4. **Narrative texts: syntactic problems**

Syntax is another problematic area for translators working with Arabic and English texts. Though both languages share some syntactic universals, many differences still challenge the translator. While English is usually considered an SVO (Subject-Verb- Object) language, Arabic is basically a VSO language since SVO structures are less frequent. A translator from English into Arabic must take this difference into consideration. English makes use of auxiliary verbs in questions and negation. Such use is not frequent in Arabic. Therefore, auxiliary verbs are not always translated into Arabic. Tense also constitutes a challenge for translators who are not fully aware of the Arabic tense. Arabic tense is classified into past, present and future. It depends on inflections of both the verb and the subject to convey the meaning associated with the use of a certain tense. One form of the verb is used to convey different categories of past or present. Adverbs are used sometimes to indicate different tenses. Study the following English sentences:

Mark went to school.

Mark has gone to school.

Both sentences are rendered by:ذهب مارك الى المدرسة

When I had finished my work, I went for a walk.عندما انهيت عملي خرجت في نزهة.

I finished my work yesterday.انهيت عملي امس

Notice that both 'finished' and 'had finished' are translated as أنهيت. The simple past tense might be less problematic than the perfect whose equivalent is not easily found in Arabic. Instead, Arabic usually uses adverbs to indicate the perfective aspect. Consider the following examples:

They have just arrived from the airport.وصلوا من المطار توا او حالا.

They arrived from the airport yesterday.وصلوا من المطار امس.

As can be seen, an adverb had to be added to convey the perfect aspect in Arabic. For the present perfect you need to add adverbs such as على الفور, حالا, توا ,في التو, or .لتوهم

Furthermore, the construction كان+ قد with its derivatives is used to convey the past perfect as shown in the following example:

She felt sad about losing her watch because she had had it for twenty years.

شعرت بالحزن لأنها اضاعت ساعتها لأنها كانت قد احتفظت بها عشرين عاما.

The progressive is not rendered by auxiliary verbs in Arabic though some varieties of colloquial Arabic do have equivalents for auxiliaries used with the progressive. Standard Arabic, however, depends on the use of adverbs to convey the progressive. It combines كان and its derivatives with the past progressive as illustrated in the following examples:

My sister is waiting for me at the park.

اختي تنتظرني في المنتزه.

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do.

كانت اليس قد بدأت تتعب من الجلوس بجانب اختها على ضفة النهر ومن عدم وجود شيء لتفعله.

Translate the following Texts into Arabic.

1. A fairy tale: The Golden Touch of King Midas

A greedy King makes a wish that everything he touches will turn to gold.

Once upon a time, there lived a very rich man and a king besides, whose name was Midas; and he had a little daughter, whom nobody but myself ever heard of, and whose name I either never knew or have entirely forgotten. So, because I love odd names for little girls, I choose to call her Marygold. This King Midas was fonder of gold than of anything else in the world. He valued his royal crown chiefly because it was composed of that precious metal. If he loved anything better, or half so well, it was the one little maiden who played so merrily around her father's footstool.

And yet, in his earlier days, before he was so entirely possessed of this insane desire for riches, King Midas had shown a great taste for flowers.