

الجوانب الدلالية للتركيب الاعتراضية في اللغة الإنكليزية القياسية

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الملخص

الجملة الاعتراضية هي تركيب مستقلة، قد تشير إلى الاحتمال أو اللطف أو التقدير العاطفي للمتحدث. وقد تكشف التناقضات في موقف المتحدث تجاه السياق، وأيضاً قد تشير إلى درجة التزام المتحدث بالاقتراح المذكور في المسند إليه. وجود التركيب الاعتراضية في الجملة أمر اختياري، فلا يحمل بشكل عام النقطة الرئيسية في الجملة، بل يحمل المسند إليه النقطة الرئيسية في الجملة. وقد تم تصنيف الجمل الاعتراضية حسب خصائصها العملية، فقد قسمت إلى إثباتية، وغير إثباتية، وفي بعض الأحيان قد يحمل التركيب الاعتراضي أفكار شخص آخر وليست أفكار المتحدث. قد تساهم التركيب الاعتراضية بإظهار حالة صحة الكلام إظهاراً مباشراً. حتى وإن كان التركيب الاعتراضي غير مندمجاً مع الجملة من الناحية النحوية، يبقى المعنى الدلالي للجمل الاعتراضية مندمجاً مع تفسير الجملة كاملة وبالاعتماد على عوامل براغماتية. فالجمل الاعتراضية مرتبطة بالتركيز الدلالي، ومع ذلك في بعض الأحيان، قد يكون التركيب الاعتراضي نتيجة العفوية دون أي علاقة بالكلام الذي يقاطعه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدلالي، التركيب الاعتراضي، تصنيف، مستقل

The Semantic Aspects of Parenthetical Constructions

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Abstract

Parentheticals are independent constructions, which may indicate probability, politeness or emotional evaluation. Parenthetical constructions reveal the attitude of the speaker towards the context. The parenthetical may reveal the degree of the speaker's commitment to the truth of the host proposition. Their existence in the sentence is optional. A parenthetical does not generally carry the main point of the sentence; the host clause carries the focus. Parenthetical constructions have been classified based on their pragmatic properties. Parentheticals are divided into: evidential and non-evidential. Sometimes a parenthetical can express somebody else's thoughts. i.e., not the speaker's thoughts, so in this case, it contributes to the truth conditions of the utterance directly. Even if the parenthetical construction is syntactically unintegrated in the sentence, the semantic meaning of parentheticals is incorporated into the interpretation of the full utterance depending on their interpretation on pragmatic factors. Parentheticals associate with semantic focus. However, parentheticals can be the result of spontaneity with no relation to the utterance which they interrupt.

Keywords: semantic, parenthetical, classification, independent

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1- Introduction

Parenthetical constructions are words or phrases that are not essential to the rest of the sentence. A parenthetical, however, can add crucial new information to a sentence when it is used correctly. Parentheticals are identified by "a perceived structural independence from a main utterance and as having interruptive effect within the sentence"⁽¹⁾. In this research paper, the semantic functions of parentheticals and their categories are studied.

2- The semantic functions of parentheticals

Parentheticals are "expressions that are linearly represented in a given string of utterance" ⁽²⁾. A parenthetical clause does not generally carry the main point and the host clause carries the focus. Parentheticals are "outside the focus-background structure of their hosts" ⁽³⁾.

A parenthetical construction may indicate a degree of probability, speaker's concession, showing politeness or an emotional evaluation ⁽⁴⁾. They reveal the attitude of the speaker towards the context, and their deletion does not make the sentence ungrammatical ⁽⁵⁾. Parenthetical constructions are independent of the entailments of the host and they are instead speaker-oriented comments on a semantic entailment ⁽⁶⁾. They function as a comment on some aspect of the meaning of that sentence and they are significant because they are examples of "linguistic devices which are meaningful but whose meaning does not contribute to the truth-conditions of the sentence in

¹ MCINNERNEY, A., 2016- **The syntax of parenthetical topics in English**. U.S.A.: Ohio State University. Retrieved on 2/7/2020 from: <https://kb.osu.edu>. p. 3.

² DEHÉ, N; KAVALOVA, Y., 2007- **Parentheticals: An introduction**. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. p.1. Retrieved on 20/2/2021 from: <http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bzs:352-141751>

³ ibid.p.1

⁴ JAGIELLA, D., 2015- **A relevance-theoretic account of some constraints on syntactic parentheticals: Evidence from English and Polish**. *Studies in Polish Linguistics*. **10**. (4). pp. 177–178. Retrieved on 23/7/2020 from: www.ejournals.eu/pliki>art

⁵ HAMZA, J.N., 2017- **Comment clauses in English and Arabic: A comparative analysis**. In *Journal of Babylon University*. **25** (6). Iraq: University of Al-Qadisiyah. pp.3132-3142.

⁶ POTTS, C., 2005- **The logic of conventional implicatures**. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.11.

which they occur" ⁽¹⁾. According to ⁽²⁾, parentheticals might act as modifiers, additions, or comments on the current speech. They reveal the attitude of the addresser towards the semantic content of the speech. The parenthetical may reveal the degree of the speaker's commitment to the truth of the host proposition, as can be seen in:

1. Jules is back, I think ⁽³⁾.

The parenthetical in the previous example is speculative.

An additional emotional meaning can be shown in the parenthetical clause, as can be seen in:

2. Jules is back, can you imagine! ⁽⁴⁾.

When a parenthetical clause expresses somebody else's thoughts not the speaker's, it marks the interpretive use of the parenthetical clause and contributes to the truth conditions of the utterance directly, as can be seen in the following example:

3. John is, you say, a spy ⁽⁵⁾.

Parenthetical expressions, for example, "I believe" and "I think" enable "the epistemic force of an utterance to be expressed or modified midway through the production of a sentence" ⁽⁶⁾, as can be seen in the following example:

4. The airport terrorists that you know were in control during nine eleven, they all had fake drivers license from I believe Florida⁽⁷⁾.

The notion that 9/11 terrorists had fake drivers' licenses is presented as a fact, but the licenses were from Florida is presented as a belief. Such

¹ KODAH, M.K., 2013- **The linguistic impact of parenthetical expressions: A study of The suns of independence of Ahmadou Kourouma**. In *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*. **2** (11). pp. 67-71. Retrieved on 11/2/2021 from: www.ijhissi.org

² DEHÉ, N; KAVALOVA, Y., 2007- **Parentheticals: An introduction**. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. p.2. Retrieved on 20/2/2021 from <http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bzs:352-141751>

³ JAGIELLA, D., 2015- **A relevance-theoretic account of some constraints on syntactic parentheticals: Evidence from English and Polish**. *Studies in Polish Linguistics*. **10**. (4). p. 178. Retrieved on 23/7/2020 from: www.ejournals.eu>pliki>art

⁴ ibid. p. 178

⁵ ibid. p.186

⁶ HEDBERG, N; ELOUAZIZI, N., 2014- **Epistemic parenthetical verb phrases: C-command, semantic scope and prosodic phrasing**. Simon Fraser University. p.1. Retrieved on 22/1/2021 from:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Epistemic+parenthetical+verb>

⁷ ibid.p.1

parentheticals uses originate by means of a pragmaticalization process from main clause uses that become detached from the former subordinate clause and then move to different positions in the sentence ⁽¹⁾.

Parentheticals can express a degree of speaker commitment with regard to the proposition expressed, as can be seen in the following example:

5. And the Labour Party I believe want sanctions to work ⁽²⁾.

Parentheticals might function as hesitation indicators and are usually accompanied by other filled or unfilled pauses, as can be seen in the following example:

6. Blinkered I think is a nice word if you're describing someone that you don't like ⁽³⁾.

Parentheticals can be the result of spontaneity with no relation to the utterance which they interrupt, as can be seen in the following example:

7. The main point - *why not have a seat?* - is outlined in the middle paragraph ⁽⁴⁾.

He depends on backtracking device. Also, as for ⁽⁵⁾, the use of backtracking helps to mark disfluency in the parenthetical construction and the sentence in which it is used. Nevertheless, parentheticals are used deliberately. Written texts are subjected to a number of revisions, so when a parenthetical is used, it is used by the author deliberately not spontaneously. According to ⁽⁶⁾, without the parenthetical, the hearer will not be able to directly access certain implications and the hearer might stray away from the intended meaning.

3- Parenthetical constructions categories

Parenthetical constructions have been classified based on their pragmatic properties. Parenthetical constructions "are united in

¹ Ibid.p.1

² ibid. p.6

³ ibid. p.7

⁴ BURTON-ROBERTS, N., 2006- **Parentheticals**. In E. K. Brown (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*, Elsevier Science. p.180.

⁵ DEHÉ, N; KAVALOVA, Y., 2007- **Parentheticals: An introduction**. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. p.8. Retrieved on 20/2/2021 from: <http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bzs:352-141751>

⁶ ibid.p.9s

operating on a distinct discourse plane" ⁽¹⁾, so they are defined pragmatically since they serve metacommunicative pragmatic functions into four categories:

- a) subjective evaluation existence of elements that encode a subjective reference towards the speaker's proposition, e.g. comment clauses and sentence adverbs.
- b) addressee-oriented: shows a listener's response, e.g. you see, you know, don't you think and question tags. The main function is to add a parenthetical comment to another clause ⁽²⁾.
- c) supplementary information represents explanations or extra information to qualify something, e.g. clausal parentheticals.
- d) metastatements give references to the listener to know how to interpret what is being said ⁽³⁾.

Parenthetical are divided into two types: evidential and non-evidential. Evidential parentheticals include apparently, seemingly, and obviously. In this type of parentheticals, the context is altered for the interpretation of the host. Non-evidential parentheticals include possibly and probably, as can be seen in:

4. John is, apparently, a spy.

The speaker in the previous example is not committed to the truth of John is a spy but the truth of John is, seemingly, a spy (i.e., it seems/appears that John is a spy). The adverbial apparently ensures that the speaker is putting forward the proposition that John is a spy with a very reduced degree of strength ⁽⁴⁾.

According to ⁽⁵⁾, parentheticals are divided into: a) nominal appositives, b) reporting verbs like *said*, and c) full clausal parentheticals, as can be seen in the following examples, respectively:

¹ GRENOBLE LENORE, A., 2004- **Parentheticals in Russian**. *Journal of Pragmatics* **36(11)**, p. 1954.

² CRYSTAL, D., 2003- **A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics**. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. p.84. Retrieved on 10/1/2021 from: <https://books.google.com/books?id=3ZPQVuSgDAkC&pg=PT26>

³ GRENOBLE LENORE, A., 2004- **Parentheticals in Russian**. *Journal of Pragmatics* **36(11)**, pp. 1968–1972.

⁴ JAGIELLA, D., 2015- **A relevance-theoretic account of some constraints on syntactic parentheticals: Evidence from English and Polish**. *Studies in Polish Linguistics*. **10. (4)**. pp.190-191. Retrieved on 23/7/2020 from: www.ejournals.eu>pliki>art

⁵ MCINNERNEY, A., 2016- **The syntax of parenthetical topics in English**. U.S.A.: Ohio State University. Retrieved on 2/7/2020 from: <https://kb.osu.edu>. p. 3.

5. a. Don, *a friend of mine*, is the one you're looking for.
b. The demonstration was a waste of time, *said the chairperson*.
c. The number of participants is, *as you already know*, completely arbitrary.

4- Semantic interpretation of parentheticals

The semantic interpretation of parentheticals is the same representation as for independent sentences, and this leads to the idea of the compositional meaning of parentheticals. However, the semantic meaning of parentheticals is incorporated into the interpretation of the full utterance without being syntactically integrated with the host clause ⁽¹⁾.

The host clause in a parenthetical construction has often been considered as an assertion; however, there are some restrictions on the discourse of the parentheticals. i.e., a syntactic parenthetical with a declarative host cannot be used to answer a question, unlike a declarative sentence with the parenthetical predicate in the main clause. Moreover, interrogative host clauses are not used as requests for information, as can be seen in:

5. What did Fred say?
a. He said that he was an idiot./That he was an idiot.
b. *He was an idiot, he said./*He was, he said, an idiot.
6. a. What, he wondered, was going to happen next?
b. *I haven't a clue ⁽²⁾.

When the embedded clause has main point status, the parenthetical clause, which is the main clause, carries information about the embedded proposition as can be seen in:

7. Henry thinks/I think she was with Bill ⁽³⁾.

On the other hand, the source of the information in the embedded clause in the following example is Henry:

8. Henry said that she was with Bill ⁽⁴⁾.

¹ ibid.pp.15-29

² JAGIELLA, D., 2015- **A relevance-theoretic account of some constraints on syntactic parentheticals: Evidence from English and Polish.** *Studies in Polish Linguistics*. **10**. (4). p.180. Retrieved on 23/7/2020 from: www.ejournals.eu>pliki>art

³ ibid.p.177

⁴ Jagiella, D., 2015- **A relevance-theoretic account of some**

The speaker conveys that s/he is not to be taken to be responsible for the truth of the embedded proposition. The truth relies on how Henry is reliable.

9. John is, obviously, a spy.

The parenthetical "obviously" is referred to as a strong evidential; it is implied that there is clear evidence for the parenthetical. i.e., the commitment of the speaker is strong ⁽¹⁾. Parentheticals are interpreted based on discourse and pragmatic factors.

Parentheticals associate with semantic focus; for instance, in the case of parentheticals that occur between the subject and predicate of the sentence, the subject is often the topic and it is excluded from the semantic scope of the parenthetical ⁽²⁾. On the other hand, parentheticals might not be semantically related to the host in the sentence in which they occur, and they are considered detached and separate utterances, as can be seen in the following example:

10. I got quite good at *like* heating up thermometers and stuff and give myself a temperature and things ⁽³⁾.

However, as for ⁽⁴⁾, there is no syntactic relationship between the parenthetical and its host, but the relation between these two items is a semantic one.

5- Conclusion

As it has been explained that there are various approaches of dealing with parentheticals semantically. Parentheticals associate with semantic focus. Parenthetical constructions do not carry the main point of the sentence; they are independent semantic constructions. They are instead speaker-oriented comments on a semantic entailment. The

constraints on syntactic parentheticals: Evidence from English and Polish.

Studies in Polish Linguistics. 10. (4). p. 176. Retrieved on 23/7/2020 from:

www.ejournals.eu>pliki>art

¹ *ibid.* pp.190-191

² HEDBERG, N; ELOUAZIZI, N., 2014- **Epistemic parenthetical verb phrases:**

C-command, semantic scope and prosodic phrasing. Simon Fraser University. p.5.

Retrieved on 22/1/2021 from:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Epistemic+parenthetical+verb>

³ DEHÉ, N; KAVALOVA, Y., 2007- **Parentheticals: An**

introduction. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. p.3. Retrieved on

20/2/2021 from: <http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bzs:352-141751>

⁴ PETERSON, P., 1999- **On the boundaries of syntax.** In Peter Collins and David Lee (eds.), *The Clause in English*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. pp. 229–250.

parenthetical constructions are divided into four main categories: subjective evaluation, addressee-oriented, supplementary information, and metastatements. The first category encodes speaker's proposition. The second type shows the addressee's response. The third type reveals extra information added to explain the sentence. The fourth type is to help the addressee to interpret what is said in the right intended meaning. The parenthetical can reveal the degree of the speaker's commitment to the truth of the host proposition. If a parenthetical expresses somebody else's thoughts, not the speaker's thoughts, the parenthetical contributes to the truth conditions of the utterance directly. It can express a degree of speaker commitment with regard to the proposition expressed. A parenthetical may seem odd that even if parentheticals are independent clauses, the semantic meaning of parentheticals is incorporated into the interpretation of the full utterance. Understanding the meaning of a parenthetical depends heavily on pragmatic and contextual factors. Parentheticals might function as hesitation indicators and accompanied by other filled or unfilled pauses. They function as modifiers, additions, or comments on the current speech and reveal the attitude of the addresser towards the semantic content of the speech. Sometimes, parentheticals, however, can be semantically unrelated to the host in the sentence in which they occur and are considered detached and separate utterances. Moreover, they might occur as a result of unplanned speech. But, this is not true; parentheticals are not accidental and spontaneous construction. When they are used in the sentence, they are used on purpose.

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