**Al-Mustansiriyah University**

**College of Arts**

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**CONTRASTIVE GRAMMAR**

**Fourth Year/ Morning & Evening Classes**

**Lecture # 28**

**Complex noun phrase in English and Arabic : points of similarity and difference**

There are many differences between English and Arabic complex noun phrase, and these are:

1. Both English and Arabic complex noun phrases consist of of the head and certain items functioning as modifiers, i.e., the structure of the complex noun phrase in both languages is one of modification.
2. In English, all items of postmodification belong to open classes , they are therefore a characteristic of complex noun phrases. In Arabic, most of the postmodifying elements belong to an open class, but not all. Some of these elements belong to closed systems,eg., the possessive suffix in كتابي . Nevertheless, it is true to say that in Arabic most of the elements of a basic noun phrase (closed- system elements) occur in a premodifying position ,eg., the definite article, the demonstrative. Postmodifiers in Arabic mostly belong to open class words, and are therefore characteristic of the complex noun phrase.
3. Few adjectives in Arabic occur in premodifying positions: the elative form is one of them. The normal position of an open class adjective is after the head. In English , these adjectives normally precede the head only few adjectives follow the head. Thus if a comparison is drawn between multiple modification in English and Arabic, such comparison will involve premodification (in English ) and postmodification (in Arabic), as in

-The brave Iraqi soldier الجندي العراقي الشجاع

1. Owing to the number and high frequency of postmodifers in Arabic, the generation of the structure of a noun phrase in Arabic seems to be from left to right or right-hand branching (i.e., the modifier follows the head). In English , the reverse tendency is more usual, and the complex noun phrase seems often to be a left hand branching (i.e., the modifying element tends to precede the head).
2. Most of the major types of postmodification are used both in English and Arabic, namely relative clauses, participles and prepositional phrases. Arabic also uses a special kind of nominal phrases as postmodifers , which are often rendered into English by a relative clause:

-Here is a man whose acts are praiseworth. هذا رجل محمودة افعاله

1. Certain minor types of postmodification in English, namely adjectives, are major constructions in Arabic. This affirms what has already been mentioned .
2. Premodification in complex Arabic noun phrases is a minor type ,whereas it is a major type.
3. The ‘-s’ genitive in English is a case of premodification

* Ali’s book كتاب علي

1. Modifying relative clauses are found in both languages, but Arabic frequently uses restrictyive clauses, non-restrictive clauses are not so frequent in Arabic; and sentential relative clauses are not used , they are normally expressed by two coordinate clauses joined by a conjunction, as in:

- I gave the books to the student who was sitting in the front row.أعطيت الكتب إلى

التلميذ الذي كان يجلس في الصف الأمامي

-I gave the books to Ali, who took them to the library.أعطيت الكتب إلى علي . فأخذها إلى المكتبة

-I gave the books to the librarian, which was the right thing to do.أعطيت الكتب إلى أمين المكتبة . و هو الأمر الصحيح

1. Modification is often related in Arabic by mere juxtaposition , without any linking word: جاء رجل راسه كبير .In English , on the other hand , finite clause modification is usually linked to the head by means of a linking word:

* There came a man whose head was big.