

Tikrit University
College of Education for Humanities
English Department



Forth Stage/ Translation
Translation of QUESTIONS
Dr. Ashwaq J. Mohammed
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1.1. Translation of QUESTIONS

Questions in English are formed in two ways only:

1. The conversion of the subject and the verb when one of the following verbs is used: "be", "have" and the modal verbs (see examples below).
2. The use of the auxiliary verb "do" with the rest of verbs in English (see also examples below).

Problems could arise at translating the different types of questions, because making questions is not the same in Arabic. Both types of questions are called "yes-no questions" because they are answered by "yes or no".

Problem 1: The possibility of imitating the question form:

The students might think of translating the types of English questions into equivalent types in Arabic. They will find this not possible and quite problematic, because simply there are no such equivalents.

Solution: One word for all questions:

The solution for the problems of translating all types of English questions is simply by using only one word in Arabic, that is, the question particle, (هل) to begin all the equivalent Arabic questions: e.g.

1. "Are you playing tennis?": (هل تلعب التنس؟)
2. "Have you played tennis?": (هل لعبت التنس؟)
3. "Do you play tennis?": (هل تلعب التنس؟)
4. "Did you play tennis?": (هل لعبت التنس؟)

Two more, less frequent question words can be sometimes interchangeable with (هل). The first is the Arabic alphabetical letter, al-hamza (أ), and the second is (هلاً). The latter is quite rare and may imply the meaning of request. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid using it frequently.

The former, however, is more popular than the latter, and interchanges with (هل) perfectly as follows: أتلعب ، ألعبت، أتلعب، ألعبت؟ أتلعب، (هل)

Problem „2“: The disappearance of (هل) with WH-questions:

Some questions are formed by using one of the following words: „what“ (ماذا/ما), “why” (لماذا / لم / لم / لماذا), “where” (أين) “which” (أي) , “who” (من) , “whom” (من / ممن / لمن / ممن / من) , 'whose' (لمن) (“when” (متى) , “how” (كيف). All these question words (except „how“) start with „wh“, which is why the questions started with them are called WH-questions.

Solution: The omission of (هل) :

When „do“ and the subject-verb conversion are used in a WH-question, they are meaningless. (هل) is no longer used in the Arabic translation: e.g.

1. “Why are they crying?” : (لماذا يبكون؟)
2. “What have you said?” : (ماذا قلت؟)
3. “Who can answer?” : (من يستطيع الاجابه ان يجيب؟)
4. “When does the baby sleep?” (متى ينام الطفل؟)
5. “Where did the man disappear?” (اين اختفى الرجل؟)
6. "Whom are you talking to on the phone?" (الى من تتحدث على الهاتف؟)
7. Whose money is this? (لمن هذه النقود؟)
8. How do you do? (كيف حالك\ كيف انت؟)

1.2. Translation of NEGATION

Negation in English includes words like “not”, “do not”, “does not”, “never”, “neither”, “nor” and “no”. The translation of these words is not always as easy as many students might think. The following discussion illustrates this.

Problem 1: “Not” has one single equivalent:

“Not” seems a simple word and has a straightforward translation as (لا) in Arabic. But it is not always so. Other translations are given to “not”, but all of them are negative words, as the following examples show:

Solution: “Not” has more than one equivalent:

The students are required to search for the suitable word in Arabic. It can be either (لا), (لن), (لي) or (ما):e.g.

1. “She cannot pay money”: لا تستطيع ان تدفع نقودا
2. “She will not pay money”: (سوف) لن تدفع نقودا
3. “She has not money”: ليس معها نقودا\ لا نقود معها\ لا تملك نقودا
4. “All that glitters is not gold” ما كل ما يلمع ذهبيا

"Not" is strong after "will" and „shall“, and is, therefore, always translated into the strong (لن) only for future reference in Arabic.

Problem 2: A difference between “do not” “does not” and “ did not”:

These constructions are different in English. Therefore, some students might think that they equally have to be translated into different forms in Arabic in terms of word-for-word translation. But we do not have a word for each of these three particles. Two equivalent particles only are used in Arabic, one for “do not” and “does not” (in the present), and another for 'did not'(in the past).

Solution; “Do not” and “does not”=(لا); “did not”=(لم):

(لا) is used in Arabic to make negation in the present. It is, therefore, equivalent to “do not” and “does not”. But (لم) is to negate something in the past. That is why it translates “did not”. It

Problem „3“: "Never" as one word (أبدا) in Arabic:

Dictionaries give "never" one meaning in Arabic, which is (أبدا). But we cannot translate it into it only. For instance, it is not allowed to say the following versions in Arabic.

1. "We never give up":(نستسلم ابدا، قط)
2. "I never saw him before": رأيتہ ابدا \قط من قبل
3. "Never say this again!": ابدا\ قط قل هذا ثانية

Solution: "Never" is either (أبداً... لم) or (أبداً... لن); (أبداً... لا)

"Never" is a strong negative word in English, and translated into two words in Arabic, preferably (أبداً... لن) or (أبداً... لم). Therefore, the previous examples can be translated suitably as follows:

1. "We never give up": (لن (لا) نستسلم ابدا (قط))
2. "I never saw him before": (لم اره من قبل ابدا\ لم اره قط من قبل)

(Notice the change of the past into present, and the form of verb after (لم) in Arabic.)

3. "Never say this again": (لا تقل هذا ثانيه ابدا (قط البتہ))

(The last two Arabic words,(قط البتة),(أبدا are two good variations on