The Dangling Behaviour of Clausal Gerunds

Dunya Mohammed I'jam
In English language and linguistics

Section I /Introduction

1.1 Problem

Constructions headed by(v-ing) [1] in English are divided into several types that pattern with noun phrases and regular clauses. This paper proposes an analysis of the types of(v-ing) constructions where the subject is either in the accusative case, called clausal gerunds, or in the genitive case, called passive-ing(henceforth poss-ing).Sometimes, clausal gerunds behave in most respects like clauses(Reuland, 1983:16).In this paper,there is a list of several properties that distinguish clausal gerunds not only from regular clauses but sometimes also from(poss-ing) constructions(Abeny,1987:33 and Williams,1975:56).(Poss-ing) constructions, on the other hand, have been shown to pattern with regular clauses in many respects. Abeny(1987:105) argues that both(poss-ing) and clausal gerunds should be analyzed as either regular clauses or noun phrases at some point in the derivation. As a result, clausal gerunds and(poss-ing) sometimes behave like each other and sometimes not. Therefore, the important question here is how far these types are different and how far they are similar.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge no detailed analysis of(v-ing) constructions has been carried out to highlight the differential characteristics and properties of the different types of(v-ing) constructions.

1.2 Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1. Clausal gerunds are like noun phrases since they should project into noun phrases at some points in the derivation.
2. Clausal gerunds are regarded as regular clauses and not as noun phrases in any point of derivation.

1.3 Aim

In connection with the two proposed hypotheses, the study aims basically at:

1. Investigating issues related to the clausal gerunds in English.
2. Identifying the points of similarities and differences between clausal gerunds,(poss-ing), noun phrases, and regular clauses.

1.4 Procedures

The researcher followes the following steps:

1. Presenting a description of the gerunds in English through showing its definition, form, and use.
2. Presenting the several types of(v-ing), clausal gerunds, and(poss-ing) by showing their dangling behaviour through a comparison between clausal gerunds,(poss-ing), noun phrases, and regular clauses.

1.5 Limits

This study limits itself to the use of clausal gerunds regardless of other types of non-finite clauses i.e. present or past participle, and infinitives.

1.6 Value

This study will hopefully have theoretical value i.e. it will be advantageous for researchers, linguists and grammarians. It may also contribute to a better understanding of the issue of clausal gerunds and their major characteristics that make them different from other clauses.

Section II/The Gerund: Form and Use
2.1 Definition
	In the English language, the gerund is regarded as a verbal-noun i.e. it is a verb-like and a noun- like form at the same time. Morphologically, it is constructed from the verb base with the suffix {ing} with the capacity of behaving like nouns, and because of that, the gerund can:
1. Take premodifiers as determiners and adjectives, as in:
	(1) This ***deliberate bowling of bouncers*** is unfair.
	(Trask, 1993: 118)
2. Be singular, so it can be replaced by(it), and be plural therefore, it can be replaced by(they):
	(2)	a. ***Walking*** is fun, I love it.
		b.Dickens often gave ***readings*** of his works; They were very popular.
	(Alexander, 1988: 313)

2.2 Form
	The gerund can, according to voice and aspect, be either simple or complex.
2.2.1 Simple Form
	It can be active or passive:
	(3) He is afraid of ***riding*** a horse.
	(4) She hates ***being looked at.***	(Swan, 1996: 277)
2.2.2 Complex Form
	The gerund can appear in either a progressive active form:
	(5)	You can get an extention on the ground of ***being teaching.***
	(Quirk et al., 1985: 154)

	a perfective active form
	(6) I admit ***having seen it.***
	(Frank, 1972: 315)

	a perfective passive form:
	(7) He is proud of ***having been entertained by the guests.***
	(Archer and Nolan – Woods, 1980: 163)
	or, it appears as a mutative gerund, as in:
	(8) The article ***having got written***, it is sent to be typed.
	(Strang, 1968: 173)

2.3 Use:
	The gerunds can occupy the nominal, adjectival, or adverbial position. Thus, they have the functions that these positional classes have in the various sentence patterns.
2.3.1 Nominal Position
	As a noun, it can be a subject, subject complement, direct object, indirect object, adjective complement, prepositional complement and appositive, as in:
	(9)	a. ***Ann's missing*** a word was unusual.	(subject)
	(Simpson, 1979: 154)
		b. The crisis was ***Ann's bursting into tears***.(subject complement)	***her***
	(Thomson and Martinet, 1986: 228)
		c. I don't mind people ***telling me how to do things better.***	(direct object)
	(Leech and Svartvick, 1994: 314)

    d.   They   gave   ***reading***   precedence   over   speaking   in teaching English.   (indirect object)

    e. The match is worth ***watching.***

            (adjectival complement)

           (Kruisinga, 1931: 61 – 62)

f.   He   is   thinking   of   ***emigrating***.   (prepositional   complement) (Azar, 1989: 160)

      g. His hoppy ***painting*** in oils made him famous. (appositive)

           (Roberts, 1954: 358)

2.3.2 Adjectival Position

   The gerund is either a premodifier or postmodifier, as in:

   (10)   a*. **Shopping** centers, **drinking** water.(Premodifier)

           (Nesfield, 1966: 88)

    b.   It   is   a   catastrophe   ***their / them shutting all those factors.***(postmodifier)

          (Alexander, 1988: 317)

2.3.3 Adverbial Position

   Since the gerund can perform the function of an adverb, it can modify a whole sentence, a verb, or an adjective, as in:

(11)   a. I bought an album ***for keeping the photographs***.

(whole sentence)   (Curme, 1953: 189)

      b. She spent the day ***typing letters***.(verb)

          (Kruisinga, 1931: 61)

      c. I'm busy ***getting the house redecorated***.(adjective)

          (Quirk et al., 1985: 1131)

   In addition, the gerund can have different semantic roles in relation to the main clause:

   (12)   a. The children were playing ***without quarrelling***.   (result)

      b. ***On seeing her***, he ran to meet her.(time)

      c. He was punished ***for breaking the window***.   (reason)

    d.   Nothing   could   be   as   unwise   as   ***his attempting that***. (degree)

   e.   He   spent   the   day   ***in roaming through the woods***. (manner)

          (Curme, 1947: 189)

Section III/Comparison between Clausal Gerunds,(Poss-ing), Noun Phrases and Regular Clauses

3.1 Introduction

   This section introduces the dangling behaviour of the clausal gerunds by distinguishing them from gerunds whose subject is in the accusative case, and those marked with the genitive case,(called poss-ing), as well as distinguishing them from regular clauses, on the one hand, and from noun phrases on the other.

3.2 Clausal Gerunds behaving like(Poss-ing)

   Clausal   gerunds   with   accusative   subject   pattern   with (poss-ing) and are distinct from noun phrases in a couple of respects:

 i. Both can be modified by adverbs:

   (13)   a. John's /John quickly surprised everybody.

      b. John's quickly departure surprised everybody.

ii. They can directly select for a complement, without need for *of*:

    (14)   a. Mary's / Mary ***revisiting the book.***

           b.* Mary's revision of the book.   (Abney, 1987: 113)

Notice that the example below patterns with regular noun phrases, but it should not be collapsed with(poss-ing) construction:

    (15) Mary's revision of the book.   (Pires, 1999:43)

3.3 Clausal Gerunds behaving like Regular Clauses:

Clausal gerunds and(poss-ing) have quite different distributions. In that respect, clausal gerunds are like regular clauses and different from(poss-ing) and regular noun phrases, which pattern together:

I.   Clausal gerunds accept certain sentential adverbs which (poss-ing) constructions do not:

    (16)   a.   ***Mary(*'s) probably being responsible*** for the accident, the attorney did not want to defend her.

ii.   Clausal gerund complements allow(long) wh- extraction, whereas(poss-ing) complements do not:

    (17)   a. What did everyone imagine ***Fread(*'s) singing***?

           b. Who did you defend ***Bill(*'s) inviting***?

                                  (Frank, 1972: 318)

iii. There is a restriction on the subject of(poss-ing) that it must be [+ specific] and [+ animate]:

    (18)   a.***John('s) arriving*** late in New York upset everybody.

           b. ***The children's shouting*** disturbed his sleep.

                                    (ibid)

This restriction does not apply to clausal gerunds where the choice of the subject is almost as free as in the corresponding tensed clauses:

    (19)   a.   ***Anyone(*'s) winning this prize*** would be unexpected.

           b.   ***The train(*'s) arriving late in New York*** upset everybody.   (Ibid)

iv. The subject position of clausal gerunds, but not that of poss-ing may be filled with an expletive ***there***:

    (20)   You may count on ***there(*'s) being a lot of trouble tonight***.   (Pires, 1999:55)

v.(Poss-ing) is like noun phrases with respect to case assignment to their subjects, which are also, assigned genitive case. The clausal gerunds below license either a nominative as in(21 a.) or an accusative case marked subject, similar to inflected clauses as in(21 b.) and inflective constructions as in(21 c.), respectively:

    (21) a. Jane expected to win the game, ***she being the best athlete in the school.***

          b. Mary worries ***about him being tired of the trip***.

          c. She believes him to be tired of the trip.

vi. Clausal gerunds are unlike noun phrases and(poss-ing) in that they freely allow complex subjects which have prepositional phrases or full relative clauses as complements.

(22)   a. John counted *on the woman at the door reading the instructions.*

b. The fan counted *on the player who struck out returning to the field*.

(Crush, 1997:23)

3.4. Clausal Gerunds similar to Noun Phrases

Clausal gerunds share several properties with regular clauses that distinguish them from noun phrases, and in most cases, from(poss-ing) as well. However, there are some facts about the distribution of clausal gerunds show exacting the opposite picture, in which they pattern a way from regular clauses and behave like noun phrases and(poss-ing):

i. Unlike other classes complements below(23, a) except indirect questions as in(23, b), clausal gerunds do occur headed by a preposition in a position subcategorized by a verb, as in(23,c). In this respect, clausal gerunds behave like(poss-ing), as in(23, b) and regular noun phrases:

(23)   a. * Mary talked about(that) John moved out.

b. Mary talked about why John moved out.

c. Mary talked about *John moving out*.

d. Mary talked about *John′s moving out*.

(Ibid)

Reuland(1983:110) accounts for the facts that clausal grounds are case marked[2]in the complement position of subcategorized preposition.

ii. Extraposition[3] is usually possible with regular classes, as in(24, a), but it is not possible with clausal gerunds, as in(24, b), with(poss-ing)(24, c), nor with regular noun phrases, as in(24, d):

(24)   a. It was tragic that Paul lost the election.

b. *? It was tragic *Paul losing the electrons*.

c. *It surprised me *Mary's leaving town*.

d. *It surprised me *Paul's loss*.

(Williams, 1975, 1980: 312 – 314)

If it is assumed that a case marking working distinction exists between regular clauses and clausal grounds, it is to account for the facts above. It is also necessary to accept Reuland's(1983: 110) idea that expressions that require case marking cannot undergo extraposition in English, in conjunction with the fact that a tensed clause does not require case. That is after all consistent with the fact that neither noun phrases nor(poss-ing) can be extraposed, because they are obligatory case marked.

iii. In addition, there is a straight forward account for the contrast between clausal gerunds and regular clauses if only the former can be case marked. This is the reason why occurrence of clausal gerund in(25, 26, a) and(poss-ing)in(25, 26, b) is accepted by most speakers, but where regular clauses are not accepted as in(25, 26, c). It is clear from the two situations below:

First, clausal gerunds occur in the subject's position of direct questions with auxiliary inversion:

(25)   a. *Did John kissing Mary* bother her parents?

b.*DidJohn's kissing Mary* annoy/bother her parents?

c. *Did(that) John kissed Mary bother her parents?

Second, they may occur in the cleft focus position:

134

(26)   a. It was ***Mary leaving town*** that surprised me.
        b. It was ***Mary's leaving town*** that surprised me.
        c. * It was Mary to leave town that surprised me.

<div align="right">(Gelderen, 2000:3)</div>

Section IV/Conclusions
4.1 Introduction
        With regard to the hypotheses mentioned in section I, the study reveals the following points :
4.2 Clausal Gerunds and Noun Phrases
4.2.1 The Similarities
        Both clausal gerund and noun phrases:
1. Are able to occur after a preposition in a position subcategorized by a verb.(3.4. i)
2. Are unable to be extraposed in a sentence.(3.4. ii).

        These points show strong evidence validating the first hypothesis that clausal gerunds should project into a noun phrase at some point in the derivation.
4.2.2 The Differences
1. Clausal gerunds can be modified by adverbs where noun phrases cannot.(3.2.i).
2. Clausal gerunds do not need a complement with ***of***, whereas noun phrases do.(3.2.ii).
4.3 Clausal Gerunds and Regular Clauses
4.3.1 The Similarities
1. Both accept sentential adverbs.(3.3.i).
2. Both allow(long) wh-extraction.(3.3.ii).
3. The choice of the subject is free in both.(3.3. iii).
4. The subject position may be filled with expletive ***there***.(3.3. iv).
5. Both allow complex subjects with prepositional phrases or full relative clauses as complements.(3.3.v).
        The evidence received up to this point is to support the second hypothesis which is that clausal gerunds are regarded as regular clauses and not as noun phrases in any point of the derivation.
4.3.2 The Differences
1. Clausal gerunds are able to occur after a preposition in a position specialized for a verb whereas regular clauses are not.(2.4.i).
2. Clausal gerunds are unable to be extroposed in a sentence whereas regular clauses are able to(3.4.iii)
3. Clausal gerunds' subjects are case marked whereas regular clauses' subjects are not(3.4.iii).
4.4 Clausal Gerunds and(poss-ing)
  4.4.1 The Similarities
        Clausal gerunds and(poss-ing):
1. Can be modified by an adverb.(3.2.i)
2. Do not need a complement with ***of***.(3.2.ii).
 4.2.2 The Differences
1. Clausal gerunds accept sentential adverbs which(poss -ing) do not.(3.3.i).
2. Clausal gerunds allow(long) wh- extraction which poss -ing do not.
3. The choice of the subject of clausal gerunds is free where that of(poss-ing) must be(+ specific) and(+animate).(3.3. iii)

<div align="center">135</div>

4. The subject position of clausal gerunds may be filled with expletive there, whereas that of(poss-ing) may not.(3.3.iv)
5. The subject of(poss-ing) is assigned genitive case, where as clausal gerunds subjects are either nominative or accusative case marked subject.(3.3. v)
6. Clausal gerunds allow complex subjects which have prepositional phrases or full relative clauses as complements which(poss-ing) do not.(3.3. vi)

Notes
1.(V-ing)
This term is used(where V stands for a verb root) to refer to a broad range of v-constructions, restricting the terms gerunds to the ones covered in detail in this paper.

2. Case marking
It is a term used in one sub theories of government binding theory called case theory which deals with the assignment of abstract case and its morphological realizations, restricting the distribution of lexical noun phrases at surface structure, case marking rules assign structural case to certain noun phrases' positions(e.g. where the noun phrase is govern by transitive verb or by preposition)(Crystal, 2003:64)

3. Extraposition
A term used to refer to the process of or result of moving an element from its normal position to a position at or near the end of the sentence, as in:
(27)* a. That the boy came in late upset the teacher.
b. It upset the teacher that the boy came in late.

(Ibid: 174)

Refrains

Abney, S. 1987. *The English Noun Phrase in its Sentential Aspect*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alexander, L.G. 1988. *Longman English Grammar*. London: Longman.

Archer, M. and Nolan-wood. 1979. Cambridge Certificate English: A Course for First Certificate. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd.

Azar, B.S. 1999. *Understanding and Using English grammar*. 3rd ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Burton- Roberts, N. 1997*. Analyzing Sentences: An Introduction to English Syntax.* London: Longman.

Crystal, D. 2003. *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Curme, G.O. 1953. *English Grammar*. New York: Branes & Noble, Inc.

Frank, M. 1972. *Modern English: A Practical English Guide*. Englewood Diffs, N. J. Prentice – Hail Inc.

Gelderen, E.V. 2000. *A Grammar of English*. Internet. *www.public.asu.edu/geldren/314ex/chap7*.

Grush,R. 1997. " Introduction to GB" Internet. *www.mindused.edu/mise/resources/gbontes/pdf.*

Kruisinga, E. 1931. A Handbook of Present – day English. English Accidence and Syntax: Part II. Groningen: Noordhoff.

Leech, G. and J. Svartvik. 1994. *A Communicative Grammar of English.* London: Longman.

Nesfield, J. 1960. *Aids to the Study and Composition*. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd.

Pires, A. 1999. A Minimalist Approach to Clausal Gerunds. Internet. *www.miniling.helsink.fi/acris./doc./AP1/node/7.htM*.

Quirk, R.;S. Greenbaum;G. Leech; and J. Svartivik. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Roberts, R. 1954. *Understanding Grammar*. New York: Harper Row, Publishers, Inc.

Reuland,E.1983.*Coverning-ig.Linguistic Inquiry*. London: Longman group Ltd.

Simpson, J.M.Y. 1979. *A First Course in Linguistics*. Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press.

Strang, B.M.H. 1988. *Modern English Structure*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd.

Swan, M.1996. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thomson, A.J. and A.V. Martinet. 1986. *Practical English Grammar for Foreign Students.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Trask,R.L.1993.*A Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics. London:* Rutledge.

Williams, E. 1975. *Small Clauses in English. In Syntax and Semantics,* Vol. 4, ed. J. Kimball. New York: Academic Press.

Williams, E. 1980. *Prediction.* Linguistic Inquiry Vol. II: 208 – 238.