

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Gerunds are a part of grammar, specifically the structural rules of the English language. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a gerund is a verb form that has been modified to function as a noun. Raflis et. al (2018) stated that gerunds can be used in multiple grammatical roles and mastering gerunds can guide learners create more complex sentences and improve language proficiency (p. 60-61). Jufrizal et al. (2021) described gerund as linguistically distinctive due to their dual nature, as they result from both nominalization and verbalization processes, making them a productive element in English grammar (p. 1). Furthermore, Raflis et al. (2018) stated that gerund differs from other grammatical constructions in English because they have the capacity to transform a verb into a noun (p. 60). However, their dual nature can cause confusion to foreign learners and failing to understand gerunds can have a significant effect on a learner's overall English proficiency. Additionally, their communicative abilities can be limited, making it harder for them to express ideas clearly and confidently in both spoken and written English (Larsen-Freeman, 2015, p. 6-7).

In Indonesia, English is considered a vital skill for advancing education. However, the average English national exam scores for all middle schools in Samarinda was 54.6 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). Which is below the expected or ideal level of proficiency. Furthermore, The Mayor of Samarinda, Andi Harun, emphasized the city government's commitment to enhancing the Human Capital Index (HCI) by raising students' English proficiency levels in Samarinda. The low English national exam scores in Samarinda reflect the urgent need for better English education, supporting the mayor's initiative to improve the Human Capital Index (HCI).

The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has provided official textbooks to support the implementation of the

Merdeka Curriculum. These textbooks are available in various formats, such as PDF and audio. There have been various initiatives aimed at increasing students' engagement in learning English through digital tools like mobile apps, e-books, and audio resources. Despite these efforts, some of these tools face challenges such as limited accessibility and lack of interactivity. Research conducted by Zhang (2022) stated that for non-native middle school students, learning English can be challenging. These difficulties often result in a gradual decline in interest. The implementation of engaging and interactive learning process is a strategy needed in classrooms to help students' loss of motivation when it comes to learning a foreign language.

Research by Ardiel et al. (2024) concluded that to support English learning, ensuring effective engagement through website tool that includes comprehensive tutorials, interactive exercises, and quizzes will significantly improve the language learning process. Based on this insight, creating a website focused on teaching English gerunds is important for boosting students' engagement during lessons, resulting in a better understanding towards gerunds and improving their English proficiency. Websites are a highly effective learning tool due to their easy accessibility and versatility. Through this project, the author hopes to assist teachers in igniting students' interest in learning gerunds and improving their study outcomes.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Based on the background described above, the existing problem can be summed up into:

1. The lack of interactive learning media for teaching gerunds makes it difficult for students to grasp the concept, leading to a lack of interest in learning.
2. Many students struggle to understand gerund due to the structural differences between their first language and English, which affects their writing and speaking skills.

Therefore, the author concluded a problem statement as follows:

How can a mobile website about ‘gerund’ be designed to improve English proficiency at the middle school level?

### **1.3 Problem Scope**

This study focuses on designing a mobile website about gerunds to enhance English proficiency among middle school students. Geographically, the research is limited to Samarinda. Demographically, the primary target audience consists of male and female students aged 12 to 15 who are currently studying at the middle school level and belong to the socioeconomic status (SES) B category. The study targets students who are motivated to continuously improve their language proficiency. The scope of this project is to develop a learning media that simplifies the learning process and enhances students' understanding of gerunds.

### **1.4 Research Objective**

Based on the problem scope written, the objective of this project is to design a mobile website about ‘gerund’ to improve English proficiency at the middle school level.

### **1.5 Research Benefit**

In alignment with the research objectives, this final project is anticipated to contribute to the following aspects:

#### **1. Theoretical Benefit:**

The theoretical benefit of this project is to create a mobile website about gerund that contributes to improve students' English proficiency levels. By creating a mobile website focused on gerunds, the project provides a resource that supports the understanding and application of gerunds in English. This can enhance students' grammatical knowledge, which in turn contributes to improving their overall English proficiency.

## 2. Practical Benefit:

The practical benefit of this project is to improve English proficiency at the middle school level. By using a mobile website, students can study grammar more flexibly and interactively. It helps reinforce what is taught in class and provides additional support for students who may need extra practice, ultimately making grammar learning more effective and engaging.

