The Nuts and Bolts of Arabic-English Translation

The Nuts and Bolts of Arabic-English Translation:

An Introduction to Applied Contrastive Linguistics

By

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The Nuts and Bolts of Arabic-English Translation:
An Introduction to Applied Contrastive Linguistics

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By Ali Almanna

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Adj	Adjective
AdjP	Adjective phrase
Adv	Adverb
AdvP	Adverb phrase
C	Complementizer
Conj	Conjunction
CP	Complementizer phrase
Det	Determiner
e	Empty
Infl	Inflection
NP	Noun phrase
P	Preposition
PP	Preposition phrase
Pro	Pronoun
S	Sentence
Sb	Somebody
Sth	Something
TT	Target text
V	Verb
VP	Verb phrase

INTRODUCTION

The Nuts and Bolts of Arabic-English Translation: An Introduction to Applied Contrastive Linguistics is an academic textbook. Contrastive linguistics, as a linguistic approach adopted here (also known in the literature as ‘differential linguistics’), is a branch of linguistics which is concerned with showing differences and similarities between two or more languages (Fries 1945; Fisiak 1981; Aziz 1989, among others). Contrastive linguistics covers two main areas, viz. theoretical contrastive linguistics and applied contrastive linguistics (Aziz 1989: 7). As this book is designed for translation students, it falls in the area of applied contrastive linguistics, which can be useful for those who are interested in either this topic or foreign language learning, not to mention translation (ibid.).

In describing the most effective materials that can be used to teach a foreign language, Fries states that they are those materials that “are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner” (1945: 9). In 1957, this view was developed and put into practice by Robert Lado. In the actual act of comparing two languages, different methods can be used. While some researchers focus on form, others pay extra attention to function. In this book, however, an attempt is made to strike a balance between form and function.

The book is designed primarily for those whose mother tongue is either Arabic or English and who have some knowledge of both linguistics and translation. It is aimed primarily at undergraduate students of translation along with their instructors throughout the world in view of the growing number of universities in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, and the Arab world that are now offering such courses in translation. The book aims at:

- raising awareness of the pitfalls specific to translation and
- developing and honing translators’ competences, in particular linguistic, translational, contrastive, and evaluative competence.

The ‘core’ language of this publication is English in order to appeal to a wider audience. Traditionally, the golden rule has been that one should translate only into one’s native language. However, for various reasons this rigid position is no longer being applied and translators are increasingly encouraged to work in both directions.

The book does not confine itself to one direction, but focuses on translation in both directions: translating from Arabic into English and *vice versa*. It features authentic materials taken from a wide range of sources, including:

- media,
- business,
- religious texts,
- literature, and
- legal texts.

Key features of the book

- It highlights the main similarities and differences between Arabic and English.
- It provides the readers with different types of assignments to develop and hone their competences (be they linguistic, translational, contrastive, or evaluative).
- It provides the students and instructors with a great number of supporting exercises and assignments that can be used for a range of purposes.
- It provides translation students with limited previous experience in translation with materials to help them reach an acceptable professional level of translation competence.
- It highlights the importance of some pre-translation techniques, such as syntactic parsing and semantic parsing.
- Each chapter closes with a wide-ranging selection of exercises.

Objectives of the book

The overall aim of the book is to develop a professional translation competence in all essential areas in students and trainees, whether their mother tongue is Arabic or English, by providing a suitably wide range of bidirectional (i.e. Arabic>English and English>Arabic) practice materials for them and their teachers/trainers. Such competence is to be developed from the basis of a contrastive study of this language pair, and is to embrace not just contrasting grammar but also such matters as awareness of collocations, stylistics and cohesive devices, and the identification of text types. The intention behind this very practical course is to gradually build up familiarity with the linguistic and stylistic norms of the target language, whether English or Arabic, through examples and practical tests that also demonstrate and highlight the professional skill of translation annotation. Being a practical course, the book seeks to develop the application of intelligent translation procedures, with reference as necessary to the theories underpinning them.

Main elements of methodology

With all this in mind, the first chapter emphasizes and illustrates certain pre-translation techniques as a necessary starting point for translation training. These are syntactic parsing (i.e. analysing the units of the source text syntactically) and semantic parsing (i.e. identifying the semantic roles assigned to each noun phrase in the clause). These techniques are seen to enable would-be translators to gain a better insight into their source texts, thus helping them plan suitable and effective translation procedures. The general pedagogical approach here is to provide students and their instructors or trainers with sufficient closely-examined examples of short source texts in both languages, systematically building up understanding of (and the ability to recognize) simple, compound and complex sentences, dependent clauses, and other such elements of text. The problems caused by failure to clearly identify the subject of a sentence are also illustrated. All such explanations and elucidations are highlighted for greater ease of study and reference, and at the end of the chapter revision materials are offered (source texts in both languages) in order that students may check and consolidate their understanding of the chapter’s main points (with help and feedback of course from those training them).

The succeeding chapters continue in the same way, tackling in sequence translation issues arising from such areas of language as narration in the past, tense and aspect, articles, quantifiers, partitives, causatives, transitivity processes, modality, and connectors (and cross-referencing as necessary for greater ease of study), before finally presenting discourse markers in both languages. In addition to providing a wealth of annotated examples for study, these chapters aim constantly to build up the student’s lexical and collocational stock as well as grammar knowledge, and also to give reasonably challenging translation, often with suggestions for background factual or cultural research. Each distinct section of a chapter is followed by an assignment, and these are sufficiently varied in type to obviate boredom or predictability.

The general and pervasive aim, then, is to encourage and train students to be creative in their thinking and overall approach, to analyse texts and always pay attention to detail, to be active and regular researchers, and to regularly hone their own skills as writers and re-writers. Such habits are bound to make them both more confident and more competent as translators.

Aspects of difference

There are a number of books available that explain the principles of translation with a focus on contrastive grammar, such as:

- Aziz, Y. (1989). *A Contrastive Grammar of English and Arabic*. Iraq: Mosul University Press.
- Khalil, A. (1999). *A Contrastive Grammar of English and Arabic.* Jordan: Jordan Book Centre Company Limited.
- Husni, R. and Newman, D. (2013). *The A-Z of Arabic-English-Arabic Translation*. London: Saqi Books.

However, they use short examples focusing on the similarities and differences between the two languages rather than on the mechanics of translating.

In this book, the trainees, in addition to developing a contrastive competence by being fully aware of the differences between Arabic and English, will learn how to analyse the text syntactically and semantically, and adjust it prior to translating it, thus obtaining a better insight into the source text.

Further, unlike the aforementioned books, this book is designed in a way that helps the trainees build their own vocabulary. A great number of verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and idiomatic expressions used in different genres and text types have been used in this book.

Trainees receive clear guidance to enable them to re-write the source texts used in the book and thus to improve their writing skills, thus becoming fully aware of the different styles that may be used in certain registers and text types.

Each sentence or text is followed by certain annotations to help the trainees identify the differences between particular structures, levels of meaning, and different styles while at the same time conceptualizing certain socio-cultural experiences.

To sum up, unlike the other contrastive books on the market, this book does not confine itself to showing the differences between the two interfacing languages in terms of traditional grammar only, but gently extends to the discussion of such issues as functional grammar, syntax, cohesion, semantics, pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, stylistics, text-typology, translation procedures and, to a certain degree, translation theories.

CHAPTER ONE

PRE-TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES

In this chapter, an attempt is made to highlight the importance of some pre-translation techniques to the actual work of translators. The view is taken here that acquiring these skills will lead to translation competence that each and every translator should have.

1 Syntactic parsing

Syntactic parsing here refers to the act of analysing the units of the original text (be they sentences, clauses, phrases, and the like). Before embarking on translating any sentence/paragraph/text, the translators need to identify (depending on their level, and the level of the text, of course):

- the type of each sentence (simple, compound, complex, or compound complex/nominal versus verbal),
- the subject of each clause/sentence (one word or a group of words),
- the tense of each clause/sentence (past, present, or future),
- the aspect of each clause/sentence (simple, progressive, perfect, or progressive perfect),
- the voice of each clause/sentence (active or passive),
- the adverbs used in each clause/sentence, and
- other details.

To begin with, let us consider the following simple sentences:

‘Who went to school?’ = the subject = مَن الذي ذهب إلى المدرسة؟

~ ذهبتُ إلى المدرسة أمس مع أبي بالسيارة.

In this verbal sentence, there is only one finite clause. The subject can be identified by raising this question مَن الذي ذهبَ؟ = the subject of which is the implicit pronoun أنا *'I'* expressed by the letter ت attached to the verb ذهبَ *'to go'*. The tense is 'past' indicated by the letter ت suffixed to the verb as well as the time marker أمس *'yesterday'*, and the emphasis is placed on its completion. A number of circumstances that answer different questions are utilized by the language user, as follows:	ذهبتُ
where?	إلى المدرسة
when?	أمس
with whom?	مع أبي
how?	بالسيارة

(to learn more about 'Circumstances', see Chapter 4)

~ سأذهبُ إلى المدرسة غدًا مع أخي.

مَن الذي سيذهب؟ = the subject of which is the implicit pronoun أنا *'I'* expressed by the letter أ attached to the verb ذهبَ *'to go'*. The tense in this sentence is in the future, as indicated by the letter ســ and the time marker غدًا *'tomorrow'*.

~ عادة ما أذهبُ إلى المدرسة بسيارتي وحدي.

مَن الذي عادة ما يذهبُ؟ = the subject of which is the implicit pronoun أنا *'I'* expressed by the letter أ attached to the verb ذهبَ *'to go'*. The tense is a simple present tense, as the emphasis placed on the frequency of the action as a matter of routine is indicated by عادة ما *'usually'*.

~ قد أذهبُ إلى المدرسة غدًا مع صديقي.

مَن الذي قد يذهب؟ = the subject of which is the implicit pronoun أنا *'I'* expressed by the letter أ attached to the verb ذهبَ *'to go'*. The tense is in the future, as indicated by the time marker غدًا *'tomorrow'*. As can be observed, the verb أذهب in this example and the previous one have the same morphological structure even though the previous instance describes a real event while the one in this example is preceded by a modalized particle قد *'may'* that is used to refer to likelihood (to learn more about likelihood, see 'Modality' in Chapter 7).

To elaborate, let us syntactically analyse the following sentences:

~ بينما كنتُ أشاهد التلفاز البارحة، جاء صديقي ليزورني.

Here, there are two finite clauses and an embedded clause that starts with لـ *'to'*. The subject of the first finite clause كنت أشاهد التلفاز البارحة is أنا *'I'* and the tense is 'past', as indicated by the verb كان and the time marker البارحة *'last night'*. The emphasis, i.e. the aspect, is put on the continuity of the described activity شاهدَ/مشاهدة in a specific period in the past. The act of watching in such a process of behaving is characterized by atelicity, that is having no natural finishing point, but the behaver has to stop watching for a particular reason. The subject of the second finite clause جاء صديقي is صديقي *'my friend'* and the tense is 'past' where the emphasis is put on the completion of the action which occurred in the middle of the act of watching.

~ كنتُ أشاهد التلفاز كثيرًا عندما كنتُ طفلاً.

As can be observed, the same verb form كنت أشاهد is used in these two examples. However, in this example, there is an implicit word مُعتادًا that gives rise to a habitual interpretation of a simple past tense clause. To express habituality in the past in English, *'used to'* may be used.

~ *In order to apply for this job, you must speak two languages, but you don't have to have a degree in international relations.*

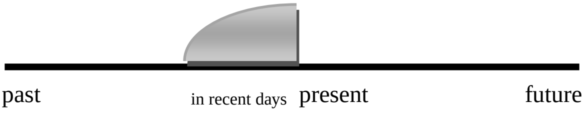
Here, there are two finite clauses conjoined by a coordinating conjunct, such as *'but'* and a non-finite clause, that is, *'in order to apply for this job'*. In the first finite clause, the subject is *'you'* and the tense is 'present' charged with necessity indicated by the modal verb *'must'*. In the second finite clause, the subject is *'you'* followed by a modalized phrase *'do not have to'* that indicates that obligation/necessity is removed (for more details on 'Modality', see Chapter 7).

Now, let us distinguish between the morphological tense and contextual tense, by comparing these two examples:

~ لم يتّصل بيّ اِبني في الآونة الأخيرة.

~ لم يتّصل بيّ اِبني أمس.

As can be seen, the morphological tense in both examples is ‘past’ indicated by the particle لم. However, by the effect of the phrase في الآونة الآخيرة *‘in recent days’* used in the first example, the emphasis is put on the whole period that began in the past and is seen as relevant to the moment of speaking as modelled below:



To reflect both the morphological tense and contextual tense, one may opt for a present perfect tense, that is ‘have/has + past participle’. On the other hand, in the second example, by the effect of the time marker أمس *‘yesterday’*, the emphasis is placed on the completion of the act of not calling in a specific period in the past; therefore, it can be translated into a simple past tense.

To show how failing to determine the subject of the sentence may lead to an inaccurate translation, the following example along with three selected translations (TT) offered by three BA translation students may be discussed:

~ لم يزرني أمس مساءً لا أخي ولا أختي.

مَن الذي لم يزرني؟ = the subject of which is أخي وأختي ‘*my brother and sister*’. The tense is ‘past’ indicated by the particle لم and time marker أمس, and the emphasis (aspect) is placed on the completion of the action, which is in the negative form.

TT 1:

I did not visit neither my brother nor my sister yesterday evening.

Here, the translation trainee has been confused, and accordingly, changed the subject of the sentence to *‘I’*, thus producing an inaccurate translation. Further, she has used the negative form with *‘neither ... nor’*, thereby producing an ungrammatical structure.

TT 2:

Neither my brother nor my sister visited me yesterday in the evening.

Here, the translation trainee has succeeded in figuring out the subject of the sentence and the other important elements, such as the tense, aspect, negation, etc. thus producing an accurate translation.

TT 3:
My brother and sister could not visit me yesterday evening.

Here, the translation trainee has succeeded in figuring out the subject of the sentence *'my brother and sister'*. However, she has opted for the modal verb *'could'* in the negative form, thus emphasizing the doers' inability to visit somebody.

Had the translation students analysed the sentence and identified its main elements, in particular the particle لم, which is used in Arabic to indicate both 'past' and 'negation', they could have suggested renderings such as:

My brother and sister did not visit me yesterday evening.
Neither my brother nor my sister visited me yesterday evening.

Or, one may go for a passive voice, as in:

I was not visited yesterday evening by my brother or my sister.

But, there will be a 'structure shift' to use Catford's (1965) terminology (for more details on 'Shift', see Chapter 2).

Let us now try to identify the types of the sentences used in the following text, the subject of each clause/sentence, the tense and aspect of each clause/sentence, and so forth:

~ قرَّرتُ الأسبوع الماضي أن أتقاعدَ عن عملي في أقربِ فرصةٍ مُمكِنة. سأُقدّمُ على وظيفةٍ جديدةٍ في الأيامِ المُقبلةِ كي أُحسّنَ أوضاعي الاِجتماعية، أو رُبّما أُسافِرُ إلى أوروبا لِفتحِ مشروعٍ صغير.

أتقاعد عن عملي (also أتقاعد من عملي) in such a context means أستقيل or أقدّم اِستقالتي. In English, the verb *'to resign'* means to give up a job or position by telling your employer that you are leaving your job. However, the verb *'to retire'* means to leave your job or stop working because of old age or ill health.

Here, there are two sentences as أو *'or'* is a conjunction that introduces a new conjoined clause rather than a sentence.

In the first sentence, in addition to the finite clause قرَّرتُ *'I decided ...'*, there is an embedded clause that functions as the complement of the verb قرَّر *'to decide'*, that is, ... أن أتقاعد (for more details, see next section). In this mental process قرَّرتُ *'I decided'*, the scope of intention is greater than the extent of causation as the speaker may change his mind later (for more details, see Chapter 4).

Similarly, in the second sentence, there is a non-finite clause that begins with كي *'in order to'*.

Finally, let us analyse the following text titled *'The Farmer and His Sons'* syntactically prior to translating it into Arabic:

In a small village, there was a farmer with five sons. His sons were strong and hardworking. But they always quarrelled with one another. Sometimes, they even fought.

The farmer wanted his sons to stop quarrelling and fighting; he wanted them to live in peace. But, unfortunately, plain words of advice or scolding did not have much effect on these young people.

The farmer always thought what to do to keep his sons united.

One day, he called all his sons together. He showed them a bundle of sticks and said, "I want to see if any of you can break these sticks without separating them from the bundle".

Each of the five sons tried one by one. They used their full strength and skill. But none of them could break the sticks. Then the old man separated the sticks and gave each of them just a single stick to break. They broke the sticks easily.

The farmer said, "A single stick by itself is weak. It is strong as long as it is tied up in a bundle. Likewise, you will be strong if you are united. You will be weak if you are divided".

How many verbs are used in the text?

Identify the non-finite verbs (go to page 17).

How many adverbs are used in the text?

How many adjectives are used in the text?

How many connectors are used in the text?

How many partitives are used in the text? (go to page 203)

Identify the modes of narration used in the text? (go to page 149)

2 Semantic parsing

Semantic roles (also known as ‘thematic roles’, ‘theta roles’, and ‘thematic cases’) are classified in this section into verb-specific semantic roles, i.e. semantic roles that are derived from the verb itself. To explain, the following example can be discussed:

~ أعطى المُدرِّسُ الطالبَ هديةً قبل يومين.

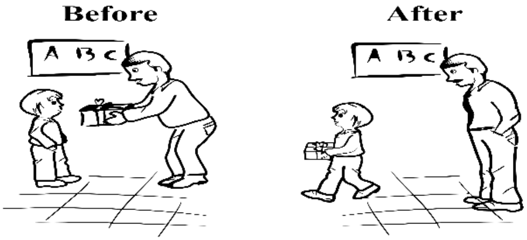
Here,

! المدرِّس *‘the teacher’* fills a verb-specific semantic role of Giver.
! الطالب *‘the student’* fills a verb-specific semantic role of Receiver.
! هدية *‘a gift’* fills a verb-specific semantic role of something Given.
! قبل يومين *‘two days ago’* is an adverb of time answering the question ‘when’.

This can be modelled as follows:

أعطى المُدرِّسُ [Giver] الطالبَ [Receiver] هديةً [sth Given] قبل يومين [Adverb of time].

It is worth mentioning that what was Given was first with the teacher and then with the student. We can also notice that what was Given was not affected, but it was moved from the Source المُدرِّس *‘the teacher’* to the Goal الطالب *‘the student’*.



Now, let us compare these five sentences expressing the same idea to answer these questions:

1. Who was the sender? a. ______ b. ______ c. ______ d. ______ e. ______.
2. Who was the receiver? a. ______ b. ______ c. ______ d. ______ e. ______.
3. What was sent? a. ______ b. ______ c. ______ d. ______ e. ______.

a. *I sent an email to my supervisor two days ago.*

b. *I sent my supervisor an email two days ago.*

c. *My supervisor received an email from me two days ago.*

d. *My supervisor was sent an email by me two days ago.*

e. *An email was sent by me to my supervisor two days ago.*

Unlike simple and compound sentences, complex sentences can be analysed at different levels. By way of illustration, the following sentence can be examined:

~ قرَّرتُ أن أبيع شقتي وأسافر إلى لندن لأسكن هناك.

مَن المُقرِّر؟

ماذا قرَّرَ؟

قرَّرتُ [Decider] أن أبيع شقتي وأسافر إلى لندن لأسكن هناك [sth Decided].

In the above sentence two main verb-specific semantic roles can be identified, viz. Decider and sth Decided, as shown above. Inside the clause that fills a verb-specific semantic role of sth Decided (also known as the ‘أن-clause’ and ‘complementizer clause’), there are three clauses, namely:

! أبيع [Seller] شقتي [sth Sold]

! أسافر [Traveller] إلى لندن [Adverb of place]

! أسكن [Inhabitant] هناك [Adverb of place]

So, when we translate from language *A* to language *B*, extra attention should be paid to the semantic roles rather than to the syntactic structures.

Now, let us produce more than one translation of the following sentences without changing the semantic roles:

~ كتبَ أحدُ أصدقائي [Writer] روايةً [sth Written] السّنة الماضية [Adverb of time].

~ أكلتْ أُختي الصّغيرة [Eater] قبل قليلٍ [Adverb of time] تفاحتين [sth Eaten].

~ اشتريتُ [Buyer] سيّارةً مُستعملةً [sth Bought] قبل أيامٍ [Adverb of time] من أخي الأصغر [Seller].

~ سألتني [Addressee] اِبنتي [Asker] يوم أمس [Adverb of time] سؤالاً مُحرجًا [sth Asked].

~ لعبَ الأولادُ [Player] كرةَ القدم [sth Played] في ساحة المدرسة [Adverb of place] يوم أمس [Adverb of time].

~ قبلتُ [Accepter] قبل أسابيعَ [Adverb of time] عرضًا [sth Offered/Accepted] من إحدى الجامعات [Offerer].

3 Revision

EX 1: The following text is adapted from a short story titled الحديقة *'The Garden'* by Maẖmūd 'Abdulwahhāb. Complete the translation suggested by Sadkhan and Pragnell (2012: 44-5) by paying extra attention to the semantic roles assigned to each noun phrase.

نهض وارِتدى بيجامته وخرج من غرفته ... ما إن فتح باب البيت حتى تناول انبوب الماء المطاط وأزال الطين العالق بنهايته، ثم فتح الحنفية فالتمع قوس الماء، وبدأ يسقي حديقته.

____

____

He took the rubber hosepipe, removed the mud which caked its end, and then turned on the tap. The arc of water glistened and he began watering his garden.

EX 2: Translate the following dialogue written for the purposes of this course, paying extra attention to the author's intention, text-type focus, and semantic roles assigned to each noun phrase.

~ *I've told you many times not to put fruit and vegetables in the freezer, but you do not listen to me.*

~ *Mom, please don't be angry with me. I meant to put them in for five minutes, but it completely slipped my mind.*

~ *Come on. This is not the first time, honey. Is it?*

~ *True. I promise I won't do it again.*

EX 3: Analyse the following text titled *'As you sow, so shall you reap'* syntactically prior to translating it into Arabic.

One night, three thieves stole a lot of money from a rich man's house. They put the money in a bag and went to the forest. They felt very hungry. So, one of them went to a nearby village to buy food. The other two remained in the forest to take care of the bag of money .

The thief that went for food had an evil idea. He ate his food at a hotel. Then he bought food for his two mates in the forest. He mixed a strong poison with the food. He thought, "Those two will eat this poisoned food and die. Then I will get all the money for myself ".

Meanwhile, the two wicked men in the forest decided to kill their mate on his return. They thought that they would divide the money between the two of them. All the three wicked men carried out their cruel plans. The thief who wanted all the money for himself came to the forest with the poisoned food. The two men in the forest hit him and killed him. Then they ate the poisoned food and died.

Thus, these evil people met with an evil end.

How many verbs are used in the text?

Identify the semantic roles assigned to each noun phrase used in the first two sentences.

Identify the non-finite verbs in the text.

How many adverbs are used in the text?

How many adjectives are used in the text?

How many connectors are used in the text?

How many partitives are used in the text?

Identify the modes of narration used in the text.

EX 4: Before translating the following sentences, try to identify:

! the type of each sentence (simple, compound, complex, or compound complex),
! the subject of each clause/sentence (one word or a group of words),
! the tense of each clause/sentence (past, present, or future),
! the aspect of each clause/sentence (simple, progressive, perfect, or progressive perfect),
! the voice of each clause/sentence (active or passive),
! the adverbs used in each clause/sentence, and
! the semantic roles assigned to each noun phrase.

1. ما إن تخرّج من قسم الترجمة حتى بدأ العمل في واحدةٍ من أكبرِ الشركات في البلاد.
2. لم يكن بمقدور والدي السفر إلى بريطانيا كي يُجري بعضَ الفحوصاتِ الطبيّة.
3. بصراحةٍ، لم أكنْ مُنزعِجًا كثيرًا من كلامِهِ يوم أمس.
4. لم يحضرِ الاِجتماع الذي عُقِد يوم أمس إلا موظفان.
5. لغاية يوم أمس، لم اتلقَ أيّ اِتصالٍ لا من أصدقائي المُقرّبين ولا من زملائي.
6. البارحة، قبل أن يصلَ أبي من السفرِ، كنتُ قد نِمتُ لأكثرِ من سبعِ ساعاتٍ.
7. *She invited all her friends to her birthday party, but no one attended.*
8. *Next month, I will have been teaching in this university for 12 months.*
9. *While I was talking with my friend, somebody threw a car key at me.*
10. *Yesterday, neither the dean nor the head of the department attended the meeting.*

EX 5: Identify the verb-specific semantic role of each noun phrase used in the following sentences. Then, translate them into English without changing the semantic roles.

1. أرسلَ أخي يوم أمس العديدَ من الإيميلات إلى صديقِهِ المقرّب.
2. كتبتْ اِبنتي الصّغيرة قبل يومين قصّة رائعًة.
3. سألَ المُدرّسُ أحدَ الطّلابِ سؤالاً صعبًا قبل أيام.

CHAPTER TWO

NARRATING EVENTS IN THE PAST

1 Verbs: finite & non-finite verbs

Generally speaking, the forms of finite verbs (also known as ‘tensed verbs’) indicate tense, person, and number, while non-finite verbs (also known as ‘non-tensed verbs’) do not indicate tense, person, or number. In English, for example, a verb has three non-finite forms, viz.

! Infinitive: *I have moved to another city to find a job.* (to find = a non-finite verb)

~~so that I can~~ find > to find

! Past participle: *The question asked by you was very difficult.* (asked = a non-finite verb)

~~which was~~ asked > asked

! Gerund: *Having cleaned my flat, I went out.* (having = a non-finite verb)

~~After I had~~ cleaned > Having cleaned

However, in some languages, such as Arabic, non-finite verbs still indicate person and number, but not the tense. By way of explanation, let us consider the following example in which two verbs are used: one finite verb سافرتُ indicating tense (past), number and person (the first person singular), and one non-finite verb ألتقي preceded by كي *‘in order to’*, indicating only number and person (the first person singular):

~ **سافرتُ** قبل يومين إلى القاهرة كي **ألتقي**(بـ) صديقي.

I	The Actor is the implicit pronoun أنا *‘I’* indicated by the letter ت attached to the verb سافر *‘to travel’*. It fills the verb-specific semantic role of Traveller (see Chapter 1).

travelled	Here, the finite verb سافر can be translated as *‘to travel’*. The verb سافر is in the past indicated by قبل يومين *‘two days ago’* and the emphasis is placed on its completion; therefore, it can be translated into a simple past tense *‘travelled’*. Cognitively speaking, the open path utilized here is approached from a distal perspective, thus being seen as a point on the timeline.
to Cairo	إلى القاهرة, which is an equivalent of *‘to Cairo’*, is a location circumstance construing the extent of the unfolding of the process in space and answering the question ‘where’.
two days ago	قبل يومين is an equivalent of *‘two days ago’*. The difference between *‘ago’* and *‘before’* in English is that the former is used with a past tense and a time expression to count back from the present while the latter is used for past times from another time in the past, as in: *I met my friend two weeks* ***before*** *I graduated.* *I graduated from this school three years* ***ago****.*
to meet my friend.	Here, the scope of intention is greater than the extent of causation as the Actor/Traveller may change his mind later. To borrow terms from cognitive grammar, this non-finite verb *‘to meet’* is not grounded, that is, its reality status has not been established in such an example. Building on this, it cannot stand on its own as a communicative speech event. In such a context, the verb التقى *‘to meet’* can be translated as *‘to visit’*. كي ألتقي (بـ)صديقي *‘to meet my friend’* is a non-finite clause. However, when it is translated as *‘so that I could meet my friend’*, then it will be regarded as a finite clause.

Now, let us discuss the following text adapted from a short story titled القطار الصاعد إلى بغداد *‘The Train Headed up to Baghdad’* by Maẖmūd ‘Abdulwahhāb (translated by and cited in Pragnell and Sadkhan 2011: 11):

عندما صفر القطار صفرته الثانية الحادة المتقطعة فكّت أمي عقدة فوطتها وسلّمتني الدينار الوحيد الذي تملكه ...

> *When the train gave its second, sharp shrill whistle, my mother untied the knot of her apron and gave me the only dinar she had …*

As can be seen in both texts, there are four finite clauses. They are

When	the train gave its second, sharp shrill whistle	صفر القطار صفرته الثانية الحادة المتقطعة	عندما
,	my mother untied the knot of her apron	فكّت أمي عقدة فوطتها	،
and	gave me the only dinar	سلّمتني الدينار الوحيد	و
(that)	she had	تملكه	الذي

In these four clauses, three processes of doing and a process of having are employed by the writer and reflected by the translators (for more details on 'Processes', see Chapter 4). The emphasis in the first three processes is placed on the completion of the acts of whistling, untying, and handing/giving in the past. In the fourth clause although the morphological tense in the process of having is in the present, the emphasis is also placed on its completion as there is an implicit كان (see Chapter 3, for more details). Cognitively speaking, all these acts in such a context are approached from a distal perspective, thus being seen as points on the timeline. To put this differently, these finite verbs in these processes are grounded, that is to say they have established a relationship with 'now and then'. As a consequence, the speaker construes them as part of known reality.

In the first finite clause صفر القطار صفرته, a cognitive operation of actionalizing is used by the writer (for more details, see Talmy 2000: 45). However, such an operation of actionalizing, i.e. صفر *'to whistle'*, has been reified to an object, i.e. *'whistle'* by the translators to avoid the repetition resulting from the use of the cognate accusative المفعول المطلق (see Section 2).

EX: Translate the following sentences using the notes that follow some of them, paying extra attention to the finite and non-finite clauses and verbs.

~ **اتّصلتُ** به قبل يومين أكثر من خمسِ مراتٍ **لأعرفَ** مكانَ الحفلةِ.

! The finite verb اتّصل can be rendered as *'to call'* or *'to phone'*.

However, it can be translated as *'to give somebody a call'*, *'to give somebody a buzz'*, *'to give somebody a ring'*, and the like.

! Particles such as كي, لكي, لـ, and حتى used to express purpose, are synonyms in Arabic and can be translated as *'to'*, *'in order to'*, *'so as to'*, or *'with a view to'*.

! While *'to'*, *'in order to'*, and *'so as to'* are followed by the base form, i.e. the first form of the verb, *'with a view to'*, which is used in a formal register, is followed by the first form + *'–ing'*.

~ **أرادتْ** أمس أن **تشتري** هديةً لأُختِها في عيدِ ميلادِها.

! Here, there are two verbs, viz. أرادتْ and تشتري. While the verb أرادتْ is finite, indicating tense (past), gender (feminine), number, and person (the third person singular), the verb تشتري is non-finite as it does not indicate any tense because it is preceded by أن.

! The word هدية can be translated into *'gift'* or *'present'*. The two words are used with things given to other people without expectation of return or compensation. In English, it is common to say *'I gave her a gift/present on her birthday'*. The difference between them is that a *'gift'* tends to be much more valuable than a *'present'*.

! Attention should be paid to التنوين *'nunation'* in هدية as it lends itself here to the indefinite article *'a'* (for more details on تنوين 'Nunation', see Chapter 6).

~ **حلمتُ** البارحة حلمًا مُزعِجًا.

~ في حلمِها، **حلمتْ** بأشياء جميلةٍ كثيرةٍ.

! *'Dream'* as a noun collocates well with verbs like *'to have'* or *'to haunt'*.

! The adjective مُزعِج in the first example can be translated into *'disturbing'*, *'awful'*, or *'bad'* as they collocate well with the noun *'dream'*. Or, one may go for *'nightmare'* كابوس to stand for the phrase حلم مزعِج.

! The adjective جميل in the second example can be rendered into *‘pleasant’* as it collocates well with the noun *‘dream’*.

~ لا يزال مشهدُ الحادثِ **يُطارِدُهُ** في أحلامِهِ مُنذُ سنةٍ.

! In this example, extra attention should be paid to the tense and aspect. The tense is ‘present’ يطارِد, and the emphasis (aspect) is on:

1. the continuity of the described action طاردَ/يُطارد indicated by لا يزال *‘still’*.
2. the duration of the described action indicated by the word منذ *‘since/for’*.

To reflect both the tense and aspect, one may opt for the present perfect continuous, i.e. *‘have/has* + *been* + Verb 1 + *–ing’*, as in:

The image of the crash (*or: the scene of the accident*) ***has been haunting*** *his dreams for a year.*

~ **طبختْ** والدتي أمس بعضَ الأكلاتِ الشعبيةِ للضيوف.

~ **كتبتُ** تقريرًا عن المشاكل التي يعاني منها الطلبة في تعلّم اللغة الإنكليزية.

~ البارحة، قبل أن تخلد إلى النوم، **حاولتْ** أن تتصل بأمها لتطمئن عليها.

! The verbs طبخ, كتب, and حاول lend themselves to *‘to cook’*, *‘to write’*, and *‘to try’* respectively.

! We need to make some pre-transferring adjustments prior to embarking on the actual act of translating the text. Here, the clause قبل أن تخلد إلى النوم simply means قبل أن تنام, i.e. *‘before going to bed’* or *‘before falling asleep’*.

! The verb يطمئن lends itself to *‘to check on’, ‘to rest in comfort’, ‘to feel better’*, etc.

~ **كان** الاِمتحانُ صعبًا جدًا.

~ **خرجتْ** أمس قبل اِنتهاءِ العملِ بِنصفِ ساعةٍ.

~ **أخذتُ** والدتي إلى أقربِ عيادةٍ كي نعرفَ سببَ تعبِها المُفاجئ.

~ **بقيتُ** البارحة أتقلّبُ في الفراش، **ولم أتمكّن** من النوم.

! بقيتُ أتقلبُ can be slightly adjusted into بقيتُ صاحيًا, thus lending itself to *'I stayed awake last night rolling/turning over and over'* or *'I stayed awake last night tossing and turning'*. In this context, the adjective *'awake'* collocates well with verbs, such as *'to stay'*, *'to keep'*, *'to remain', 'to lie'*, and *'to be'*, and adverbs such as *'fully'*, *'wide'*, *'only half'*, and *'still'*, as in:

Last night, the mother remained awake, her hand on her son's shoulder. Later, she fell asleep. When her husband arrived home, she was only half awake, and her son was wide awake.

! لم أتمكّن in the second sentence lends itself to *'could not'* or *'was not able to'* to reflect both 'negation' in the past expressed by لم and 'ability' expressed by تمكّن (for more examples, see the lesson on 'Negative Sentences' in this Chapter).

~ **دعاني** صديقي إلى حفلةِ عيدِ ميلادِهِ البارحة.

~ **غادر** الأردن يوم أمس جلالةُ الملكِ عبدالله الثاني مُتوجّهًا إلى الكويت لمناقشةِ بعضِ القضايا المُشتركة بين البلدين.

! The verb دعا, which means *'to invite'*, can be translated as *'my friend invited me …'*. However, when it is translated as *'I was invited by my friend …'*, which is in the passive form, there will be a 'structure shift' to use Catford's (1965) terminology.

! The structure غادر فلان ... متوجّهًا إلى ... can be rendered as *'X left … heading for …'* or *'X left … heading up to …'*.

~ **اِستقبلَ** يوم أمس في مطار القاهرة الدولي وزير الداخلية المصريّ نظيرَهُ السّودانيّ.

! The expression وزير الداخلية is translated into *'the minister of the interior'* (note UK: *'home secretary'*). As for وزير الدفاع, رئيس الوزراء, and وزير الخارجية, they can be translated into *'the minister of defence'*, *'the prime minister'*, and *'the minister of foreign affairs'* respectively.

! The word نظير can be translated into *'counterpart'*.