Transforming Finite Subordinate Sentences into Non-Finite and Verbless Sentences with Reference to Translation: A Contrastive Study

Lecturer. Mustafa Nu’man Ahmed
College of Political Science \ University of Mustansiriya
Linguistics and Translation
Mustafatranslator2@gmail.com
07807307906

Abstract:

This study is a contrastive syntactic analysis for the purpose of showing the possibility of transforming finite subordinate sentences into non-finite and verbless sentences. Some English and Arabic adverbial finite sentences could be changed into non-finite or verbless sentences. This change may occur by ellipting some parts of the subordinate sentences or by converting the finite verb into a non-finite verb. The present study deals with the problem of transforming finite subordinate sentences into non-finite and verbless sentences as they appear within the context of the complex sentence. These sentences have different sorts of syntactic structures which could pose problems to translators. This study aims at demonstrating (1) Whether all types of English subordinate adverbial sentences, which have a finite verb, can be transformed into non-finite or verbless sentences and (2) Whether Arabic has surface structures which correspond to the English non-finite or verbless sentences. This study limits itself to the subordinate adverbial sentences as they appear within the context of the complex sentence. Other types of subordinate sentences, nominal or adjectival, are beyond the scope of this study. It is hoped that this study is of some theoretical and practical value to those concerned with syntactic structures and translation.

The methodology adopted in dealing with the subject under investigation is Transformational-Generative Grammar.

Key words: finite sentence, non-finite sentence, syntax, translation, verbless sentence, subordinate sentence.

Introduction
A complex sentence, which contains one or more adverbial sentences, is a type of syntactic structure where the syntactic and semantic relations between the superordinate sentence and the subordinate sentence are assumed to be determined, in many cases, in the deep structure, especially if the adverbial sentence is transferred into a verbless sentence or into a sentence with a non-finite verb. In this connection, Chomsky (1970: 139) says:

“Grammatical relations are defined in a general way in terms of configuration within phrase-markers [tree Diagram] and that semantic interpretation involves only these grammatical relations specified in deep structure although it may also involve certain properties of surface structure “ *


It is to be mentioned that the term “subordinate sentence” will be used throughout this study to replace the traditional term “subordinate clause”. Transformational-Generative Grammar (henceforth T.T.G), the model which will be adopted in this study, rightly considers the clause to be a sentence embedded in the superordinate sentence to form a complex sentence.

Some English subordinate adverbial sentences, which have a finite verb, can be transformed into non-finite and verbless sentences. Such a transformation is marked either by converting the finite verb into non-finite or by ellipting the finite verb and the subject without affecting the well-formedness and acceptability of
these sentences. The omitted verb can generally be assumed to be a form of the verb BE, and the subject ... can be treated as recoverable from context, (Quirk, 1972:752). These transformed sentences can cause structural problems to translators as long as there are no one–to–one transformational rules between English and Arabic for deriving adverbial sentences:

(1.1) a. [Although he was tired], the worker kept on working

b. [Although \( \varnothing \) tired], the worker kept on working.


Both (1.1a–b) are well–formed sentences. (1.1b) is transformed from its deep counterpart (1.1a) by a transformational rule which deletes the subject “he” and the verb “was” rendering thereby the sentence into non–finite (i.e. with no tense indication). Arabic, however, does not provide a corresponding transformational rule which always deletes the subject of the subordinate sentence and which may derive an Arabic structure equivalent to that in (1.1b).
Therefore, (1.1b) should be transformed back into its deep structure (1.1a) before translating it into Arabic. Two Arabic renditions are given in (1.2). Translation (1.2a), which corresponds to the deep structure (1.1a), is well-formed but translation (1.2b), which corresponds to the surface structure (1.1b), is ill-formed.

(1.2)a. 

b. 

One way for translating (1.1b) will be by converting the subject “tired” into a noun and a coreferential pronoun should be suffixed to that noun. Thus an Arabic translation for (1.1b) will be:

(1.2). 

( The superordinate and the subordinate sentences are reordered to avoid cataphoric reference ).

The same can be said about verbless sentences. The following example illustrates:
(1.3) a. [When he was at Oxford], he was a prominent member of the dramatic society.

b. [When at Oxford], he was a prominent member of the dramatic society.

(1.4) a. [When كان في أكسفورد], كان عضواً بارزاً في الجمعية المسرحية.

b. [في أكسفورد], كان عضواً بارزاً في الجمعية المسرحية.

Again the English sentence (1.3b) can be translated with the subordinate sentence rendered into a verbless sentence but a subject pronoun should be present. The subordinator “when” should be matched by the coordinator (و) :

وهو في أكسفورد كان عضواً بارزاً في الجمعية المسرحية.

(1.5)

It should be noted that the elliptical subject of a non-finite or verbless sentence is assumed to be identical in reference to the subject of the superordinate sentence.

(1.6)a. [He] wrote his greatest novel [while he was working on a

freighter]

b. He wrote his greatest novel [while working on a freighter].
The serious problem arises when “the noun phrase with which the understood subject of the non–finite clause should be identical does not appear as subject of the main clause, and perhaps does not occur in the main clause at all,” (Quirk, 1972: 757):

(1.7) Many radical changes have been made, [ since \(\emptyset\) appointed supreme commander].

In such cases, the intended subject can be recoverable from the context. Therefore, we would assume that the superordinate sentence in (1.8) means “Many changes have been made by him”, and that the subject of the subordinate sentence is the third person pronoun “he”.

(1.8) Many radical changes have been made by [ him ], [ since [ he ] was appointed supreme commander ].

The following investigation aims at finding out:
1– Whether all types of the English subordinate adverbial sentences, which have a finite verb, can be changed into non–finite or verbless sentences.
2– Whether Arabic has corresponding surface structures.

A Cross Linguistic Analysis of Transforming Finite Adverbial Subordinate Sentences into Non–Finite and Verbless Sentences with Reference to Translation
1- The Subordinate Sentence of Time

Each of the following examples will be given with two structures (a) Deep and (b) Surface together with their Arabic translation

English:

(1.9)a. D.S [When it was published], the book caused a remarkable stir among critics.

b. S.S [When published], the book caused a remarkable stir among critics.

Arabic:

(1.10)a. D.S [حِينٌ نُشِّرَ الكتاب] سبب ضجة كبيرة بين النقاد

b. S.S [حِينَ منشور الكتاب] سبب ضجة كبيرة بين النقاد

The translator has to determine the syntactic frame in which the past participle “published” appears in (1.9b). The past participle in English could be used in different syntactic contexts: (a) with the perfect tense, (b) with the passive voice and (c) as an adjective (e.g. the published books). Therefore, the English subordinate sentence of time in (1.9b) above should be transformed back
into its deep structure (1.9a) above before rendering it into Arabic in order to determine the intended context in which the past participle has been used. Word–for–word translation will lead to producing the ill–formed sentence (1.10b) above.

However, sentence (1.10b) can be made well–formed by using the subordinator (لدى) followed by a gerund.

(1.10)b. سبب الكتاب ضجة كبيرة بين [لدى نشره] النقاد

(In relation to the verbless sentence of time, see sentence (1.3) above and the Arabic translations (1. 4,5))

2– The Subordinate Sentence of Place

English:

(1.11)a. D.S. Such facts must have been reported [wherever they were known]

b. S.S. Such facts must have been known[wherever known]

Arabic:

(1.12)a. D.S. كان لا بد من الأخبار عن هذه الحقائق [حيثما غرفت] معروفة

b. S.S. كان لا بد من الأخبار عن هذه الحقائق [حيثما معروفة] معرفة

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The English subordinate sentence of place (1.11b) above should be rendered into Arabic by translating its deep structure (1.11a) above.

English:

(1.13)a. D.S.  All moving parts should be tested [where that is possible]  

          b. S.S.  All moving parts should be tested [where possible]

Arabic:

(1.14)a. D.S  يجب فحص كل الأجزاء المتحركة [حيث امكّن ذلك]  

          b. S.S  [حيث ممكن]  يجب فحص كل الأجزاء المتحركة

3- The Subordinate Sentence of Purpose

The English subordinators of purpose, “so that, in order that”, could not introduce non–finite or verbless sentences.

(1.15)a. D.S.  We carved their names on the stone [so that they will be known to future generations]  

          b. S.S.  We carved their names on the stone *[so that known to future generations]
but see: We carved their names on the stone [in order for them to be known to future generations]

The Arabic rendition of (1.15) above will be:

(1.16)a. D.S. نقصنا أسماءهم [كي يكونوا معروفين لدى أجيال المستقبل]

ب. S.S. نقصنا أسماءهم على الحجر [كي معروفين لدى أجيال المستقبل] ∅

The subordinate sentences of purpose could be transformed into non–finite sentences by replacing “so that, in order that” with “to, in order to, and so as to” provided that the subject of the subordinate sentence id identical to that of the superordinate sentence.

(1.17)a. D.S. The police made many elaborate plans [so that they might catch the culprits].

b. S.S. The police made many elaborate plans [so as to catch the culprits].

Both (1.17a–b) will have one Arabic translation (1.18) below:

وضعت الشرطة العديد من الخطط المتقدمة [لكي تقبض على المجرمين] .

(1.18)a.

We also change this verb into gerund:

ب. وضعت الشرطة العديد من الخطط المتقدمة [للتقبض على المجرمين] .
English and Arabic do not have subordinate verbless sentences introduced by a subordinator of purpose, where there is no verb at all in the subordinate surface sentence of purpose.

4- The Subordinate Sentence of Result

Not all subordinate sentences of result can be converted to non–finite sentences. The following finite subordinate sentence can not be transformed into a non–finite sentence. Its Arabic translation can not also be converted into a non–finite sentence.

(1.19) He spoke for such a long time [ that people began to think he would never end].

The Arabic translation for (1.19) will be:

لقد اطول الحديث [ بحيث بدا الظن يساور الناس أنه لن ينتهي ابدا] . (1.20)

However, sentences introduced by the subordinator “ So … that “ can be converted into non–finite sentences :

(1.21)a. D.S. The story was so interesting [ that I enjoyed it].

b. S.S. The story was interesting enough [ to enjoy it].

The Arabic translation for (1.21a) above is:

(1.22)a. D.S. كانت القصة جد مثيره [ بحيث استمعت بها] .

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But a word– for–word translation for the English surface sentence (1.21b) will be the following ill–formed Arabic sentence:

المتمع

b. S.S. كانت القصة قد مثيره [بما يكفي ان اتمتع 

5– The Subordinate Sentence of Condition and Concession

(1.23)a. D.S. [ If it is hit by the endemic ] , the town will be evacuated at once.

b. S.S. [ If hit by the epidemic ] , the town will be evacuated at once.

(1.23b) above must be rendered into Arabic by translating its deep counterpart (1.23a). Otherwise, the translation of (1.23b) will produce the ill–formed sentence (1.24b) below:

(1.24)a. D.S. أنت تتعرض المدينة للأصابة بالوباء [فستخلي على الفور ]

b. S.S. أنت المدينة معرضة للأصابة بالوباء [فستخلي على الفور ]

(1.25)a. D.S. [ Unless he is expressly forbidden ] , he will not stop his childish behaviors

b. S.S. [ Unless expressly forbidden ] , he will not stop his childish behaviors.
(1.26)(a) D.S. [Malim yumnû boushû] fân Yûfûf Tisrifatunux al-Makhîfah

(b) S.S. [Malim Mînunû boushû] fân Yûfûf Tisrifatunux al-Makhîfah

(1.27)(a) D.S. [Though he is over eighty], he can walk a mile faster than I can.

(b) S.S. [Though over eighty], he can walk a mile faster than I can.

(1.28)(a) D.S. [Barûm an umru] fûhû yistûfû in ymsi mîlû asrû mûnûnû yîjâzu al-shâmîn

(b) S.S. [Barûm al-shâmîn] fûhû yistûfû in ymsi mîlû asrû mûnûnû.

6– The Subordinate Sentence of Manner and Comparison.

The adverbial sentence of manner, introduced by “as”, can be transformed into a non–finite sentence as (1.29) below illustrates:

**Manner**

(1.29)(a) D.S. He fixed it perfectly [as he has been directed]

(b) S.S. He fixed it perfectly [as directed]

(1.30)(a) D.S. [Thabûta bâ hakâm] kîmûnû wîjîbûnux

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b. S.S. It is often more expensive for the young mother to work and pay for a nursery [than she does it herself]

(1.31)a. D.S. It is often more expensive for the young mother to work and pay for a nursery [than she does it herself]

b. S.S. It is often more expensive for the young mother to work and pay for a nursery [than \( \emptyset \) to do it herself]

(1.32)a. D.S. French sentiment, he assures us, has never been as pronounced against Germany [as it is Today]

b. S.S. French sentiment, he assures us, has never been as pronounced against Germany [as \( \emptyset \) today].
(1.34a) D.S.

\[ \text{إنه} \text{ يؤكد لنا إن} \text{ المشاعر} \text{ الفرنسية} \text{ لم} \text{ يجاهري بها} \text{ من قبل} \]

\[ \text{ضد} \text{ المانيا} \text{ [كم]ا} \text{ يحصل اليوم} \]

But translating (1.33b) above will yield the following dubious sentence.

(1.34b) S.S.

\[ \text{إنه} \text{ يؤكد لنا إن} \text{ المشاعر} \text{ الفرنسية} \text{ لم} \text{ يجاهري بها} \text{ من قبل} \]

\[ \text{ضد} \text{ المانيا} \text{ [كم]ا} \text{ اليوم} \]

7- The Subordinate Sentence of Proportion

The proportional sentence can not be transformed into a non–finite or verbless sentence:

(1.35) \[ \text{The farther one penetrates into the house} \text{, the more evident the} \text{ ravages of time are.} \]

(1.36) \[ \text{كلما ازداد المرء توجلاً داخل المنزل} \text{, ازدادت غوائل الزمن جلاءً} \]

(1.36a) \[ \text{As the strength of the defenders failed} \text{, (so) their courage grew.} \]

(1.37) \[ \text{كلما وهنت قوة المدافعين} \text{, اشتدت شجاعةتهم} \]

8- The Subordinate Sentence of Preference

The subordinate sentence of preference is more often gerundive than finite. Such infinitival sentences, like most adverbial infinitival sentences, have no subject in their surface structure. Both the D.S. and S.S. can be rendered into well–formed Arabic translations:

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(1.38)a. D.S. [ Rather than I borrow from you], I would borrow money from the bank.

b. S.S. [ Rather than borrowing from you], I would borrow money from the bank.

(1.39)a. D.S.  

b. S.S.  

The finite sentence of preference, introduced by “rather ... than”, can also be changed into a verbless sentence. Both the D.S. and S.S. sentences will have well-formed Arabic translation:

(1.40)a. D.S. [ Rather than he bought a new car], he bought a color television.

b. S.S. [ Rather than a new car], he bought a color television.

(1.41)a. D.S.  

b. S.S.  

9- The Subordinate Sentence of Reason or Cause

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Non–finite and verbless sentences of reason and cause can be used, but without subordinator.

(1.42)a. D.S. [Because he was a man of ingenuity ], he had soon repaired the machine.  
  b. S.S [Being a man of ingenuity], he had soon repaired the machine.

(1.42a–b) both can be rendered into well–formed Arabic translation.

(1.43)a. D.S.  لأنه كان رجلاً بارعاً [ فقد أصلح الماكينة على الفضول ]
b. S.S.  رجلاً بارعاً [لكونه ] فقد أصلح الماكينة على الفضول

The adverbial sentence of reason, introduced by (because), can be changed into a verbless sentence with (because of):

(1.44) a. D.S. She hesitated, [because she was cautious], to open the door 
  
  b. S.S. She hesitated, [because of her caution], to open the door.

Both (1.44a–b) can be translated into Arabic:

(1.45)a. D.S.  لأنها كانت حذرة [ ترددت في فتح الباب ]
b. S.S.  حذرها [ ترددت في فتح الباب ]

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The parenthetic subordinate sentences in (1.45a–b) are better moved to the beginning of the whole sentence, otherwise a translation into Arabic with the same English sentence order will yield the following sentences which might be unacceptable to some native speakers of Arabic.

(1.46a) D.S. ؟ ترددت ، [لأنها كانت حذرة] ، في فتح الباب .

(1.46b) S.S. ؟ ترددت ، [بسبب حذرها] ، في فتح الباب .

Conclusions

This study has shown that English uses translated non-finite or verbless subordinate sentences more extensively than Arabic does. In some cases, especially in the subordinate sentences of time, purpose, proportion and cause, Arabic can use non-finite or verbless subordinate sentences. This state of affairs means that in many cases, the translator has to back-transform these English non-finite or verbless sentences into their deep structure before translating them, since it has been demonstrated through our extensive examples that a surface word-for-word translation of many of such sentences will yield ill-formed Arabic translation.

It is also noticed that not all English finite subordinate sentences accept transforming them into non-finite or verbless sentences. The English subordinate sentence of result introduced by the subordinator “such …. that” can not be converted into non-finite or verbless sentences, which will mean that translating such sentences is easier than translating transformed non-finite and verbless sentences since the surface structure of the former is identical with the deep structure.
References
تحويل الجمل الثانوية المحدودة إلى جمل غير محدودة وغير فعلية مع الإشارة إلى الترجمة: دراسة مقارنة

الباحث مصطفى نعمان أحمد
كلية العلوم السياسية/الجامعة المستنصرية / اللغويات والترجمة
Mustafatranslator2@gmail.com
07807307906

البحث:
يمكن تحويل بعض الجمل الظرفية المعطلة الانكليزية والعربية المحدودة الزمن إلى جمل غير محدودة الزمن أو جمل لا فعلية. وقد يتم هذا التحويل بحذف بعض أجزاء الجمل المعطلة أو بتحويل الفعل المحدد الزمن إلى فعل غير محدد الزمن. وقد لا يكون بالأمكان تحويل بعض الجمل الانكليزية السطحية المعطلة ، وخصوصا تلك التي خضعت لحذف أو تلك التي تختلف بناوها السطحي عن بنيتها العميقة نتيجة لتحولات معينة، إلى العربية مباشرة بسبب عدم وجود البنية السطحية المكافئة ، لذا يجب تحويل هذه الجمل إلى بناها العميقة قبل ترجمتها إلى العربية.