**INTRODUCTION**

Although they come from completely two different language family trees, German and Arabic share the feature of flexibility in sentence word order. This flexibility can make it easier for learners of German/Arabic to comprehend the meaning intended from the sentence in Arabic/German. The verb in main sentences in German has a fixed position. It always takes the second position “*Ferben haben eine feste Position im Satz.*” In German, the verb is always on position 2 (Hueber, Grammatik ganz Klar, P. 138). In the subordinate sentences, the verb in the German sentence comes at the end of the sentence. The other elements of the sentence (subject, object, adjective phrase, adverb phrase, prepositional phrase) are flexible. For example, the sentence can start with the subject or object or adverb. Arabic has more flexibility due to the fact that it is not necessarily that the verb takes a fixed position in main or subordinate sentences. The verb in the Arabic sentence takes usually the first position, then it is followed by the subject, but the subject can also precede the verb in Arabic and in this case the sentence changes from a verbal sentence into a nominal sentence (الانطاكشي، المنهج في القواعد والأدب العربي).

Some patterns of word order in German and Arabic

The word order in German can be of various patterns. A common word order is that which follows the pattern SVO/OVS:

- SVO:  
  - Der Löwe hat den Büffel gefressen.  
  - Der Löwe (S) hat (V) den Büffel (O) gefressen.

This sentence can have at least three variations in Arabic as

- الأسدُقاموُسامُة
  - أَكَّلَ اﻟﺠﺎﻣﻮسَ اﻷﺳَﺪُ  
  - أَكَّلَ اﻷﺳَﺪُ اﻟﺠﺎﻣﻮسَ
- الأسدُقاموُسامُة
  - أَكَّلُ اﻟﺠﺎﻣﻮسَ اﻷﺳَﺪُ  
  - أَكَّلُ اﻷﺳَﺪُ اﻟﺠﺎﻣﻮسَ

The first Variation Contains an Emphatic word (qad), which is a Common and natural Translation in Arabic.

- الأسدُقاموُسامُة
  - ʾalasadu qad ʾakala alğāmusa.
  - ʾalasadu (S) qad (emphatic word) ʾakala (V) alğāmusa (O).

In the Second Variation, the Sentence can Also Be Written Without the Emphatic word “qad”

- أَكَّلُ اﻟﺠﺎﻣﻮسَ اﻷﺳَﺪُ  
  - ʾakala ʾalasadu alğāmusa.
  - ʾakala (V) ʾalasadu (S) alğāmusa (O).

OVS

Another variation of writing this sentence in German is OVS
This sentence in Arabic is possible because the subject (agent) is embedded in the verb and the verb (اَلْتَعْطُىْ) contains an attached pronoun (هُمَّةٍ) that refers to the previously mentioned object (Alkurata).

It is also possible in German to start the sentence with the indirect object as follows:

**Indirect Object (Dative) + Verb + Subject + Direct Object (Accusative)**

- Dem Jungen (IO) gab (V) ich (S) einen Ball (DO).

To give a close equivalent of this sentence into Arabic, the sentence will start with a prepositional phrase as in:

إلى الولد / علمي الكرة

- ilāwaladi (Prep + Prep Comp) اَلْتَعْطُى (V+S) Alkurata (O).

**Sentences with modal verbs**

In German, when there is a modal verb in the sentence, the modal verb takes the second position, and the main verb goes at the end of the sentence.

- Ich werde das Buch bald lesen.
  Ich (S) werde (Modal/Helping verb) das Buch (O) bald (Adv.) lesen (Part two of the M. verb).

**This Sentence can be rendered into Arabic as follows**

- سوِفَ أُ القرِئُ الكِتابِ قرِيبًا
  Sawfa’ aqra’ alkitaba qarīban.

- Sawfa’ (introductory word indicating the future) اَقْرَأْتُ (V+S) alkitaba (Object) qarīban (adverb).

The helping verb/modal in German is rendered into Arabic in this sentence through the introductory word (Sawfa).

**Subordinate clauses word order**

The verb in the subordinate clause in German is placed in the last position.

- Ich weiß nicht, ob er dir hilft.
- Ich (S) weiß nicht (V), ob (Conj.) er (S) dir (IO) hilft (V).

**This sentence is translated into Arabic as**

- لا أعلم أذاكانتيساعدك
  Lā’ lamu ma َاذْكَانِيسُعِسَىُ iduk.

- Lā’ lamu (NV + S) mā (Relative Word) iḍā(Conditional word) kān(Helping Verb) sayusā’ iduk. (V + S + O)

These examples show that the verb in the subordinate clause is placed at the end in both German and Arabic sentences.

**Word Order in relative clauses**

- Das ist der Film, den ich mir ansehen will.
  Das (P) ist (V) der Film (N), den (Relative Pronoun/O) ich (S) mir (IO) ansehen (Part. II) will (Modal).

- هذا هو الفيلم بالداريد مشمسهاته
  هذَهُ huwa alfilmu aḏī uridu musāhadaṭu

- hāḏā (P) huwa (P+S) alfilmu (O) aḏī (Relative Pronoun) uridu (V+S) musāhadaṭu (O)
The difference between the German sentence and the Arabic translation is that the relative sentence in German ends with the verb, whereas the Arabic sentence ends with the object and preceded by subject and verb.

**Word order in questions**

The verb in Wh-questions in German takes the second position; the subject takes the third position.

- Wo wohnst du?
- Wo (Adv.) wohnst (V) du (S)?

**In Arabic this sentence is translated as**

- أين تعيش؟
- ‘aynataskuni?
- ‘ayna (Adv.) taskuni (V+S)?

The verb in Arabic takes the second position after the question word (adverb), and the subject is in this sentence embedded in the verb. In other words, it also takes the second position.

**Word order in Imperatives**

The German imperative starts with the verb. The subject/agent who is addressed is omitted. It is also common to use the subject when the imperative is addressed to a person in an official manner. The subject in this case is the pronoun “Sie”.

- Schreib mir eine E-mail.
- Schreib (V) mir (OD) eine E-mail (O).

The addressee is embedded in the imperative verb and this is the case in Arabic also where the addressee is embedded in the imperative verb.

- ❄️akīb ‘lī ‘īmarīl
- ’uktub (V) lī (Prep. Ph.) ‘īmarīl (O)

**When the Imperative is Addressed in an Official Manner, the Addressee is Mentioned as in**

- Kommen Sie bitte schnell!
- Kommen (V) Sie (S) bitte schnell (Adv).
- حضرك، حضرتك. (V)
- ta’labisur ‘atirrā’ an.
- ta’ala(S+V) bisur ‘atin(Prep. Ph) ra’ga an (gerund).

This example shows an interesting difference between Arabic and German with regards to the use of the imperative in a formal manner. It is necessary to use the pronoun “Sie” in German whereas standard Arabic does not require using this pronoun in the equivalent translation.

Sometimes the formal pronoun “Sie” is translated in some Arabic dialects such as Egyptian dialect with the word “tafadal hadratuka”. This word shows respect for the other person. So the following example shows how the word is used.

- Bitte nehmen Sie Platz.
- تفضل حضرتك بالجلوس. (V)
- tafadal hadratuka biljulus.

The word “Sie” in German is equivalent in Arabic to the word “ḥadratuka”. However, this is common only in the Egyptian dialect whereas in other Arabic dialects the word “ḥadratuka” is usually not used, and it is enough to translate the German sentence as:

- tafadal hadratuka biljulus.

**CONCLUSION**

The various structures show that Arabic and German are flexible in word order. The same sentence can be written in more than one way. It depends on which part of the sentence one wants to emphasize. The object/patient can precede the subject/agent and vice versa.

The verb takes position 2 in the main sentence in German, whereas in the subordinate sentence it takes the last position. One might say that this is a fixed rule in German word order. For example, if any element is used in the German sentence, the other elements change their positions except the verb (https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/z9jfbk7/revision/1).

In contrast, in Arabic it usually takes the first position in both the main clause and subordinate clause. However, there is flexibility in Arabic to have various positions for the verb.

In Arabic, it is common to have the subject/agent embedded in the verb. In this case, it is considered in Arabic “hidden agent”. It is represented through a letter/pronoun that refers to the subject/agent or object/patient. This does not exist in German as the subject should be identified in words in the sentence.

Rather than English, Arabic and German translators have flexibility in translation of German/Arabic sentences due to the word order variation in both languages. This variation can be attributed to the fact that both German and Arabic are highly inflectional languages.

**List of Abbreviations**

- S: Subject
- V: Verb
- O: Object
- DO: Direct Object
- IO: Indirect Object
- Prep: Preposition
- Prep Comp: Prepositional Complement
- Conj: Conjunction
- NV: Negative Verb
- P: Pronoun

**Transliteration of Arabic Letters**

The Deutsches Institutfür Normung (DIN) style is used for the transliteration of the Arabic alphabet.

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4. Hueber(2011), Grammatik ganz Klar,

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