

## A Syntactic Study of Postponement in Modern Standard English and Modern Standard Arabic

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### 1-Introduction

Postponement is a grammatical phenomenon whereby certain sentence elements optionally or obligatorily change their positions and move to the end of the sentence under the influence of considerable conditions in both English and Arabic . Syntactically speaking , " English relies heavily on word order and word –class membership as the markers of syntactic relationships between the words in a sentence" (Thakur,1997: 88 ) . Arabic ,on the other hand , is known as "an inflecting language" in which "the syntactic relationship that a word has with the other words in a sentence manifests itself in the form of that word ( e.g., in its inflectional endings )" ( Ibid : 85-86 ). In this case, a native speaker finds it easy to postpone a sentence element by means of using the inflectional marks such as الضمة [addamma] , الفتحة [alfatha] , الكسرة [alkasra] , السكون [assukuun] and التتوين [attanwiin].

Sometimes English and Arabic are syntactically similar as illustrated in the following instances in which the adjectives follow the nouns they modify :

1-The president elect works hard .

2- هناك مشكلات في المديرية العامة للتربية- [hunaaka mushkilaatun fii almuudiiriyyati al 'aammati littarbiya ]

There are problems in the directorate general of education .

The problem arises when syntactic differences occur between English and Arabic . Consider the following examples in which Arabic sentence elements can optionally be postponed ,the process which is impossible in English :

3- Mohammad taught Ali .. عليا محمد درس [muhammadun darrasa 'aliyyan ] .

4- \*Taught Mohammad Ali .. عليا محمد درس [darrasa muhammadun 'aliyyan ] .

5- \*Taught Ali Mohammad . عليا محمد درس [darrasa 'aliyyan muhammadun ] .

6- \*Ali Mohammad taught .. عليا محمد درس [ 'aliyyan muhammadun darrasa ] .

Accordingly, it is hypothesized that there are similarities and differences between English and Arabic concerning the syntactic process of postponement . The present study aims at investigating such points of similarities and differences .This research is of a considerable value to those interested in syntax and foreign language learning and teaching . Moreover , it gives insight to translators and curriculum designers .

### 2- Postponement in English

This section is concerned with subject , object , and modifiers postponement . There is also an explanation of how phrases of exception , reflexive pronouns , vocative , and comment clauses are postponed .

#### 2.1 Subject Postponement

A subject is the constituent with which the sentence begins . It usually precedes the main verb with which it is in number concord . A subject can be a noun , a pronoun , a that – clause , to –infinitive , gerund , or a prepositional phrase . With the exception of nouns and pronouns , such elements can optionally be postponed leaving behind a pronoun known as "introductory it" . This can be respectively illustrated in the following instances :

7a: That you enjoy reading short stories is useful.

b : It is useful that you enjoy reading short stories .

8a : To ride with a drunk driver is dangerous.

b : It is dangerous to ride with a drunk driver .

9a : Riding with Tom was dangerous .

b : It was dangerous riding with Tom .

Example (9) is stated "when the speaker is talking about a particular situation and wants to give the idea of while":

10-We were in danger while we were riding with Tom .

(Thomson and Martinet ,1986:213 ; Azar ,1986 :172 ; and Biber et al , 2000 : 155 ,198 )

11a: From Boston to New York is two hundred miles .

b: It is two hundred miles from Boston to New York .(Quirk et al ,1985 : 1392 )

According to Brown and Miller (1980:372 )and Gramely and Patzold (1992:178) , subject postponement is obligatory in sentences having the verbs appear , seem , happen , occur , turn out , and chance :

12a: \*That I am related to the Russian Royal Family happens .

b: It happens that I am related to the Russian Royal Family .

## 2.2 Object Postponement

This section is concerned with direct and indirect object postponement :

### 2.2.1 Direct Object Postponement

The direct object normally precedes the object complement :

13- They elected John president .

Being a long noun phrase and for the sake of "end –focus or end –weight" , the direct object can be postponed as shown in the following instance in which idiot is an object complement and the man on whose judgment he now had to rely is a direct object :

14a: He had called the man on whose judgment he now had to rely an idiot .

b: He had called an idiot the man on whose judgment he now had to rely .

(Quirk et al ,1985 :1395 ; and Biber et al ,2000 : 153 )

On the other hand , the direct object can be postponed and preceded by an adverbial phrase realized by a prepositional phrase :

15a: He bequeathed his priceless collection of ming vases to Mary .

b: He bequeathed to Mary his priceless collection of ming vases . (Radford ,2004: 451 )

According to Leech and Svartvik (1994: 207) , gerund can function as a direct object and it can optionally be postponed leaving behind "introductory it " :

16a: You must find working here enjoyable .

b: You must find it enjoyable working here .

Similarly ,the direct object can be a that –clause or to –infinitive whose postponement is obligatory leaving behind the pronoun it :

17a: \*Something put that she was a spy into his head .

b: Something put it into his head that she was a spy .

18a: \*I'll leave to lock the door to you .

b: I'll leave it to you to lock the door . (Ibid : 210 )

As far as phrasal verbs are concerned , the direct object can optionally follow the particle for the sake of end –focus provided that the object is a noun phrase :

19a: I'll help you take your bags up .

b: I'll help you take up your bags .

However , the object can not follow the particle when it happens to be a pronoun :

20a: I'll help you take them up .

b: \*I'll help you take up them . (Biber et al ,2000 :154)

### 2.2.2 Indirect Object Postponement

The indirect object normally precedes the direct object :

21- She gave her brother a ring .

22- She gave him a ring .

In this case , the indirect object can optionally be postponed provided that it changes into a prepositional phrase :

23a: She gave a ring to her brother .

b: She gave a ring to him .

On the other hand ,the indirect object is obligatorily postponed when the direct object happens to be a pronoun :

24a: She gave it to her brother .

b: \*She gave (to)her brother it . (Quirk et al ,1985 :1396 )

### 2.3 Modifiers Postponement

A sentence element can be modified by means of a relative clause ,to-infinitive ,-ing clause , a prepositional phrase , or a comparative clause . Such modifying clauses are optionally or obligatorily postponed making continuous noun phrases as illustrated in the following points :

2.3.1 A relative clause modifying the subject can be optionally postponed .Consider the following instance in which the verb phrase is at the door separates the subject from the modifying relative clause :

25a: A guy who wants to speak to you is at the door .

b: A guy is at the door who wants to speak to you .

(Akmajian et al ,1997:173 ; and Hudson ,2000:274 )

2.3.2 A to – infinitive phrase modifying the subject can optionally be postponed and separated from the subject by a verb phrase :

26a: The time to decorate the house for Christmas had come .

b: The time had come to decorate the house for Christmas .(Quirk et al ,1985:1397)

According to Leech and Svartvik(1994:208-9)such a type of postponement is due to the fact that the predicate had come in (26) is short as compared to the subject the time to decorate the house for Christmas ,which is very long .

2.3.3 An –ing clause modifying an object can be optionally postponed for the sake of end-focus :

27a: I met a man carrying an injured child this morning .

b: I met a man this morning carrying an injured child .(Quirk et al ,1985:1397)

2.3.4 A relative clause modifying an object can optionally be postponed as Brown and Miller (1980 : 373) illustrate in the following example:

28a: They presented a copy of the work of Bloomfield which was hand printed on parchment and bound in red Morocco to the retiring professor .

b: They presented a copy of the work of Bloomfield to the retiring professor which was hand printed on parchment and bound in red Morocco .

2.3.5 A prepositional phrase modifying an adjective is obligatorily postponed when a degree adverbial is inserted between them . Consider the following instance in which of Brecht's early work modifies the adjective fond and that the adverbial to some extent is inserted between them :

29- They were fond , to some extent , of Brecht's early work .(Quirk et al ,1985:1209)

2.3.6 A to-infinitive clause modifying an adjective can optionally be postponed "to avoid the awkwardness of a long or emphatic element coming in a non-final position" . Consider the following example in which the infinitive clause to make peace with their enemies modifies the adjective ready:

30a: How ready to make peace with their enemies are they .

b: How ready are they to make peace with their enemies . (Leech &Svartvik,1994:208)

2.3.6 A comparative clause modifying an adjective or a noun can be obligatorily split into a pre- and post modifier , as illustrated in the following instances in which the adjective

intelligent and the noun name are pre modified by more and better and post modified by than his brother and than that respectively :

31- He is more intelligent than his brother .

32- You could not have a better name than that .(Aziz ,1989:220-1;&Biber et al,2000:102)

2.4 Clauses of amount or degree following too,so, and enough are postponed :

33- Too many people were there for the thief to escape unseen .

34- I've had enough trouble from those children to last me a life time .

35- I was so excited by the present that I forgot to thank you . (Leech & Svartvik ,1994: 209)

2.5 Phrases of exception are obligatorily postponed for end – weight :

36-All of them were arrested except the gang leader himself . (Ibid )

2.6 A reflexive pronoun mentioned for emphasis can be optionally postponed according to Pinckert(1986:122) who points out that the end of the sentence is the position of emphasis :

37a: The teacher himself came .

b: The teacher came himself .

2.7 A vocative is optionally postponed as in :

38a: Mr.John ,come here .

b: Come here ,Mr.John . (Crystal et al ,1976: 46 )

2.8 A comment clause is optionally postponed as illustrated in the following in which I think can be placed either initially or finally :

39a: I think Ali is absent .

b: Ali is absent , I think . (Aziz , 1989 : 227 )

## 2.9 Postponed Adjectives

Postponed adjectives follow certain indefinite pronoun heads such as no one, anything , and somebody :

40- I think they are doing every thing possible to protect the workers .(Biber et al ,2000:519)

On the other hand , Quirk & Greenbaum (1973 :116) state that certain adjectives such as elect , proper, absent , present ,concerned , involved , and others obligatorily follow the nouns they modify:

41- The people involved were not found .

In the same respect ,there are certain fixed expressions that contain postponed adjectives ,e.g. attorney general , heir apparent , notary public, Asia Minor , and others .(Biber et al ,2000:519) .

In addition , a head noun can be premodified and postmodified by adjectives as shown in the following example in which the head noun factors is premodified by physiological and postmodified by involved :

42- The physiological factors involved in transplanting are somewhat obscure .(Ibid )

Prepositional phrases beginning with of can postmdify nouns as in : the owner of the city , the city of Lahore and others . (Ibid :636 )

2.10 In English passive sentences , the agent is optionally postponed preceded by the preposition by:

43a: The farmer killed the ducklings.

b : The ducklings were killed( by the farmer) . ( Brown, 1984 : 229 )

2.11 English sentence elements can be reversed by means of using certain words as illustrated in the following example in which the meaning of belong to is similar to that of own :

44a: The house belongs to me .

b: I own the house . ( Ibid )

Similarly , Quirk et al , (1985 :1390 ) indicate that there are certain items such as similar to , different from , opposite , and others which express reciprocal relations :

45a: My house is opposite the hotel .

b: The hotel is opposite my house .

### 3- Postponement in Arabic

Arabic is syntactically enriched with sentence element postponement since it is an inflectional language in that the words are marked by what can be called الضمة [addamma] , الفتحمة [alfatha] , الكسرة [alkasra] , السكون [assukuun] , and التتوين [attanwiin] which make it possible to postpone certain sentence elements according to considerable restrictions and conditions .

#### 33.1 Subject Postponement

The subject of the sentence normally precedes the predicate as in :

1- القراءة مفيدة [alqiraatu mufiidatun ]

3.1.1 The subject is optionally postponed when :

a: it is a definite element and the predicate is a prepositional phrase :

2a: الحمد لله [alhamdu lillaah ]

b : الحمد لله [lillahi alhamd ] (Jadul-Kareem , 2002: 82 )

All praise is due to Allah .(Shakir ,2005: 31 )

b : the sentence begins with ( نعم ) [ni<sup>fa</sup>ma ] to express praise :

3a: علي نعم الطالب الذكي [‘aliyyun ni<sup>fa</sup>ma attalibu aththakiyyu ]

b : نعم الطالب الذكي علي [ni<sup>fa</sup>ma attalibu aththakiyyu ‘aliyyun ] (Al-Rajihi,2000: 108 )

What an intelligent student Ali is !

c : اللام المزحلقة [allam almuzahlaqa ] mentioned to emphasize the meaning of speech is attached to the predicate :

4a: انت ناجح [anta naajihun ]

b : انت ناجح انت [lanaajihun anta ] (Jadul- Kareem ,2002: 116 )

You are successful .

d: the sentence begins with the negative particle ( لا ) [laa ] whose function is similar to that of ( ليس ) [laysa ] even if the subject is an indefinite element and the predicate is a prepositional phrase :

5a: لا رجل في الدار [laa rajulun fii addaari ]

b : لا في الدار رجل [laa fii addaari rajulun ] ( Ibid )

There is no man in the house .

e : the predicate is a verb phrase preceded by a defective verb ( فعل ناقص ) [fi<sup>fa</sup>lun naaqis ]

6a: الطير يغرد [attayru yugarridu ]

b : شرع يغرد الطير [shara<sup>fa</sup>a yugarridu attayru ] ( Abu Muslih ,1988: 239 )

The bird began singing .

f: the sentence begins with ( كان واخواتها ) [kaana waaxawaatuha ] :

7a: زيد قائم [zaydun qaaimun ]

b : كان قائما زيد [ kaana qaaiman zaydun ] (Al-Bakkaa,1989:296 )

Zayd was standing up .

In this case , Jadul-Kareem,(2002:97) points out that both the subject and any one of ( كان واخواتها )

[kaana waxawaatuha ] , with the exception of ( ليس ) [laysa ] and ( مادام ) [maadaama ] ,can be postponed and preceded by the predicate :

8a: كان محمد مؤدبا [kaana muhammadun muaddaban ]

b : مؤدبا كان محمد [muaddaban kaana muhammadun ]

Mohammad was polite .

g : the sentence begins with ( ان ) [inna] and the predicate is a prepositional phrase provided that there is no pronoun , referring to the predicate , attached to the subject :

9- (Jadul-Kareem,2002:107) [inna fii thaalika la'ibratan] ان في ذلك لعبرة ....النازعات :الاية ٢٦- 9-  
Most surely there is in this a lesson .... (Shakir ,2005 : 678 )

h : the speaker intends to make the predicate prominent and closer to the listener's ears :

10a: عملك مخجل [ʔamaluka muxjilun ]

b : مخجل عملك [muxjilun ʔamaluka ] (Abu Muslih ,1988 : 118 )

Your work is ignominious .

3.1.2 The subject is obligatorily postponed when

a : it is an indefinite element and the predicate is a prepositional phrase :

11- [fii quluubihim maradun ] في قلوبهم مرض .....البقرة :الاية ١٠- 11-

(Ibn Eisa ,1998 : 202-4 ; & Ibn Jinni,1982 :86 )

There is a disease in their hearts ... (Shakir ,2005: 65 )

b: the predicate is an interrogative particle that must precede the subject :

12- [mata nasru allaah ... ] متى نصر الله ...البقرة :الاية ٢١٤- 12-

When will the help of Allaah come ? (Shakir ,2005 : 65 )

c: the sentence includes ( ان ) [anna ] :

13- [ʔindi anna zaydan muntaliquun ] عندي ان زيدا منطلق - 13-

To me ,Zayd set out .

d: a pronoun , referring to the predicate , is attached to the subject :

14- [am ʔala quluubin aqfaaluha ] ام على قلوب افعالها .... محمد :الاية ٢٤- 14-

(Abdul-Hameed ,1979 :242; & Al-Siyooti1998: 332)

Nay, on the hearts there are locks . (Shakir,2005: 586)

e: the subject is restricted and preceded by ( الا ) [illa ] :

15- [maa naajihun illa attaalibu aththakiyyu ] ماناجح الا الطالب الذكي - 15-

No one is successful except the intelligent student .

### 3.2 Agent Postponement

3.2.1 The agent is optionally postponed when

a : both the agent and the object do not end with ( الف مقصورة ) [alf maqsuura ] :

16 a: [darrasa muhammadun ʔaliyyan ] درس محمد عليا

b: [darrasa ʔaliyyan muhammadun ] درس عليا محمد

(Hanafi ,1977 : 51 ; & Al-Nahwi ,1999:176 )

Mohammad taught Ali .

b: the agent ends with ( الف مقصورة ) [alf maqsuura ] :

17a: [kataba muusa alkitaaba ] كتب موسى الكتاب

b: [kataba alkitaaba muusa ] (Ibid ) كتب الكتاب موسى

Moosa wrote the book .

c : both the agent and the object end with ( الف مقصورة )

[alf maqsuura ]:

18a: [lasa 'a alafa 'a yehya ] لسع الافعى يحيى

b : [lasa 'a yehya alafa a ] (Ibid ) لسع يحيى الافعى

The snake stung yehya .

d : the object's social rank is higher than that of the agent :

19a: [shatama assufahaau alxaliifata ] شتم السفهاء الخليفة

b : [shatama alxaliifata assufshaau ] شتم الخليفة السفهاء

(Al-Batliyoosi ,2003:65 )

The ignorant insulted the caliph .

e : the speaker is interested in the object rather than the agent :

20a: [daraba zaydun axi ] ضرب زيد اخي

b : [daraba axi zaydun ] (Ibid ) ضرب اخي زيد

Zayd hit my brother .

f : the poets write verse :

21a: اذا خضضت القنابل ماء السماء [itha xadxadat alqanaabulu maa assamaai ]

b : اذا خضضت ماء السماء القنابل [itha xadxadat maa assamaai

Alqanaabulu ] ( Ibid )

If pumps had shaken the water of the sky .

### 3.2.2 the agent is obligatorily postponed when :

a: a pronoun , referring to the object , is attached to the agent :

22- لا ينفع نفسا ايمانها... الانعام : الاية ١٥٨ - ١٥٨ ( Al-Nahwi,1999:179;& Al-Batliyoosi,2003:63 )

Its faith shall not profit a soul . (Shakir ,2005: 194 )

b : the agent is restricted by ( الا ) [illa ] :

23- ما فهم الدرس الا الطالب الذكي [maa fahima addarsa illa attalibu aththakiyyu ]  
( Jadul-Kareem ,2002 : 137 )

No one understood the lesson except the intelligent student .

c : the object is a pronoun attached to the verb and the agent is an explicit noun :

24- كافأني الامير [kaafaani alamiiru ] ( Al-Hashimi , 2002 : 91 )

The prince rewarded me .

### 3.3 Agent and verb postponement

Both the agent and the verb are postponed when

a : the object is an interrogative particle which must occur initially :

25- فأي ايات الله تنكرون ..... غافر : الاية ٨١- ٨١ [faayya aayaati Allaahi  
Tunkiruun .....]

In this sentence, ( الواو ) [alwaaw ] attached to the verb ( تنكر )

[ tunkir] is considered the agent . ( Al-Taftazaani ,2001:373; & Ibnulatheer ,1998 : 23)

b : the object is an explicit pronoun in an accusative case such as

( اياك ) [iyyaaka ] :

26- اياك نعبد... الفاتحة : الاية ٥ - ٥ [iyyaaka na'abudu ] (Ibid )

Thee do we serve .....(Shakir ,2005 :31 )

c : the sentence expresses a purpose in terms of a purpose phrase :

27a : جاء اللص طمعا في المال [jaa allussu tama'an fii almaal ]

b : طمعا في المال جاء اللص [tama'an fii almaali jaa allussu ]

(Jadul-Kareem,2002:162 )

The thief came for the love of money .

d : the sentence begins with ( أما ) [amma ] which is mentioned for specification :

28- فأما اليتيم فلا تقهر... الضحى : الاية ٩ - ٩ [faamma alyatiima falaa taqhar ...]

It should be noticed that the agent in this sentence is an implicit pronoun related to ( اليتيم ) [ alyatiim ]

Therefore, as for the orphan , do not oppress (him) .( Shakir,2005:696)

e : فاء الجزاء [faa aljaza'a ] is attached to the verb :

29- وربك فكبر... المدثر : الاية ٣ - ٣ [warabbaka fakabbir ....] (Al-

Hashimi , 2002: 92 )

And your lord do magnify .(Shakir,2005:665 )

### 3.4 Indirect Object Postponement

Certain transitive verbs are followed by two objects , the first of which is considered as a semantically agent originally preceded by a preposition.

Sibawayh named such a first object as indirect followed by a direct object:

30- اعطيت زيدا كتابا- [a ataytu zaydan kitaaban ] I gave Zayd a book .

31a: اعطيت لزيد كتابا [a ataytu lizaydin kitaaban ]

b : اعطيت كتابا لزيد [a ataytu kitaaban lizaydin ]

This indicates that the prepositional phrase ( لزيد ) [lizaydin ] as an indirect object is postponed . ( I gave a book to Zayd ) .(Al-Rajih,2000:191 ;& Al -Batliyoosi,1980:230)

### 3.5 Verb ,Agent and object postponement

Sometimes two pronouns are attached to a transitive verb , the first of which is an agent and the second is an object referring to a preceding noun . This process is known as ( الاشتغال ) [alishtigaal] :

32- اخوك رأيتَه [axuuka raaytuhu ] (Abu Muslih,1988:184)

I saw your brother .

Adverbs of manner normally follow verbs but such verbs can be postponed provided that they are inflected :

33- خشعا ابصارهم يخرجون من الاجداث ... القمر :الاية ٧ [xushsha'an absaaruhum yexrujuuna mina alajdaath ] (Jadul-Kareem ,2002:191 ;& Ibn Eisa ,1998:21 )

Their eyes cast down , going forth from their graves .( Shakir ,2005:610)

On the other hand , the verb is obligatorily postponed when the adverb is an interrogative particle which must occur initially :

34- كيف تكفرون بالله ... البقرة :الاية ٢٨ [kayfa takfuruuna billaah ...] ( Al-Hashimi,2002:176 )

How do you deny Allah ... (Shakir,2005: 35 )

### 3.6 Noun Postponement

Nouns normally precede adverbs of manner . However , such nouns are optionally postponed :

35a: دخل الصديق مبتسما [daxala assadiiqu mubtasiman ]

b : دخل مبتسما الصديق [ daxala mubtasiman assadiiqu ] ( Ibid )

The friend entered smiling .

On the other hand , the noun is obligatorily postponed when

a: it is an indefinite element :

36- جاء مسرعا رسول [ jaa musri'an rasuulun ] ( Ibid )

A messenger came quickly .

b: it is restricted by ( الا ) [illa] :

37- ما جاء ماشيا الا سليم [ maa jaa maashiyan illa saliimun ] (Ibn Eisa ,1998:19 )

No one came on foot except Saleem.

### 3.7 Comparative Clause Postponement

A comparative clause is obligatorily postponed and preceded by an adverb of manner when :

a : comparing two different characteristics of two different persons :

38- سليم رجلا اسرع من خليل راكبا [saliimun rajulan asra'u min xaliilin raakiban ] (Al-Hashimi,2002:176)

Saleem on foot is faster than Khalil riding .

b : comparing two different characteristics of the same person or thing :

39- الطير مغردا افضل منه ساكتا [ attayru mugarridan afthalu mihu saakitan ] (Ibid )

The bird singing is better than its being silent .

### 3.8 Phrases of Exception postponement

Phrases of exception are normally postponed in Arabic :

40- حضر السادة الا خادمهم [hadara assadatu illa xaadimahum ]

The gentlemen have attended except their servant .

However , such a phrase can precede the noun from which it is excluded :

41- حضر الا خادمهم السادة [hadara illa xaadimahum assadatu ] ( Al-Bakkaa,1989:418 )

### 3.9 Reflexive Pronouns Postponement

Reflexive pronouns are mentioned to emphasize speech in terms of the word ( نفس ) [nafs ] which is annexed to the pronoun that refers to the emphasized noun . Such an emphasizing element is obligatorily postponed :

42- جاء الطالب نفسه [jaa attalibu nafsuhu . ] ( Al-Hashimi ,2002:223 )

The student himself came .

### 4- Contrastive Analysis

There are certain syntactic similarities and differences between English and Arabic concerning postponement as illustrated in the following points :

#### 4.1 Subject Postponement

##### 4.1.1 Gerund

In English , gerund as a subject is optionally postponed leaving behind the pronoun it :

1a: Getting up early is healthy .

b : It is healthy getting up early .

In Arabic , the noun phrase as a subject is optionally postponed provided that the sentence begins with one of the defective verbs ( كان واخواتها ) [kaana waaxawatuha ] and that (تنوين الضم) [tanwiin addam ] of the predicate changes into ( تنوين الفتح ) [tanwiin alfath ] :

2a: السفر ممتع [assafaru mumti'un] . Traveling is interesting .

b : كان ممتعا السفر : [kaana mumti'an assafaru ] . Traveling was interesting .

##### 4.1.2 Prepositional phrase

When the subject of the English sentence is a prepositional phrase , it is optionally postponed leaving behind the pronoun it :

3a: From Hilla to Baghdad is ninety kilometers .

b : It is ninety kilometers from Hilla to Baghdad .

In Arabic , the subject is also optionally postponed provided it is a definite element and the predicate is a prepositional phrase :

4a: الحمد لله [ alhamdu lillaah ]

b: الله الحمد [lillaah alhamd ] All praise is due to Allaah .

4.1.3 In Arabic , the subject is postponed when the sentence begins with ( ان ) [inna] and the predicate is a prepositional phrase . In this case , a subject in English is marginally postponed to express emphasis :

5- ان في العلم فائدة [inna fii al'ilmii faaidatan ]

6- Most surely there is in science a benefit .

4.1.4 The subject in Arabic is obligatorily postponed when it is an indefinite element and the predicate is a prepositional phrase :

7- في دارهم ضيف [fii daarihim dayfun ] . There is a guest in their house .

In English , it is possible for the subject to follow the main verb after an adverbial phrase of position introduced by a preposition as illustrated in the following example in which a guest can be postponed under the influence of the prepositional phrase in their house :

8-In their house is a guest . (Murcia & Freeman ,1999: 619 )

4.1.5 In both English and Arabic , the subject is postponed when the sentence begins with an interrogative particle :

9- متى نصر الله... البقرة : الاية ٢١٤ [ mata nasru Allaah ]

10- When will the help of Allaah come ?

##### 4.1.6 That-Clause

In English , the subject may be a that- clause which can optionally be postponed leaving behind the pronoun it , a case which is similar to the subject in Arabic that obligatorily follows the verb and the object :

11a :That the students are lazy upsets me .

b: It upsets me that the students are lazy .

12- [yuqliquni anna attalabata kusaala ] يلقطني أن الطلبة كسالي

#### 4.1.7 To-Infinitive

The subject in English may be to-infinitive that can optionally be postponed leaving behind the pronoun it , the structure which has no counterpart in Arabic :

13a : to smoke is harmful .

b: It is harmful to smoke .

14a: [an tudaxxina mudirrun ] أن تدخن مضر

b : \* [mudirrun an tudaxxin ] مضر أن تدخن \*

4.1.8 In Arabic , praise can be expressed by means of using the word ( نعم ) [ni'ma ] . This results in optional postponement of the subject .Such a process is similar to exclamatory sentences in English in which the subject is obligatorily postponed :

15a: [a'liyyun ni'ma attaalibu aththakiyyu ] علي نعم الطالب الذكي

b: [ni'ma attaalibu aththakiyyu a'liyyun ] نعم الطالب الذكي علي

16- What an intelligent student Ali is !

4.1.9 The subject in Arabic is postponed when ( اللام المزحلقة ) [ allam almuzahlaqa] is attached to the predicate , a structure which is impossible in English :

17a: [anta naajihun ] . انت ناجح .

b: [ lanaajihun anta ] . \* Successful are you .

4.1.10 When the Arabic sentence begins with the negative particle ( لا ) [laa] even If the subject is an indefinite element and the predicate is a prepositional phrase , the subject is postponed . Such a structure has no counterpart in English :

18a: [laarajulun fii addaari ] . لا رجل في الدار .

b : [laa fii addaari rajulun ] . \* There is not in the house a man .

4.1.11 The subject is obligatorily postponed in Arabic when the sentence includes ( أن ) [anna ] and its antecedent , the process which has no counterpart in English :

19- [Indi annaka faadilun ] . عندي أنك فاضل .

In this English sentence , the subject is the pronoun you whereas honest is the subject complement which counterparts with فاضل [faadilun ] the postponed subject in Arabic .

4.1.12 In Arabic , the subject is obligatorily postponed when preceded by the particle of exception ( الا ) [illa] :

20- [maa naajihun illa attaalibu aththakiyyu ] ما ناجح الا الطالب الذكي

This is similar to English as illustrated in the following sentence in which the intelligent student, which counterparts with the subject no one , must follow the preposition except :

21- No one is successful except the intelligent student .

## 4.2 Object Postponement

This section is concerned with direct and indirect object postponement :

### 4. 2.1 Direct Object Postponement

Being a long noun phrase , the direct object can optionally follow the object complement , a structure which is impossible in Arabic

22a: They chose the student who comes early monitor .

b : They chose monitor the student who comes early .

23a: [ixtaaru attaaliba allathi yati mubakkiran muraqiban ] اختاروا الطالب الذي يأتي مبكرا مراقبا

b : \* [ixtaaru muraaqiban attaaliba allathi yati mubakkiran ] اختاروا مراقبا الطالب الذي يأتي مبكرا \*

Gerund can function as an object in which case it is optionally postponed leaving behind the pronoun it , a structure which has no counterpart in Arabic :

24a: I found working here enjoyable .

b: I found it enjoyable working here .

25a: [wajattu al'amala huna mumti'an .] وجدت العمل هنا ممتعا

b : \* [wajattuhu mumti'an al'amala huna ] وجدته ممتعا العمل هنا \*

A that-clause can function as an object which is obligatorily postponed leaving behind the pronoun *it* . Such a structure has no counterpart in Arabic :

26- Something put it into his head that she was a spy .

27- شيء ما وضعه في تصوره انها كانت جاسوسة \* [ shayun ma wada'ahu fii tasawurihi annaha kaanat jaasusatan ]

To-infinitive as an object is obligatorily postponed leaving behind the pronoun *it*, a structure which has a counterpart in Arabic :

28- I'll leave it to you to lock the door .

29- سأترك الامر لك أن تغلق الباب [saatruku alamra laka an tagliqa albaaba ]

#### **4.2.2 Indirect Object Postponement**

In both English and Arabic , the indirect object is optionally postponed provided it changes into a prepositional phrase :

30a: She gave her brother a book .

b: She gave a book to her brother .

31a: اعطت اخيها كتابا [a'atat axiia kitaaban ]

b: اعطت كتابا لـ اخيها [a'atat kitaaban liaxiia ]

In both English and Arabic , the indirect object is obligatorily postponed when the direct object happens to be a pronoun :

32a: She gave it to her brother .

b : \*She gave (to)her brother it .

33- اعطته لـ اخيها [a'atathu liaxiia ]

#### **4.3 Agent Postponement**

In English , it is impossible to postpone the agent because it changes the meaning of the sentence :

34a: The boy ate the apple .

b: \* The apple ate the boy .

In Arabic the agent ( الفاعل ) [alfail ] is optionally postponed :

34a: كتب عليّ الدرس [kataba aaliyyun addarsa ]

b: كتب الدرس عليّ [kataba addarsa aaliyyun ]

#### **4.4 Agent and Verb Postponement**

In Arabic , the agent can be a pronoun attached to the verb such as ( كتبت ) [katabtu ] , or an implicit pronoun which is optionally postponed in both cases :

35a: كتبت الدرس [katabtu addarsa ] . I wrote the lesson .

b: الدرس كتبت [addarsa katabtu ] \*The lesson wrote I .

36a: اقصد اياك [ aqsudu iyyaaka ] . I intend you .

b: اياك اقصد [iyyaaka aqsudu ] . \*You intend I .

Such processes do not correspond to English in which the agent and the verb can not be postponed . In both English and Arabic , the agent and the verb are postponed when the object is an interrogative particle :

37- أي كتاب تريد ؟ [ayya kitaabin turiid ]

38- Which book do you want ?

#### **4.5 Verb, Agent ,and Object Postponement**

Sometimes two pronouns are attached to a transitive verb , the first of which is an agent and the second is an object referring to a preceding noun . Such pronouns and the verb are postponed in Arabic ,whereas in English such a structure is impossible :

39- اخوك رأيته [axuuka raaytuhu ] I saw your brother .

40- \* Your brother I saw him .

In both English and Arabic ,the verb ,agent and object are obligatorily postponed when the sentence begins with an interrogative particle :

41- How do we help you ?

42- كيف نساعدكم؟ [ kayfa nusaa'idukum ]

#### **4.6 Phrases of Exception Postponement**

In both English and Arabic , phrases of exception are postponed :

43- جاء التلاميذ الا معلمهم [jaa attalaamiithu illa mu'allimahum ]

44- The pupils came except their teacher .

However , in Arabic a phrase of exception can precede the noun from which it is excluded , a structure which is impossible in English :

45- جاء الا معلمهم التلاميذ [jaa illa mu'allimahum attalaamiithu ]

46- \* The pupils except their teacher came .

#### **4.7 Comparative Clause Postponement**

In both English and Arabic , a comparative clause is obligatorily postponed when

a : comparing two different characteristics of two different persons or things :

47- سليم رجلا اسرع من خليل راكبا [saliimun rajulan asra u min xaliilin rajulan ]

48- Saleem on foot is faster than Khalil riding .

b : comparing two different characteristics of the same person or thing :

49- الطير مغردا افضل منه ساكتا [attayru mugarridan afdalu minhu saakitan ]

50- The bird singing is better than its being silent .

#### **4.8 Reflexive Pronoun Postponement**

In both English and Arabic , a reflexive pronoun mentioned for emphasis is postponed :

51- The student came himself .

52- جاء الطالب نفسه [jaa attaalibu nafsuhu ]

#### **4.9 Vocative Postponement**

Vocative is optionally postponed in both English and Arabic :

53a: Ali,come here .

b : Come here ,Ali.

54a: ياعلي تعال [ ya'aliyyu ta'ala ]

b : تعال ياعلي [ ta'ala ya'aliyyu ]

#### **4.10 Comment Clause Postponement**

A comment clause is optionally postponed in both English and Arabic :

55a: I think Zeki is absent .

b : Zeki is absent , I think .

56a: أظن زكيا غائبا [azunnu zakiyyan gaaiban ]

b : زكي غائب اظن [zakiyyun gaaibun azunnu ]

#### **4.11 Adjective Postponement**

In Arabic , adjectives always follow the nouns they modify similar to certain

English adjectives such as elect , proper , absent , present , concerned , involved and others :

57- The minister elect works hard .

58- الوزير المنتخب يعمل بجد [ alwaziiru almuntaxabu ya'amalu bijiddin ]

#### **4.12 Reciprocal Relations**

Certain items such as similar to , different from , opposite , and others are mentioned to express reciprocal relations in which case postponement is clear in both English and Arabic :

59a: The school is in front of our house .

b : Our house is in front of the school .

60a: المدرسة امام بيتنا [ almadrasatu amaama baytina ]

b : بيتنا امام المدرسة [ baytuna amaama almadrasati ]

#### **4.13 Modifiers Postponement**

##### **4.13.1 Relative Clause Modifying Subject**

In English , the relative clause that modifies the subject is optionally postponed , whereas in Arabic it can not be postponed :

61a: The boy who wants to speak to you is at the door .

b: The boy is at the door who wants to speak to you .

62a: الولد الذي يريد ان يتكلم معك على الباب [alwaladu allathi yuriidu an yatakallama ma'aka a'ala albaabi ]

b : \* الولد على الباب الذي يريد ان يتكلم معك [alwaladu a'ala albaabi allathi yuriidu an yatakallama ma'aka ]

#### **4.13.2 To-Infinitive modifying subject**

In English , the to –infinitive clause that modifies the subject is optionally postponed whereas in Arabic it is obligatorily postponed :

63a: The time to decorate the house for Christmas had come .

b : The time had come to decorate the house for Christmas .

64a: \* الوقت لنزين البيت لاعياد الميلاد حان [ alwaqtu linuzayyina albayta lia'ayaadi almiilaadi haan ]

b: حان الوقت لنزين البيت لاعياد الميلاد [haana alwaqtu linuzayyina albayta lia'ayaadi almiilaadi ]

#### **4.13.3 -Ing Clause Modifying Object**

In English , the –ing clause that modifies the object is optionally postponed similar to a verb phrase in Arabic :

65a: I met a man carrying an injured child this morning .

b : I met a man this morning carrying an injured child .

66a: قابلت رجلا يحمل طفلا مصابا هذا الصباح [qaabaltu rajulan yahmilu tiflan musaaban hatha assabaah ]

b : قابلت رجلا هذا الصباح يحمل طفلا مصابا [qaabaltu rajulan haatha assabaah yahmilu tiflan musaaban ]

#### **4.13.4 Relative Clause Modifying Object**

The relative clause that modifies the object is optionally postponed in both English and Arabic :

67a: They presented a present which was very precious to the first winner .

b : They presented a present to the first winner which was very precious .

68a: قدموا الهدية التي كانت ثمينة جدا الى الفائز الاول [qaddamu alhadiyyata allati kaanat thamiinatan jiddan ilaa alfaaizi alawwal ]

b : قدموا الهدية الى الفائز الاول التي كانت ثمينة جدا [qaddamu alhadiyyata ila alfaaizi alawwali allati kaanat thamiinatan jiddan ]

#### **4.13.5 Prepositional Phrase Modifying Adjective**

The prepositional phrase that modifies an adjective is obligatorily postponed in both English and Arabic :

69- They were fond , to some extent , of Shakespear's plays .

70- كانوا مولعين و الى حد ماو بمسرحيات شكسبير [kaanu mula'iin ila haddin maa bimasrahiyyaat shakispiir ]

### **5- Conclusions**

As far as conclusions are concerned ,the present study shows certain points of similarities and differences between English and Arabic constructions of postponement :

#### **5.1 Points of Similarity**

##### **5.1.1 Subject Postponement**

In both English and Arabic, the subject is postponed when

a: it is gerund in English ,and the Arabic sentence begins with a defective verb .

b: it is an indefinite element and the predicate is a prepositional phrase .

- c: it is a that-clause in English ,and preceded by a verb phrase in Arabic .
- d: it is preceded by the particle of exception such as except in English and (لا) [illa]in Arabic .
- e: the English subject and the Arabic predicate are prepositional phrases .
- f: the English sentence expresses exclamation ,and the Arabic one expresses praise .
- g: the sentence begins with an interrogative particle .
- h: the predicate is a prepositional phrase ,and the Arabic sentence begins with ( ان ) [inna] .

### 5.1.2 Object Postponement

- a: A to-infinitive phrase in English and its counterpart in Arabic are obligatorily postponed when they function as direct objects .
- b: In both English and Arabic , the indirect object is optionally postponed provided it changes into a prepositional phrase .
- c: The indirect object is obligatorily postponed when the direct object is a pronoun .

5.1.3 In both English and Arabic , the agent and the verb are postponed when the object happens to be an interrogative particle .

5.1.4 A comparative clause, a reflexive pronoun , a comment clause , vocative, a to-Infinitive phrase modifying a subject , a relative clause modifying an object , a prepositional phrase modifying an adjective , and a verb phrase in Arabic and an -ing clause modifying an object in English can be postponed in both English and Arabic .

5.1.5 All adjectives in Arabic and certain ones in English follow the nouns they modify .

## 5.2 Points of Differences

### 5.2.1 Subject Postponement

- a: In English, the subject is postponed when it happens to be to-infinitive, the structure which is weak in Arabic.
- b: The Arabic subject , unlike the English one, is postponed when
- 1-اللام المرحقة-1 [allaam almuzahlaqa] is attached to the predicate .
  - 2-the sentence begins with the negative particle( لا ) [illa].
  - 3-the sentence includes ( ان ) [anna] and its antecedent .

### 5.2.2 Object Postponement

Object postponement is weak in Arabic , whereas in English the direct object is optionally postponed when it happens to be gerund or longer than the object complement.

5.2.3 It is possible to postpone the verb, the agent, and the object in Arabic, whereas in English such a type of postponement is impossible .

5.2.4 The relative clause that modifies the subject is optionally postponed in English , the structure which is weak in Arabic .

5.2.5 In Arabic, a phrase of exception can precede the noun from which it is excluded ,the structure which is impossible in English .

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