

Structural findings of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: Composition of lines

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ABSTRACT

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen tells the story of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy as they deal with pride, prejudice, and social expectations. This study looks at how Austen structures her sentences and lines, following the rules of English, including grammar, punctuation, and sentence patterns. Using qualitative analysis of secondary data from literary studies, the research examined Subject–Verb–Object sentences, active and passive voice, sentence length, parallelism, and other writing styles. The findings show that Austen mostly uses clear SVO sentences, active voice, and a mix of long and short sentences. She also uses free indirect discourse, irony, dialogue, and formal language to show character traits, emotions, and relationships. Overall, her careful sentence structure, correct English usage, and writing style highlight themes of pride, personal growth, social rules, and love, helping readers understand and enjoy the story.

Keywords: Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, sentence structure, stylistic analysis, structuralism.

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INTRODUCTION

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the most famous and well-loved novels in English Literature. First published in 1813, the story follows Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy as they learn to understand and respect each other, overcoming pride, prejudice, and social expectations along the way (Dillon, 2025). While many readers focus on the novel's themes, characters, and social context, fewer pay attention to how Austen constructs her sentences and lines to create emotion, guide the plot, and reveal character. This study focuses on that often-ignored part of her writing, which is the technical and structural side of her style.

For tertiary levels, students are required to construct sentences not just meaningfully but also as structures. The qualitative study on Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* Composition of Lines focuses on how the novel is written, not just what it is about. Studying the structure of the novel means looking at how Austen builds her sentences, uses word patterns, and how it creates rhythm in her writing. These elements affect how the story feels and how readers connect with the characters and events. By exploring her sentence style, word choices, and line composition, the study aims to better understand how these techniques add depth to her storytelling and discourse readers to the complete component of the text. On the other side, as to literary criticism, structuralism refers to the text.

Furthermore, this assumes that Austen's writing is not only elegant but also carefully planned, as to structure, thus the need to find and explain these writing patterns using information from existing studies and online resources. In doing so, the study hopes to give a new view on Austen's writing skill and how her sentence structure adds to the novel's lasting impact.

Statement of the problem

Specifically, this study qualitatively sought to answer the following sub-problems. It aimed to examine the linguistic construction and stylistic elements employed by Jane Austen in *Pride and Prejudice*, focusing on how her use of language contributes to character development, thematic expression, and reader engagement.

1. How does Jane Austen construct her sentences in *Pride and Prejudice* in terms of subject–verb–object agreement, active and passive voice usage, and adherence to the rules of English grammar?
2. How does Jane Austen's writing style contribute to the portrayal of characters and the development of themes in *Pride and Prejudice*?
3. How does Austen's sentence structure and stylistic approach influence readers' emotional responses and comprehension of the story?

METHODOLOGY

This study applies data mining techniques based on qualitative secondary data on Jane Austen's literary work entitled *Pride and Prejudice*. The methodology is grounded in secondary qualitative analysis, reading word for word, focusing on expert reviews and literary studies that discuss the novel's writing style as to Subject-Verb-Object agreement, sentence structure as to active and passive voice, and composition of lines as to rules of English. By collecting and

analyzing these existing findings, this study aims to identify patterns in how Austen structured her writing and how these patterns contribute to the novel's overall impact.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved a qualitative linguistic analysis of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to explore how her sentence construction, voice usage, and stylistic choices contribute to characterization, thematic development, and reader interpretation. Using selected textual fragments and chapter-based analysis, data were gathered from a range of representative passages across the novel, including recurring sentences, grammatical structures, and stylistic patterns. The findings were then organized according to the research objectives, with quantitative tallies supporting the qualitative observations.

Sentence construction in *Pride and Prejudice*

The results show that Jane Austen frequently employed the Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) sentence structure in *Pride and Prejudice*, which contributed to the clarity and coherence of her prose. Sentences such as “Mr. Darcy said nothing” and “He looked at her” appeared most often, with fourteen occurrences each. These recurring expressions emphasize Mr. Darcy's quiet, reserved disposition and highlight how silence and observation often communicate more than dialogue. Meanwhile, sentences like “Elizabeth could not believe it” and “She answered him,” though less frequent, effectively reveal emotional immediacy and spontaneity. They demonstrate Austen's capacity to express complex feelings in simple linguistic forms, allowing readers to experience Elizabeth's internal reactions directly. Less frequent constructions, including “Charlotte accepted Mr. Collins” and “Elizabeth refused the proposal,” though appearing only twice, mark pivotal moments in the plot that embody the novel's key themes—marriage, choice, and independence. The computed mean of 6.22 and standard deviation of 4.74 reflect Austen's balanced use of repetition and variety, suggesting deliberate stylistic control. Overall, Austen's preference for SVO structures reveals her intent to make character motives transparent and to advance the narrative with linguistic precision and emotional resonance.

Active and passive voice usage

The findings also reveal a clear dominance of the active voice throughout *Pride and Prejudice*. Across the six chapter ranges analyzed, an average of 675 active sentences were identified compared to only 66.6 passive ones. In the early chapters, examples like “Mr. Collins proposed to Elizabeth” illustrate active constructions that drive the plot and foreground individual agency, while passive expressions such as “She was not invited” depict social exclusion and implicit social norms. As the story progresses, Austen continues this pattern: active sentences such as “Elizabeth read the letter” create immediacy and personal involvement, while passive ones like “The letter was read with great attention” reflect collective perception and societal judgment. The pattern indicates Austen's careful manipulation of grammatical voice to balance personal autonomy and external influence. Active voice underscores decisive actions by strong-willed

characters like Elizabeth and Darcy, while passive constructions are reserved for social commentary or formal declarations such as “The marriage was announced.” This stylistic equilibrium allows Austen to maintain narrative momentum while situating her characters within the constraints of Regency society. The high mean and low standard deviation confirm the consistency of this pattern across the novel’s structure, reinforcing Austen’s intent to portray characters as active participants in, rather than passive subjects of, their social world.

Writing style and thematic revelation

Austen’s writing style revealed strong connections between sentence form, character portrayal, and thematic depth. Structuralism is evident through the frequent use of binary oppositions—Elizabeth versus Charlotte, Darcy versus Wickham—which expose moral contrasts such as pride and humility, sincerity and deceit, and independence and conformity. Through these contrasts, Austen illuminates the characters’ moral evolution and critiques societal expectations. Parallelism also plays a key role, as mirrored relationships like Elizabeth–Darcy and Jane–Bingley or Charlotte–Mr. Collins highlight differing perspectives on love, social class, and duty. This technique underlines Austen’s exploration of genuine affection versus marriage of convenience. The feminist dimension of her style is equally pronounced. Austen challenges patriarchal norms by granting Elizabeth Bennet agency and moral authority. Elizabeth’s rejection of Mr. Collins and defiance of Lady Catherine de Bourgh symbolize the novel’s assertion of women’s independence and intellectual equality. The realist aspects of Austen’s style further ground the novel in ordinary domestic life, showing that personal virtues and moral decisions exist within social and economic realities. Additionally, punctuation—semicolons, dashes, and exclamation marks—was found to serve as a subtle stylistic tool that adds rhythm, tone, and emotion to dialogue and narration. Sentences like “She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me” exemplify her ironic precision, where structure and punctuation convey both character attitude and thematic emphasis. Collectively, these stylistic choices reinforce the moral and social complexity of *Pride and Prejudice*, illustrating how Austen’s craft bridges form and meaning.

Reader perception and emotional response

Jane Austen’s sentence styles in *Pride and Prejudice* play a crucial role in shaping readers’ emotional responses and understanding of the narrative. Long, complex sentences immerse readers in Elizabeth’s consciousness, as seen in passages describing her visit to Pemberley, where her anticipation and self-reflection unfold naturally through layered syntax. Witty and ironic sentences, such as the iconic opening line—“It is a truth universally acknowledged...”—establish the novel’s satirical tone and invite readers to question prevailing social norms. Short declarative sentences, including Darcy’s blunt remarks, generate immediate emotional impact and define character pride and restraint.

Dialogue-driven sentences enliven the story, making social exchanges vivid and authentic, while polite and formal language mirrors the strict decorum of Regency society. Through these linguistic manners, Elizabeth’s intelligence and independence emerge subtly within her adherence to propriety. Austen’s frequent use of free indirect discourse blends narration with character thought, allowing readers to share Elizabeth’s inner reasoning and emotional evolution. Moreover,

balanced and parallel structures give rhythm to dialogue and emphasize moral and emotional symmetry among characters. Finally, satirical and exaggerated sentences add humor and heighten awareness of social pretensions, particularly in scenes involving Mrs. Bennet's obsession with marriage. Altogether, these findings confirm that Austen's mastery of sentence style not only enhances narrative engagement but also deepens readers' understanding of character psychology, social critique, and thematic richness.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study conclude that Jane Austen's writing in *Pride and Prejudice* is characterized by a deliberate and systematic approach to sentence construction that reinforces both clarity and meaning. Her frequent use of the Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) structure ensures that her prose remains accessible while maintaining a refined sense of rhythm and coherence. The prevalence of active voice throughout the novel further emphasizes character agency, particularly in shaping the identities of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy, whose decisions and dialogues drive much of the narrative's development. Although passive constructions appear less frequently, their presence serves to underscore societal perceptions and collective attitudes, thereby balancing individual autonomy with the expectations of Regency-era society.

Austen's stylistic strategies, including the use of long and short sentences, parallel structures, and free indirect discourse, demonstrate her mastery in blending grammatical precision with emotional depth. Long, descriptive sentences invite readers into the internal landscapes of characters, while short, declarative statements heighten emotional tension and deliver key moments with impact. Parallelism and structural contrasts, such as those between Elizabeth and Charlotte or Darcy and Wickham, illuminate central themes of pride, humility, and moral judgment. Through free indirect discourse, Austen fuses the narrator's perspective with that of her characters, providing intimate access to their inner thoughts and moral growth, which strengthens reader engagement and empathy.

The study also affirms that Austen's use of punctuation—such as semicolons, dashes, and exclamation marks—plays a stylistic role beyond grammatical function. These marks shape tone, rhythm, and irony, making dialogue and narrative expression more dynamic and reflective of character temperament. Her formal yet witty language, often interspersed with satire, exposes the constraints and absurdities of social conventions surrounding marriage, wealth, and gender. This stylistic interplay of humor and critique ensures that readers are both entertained and prompted to reflect on moral and societal issues.

Overall, Austen's deliberate integration of linguistic form, narrative structure, and stylistic devices contributes significantly to the novel's enduring appeal. The study recommends that future literary analyses of *Pride and Prejudice* consider how Austen's grammatical and stylistic techniques not only enhance aesthetic quality but also serve as vehicles for social commentary. Moreover, educators and students of literature may benefit from examining Austen's writing style as a model of how linguistic simplicity can convey profound thematic complexity. Her mastery of sentence construction and narrative voice continues to demonstrate how style and structure can shape moral insight, emotional connection, and cultural critique, making *Pride and Prejudice* a timeless exemplar of literary craftsmanship.

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