

English department Third stage Ninth lecture
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Lecture: The Comparative Paradigm

1. The Concept of a Paradigm

In morphology, a **paradigm** is a set of related word forms that belong to the same lexeme and show systematic grammatical contrasts. These forms share the same basic lexical meaning but differ in grammatical meaning.

A paradigm helps us understand how a single word changes its form to express different grammatical functions.

مجموعة من صيغ الكلمات المرتبطة التي تنتهي إلى نفس (Paradigm) في علم الصرف، يُعرَّف النموذج الصرفي وتنظَّر فروقاً نحوية منتظمة. تشتَّرَك هذه الصيغ في المعنى المعجمي الأساسي نفسه، (Lexeme) الوحدة المعجمية لكنها تختلف في المعنى النحوي.

2. Definition of the Comparative Paradigm

The **comparative paradigm** refers to the set of inflectional forms of adjectives and some adverbs that express **degrees of comparison**. These forms indicate variation in the intensity or degree of a quality rather than a change in meaning or word class.

مجموعة الصيغ التصريفية للصفات وبعض (Comparative Paradigm) يشير النموذج الصرفي للمقارنة وتدلّ هذه الصيغ على اختلاف في شدة الصفة أو درجتها، وليس على تغيير في الظروف التي تعبر عن درجات المقارنة المعنى أو في نوع الكلمة.

3. Degrees of Comparison

The comparative paradigm consists of **three degrees**:

a) Positive Degree

The **positive degree** is the basic form of the **adjective** or **adverb**. It expresses a quality without making any **comparison**.

Example:

- tall
- fast

b) Comparative Degree

The **comparative degree** expresses a higher or lower degree of a quality when **two entities** are compared.

There are two main ways to form the comparative degree:

- By adding the suffix **-er** to short adjectives
 - tall → taller
- By using **more** with long adjectives
 - important → more important

c) Superlative Degree

The **superlative degree** expresses the highest or lowest degree of a quality when **more than two entities** are involved.

It is formed by:

- Adding **-est** to short adjectives
 - tall → tallest
- Using **most** with long adjectives
 - important → most important
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◦ 4. Morphological Nature of the Comparative Paradigm

The comparative paradigm is **inflectional**, not derivational. This means:

- The word class does not change.
- The core lexical meaning remains the same.
- Only grammatical meaning (degree) is added.

All three degrees belong to the same lexeme.

5. Synthetic and Analytic Forms

الأشكال التركيبية والتحليلية

Comparison can be expressed in two morphological ways:

a) Synthetic Comparison

This involves a single word formed by adding suffixes:

- -er
- -est

Example:

- small → smaller → smallest

b) Analytic (Periphrastic) Comparison (التعبرية)

This involves the use of separate words to express comparison:

- more
- most

Example:

- interesting → more interesting → most interesting
- Both types are considered part of the same comparative paradigm.

6. Irregular Comparative Paradigms

Some adjectives form their comparative paradigm irregularly. These forms do not follow the usual suffixation or periphrastic patterns.

Example:

- good → better → best

Despite their irregularity, these forms still represent a single paradigm because they contrast systematically in degree.

7. Comparative Paradigm and Syntax

The comparative paradigm itself is a **morphological system**.

Syntactic elements such as *than*, *the*, or prepositional phrases are not part of the paradigm, although they often appear in sentences containing comparative forms.

يُعدّ نموذج المقارنة نفسه نظاماً صرفيّاً.

والعبارات الجرية جزءاً من هذا النموذج، على الرغم من أنها تظهر "than" و "the" لا تُعتبر العناصر النحوية مثل غالباً في الجمل التي تحتوي على صيغ مقارنة

8. Conclusion

The comparative paradigm is the systematic set of forms that adjectives and some adverbs take to express positive, comparative, and superlative degrees. It represents a grammatical contrast within a single lexeme and plays an essential role in expressing comparison in English. النموذج المقارن هو مجموعة الأشكال المنهجية التي تتخذها الصفات وبعض الظروف للتعبير عن درجات الإثبات والمقارنة والتفضيل. وهو يمثل تباعيناً نحوياً داخل الكلمة الواحدة، ويلعب دوراً أساسياً في التعبير عن المقارنة في اللغة الإنجليزية.