Analysis of Student’s Errors in Translating Nominal Infinitive and Gerundial Subordinate Clauses from English into Albanian

This study identifies, analyzes and explains the most common and major mistakes and errors that are usually made by students. Moreover, it presents the percentage of correct and wrong responses given by twelfth grade students of the public high school “Kuvendi i Lezhës” in Vitia, Kosovo and by third-and-fourth year Albanian students of the English language faculty from three different universities such as private college AAB in Prishtina, Kosovo; public University “Fehmi Agani” in Gjakova, Kosovo; and South East European University in Tetovo, Macedonia. The major purpose of this research is to see the way students use these structures and what difficulties do they have during the process of translating the structures and the functions of English gerundial and infinitive subordinate clauses when they switch from English into Albanian. Results showed that the most common mistakes made by students are: wrong tense, unfamiliarity with the structure of infinitive and gerundial subordinate clauses, inability to translate either the infinitive or gerundial subordinate clause, word-for-word translation etc. It is recommended that more time should be devoted to these aspects, which will help students internalize the usage and translation of these subordinate clauses.

Keywords: English sentence, mistake analysis, subordinate clause, infinitive clause, gerundial clause etc.

Introduction

In English a sentence is the largest grammatical and the smallest communication unit which expresses a more or less complete thought and has a definite grammatical form and intonation. Clauses are the principle units of which sentences are composed. A clause is defined as a group of words with its own subject and predicate, if it is included in a larger sentence. A sentence contains at least one main clause. It may also contain subordinate clauses. (Kabashi, 2000:17).

e.g. I heard a rumour that the professor has been kidnapped. (Eastwood, 2005:353)
‘I heard a rumour’ – main clause
‘that the professor has been kidnapped’ – subordinate clause

Main clauses are not dependent on any other clauses and can form sentences on their own. Subordinate clauses are dependent on other clauses and can only form sentences by combining with main clauses. (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:531).
All grammatically independent clauses are finite. Dependent clauses may be finite or non-finite. (Downing & Locke, 2006:36).

According to Verspoor & Sauter (2000:35-44) in English the sentences may consist of one or more main clauses or they may consist of one or more main clauses with one or more dependent clauses. They are called simple, compound, complex or compound-complex sentences depending on the types of clauses they contain.

A simple sentence consists of one main clause only.

e.g. All the grace, the beauty, and the poetry had gone out of the majestic river.

A compound sentence consists of two or more main clauses joined together with coordinating conjunctions or without them.

e.g. I had made a valuable acquisition but I had lost something too.

A complex sentence contains a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

e.g. I had lost something which could never be restored to me while I lived.

A compound-complex sentence contains at least two main clauses and at least one subordinate clause.

e.g. A tone is what you hear in music, and a note is the symbol that you write down for a tone.

According to studyandexam.com (2018) there are three types of subordinate clauses:

1. Noun Clause – It acts exactly like a noun in a sentence.
   e.g. I buy whatever I need.

2. Adjective Clause – It modifies or adds information to a noun or pronoun in the sentence.
   e.g. I saw a child who was crying.

3. Adverb Clause – It modifies or adds information to a verb (action) of the main clause in terms of time, frequency, condition, cause and effect and intensity.
   e.g. Call me when you need my help.

Nominal clauses are dependent clauses and they do not function as complete sentences. (Kolln & Funk, 2012:177)

English nominal clauses may have the pattern of (Blaganje & Konte, 1979:499):

1. Dependent statements, i.e. the pattern of that-clauses
   e.g. That she does not believe him is obvious.

2. Dependent verbal (yes-no) questions
   e.g. I wonder if/whether the telegram will arrive in time.

3. Dependent wh-questions
   e.g. Who will substitute for him is still not known.
4. Nominal relative clauses
e.g. He made his firm what it is today.
5. To-infinitival nominal clauses
e.g. Mary’s aim is to win the first prize.
6. Gerundial clauses
e.g. Writing letters is a waste of time.

A nominal clause has the same uses in a sentence as a noun. (Azar & Hagen, 2009:242).

In English, a nominal clause may function in a sentence as any of the following (Nuhiu, 2012:127):

1. Subject clauses – The subordinate clauses perform the function of the subject in a complex sentence.
e.g. What you think of it does not change the matter.
2. The Extra posed Subject clauses – The real subject of a sentence is shifted from its initial position to the end of the sentence. Then the usual subject position is filled with the so-called anticipatory, introductory or dummy subject it. The clause then functions as apposed or postponed subject.
e.g. It is impossible to find a hotel room in this city.
3. Direct Object Clauses – The subordinate clauses perform the function of the direct object in a complex sentence.
e.g. They told us that he would leave next day.
4. Indirect Object Clauses - The subordinate clauses perform the function of the indirect object in a complex sentence.
e.g. I warned whoever I met about the danger.
5. Subject Complement Clauses - The subordinate clauses perform the function of the subject complement in a complex sentence.
e.g. He is not what he pretends to be.
6. Object Complement Clauses - The subordinate clauses perform the function of the object complement in a complex sentence.
e.g. I found it what I couldn’t believe.
7. After a preposition (Object of preposition)
e.g. We had a talk about who should be invited.

According to Miller (2004:82) English non-finite constructions are highly limited in their grammar. The non-finite clauses in the following examples:

Fanny regretted talking to Mary.
Henry wanted to marry Fanny.
All Mr. Collins does is praise Lady de Bourg.

Exclude tense and modal verbs such as CAN, MAY, MUST. They also exclude interrogative and imperative constructions and do not allow prepositional phrase fronting or negative fronting.
Although non-tensed verb forms do not indicate tense, person or number and usually do not have a subject, their person, tense etc. are normally understood in relation to items in the main clause.

Various other features, not related to the verb-form, further distinguish non-finite clauses from main clauses (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005:205):

- a non-finite clause can have special subordinators (‘to’ and ‘for’):
  e.g. She wants me to lend him the money.
  We can’t afford for everyone to travel business class.
- a non-finite clause can lack overt subjects despite not being imperative:
  e.g. Liz wants to write a novel.
- when a non-finite clause has a personal pronoun as subject, that pronoun generally does not have the nominative case-form:
  e.g. All I want is for us to be reunited.
- under certain conditions a non-finite clause may have a non-subject NP left understood.
  e.g. The house will be ready (for you to inspect ____ in a few days.

The verbal element in nonfinite clauses may take one of four forms, usually determined by the verb in the main clause. (Brinton, 2000:239-240).

1. bare infinitive – e.g. I saw Aaron leave.
2. to-infinitive – e.g. I want to give you a present.
3. -ing participle – e.g. He stopped working there a year ago.
4. -en participle – e.g. The book given to him yesterday is very valuable.

The term infinitive clause is used for constructions with to-infinitive. (Crystal, 2008:243). They are a type of non-finite clauses in that their verb, being in the infinitive form, does not carry tense (Cowan, 2008:472).

According to Thomson & Martinet (1986:238) the nominal infinitive clause may function in a sentence as:

subject – e.g. To save money seems impossible.
extra posed subject– e.g. It is dangerous to lean out of the window.
direct object – e.g. He wants to pay.
subject complement – e.g. His plan is to keep the affair secret.
object complement – e.g. He believes it to be very rare.

Gerundial clauses are “-ing” forms of a verb that function as nouns in a sentence. (Herring, 2016)

According to Aarts (2001:74-78) the nominal gerundial clause may function in a sentence as:

subject – e.g. Running a business is hard work.
direct object – e.g. I can’t imagine travelling to Moscow.
The nominal gerundial clause can also function as (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, Svartvik 1995:1063):

subject complement – e.g. Her first job had been selling computers.
object of preposition – e.g. I’m responsible for drawing up the budget.

According to Eastwood (2002:159) two other functions can also be performed by gerundial clauses such as:

extra posed subject – e.g. It wasn't easy finding the money.
object complement – e.g. I don't like people bossing me around.

Materials and Methods

This study is based on 145 responses of fourth year high school students who have been attending intermediate English classes and have only been familiar with the structural forms of the English infinitive and gerundial clauses and third year and fourth year undergraduates who have attended the English Syntax course and thus have learned the structures and nominal functions of English infinitive and gerundial subordinate clauses.

50 responses were from the public high school “Kuvendi i Lezhës” in Vitia, Kosovo, 50 from the private college AAB, Faculty of English Language in Prishtina, Kosovo, 25 from the public University “Fehmi Agani” (FA), Faculty of Philology, English Language and Literature program in Gjakova, Kosovo and 20 from the South East European University (SEEU), Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication in Tetovo, Macedonia.

The test consists of 11 English sentences which contain the English structures of infinitive and gerundial clauses in eleven different nominal functions that need to be translated into Albanian. All the sentences are taken from different and reliable English grammar books.

The purpose of this test is to reveal and measure the Albanian EFL University and high school students’ ability to translate structures with infinitive and gerundial clauses in different nominal functions since, when translated these structures can have different forms and functions among these two languages; to identify, investigate and demonstrate the most common mistakes that students make while translating the nominal functions of English infinitive and gerundial subordinate clauses; to minimize the mistakes and to increase students’ mastery of the nominal infinitive and gerundial clauses.
Results, Analysis and Discussions

Analysis of examples of English infinitive subordinate clauses in five different nominal functions

Analysis of the example of infinitive subordinate clause as subject of the sentence

The following example was requested to be translated by students:

*To be sitting long after dinner* was a confinement.

The English infinitive subject clauses are mostly translated in Albanian with the structure of a finite clause which is introduced by a verb phrase in imperfect subjunctive mood with the particle ‘të’. The same case is also in our example: ‘*Të rrëje ulur gjatë pas darke* ishte detyrim’. However, some other translations used by our students can also be taken as correct such as: the Albanian Gheg form: ‘*Me qëndru ulur gjatë pas darke* ishte detyrim’ and the neuter nouns: ‘*Të qëndruarit ulur gjatë pas darke* ishte detyrim’ or ‘*Të ndenjurit ulur gjatë pas darkës* ishte detyrim’.

Some of the mistakes noticed here are that students tried to translate the subject clause by using the same structure, it means the Albanian infinitive (‘*Për të vendosur gjatë pas darkës* ishte një izolim’; ‘*Për të qëndruar ulur gjatë pas darkës* ishte si një burg’). Some of them even used the Albanian gerundial clause (‘*Duke shkuar në darken e kaluar* ishte e çuditshme’; ‘*Duke ulur gjatë pas darkës* ishte e rahatshme’.) but both these structures used to translate the English infinitive clause do not make sense in Albanian. Several students had problems with the tense. From the main verb of the source sentence, it can be understood that the action was finished in the past while students used present simple tense as its Albanian correspondent (‘*Të rrëje ulur gjatë pas darkës* është detyrim’ or ‘*Të rrëje ulur gjatë pas darkës mund të jetë detyrim’).
According to the data collected from the test, fifty-two percent (52%) of the high school students translated the infinitive subject clause correctly while eighty percent (80%) of the SEEU students, fifty-eight percent (58%) of the AAB students and seventy-two percent (72%) of the FA students translated the infinitive subject clause correctly.

A lower percentage is noticed in high school and AAB students’ performance. This is because they did not practice enough the translation of these structures into Albanian.

Analysis of the example of infinitive subordinate clause as extra posed subject of the sentence

The example below was requested to be translated by students:

It is hard to live away from my family.

The infinitive clause as extra posed subject performs a different function when translated into Albanian. The structure is different as well. In the Albanian translation ‘Èshtë e vështirë të jetosh larg familjes’ the subordinate clause ‘të jetosh larg familjes’ is a finite clause introduced by a verb phrase in imperfect subjunctive mood with the particle ‘të’and it has the function of the subject clause. The usage of the Albanian Gheg form (‘Èshtë e vështirë me jetu larg familjes’) is also acceptable.

The most common mistake noticed here is the infinitive clause translated as the main predicator in Albanian which is not correct because it does not indicate the exact meaning of the English sentence (Ajo jeton larg familjes.).

The Albanian infinitive as a correspondent of the English infinitive is another mistake of students (‘Èshtë e vështirë për të jetuar larg familjes’). It does not show the meaning of the English infinitive clause. A few students used the past simple tense in the subordinate clause (‘Èshtë e vështirë të jetoi larg familjes’) which is not coherent with the present simple tense of the main verb.
Seventy percent (70%) of the high school students translated correctly the infinitive clause as extra posed subject while ninety percent (90%) of the SEEU students, ninety-two percent (92%) of the AAB students and eighty-four percent (84%) of the FA students translated correctly the infinitive clause as extra posed subject.

Even though there is not such a nominal function in Albanian, most students from all the educational institutions performed well on test. It is thought that students understood the meaning of the words in the sentence and they did not face difficulties in translating it.

Analysis of the example of infinitive subordinate clause as direct object of the sentence

Students were requested to translate the following sentence:

His sister remembered to lock the door.

There are two Albanian translations of the infinitive subordinate clause above. The first one: Motrës së tij iu kujtua të mbyll derën where the subordinate clause is realized by a finite clause introduced by a verb phrase in imperfect subjunctive mood with the particle ‘të’ and performs the function of the subject clause and the second option: Motra e tij e mbajti mend/kujtori/nuk harroi të mbyll derën where the subordinate clause is a finite clause but like in English it functions as direct object clause.

Here are also a lot of students who did not translate the sentence properly. Most of them tried to translate it by using the Albanian infinitive but it is not grammatically and semantically correct (‘Motra e tij u kujtu për të mbyllur derën’; ‘Motra e tij u përkujtua për ta mbyllur derën’). Some of the students confused the meaning of the sentence in their translations ‘Motra e tij ia kujtoi ta mbyllte derën’; ‘Motra e tij i kujtoi që ta mbyll derën’; ‘Motra e tij na kujtoi ta kyçim derën’ it is understood that his sister remembered somebody else to lock the door but actually she reminded herself to lock the door. A few students...
even confused the meaning of the main verb or the meaning of what comes
after the subject: ‘Motra e tij harroi të mbyllte derën’ (harroi – forgot); ‘Motra
e tij e harroi çelsin në shtëpi’.

Based on the results of the test, fifty-two percent (52%) of the high school
students translated correctly the infinitive subordinate clause as direct object
while ninety percent (90%) of the SEEU students, seventy-six percent (76%) of
the AAB students and eighty percent (80%) of the FA students translated
correctly the infinitive subordinate clause as direct object.

Many of the high school students’ answers were inappropriate since they
have not learned the infinitive clause functioning as direct object clause. This is
the reason they translated it incorrectly.

Analysis of the example of infinitive subordinate clause as subject/predicative
complement of the sentence

Students had to translate the following example:
Her second duty was to promote her comfort.

The most appropriate Albanian translation of the above infinitive
subordinate clause ‘Detyra e saj e dytë ishte të ndihmonte mirëqenien/rehatinë
e saj.’ is realized by a finite clause introduced by a verb phrase in imperfect
subjunctive mood with the particle ‘të’. The Albanian subordinate clause is
functionally similar with the English infinitive as it also functions as
subject/predicative complement. Some students translated the subordinate
clause by using the conjunction ‘që’ which can also be taken as correct.

(Detyra e saj e dytë ishte që të ndihmonte mirëqenien/rehatinë e saj.)

The mistaken translation versions in Albanian: ‘Ai çdo sekond i ndihmon
cëdokujt’ or ‘E dyta ishte premtuese për komfort’ or ‘Detyra e dytë ka qenë
përkrahja’; ‘Detyra e saj e dytë do t’i jepte mbështetje’ show that students had
difficulties translating the English infinitive clause as subject/predicative
complement and this is the reason why their sentences are meaningless. Some
of them did not translate the infinitive clause at all (Detyra e saj e dytë
ishte,…). It can be supposed that they were unable to find the proper Albanian
translation of the English infinitive clause as subject/predicative complement
or they did not understand the words in the infinitive subordinate clause. In
some other students’ translations, it can be noticed that the Albanian
subordinate clause does not express the meaning of the English infinitive
clause even though the structure is correct (‘Detyra e saj e dytë ishte të tregonte
rehatinë e saj’; ‘Detyra e saj e dytë ishte të bënte sefa’; Detyra e saj e dytë
ishte që të kishte besim’; ‘Detyra e saj e dytë ishte të prezentojë rehatinë’;
‘Detyra e saj e dytë ishte të gjej rehat’; Detyra e saj e dytë ishte të reklamoj
rehatinë e saj’).

According to the test results, fifty-four percent (54%) of the high school
students correctly translated the subordinate clause functioning as subject/
predicative complement while seventy percent (70%) of the SEEU students,
seventy percent (70%) of the AAB students and sixty-four percent (64%) of the
FA students correctly translated the subordinate clause functioning as
subject/predicative complement.
Not a very high percentage is shown by the students of all educational institutions. It is noticed that they had especially problems in understanding and translating the subject/predicative complement function since most of them translated properly the main clause.

Analysis of the example of infinitive subordinate clause as object complement of the sentence

Students were requested to translate the sentence below:

She could hardly believe it to be only their second meeting.

In most English complex sentences containing the function of object complement, the Albanian correspondent functions as direct object. The same case is with our example above. The translated version ‘Nuk mund ta besonte se ishte vetëm takimi i dytë’ is also an Albanian complex sentence whose subordinate clause in bold is realized by a finite clause with the conjunction ‘se’ and performs the function of the direct object.

The mistakes here could be because the Albanian infinitive does not perform the function of object complement. Whenever this function is found in a complex sentence and has to be translated in Albanian, it performs different
functions. Most students translated it mistakenly. Their Albanian versions:

- ‘Ajo nuk e besoi atë vetëm në takimin e tyre të dytë’; ‘Ajo beson shumë në takimin e tyre të dytë’; ‘Do t’i besonte më tepër pas takimit të dytë’ are simple sentences and have a very different meaning from that of English sentence.
- There are also cases when the Albanian translation is also a complex sentence but it does not express the meaning of the English sentence: ‘Ajo mezi besonte sepse ishte ishëm takimi i tyre i dytë’; ‘Ajo beson se do të jetë takimi i tyre i dytë’; ‘Ajo duhet shumë të besoj pasi që është vetëm hera e dytë e takimit’.

Several students tried to include the Albanian infinitive in their translations:

- ‘Ajo vështirë e kishte për të besuar që të bëhej takimi special dhe i vetëm i tyre’ which stil is not correct.
- One more mistake involves the usage of incorrect tense in the subordinate clause. In the following translations ‘Ajo mezi besonte që do të jetë takimi i tyre i dytë’; ‘Ajo mezi besonte që do të ishte takimi i tyre i dytë’ and ‘Ajo nuk mund ta besonte se është vetëm takimi i tyre’ students used a wrong tense. They used the Albanian future tense, future of the past tense and present simple tense instead of the past simple tense. This type of mistake can affect meaning or cause confusion.

Forty-two percent (42%) of the high school students’ responses were correct with the function of object complement while sixty-five percent (65%) of the SEEU students’ responses, sixty percent (60%) of the AAB students’ responses and sixty percent (60%) of the FA students were correct.

It is thought that the sentences containing the object complement function are very difficult to be understood. This is the reason of the low percentage performed by students.

Analysis of examples of English gerundial subordinate clauses in six different nominal functions

Analysis of the example of gerundial subordinate clause as subject of the sentence

Students had to translate the example below:

**Telling unimportant things by telephone is expensive.**

The gerundial subordinate clause is mostly translated in Albanian with a finite clause introduced by a verb phrase in imperfect subjunctive mood with the particle ‘të’ (*Të tregosh/të thuash gjëra të parëndësishme në telefon kushton*). Regarding the function, the subordinate clauses in both languages perform the function of the subject. The Albanian Gheg form ‘Me tregu gjëra të parëndësishme në telefon kushton’ used in some of the students’ translations is also correct. Very few students avoided the translation of gerundial clause.

Although they used a different form of translation – a noun phrase: ‘Bisedat jo të rendësishme në telefon kushtojnë’ or ‘Bisedat e panovojshme në telefon janë të shtrenjta’, it makes sense in Albanian.

The most common mistake made by students is their attempt to use the same structure in their translations. It means a non-finite form respectively the Albanian gerundial structure: ‘Duke treguar gjëra të parëndësishme permes telefonit është e shtrenjtë’ or the Albanian infinitive structure: ‘Eshthë e shtrenjtë për të treguar gjëra të panevojshme në telefon’. But both these forms
of translation are grammatically and semantically incorrect. Some students used a noun phrase ‘Tregimi i gjërave të parëndësishme përmes telefonit është shtrenjtë’; ‘Thënia e gjërave të parëndësishme në telefon është e shtrenjtë’ or a neuter noun ‘Të folurit për gjëra të parëndësishme në telefon kushton’; ‘Të treguarit e gjërave të parëndësishme përmes telefonit është shtrenjtë’ as an Albanian correspondent of the English gerundial clause. But it is thought that these forms of translation make the sentence sound weird. A few students’ translations indicate very different meanings from the original English sentence. (‘Thotë gjëra të vërteta në telefon’; ‘Fliste gjëra të parëndësishme por telefonë ishte i shtrenjtë’; ‘Tregimi vjen nga telefoni’ etc).

The results from the test show that fifty-six percent (56%) of the high school students translated correctly the English subject function while seventy-five percent (75%) of SEEU students, sixty-six percent (66%) of the AAB students and sixty percent (60%) of the FA students translated correctly the English subject function.

The percentage above reveals that the students’ ability to translate the gerundial clause as subject is low. It is thought that the structure of gerundial clause was found difficult to be translated.

Analysis of the example of gerundial subordinate clause as extra posed subject of the sentence

Students had to translate the following example:

It is strange seeing you here.
When the above extra posed subject subordinate clause is translated into Albanian, it becomes very different in structure and function. In the Albanian translation “Éshtë e çuditshme që të shoh këtu” the subordinate clause, unlike English subordinate clause, is a finite clause with the conjunction ‘që’ and performs the function of the subject. A few students used the Albanian Gheg form “Éshtë e çuditshme me të pa ty këtu” which is also correct.

Most students translated the English gerundial clause incorrectly by using the Albanian gerundial clause or the Albanian infinitive clause (“Éshtë e çuditshme duke ju parë juve atje”; “Éshtë e drejtë për të parë ty këtu”). Several other students gave wrong translations too. The Albanian translation is a simple sentence which conveys a very different meaning from the English complex sentence (“Éshtë shikim i fortë ai”; “Shikimi është i çuditshëm”; “Ju dukeni shumë i çuditshëm”). This means that they understood most of the words comprising the English sentence but the gerundial clause was the reason why they could not give the required translation. A few students confused the tense of the main clause verb. Instead of the present simple tense, they used the past simple tense (“Ishte e çuditshme që të shoh këtu”).

Fifty-six percent (56%) of the high school students translated correctly the gerundial clause as extra posed subject while eighty percent (80%) of the SEEU students, seventy-two percent (72%) of the AAB students and seventy-six percent (76%) of the FA students translated correctly the gerundial clause as extra posed subject.

A lower percentage of high school students’ correct answers is also noticed here. It can be said that this structure has not been taught to them.

Analysis of the example of gerundial subordinate clause as direct object of the sentence

Students had to translate the example below:

She advised waiting until tomorrow.

The Albanian translation of the gerundial clause above ‘Ajo më/na këshilloi të prisja / të prisnim deri nesër’ is similar functionally but is different
structurally. It is a finite clause introduced by a verb phrase in imperfect subjunctive mood with the particle ‘të’.

The most common mistake is the usage of the Albanian gerundial clause or infinitive clause as options to translate the English gerundial clause (‘Ajo është duke pritur që dje për tu këshilluar’; ‘Ajo këshilloi duke pritur të nesërmen’; ‘Ajo priste duke këshilluar atë’; ‘Ajo u mendua duke pritur deri nesër’; ‘Ajo këshilloi për të pritur deri nesër’). Here is also noticed the difficulty to translate the English gerundial clause as direct object even though all the words were familiar to the students. Several students provided simple sentences as an optional translation in Albanian but they do not give the meaning that the English sentence does (‘Këshillat e saj prisnin deri të nesërmen’; ‘Ajo priste këshilla deri sot’; ‘Ajo këshillë do të pret deri nesër’). A few students could not understand that both the main verb and the gerundial clause describe past actions in the English sentence. They used the correct tense (past simple tense) in the main clause but the incorrect tense (present simple tense instead of past simple tense) in the subordinate clause (‘Ajo më këshilloi të pres deri nesër’; ‘Ajo na këshilloi të presim deri nesër’).

Based on the test results, forty percent (40%) of the secondary school students correctly translated the gerundial clause that functions as direct object clause while sixty percent (60%) of SEEU students, fifty-four percent (54%) of the AAB students and forty-four percent (44%) of the FA students translated correctly the gerundial clause that functions as direct object clause.

A very low percentage is shown when translating the gerundial clause as direct object. It is thought that students had difficulties in giving the right translation of the gerundial clause even though they understood the words.

Analysis of the example of gerundial subordinate clause as subject/predicative complement of the sentence

The following example was asked to be translated by students:

Our task now is fighting for freedom.
The finite clause introduced by a verb phrase in imperfect subjunctive mood with the particle ‘të’ is the structure used mostly to translate the above subject/predicative complement clause in Albanian (‘Detyra jonë është të luftojmë për lirinë’). A translation using a conjunctive finite clause is also possible (‘Detyra jonë është që të luftojmë për lirinë’ – the conjunction is ‘që’). Regarding the function, the subordinate clauses in both languages perform the function of subject/predicative complement. The Albanian Gheg form is also used here as a form of translation by some students (‘Detyra jonë është me luftue për lirinë’) and of course it can be considered as correct.

The most noticed mistake here is the wrong translation of the English gerundial clause. The Albanian gerundial clause used by students as their form of translation makes the Albanian sentence incorrect grammatically and semantically (‘Detyra jonë është duke luftuar për liri’). Another form of translation such as the simple sentences: ‘Detyra jonë tani po lufton për lirinë’ or ‘Detyra jonë bënë luftë për liri’; ‘Detyrat tona luftojnë për liri’ are also incorrect since they change completely the meaning of the English sentence. The following translation: ‘Detyra jonë ishte të luftojmë për lirinë’ show the students’ mistake in regards to using the past simple tense instead of present simple tense.

Sixty percent (60%) of the secondary school students gave correct translation of the gerundial clause as subject/predicative complement while eighty percent (80%) of the SEEU students, eighty-eight percent (88%) of the AAB students and sixty-eight percent (68%) of the FA students gave correct translation of the gerundial clause as subject/predicative complement.

The high school and FA students’ performance is lower than the other institutions. It is supposed that they had difficulties in finding the appropriate corresponding structure in Albanian.
Analysis of the example of gerundial subordinate clause as object complement of the sentence

The example below was asked to be translated by students:

I do not find myself making any use of the word sacrifice.

The Albanian translation of the gerundial clause above as object complement differs structurally and functionally (‘Vë re se nuk po e përdor fare fjalën sakrificë’). The Albanian subordinate clause is a finite clause with the conjunction ‘se’ and has the function of direct object.

From the percentage below, it can be said that a lot of students from all the educational institutions could not translate the English complex sentence containing a subordinate clause that functions as object complement. Most of the students used the Albanian gerundial clause or Albanian infinitive clause as their translation. They also confused the meaning of the main verb ‘find’. These are two elements that make their translations gramatically incorrect and without meaning. It is thought that students translated literally our example as seen in the following sentences (‘Nuk e giej veten duke përdorur ndonjë sakrificë për fjalën’; ‘Nuk e giej veten time duke bërë çdo përdorim fjalë si sakrificë’; ‘Nuk e giej veten duke bërë ndonjë sakrificë’; ‘Nuk e giej veten duke vendoxor fjalë të sakrifikuar’; ‘Nuk e giej veten për të përdorur fjalë sakrifikuëse’; ‘Nuk e giej veten për të bërë të përdorshme sakrificat’).

Simple sentence as a translation is also noticed here but they miss the proper structure and meaning (‘Nuk e përgatis veten për ndonjë sakrificë’; Unë nuk kisha mbaruar ende sakrificat’; ‘E ka menduar veten time për sakrificëa’; ‘Nuk e giej veten të dobishme’).

The data collected from the test show that twenty percent (20%) of the high school students correctly translated the gerundial object complement clause while sixty percent (60%) of the SEEU students, forty-four percent (44%) of the AAB students and thirty-two percent (32%) of the FA students correctly translated the gerundial object complement clause.

A higher performance of SEE students is noticed here. It is thought that they practiced more the nominal object complement function.
Analysis of the example of gerundial subordinate clause as object of preposition of the sentence

Students were asked to translate the following sentence:

You are afraid of giving me trouble.

In most cases the object of preposition function becomes a direct object function in Albanian translation. The same difference is also noticed in the translation of our example. The structure is different as well. Unlike English, it is a finite clause introduced by a verb phrase in imperfect subjunctive mood with the particle ‘të’ (‘Keni frikë të më shqetësoni’). Another translation used by students is also correct (‘Ti frikësohesh se më fut në telashe’) even though the subordinate clause differs in structure and function from the first translation. It is a finite clause with the conjunction ‘se’ and functions as an adverbial clause of reason.

The usage of the Albanian infinitive clause or in some cases of the Albanian gerundial clause to translate the English gerundial clause is incorrect as it can be seen in the following translations: ‘Ti je i frikësuar për të më shqetëuar mua’; ‘Ti je i frikësuar për të më dhënë probleme’; ‘Ti je i shqetëuar për të më shkaktuar mua probleme’; ‘Ti je i frikësuar duke më dhënë mua shqetësim’; ‘Ti je duke u frikësuar të bësh probleme’. The infinitive of ablative case was also used by some students (‘A frikësohesh së më dhëni mua telashe’ and this translation is also not correct. Some other forms of translations indicate a lot of mistakes in structure and meaning (‘Ti je i mërztitur’; ‘Ju leni të sjellshem dhe të ndershëm’; ‘Ti je i mirëpritur’). The following sentences also fail to convey the real message of the source sentence (‘Ti nuk frikësohesh të më bezdisësh’; ‘Ju leni i frikësuar të më tregoni mua telashet’; ‘Ti je i frikësuar të më bësh mua probleme’; ‘Ti je i trishtuar të më japësh telashe’).
According to the results of the test, fifty percent (50%) of the secondary school students translated correctly the gerundial clause that functions as object of preposition while sixty-five percent (65%) of the SEEU students, sixty-two percent (62%) of the AAB students and sixty-four percent (64%) of the FA students translated correctly the gerundial clause that functions as object of preposition.

The reason of this percentage is that students did not understand the right meaning of the verb ‘give’ in that context.

Conclusions

This study has analyzed the mistakes that students made whilst translating the English infinitive and gerundial subordinate clauses into Albanian. The analysis is based on the structure and function of infinitive and gerundial subordinate clauses. This research came to the following conclusions:

The analysis regarding the mistakes that EFL students make whilst translating the nominal infinitive and gerundial subordinate clauses from English to Albanian show that the most common mistakes made by students are the following ones: mistakes are usually made in the use of proper structure. Students used the Albanian infinitive or gerundial clause as the corresponding form of translation which is wrong and the meaning is not the same; mistakes are also made in the tense usage while translating the English sentences containing nominal infinitive and gerundial clauses. Students used a wrong tense which made the sentence syntactically incorrect; mistakes are also encountered when translating the English infinitive or gerundial subordinate clause. Students translated it as the main predicator in Albanian which is not correct because it expresses a very different meaning from the English sentence.

According to the test results obtained, it is thought that the English syntax course helps students in translating the nominal infinitive and gerundial subordinate clauses as they showed better performance than the high school students who learned these clauses just in terms of structure or as patterns of verbs.

References

1. Translate the following sentences into Albanian:

   To be sitting long after dinner was a confinement.

   It is hard to live away from my family.

   His sister remembered to lock the door.
1 Her second duty was to promote her comfort.
2 She could hardly believe it to be only their second meeting.
3 Telling unimportant things by telephone is expensive.
4 It is strange seeing you here.
5 She advised waiting until tomorrow.
6 Our task now is fighting for freedom.
7 I do not find myself making any use of the word sacrifice.
8 You are afraid of giving me trouble.