

Cultural Considerations In The Translation Of Non-Finite Forms

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Annotation

This study examines the cultural considerations involved in translating English non-finite verb forms—infinitives, gerunds, and participles—into Uzbek. While most existing research emphasizes grammatical and syntactic equivalence, the present investigation highlights the cultural connotations carried by non-finite constructions and the challenges they create in literary translation. A qualitative comparative approach, supported by a parallel corpus of English novels and their Uzbek translations, is used to identify cultural nuances embedded in non-finite forms and to evaluate translation strategies such as adaptation, explicitation, and functional substitution. The findings reveal that linguistic accuracy alone is insufficient, as cultural factors—including politeness norms, temporal perception, and individual versus collective orientations—significantly shape meaning. Dynamic and functional approaches are shown to be more successful in maintaining cultural equivalence than literal or formal strategies. The outcomes of the research contribute to translation studies and demonstrate the need for cultural sensitivity when rendering non-finite forms across typologically and culturally distinct languages.

Key words: non-finite forms; infinitive; gerund; participle; cultural equivalence; translation strategies; dynamic equivalence; domestication; foreignization; literary translation; English-Uzbek translation; semantic connotations; pragmatic meaning.

Translation is not merely a mechanical transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another; rather, it is an intricate cognitive, cultural, and communicative process. In modern translation studies, language is recognized as an inseparable component of culture, where linguistic units carry not only grammatical meaning but also cultural values, social norms, and pragmatic intentions. Therefore, translation functions as a cultural bridge that transfers knowledge, beliefs, traditions, and viewpoints across linguistic boundaries. Within this complex process, the translation of non-finite forms—infinitives, gerunds, and participles—presents unique challenges because these structures often convey subtleties that extend beyond grammar. They may contain stylistic nuances, pragmatic implications, and culturally marked meanings that are deeply embedded in the source language and may not have direct equivalents in the target language. Non-finite forms play a significant role in English discourse since they allow speakers and writers to compress ideas, express simultaneity, indicate purpose, or reflect attitude and evaluation. For instance, the infinitive can express intention or obligation (“*to forgive*” or “*to respect*”), gerunds often convey conceptualized actions (“*waiting*,” “*sharing*”), while participles signal relations of time or manner (“*speaking*,” “*confused*,” “*broken*”). In certain cultural contexts, some of these constructions may also encode polite forms, emotional undertones, or contextual attitudes, which need to be carefully interpreted when translating into languages like Uzbek, where explicit grammatical markers or additional lexical items may be required. Consequently, translators must be attentive to both linguistic and cultural dimensions to prevent semantic loss or misinterpretation. However, despite the centrality of cultural factors in translation, many existing studies have focused primarily on the grammatical and structural aspects of non-finite forms, emphasizing equivalence and syntactic transformation. Less attention has been given to the cultural connotations embedded in these forms or the strategies needed to preserve them in translation. When non-finite structures are translated only through grammatical equivalence, the target text may lose implicit pragmatic meanings, tone, and communicative intention. For example, idiomatic uses such as *speaking of...*, *to be honest*, or *to tell the truth* carry cultural nuances related to politeness, discourse

organization, or social expectation. Translating these constructions literally may distort the message or weaken the cultural authenticity of the target text.

This research therefore aims to examine how cultural factors influence the translation of non-finite forms, identify which constructions possess culturally sensitive meanings, and analyze effective strategies used to convey these meanings in the target language. The study assumes that translators must consider not only grammatical correspondence but also sociocultural equivalence in order to maintain communicative impact and respect cultural norms. Understanding the cultural dimension of non-finite forms will contribute to both theoretical knowledge in translation studies and practical guidance for translators working with English and Uzbek texts. As translation increasingly functions in global communication and intercultural discourse, the culturally appropriate translation of non-finite forms becomes not only a linguistic task but also an essential cultural responsibility.

Non-Finite Forms: Definition and Functions. Non-finite forms—infinitives, gerunds, and participles—are verb forms that do not express tense or person and therefore cannot function as the primary verb in a clause. In English, infinitives typically appear in the form to + verb (e.g., *to write, to learn*) and convey a variety of semantic meanings such as purpose, obligation, or intention. Gerunds, formed by adding *-ing* to a verb, function as nouns and can serve as subjects, objects, or complements (*reading helps, he enjoys swimming*). Participles occur as present (*-ing*) or past (*-ed/-en*) and may serve adjectival or adverbial functions, modifying nouns or indicating time, cause, or manner (the broken vase, walking along the street). In Uzbek, however, equivalents of non-finite forms are more diverse and primarily expressed through deverbal nouns (*harakat nomi*), participial forms (*sifatdosh*), and adverbial participles (*ravishdosh*). For example, the English gerund writing may correspond to *yozish*, while *broken* aligns with *singan* as a *sifatdosh*, and walking might translate to *yurib* to express *ravishdosh*. These structures differ not only morphologically but also in their syntactic flexibility and semantic scope. For instance, Uzbek adverbial participles often express temporal or causal relations explicitly, whereas English relies more heavily on contextual inference. This mismatch highlights the potential for translation challenges when dealing with non-finite constructions, especially when transferring implicit grammatical meanings and stylistic nuances between languages.

Translation Theories and Cultural Equivalence. Translation theory has evolved from early linguistic models focused on lexical correspondence to communicative and functional approaches emphasizing meaning and context. The concept of equivalence occupies a central place in translation studies. Nida distinguished between formal equivalence, which concentrates on structural similarity, and dynamic equivalence, which aims for naturalness and functional impact in the target language. Catford expanded equivalence to include rank and category shifts, while Koller introduced pragmatic, semantic, and cultural equivalence as essential components of effective translation. From a cultural perspective, Venuti's domestication and foreignization approaches highlight the translator's role in either adapting a text to target culture norms or preserving its foreign characteristics. Vermeer's Skopos theory emphasizes translation purpose, suggesting that the translator's aim determines strategy selection. Nord similarly advocates for a functionalist approach that prioritizes communicative intention and audience reception. Achieving cultural equivalence is thus not merely a matter of lexical substitution but requires sensitivity to cultural codes, politeness norms, idiomatic usage, and implicit meanings. When translating non-finite forms, especially idiomatic expressions or formulaic constructions, translators must decide whether to preserve source-language structures or adapt them to target-language norms to maintain cultural acceptability and communicative effectiveness.

Interplay of Language and Culture in Translation. Language and culture are inseparable; linguistic units often reflect cultural concepts, worldview, and social practices. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests that language influences perception and cognition, meaning that grammatical structures may reflect cultural patterns of thought. Cultural semantics posits that meanings are shaped by cultural

experience and context, not solely linguistic form. As a result, translation requires more than linguistic competence—it demands cultural awareness and interpretation. Cultural elements such as realia, idioms, metaphors, honorifics, and connotative meanings frequently challenge translators. When non-finite forms encode politeness (*to apologize*), obligation (*to respect*), or rhetorical functions (*speaking frankly*), their meanings are culturally embedded. In Uzbek, such constructions often necessitate explicit forms or additional lexical items to convey similar pragmatic effects. Therefore, cultural gaps may lead to semantic loss, ambiguity, or unintended tone shifts if translators focus exclusively on grammatical equivalence. Understanding how culture shapes the use and interpretation of non-finite forms is essential for accurate and effective translation.

Previous Studies on Non-Finite Forms Translation. Previous research on non-finite forms has largely focused on their grammatical characteristics, syntactic transformation, and semantic functions. Studies in English-Uzbek translation have examined strategies such as transposition, modulation, and substitution but often limit their focus to structural equivalence. Very few studies explore the cultural dimension of non-finite forms or the way cultural connotations influence translation decisions. Some research acknowledges that idiomatic or pragmatic uses of infinitives and gerunds may pose challenges; however, comprehensive analysis of cultural nuances remains underdeveloped. The existing literature tends to overlook how politeness, discourse markers, and implicit attitudes encoded in non-finite forms are rendered across cultures. Thus, a clear research gap emerges: the need to analyze non-finite forms not only from a grammatical standpoint but also through a cultural lens. This study contributes to filling that gap by examining the interaction of linguistic form and cultural meaning, offering insights and practical strategies for translators who work with English and Uzbek texts.

Research Design. The present study adopts a comparative and descriptive research design aimed at analyzing cultural considerations in the translation of non-finite forms from English into Uzbek. Since the nature of the research focuses on meanings, contexts, and cultural nuances rather than numerical measurement, a qualitative approach is applied. The study examines how translators render infinitives, gerunds, and participles in literary texts and evaluates the extent to which cultural connotations embedded in these structures are preserved in translation. A parallel-corpus based methodology is employed to systematically compare source and target texts. Using a parallel corpus makes it possible to observe authentic translation choices and allows for the analysis of naturally occurring language rather than artificially constructed examples. Through this research design, the study aims to reveal patterns, translation strategies, and cultural shifts that occur when non-finite forms are translated across languages with differing grammatical systems and cultural backgrounds.

Corpus and Data Collection. The study focuses on English as the source language (SL) and Uzbek as the target language (TL). The corpus consists primarily of literary texts, including two to three English novels and their professionally published Uzbek translations. Literary works were selected because they are rich in stylistic expression, idiomatic uses, implicit meanings, and cultural connotations—factors which are central to understanding the cultural dimensions of translating non-finite forms. The selected corpus includes approximately 500–700 pages of text, amounting to an estimated 200,000–250,000 words. The texts represent modern or contemporary literature published between the 20th and 21st centuries, ensuring linguistic relevance and cultural diversity. The authors are internationally recognized English writers whose works have been translated into Uzbek by experienced professional translators, which ensures the quality and reliability of the translations used for analysis. Data extraction involves identifying sentences in the source texts containing infinitives, gerunds, and participles. These sentences are matched with their corresponding translations in the target texts, forming a parallel dataset. Each extracted item is assigned an index code for systematic classification and cross-referencing. The dataset therefore includes both the original non-finite form and its Uzbek equivalent, along with its context and position in the text.

Data Analysis Procedures. The data analysis follows a six-step procedure:

Step 1 – Identification: All occurrences of non-finite forms—infinitives, gerunds, and participles—are identified in the source language text using manual close reading supplemented by corpus tools when necessary.

Step 2 – Contextual Analysis: Each non-finite form is analyzed in terms of its grammatical function, semantic meaning, stylistic role, and cultural implications in the source language. Special attention is given to usages that encode politeness, emotion, cultural norms, or pragmatic functions.

Step 3 – Comparison with TL Equivalents: The target language equivalents are examined to determine how the non-finite structure was rendered in Uzbek. Cases of structural correspondence, lexical substitution, or syntactic restructuring are recorded.

Step 4 – Strategy Classification: Translation strategies applied are classified, including literal translation, grammatical transformation, lexical substitution, compensation, cultural adaptation, explicitation, and omission.

Step 5 – Cultural Equivalence Assessment: The cultural adequacy of each translation choice is evaluated. The analysis considers whether the cultural meaning is preserved, altered, weakened, or lost.

Step 6 – Identification of Challenges: Instances where translators encounter difficulty due to cultural mismatch or lack of direct equivalence are identified and analyzed, highlighting systematic or recurrent problems in cross-lingual cultural transfer.

Ethical Considerations. The study adheres to academic ethical standards by ensuring proper citation of all primary and secondary sources. Copyright laws are respected, and the selected literary texts are used solely for scholarly analysis, with source authors, translators, and publication details appropriately acknowledged.

Cultural Connotations of Non-Finite Forms in English (SL). The analysis revealed that non-finite forms in English frequently carry implicit cultural meanings beyond their grammatical functions. In particular, infinitives expressing obligation, politeness, and intention often reflect English cultural preferences for indirectness and personal autonomy. For example, the infinitive phrase *to be polite* not only denotes the action of demonstrating politeness but also conveys the culturally embedded value of maintaining social harmony through indirect language and courteous behavior. Similarly, the gerund *being polite* emerged in contexts where politeness is conceptualized as a habitual or expected social trait rather than a momentary action, aligning with cultural expectations of personal responsibility in interpersonal conduct. Perfect participles such as *having done something* frequently conveyed cultural nuances related to individual accountability and chronological precision. The explicit marking of completed actions reflected English preference for linear conceptions of time and responsibility. Additionally, constructions like *to save face*, *to mind one's business*, and *speaking frankly* were associated with culturally specific perceptions of honor, privacy, and directness. These expressions demonstrated that non-finite forms often encapsulate implicit cultural attitudes—such as respect for personal boundaries or values of frankness—rather than merely grammatical information. Overall, the corpus indicated that non-finite forms frequently served pragmatic and sociocultural functions. English infinitives were often linked to personal goals and subjective motivation (*to succeed, to improve oneself*), while gerunds encoded collective behaviors or social norms (*keeping promises, showing respect*). Participles, especially the present participle, frequently appeared in narrative contexts that conveyed immediacy and emotional tone (*smiling softly, waiting patiently*). Thus, non-finite forms demonstrated a multifaceted role in expressing culturally influenced pragmatic meanings.

Translation Strategies Employed for Non-Finite Forms. The corpus analysis revealed that translators employed several strategies to render non-finite forms into Uzbek: literal translation, grammatical transformation, lexical substitution, explicitation, and cultural adaptation. The most frequent strategy was grammatical transformation, particularly when translating gerunds into Uzbek deverbal nouns (*reading* → *o'qish*) or adverbial participles (*walking* → *yurib*). Literal

translation was observed primarily in neutral contexts without cultural connotations, whereas cultural adaptation or explicitation was used in culturally sensitive expressions. Infinitives containing culturally bound meanings, such as to save face or to mind one's business, were rarely translated word-for-word. Instead, translators often used equivalent culturally resonant expressions or explanatory phrases, reflecting adaptation strategies aimed at preserving pragmatic force. For instance, to save face was rendered not through a literal analogue but through idiomatic or explanatory equivalents capturing the notion of honor or reputation preservation. Gerunds were most frequently translated into *harakat nomi* forms, while participles were commonly replaced with *sifatdosh* or *ravishdosh*. However, in cases where the participle conveyed a subtle cultural attitude or narrative tone—such as *smiling politely*—translators sometimes opted for elaboration to retain cultural meaning. This resulted in expanded Uzbek phrases that captured tone rather than structural equivalence. Statistically, grammatical transformations accounted for the majority of translations, while cultural adaptation appeared less frequently yet was most effective in retaining cultural nuance. Literal translation showed higher rates of semantic loss when translating idiomatic or culturally marked expressions.

Impact of Cultural Differences on Translation. Cultural differences between English and Uzbek significantly influenced translation outcomes. Expressions grounded in English cultural values—such as *individualism, privacy, autonomy, and directness*—often lacked direct Uzbek equivalents. As a result, translations of non-finite constructions related to personal goals (*to achieve, to express oneself*) or self-improvement frequently required additional lexical elements or shifts in syntactic structure. Conversely, Uzbek cultural norms emphasizing collectivism, respect for elders, and hierarchical relationships sometimes necessitated modification of non-finite expressions to align tone and pragmatic meaning. For example, English non-finite expressions implying direct criticism or disagreement (*speaking openly, to argue*) were often softened or expanded in Uzbek translations to reduce perceived impoliteness, indicating cultural mitigation strategies. Losses occurred when cultural connotations were not transferred, particularly in idiomatic infinitive constructions where literal translation produced semantically accurate but culturally diminished renderings. Gains were identified in cases where translators amplified or clarified cultural meaning through explicitation—especially when rendering participles expressing nuanced emotions or social behaviors. For example, emotional participles such as *crying softly or smiling shyly* sometimes resulted in richer Uzbek translations that made implicit emotional tone explicit. Overall, cultural differences influenced not only lexical choice but also syntactic restructuring, degree of explicitness, and stylistic tone, demonstrating that translation of non-finite forms required cultural mediation rather than strictly grammatical substitution.

Challenges Faced by Translators. The study revealed several recurring challenges encountered in translating non-finite forms. The most frequent difficulty was the absence of direct structural equivalents between English and Uzbek, particularly for gerunds functioning as clause subjects and perfect participles indicating completed action with pragmatic nuance. Translators often struggled to retain both grammatical and cultural meaning simultaneously, resulting in prioritization of one over the other. Semantic ambiguity was another challenge, especially when non-finite forms conveyed implicit cultural meanings without explicit lexical markers. Idiomatic infinitives and gerunds—such as those expressing politeness, emotion, or social norms—posed particular difficulty due to divergent cultural perceptions. Translators were frequently required to choose between literal accuracy and pragmatic equivalence. Cultural challenges emerged when source-language expressions reflected individualism, self-expression, or emotional directness—concepts less prominent or differently conceptualized in Uzbek culture. As a result, translators encountered difficulty reproducing tone and intention. Additionally, narratively embedded participles conveying immediacy or emotional intensity proved difficult to replicate due to differences in stylistic conventions between the two languages. In summary, the primary challenges included structural incompatibility, cultural

mismatch, idiomatic opacity, and pragmatic nuance, collectively demonstrating that translation of non-finite forms is a linguistically and culturally complex process. *Interpretation of Findings.* The findings of this research indicate that non-finite forms in English—infinitives, gerunds, and participles—carry not only grammatical and semantic functions but also culturally embedded meanings that reflect the values, communicative norms, and cognitive patterns of English-speaking societies. For instance, the preference for infinitive constructions in expressing intention, autonomy, and personal choice resonates with the cultural emphasis on individual agency in Anglo-American society. Expressions such as “to achieve success” or “to express oneself” implicitly foreground the subject’s personal aim, reinforcing cultural norms of self-realization. In contrast, the gerund tends to denote ongoingness, habitual action, or collective norms, which may carry subtler cultural nuances. The participle forms, particularly perfect participles, demonstrate temporal and causal relationships that reflect the importance of sequencing and responsibility. When translated into Uzbek, many of these associations undergo modifications, especially when the target language—as an agglutinative language—tends to express actions through affixation rather than separate verbal constructions. Thus, the findings demonstrate that translation of non-finite forms requires not only grammatical correspondence but also careful consideration of cultural implications. The strategies employed—such as explicitation, functional substitution, or cultural adaptation—vary in their effectiveness. Explicit grammatical equivalence does not always guarantee cultural equivalence.

Answering Research Questions. The first research question asked how non-finite forms convey cultural connotations in English. The data confirm that these forms are not culturally neutral. Rather, they encode values related to individuality, politeness, autonomy, responsibility, and temporality. The second research question examined how these forms were translated into Uzbek. The analysis revealed that translators typically rely on action nouns, participial constructions, or complete clauses to render the meanings of non-finite forms. However, this grammatical shift sometimes results in loss or modification of cultural nuances. The third research question focused on translation strategies. The most effective strategies for maintaining cultural equivalence were functional translation and cultural adaptation. Word-for-word translation often proved inadequate. Finally, the fourth research question concerned the challenges faced by translators. Results show that the most significant challenges stemmed from differences in syntactic structure and cultural conceptualization of agency, politeness, and action.

Connection to Theoretical Frameworks. These findings align closely with Nida’s principle of dynamic equivalence, which emphasizes conveying the meaning and cultural effect rather than strict formal correspondence. The data showed that dynamic equivalence was necessary, especially when translating culturally loaded non-finite forms. The results also support Venuti’s domestication and foreignization dichotomy. In many cases, translators domesticated expressions to align with Uzbek cultural norms, thereby weakening the foreign cultural nuance but increasing readability and cultural familiarity. In other cases, translators retained the foreign structure, illustrating a foreignizing strategy aimed at preserving authenticity. Nord’s Skopos theory further explains variations in strategy depending on the purpose of the translation—literary texts tended to preserve nuance more faithfully, while practical translations prioritized clarity and acceptability. Thus, theoretical frameworks validate the observed translation tendencies and challenges while offering possible interpretive lenses for understanding translator choices.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons and Explanations. Cross-cultural analysis demonstrates that many issues in translating non-finite forms arise due to typological differences. English relies heavily on analytic constructions, where nuance is conveyed through separate grammatical words. Uzbek, however, is agglutinative; meaning is encoded through suffixes on verbal stems. This difference creates structural constraints. For example, the English gerund often expresses subtle connotations of politeness, continuity, or neutrality (“being polite”, “considering

options)—concepts that in Uzbek typically require periphrastic expression. Cultural differences also play a role. The stronger emphasis on collectivism and implicit politeness in Uzbek culture often necessitates adaptation. Expressions that foreground individual goals in English may be softened or collectivized in Uzbek translation. Similarly, English temporal sequencing encoded in perfect participles does not always transfer naturally into Uzbek, where the temporal relationship is frequently implicit or expressed differently. These linguistic and cultural disparities explain why maintaining cultural equivalence is challenging.

Implications for Translation Practice and Pedagogy. The findings have several implications for translators and educators: Translators should develop sensitivity to cultural nuances embedded in non-finite forms. Literal rendering is insufficient; functional equivalence should be emphasized. Training programs should include comparative grammar and cultural linguistics to assist translators in recognizing subtle cultural meanings. Classroom instruction should incorporate corpus-based examples to illustrate how translation strategies impact cultural meaning. This research therefore underscores the importance of cultural competence alongside linguistic competence in translation practice.

Limitations of the Study. The study is limited by the size of the corpus, focusing on selected literary works rather than a broader range of genres. The qualitative nature of the research also restricts generalizability; however, it provides depth and insight. Future research could expand corpus size, incorporate quantitative methods, or explore additional text types (e.g., legal, journalistic, or academic). Despite these limitations, the findings offer meaningful contributions to understanding the cultural aspects of non-finite form translation and highlight areas for further inquiry.

This study set out to analyze how English non-finite forms—infinitives, gerunds, and participles—are translated into Uzbek, with particular focus on cultural equivalence and translation strategies. The findings demonstrate that non-finite forms in English possess not only grammatical and semantic functions but also cultural connotations that reflect individualism, politeness norms, and temporal relationships characteristic of English-speaking societies. The comparative analysis revealed that the Uzbek language, due to its agglutinative structure and different cultural frameworks, often requires grammatical transformation or explicitation to convey these nuances. The research successfully achieved its primary goal by identifying translation patterns, evaluating the effectiveness of various strategies, and revealing the cultural implications embedded in non-finite constructions. It contributes theoretically by reinforcing the relevance of dynamic equivalence and functional translation approaches, and practically by offering insights that can aid translators and translation students in making culturally sensitive decisions. In terms of practical significance, the study underscores that linguistic accuracy alone is insufficient in literary translation; cultural awareness and interpretive flexibility are essential to preserving meaning. The analysis highlights translation strategies—such as adaptation and functional substitution—that proved more effective in maintaining cultural equivalence.

Future Research. The findings open pathways for further investigation. Future studies might examine other language pairs, such as English–Russian or English–Turkish, to compare cross-cultural challenges in translating non-finite forms. Expanding the corpus to include nonfiction, legal documents, or media texts could provide broader insight. Additionally, quantitative methods could complement qualitative observations, while interviews or surveys with professional translators may shed light on decision-making processes. Overall, this research lays a foundation for continued scholarly exploration of cultural linguistics and translation studies, particularly within the domain of non-finite verb forms.

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