

The Realization of Meaning Differences between English Resultative and Depictive Predication Constructions in Focus Theory

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Noh, Bokyung. 2001. **The Realization of Meaning Differences between English Resultative and Depictive Predication Constructions in Focus Theory**. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 1-2, 273-293. In this paper, I examine the phenomenon of English depictive and resultative predications with specific attention given to the relation between accentual focus structure and argument structure. The goal is pursued primarily through a production experiment and analyses to establish the interconnection between focus and argument structure. The central claim is that the resultative predicate forms a complex predicate with a main verb, whereas the depictive predicate behaves as an adjunct in English secondary constructions. The result shows that the relationship between focus and accent depends at least in part on their argument structure, confirming that current focus theories about argument-head and adjunct-head structures in primary predication constructions can be extended to secondary predication constructions.

1. Introduction

Focus is a syntactic feature that is assigned to a syntactic node in the syntactic tree and consequently triggers a specific prosodic realization, on the one hand, and semantic interpretation on the other (Jackendoff 1972). This paper looks at how the theory of focus is interrelated with prosodic phonology by looking at the prosodic realizations of depictive and resultative predication constructions. I will see that a phonological phrase within a focus reflects argument structure. In doing so, focus provides *insights into the set-up of the syntax-prosody interface*. To address this issue, the following limitations were considered to

inquire the normal accentual patterns with regard to the argument-head and adjunct-head relations.

First, narrow focus is often assumed to indicate contrastiveness, as shown in (1a). Note that []_F denotes the focus domain. In (1a), the focus is on *an apple*, where the entity was at issue. On the other hand, broad focus does not show such a direct relationship between focus and accent, as shown in (1b). In (1b), the focus is on *ate an apple*, where the activity he performed was at issue, denoting where to assign the accent in the focus, although in both cases the NP *an apple* is accented.

- (1) a. What did you ate? I ate [an APPLE]_F
 b. What did you do? I [ate an APPLE]_F

Second, the distinction between new and given plays an important role in explaining patterns of intonational prominence in English. Simply, the entities denoting new information are accented, while those denoting old information are deaccented. In (2), the accent is on *left* in the first sentence because it is new information, whereas it is on another new entity, *a mechanic*, in the second clause. The word *the car* fails to have accent in a context where the entity to which it refers is already mentioned. This supports the assumption that the discourse status of a constituent as old or given may prevent it from being the target of accent percolation.

- (2) What did you do when your car broke down?
 I [LEFT the car]_F Then I [called a MECHANIC]_F

Third, it is well known that arguments tend to be more accented than predicates and that predicates and adjuncts are both accented when they are adjacent to each other (Inkelas & Zec 1995). Given this, I will discuss the issue based on

phonological phrasing. Look at the examples in (3).

- (3) How did you know that Mary got a cold?
 a. She [(took an ASPIRIN)]_F
 b. She [(SNEEZED)(at SCHOOL)]_F

In (3a), accent falls on the argument *aspirin* within a VP, whereas both the NP and the PP have accents in (3b). With regard to the phonological phrase, following Uhmann (1991), since each phonological phrase has an accent, we must assume that the VP forms a single phonological phrase in (3a), whereas in (3b) a verb and a PP forms a separate phonological phrase, as indicated by parentheses. The principle behind phonological phrase formation follows Uhmann's (1991) proposal that a head and an argument can form a single phonological phrase, whereas a head and an adjunct form separate phonological phrases. Given this, this paper will address two issues:

- (4) What are the accentual patterns of depictive and resultative predications?
 (5) How can the current focus theory of argument-head and adjunct-head structure be extended into English secondary predication?

2. Previous Researches and Outstanding Problems

Depictive predications (D-predications) and Resultative predications (R-predications) are two types of English secondary predications, as shown in (6) and (7).

- (6) I cut my bread fresh. (D-predication)

(7) I nailed the window shut. (R-predication)

Although the predication relations in the sentences occur in addition to their main verbs, they have different interpretations. For example, the predication in (6) indicates a depictive reading, meaning that when I cut my bread, it was fresh. In contrast, (7) means that I caused the window to be permanently shut by nailing it. With respect to argument structure, the most interesting work in focus is from Gussenhoven (1992) and Winkler (1997).

Both Gussenhoven (1992) and Winkler (1997) address that with regard to focus, resultative and depictive predications have distinctive accentual patterns, as shown in (8) and (9).

(8) I [painted the HOUSE red]_F (R-predication)

(9) I [drank the TEA HOT]_F (D-predication)

According to their observations, when focus is assigned to a VP, the direct object NP is accented in R-predication shown in (8), while in D-predications, both the NP and the depictive are accented, as in (9). Both argue that sentence accentual patterns reflect argument structure with the claim that resultative predicates (R-predicates) form head-argument relations, while depictive predicates (D-predicates) form head-adjunct relations. This means that the differences between R- and D-predicates in argument structure are presented by distinct accentual patterns in focus structure, as in other cases of head-argument and head-adjunct configurations.

However, arguments such as Gussenhoven and Winkler may not be entirely correct (Noh 2001). First, there is no empirical evidence to support in Gussenhoven's work. He did not show any experimental observations for the accentual patterns. He just

assumed the accentual patterns based on the general argument structures involved in R-predications and D-predications. Second, Winkler's work has some problems in the experimental design. The number of her subjects is so small that the results are hardly representative. Only three or four native speakers were involved in two pitch extraction experiments with English and German data. In addition, she did not provide any context for the subjects in the experiments. The problem with a lack of provided context is that subjects would classify certain expressions as given because they are given in the particular context they might imagine, causing another accentual patterns. So, the experimental results are sometimes not as convincing as one would like to see. Third, as noted by Noh (2001), phonological phrases should be employed as a means to explain the meaning differences, even explaining a few cases where both secondary subject NPs and secondary predicates are accented in D- and R-predications. For example, the two sentences *I drank the tea hot* and *I painted the door black* might have identical accentual structure by having accents on the NPs *the tea*, *the door* and its secondary predicates *hot*, *black*. However, they have different phonological phrase formations such as I (painted the DOOR Black), I (drank the TEA)(HOT): the R-predicate *black* forms a single phonological phrase as a second argument of a main verb, but this is not possible in D-predications.

3. Experiment

3.1. Hypotheses

The experiments tested two hypotheses derived from current theories of the interaction between focus, argument structure, and phonological phrasing. More specifically, the hypotheses relate the discussion of the accentual properties of D-predications and R-predications. Note that the hypotheses hold only for broad

focus. The hypotheses are:

- (10) If there is just one main accent,
H1: the Secondary Predicate (SP) is accented in depictive predications.
H2: the secondary subject NP is accented in resultative predications.

Given this, four variables, secondary subject noun phrase (NP), secondary predicate (SP), NP=SP and Other were used with the following operational definitions.

- (11) Individual variables:
- a. NP (Noun Phrase): When the main accent fell on a secondary subject NP, the test item was coded as NP.
 - b. SP (Secondary Predicate): When the main accent fell on a secondary predicate (either on a R-predicate or on a D-predicate), the item was coded as SP.
 - c. NP=SP: When a main accent fell equally on both a secondary subject NP and a secondary predicate, it was coded as NP=SP. This variable included the cases where it was not clear which element had a stronger accent where both NP and SP were accented.
 - d. Other: When accentual patterns did not correspond to any of the above ((11a)-(11c)), or when the accent location was not clear enough to judge, the item was coded in this way.

3.2. Judgement Processes

Each subjects utterance was recorded on a separate cassette tape. A native speaker of English, born and raised on the West Coast of the US, judged the ten subjects utterances. At the time of the judgments, she was a doctoral student in the Department

of Linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin. The judge was given ten copies of a script that I prepared.

The judge was instructed to listen to the subjects utterances carefully, and then to determine which of the four variables best corresponded to the placement of the accent. The judge double-checked all the data after one week to make sure that she had not made any mistakes. Her handwritten raw data in the judge's script were entered into the Data Entry program of the SPSS for Windows Statistical package.

3.3. Subjects

Ten subjects participated in this experiment. All were middle-class native speakers of American English, born and raised in the US. The same subjects participated in all four experiments. These three males and seven females were between the ages of 20 and 50. All of them were college graduates, and eight were enrolled in graduate programs at the University of Texas at Austin.

3.4. Recording Stimuli

The stimuli were recorded by a female doctoral student in the Foreign Language Education program who was not familiar with the purposes or the hypotheses of the experiments. She was a native speaker of American English, having grown up in the US. All of the test items and filler items were randomized to form a single 70-item speakers script. Among them, She recorded question sentences. They were punctuated, so that the meaning was clear to the speaker. An audio cassette recorder was used for the recording. The speaker was instructed to read each test item at a natural rate and with rhythm, and was asked to try to hold the rate and rhythm constant throughout the script. There were pauses of 4-5 seconds between each question. She made sure the items met the condition that the

sentences sounded the way she would normally say them. Any items that the speaker felt to be unnatural were immediately re-recorded and reviewed once again. The actual recording time lasted about one hour. When the speaker finished the recording, the experimenter listened to all of the items without the script and checked each item a second time. This provided a double-check to ensure that the utterances were appropriate for their intended reading; no discrepancies were found.

3.5. Materials

Materials consisted of 35 question-answer pairs (see APPENDIX for a complete list). In this experiment, a context was set by a question. A question sentence sets up a VP focus in the following answer sentence. Test items contained either D-predicates or R-predicates, as shown in the examples. The secondary subjects (the direct objects) are underlined, and the secondary predicates are italicized. These annotations were not given in subjects' materials.

(12) Q: What did you do when you saw the thief enter your apartment at midnight?

A: I screamed my throat *raw*. (R-predication)

(13) Q: What did you do when you got a cold?

A: I drank the tea *hot*. (D-predication)

Among the test items, there were 20 R-predications and 15 D-predications. The experimental condition of givenness was controlled in all the test items by forming a question which established the answers argument (a secondary subject) as new. Each answer sentence consisted of a subject NP, a verb, a secondary subject and a secondary predicate (either a R- or D-predicate). In order to make the question more natural,

prepositional phrases and adjuncts were sometimes added to the answers. The 35 test items were randomly presented but in the same order for each subject.

3.6. Procedure

Each question-answer pair was written on a separate sheet of paper ($8\frac{1}{2}\times 5\frac{1}{2}$), which was tied together with a small ring so that subjects could easily turn to the next page.

Subjects were first asked to read an instruction script, which asked them to listen to each question from the cassette-tape deck and then to record the given answer, uttered as they would in the normal conversation. Subjects were told to produce natural-sounding utterances and to stop recording when they desired, for example, if they made errors in their productions or felt that their utterances were somewhat unnatural. These items were recorded again.

In the recording, subjects first read a given test item silently. A recorded stimulus was played right after the subject gave signal indicating they understood the question-answer pair. Once I received the signal from subjects, I played a recorded stimulus from a cassette-tape deck on a separate audio cassette recorder. After they read the next question-answer pair silently and signaled that they were ready, the next stimulus was provided. The recording and discussion took 30 minutes for each subject.

3.7. Results

This experiment tested the accentual differences between D-predications and R-predications in the production of answers to corresponding questions. Using cross-tabulation, the statistically significant relationship between accents and secondary predicates was tested. Table 1 presents the frequencies and percentages of accent location in D-predications and R-predications. The number within parentheses refer to the percentages of each variable

within each predication type.

<Table 1> The Frequencies and Percentages of Accent Location in Resultative and Depictive Predications

Predicates	Accent Location				Total
	NP	SP	NP=SP	Others	
R-pred.	104(52.5)	19(9.5)	76(38)	1(0.5)	200(100)
D-pred.	9(6)	83(55.3)	58(38.3)	0(0)	150(100)
Total	113	102	134	1	350

$$\chi^2=95.740, df=3, p<.001.$$

As a result, in R-predications, main accents tended to fall on secondary subject NPs (NP). One test item was coded as Other because its accentual pattern was unclear. More than a half of test items had main accents on secondary subject NPs in R-predications. In contrast, in D-predications, main accents tended to fall on D-predicates more often than other patterns. More than a half of test items had main accents on D-predicates. A chi-square test determined that, in general, R-predications differ significantly from D-predications in their accentual patterns, $\chi^2=95.740$, $df=3$, $p<.001$. The overall results provided clear support for Hypothesis 1 and Hypotheses 2, according to which D-predicates carry accents in contrast to R-predicates.

To test each hypothesis more clearly, the two categories, NP and SP, were compared where main accents fall. The other two categories, NP=SP and Other, were excluded. Table 2 shows D-predicates were accented significantly more often than R-predicates, $\chi^2=91.022$, $df=1$, $p<.001$. (Note that SP refers to either a D-predicate or a R-predicate, and NP refers to secondary subject NP)

<Table 2> The Frequencies and Percentages of Accented NPs and SPs in Resultative and Depictive Predications

Predicates	Accent Location		Total
	NP-accented	SP-accented	
R-pred.	104(92)	19(8)	113(100)
D-pred.	9(8)	83(92)	92(100)
Total	113	102	205

$X^2=91.022$, $df=1$, $p<.001$.

4. Analyses and Discussions

4.1. Analysis in Phonological Accentual Percolation Approach

Based on Accent Percolation approach (Gussenhoven 1992: Jacob 1991), the so-called Phonological Accent Percolation Approach (PAPA) I assume follows that argument-head structure is different from adjunct-head structure in sentence accentuation. In addition, following Uhmann (1991), this model relates accentual focus structure to phonological phrasing and shows that an argument-head structure forms a single phonological phrase, whereas an adjunct-head structure forms two phonological phrases, one containing a head, and the other containing an adjunct. In doing so, this model does not only capture how an argument-head structure differs from an adjunct-head structure in accentual focus structure, but also represents how the accentual differences are related with semantics. In this model, argument-head and adjunct-head structures are represented with four rules, Focus Assignment (FA), Phonological Phrase Formation (PPF), Accent Percolation (AP) and Final Strengthening (FS): The accent words are in capitals. The more strongly accented words are underlined.

(14) Argument-Head Structure

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---------------|
| a. | [pred argu] _F | FA |
| b. | [(pred argu)] _F | PPF |
| c. | [(pred ARGU)] _F | AP |
| d. | [(pred <u>ARGU</u>)] _F | FS (optional) |

(15) Adjunct-Head Structure

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| a. | [pred adj] _F | FA |
| b. | [(pred) (adj)] _F | PPF |
| c. | [(PRED) (ADJ)] _F | AP |
| d. | [(PRED) (<u>ADJ</u>)] _F | FS (optional) |

As shown in (14) and (15), both the argument-head structure and the adjunct-head structure go through the same stages, although the prosodic realizations are different. The FA rule determines a focus domain. Then, the PPF rule is applied based on Uhmann's proposal that each phonological phrase carries a single accent. Next, According to the AP rule (Gussenhoven 1983, 1992; Jacob 1991), accent goes to the argument in an argument-head structure, whereas accents go to the head and the adjunct respectively. Finally, the FS rule is optionally applied to the pitch-accented syllable in the last phonological phrase, where it is appropriate (cf. Chomsky & Halle 1968). In argument-head structure, as there is only one phonological phrase, it does not lead to any superficial difference, perhaps for strengthening the accented syllable on the argument. In contrast, in an adjunct-head structure, the adjunct, which follows the head, receives a stronger accent than its head. However, the FS rule might be sometimes optional or might not be detectable because the strength of an accent is not a continuous, as opposed to discrete dimension. So, at least for perception purposes, I might consider it optional.

Given this, the data collected in the production test were

congruent with the two hypotheses: D-predicates were accented significantly more often than R-predicates. Note that the accentual pattern concerns only the main accents in the broad focus VP. That is, (16) allows an accentual pattern in which a secondary (minor) accent is on the R-predicate.

(16) General Accentual Patterns

- a. vp[V NP SP]_F (R-predications)
- b. vp[V NP SP]_F (D-predications)

The accentual patterns of R-predication and D-predication is analyzed in the PAPA as follows:

(17) Focus Accentual Structure of Resultative Predication

- a. [pred argu result]_F FA
- b. [(pred argu result)]_F PPF
- c. [(pred ARGU result)]_F AP
- d. [(pred ARGU result)]_F FS(Optional)

(18) Focus Accentual Structure of Depictive Predication

- a. [pred argu dep]_F FA
- b. [(pred argu) (dep)]_F PPF
- c. [(pred ARGU)(DEP)]_F AP
- d. [(pred ARGU)(DEP)]_F FS(Optional)

First, broad focus is assigned to the VP. Second, whole VP forms a single phonological phrase in (17b), because it includes an argument-head construction. In (18b), the argument and the head form a single phonological phrase and the D-predicate forms an independent phonological phrase. Then, accent is realized on the argument (a secondary subject NP), by the AP rule in (17c). In (18c), accents are realized on the argument and the D-predicate each. Finally, the FS is optionally applied to the

single phonological phrase, strengthening the pitch-accented syllable of the secondary subject NP as in other argument-head structure, as shown in (17d). In (18d), the FS is optionally applied to the last phonological phrase, strengthening the accent on the D-predicate.

4.2. Syntax and Semantics with Prosodic Phonology

The Phonological Accent Percolation Approach (PAPA) I follow adopts a notion of phonological phrase as a diagnostic to relate prosodic phonology to syntax and to semantics.

With regard to syntax, the results in which R-predicates tend to be deaccented is consistent with previous studies. R-predicates have been analyzed to be lexically related with a primary predicate in argument structure (Dowty 1979; Krifka 1998; Winkler 1997). The generalization is that the main predicate and the R-predicate construct a discontinuous word item, as a single syntactic unit. Williams (1997) recently supports this idea by Heavy NP shift. For example, the sentence *John wiped the table clean* can appear in the form “V Predicate NP,” as in *John wiped clean the table*. This confirms that R-predicates form complex predicates with main verbs, indicating that R-predication forms head-argument structure. In contrast to R-predications, an accent on the secondary subject NP is hardly obtained in D-predications. That is, by the PPF, the phonological phrasing which includes a whole VP is not possible because an adjunct cannot be integrated within the phonological phrase containing an argument-head structure. Instead, D-predicates should have accents in their own phonological phrases as syntactic adjuncts, confirming the general idea that D-predicates, as syntactic adjuncts, are not lexically related to a matrix verb in argument structure. For example, the form “V Predicate NP” generates an unacceptable sentence in D-predications as in **I drank hot the tea*. That is, I suggest that the idea that, a head and a R-predicate

form a single syntactic unit, while a head and a D-predicate are separate syntactic units is reflected by their accentual patterns.

In the interaction between semantics and prosodic phonology, Jacobs (1991) proposes information integration and information autonomy. According to him, a non-head that is an object (e.g., *a house* in *built a house*) will trigger a different accentual pattern from the pattern that arises when the non-head is an adjunct (e.g., *slowly* in *speak slowly*). This is based on semantic processing. For example, in the VP *built a house*, the VP refers holistically to the activity of building. On the other hand, in the VP *speak slowly*, the head *speak* refers to the activity of speaking and then attributes a manner of action, *slowly*, to this property. In this sense, the former forms an information integration, whereas the latter does information autonomy.

Now consider the following observations. Note that the main accent is underlined in (19), and the strongest accented words are bold. I use the notation % for dispreference.

(19) Resultative Predications

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| a. | [(V <u>NP</u> SP)] _F | Integration |
| b. | %[(V NP) (SP)] _F | Almost dispreferred |

(20) Depictive Predications

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------|
| a. | %[(V <u>NP</u> SP)] _F | Almost dispreferred |
| b. | [(V NP) (<u>SP</u>)] _F | Non-Integration |

In R-predications, a R-predicate tend to be integrated into the phonological phrase including a head and an argument, as in (19). It indicates that a R-predicate does not function as a separate information unit from its main verb: the whole VP including the R-predicate behaves as a semantic (information) unit. For example, in the sentence *I wiped the window clean*, we do not first refer to the property of the activity of wiping and

then attribute this property to the result state by the R-predicate *clean*. On the other hand, as shown in (20), in D-predications, a D-predicate tends to form its own phonological phrase, forming information autonomy. For example, as in *I drank the tea hot*, the VP, *drank the tea* refers to a certain activity, namely drinking, and later attributes a state of the tea to the property. That is, the representations in (19) and (20) show the interaction between focus accentual patterns and semantic units by way of information integration and information autonomy. Being a part of the same semantic unit as the main verb, a R-predicate tends to be deaccented and integrated within a single phonological phrase. On the other hand, as a separate semantic unit from a main verb, a D-predicate tends to be accented so to form a separate phonological phrase. In this sense, phonological phrase reflects how R-predications are semantically different from D-predications, leading us to argue that accentual structure represents semantic units. Thus, I can conclude that the PAPA captures the relations between prosodic phonology and semantics.

5. Conclusions

The findings show that production depends substantially on the appropriate accentual focus marking. Subjects were sensitive to the appropriateness of the accent patterns of sentences in producing the sentences, and thus the relationship between focus and accent depended at least in part on their argument structure. So, I conclude that the argument structure of R- and D-predications interact with accentual focus structure and the correlation between semantics and prosodic phonology is maximally transparent by phonological phrases. Therefore, I argue that the PAPA represents the relationship between focus and argument structure, as well as between prosodic phonology

and semantics, in confirmation of the fact that current focus theories on primary predications can be extended to secondary predications as well.

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APPENDIX

Directions: Please read each question and answer pair. After hearing each question from a recorder, produce the corresponding sentences as much as naturally.

- (1) What did your hairdresser do to change your looks?
He dyed my hair red.
- (2) What did you do after taking a shower?
I hung the towels wet.
- (3) What happened when you went out in the rain without an umbrella?
My clothes were soaking wet.
- (4) What did you do when you heard that your friend had died in the traffic accident?
I cried a bucket full.
- (5) What did she do when you were in need of money?
She sold her house cheap.
- (6) What did you do before leaving the restroom?
I rubbed my hands dry.
- (7) What did he do when you told the artist that the exhibition would come up so soon?
He agreed to exhibit his painting unfinished.
- (8) What happened when the storm hit your house?
The windows blew open.
- (9) What happened when the earthquake hit the church?
The bell fell down.
- (10) How did you train to win the marathon?
I ran my shoes ragged.
- (11) What did she do when you told her that you heard that the price of real estate would be rising soon?
She rushed and bought her house cheap.
- (12) What did you do when your mom asked you to help her with her housework?
I wiped the windows clean.
- (13) What did you do when the realtor came while you were packing up your stuff?

I showed my house unfurnished.

- (14) During the last holiday, what did you do when you did not swim in the pool?

I tanned my skin dark.

- (15) What did you do when you heard that a hurricane might hit your house?

I nailed the windows shut.

- (16) What did you do when you saw the thief enter your apartment at midnight?

I screamed my throat raw.

- (17) What did he do when he was suddenly asked to give a talk at the conference?

He presented his paper unfinished.

- (18) What did you do when you felt you might have a cold?

I drank my tea hot.

- (19) What did she do when you saw Love Story with her?

She cried her handkerchief wet.

- (20) What did you do when you invited your friend over for dinner?

I cooked the steaks rare.

- (21) What did you do when you found out that you could not heat up your food because of the blackout?

I ate my dinner cold.

- (22) What happened when you were interrupted while cooking?

The kettle boiled dry.

- (23) What did you do when you moved here for a short time?

I rented my apartment furnished.

- (24) What did your brother do when he saw your mom looking for her wallet which he had lost?

He bit his fingernails jagged.

- (25) What did you do first when you made the sandwich?

I cut my bread fresh.

- (26) What happened after the wind started to blow?

The clouds swept away.

- (27) What did she do when she heard the bell ringing?

She pushed the door open.

- (28) What did you do when you realized that you became thirsty by walking?

- I drank the water cold.
- (29) What did you do when you walked through London after the rain?
I photographed the streets wet.
- (30) What did you do in the garden when the wind stopped blowing?
I swept the leaves away.
- (31) What did you do when you finished cooking?
I ate my lunch hot.
- (32) What did your dog do when it saw a stranger in the garden at night?
It barked my neighbors awake.
- (33) What did you do when you did not have enough money to buy food during your trip?
I ate my bread stale.
- (34) How did you dress while your belly was bulging because of your pregnancy?
I wore my jacket unbuttoned.
- (35) What did you do when you heard that was somebody shouting in a hallway?
I pushed the door closed.