

Deleting Subordinators in English and Arabic Subordinate Adverbial Clauses with Reference to Translation: A Contrastive Study

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Abstract

This study is a contrastive syntactic analysis whose main focus related to the deletion of subordinators in both English and Arabic subordinate adverbial clauses. The present study tackles the problem of deleting subordinators in the English surface structure of the subordinate clause and transforming the finite clause into a non- finite or verbless clause. These clauses have different sorts of syntactic structures which could pose problems to translators. This study aims at showing (1) Whether all types of the English subordinate adverbial clauses involve deletion of the subordinator, (2) Whether Arabic can exhibit corresponding surface structures where the Arabic subordinator can be deleted. This study limits itself to the subordinate adverbial clauses as they appear within the context of the complex sentence. Other types of subordinate clause, nominal and 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 tackling the subject under investigation is the contrastive approach.

Key words: subordinators, deletion, surface structure, deep structure, non-finite clause.

Introduction

In some English subordinate adverbial clauses, the subordinator could be deleted without affecting the well- formedness or acceptability of these clauses.

(1.1) a. [If a serious crisis should arise], the public would have to be Informed of its full implications.

b. [* should a serious crisis arise], the public would have to be informed of its full implications.

(1.1a) represents the normal structure, but (1.1b) has stylistic features. (1.1b) is said to be derived from its deep counterpart (1.1a) by two ordered transformational rules: if- deletion and Subject – Verb inversion. When

rendered into Arabic, both (1.1a-b) will have one Arabic translation (1.2) below simply because there are no Arabic transformational rules which may derive an Arabic structure equivalent to that in (1.1b); hence the stylistic features in the latter could be transferred into Arabic.

(1.2) a. لو نشأت أزمة خطيرة لأستوجب اعلام الجمهور بكامل تفاصيلها.

Sentence (b) below is ill – formed where the conditional particle is deleted:

b. * نشأت أزمة خطيرة لأستوجب اعلام الجمهور بكامل تفاصيلها.

Each of the following examples will be given with two structures: (a) Deep structure (D.S.) and (b) Surface Structure (S.S)

For more information and illustrations regarding the topic of deleting subordinators, , Roberts (1986), Tippling (2000), Radford (2004), Langacker (2008), Jagger (2010), Koutsoudas (2011), Liles (2012), Onions (2012), see Bebbington (2017).

1- The Subordinate Clause of Time

(1.3) a. D.S. [When I neared the entrance], I shook hands with my colleagues.

b. S.S. [* Nearing the entrance], I shook hands with my Colleagues.

The sequence of words “Nearing the entrance “in (1.3b) above functions as a non- finite subordinate clause of time. Its deep structure is in (1.3a) above. (1.3b) should be rendered into Arabic with the deep structure of the subordinate clause of time being recovered, i.e. the subordinator should be present since its deletion will end in the ill-formed translation (1.4b) below.

(1.4) a. (حين اقتربت من المدخل)، تصافحت مع زملائي

b. (اقتراب من المدخل)، تصافحت مع زملائي

In (1.5) below the non – finite clause of time in (1.5b) is derived from its deep structure (1.5a) which is the structure to be rendered into Arabic:

(1.5) a. The stranger, [after he had discarded his jacket], moved threateningly towards me.

b. The stranger, [having discarded his jacket], moved threateningly towards me.

Two Arabic translations are given in (1.6). (a) is for the deep structure (1.6a) and (b), which is not preferred in Arabic, is for the surface structure (1.6b):

- (1.6) a. باتوجه الغريب، (يعد أن نزع سترته)، باتجاهي مهددا.
b. توجه الغريب، * (نزع سترته)، باتجاهي مهددا

In most cases, the subject, that is actually expressed in a non - finite or verbless subordinate clause whose subordinator has been deleted, is assumed to be identical in reference to the subject of the main clause:

- (1.7) a. When [we] reached the river, [we] pitched a camp for the night.
b. [*] Reaching the river, [we] pitched a camp for the night.

The absent subject of the non – finite subordinate clause of time in (1.7b) is identical with that of the main clause. Both (1.7a-b) will be rendered into Arabic as:

- (1.8) حين وصل(نا) النهر أقم(نا) مخيما لنقضي الليل فيه.

Sometimes, the subject of the main clause does not appear as a subject of the subordinate clause as (1.9) illustrates:

- (1.9) Reaching the river, the storm forced us to pitch a camp for night.

The noun phrase “the storm” which is the subject of the main clause, can’t be coreferential with the deleted subject of the subordinate clause. The real subject can be determined according to the sentential context. The pronoun “us”, in the main clause, appears as the appropriate due to the deleted subject of the subordinate clause.

- (1.10) حين وصل(نا) النهر اجبرت(نا) العاصفة على أن نقيم مخيما لنقضي الليل فيه

When no subordinator is present, this could cause a problem to the translator, because the subordinate clause, in such a case, could be ambiguous unless the macro – context disambiguates it. The subordinate clause which has underground deletion in (a) below could have two readings:

- (1.11) a. feeling sick, he decided to stay in bed.
b. As he felt sick, he decided to stay in bed.

2. The Subordinate Clause of Place

- (1.12) a. I found my book [where I had left them].
b. I found my book [* I had left them].

Deleting the subordinator of place will lead to an ill – formed structure as (1.12b) above illustrates. Translation (1.13a) below, which corresponds to the (1.12a) is well – formed whereas translation (1.13b), which corresponds to (1.12b) above, is ill – formed.

- (1.13) a. وجدت كتبي (حيث كنت قد تركتها)
b. وجدت كتبي (* كنت قد تركتها).

3. The Subordinate Clause of Purpose

- (1.14) a. I sent him the proposals last week [so that he might have time to consider them].
b. I sent him the proposals last week [* he might have time to consider them].

- (1.15) a. ارسلت اليه المقترحات الاسبوع الماضي (كي يكون لديه وقت لدراستها).
b. ارسلت اليه لمقترحات الاسبوع الماضي (* يكون لديه وقت لدراستها).

4. The Subordinate Clause of Result

- (1.16) a. He spent very little [so that he has plenty of money].
b. He spent very little [* he had a lot of money].

- (1.17) a. أنفق قليلا جدا (بحيث كان لديه الكثير من المال)
b. أنفق قليلا جدا (* كان لديه الكثير من المال)

5. The Subordinate Clause of Condition and Concession

Condition:

- (1.18) a. [If it is interpreted strictly] , the new law couldn't be enforced.
b. [* it is interpreted strictly], the new law couldn't be enforced

Both (1.18a-b) are syntactically well – formed. (1.18b), which is derived from its deep counterpart (1.18a) by a set of transformational rules, should be transformed back into its deep structure (1.18a) before translating it into Arabic, because Arabic does not provide similar transformational rules for deriving a corresponding surface structure where the conditional particle, the subject and the auxiliary verb are deleted. Two Arabic translations are given below. The first for the deep structure (1.18a) and the second, which is ill – formed, for the surface structure (1.18b):

- (1.19) a. لن يكون فرض النظام الجديد ممكنا (إذا فسر تفسيراً صارماً)
b. لن يكون فرض النظام الجديد ممكنا (* فسر تفسيراً صارماً)

(1.20) a. [If the government had known what was going to happen], it wouldn't have abolished the credit facilities rendered to the foreign investors.

b. [* had the government known what was to happen], it wouldn't have abolished the credit facilities rendered to the foreign investors.

(1.21) a. لو كانت الحكومة تعرف ما سيحدث) لما الغت التسهيلات الائتمانية المقدمة الى المستثمرين الأجانب.

b. (* كانت الحكومة تعرف ما سيحدث) لما الغت التسهيلات الأتمانية المقدمة الى المستثمرين الأجانب.

Concession:

(1.22) a. [Although he was tired], he kept on working.

b. [* tired], he kept on working.

(1.22b) should be rendered into Arabic with its deep structure (1.22a) being recovered.

(1.23) a. (برغم انه كان متعبا) فقد ظل يعمل.
b. (* متعبا) فقد ظل يعمل.

6. The Conditional – Concessive Clause

(1.24) a. He always comes worst in argument, [whether he is right or wrong].

b. He always comes worst in argument, [* (he is) right or wrong].

(1.25) a. يفشل دوما في النقاش (سواء كان صائبا أم مخطئا)
b. يفشل دوما في النقاش (* كان صائبا أم مخطئا)

7. The Subordinate Clause of Manner and Comparison

(1.26) a. He was fascinated to her [as a moth is attracted by a light].

b. He was attracted to her [* a moth is attracted by a light].

(1.27) a. كان منجذبا اليها (كما يجذب حشرة العث الضوء)
b. كان منجذبا اليها (* يجذب حشرة العث الضوء)

8. The Subordinate Clause of Proportion

(1.28) a. [As he grew disheartened], (so) his work deteriorated.

b. [* he grew disheartened], (so) his work deteriorated.

(1.29) a. (كلما ثبتت عزيمته) تدهور عمله
b. (* ثبتت عزيمته) تدهور عمله

9. Subordinate Clause of Preference

- (1.30) a. She 'd work in the countryside [rather than marry that man].
b. She 'd work in the countryside [* marry that man].

- (1.31) a. هي ستعمل في الريف (بدلاً من أن تتزوج ذلك الرجل)
b. هي ستعمل في الريف (* ان تتزوج ذلك الرجل)

10. The Subordinate Clause of Reason or Cause

- (1.32) a. [Since he was persuaded by our optimism] , he contributed time and money to the scheme.
b. [* Persuaded by our optimism] , he contributed time and money to the scheme.

Both (1.32b) and its deep structure (1.32a) are well – formed sentences. If (1.32b) , where the subordinator is deleted , is translated into Arabic , the resulting translation would be the ill- formed sentence (1.33b). Thus (1.32b) must be rendered into Arabic with its deep structure recovered and translated.

- (1.33) a. (مادام مقتنعاً بتفاؤلنا) فقد أسهم بالمشروع بماله ووقته.
b. (* مقتنعاً بتفاؤلنا) فقد أسهم بالمشروع بماله ووقته.

- (1.34) a. [Seeing that the weather had improved], we enjoyed the rest of the game.
b. [* The weather had improved], we enjoyed the rest of the game.

(1.34b) must be translated into Arabic by recovering its deep structure (1.34a). Otherwise, its rendition will be the ill – formed sentence (1.35b) below:

- (1.35) a. (اما وأن الجو قد تحسن) فأنا استمتعنا ببقية اللعبة
b. (* الجو قد تحسن) فاننا استمتعنا ببقية اللعبة.

Some subordinate non – finite clauses of reason or cause may be used without a subordinator as (1.36b) below illustrates:

- (1.36a) a. Tom, [because he is a shrewd politician], refused to form a coalition government.
b. Tom, [being a shrewd politician] , refused to form a coalition government.

(1,36a-b), both are well formed sentences, can be directly rendered into Arabic as:

- (1.37) a. رفض توم، (لأنه سياسي حاذق) ، أن يشكل حكومة ائتلافية.
b. رفض توم ، (* كونه سياسي حاذق) ، أن يشكل حكومة ائتلافية.

Conclusions

The above exploration of deleting the subordinator has shown the following facts:

- 1- The English subordinator of time (when, as, while, after, etc.), of condition (if), of concession (although), and of reason (because) can be deleted.
- 2- If the English surface structure of the subordinate clause has undergone the deletion of the subordinator and transforming the finite subordinate clause into a non – finite or verbless clause, the English deep structure will be translated into Arabic, because translating such surface structures always yields syntactically ill – formed sentences. (The only exception is the clause of reason where the subordinator of reason can be deleted in Arabic).
- 3- Deleting the subordinator in English could make the subordinate clause ambiguous. In such a case the translator has to consult the macro – context to disambiguate such clauses before translating them.

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حذف الأدوات التي تتصدر العبارات الانكليزية والعربية الظرفية التابعة مع
الإشارة الى الترجمة: دراسة مقارنة

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مستخلص البحث

هذه الدراسة هي تحليل نحوي مقارن يركز هدفها الرئيس على حذف الأدوات التي تتصدر العبارات الظرفية التابعة في اللغتين الانكليزية والعربية. وتتناول الدراسة مشكلة حذف الادوات التي تتصدر العبارات الظرفية التابعة في البنية السطحية الانكليزية وتحويلها من عبارات محدودة الى عبارات غير محدودة وغير فعلية. ولهذه العبارات انواع مختلفة من البنى السطحية التي قد تتسبب لمشكلات للمترجمين. وتسعى هذه الدراسة الى اظهار (1) فيما لو تضمن كل نوع من أنواع العبارات الظرفية التابعة الانكليزية حذفاً للأدوات التي تتصدر هذه العبارات و (2) فيما لو كان في اللغة العربية بنى سطحية مماثلة بالأماكن فيها حذف الأدوات التي تتصدر العبارات الظرفية التابعة. نامل أن يكون لهذه الدراسة قيمة نظرية وعملية للمهتمين بالبنى النحوية والترجمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الأدوات التي تتصدر العبارات الظرفية التابعة، الحذف، البنية السطحية، البنية العميقة، العبارة غير المحدودة.