

# A Synchronic and Diachronic Study of the Structure of the Verb to Infinitive and - ing Complement from the Perspective of Cognitive Linguistics

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**Abstract:** in English Learners' Writing and Translation, There Are Grammatical Errors with High Frequency: Incorrect Sentence Structure, Several Verbs Arranged in Chinese Order, Unclear Subject Predicate Level, Which Makes It Difficult for Readers to Understand the Meaning. This Problem Can Be Attributed to the Lack of Use of Non Predicate Verbs. in View of the Use of Non Predicate Verbs Can Enhance the Flexibility of Language Expression, It is Necessary for Learners to Master Their Usage by Means of a Large Number of Reading, and in Writing and Translating, through Simplifying Clauses, Attributive Participations, Adverbial Participations and Other Ways, to Develop the Awareness of Habitual Use of Non Predicate Verbs.

## 1. Introduction

It is Inevitable to Learn English without Non Predicate Verbs. the Concepts of Non Predicate Verb Phrase and Independent Structure Often Bring Inexplicable Confusion to Learners. in Order to Achieve the Purpose of Using Non Predicate Verbs in a Simple and Clear Way[1]. Learners Need to Read a Lot of Authentic English Books and Magazines If They Want to Understand It Thoroughly.

According to the Knowledge of English Grammar, There Are Three Forms of Non Predicate Verbs: Infinitive, - ing Participle and Verb to Infinitive. They Can Act as Any Sentence Component Except the Predicate, Such as Subject, Object, Attribute, Adverbial, Etc., So They Are Called Non Predicate Verbs. Infinitive, - ing Participle and Verb to Infinitive All Have the Nature of Verb and Non Verb. They Are Sometimes Equivalent to Nouns, Sometimes to Adjectives, Sometimes to Adverbs[2].

In short, their syntactic functions can be listed as follows:

Subject: the verb to infinitive, infinitive and its phrase can be selected, but it is often used as the formal subject, and the real subject such as the participle or infinitive phrase is placed at the end of the sentence.

Object: ing participle, infinitive and its phrase can be selected; it is also often used as the formal object, with participle or infinitive phrase at the end of the sentence. Subject complement: it can choose - ing participle, verb to infinitive, infinitive and its phrase.

Object complement: it can choose - ing participle, verb to infinitive, infinitive and its phrase.

Prepositive attribute: the compound adjective composed of - ing participle, verb to infinitive and the compound adjective (composed of a noun, adjective or adverb before the participle) can be selected.

Postpositive attribute: it can choose - ing participle, verb to infinitive, infinitive and its phrase[3].

Adverbial: it can choose - ing participle, verb to infinitive, infinitive and its phrase or independent structure (composed of with + noun + - ing / verb to infinitive or infinitive phrase). As shown in Figure 1.



Fig.1 Language Structure from the Perspective of Cognitive Linguistics

## 2. The Use of Non Predicate Verbs is a Mark of Authentic English

The importance of non predicate verbs can be reflected in many aspects. Its extensive use is a major feature of authentic English written language. When we read a lot, we will find that the use of non predicate verbs is everywhere. In order to prove this, we can take book 4 of New Horizon College English as an example. There are totally 16 articles in 8 units, with an average of 978 words and about 50 sentences. In every article, there are a large number of - ing participle and verb to infinitive as attribute, adverbial and - ing participle as subject, object and complement. As for the use of infinitives, there are 48 sentences in the first 2 units and 4 articles[4]. The specific facts are as follows:

-There are 84 sentences with ing participle as pre positive and post positive attributive. For example:

You need attractive products or services and a compelling strategy.

Every night several hundred planes bearing a purple,white,and orange design touch down at Memphis Airport,in Tennessee.

-There are 70 sentences with ing participle as the adverbial of purpose and accompaniment. Gamblers have a higher risk of investing money on the way to the slot machine, but each bet has a certain amount of chips.

“Wow, what presumption! I'll leave what you can understand to someone else, “Polly retorted, sarcastically.

-The participle of ing is subject and object. There are 105 sentences in all.

Learn how and under what circumstances you will find your awareness of your limitations and allow you to decide on the details of your decision.

They may decide that they will keep the unpaid money on the machine.

-The participle of ing is used as subject complement and object complement. Most of the toys shaved by the little boy look weird, just like the one called buzz off. Like men, it's a part of flying insects.

I might think about how it makes young people tired all day.

There are 97 sentences in which the infinitives are prepositions and postpositions.

The anger immediately deserved;

Since memory retention and retrieval are examples of liveliness, excitement, and emotion, decisions based on them can lead to strange, erroneous conclusions.

The 16 sentences in which infinitive verbs are used as causative adverbs. He cured the disease when he was ten years old. In high school, he played basketball, basketball and baseball in PE class.

Nowadays, extreme changes have been going on, and countless people are attracted by Botox injection and real life.

The ratio of infinitive as postpositive attribute to object adverb is 10 / 48 and 5 / 48 respectively. When the boss put forward the condition, he said she would feed the baby.

I can assign her enough wisdom to make her “speak well”.

In addition to the above university textbooks, we have randomly selected an article [3] on China Daily (English version), with a total of 30 English sentences. There are 19 sentences using - ing participle and verb to infinitive, and 13 sentences using infinitive as postpositive attribute and objective adverbial. It can be seen that English expression can not be separated from the use of non predicate verbs at any time. However, we have to admit the following facts.

### **3. The Lack of Use of Non Predicate Verbs is the Weakness of Learners' English Expression**

Whenever and wherever, as long as you browse the English compositions and Chinese-English translation written by college students, you will find this kind of common mistakes: the sentence structure is not correct, there are several predicate verbs in a sentence, and they are arranged in Chinese order, so that the readers can not understand the hierarchical relationship of the sentence, and then they can not quickly understand the meaning of the sentence[5]. For example:

They think they are parents are peak more with the age increase.

Holidays can bring people together with their parents.

Most people choose to be reunited with their families.

They think that they spend more time to play games or watch TV to learn students' hobbies.

These are all the wrong sentences written by sophomores. There are too many similar sentences. We had 166 entries registered on the computer. For this kind of mistakes, many scholars have paid attention to and studied for a long time. For example, Mr. Shu wrote in the article "Zhejiang University's interest in languages" that "running on sentence is one of the most common mistakes made by Chinese English learners. This is also the most obvious mistake in translation. The so-called running water sentence means that there is no explicit connection mark between two or more verbs to show their relationship. The relationship between two verbs may be parallel, which is called parataxis, for example:

The Ya rethe predecessors and the Ye explored the unknown There are two situations in which a verb may depend on another verb. One is a clause: the guide word who explored the unknown The second is the structure of non finite verbs, such as the Ya rethe predecessors exploring the unknown There are only three ways to connect two verbs in English, and they can be converted to each other. " The key to the problem is that some college students are not clear about the second kind of dependency between the two verbs: the non finite verb structure, that is[6], the usage of the non finite verb structure.

The translation strategy proposed by Lu Ruichang is: "when there are two or more verbs after the same subject in Chinese, when translating into English, it is necessary to correctly judge the meaning of several verbs. Then according to the characteristics of English, translate the main verbs in the subject-slave relationship into English predicates, and translate other verbs into infinitives, -ing participles, verb to infinitives, etc. " [5] When there are many verbs in English, the use of non predicate verbs is indispensable.

A sentence in English usually cannot have two (or more) predicate verbs. According to this principle, we can decide when to use non predicate verbs and when not. In a word, we have to face and think about this fact: on the one hand, in authentic English texts, the use of non predicate verbs is quite common; on the other hand, learners seldom use non predicate verbs when writing and translating in English, and can't correctly deal with the hierarchical relationship of multiple verbs in a sentence at the same time, resulting in endless errors in such sentences, which appear in successive schools Students' written work. Therefore, we need to pay attention to the use of non predicate verbs, and it is valuable to do so.

### **4. The Thinking Path of the Usage of Non Predicate Verbs**

#### **4.1 The Clause Can Be Simplified, Using -ing Participle, Verb to Infinitive or Infinitive**

The most common clauses we use in written expression are object clause, attributive clause and adverbial clause. In fact, these clauses can be replaced by -ing participle, verb to infinitive or infinitive to simplify the sentence. Professor Tian Guisen once summarized the features of the choice of modern English Vocabulary: in modern society, people are more and more inclined to use nouns, noun phrases, non predicate verb phrases, etc. instead of clauses[7]. The attributive clauses and adverbial clauses that once filled the whole article are now reduced or replaced to the greatest extent. Examples are as follows:

The people sitting there are Daylight tourists. The people sitting there are Daylight tourists.

There are many difficulties that will be overcome. There are many difficulties that will be overcome.

Adverbial clauses can be replaced by - for participles, verbs to infinitives or infinitive phrases

If you work hard, you will succeed. Work hard and you will succeed. The object clause can be changed into - ing participle or infinitive phrase I hope that I'll be able to achieve

We think it's trustworthy → we think it's trustworthy.

-Ing participle and verb to infinitive phrase refer to the - ing or - ed form of the verb followed by its object or adverbial; infinitive phrase refers to the infinitive sign “to” followed by the verb with object or adverbial. The general basis of choosing - ing participle, verb to infinitive or infinitive phrase is that - ing participle represents general, abstract and general concept, or some purpose or active or ongoing meaning; verb to infinitive represents passive or completed meaning; infinitive represents specific individual action or action or whole process of action or work with future meaning[8].

#### **4.2 Attributive Modification of Restricted Noun: ing Participle, Verb to Infinitive or Infinitive**

Attributives involve pre or post, restrictive or non restrictive situations. It is advisable to distinguish their concepts first: pre attributive refers to the modifier that appears before the center word, and post attributive refers to the modifier that appears after the center word. Restrictive attributive is an indispensable attributive in the meaning of the modified word. If it is removed, the meaning of the whole sentence will be incomplete or meaningless. This kind of attributive has a very close relationship with the modified word. When it is written, it is not separated by commas. On the contrary, the relationship between the non restrictive attribute and the modified word is not very close, but some additional explanations are given. If it is removed, the meaning of the sentence is still clear. This attribute is often separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Using - ing participle, verb to infinitive or compound adjective as preposition - ing participle, verb to infinitive can be preceded by a noun, adjective or adverb to form compound adjective. There is usually a conjunction between an adjunct and a participle. The compound adjective should be placed before the noun it modifies. For example:

Disruptive situation; outdated smart lawyers; cost cutting measures; newly opened small restaurants.

The frequency of using - ing participle, verb to infinitive phrase as post attributive or non restrictive attributive is quite high, which appears 181 times in 16 articles in the fourth volume. Sometimes, if you insert the - ing participle or the verb to infinitive phrase between the subject and the predicate, and separate them with commas, it is an unrestricted attribute. For example:

A small drop of ink, falling like DuPont, can make millions of thoughts.

Once the wolf is fed and killed, it is reintroduced into the environment

This is a simple request for a room.

He travels to the world.

#### **4.3 Adverbial Modification Restricts the Action or State, and - ing Participle, Verb to Infinitive or Infinitive Can Be Selected**

Directly using - ing participle, verb to infinitive or infinitive phrase as adverbials, they can be placed at the beginning or the end of the sentence, doing various adverbials, indicating cause, accompaniment, etc[9]. For example:

Looking forward to playing, walking dead makes fireworks more complicated.

However, infinitive phrases are usually used to express the objective adverbials, and the infinitive symbols “to” can even be replaced with “inordertto”, “soasto”, etc.; when the result adverbials are expressed, infinitives are used, and “only” is added before “to” to “to express unexpected results. For example:

I can tell her a “good word” here.

They negotiated a raise five times and were fired.

The independent structure composed of - ing participle or verb to infinitive independent structure

as adverbial “with + noun / Pronoun + - ing participle or verb to infinitive phrase” is used as various adverbial in the sentence, which is the most common independent structure, which can be placed at the beginning or end of the sentence, separated from the main sentence by comma. For example:

Now that everything is over, we can continue our journey.

Tired of hearing, many people are sleeping.

Of course, when writing and translating in English, it also involves that the subject, object, subject complement and object complement can be selected from infinitive, - ing participle or the verb to infinitive with the definite article. Due to the limited space and easy to master reasons, it is omitted here, and learners can understand its usage through a large number of English reading.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, we come to the essence of non predicate verbs: because the syntactic rule of English is that any sentence can only have one predicate no matter how long or short, the existence and use of non predicate verbs is to let the writer and translator skillfully deal with the problems of multiple verbs at the same time, so as to enhance the flexibility, diversity and convenience of language expression. Therefore, it is suggested that learners should pay more attention to non predicate verbs, use fewer clauses instead of non predicate verbs, use more non predicate verbs as attributive and adverbial, especially attributive and adverbial participations, read a lot of English books and periodicals to pay attention to their usage, and form the habit of using non predicate verbs involuntarily in English writing and translation.

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