

Jane Austen's Use of The Progressive in *Persuasion*

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I would like to discuss how Jane Austen uses the progressive and how it brings effect to the works. I chose *Persuasion* (1816), which is her last work. She frequently uses the progressive in her works in her own artistic way, and her use of the progressive is unlike any other contemporary writers. *Persuasion* is evaluated as the masterpiece of her works and her syntax is the most sophisticated. I believe that *Persuasion* is the most suitable one to investigate her syntax. In my thesis, I would like to analyze all of the progressives found in *Persuasion* in terms of: 1) form; 2) meaning and 3) speech and thought to discover what Austen drives at, using frequently the progressive and how the progressive influences the characters' speech and thought.

In Chapter II, I would like to focus on form of the progressive. I grouped the forms of the progressive broadly into two categories: finite forms and non-finite forms. The present and past progressive, and the present and past perfect progressive are included in finite forms. The progressive infinitive, progressive gerund, progressive participle and the progressive combined with modal auxiliaries are included in non-finite forms. I will closely analyze them to see the characteristic of each form. I would also like to deal with the gerund and the present participle which look like the progressive. There are many examples of them seen in *Persuasion*, and I believe that this is related to her fondness for the progressive to some extent.

In Chapter III, I would like to focus on meaning of the progressive. I grouped the meaning into three: 1) iteration, 2) futurity and 3) duration, and took the statistics to see which meaning is the used most. This classification gives an overall picture of the semantic characteristics of the progressive in *Persuasion*. I will analyze each meaning in details so that I can find the fundamental meaning of Austen's progressive.

In Chapter IV, I would like to focus on the progressive appearing in the characters' speech and thought. I grouped speech and thought into six categories: 1) 'direct speech'; 2) 'direct thought'; 3) 'indirect speech'; 4) 'indirect thought'; 5) 'free indirect speech'; 6) 'free indirect thought'. Since it

was not possible to investigate all characters' progressive, I took up the progressive in speech and thought of Mary Musgrove, Mrs. Smith, Captain Wentworth and Anne Elliot.

In conclusion, I discovered three interesting findings as a result of the analysis. Firstly, The past progressive is used the most in *Persuasion*. I believe this might be related to her frequent use of 'free indirect speech and thought' but more than anything, the suspended image use of the past progressive which emphasizes the moment of events and characters' physical and psychological movements is very suitable to Austen's style.

Secondly, I concluded that the fundamental meaning of Austen's progressive is duration. The durative meaning of the progressive focuses on 'one moment' in actions and events and describes them vividly even though the time expressed is a very short period of time. This is the characteristic of her progressive.

Lastly, Austen uses the progressive as a means of characterization. I found that the characters' use of the progressive reflects their personality, way of speaking and mental state. Heroine Anne Elliot's frequent use of the progressive in her 'free indirect thought' is especially interesting.

Taken together, it is obvious that Austen intentionally operates the progressive to fabricate more detailed and sophisticated description in her own way. We could read what is going on in her text by looking into her use of the progressive.

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