NON-FINITE MOODS IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN

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Abstract: In contrast with the personal forms of a verb, the non-personal forms do not contain the grammatical category of person, number or mood and can not be used as predicates in the sentence, they can only be some other parts of the sentence. The non-personal forms still have the category of tense, voice and also the category of aspect which is specific to the English language.

There are five such non-finite forms of the English verb: the infinitive, the participle, the gerund, the verbal noun and the verbal adjective with the observation that in the case of a number of grammarians, the verbal noun is included in the larger category of the gerund and the verbal adjective is just considered an adjective proper.

In Romanian, there are four non-finite forms, including: the infinitive, the participle, the gerund and the so-called supine, which is considered to be a form of the verbal noun. The Romanian language is the only Romance language that uses this verbal form, whose origin represents a controversial problem.

Keywords: infinitive, participle, gerund, supine, characteristics

1. The non-finite verbal forms, which were considered non-personal moods in traditional grammars, don't actually have the characteristics that can transform them into proper moods because they no longer express and action which can either be sure, possible, realizable or uncertain, desired, unreal.

There are the following non-finite forms of the English and Romanian verbs: *the infinitive, the participle, the gerund*. It is to be mentioned that the Romanian language has also a fourth non-personal verbal form called *the supine*, which is inherited from Latin.

The non-personal or non-finite forms of a verb differ from the personal ones in the sense that they do not express the grammatical category of: person, number or mood and can not be used as predicates in a sentence.

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They still have the category of: tense, voice and in the case of the English verbs, also the category of aspect, with the observation that they require a verbal form which belongs to a personal mood, no matter if the respective verb is: predicative, copulative, modal or passive. It is to be noted that the Romanian non-personal verbal forms lose also the temporal flexion, except the infinitive.

The non-personal verbal forms have as a common feature the fact that they do not show the typical manifestation of the verb. Both in English and in Romanian, they express the same tense: present, past or future with the verb preceding them: *He wanted **to go** there yesterday.; He wants **to go** there tomorrow.; He will want **to go** there tomorrow.; Tu poţi **merge** acolo mâine.; Tu vei putea **merge** acolo mâine.*

From a syntactical point of view, the Romanian non-personal verbal forms can be the center of a verbal group, but they can also be part of a nominal or adjectival group: *Pot **primi** vizita colegilor din Bucureşti.; Rămâne **de trimis** directorului raportul.; Aud **venind** dinspre pădure un murmur.*

In English, the non-finite verbal forms are used in the complex parts of the sentence: *John appears **to be 30 years**.; **Finishing work**, they left.; **Having finished all their supplies**, they went to bring some more.*

Both in English and in Romanian, the non-personal verbal forms have a double nature, an intermediate one. For example, the Romanian infinitive has both verbal and nominal characteristics, while the supine is even more different, having both verbal and nominal features, but also adjectival and adverbial ones.

The Romanian participle has verbal characteristics, but also adjectival ones, while the gerund has both verbal and also adverbial features. The differences between the various types of characteristics depends on the context in which the respective forms are used.

Except the infinitive, which has both verbal and nominal characteristics, the English non-personal verbal forms end in the *–ing* suffix. The grammatical agreement of the respective *–ing* forms can only be established in a context depending on their determinatives or on their syntactical functions. The participle is a strictly verbal form and its determinatives are verbal, while the gerund has a double nature. It has both the characteristics of a noun and those of a verb.

2. *The infinitive* names an action or a state expressed by the respective verb without reference to the grammatical categories of person, number or mood. For example: *to go/ a*

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merge- we can not distinguish the author of the action of *going*, if there is only one or more persons performing the action.

The infinitive has two tenses: the present infinitive and the perfect infinitive. The present infinitive does not have proper temporal values. It can take the value of the personal verbal regent: *I tried to run./ Am încercat a alerga*.; *I will try to run./ Voi încerca a alerga*.

The perfect infinitive refers the action of its past participle verb to an earlier time than that expressed by the tense of the verb preceding it, which also justifies its denomination: *I don't remember to have run so fast before./ Nu-mi amintesc a fi fugit atât de repede înainte.*

The infinitive has two forms: the long infinitive, used with the particle *to* in English/ *a* in Romanian and the short infinitive, used without the particle *to/ a*: *to write- write/ a scrie- scrie*.

The Romanian morpheme *a* has an uncertain grammatical status, having both the role of a morphological, but also of a syntactical mark. Although the morpheme ***a*** is not always used, there are some situations which require its compulsory presence: *dorinţa de a pleca, se teme de a pleca*.

The Romanian short indefinite infinitive is used in the structure of some compound verbal forms: *eu voi merge, eu aş merge*, after the modal verb *a putea*: *eu pot merge* and in the infinitival constructions.

It is to be noted that in Romanian language, the infinitive that forms the future, the conditional and the negative forms of the imperative has lost its morphological autonomy and the stress lays upon its graphy, not upon its description because of the numerous mistakes that are made when using these moods and tenses. For example: *vei fii, vei venii, vei ştii* compared to the correct forms: *vei fi, vei veni, vei şti*.

In order to form the negative English infinitive, the adverb *not* is put in front: *to go- not to go, to have gone- not to have gone*.

However, there are cases in which a number of adverbs, including the adverbial particle *not* are interpolated between *to have* and the respective participle, either for stylistic effect or in cases in which the placing of such adverbs including *not* in front of the perfect infinitive form would affect the meaning of the communication.

Such an interpolation of the negation *not* or of an adverb between the particle *to* and the infinitival particle proper: *to go- to not go* or in between *to have* and the respective

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past participle form: *to have gone – to have always gone, to have not gone* is called *split infinitive*.

The problem of the split infinitive appears also in Romanian language when the negation *nu* or any other adverbs or pronouns are put between the particle ***a*** and the verb: *a nu merge, a nu mai tot spune, a i-o zice, până a nu mi le mai fi spus*.

In English, *the* infinitive is also part of some specific constructions called: *the accusative with the infinitive, the nominative with the infinitive, the for-to infinitive*.

The accusative with the infinitive represents a combination of a noun or pronoun in the accusative, following a transitive verb, and a short or long infinitive form which is in a predicative relationship with the respective accusative form.

I helped him finish the job/ to finish the job.

In all the cases of usage, the action suggested by the infinitive form is seen as finished.

In such a construction, one uses a short infinitive form after the verbs of the senses: *to see, to hear, to perceive, to watch* etc., as well as after the verbs: *to make, to let, to help,* which are also followed by a long infinitive form: *I saw him do it.; I let him do it.;* but also: *I helped him to do it.*

A long infinitive form is used in this construction after the following categories of verbs:

- verbs of wish: *I want you to do that.*

- verbs expressing mental activities: *to think, to suppose, to imagine, to guess* etc.

I imagine him to be a tall man.

- verbs expressing feelings and emotions: *to hate, to love, to like, to dislike etc.*

I hate him to behave like that towards his dog.

- verbs with obligatory prepositions such as: *to wait for, to rely on, to count on, to count upon.*

I count upon you to solve this situation.

We are waiting for him to come.

The nominative with the infinitive construction is made up of a noun or a pronoun in the nominative case followed by a predicative verb either in the passive or active voice and a long infinitive form. The nominative noun or pronoun and the long infinitive form together the complex subject of the respective sentence.

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Such *a Nominative + Infinitive* construction is used as follows:

- as a substitute for a subject clause depending on such verbs as: *to see, to appear, to happen, to turn out etc.*

George appears to be 60 years.

- as a passive equivalent of an *accusative with the infinitive* construction with verbs of the senses and verbs of mental activities:

He is thought to be very clever by me.

- in the form of *is/ are certain + the word groups*: *is/ are likely; is/ are sure; is/ are certain* or other combinations of the verb *to be + adjective + long infinitive.*

They are likely/ are expected/ are sure/ are certain to come tonight.

The *for- to infinitive construction* contains a long infinitive which stands in a predicative relationship to the noun and pronoun in the accusative case preceded by the preposition *for.*

Such constructions are used as subjects introduced by the pronoun *it* following a nominal predicate whose predicative part is represented by such adjectives as: *necessary, advisable, possible, impossible, imperative, difficult* etc..

It is absolutely necessary for you to go there.

The Romanian constructions that involve the usage of the infinitive are: *the relative infinitival construction* and *the absolute infinitival construction*.

The relative infinitival construction has the following characteristics:

- it only appears in connection with the verbal regents: *a avea* and *a fi*, the first being used both as a personal and impersonal verb, while the second only as an impersonal one: "N-am ce face.; Am de ce mă plânge.; N-are ce se întâmpla.; Nu-i ce mânca."(GALR, I, 2005: 491);
- it is made up of a pronominal, adjectival or adverbial relative followed by the short infinitive;
- the relative can be preceded by a preposition or not and can discharge any syntactical function: *N-are cu cine merge.*

The absolute infinitival construction is made up of *a preposition + the particle a + the infinitive + the subject (of the infinitive) + some other subordinate elements (of the infinitive)*: *Până a începe spectacolul, nimeni nu se aştepta la aşa ceva.* As can be seen from the given example, the construction is isolated from the rest of the sentence, has the

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value of an adverbial modifier, has a certain syntactical autonomy and a certain free topic, but it still needs the support of a predicative verb.

3. *Theparticiple* represents one of the controversial problems of the English language because it has the same form with the gerund, the verbal noun and the verbal adjective.

The grammatical agreement of these four *–ing* forms can only be established in a context depending on their respective determinatives or on their syntactical functions. Thus, the participle is a strictly verbal form and, as a consequence to this, its determinatives are verbal.

The gerund has a double nature. It has both the characteristics of a noun and those of a verb, which allows its recognition on the basis of both noun determiners and functions in the sentence as well as verbal determiners.

The verbal noun has all the characteristics of a noun functioning as a noun properly. The verbal adjective is used either as part of a nominal predicate or as an attribute determining a noun.

It is to be mentioned that there are more differences than similarities between the English and the Romanian participle. The similarities are only to be noted between the English past participle and the Romanian participial verbal forms: *written- scris, sung- cântat, asked- întrebat*, while the differences consist in the fact that the English indefinite participle ending in *–ing* resembles more the Romanian gerund: *going- mergând, singing- cântând, learning- învăţând, running- alergând*.

The Indefinite Participle is a non-finite form of the English verb which denotes an action or a state like a principal verb, without being able, at the same time, to form a predicate by itself.

The form of the indefinite participle originates in a short indefinite form to which the *–ing* suffix ending is attached.

The main use of the indefinite participle form is that of building the continuous aspect of the English principal verbs in three of the four moods: indicative, conditional and subjunctive.

The English *perfect participle* is formed with the help of the indefinite participle of ***have***, followed by the past participle of the verb to be conjugated. In a sentence, a perfect participle form denotes the idea of an action or a state prior to the action or state denoted by the personal verb in the respective sentence: *Having finished work, they left.* In

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Romanian, it is usually translated with the help of the gerund or an adverbial clause of time: *Having finished work, they left. – Terminând lucrul/ După ce au terminat lucrul, au plecat.*

In Romanian, the participle has both verbal and adjectival characteristics, the most important being the one that connects the participle with its nominal regent, with which it also agrees. Still, there are also features that belong to the verbal value of the participle as: the temporal value of anteriority and the passive value.

As well as the English correspondent, the Romanian participle helps the formation of different moods and tenses and of the passive voice: *am mers, voi fi mers, să fi mers, aş fi mers, este ajutat, este citit, este scris.*

The English present and perfect participle are used in a series of constructions that are similar to those of the infinitive: *the accusative with the participle, the nominative with the participle, the absolute nominative with the participle*.

The accusative with the participle construction is almost homonymous with the *accusative with the infinitive* construction form which differs slightly in the sense that it lays stress on the continuity of a state or of an action at a certain moment, which are denominated by the participle form of the verb.

By comparison, in the *accusative with the infinitive* construction the stress is laid on the finished character of the action or state denominated by the infinitive verb.

I saw him cross the street./ I saw him crossing the street.

As can be seen from the above example, the construction is made up of a principal transitive verb, followed by a common or proper noun/ pronoun in the accusative case + the principal verb in its indefinite participle form.

Such a construction is used in conjunction with the following verbs:

a. verbs of perception: *to see, to hear, to perceive, to smell, to taste etc*.

I heard him opening the door.

b. after a number of verbs including: *to find, to imagine, to keep, to leave, to set, to start, to have, to catch.*

He left her crying.

She kept him waiting.

The nominative with the participle construction represents the passive equivalent of *the accusative with the participle* construction. It is a construction analogous to the *nominative+ infinitive* construction. Again, it lays stress, by comparison, on the continuity

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of the action of the participle form and not on the finished character of the actions as it is the case of the other construction, the *nominative+ infinitive:The burglar was seen climbing up the drainpipe. / The burglar was seen to climb up the drainpipe.*

The Nominative Absolute Participial construction is a special construction in which the indefinite perfect participle form stands in a predicative relation to a noun or pronoun in the nominative case which is not the subject of the sentence, but only a part of an adverbial modifier of time, cause etc.: *The shelling having stopped, they rushed to give first aid to the wounded.*

A structure that is similar to the English participial construction is *the Romanian absolute participial construction*: *Un lucru, odată pierdut, nu mai poate fi recuperat.*

This type of construction is isolated from the rest of the sentence, may have a proper subject which is not the subject of the sentence, has the value of an adverbial modifier of time and it only accepts the participles of the transitive verbs.

4. The forms of the *gerund* in English are similar to those of the present and perfect participle: *going- having gone*, with the observation that while indefinite and perfect participle forms have only verbal functions or behaviour, the gerund has both nominal, the presence of noun determiners such as: possessive adjectives or prepositions, and verbal features, direct objects following or adverbs defining them: *After having rested for an hour, they started again*.

The Romanian gerund is formed either with the suffix *–ând* or with its variant *–ind*: *cântând, dansând, citind, venind* and it has both verbal and nominal characteristics, but also adjectival and adverbial ones. The verbal characteristics denote the possibility to mark the oppositions of voice, the adverbial features refer to the fact that the gerund can discharge the syntactical functions which are specific to the adverb. The nominal and adjectival characteristics are given by the syntactical functions that the gerund discharges: subject, direct object, verbal attribute.

There are certain incidental constructions in Romanian that are formed with the gerund, which have a metalinguistic function and are explained with the help of a conditional clause: *El o privea ca pe o prinţesă, asta presupunând că ea ar fi o prinţesă.*(*dacă presupunem că ea este o prinţesă*)

Some of the Romanian stereotypical expressions of the type: *la drept vorbind, sincer vorbind, cinstit vorbind* have correspondents in English in a number of parenthetical

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participial phrases: *generally speaking, honestly speaking, judging by appearances, admitting that, considering that* etc..

5. *The supine*, one of the non-finite verbal forms that is specific to Romanian language, is inherited from Latin, a language in which it represented the accusative and the ablative forms of the verbal noun. In Romanian language, it has almost the same form with the participle with the observation that it is accompanied by one of the prepositions: *de, la, pentru*. For example: *de citit, la învăţat, pentru scris*.

There are some characteristics that only belong to this non-finite verbal form such as:

- it is not used in connections with the personal or reflexive pronouns;
- it is not used in the passive voice;
- it doesn't have a proper subject;
- it uses the prefix *ne-* in order to form the negative aspect.

The non-finite verbal forms are frequently used both in English and in Romanian. They help not only the formation of different moods, tenses or voices, but the non-personal verbal forms are also part of some specific constructions that are useful for the fluency of the respective language.

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