eISSN: 2229-3213 pISSN: 2229-3205
The Journal of Applied Science and Social Science
Volume 16,Issue 05 May, 2026

NON-FINITE FORMS OF THE VERB AS PRAGMATIC MARKERS IN TEXTUAL COMMUNICATION

Oblokulova Mastura Mizrobovna
Teacher, Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages
Department of English Language teaching methodology
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20022199

Abstract. The present article investigates the pragmatic peculiarities of non-finite forms of the verb in textual communication. Special attention is given to their role in expressing implicit meanings, structuring discourse, and ensuring cohesion. The study is based on examples drawn from English and Russian literary texts and employs a functional-pragmatic and discourse-analytic approach. The findings demonstrate that non-finite forms of the verb function as pragmatic markers that enable information compression, convey evaluative meanings, and guide interpretation. The study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between grammar and pragmatics.

Keywords: non-finite forms of the verb, pragmatics, discourse, infinitive, participle, gerund, cohesion.

Introduction. The relationship between grammatical form and communicative function has become one of the central concerns of modern linguistics. While earlier approaches tended to treat grammar as an autonomous system, contemporary research increasingly emphasizes its integration with discourse and pragmatics. In this context, non-finite forms of the verb - traditionally defined as verb forms lacking grammatical categories such as tense, person, and number- have attracted renewed scholarly attention.

Non-finite constructions (infinitives, gerunds, and participles) are often described as syntactically reduced forms. However, such a description does not fully account for their communicative potential. In actual discourse, these forms frequently perform functions that go beyond syntax, shaping the way information is presented and interpreted. As noted in recent studies, they serve as important tools for information packaging and pragmatic structuring [1; 2].

One of the key features of non-finite forms is their ability to encode complex semantic relations implicitly. Instead of explicitly marking logical connections such as cause, condition, or time, they allow these relations to be inferred by the reader or listener. This implicitness enhances the efficiency of communication while simultaneously increasing its interpretative depth. The aim of this article is to analyze non-finite forms of the verb as pragmatic markers in textual communication.

Methods. The research is based on a qualitative functional-pragmatic analysis combined with elements of discourse analysis. The material includes examples from literary texts, which are particularly suitable for studying pragmatic nuances due to their richness and stylistic diversity. The selection of examples was guided by their ability to illustrate key pragmatic phenomena, including compression, implication, cohesion, and evaluation.

The theoretical framework draws on recent developments in: functional grammar and discourse studies; cognitive linguistics; construction-based approaches to grammar. The analysis focuses on how non-finite constructions function within context rather than in isolation.

Results. One of the most prominent pragmatic functions of non-finite forms of the verb is their ability to compress information. By using a non-finite construction, speakers and writers can combine multiple propositions into a single syntactic unit, thereby reducing redundancy. Example: *She stood looking at the garden.*

The participial form *looking* replaces a full subordinate clause (*while she was looking at the garden*). This not only shortens the sentence but also creates a more fluid and continuous description. Russian example: *Он сидел, читая письмо.*

The gerundial form *читая* expresses simultaneity, integrating two actions into a single conceptual frame.

This phenomenon can be described as conceptual compression, where complex events are packaged into compact linguistic forms. Such compression contributes to the efficiency of discourse and reflects the cognitive tendency to minimize processing effort.

Non-finite forms of the verb frequently encode logical relations without explicit markers. This implicitness is one of their defining pragmatic features.

Example: *To hear him speak, you would think him a genius.* The infinitive construction implies a conditional meaning (*if you heard him speak*), but the condition is not explicitly stated. The reader must infer it based on context. Russian example: *Не зная ответа, он промолчал.* The gerundial form *не зная* implies causality (*because he did not know the answer*).

Such constructions function as implicit connectors, allowing the speaker to convey complex relationships in a subtle and economical way [3]. At the same time, they increase the interpretative involvement of the reader, who must reconstruct the intended meaning.

Non-finite forms play a crucial role in organizing discourse and maintaining textual cohesion. They allow for smooth transitions between actions and ideas, reducing the need for repetitive conjunctions. Example: *Having finished his work, he left the room quietly.* The participial clause provides background information and establishes a temporal sequence. Russian example: *Подойдя к окну, она задумалась.* Here, the gerundial construction serves as a linking device that connects two events in a coherent narrative flow.

These structures contribute to what is often described as syntactic layering, where information is distributed hierarchically rather than linearly [1]. As a result, the text becomes more cohesive and easier to process.

Another important function of non-finite verb forms is the expression of evaluation and speaker stance. In such cases, they act as pragmatic markers that frame the utterance. Example: *To be honest, I did not expect such a result.*

The infinitive phrase introduces a subjective evaluation, signaling sincerity and positioning the speaker in relation to the statement. Example: *Seeing him again felt strangely unreal.* The gerundial construction conveys emotional perception, adding an evaluative dimension to the description.

These uses align with the concept of stance marking, which refers to the expression of attitudes, judgments, and emotions in discourse [4]. Non-finite forms provide a flexible means of encoding such meanings without disrupting syntactic structure.

While non-finite constructions are efficient, they can also introduce ambiguity. Because logical relations are not explicitly marked, multiple interpretations may be possible. Example: *Walking down the street, the trees looked beautiful.* This sentence creates ambiguity regarding the subject of the action (*who is walking?*).

Such cases highlight the importance of context in interpreting non-finite constructions. As noted in recent research, ambiguity is not necessarily a disadvantage but can serve as a resource for interpretative flexibility [6].

Discussion. The results of the analysis confirm that non-finite verb forms function as important pragmatic markers in textual communication. Their role extends far beyond grammatical reduction, encompassing a wide range of communicative functions.

First, they enable economy of expression, allowing speakers to convey complex meanings in a concise form. This is particularly important in written discourse, where clarity and efficiency are highly valued. Second, they rely on contextual inference, which enhances the interactive nature of communication. By leaving certain relations implicit, they invite the reader to actively participate in meaning construction. Third, they contribute to textual cohesion, ensuring smooth transitions between ideas and maintaining the overall coherence of the text.

From a cross-linguistic perspective, English and Russian exhibit similar pragmatic uses of non-finite forms, although Russian tends to employ gerundial constructions more frequently. This reflects broader typological differences in syntactic organization. The findings support the view that grammar and pragmatics are deeply interconnected and should be studied within a unified theoretical framework [5].

Conclusion. The present study has demonstrated that non-finite forms of the verb play a significant role in textual communication as pragmatic markers. They contribute to: information compression and efficiency; expression of implicit logical relations; structuring and cohesion of discourse; marking of evaluation and stance.

These functions highlight the importance of considering grammatical forms within their communicative context. Non-finite constructions should therefore be viewed not merely as syntactic elements but as dynamic tools of meaning-making.

Future research may explore their use in different genres, as well as their acquisition in second language learning.

The list of used literature:

1. Aarts B. Oxford Modern English Grammar. - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. - 854 p.
2. Dancygier B. The Cambridge Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics. - Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. - 504 p.
3. Kaltenböck G., Heine B., Kuteva T. On thetical grammar // Studies in Language. - 2019. - Vol. 43, № 1. - P. 1-30.
4. Gray B., Biber D. Grammatical Complexity in Academic English. - Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. - 350 p.
5. Goldberg A. E. Explain Me This: Creativity, Competition, and the Partial Productivity of Constructions. - Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019. - 230 p.
6. Schmid H.J. The Dynamics of the Linguistic System. - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. - 320 p.
7. Rühlemann C. Corpus Linguistics for Pragmatics. - London: Routledge, 2019. -220 p.
8. Wulff S. Usage-Based Approaches to Language Acquisition and Processing. -Wiley, 2018. - 300 p.