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Fronting in English

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Abstract

This study seeks to give extensive account of fronting, which appears to be a universal phenomenon and how translates it from English to Arabic. Fronting means putting something that is important at the beginning of the sentence. The phenomenon of fronting appears not only in English but also in another languages. The linguists recognize this fact and confirm it in their various theses and researches. The study also presents a good account of fronting in English. There are many of terms and expressions have the same meaning of fronting. The study refers to most of this terms and expressions and gives illustrative examples of them such as Thematization and Clefting. The study deals with a set of definitions about fronting, reasons for using fronting in the language and kind of fronting. The study focuses on the translation of fronting from English to Arabic and gives illustrative examples of translation. This research refers that fronting is not mean add aesthetic and emphasis for sentences, but is also a linguistic phenomenon imposing itself and committed to do it. So , it becomes worthy to study, research and analyze. This is the purpose that make the researcher to do this study.

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1.Introduction

Linguists have given extensive attention to the fronting because fronting has become a universal linguistic phenomenon since it is found in almost all natural languages .It is optional in English and obligatory in some languages such as Japanese .Allerton (1979:275) finds that “A language, like English, which has a relatively rigid order, needs to make extensive use of transformations like passivization, clefting, etc., to achieve the required thematic order of elements.” It is known that a sentence is a linguistic object; and so, if one of its elements is fronted, then the treatment should be still linguistic In this respect, Mallinson and Bake (1981) think that the possibility of placing the focused word or phrase at the beginning of a clause may be universal; and the most usual function for fronting is topicalization.

However, many linguists intend to give the process of fronting more close attention since it cares all the semantic, syntactic, morphological and phonological components of language in addition to its stylistic and/or pragmatic effects.

The next section demonstrate the meaning of fronting and why we use it and how. Fronting means putting something that is important at the beginning of the sentence and this something usually comes later .The writer moves a word, clause, or a phrase from its original position in the sentence to the front position . The writer use fronting to focus on words that is move to the front position ,emphasize meaning and given topic .

the current papers sheds light on the different kind of fronting such as fronting of verb phrase, noun phrase fronting ,wh-fronting , etc. Themmatization (or marked them transformation) is other terms in English grammar referring to the same meaning of fronting. marked theme can be simply achieved by transposing object, verb or even adverb to sentence initial position.

Translation means the replacement of word,phrase,or clause in one language (SL) by equivalent word,phrase,or clause in another language (TL). The translation of fronting is not easy process because differences between source language and target language. .In the (Translation of fronting) we will explain many examples and how translate these examples to Arabic language. The translation of fronting from English into Arabic greatiy depends on the linguistic difference between SLand TL and the structure of the two.

2. what is fronting?

Fronting is a transformation which moves constituents to sentence initial position (Culicover 1979). Carter (2011) finds that fronting happens when we want to focus on something important ,we bring it to the front of the clause .Winter (1982:16) demonstrates that fronting is a process in which a constituent that normally appears in some position within a sentence occurs at the front the sentence of instead , while a gap occurs in the normal position, as in;

EX : This subject I enjoy-----

Where 'This subject' is fronted leaving a gap to occur in its normal position after the verb 'enjoy'. Jackendoff (1972) stats that fronting is a rule of preposition which moves phrases over a variable ,thinking that such utterances result from a transformation called 'topicalization' that moves noun phrases to the front of the sentence .So does Parlmutter (1979)refers to fronting as a process of moving an NP to sentence initial position over an indefinite distance; providing examples as the ones given below:

That boy nobody hates.

That boy John said that nobody hates.

That boy Mary believed John said nobody hates.

That boy somebody said Mary believed John said nobody hates

In this respect, Chomsky (1975) explains that fronting is optional, and has the effect of representing in the significant first place of a clause something other than the topic (subject). He adds that achieving such an effect is done by moving a whole element of structure and placing it in an unusual position in the clause; whereas Karris (1982) expresses fronting in terms of 'linearization' or rather 'alternative linearization.'

3. Why we use fronting?

Elgin (1979) thinks that fronting is one of the rules used to mark a particular constituent of a sentence as the focus of that sentence.

Fronting has three different effects:

3.1- **Emphatic:** giving the fronting element, in formal conversation, double emphasis and nuclear stress; consider the following;

EX : Noor her name is.

EX : Excellent food they serve here.

In the first sentence the speaker put "Noor" in initial position to give double emphasis that her name is Noor .

In the second sentence the speaker put "Excellent food" in initial position to give double emphasis that the food is excellent.

3.2. **Contrastive** :fronting helps to point dramatically to contrast between two things mentioned in neighbouring sentences or clauses which often have similar structures:

EX : Iraqi my nationality is; so Iraqi you might call me .

3.3. **'Given'** : found in more formal, especially in written English, as in:

EX : Most of these problems a computer could solve easily.

Baker (1992:145) argues that given information represents the common ground between the speaker and the listener gives the hearer reference point to which she / he can related new information .

4. Fronting as a Thematization

It seems that there are other terms in the English grammar indicating the same meaning of fronting. Thematization (or marked theme transformation) , is a case in point. Here, it is possible to take as 'theme' of a clause some elements not usually assuming that function. It is through this possibility that theme becomes a variable factor of importance in the message . Quirk and Greenbaum (1972: 411-12) think it quite common, especially in informal speech, for one element to be fronted with nuclear stress and thus to be 'marked' (given special emphasis) both thematically and informationally.

Fronting is the term we apply to the achievement of marked theme by moving into initial position an item which is otherwise unusual there QUIRK et al(1985,1377) .In this definition, Markedness is a comprehensible used by linguists to refer to departure from the criterion. According to James (1980:110) “affirms that marked the theme can be simple achieved by transposing object, verb or even adverb to initial position in a sentences ”.

However, the following are some ways in which fronting can be realized in English:

4.1 Adverb fronting:

EMONDS (1976:28) emphasis that several kinds of adverbs may be fronted .And they marked, when they are fronted as in:

EX : Rarely does Ali drink tea.

EX : Into the house the strange boy enter.

4.2 Fronting of Prepositional Phrase:

EX : In my opinion, Ali will success in the exam.

EX : Among the teacher sat some students.

As above some prepositional Phrase can be fronted and this prepositional phrase it's function as adverbs in a sentences.

4.3 Fronting of Adjective phrase:

According to Allan(1986:87) states that prediecte adjectives can be fronted, he says that this expression is poetic, as in this example:

EX : Bright were the starts.

On the other hand, Emonds(1976:35)says that adjectives that can function as the adjective phrase are mobile and can be placed in the initial position as in:

EX : Long and Tidy, her hair played in the breeze.

4.4 Fronting of Verb Phrase:

According to Emonds (1976:31) Verb Phrase can be fronted to emphasis the idea for example:

Nada once predicted that Ali would pass an exam,and pass one he now has.

Emonds emphasizes that the sentence above is derived from the following sentence: Nada once predicted that Ali pass an exam eventually and he passed one.

4.5 Noun Phrase Fronting:

Noun Phrase that functions as direct objects can be fronted. For examples:

A: What subject can't you understand?

B: Math I just can't understand.

4.6 Invention

Fronting of an element is often associated with inversion” QUIRK et al (1985:1379) for example the subject operator inversion which has to do with Yes/No questions as in:

EX : Ali will pass the exam

EX : Will Ali pass the exam?

4.7 Wh- Fronting:

Wh -question can be fronted to get emphasis. for example:

EX : Where are they going?

EX : Why did he leave the party early?

4.9 Cleft fronting:

“Cleft consists of a formulaic onset of a third person subject pronouns”

Allan(1986:90) .For example:

EX : It's an Alfa that Max has got.

“It's an Alfa" is the marked theme.

Jackson (1982) states that the cleft construction is used particularly in written English because it marks unambiguously the focus of information that can usually be done in speech by means of contractive stress and intonation, as in;

EX : It was Demy that Jim found last night.

5. Translation of fronting

Translation is the interpretation of a source text meaning and the production of an equal text meaning in another language. Translation is a process that deals with meaning across language barriers. According to Catford (1965:20), translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). In the definition above Catford, focuses on the concept of equivalence because it is considered the cornerstone of translation. He (ibid) makes an important distinction between formal correspondence and textual equivalence:

1. A formal correspondence is any TL category (unit, class, element of structure, etc.) , as nearly as possible, which can be said to occupy the same place in the economy of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL.

2. A textual equivalence is any TL text or portion of text which is observed on a particular occasion.... To be the equivalence of a given SL text or portion of text.

Equivalence is defined as the standard relationship between original and translation (Broek, 1978:30). Hatim and Mayson (1990:5-6) believe that equivalence in translation is a relative matter. They argue that there is no complete equivalence in translation and The term equivalence to them means reaching the closest meaning to the source text meaning .

Moreover, Baker (1992:10-11) argues that translation involves some problems due to the lack of equivalence and suggests that there is no one-to-one agreement between orthographic words and elements of meaning within or across languages. She (ibid:17-18) thinks that there is a wide range of factors that circumscribe the choice of a suitable equivalent in a specific text. These factors may be linguistic or extralinguistic.

The translator should find the optional equivalence in translating the features of fronting in the TL and in a way that could find the functional equivalence. This functional equivalence is after the writer's /speaker's intention(s). Dealing with such texts, Aziz and Lataiwish (2000:44) discuss that equivalence in thematic organization has to be chosen on the deeper standard of unmarked/marked themes, since the theme in certain languages including English is often tied up with the structure of the sentence.

They add that, the speaker in English has little choice in determining his theme whereas the Arabic speaker can choose between the subject and the verb as the theme of a sentence

Therefore, a deeper level, they continue, should be used where speakers in both languages are presented with a number of choices between the unmarked and the marked alternatives.

For this purpose, the marked/unmarked choice may be exposed as in the following examples(ibid)

وصلت الطائرة

الطائرة وصلت

The plain has arrived (theme given, end focus).

The plain has arrived (theme new).

Consequently, " in the two English sentences above the marked arrangement is determined with the help of a given- new information carried by the theme and the rheme" (Aziz and Lataiwish,2000:44).they continue determines the new element whereas, in the Arabic sentence, the unmarked/marked pattern is determined by the element occupying the initial position ,the focus is on the theme . The verb in the unmarked theme and the subject in the marked theme are as by given –new information.

Some English examples will be considered with reference to translating the feature of fronting.

1.Scarcely does John come here

. In this utterance, the adverb is fronted as being the marked theme. The translator can transfer this marked theme into the TL successfully on the condition that the TL structure allows such kind of fronting:

قلما يأتي جون الى هنا

If back-translation is made to the Arabic sentence, it will be:

John scarcely comes here.

قلما يأتي جون الى هنا

This suggests that the Arabic theme is unmarked whereas the English one is not. The translator can overcome such difficulty, for example, by adding another synonymous item to as in

قلما ونادرا ما يأتي جون الى هنا

In this utterance قلما ونادرا, can function as a marked theme. By so doing , The translator avoids , any loss in the translation.

2.The robber was arrested by the police.

In this utterance, the object noun phrase is fronted to express markedness. The translator should keep this structure in the TL and should avoid translating this utterance into

اللس القى القبض عليه من قبل الشرطة

Or he shifts the passive voice into active one:

الشرطة القت القبض على اللص

Whereas the marked theme is not اللص but it is الشرطة.

Therefore, he should translate it into

اللس القت القبض عليه الشرطة

This translation is suitable since it has the same marked theme as the ST has.

3 .A woman is in the house.

This English sentence starts with an indefinite noun (A woman) which is the marked theme. Arabic, for its part, does not accept a sentence

starting with an indefinite noun. For this reason, the following translation is unacceptable in Arabic:

أمرأة في البيت

In this sentence امرأة , is the marked theme but it does not have the same marked theme as the English sentence does. By corollary, some inevitable loss may arise due to the linguistic differences between English and Arabic.

4 .Terrible was the wind.

Here, the adjective noun phrase is the marked theme. To some extent, the fronting of the adjective phrase is poetic. The translator should avoid translating this sentence into the normal unmarked construction as in

كانت رياح رهيبة

This sentence is neither poetic nor after the SL marked theme. Therefore, the translator should translate it into

رهيبة كانت الرياح

This expression is an optional equivalent to the SL marked theme and often used in literary language.

As a corollary, the translation of fronting from English into Arabic greatly depends on the linguistic differences between SL and TL and the structure of the two.

6. Conclusion

This study seeks to give a comprehensive account of fronting, which appears to be a universal phenomenon, and themes which appeal to users of almost all languages. The study principally focuses on this phenomenon in the translation of fronting from English to Arabic

The research having focus the attention on language according to use and the basic elements of such language is text not the sentence.

In this research having discussed fronting as a Marked theme in English language and its translation into Arabic. The researcher concludes that fronting is a type of focus strategy often used to enhance cohesion and provide emphasis and we moved a part from its position to the beginning of sentence to focus on specific topics and idea. Markedness is used by linguists to refer to the part that are moved from its norm position. There are many ways in which fronting can be achieved in English language such as adverb fronting, prepositional phrase and fronting of Adjective....etc.

This research also having discussed the translation of fronting into Arabic language. It can be realized when the structure of SL and TL are the same this is lead to the Functional equivalence. On the other hand if the structure of SL and TL are different, fronting equivalence can't be achieved.

The study also presents a good account of fronting in English, and fronting is used for different purposes. It is observed that linguists of

English have identified several useful structures, which successfully account for fronting such as: clefting and thematization.

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