

THE USE OF GERUND AND INFINITIVE IN STUDENTS' RECOUNT TEXT

(Survey at School of Foreign Language in Bekasi)

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to find and analyze the use of gerund and infinitive in students' recount text. This research used a qualitative approach and the method was descriptive analysis. The research population was the students of school of foreign languages and 60 samples were taken randomly from third to fifth semester. The research design used content analysis because this research employed recount texts as the source of data. It was found that the errors of using gerund for "misformation" was 68.96%, "addition" was 20.68%, "omission" was 10.34% and "misordering" was 3.44%. While, for the infinitives, there were 60% of "misinformation", 22.22% of "addition", 11.11% of "misordering", and 6.66% of "omission".

Keywords: gerund, infinitive, recount text

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A. INTRODUCTION

English becomes the most essential language in the field of education. In many countries, children are taught and encouraged to learn English as second language to positively impact children's present and future academic. At the university level, most of the top universities provide the international program in order to make the material more accessible to international students. We also find most of recent research studies in any scientific field will be written in English. Therefore, many people are now learning English to create more opportunities in their life.

Unfortunately, learning English as a second language is not as easy as learning the first language or mother tongue. People deal with other people's language which is grammatically and culturally different from their own language. Mastering second language skills and language components are the important things in learning second language. Language skills consist of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are language components. We should master English components to support our English language skills. One of the components is grammatical structure.

Studying grammar helps one to learn about a language. If people use grammatical structure correctly, they will speak English and write in English correctly. Students who are good at grammar subject may easily produce correct sentences both in spoken and written language.

Both gerund and infinitive are sub topic in grammar subject which have been introduced to students since they first learn English. In Indonesia, English is taught from schools to college level. However, there are some difficulties or problems faced by the students in using grammar, even though they have been learning it for a quite long time. A different concept between English and Indonesian language makes students difficult to implement the grammar rules in their writing.

Byrd and Benson (2001:368) state that gerund is verbs followed by the *-ing* form. If the new word is used as a noun, it is called gerund. Gerund can be used as subject, direct object, complement, object of preposition, and appositive.

A verb can also be changed by adding *to*. This combination is called an infinitive. Byrd and Benson (2001:368) state that infinitive can be used as subject, direct object, complement, appositive, adjective modifier, and adverbial in sentence. Students have to know the

differences between gerund and infinitive in terms of functions and patterns because writing a sentence means that the sentence should be meaningful. If they cannot use the rules of gerund and infinitive, it may cause the sentences they have written have no clear meaning.

The students often find the sentences that use gerund and infinitive and it is difficult for them to use which verbs are followed by gerund or infinitive. Gerund and infinitive are taught in one subtopic in teacher's material because they are related each other in defining verb as direct object which are verbs that can be followed by gerund or infinitive. Moreover, many students often make errors using gerund because they cannot distinguish of an *-ing* form in gerund usage. There are many kind of an *-ing* form in English. This condition is making confusion for students in learning about an *-ing* form, especially for gerund.

As important as gerund, infinitive is also used very often in sentences. Even both can be used interchangeably in one sentence. So, it is really important to everyone who is studying English to understand the use of gerund and infinitive.

The students should have known if their comprehension in gerund and infinitive can be mastered, it means that students have succeed on following the

rule of language in English and there would not occur a chaotic in writing complex sentences. As Dulay (1982) said in the production of certain complex sentences, the used of to infinitive, gerunds and that-clause as complement types are observed in his error research as common errors made by second language learner. 'the use of the infinitive as an archi-form for the other complement types (e.g. gerund and that-clause) as also has been observed'

Writing is the most difficult skill for all language users whether the language is the first, second, or foreign language, because writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity. Richards and Renandya (2002:303) state that writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. The skills involved in writing are highly complex.

Writing abilities are taught to the students of the English Literature Department of STBA-JIA and STIBA IEC. Writing is taught from the first semester to the fifth semester, start from Writing I subject in semester one to Advanced Writing subject in semester five. These subjects are taught to the students gradually, so that the students are supposed to have mastery in writing.

Meanwhile, in reality, in the process of acquiring English in writing, the

students make errors. Dulay in Brown (2001: 205) states that 'an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker'. It means that learners make errors because they lack knowledge of the rules of the target language. They may make the same errors at other times. These same errors made by the learners may give contribution in understanding the process of second language acquisition, in this case, English. This is also experienced by the researcher and other students as foreign language learners. It makes the researcher interested in doing research about the use of gerund and infinitive in recount texts made by third and fifth semester students in English Literature Department at STBA JIA and STIBA IEC

One of writing texts which must be mastered by students of English Department in School of Foreign language is recount text. So, research will focus on recount text as one genre of writing texts. Recount text is a piece of text that retells past event, usually in the other word in which they happened. (Anderson and Anderson (2003: 48). It means that the students are expected to be able to write their past experience by learning recount text. It can be their personal diaries, letters, biographies, and speeches (Anderson and Anderson, 2003:49).

By doing an error analysis of using gerund and infinitive in students' writing and student's answers, it may help to determine which errors made by student in using gerund and infinitive. Later, it may also give some contributions on teaching English just like another goal of the second language research. Based on the background above, the writer wants to conduct research with the title: **The Use of Gerund and Infinitive in Students' Recount Text**. It is to find the errors that the students make in using gerund and infinitive most frequently in recount text.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Method of the Research

This research used qualitative approach. Dornyei (2007: 35) stated that qualitative research involved data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which was then analyzed primarily by non-statistical method. It can be summarized that qualitative research is interpretative data or non-numerical data analysis. Meanwhile, Ary (2002: 48) said that a qualitative study is designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. It can be concluded that it is to describe some important events that naturally occur in the classroom. Therefore, Cresswell (2013: 3) stated that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and

understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

Following the method used in this research, it deals with the phenomenon of the students' ability in writing recount text and the ability in using gerund and infinitive in a real situation that happened to the students while they were in the classroom in learning advanced grammar subject. The result of this research was described descriptively. The data of the research were taken by using students' writing, and any appropriate documents.

2. Time and Place of the Research

The research was conducted from the beginning of October 2020 to January 2021 at School of Foreign Language –JIA Bekasi and School of Foreign Language – IEC Bekasi. During this time, the writer applied the process of writing, such as collecting references, reading, finding data, comprehending and analyzing data.

3. Data Source

The population in this research was the students taking writing II subject of the English Literature Department in STBA-JIA and STBA IEC. For the sample, the researcher took the second semester students of English Literature Department in STBA-JIA and STBA IEC. The number of the students in English Literature of the second semester was 65 students. The

source of data was obtained in the following information: all compositions of writing subject from semester three to five classes of the English Literature Department in STBA-JIA and STBA IEC.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The researcher collected the data of students' writing and students' answers of the test. The writing is a recount text that consists of 3 paragraphs of 15 sentences with the given topic, that is "Past Experience". In addition to it, the open-ended test consisting of 30 sentences as pre writing activity was given. Pre-writing activity was given to know the use of gerund and infinitive in student's sentences.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique used in this research is content analysis technique, which is a research method for studying observed documents. It was intended to address the research questions in this research.

6. Research Instrument

The main instrument in this research was the researcher herself. She acted as the planner, data collector, analyst, and finally the reporter of the research findings.

C. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Omission

Omission occurs when there is a morpheme/word omitted by the learners. The writers found omission which includes two main parts: omission of gerunds and omission of to infinitives. Both are divided into 1 subtype which is preposition omission before gerund and infinitive. This subtype of error appears in the sentences used by the students in their texts. The case of omission can be seen below:

1.1. Preposition omissions

Preposition omissions are important in their function to build a sentence. When a preposition is omitted, readers will fail to refer to what the writer tried to convey. The prepositions omitted from the constructions of either gerund and to infinitive are found in the student's texts. The writer only found a preposition omission in students' sentences. The errors occurring the most are related to 'gerund'. Omission error of to infinitive and gerund can be seen below:

Student's sentence [SS]: *We went using 4 private cars.*

Correct sentence [CS]: *We went there by using 4 private cars.*

From the student's sentence above, there is an omission error found. In the sentence "We went using 4 private cars", the student omitted preposition 'by' before gerund 'using'. It should be added preposition 'by' Since the gerund of 'using' has function as object of preposition, that is required a preposition. It should be "We went there by using 4 private cars". Based on the data above it can be concluded that Student made 1 omission error in using Gerund as the object of preposition.

Another example related to preposition omission in 'to infinitive' is presented here below.

SS: *I took my ticket on my bag and go to the information section to ask about how use the ticket*

CS: *I took my ticket on my bag and go to the information section to ask about how to use the ticket*

The student who wrote the text omitted the preposition 'to' in "to ask about how use the ticket". In fact, an infinitive requires 'to' after certain verbs that are followed by question words such as 'how'. This implies that the student might not understand how to use to infinitives after certain conditions.

2. Addition

Addition error is the opposite of omission error. It occurs when the students employ unnecessary elements in their

sentences. This kind of errors are caused by too faithfully relying on the rules in the target language. The case of addition is found a lot in the texts. The writers classified them into some subtypes.

2.1 Word Addition

Word additions without knowing the construction of a good sentence and the writer's purpose will cause grammatical errors. In the first datum shown below, the student inserted adverb 'up' the which makes the sentence ungrammatical. Seen from the correct version of the sentence on the second column, the should be omitted in order for the sentence to be correct.

SS: *My family and another family went camping up in Bandung for the weekend.*

CS: *My family and another family went camping in Bandung for the weekend.*

In another sample provided below, the writer added verb or double verbs. This makes the sentence structurally incorrect.

SC: *But, the stars that shone at dawn so pretty that's makes me forgot all my pain for a while.*

CS: *But, the stars that shone at dawn so pretty that makes me forgot all my pain for a while.*

2.2 Preposition Addition

Addition errors occur when the students employ unnecessary elements in their sentences. In this case the student

added unnecessary preposition after infinitive.

SS: *I like traveling is because for me traveling with us we can find out the history of the places we visit.*

CS: *I like traveling is because for me traveling makes us finding out the history of the places we visit .*

In the sentence "*I want to moan to about how crap my day was*" , an additional of preposition 'to' found. The preposition should be omitted to construct the correct sentence. It should be *I want to moan about how crap my day was*. In the data collected by the researchers, there are some cases found like this. These data show that in addition to other grammatical issues, students also need to focus on how to use gerunds and to infinitives.

SS: *I want to moan to about how crap my day was.*

CS: *I want to moan about how crap my day was*

3. Misformation

The most predominant grammatical error in the data is misformation. This is related to structure and form of verbs or words in sentences. The cases found by the writers cover misformation of gerunds and misformation of infinitives.

3.1 Misformation of Gerund

From the data presented here below, it can be seen that in addition to make mistake in the formation of the verb, the student producing the sentence also made mistakes in some other grammatical notions. The first one is related to using gerund after certain verb, the second using gerund after certain adjective, the third is using gerund as complement and the last error that related to gerund after preposition.

SC: I had 1 free ticket for watching a movie.

*CS: I had 1 free ticket **to watch** a movie.*

SC: he would be happy getting that fish.

CS: he would be happy to get that fish.

SC: I Planned to have Simple Party, buying her a cake and gift in the form of a necklace.

CS: I Planned to have Simple Party, buy her a cake and gift in the form of a necklace.

SC: After swam, then we play so many water sports such as banana boat, jetsky and speedboat.

CS: After swimming, then we play so many water sports such as banana boat, jetsky and speedboat.

3.2 Misformation of Infinitive

Misformation of to infinitives found by writers consists of several types. Cases occurring the most are related to infinitive

after certain verbs or expressions. The types are presented in the following sentences.

SC: Next day, we went to Malioboro for bought some souvenirs.

CS: Next day, we went to Malioboro to buy some souvenirs.

SC: "It was the first experience for me to spend time to go with my big family".

CS: "It was the first experience for me to spend time going with my big family".

SC: To be honest I would rather took a vocation in Malioboro.

CS: To be honest I would rather take a vocation in Malioboro

*SC: I said I'd love(9) (**sailing**) to a quiet island.*

*CS: I said I'd love to **sail** to a quiet island*

SC: We ended up watch random movie that I never saw before

CS: We ended up watching random movie that I never saw before

SC: I reminded him for put a headset in the right place

CS: I reminded him to put a headset in the right place

The first one is related to using infinitive to tell a goal or reason, the second using infinitive after certain expression, the third is using gerund after certain verb and the last error that related to preposition 'for'. There are one example presented here in *Next day, we went to*

Malioboro for bought some souvenirs which different students made the same mistakes in forming to infinitives in *I reminded him for put a headset in the right place*. In the first, the student using phrase for bought to tell a goal. In the second, the student added the same preposition 'for' before the verb 'put' to tell a goal. They should be 'to buy' and 'to put'. These make the to infinitive phrases ill-formed.

Another mistake here interesting to discuss is the use of infinitive after certain expression and verb such as in *'It was the first experience for me to spend time to go with my big family'* after expression 'spend time' it should be followed by gerund 'going' in the second datum. This might seem structurally acceptable but as the sentence has special expression must be followed by gerund. The students makes a lot of mistakes related to this condition. In addition, in the sentence *'To be honest I would rather took a vacation in Maliobor'*. The expression would rather must be followed by verb one or verb in the simple form. However, the data the researchers analyze, would rather is followed by past form which is not grammatically acceptable.

They also made mistake in using gerund and infinitive after certain verbs such as in *'We ended up watch random movie that I never saw before'* which

should be gerund 'watching' after verb 'end up'. The same error of misformation also found in sentence 'I said I'd love(9) (sailing) to a quiet island' that should be changed to I said I'd love to **sailing** to a quiet island' after certain verb 'would love' is must be followed by infinitive 'to sail'.

Those examples above employ the student's struggling of using gerund and infinitive after certain expression and verbs.

4. Misordering

Misordering refers to misplacement of a word in a sentence. In the data collected by the researchers, students often misplaced words especially in the construction of to infinitive. In this kind of error, the disorder of using gerund found only one in the student's sentence.

SC: *I like travelling is because for me travelling with us we can find out the history of the places we visit.*

CS: *I like travelling because travelling allows us to find out the history of the places we visit.*

In the sample above, there is misordering between gerund as a subject and the complement that complete the subject is complicated to understand. The subject should be written in the beginning, and followed by its verbs and complement. In addition to this, the word 'we' and 'can' must be omitted as it causes double

subjects in one sentence. It is not grammatically correct to use it.

SC: he told me don't only memorize.

CS: he told me not to just memorize.

The researcher found students often misplaced words especially in the construction of to infinitive, in the first sample above, there is misordering between infinitive as complement and main sentence. In the sentence the main verb must be followed by complement. The complement should be written in the end of the sentence. In addition to this, student sometimes also make mistake in negative form of infinitive as in '*he told me don't only memorize*', the negative not' should be followed by to infinitive.

By calculating the frequency of each error, the writer can identify the most frequent error and the least frequent error made by the students. The description of the total number and the percentage of the error made by students in using Gerund and Infinitive in Writing Recount can be seen in the table 1 and table 2.

Table 1. The Use of Gerund in Students' Recount Text

No	Types of Error	Number of Error	Percentage (%)
1	Misformation	27	60%
2	Addition	10	22.22%.
3	Misordering	5	11.11%
4	Omission	3	6.66%.
Total		45	100%

From the table above, it can be seen that the total numbers of errors found in 60 of students' recount text are 29 errors. From the calculation above, it is known that that the most type of errors in using Gerund is error of misformation, which consists of 20 errors or 68.96%, in the second place is error addition which consists of 6 errors or 20.68%. Then, it is followed by error omission which consists of 3 errors or 10.34%. The last error is misordering which consists of 1 error or 3.44%.

Furthermore, the description of the total number and the percentage of the errors made by students in using infinitive can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. The Use of Infinitive in Students' Recount Text

No	Types of Error	Number of Error	Percentage (%)
1	Misformation	20	68.96%
2	Addition	6	20.68%.
3	Omission	3	10.34%
4	Misordering	1	3.44%.
Total		30	100%

From the table above, it can be seen that the total numbers of errors in infinitive found in 60 of students' recount text are 45 errors. From the calculation above, it is known that that the most type of errors in using infinitive is error of misformation, which consists of 27 errors or 60%, in the second place is error addition which consists of 10 errors or

22.22%. Then, it is followed by misordering which consist of 5 errors or 11.11%. The last error is placed to omission which consist of 3 errors or 6.66%.

D. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION

1. Conclusion

To conclude, the students made some errors in the use of gerund and infinitive in the recount texts analyzed by the researchers. The level of understanding varies from one student to another.

From the numbers of error above students usually make misinformation errors in both gerund and infinitive while writing recount text. Mostly the errors occurred in misinformation of gerund after special verb and expression.

Based on the result, it can be seen that the reason of the errors in their writing text because they were still confused in arranging sentences which have the verb or expression that must be followed by gerund or infinitive.

Above all, this linguistic findings should be able to be contributive and used by lecturers in order to improve students' abilities in using gerunds and infinitives, especially in writing class. It is very important for students to learn how to use complex sentence structures in their writing by using gerund and infinitive

correctly. As implied in the discussion, students' language proficiency might play a very important role in writing a recount text.

2. Implication

This research can give deep information about student's ability in using gerund and infinitive in their text. Other researchers are able to use this paper for their reference in order to make better research in other fields of study especially about the use of gerund and infinitive in students' writing.

3. Suggestion

After conducting the research, the researcher would like to give some suggestions related to the result of the research. The following are some suggestions that hopefully can be useful for students and teachers:

3.1 The students should study more how to write recount text well since they often use in constructing sentences. Pay attention to some aspects in writing recount text, especially in using gerund as object of preposition and gerund and infinitive as direct object after certain verbs and expressions. Furthermore, they should discuss their difficulties with the teacher to get clear explanation. Besides, do more practices in writing recount text in order to get used to

write it well. It is because Practices make perfect!

3.2 The teachers should give more explanation about grammar, especially in special verbs and expressions that can be followed by either gerund and infinitive. It is very important for students to expand sentence structures in their writing by using gerund and infinitive correctly. In addition, the teacher should teach the students how to memorize special verbs that followed by gerund and infinitive. For example by practicing in classroom, studying through interesting story. In order to master all the material of gerund and infinitive, the teacher should make the class comfortable for studying and give motivation in teaching-learning process.

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