

## Chapter VIII

# THE NON-FINITE FORMS OF THE VERB (THE VERBALS)

§ 1. The verb has finite and non-finite forms, the latter being also called **verbals**. The verbals, unlike the finite forms of the verb, do not express person, number or mood. Therefore they cannot be used as the predicate of a sentence.

Like the finite forms of the verb the verbals have tense and voice distinctions, but their tense distinctions differ greatly from those of the finite verb. (For detailed treatment of the tense distinctions of verbals see § 2.)

There are three verbals in English: the **participle**, the **gerund** and the **infinitive**.

In Russian we also have three non-finite forms of the verb, but they do not fully coincide with those in the English language (причастие, деепричастие, инфинитив).

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■ **Note.** In some modern grammar textbooks no distinction is made between Participle I and the gerund. Both forms are referred to as ‘-ing forms’ or ‘-ing participle’. However, as shown below, there exist clear-cut differences between these two verbals, which give grounds for their differentiation.

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§ 2. **The characteristic traits of the verbals** are as follows:

1. They have a double nature, nominal and verbal. The participle combines the characteristics of a verb with those of an adjective; the gerund and the infinitive combine the characteristics of a verb with those of a noun.

2. The tense distinctions of the verbals are not absolute (like those of the finite verb), but relative; the form of a verbal does not show whether the action it denotes refers to the present, past or future; it shows only whether the action expressed by the verbal is simultaneous with the action expressed by the finite verb or prior to it.

3. All the verbals can form predicative constructions, i. e. constructions consisting of two elements, a nominal (noun or pronoun) and a verbal (par-

ticiple, gerund or infinitive); the verbal element stands in predicate relation to the nominal element, i. e. in a relation similar to that between the subject and the predicate of the sentence. In most cases predicative constructions form syntactic units, serving as one part of the sentence.

They sat down to supper, **Manston still talking cheerfully.** (*Hardy*) — Они сели ужинать; Мэнстон продолжал весело разговаривать.

*Manston still talking cheerfully* is a predicative construction with a participle: the participle *talking* stands in predicate relation to the noun *Manston*, which denotes the doer of the action expressed by the participle.

In the sentence a verbal may occur:

(a) singly, i. e. without accompanying words.

She... went away **smiling.** (*Dreiser*) — Она... ушла, улыбаясь.

**Reading** is out of the question — I can't fix my attention on books. (*Collins*) — О чтении не может быть и речи — я не могу сосредоточить свое внимание на книгах.

**To decide** is to act. — Решить — значит начать действовать.

(b) in phrases, i. e. with one or several accompanying words (an object or an adverbial modifier to the verbal). These phrases form syntactic units serving as one part of the sentence.

A phrase should not be confused with a predicative construction: between the elements of a phrase there is no predicate relation as it does not include a noun or a pronoun denoting the doer of the action expressed by a verbal.

The windows of the drawing-room opened to a balcony **overlooking the garden.** (*Mansfield*) — Окна гостиной выходили на балкон, с которого был виден сад.

She tried to tranquillize him **by reading aloud.** (*Gaskell*) — Она пыталась успокоить его тем, что читала ему вслух.

**Not to disquiet his sister,** he had said nothing to her of the matter. (*Hardy*) — Чтобы не встревожить сестру, он ничего не сказал ей об этом.

(c) in predicative constructions.

**My mistress being dead...**, I had to look out for a new place. (*Ch. Brontë*) — Так как моя хозяйка умерла, мне пришлось искать другое место.

There is no mistake **about his being a genius**. (*Shaw*) — Не может быть никакого сомнения в том, что он — гений.

She heard **him unbar the door and go out into the yard**. (*Hardy*) — Она слышала, как он отодвинул засов и вышел во двор.

## The Participle

**§ 3.** The participle is a non-finite form of the verb which has a verbal and an adjectival or an adverbial character.

There are two participles in English — Participle I and Participle II, traditionally called the Present Participle and the Past Participle.

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**Note.** These traditional terms are open to objection on the ground that Participle I does not necessarily refer to the present, just as Participle II need not refer to the past. The difference between them is not a difference in tense, but chiefly a difference in voice. In modern grammar textbooks they are also termed ‘*-ing* participle’ and ‘*-ed* participle’.

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**Participle I** is formed by adding the suffix *-ing* to the stem of the verb; the following spelling rules should be observed:

(a) If a verb ends in a mute *e*, the mute *e* is dropped before adding the suffix *-ing*: *to give* — *giving*, *to close* — *closing*.

(b) If a verb ends in a consonant preceded by a vowel rendering a short stressed sound, the final consonant is doubled before adding the suffix *-ing*: *to run* — *running*, *to forget* — *forgetting*, *to admit* — *admitting*.

A final *l* is doubled if it is preceded by a vowel letter rendering a short vowel sound, stressed or unstressed: *to expel* — *expelling*, *to travel* — *travelling*.

(c) The verbs *to die*, *to lie* and *to tie* form Participle I in the following way: *dying*, *lying*, *tying*.

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**Note.** A final *y* is not changed before adding the suffix *-ing*: *to comply* — *complying*, *to deny* — *denying*.

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(For the formation of Participle II see Chapter VII, § 3.)