

Comparative Constructions II

9 - Relative Clauses

Relative Clauses

- Relative clauses are subordinate clauses that function as adjectives by modifying a noun or a noun phrase.
- Relative clauses:
 - Contain a subject and a verb
 - Begin with a relative pronoun or relative adverb
 - Function as adjectives
- Relative clauses can be restrictive (i.e., provide essential information) or non-restrictive (i.e., provide additional information).

Restrictive vs. Non-Restrictive Relative Clauses

- Restrictive Relative Clauses:
 - Restrictive relative clauses provide essential information.
 - They are not set off by commas.
 - e.g., Do you know the girl who is talking to Sara?
 - e.g., The book (that) I read yesterday is interesting.
 - Note: in restrictive relative clauses, the object relative pronoun may be dropped.
- Non-Restrictive Relative Clauses:
 - They provide additional information
 - They are set off by commas.

Relative Pronouns

- Who (subject or object - people): I told you about the woman who lives upstairs.
- Which (subject or object - animals and things): Do you see the cat which is hiding under the table.
- Which (to a whole sentence): He was late which surprised me.
- Whose (possession for people, animals, or things): I met the boy whose mother is the famous surgeon.
- Whom (object pronoun - people, especially in non-restrictive relative clauses): I was invited by the teacher whom I met by chance.
- That (subject or object pronoun - people, animals, or things, in restrictive relative clauses): I bought the table that we eat on everyday.

Subject vs. Object Relative Pronouns

- If the relative pronoun is followed by a verb, it is a subject pronoun. In this case, the relative pronoun must be used. For example: I ate the apple which is lying on the table.
- If the relative pronoun is not followed by a verb (i.e., by a noun or a pronoun), it is an object pronoun. In restrictive relative clauses, it may be omitted. For example: I ate the apple which Sara put on the table OR I ate the apple Sara put on the table.

Relative Adverbs

- Sometimes relative adverbs may be used instead of relative pronouns:
 - When (in/on which - time): The day when we met them was an unforgettable day.
 - Where (in/at which - place): The library where we study is more than 30 years old.
 - Why (for which - reason): The reason why we study is to graduate.

Reducing Relative Clauses

- Relative clauses with the pronouns who, which, and that as subject pronouns can be reduced.
- For example:
 - I told you about the girl who lives next door. →
I told you about the girl living next door.
- How to reduce relative clauses:
 - Omitting the pronoun and the verb be: The ideas which are presented in that book are good. → The ideas presented in that book are good.
 - Omitting the pronoun and changing the verb into a participle -ing (when there is no verb be in the sentence):
Anyone who wants to come with us is welcome. →
Anyone wanting to come with us is welcome.

In Arabic ...

- Relative clauses in Arabic are called **جملة الصلة**
- Relative pronouns introduce the relative clause, such as:

الذي - التي - اللذان - اللتان - الذين - اللاتي - اللائي - من - ما - ذا

- جملة الصلة تُعرب على حسب موقعها من الإعراب
- عادة ما يكون هناك ضمير في جملة الصلة يربط بينها وبين ما تعود عليه

Arabic vs. English

- The relative clause in both English and Arabic occurs after the noun/pronoun it modifies.
- In English, relative clauses may modify a definite or an indefinite noun. For example:
 - The boy who plays football is sick.
 - A boy who plays football is sick.
- In Arabic, relative clauses modify definite nouns only. For example:
 - رأيت الولد الذي فاز
 - رأيت ولداً الذي فاز *

- In Arabic, the relative pronoun agrees with the noun it modifies in number, gender, and case.

References

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