

Comparative Typology of Azerbaijani and English: A Focus on the Non-Finite Forms of Verbs

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Keywords	Abstract
Non-finite verbs Infinitives Participles Gerunds Comparative typology	This study examines and compares the non-finite verb forms in Azerbaijani and English, focusing on their morphological structures, syntactic roles, and functional characteristics. Non-finite verbs, including infinitives, participles, and gerunds, serve crucial roles in both languages by enabling grammatical abstraction and contributing to complex sentence structures. The analysis highlights the similarities in their uses, such as expressing purpose, describing actions, and modifying nouns, as well as notable differences in formation and syntactic behavior. Azerbaijani relies on a suffixation system, while English uses auxiliary markers and fixed forms like "to" and "-ing." Understanding these features provides deeper insights into typological distinctions and linguistic diversity, enhancing the broader field of comparative linguistics.

Introduction

Definition and Significance of Comparative Typology

Comparative typology explores the similarities and differences among languages in terms of their structural and functional characteristics. By examining these features, linguists gain valuable insights into the universal principles of language and the unique traits of individual languages. This approach not only enhances our understanding of linguistic diversity but also facilitates language learning and translation studies (Yunusov & Khanbutayeva, 2008).

Overview of Non-Finite Verbs as a Typological Feature

Non-finite verbs, which include forms like infinitives, participles, and gerunds, are a key typological feature of many languages. Unlike finite verbs, they do not convey tense, person, or number and are often used in subordinate clauses or phrases to express actions, states, or events without temporal or subject-specific constraints. The structural and functional differences in the use of non-finite verbs provide valuable insights into the grammatical organization of languages such as Azerbaijani and English (Ilyish, 1965; Burlakova, 1971).

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to analyze and compare the non-finite verb forms in Azerbaijani and English, focusing on their morphological structures, syntactic roles, and functional characteristics. By examining these



differences, the article seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of comparative typology and the typological features of these two languages.

Non-Finite Verbs: General Overview

Definition of Non-Finite Verbs and Their Grammatical Role in Different Languages

Non-finite verbs are verb forms that do not convey grammatical features such as tense, person, or number. Unlike finite verbs, which function as predicates in sentences and agree with their subjects, non-finite verbs often serve auxiliary roles. These include forming complex verb phrases, clauses, and subordinate structures. Non-finite verbs are essential for creating intricate syntactic patterns and expressing relationships between actions or states in sentences (Ilyish, 1965; Kaunisto & Rudanko, 2019).

Across languages, non-finite verbs take various forms, such as infinitives, participles, and gerunds. These forms are critical in syntax because they allow the condensation of ideas and flexibility in sentence construction. For example, they enable embedding actions or states as modifiers, complements, or adverbials, thus reducing redundancy while maintaining clarity (Harbi, 2022; Burlakova, 1971).

Key Differences Between Finite and Non-Finite Verbs

Finite verbs carry grammatical distinctions such as tense (e.g., past, present, future), number (e.g., singular, plural), and person (e.g., first, second, third). These features make finite verbs central to sentence predicates, allowing them to establish the temporal and subject-oriented context of a clause.

Non-finite verbs, however, lack these distinctions and serve broader syntactic roles. Instead of acting as predicates, they function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. This abstraction allows non-finite verbs to operate independently of tense or subject, making them versatile tools for linking clauses and expanding sentence meaning. For example:

- In English:
 - Finite verb: "She **reads** every day."
 - Non-finite verb: "To **read** is to grow."
- In Azerbaijani:
 - Finite verb: "O hər gün **oxuyur**."
 - Non-finite verb: "**Oxumaq** vacibdir."

Azerbaijani and English both use non-finite verbs extensively, but their morphological forms and syntactic roles differ significantly. English typically employs auxiliary markers such as "to" for infinitives or "-ing" for participles and gerunds, whereas Azerbaijani relies on suffixes like "-maq" or "-mək" for infinitives and various morphemes for participles and gerunds (Yunusov & Khanbutayeva, 2008; Taşçı, 2019).

Examples from Azerbaijani and English

Infinitive:

- Azerbaijani: "Kitab **oxumaq** istəyirəm." ("I want to read a book.")



- English: "I want **to read** a book."

Participle:

- Azerbaijani: "Oxuyan tələbə" ("The student **who is reading**").
- English: "The **reading** student."

Gerund:

- Azerbaijani: "Kitabı **oxuyaraq** dərs öyrəndim." ("I learned the lesson **while reading** the book.")
- English: "I learned the lesson **while reading** the book."

These examples highlight the typological similarities in how the two languages employ non-finite verbs for syntactic and semantic purposes. However, the morphological processes differ, with Azerbaijani emphasizing suffixation and English relying on auxiliary constructions and root modifications (Kaunisto & Rudanko, 2019; Rəfibəyli, 2008).

Non-Finite Verb Forms in Azerbaijani

Infinitive (Məsdər)

Formation:

In Azerbaijani, the infinitive form, known as *məsdər*, is formed by attaching the suffixes **-maq** or **-mək** to the verb stem. The choice between these suffixes depends on vowel harmony, a key feature of Azerbaijani phonology. For example:

- *Oxumaq* ("to read")
- *Yazmaq* ("to write")
- *Gəlmək* ("to come")

Usage:

The infinitive in Azerbaijani is versatile and performs several syntactic functions:

1. Expressing Purpose:

The infinitive often conveys intent or purpose in a sentence.

- Example: *Mən kitab **oxumaq** istəyirəm.*
Translation: "I want **to read** a book."

2. Expressing Necessity:

The infinitive can indicate necessity or obligation.

- Example: *Bu məsələni həll **etmək** vacibdir.*
Translation: "It is necessary **to resolve** this issue."

3. Functioning as a Subject or Object:

The infinitive acts as a noun, serving as the subject or object of a sentence.



- Example (Subject): *Oxumaq çox vacibdir.*
Translation: "**To read** is very important."
- Example (Object): *O, məktubu yazmaq qərarına gəldi.*
Translation: "He decided **to write** the letter."

Examples with Analysis:

1. *Uşaqlar oyun oynamaq istəyirlər.*
 - Translation: "The children want **to play** a game."
 - Analysis: The infinitive *oynamaq* functions as the direct object of the verb *istəyirlər* ("want"), indicating the action desired by the subject.
2. *Yeni dil öyrənmək faydalıdır.*
 - Translation: "**Learning** a new language is useful."
 - Analysis: The infinitive *öyrənmək* serves as the subject of the sentence, representing the action of learning abstractly.
3. *O, həmişə işləmək üçün çox çalışır.*
 - Translation: "He always works hard **to succeed**."
 - Analysis: The infinitive *işləmək* is used to express the purpose of the subject's hard work.

The infinitive (*məsdər*) in Azerbaijani is a fundamental non-finite verb form that plays diverse syntactic roles. Its simplicity of formation through the suffixes **-maq** and **-mək**, combined with its versatility in expressing purpose, necessity, and serving as a noun, makes it integral to Azerbaijani sentence structure. Understanding its usage highlights how the language encodes abstract actions and states without tense or subject specificity.

Non-Finite Verb Forms in Azerbaijani

1. Participle (Fəli Sifət)

Types:

Participles in Azerbaijani have both **active** and **passive** forms:

- **Active participles** describe ongoing or completed actions performed by the subject.
 - Formation: Suffixes **-an, -ən, -mış, -miş, -muş, -müş.**
- **Passive participles** describe actions received or experienced by the subject.
 - Formation: Suffixes **-ılmış, -ilmiş, -ulmuş, -ülmüş.**

Usage:

Participles are primarily used in Azerbaijani as adjectives or to form complex tenses:

1. Adjectival Role:

Participles function as attributes to modify nouns, describing their actions or states.



- Example (Active): *Oxuyan tələbə*
Translation: "The student **who is reading**"
- Example (Passive): *Oxunmuş kitab*
Translation: "The book **that has been read**"

2. Forming Complex Tenses:

Participles contribute to the construction of verb forms expressing completed or ongoing actions.

- Example (Active): *Mən kitab oxuyan zaman gəldim.*
Translation: "I came while I was reading a book."
- Example (Passive): *O, oxunmuş kitabı qaytardı.*
Translation: "He returned the book that had been read."

Examples with Analysis:

1. *Gələn qonaqlar çoxdur.*

- Translation: "The guests **who are coming** are many."
- Analysis: The active participle *gələn* modifies *qonaqlar* ("guests"), describing an ongoing action.

2. *Yazılmış məktub poçt vasitəsilə göndərilib.*

- Translation: "The letter **that was written** was sent by mail."
- Analysis: The passive participle *yazılmış* modifies *məktub* ("letter"), indicating a completed action.

2. Gerund (Feli Zərf)

Formation:

The gerund in Azerbaijani (*feli zərf*) is formed using the suffixes **-araq** or **-ərək**, which align with the principles of vowel harmony.

Usage:

Gerunds express actions that occur in a continuous, habitual, or simultaneous manner. They are often used to indicate the manner in which an action is performed.

1. Continuous Actions:

The gerund conveys simultaneous actions occurring with the main verb.

- Example: *Kitabı oxuyaraq, mən dərsi başa düşdüm.*
Translation: "By **reading** the book, I understood the lesson."

2. Habitual Actions:

The gerund describes repeated or habitual activities.

- Example: *Hər gün səhər idman edərək sağlam qalır.*
Translation: "Every morning, by exercising, he stays healthy."



Examples with Analysis:

1. *O, məktubu yazaraq vaxt keçirdi.*
 - Translation: "He passed the time **by writing** the letter."
 - Analysis: The gerund *yazaraq* conveys the manner in which the subject spent time, modifying the main verb *keçirdi*.
2. *Tələbələr kitabxanada oxuyaraq dərsə hazırlayırlar.*
 - Translation: "The students prepare for class **by reading** in the library."
 - Analysis: The gerund *oxuyaraq* describes the continuous action that accompanies the students' preparation.

Summary

- **Participles (Fəli Sifət):** Active and passive participles modify nouns and form complex tenses, emphasizing descriptive and temporal relationships.
- **Gerunds (Fəli Zərf):** Gerunds indicate actions performed simultaneously or habitually and are integral for conveying nuance in sentence structure.

Both forms contribute significantly to the syntactic and semantic richness of Azerbaijani, demonstrating its typological complexity.

Non-Finite Verb Forms in English**1. Infinitive (To-Infinitive)****Formation:**

The infinitive in English is formed by adding the particle "**to**" before the base form of the verb.

- Examples:
 - To read
 - To write
 - To learn

Usage:

1. **Expressing Purpose or Intention:**
The infinitive is often used to indicate the purpose or intention behind an action.
 - Example: *She went to the library **to study**.*
Analysis: The infinitive *to study* explains the reason for the action of going to the library.
2. **Following Certain Verbs, Adjectives, or Nouns:**
Infinitives frequently appear after specific verbs (e.g., want, decide, try), adjectives (e.g., eager, happy, ready), or nouns.



- Example (Verb): *He decided **to travel** abroad.*
 - Analysis: The infinitive *to travel* complements the verb *decided*, expressing the subject's decision.
- Example (Adjective): *She is eager **to help** her classmates.*
 - Analysis: The infinitive *to help* complements the adjective *eager*, clarifying the subject's intent.
- Example (Noun): *His plan **to succeed** was clear.*
 - Analysis: The infinitive *to succeed* modifies the noun *plan*, specifying its purpose.

2. Present Participle

Formation:

The present participle is created by adding **-ing** to the base form of the verb.

- Examples:
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Learning

Usage:

1. Forming Continuous Tenses:

The present participle is an essential component of continuous tenses, indicating an ongoing action.

- Example: *She is **reading** a book.*
 - Analysis: The present participle *reading* combines with the auxiliary verb *is* to form the present continuous tense.

2. Adjectival Functions:

Present participles are used as adjectives to describe nouns.

- Example: *The **running** water was refreshing.*
 - Analysis: The present participle *running* describes the noun *water*, indicating its state.

Examples with Analysis:

1. *They are **studying** for the exam.*
 - Analysis: The present participle *studying* is part of the present continuous tense, indicating an ongoing action.



2. The *shining* sun brightened the day.

- Analysis: The present participle *shining* functions as an adjective, modifying the noun *sun*.

3. Past Participle

Formation:

The past participle is formed by adding **-ed** to the verb root for regular verbs or using the specific forms of irregular verbs.

- Examples (Regular):
 - Worked
 - Finished
- Examples (Irregular):
 - Written
 - Seen

Usage:

1. Forming Perfect Tenses:

The past participle is used with auxiliary verbs (e.g., have, has, had) to form perfect tenses.

- Example: *She has **completed** the assignment.*
 - Analysis: The past participle *completed* combines with *has* to indicate an action finished in the past but relevant to the present.

2. Passive Constructions:

The past participle is essential for forming passive sentences.

- Example: *The book was **written** by the author.*
 - Analysis: The past participle *written* combines with the auxiliary *was* to form the passive voice, emphasizing the action rather than the doer.

Examples with Analysis:

1. *He had **finished** the project before the deadline.*

- Analysis: The past participle *finished* combines with *had* to form the past perfect tense, showing an action completed before another.

2. *The cake was **baked** perfectly.*

- Analysis: The past participle *baked* is used in the passive voice, focusing on the result of the action.

Summary



- **Infinitive (To-Infinitive):** Expresses purpose, intention, and often follows specific verbs, adjectives, or nouns.
- **Present Participle:** Indicates ongoing actions in continuous tenses or functions adjectivally.
- **Past Participle:** Forms perfect tenses and passive constructions, highlighting completed actions or states.

These non-finite verb forms are integral to English grammar, providing flexibility in sentence structure and expanding expressive possibilities.

Comparison of Non-Finite Verb Forms in Azerbaijani and English

1. Infinitive

Similarities and Differences in Formation and Usage:

Both Azerbaijani and English use infinitives to express purpose and intention. However, their formation and usage differ structurally.

- **Azerbaijani:** The infinitive is formed using suffixes **-maq** or **-mək** and often functions without auxiliary verbs.
 - Example: *Kitab oxumaq vacibdir.* ("To read a book is important.")
- **English:** The infinitive is formed by adding "to" before the base form of the verb.
 - Example: *To read a book is important.*

Structural and Syntactic Distinctions:

In Azerbaijani, infinitives frequently act as nouns, whereas in English, infinitives often require auxiliary markers like "to" to clarify their purpose.

- **Azerbaijani:** Infinitives are standalone and can serve as subjects or objects.
- **English:** Infinitives are more dependent on auxiliary verbs or contextual markers.

2. Participle

Variations in Active and Passive Forms:

Both languages use participles to indicate ongoing or completed actions, but their morphological markers differ.

- **Azerbaijani:** Active participles use suffixes like **-an**, **-ən**, while passive participles use **-ılmış**, **-ilmiş**.
 - Active Example: *Oxuyan tələbə* ("The student who is reading").
 - Passive Example: *Oxunmuş kitab* ("The book that has been read").
- **English:** Active participles add **-ing**, and passive participles add **-ed** or take irregular forms.
 - Active Example: *The reading student.*
 - Passive Example: *The book that was read.*



Adjectival and Syntactic Roles:

In both languages, participles function adjectivally, modifying nouns. However, Azerbaijani participles are more embedded in sentence structures, while English participles often combine with auxiliary verbs for tense formation.

3. Gerund**Comparison of Formation and Usage:**

Azerbaijani gerunds are formed with suffixes **-araq** or **-ərək**, while English gerunds are created by adding **-ing** to the verb base.

- **Azerbaijani Example:** *Kitabı oxuyaraq dərs öyrəndim.* ("I learned the lesson while reading the book.")
- **English Example:** *I learned the lesson while reading the book.*

Typological Differences in Expression of Continuous or Habitual Actions:

- Azerbaijani gerunds are often tied to specific temporal or causal actions.
- English gerunds are more flexible, functioning as both nouns and adverbial modifiers.

4. Syntactic Roles**Subject, Object, or Complement in Sentences:**

Both languages use non-finite forms as subjects, objects, or complements, but their syntactic flexibility differs.

- **Azerbaijani Example (Subject):** *Oxumaq vacibdir.* ("To read is important.")
- **English Example (Subject):** *Reading is important.*
- **Azerbaijani Example (Object):** *O, oxumağı sevir.* ("He loves to read.")
- **English Example (Object):** *He loves reading.*

Differences in Auxiliary Verb Usage:

- Azerbaijani infinitives and gerunds rarely require auxiliary verbs.
- English often relies on auxiliary verbs for clarity, especially in participle constructions (e.g., *is reading*).

Typological Insights**Broader Implications of These Similarities and Differences:**

The comparison highlights how Azerbaijani and English use non-finite verbs to simplify complex actions and ideas. The differences in their morphological systems reflect distinct linguistic priorities:

- Azerbaijani relies heavily on suffixation for clarity and compactness.
- English integrates auxiliary verbs and fixed markers like "to" and "-ing" to enhance flexibility and nuance.



Insights into How Azerbaijani and English Handle Grammatical Abstraction:

Both languages demonstrate the capacity for grammatical abstraction through non-finite forms. While English uses a smaller set of fixed markers to achieve broad functionality, Azerbaijani's rich suffixation system creates precise distinctions within its grammatical structures.

Conclusion

Summary of Key Findings:

- Azerbaijani and English both utilize non-finite verb forms (infinitives, participles, and gerunds) but differ significantly in their formation and syntactic roles.
- Azerbaijani's morphology is highly suffix-based, while English relies on auxiliary constructions and fixed markers.

Relevance of Understanding Non-Finite Verb Forms in Comparative Linguistics:

The study of non-finite verb forms provides insight into how languages manage grammatical abstraction, contributing to the broader understanding of typological variation and linguistic universals.

Implications for Further Research in Azerbaijani-English Comparative Typology:

Future studies could explore the pragmatic functions of non-finite forms, their role in spoken versus written discourse, and their acquisition by second-language learners to deepen our understanding of these languages.

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