A Pragmatic Analysis of Parenthetical Structures in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to investigate the functions of parenthetical structures in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. It seeks to identify how these structures are employed from a pragmatic perspective and examines three specific types. The first type is comment clauses, which have pragmatic value; these expressions are important for readers to understand the intended meaning. The second type is relative clauses, which are used to present additional information, thereby enhancing meaning and interpretation. The final type is apposition, which helps the reader identify a referent. Hence, this paper focuses on the functions of these types, which hold significant contextual value in aiding the reader's interpretation. Therefore, it is asserted that such expressions cannot be analyzed solely through sentence grammar, as they are influenced more by contextual factors than by grammatical structures.

1. INTRODUCTION

Definitions of parentheticals typically emphasize that this construction is syntactically independent from the main structure of the sentence. In other words, a parenthetical does not fulfill any syntactic role within the larger context of the host clause. For example, Biber et al. (1999) describe a parenthetical as "an interpolated structure […] a digressive structure […] which is inserted in the middle of another structure and which is uninterrupted in the sense that it could be omitted without affecting the rest of that structure or its meaning" (p. 1067). This highlights the idea that parentheticals can be removed without altering the core meaning or grammatical integrity of the sentence.

From the above definitions, it is clear that the syntactic independence of parentheticals is widely acknowledged. However, since a parenthetical does not contribute to the syntactic role of the entire sentence construction, some linguists argue that parentheticals hold pragmatic significance. They can facilitate listeners and readers in recovering the intended meaning of the speaker or writer with minimal cognitive processing. Furthermore, parentheses encompass various types. This study will focus on three types: relative clauses, comment clauses, and appositions. These types are essential, each serving a distinct pragmatic function.

In this context, the current paper aims to explore the role of parenthetical structures, emphasizing that their pragmatic function is closely related to context.

More specifically, the study aims to address the following questions:

A. What types of parenthetical structures are present in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, and what pragmatic functions do they serve?

B. How do parenthetical structures contribute to the overall meaning and interpretation of the text?

C. In what ways do the pragmatic aspects of parenthetical structures influence reader comprehension and engagement with the narrative?

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

A. Pride and Prejudice heavily relies on the functions of parenthetical structures to capture the reader's attention.

B. Parenthetical structures are employed to clarify the speaker's message.

C. The role of pragmatics in this novel is to identify and elucidate the text precisely.

To accomplish the aims of the study and test these hypotheses, the following methods will be adopted:

A. Conducting a comprehensive literature review to establish a theoretical framework for understanding parenthetical structures and their pragmatic significance.

B. Performing a systematic analysis of parenthetical structures as employed by Jane Austen, focusing on their syntactic and pragmatic roles within her narrative style.

C. Engaging in a textual analysis of Pride and Prejudice to elucidate the primary functions of these parenthetical structures and their impact on reader interpretation and meaning construction.

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Finally, it is highly important to show the significance of this study as concerning to bring valuable findings. Such an insight a study of parenthetical structure has very significant contextual value, which helps the reader in interpreting and knowing the meaning of the text. A parenthetical structure can be used to extend the meaning of a word to include other information within the framework of the sentence.

1. Pragmatics

Leech (1983) describes pragmatics as the examination of meaning in relation to the context of speech, highlighting that the emphasis lies in how individuals utilize language rather than on the language itself (p. 6). Similarly, Leech and Short (1981) assert that meaning is not derived from the formal attributes of words and structures, but rather from the situational context in which utterances are made (p. 245). Likewise, Gee (2011) emphasizes the importance of contextual factors—such as participants, setting, actions, and shared knowledge—in understanding the intended meaning of utterances and how these factors relate to the context in which they are expressed (p. 12).

Broadly speaking, Crystal (2011) defines speech act theory as a framework that explores the relationship between utterances and the behaviors of both speakers and listeners in the context of interpersonal communication. Rather than being merely an act of speech in a traditional sense (parole), this theory views communication as an activity (locutionary act) that is influenced by the speaker's intentions (the illocutionary force) and the consequences their words have on the audience (the perlocutionary effect) (p. 446).

Implicature originates from the philosophy of Grice. Leech (1983, p. 238), along with Grice (1989, p. 18), defines implicature as the additional meaning conveyed by a speaker in line with the cooperative principle (CP). In this regard, Thomas (1995) considers the CP to be a vital principle that governs interactions in conversation (p. 38).

Grice (1989) makes a distinction between what a speaker directly communicates through their words and what they imply or suggest. He identifies two categories of implicature: conventional and conversational. (p. 33). The practice of drawing meaning from conversational maxims during dialogue is referred to as conversational implicature, while the mutual adherence to these maxims by speakers is known as the cooperative principle. Grice outlines four essential maxims that guide conversational implicature: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. (Grice, 1975, pp. 41-58)

2. Parenthetical Structures

Urmson (1952) examines a category of verbs, including suppose, know, and believe, which he classifies as "parenthetical verbs." An example of this can be seen in the sentence "Nothing, I think, happened," where the verb introduces a parenthetical element. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) state that comment clauses generally act as parentheses, as demonstrated in sentences like "As you know, nothing happened" and "What is odd, he had his wife with him." Additionally, sentence adverbs (or adverbials) are often described as parenthetical, such as in "Clearly, I could be wrong." Dehe and Kavalova (2007) present a collection of articles that discuss the phenomenon of parentheticals, which they note is often neglected, viewing these constructions as interruptions within the main flow of the sentence.

Blakemore (2008) illustrates that the primary communicative function of parentheticals is to highlight spoken discourse. Banik and Alan (2008) define parentheticals as constructions that generally appear in the middle of a clause. In a subsequent publication, Blakemore (2009) recognizes the importance of parenthetical constructions in free indirect style, particularly noting their role in allowing authors to express thoughts from various viewpoints, including their own.

Villy Rouchota (1998) states that parenthetical expressions are linguistic constructions—comprising words, phrases, or sentences—that occupy a syntactically peripheral position in a sentence. These expressions are typically separated from their host clause by commas or intonation and function to provide a gloss or commentary on certain aspects of the meaning or structure of that sentence (p. 97).

2.1. Types of Parenthetical Structure.

Quirk et. al (1985) classify PSs in English into:

2.1.1. Comment clauses (CCs)

Comment clauses (CCs) include expressions like I think, I suppose, I imagine, and I'm afraid (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 1112). These clauses usually consist of a first-person pronoun paired with a verb that indicates knowledge, belief, or conjecture, or a related adjectival construction. CCs can appear at the end of a sentence or in the middle, between or within syntactic constituents. Examples include (Emonds, 1973, p. 333; Quirk et al., 1985, p. 1113; Nespor & Vogel, 1986, p. 190):

(a) John came later than Sue, I think.

(b) John came, I think, later than Sue.

(c) John, I think, came later than Sue.

(d) There were no other applicants, I believe, for that job.

(e) Charles wouldn't, I imagine, have done such a thing.

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2.1.1.1 Function of Comment Clauses

The concept of a comment can be understood in various ways. Comment clauses are pragmatically dependent, meaning their interpretation relies on their connection to the main clause elements. Brinton (1996) notes that parenthetical expressions like I mean, I see, or you know are often categorized as pragmatic markers. These clausal pragmatic markers encompass a diverse range of formal structures (p. 40).

Furthermore, Quirk et al. (1985) describe comment clauses as both style and content disjuncts. They serve functions such as hedging, which expresses uncertainty about the truth value of the statement, indicating the speaker's confidence, reflecting the speaker's emotional perspective on the content, and claiming the listener's attention (pp. 1114–1115).

A pragmatic marker is defined as a short phonological unit that is not syntactically tied to the rest of the clause (i.e., it is parenthetical) and carries minimal or no referential meaning, serving mainly pragmatic or procedural roles. Quirk et al. identify four distinct semantic functions of comment clauses (1985, pp. 1114-1115):

a) Hedging: They convey the speaker's uncertainty about the truth value of the main clause. Examples include phrases like I believe, I guess, I think, I expect, I feel, I hear, I presume, I assume, I understand, I suppose, I consider, I suspect, and I daresay.

b) Expressing Certainty: They indicate the speaker's confidence. Examples include I know, I claim, I see, I remember, I'm sure, I'm convinced, I have no doubt, I must say, and I must tell you.

c) Expressing Emotional Attitude: They reflect the speaker's feelings toward the content of the main clause. Examples include I'm glad to say, I'm happy to say, I hope, I wish, I fear, I regret, I'm afraid, and I regret to say.

d) Claiming Attention: These comment clauses help the speaker engage the listener and maintain a warm connection. Examples include you know, you see, you realize, you may have heard, and mind you.

2.1. 2. Relative Clauses

A relative clause is a type of clause that modifies a noun or noun phrase, typically introduced by relative pronouns like that, which, who, when, or where (Richards et al., 1992). It functions similarly to an adjective but allows for more detailed descriptions. These clauses provide additional information about head nouns, aiding in identification and comprehension.

Crystal and Davy (1969) argue that relative clauses do not constitute a major element of sentence structure but function as post-modifiers within nominal groups. Thomson and Martinet (1993) further categorize relative clauses into two types: defining relative clauses, which distinguish a noun from others in the same class, and non-defining relative clauses, which add extra information to already definite nouns. Examples illustrate these distinctions:

(2)The noise that he made woke everybody up. (Defining)

(3) My neighbor, who is very pessimistic, says there will be no apples this year. (Non-defining)

2.1.2.1 Types of Relative Clauses

Eastwood (2000) categorizes relative clauses into two types: restrictive relative clauses (RRCs) and non-restrictive relative clauses (NRRCs). The distinction between these types in writing is marked by comma intonation.

For example:

RRC: "We've been looking for a pub that serves food".

NRRC: "I shouted to the man, who ran off".

Eastwood notes that both types can be introduced by relative pronouns such as "who," "whom," "which," and "that." NRRCs provide additional information about a noun or connect two actions, while RRCs serve functions such as identification, classification, and emphasis.

2.1.2.2. Function of Relative Clauses

Relative clauses (RCs) are subordinate clauses that help identify or provide extra information about nouns, usually noun phrases or certain pronouns. They typically start with words like "who," "which," or "that," which refer back to the noun (Ballard, 2007). Non-Restrictive Relative Clauses (NRRCs) also add information but do not limit the meaning of the noun they modify. For example: "I spoke to Dr. Spolsky, who was unwilling to give further details".

"Kim won the race, which was a relief" (Quirk et al., 1985; Arnold, 2007).

NRRCs often modify proper nouns and can provide context without defining them. They are usually optional and can stand alone as separate clauses. NRRCs are typically set off by commas in writing (Arnold, 2007; Quirk et al., 1985). Overall, both RCs and NRRCs enhance meaning in sentences, but NRRCs do not restrict the interpretation of their referents.

2.1.3 Appositions

Hartman and Stork (1972) define appositions as "a word or phrase modifying a preceding noun phrase or clause." This definition highlights that appositives act as modifiers for the noun or noun phrase that comes before them. The term "appositive" derives from a Latin verb meaning "to put near or next to," referring to words that follow a noun to rename or describe it differently. Typically, an appositive comes immediately after another noun or pronoun in a sentence. The noun or pronoun that precedes the appositive, known as the antecedent, is the word to which the appositive refers (p. 17). Thus, the appositive is considered to be in apposition to its antecedent.

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2.1.3.1 Types of Appositions

Apposition can be categorized into non-restrictive and restrictive types, each with specific features:

a. Non-restrictive apposition:

In non-restrictive apposition, the appositives are presented as separate information units, with each having a different informational value, where one is subordinate. The second element provides additional, parenthetical information about the first without altering its meaning. Non-restrictive appositives are not essential to the sentence's meaning and must be set off by commas (Quirk et al., 1973, p. 276).

b. Restrictive apposition:

In restrictive apposition, the second element specifies or clarifies the first in a significant way. For instance, in "My friend Alice is nice," "Alice" identifies which friend is being referred to, making it restrictive. This type of apposition is often found with general noun phrases like "the fact," "the idea," and "the view" (Quirk, 1973, p. 283).

2.1.3.2 Functions of Appositions

In a pragmatic theory, a text is seen as a complete unit, supported by context, which includes both linguistic and non-linguistic (communicative) aspects. According to Verschueren's analysis, context is just one part of adaptability, reflecting an ongoing choice of linguistic forms (1999, p. 189). Appositions convey several pragmatic functions in communications by clarifying and specifying subjects and identities, providing extra additional information, accentuating points, and allowing for concise expressions. In addition, they can specify subjects, add context, reinforce ideas, rename them, and make sentences clearer and more impactful (Quirk et al.,1985).

3. MODEL OF ANALYSIS

The researcher will concentrate on the most pertinent elements connected to the main topic of this study, which involves parenthetical structures. Additionally, the study will integrate Searle's five classifications of speech acts to enhance the analysis and understanding of how these structures function within communication. By examining the interplay between parenthetical structures and speech acts, the researcher aims to provide a comprehensive perspective on their roles in conveying meaning and intent in discourse.

Fromkin et al. (2017, p. 501) define speech act (SA) as the action or intent a speaker achieves when utilizing language in context, with the meaning inferred by the hearers. Yule (1996, p. 47) describes SA as an action executed through utterances. Since language, whether verbal or non-verbal, serves as the primary means of communication, it influences the thinking and behavior of others. This is further emphasized by Searle (1969, p. 16), who states that performing a language involves executing speech acts.

Austin (1962) identified three types of actions associated with speech acts, which he discussed in detail (pp. 102-3). A locutionary act involves the physical act of producing sounds, words, phrases, and sentences that carry an obvious meaning related to the description of the speaker's speech (Leech, 1983, p. 199). Yule (1996) notes that utterances are not made without purpose; they carry an underlying intention or function (p. 48). Essentially, the illocutionary act refers to the act of performing something through utterance (Austin, as cited in Coulthard, 1985, p. 19).

Searle (1979) categorized illocutionary acts into five groups, which were initially presented by Austin and later adapted by Searle. These categories include stating, promising, thanking, proposing, expressing, apologizing, congratulating, threatening, predicting, requesting, and ordering (Alston, 1964, p. 35, as cited in Leech, 1983, p. 203).

According to Searle, there are five illocutionary points that speakers can achieve through their utterances:

Assertives: These speech acts connect the speaker to the truth of the assertion being made and have a truth value. They express the speaker's perspective and include acts such as asserting, claiming, complaining, concluding, reporting, and stating. In this type of speech act, the speaker aims to align their words with their belief about the world (Huang, 2007, p. 98). For example: "The ambassador cooperates with all refugees".

Directives: These are attempts by the speaker to get the listener to take some action. Common verbs in this category include request, ask, and invite (Huang, 2007, p. 101). An example is: "Can you speak slowly, please? I cannot understand".

Commissives: These linguistic acts establish a connection between the speaker and the truth of the claims being made, carrying a truth value. They express the speaker's commitment to a future action. In this case, the speaker intends for their words to correspond with a future action. Verbs like promise, threaten, vow, commit, and pledge fall under this category. For example: "I'll be back in five minutes" (Thomas, 1995, p. 35).

Expressives: These speech acts convey the speaker's psychological state or attitude, such as feelings of joy, sorrow, or preferences. Examples include apologizing, blaming, congratulating, praising, and thanking (Allot, 2010, p. 13). For instance: "I'm so sorry for your loss".

Declarations (or declaratives): These acts involve making statements that result in changes to a person, group, or the world. Examples include actions like bidding in bridge, declaring war, excommunicating someone, firing an employee, or nominating a candidate. For example: "Teacher: I name Mark as the class monitor" (Allot, 2010, p. 13).

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Furthermore, A perlocutionary act pertains to the effects or outcomes that result from the speech produced by the speaker. This type of act focuses on how the listener interprets and responds to the utterance, leading to changes in their beliefs, feelings, or actions as a consequence of what was said.

4. DATA AND ANALYSIS
1. "Come, Mr. Wickham, we are brother and sister, you know".

In Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," the analysis of "Come, Mr. Wickham, **"we are brother and sister, you know"** reveals the significance of parenthetical structures like apposition and comment clauses, while also highlighting the role of pragmatics in understanding the intended meanings behind Georgiana's words. The statement **"we are brother and sister"** is appositional because it explicitly defines the relationship between Georgiana and Mr. Wickham, providing clarity about their familial bond. This clarity emphasizes the importance of family ties, suggesting that Georgiana expects Mr. Wickham to treat her with the respect and consideration due to a family member. Additionally, this declaration carries emotional weight, inviting Mr. Wickham to engage with her on a deeper level.

The phrase **"you know"** serves as a comment clause, adding an informal, familiar tone that reflects Georgiana's assumption that Mr. Wickham is already aware of their relationship. This clause softens the assertion and creates a conversational atmosphere, fostering a sense of intimacy and connection.

From a pragmatic perspective, the entire statement functions as an assertive act, as Georgiana aims to align her words with her understanding of their familial connection, influencing Mr. Wickham's perception and behavior while navigating the social dynamics of their world. The pragmatics of the situation reveal how Georgiana's words are not merely statements of fact but strategic moves designed to reinforce their relationship and shape Mr. Wickham's response. Through this interplay of apposition, comment clauses, assertive acts, and pragmatic intent, the dialogue not only clarifies their relationship but also enriches the emotional complexity of their interaction.

2. "Oh, you are a great deal too apt, you know, to like people in general."

The phrase **"you are a great deal too apt"** serves as an appositional element that characterizes the recipient's behavior, specifying a particular trait of being overly inclined to like others. This characterization is crucial for understanding the dynamics of their relationship. Additionally, **"you know"** functions as a comment clause, adding familiarity and suggesting the speaker's assumption that the recipient is already aware of their tendency to like people. This informal tone enhances the conversational quality of the dialogue, fostering a sense of intimacy between the speaker and the recipient.

The analysis of the phrase **"you are a great deal too apt"** functions as an assertive act. This statement communicates the speaker's opinion about the recipient's tendency to be excessively favorable toward others. This assertion encourages the recipient to reflect on their behavior, implying that their inclination to like people may be over the top.

The phrase **"you know"** in this context also acts as an assertive act that suggests mutual understanding and familiarity between the speaker and recipient. Here, the speaker aims to foster closeness, indicating that they both acknowledge this tendency.

Lastly, the phrase **"to like people in general"** is an assertive statement that describes the person's behavior. It shows that this person tends to like many people. The assertive act here is that the speaker is clearly stating this tendency as a fact. The purpose of this statement is to point out that their affection is very wide, which might mean they don't think carefully about who they like.

3. "She is on her road somewhere, I dare say, and so, passing through Meryton, thought she might as well call on you. I suppose she had nothing particular to say to you, Lizzy?"

The quotation "She is on her road somewhere, I dare say, and so, passing through Meryton, thought she might as well call on you. I suppose she had nothing particular to say to you, Lizzy?" incorporates various parenthetical structures, including comment clauses and apposition. The phrase "I dare say" serves as a comment clause, providing insight into the speaker's attitude and belief about the woman's journey. This clause adds a layer of informality and speculation, suggesting that the speaker is confident yet acknowledges some uncertainty. It invites Lizzy to share in the speaker's thought process, enhancing the conversational tone. It functions as an assertive speech act, expressing the speaker's belief about the woman's journey and suggesting a casual assumption regarding her visit. This statement connects the speaker to the truth of their assertion and reflects their perspective on the situation.

The phrase "thought she might as well call on you" acts as an appositional element, clarifying the speaker's interpretation of the woman's actions. This apposition specifies the nature of her visit, indicating that it is casual rather than significant. It functions also as an assertive act, presenting the speaker's perspective on the woman's motivations as a factual claim.

Furthermore, the phrase "I suppose" serves as both a comment clause and an expressively speculative speech act, indicating the speaker's uncertainty about the woman's intentions and inviting Lizzy to consider this viewpoint.

4. "My temper I dare not vouch for. It is, I believe, too little yielding— certainly too little for the convenience of the world."

The quotation "My temper I dare not vouch for. It is, I believe, too little yielding certainly too little for the convenience of the world." employs various parenthetical structures, including comment clauses and appositions.

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The phrase **"I dare not vouch for"** functions as a comment clause, expressing the speaker's uncertainty about their temper. This admission implies a self-awareness and acknowledgment of personal limitations, inviting the listener to consider the speaker's perspective on their temperament. The phrase **"I dare not vouch for"** can be viewed as an expressive speech act, conveying the speaker's feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability about their temperament. This expression reflects an introspective attitude, revealing the speaker's recognition of their limitations and the potential impact on their interactions with others. Additionally, **"I believe"** serves as another comment clause, indicating that the speaker is reflecting on their own nature, which enhances the conversational tone and personalizes the statement. Similarly, **"I believe"** serves as an expressive act, as it communicates the speaker's subjective understanding of their own nature. This addition not only personalizes the statement but also emphasizes the speaker's introspection.

The phrase **"too little yielding"** acts as an appositional element, describing the speaker's temper in relation to societal expectations. This apposition clarifies the nature of the temper being discussed, emphasizing its rigidity and lack of flexibility. It operates as an assertive act. Here, the speaker expresses a belief about the rigidity of their temper, reinforcing the idea that their temperament may not align with societal expectations.

The follow-up statement **"certainly too little for the convenience of the world"** further elaborates on this description, providing context for why the speaker believes their temperament may be problematic in social situations. The phrase "**certainly too little for the convenience of the world**" continues this assertive stance, providing justification for the previous assertion by indicating the potential social implications of their temperament.

5." I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding."

The quotation "I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding." employs various parenthetical structures, including comment clauses and apposition.

The phrase **"I hope"** functions as a comment clause, expressing the speaker's desire or aspiration regarding the nature of their faults. This clause introduces an element of uncertainty and personal reflection, indicating that the speaker is contemplating their own shortcomings. It invites the listener to consider the speaker's perspective, highlighting a level of self-awareness and concern about how their faults may be perceived.

The overall structure presents an assertive speech act, as the speaker makes a claim about their faults and delineates them in a way that reflects their self-awareness. By stating **"I have faults enough,"** the speaker asserts a belief about their character, while the follow-up "but they are not, I hope, of understanding" reinforces this assertion by providing a specific qualification.

The statement **"faults enough"** acts as an appositional element that identifies the speaker's acknowledgment of their imperfections. This apposition clarifies the nature of the faults being discussed, suggesting that while the speaker recognizes their flaws, they differentiate between various types of faults. The phrase **"not... of understanding"** serves to specify which faults the speaker wishes to exclude, emphasizing that they do not consider a lack of understanding to be among them.

The phrase **"I hope"** also serves as an expressive speech act, conveying the speaker's emotional state regarding their faults. This expression reflects a desire for understanding and a fear of being misunderstood, revealing the speaker's vulnerability and introspection.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has investigated the pragmatic role of parenthetical structures in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, revealing their importance in conveying character relationships and emotional complexity. The analysis highlights how elements such as comment clauses and apposition contribute to the richness of dialogue, providing insight into the characters' intentions and social interactions. Comment clauses serve to establish familiarity and intimacy, inviting readers into the characters' thought processes, while appositional phrases clarify and emphasize specific traits and relationships. Furthermore, the use of assertive speech acts underscores the characters' self-awareness and emotional depth, illustrating their struggles within societal expectations. The findings demonstrate that these linguistic features are not merely decorative; they play a crucial role in shaping the narrative's emotional landscape and enhancing the reader's understanding of interpersonal dynamics. Through this examination, the researcher gains a deeper appreciation for Austen's skillful use of language and the intricate ways she portrays the complexities of human relationships in her work.

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