

THE DISTRIBUTION OF GERUND COMPLEMENTS

The aim of this section is to review the distribution of gerund complements, with examples and comments on usage.

1. Gerund complements as Direct Objects

There is a considerable number of verbs which take *ing* complements as Direct Objects. Many of them also accept infinitival Direct Objects.

1.1. Here is a list of verbs which accept gerund Direct Objects, but with which an infinitive complement is infrequent or not available.

(1) A. a. avoid, adore, bear, chance (= risk), contemplate, dread, dislike, detest, drop, end up, enjoy, escape, evade, feign, finish, give up, keep, leave off, miss, postpone, put off, play, practice, risk, resume, renounce, shirk, can't resist, help, stand, grudge;

b. condemn, consider(= think over), justify, ensure, include, entail, necessity, encourage, defer, delay, excuse, pardon, defend, detest, support, sanction, oppose, criticize, favour.

B. a. resent, regret (also + inf) grasp, perceive, repent, deplore, ignore, care (about), bear in mind, mind, reveal, discover, disclose ;

b. admit, emphasize, explain, mention, announce, point out, verify, mean, acknowledge, certify, testify, doubt, deny, imagine, imply, etc.

Class A contains verbs that are typically followed by the gerund, verbs in class B have an alternative *that* complement construction.

- (2) a. They certified his being insane.
b. They certified that he was insane.
c. I imagined John eating the apple quickly.
d. I imagined that John ate the apple quickly.
e. Mary denied having seen the suspect.
f. Mary denied that she had seen the suspect.

The fact that the gerund may alternate with a *that* complement means that the gerund may have a *propositional* interpretation with these verbs. Following Portner (1994), we assumed that gerunds basically denote propositions, understood as *sets of situations*, rather than sets of possible worlds. Object gerunds may also denote facts (when the main clause predicate is factive) or events, facts and events having in common the fact that they are more concrete occurrences.

- (3) a. He regrets/ deplores accidentally killing his dog.
b. Mary always enjoyed going to the Opera.

Few of the verbs in (1) are verbs of obligatory subject control, which would always take a PRO-ing complement; examples are *resist*, *finish*, *leave off*, *resume*, *keep on*, as well as aspectuals.

- (4) a. *I left off his writing the essay.

b. *I resumed his writing the essay.

Most verbs in (1) accept different subjects in the matrix and complement clause, and then the subject assumes Possessive or Accusative form:

- (5) *Poss-ing*
a. Nothing in the accident justified their grounding the aircraft. b. And maybe you won't mind my saying that you're getting a little old for studying. c. I don't mind his coming whenever he likes. d. He said he favoured people's having decent haircuts.
- Acc-ing*
(6) a. I cannot help the dreams coming. b. He replied that he should certainly support every nation being allowed to govern itself. c. The parents did not mind the news becoming public. d. Do you mind me saying it? e. It is difficult to envisage many new hotels being built. f. Do you mind the window being open? g. I had fancied him reading it with relish.

Allen (1959) mentions that *deny*, *postpone*, *risk* allow only a Poss-ing complement, rejecting the Acc-ing structure:

- (7) I couldn't deny his / *him having made a reasonable excuse.

As to the preference for the Poss-ing or the Acc-ing in object position, the LONGMAN Grammar (1999: 750) has got the following to say: "In spite of a prescriptive tradition favouring the possessive form, the objective case must be considered the unmarked choice for the post-verbal noun-phrase in the pattern verb + NP + ing-clause. [...] When both the objective and the possessive forms are permitted, the possessive option focuses attention on the action described in the *ing*-clause. In contrast, use of the objective form emphasizes the person doing the action."

Another difference between the Poss-ing and the Acc-ing complement, already discussed above is that the Poss-ing is understood as a definite nominal, referring to a definite (presupposed) event, while the Acc-ing may also refer to an indefinite event, when it is embedded under a non-factive-predicate, as in (8d). A definite interpretation of the Acc-ing complement is also available, under factive predicates, as in (8b).

- (8) a. Mary didn't enjoy John's coming to visit her.
b. Mary didn't enjoy John coming to visit her.
c. Mary didn't discuss John's coming to visit her.
d. Mary didn't discuss John coming to visit her.

This interpretative contrast, suggests that Poss-ing gerunds are interpreted as DPs headed by a silent *definite* article, which secures reference to a known event, therefore, a presuppositional interpretation. The silent D of the Acc-ing complement may be indefinite, allowing a definite reading as a result of the factive context.

Where the Su of the complement is the same as that of the main clause, a PRO-ing complement is used, as in the following examples.

- (9) a. I could hardly avoid (*my) running into him. b. I gave up (*my) smoking. c. I couldn't resist (*my) buying such lovely apples. d. He could not help looking youthful and calm and debonair. e. He had sometimes envisaged telling her everything and making her his confessor and his judge. f. He narrowly missed being seriously hurt, if not killed. g. Andrew had by now almost finished dealing with the swing. h. He will soon discontinue teaching this class. i. Pat had always enjoyed knocking his brother about, sometimes with a brutality which was alarming to witness. j. Would you mind lifting

those boxes off the chairs? k. Though of course if Frances did engage in a struggle with her father this might induce her to put off leaving Ireland or even to put off getting married. l. I anticipate deriving much instruction from reading it. m. She's contemplating coming to stay with us. n. She purposes writing a book. o. They acknowledged having been defeated. p. Your duties will include putting the children to bed.

Kiparsky (1970) mentions that the verbs listed under (1) Ba. above, which are factive verbs, optionally allow a possessive of the same person as the subject to be inserted between the main verb and the *ing* complement, resulting in the alternation between the Poss-*ing* and PRO-*ing* complement.

- (10) a. They resented (their) having a young family to support.
 b. He deplored (his) going blind.
 c. I recall (my) having seen her.

An arbitrary generic interpretation of the subject, roughly understood as the pronoun 'one' is also possible:

- (11) a. The law doesn't even mention killing oneself. b. They abhor abusing oneself in public.
 c. To do that implies taking a burden of responsibility in the affairs of the whole world. d. The acquisition in early life of Greek and Latin does not always facilitate travelling on one's own on the continent.

As already discussed in the previous chapter, 'public verbs' dispose of a second type of uncontrolled Su selection in the complement clause, the unspecified subject', a featureless DP, whose content is retrievable in a given context. Examples of 'Public verbs' have tentatively been listed in (1) Ab and Bb, following the suggestions of Thompson (1973); verbs in Aa and Ba are 'private verbs' accepting only controlled readings.

- (12) a. The report advocated setting up day-training-college. b. The experiment justified changing the normal method of attack. c. He advocated making war upon the brewers. d. I bar kissing in my class altogether. e. He had officially sanctioned flogging prisoners.

1.1.2. The gerund construction brings out several characteristics of true. [+ Factive] verbs. We have already mentioned the alternation between a lexical and a null subject with factive verbs, even when the embedded subject is the same as a main clause argument, so a PRO subject could have been used. An example appears in (13a, b) below. Since, with these verbs a lexical subject may potentially intervene between the main verb and the *ing*-predicate of the subordinate clause, these verbs tolerate apparent 'doubling violations, as in (13c):

- (13) a. Ed resented his getting photographed drunk.
 b. Ed resented PRO getting photographed drunk.
 c. Ed's resenting PRO getting photographed drunk is just too funny. (Ross (1972))

Moreover factive verbs have the property of freely combining with *perfect* gerunds; not all of the other verbs listed in (1) have this possibility, as apparent in the contrasts below:

- (14) a. I deplored/resented having been given this commission.
 b. I *avoided / *evaded having been given this commission.

Kiparsky (1970: 361) notices the existence of verbs which allow for a factive, as well as a non factive interpretation of their complement clause (e.g. *announce*, *anticipate*, *admit*,

emphasize, mention, deduce, a.o.). It is interesting that, with this verb sub-class, the gerund complement is normally interpreted as factive, while the *that* clause is indifferent to factivity.

- (15) a. He will mention his having read it in the paper.
b. He won't mention that he had read it in the paper.
c. They announced / didn't announce their having got married.

Note. With the verb *explain*, the gerund complement and *that* complement differ in meaning, again along the lines of a factive / non - factive interpretation. Compare:

- (16) a. I explained Adam's refusing to come to the phone.
b. I explained that he was watching his favourite TV show.

In (16a) the subordinate clause refers to a proposition regarded as a fact. *Explain*, in this case means 'give reasons for'. When the object is a *that* clause, as in (16b), it can be read as non-factive with *explain that S* meaning 'say that S to explain X'.

1.2. Verbs followed either by *ing* or by infinitive complements constitute an interesting class, as this syntactic difference sometimes correlates with a difference in the meaning of the two constructions.

As remarked in LONGMAN (1999: 757) "in general a *to*-clause has a meaning that is more hypothetical or potential than the meaning of the corresponding *ing*-clause (with the same verb)..." This general difference naturally follows from the properties of Inflection in infinitive and gerund clauses. With some exceptions, control infinitive have irrealis, future Tense, while gerunds have realis tense. No wonder then that the infinitive is associated with hypothetical or potential events.

In general the *to V* construction has future orientation. It speaks of potential events, while the gerund has present or past readings, it tends to 'reify' or factualize an event. This distinction is relevant for several categories of verbs that take both complements.

Also, in general, the infinitive complement carries with it a generic reading (cf. Freed (1979)) It suggests a series (= + countable, plural interpretation) of the event / action in question, occurring at different moments, throughout an unspecified stretch of time. The gerund on the other hand has a durative reading, which typically refers to the unspecified duration of a single event.

While these are very general properties of the two types of clauses, the specific meaning difference between a *to*-clause and an *ing*-clause depends on the semantics of particular main verbs as well.

1.2.1. There is a first class of verbs showing little or no meaning difference between the infinitive and the gerund complement.

- (17) afford, attempt, brook, decline, delay, disdain, dread, fear, forbear, neglect, omit, project, purpose, scorn, shun, plan, intend.
(18) a. It is needless to attempt describing the particular character of young people.
I don't attempt to strike out anything new.
b. Do you think I'll brook to be / being worse treated than a cook?
c. He had declined attending the ceremony. He declined to take any part in the concern.
d. He did not fear wetting his feet. / Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
e. I cannot forbear to give another quotation. Few can forbear to tell a spicy story of their friends.

One should also include in this class the few, *aspectual* verbs that govern both infinitives and gerunds: *begin, start, commence, continue, cease, go on, finish, stop* (only gerund), because the two complements are interchangeable in almost all contexts. In spite of this, Freed (1979), Conrad (1982)

have shown that each of the two complements may convey specific shades of meaning, emerging in appropriate contexts.

When the gerund is used after aspectual verbs it makes reference to a specific event or a series of events *locatable in space and time*. Since the gerund refers to observed performances of an action, it is often qualified by manner adverbials or other adverbials describing various aspects of the event. This has to do with the more concrete range of denotations allowed by gerunds (events, facts, propositions), while the infinitives express propositions. (cf. Asher (1993) in the preceding chapter).

- (19) a. He began abstractly brushing his hair. b. He went across to the shelves and began removing books from them with admirable speed and dexterity. c. He started eagerly reading an article reprinted from "The Time".

The infinitive with aspectual verbs is best suited to refer to potential events, given its modal meaning. Thus the infinitive is appropriate to express *dispositional properties* of the subject, that is, what the subject can do, not what the subject is actually doing at some point in time. The infinitive is frequent with verbs of state, habitual predicates or psychological verbs, since they often express dispositional properties:

- (20) a. She started to be interested in music late in life. b. She began to read poetry when she was ten. c. He began to be bored. d. Edward began to miss his friends. e. Man is beginning to understand himself better.

The infinitive is often chosen to express habitual events (the same event appearing at different points in time), sometimes with subjects designating a plurality; the event may be regularly or sporadically repeated:

- (21) a. His intelligence never ceases to amaze me / (?amazing me). b. Two years later they began to write to one another regularly. c. It was that kind of crude and incomplete dictionaries that began to appear in the 16-th century. d. [I had hardly slept for two nights, but the excitement of the move plus my nervous energy kept me going.] By the third day I began to feel (? feeling) drugged and every time I sat down, I started to fall (?falling) asleep. e. The previous salesman had met his death in a car accident, for which Mr Ingham, a paternal employer, had never ceased to blame himself.

Freed (1979:153) gives pairs of the following type to bring out the possible contrast between the *to*-V (repeated events) and the *ing* complement (one durative event) of the same aspectual verb.

- (22) a. While the man held a gun on her she continued counting / ?to count out hundred dollar bills.
b. She told him not to visit her anymore. At first he ignored her and continued to visit / ?visiting anyway. Finally the visits stopped.

While semantic factors of the type mentioned above may explain the preference for one form in a particular context, the two complements are, in principle *interchangeable* with aspectual verbs. Thus the infinitive may describe one single non-hypothetical occurrence, which is the realization of some dispositional property (23a,b). Similarly, the gerund can be quantified over, so that it may express generic activities, which represent, however, a generalization of *observed* specific events (23c):

- (23) a. The train started to move. b. To fill in some time, he found some College stationary and began to write. c. Since then, the Bank has begun issuing quarterly reports.

1.2.2. A difference of meaning has often been noticed between the gerund and the infinitive of verbs of *affective stance* (verbs of liking and disliking): *like, love, adore, detest, hate, prefer* (all with gerund and infinitive), *adore, enjoy tolerate, resent, dislike* (only with gerund complements).

The difference between gerund and infinitive with verbs of emotional reaction is similar to the one described for aspectual verbs. The gerund after verbs of emotional reaction refers to a definite event; it expresses an emotional stance to *real experienced* occurrences. Also, it often functions like an anaphoric definite article, referring back to an already mentioned event.

- (24) a. Bond liked fast cars, and he liked driving them.
b. Yesterday I went out for a walk in the woods. I liked walking in the wood.

The infinitive implies that there is a disposition for actions of a certain kind. What the subject likes, hates, etc. is a *kind* of activity, which will predictably appear under appropriate circumstances, though it *need not have* occurred. The infinitive is preferred to convey generic meanings: general rules, properties, etc. Thus in (25a) the subject has the property of liking to talk over dinner, etc.:

- (25) a. Soames liked to talk during dinner. b. A man likes to be waited on. c. He loved above all to see the Guards drilling in the park. d. I prefer to call my son and grandson by their names. e. He drinks very little alcohol, and at parties prefers to have ginger ale. f. She was making tea and toast because she hated to have meals in the dining hall.

The typically referential nature of the gerund, in contrast with the generic, dispositional nature of the infinitive is best brought out in sentences containing state verbs, where the infinitive may suggest several occurrences of a state, while the gerund refers to a continuous durative occurrence.

- (26) a. We all love being in love. / We all love to be in love.
b. I adore being engaged. / I adore to be engaged.

However, since the gerund DP can be quantified over, the gerund too can express generic meaning, as in (27c-f), and, on the other hand, the infinitive may refer to a single event, possibly falling under some rule, or disposition (as in (27a, b)), so that again the two forms will often be interchangeable. (27 f, g)

- (27) a. I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. b. I don't like to be avoided. c. We like having fun, and we like having it together. d. He likes going out with an attractive girl. e. I dislike lending my things, and I dislike spending my money except on myself. f. He loves playing the piano. / I love to hear you sing. g. I hate being pitied. / Dickens hated to have to blot his manuscripts while he was writing.

The choice of the gerund or the infinitive with these verbs may also largely depend on mood, tense factors of the main and the embedded clause. Thus the infinitive is chosen to convey futurity with respect to the main clause.

- (28) a. I don't like to refuse him, but I am afraid I shall have to. b. He preferred to drive back through the night. c. I hate to break up this session but I've a hell of a pile of letters to attend to. d. I knew you were back, but I didn't like to disturb you.

Given its modal meaning, the infinitive is *strongly preferred* when the main clause is in a subjunctive, hypothetical form. For example in the five-million word corpus investigated by the LONGMAN grammar, "75% of the occurrences of *like + to*-clause in fiction and news are preceded by *would*. (op. cit. 757)."

- (29) a. I would like to have your little rowing boat tomorrow, and go out to the wreck and take some photos of that. b. She would however have liked to have had a child. c. I should hate to be involved in any trouble. d. I'd have preferred to be killed straight off.

All the examples so far have involved explicit control of the complement subject. This is the only possibility for infinitives. The gerund may also have a non-controlled interpretation, where the embedded subject is understood as impersonal, unspecified, as in (30b, c). Hence the gerund may be more 'impersonal' than the infinitive. Thus example (30b) does not imply that the main clause subject kills dogs or tortures animals, in contrast with (30a).

- (30) a. I hate to have to kill my dog / dogs.
b. I hate killing dogs / torturing animals.
c. Mabel despises kissing in public.

1.2.3. Consider the following verbs: *need, require, want (= need), deserve, bear*. These verbs are freely followed by gerund or infinitive complements. What is of interest with these verbs is the alternation between a passive controlled infinitive (the matrix and complement have identical subjects) and an active non-controlled gerund complement, semantically equivalent to the passive infinitive. A passive gerund is likewise allowed. Examples are given in (31) and (32):

- (31) a. He deserves to be hanged for this.
b. He deserves hanging for this.
c. He deserves being hanged for this.
- (32) a. Charles Beresford will *require* looking after one of these days. b. The verb 'make' has naturally required to be treated at unusual length. c. The house wants painting and papering shamefully. d. He has delusions, sees demons when he is in this state. He wants to be watched. e. Only two small incidents need mentioning. f. These changes will need to be mentioned. g. Who needs to be told, that if a woman has a will, she will assuredly find a way? h. The matter won't bear thinking about. i. Alas, the life of such boys does not bear telling altogether. j. These soft words do not bear to be written down / being written down. k. I cannot bear to be subjected to systematic arrangements. (from Poutsma)

1.2.4. There is a larger class of exercitive verbs of communication which select an infinitive of control when in the main clause there is an indirect object, serving as controller. If there is no personal indirect object in the sentence, then these verbs select *ing* complements, or, if possible, they take an Accusative + Infinitive complement. These possibilities are illustrated in (33). Some of the relevant verbs are the following: *allow, permit, advise, suggest, propose, recommend, prescribe, suffer, forbid, telephone, urge, etc.*

- (33) a. He allowed Tom [PRO to smoke].
b. He didn't allow [Tom('s) smoking in the room].
c. He didn't allow [PRO smoking in the room].

d. He didn't allow [there to be any dancing in the room]. (Acc+Inf)

The infinitive of control in (33a) is appropriate when there is interaction between the referents of the Subject and Indirect Object. The Indirect Object is the permittee in the permission granting act. In examples (33 b-d), no permittee is actually expressed. It is suggested that the matrix Su has enough authority to make a more formal pronouncement. Notice in (33), (34) that the gerund's subject is often unspecified, rather than arbitrary generic PRO.

- (34) a. I advised her to wait until the proper time. / I advised waiting till the proper time. b. I forbid you to smoke here. / Smoking cigars in the child's room is strictly forbidden. c. I recommend you to buy this dictionary. / I recommend buying this dictionary. d. I suggested to them to bring the meeting to an end. / I suggested bringing the meeting to an end. e. I urged him to make haste. / A few of the committee had urged hanging him as a possible example. f. I proposed to her to walk out with me. / And I did not tell you this morning when you proposed our confessing our faults.

1.2.5. Other differences between *V ing* and *to V* complements of the same verb characterize very small groups of verbs, but they are not unpredictable in the light of our discussion so far.

The verbs *remember*, *recollect*, *recall*, *report*, *observe*, *perceive*, *notice* are non-factive in the Accusative + Infinitive construction (35a), but have a factive interpretation when used with the gerund complements (35b).

- (35) a. They reported the enemy to have suffered a decisive defeat.
b. They reported the enemy's having suffered a decisive defeat.

The second example implies that the report was true in the speaker's opinion, while the first leaves open the possibility that the report was false. Consider more examples, which bring out the same contrast:

- (36) a. I remembered him to be bald so I was surprised to see him with long hair. b. I remembered his being bald so I brought a wig and disguised him. c. I remember him going on and on asking questions. d. He could not remember coming from the chapel. e. I don't recollect him to do it. / I do recollect hearing Chaliapin. f. He recalled reading once in some novel that the interpolation of anything, even if it is only a broken arm, between oneself and the experience of unhappy love is a consolation. / I didn't notice him to be there (perhaps he wasn't there). / I didn't notice his being there (but I know now that he was there).

The gerund reifies the event, (to use the expression of Bolinger (1977)), which may be understood as *past*, even when it is not marked so. Thus, *They resented his being away* is ambiguous as to the time reference of the gerund, and on one prong of the ambiguity, is synonymous with *They resented his having been away*.

In contrast, the infinitive is understood as simultaneous or future with respect to the main clause. If a past reading is intended, it has to be marked on the complement verb. Thus, *They suppose him to be away* cannot mean *They supposed him to have been away*.

- (37) a. He could not remember coming from the bar to the chapel. b. I didn't remember to post the letter, so I still have it with me. c. I shall never forget seeing her. (= 'having seen her', factive reading) d. I forgot to tell my sister about the party. (... so I was surprised when she came.) e. I remembered to play my part and began to tap my way forward. f. I remember being D'Artagnan for weeks on end. g. I do recollect hearing Chaliapin. h. I don't recollect

him to have done it. i. I didn't, at the time, notice his being there, but I know now that he was there. j. I didn't notice him to be there, so perhaps he didn't come after all/

Notice that similar tense distinctions hold for *regret*. Contrast.

- (38) I regret to say that you are a fool.
I regret saying that you are a fool.

1.2.6. The verb *try* + *ing* is implicative, indicating that the complement clause action did take place. In contrast, the construction *try to* V suggests a difficult or unsuccessful attempt. Compare:

- (39) a. He tried speaking French, but wasn't understood. b. He tried to speak French, but couldn't. c. Both tried to get money by journalism, but opportunities failed. d. I tried drinking three or four whiskies... I tried going to bed immediately after dinner but I could not sleep.

1.2.7. Finally notice that, for some verbs, different meanings correspond to different choices of complement constructions.

1.2.7.1. The verb *mean* + *inf* has the same sense of 'intend' or 'signify', while *mean* + *ing* is used only in the sense of 'signify'.

- (40) a. He means to run over France. / *running over France.
b. To serve such a man would mean doing / to do something worth doing.

1.2.7.2. The verb *want* expressing volition takes an infinitive complement, *want* meaning 'be in need of' takes both kinds of complement.

- (41) a. I don't want to tell you.
b. The door needs to be painted / painting.

1.2.7.3. The verb *stop* allows the *ing* as a DO, but takes an infinitive only as adverbial of purpose. There is clear syntactic and semantic difference between (36a.) and (36b).

- (42) a. When he has working, he would stop to take a few pipes of his pipe.
b. He stopped smoking cigars at table.

2. Gerund complements as Subjects

The distribution of subject gerunds closely parallels the infinitive cases and this is why we will not discuss it in any detail. The constructions are often interchangeable from a syntactic perspective, though there may be differences of meaning.

- (43) It was great fun to swim in the sea.
It was great fun swimming in the sea.

Since the subject position is least dependent on the verb from the interpretive point of view, it brings out the more concrete meaning of the gerund which designates propositions, facts or events in contrast with the proposition-denoting infinitive.

Gerunds in subject position often refer to *facts* or possibilities, i.e., to definite events that have *causal* efficacy. Gerunds are often subjects of causative verbs, or causative psychological verbs:

- (44) a. Mary's having won the competition is a fact / a possibility I hadn't thought of. b. John's hitting Mary made her mad. c. Pulling the little girl's hair infuriated her. d. His having lost his driver's license once made John an especially careful driver when the cops were around.

In examples like those below the gerund is the subject of event-taking predicates, thus designating an *event*. Remember that events are identified by their space-time properties:

- (45) a. Building the Panama Canal took longer than expected.
b. Gathering pecans in central Texas starts in September.

2.1. Comparing the frequency of various types of complements subjects, Close (1972) notices that *Poss-ing* and *Acc-ing* complements “seem to be less frequent as subjects, at least in the spoken language”. When a full *ing* complement is, nevertheless, used as a subject, *Poss-ing* appears to be the more natural construction. *Acc-ing* constructions in subject position are also possible, however.

Gerund complements appear as subjects of one place adjectives or nouns: *likely*, *necessary*, *odd*, *tragic*, etc. *a pleasure*, *an event*, *a good / bad thing* etc. When it is lexically specified, the subject appears in the Possessive or in the Accusative case (sentences (46)). Alternatively, when it is not lexically specified, the subject is control or arbitrary PRO, or it is an unspecified variable DP, whose content is recoverable only in a context (sentences (47)). Examples of extraposed gerund subjects have also been included.

- (46) *Poss-ing* a. “Your guessing that is a proof that you’re as clever as I say.” b. Her watching by the fireside for her husband’s return from an absence might superficially have appeared as the most natural act in the world. c. A stranger’s sharing this trip with them was bad enough. d. She had not thought that the Chancellor’s asking for an undertaking under threat was fair.

Acc-ing. e. Millie flirting with Christopher was one good thing.
f. Look here, Billy, it’s no good you hanging around.

- (47) *PRO-ing with control subject* a. Losing his fortune angered him. b. Stepping into the public bar gave him a comforting sense of normality. c. Thinking of her made him think of her embrace. d. It was difficult enough getting acquainted to her.

PRO-ing with arbitrary subject a. Loving one’s enemies is a Christian duty. b. Swimming in the sea is great fun. c. Travelling to the moon was once inconceivable. d. It was no good saying pretty things to him if he really can read thoughts.

2.2. Gerund complements also occur as subjects of intransitive predicates that also govern prepositional Indirect Objects introduced by *to*, *for*, *of*, or Prepositional Objects (adjectives: *hard*, *easy*, *surprising*, *boring*, verbs: *matter*, *occur* etc.)

- (48) a. Being sorry for Austin was a sort of occupation for both of them. b. Walking and even breathing were now difficult for him but what Aldous Huxley called the “miracle” of his creative vitality continued with “Last Poems”. c. Meeting him was of utmost interest to me. d. And seeing him for the first time this way is a great event for me. e. Giving your son a father’s advice before he leaves home is now incumbent on you.

2.3. As already mentioned gerund complements are subjects of the large group of causative psychological verbs (*surprise, alarm, bore, etc.*), as well as of other transitive verbs (*alter, mean, imply, entail, cause, make, give, etc.*) and intransitive verbs (*suffice, will do*).

- (49) a. Howard's coming to live with us disturbed the routine of our household. b. The front door bell's sharply ringing pierced his ears so rudely that he could not at first think what has happened to him.
- (50) a. Aiming for truth brings one up against what she calls "the opacity of persons". b. Finding you here surprised me. c. Losing his fortune made him mad. d. If I understand how your mummy functions, having you about will make life worth living. e. Limiting the calorie intake of the diet, but providing all the necessary constituents slowed growth for long periods.

2.3. We have already mentioned that Extraposition is not in general allowed, due to the fact that gerunds are DPs. Certain adjectives (*easy, hard, useless, fun, fine, worth, awkward, ill, jolly, awful, etc.*) and nouns (*it is no / not any / little use / good / avail, it's worth while, it's an awful job etc.*) allow the application of Extraposition (examples (52)). All of them have affective, evaluative meaning; moreover, the nouns appear in frozen idiomatic constructions.

The examination of the corpus indicates that, as also noticed by Milsark (1988), only *subjectless gerunds* can extrapose in contemporary English (sentences (52)). To account for this distribution, we assumed that, when it extraposes, the gerund may appear in a caseless position, because the *ing* suffix lacks a nominal feature in this case, so that the gerund will not be headed by a DP, being an IP. In contrast, in modern, as opposed to contemporary, English, it was possible to extrapose gerunds that had subjects as well. Examples (51) are due to Poutsma [1929: 959].

- (51) a. It was (of) no use my saying anything to you.
b. It is exceedingly unwise his going off to stay at Court.
- (52) a. It was delightful being with him. b. It's so awful not being able to communicate. c. But it's so terribly painful seeing her so frail and not herself any more and some days she can't even speak. d. It's little use mincing matters in an affair of this kind. e. It's no good hiding the truth. f. It's an awful job patching carpets up.

Remarks. 1. Extraposition should not be mixed up with Right Dislocation, a rule which moves an NP to the end of the sentence, leaving behind a pronominal copy. The moved constituent is separated from the clause by comma intonation.

- (53) a. John's big cigar bothers me.
b. It bother's me, John's cigar.
c. I buy these clams right at the store.
d. I buy them right at the store, these clams.

Right Dislocation may operate on gerunds:

- (54) a. It's not very important to you, seeing Dorina, is it?
b. It will be a sad thing, parting with her.

2. A frequent class of idiomatic gerund constructions is the following, based on *There*-insertion, in a (usually) negative sentence:

- (55) a. He had a few faithful clients, but there was no denying business was rotten. b. I'm not at all keen about marrying, but there's no knowing what an interesting woman might do with me. c. There's no use saying any more about it.

3. Poss-ing and Acc-ing complements as objects of prepositions

The prepositional context is the most characteristic environment for gerund complements, being the only surface context which they do not share with infinitives or finite complements. Occurrence in the context of the preposition confirms that gerunds are DPs. Secondly, the prepositional context is also historically the oldest distributional context of the gerund. "the only verbal gerunds that have been found in old English texts are prepositional gerunds based on action verbs." (Wik, 1973:196). Third, the prepositional context is the least marked semantically allowing any of the current interpretations of the gerund (function of the matrix predicate and other factors).

In what follows we present the more frequent predicates that govern prepositional gerunds (verbs, verbal idioms, adjectives, nouns and which are strictly subcategorized for the respective preposition. (the PP is a complement dominated by a syntactic category of type $N' \rightarrow N^{PP}$, $A' \rightarrow A^{PP}$, $V' \rightarrow V^{PP}$).

As usual, the gerunds may or may not have an overt subject. Predicates and examples are grouped according to the preposition that governs the gerund. Lists are illustrative not exhaustive.

3.1.1. ABOUT. *Verbs*: care, hesitate, hurry, see, talk, dispute, make (no) bones, trouble oneself, brag; *Adjectives*: careful, anxious, annoyed, particular, positive, scrupulous, glad, sorry, happy, excited, right, wrong, mistaken, pleased, uneasy, diffident, etc.

- (56) a. Mary is annoyed about Jim staying out so late. b. I'm worried about Mary living abroad. c. I'm pleased about him getting a holiday soon. d. Jesse was not altogether mistaken about Lawrence's side-stepping the issue. e. The only people she is rude to are people like me and papa, whom she cares for enough not to worry about being fair to. f. She felt slightly uneasy about it. g. They often talked about drowning cats. h. She was diffident about asking for the menu as she was about ordering drinks.

3.1.2. AGAINST. *Verbs*: rule, exclaim, murmur, fight, be on one's, guard, set one's face, vote. *Adjectives*: be dead against, etc.

- (57) a. She had always been on her guard against believing too much of what men said. b. They now exclaimed against punishing in cold blood. c. They voted against killing the prisoners.

3.1.3. AT. (mostly psychological, non-causative predicates). *Verbs*: blush, delight in / at, laugh, rejoice, revolt, stare, grieve etc. *Adjectives*: agitated, alarmed, angry, annoyed, astonished, (un)concerned, delighted, disgusted, embarrassed, impatient, (dis)pleased, surprised, taken about, transported, stunned.

- (58) a. We were delighted at (the fact of) her inheriting a fortune and surprised at it making no difference to what she did. b. Barney had been shaken and rather especially pained at twice meeting Pat at the house. c. He had said nothing to her, he was too transported at

seeing the bell. d. She was still completely stunned at having left Paul's notebook on the train.

3.1.4. FOR. *Verbs*: answer, vote, care, prepare, etc. *Adjectives*: prepared, ready, responsible, qualified, fit.

- (59) a. I'll answer for him being there in time. b. He voted for outing off Cromwell's head without a trial. c. I shall want to be made ready for shaving. d. His whole substance was fit only for burning.

3.1.5. FROM. *Verbs*: abstain, arise, come, emerge, result, desist, discourage, escape, refrain, shrink, forbear, etc.

- (60) a. This aspect of the matter, he deliberately refrained from examining in detail. b. Mr. Guppy therefore desisted from taking something out of his pocket. c. How difficult it is even for great men to escape from being snobs. d. He wishes to secure himself from falling off, he must be fastened.

3.1.6. IN. *Verbs*: believe, consist, join, assist, result, fail, end, persist, succeed, etc. to take delight / refuge, to take pleasure / pride / part etc. *Adjectives*: absorbed, engaged, deep, justified, instrumental, occupied, successful, warranted, continuous, interested, wrong, right, sunk, exact.

- (61) a. Doro felt he had laid it on rather thick, but was certainly right in thinking that he would be forgiven. b. He thought that truthfulness consisted in telling everybody everything regardless of whether they wanted to know. c. I took refuge in repeating that his account was poor in something or other.

3.1.7. OF. *Verbs*: admit, come (= result), complain, despair, repent, think. *Adjectives*: apprehensive, aware, ashamed, afraid, chary, guilty, shy, conscious, hopeful, indicative, glad, desirous, jealous, (in)capable, sure, weary, worthy, etc.

- (62) a. She was constantly complaining of the cold, and of [its occasioning a visitation in her back, which she called 'the creeps']. b. I thought that by your theory you disapproved of a writer's marrying. c. She is afraid of Mary being late for the party. d. I hope we shall hear no more of idiots not having souls. e. He felt ashamed of being an Aryan German and yet also ashamed of having ceased to be one. f. He had been guilty of nothing but inopportunistly falling in love. g. But in this case he was even more sure of being in the right. h. Nobody could ever get tired of staring at you. i. She knew herself incapable of refusing so dazzling, so delightful a prospect. j. I despaired of even coming home alive. k. His presence is indicative of his wishing to help. l. Germany has never been chary of showing us that our imperial interests conflict with hers. m. I was always so afraid of being boring that I could never talk for long enough.

3.1.8. ON *Verbs*: calculate venture, decide, determine, resolve, vote, theorise, depend, fix, insist, reflect, pique, pride oneself on, etc. *Adjectives*: bent, determined, intent, resolved, set, intent, etc.

- (63) a. She'd insist on everything's being made comfortable, advantageous, propitious for them. b. Lawrence is almost exclusively intent on bringing out the weakness and

dissatisfaction of their relationship. c. Michael prided himself on having lost at least certain illusions. d. More upsetting still, Paul insisted on spending the morning with her.

3.1.9. TO *Verbs*: admit, address, take to, confine oneself, allude, pertain, amount, consent, apply, to go far / a long way to, to lay claim to, to see clear to / one's way to, testify, revert, settle, confess, resort, object, vouch, etc. look forward to, to be given / used to, to be on the way to. *Adjectives, nouns*: accessory, committed, confined, essential, opposed, subject, preferable, superior, tantamount, accustomed, near, averse, enemy, friend, party.

(64) a. I wouldn't be a party to stealing a lot of worthless trinkets. b. The next day he addressed himself to deciding what to do. c. Michael confined himself to pointing out to Doro that her being married to him was a very important fact. d. Sometimes I fancied that Pegotty perhaps objected to my mother's wearing all the pretty dresses she had in her drawer. e. That's the real reason why I consented to his going. f. Mama's taken to going to bed at nine o'clock these days. g. About Michael Mead, whom he had much looked forward to seeing, he still felt rather uncertain. h. They admit to shrinking back from personal risk as from a leprosy. i. She was much given to using the phone. j. She was stubbornly averse to asking for directions. k. But Walter was well on the way to knowing his way around. l. She was quite unused to judging others with precision.

3.1.10. WITH *Verbs*: put up, dispense, content, busy / occupy oneself with, etc. *Adjectives*: content, pleased, satisfied etc.

(65) a. She was forced to put up with sleeping in the kitchen.
b. She busied herself with tidying up her dress.

3.2 In this next paragraph we illustrate the category of verbs subcategorized for [--NP[^]PP], that is, verbs that govern a Direct Object and Prepositional Object, where the latter is a gerund construction.

Verbs:

a) caution smb. against, warn smb. about / against, prepare smb. for, select smb. for, incapacitate smb. for, blame / chide / reprove / upbraid smb. for, compensate smb. for, excuse / forgive / pardon smb. for + ing, hold smth. / smb. in, employ smth. / smb. in, engage / occupy smb. + in, justify smb. in, spend smth. in, compliment smb. on, congratulate smb. on, reconcile smb. to, dedicate / devote smth. to, attach importance to, accuse smb. of, acquit smb. of, (fore)warn smb. of, persuade smb. of, inform smb. of, notify smb. of, convince smb. of, accredit smb. with, charge smb. with, reproach smb. with, taunt smb. with, credit smb. with, tax smb. with.

b) badger smb. into, beguile smb. into, coax smb. into, coerce smb. into, dupe smb. into, entice smb. into, exasperate smb. into, force smb. into, frighten smb. into, goad smb. into, induce smb. into, inveigle smb. into, provoke smb. into, tempt smb. into, wheedle smb. into, lure smb. into, etc.; argue smb. into, fool smb. into, drive smb. into, talk smb. into, persuade smb. into, reason smb. into, frighten smb. into, bully into.

c) deter smb. from, discourage smb. from, hinder smb. from, frighten smb. from, exempt smb. from, dispense smb. from, etc.

Note. Most if not all the verbs in b) have pairs with the preposition *out of*: *fool smb. out of, talk smb. out of, argue smb. out of, reason smb. out of* etc.

Consider the following examples:

- (66) a. The lawyer saved you from losing his license. b. He has been warned about leaving his car unlocked. c. The police have charged the students with obstructing the road. d. The magistrate has acquitted the students for obstructing the road. e. The government must compensate Tom for losing his job. f. We'll have to forgive them for saying that. g. We congratulated him on winning the award.

Verbs in classes b) and c) describe the notion of causation b) or negative causation c); most of them are one-way implicative causative verbs. Class b) is particularly well represented and even productive. Verbs in b), c) describe part of the important domain of interpersonal manipulation. The verb labels a particular method of manipulation. The Direct Object is the object of attempted manipulation “yet it is interpreted as an Agent with respect to the complement clause action which it controls. The complement must be non-stative. The DO is thus a manipulated (affected) Agent (see Givon, 1974: 79)

- (67) a. Try to reason him into going away quietly / *being tall. b. I coaxed him into taking me to the theatre. c. The government coerced the unions into accepting a pay limit. d. You can't fool me into believing it. e. They argued him out of leaving the job. f. If Dr. Kenn should be beguiled into marrying that Miss Tulliver... g. I have seen you wheedling an angry married woman into giving you dates.

3.2.2. We would like to include here a number of very frequent constructions with the verbs *come*, *go (out)*, *to run (out)*, *fall*, *get*, *to be out/off*, which may be followed by non-prepositional gerunds. These gerunds are obligatory constituents of the predicate.

- (68) a. I'd rather go shopping / hunting / swimming with you.
b. I'd rather go drinking beer with you.
c. Don't go saying I never knew a mother.
d. I'd rather come climbing / hiking / walking with you.
e. They didn't get talking until very late.
g. She had fallen thinking of the event.
h. After a while they fall crying.
i. I am off shooting.

It will be assumed that these constructions have obligatory locative prepositions, that is, the gerund is an obligatory constituent under V'. Support for this hypothesis comes from the existence of parallel prepositional constructions of the same meaning in contemporary English or in older stages of the language:

- (69) a. We got *to* chatting about our rowing experiences.
b. He gets *to* feeling very low, walking about all day after work. (Pt)
He fell *to* imagining the little room.

Even in the 19th century, the gerund could be preceded by the proclitic *a*, which is a remnant of a locative preposition, as explained by Poutsma[1929 : 922]: “in Old English *on*, the labialized form of *an*, absorbed the preposition *in* and so had the meanings *on*, *in*, *unto*, *into*, *to*.”

- (70) a. They all felt a-crying. (Poutsma)
 b. Where does he go a-begging? (Dickens)
 c. My husband was very happy gone out a-hunting. (Defoe)
 d. The young man who comes a-courting is as familiar an incident in my life, as coffee for breakfast. (Shaw).

3.2.3. There are also a few adjectives that may be attended by a non-prepositional gerund. Again the assumption is that there is an underlying silent preposition, which can surface in other constructions of the same adjectives: *busy, near, worth*.

- (71) a. Moll was near crying again.
 a'. Once or twice she came very near to throwing away all her chances of happiness.
 b. She was too busy helping people in distress.
 b'. She was too busy with the dishes.
 c. Ah, well, perhaps, after all, she is not worth trying on.

4. Other functions of the gerund

4.1. Gerund complements may also function as predicatives as in the following examples:

- (72) a. The consequence of my incapacity was his driving my cattle that evening, and their being appraised and sold next day. b. What I could not stand was Stivers throwing his handkerchief over his face when he had done reading. c. His main extravagance is smoking cigars. d. Seeing is believing.

4.2. Gerund complements of all types (Poss-ing, Acc-ing in (73), and PRO-ing in (74)) also frequently function as attributes, after nominalizations or other complement taking nouns.

- (73) a. The thought of his missing his plane did not dismay her. b. At that school there was no nonsense about its being priggish to like good books. c. There is no question of there being any deadlock in the commission. d. When Clara explained this to people, she found that they merely laughed, and the thought of people laughing, however indirectly, at her mother's intentions, gave her a deep and secret pleasure.
- (74) a. Her mother did not like her to smoke, and made much show of having no serviceable ash-tray. b. She was a little cool about the idea of being taken as his secretary. c. It isn't after all as though we had any reason for not having them, she said. d. But the thought of seeing the television place appealed to her as an excursion.

4.3. Finally gerunds may function as adverbials, introduced by various types of prepositions.

- (75) On finding out the news, they cried with joy.