

Comment Clauses in English and Arabic: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

The present study sheds light on comment clauses in English and Arabic. In English, comment clauses refer to those clauses which comment either on the content of the main clause or the attitude of the speaker towards the way of speaking. Arabic comment clauses are non-functional clauses which occur either between two parts of the same speech or two independent speeches connected by meaning in order to illustrate, emphasize or improve certain meanings that the speaker wants to convey.

This study is divided into three sections. The first section tackles comment clauses in English with reference to definition, structure, position, types and pragmatic functions. Following the same way, the second section deals with comment clauses in Arabic. The third section concentrates on the similarities and differences in both languages: English and Arabic.

The study aims to investigate comment clauses in English and Arabic, and to draw a comparison in order to show the similarities and differences between them. The analysis shows that English comment clauses can take the finite or non-finite forms whereas Arabic clauses can take the form of nominal, verbal, interrogative or conditional sentence starting with one of the particles such as **Waw** الواو or **Fa'a** الفاء which are considered as the widely used particles in comment clauses. Also, both English and Arabic comment clauses lack a syntactic connection with the main clause.

Key words: comment clauses, comparative analysis.

الخلاصة

تُسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الجملة المعارضة في اللغتين الانجليزية والعربية. تُشير الجملة المعارضة في اللغة الانجليزية الى تلك الجمل التي اما تعترض محتوى الكلام او معتقدات المتكلم فيما يخص طريقة التكلم. ان الجملة المعارضة في اللغة العربية ليس لها محل من الاعراب حيث تعترض بين اجزاء الكلام الواحد او كلامين مستقلين متصلين معنى ، لغرض توضيح ، او توكيد، او تحسين بعض النكات التي يسعى المتكلم نقلها للمستمع.

قُسمت هذه الدراسة الى ثلاثة اقسام، يُعنى القسم الاول منها بالجملة المعارضة في اللغة الانجليزية من حيث التعريف، التركيب، الموضع، الانواع والوظائف التداولية. باتباع نفس الطريقة، يتناول القسم الثاني منه الجملة المعارضة في اللغة العربية. يُركز القسم الثالث على اوجه التشابه والاختلاف في اللغتين الانجليزية والعربية.

تهدف الدراسة الى تحري الجملة المعارضة في كلتا اللغتين الانجليزية والعربية وإجراء مقارنة لغرض ايجاد أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بينهما. لقد اظهر التحليل ان الجملة المعارضة في اللغة الانجليزية تأخذ شكل الجملة ذات الفعل التام أو جملة ذات الفعل غير التام، بينما تكون الجملة المعارضة في اللغة العربية اسمية، فعلية، استفهامية، او شرطية حيث تنصدرها أحد الاحرف مثل الواو والفاء التي تُعد أكثر الحروف شيوعاً واستخداماً في هذا النوع من الجمل. كما وان الجملة المعارضة في اللغتين الانجليزية والعربية تفتقر الى الترابط الاعرابي مع باقي اجزاء الجملة التي تعترض اجزائها.

1. Comment Clauses in English

1.1 Definition and Structure

Crystal (2003: 84) illustrates that a comment clause refers to an optional structure whose main function is to add a parenthetic comment to another clause. A wide range of comment clauses can be seen in English, e. g. **You know, to behave, they say, generally speaking**. Many of these clauses act as stereotyped conversation fillers with several complex functions, e.g. **you see, mind you, I see**.

Dehè (2010: 307) states that comment clauses have been analyzed as mitigators in more recent speech act theoretical approaches, i. e. "insertions used to modify, correct, reinforce or soften a speech act performed by the host utterance." They function as a hedge on the illocutionary force of the frame utterance. The speaker uses these clauses to set off the marked theme from what follows the main utterance and to link it to information in the preceding utterance.

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 1112), comment clauses can be either content disjuncts which express the speaker's comments on the content of the main clause, or style disjuncts which convey the speaker's points of views concerning the way others are speaking.

Leech and Svartvik (2002: 196) define comment clauses as clauses which "comment on the truth of the sentence, the manner of saying it, or the attitude of the speaker (an emotional reaction or judgment)." They state that comment clauses are not very much related to the rest of the main clause they belong to, they function as sentence adverbials. Usually they are marked off from the other clause by commas in writing or they have a separate tone unit in speech.

Similarly, Peltola (1983: 103) maintains that comment clauses are meta-communicative in the sense that "they comment on the truth value of a sentence or a group of sentences, on the organization of the text or on the attitude of the speaker."

Brinton(2008: 2) mentions that the broadest category to which comment clauses could be said to belong to is that of sentence adverbials which have three distinctive features: They are speaker- oriented expressing the subjunctive attitude of the speaker towards some state of affairs, they have sentential scope, and they have clausal properties which can be understood as reduced sentence.

According to Biber et al.(1999: 972), comment clauses are considered as markers of stance, or the expression of personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments, denoting epistemic stance(**I think, I guess**), attitude(**as you might guess**), or style(**if I may say so**).

Comment clauses add a comment to what is said in the main clause or in the rest of the sentence. They can freely occur at the beginning as in (1), in the middle as in (2), or at the end of the main clause as in (3), but the end-position is mainly limited to informal speech:

1. **As you know**, I've always wanted to visit Greece.
2. And the photograph, **you see**, helped us to find the thief.
3. Jill's husband is a lawyer, **I believe**. (Leech and Svartvik, 2002: 197)

Consequently, Quirk et al. (1985: 1112) state that comment clauses are parenthetical disjuncts in that they may occur initially, medially or finally, and thus generally have a separate tone unit. Many of these clauses are characteristics of spoken English:

4. KÍNGstone, | as you probably KNOW, | is the capital of JaMAIca|.

Similarly, Biber et al.(1999: 197) believe that in medial and final positions, comment clauses are best described as peripheral elements. In initial position, they may look superficially like main clauses with an embedded nominal clause:

5. **You know**, there is no money to be made out of ri- recycling.

In example (5), the speaker tells the addressee something the latter perhaps does not know; the function of **You know** is to underlie the truth of the statement.

Comment clauses can be seen as occurring within interrogative or imperative sentences, in addition to declaratives as being the most frequent type in which these clauses occur. Here, one should notice that neither the interrogative nor the imperative can occur as a subordinate clause in Standard English:

6. Will she, I wonder, late?

7. Do not, I beg you, leave me alone. (Dehè, 2008: 17)

Stenström(1995: 299) illustrates that clauses like **You see**, **You know**, **I think** and **I mean** act as comment clauses once they occur medially and finally. But initially, **You see** is always considered as a comment clause; **You know** as generally a comment clause, **I think** is a main clause, **I mean** is a possible main clause, but rather a comment clause.

Brinton (2008: 245) sustains comment clauses as epistemic/ evidential parentheticals which exhibit many of the features of the large class of parentheticals: They lack a syntactic connection with their anchor clause (sharing only linear adjacency), they are positionally mobile, they are semantically independent and non-truth-conditional, and they share a comment function which can be understood broadly as the speaker's attitude or style. Furthermore, they retain non-parenthetical uses. What sets comment clauses apart from parentheticals is that parentheticals range from single words, such as 'understandable', to entire sentences, such as 'There is no harm in saying so.'

What is more, comment clauses likewise exhibit many of the features of pragmatic markers in that they lack propositional or referential content (have little semantic content), but rather serve pragmatic or procedural functions, with scope over the entire clause. Comment clauses frequently have textual and interpersonal (subjective and inter-subjective) functions typical of pragmatic markers. They are optional elements in the sense that their omission does not render the discourse ungrammatical or incomprehensible, though it may cause pragmatic or processing difficulties. Like pragmatic markers, comment clauses are characteristics of oral or speech-based discourse. However, comment clauses are either finite clauses, such as **I think**, or non-finite clauses, such as **to be honest**, while pragmatic markers are often short items, such as **well** or **right** (Ibid. 241).

Comment clauses are similar to reporting clauses; they are loosely connected to the main clause; they normally lack an explicit link; and they are usually short and can appear in a variety of positions. However, they differ from reporting clauses by being more formulaic. Also, they are usually in the present rather than in the past tense; first or second rather than third persons; and comment on a thought rather than the delivery of a wording. Comment clauses directly express the speaker's or writer's attitude to the message and can therefore be grouped among stance adverbials (Biber et al., 1999: 197).

1.2. Types of Comment Clauses

In this study, the syntactic classification of comment clauses presented by Quirk et al. (1985: 1113- 18) is going to be followed because of its comprehensive categorization. There are six types depending on structure which are as follows:

First, a comment clause is similar to the matrix clause of a main clause. It is the most important type that consists of a transitive verb or an adjective which elsewhere requires a nominal 'that clause' as object. A comment clause resembles the main clause in that it contains at least a subject and a verb which is not introduced by a subordinator. Such a clause is not independent because it is syntactically defective in the sense that the verb or adjective lacks its normally obligatory complementation. As such, one can see there is a correspondence between sentences containing comment clauses as in (8) and those containing indirect statements as in (9). Such a correspondence does not mean that the two sentences are exact paraphrases, but the relationship between them illuminates the function of the comment clause:

8. There were no other applicants, **I believe**, for that job.

9. I believe that there were no other applicants for that job.

In this type of comment clauses, the subject can be **I, you, one, they or it**. The verb is in the simple present or it may have a modal auxiliary or be in the present perfective. These verbs include: **believe, think, assume, expect, suppose, say, consider, hear, understand**, etc. (Ibid. 1113-4).

Consequently, verbs like **believe** and **think** have a more definite meaning or merely hedge expressing a tentative meaning; but only the hedging meaning is present in comment clauses. Such a difference in meaning can be seen clearly in examples (10) and (11):

10. I believe that there is a God.

11. There is a God, **I believe**.

So, **believe** in example (10) means **I assert the belief that there is a God**. But in (11), it has the meaning **there may be a God**. Moreover, **that** in that clause which is the object of the subject **I** is normally deleted. Only the intonation (reflected by commas in writing) distinguishes an initial comment clause as in (12) from an initial matrix clause as in (13):

12. **You KNÓW**, I think you're WRÒNG.

13. You know (that)I think you're WRÒNG.(Quirk et al. 1985: 1113)

In this type, Quirk et al.(Ibid.) do not include **I mean** into comment clauses, but they mention it as a device for mistake editing which is used by the speaker to correct mistakes phonologically or semantically, which is very common in impromptu speech, i.e. informal speech.

Generally, all the expressions **I mean, you see, you know** are interactive and cohesive. **I mean** can signal a following clarification whereas **you see** and **you know** signal that what follows is an explanation of what has preceded them. Such an interactive function will be kept as it is regardless of their position: initial, medial or final(Biber et al. 1999: 1078).

Quirk et al.(1985: 1117) add that finite comment clauses are characterized by their semantic neutrality towards the truth value of the main clause. This shows some sort of correspondence between these clauses and the clausal pro- form **so** when used in parenthetical clauses such as **so he says, so I understand, so it seems**.

Stenström (1995: 291) illustrates that such a type of comment clauses can occur initially, medially and finally. Also, they occur in a separate tone unit, with the exception of **I think** and **I mean**, which often have a separate tone unit. There also

appears to be a clear difference between I- oriented and You- oriented comment clauses concerning tonicity- **you know** and **you see** are quite high up the scale whereas **I think** and **I mean** are not. This reflects a tendency on the part of the speaker to minimize attention to the self in favour of the listener.

Second, a comment clause is similar to an adverbial finite clause introduced by **as**. **As** serves one of two syntactic functions: As a relative and a subordinator. In its relative function, **as** introduces a type of sentential relative clause that may precede or be inserted in its antecedent, in this case, the clause or sentence to which it is attached:
14. I live a long way from work, **as you know**.

There are other examples of **as** in its relative function including: **as everybody knows, as you may remember, as you say, as I can see you, as I have said, as I'm told, as you may have heard**.

As a subordinator, it introduces a clearly adverbial clause and the sentential antecedent is replaced by **it**. It is roughly synonymous with **insofar as (to the extent that)**:

15. He is the best candidate, **as it seems**.

Here are other examples in which (**as**) is a subordinator: **as it happens, as it has transpired, as it may interest you to know, as I see it, as I interrupt it**. In addition, these clauses are characterized by being affirmative in implying the truth of the main clause (Quirk et al. 1985: 1116).

Third, a comment clause is similar to a nominal relative clause starting with 'what'. Here, the what- clause must occur in initial position, as in (16), which differentiates it from sentential relative clause that must occur finally as in (17):

16. **What is more surprising**, he didn't inform his parents.

17. He didn't inform his parents, *which is more surprising*.

This type includes: **What's more serious, what's most signified of all, what annoys me, what's very strange, what's more surprising** (Ibid. 1117).

Fourth, a comment clause corresponds to 'to- infinitive clause' as style disjuncts. This type includes examples such as: **to be honest, to be fair, to be frank, to be precise, to be truthful, to be serious for a moment, to speak candidly, to put it briefly**:

18. **To be honest**, I don't like spaghetti. (Ibid. 1118).

Fifth, a comment clause likes a nonfinite -ing clause such as **broadly speaking, loosely speaking, roughly speaking, figuratively speaking, speaking frankly, speaking generally, speaking personally, putting it mildly, putting it crudely**:

19. **Broadly speaking**, food can be optimized according to taste, price, and nutrition. (Ibid.)

Sixth, a comment clause is similar to a nonfinite -ed clause as style disjuncts. This type includes '**rephrased, put in another way, worded plainly, stated quite simply**' (Ibid.).

1.3 Pragmatic Functions of Comment Clauses

Pragmatically speaking, Dehè (2010: 307) maintains that comment clauses are considered as forms which have no descriptive function and have nothing to do with the truth- conditionality of the host utterance, but they attach an illocutionary commitment to the utterance.

One can use finite comment clauses to show the speaker's emotional attitudes and feelings towards the content of the main clause. Commonly, the subject is **I** and the verb is in the present simple occurring at the beginning of the main clause. Some are followed by a to-infinitive verb of speaking:

20. **I'm happy to say**, you are the winner.

Other examples include: **I'm glad to say, I'm pleased to say, I'm delighted to say, I'm happy to tell you; I hope, I wish, I fear, I'm afraid, I regret to say, I'm sorry to say; it pains me to tell you, it grieves me to say**(Quirk et al. 1985: 1114).

Biber et al. (1999: 864-5) illustrate that finite comment clauses, which usually have a first person pronoun subject and no subordinator, are used to mark a proposition as the speaker's opinion, or to convey some level of personal doubt or certainty:

21. This room's not been in years, **I would say**.

Quirk et al. (1985: 1114) state that finite comment clauses hedge, i.e. they express the speaker's tentativeness over the truth value of the matrix clause. Here, the subject is **I** and the verb is in the present simple. But the subject may be an indefinite **one** or **they** or **it** and the verb may have a modal auxiliary or be in the present perfective. Here, the comment clause occurs in end- position:

22. The child is in the garden, **I believe**.

Such a kind of tentativeness can also be denoted through the use of the following examples: **I believe, I guess, I think, I expect, I feel, I hear, I presume, I assume, I understand, I suppose, I consider, I suspect, I'm told, I have read, I have heard tell, I can see, I may assume, I daresay, I venture to say, one hears, they tell me, they allege, they say, it is said, it is reported, it is claimed, it is rumoured, it has been claimed, it seems, it appears**. The comment clause may be negative if the matrix clause is also negative. Here, the subject is **I**, and the negative expresses greater tentativeness than the positive:

23. They aren't at home, **I do not believe**.

There are few verbs that can allow the negative which are **believe, think, expect** and **suppose**.

Moreover, Crystal (2003: 229) adds another meaning expressed by comment clauses which is attracting the listener's/ hearer's attention with the personal pronoun **you** or the implied **you** in imperative sentences as a subject in final position. So, claiming attention is the most hearer- oriented function:

24. He is very selfish, **you see**.

By using **you see** in example (24), the speaker makes sure that the listener/ hearer fully understands the content of communication by seeking some responsive feedback. Here are other examples suggested by Quirk et al.(1985: 1115): **You know, you realize; you can see, you may know, you may have heard, you must admit; mind you, mark you; it may interest you to know**.

What is more, Muzikant(2007: 12) says that finite comment clauses, once occurring initially, might express the speakers' certainty. The subject here is **I** and the verb will be in the present simple such as **I know, I see, I admit, I have no doubt**, etc. :

25. **I'm sure**, he knows me.

Certainty might also be expressed by the negation of a verb that denotes 'rejection' or 'lack of certainty' in the comment clause:

26. **I don't deny**, he has done a good job.

Furthermore, Quirk et al. (1985: 1115) offer another pragmatic function of the finite comment clauses which is the hearer's agreement. At the same time, these clauses might express the speaker's informality and warmth towards the hearer when they occur finally. The subject is usually **you** or the implied **you** of the imperative:

27. I'm not interested in grammar, **you know**.

Negative questions usually call for the hearer's agreement:

28. It is ethically wrong, **wouldn't you say?**

Biber et al. (1999: 864-5) maintain that adverbial comment clauses which start with **as** are used to express recognition of the audience's knowledge or expectations:

29. **As you know**, there are several groups for the different application areas.

In this respect, Stenström (1984: 77) adds that **as you know** shows that the speaker presupposes that the listener/ hearer has some sort of knowledge concerning what the speaker is referring to and as such acts as a politeness device and it does not appeal for feedback. This is in contrast to **you know** which does not necessarily show presupposition as far as previous knowledge on the part of the listener/ hearer which is done for the sake of politeness.

Leech and Svartvik (2002: 157) point out that, in initial position, non- finite comment clauses can denote emotional reaction or judgment as in:

30. **To my regret**, he didn't accept our offer.

Biber et al. (1999: 866) illustrate that to- infinitive and -ing comment clauses can be used to convey how the speaker/ writer is communicating. With this meaning, they are positioned at the beginning of the main clause:

31. **Generally speaking**, you get what you pay for in a kitchen.

32. **To tell you the truth**, I don't know.

The different pragmatic functions denoted by comment clauses reflect the extent to which the speaker tries to keep his face and the hearer's face balanced. In other words, the consensus of opinion between the speaker and the interlocutor is evoked without offending hearers or addressees. This is in order to protect him/herself from a possible counter- argument beforehand, and to mitigate the imposition of the speaker's thought or points of view upon the hearer or addressee. All these ideas are related to politeness, positive or negative (Yamamoto: 2010: 387).

2. Comment Clauses in Arabic

2. 1 Definition and Structure

A comment clause is a clause that occurs throughout the speech or between speeches connected by meaning. Such a clause separates the speech or speeches and has no effect upon its meaning when removed but used for a purpose (الزركشي، 1990:56).

One of the characteristics of the Arabs is that they are well known for their use of comment clauses which can mostly be seen in their prose and poetry. Such a use is an indication of the Arabic native speaker and his/her power. What supports this is that many comment clauses are clearly used in the Holy Glorious (Ibid.).

ابن هشام (1985 : 446) defines comment clauses as those clauses occurring between " two things in order to improve and strengthen speech". Here, 'two things' means that a comment clause can occur between two parts of the same sentence; in other words within syntactic constituents of the same sentence as **ولن تنجح** in (33) or between two independent clauses connected by meaning as **إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ** in (34):

33. **إن نجحت ، ولن تنجح، سأعطيك هدية.**

If you succeed, and you will not succeed, I will give you a gift.

34. (فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ) (البقرة: ٢٢٢-٢٢٣)

But when they have purified themselves, ye may approach them in any manner, time, or place ordained for you by Allah. For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean. Your wives are as a tilth unto you. (Ali, 2001: 12)

(بن جني 2010:188) adds if a comment clause occurs in its right position, i.e. between the parts of the same utterance or two utterances, having no syntactic function with them and used to reinforce or improve speech, so no one can omit this clause and it is as such one of its requirements. Consequently, if it is dropped from the context in which it should be used, the sentence will lose its principal meaning.

(القزويني 2003: 231) maintains that one comment clause or more than one can occur within the same speech or between two speeches connected by meaning. Such clauses have no syntactic functions but are used to express meaning. This is a comprehensive definition because it specifies the position of comment clauses either between the parts of one sentence or between independent sentences. Then, such a definition tackles comment clauses pragmatically by referring to the reasons behind using them.

Similarly, (الرجاني 2008: 12) sustains that a clause or more than one clause can occur through a speech or between speeches with no syntactic function. All grammarians agree that comment clauses have no syntactic functions in the sentences they occur in. This means that there is no syntactic relationship between comment clauses and the clauses that occur before and after them. This is because they cannot be substituted by a single word.

Consequently, (بو معزة 2008: 95) points out that a comment clause is an independent clause in meaning and structure which is used by the speaker to attract the hearer's/ listener's attention and to add a meaning to the sentence in which it occurs. As such, a comment clause is not a kind of insertion that can be dropped easily.

(قبابة 1989:67-8) shows that a comment clause has semantic relationship with the speech it occurred between its parts to emphasize as عمرو بن شأس said in (35) , illustrate as قطري بن الفجاءة said in (36) or improve as زهير بن ابي سلمى said in his poetry in (37):

35. أردت عرارا بالهوان ، ومن يرد عرارا - لعمرى - بالهوان فقد ظلم
36. فإن أمت حتف أنفي لا أمت كمدا على الطعان - وقصر العاجز الكمد -
ولم أقل لم أساق الموت شاربته في كأسه والمنايا شرع ورؤ
37. سئمت تكاليف الحياة ومن يعيش ثمانين حولا - لا أبا لك - يسأم

So, in (35), the poet here uses the comment clause لعمرى which separates the two clauses as a swear in order to emphasize his speech; in (36) وقصر العاجز الكمد is used to illustrate the poet's intention of personality and heroism as compared with other people and in (37) لا أبا لك is used to improve and decorate his speech.

(2009: 188) states that in written language, comment clauses are characterized by the use of the punctuation marks (— →). Comment clauses can be enclosed by these marks with or without an equal space before and after them, yet still it is preferable to leave such a space.

Moreover, (1989: 73, 76) points out that one of the features of comment clauses is that they can be preceded by certain particles such as **Sa** السين, **Sawfa** سوف, and **Lan** لن which denote futurity. At the same time, they can be also preceded by the particles of condition which also denote futurity including: **Fa'a** الفاء, **Waw** الواو, **Ith** اذ or **Hata** حتى.

(1996:182) states that one can see that there are more than one comment clause occurring within the speech as in (38) in which **اليه** and **عليه توكلت** are two comment clauses separating the adjective and its noun:

38. (وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُوكُمْ فِيهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ) (الشورى ١٠-١١)

Whatever it be wherein ye differ, the decision thereof is with Allah: such is Allah my Lord: In Him I trust, and to Him I turn. (He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs among cattle: by this means does He multiply you: there is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things). (Ali, 2001: 184)

2.2 Types of Comment Clauses

In terms of form, there are certain types of comment clauses. A comment clause can take the form of a nominal clause consisting of a subject and a predicate as in:

39. (أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ) (البقرة: ١٩)

Or [another similitude] is that of a rain-laden cloud from the sky: In it are zones of darkness, and thunder and lightning: They press their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap, the while they are in terror of death. But Allah is ever round the rejecters of Faith! (Ibid.2)

So, (والله محيط بالكافرين) is a nominal comment clause which consists of **الله** as the subject and **محيط بالكافرين** as the predicate. The whole comment clause is characteristically preceded by the particle **Waw** الواو, (ابن هشام, 1985: 447).

Another form of one sentence is the positive/ negative verbal sentence which starts with a verb followed by its subject as in:

40. عدت- يعلم الله كيف كان ذلك- الى منزلي.

I have returned, and Allah know how was that, home.

In example (40), the comment clause **يعلم الله كيف كان ذلك** is a hedged verb sentence occurring between **عدت** and **الى منزلي** (قباوة, 1989: 73).

In addition, a comment clause can take the form of an interrogative sentence as in:

41. (وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ لَهُ وَلَا يَكُفِّرُ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ) (آل عمران: ١٣٥)

And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins,- and who can forgive sins except Allah?- and are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in [the wrong] they have done. (Ali,2001 : 29)

In this example, وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ لَهُ is the comment clause which takes the interrogative form. It is positioned between فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ and لَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلُوا (السامرائي , 2007: 188).

Moreover, a comment clause can be the form of a conditional sentence as in:

42. (لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا) (الفتح: ٢٧)

Truly did Allah fulfil the vision for His Messenger: ye shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, with minds secure, heads shaved, hair cut short, and without fear. For He knew what ye knew not, and He granted, besides this, a speedy victory.(Ali, 2001 :261)

إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ in example (42) is the comment clause which is in the form of **if** clause whose main clause is omitted since it is recovered from the context. This is one of the features of Arabic speech (ابن هشام, 1985: 455).

2.3 Positions Occupied by Comment Clauses

بن جني (2010 : 268) states that a comment clause can occupy different positions in a sentence. First, it occurs between the verb and its subject as in (٤٣) in which الحمد لله is a comment clause:

43. نجح - والحمد لله - أخوك.

Your brother, and praise be to Allah, succeeded. (عباس , 2000:501)

Second, it takes a position between the direct object and indirect objects as in (44) where وفقه الله is a comment clause:

44. علمت أخاك - وفقه الله - ناجحاً.

I have been told that your brother, Allah bless him, has succeeded. (السامرائي , 2007 :188)

Third, قباوة (1989: 68-69) points out that a comment clause might be positioned between the subject and its predicate as in (45). So, **انا موقن** is the comment clause:

45. زيدٌ - انا موقن - كريمٌ .
Zayd, I'm sure, is generous

Fourth, it might occur between the subject and object such as **أقسم** in (46):

46. أكرمتُ - أقسم - زيداً
I rewarded, I swear, Zayd.

Fifth, a comment clause can be placed between oath and its complement as in (47) in which **وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ** is a comment clause:

47. ﴿فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ * وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ﴾ (الواقعة: ٧٥-٧٦)

Furthermore I call to witness the setting of the Stars,-
And that is indeed a mighty adjuration if ye but knew. (Ali, 2001: 277)

Sixth, it can be also seen between the adjective and its noun. So, **والله** is a comment clause in (48):

48. كافأتُ طالباً - والله - مجداً

I rewarded a clever, By Allah, student. (ابن هشام, 1985 : 726)

As the samirani (2007: 188) adds a seventh position in which the comment clause, as exemplified by **وَكُنْ تَفْعَلُوا** in (49), is placed between if condition and its main clause:

49. (فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَكُنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ) (البقرة: ٢٤)
But if ye cannot- and of a surety ye cannot- then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones,- which is prepared for those who reject Faith. (Ali, 2003: 2)

Eighth, it can also occur between **سوف Sawfa** and the verb as in (50), between **قد Qad** and the verb as in (51) or between the particle of negation and its negation as in (52):

50. ما أدري وسوف - أخال - أدري أقوم آل حصن أم نساء؟
51. أخالد قد - والله - أوطأت عشره
52. فلا - وابي دهماء - زالت عزيزة (قباوة, 1989: 69- 70)

Ninth, بن جني (2010:268) sustains that a comment clause can be placed between the relative pronoun and its antecedent as in (53). So, **أظن** is the comment clause occurring between **الذي** as the relative pronoun and **فاز** as its antecedent:

53. قابلتُ الذي - أظن - فازَ بالجائزة.

I have met the person who, I think, won the prize.

Or it might be placed between the parts of the relative clause as **والكرم جميل** in (54):

54. رأيتُ الذي ماله - والكرمُ جميلٌ - مبدول للناس .

I saw that whose money, and generosity is fine, is exerted to all.

Eleventh, ابن جني (ibid. :269-70) adds another position for the comment clause which is between the noun and predicate of **Inna** as in (55), the noun of **Kan** and its predicate as in (56) or between the genitive and its noun as in (57):

55. انه - المسكين - أحمق.

He is, the miserable, foolish.

56. كان عليّ - رحمه الله - أميناً في صداقته

Ali, May Allah be merciful to him, was loyal of his friendship.

57. استعرتُ كتابَ - والله - محمدٍ.

I borrowed Mohammad's, By Allah, book.

What is more, one can see a comment clause occurring between the preposition, as exemplified by *الى* in (58), and the noun in the genitive case *زيد*, or between the accusative of state, as exemplified by *فرحاً* in (59) and its noun *التلميذ*:

58. أرسلَ أحمدُ رسالةً الى - والله - زيدٍ.

Ahmed had sent a message to, By Allah, Zayd.

59. جاءَ التلميذُ - والحمد لله - فرحاً.

The pupil came, and praise be to Allah, happy. (1989: 70, قباوة)

Furthermore, قباوة (Ibid.) maintains that a comment clause can be positioned between two independent sentences having a relation of cause, illustration or interpretation as in the poetry of زفر بن الحارث :

60. أريني سلاحي - لا أبالك - اني ارى الحرب لا تزداد الا تمادياً

So, *لا أبالك* is the comment clause that occurs between two independent clauses which are *اني ارى الحرب لا تزداد الا تمادياً* and *أريني سلاحي*.

2.4 Pragmatic Functions of Comment Clauses

Although comment clauses have no syntactic functions in the sentence, yet they can be used to denote different pragmatic functions. These are as follows:

1. Statement

الزركشي (1990 : 57) illustrates that these clauses can be used to report speech as in (٦١) in which *لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ* is a comment clause which occurs between *قَالُوا تَاللّٰهِ* and *مَا جِئْنَا نَنفُسِدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ* to state 'confessing innocence' than the act of 'stealing'. At the same time, he mentions that these clauses which expire can occur at the end of the sentence as in (٦٢) which is used to report what kings do by humiliating others:

61. (قَالُوا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْنَا لِنَفْسِدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سَارِقِينَ) (يوسف: ٧٣)

[The brothers] said: "By Allah! well ye know that we came not to make mischief in the land, and we are no thieves!" (Ali, 2001:111)

62. ((قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ)) (النمل: ٣٤)

She said: "Kings, when they enter a country, despoil it, and make the noblest of its people its meanest thus do they behave. (Ibid. 187)

2. Transcendence

التفتازاني (1813 : 286) shows that a comment clause can be used to express transcendence. In (63), *سُبْحَانَهُ* is a comment clause which occurs within the same speech. The clause often has the connotation of praising Allah for His total perfection,

implying a rejection of any anthropomorphic elements or associations with Allah, or any attribution of mistakes or faults to Him. Thus, it serves as testimony to Allah's transcendence of having daughters:

63. (وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَلَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ) (النحل: ٥٧)

And they assign daughters for Allah! - Glory be to Him! - and for themselves[sons,- the issue] they desire! (Ibid. 127)

3. Asking the Blessing

الزركشي (1990 : 57) maintains that a comment clause might be used to ask for the blessing of getting into the Sacred Mosque as in (64) in which 'إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ' is a comment clause with such a meaning:

64. (لَقَدْ صَدَّقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الْوُيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَنَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ ﴿٢٧﴾) Truly did Allah fulfil the vision for His Messenger: ye shall enter the

Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, with minds secure, heads shaved, hair cut short, and without fear. For He knew what ye knew not, and He granted, besides this, a speedy victory. (Ali, 2001: 261)

4. Prayer

عوف بن محم (2000: 501) illustrates that prayer can be expressed through the use of comment clauses within the same speech or sentence as in the poetry of الخزاعي:

65. إِنْ الثَّمَانِينَ - وَبُلِّغْتَهَا — قد أحوجتُ سمعي إلى ترجُمان

Here, وَبُلِّغْتَهَا is a comment clause, which starts with Waw الواو, used to show prayer to the addressee. وَبُلِّغْتَهَا means "I hope that you reach this age". This is one of the most interesting uses of comment clauses.

5. Regret

A comment clause can also be used to express regret as in the poetry of ابراهيم بن المهدي while he was lamenting his son:

66. واني - وان قدمت قبلي - لعالم باني - وان أبطأت منك - قريب

So, وان قدمت قبلي in the first line, in example (66), and وان أبطأت منك in the second line are two comment clauses used intentionally by the poet to show his sadness and regret because of his son's death (المبرد, 1990: 337).

6. Glorification

الزركشي (1990 : 58) points out that a comment clause can be used to denote overemphasis as in:

67. (فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ * وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ) (الواقعة ٧٥ - ٧٦)

Furthermore I call to witness the setting of the Stars,-

And that is indeed a mighty adjuration if ye but knew,- (Ali, 2001: 277)

These second ayaa, وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ, contains two comment clauses. The first one is the nominal sentence وانه لقسم لو تعلمون عظيم occurring between the oath

and its complement whereas the second one is the verbal clause *لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ* which occurs between the adjective and its antecedent. The aim here is to glorify and emphasize what Allah has sworn of, as exemplified by *مواقع النجوم*.

7. Paying Attention

(الهاشمي 185: 1970) sustains that paying attention can be manifested through the use of comment clauses as in:

68. *وَأَعْلَمَ - فَعِلْمُ الْمَرْءِ يَنْفَعُهُ - أَنْ سَوْفَ يَأْتِي كُلُّ مَا قَدِرَا*

So, *فَعِلْمُ الْمَرْءِ يَنْفَعُهُ* is a comment clause occurring between the two connected speeches, more specifically the verb *وَأَعْلَمَ* and its object. It is used to attract the listener's attention to something that the speaker wants to convey. It means that fate is coming even though it is delayed.

8. Specifying One Person with More Care

Comment clauses can be used to show how someone is specified with more care and attention as in the following example:

69. *(وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ) (لقمان: ١٤)*

And We have enjoined on man [to be good] to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: [hear the command], "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is [thy final] Goal. (Ali, 2001: 203)

In this aayah, Allah advise human beings to thank Him and their parents who are responsible for their birth according to Allah Law. So, *حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ* is a comment clause occurring between *وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ* and *أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي* in order to direct sons and daughters' attention that mothers suffer much during their pregnancy and milk- giving, as such they must take care of their mothers. So, a sense of specification with more care is for mothers more than fathers (الزركشي, 1990: 58).

9. Increased Reply to the Antagonist

A comment clause can express the meaning of increased reply to the antagonist as in:

70. *(وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ) (البقرة: ٧٢)*

Remember ye slew a man and fell into a dispute among yourselves as to the crime: But Allah was to bring forth what ye did hide. (Ali, 2001: 5)

So, the comment clause *وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ* is to affirm the idea that though the tribes of Israel tried to make secret the killing of those people but this was not beneficial because Allah is responsible for bringing forth this secret (الزركشي, 1990: 58).

10. Entreating and Coincidence

(عباس 503: 2000) states that a comment clause can be used to show entreating and coincidence as in the speech of Al- Mutanbi:

71. *وَحُفُوقُ قُلُوبٍ لَوْ رَأَيْتَ لَهْبِيئَهُ - يَا جَنَّتِي - لَطَنَنْتَ فِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ*

So, *يَا جَنَّتِي* is a comment clause that is used for entreating with hell.

11. Illustrating the Reason for Strangeness

(ibid.) adds that a comment clause can be used to denote the reason behind doing something strange as in the poetry of ابن ميادة once he says:

72. فلا هجره يبدو - وفي الياس راحة- ولا وصله يبدو لنا فنكارمه

So, وفي الياس راحة is a comment clause used here to show the cause behind jilting the lover which is something strange.

12. Praise

Comment clauses can be used to express praise. This means that these clauses can express warm admiration or approval of the achievements or characteristics of a person or thing as وأنت معناه in the poetry of ابي محمد الخازن :

73. (197 : 2003 , القزويني) ايه طربة للعفو إن ال ... كريم- وأنت معناه - طروب

13. Contempt

Moreover, (ibid.) sustains that contempt, i.e. a strong feeling of dislike and having no respect for someone or something, can be manifested through the use of comment clauses. So, ولم أطلب in example (74) is a comment clause occurring between the verb كفاني and its subject قليل expressing the meaning of contempt concerning living:

74. ولو ان ما اسعى لأدنى معيشة كفاني - ولم أطلب - قليل من المال

3. Comparison of Comment Clauses in English and Arabic

The aim of this section is to trace the similarities and differences between English and Arabic comment clauses. This will be done in terms of definition and structure, types, positions and pragmatic functions.

3.1 Definition and Structure

In English, comment clauses are those clauses which comment on the content of the main clause, i.e., content disjuncts, and the attitude of the speaker towards the way of speaking, i.e., style disjuncts. They are separated from the main clause by commas in writing having a separate tone unit in speech. Syntactically, their omission does not make the sentence ungrammatical, but may cause pragmatic difficulties.

In Arabic, a comment clause is, syntactically speaking, a non- functional clause which separates either two parts of the same speech or two speeches in order to illustrate, emphasize or indicate certain meanings that the speaker wants to convey. This means that there is no syntactic relation between the comment clause and what precedes or follows it. It is enclosed by the punctuation marks (- -). It can be preceded by one of the particles such as Waw الواو, Fa'a الفاء, Ith اذ or Hata حتى. Also, there can be more than one comment clause within the connected speech.

3.2 Types of Comment Clauses: There are six types of comment clauses in English depending on structure. First, finite comment clauses, as the most frequent type, which consist of at least a subject and a transitive verb or adjective without any introductory word. Second, they might be in the form of adverbial finite clauses preceded by **as**. Third, they might also take the structure of nominal relative clauses starting with **what**. Fourth, they take the form of to- infinitive; fifth will be non- finite -ed clause whereas the sixth takes the form of non- finite -ing clause.

Arabic comment clauses are of four types depending on the form of the sentence. First, they take the form of nominal clauses which consist of a subject and a predicate. Second, they might be in the form of positive or negative verbal clause which starts

with the verb followed by its subject. Third, they can also take the structure of interrogative clauses. Fourth, comment clauses might have the structure of conditional clauses.

3.3 Positions Occupied by Comment Clauses: English comment clauses can occur in different positions, i. e. at the beginning, in the medial or at the end of the main clause having a separate tone unit and marked by increased space and lowered pitch and volume. Finite comment clauses are mobile in the sense that they occur initially, medially or finally. Nominal relative clauses are always initial so as to be distinguished from sentential relative clauses. Non- finite clauses in their three forms occur at the beginning of the matrix clause.

Arabic comment clauses take one position only in the middle of the same speech or between two independent speeches having a relation of cause, illustration or interpretation. Within the same sentence, a comment clause can occur between its different parts. A comment clause might occupy a position between the subject and predicate, the verb and its subject, the direct and indirect object, the subject and the object, oath and its complement, the adjective and its noun, if clause and its main clause, the preposition and the noun in the genitive case, **Sawfa سوف** and the verb, **Qad قد** and the verb, the particle of negation and its negation, the relative pronoun and its antecedent, the accusative of state and its noun, the noun of **Inna إن** and its predicate, the noun of **Kan كان** and its predicate, or between the genitive and its noun.

3.4 Pragmatic Functions of Comment Clauses: In English, comment clauses can be used to express different pragmatic functions. Finite comment clauses can mark a proposition as the speaker's opinion or to cover some level of personal doubt or certainty. They can also denote the speaker's tentativeness over the truth value of the matrix clause, attract the listener's/ addressee's attention, illustrate the speaker's emotional attitude towards the content of the main clause and express the speaker's informality or warmth towards the hearer. Non- finite clauses can denote how the speaker is communicating or indicate emotional reaction or judgment. Adverbial finite clauses starting with **as** express recognition of the audience's knowledge or expectations. Arabic comment clauses can be used to denote different pragmatic functions including: statement, transcendence, asking the blessing, prayer, regret, glorification, paying attention, specifying one person with more care, increased reply to the antagonist, entreating and coincidence, illustrating the reason for strangeness, praise, and contempt.

Conclusions

In English, comment clauses are those clauses that belong to the category of parenthetical disjuncts which function as either indicators of the speaker's personal comments on what precedes or follows the utterance or of the hearer's involvement in the discourse. In Arabic, comment clauses are those clauses which occur either between syntactic constituents of the same speech or between two independent speeches used for illustration, reinforcement or emphasis.

Both English and Arabic comment clauses are highly used in speech. They occur in a linear sequence, but syntactically non-functional, i.e. they are not integrated into the structure of the sentence in which they occur. Intonationally, they are separate or set off by punctuation marks. Semantically, they have little or no propositional meaning. Also, they are person-to- person oriented; and they are optional in that their

omission does not render the sentence ungrammatical, although it may cause pragmatic or meaning difficulties.

English comment clauses can take the finite and non-finite forms whereas Arabic comment clauses can take the form of a nominal, a verbal, an interrogative or a conditional sentence stating with one of the particles such as **Waw** الواو or **Fa'a** الفاء which are considered as the widely used particles in comment clauses.

By position, English comment clauses are syntactically possible at all positions in that they can be placed at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the main clause, although mid-position is considered as the most widely used one. However, Arabic comment clauses occur either between the parts of the same connected speech or between two independent speeches connected by meaning, so that they are of mid-position only.

Pragmatically, both English and Arabic make use of comment clauses to express various functions whether in same or different positions. In English, on the one hand, they can be used to denote certainty/ doubt, agreement, hedging, emotional attitude and feelings; to attract the hearer's attention to feel part of the conversation; to show recognition of the speaker's knowledge or expectation, emotional reaction, judgment or the speaker's informality and warmth towards the hearer. On the other hand, Arabic comment clauses are used in contexts including: Statement, transcendence, asking the blessing of , prayer, regret, glorification, paying attention, specifying one person with more care, increased reply to the antagonist, entreating and coincidence, illustrating the reason of strangeness, praise and contempt.

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