On the Participial Construction in English
– with a Special Focus on Syntactic Positions

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by
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Abstract

The purpose of this investigation is to determine how the phrase position contributes to the semantic interpretation of sentences with subordinates composed of the participles (i.e., the participial constructions). Different functions are found to be associated with participial phrases placed in front of the main clause (Pre·PrtPs) and participial phrases placed after the main clause (Post·PrtPs). Only participial phrases headed by a present participle, which are regarded as the basic usage of the participial phrase, are examined here; further research is necessary for phrases using perfect or past participles, the conjunctions, or the participial subjects.

Surveys that included paired sentences (one sentence with a participial phrase in front of the main clause and the other with the identical participial phrase after the main clause) are used to examine the different functions, and based on the results it is concluded that Pre·PrtPs express an action/event/state which overlaps the beginning of the main event, whereas Post·PrtPs express an action/event/state which overlaps whatever point of the main event as an accompanying circumstance. It is also argued that Pre·PrtPs express the temporal, logical, or perceptual priority to the main clause, and that Post·PrtPs express informative supplements to the main clause regardless of the event order. Pre·PrtPs are thought to help the understanding of the main clause and contribute to the cohesiveness of the sentence as a whole. By contrast, in sentences with a Post·PrtP, the main clause is logically independent and seems complete without the assistance of the Post·PrtP. Accordingly, Post·PrtPs need to supply an informative
description to the main clause. Only those Post-PrtPs that are informative could follow the logically completed message.

The choice on the subordination of the clauses in the participial construction reflects the writer/speaker's intention as to how the situation is to be recognized by the readers/listeners. It is also suggested that the perception of the actors affects the inference of the implied subject of the participles. I propose that the narrative effect of the participial construction directs the readers to recognize the situation described from the same viewpoint as the actors.

I also attempted to observe how the functions of the participial construction are brought into effect in literary works. The descriptive effects attained by using the participial constructions are illustrated by several examples from literature. It is proposed that the actor's perception of the current situation is effectively described by the position of the participial phrase(s).

The participial constructions succeed in giving a different sketch of the same situation, depending on the phrase position. Based on my findings regarding the different functions of Pre and Post-PrtP, I argue Pre-PrtP allows the readers to see into the actor's mind by telling what is prior in his perception. The argument above may be an answer to the question raised by Biber et al. (1985): "Why fiction and academic prose have slightly higher proportions in initial position," though final position is clearly "the unmarked choice for non-finite adverbial clauses in all registers." I also argue that a potential effect of Post-PrtPs is their ability to produce lingering images which may enchant the readers as a visionary depiction.
The participial constructions guide the readers to capture the situation described and make them identify with the actor's viewpoint. The readers are induced to use their own subjective imagination and participate in the appreciation of the text. The participial construction may help readers access an emotional truth which might not be suitably described by explicit expressions using outside conjunctions. Thus, the participial construction intrigues the readers, since its implicitness allows the readers to sympathize with the emotional delicacy of the actors. I conclude that the effects of the participial construction lie in the emotional interactions between the actor and the reader, which might be manipulated by the writer.
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Introduction

The following sentences are from *The Old Man and the Sea* by Earnest Hemingway:

(i) He was thirsty too and he got down on his knees and, being careful not to jerk on the line, moved as far into the bow as he could get and reached the water bottle with one hand. (46)

(ii) He started to work his way back to the stern on his hands and knees, being careful not to jerk against the fish. (78)

(bold font is not used in either original)

The actor is on a boat, holding a fishing line against his back. At the end of the line is a huge fish — a marlin. He has been bearing the pull of the marlin across his shoulders for more than four hours. Now he is going to make a move on the boat while holding the line, a risky act. When we read the passages above, we might feel somewhat different levels of tension, thrill, suspense or excitement between sentences (i) and (ii), and we notice that the participial phrases are placed in different positions, to the left of the verb ‘moved’ in (i) and to the right of ‘started to work’ in (ii). Is it a coincidence that the sentence which has the participial phrase in front of the main clause is the description of the actor’s first move, and the sentence whose participial phrase is placed after the main clause is the description of the second move? Perhaps not. Here arises our primary question: How does the position of the participial phrase contribute to the semantic interpretation of the
sentence which is called the participial construction? The exploration of the sentences' construction can thus start with a special interest in the syntactic positions.

We shall see first how the grammatical construction in question is explained by Quirk et al. (1985: 1124). They defined adverbial participle and verbless clauses without a subordinator as supplementive clauses, and they stated that supplementive clauses "do not signal specific logical relationships, but such relationships are generally clear from the context." They remarked that "according to the context, we may wish to imply temporal, conditional, causal, concessive, or circumstantial relationship," and that "in short, the supplementive clauses imply an accompanying circumstance to the situation described in the matrix clause." Quirk et al. did not mention the existence of specific factors besides the context that enable us to infer the relationships between the clauses despite the absence of an explicit conjunction.

Biber et al. (1999: 201) touched on the phrase position, saying that the information given in the participial phrase is marked "as subordinate: as background (initial position), parenthetical (medial position), or supplementary (final position)." Their indication of the positional function is suggestive, but the precise meanings of the words "background" and "supplementary" were not specified. It is also difficult to find a complete analysis of the phrase position in other studies. I therefore chose to test the assumption that the phrase position plays an important role in the appropriate interpretation of a sentence.

Surveys were designed previously to determine how the phrase position
contributes to the semantic interpretation of a sentence. Several sentences in grammar books were chosen and new sentences were made by reversing the ordinate clause and the subordinate clause in the sentences. I presented the original sentences and the new sentences in pairs to informants. Several native speakers of English were asked what difference (if any) they would find in their semantic interpretations of the paired sentences.¹

The surveys dealt with the participial phrases headed by present participles, which are regarded as the basic usage of the participial phrases. The participial phrases have wide variations in structures: some are headed by past or perfect participles, others have the participial subjects, and still others have conjunctions to mark the relationship to the main clauses. Though it would be desirable to conduct further research on those participial phrases, use of the present surveys enabled some fundamental discoveries which are worth presenting and discussing. The surveys also focused on detecting the differences between the effects of the initial position and the final position of the participial phrase on the presumption that the medial position shares the basic functions with the initial position when the participial phrase is placed ahead of the verb in the matrix sentence.

Chapter 1 provides the findings of the surveys and the results of the analysis of how the phrase position contributes to the semantic interpretation of sentences. Chapter 2 explains the different functions fulfilled by the participial phrase (PrtP) placed in front of the main clause (hereafter cited as Pre-PrtP) and the phrase placed after the main clause (hereafter cited as Post-PrtP). The issue of how the subordination of the
clauses in the sentence brings a different recognition of the situation is
explored in Chapter 3. A discussion of the implied subjects of the participle
is also presented, including some thoughts on what is reflected in the linear
order of the clauses in a given sentence.

Several literary works are taken up in Chapter 4 to illustrate how
various descriptive effects are attained by using sentences with the
subordinates composed of participles (referred to here as the participial
constructions).
Chapter 1

Different functions of phrase positions

1.1. The first observation: the different coherence with the main clause

Thomson and Martinet (1980: 241-243) offered a lucid explanation of the general functions of the participial construction. The sentence below (1a), given by them, shows that "when one action is immediately followed by another by the same subject the first action can often be expressed by a present participle" which must be placed in front of the main clause. In order to discover the positional functions, the ordinate clause and the subordinate clause in the sentence (1a) were reversed, as shown in (1b). I asked ten informants about the difference in the semantic interpretations of (1a) and (1b):

(1) a. Opening the drawer he took out a revolver.

b. He took out a revolver, opening the drawer.

All the informants said that (1a) gives a picture that two actions occurred successively: the actor first opened the drawer and then he took out a revolver from the drawer. Most informants regarded (1b) as unacceptable. However, one informant made an interesting observation. He pointed out that (1b) means the revolver was not in the drawer. According to him, (1b) describes that the actor conducted two actions at the same time with his two hands: e.g., the actor took out a revolver from his pocket with his right hand.
while he was opening the drawer with his left hand. This observation was shared by other informants and it seems reasonable to think that (1a) describes two successive actions, while (1b) describes two simultaneous actions.

Sentence (1b) needs to be investigated further. That is because we notice (1b) might be able to describe that the actor took out the revolver from the drawer when the context shows a revolver had been in the drawer. Such a situation, however, turned out to be unimaginable. It was pointed out that the article ‘a’ in (1b) indicates that the revolver had not been mentioned yet. The article was proposed to be changed into ‘the’, as shown in (2):

(2) He took out the revolver, opening the drawer.

It was judged that the sentence above describes that the actor took out the revolver from the drawer while he was opening it.

This survey revealed different functions of Pre·PrtP and Post·PrtP. The Pre·PrtP in (1a) allows the reader/hearer to infer that ‘a’ revolver was contained in the drawer. It is also inferred that the two actions, opening the drawer and taking out a revolver, were closely related to each other. By comparison, the Post·PrtP in (1b) simply indicates a simultaneous action with the main action, and the inference of the correlation between the two actions relies on the context. In other words, we can reasonably think that a Pre·PrtP expresses a coherent relationship with the main clause and contributes to the cohesiveness of the sentence as a whole. In contrast, it is
apparent that the basic function of a Post·PrtP is to express an accompanying circumstance of the main event which may not have any other relationship than simultaneity, and that a Post·PrtP needs other factors for the inference of the logical relationship with the main clause.

This survey demonstrated the different coherences with the main clause of Pre·PrtP and Post·PrtP. It revealed that a function of a Pre·PrtP is to indicate the logically coherent relationship with the main clause, whereas a function of a Post·PrtP is to express an accompanying circumstance of the main event.

1.2. The second observation: the different overlap to the main clause

The surveys revealed another important finding. The following sentence (3a) given by Thomson and Martinet (ibid. 242) shows that "a present participle can replace a subordinate clause" headed by "as/since/because." A new sentence was made by changing the phrase position, as shown in (3b). The difference in the interpretations of (3a) and (3b) was examined:

(3) a. Knowing that he wouldn't be able to buy food on his journey he took large supplies with him.

b. He took large supplies with him, knowing that he wouldn't be able to buy food on his journey.

All the informants agreed that the sentences above have almost the same meaning. Contrary to this result, some of the informants stated that the
following sentences have different meanings:

(4) a. Not knowing what to do, I telephoned the police.

(Swan 455)

b. I telephoned the police, not knowing what to do.

The different results between the sentence sets (3) and (4) are interesting, since they seem to have the identical syntactic structure with the same participle, "knowing." Further interviews were conducted using (4a) and (4b) to analyze the different judgments among the informants, revealing that all the informants agreed that (4a) denotes that the speaker had not known what to do before he telephoned the police. The paraphrase for (4a) was shared as "I didn't know what to do, so I telephoned the police." Sentence (4b) was found to denote that the speaker did not know what to do when he telephoned the police. The informants thought it was rather difficult to paraphrase (4b), but they managed to give such paraphrases as "I telephoned the police; I didn't know what to do" or "I didn't know what to do while I telephoned the police." We can properly conclude that the Pre·PrtP in (4a) describes the preceding situation to the main event as its cause, whereas the Post·PrtP in (4b) describes the simultaneous state with the main event. Here again a difference in the logical relation with the main clause of Pre·PrtP and Post·PrtP is suggested.

Some informants said that (4a) describes that the decision on telephoning the police triggered the termination of the speaker's confused state of mind, but the other informants considered that the speaker
remained at a loss even after the telephone call. As for (4b), some of the informants thought that the speaker might have decided to telephone the police without any hesitation and now he was asking the police what to do on the phone. Those informants felt that the Post-PrtP in (4b) expresses the simultaneous circumstances of the telephone call. The other informants thought that the Post-PrtP in (4b) describes the reason why the person telephoned the police. Accordingly, it was not surprising that the informants were divided as to whether (4a) and (4b) share the semantic interpretation.

This survey proved that there are different ideas concerning when the situation described in the participial phrase commences or ends. The examination of the different opinions among the informants resulted in the following hypotheses:

1. A Pre-PrtP expresses an action/event/state which overlaps the beginning of the main event without denoting the terminal point.

2. A Post-PrtP expresses an action/event/state which overlaps whatever point of the main event without denoting the commencing point.

The portion of hypothesis 1 saying that a Pre-PrtP does not denote the terminal point explains why some informants inferred that the state of ‘not knowing what to do’ terminated when the speaker telephoned, though the other informants inferred that the state continued after the telephone call. Similarly, the portion of hypothesis 2 saying that a Post-PrtP does not denote the commencing point explains why some informants thought the state of
'not knowing what to do' referred to the situation before the speaker telephoned, while the other informants thought the state was simultaneous with the call.

These two hypotheses also adequately predict the answer that (3a) and (3b) share the interpretation. We can reasonably think that the state of 'knowing that he would not be able to buy food on his journey' would not change before and after 'he took large supplies with him.'

A further illustration of the hypotheses is based on a comparison of the following passages:

(5) a. "From where?" asked someone.

"Where? From wherever the train is now," said Totto-chan, beginning to think her idea wasn't a good one, after all.

(Kuroyanagi 50; bold font is not used in the original)

b. "From where?" asked someone.

Beginning to think her idea wasn't a good one, after all, Totto-chan said, "Where? From wherever the train is now."

Totto-chan's school has made use of the abandoned railroad cars for its classrooms. Totto-chan and her friends are excited at the news that a new railroad car is coming. Now they have a challenging topic: "What route will the railroad car take to get to the school?" Totto-chan hits upon a good idea and cries, "Rails! They're probably going to lay some rails right here to the school." Then she is asked, "From where?" In the passages above, when would we infer Totto-chan began to think her idea wasn't good after all?
The inference in (5b) is that Totto-chan had already begun to doubt her idea before starting her speech, while the inference in (5a) is that the doubt might arise and grow during her utterance. An actress may speak out the part "Where?" with a different intonation in each utterance, probably with confidence in (5a) but with anxiety in (5b). Thus, we see that the situations described by Pre·PrtP and Post·PrtP overlap the main event differently; the Pre·PrtP expresses a situation which overlaps the beginning of the main event, and the Post·PrtP expresses a situation which overlaps the main event at whatever point.

1.3. The third observation: informativeness

Kubota (2004) argued that a Post·PrtP should describe what is compatible with the description in the main clause, quoting the following sentence:

(6) *The airplane exploded in mid-air, killing none of its crews and passengers.

The sentence above is unacceptable, because the survival of all the crews and passengers is not predicted from the airplane explosion. Kubota also pointed out that the linear order of the participial phrase and the main clause in a sentence is free, and has nothing to do with the actual event order, quoting the following sentence:

(7) At one point I made up my mind to go and talk to Uncle Sam. Then
I changed my mind, realising that he could do nothing to help.

The sentence above is acceptable despite the fact that the speaker should have realised his uncle could not help him before he changed his mind. Kubota then presents the following sentence:

(8) *He threw a stick at a dog, picking it up.

The sentence above is unacceptable, Kubota explains, not because the act of picking up is mentioned after the main clause but because such a mention is not predictable from the description that the actor threw a stick at a dog. Kubota thus points out that the Post·PrtP in (8) fails to be compatible with the description in the main clause. Kubota's analysis is very insightful in that it has elucidated that a Post·PrtP should have pragmatic relevance to the main clause. Further research regarding the functions of the Post·PrtP is necessary.

The judgment on (8) was shared by our informants. One of their reasons for the unacceptability is that the referent of the pronoun "it" is ambiguous as to whether it is the stick or the dog. The words "at a dog" were deleted in (9), and the following sentence was tested:

(9) *He threw a stick, picking it up.

The sentence above was also judged unacceptable. The question of whether there is any other specific explanation for the unacceptability than what
Kubota pointed out arises, since hypothesis 2 predicts that this Post·PrtP could express an action which commenced before the main event.

The discussions among the informants brought a very important realization: The Post·PrtP in (9) is not informative enough to give meaningful details to the main action of throwing. A kind of informativeness seems to be required of a Post·PrtP. In order to clarify what it is to be informative, it would help to look again at sentence (2):

(2) He took out the revolver, opening the drawer.

The action described in Post·PrtP is informative about the description in the main clause, since ‘opening the drawer’ supplies meaningful details to the main event ‘he took out the revolver.’ How about (9) ("He threw a stick, picking it up")? Does mentioning ‘picking it up’ give any informative details to the main action of throwing? Referring to ‘picking it up’ after the main clause would only impede the readers’ thinking process and confuse them about the actual event order. We thus realize that the Post·PrtP in (9) needs to be more informative about the main event. The survey found the acceptability of the following sentence:

(10) He threw the stick (at a dog), picking it up from the pile.

In the sentence above, the article ‘the’ proved to give naturalness to the sentence since it indicates a given context. We realize that in (10), ‘picking it up from the pile’ succeeds in giving a meaningful detail to the act of
throwing, regardless of the actual event order. We thus argue that a Post·PrtP should describe what is informative about the main clause. Here are some of the other sentences accepted by the informants:

(11) He entered the room, opening the door hastily.

(12) He took out his cell phone from his pocket, hearing the call.

Even though the Post·PrtPs in (11) and (12) describe situations preceding the actions described in the main clauses, the sentences above are acceptable since the Post·PrtPs provide details that are informative about the main events.

It should be noted that without a conjunction between the two statements, the logical relation between the statements is to be inferred depending on the order of the presentations. Therefore, in the participial construction, the temporal sequence of actions/events should be expressed in order of their occurrences, since we would otherwise have no idea what occurs after what. In the nontemporal cases, however, it would be common to refer to the preceding circumstances after describing the main event. Naturally, it is possible for a Post·PrtP to describe circumstances preceding the main event. However, we should note that when a Post·PrtP refers to a situation preceding the main event, the Post·PrtP should be informative about the description in the main clause.

1.4. Results of analyses

The first observation in the present study was that a Pre·PrtP allows
the inference of a logical relationship between the participial phrase and the main clause, whereas a Post·PrtP needs other factors for the inference of a logical relation besides being simultaneous. The third observation was that when a Post·PrtP refers to a situation preceding the main event, the Post·PrtP should be informative about the main clause. How should these two findings be explained?

I concluded that the position of a Pre·PrtP in a sentence infers the coherence of the Pre·PrtP with the main clause, since the description given in advance would be regarded as necessary information to interpret the main clause. Accordingly, we can say that a Pre·PrtP helps the reader/listener understand the main clause and contributes to the cohesiveness of the sentence as a whole. By contrast, in the case of a sentence with a Post·PrtP, the main clause is logically independent and seems completed without the assistance of the Post·PrtP. We then can understand why a Post·PrtP needs to supply informative description to the main clause — only an informative Post·PrtP would make a logically coherent message.

In summary, the contributions of Pre·PrtPs and Post·PrtPs to the semantic interpretation of sentences are as follows: a Pre·PrtP expresses an action/event/state which overlaps the beginning of the main event without denoting the terminal point, and a Post·PrtP expresses an action/event/state which overlaps whatever point of the main event without denoting the commencing point. A Pre·PrtP expresses a coherent relationship with the main clause and contributes to the cohesiveness of the sentence as a whole, whereas a Post·PrtP supplies an informative description of the event described in the main clause.
Chapter 2

The priority and the supplementarity

2.1. Temporal priority

The word "overlap" used in the preceding chapter merits an exploration. The situation described in a participial phrase does not always overlap with the event described in the main clause.

Tomozawa (2003) argued that the temporal relationship of simultaneity plays a crucial role in motivating the use of the participial construction. He regarded the usage of the construction for successive events as an extension of the basic usage for simultaneity, citing the notion of "sloppy simultaneity" presented by Declerck (1991: 132-133). "Sloppy simultaneity" is explained by Declerck as follows: "the tense forms expressing simultaneity can be used in cases where there is 'sloppy' rather than strict simultaneity." He also introduced the following sentences (13) and (14) as "clear illustrations of such a use," after pointing out that the basic meaning of a present participle is the expression of simultaneity.

(13) Opening the drawer, he took out a booklet.

(14) The lorry skidded off the road, narrowly missing a couple of cottages and ended up in a field.

Declerck considers it common that "the speaker disregards the fact that the two situations do not really overlap but concentrates on the fact that they
follow each other closely and that there is some logical relation between them." He also gives the following example:

(15) He went to university at the age of 17, graduating six years later as a civil engineer.

Declerck's notion of "sloppy simultaneity" is quite insightful, and it clarifies that overlap can involve sloppiness. Declerck also uses the expression "subjective rather than objective simultaneity." The word 'overlap' can be used to represent the notion of sloppy or subjective overlap. In (13) ("Opening the drawer, he took out a booklet"), the actions of opening the drawer and taking out a booklet are interpreted to take place as overlapping with each other. Similarly, in (14) ("The lorry skidded off the road, narrowly missing a couple of cottages and ended up in a field"), the lorry's skidding and its narrow escape from the cottages are duly thought to overlap logically.

As for (15) ("He went to university at the age of 17, graduating six years later as a civil engineer"), we notice the writer/speaker's intention to convey that going to and graduating from university belong to "the same time interval," to borrow Declark's expression. Although there is a six-year gap between the two events objectively, in the writer/speaker's mind, it seems as if the two events overlapped each other. In short, it is the notion of overlap that seems to motivate the use of the participial construction. Thus, the participial phrase describes a situation that overlaps the description in the main clause, no matter how sloppily or subjectively.

The analysis in the previous chapter would explain why the participial
construction is understood to express the sequence of events. A Pre-PrtP overlaps the beginning of the main event, whereas a Post-PrtP overlaps the main event at whatever point. A situation that overlaps as early as the beginning of another event is reasonably thought to be first to occur. This leads to the understanding that a Pre-PrtP expresses what precedes the event described in the main clause. Likewise, what is mentioned later could be inferred to be occurring second, and this leads to the understanding that a Post-PrtP expresses what follows the main event. In this way, the participial construction is understood to express the sequence of events/actions. We can thus reasonably conclude that one function of a Pre-PrtP is to express the temporal priority to the main clause, and that one function of a Post-PrtP is to describe an accompanying circumstance of the main event, including its result or consequence.

2.2. Logical priority

Now that the temporal expression of the participial construction has been explored, this section takes a look at how the participial construction is used for logical expression. Common knowledge tells us that what is precedent can be the cause of what follows, and what follows can be the result or the consequence of what is precedent, but not vice versa. The same notion would apply to the usage of the participial construction. It is rational for a Pre-PrtP to express the temporal, causal, conditional, or concessional framework, which is logically antecedent to the main description. The position in the sentence also makes a Post-PrtP express the result, elaboration, specification or exemplification which is logically
supplementary to the main description.

Though it is clear that the following sentences (16a) and (17a) have phrase positions which accord with logic, we shall examine the positional functions by changing the phrase positions in (16b) and (17b):

(16) a. Used economically, one tin will last for at least six weeks.

(Swan 455)

b. One tin will last for at least six weeks, used economically.

(17) a. It rained for two weeks on end, completely ruining our holiday.

(Swan 455)

b. *Completely ruining our holiday, it rained for two weeks on end.

The informants were asked about (16b) and (17b). In (16b) the existence of the conjunction "if" was thought desirable, not to say necessary. The sentence (17b) was rejected by all of the informants. The unacceptability of (17b) is predicted by hypothesis 1, which requires a Pre-PrtP to describe the situation which overlaps the beginning of the main event, since the holiday had not been ruined yet when it began to rain. As for (16b), although a Post-PrtP may describe a situation which has a sort of conditional relation to the main event, the inference of the logical relation is not as strong as in the case with a Pre-PrtP. As a result, the existence of an explicit conjunction would be naturally preferred.

The difference in the logical relation with the main clause of Pre-PrtPs and Post-PrtPs would be more noticeable in the case of the causal
relationship. The following sentences are instructive:

(18) a. Knowing that she was loved, the woman died in the arms of her children peacefully.

b. The woman died in the arms of her children peacefully, knowing that she was loved.

The state of 'knowing that she was loved' would be inferred to be the direct or the principal reason for her peaceful death in (18a), while in (18b) we may see other possibilities for her death in peace, such as good care or deep faith in religion. The sentences above demonstrate that Pre·PrtPs and Post·PrtPs have different logical relations with the main clause.

Thus, a temporal, causal, conditional or concessional relationship to the main clause is more strongly expressed by a Pre·PrtP than by a Post·PrtP. We can claim that another function of Pre·PrtPs is to express the logical priority to the main clause, whereas another function of Post·PrtPs is to express supplementary information to the main clause.

2.3. Perceptual priority

Stump (1985: 320) made an interesting observation as to the following sentences with different phrase positions:

(19) a. Counting the number of echoes, Hilary shouted his name.

b. Hilary shouted his name, counting the number of echoes.
He states that in (19b) "the counting may be understood to follow the shouting (or, on a less likely interpretation, to overlap), but not to precede it." He then says concerning (19a), "the counting may be understood to precede the shouting...this is the most likely interpretation." However, he refers to (19a) in a Note on page 348 and remarks, "Oddly, it still seems quite possible to infer that the shouting preceded the counting." He presents two interpretations for (19a): the counting preceded the shouting; the shouting preceded the counting. The first interpretation requires our assumption that the actor shouted more than once, since it is impossible to count the echo of a shout which has not been made. If the counting preceded the shouting, we cannot but suppose that the actor counted the echo of the shout which had already been made (or the echo of some other thing), and then shouted.

Our informants commonly thought such assumptions unnecessary in order to interpret (19a). They contended that it is possible for (19a) to describe the situation in which the actor shouted only once and counted the echo of that shout. Their interpretation agrees with Stump's description in the Note, and it follows that both (19a) and (19b) share the situation where the shouting preceded the counting. Yet, does no difference exist between the two sentences? We notice that there are two situations imaginable: the actor shouted the name with the intention of counting the number of echoes; the actor got the idea of counting the number of echoes after the shout.

Our informants agreed that (19a) expresses the first situation where the actor shouted with the intention to count, while (19b) can express both situations. This finding indicates that the informants regard the shouting
and the counting as simultaneous actions and consider the action described in the Pre-PrtP (i.e., counting) to be prior in the actor's intention to the action described in the main clause (i.e., shouting). It leads to the realization that we can modify Stump's description for the sentence (19a) by adding the underlined part as follows: "the counting may be understood to precede the shouting in the actor's intention."

Needless to say, it is impossible to describe in words all simultaneous events at once; we would have to determine in what sequence the sentence is generated. The description order naturally mirrors our cognition. Thus we realize that the phrase position in the participial construction reflects the speaker/writer's intention to show what is perceptively prior to or after the main event. Accordingly, I contend that another function of Pre-PrtPs is to express the perceptual priority to the main event, and Post-PrtPs describe a supplementary perception of the main event.

Discussions of the phrase position have always dealt with similar phenomena: a Pre-PrtP expresses what is prior to the main event, and a Post-PrtP expresses what is supplementary to the main event. Let us recall the discussion of the following sentences:

(1) a. Opening the drawer he took out a revolver. (p. 5)
   b. He took out a revolver, opening the drawer.

(4) a. Not knowing what to do, I telephoned the police. (p. 8)
   b. I telephoned the police, not knowing what to do.

(19) a. Counting the number of echoes, Hilary shouted his name. (p. 20)
   b. Hilary shouted his name, counting the number of echoes.
These sentences exemplify my proposal that Pre·PrtPs describe situations preceding the main events in occurrence, logic or perception, and Post·PrtPs describe accompanying circumstances of the main events and supply informative details.

The discussion of the differences between Pre·PrtPs and Post·PrtPs in Chapters 1 and 2 can be summarized as follows: Pre·PrtPs express an action/event/state which overlaps the beginning of the main event without denoting the terminal point, and they also express the temporal, logical or perceptual priority to the main event. Post·PrtPs express an action/event/state which overlaps whatever point of the main event as an accompanying circumstance without denoting the commencing point, and Post·PrtPs also describe accompanying circumstances of the main event to supply informative details.
Chapter 3

Recognition of the situation

3.1. The main clause and the participial phrase

Next, the difference between the description in the main clause and the description in the participial phrase is of interest. The following sentence was submitted to the informants for evaluation:

(20) He picked up a stick, throwing it at a dog.

This sentence was not easily accepted by the informants. Some informants said the sentence was understandable but not natural, and others said it was unacceptable. I admit that my hypotheses do not give a convincing explanation for the unnaturalness of (20). Another perspective is needed for further investigation.

Let us compare (20) to sentence (21) by Thomson and Martinet (ibid. 242), which tells us that "when the second action forms part of the first, or is a result of it, we can express the second action by a present participle":

(20) He picked up a stick, throwing it at a dog.
(21) He fired, wounding one of the bandits.

Let us imagine the two situations described by the sentences, "He picked up a stick and threw it at a dog" and "He fired and wounded one of the bandits."
When we express these situations using the participial constructions, either of the verbs in the sentences could be changed into the participle. In English, the main event is generally expressed by a finite verb and the secondary event is generally expressed by a nonfinite verb. In other words, the subordination reflects the idea of the writer/speaker as to which event should bear the main description. Therefore, sentence (20) is understood to describe that ‘to pick up a stick’ carries more significance than throwing it. The interpretation of this sentence would be naturally confused, since our common knowledge tells that picking is usually an ancillary action to throwing. As a result, we fail to see the naturalness of (20). In sentence (21), the actor’s firing is reasonably regarded as the main action with an ancillary event of wounding a bandit. Accordingly, the sentence (20) needs an appropriate context to be interpreted naturally. I propose that it is possible.

The following passage is from *The Bridges of Madison County*:

(22) For the last time, he let her go and stepped into the truck, sitting there with the door open. Tears running down his cheeks. Tears running down her cheeks. Slowly he pulled the door shut, hinges creaking. (Waller 142; bold font is not used in the original)

This passage tells that ‘to step into the truck’ carries more significance than sitting there. We would step into the truck in order to sit there in normal situations. In this context, however, he stepped into the truck after an emotionally painful moment. Stepping into the truck means he finally
decided to leave his lover for good, and it is easily imagined that conducting
the action of stepping into the truck required great determination. Here we
see the naturalness of the verb 'step' having more significance than the verb
'sit.'

This type of context is also required for (20) if the sentence is to sound
natural. We could imagine a situation such as this: A man has some
paralysis in his right hand; he trained hard and mastered the ability to
throw with that hand; he is now training to pick up objects, which is the
hardest task for him considering the paralysis; he succeeds in picking up a
stick for the first time. We can say, "He picked up a stick, throwing it at a
dog." The reader/hearer would understand why the action of picking up a
stick deserves the main expression. We also see that the sentence becomes
a successful and impressive description of the situation. The subordination
of the verbs reflects the writer/speaker's intention as to how the situation
should be perceived by the reader. The participial construction thus
succeeds in directing the reader/listener's recognition of the situation
described.

3.2. The implied subject

The participial construction is also worth considering regarding the
implied subject of the participle. According to Quirk et al. (ibid. 1126), the
following sentence (23) allows three interpretations, since "the absence of a
subject leaves doubt as to which nearby element is notionally the subject":

(23) I caught the boy waiting for my daughter.
(i) 'I caught the boy while I was waiting for my daughter.'
   [supplementive clause]
(ii) 'I caught the boy in the act of waiting for my daughter.' [verb complementation]
(iii) 'I caught the boy who was waiting for my daughter.'
   [postmodification]

Curme (1931:452) also stated that the participle's subject is "not expressed but implied in the subject or the object of the principal verb," presenting the following sentence with its paraphrase:

(24) 'I feel it as a rare occasion, occurring as it does only once in many years' (= since it occurs only once in many years).

The descriptions by Curme and Quirk et al. suggest that the syntax of the participial construction allows syntactic ambiguity, which leads to semantic ambiguity. A discussion of the implied subject would develop our understanding of the constructions. Our survey found that in the following sentence, the participle subject was easily related to a gentleman, not the sentence subject:

(25) Sachiko and Teinosuke had noticed, sitting in the lobby, a gentleman they recognized. (Tanizaki 128; bold font is not used in the original)

For comparison, in the following sentence (26) whose finite verb is altered,
the participial subject was inferred to be Sachiko and Teinosuke:

(26) Sachiko and Teinosuke had \textit{waited}, sitting in the lobby, \textit{for} a gentleman they recognized.

It is supposed that in the original sentence (25), the reader’s knowledge that the verb ‘notice’ is often followed by a participle as its objective complement affects the inference of the participle subject. It is also true that a Post-PrtP always has potential ambiguity as to the implied subject when the main clause ends with a noun, due to its structural resemblance to the nonrestrictive relative clause.

With the aim of discovering what factor infers the participial subject, I conducted a survey using the following sentence (27):

(27) Hanako is happier than Taro, living in X city.

A real city name was not used, in order to avoid a biased inference. Sentence (27) has the possibility of being understood in the following two ways:

(i) Hanako is happier than Taro, because she lives in X city.
(ii) Hanako is happier than Taro, who lives in X city.

I suspected that adding "being able to" or "being obliged to" to the Post-PrtP in (27) would reveal which possibility is adopted by the informants in finding
the participial subject. Four informants were asked who they thought lived in X city in the following sentences:

(28) a. Hanako is happier than Taro, being able to live in X city.
    b. Hanako is happier than Taro, being obliged to live in X city.

Though the informants pointed out that the above sentences do not have a natural flow of words—the flow was sacrificed for the purpose of the survey—the participial subject was inferred to be Hanako in (28a) and Taro in (28b). This result shows that different subjects were inferred between (28a) and (28b) in order to have a reasonable meaning from each sentence; the person who is able to live in a certain city is generally thought to be happier than the person who is obliged to live somewhere. The Post·PrtP in (28a) was regarded as a supplementive clause, whereas the Post·PrtP in (28b) was regarded as a postmodification. With this result, let us return to the discussion of sentence (27) with the Post·PrtP "living in X city":

(27) Hanako is happier than Taro, living in X city.

The Post·PrtP in (27) can be regarded either as the supplementive phrase which shares the subject with the main clause or as the post-modifying phrase of its preceding noun.

Contrary to (27), three informants inferred the same subject in the following sentences, while one informant gave a different inference to each:
(29) a. Hanako envies Taro, being obliged to live in X city.
   b. Hanako envies Taro, being able to live in X city.

Three out of four informants answered that in both sentences Taro is the subject of the participle, which leads (29a) to bear the satirical meaning: Hanako envies Taro and Taro is obliged to live in X city. This result indicates that the informants preferred a satirical interpretation of the sentence to relating the participle to the sentence subject.

It seems that the Post-PrtPs in both (29a) and (29b) have the tendency to be regarded as the modification of Taro, not as the supplementive phrase whose subject is identical to the sentence subject, Hanako. How should the results be explained? Many dictionaries give example sentences in which the verb ‘envy’ has double objects, e.g., she envies him his position. It is reasonable to infer that the information after "Hanako envies Taro" should refer to Taro, not to Hanako. The situation certainly differs from dealing with the main clause "Hanako is happier than Taro," which can be followed by the information about either Hanako or Taro. Thus, a reader/hearer's knowledge of the sentence structure affects the inferences made regarding the participial subject.

The knowledge of the wording or the sentence structure restricts the reader/hearer's anticipation as to what information should come after a certain portion of the sentence. Sentences (27), (28) and (29), which are made up, often bewildered the informants and they were regarded as awkward usages. In other words, we can duly conclude that a sentence with a participial construction is adequately understood as long as it gives
the information in accordance with the readers/hearers' anticipation without impeding their flow of thinking.

Yamaoka (2005) argued that the participial construction describes how the actor perceives his current situation, based on the comprehensive analysis of the discourse of the participial construction. It might be that the participial subject is inferred by tracing the perception of the actor. Let us consider the following sentence (30), which Yamaoka cites:

(30) At last, far in the distance, walking on the water, Ulysses saw a great man, Big Chris. (Saroyan 172; bold font is not used in the original)

All of the informants thought that the person who was walking on the water was Big Chris. This is an instance where the narrative viewpoint is of concern. In the passage above, the narrator talks from the standpoint of Ulysses, and therefore the phrase "far in the distance" naturally directs the reader's eyes away from Ulysses. The reader then gets the information "walking on the water." It would be easy for the reader to infer that the subject of "walking on the water" should be not Ulysses but rather anything in the distance. As expected, at the end of the sentence the reader finds the words "a great man, Big Chris." The subject of 'walking' is thus successively inferred to be Big Chris. The phrase "far in the distance" in (30) crucially determines the inference of the subject, since the present survey showed that in the following sentence (31), which lacks "far in the distance," the subject was inferred to be Ulysses:
(31) At last, walking on the water, Ulysses saw a great man, Big Chris.

The sentence with the participial phrase enables the reader to follow the perception of the agent, which helps find the appropriate subject of the participle.

The viewpoint is also of concern in sentence (25):

(25) Sachiko and Teinosuke had noticed, sitting in the lobby, a gentleman they recognized.

In the context where Sachiko and Teinosuke are waiting for the gentleman to whom they are to be introduced, the verb 'notice' shows the agents' perception toward others. It would be natural that the subject of the participle 'sitting' is inferred to be anyone else but the agents. In sentences (25) and (30), which are in literary works, the participial phrases are placed in an effective position which enables the reader to share the viewpoints of the actor(s) and to recognize the current situation. We thus find that an important function of the participial construction is to help the reader identify with the actor.

Lastly, a case in which only the context might infer the participial subject is considered. In the following passage from "The Undefeated" by Hemingway, the bullfighter Manuel has just launched himself on the bull:

(32) There was a shock, and he felt himself go up in the air. He pushed on the sword as he went up and over, and it flew out of his hand. He
hit the ground and the bull was on him. Manuel, lying on the
ground, kicked at the bull's muzzle with his slippered feet. Kicking,
kicking, the bull after him, missing him in his excitement, bumping
him with his head, driving the horns into the sand. Kicking like a
man keeping a ball in the air, Manuel kept the bull from getting a
clean thrust at him. (The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway 261;
bold font is not used in the original)

The informants were asked who they would think was kicking in the
bold-font sentence, "Kicking, kicking, the bull after him, missing him in his
excitement, bumping him with his head, driving the horns into the sand."
All the informants thought it was Manuel who was kicking. For comparison,
the following sentence was made by adding the verb 'came' after the bull:

(33) Kicking, kicking, the bull came after him, missing him in his
excitement, bumping him with his head, driving the horns into the
sand.

It was inferred that the bull was kicking in the sentence above. It should be
noted that the original bold-font text in (32) is not a complete sentence, as it
lacks a verb. We notice that the participle subject is implicitly understood
from the context, since the bold-font wording is placed between the sentences
that tell Manuel was kicking. However, when the sentence is completed by
the verb, as shown in (33), it is inferred that the participle has the subject
which is identical to the sentence subject. We thus see that when the
sentence gives no clue to the participle subject, the context determines the implied subject.

The present findings indicate that several factors interact to infer the participial subject. Yet, the most important finding should be that in authentic usages of the participial construction in context, native speakers have almost no difficulty in finding the implied subject. Syntactic ambiguity of the sentence seldom leads to pragmatic ambiguity. On the contrary, the participial phrase is placed in an effective position which enables the reader to share the actor's perception. The outcomes of the two discussions in this chapter can be summarized as follows: one function of the participial phrase is to guide the readers to capture the situation described, making them identify with the actor's viewpoint.
Chapter 4

Literary works

4.1. The descriptive effects

Thompson (1983:46) defined the participial phrase we discuss as the detached participial clause. She conducted an extensive study that revealed a fruitful discovery: she found that the detached clause occurs most frequently in descriptive prose and very rarely in factual or scientific writing. She argued the type of discourse in which detached participles abound is the one that "attempts to describe by creating images." She used the term "depictive" for "discourse purporting to evoke an image." Yamaoka (ibid. 112) also made an exhaustive analysis of the discourse of the participial construction and concluded that the construction is frequently used to express the actor's current consciousness. He proposed that the basic function of a present participle is to express "atemporal relation," and he argued that being atemporal enables the present participle to describe the actor's current consciousness. Yamaoka presumed that consciousness transcends the concept of time, meaning that it is atemporal.

Syntactic positions appear to be strongly concerned with the descriptive functions mentioned above. The question of how the phrase position reflects the perceptual priority was discussed in Chapter 2, and the next chapter noted that the subordination of the verbs in the sentence helps the reader recognize the situation described. Chapter 3 also presented the finding that the actor's viewpoint affects the inference of the implied subject
and allows the reader to share the recognition of the situation. These arguments lead me to propose that writers use the participial construction quite intentionally in order to invite the readers into the scene themselves.

Let us now investigate how the functions discussed above are brought into effect in literary works.

4.2. Description of the perceptual priority

We return to the pair of the sentences given in the Introduction:

(34) He was thirsty too and he got down on his knees and, being careful not to jerk on the line, moved as far into the bow as he could get and reached the water bottle with one hand.

(35) He started to work his way back to the stern on his hands and knees, being careful not to jerk against the fish.

We see that (34) succeeds in creating more tension and excitement than (35) by adopting a Pre·PrtP. A Pre·PrtP expresses a temporal, logical or perceptual priority to the description in the main clause. The Pre·PrtP in (34) gives a kind of conditional frame to the main clause. The readers imagine that the actor starts to move making very sure not to jerk on the line and that his action should be stopped at the moment he finds the danger of jerking. ‘Being careful’ actually precedes his move in the actor’s intention, and that makes the readers thrilled along with the actor while he was moving on the boat.

The readers are also suspended from finding out whether the actor
really started to move or did not until they come across the main clause. The readers' tension builds naturally during the Pre·PrtP, and it leads to the excitement. In sentence (35) in contrast, the actor has already started moving when the readers get the information that he was careful. The readers would have no time to get excited. The differences in the perceptual priority, the amount of suspense or excitement, explain why (34) is given for the description of his first attempt to move and (35) is given for the description of his second attempt. Both times, the actor took the same actions: he moved and he was careful. However, the participial constructions succeed in giving a different sketch of the same situation depending on the phrase position. That is, a Pre·PrtP allows the readers to see into the actor's mind by telling what is prior in his perception.

The next passage is from *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery. This passage has a sentence with a Pre·PrtP, and it is among only three sentences with a Pre·PrtP in the first fifty pages of the book, in contrast to fifty-four sentences with a Post·PrtP in the same pages. The passage describes a scene where the actor is shocked to know that she has not been welcomed:

(36) "Oh, what shall I do? I'm going to burst into tears!"

Burst into tears she did. **Sitting down on a chair by the table,**

**flinging her arms out upon it,** and burying her face in them, she proceeded to cry stormily. **(26: bold font is not used in the original)**

The bold-font text should be considered to reflect some intention of the writer,
along with its inverted preceding sentence. This is the instance where simultaneous actions with the main event are described in the Pre-PrtP. This sentence is successful in creating a vivid picture of the actor's act. Simultaneous actions are usually described in a Post-PrtP. However, as I have argued, a Pre-PrtP can describe the actions as being prior to the main event in the perception of both the actor and the narrator. As a result, the action described in a Pre-PrtP naturally gains more prominence and emphasis in the sentence. We find that the exaggeration of the description in passage (36) perfectly matches the exaggerated conduct of the actor.

Biber *et al.* (*ibid.* 831) says, "Clearly, final position is the unmarked choice for non-finite adverbial clauses in all registers." They also note that "in fiction, the most common non-finite clauses are *ing*-clauses" and they consider it interesting to ask "why fiction and academic prose have slightly higher proportions in initial position." One could argue that if one of the purposes of novels is to give a vivid description of the actor's actions or emotions, it is natural for novel writers to try to achieve that purpose by adopting Pre-PrtPs. A Pre-PrtP shows the actor's perceptual priority and allows the readers to look into the actor's mind.

Though it was pointed out that Pre-PrtPs have the effect of painting a more vivid sketch of the events than do Post-PrtPs, it might be difficult for native speakers of Japanese to realize the descriptive effect of Pre-PrtPs. That is because in Japanese, the subordinate clauses unmarkedly precede the main clauses. Therefore, when the passages we discussed above are translated into Japanese, the readers might not be able to sense the stylistic effects in the original works. We may vaguely see the trace of the difference
in the paired sentences from *The Old Man and the Sea*, when we notice that the translator adopts a somewhat old-fashioned and literary word for the Pre-PrtP in (34), which is ‘*nu*’ in contrast to ‘*nai*’ for sentence (35).

Concerning the difference between Japanese and English, we can consider the following two passages from Japanese novels, in translation:

(37) ‘Look in the top drawer on the right.’

Puckering her lips as though she were about to kiss the mirror, Sachiko took up her lipstick. ‘Did you find it?’

(Tanisizaki 2; bold font is not used in the original)

(38) **Much intrigued**, I took the letter with my free hand.

(Natsume 93; bold font is not used in the original)

Actually, the original Japanese sentences describe the actions in the passages above using the particle "*te.*" Though it is true that the Japanese particle "*te*" can express the simultaneity, succession and causality of the actions, just like the English participial construction can do, there is no doubt that the Japanese original sentences express that "she took up a stick, and then puckered her lips" and "I took the letter and I was intrigued (by its thickness)." The English passages above could be regarded as mistranslations. However, we can presume that the English translations above could be adequate when the translators thought that the actors conducted two simultaneous actions. That is because the action of puckering or being intrigued is indeed impressive and unforgettable in the original passages. A Pre-PrtP can describe the actions more prominently.
There remains a possibility that the translators intentionally deformed the action order to put emphasis on the more impressive action. Moreover, it was suggested that the wide variety of usages commonly attributed to the English participial construction and the Japanese participle "te" can sometimes cause misunderstandings between the two languages.

4.3. The effects of lingering images

Our next topic is the descriptive effects that Post-PrtPs can yield. The first illustration is the following passage, where the actor is walking on the ridge-pole of a roof:

(39) Then she swayed, lost her balance, stumbled, staggered and fell, sliding down over the sun-baked roof and crashing off it through the tangle of Virginia creeper beneath — all before the dismayed circle below could give a simultaneous, terrified shriek.

(Montgomery 155; bold font is not used in the original)

The actions of sliding and crashing gain atelic aspects and can be imagined to be continuing as long as the reader prefers. We might find such effects disappear in the following passage (40), where the participles are altered into finite verbs:

(40) Then she swayed, lost her balance, stumbled, staggered and fell, slid down over the sun-baked roof and crashed off it through the tangle of Virginia creeper beneath — all before the dismayed circle below could
give a simultaneous, terrified shriek.

Here, all of the actions are thought to take place at rather regular intervals, and we may find that the passage loses its descriptive effect. The sentence with the participial construction is not monotonous but can be rhythmical or melodious, since we feel as if the theme was being played with its accompaniment like in music; the finite verbs play the theme and drive the plot forward, while the participles play the part of accompanying effects. The melodiousness can be an important effect of the participial construction.

A Post·PrtP is also useful for producing a long pause after the phrase. The following sentence is from *The Speeches of Barack Obama*:

(41) They would give me an African name, Barack, or "blessed," **believing** that in a tolerant America your name is no barrier to success.

(Obama 24: bold font is not used in the original)

On the recording of this speech we hear a round of applause after this sentence. Which fact did he wish to linger in the minds of the audience, the fact that his parents gave him an African name or the fact that they believed in a tolerant America? The position of the participial phrase shows his wish that the latter message would last in the audience. In addition, the nonfinite form "believing" without the subject succeeds in giving the eternal and anonymous character to the belief, even though it should literally refer to his parents' past act. This sentence demonstrates how Post·PrtPs can produce lingering messages which may last beyond time and space.
Participial phrases are often placed on both sides of the main clause as follows:

(42) With their knapsacks bulging, the children waited to hear what the headmaster had to say, while beyond them the famous waterfall fell in booming torrents, making a beautiful rhythm.

(Kuroyanagi 139; bold font is not used in the original)

Our focus shifts from the close-up view of the knapsacks, to the children, to the waterfall, and at last to the torrents, which become zoomed in on with a beautiful rhythm that lingers in our ears. This sentence is so image-evoking — like a film — that the readers might feel they are gazing at the view themselves. This passage demonstrates my argument that the position of the participial phrases directs the readers’ viewpoint and brings about identification with the narration. It should be pointed out again that the Post-PrtP in the above sentence succeeds in describing the torrents of the waterfall as if they would pulse forever with a beautiful rhythm.

In The Makioka Sisters, the chapter with a great many participial phrases is the one where the heroine Sachiko recalls ‘the firefly hunt’ she experienced that night in her bed. In the Japanese original, we find many uses of representations ‘…’, which are intended to indicate something indescribable. It is not coincidental that this chapter in English translation includes plenty of Post-PrtPs, as we see in the following passage:

(43) Down into the grasses on the bank, and there, gliding out over the
water, in low arcs like the sweep of the grasses. On down the river, and on and on, were fireflies, lines of them wavering out from this bank and the other and back again, sketching their uncertain tracks of light down close to the surface of the water, hidden from outside by the grasses. . . . Sachiko felt a surging inside her, as though she were joining them, soaring and dipping along the surface of the water, cutting her own uncertain track of light.

(Tanizaki 321: bold font is not used in the original)

Sachiko thinks a firefly hunt is "something not to be painted, but set to music," and the readers come across such sentences as, "The events of the day passed through Sachiko's mind in no particular order" and "She could have been dreaming." The readers are told that when Sachiko opened her eyes, she saw "a framed motto" whose words read "Pavilion of Timelessness." The images in this chapter owe much of their visionary and enchanting depiction to the repeated use of the participial phrases, as would be noticeable in passage (43) above. The Post-PrtPs in (43) succeed in fascinating the readers by the never-ceasing images of the fireflies floating dream-like beyond the concepts of space and time.

4.4. Description of the emotional reality

Lastly we shall see how the participial construction expresses an emotional truth which emerges from inside of the actor. In the following passage the actor, Nick, visited an Indian camp with his father, where he watched a baby being born and witnessed the suicide of the baby's father.
Now Nick is on the boat home, with his father rowing.

(44) "Do ladies always have such a hard time having babies?"

Nick asked.

"No, that was very, very exceptional."

"Why did he kill himself, Daddy?"

"I don't know, Nick. He couldn't stand things, I guess."

"Do many men kill themselves, Daddy?"

"Not very many, Nick."

"Do many women?"

"Hardly ever."

"Don't they ever?"

"Oh, yes. They do sometimes."

"Daddy?"

"Yes."

"Where did Uncle George go?"

"He'll turn up all right."

"Is dying hard, Daddy?"

"No, I think it's pretty easy, Nick. It all depends."

They were seated in the boat, Nick in the stern, his father rowing. The sun was coming up over the hills. A bass jumped, making a circle in the water. Nick trailed his hand in the water. It felt warm in the sharp chill of the morning.

In the early morning on the lake sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, he felt quite sure that he would never die.
The two facts— that Nick was sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, and that he felt quite sure he would never die— could not be regarded as cause and effect, which is expressed with an explicit conjunction. Yet the readers can feel that for Nick the two facts of sitting and feeling were indispensably tied together. The readers are sure that Nick would never have believed in his immortality but for his current situation. The position of the participial phrase in the sentence makes the readers realize the emotional truth in Nick. The readers are convinced that a kind of psychological reality ties the two facts together. Truth conceived at the core of one's heart would be beyond logical or objective expressions. Such inner induced reality is not described more eloquently than in the sentence with the participial phrase. The participial construction intrigues the readers, since its implicitness allows the readers to sympathize with the emotional delicacy of the actors. It is the readers themselves, after all, who are meant to appreciate the interpretations of the text.

Thus the participial construction, which simply presents two clauses side by side, embraces a surprising amount of messages. The readers are also induced to use their own subjective imagination. As a result, the readers may find themselves "sharing the experience" with the actors. I propose that the effects of the participial construction lie here in the emotional interactions between the actor and the reader, which might be manipulated by the writer.
Conclusion

This paper has briefly explored the different functions fulfilled by the position of participial phrases in sentences with subordinates composed of participles, which are referred to herein as the participial constructions. The ways that the different functions are brought into effect in literary works were also touched on. The following is a brief summary and conclusion.

Chapter 1 described the results of informant surveys and an analysis: it became clear that the participial phrase ahead of the main clause (Pre·PrtP) expresses an action/event/state which overlaps the beginning of the main event, whereas the participial phrase which follows the main clause (Post·PrtP) expresses an action/event/state which overlaps whatever point of the main event as an accompanying circumstance.

In Chapter 2, the different functions of Pre·PrtPs and Post·PrtPs were discussed. It was argued that Pre·PrtPs express the temporal, logical, or perceptual priority to the main clause, and Post·PrtPs express informative supplements to the main clause regardless of the event order.

Chapter 3 proposed that the choice regarding the subordination of the clauses in a participial construction reflects the writer/speaker's intention as to how the situation is to be recognized. I argued that the actor's perception plays an important role in inferring the implied subject of the participles.

Chapter 4 applied the linguistic findings to the appreciation of literary works. The participial constructions succeed in giving a different sketch of the same situation depending on the phrase position. Pre·PrtPs describe
the action vividly and let the readers look into the actor's mind by telling what is prior in his perception. A potential effect of Post-PrtPs is their ability to produce lingering images in the mind of the reader. This lasting effect can enchant the readers with a visionary and fascinating depiction.

The participial construction intrigues readers by allowing the identification with the actors. The readers are induced to use their own subjective imagination and participate in the appreciation of the text. The participial construction may help readers access an emotional truth which might not be suitably described by explicit expressions using outside conjunctions. The benefits of the participial construction lie in the emotional interactions among the actor, the reader and the writer.

This investigation sheds some light on the descriptive functions fulfilled by the phrase position, to which proper attention has not been drawn. Further research should be conducted regarding phrases with the perfect or past participle, the conjunction or the participial subject, as this paper focused only on the differences between the initial position and the final position of the participial phrases headed by the present participle. However, the larger goal is to apply the linguistic findings to the appreciation of literature. It would be quite gratifying to the author if this modest elucidation of a protean device, the participial construction, would help readers explore the fertile land of literature.
Note

1 the backgrounds of the informants

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References


