

Pragmatic Analysis of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

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Abstract. *This research aims to analyze conversational features in *Pride and Prejudice* from cooperative principle of pragmatics. Various utterances have been analyzed in the novel with minute observation to figure out the contextual meaning of the dialogues. This study also helps us to analyze every character's psycho-analytic perception. The contextual meaning has been traced by keeping in mind the background of the existing situation where the characters exchange the dialogues willingly and unwillingly. Jane Austen has given a dramatic touch to this novel with lots of dialogues exchanged among the characters. All chapters in the novel are included mutual conversations and they exchange properly. It deserves to do more justice with elements of pragmatics i.e. Cooperative principle by employing various maxims of CP. It can be seen, as the story unfolds, characters take strong positions and become a vital part of developing plot. Thus I have observed conversation between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth, Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy, Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet, Jane and Elizabeth etc. to have an eagle-eyed observation of the invisible meaning of various important conversations in different situations in the novel.*

Key words: *pride and prejudice, Mr. Darcy, Mr. Bingley, CP, Jane Austen.*

1. Introduction

Pragmatics is the study of meaning as it is conveyed by a writer or speaker and understood by a reader or listener. Studying a speaker's meaning is known as pragmatics. (Yule, 1996:3)

This kind of research inevitably entails interpreting people's intentions within certain contexts and how those contexts affect the things that people say. It necessitates thinking about how speakers arrange their thoughts according to the audience, the situation, the place, and the time of day. The study of contextual meaning is known as pragmatics.

This method must also include the assumptions that listeners may draw from the speaker's words in order to determine the intended meaning. This kind of research investigates how a significant portion of what is acknowledged as being communicated is what is unsaid. It may be described as the study of significance that is invisible. Pragmatics is the study of communication in which more is implied than stated. The study of expressing relative distance is known as pragmatics. (Yule, 1996:3)

Thus, this study mainly analyzes the conversational features in *Pride and Prejudice* by applying the theory of cooperative principles.

Despite being a relatively recent field of study in linguistics, pragmatics has roots in ancient Greece and Rome, where the words "pragmaticus" (found in late Latin) and "pragmaticos" (found in Greek) both denote practicality. The American philosophical philosophy of pragmatism is credited with influencing the application of pragmatics in modern times.

The pragmatic interpretation of verbal communication studies and semiotics in Charles Morris's (1938) foundations of the theory of "Signs" helped to succinctly explain the distinctions between standard linguistics and semiotics endeavors. Morris identifies three fields of study: syntactic examines the formal relations of signals to one another, semantics studies the links of signs to the things to which the signs are applicable, and pragmatics explores the interactions of interpreters to interpreters.

Grice (1975) advanced the current understanding of meaning by defining natural and non-natural meaning and developing the pragmatic sense with regard to conversational meanings. Grice proposed that pragmatics should focus on the more utilitarian aspect of meaning, or the conversational meaning that was subsequently articulated in a number of ways. (Levinson, 1983:3)

Problems of the Study

The ultimate aim of the study is to analyze the different utterances with different interpretations with a view to find the intended meaning behind every conversation. The characters are exchanging the dialogues unconsciously with a view to convey their ideas. But my aim here is to read the psychology of the characters, implied meanings and their intentions. This study focused with cooperative principles of pragmatics.

Research Question

What are the psycho-analytical perception for the main characters in pride and prejudice?

Objectives of the Study

1. To explain the psycho-analytical perception for the main characters in pride and prejudice.
2. To get more understanding about the co-operative principle.

2. Literature Review

A review of previous research in the area indicates some attempts at a pragmatic analysis of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and other literary works. According to the research of Anggraini et al. (2019), implicature is overused in the novel by people of all social classes for sarcasm, real interaction, and politeness. Z Y Chang (2010), in his detailed analysis of the novel takes into account both politeness principles and cooperative principles. What he discovers is that the strategy of face-threatening-act is frequently used in indirect manner to uphold politeness principles and the expense of cooperative principles. Fajrina (2014), concentrates on analyzing the maxims used in Elizabeth Bennet's dialogue to determine that Elizabeth flouts them in order to either reflect a deeper connotation, demonstrate wit, or display a sense of humor. Du (2016), linguistically emphasizes the close and significant bond between Paul and his mother by using the conversational implicature to Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*.

Therefore, as discussed, the literature on Austen's novel has not yet practically and exclusively focused on the conversations between Mr. Darcy, Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet, Jane and Elizabeth. This study is an attempt to fill this gap in the literature.

3. Methodology

Research Design

In this study I will adapt a qualitative description design. Exchange of information is regarded as the primary goal of communication in pragmatics. People usually collaborate together to express their goals and the implied meaning of what they say. Thus, conversations are collaborative efforts centered on finding a common ground and collaborating toward a shared goal.

Language is a social institution. When two people engage in language communication, they function under the tacit understanding that they should assist one another. Here, cooperation does not only refer to carrying out tasks in the physical sense. For instance, when someone asks me to get him a glass of water, I actually go into the kitchen, get a glass, fill it, and deliver it to the requester. By granting the speaker's wish in this instance, I am being cooperative. I'm not using words to participate

in this situation. Naturally, I am free to respond negatively or positively and to choose not to take action. However, this would not occur in normal circumstances. On the other hand, I could easily go get him a glass of water and say nothing at all. But when no implementation is involved, turn taking remains at the linguistic level. (Thorat,2002: 21)

It is worthwhile to try to give at least a general idea of pragmatics' scope. In the first place, it's merely an adequately unfamiliar term. In the second place, there are currently no available text books, only one specialized journal (the Journal of Pragmatics) that covers the borderline Continental usage of the term, a small number of monographs, and a few collections of papers, making it difficult to just "go and take a look" at what pragmatics workers do. That being said, a lot of work has been published in a variety of linguistics and philosophy journals. Thirdly, According to several writers, there isn't even a coherent field: thus (Lyons,1977: 117) states that "the applicability [of the distinction between syntax, semantics and pragmatics]" to the description all of natural languages, in contrast to the description of construction of logical calculi is, at least that "Pragmatics is one of those words (societal and cognitive are others) that gives the impression that something quite specific and technical is being talked about when often in fact it has no clear meaning." The pragmatist is thus challenged to show that, at least within the linguistic and philosophical tradition that is the concern of this book, the term does have clear application. (Levinson, 2003: 5-6).

Data Collection

Jane Austen was born on December, 1775, at the Steventon parsonage house, where her father, George Austen, served as the parish rector. Jane was the sixth child in the Austen family's which included two sisters and five brothers. One of Jane Austen's strongest traits was her love of family. Although Jane loved every member of her family, her older sister Cassandra was her favorite.

Jane Austen life can be divided into three periods, they can be stated as: the twenty five years from 1775-1800 in Steventon Parsonage, eight years from 1801-1808 in Bath and Southampton and the last eight years, till just few months before her death in 1817 in the village of Chawton. She spent most of her life in the Steventon Parsonage, where she saw and knew closely the people of different strata like the gentry class and around the village of the large landed proprietor, the small proprietor and the clergyman, occasionally the military or the naval officer, the retired tradesman, the village apothecary and the independent Yeoman. These comprise the material of her novels, Austen calls it "Human nature in the midland countries". If the range or the character was limited, she had good opportunities of studying them minutely.

Jane's literary talent blossomed at Steventon and it appears she began writing at very early age, perhaps even before she was sixteen. At Steventon, Austen wrote her first draft of her novels, *Pride and Prejudice*, earlier entitled "First Impression" and written in 1796, *Sense and Sensibility* written in the form of letters in 1797 under the title "Elinor and Marianne", and *Northanger Abbey*, written under the title "Susan" in 1798-1799.

Among the indications of Jane's rising fame was the introduction of her name to the prince; Regent who kept a set of her novels in each of her residences. On learning through his physician who attended at her ailing brother Henry, when she was in London. His royal highness asked her librarian, Mr. Clarke, to wait for her. Mr. Clarke met her and told her that if she had any other novel forth coming she may dedicate it to the Prince. *Emma* was dedicated accordingly. (Austen, 2013: Introduction to *Pride and Prejudice* pp. vii-ix)

The selected novel for this study 'Pride and Prejudice' was published in 1813. It is a novel of manners that is set in the English countryside during the beginning of the 1800's. *Pride and Prejudice*, originally titled *First Impressions*, was finished by Jane Austen in 1797, but it wasn't published until she had revised it over sixteen years later. *Pride and Prejudice* appears to have been her favorite of her six finished novels. She dubbed the novel her "darling child" and her protagonist Elizabeth Bennet in a letter to her sister Cassandra. "as delightful a character as ever appeared in print". Political events in Jane Austen's lifetime as well as major literary movements of the time don't seem to have had much of an impact on her writing. Instead, she focuses on *Pride and Prejudice's* themes of social class, middle class etiquette, gender difficulties, courting, and marriage. Maybe it's these classic themes that

bring readers back to this book over and over again. *Pride and Prejudice* as the representative of Jane Austen, is worldly considered as a classical work in literary history. Due to its relationship among the main characters, *Pride and Prejudice* owns distinguished conversational features. This research project aims to analyze the Conversational features in *Pride and Prejudice* from cooperative principles of pragmatics. (Austen, 2013: Introduction to *Pride and Prejudice* pp. xii-xiv)

Data Analysis

Grice's Maxim

Maxim of Quality

Be Truthful

- ✓ Don't say anything you think is untrue.
- ✓ Avoid making statements for which you lack sufficient support.

Maxims of Quantity

- ✓ The intervention must provide sufficient information.
- ✓ It is not required to provide any more information than is required.

Quantity of Information

- ✓ Provide as much information as you can in your contribution (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- ✓ Don't provide more information than is necessary in your contribution.

Maxim of Relation

- The information provided needs to be relevant.

Relevance

- With respect to this maxim, Grice writes, "Though the maxim itself is terse, its formulation conceals such number of problems that exercise me good deal questions about what different kinds and focus of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange, how to allow for the fact that subjects of conversations are legitimately changed, and so on. I find the treatment of such questions exceedingly difficult, and I hope to revert to them in later work." (Grice, 1989: 27)

Maxim of Manner

Be Clear

- ✓ Keep your words clear.
- ✓ Avoid vagueness.
- ✓ Be brief; omit superfluous detail.
- ✓ Be orderly.

4. Results and Discussion

The first line of the novel begins with "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (Austin: 2013,1), this first line credits as the proper beginning *Pride and Prejudice*. If we try to understand the contextual meaning of the above sentence; then the sentence should analyze pragmatically. It not only draws the reader's attention to the marriage's pivotal role in the story's storyline, but it also instantly introduces them to Austen's use of irony. Although the sentence concentrates on "a single man... in want of a wife," young women's search for husbands who are wealthy is actually the main subject of the book and of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century society. In the book, there will be criticism directed towards the merely

utilitarian, economic reason for marriage as well as the social pressures that force many women to marry in order to survive financially.

As per the context of the novel, Bennet family is not well to do, they have burden of getting their daughters married to rich men of England. They found Mr. Bingley and Darcy in the form of proposed husbands for their daughters. This statement applies to the time of Victorian period when women were insecure about their future. Thus, this statement also provides multifarious meanings in the context of the background of various characters. Thus this line also proves fruitful to unfold the central theme of the novel.

Apart from this statement, it is important to study and analyze the conversations among different characters mainly, Darcy and Elizabeth, Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Bennet, Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet to comprehend the intended meaning behind the utterances. This novel is full of dialogues that expose character's internal working of mind.

Now I'm going to interpret briefly some important conversations among major characters in the novel:

Conversation Between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley:

Jane Austen has made very significant use of dialogues in the novel as it is apt from the following dialogues between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley. When Mr. Darcy was not willing to mingle with the Ball surroundings, Mr. Bingley as he is very excited lets Mr. Darcy at ease, hence, cooperating with his partners when other is not at ease. As per the pragmatic principle, the conversation becomes fruitful, when the hearer also participates in the conversation and cooperates with the hearer by replying or being active.

'Come, Darcy,' said he, 'I must have you dance. I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance.'

'I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this, it would be insupportable. Women in the room, whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand with.'

'I must not be as fastidious as you are.' Cried Bingley, *'for a kingdom! Upon my honour, I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life, as I have this evening; and there are several of them you see uncommonly pretty.'*

'You are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room,' said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet'. (Austin, 2013: 8-9)

It can be seen in the above dialogue how important is to cooperate with the communicating partner in the conversation. Mr. Bingley being very free and frank in his behavior compels Mr. Darcy to mingle with the Ball surrounding. There are various utterances of this kind in the novel that play a very vital role in the development of the plot and fulfillment of this research's hypothesis.

Conversation Between Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet:

It can be observed that Mrs. Bennet violates the quantitative maxim that makes your contribution as informative as required (For the current purpose of the exchange) and not to make your contribution more informative than is required. This cooperative principle is violated by her when she informs about the letting of Netherfield Park by providing unnecessary details and when, in fact he is not interested in knowing about the same.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied "that he had not".

"But it is", returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do not you want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week." (Austen, 2013: 1)

It can be observed in the above dialogues that Mr. Bennet is uninterested in the situation about what is going on in their village. Mrs. Bennet talks too much to confuse him to a great deal. Thus these dialogues are showing that Mrs. Bennet, unnecessarily provides too much information than is required. She violates maxim of quantity. Mrs. Bennet tells him that it is the hearsay of their neighbor Mr. Morris, but she is not absolutely sure of the information. Thus apart from flouting the quantity maxim, she also violates qualitative maxim that states to speak truth always. Thus, above conversations provide very significant points to deal with these two maxims.

In the above conversation, Mrs. Bennet uses unnecessary details, even when he is at least bothered. When she asks, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?" this utterance shows that she deliberately participates in the conversation. She provides unwanted details about Netherfield Park. When Mr. Bennet does not reply. She again asks "Do not you want to know who has taken it?" Thus we can infer that when a communicating partner is not at ease to participate in the conversation, it shows encroachment on one's rights. Mrs. Bennet talks so much and does not give any chance to her husband to comment. It can be seen that she is violating the maxim of quantity.

Conversation Between Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet (Maxim of Quantity):

Here also, it can be observed that most of the dialogues are unwanted. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are expecting a guest in their house. Mr. Bennet can directly name the guest as Mr. Bingley. But he uses circumlocution way of talking with his wife. Interestingly another person happens to visit their house instead of Mr. Bingley. So the dialogues here, violate the maxim of quantity.

'I hope my dear,' said Mr. Bennet to his wife, as they were at breakfast the next morning, 'that you have ordered a good dinner today, because I have reason to expect an addition to family party.'

'Who do you mean, my dear? I know of nobody that is coming I am sure, unless Charlotte Lucas should happen to call in, and I hope my dinners are good enough for her. I do not believe she often sees such at home.'

'The person, of whom I speak, is a gentleman and a stranger.' Mrs. Bennet's eyes sparkled. 'A gentleman and a stranger! It is Mr. Bingley I am sure. Why Jane, you never dropped a word of this; you sly things! Well, I am sure I shall be extremely glad to see Mr. Bingley. But good lord! How unlucky! There is not a bit of fish to be got today. Lydia my love, ring the bell. I must speak to Hill, this moment.'

'It's not Mr. Bingley,' said her husband; 'it is a person whom I never saw in the whole course of my life.' (Austen, 2013: 57-58)

Above mentioned conversations also provide important details to find the violation of maxim of quantity in the novel. It can be seen here, that Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are discussing about some types of guests in their house. Both of them talk roundabout and in circumlocution way in which they use unwanted expressions those are not required. According to manner maxim, we should be clear, unambiguous in our conveying the message. When, the dialogues uttered by Mr. Bennet are analyzed, his aim of talking is not to the point. Thus, here Mr. Bennet flouts the maxim of quantity and manner by employing circumlocution and roundabout way of imparting the information or message. Mr. Bennet again says 'It's not Mr. Bingley', 'it is a person whom I never saw in the whole course of my life.' actually he is talking about Mr. Collins, his distant cousin who is the heir of his forefather's property. He could say that his cousin was going to come, but he stated that, instead of taking his direct name, he confuses his wife. Hence, he flouts the manner maxim of cooperative principle.

Conversation Between Mr. Darcy and Miss Elizabeth. (Maxim of Manner):

This is a very good example of unwanted interference in someone's work. When Mr. Darcy was writing a letter to his sister Miss. Darcy. Elizabeth interferes and asks too many questions to him. He seems disinterested in her. She keeps asking him about his writing style, about the sort of pen that he uses for writing, about his sister who is unfamiliar to her. All these dialogues show the intrusion on her part to trouble Mr. Darcy. This is not approved by the manner maxim.

"How delighted Miss Darcy will be to receive such a letter!"

He made no answer.

"You write uncommonly fast."

"You are mistaken. I write rather slowly."

"How many letters you must have occasion to write in the course of the year!"

Letters of business too! How odious I should think them!"

"It is fortunate, then, that they fall to my lot instead of to yours."

"Pray tell your sister that I long to see her."

"I have already told her so once, by your desire."

"I am afraid you do not like your pen. Let me mend it for you. I mend pens remarkably well."

"Thank you -- but I always mend my own."

"How can you contrive to write so even?"

He was silent. (Austen, 2013: 43-44)

Mr. Darcy is very much engrossed in deep thought about what to write to his sister but Lizzy disturbed him by asking too many questions about the handwriting, pen and manner of writing which an intruder should avoid. Here, it can be seen the direct intervention of Elizabeth. Whatever her intention positive or negative, provides us some clue of what kind of expressions she is interested. Thus in providing more comments she violates the maxim of manner directly.

Conversation Between Mr. Collins and Elizabeth:

In *pride and prejudice*, Mr. Collins' proposal to Miss Elizabeth shows the traits of their characters. She disagrees with him. He blames Mr. Darcy of no fault of him. Thus he flouts the maxim of quality that states to speak the truth always.

"Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth...allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address...Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life..."

"My reasons for marrying are, first...secondly...and thirdly which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honor of calling patroness..." (Austen, 2013: 57)

Mr. Collins is one of the antagonists, a vain, selfish hypocrite. In order to persuade Elizabeth into marrying him, he firstly asked for the agreement of Mrs. Bennet, and confessed that he loved her at first sight and controlled himself for a long time. This shows Mrs. Collins' flattery vividly. Mr. Collins flouts quality maxim by flattering Elizabeth about his love towards her. In the story, he is the man who filled hatred in Elizabeth's mind about Mr. Darcy's character.

Conversations Between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy (Relevance Maxim):

Elizabeth and Darcy are representatively the heroine and hero of the novel. They play the very vital role in the progression of the plot of the novel. According to Grice, Relevance maxim states that, whenever you talk with anybody, you have to use the relevant sentences. And convey the relevant information, thus the following dialogues will cater to our purpose.

As the main characters, they have been known each other, the conversations between Elizabeth and Darcy appear until chapter six in the novel. The first five chapters have been prepared well for the following dialogues.

"Did you not think, Mr. Darcy that I have expressed myself uncommonly well just now, when I was teasing Colonel Forester to give us a ball at Meryton?"

"With great energy; but it is always a subject which makes a lady energetic."

"You are severe on us". (Austen, 2013: 20-21)

Through this conversation, everyone knows that their dialogues are full of prejudice. In fact, what Darcy says violate relevance maxim. Relevance maxim is that when you say is relevant to the topic you are talking. Elizabeth asks Darcy whether her expressions suitable or not? However, Mr. Darcy answers "with great energy" which means that coming ball is with great energy so, Mr. Darcy's words violate the relevance maxims in cooperative principle.

Conversation Between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley about Elizabeth (Maxim of Manner):

The following dialogue shows the selfish nature of Mr. Darcy. When Mr. Bingley praises Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy, out of pride gives her no notice. This kind of expression on the part of Mr. Darcy shows his attitude towards Miss. Elizabeth. Thus with this dialogue we can inferred that Mr. Bingley complies by the manner maxim by doing fullest justice to it whereas, Mr. Darcy flouts the manner maxim by being rude to her.

"You are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room," said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet.

"Oh! She is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you."

"Which do you mean?" and turning round, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me." (Austen, 2013: 8-9)

Conclusion

This study is an analysis of cooperative principles in *Pride and Prejudice*. A detailed analysis is conducted of Grice's cooperative principles. The conversational technique and the relationship between "sense and force" are explained by the cooperative and related maxims. It is noted that *Pride and Prejudice*'s conversational analysis is made easier by the theoretical framework provided by these pragmatic ideas. Elaborating on the contextual meaning provided by the chosen *Pride and Prejudice* examples constitutes the primary focus of the study.

Pragmatic theories are just hypotheses about how we process our language. They are not specific to any particular language use. The assumptions are the ground rules can be used for interpreting all discourse. Grice's maxim suggests some of the way in which that cooperation is carried out. Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* is full of pragmatic discourse. There are many dialogues in the novel that are worth studying. This project has mentioned some of the major discourses. Very first chapter of the novel gives us pragmatic touch, when it is analyzed the context in the chapter-1, where Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are arguing about their sister's marriages to Bingley family. It can be quoted a very small part of their conversation as example here.

'What is his name?'

'Bingley'

'Is he married or single?'

'Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!' (Austen, 2013: 1).

If it is done contextual analysis of the dialogue, it can be realized that Mrs. Bennet is more concerned about large fortune owned by Mr. Bingley rather than finding perfect husband for her daughter like other mothers. Thus, the dialogue has two interpretations one indicates to Mr. Bingley as a fine husband on the other hand, it also means large fortune.

It can be expected *Pride and Prejudice* to be a romance, exploring the courtship of Lizzy and Darcy, which it is, and its proud for me that there was so much more to analyze in this novel to explore. I analyzed this novel as possible as then went back and reread it right away; this was mainly because it needed to be captured with the essence of dialogues among various characters, but it can be found that the plot developing with every successive chapters and incidents along with running dialogues. Also it can be found an opportunity to do in-depth analysis of various obscure dialogues which are very difficult to comprehend. This study proved very pivotal in deciphering the various implied expressions along with contextual meaning effectively.

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