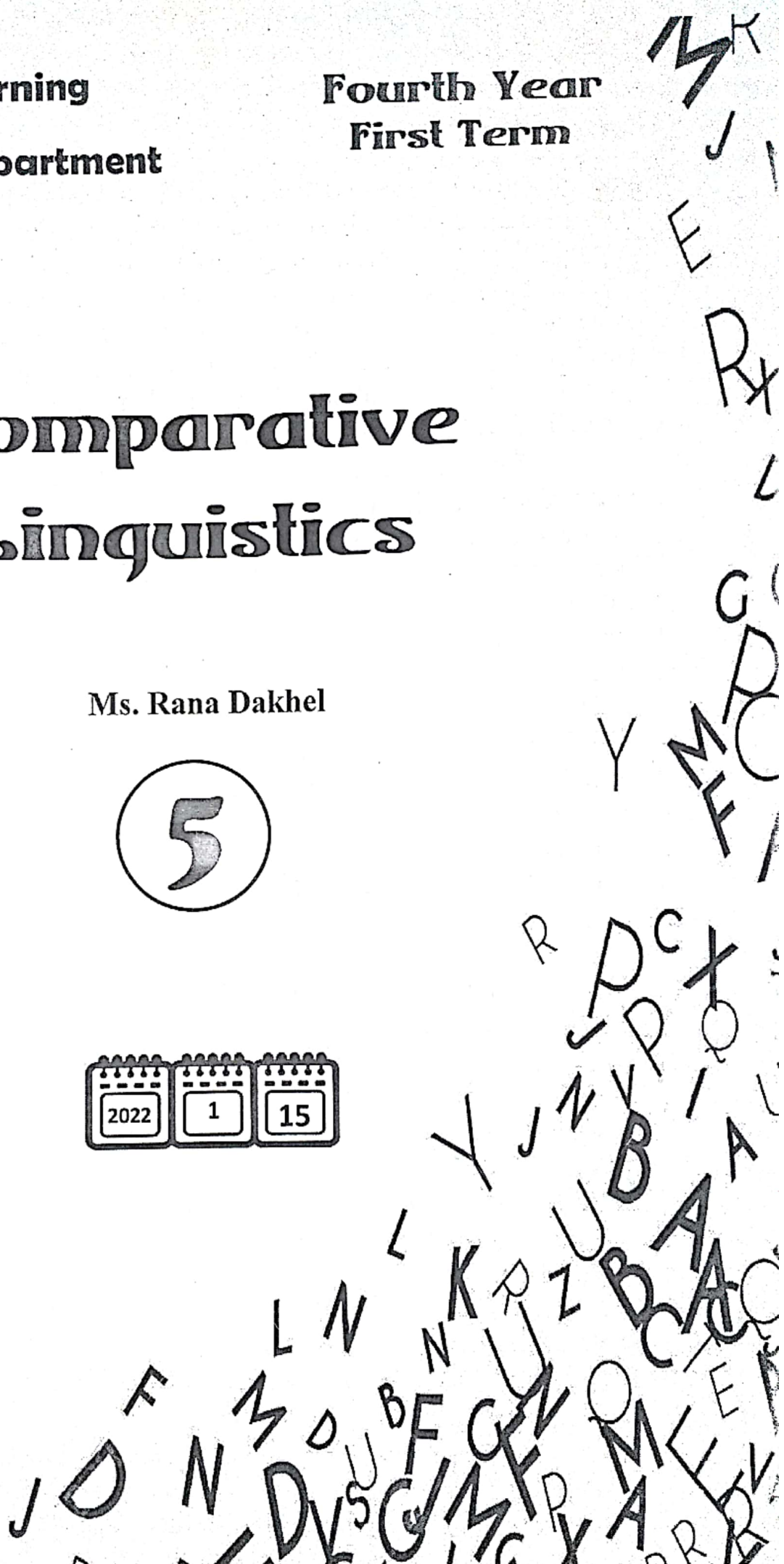


Open Learning  
Translation Department

Fourth Year  
First Term

# Comparative Linguistics

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# Good afternoon!

Some of you were stressed from yesterday's lecture because it was all about syntax; although I really like syntax because it makes your mind work.

Yesterday, the lecture was about sentence elements in English (8 patterns) and in Arabic (7 patterns). I advise you to reread them because if you do not, you will easily forget about them. I need you to memorize them because I will use some symbols, and I need you to recognize them.

Yesterday, we talked about sentence elements in terms of verbal sentences. Today, I am going to talk about nominal sentences.

## Sentence Elements in Nominal Sentences

A nominal sentence has (مبتدأ و خبر):

(مبتدأ) is called **Topic**, and (خبر) is called **Comment**.

When we talk about the topic, in Arabic the topic must be definite. How is it realized?

It can either be:

☞ Noun

☞ Pronoun

☞ Infinitive verbal noun مصدر مؤول

The topic is always in the nominative case حالة الرفع. Let us start with the topic as a noun.

**Student:** الصف واسع

**Teacher:** Very good; (الصف) is a noun. Now, give me a topic as a pronoun.

**Student:** نحن مجتهدون

**Teacher:** Good. Give me a topic as a مصدر مؤول.

**Student:** أن تعمل أمر جميل

**Teacher:** We can say:

أن تقول الحقيقة خير لك.

Now, we move to talk about the comment. The comment is realized by:

☞ A noun

☞ A phrase شبه جملة: temporal adverbs, located adverbs, and prepositional phrase جار و مجرور

☞ An adjective

☞ Nominal sentence

☞ Verbal sentence

Now, give me an example about a comment as a noun.

**Student:** العلم نور

**Teacher:** very good. Give me an example of it as an adjective.

العلم نافع

Now, give me one as a phrase.

القطعة فوق الشجرة: a locative adverb  
في الحديقة قطة: prepositional phrase

Can you give me a prepositional phrase as a comment but one that does not indicate a place?

**Student:** على أبصارهم غشاوة

**Teacher:** Good. Although it kind of indicates a place.

**Student:** للعلم نفع

**Teacher:** Excellent. We can also say: الحمد لله

Now, give me a temporal adverb.

**Student:** العشاء قبل العشاء

**Teacher:** Excellent. We can also say: الاجتماع غداً

What about a comment as a nominal sentence?

**Student:** الحقل أشجاره مثمرة.

**Teacher:** Very good. Comment as a verbal sentence

**Student:** العلم يرتقي بالأمم

**Teacher:** Excellent. I will give you a sentence:

محمدٌ أبوه مريض.

This is a nominal that I will comment on later in this lecture.

البنْتُ حضر أبوها.

Now, do you notice anything?

This suffix (ها) is anaphoric and refers to (البنْتُ); do you notice that we have two topics? The first topic is (البنْتُ), and the comment is the verbal sentence (حضر أبوها).

In the nominal sentence (محمدٌ أبوه مريض), we have the first topic (محمدٌ), and in (أبوه مريض) we also have another topic.

I want you to know that the suffixes (ها) and (ه) are anaphoric of the first topic. It is called in Arabic ضمير الشأن or الضمير العائد. We can say it is an anaphoric pronoun.

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Now, your task is to contrast between Arabic and English depending on yesterday's and today's lecture.

What are the differences between English and Arabic in terms of sentence elements?



**Student:** The subject in English is explicit.

**Teacher:** Excellent. Of course, this is not in all cases; we can exclude passive voice and imperative.

In Arabic, the subject may be explicit (overt) or implicit (convert).

This is the first point. Give me the second point.

**Student:** In Arabic, we do not have copular verbs.

**Teacher:** That is correct. In English, we do have copular verbs; in Arabic, we do not.

**Student:** The transitive verbs in English is either one or two.

**Teacher:** Yes, in Arabic, we have one, two or three transitive, but in English, the maximum is di-transitive.

**Student:** In Arabic, we have nominal and verbal sentences.

**Teacher:** Excellent. In Arabic, we have two types of sentences: nominal and verbal. In English, we only have verbal sentences; we cannot have a sentence without a verb.

We know that a nominal sentence might or might not have a verb. In Arabic, we call the nominal sentences without a verb: equational; verbless sentences.

For example:

محمدٌ أبوه مريضٌ.

This is a nominal sentence.

البنْتُ حضرَ أبوها.

This is also a nominal sentence, but we have a verb.

So, a nominal sentence is sub-divided into nominal and equational. This is just in Arabic, but in English, we have a verb in the sentence all the time.

What else?

**Student:** We do not need to use anaphoric in English.

**Teacher:** Very good. We do not need to use anaphoric pronouns in English, but in Arabic, we do use them. In English, if you want to use anaphoric to refer to something, we use pronouns without the need to use the noun.

Syntactic elements in English are determined by ...

**Student:** Their place in the sentence

**Teacher:** So, by the word order; in English, syntactic elements are determined by word order; their position in a sentence. In Arabic, syntactic elements are determined by **Case Endings**; inflections التشكيل.

For example, how do you know that this is الضمة? If I say:

أحمدُ

This is الضمة

الفتحة a: - تنوين الفتح: an  
الكسرة i: - تنوين الكسر: en  
الضمة au: - تنوين الضم: un  
السكون ʾ: ʾ

**Student:** What do we use them for?

**Teacher:** We use them for transliteration; what do we mean by that?

**Student:** Writing Arabic words using English letters

**Teacher:** Yes. For example, if I want to write:

أحمدٌ عائِدٌ: *Ahmadun 'aa'idun*

We use transliteration when we are writing a research paper to compare between Arabic and English language in terms of case endings or phonetics, for example. When your major is English, you are not allowed to use Arabic letters in your research paper; that is why we have transliteration to help us.

For example:

ابن رشد: *Ibn Rushd*

I am not sure about proper names whether they are transliterated or not.

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Now, we said that word order is very important in English; we can know the parts of speech according to their order in a sentence. In Arabic, we can shift an object to the beginning of the sentence, for example. So, how will I know the function of each word? According to case endings; yet, there is a case in Arabic that may make students confused which is:

الأسماء الممنوعة من الصرف

In such names, there are no case endings. What do we call these nouns in English? *Indeclinable Nouns*

For example:

حدَّثَ موسى عيسى

حدَّثَ عيسى موسى

طالبة: أخبرتنا دكتورة اللغة العربية سابقاً أن نجعل الأولوية للفاعل.

**Teacher:** Yes, this is the case. here, we determine parts of speech depending on word order like English.

What other differences do we have?

**Student:** In English, we do not have deputy agent. نائب فاعل.

**Teacher:** This is a very good point; in English, we only have subject as an agent.



**Reminder: The object in the passive voice is the subject in the active voice.**

**Student:** In Arabic, we have enclitic pronouns; in English, we do not.

**Teacher:** Yes.

**Student:** In Arabic, we have circumstantial accusative *الحال*.

**Teacher:** Yes, in English, we only have objects.

You can talk about similarities if you find any; we are comparing and contrasting; contrast means to show only differences, and compare means to show both similarities and differences.

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In English, we know that a sentence contains: subject, verb, and object. In Arabic, can I use subject, verb and object in one word?

**Students:** Yes

**Teacher:** Of course, we can say: *سألتهموني*

This word has the three parts.

**Student:** *يعجبني*

**Teacher:** Yes. In English, we cannot do that. **This is one of the major differences between Arabic and English.**

What else?

**Student:** In English, we only have singular and plural; in Arabic, we have (مفرد، مثنى، جمع).

**Teacher:** Yes, in Arabic, in addition to singular and plural, we have dual. If we want to refer to dual in English, we use *both*.

**Student:** Also, in Arabic, we have (نون النسوة) and (واو الجماعة), but in English, we use (they, them) for both feminine and masculine plural.

**Teacher:** Very good.

Each language has its own features, but when it comes to English, the most challenging thing is pronunciation because there is no set rules for it. You just have to memorize how words are read, and that is why you might say that English is crazy.

**Student:** In English, there are silent letters that are written but not pronounced; for example: hours, school, knife, etc.

**Teacher:** We will talk about these things when we move to talk about phonetics; right now, we are comparing depending on sentence elements.

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Now, try to translate the following:

*I like the colour and size of this dress.*

طالبة: يعجبني لون هذا الثوب وقياسه.  
**Teacher:** Excellent. So, you cannot compound such phrases in Arabic. In other words, you cannot say:

يعجبني لون وقياس هذا الثوب.  
Remember this rule. In English, you can rewrite this sentence as:  
*I like the colour of this dress and its size.*

A translator can be evaluated depending on minor errors; like when students keep using the word (حيث), when it should be only used with phrases. Instead of it, you should use (إن).

Also, some students keep on using (تم) like in (تم تعديل), for example instead of simply using the passive voice. Of course, if you know the doer of the action, use active voice immediately and avoid using (تم) as much as possible.

We still have one point to talk about:

Can you translate this phrase: A man in the house?

طالبة: رجل في المنزل  
طالب: في المنزل رجل

**Teacher:** Excellent. Pay attention that in Arabic, it is never allowed to start with an indefinite noun (نكرة). In English, you can. When you want to translate such phrase, you start with the prepositional phrase.

If you want to translate the Arabic phrase into English, you need to translate it as a sentence not as a phrase:

*There is a man in the house.*

**Student:** I thought that if the meaning was incomplete in English, we need to keep it incomplete when we translate into Arabic as well. 😊

**Teacher:** No.

**Student:** What about idioms?

**Teacher:** Idioms are a different story; they have a fixed meaning, and you should translate them as they are.

Sometimes, you cannot find an equivalent of an idiom when you want to translate it from English into Arabic or vice versa. This because the differences in culture. Sometimes, we have an equivalent but using totally different words. This is all not related to syntax, but to differences between Arabic and English idioms. If you find them interesting, we will talk about them later.

**Student:** How are we going to see these issues in the exam?



**Teacher:** I will focus on the differences through sentences and examples; it will be more about practical questions. Focus on all the details while studying because I'm explaining everything to you.

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We talked about sentence elements, now we move to:

### Word Order

This is the second aspect of syntax. In English, we all know that word order in a sentence is:

Subject + Verb + Object

The dog chased the cat.

Here, we have a fixed structure. Yet, in some cases, we need to shift positions of the subject and the verb.

**Student:** like in questions

**Teacher:** Is it only in questions?

**Student:** when emphasizing and focusing

**Teacher:** Exactly. Sometimes, we shift the word order for pragmatic purposes. For example:

If someone told you: the truck hit the cat yesterday, but you know that this information is wrong, and it was a horse not a cat. So, you say: it was a horse that the truck hit yesterday.

Here, we have some terms that I want you to memorize:

التقديم و التأخير: fronting and postponement

In English, we have five processes of fronting and postponement:

Thematization

In the previous example, the horse theme is the new information, and the truck hit is also a theme, but it is a given information.

When I moved the theme of the horse to the beginning of the sentence, this means that I want you to focus on this information.

Now, if I want to see it in other examples, let us say:

*His name is John.*

This is called unmarked theme. This means that there is no shift in the positions and the sentence is normal.

We will continue discussing next time.

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**Thank you very much!**  
**See you next week**

