



Ministry of Higher and Secondary  
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The Faculty of foreign languages

# COURSE PAPER

Theme: The gerund and its syntactical functions in  
Modern English.

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## **Plan:**

Introduction.

Main part:

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1.1 Theoretical foundations of gerund in Modern English

1.2 The double nature of the gerund.

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## **Introduction.**

The educational system of the republic of Uzbekistan is also advancing at a high speed and is being paid a great attention to. Our government allocates more than a half of state budget every year for cultivating the system of education. At present, Uzbekistan is among the leading countries of the world where 99% of the population is literate and 12 years of education including primary and secondary general schooling, vocational and academic education is compulsory and is under state financing.

Educating the young generation has always been a top priority and the cardinal focus of social development in the republic. Our Constitution ensures that every citizen of Uzbekistan receives equitable education irrespective of their nationality, sex, language, ethnic origin, religious views, cultural background and social status.

In a very recent on the decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “About measures on the further perfection of the system of studying of foreign languages” declared on December 10, 2012. According to the decree, starting from 2013/2014 school year foreign languages, mainly English, gradually throughout the country will be taught from the first year of schooling in the form form of lesson-games and speaking games, continuing to learning the alphabet, reading and spelling in the second year (grade).

Also it is envisaged that university modules, especially in technical and international areas, will be offered in English and other foreign languages at higher education institutions.

This Decree has categorically been a great stimulus for all the English language learners and teachers to work diligently and do their best to contribute to the well-being of the people of our young independent country.

My course paper is devoted to one of the actual themes of modern comparative linguistics: “Theory of gerund in Modern English”. I’m going to

make a research in both English and Uzbek language grammars, whereas the present days the comparison learning of the language is very essential and not sufficiently explored yet.

**Aim of the research:** is to work out an effective methodology for teaching the gerund at Uzbek schools for linguodidactic purposes.

**Tasks of the research:** The present paper seeks to identify and justify the actuality of the topic of the research, to further broaden the current knowledge of the chosen topic, to create cutting-edge methods of teaching them to Uzbek learners.

**Object of the research:** The research focuses on structural-semantic features of the gerund in Modern English for purpose of creating effective strategies for teaching the word order in sentences at Uzbek schools.

**Methods of the research:** The methods we have put forward to conduct a detailed research into our chosen topic are as follows:

1. Comparative method;
2. Oppositional method;
3. Parts of sentence method;
4. Distributional method.

**Materials of the research:** In order to back-up the theories of the research we have worked on methodology of teaching based on solid empirical examples of gerund in a sentence from fiction and non-fiction works by English scientists and writers.

**Structure of the graduation paper:** The graduation paper consists of the following sections: introduction, 2 chapters, conclusion and the list of the used literature.

# Theory of gerund in Modern English

## 1.1 Theoretical foundations of gerund in Modern English

The gerund is the non-finite form of the verb which, like the infinitive, combines the properties of the verb with those of the noun. Similar to the infinitive, the gerund serves as the verbal name of a process, but its substantive quality is more strongly pronounced than that of the infinitive. Namely, as different from the infinitive, and similar to the noun, the gerund can be modified by a noun in the possessive case or its pronominal equivalents (expressing the subject of the verbal process), and it can be used with prepositions.

The gerund developed from the verbal noun, which in course of time became verbalized preserving at the same time its nominal character. The gerund is formed by adding the suffix *-ing* to the stem of the verb, and coincides in form with Participle I.

The gerund is a verbid characterized by the following features:

1. Its dual lexico-grammatical meaning of an action partially viewed as a substance.
2. The categories of voice and order
3. The group morpheme-*ing*.
4. The combinability resembling that of the verb (the gerund is associated with adverbs, with nouns or pronouns denoting the object of the action) and that of the noun (the gerund is associated with prepositions, with the conjoint possessive pronouns, nouns in the possessive case)!

E.g. The district is justified in blindly ignoring the county. (Bennett).

5. The syntactical functions of subject, complement, attribute, etc.

E.g. His returning so soon surprised his family. (Meredith).

## 1.2 The double nature of the gerund.

As a natural result of its origin and development the gerund has nominal and verbal properties. The general combinability of the gerund, like that of the infinitive, is dual, sharing some features with the verb, and some features with the noun. The verb-type combinability of the gerund is displayed in its combining, first, with nouns expressing the object of the action; second, with modifying adverbs; third, with certain semi-functional predicator verbs, but other than modal. Of the noun-type is the combinability of the gerund, first, with finite notional verbs as the object of the action; second, with finite notional verbs as the prepositional adjunct of various functions; third, with finite notional verbs as the subject of the action; fourth, with nouns as the prepositional adjunct of various functions.

The gerund, in the corresponding positional patterns, performs the functions of all the types of notional sentence-parts, i.e. the subject, the object, the predicative, the attribute, the adverbial modifier. The nominal characteristics of the gerund are as follows:

1. The gerund can perform the function of subject, object and predicative.

They say **smoking leads** to meditation. (*Collins*) (subject)

I like **making** people happy. (*Shaw*) (object)

The duty of all progressive mankind is **fighting for peace**. (predicative)

2. The gerund can be preceded by a preposition.

I am very, very tired **of rowing**. (*Hemingway*)

3. Like a noun the gerund can be modified by a noun in the possessive case or by a possessive pronoun.

“I wonder at **Jolyon’s allowing** this engagement,” he said to Aunt Ann.  
(*Galsworthy*)

Is there any objection to **my seeing** her? (*Galsworthy*)

The gerund is originally a verbal noun in –ing(until about 1250 also with the form –ung. Similar to the infinitive, the gerund is the name of a process but its substantive meaning is more strongly pronounced than that of the infinitive: unlike the infinitive, the gerund can be modified by a noun in the genitive case or by the possessive pronoun and used with prepositions.

If the gerund is an abstract name of a process, why is then the infinitive, not the gerund, the citation, or standard, form of the verb in general? There are several reasons: 1) it is more substantival than the infinitive; 2) it does not take part in the conjugation of the verb: 3) structurally it is more complex than the infinitive – it has an inflectional form(-ing).

The verbal characteristics of the gerund are the same as those of the participle:

1. The gerund of transitive verbs can take a direct object.

I had now made a good progress **in understanding and speaking their language**. (*Swift*)

2. The gerund can be modified by an adverb.

She burst out **crying bitterly**. (*Hardy*)

3. The gerund has tense distinctions: the gerund of transitive verbs has also voice distinctions. The forms of the gerund in Modern English are as follows:

	<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>
Indefinite	writing having written	being written having been written

It should be observed that though the active forms of the gerund may be rendered in different ways, the passive forms are nearly rendered by a clause.

As she contemplated the wide windows and imposing signs, she became conscious **of being gazed upon**. (*Dreiser*)

**After having been informed** of the conference in my lady's room

... he immediately **decided on waiting** to hear the news from Frizing hall.  
(*Collins*)

One of the specific gerund patterns is its combination with the noun in the possessive case or its possessive pronominal equivalent expressing the subject of the action. This gerundial construction is used in cases when the subject of the gerundial process differs from the subject of the governing sentence-situation, i.e. when the gerundial sentence-part has its own, separate subject.  
*E.g.:*

*Powell's being rude* like that was disgusting. How can she know about *the Morions' being connected* with this unaccountable affair? Will he ever excuse *our having interfered*?

### **The tense distinctions of the gerund.**

The tense distinctions of the gerund, like those of the participles, are not absolute but relative.

The Indefinite Gerund Active and Passive denotes an action simultaneous with the action expressed by the finite verb; depending on the tense form of the finite verb it may refer to the present, past, or future.

He can swim for any number of hours **without tiring**. (*Hichens*)

She walked on **without turning** her head. (*Hardy*)

Gwendolen will not rest **without having** the world at her feet. (*Eliot*)

No one could pass in or out **without being** seen. (*Dickens*)

The Perfect Gerund denotes an action prior to that of the finite verb.

She denies **having spoken** with him.

He was ashamed of **having shown** even the slightest irritation. (*Bennett*)

She really had been crying..., out of anger at **having been driven** so hard. (*Heym*)

However, a prior action is not always expressed by a Perfect Gerund; in some cases we find an Indefinite Gerund. This occurs after the verbs *to remember*, *to excuse*, *to forgive*, *to thank* and after the prepositions *on (upon)*, *after* and *without*.

I don't remember **hearing** the legend before. (*Hardy*)

You must excuse my **not answering** you before. (*Collins*)

I thank you **for restraining** me just now. (*Ch. Bronte*)

**On leaving** the house we directed our steps to the nearest shade.

**After walking** about ten yards, he found the hat among the leaves. (*Hardy*)

She passes through and disappears in the pantry **without noticing** the young lady. (*Shaw*)

The Perfect Gerund may also be used after the above mentioned verbs and prepositions.

He did not remember **having been** in that room. (*Galsworthy*)

They parted at Cohen's door **without having spoken** to each other again. (*Eliot*)

### **The voice distinctions of the gerund.**

The gerund of transitive verbs has special forms for the active and the passive voice.

He liked neither reading aloud nor being read aloud to. (*Maugham*)

It is to be observed that after the verbs *to want*, *to need*, *to deserve*, *to require* and the adjective *worth* the gerund is used in the active form, though it is passive in meaning.

“The slums want **attending** to, no doubt,” he said. (*Gasworthy*)

He realized that his room **needed painting**.

The child deserves **praising**.

They were not **worth saving**. (*Heym*)

### **Predicative constructions with the gerund.**

Like all the verbals the gerund can form predicative constructions, i. e. constructions in which the verbal element expressed by the gerund is in predicate relation to the nominal element expressed by a noun or

I don't like your **going off** without any money. (*Maltz*)

Here the gerund *going off* is in predicate relation to the pronoun *your*, which denotes the doer of the action expressed by the gerund. The nominal element of the construction can be expressed in different ways.

1. If it denotes a living being it may be expressed:

(a) By a noun in the genitive case or by a possessive pronoun.

His further consideration of the point was prevented by *Richard's coming back* to us in an excited state. (*Dicken*)

Do you mind *my smoking*? (*Hardy*)

(b) by a noun in the common case.

I have a distinct recollection of *Lady Children* always **getting** the good conduct prize! (*Wilde*)

Thus in Modern English there are two parallel constructions of the type: *Fancy David' courting Emily!* *And Fancy David courting Emily!* These two constructions may be used indifferently, but sometimes there is a slight

difference in meaning: in the first example the action (the verbal element of the construction) is emphasized, whereas in the second the doer of the action (the nominal element of the construction) is emphasized. Occasionally examples are found where the nominal element of the construction is expressed by a pronoun in the objective case.

I hope you will forgive me **disturbing** you. (*Du Maurier*)

There are cases when the nominal element of the construction, though denoting a living being, cannot be expressed by a noun in the possessive case, but only by a noun in the common, namely when it consists of two or more nouns or when it is a noun modified by an attribute in post-position.

I object to **Mary and Jane going out on such a windy say**. He felt no uneasiness now in the thought of the brother and sister **being alone together**. (*Eliot*)

Did you ever hear of a man of sense **rejecting such an offer**?

2. If the nominal element of the construction denotes a lifeless thing, it is expressed by a noun in the common case (such nouns, as a rule, are not used in the genitive case) or by a possessive pronoun.

I said something about my clock **being** slow. (*Du Maurier*)

... Peggotty spoke of... my room, and of its **being ready** for me. (*Dickens*)

3. The nominal element of the construction can also be expressed by a pronoun which has no case distinctions, such as *all, this, that, both, each, something*.

I insist on both of them **coming** in time.

Again Michael... was conscious of something deep and private **stirring** within himself. (*Galsworthy*)

## Chapter 2. The usage of gerund in Modern English.

### 2.1 The functions of gerund in a sentence.

In Modern English the gerund is widely used and often competes with the infinitive.

In the following cases only the gerund is used:

1. With the verbs and verbal phrases: *to avoid, to burst out, to deny, to enjoy, to excuse, to fancy* (in imperative sentences as an exclamation of surprise), *to finish, to forgive, to give up, to go on, to keep (on), to leave off, to mind*, (in negative and interrogative sentences), *to postpone, to put off, cannot help*, and some others.

He avoided looking at Savina. (*Wilson*)

... She burst out crying. (*Collins*)

We all burst out laughing. (*Braine*)

She denied having been at the station that evening. (*Gaskell*)

... he enjoyed thinking of her as his future wife. (*Eliot*)

Excuse my leaving you in the dark a moment. (*Dickens*)

Fancy finding you here at such an hour! (*Hardy*)

Forgive my speaking plainly. (*Hardy*)

When the Committee had finished deciding on its politics, he had gone home. (*Heym*)

The Gerund of transitive verbs can express voice.

#### The Forms of the Gerund

	Active	Passive
Indefinite	Do	being done
Perfect	Having done	having been done

As the passive voice is of later development, we still find in Modern English instances when the active form of the Gerund is passive in meaning. Such constructions are survivals of the time when one and the same form was used with both active and passive meanings. The Gerund is always used in the active form (with passive meaning) after the verbs *to want*, *to require*, *to need*, *to deserve*, also after the adjective *worth*.

The grass needs cutting.

The camera wanted adjusting.

The child deserves praising.

The film is worth seeing

2. With the following verbs and verbal phrases used with a preposition: *to accuse of*, *to agree to*, *to approve of*, *to complain of*, *to depend on*, *to feel like*, *to insist on*, *to look like*, *to object to*, *to persist in*, *to prevent from*, *to rely on*, *to speak of*, *to succeed in*, *to suspect of*, *to thank for*, *to think of*, *to give up the idea of*, *to look forward to*, *not to like the idea of*, *to miss an (the) opportunity of* and some others.

They accuse me of having dealt with the Germans. (*Heym*)

It was clear now... that Abraham never had agreed to their being married to-day. (*Stone*)

You did not approve of my playing at roulette. (*Eliot*)

All the happiness of my life depends on your loving me. (*Eliot*)

I don't feel like going out. (*Wilson*)

I don't want to bore you with all this, but I feel like talking. (*Priestley*)

I insist on being treated with a certain consideration. (*Shaw*)

I object to his having any acquaintance at all with my sister. (*Dickens*)

I rushed out to prevent her from seeing this dreadful sight. (*Conan Doyle*)

... you may rely on my setting matters right. (*Collins*)

My medical adviser succeeded in saving my life... (*Collins*)

You suspect me of stealing your diamond. (*Collins*)

I resolved not to think of going abroad any more. (*Defoe*)

I really thank you heartily for taking all this trouble.

So he returned his straitened means to his pocket, and gave up the idea of trying to buy the boys. (*Twain*)

I think everybody looked forward to his coming back. (*Mansfield*)

He did not like the idea of being hunted down by Butler. (*Dreiser*)

Don't miss the opportunity of hearing this pianist.

With the following predicative word-groups (with or without a preposition): *to be aware of, to be busy in, to be capable of, to be fond of, to be guilty of, to be indignant at, to be pleased (displeased) at, to be proud of, to be sure of, to be surprised (astonished) at, to be worth (while)*, and some others.

Sir Pitt Grawley was not aware of Becky's having married Rawson.

I felt physically incapable of remaining still in any one place and morally incapable of speaking to any one human being. (*Collins*)

I am very fond of being looked at. (*Wilde*)

You are really guilty of having connived with a German officer to help his escape. (*Heym*)

Mr. Osborne was indignant at his son's having disobeyed him.

... she was not pleased at my coming. (*Hichens*)

Miss Grawley was greatly displeased at Rawdon's having married Becky.

... nobody knows better than I do that she (Mrs. Coppefield)... is proud of being so pretty. (*Dickens*)

Are you quite sure of those words referring to my mother? (*Collins*)

The bridal was worth seeing. (*Eliot*)

The standard form is the form with the noun in the genitive case or with the possessive pronoun. The other form is more common in spoken English. The gerund in the latter construction is traditionally called the half-gerund. The semantic difference between the two types of construction is inconsiderable: the gerund modified by a noun in the genitive or a possessive pronoun is generally thought to be more nounal in meaning and the gerund modified by a noun in the common case or the objective form of the pronoun is thought to be more verbal. According to B. Khaimovich and B. J., “This usage is suggestive of the further verbalization of the gerund”. Unlike the noun, the gerund cannot be used in the plural; it cannot be preceded by the article (or its substitute); it cannot be determined by the adjective.

His coming at such a late hour disturbed me (gerund). vs.

His comings and goings disturb me (verbal nouns).

I resented his constantly questioning my motives (gerund). vs.

I resented his constant questioning of my motives (verbal noun).

## 2.2 The functions of the gerund in the sentence.

The gerund may be used in various syntactic functions. A single gerund occurs but seldom; in most cases we find a gerundial phrase or a gerundial construction.

### 1. The gerund as a subject.

**Talking** mends no holes. (*proverb*)

**Waiting** for the Professor was a lame excuse for doing nothing. (*Heym*)

**My answering** in the affirmative gave him great satisfaction. (*Dickens*)

The gerund as a subject may follow the predicate; in these cases the sentence opens with the introductory *it* (which serves as an introductory

subject) or with the construction *there is*. The subject expressed by a gerund may follow the predicate in the construction *there is no*, also after *it's no ...*

It's **no use talking** like that to me. (*Shaw*)

There **was no mistaking** the expression on her face. (*Collins*)

There is no concealing the truth.

It's no use worrying about them.

As usual, there's no arguing with you, boss.

There is no accounting for the tastes of the rich.

2. The gerund as a predicative.

The only remedy for such a headache as mine **is going to bed**. (*Collins*)

3. The gerund as part of a compound verbal predicate. Part of a compound aspective or modal predicate (after the verbs denoting the beginning, the duration or the end of the action such as to begin, to start, to burst out, to go on, to keep (on), to stop, to finish, to give up, also after the verbs which have modal meaning, such as to intend, to try, to attempt, can't help).

Stop spreading the news! Go on working!

The child burst out crying. I can't help admiring you!

Oh, please, stop asking me for definitions. I feel like a walking dictionary.

(a) With verbs and verbal phrases denoting modality the gerund forms part of a compound verbal modal predicate.

We **intend going** to Switzerland, and climbing Mount Blanc.

Joseph could not **help admiring** the man. (*Heym*)

(b) With verbs denoting the beginning, the duration, or the end of an action, the gerund forms part of a compound verbal aspect predicate.

She **began sobbing** and weeping. (*Dreiser*)

In the night it **started raining**. (*Hemingway*)

Bathsheba **continued walking**. (*Hardy*)

She took my hand and **kept on laughing**. (*Hemingway*)

Isabella **ceased speaking**. (*E. Bronte*)

#### 4. The gerund as an object.

The gerund may be used as a direct object and as a prepositional indirect object.

I simply love **riding**. (*Galsworthy*) (direct object)

She enjoyed **singing** and **playing** to him. (*London*) (direct object)

The times were good **for building** ... (*Galsworthy*) (prepositional indirect object)

Charlie did not succeed **in taking** things easily. (*Priestley*) (prepositional indirect object)

Predicative constructions with the gerund form a complex object as they consist of two distinct elements, nominal and verbal.

Perhaps you wouldn't mind **Richard's coming** in? (*Dickens*) (complex object)

Aunt Augusta won't quite approve **of your being** here. (*Wilde*) (prepositional complex object)

Also after the verbs: *need, require, want, deserve*.

His suit needed cleaning and his brown moccasins needed throwing away.

#### 5. The gerund as an attribute.

In this function the gerund is always preceded by a preposition.

Swithin protruded his pale round eyes with the effort **of hearing**. (*Galsworthy*)

He was born with the gift **of winning** hearts. (*Gaskell*)

She had a feeling **of having been** worsted ... (*Galsworthy*)

... there is no chance **of their getting** married for years. (*Galsworthy*)

Presently there was the sound of the car **being brought** to the door. (*Du Maurier*)

Water has a wonderful way of calming.

Lately he had developed a nervous habit of pushing back his hair quickly.

Who will take the trouble of telling me what's up?

What's the most effective method of foreign language teaching?

Patience is the art of hoping. Art is a way of learning things.

#### 6. The gerund as an adverbial modifier.

In this function the gerund is always preceded by a preposition. It is used in the function of an adverbial modifier of time, manner, attendant circumstances, cause, condition, purpose and concession; the most common functions are those of adverbial modifier of time, manner, and attendant circumstances.

- (a) As adverbial modifier of time the gerund is preceded by the prepositions *after, before, on (upon), in* or *at*.

**After leaving** her umbrella in the hall, she entered the living room. (*Cronin*)

He was to have three days at home **before going back** to farm. (*Galsworthy*)

**On reaching** Casterbridge he left the horse and trap at an inn. (*Hardy*)

Mr. Bumble's conduct **on being left** to himself was rather inexplicable. (*Dickens*)

**Upon waking** I found myself much recovered. (*Swift*)

**In quitting** the room he paused once more at my desk. (*Ch. Bronte*)

Clare turned **at hearing** her footsteps... (*Hardy*)

In the function of an adverbial modifier of time the gerund sometimes competes with the participle.

George, **on hearing** the story, grinned. (*Galsworthy*)

The four girls, **hearing** him speak in the hall, rushed out of the library.

(*Eliot*)

**After reaching** the second landing ... I heard a sound of quiet and regular breathing on my left hand side.

**Reaching** the door of the room occupied by Cowperwood and Aileen, she tapped lightly. (*Dreiser*)

- (b) As an adverbial modifier of manner the gerund is used with the prepositions *by* or *in*.

She started her father **by bursting** into tears. (*Gaskell*) The day was spent

**in packing**. (*Du Maurier*)

As an adverbial modifier of attendant circumstances the gerund is preceded by the preposition *without*.

She was not brilliant, not active, but rather peaceful and statuesque

**without knowing** it. (*Dreiser*)

- (c) As an adverbial modifier of purpose, the gerund is chiefly used with the preposition *for*.

... one side of the gallery was used **for dancing**. (*Eliot*)

- (d) As an adverbial modifier of condition the gerund is preceded by the preposition *without*.

He has no right to come bothering you and papa **without being**

**invited**. (*Shaw*)

- (e) As an adverbial modifier of cause the gerund is preceded by the prepositions *for*, *for fear of*, *owing to*.

I feel the better myself **for having spent** a good deal of my time abroad. (*Eliot*)

I dared not attend the funeral **for fear of making** a fool of myself.  
(*Coppard*)

- (f) As an adverbial modifier of concession the gerund is preceded by the preposition *in spite of*.

**In spite of being busy**, he did all he could to help her.

The above examples show that the gerund preceded by one and the same preposition may be used in different functions: with the preposition *without*, it may perform the function of an adverbial modifier of attendant circumstances and of condition; with the preposition *in*, it may perform the function of an adverbial modifier of time and manner; with the preposition *for*, it may perform the function of an adverbial modifier of purpose or of cause.

Participle if it is used in the function of adverbial modifier of cause.

**Not knowing** Miss Betsey's address, David could not write to her.  
(cause)

Some grammarians recognize the existence of two separate constructions: the gerundial construction (a construction whose nominal element is expressed by a noun in the genitive case or by a possessive pronoun) and a construction with a half gerund (a construction whose nominal element is expressed by a noun in the common case, a pronoun in the objective case, or a pronoun which has no case distinctions).

## 2.2 The differences of the gerund with infinitive, participle and verbal noun.

### The gerund and the infinitive.

As already known, some verbs can be followed by either the gerund or the infinitive. According to D. Bolinger (1968), the gerund expresses something “real, vivid, fulfilled”, whereas the infinitive expresses something “hypothetical, future, unfulfilled”:

1. John hopes to learn French.
2. Max enjoys swimming.

In the first sentence, the infinitive to learn denotes a process that will be fulfilled in the future, i.e. it is not a factive process; in the second sentence the gerund swimming denotes a process that has already been fulfilled before the moment of speaking: we can only enjoy things we have already directly experienced. D. Bolinger’s principle of factivity vs. non-factivity also helps to explain the difference between such sentences as I like camping in the mountains and I like to camp in the mountains. Camping suggests that the person has already experienced the process while to camp is a non-factive process, which is especially obvious when like is modified by a modal. However, according to N. V. So (1973), most native speakers do not readily perceive the difference between like + doing and like to do. With a number of verbs and word-groups both the gerund and the infinitive may be used. The most important of them are: *to be afraid, to begin, to cease, to continue, can, (cannot), afford, to dread, to fear, to forget, to hate, to intend, to like (dislike), to neglect, to prefer, to propose, to remember, to recollect, to start, to stop.*

The young man began turning over the pages of a book. (*Priestley*)

At length she began to speak softly. (*Eliot*)

She continued standing near the piano. (*Eliot*)

She continued to look at me... (*Dickens*)

It is sometimes possible to find a person for the use of a given form. With some verbs and word-groups, such as *to be afraid*, *to forget*, *to hate*, *to like* (*dislike*), *to prefer* the infinitive is mostly used with reference to a special occasion, the gerund being more appropriate to a general statement.

The child was not afraid of remaining alone, but he was afraid to remain alone on such a stormy night.

I was always afraid of losing his goodwill. (*Llewellyn*)

Gwendolen answered rather pettishly; and her mamma was afraid to say more. (*Eliot*)

Don't forget shutting the windows when you leave home.

I don't like interrupt him, he seems very busy.

With the verb *to remember* the infinitive usually refers to the future, and the gerund to the past.

I remember seeing the book in many bookshops.

Remember to buy the book.

With the verb *to stop* the infinitive and the gerund have different syntactical functions. The gerund forms part of a compound verbal aspect predicate.

They stopped talking when he came in. (*Galsworthy*)

The infinitive has the function of an adverbial modifier of purpose.

She stopped to exchange a few words with a neighbor. (*Dickens*)

### **The gerund and the participle.**

In most cases the differentiation between the gerund and the participle does not present any difficulty.

Unlike the participle the gerund may be preceded by a preposition, it may be modified by a noun in the possessive case or by a possessive pronoun; it can be used in the function of a subject, object, and predicative. In the function of an attribute and if an adverbial modifier both the gerund and the participle may be used, but the gerund in these functions is always preceded by a preposition.

There are cases, however, when the differentiation between the gerund and the participle presents some difficulty; for instance, it is not always easy to distinguish between a gerund as part of a compound noun and a participle used as an attribute to a noun. One should bear in mind that if we have a gerund as part of a compound noun, the person or thing denoted by the noun does not perform the action expressed by the *ing*-form: e. g. *a dancing-hall* (a hall for dancing), *a cooking-stove* (a stove for cooking), *walking shoes*, *a writing-table*, etc.

If we have a participle used as an attribute the person denoted by the noun perform the action expressed by the *ing*-form: e. g. *a dancing girl* (a girl who dances), *a singing child*, etc.

However, there are cases which admit of two interpretations: for example, *a sewing machine* may be understood in two ways: a machine for sewing and a machine which sews; *a hunting dog* may be a dog for hunting and a dog that hunts.

### **The gerund and verbal noun.**

The gerund should not be confused with the verbal noun, which has the same suffix *-ing*. The main points of difference between the gerund and the verbal noun are as follows:

Like all the verbals the gerund has a double character – nominal and verbal

1. The verbal noun has only a nominal character.
2. The gerund is not used with an article.

3. The verbal noun may be used with an article.

The making of a new humanity cannot be the privilege of a handful of bureaucrats. (*Fox*)

I want you to give my hair a good brushing. (*Hardy*)

4. The gerund has no plural form.

5. The verbal noun may be used in the plural:

Our likings are regulated by our circumstances. (*Ch. Bronte*)

6. The gerund of a transitive verb takes

7. A verbal noun cannot take a direct object; it takes a prepositional object with the preposition *of*.

He received more and more letters, so many that he had given up reading them. (*Priestley*)

Meanwhile Gwendolen was rallying her nerves to the reading *of the paper*. (*Eliot*)

8. The gerund may be modified by an adverb.

9. The verbal noun may be modified by an adjective.

Drinking even temperately, was a sin. (*Dreiser*)

He (Tom) took a good scolding about cladding Sid. (*Twain*)

Compare the following:

- The loud ticking of the clock woke me up. (verbal noun)
- The clock started ticking all of a sudden. (gerund, part of a predicate)

Some grammarians recognize the existence of two separate constructions: the gerundial construction (a construction whose nominal element is expressed by a noun in the genitive case or by a possessive pronoun) and a construction with a half gerund (a construction whose nominal element is expressed by a noun in the common case, a pronoun in the objective case, or a pronoun which has no case distinctions).

## Conclusion

In conclusion we think it necessary to add a few words concerning these-called 'half-gerund', as in the examples *Excuse my boys (them) having bored you so*. The gerund used in this complex differs from a 'classical' gerund but in having a noun in the common case as its subject-word. The common case established itself early with nouns that have no possessive case. The usage has spread very rapidly in recent years. At present such complexes are common:

a) with nouns that have no case opposemes:

The back-benchers insisted on the treaty being ratified. (TheWorker);

b) with nouns accompanied by attributes in post-position:

Fancy aw OT an of taste buying a hat like that. (Christie);

c) to avoid ambiguity which might arise in oral speech if the gerund were connected with a noun in the possessive case: /

imagine his son (son's) marrying so young;

d) when the gerund is preceded by more than one noun: She objected to children and women smoking;

e) when it is desirable to stress the person component of this complex:

I hate the idea of your wasting your time.(Maugham).

Though there is no unity of opinion about the nature of such forms, we do not think it expedient to have a special name for them. Examples like those given above merely show that the subject words of the gerund may also be nouns (pronouns) in the common case (or nouns and pronouns having no case opposites) and pronouns in the objective case.

The use of the common or the objective case form to express the agent of the action denoted by the gerund makes it possible to use gerundial complexes with a much greater number of nouns and pronouns.

This usage is suggestive of the further verbalization of the gerund, of some important change in its combinability.

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