The Comment Clause in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

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1 Introduction

As Biber et al. (1999：197) state, one of the grammatical features commonly observed in PDE speech is the frequent use of a comment clause (CC), a phrase consisting of the first-person pronoun and a present tense verb of mental state, such as *I think, I believe, I suppose.* These phrases show several characteristics: displaying the speaker's epistemic subjectivity, functioning parenthetically rather than as a matrix clause, taking free position in the sentence. This paper examines the extent to which the use of these phrases is a feature of early nineteenth-century English, using Jane Austen's literary work as an exemplar. The reason for choosing Jane Austen's work is that her dialogue has been regarded as representing contemporary conversational style. For example, Page (1972: 115-116), quoting some comments on the vividness observed in her colloquial conversation style, highly evaluates her realism in dialogue, although caution is needed in using the word 'realism'. H. C. Wyld (1936: 185) even describes her style as "the real representation of actual life and dialogue as the author knew it". In line with this colloquialism, this paper also examines the way in which it can be used for the purposes of characterization. Her excellent technique for shaping character in dialogue has been acknowledged widely. Lascelles (1939: 101) recognises that Austen intentionally chooses a voice suitable for each character. Phillipps (1970: 11) also states that in the English of her dialogues differences of characters are revealed in slight variations of speech.

It is highly expected that the use of CCs, a feature of PDE, is related to characterization in her novels. In the text of *Pride and Prejudice* (hereafter abbreviated as *PP*), it is very easy to encounter phrases such as 'I assure you' in (1) and 'I dare say' in (2). These phrases function as pragmatic markers

when highly grammaticalized and become effective in showing the speaker's personal attitude in a similar way to interjections. Although they are not used so frequently in PDE as before[1] , these phrases seem to have an important influence on the conversational language of Jane Austen by making it sound lively and real.

(1) <MR BENNET> "It is more than I engage for, I assure you." (Ch. 1)[2]
(2) <MRS BENNET> "Lydia, my love, though you are the youngest, I dare say Mr. Bingley will dance with you at the next ball." (Ch. 1)

2 Background

In this section, the definition and the functions of CCs will be briefly outlined. Phrases consisting of the first person pronoun and a verb of cognition in the present tense such as 'I know' have been referred to by various terms such as comment clauses (Quirk et al. 1985, Biber et al. 1999), first-person epistemic (Thompson and Mullac, 1991), epistemic phrases (Wierzbicka, 2006), and parentheticals (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002). Brinton (2008) uses the terms 'comment clauses' and later 'first-person epistemic parentheticals' (2017b), based on Thompson and Mulac's (1991) terminology for the phrases 'I + a verb

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[1] The survey in COHA, although regionally different from British English, yields 2583 examples of 'I dare say' and 2441 examples of 'I assure you' from the 1810s to the 2000s, regardless of the position where they occur in the sentence. The numbers do not include the phrases followed by *that* as conjunction and demonstrative. The frequency of 'I dare say' was constantly high during the eighteenth century, at maximum 19.20 words per million in 1880s, but started to drop after the turn of the century, drastically after the 1970s to below 0.5 word per million. Similarly, 'I assure you', hit 16.2 words per million in the 1820s and fluctuated around the early teens during the nineteenth century. Its noticeable decline started after 1900, but, compared with 'I dare say', it still keeps a relatively high frequency, 2.84 words per million, in the 2000s.

[2] All the examples are quoted from the text downloaded from Project Gutenberg at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1342>. The names of the characters added to the citations are specifically inserted by the present author for this study as tags showing sociolinguistic information.

of knowing'. Among them, one of the studies probably most quoted so far is Quirk et al. (1985).

Quirk et al. (1985: 1112-8) call such a phrase 'a comment clause', including verbal phrases of the first person pronoun + BE + an adjective such as 'I am afraid'. Brinton researches their origin and development in detail in a series of studies (2008, 2017a, 2017b). Akimoto (2010) published *The Historical Development of Comment Clauses*, a collection of articles dealing with CCs with a verb of knowing from the OE to PDE periods. In this volume, the contributors researched *I think, I know, I suppose* etc. in each period so that as a result the volume can display an outline of the historical development of CCs. Other than that, Akimoto made further studies on more parentheticals such as 'I am afraid', 'I dare say' in Akimoto (2011, 2014, 2017: Chapters 8, 14). In this study, the term 'comment clause' will be used. Whatever they are called, they have semantic functions such as cognitive, subjective, evidential, and interpersonal meanings. CCs can express more than one meaning at the same time.

2.1 Definition of CCs

In Quirk et al. (1985), CCs are parenthetical disjuncts. They may occur initially, finally or medially, and thus generally have a separate tone unit (Quirk et al. 1985: 1112). Quirk et al. (1985) consider various types of phrases included in the category of CCs, but we are going to focus only on Type (i) in this study. Type (i) typically is a construction consisting of the matrix clause with a first person pronoun + a verb in the present tense: *There were no applicants, I believe, for that job.*

It should be noted that not only verbs but adjectives are included in this Type (see *I'm sure* in subcategory (b)). Type (i) has several semantic functions (1114-1115) such as expressing:

(a) the speaker's tentativeness over the truth value of the matrix clause (a hedge): e.g. *I believe, I think, I suppose, I dare say*
(b) the speaker's certainty e.g. *I know, I'm sure*
(c) the speaker's emotional attitude towards the content of the matrix clause:

e.g. *I hope*

(d) the hearer's attention to, the hearer's agreement with, the speaker's informality with and the speaker's warmth toward the hearer: e.g. *you know, you see*

2.2 Previous Studies on Austen's English

Alongside the admiration of literary critics, scholars have paid a fair amount of attention to Jane Austen's English. We have some earlier studies such as Phillipps (1970), Page (1972), followed by Stokes (1991), Suematsu (2004), Fischer-Starcke (2010), Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014), Bray (2018). However, except for a brief description of 'I dare say' by Suematsu (2004) in the section on modal auxiliaries (174-175), none of them deals with CCs.

So far concern for Austen's English has been directed toward vocabulary and narrative techniques, and linguistic discussion tends to be concerned with characterization in her novels. For his corpus-based study of *Sense and Sensibility* (hereafter abbreviated as *SS*), Hubbard (2002: 80) takes up 'private verbs', i.e. verbs "that refer to non-observable acts and states" including "verbs of perception (e.g. *see, hear, feel*) and verbs that refer to cognition, whether intellectual states (e.g. *know, believe*) or intellectual acts (e.g. *think, assume*) (80)", as one of the grammatical features of involvement. Interestingly, Hubbard (2002) finds that there is a strong relationship between the uses of private verbs and the characterization of the main characters; Elinor, intellectual and patient, "uses significantly more of the verbs of cognition such as *believe, think, suppose* and *mean*", while her sister Marianne, energetic and passionate, uses more verbs of perception (80). Their preference for particular types of private verbs makes a clear-cut distinction between the two sisters' dispositions. His findings are useful in considering the use of CCs in *PP*, but as the description is short with no citations, I surmise from what is in the article that the private verbs analyzed in his study are not restricted to CCs, (phrases consisting of 'I + a present tense cognition verb', in our definition), but include all the forms of verbs with various subjects or possibly even non-finite forms. Therefore, a closer look at the occurrences of

the CCs in *PP*, which has as much dialogue as *SS,* will yield significant results from the viewpoints of sociolinguistic variation and characterization in the novel.

3 Research Questions

This paper aims to examine the use of CCs in Jane Austen's literary work and whether they have some influence on the ways the characters speak in the dialogue of her novels. The first question is whether her use of CCs is idiosyncratic or conservative, compared to CCs in early nineteenth century English in general. Whether it shows idiosyncracy, conservatism or not, it should be meaningful to know if there exist differences in the use of CCs between male and female characters in her novels. Therefore, the second question is to examine gender difference. It has been suggested that women prefer some CCs such as 'I hope' in earlier studies (Tanabe 2010, 2012). The third question is whether CCs are related to characterization in the novels. It is highly probable the authors of novels take advantage of the effect of various CCs.

4 A Case Study: Analysis of CCs in *Pride and Prejudice*

Among Jane Austen's six novels, *PP* is taken up to analyze her use of CCs as a case study. This well-known novel is suitable for a case study because the characters in this novel are vividly portrayed in such a way that readers can easily grasp their personalities, as Baker (2014: 170) argues:

> Austen is one of a few skillful authors who can create whole people out of literary characters by their words. She gives each a unique voice, structure pattern, and manner of speaking unlike any other character in each novel (170).

Especially, Baker considers Austen's power of characterization is clearly seen in *PP*, where the voices of Elizabeth and Darcy are distinguished by their

sentence structures (170).

4.1 Methodology

The method taken in this study is a corpus-based study. Roughly speaking, half of this novel's text consists of dialogue and CCs appear only in dialogue. Table 1 shows the total word counts of the narrative section, the dialogue section and the whole novel. In this case study, only the dialogue section is analyzed as a corpus.

Table 1 Corpus Size of *PP*

Narrative	Dialogue	Total
65193 words	56417 words (F 36673 words/M 19744 words)	121610 words

The total word count was calculated based on the e-text downloaded from Project Gutenberg. The dialogue section was extracted with the editor *TextEdit Plus* by utilizing the quotation marks. The tags for indicating genders and names of speakers were manually added to all the utterances. Subsequently, by using the tags the male-female sub-corpora were created and the word count of each sub-corpus was calculated with the editor. Then, sub-corpora of male/female dialogue and those of the characters were imported into *AntConc*, a concordance generating software, and the results were analyzed with reference to the contexts where the concordance lines are included.

4.2 CCs in *PP*

In the studies of CCs, phrases with verbs of epistemic meaning, the KNOW verbs in Brinton's (1996: 211) term, have been one of the central topics of research. In her study of first-person epistemic parentheticals in Middle English, the KNOW verbs include 'I believe', 'I deem', 'I doubt', 'I guess', 'I know', 'I leve', 'I suppose', 'I think', 'I trow', 'I understand', 'I undertake', 'I was aware', 'I wene' and 'I woot'. Some of them, such as 'I trow', 'I wene' and 'I wot', become

obsolete by the eighteenth century, but among the rest, 'I believe', 'I know', 'I suppose', and 'I think' are frequently used in *PP*, and included as examples of CCs of Type (i) in Quirk et al. (1985: 1114). Other than these, 'I hope', 'I am sure', 'I dare say' and 'I assure you' are examined in this study. The reason they are included is that 'I hope' and 'I dare say' exhibit the speaker's emotional attitude and certainty towards the content of the clause respectively, and are also listed as examples in Quirk et al. (1985: 1114). Moreover, it is important that they are frequent as an element of CCs in *PP* at the same time. Although 'I assure you', another common CC, is not mentioned in Quirk et al. (1985: 1114), it can be regarded as functioning to seek attention or agreement from the hearer (Type (i) with semantic function (c) in Quirk et al. (1985: 1114)) and is included in the CCs to be examined in this study. CCs with verbs of saying are also an important topic in the research on CCs, but they are not dealt with in this study.

4.2.1 Scope

In this section, the scope of CCs is defined. When CCs are in initial position, it is difficult to judge whether they function as a matrix clause followed by a subordinate clause stating a proposition or as a pure parenthetical, since no information on the phonological contour is available in the case of historical writings. In dealing with earlier writings, the distinction is made with reference to whether the complementizer *that* is absent or not, as the rate of the phrases with *that* was much higher. Some researchers treat 'I + a verb of cognition (present tense)' with *that*-deletion as a CC. Rissanen (1991: 279), who examined the complementation patterns of *say, tell, think, know* in the Helsinki Corpus, found that after the fifteenth century an increasing number of verbs occur with *that*-deletion, for example 70% in 1640-1710. In *PP*, written in the early nineteenth century, a surprisingly small number of phrases are followed by *that*: only 10 out of 308 examples (3.2%) are observed in *I hope, I know, I assure you, I confess,* and *I fancy.* Considering the overall low percentages of CCs with *that*, it has been a matter of debate for a long time whether to judge clause-initial 'I + a verb of cognition' as a CC. There

is even a discussion whether by observing prosodic data the function of *that* after clause-initial 'I think', a highly grammaticalized parenthetical, can be regarded as functioning as a filler in colloquial Modern English (Kaltenböck 2011). In this paper, however, I will follow a more traditional view in dealing with this phrase and exclude CCs followed by *that* from our data, regarding the structure as functioning as a matrix clause rather than a parenthetical. Although there is a possibility that the CCs with *that*-deletion functioning as a matrix clause are included in the data, they are still kept but the degrees of gramaticalization will be made clear by showing the statistics of medial and final parenthetical uses.

4.2.2 Frequency

Table 2 displays the most common CCs used in *PP* arranged in a descending order of frequency. As discussed above, the occurrences of phrases with *that* in clause-initial position are not included in the figures. We can see it is a characteristic of *PP* that the frequencies of 'I am sure' and 'I hope' are outstanding; next in the ranking, 'I believe', 'I think', 'I dare say' are in a high frequency group. Another feature of CCs in *PP* is that 'I think' and 'I know' are low in frequency in comparison with the data from the survey in Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler (CEECS) (see Tanabe 2012). In Table 2, the frequencies of common CCs in EModE and PDE, 'I trust', 'I confess', 'I beg', 'I fancy', 'I fear', 'I imagine', 'I presume', 'I suspect' are included for the sake of reference.

Table2 List of CCs in Dialogue of *PP* (Tanabe 2019: 275)

I am sure	61	I think	30	I trust	5	I fear	2
I hope	50	I suppose	25	I confess	3	I imagine	2
I believe	31	I know	17	I beg	3	I presume	1
I dare say	31	I assure you	15	I fancy	3	I suspect	1

4.2.3 Position

CCs are placed either in medial or final position of sentences if they have

acquired the status of parentheticals. Figure 1 shows the distribution of positions of CCs in *PP*.

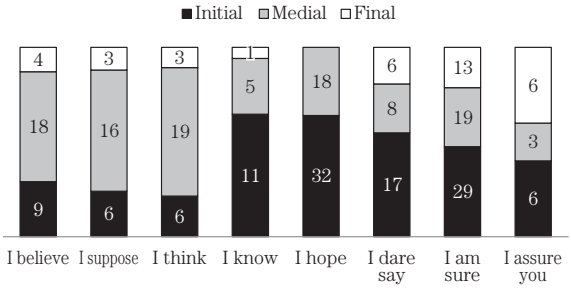

Figure 1 Distribution of Positions of CCs in *PP*
(Based on Table 2 in Tanabe 2019: 276)

In case of 'I believe', 'I suppose', 'I think', the majority appear in either medial or final position. This shows that grammaticalization of these phrases is fairly developed. On the other hand, medial position is not so strong in 'I know', 'I hope', 'I am sure', 'I dare say' and 'I assure you'. This phenomenon may be a sign to show these phrases are still behind in the process of grammaticalization. However, 'I assure you', 'I am sure' and 'I dare say' are fairly high in final position. It seems that they are following a slightly different path from the group of 'I think' because 'I dare say', 'I am sure' and 'I assure you' actually occur in final position much more frequently and also early, in case of 'I dare say' as early as the fifteenth century, as Brinton (2008: 95) showed (see (14)).

4.3 Comparison with Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Data

4.3.1 Frequency

In order to observe a general tendency in the use of CCs during the period from the late eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century, equivalent to the lifetime of Jane Austen, a survey was done with Google Books Ngram Viewer and ARCHER. Figure 2 is the result of a Google Books Ngram survey. The corpus is limited to English novels and the time period

from 1770 to 1820. It is interesting that 'I think' and 'I know' mark the highest frequencies, whereas in *PP* they are the fifth and the seventh in the ranking. On the contrary, 'I am sure', 'I dare say', 'I assure you', 'I suppose' remain in the low frequency group, while in *PP* the rank of 'I am sure' is the highest and 'I dare say' the fourth. It should be noted that in this survey the examples with *that* after clause-initial CCs are included in the statistics.

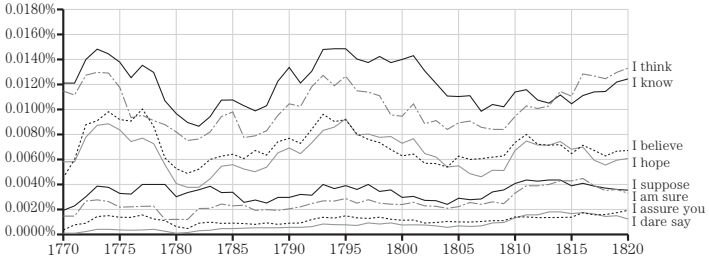

Figure 2 CCs in Google Books (English Fiction) Ngram Viewer in 1770-1820

It would be useful to see whether the data of CCs in *PP* conform to the general tendency observed in a multi-genre corpus of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or show idiosyncracy peculiar to *PP*. Yamamoto (2009) surveyed the occurrences of CCs with 'I know', 'I believe', 'I guess', 'I suppose', 'I trust' and 'I think' in ARCHER (A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers). As ARCHER covers the period of the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, the change in frequency over time can be traced by using this corpus. However, the data in Figure 3 is subject to the qualifications that the seventeenth-century corpus begins in 1650, and the amount of text for each period is not exactly the same. Comparison of frequencies is valid only for relative occurrences within the data for the same period.

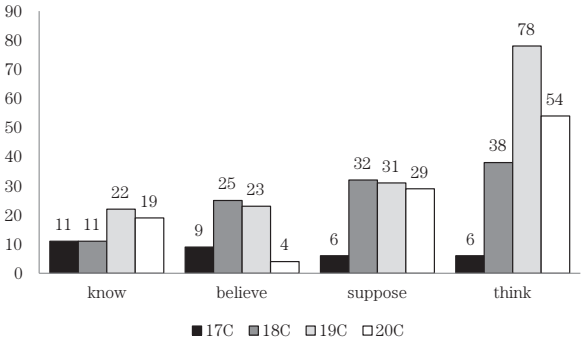

Figure 3 Frequencies of 'I know', 'I believe', 'I suppose', 'I think' in 17C-20C ARCHER[3]

From Figure 3, we can say roughly that 'I suppose' and 'I think' are similar in frequency in the eighteenth century, while the frequency of 'I think' dramatically increases in the nineteenth century. 'I believe' is fairly common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but suddenly becomes rare in PDE.

The surveys in Google Books Ngram Viewer and ARCHER have shown that the frequencies of 'I think' in *PP* are extremely low, even outnumbered by 'I believe'. This result is outstanding against other numerous CCs, and may be accounted for by considering that the low frequencies of 'I think' were replaced by abundant uses of 'I hope' and 'I am sure'. Brinton (2017b: 130) suggests one type of 'I think' expressing a strong certainty "might be glossed 'I am sure' or 'certainly'" in PDE. But to provide substantial evidence for this, we need another detailed examination of the possible replacements.

Another point to make regarding Figure 3 is that in *PP* 'I believe' and 'I think' are more frequent in initial position than in the results from the survey in ARCHER. Tanabe (2010), examining CCs in CEECS, found that the frequency of 'I think' is overwhelmingly high with a dramatic rise in the sixteenth century among female letter-writers (see 4.4). It is also possible

[3] Dr Shihoko Yamamoto kindly provided me with the breakdown figures of CC frequencies. I would like to express my profound gratitude to her.

that the difference in genre is related to this as ARCHER includes writings in various genres whereas our corpus of *PP* is restricted to dialogue. From the evidence so far obtained, it is clear that Jane Austen's dialogue in *PP* takes different strategies in using CCs from more general conventions in her era: avoidance of 'I think' and preference for 'I hope' and 'I am sure'. Her use of CCs seems to be reminiscent of the former period rather than being a forerunner, or to be a display of uniqueness for literary purpose.

4.3.2 Position Compared with ARCHER

Yamamoto (2009, 2010) surveyed the positions of CCs such as 'I think', 'I believe', 'I know', 'I suppose' in ARCHER. The result of her study is shown in Figures 4-7[4].

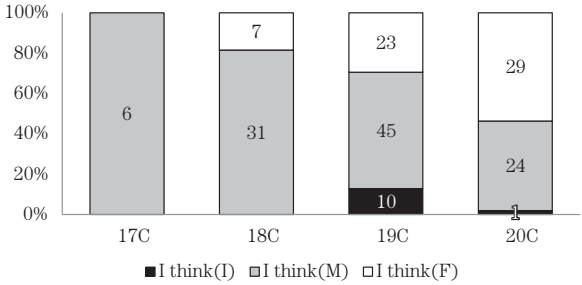

Figure 4 Distribution of Syntactic Position of 'I think'

[4] The figures are created from the data provided in the conference handout by Yamamoto (2009).

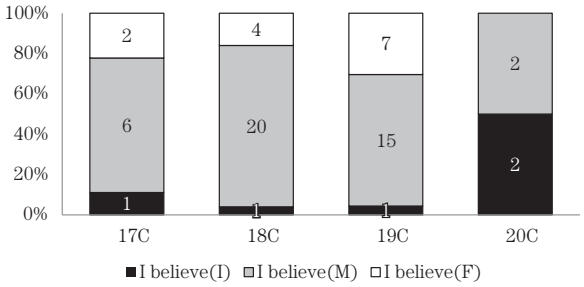

Figure 5　Distribution of Syntactic Position of 'I believe'

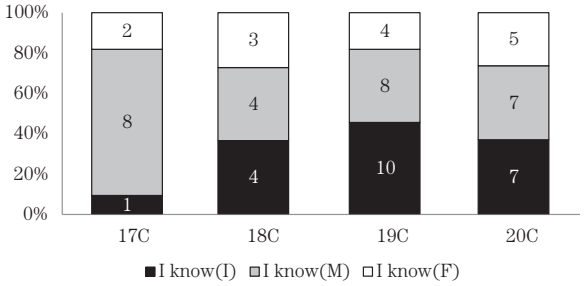

Figure 6　Distribution of Syntactic Position of 'I know'

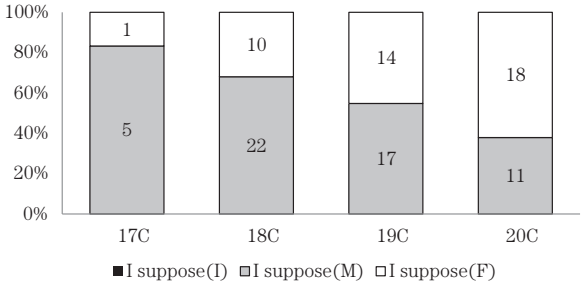

Figure 7　Distribution of Syntactic Position of 'I suppose'
(Figures 4-7: I=Initial, M=Medial, F=Final)

The ratios of CCs in initial position fluctuate depending on each CC and period in which they occur. Therefore, the ratios of CCs in medial and final positions combined do not show regular increase over time. However, if we look at the numbers in final position in Figures 4-7, the overall gradual increase is clear over time with varying degrees of frequencies in 'I think', 'I suppose' and to a lesser degree 'I believe'. Yamamoto (2010: 140) argues that CCs in final position are more grammaticalized than those in medial position because the speaker tries to show epistemicity and subjectivity as well as their personal attitude towards the hearer while maintaining the hearer's face. This is especially true of CCs occurring in final position, she explains, because the speaker can add a CC, if necessary, as a 'reminder' after finishing their utterance and observing the reaction from the hearer. The 'reminder' function facilitates the interaction with the hearer and promotes interpersonal, pragmatic function. In that sense, the clear increase of final position in 'I think' and 'I suppose' in Figures 4 and 7 suggests these CCs are more grammaticalized than other CCs with fewer final-position instances.

4.4 Gender Difference in the Frequencies of CCs by the Characters in *PP*

Gender difference is one of the topics socio-historical pragmatics has recently focused on in linguistic analyses. A careful study on the frequencies of CCs used by the characters in *PP* may be able to disclose unknown findings on the differences men and women display. The studies so far conducted on gender difference in CCs are performed on the text of the fifteenth-century Paston Letters in Tanabe (2010) and in the survey of CEECS, a corpus of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Tanabe (2012). It is found that 'I hope' is more used by women than men, and subsequently that 'I hope' and 'I think' rapidly increase in the seventeenth century sub-corpus of female letters. Are there any gender differences in the use of CCs in *PP*? There are 25 characters who produce conversational utterance in *PP*, 15 women and 10 men.

Table 3 Frequency of CCs in Male and Female Dialogue Sub-Corpora of *PP* (Tanabe 2019: 277)

	Female Freq.	Male Freq.	Total	Female Normalized Freq. per 1000	Male Normalized Freq. per 1000
I believe	18	13	31	0.49	0.66
I suppose	23	2	25	0.63	0.10
I think	22	6	28	0.60	0.30
I dare say	26	5	31	0.71	0.25
I know	11	6	17	0.30	0.30
I hope	35	15	50	0.95	0.76
I am sure	50	11	61	1.36	0.56
I assure you	8	7	15	0.22	0.35
Total	193	65	258	5.26	3.29

A comparison between male and female characters' use of CCs in per 1000 words normalized frequencies in Table 3 reveals the fact that female characters use CCs 1.6 times more frequently than males. Attention should be drawn to the figures of the totals, F 5.26 and M 3.29 in Table 4.[5] The female high-frequency CCs are 'I am sure', 'I hope', 'I dare say', 'I suppose' and 'I think', whereas the male favorite CCs are 'I hope' and 'I believe'. 'I hope' is favored by both men and women, with a slightly higher frequency for females. This is inconsistent with the result from Tanabe (2012), where vastly higher frequencies are observed in the female letters in CEECS. It should be noted that men prefer CCs exerting strong subjective effects towards the hearer among the very few they use.

[5] According to Coates (2013: 48; quoted in Beeching 2016: 12), in the PDE experiment in which men and women were asked to narrate stories, the women's frequencies of hedges including 'I think' and 'I mean' were systematically higher than those of men. The difference was much more significant than found in *PP* : women used 'I think' and 'I mean' three times more often than men.

4.5 Difference in the Use of CCs by the Characters

4.5.1 Overview

To obtain the data on who uses which CCs in *PP*, the corpus of *PP* is further subdivided into the sub-corpora consisting of each character's utterances in the dialogue sections. The results of the frequencies of all CCs by characters are shown in Table 5 (see Appendix). For each CC, both raw frequency and normalized score per 1000 words are given in each character's sub-corpus. In the bottom row are shown the normalized total frequencies. Those who use CCs of any kind with high frequency are Mr Bingley, Mrs Bennet, Lydia, and Mrs Gardiner, while those who do not use them so often are Mr Collins, Mr Darcy, Mr Bennet, and Mr Wickham. Elizabeth is the lowest among the women. It is interesting to observe that Bingley is included in high CC frequency group despite his gender. With the knowledge that Bingley is a gentleman who behaves congenially in pleasant social manners towards people around him, it is understandable he uses CCs in the highest ratio among the men. This nature of his makes a clear contrast with Darcy, who is considered unpleasant in the local community of Longbourn. (3) is one of the examples how Mr Bingley uses CCs.

(3) <MR BINGLEY> "In nursing your sister I am sure you have pleasure," said Bingley; "and I hope it will be soon increased by seeing her quite well." (Ch. 8)

Although Mr Bingley's total word count is the smallest among the male characters, he uses a variety of CCs frequently. In (3) we have words intended to console Elizabeth, who has attended her sister Jane sick in bed. Usually men do not know what to say in this situation, but Mr Bingley is able to carry on conversation with women in the same way as women do. Naturally, he is considered an affable, pleasant young man by Jane and Mrs Bennet as well as by all the other women around him.

An interesting similarity is observed between Darcy and Elizabeth's frequencies of CCs. Neither of them has a liking for CCs compared with other

characters. In fact, the character who ranks the lowest in the ratio of CCs among the male characters is Collins, who speaks in elaborate formal style. But he is caricatured as an absolutely unacceptable candidate as husband for the Bennet sisters; therefore, there is no need to consider him any further. It is Darcy, the second lowest in frequency, and Elizabeth, the lowest among the female characters, who share the same predilection for not using CCs in their dialogue. This means they share the similar characteristic of being more calm and decisive, and probably explains why they will find their destined partners in each other in the end.

The following are some more examples of the CCs in *PP*.

(4) <MRS GARDINER> "...But he is a liberal master, I suppose, and that in the eye of a servant comprehends every virtue." (Chap. 43)
(5) <LADY CATHERINE> The dear Colonel rallied his spirits tolerably till just at last; but Darcy seemed to feel it most acutely, more, I think, than last year. (Chap. 37)
(6) <MR BENNET> For you are a young lady of deep reflection, I know, and read great books and make extracts." (Chap. 2)
(7) <ELIZABETH> He and his sisters were well, I hope, when you left London? (Chap. 32)
(8) <MRS BENNET> "But, my dear, your father cannot spare the horses, I am sure...." (Chap. 7)
(9) <What say you to the day? I think every thing has passed off uncommonly well, I assure you. (Chap. 54)

I will discuss 'I believe' and 'I dare say' in detail with a view to examining gender difference in the subsequent sections.

4.5.2 'I believe'

The CC 'I believe' was rare in the fifteenth century, but after the seventeenth century it became common (Akimoto 2010: 162). Compared with the use of 'I think', it is not so frequent in the eighteenth-century section of ARCHER (see

Figure 3). It is interesting, however, that Samuel Johnson, without noticing the fact that 'I think' has the same meaning, recognized a parenthetical use of 'I believe' and commented in his dictionary that it "is sometimes used as a way of slightly noting some want of certainty or exactness"[6] (Johnson 1755, Vol. 1 s.v. *Believe*). By the time of Jane Austen, 'I believe' must have developed a fully grammaticalized function. However, it retains the lexical meaning of 'believe' and can make a stronger comment on the speaker's proposition than 'I think'. Wierzbicka (2006: 214) describes the meaning of 'I believe' in PDE as "more confident than *I suppose* and *I think*, more thoughtful, considered and cautious, —perhaps more intellectual, more controlled", and "a little standoffish", "used with lack of knowledge and engagement with the hearer" (214). This description is suitable for Darcy's personality. The following are some examples of the male characters' use of 'I believe' which expresses a more confident meaning. In fact, Darcy uses 'I believe' with the second highest frequency, 1.23 words per 1000 words, among all the characters, and it is his most frequent CC.

(10) <DARCY> "…I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding. My temper I dare not vouch for. It is, I believe, too little yielding—certainly too little for the convenience of the world. …"
<ELIZABETH> "That is a failing indeed!" cried Elizabeth. "Implacable resentment is a shade in a character. But you have chosen your fault well. I really cannot laugh at it. You are safe from me." (Ch. 11)[7]

(11) <DARCY> "There is, I believe, in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil—a natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome." (Ch. 11)
<DARCY> Much as I respect them, I believe I thought only of you.

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6 'I believe' is the only CC Johnson defined in his 1755 dictionary.

7 For a summary of the discussion on (10) and (11), see Tanabe (2019: 278-279).

(Ch. 58)

In (10), Elizabeth hates Darcy because she thinks his behavior is blunt and impolite. Notice Darcy says 'I believe' repeatedly despite the fact that he uses CCs very infrequently. Usually 'I believe' expresses the speaker's tentativeness. However, examining Robin Lakoff's hypothesis that women prefer hedges such as tentative parentheticals and tag questions, Holmes (1985) proposed two main categories for the meanings of 'I think': DELIBERATIVE when asserting a strong opinion with confidence and TENTATIVE when showing the speaker's uncertainty or politeness. The distinction between DELIBERATIVE and TENTATIVE is made, according to Holmes (1985: 33), not only "on the basis of formal features alone", but also by "tak[ing] account of contextual factors such as the speaker's status or role", "the formality of the interaction, the relative expertise of participants in the area being discussed", and "the specific illocutionary force of the speech act in the discourse". Holmes' study of 'I think' is based on modern New Zealand English, but this classification is applicable to other CCs in the past as far as the original meaning of verb is still retained. In (10), Darcy places 'I believe' in medial position as if it were a hedge, but in fact this use is what Holmes calls DELIBERATIVE, as he understands his own character well and speaks with thoughtful confidence. He emphasizes his stubborn inflexibility by displaying his strong subjectivity, belief, and certainty.

(11) is from the confession scene where Darcy honestly reveals his long-cherished affection for Elizabeth after arranging a marriage for wicked-natured Wickham and frivolous Lydia to legitimatize their rash elopement. Here Darcy's 'I believe' is not a tentative hedge, but shows his strong certainty in his devotion to Elizabeth. It is effective in making Elizabeth and the readers fully realize how much he loves her. Both CCs in (10) and (11) function successfully to highlight Darcy's disposition.

(12) <WICKHAM> "A thorough, determined dislike of me—a dislike which I cannot but attribute in some measure to jealousy. Had the

late Mr. Darcy liked me less, his son might have borne with me better; but his father's uncommon attachment to me irritated him, I believe, very early in life...." (Ch.16)

For another male character, Wickham, 'I believe' is his most frequent CC. In the dialogue with Elizabeth, he succeeds in making her believe his spiteful, fabricated story about Darcy. 'I believe' in (12) is the third occurrence in the extended dialogue. The phrase may look expressive of tentativeness, but considering the nature of his fake story that maliciously debases Darcy, Wickham must sound very confident to Elizabeth. Trying to be exact in details by recalling the past incidents may give an impression that his whole story is genuine. As (10)-(12) exemplify, DELIBERATIVE use of 'I believe' is remarkable in the male speeches if the overall low frequencies of CCs by the men are taken into consideration.

4.5.3 'I dare say'

The CC 'I dare say' is attested as early as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in initial and medial positions as in (13) and (14).

(13) Bot i dar sai, and god it wat, 'Qua leli luues for-gettes lat'. (*a*1325; 1400 *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 4509) [*OED*, s.v. *Dare* 6] "But I dare say, and God knows it, 'Who loves faithfully forgets lately'".

(14) She nolde, I dar seyn, hardely, Hir owne fadir ferde well (a1425 [?a1400] Chaucer, *The Romaunt of the Rose,* 270-271, Brinton 2008: 95, *MED hardli* adv.) "She did not want, I dare say, certainly her own father would do well."

It occurred with *that*-deletion from an early stage (Akimoto 2011: 103), following a process of grammaticalization with the meaning of *dare* weakened or lost, the univerbated form 'I daresay' from the seventeenth century (Brinton 2008: 96), and sometimes the reduced form 'I dessay' is also found. Akimoto (2011: 103) categorizes the meanings of 'I dare say' into three: (a) to venture

to say as likely, (b) to assume as probable and (c) probably. The final, the most grammaticalized meaning, is recorded from the eighteenth century (OED s.v. *dare* 6b.). As Brinton (2008: 93) admits, 'I dare say' retains its full meaning 'to venture to say' along with the grammaticalized meaning 'probably'. This leads modern readers of Jane Austen's novels to occasional dismay when they try to interpret the phrase, as C. S. Lewis (1967: 311) argues.

> When Bingley urges Darcy to dance with Elizabeth he points her out 'sitting down just behind you' and says she 'is very pretty and I dare say very agreeable' [Chap 3]. Can this really have been the *I dare say* of modern conversation? It is just possible. But it is cold encouragement to say that a girl is 'perhaps' or 'possibly' or 'for all you know to the contrary' very agreeable, nor is it in keeping with the generous, sanguine, easily pleased Bingley. I think that if Bingley had been talking modern English he would have said, at the very least, 'no doubt', or (more probably) 'I don't mind betting'.

Although 'I dare say' is inserted in medial position as a parenthetical, it seems to preserve the original meaning of *dare* to some extent. Suematsu (2004: 174-175) reports there are 191 examples of 'dare say' in all the novels written by Jane Austen, but confesses that it is almost impossible to classify their meanings. I agree with her on the difficulty of semantic classification even when the contexts are taken into consideration. Yet, some of the examples probably have the meaning 'to venture to say' as (15).

(15) <BINGLEY> "Nay," cried Bingley, "this is too much, to remember at night all the foolish things that were said in the morning. And yet, upon my honour, I believe what I said of myself to be true, and I believe it at this moment. At least, therefore, I did not assume the character of needless precipitance merely to show off before the ladies."
<DARCY> "I dare say you believed it; but I am by no means convinced

that you would be gone with such celerity....” (Chap. 10)

Bingley's normalized frequency of 'I dare say' is the highest among all the characters. In (15) he emphasizes his words by repeating 'I believe' as a transitive verb and using an emphatic 'upon my honour'. In reply to his strong assertion, Darcy's 'I dare say' is best interpreted as having the original meaning of *dare*, not expressing tentativeness or uncertainty.

In contrast, the grammaticalized 'I dare say' is more commonly observed in female conversation, especially in Mrs Bennet's. She uses 'I dare say' 1.56 times per 1000 words, and Lydia, her frivolous daughter, 1.75 times. Elizabeth also uses it but in very low frequency (0.35 times per 1000 words).

(16) <LADY CATHERINE> “I hope you are well, Miss Bennet. That lady, I suppose, is your mother.” Elizabeth replied very concisely that she was.
<LADY CATHERINE>“And that I suppose is one of your sisters.”
<MRS BENNET> “Yes, madam,” said Mrs. Bennet, delighted to speak to Lady Catherine. “She is my youngest girl but one. My youngest of all is lately married, and my eldest is somewhere about the grounds, walking with a young man who, I believe, will soon become a part of the family.”
<LADY CATHERINE> “You have a very small park here,” returned Lady Catherine after a short silence.
<MRS BENNET> “It is nothing in comparison of Rosings, my lady, I dare say; but I assure you it is much larger than Sir William Lucas's.”
-----(Lady Catherine and Elizabeth talk privately in the garden.)-----
<MRS BENNET> “…She is a very fine-looking woman! and her calling here was prodigiously civil! for she only came, I suppose, to tell us the Collinses were well. 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?”(Ch.

56)[8] (See Tanabe 2019: 280-282.)

(17) <LYDIA> "... We shall be at Newcastle all the winter, and I dare say there will be some balls, and I will take care to get good partners for them [=her sisters] all."
<MRS BENNET> "I should like it beyond anything!" said her mother.
<LYDIA> "And then when you go away, you may leave one or two of my sisters behind you; and I dare say I shall get husbands for them before the winter is over." (Chap. 51)

(16) is the most memorable, powerful dialogue in *PP*. Lady Catherine de Bourgh hears a rumor that Elizabeth, whose family background is unacceptably low in social rank, is going to marry Darcy, her nephew, and visits her down in the South with an intention to dissuade her from this marriage. The way Lady Catherine behaves is arrogant and impolite, but Mrs Bennet enthusiastically tries to entertain her politely with CCs, in an attempt to show that her visit is a great honor to her family. After the initial greeting, Lady Catherine and Elizabeth, while taking a walk in the garden alone, spar with bold but tactful remarks between them on the possibility of her marrying Darcy. During this dialogue in the garden, neither of them uses a single CC. Finally, Lady Catherine gets angry and departs without taking leave of Mrs Bennet. Unaware of the content of their conversation, Mrs Bennet repeats 'I suppose' and 'I dare say'. Her first 'I dare say' added at the end of the sentence shows her uncertainty about the proposition as she has never been to Rosings before, but with a slight 'boldness' in it, which is assured by her proud comment on the smaller size of her nobility-class neighbour's garden. The second 'I dare say' is uttered by Mrs Bennet without knowledge of the exact route Lady Catherine is taking, simply based on her speculation. In (17), Lydia, boastful of being the first of all the sisters to get married, gets impudent enough to insist she can find husbands for her sisters if they come to visit her, but her prediction about

[8] For more discussion on (17), see Tanabe (2019: 280-283).

balls and husbands is not supported by any evidence, entirely depending on her personal estimate of future events.

Sometimes the level of speculation can go too far when 'I dare say' meaning 'probably' is used by inconsiderate, thoughtless characters in gossiping and spreading rumors.

(18) <MRS BENNET> "A great deal of good management, depend upon it. Yes, yes. they will take care not to outrun their income. They will never be distressed for money. Well, much good may it do them! And so, I suppose, they often talk of having Longbourn [the Bennets' property] when your father is dead. They look upon it as quite their own, I dare say, whenever that happens." (Chap. 40)

(19) <MRS BENNET> "I do not believe a word of it, my dear. If he had been so very agreeable, he would have talked to Mrs. Long. But I can guess how it was; everybody says that he is ate up with pride, and I dare say he had heard somehow that Mrs. Long does not keep a carriage, and had to come to the ball in a hack chaise." (Chap. 5)

(18) is from a conversation between Elizabeth and Mrs Bennet, just after Elizabeth comes back from her visit to the Collinses. Mrs Bennet is still unhappy about Charlotte's marriage with Mr Collins because Mr Collins, not any of the Bennet sisters, is going to inherit the Bennet's property as a legitimate heir. In (19), Mrs Bennet's 'I dare say' occurs after making her speculative comments on how Mr Collins and Charlotte lead their new marriage life. It is noteworthy that 'I suppose' is used in a similar way to 'I dare say'. Her uses of these CCs indicate uncertainty with no evidentiality, as most of the contents are from her imaginative speculation.

(19) is another excerpt from Mrs Bennet's conversation. In response to Jane reporting that Darcy is reticent among the strangers, her mother retorts to her, insinuating Darcy had ignored Mrs Long on purpose because of her modest financial situation. However, Mrs Bennet's subjective speculation on the reason Darcy did not speak to Mrs Long has no evidence at all. When the

speaker encounters lack of evidence but wants to make a speculative comment, they must have some courage to express their opinions. This naturally leads 'I dare say' to have double meanings: one the original meaning of *dare*, which is still active, and the other a grammaticalized meaning.

In this way, the citations (15) to (19) exemplify that CCs can represent characterization in the novel. For example, Mrs Bennet and Lydia resemble each other in being frivolous and fond of rumors and gossip. They often use 'I dare say'. Pleasant and cheerful Bingley uses various kinds of CCs. Elizabeth and Darcy are similar in minimizing the use of CCs of any kind, which reflects their calm and straightforward personality.

5 Conclusion

Do the uses of CCs in *PP* conform to the general tendency in Jane Austen's days? The statistics of CCs used in *PP* show that 'I am sure', 'I hope', 'I dare say' are most frequently used. Compared with the result obtained from Yamamoto's (2009) survey in ARCHER, the frequency of 'I think' is fairly low in *PP*. Considering 'I think' was remarkably frequent in CEECS and ARCHER, avoidance of 'I think' is a peculiar characteristic to *PP*. There is a possibility that Austen simply copied women's frequent use of 'I am sure' in everyday talk or that she did not choose 'I think' for showing the speaker's epistemicity because of literary creativity or conservatism. Her CCs with cognition verbs such as 'I think', 'I believe', 'I suppose', 'I know' occur mainly in medial or final position, but 'I hope', 'I am sure', 'I dare say' and 'I assure you' remain in initial position at much higher rates than CCs with cognition verbs. The latter group may seem slow in the process of grammaticalizaion, but it started to take final position earlier. Therefore, it seems that the two groups may have followed different paths in their development.

As for gender difference in the use of CCs in *PP*, we have witnessed that nearly 1.6 times more CCs are used by female characters than by males. The women predominantly use all the CCs more than men except for 'I hope' and 'I believe'. Among women, the most popular CCs are 'I am sure', 'I hope', 'I dare say'. Traditionally, women have been said to be good at listening to others,

explaining small events in daily life and expressing their own emotions to others. This may sound stereotypical, but as CCs are subcategorized as part of pragmatic markers, their use or non-use is under the control of the speaker who seeks for effective ways to communicate their personal feelings. For this purpose, women tend to choose proper CCs according to the degree of their subjectivity or certainty.

We are not sure yet whether Austen chooses 'I am sure' instead of 'I think' for female characters or not. But if so, she might have done so simply by repeating what she heard in real conversation, or as an author she might have chosen 'I am sure' for a more confident CC and 'I dare say' for tentativeness because they are more suitable for some characters, possibly due to overuse of 'I think'. For a similar reason, 'I believe' may be chosen to reflect greater confidence for male characters.

Further, the uses of 'I believe' and 'I dare say' have been examined in the detailed context of the novel. 'I believe', one of the men's favorites, is repeatedly used by specific male characters such as Darcy and Wickham. Applying Holmes' classification of 'I think' in PDE, we can see the male characters' DELIBERATIVE use in some examples of 'I believe', in which the speakers assert their confident, controlled subjectivity. This two-way classification corresponds to full and weakened meanings of the verb in CCs and due to the persistence of full meaning in the process of grammaticalization, which makes possible the overlapping interpretations. 'I dare say', another CC preferred by women, exhibits full and grammaticalized meanings at the same time and can be interpreted as having double meanings in some cases. It is used to show boldness with the full meaning of *dare,* or uncertainty and speculation in the meaning equal to 'probably'.

Do CCs influence characterization in Jane Austen's novels? In her novels, characterization of various types of people is easily understood because she explains the emotions of each character with minute care. It is remarkable that this case study of *PP* has revealed that appropriate CCs are chosen for specific figures depending on their personalities. There is a clear-cut distinction between those who use numerous CCs of cognitive, emotional,

and interpersonal functions such as Mrs Bennet and Lydia, and those who avoid using them such as Darcy and Elizabeth. The selection of CCs by the characters in the novel clearly indicates the characterization intended by the author.

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APPENDIX
Frequencies of Comment Clauses by Characters

characters	Elizabeth	MRS BENNET	JANE	LADY CATHERINE	LYDIA	MRS GARDINER	MISS BINGLEY	DARCY	MR BENNET	WICKHAM	BINGLEY	COLLINS
words	14234	5773	5216	2769	2284	2038	2216	6504	3480	2072	1034	4425
I believe	9	2	1	1	1	2	1	8	0	4	2	0
	0.63	0.35	0.19	0.36	0.44	0.98	0.45	1.23	0.00	1.93	1.93	0.00
I suppose	3	7	0	3	0	5	0	1	0	1	0	0
	0.21	1.21	0.00	1.08	0.00	2.45	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.48	0.00	0.00
I think	9	5	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	2
	0.63	0.87	0.00	0.72	0.44	0.00	0.45	0.15	0.29	0.00	0.97	0.45
I dare say	5	9	4	0	4	0	1	1	1	0	2	0
	0.35	1.56	0.77	0.00	1.75	0.00	0.45	0.15	0.29	0.00	1.93	0.00
I know	5	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	3	1	0	0
	0.35	0.00	0.38	0.36	0.00	0.00	0.45	0.15	0.86	0.48	0.00	0.00
I hope	13	6	7	1	3	2	1	3	3	1	1	2
	0.91	1.04	1.34	0.36	1.31	0.98	0.45	0.46	0.86	0.48	0.97	0.45
I am sure	5	22	7	2	5	3	3	2	2	0	4	1
	0.35	3.81	1.34	0.72	2.19	1.47	1.35	0.31	0.57	0.00	3.87	0.23
I assure you	1	5	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	3
	0.07	0.87	0.00	0.36	0.00	0.00	0.45	0.31	0.29	0.00	0.97	0.68
Total Freq.	50	56	21	11	14	12	9	19	11	7	11	8
Total Freq. Normalized	3.51	9.70	4.03	3.97	6.13	5.89	4.06	2.92	3.16	3.38	10.64	1.81