renderings:

Translate the following sentences into English:

1. يصحو الفلاح من نومه مبكرا.
A farmer wakes up early.
2. كان الفدائيون يدبرون مكيده للعدو.
The fedayeen /commandos were plotting against the enemy.
3. ظل الرجل يتردد ذهابا وجيئة.
The man kept walking to and fro / up and down / back and forth.
4. تخلفت عن اللجنة هذين اليومين لأنني كنت مسافرا.
I failed to attend the committee these two days because I was traveling.
5. لقيت الزائرتان العربيتان كل ترحيب.
The two Arab female visitors were welcomed warmly.
6. فجأة قطعت السكون ضجة كبيرة.
Suddenly, a great uproar / noise broke the silence.
7. من ساعة واحدة فقط كان يقرأ جريدة المساء.
He was reading the evening newspaper an hour ago.
8. لقد أصبح قرار التأميم بداية مرحلة جديدة.
The nationalization decision has become a start for a new period.
9. مع نهاية هذا الشهر سيكون الجميع انهوا أعمالهم.
By the end of this month everyone will have finished their works.
10. مازالت أشعاره تلهم المحدثين من الشعراء.
His poetry still inspires the new poets.

Chapter six: negation in English and Arabic

Negation in English

The negation of English sentences is realized by using not, n't immediately after the operator.

The child is sleeping..... the child is not sleeping.

The lexical verb Be functions as operator.

Layla is a nurse..... Layla is not a nurse.

Have as a lexical verb functions in two different ways in British English:

- a. As operator when it means possession.
I have many friends... I haven't many friends.
- b. As an ordinary lexical verb (not operator) in its other meanings.
We had our breakfast at 7 o'clock. Had means ate.
We didn't have our breakfast at 7 o'clock.

In American English have is always lexical.

I have many friends.... I don't have many friends.

In sentences where there is no operator, Do is used as operator with the appropriate tense (do, dose (present), did (past)).

She comes early... she doesn't come early.

Negation in Arabic

Negation in Arabic is mainly realized by certain particles placed before the negated item. These particles usually indicate time as well as negation. They are:

- a. لن . it is used with subjunctive imperfect المضارع المنصوب to indicate negation in the future.
لن يذهب الأولاد إلى الحديقة. (the boys will not go to the garden)
- b. لا . It is used with the indicative imperfect المضارع المرفوع to express negation in the present or future.

لا اعرف الجواب I don't know the answer.

لا يغادر القطار قبل الثامنة مساء (the train will not leave before 8 o'clock p.m).

Occasionally لا is used with the perfect الماضي to indicate negation in the past, but this use is restricted to a pattern where لا is repeated twice.

لا صدق ولا صلى (he has neither believed nor prayed).

c. ما is used with the perfect الماضي to negate a verb in the past, sometimes with present relevance.

ما رأيته البارحة (I didn't see him yesterday). Definite past

ما فعل هذا من قبل (He has not done this before). with present relevance.

d. لم is used with the jussive imperfect المضارع المجزوم to express negation in the past. With or without present relevance.

لم يأت علي الى الاجتماع (Ali didn't / hasn't come to the meeting).

e. لَمَّا is used in formal style to mean 'not...yet'; it is followed by the jussive imperfect.

لَمَّا يصل القطار (the train has not arrived yet).

Negation is also realized by using the word ليس, which more often negates nominal sentences; but is also found in verbal sentences.

ليس هذا الكتاب مفيدا (This book is not useful)

ليس يرغب في الزراعة (He is not interested in agriculture).

Other kinds of negation

The particle لا is used to negate a generic subject in the indefinite form. It governs the subject in the negative. The particle is termed لا النافية للجنس .

لا احد في الدار (There is no one in the house).

لا كتاب خير من هذا (There is no book better than this).

There is no generic (absolute) negation of the object in Arabic. The English sentence: 'I saw nobody / no one' has no equivalent and is usually rendered as: لم أر أحدا (I didn't see anyone).

Intensification of negation

Negation is intensified by using certain adverbial forms including

أبدا , قط , البتة

أبدا is used in sentences indicating future.

لن يعود ابدا (He will never return)

قط is used in sentences referring to past.

ما رأيت هذا الرجل قط (I have never seen this man).

البتة is used in sentences referring to past, present or future

انه لا يعرف شيئا عن هذا البتة (He doesn't know anything about this at all).

لم يكتب شيئا البتة (He didn't write anything at all).

Articles and Reference in English and Arabic

English has three articles: the definite, the indefinite, and the zero articles. The distribution of these articles is determined by the three classes of nouns: the count singular, the count plural, and the non-count. This may be represented as in figure 1:

Count	Non-count
Singular: a lion / the lion	Water
Plural: lions / the lions	The water

Figure 1: the use of articles in English

The definite article is used with the three classes; the zero article with plural count and non-count nouns, and the indefinite article with singular count nouns only. The English articles are confined to nouns and are irrelevant for the other classes of linguistic forms.

In contrast, Arabic has two articles, the definite ال and the zero article. They are used with all types of nouns. Thus, the division into count/ non-count singular and plural is irrelevant for Arabic nouns. Moreover, the articles in Arabic are also used with adjectives modifying nouns.

Article	Adjectives	Nouns
Definite	الجميلة الأذكىاء الذكي	الحياة الرجال الرجل
Indefinite	جميلة أذكىاء ذكي	حياة رجال رجل

Figure 2: the use of articles in Arabic

In translation this means that when rendering English adjectives into Arabic, they may be rendered by a definite or zero article depending on the noun heads modified by the adjectives e.g.

The beautiful houses: البيوت الجميلة . Beautiful houses جميلة بيوت.

Translation in the other direction results always in the omission of the articles before the English adjective.

The zero article in Arabic would be rendered into English as an indefinite article 'a' before singular count noun, or a zero article before a non-count noun, or a plural noun e.g.:

اشتريت كتابا I bought a book.

احتاج إلى حبر I need (some) ink.

رأينا قرى بعيدة We saw (some) distant villages.

The discussion so far has been confined to the syntactic aspects of the articles in the two languages. There are however the semantic aspects of the articles, which should be taken into consideration. They probably more important for translation since they concern the meaning of the articles.

The article limits or determines the reference of the noun head. There are two major types of reference which a noun head may acquire when used with an article: generic reference and specific reference. Within specific reference, two subtypes are distinguished: definite and indefinite reference. The following examples from English illustrate these kinds of references:

1. Generic reference

- a. A lion is a brave animal.
- b. The lion is a brave animal.
- c. Lions are brave animals.
- d. Milk is good for you.

These examples show that all the three articles are used to express generic reference. A singular count noun may take either the definite or the indefinite article; plural and non-count nouns take zero article. In Arabic the corresponding examples would use the definite article:

- e. الأسد حيوان شجاع
- f. الأسود حيوانات شجاعة
- g. الحليب مفيد لك

Figure 3 summarizes generic reference in English and Arabic.

English	Arabic
A lion The lion	الأسد
The lions	الأسود
Milk	الحليب

Figure 3 generic reference in English and Arabic

2. Specific reference

A. Definite. To express definite specific reference, English uses the definite article with count singular and plural nouns and with non-count nouns:

- a. The book we ordered has arrived.
- b. The books we ordered have arrived.
- c. The sugar we ordered has arrived.

Similarly, Arabic uses the definite article in the sentences corresponding to (a-c):

- d. الكتاب الذي طلبناه قد وصل
- e. الكتب التي قد طلبناها قد وصلت
- f. السكر الذي طلبناه قد وصل

Figure 4 summarizes definite specific reference in English and Arabic.

English	Arabic
The book	الكتاب
The books	الكتب
Sugar	السكر

Figure 4: Definite specific reference in English and Arabic

B. Indefinite. In English, indefinite specific reference is expressed by the indefinite article 'a(n)' in singular count nouns, and by the zero article or 'some' in plural count and non-count nouns.

- a. I bought a book.

- b. I bought (some) books.
- c. I bought (some) sugar.

In Arabic, indefinite specific reference is expressed by the zero article:

- a. اشتریت کتابا
- b. اشتریت کتابا
- c. اشتریت حلیبا

Figure 5 illustrates indefinite specific reference in English and Arabic.

English	Arabic
A book	کتاب
Some books	کتب
Some milk	حلیب

Figure 5: indefinite specific reference in English and Arabic

The above discussion about the syntactic and semantic uses of the articles in English and Arabic illustrates what is meant by the statement that a grammar word takes its meaning from the language in which it occurs. **In translation, grammatical words are not translated but replaced by suitable equivalents in the grammar of the target language.**