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14 - Translating Adjectives**1.12. Translation of ADJECTIVES:**

Adjectives in English have quite variable forms. Some of them are interchangeable with nouns. Above all, they are ordered in the sentence in a way different from Arabic.

Problem 1: An adjective-noun order in English:

It is a general, well-known rule in English that the adjective occurs before the noun, whereas in Arabic it comes after the noun.

Solution: Reversing the English adjective-noun order in Arabic:

This solution is easy and known to students: e.g.

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| 1. "Generous people are kind-hearted": | (الناس) الكرماء طيبو القلوب |
| 2. "That tall youngman is my cousin": | (ذاك الرجل الطويل ابن عمي) |
| 3. "She likes polite colleagues": | (تحب الزميلات المهذبات) |

Problem 2: The ordering of a series of adjectives:

A number of adjectives can follow one another in a certain order in English. When translated into Arabic, usually the same order is reserved. However, translating them in the back order is also feasible.

Solution: Translate a series of adjectives either way:

Successive adjectives in English can be translated either from left to right, or from right to left in Arabic: e. g.

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|---|---|
| 1. "The English weather may be cloudy, rainy and sunny at the same time": | (قد يكون الطقس الإنجليزي غائماً وممطراً ومشمساً (مشمساً وممطراً وغائماً) في الوقت نفسه) |
| 2. "He read a big, popular, useful book": | (قرأ كتاباً كبيراً شعبياً مفيداً (مفيداً شعبياً كبيراً)) |
| 3. "Throw that small, round ball": | (ارم تلك الكرة الصغيرة المدورة (المدورة الصغيرة)) |

Yet, the same English order of adjectives is usually preferred. e. g.

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|--|---------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1."The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)". | | |
| (الثقافة : اليونسكو) | والعلوم | منظمة الأمم المتحدة للتربية |
| 3 | 2 | 1 |

Problem 3: Imitation of the English sequence of adjectives:

At using a number of English adjectives consecutively, a comma is used to separate them from one another, with 'and' being used only before the last one. Many students and translators do the same in Arabic. But the sequence in Arabic is different, and we have to abide by it.

Solution: The repetition of 'and', or no 'and' :

When 'and' is used before the last adjective in English, it is repeated before every adjective in Arabic: e. g.

1. "The two ministers discussed the political, social and economic matters":

(ناقش الوزيران القضايا السياسية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية)

2. "Her dress is blue, soft, comfortable and cheap":

(ثوبها أزرق وناعم ومريح ورخيص)

But when 'and' is not used in English, it may either be dropped, or retained in Arabic, as follows: e. g.

1. "Lucy is an innocent, good, kind girl": (لوسي فتاة بريئة وطيبة ولطيفة)

(لوسي فتاة بريئة لطيفة/لوسي فتاة بريئة وطيبة ولطيفة)

2. "Mohammad prefers simple, homely, tasty food":

(يفضل محمد الطعام البسيط المألوف اللذيذ/والمألوف واللذيذ)

Problem 4: The use of adjectives as nouns:

Adjectives can be used as collective nouns in English when preceded by 'the' and not followed by nouns: e. g.

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|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. "poor people" | → | "the poor" |
| 2. "elderly people" | → | "the elderly" |
| 3. "handicapped people" | → | "the handicapped" |

(This is a general rule in English).

Some students may confuse such a special use of adjectives as singular nouns or adjectives in Arabic.

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Solution: 'The+adjective' → plural noun in Arabic:

Adjectives used as collective nouns are translated into plural nouns in Arabic, not into adjectives or singular nouns: e. g.

1. "The rich should help the poor = rich people should help poor people":

(يجب على الأغنياء أن يساعدوا الفقراء)

(We cannot translate 'the rich' into (الغني) or 'the poor' into (الفقر))

2. "The elderly are wiser than the young"=the elderly people are wiser than the young people":(المسنون أعدل من الشباب).

"People' is included both in 'the elderly' and (المسنون).

3. "The handicapped can do many things ="the handicapped people can do many things":(يستطيع المعاقون أن يفعلوا أشياء كثيرة)

'The handicapped' cannot be translated into (معاق) because the noun singular in English is 'a handicap'.