

## A Study of Complements of Perception Verbs

Koji Nabeya

In this report, I am concerned with the relation between the internal structure of the Participle Perception Verb Complement (PPVC) and its meaning. The PPVCs in (1a, b), which are italicized, both have two readings: one is the object reading, as shown in (2a), and the other is the event reading, as shown in (2b). In contrast, the sentence in (1c) has only the event reading.

- (1) a. I saw *the moon rising over the mountain* last night.  
 b. *The moon rising over the mountain* was seen by many people last night.  
 c. The moon was seen (by me) rising over the mountain last night.
- (2) a. the moon which rose over the mountain.  
 b. the event that the moon was rising over the mountain.

It has often been suggested that the complement of the perception verb consists of a NP unit. Declerck (1982) and Sakakibara (1981) assign the PPVC in (1a) the clausal structure in (3a), and the PPVC in (1b) the NP unit structure in (3b).

- (3) a. I saw [<sub>s</sub> the moon rising over the mountain] last night.  
 b. [<sub>NP</sub> The moon [<sub>s</sub> rising over the mountain]] was seen by many people last night.

They explain that the sentence in (1c) is derived from the structure in (3a) by subject raising.

There are, however, some problems in their analysis. First, tensed verbs can agree both in singular and in plural when a PPVC is in subject position.

- (4) a. The moons of Jupiter rising over the mountain have/has been seen by many people last night. (Inada (1989:66))  
 b. The cars running in the yard was/were quite a sight.
- (5) That UNO will be elected and that the sanctions will be lifted is/??are likely. (McCloskey (1991:565))
- (6) The boys running there and the girls swimming here \*is/are all students.

If we suppose that the PPVC in subject position consists of a NP unit, we must think tensed verbs agree in plural when the PPVC with the plural NP head is in subject position, as shown in (6). In fact, however, tensed verbs can agree in singular as the conjoined clause in (5) agrees in singular. This fact seems to indicate that the PPVC in subject position has not only a NP unit structure but also a clausal structure.

Furthermore, what is implied by the analyses of Declerck and Sakakibara is that two readings come from a single structure. Declerck (1982) and Sakakibara (1981) consider the NP unit shown in (3b) to be the structure called Pseudo-modifier that possesses both characters of clauses and those of NPs. According to their analyses, it follows that the PPVC in subject position as in (3b) is the NP unit that can express two readings because of the NP-like character of the pseudo-modifier. It is parallel to NPs used as concealed questions as in (7) below.

(7) John told me *the street that Mary lived on*.

However, I think that the PPVC must be distinguished from the concealed question. This is because the PPVC doesn't behave like clauses, while the NP as a concealed question in (8) behaves like a clause as shown in (9).

(8) a. John told the street that Mary lived on (to me).

b. John told \*(me) the street that Mary lived on.

(9) a. \*John told that Mary was a spy (to me).

b. John told the story (to me).

(10) a. John told the story (to me).

b. John told (me) the story.

I hypothesize that each of the PPVCs in (1a, b) has two different structures: the NP structure and the clausal structure. I further assume that the PPVC as a NP unit can only express the object reading and that the event reading is conveyed by another structure, that is, by the clausal structure. An important advantage of my analysis is that it makes clear the relation between the reading and the structure. Notice that this line of reasoning gives a simple account of the semantic ambiguity of (1a, b). Declerck (1982) and Sakakibara (1981) do not concern themselves with this point. In addition, assuming that (1c) can be derived only from the clausal structure, not from the NP unit structure, we can straightforwardly account for the fact that (1c) has only the event reading. As far as the structural difference between the PPVC in subject position and that in object position is concerned, there are some syntactic problems unsolved and they need further consideration.

To conclude, it can be said that there is one-to-one correspondence between the structure of the PPVC and its meaning. The PPVC can be associated with the clausal structure and a NP unit structure irrespective of its structural position. The event reading comes from the clausal structure and the object reading from the NP unit structure.