

## Syntax and Semantics of Perception Verb Complements

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In this report, I attempt to analyze some of the syntactic and semantic features of the Participle Perception Verb Complement (PPVC). The perception verb selects a participle complement but not a gerund complement. It is often said that the PPVC is different from the gerund complement in the possibility of extraction. The subject of the PPVC can be extracted in contrast to that of the gerund. The PPVC in object position in (1) has been analyzed as having both the structure of the sentence and that of the NP.

- (1) I saw the moon rising over the mountain.

Declerck (1982) and Sakakibara (1981) suggest that the PPVC in subject position of the matrix clause must have an NP structure as shown in (2) because the PPVC whose head is an imperceptible noun like *the wind* and *it* (expletive) cannot occur in subject position, while *that*-clauses and gerunds can occur as the subject complement.

- (2) [<sub>NP</sub> The moon [<sub>S</sub> rising over the mountain]] was seen (by me) last night.

Their analyses can solve a lot of syntactic problems about the PPVC, in particular, concerning the head of the PPVC. However, there are some problems about the relation between the syntactic structure and the meaning. First, under their analyses, it is unclear how the same NP structure corresponds to those quite different interpretations. It is well-known that PPVCs can have two readings, viz., the object reading and the event reading. For example, the PPVC in (1) and (2) can be interpreted as meaning either "I saw a specific object" or "I saw a certain event". Second, their analyses predict that the PPVC whose head is a plural pronoun must agree in plural. However, they often agree in singular as below:

- (3) a. Them trying to play Brahams together {is/\*are} quite a sight.  
b. Us trying to make up and be friends {was/\*were} quite a sight.

In addition, the conjunct PPVC can agree in singular, which is parallel to the syntactic behavior of the conjoined *wh*-clause in (4b). The *wh*-clause is analyzed as having clausal structure.

- (4) a. John singing the song and Mary playing the piano {??is/are} quite a sight.  
b. Where Tom lives and what house he lives in {??is/are} unclear.  
c. The boy who is singing the song and the girl who is playing the piano {\*is/are} junior high school students.

Their analyses cannot be applied to the similarity between (4a) and (4b) because the conjoined NPs must agree in plural as in (4c). It can be concluded from these facts that the PPVC has a structure of a sentence.

I propose that one-to-one correspondence is necessary between the structure of the PPVC and its meaning: the clausal structure expresses the event reading, and the NP structure expresses the object reading.

- (5) a. I saw [<sub>S</sub> the moon rising over the mountain]. (event reading)  
 b. I saw [<sub>NP</sub> the moon<sub>i</sub> [<sub>S</sub> t<sub>i</sub> rising over the mountain]]. (object reading)

My proposal can solve some problems. First, an important advantage of my analysis is that it makes clear the relation between the reading and the structure. Because the object raising is highly restricted, it is not preferable to think that the sentence in (6) is derived from (5b), in which the object raising occurs. We can correctly predict that the sentence in (6) only has the event reading if we assume one-to-one correspondence between the structure of the PPVC and its meaning.

- (6) The moon<sub>i</sub> was seen [<sub>S</sub> t<sub>i</sub> rising over the mountain] last night. (event reading)

Second, my analysis can correctly give an account of the difference in acceptability between (7a) and (7b), which is pointed out in Sakakibara (1981).

- (7) a. ?The wind was seen rusting the leaves. (event reading)  
 b. \*The wind was seen rusting the leaves. (object reading)

The difference between (7a) and (7b) seems to indicate that there is a certain syntactic difference between the underlying PPVC having the object reading and that expressing the event reading. The general semantic restriction on the object of perception verbs seems to have something to do with the difference in acceptability between (7a) and (7b). The referent of *Tom* has to be perceived by the children in (9b), but not so in (9a).

- (9) a. The children saw Tom moving the puppets.  
 b. Tom moving the puppets was seen by the children.

This fact seems to explain why sentence (7b) is not perfectly acceptable though it expresses the event reading and has the clausal structure. We can predict that the PPVC whose head is an imperceptible noun cannot occur in subject position as follows:

- (10) \* It raining violently outside was seen (by me) last night.

To conclude, there is one-to-one correspondence between the structure of the PPVC and its meaning. The PPVC can be associated with a clausal structure and an NP structure irrespective of its structural position. It can also be said that the general semantic restriction that the subject of sensory verbs must be perceived plays a role in the selection of the subject complement.

#### SELECTED REFERENCES

- Declerck, R. (1981) "On the Role of the Progressive Aspect in Nonfinite Perception Verb Complements," *Glossa* 15, 83-114./Declerck, R. (1982) "The Triple Origin of Participial Perception Verb Complements," *Linguistic Analysis* 10, 1-26./Sakakibara, H. (1980) "Chikakudoshi to Hobunsentaku," *Eigogaku* 22, 89-100./Sakakibara, H. (1981) "Eigo no Chikakudoshi no Hobunkozo ni Tsuite," *Gendai no Eigogaku*, 106-116, Kaitakusha, Tokyo.