

# On the Historical Development of Verbal Gerunds

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English gerunds acquired a number of verbal properties during ME and early ModE: the head noun of a gerund came to be modified by an adverb, take an object noun phrase without a help of the preposition *of*, take the passive form, *etc.*). It is very interesting that gerunds obtained these syntactic properties while they kept nominal distribution. Thus, the two main purposes of this paper are as follows:

- (1) to describe the developmental process of verbal gerunds in the history of English
- (2) to explain why verbal gerunds came to obtain sentential characteristics while they kept nominal distribution

My argument is that all gerunds had the DP-NP structure originally, and then the functional category D in certain gerunds began to select IP in late ME, giving rise to the DP-IP-VP structure. The apparently contradicting features (*viz.* verbal and nominal) of verbal gerunds can be accounted for in terms of the DP-IP-VP structure. Thus, the gerund in which IP is embedded shows sentence-like syntactic properties and exhibits the same external distribution as noun phrases, which have the DP-NP structure.