
THE ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING GERUND AND INFINITIVE

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Abstract

In learning a language, we often find some words that have the same meaning but different functions. In English and Indonesian grammar, we also find verbs that occupy the function of nouns. It is a gerund. Gerund and infinitive are materials that have to be learned in grammar to make good sentences. Broukal (2005) states that "Gerund is a base verb -ing that works like a noun, a gerund can be a subject or an object in a sentence". Besides, Warriner (1982) also states that "an infinitive is a verb form, usually preceded by to, that is used as a noun, adjective, or adverb". Gerunds and infinitives persist in being a major problem for students in learning English because most of languages have infinitives but not gerunds. Students often find it difficult to distinguish either they should use gerund or infinitive in a certain context. One of the problems for learners is to know which verbs in English are followed by the infinitive and which verbs take the -ing form. The problem is complicated by the fact that there are some verbs that can take both forms, but with a different meaning. This research had purpose to reveal the ability of students of English Language Education Study Program batch 2018 of Lambung Mangkurat University in using gerund and infinitive. The method of this research was a descriptive quantitative method. The research found out that the ability of students in using gerund and infinitive was average 69.47, in using gerund was average 75.04, and in using the infinitive was average 63.90. As conclusion, their ability in using gerund and infinitive was in average to good category.

Keywords: *ability, gerund, infinitive*

INTRODUCTION

English students will be future English teachers. They must possess a good and accurate English skill and knowledge, including grammar. This skills and knowledge are important part of the teaching and learning process. Since the teachers are the first source of learning students and also the collaborator and evaluator of the students' learning progress, they have a bigger responsibility to know and use a good and accurate English skill and knowledge. Hence, learning and excelling at those skills and knowledge are a must for English teachers.

One of the parts of the English grammar is the use of gerund and infinitives. Both of them almost have the same function in form noun as the subject or the object of a sentence after a certain verb. They both function like nouns and we can use both forms like noun phrases in most situations. However, there are also some important differences between those two forms. A gerund can be used as a subject, direct object, or object of a preposition. Meanwhile, infinitive can be used as an adjective, direct object, or subjective complement.

Students often find it difficult to distinguish either they should use gerund or infinitive in a certain context. One of the problems for learners is to know which verbs in English are followed by the infinitive and which verbs take the -ing form. The problem is complicated by

the fact that there some verbs that can take both forms, but with a different meaning (Huriyah, 2014: 2).

Based on research by Kitikanan (2011) who conducted the research at Naresuan University, the ability of students in general is far from perfect. The ability of English students in using gerund is still questionable, especially the ability of English students in Lambung Mangkurat University. The researcher conducted the preliminary research data to 20 students of advanced grammar class at Lambung Mangkurat University. The researcher took the data from English Language Education Study Program Study Program of Lambung Mangkurat University batch 2017. Based on the test, the researcher found that many students made errors in using gerund and to-infinitive with the highest frequency of error was in the test criteria of adjectives followed by a to-infinitive. Their average correct score was 66.8% of the total question. The result shows that the mean score is in average to good category.

The absence of the information and knowledge on the students' ability is the main reason from the researcher to conduct the aforementioned study. By doing this study, the researcher would like to dig any information related to the students' ability in using gerund and infinitives. This study attempted to reveal the reality upon the students' skills and knowledge of the English students, soon to be future teacher, in using particular grammatical structure.

Upon the reason mentioned above, the researcher aimed to conduct a study to find out the ability of students of English Language Education Study Program batch 2018 of Lambung Mangkurat University in using gerund and infinitive. This study has significance of theoretical benefits and practical benefit. For the theoretical side, it can be used as a reference for other researchers who are researching in the English learning process and give insightful knowledge about gerund and infinitive. For the practical benefit; it can help the lecturer to know the students' ability especially in using gerund and infinitive so they can arrange the syllabus regarding to the students' strengths and weaknesses.

Review of Literature

Definition of Gerund

According to Azar (1999; 297), a gerund is the –ing form of a verb used as a noun. A gerund is used in the same ways as a noun, for example as a subject or an object (walking is good exercise). Wishon and Burks (1989) noted that there are two kinds of gerund, they are simple gerund and gerund phrase. The example of simple gerund is “swimming is good exercise.” The example of gerund phrase is “your singing is beautiful.” Gerunds has different functions as per mentioned by Broukal and Wisniewska (2005). They stated that there are three functions of gerund. They are gerunds as the subject of a sentence, gerunds as the object of a preposition, and gerunds as direct object of certain verbs (Swan:2005). There are several verbs commonly followed by gerund. These verbs are; *enjoy, think about, keep on, put off, mind, finish, discuss, consider, keep, postpone, quit, and talk about.*

Infinitive

An infinitive is a kind of verb that has a function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb with addition to or

without to, before a verb. Infinitives functioning as nouns appear in the same positions as nouns: To practice had been an effort (subject); The object of practice was to improve (subject complement); They were about to succeed (object of preposition); infinitives functioning as adjectives follow the noun which they modify (Warriner:1982, Frank:1972).

There are several verbs commonly followed by to infinitives. These verbs are want, need, pretend, agree, decide, expect, plan, would like, forget, seen, promise, offer, intend, would love, appear, mean, refuse, and hope. Besides, there are several verbs commonly followed by either a gerund or an infinitive. These verbs can take either an infinitive or a gerund with no difference in meaning: *begin, like, hate, continue, can't stand, love, and start*. (Allen:1974).

Ability

Roget (1995:1) and American Heritage Dictionary (2010: 7) defined ability as the quality of being able to do something, especially the physical, mental, financial, or legal power to accomplish something. The synonyms for this word are capacity, faculty, talent, skill, competence, aptitude. Richards (2015) argued about accuracy in the dimension of grammatical knowledge. He pointed out that accuracy is related to the learners' ability to make a text which has no grammatical errors. This is also supported by Purpura (2004) who explained about grammatical ability. He elaborated that grammatical ability is a combination of the knowledge of grammatical structures and strategic competence. It means that, this research reports about the quality of the learners in using gerund and infinitive. the ability tested in this research is the ability of using gerund and infinitive. It means that, this research reports about the quality of the learners in using gerund and infinitive.

METHOD Research Design

This research used a quantitative approach due to that the use of numbers and seeks to verify relationships between variables and sometimes explains the causes of such relationship (Zulfa:2018). The data acquired from this study were reported in terms of scores to explore relationships within them (Fraenkel & Wallen:2009)

Respondents

The students of Intermediate Grammar class A-2 and A-3 from English Language Education Study Program Batch 2018 of Lambung Mangkurat University were the respondents of this research. Meanwhile, another class, A-1 was taken to check the validity and reliability before the researcher took the data on sample classes. The total respondents of this research were 79 students. The detail of the respondents is in the table below.

Table 1. Number of Students of Intermediate Grammar Class

No.	Class	Number of Students
1	Intermediate grammar A1	22
2	Intermediate grammar A2	46
3	Intermediate grammar A3	35

Instruments

The researcher used a test to score data from the students to analyze their ability. Specifically, the researcher used an achievement test to obtain the data. Test is a set of stimuli presented to an individual in order to elicit responses on the basis of which a numerical score can be assigned. Achievement tests measure mastery and proficiency in different areas of knowledge by presenting subjects with a standard set of questions involving completion of cognitive tasks. (Ary:2002). The instruments validity and reliability have been assessed by using SPSS and manual calculation using interpretation by George and Mallery (2020).

Data Collection

The researcher gave the test about gerund and infinitive. The type of test was completion question which consisted of 50 items. The topic of the test was about gerund and infinitive which had been arranged randomly. The researcher gave tests for the students to collect the data. The test was given to know the students' ability in distinguishing gerund from infinitive after certain verbs in the sentences. The test was conducted on February 7th, 2020 for Advanced Grammar A-03 and February 11th, 2020 for Advanced Grammar A-01 and Advanced Grammar A-02.

Data analysis

The steps were started by collecting the students' score. The second, the researcher calculated the percentage of students' correct answer. After that, using scoring categories to analyze the score by using the table of score category (Academic Regulation of Lambung Mangkurat University Section 36:2016, D. P. Haris:1969). Next, calculating the mean scores from all of the scores got by the students. Then, describing the students' abilities based on their score. Finally, the researcher drew the conclusion based on the whole research finding according to categories on the table.

Table 2. Scoring Category
 (D. P. Harris, 1969:134; academic regulation of Lambung Mangkurat University section 36, 2016; 36)

No.	Range Score	Alphabetical Score	Category
1.	≥80	A	Good to excellent
2.	77 - <80	A-	Average to good
3.	75 - <77	B+	
4.	70 - <75	B	
5.	66 - <70	B-	
6.	61 - <66	C+	
7.	55 - <61	C	Poor to Average
8.	50 - <55	D+	Poor
9.	40 - <50	D	
10.	00 - <40	E	

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

From 79 students who participated in this research, for both gerund and infinitives, the highest score was 98 with 49 correct answers and 1 incorrect answer of 50 item test. Meanwhile, the lowest score was 32 with 16 correct answers and 34 incorrect answers. The researcher includes alphabetical score as one of categorization based on academic regulation of Lambung Mangkurat University section 36 (2016; 36) and D. P. Haris (1964; 134). The average of the test was 69.47% and the overall incorrect percentage was 30.53% from 79 students. The detail of the students score is displayed in the table 3 below.

Table 3. Students' Categorized Score in Using Gerund and Infinitive

No.	Score	Number of Subjects	Percentage	Categories
1	80 - 100	16	20.25%	Good to Excellent
2	60 - 79	53	67.09%	Average to good
3	50 - 59	7	8.86%	Poor to Average
4	0 - 49	3	3.80%	Poor
Total		79	100%	

Based on table 3, from 79 students who participated in this research, 16 students got scores on 80 – 100 score range. This score is categorized as good to excellent. These students were 20.25% of all participants. Fifty-three students got the score 60 – 79 score range were categorized as average to good. This score is categorized as average to good. Seven students got the score on the 50 -59 score range. This score is categorized as poor to average. These students were 8.86% of all participants. Three students got the score on 0 – 49 score range were categorized as poor. This score is categorized as poor. These students were 3.80% of all participants.

For gerund questions only, from 79 students who participated in this research, the highest score was 100. The total correct answers of the highest score were 25 of 25 total gerund items. It was categorized as A and good to excellent. The number of students who got the highest score was only 1 student. The lowest score for the test was 56. The total correct answers of the lowest score were 14 of 25 total gerund items. It was categorized as C and poor to average. The number of students who got the lowest score was 3. The

average of the test was 75.04% and the overall incorrect percentage was 24.96% of 79 students. The details of the students' score can be seen in the table below.

Table 4. Students' Categorized Score in Using Gerund

No.	Score	Number of Subjects	Percentage	Categories
1	80 - 100	29	36.71%	Good to Excellent
2	60 - 79	47	59.49%	Average to good
3	50 - 59	3	3.80%	Poor to Average
4	0 - 49	0	0.00%	Poor
Total		79	100%	

Based on table 4, from 79 students who participated in this research, 29 students got the score on 80 – 100 score range. This score is categorized as good to excellent. These students were 36.71% of all participants. Forty-seven students got the score on 60 – 79 score range. This score is categorized as average to good. These students were 59.49% of all participants. There were 3 students who got the score on 50 – 59 score range. This score is categorized as poor to average. These students were 3.80% of all participants.

For infinitives questions, from 79 students who participated in this research, the highest score was 96. The total correct answers of the highest score were 24 of 25 total infinitive items. It was categorized as A and good to excellent. The number of students who got the highest score was only 1 student. The lowest score for the test was 0. The total correct answers of the lowest score were 0 of 25 total gerund items. It was categorized as E and poor. The number of students who got the lowest score was 1 student. The average correct answer of the test was 63.90% and the overall incorrect percentage was 36.10% of 79 students. The details are in the table below.

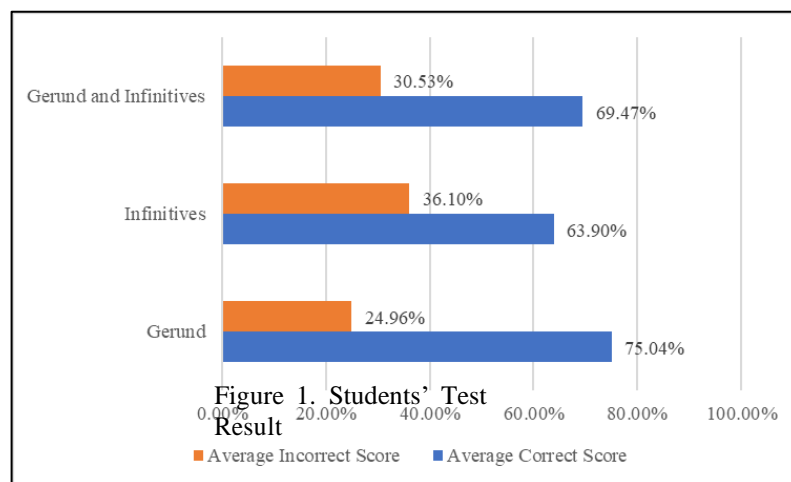
Table 5. Students' Categorized Score in Using Infinitive

No.	Score	Number of Subjects	Percentage	Categories
1	80 - 100	19	24.05%	Good to Excellent
2	60 - 79	32	40.51%	Average to Good
3	50 - 59	16	20.25%	Poor to Average
4	0 - 49	12	15.19%	Poor
Total		79	100%	

Based on table 5, from 79 students who participated in this research, there were 19 students who got the score on 80 – 100 score range. This score is categorized as good to excellent. These students were 24.05% of all participants. There were 32 students who got the score on 60 – 79 score range. This score is categorized as average to good. These students were 40.51% of all participants. There were 16 students who got the score on 50 – 59 score range. This score is categorized as poor to average. These students were 20.25% of all

participants. There were 12 students who got the score on 0 – 49 score range. This score is categorized as poor. These students were 15.19% of all participants.

Based on the test result, the researcher calculated the students score to find out the average score of the participants of the tests. The results are divided into three different categories. They are average score of gerund and infinitives ability, the average score of gerund ability, and the average score of infinitive ability. The results of the average score of the students are displayed in the diagram below:



As it can be seen in figure 1, the average score of the students for both gerund and infinitive is 69.47%, and the average wrong answer is 30.53%. So, the students' average ability of the both gerund and infinitives are 69.47%. This score is in average to good category. Then, the average score of the students for gerund is 75.04%, and the average wrong answer is 24.96%. So, the students' average ability of gerund is 75.04%. This score is in average to good category. Lastly, the average score of the students for infinitive is 63.90%, and the average wrong answer is 36.10%. So, the students' average ability of infinitives is 63.90%. This score is in average to good category.

For the functions of each gerund and infinitives, the students got a higher score in certain functions but got the opposite result for other functions. In using gerunds, the students got the highest score for function as subject of sentences. In using infinitives, the students got the highest score for function as direct object of certain verbs. The result for each function can be seen in two diagrams below.

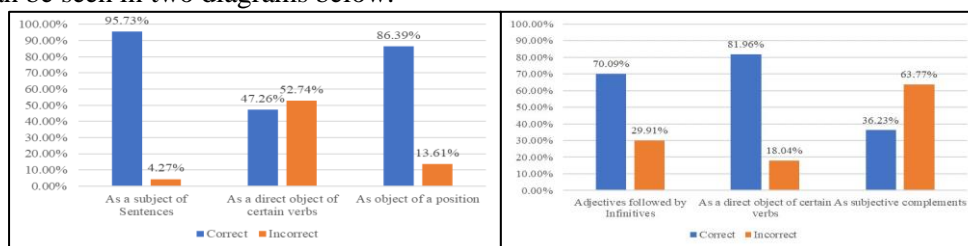


Figure 2. Students ability for each function of Gerund (left), Students ability for each function of Infinitives (right).

According to the figure 2, the highest score for gerund is 95.73% for the function as a subject of sentences. The lowest score from the students for gerund is 47.26% for the function as a direct object of certain verbs. The highest score for infinitives is 81.96% for the function as a direct object of certain verbs, and the lowest score is 36.23% for the function as subjective complements.

Other than these results, the researcher also found out that the students made other errors which are not related to gerund and infinitives. They are bare infinitives (17.72%), spelling (43.03%), simple (V_2) and past participle (V_3) (11.39%), incorrect form (unfinished word, to+ V_{ing} , non-word) (13.92%), and all combined (62.02%). The detail of these errors is displayed in the table below.

Table 6. Students' Errors in Using Gerund and Infinitive

No.	Error in Students' A	Percentage of Error	Student Number who	Type of error
1	Bare infinitive (V_1)	17.72%	2, 11, 13, 21, 22, 48, 54, 56, 57, 67, 69, 71, 72	Omission
2	Spelling	43.03%	6, 9, 10, 13, 20, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 54, 56, 57, 60, 62, 63, 64, 66, 68, 73, 75, 79	Omission
3	Past Simple (V_2) and Past Participle (V_3)	11.39%	3, 4, 11, 56, 57, 62, 67, 69, 71	Addition (regularization)
4	Incorrect form (unfinished word, to+ V_{ing} , non-word)	13.92%	1, 4, 5, 11, 12, 35, 41, 45, 56, 62, 76	Addition (regularization and simple)
5	All combined	62.02%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 54, 56, 57, 60, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 79	

Discussion

Based on the findings, the researcher emphasizes that the result is linear with the research conducted by Kitikanan (2011) that the students have lower proficiency in using infinitives than gerund. The results of the test showed that the students only able to answer 63.90% of the infinitive questions while they can answer 75.04% of the gerund questions correctly. Therefore, it meant that their ability in using gerund was higher than their ability in using infinitive.

The students mostly were unable to answer gerunds as direct objects of certain verbs correctly. This finding was in line by Nurmawaddah (2014) showed that the use of gerund in using direct objects which occurred 189 times (63%) because of the students' limitation in memorizing the certain words follow by a gerund. In a study conducted by Huriyah (2014), she found that the most frequent error made by the second-year students of SMA Islam Al-Kholidin Jakarta Selatan was infinitive as a subjective complement with 45 errors or 25,3%. Meanwhile, in this research, the researcher found a special case there was a student who was unable to answer the infinitive questions correctly of 25 infinitive questions given at all.

The students' average result is 69.47%. It means their grammatical accuracy and ability is 69.47%. Grammatical accuracy and ability, according to Richards (2015) and Purpura (2004), is the students' knowledge of grammatical structure and strategic which enable them to produce texts with no grammatical errors. Thus, with the results from the tests, the students, in average, are only able 69.47% of the texts correctly without any errors.

The factors that probably affect the students' ability in answering gerund are; first language interference, limited knowledge, lack of giving attention to the learning process, and overgeneralization.

These factors are linear with what Widyawati (2008), Firdaus (2013), Matrood (2010), Haryanto (2017) mentioned in their research. Lastly, these factors are also theoretically explained by Jain (1974) and Richards (2015) regarding the reasons on why many language learners commit errors in the process of the language learning.

From these statistical facts, it can be deduced that the students find it easier to answer the questions which asked about gerund as the subject of the sentences. This might be resulted by the familiarity of the use of gerund as a subject compared to the use of infinitives as a complement for the students. Due to this familiarity, the students can easily answer the questions which started by a blank that indicates the subject of the sentences.

Besides that, other probable factor is the use of gerund as subject of sentence is way easier compared to other functions of gerund itself, moreover to the other functions of infinitive. It can be seen by comparing the correct percentage of this particular function (subject of a sentence) with the other functions of gerund. The correct percentage of this function is 95.73%. It means that there are 95.73% who can answer all questions for this particular function correctly. While the other function, as object of position, the percentage is 86.29%, and the function as a direct object as certain verbs can be answered correctly only by 47.26%, not even a half of the students. The students probably could identify the questions of gerund as subject of sentence automatically if the blank space was in front of the sentence. Therefore, they will directly answer it by using gerund because it was more familiar to them to put present participle form in front of sentence rather than infinitives form. The researcher also found some mistakes like misspelling on gerund as subject of sentence questions, but it is only in small percentage. Most of them had already had good ability in using gerund for this function.

Conclusion

The objective of this research was to find out the ability of students of English Language Education Study Program of Lambung Mangkurat University batch 2018 in using gerund and infinitive. After conducting the research, some important results have been found. Based on the research finding and discussion, the ability of students of English Language Education Study Program batch 2018 of Lambung Mangkurat University in using gerund and

infinitive is average 69.47, gerund is average 75.04, and infinitive is average 63.90. Those are categorized as average to good.

Suggestion

For English Teachers and Lecturers

It is suggested that English teachers and lecturers consider the result of this research to more emphasize the teaching and learning process to infinitive rather than gerund since this present study and previous study have found that students' ability in using infinitive is lower than using gerund.

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