**Thorough Remarks on the Interview**

Allow me please to raise the following comments on the language and content of the interview, hoping you find them useful. I apologize for going too far in questioning the details of grammatical structures, which run, by and large, smoothly and coherently enough. However, for the purposes of accuracy and refinement, which you always seek to achieve, I sought to present a microscopic commentary rather than a selective one; which might have lead to magnifying trivial points at the expense of the rich content and forceful arguments of yours. My remarks include:

1. Comments on **the structures of certain statements** to make them more coherent and lucid and avoid unnecessary repetitions. These are **marginal comments** which you can very well ignore, as they involve no shortcomings in grammar or language use, but are added for the sake of **refinement and stylistic embellishment**, should you be tempted to know. These comprise:

* **The\* terrorism is prevailing in our region, and we are part of this region**.

**Alternative**: Terrorism is prevailing in this region, which we are part of.

* **From a coup d'état to a coup d'état**

**Alternative**: going through coup d'état rumblings, one after another

Or simply: from a coup d'état to another

* **If I am free with you, how can I be free with you and not be free with the Syrians?**

Alternative: if I am free with you, how can I not be free with the Syrians!

1. Comments on **the illogicality of certain expressions**: like the previous category, these are **not comments about the correctness or incorrectness of language use**. But conversely, they are comments **you may not want to ignore** because they **undermine the meaning and/or the logic of your statements:**

For example, in the previous sentence:

* **If I am free with you, how can I not be free with the Syrians?**

the use of “***free with***” is **vague** for the English language listener as this expression **does not exist** in the English lexicon. “***To be free with someone***” cannot be used in the sense of being “***open to any questions that person is willing to ask***”, as it was meant in the context. Of course, it is not difficult for the Western listener to deduce the meaning from the context. But to avoid any attempt of decontextualising the statement (taking the words out of their context on purpose) and for the purpose of clarity, it might be better to say:

**Alternative** 1: They are free to ask any questions just as you are free to ask questions now.

**Alternative** 2: I am open to their questions just like I am open to yours.

* **You have other things that are more trivial than your work, but that are still important!**

The use of “***more trivial***” undermines the logic of the sentence as it implies that “***work is trivial, and there are things that are even more trivial than work***!” But **this is not what is meant**, as we can see in the rest of the sentence which ends with: “***but are still important***”

**Alternative 1**: You have other things that are less important than your work (or that come next to your work in priority) but are still important for your life style

Or:

**Alternative 2**: You have other things that are minor to your work, but that are still important for your life style

* **It is my land by all means: legal, political, and national. Sooner or later it has to go back\***

The illogicality of the statement lies in the use of the phrasal verb “**to go back**”, which literally means “to return” but its use depends on the semantic relationship between the subject of the sentence, the object, and the verb used.

For more clarification, look at the following examples:

* I am so homesick and can’t wait to **go back** home (I can’t replace ‘go back’ with ‘come back’; because from a logical, semantic point of view, my destination is far from me and if I were to reach to it, I have ‘go’ there like in ‘go back’ or return
* أشعر بغربةٍ كبيرة، وأتوق **للعودة** إلى وطني

If someone stole a book from me, I say:

* This is my book and you have **to return it**
* هذا الكتاب كتابي ويجب أن تعيده لي

But I cannot say:

* This is my book and has to **go\* back to me**
* Alternative is: this is my book and has **to come back** to me

لانّ استخدام الفعل go/come مرهون بالعلاقة الدلالية بين الفاعل والمفعول به واستخدام go back في الجملة المطروحة يبعد المفعول به our land عن قرينتها الدلالية (نحن) أو us:

This is our land and has to come back (return) to us

Look at the following examples:

* Jews should go back to their country of origin
* The Palestinians have to go back to their occupied land
* Our land should come back to us
* **Things change by the will of the people not by the will\* of the war.**

**Alternative: things change by the will of the people, not by the force of war**

1. Comments on **the correct grammatical and semantic use** of certain words

* **That reflected\* on our country**

**Alternative**: that influenced our country (or left its effects on our country)

* **I wouldn’t blame everything on abroad\***

**On abroad**\* is a prepositional phrase but it is **an incorrect** use because a prepositional phrase is made up of a preposition + a noun. The word ‘**abroad’** does **not function as a noun**; as it is used only as:

* **An adjective** meaning ‘**in a foreign country**’; "markets **abroad**"; "universities abroad”, etc.
* **An adverb** meaning ‘**to or in a foreign country’**; "they had never travelled ***abroad***" or “***to work abroad***, to study abroad, etc.”

**Alternative**: I wouldn’t blame everything on **countries** **abroad (foreign countries)**

**Alternative**: I wouldn’t blame everything on **factors abroad** (i.e. **external factors**)

**Alternative:** I wouldn’t blame everything on **others (or other countries**)

* **How you can support creativity which is about analyzing and open-minding\* to people**

**Alternative**: how you can support creativity which is about analyzing and **open-mindedness**

* **I didn’t define Syria as being democratic, but the society it\* is**

**Alternative**: I didn’t define Syria as being democratic, but the **society is**! (i.e. the Syrian society is democratic)

* **Many people who doesn’t\* want you they\* don’t go to the vote**

**Alternative**: many people who **don’t** want you don’t go to vote

* **It is for the Israelis to change themself\***

**Alternative**: it is for the Israelis to change **themselves**

* **When you have attack\* against a people, they will use any mean\* to defend themself\***

There is a **semantic difference** between a ‘**mean’** and a ‘**means’**:

A **mean**: is the **average** value of a set of numbers

الوسط الحسابي أو المعدّل الوسطي

A **means** (both singular and plural): is a method or an instrument by which to reach an end or accomplish something

الوسيلة أو الواسطة

**The end justifies the means (**Machiavelli)

الغاية تبرر الوسيلة (ميكيافيللي: ولا نقل أبداً: الغاية تبرر الوسائل)

The confusion is very common even among foreign language speakers (for example, the interviewer himself wrongly used ‘mean\*’ instead of ‘means’. I think the reason behind this confusion is that the language user tries to avoid using ‘means’ thinking it is the plural form of ‘mean’ (‘s’ at the end of the word makes it sound ‘plural’). In fact, that assumption is not true because ‘**means’ is not the plural of ‘mean’**. The word ‘**means’** is just like other mass nouns in English that **can be singular or plural** such as: ‘**news’** (not the plural of new\*), ‘**information’** which is not the singular of ‘informations\*’, and ‘**furniture’** which is not the singular of ‘furnitures\*’, so on and so forth.

**Alternative:** When you have an attack against a people, they will use any **means** to defend themselves

* **Before you give me the mean\*, you have to discuss with me the goal and democracy is not the mean\***

**Alternative**: before you give me the **means**, you have to discuss with me the goal and democracy is not the **means**

* **You do not implement on\* me your mean\***

**Alternative**: you do not **apply to** me your **means**

* **The Golan is occupied from\* Syria**

The use of the preposition ‘**from’** is **incorrect**

**Alternative**: The Golan is an occupied Syrian territory

But if you would like to **stress that it belongs to Syria** and was taken from Syria by force, we might **replace** the verb ‘**occupy’** with ‘**usurp’**:

Alternative 2: The Golan was **usurped from** Syria

* **You have law and that law define\* and decide\* when to send someone to jail**

**Alternative**: you have law and that law **defines** and **decides** when to send someone to jail

* Let us look at the reality before looking at the\* statements

**Alternative**: Let’s look at the reality before looking at **statements**

* **If a thief steal\* your wallet you’ll ask for the wallet to go back**

Alternative: if a thief **steals** your wallet, you’ll ask for the wallet to be given back

* **We have the most\* variety of ethnicities and religions**

Alternative: we have the **widest** variety of ethnicities and religions..

* **A political situation could change, but rights does\* not change. It is\* your right forever**

**Alternative**: a political situation may change, but **rights do not** change. They remain your rights forever.

* **We have to look at three dimensions in order to see things as it is\***

**Alternative**: we have to look at three dimensions in order to see things **as they are**

* **What you call it\* terrorism we call it resistance\***

**Alternative**: what you call terrorism we call resistance

* **Opinions has\* nothing to do with it**

**Alternative**: opinions **have** nothing to do with it

**A note about my comments on incorrect grammatical units**: Those mistakes are definitely not caused by the lack of knowledge. They rather indicate a drop in your use of the language. You know they are incorrect and realize you’ve made a mistake soon as you utter them, but you continue to speak in order not to compromise your fluency, which is the best thing to do at the time. **The long term and best way out**, however, is to **boost your communicative skills**, which are not limited to reading, listening, and watching. This has to be carried out **verbally** as well. It is a **communication** that involves **interaction** (speaking to your partner in English, let us say, for half an hour at least a day). I hesitated before I decided to enlist those minor remarks because knowing they are mistakes, which you certainly know, is not enough to avoid making them. Only making them as often as you can and listening to yourself and having another listen to you regularly can be of help.

Sorry for this unmannerly remark, but I felt I had to say this because I noticed a clear difference between the September interview (with Mr. Rose) and this one. I remember that with the former interview I was literally struggling to find a single thing to comment on or mark as a ‘grammatical mistake’, and I had to listen to the interview over and over again, and every time I did, I was so struck by your eloquence and so disappointed with your perfection which scared me into thinking I most certainly have lost my job ☹ and soon have to start hunting for a new one ☹

Having dealt with this interview, my fears diminished again, and I no longer have to learn French ;) to defeat the horror of losing my job ☺

1. Finally, I have considerably enjoyed a repetitive watching of the material with the **confident attentiveness** of your **body language**, the **intelligent smile that eloquently concluded your answers to tough questions**, and certain **insightful statements and powerful metaphors** which reflect **the wisdom and analytical reasoning** in your discourse. I tried to be selective in my choice of examples which I added to my unique collection of golden quotes:

* ***As a president, you don’t own your country; you lead your country.***
* ***Because the Syrians are free to ask their questions, you are free to ask yours. Otherwise, I can’t be two persons in one; I don’t have schizophrenia!***
* ***I cannot force the Israelis to believe in peace. It is for the Israelis to change themselves and for the American’s to change their approach after nineteen years of failure!***
* ***We have to be panoramic because I cannot talk about a reaction before talking about the action that triggered it.***
* ***A political situation may change, but rights are static and never change. What is your right continues to be your right forever!***
* ***Reform requires a national dialogue; it is not for the president or the government to make it happen. It is not something which, if you believe in, will come true. Reform is something you can lead but can’t create on your own. It is for the people to make that reform a reality, and for the government to lead it through.***
* ***I will do my best to achieve peace. But the journey needs a ship with more than one captain to run until we reach that shore of peace together!***

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