2.1 Origins and modern use

The Classical Greek word *parénthesis*, a compound of *para* 'next to, by the side of', *en* 'in, into' and a nominalization of the verb *tithénai* 'put, place', was originally used in rhetoric to refer to the insertion of a thought into a continuing discourse. In 9.3.23 of *Institutio Oratoria*, the most influential description of classical rhetoric written during antiquity (95 B.C.), Quintilian mentions two Greek terms, *parénthesis* and *parémptôsis*, and two Latin ones, *interpositio* and *interclusio*, and writes that they are used when "[...] continuationi sermonis medius aliqui sensus intervenit", i.e., some intermediate meaning or thought (*medius aliqui sensus*) intervenes in a continuing discourse. A casual idea may be inserted before, during or after the main thought; to be precise, only the second one of these possibilities is denoted by these terms. In the past, scribes and printers adopted various graphic means to mark these insertions, one of them being a pair of brackets. Hence, during the development of letterpress printing, the word *parenthesis* began to be used also for 'pair of (round) brackets', a meaning now found in English as well as in the Romance languages.

While the Greek *parénthesis* implies an intentional and conscious insertion, *parémptôsis*, composed of *para* 'next to, by the side of', *en* 'in, into' and a nominalization of the verb *píptein* 'fall', underlines the casual, incidental and unplanned way by which an optional thought may come to mind while another thought is evolving. This second term later fell into disuse, probably because it was not consistent with the concept of the rhetorical figure. In classical rhetoric, a figure is a form of expression in which the normal use of language is intentionally manipulated, extended or altered in order to enhance the effect a speech may have on the audience.

It is important to note that parenthesis or paremptosis was considered a figura sententiae, that is, a figure of thought or a semantic figure theoretically independent from any particular linguistic form (see Lausberg 1960: 375). This also implies the idea that the inserted thought should be expressible by a complete sentence. The corresponding figura elocutionis, i.e., the formulation in the speech, is the hyperbaton.

The boundaries between figures of thought and figures of speech were not as clear in classical rhetoric as one might think, therefore it cannot be said that the hyperbaton was always the exact linguistic equivalent of the parenthesis. In sev-

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1 "Die *interpositio* 'Parenthese' ist die konstruktionsfremde Zwischenschaltung eines Satzes (und damit eines Gedankens) in einen Satz." (Lausberg 1960: 427)
eral rhetoric treatises another distinction seemed to be more important: Paren-
thesis was used for the insertion of a complete sentence into another one, while
hyperbaton was used when the normal word order of a sentence was disrupted
by the insertion of sentence parts.2

In modern linguistics, a number of terms are in use for the phenomenon in
question. Particularly the German language abounds with such expressions. In
grammars, introductions to linguistics, dictionaries of linguistics, and works on
the subject in general, in addition to Parenthese one may find Einfügung (see
Homberger 2000: 373), Einschaltung (see Behaghel 1928: 537ff.; Conrad 1988:
61), Einschub (see Winkler 1969; Erben 1972: 308ff.; Lewandowski 1985: 752;
The general notion Zwischensatz (see Conrad 1988: 281; Homberger 2000: 651)
sometimes explicitly includes parenthetical clauses (see Wackernagel 1897: 21-
27). The meanings of these terms are not exactly the same; moreover the mean-
ing of every single term may vary from author to author. García Cid (1995),
whose working paper about parenthesis in spoken Spanish is written in German,
describes two different types of parenthesis, one called Parenthese, the other
Einschub. For Hoffmann (1998: 300), a Schalsatz is an RPC. Moreover,
whereas Schalsatz and Zwischensatz imply that the parenthetical must be a sen-
tence or a clause, other terms do not imply such a restriction.

If they mention it at all,3 English texts on the subject limit themselves to
parenthesis (see Matthews 1997: 265f.), parenthetic clause (see Jespersen 1937),
parenthetical clause (see Emonds 1976), parenthetical structure (see O'Grady,
Dobrovolsky, & Katamba 1997: 669) or simply parenthetical (see O'Grady, Do-
Burton-Roberts 2006). Incidental clause / expression / construction, etc. al-
though possible as linguistic terms,4 do not occur in English dictionaries of and
introductions to linguistics.

In French, incise and the related terms (élément / proposition / sous-phrase)
incident(e) and incidence5 are more frequent than parenthèse and parenthétique
(see Mounin 1974: 171f.; Robert 1985; Delomier & Morel 1986; Grevisse 1993;
Dubois, Giacomo, Guespin, et al. 1994: 242, 344; Nølke 1996). Occasionally,
one may also find proposition intercalée and intercalation (see Mounin 1974:
171). Often parenthèse merely denotes the typographic device, i.e., the brackets,
whereas parenthétique, incise, or incidente refer to the inserted expression itself

2 See Lausberg 1960: 428: "[...] das eigentliche Hyperbaton [...] ist ein Satzteil-Hyperbaton, die
Parenthese ist ein Gedanken-Hyperbaton (Ganzsatz-Hyperbaton)". We find the same distinction
3 Crystal (1997), for instance, contains no entry for the subject.
4 At least, that is what I conclude after a search in the World Wide Web, where some linguistic
documents containing the sequence incidental clause may be found.
5 In Guillaume's theory of tense and aspect, the terms incidence and incidentielle have nothing
to do with parenthesis; cf., e.g.: "Deux phases sont à envisager dans le développement de la
perspective ouverte par la conjonction. La première se rapporte à la venue du procès dans le
temps: c'est la phase incidentielle; la seconde, aux conséquences du procès survenu, ou censé
survenu dans le temps: c'est la phase conséquentielle." (Guillaume 1929: 42)
6 In Mounin's Dictionnaire de linguistique (1974), there is no entry for parenthèse.
In addition, French texts commonly differentiate between medial or final quotatives, i.e., devices reporting something said by another person, which are called *incises*, and other types of incidental constructions, often called *incidentes* (see Mounin 1974: 171f.; Grevisse 1993: 568ff.; Robert 1985; Wilmet 1998: 574; Riegel, Pellat, & Rioul 2002: 460f.). The first ones are reduced clauses, the second ones are often complete clauses.

Italian and Spanish linguistic terminology does not share this differentiation. Italian linguists speak of *inciso* and *(proposizione / frase) incidentale / parentetica* (see Serianni 1991: 625f.; Cardona 1988: 166, 229; Beccaria 1996: 385; Dardano & Trifone 1997: 427f.; Borgato & Salvi 2001: 165ff.). *Parentesi* is rarely employed; in Italian dictionaries of linguistics it is only used to refer to 'pair of (round) brackets' (see Beccaria 1996: 544; Cardona 1988: 229). Quite similarly, in the Spanish linguistic literature one may find *inciso* (see Lázaro Carreter 1968: 233; Bosque & De Monte 1999), *inciso oracional* (see Alarcos Llorach 1994: 317), *oración incidental* (see Lázaro Carreter 1968: 233; Real Academia Española 1991: 150), simply *incidental* (see Fernández Fernández 1993; Alcaraz Varó & Martínez Linares 1997: 297), *oración parentética* (see Lázaro Carreter 1968: 314), and *enunciado parentético* (see Quilis 1999: 445; Fuentes Rodríguez 1999); *parentesis* (see Lázaro Carreter 1968: 314; Navarro Tomás 1974: 82ff.; Alcina Franch & Blecua 1991: 469) may also occur in reference to these constructions. From a communicative point of view, Vigara Tauste (1992: 397ff., 423ff.) distinguishes between *incisos de opinión*, with which the speaker declares that the proposition expresses his or her personal opinion and that he or she is preparing himself or herself for a possible refutation, and *paréntesis asociativo*, which is a momentary, syntactically unconnected insertion into an information block.

As in classical times, in modern linguistics parenthesis continues to be a rather flexible concept (for a recent overview, see Kaltenböck 2005: 25ff.). There is a general tendency to see it not as a discourse technique, but as a concrete piece of language. The title of Schwyzer (1939), *Die Parenthese im engeren und im weitern Sinne*, shows this flexibility, implying that there are a narrow and a broad definition of parenthesis. Schwyzer, at one point, defines it narrowly, saying that it is a grammatical main clause that interrupts the grammatical continuity or coherence of another sentence. The variety of the phenomena examined in his treatise suggests, however, a broad definition. According to the narrowest characterization one may find, a parenthesis is, very much as in Schwyzer (1939: 31): "Vom formal grammatischen Standpunkt ist eine Parenthese ein grammatischer Hauptsatz, der den grammatischen Zusammenhang eines andern Satzes unterbricht".

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7 The definition of *incidental* in Fernández Fernández (1993), though, is rather specialized and limited to incidental adjectives, nouns, and adverbs, as well as to incidental adverbial clauses with an overt syntactic link.

8 In Spanish, the word *paréntesis* is masculine, not feminine as in French or Italian.

9 See Schwyzer (1939: 31): "Vom formal grammatischen Standpunkt ist eine Parenthese ein grammatischer Hauptsatz, der den grammatischen Zusammenhang eines andern Satzes unterbricht".

10 See Schwyzer (1939: 8): "Die Parenthese im landläufigen Sinne ist nur eine Seite einer viel umfassenderen Spracherscheinung, zur der auch manches gehört, was unter andern Namen geht".
31), a syntactically complete and autonomous sentence that interrupts the syntactic coherence of the sentence into which it is inserted (see also Faulseit & Kühn 1969: 155; Abraham 1988: 566). Very broad definitions, those based only on prosody or communicative function, without determining either its syntactic class or its position in the host, include constructions that do not match our intuitive understanding of parenthesis: interjections, vocatives and other forms of address, left or right dislocated elements, appositions, certain elliptical expressions, adjectival and participial elements appended to noun phrases, relative clauses, and communicative formulas; at one point, Schwyzer (1939: 45f.) even sees a relationship with cases of anacoluthon, i.e., with sentences that switch from one construction to another. Most definitions fall in between these two extremes. There is nevertheless a core group of constructions which are subsumed under parenthesis by most authors, while there is no general agreement on the classification of a number of other constructions.

Most definitions do not specify whether they apply to spoken or written language. There are, of course, some contributions explicitly based on spoken corpora; those based on written documents are dedicated to the use of parenthesis in literary texts in especially Sanskrit, Classical Greek, and Latin (e.g., Wackernagel 1897; Schwyzer 1939).

2.2 Principal description criteria
In the following overview, I will present the most important criteria on which descriptions and definitions are founded. Exploring and discussing them is essential for the definition of my selection criteria in chapter 4. At least six criteria or properties are involved, both in spoken and written language: prosody, interruption of the host clause, lack of an overt link between parenthetical and host clause, sententiality, the relationship between parenthetical and host clause, and communicative function (cf. also Lampert 1992: 35ff.). They cover almost all levels of linguistic analysis from phonology to pragmatics and are those most often mentioned when parenthesis is defined.

2.2.1 Prosody
Prosodic features, primarily fundamental frequency ($F_0$), intensity, rate of speech, and pauses, are considered important by almost all authors. Variations in $F_0$ recurring over stretches of speech are associated with patterns. These distinctive patterns, which are sometimes associated with particular meanings, are called intonation. Many authors assume that parenthetical constructions display such a distinctive pattern. In fact, terms such as intonation parenthétique (see Nolke 1996: 320; Campione 2001a: 377; Riegel, Pellat, & Rioul 2002: 460), parenthèse intonative (see Rossi 1999), incise prosodique (see Simon 2004: 188-196, 225-249), intonazione parentetica (see Borgato & Salvi 2001), entonación...
del paréntesis (see Navarro Tomás 1974), or Parenthese-Intonation (see Helbig & Buscha 1989: 676) occur frequently.

The level of pitch or of its acoustic correlate, the fundamental frequency, is considered to be the most important property of the parenthetical intonation. Navarro Tomás (1974: 83) describes the entonación del paréntesis as being six or seven semitones lower than the intonation of the rest of the sentence. According to Bolinger (1989: 186), English parentheticals are spoken with a lower pitch than the matrix sentence and with a rising terminal; final parentheticals display a low level pitch. Cruttenden (1997: 123, 140, 173) adds to these properties a reduced variation in pitch range and a reduced intensity. Quilis (1999: 445) states that the Spanish medial reporting parenthetical me contaba Juan is pronounced with a low pitch that rises towards the end. Canepári (1999: 224f.) confirms this, although he assumes that the F0 of parentheticals is not completely flat (= absence of modulation) but displays - on a reduced scale - the intonational patterns possible in Italian. The few parenthetical constructions specifically analyzed and described in Campione (2001a: 375ff.) display an "intonation plate en plage basse", i.e., a low-level flat intonation. Pauses, although possible before and after a parenthesis, are often not treated as being an essential prosodic property. Not all researchers, however, are convinced that parentheticals display a low-level flat intonation. Nemni (1979: 108), in an experimental study on the intonation of French parentheticals, found out that F0 varies considerably throughout the parenthetical sequence and might even reach levels higher than those of the host (cf also Blanche-Benveniste 2000: 122; Cresti 2000a: 143).

The aforementioned distinctive patterns of variation in F0 recur over stretches of speech that I call, following Hirst & Di Cristo (1998), intonation units.13 In phonology, the segmentation of utterances in intonation units is a much debated issue. There is no general agreement among phonologists on the phonetic correlates of the boundaries of these units (e.g., pauses, initial shortening, final lengthening, pitch of unaccented syllables) or the factors (e.g., length, syntactic unit, semantic coherence) defining intonational grouping. The majority of researchers nevertheless agrees that at least medial parenthetical expressions constitute separate intonation units (see Selkirk 1984: 382; Nespor 1993: 206; Cruttenden 1997: 71).

Only a few specific accounts of the prosody of parenthesis are based on corpora of spoken language. Some of these adopt prosody as a primary criterion of definition. According to Winkler (1969: 282ff.), in spoken German one recognizes an incidental construction by the fact that the speaker all of a sudden changes the intonational contour of his or her utterance by making a marked drop

13 Due to the many perspectives from which this linguistic unit can be considered, the terminology is fairly diverse in this respect. In English publications, one may also find intonation group, intonational phrase, phonological phrase, tone group, tone unit or breath group (see Cruttenden 1997: 29; Hirst & Di Cristo 1998: 18f.). French terminology is similarly prolific; besides unité intonative (see Campione 2001a), there are at least groupe rythmique, mot phon(ét)ique, groupe prosodique, groupe de souffle (see Meisenburg & Selig 1998: 121), and groupe intonatif (see Simon 2004: 65ff.). Cresti (1987: 39ff.; 2000a) calls it unità tonale, Voghera (1992: 90ff.) gruppo tonale, Nespor (1993: 205ff.) sintagma intonativo, Canepári (1999: 191ff.) intonia, Quilis (1999: 419f.) grupo de entonación.
in pitch and then, after the interruption, continues by resuming the previous pitch level. Usually, he or she accompanies this particular contour by an increased rate of speech, a short pause before and a longer pause afterwards. Interestingly, after the parenthesis the pitch returns to exactly the same level and direction (falling or rising) as before.

For Delomier & Morel (1986: 142f.), who examine the prosody of French parentheticals, the general characteristics are the so-called décrochement, i.e., the detaching of the intonational contour, a usually lower pitch that rises slightly towards the end, an increased rate of speech, and pauses before and especially after the parenthetical. This is confirmed by Morel & Danon-Boileau (1998: 59ff.). According to their study of spoken French, incidental sequences feature the lowering of the fundamental frequency (F0) to level H2 (for the description of the levels of F0 see section 9.1), the absence of moduluation of F0, frequently the acceleration of the rate of speech and the maintenance of the level of intensity, and the rising of F0 towards the end. Interestingly, they do not mention pauses as a constitutive feature. Morel & Danon-Boileau's (1998) study is exceptional insofar as they are the first to develop a coherent framework in which the incise is treated separately from expressions like je crois, j’espère, il me semble, disons, tu vois, moi je trouve, and je sais pas (see section 9.1).

Cresti (2000a: 143) states that parentheticals usually have a lower F0 than the host, but it may also be the case that the F0 is higher. The detaching from the host is further underlined by a lower or higher rate of speech. Firenzuoli & Tucci (2003: 188) and Tucci (2004: 10) mention the lowering of F0, an increased rate of speech, and a flat intonation profile. Both authors add that the mean length of syllables in parentheticals (0.142 ms) is significantly shorter than elsewhere. According to Simon (2004: 188, 225ff.), the décrochage mélodique may consist in a lowering or a raising of the F0. It may be accompanied by pauses, an increased rate of speech, and a decrease in intensity.

Winkler (1969) and Delomier & Morel (1986) emphasize that parentheticals may not manifest all of these properties in the same way (cf. also Bolinger 1989: 186); some may be lacking, e.g., pauses, increased rate of speech, some may be realized differently, by, e.g., F0 as a rise instead of a drop.

An important conclusion can be drawn from the examples of Einschub, incise,14 and inciso referred to in Winkler (1969), Delomier & Morel (1986), Morel & Danon-Boileau (1998), Cresti (2000a), Firenzuoli & Tucci (2003), Tucci (2004), and Simon (2004): Practically any syntactic construction may be marked in speech by the aforementioned prosodic properties (see also Dessaintes 1960: 72-97, 102-112; Delattre 1966: 5, 8, 12f.; Alisova 1972: 181ff.; Nølke 1996: 317ff.; Cruttenden 1997: 71; Canepàri 1999: 224f.; Borgato & Salvi 2001: 165). This is the case, for example, for constructions that are either clause-final or cannot otherwise be said to interrupt the syntactic coherence of the host. Winkler (1969: 289) even quotes a parenthetical that is a free sentence. Several of the aforementioned sources cite parentheticals that contain an overt syntactic link to

14 In Delomier & Morel (1986) and Morel & Danon-Boileau (1998) the term incise refers to incidental constructions in general, not only to incidental quotatives.
the host clause. Furthermore, some of the mentioned parentheticals do not contain a predicator, i.e., they are simple noun phrases or prepositional phrases (see especially the table in Winkler 1969: 290; see also Delomier & Morel 1986: 145f.). Regarding the incise, Morel & Danon-Boileau (1998: 60) and Simon (2004: 189) explicitly confirm this conclusion. In Wunderli (1987) and Rossi (1999), the parenthetical intonation is a characteristic of all detached constructions (e.g., topics dislocated to the left or right, appositions, modal adverbs, RPCs, and others).

2.2.2 Interruption of the host clause

Interruption of the host clause or sentence\textsuperscript{15} or position within the host is the second property typically adduced to describe parenthesis. Occasionally, it is considered the defining factor. As will be explained in section 3.1, for Bloomfield (1935: 186) and for Behaghel (1928: 493, 537ff.), parenthesis is a variety of parataxis in which one form interrupts the other. In both cases, two forms are united by the use of only one sentence pitch. The only difference between parataxis and parenthesis thus is position. Parentheticals are clause-medial:

(1) Won't you please come?

In Bloomfield's opinion, one of the two members of a clause-medial appositional group is a parenthetical, as the poor boy in the following example:\textsuperscript{16}

(2) John the poor boy ran away.

As becomes clear from these examples, in Bloomfield's conception parenthesis is not dependent on the syntactic class (sentence, clause, phrase, word) of the interrupting expression.

Although I treat the two aspects together, I am of course aware that medial position is not the same as interruption, if this means interruption of a close syntactic relationship or of a word order pattern. Please in (1) is medial, but does not actually interrupt a close syntactic relationship or a word order pattern. Medial position is recognizable immediately, whereas interruption is a less straightforward issue. As Havers (1931) suggested, associative thinking, a thinking mode in which imaginations and impressions are ordered loosely without being limited by sequence rules, is responsible for parenthesis. Zifonun, Hoffmann, Strecker, et al. (1997: 2364) state that parenthesis is above all a device that operates with linear order and makes it possible to structure information in a way not provided for by the word order rules of a language (cf. also Lampert 1992;

\textsuperscript{15}According to Matthews (1997: 265), the host does not necessarily have to be either of the two. In his words, a parenthesis is "a syntactic unit which interrupts a larger unit". Previously, Espinal (1991: 728) had expressed the same opinion.

\textsuperscript{16}1998, in a personal communication, W. Mayerthaler criticized Urmson's (1952) term parenthetical verb as syntactically useless and stated that the construction in (ii) is appositive not parenthetical:

(i) Your house is, I suppose, very old.
(ii) Your house is very old, I suppose.
Hoffmann 1998; Burton-Roberts 2006). While illustrating German word order, they discuss several clauses which in their framework have to be parenthetical only because of their exceptional position (Zifonun, Hoffmann, Strecker, et al. 1997: 1580ff.).

Espinal (1991: 730ff.) is actually expressing the same thought when, in mentioning German word order, she writes that the syntactic independence of the parenthetical and its lack of relations to the host is demonstrated by the fact that it does not exert influence on the latter's word order. In German declarative sentences, finite verbs occur in second position, so there must be another constituent (e.g., the impersonal pronoun es or a temporal adverb) in initial position:

(3) Es wurde gestern getanzt.
[Somebody danced yesterday]

(4) Gestern wurde getanzt.
[Yesterday somebody danced]

Whereas a second preverbal constituent is ungrammatical, a presentential parenthetical occurring before the first preverbal constituent is acceptable:

(5) *Gestern es wurde getanzt.
[Yesterday, somebody danced]

(6) Ehrlich, es wurde getanzt.
[Honestly, somebody danced]

Mayerthaler, Fliedl, & Winkler (1998: 262) and Ackema & Neeleman (2004: 97) cite similar German and Dutch examples that underline the extra-sentential status of parentheticals. Apart from Espinal (1991) and Zifonun, Hoffmann, Strecker, et al. (1997), I know of no other relevant work on the matter that has gone beyond general statements and examined in practice the possibility of defining parenthesis through word order.17

García Cid (1995: 13f.) defines Parenthese explicitly as discourse unit that interrupts syntactic coherence. There is no clue, though, as to how this coherence is to be understood. Moreover, the author on purely graphic grounds excludes certain expressions that could be classified as interruptions (e.g., vocatives and other forms of address, interjections, communicative formulas).18 Einschub, on the other hand, is a digression, excursion, or aside that interrupts semantic or thematic coherence, introducing a unit belonging to one discourse type into a portion of another discourse type (1995: 19ff.). The classification of discourse types is taken mainly from Grimes (1975). The thematic digression may last for

17 Interestingly enough, Quintilian, when defining parenthesis in 9.3.23 of *Institutio Oratoria*, explicitly refers to the "continuationi sermonis", in which the parenthesis intervenes, although classical Latin had rather free word order.

one or more predications. In the texts analyzed, all *Einschübe* express information that is non-sequential with respect to the time line or, as García Cid puts it, secondary predication. *Parenthese* and *Einschub*, as defined by García Cid, do not necessarily coincide.

Probably as a result of Urmson's (1952) influence, many contributions of the last 50 years promote the view that clause-medial position is not a necessary condition, which contradicts the original meaning of parenthesis. However, this opinion is also found in works preceding Urmson (1952) (e.g., Spitzer 1922; Schwyzer 1939: 34) or coming from a different tradition, as Grevisse (1993: 569).

### 2.2.3 Lack of an overt link

The third criterion I want to mention is the lack of an overt link between parenthetical and host. In Bloomfield's (1935: 171, 186) understanding, parataxis and parenthesis are syntactic relations between successive or interrupting units marked only by intonation, that is, without an overt linking device. Bayer (1973: 74) excludes any sequence overtly linked to the host clause from his study of parenthesis in spoken German, even if its communicative role is comparable to that of an asyndetic sequence. Sommerfeldt (1984: 243), Helbig & Buscha (1989: 648f.), and Borgato & Salvi (2001: 165f.) state likewise that parentheticals lack an explicit syntactic relationship between them and the host.

For other authors, though, an incidental construction does not necessarily have to be asyndetic.\(^\text{19}\) I have already quoted examples of Winkler (1969), Delomier & Morel (1986), and Morel & Danon-Boileau (1998), where parentheticals contain an overt syntactic link. Hofmann (1926: 115) states that explanatory parentheses introduced by conjunctions such as *nam*, *enim*, and *etenim* were frequent in spoken Latin. Although Schwyzer (1939: 31) believes that originally parenthesis was asyndetic, he explicitly mentions the possibility that it may be linked to the host clause by a particle or a conjunction, a construction which was frequent in Classical Greek and Latin. The most striking example of a definition where asyndesis does not play a role is Urmson's (1952). In his eyes, even sentence-initial main clauses with a complementizer can be parenthetical clauses..

Serianni (1991: 625) distinguishes between *incidentali primarie* with a conjunction and *incidentali secondarie* with a subordinating or coordinating conjunction. In a corpus-based account of the function of *parce que* in contemporary spoken French, Debaisieux (1994) dedicates a whole chapter to incidentals introduced by this conjunction and cites numerous examples. Similarly, Dardano & Trifone (1997: 428) emphasize that parenthetical clauses may occasionally contain a subordinating conjunction. Zifonun, Hoffmann, Strecker, et al. (1997: 1581), whose main criterion is position, repeatedly quote incidental clauses with overt syntactic links.

### 2.2.4 Sententiality

\(^{19}\) Similarly, Lehmann (1988: 210ff.) holds that the presence or absence of a connective device between two clauses has nothing to do with parataxis vs. hypotaxis.
Sentential or clausal character is the fourth factor occasionally named in the description of parenthesis. According to many authors, parentheticals are complete or reduced clauses. Terms like parenthetic(al) clause, proposition incidente, frase incidentale / parentetica, inciso oracional and oración incidental all presuppose this. For those German linguists who share this standpoint, Parenthese and Schaltsatz are synonyms (see, e.g., Homberger 2000: 373), for those who do not, Parenthese has a much broader meaning. The sentential character never, of course, constitutes the sole criterion, but implicitly it plays a role in many accounts. The narrow definitions of parenthesis I referred to above see it as a necessary condition. Even authors who do not explicitly mention it often cite sentences or clauses as prototypical examples of parenthesis (see Schreiter 1988; Matthews 1997: 265f.; Borgato & Salvi 2001).

The opposing standpoint is equally diffused. In phonological approaches, any syntactic class may possess the properties that characterize parentheticals (see Winkler 1969; Delomier & Morel 1986; Morel & Danon-Boileau 1998; Cruttenden 1997: 71; Borgato & Salvi 2001: 165). In Bloomfield (1935: 186), any type of expression (sentence, clause, phrase, word) may be parenthetical. In Grevisse (1993: 568ff.), the nature of the éléments incidents is extremely variable and comprises most constructions from word to clause. Similarly, Espinal (1991: 727ff.) writes that parentheticals, considered in isolation, are not characterized by a particular structure (see also Kaltenböck 2005: 27); they may be sentences, noun phrases, adjectival phrases, prepositional phrases or adverbial phrases. The fact that defines them is that they are disjuncts with respect to some other syntactic structure, that is, their nonconfigurationality with regard to a host structure. Espinal adds that the parenthetical contains less grammatical information than the host. Unfortunately she does not pursue the idea that parenthetical expressions, though not definable by themselves, are grammatically, semantically, and pragmatically reduced with respect to the host sentence. That would mean that they can never be full-fledged sentences.

It is not clear, though, in which respect a parenthesis is pragmatically reduced. According to Bassarak (1987) parentheses have autonomous illocutionary forces, which are coordinate, subsidiary, or autonomous with respect to the illocution of the host. Schreiter (1988: 126) also states that the host and the parenthetical clause may have different illocutions. García Cid (1995) assumes that parentheses fulfill autonomous communicative functions. Similarly, Debaisieux (1994) says that a parenthesis may have a modality that is distinct from that of the host. There is no doubt that, at least with respect to modality, the parenthesis and the host may differ:

(7) Inf. B.- Me quitó tres años, **oye**, de la manera más idiota. [...] (HCM.18.331)  
[I gave up three years, listen, in the most stupid way]
(8) <H1> Y cazuelas, cazuelas... sí. Y había cazuelas, ¿**sabes**? antes de estas de barro [...] (COREC.CCON021B)  
[And saucepans saucepans yes and there were saucepans, you know, before these of clay]
In the Spanish examples above, the declarative sentence hosts an imperative and an interrogative parenthetical, respectively.

2.2.5 *Relationship with the host clause*

Related to the question of an overt link is the one regarding a possible syntactic and/or semantic interaction between the parenthetical and the host. Though never adduced as a defining criterion, the type of relation has been discussed repeatedly.

According to Espinal (1991: 735), a number of arguments show that parentheticals are syntactically independent constituents. They do not participate in syntactic processes that take place within the domain of the sentence, and they are not subcategorized by verbs. Likewise, at the level of semantic representation (*Logical Form* in generative terms), the meaning of the parenthetical is not integrated into the meaning of the host. Only at the moment of utterance processing, that is, at the pragmatic level, is an interaction between the parenthetical and the host taking place.

To a certain degree, all linguists share this opinion, that is, all assume that parentheticals, though independent from the host at a lower level of representation, maintain some kind of relationship with the host at a higher level (see, e.g., Schreiter 1988: 125). The disagreements regard the point at which such a relationship becomes active. Schreiter (1988) and Espinal (1991) set it rather high, i.e., not before the pragmatic level, other linguists (e.g., Ross 1973; Emonds 1976; Zifonun, Hoffmann, Strecker, et al. 1997) posit overt or covert relations at lower levels. As Blakemore (2006: 1670ff.) explains, this has even led to a distinction between parentheticals that are regarded as performance phenomena ('disfluencies') and parentheticals that can be accommodated within grammar. Any solution to the problem also depends on the approach regarding the 'division of labour' between grammar and pragmatics (see Blakemore 2006: 1672). If pragmatics penetrates into grammar, parentheticals can be accounted for earlier and at lower levels; if grammar is autonomous from pragmatics, the interpretation of parentheticals will have to wait until the level of discourse interpretation is reached.

Unfortunately, the question has rarely been posed in such clear terms as in Espinal (1991) and Blakemore (2006). Usually the question that attracted most attention was the relationship, hypotactic or paratactic, between the host and the parenthetical. While there is no doubt that hypotaxis presupposes a relationship on the syntactic level, authors disagree on the subject of parataxis. Some consider it a syntactic relationship (see Bloomfield 1935; Mayerthaler, Fliedl, & Winkler 1998: 262), some do not (see Matthews 1981; Lepore & Loewer 1989). Authors of the second group may see a difference between coordination and par-

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20 According to Schreiter (1988: 124ff.) this is, however, a futile question: "Parenthetische Strukturen [...] lassen sich nur unbefriedigend als komplexe Sätze erklären, weil sie sich weder völlig in den syntaktischen Rahmen einer subordinativen Beziehung noch in den einer koordinativen Beziehung fügen."
ataxis (see Matthews 1981: 220; López García 1999: 3513), insofar as coordination presupposes a syntactic relationship, while parataxis does not. It is also possible that some authors are unaware of the potential ambiguity of parataxis and, by interpreting parenthesis as parataxis, simply want to stress that parenthetical expressions have to be interpreted as being outside the domain of the host clause.

Especially in older works on the subject, parentheticals are seen as paratically connected to the host: Diez (1872: 340ff.) and Meyer-Lübke (1899: 578) consider incidental Italian *credo* and *prego* as independent sentences; Wackernagel (1897: 21-27) also treats sentences asyndetically inserted into other sentences as cases of parataxis; Hofmann (1926: 114ff.) and Behaghel (1928: 493, 537ff.) share this view; for Bloomfield (1935: 186), parenthesis is just a variety of parataxis; In some initial generative accounts (see, e.g., Emonds 1976), sentences with parentheticals also form paratactic pairs.

The nature of the syntactic relationship is frequently made dependent on the position of the parenthetical. For many authors (e.g., Jespersen 1914: 32; Nilsson-Ehle 1947; Wanner 1981; Hand 1991, 1993; Mayerthaler, Fliedl, & Winkler 1998: 262, 298), initial parentheticals lead to hypotactic structures (i.e., in reality, they are not parentheticals but governing clauses), while medial or final parentheticals lead to paratactic structures. This standpoint has been questioned by the so-called paratactic analysis of sentence-initial verbs of indirect quotation (see Davidson 1968-1969) and propositional attitude verbs (see Lepore & Loewer 1989), which was originally designed to apply to sentences with an explicit complementizer (e.g., Engl. *that*), but which can also be applied to sentences with complementizer deletion (see Thompson & Mulac 1991).

A number of authors suggest that there may be an implicit hypotactic relationship between the parenthetical and the host. Most of them consider the parenthetical as a subordinate. Damourette & Pichon (1933: 459f.), e.g., state that the *incise* in the following example is a subordinate:

(9) Celui-là, *dit* Lalie en montrant Bernard, n'est plus notre frère.  
[That one over there, says Lalie indicating Bernard, isn't our brother anymore]

According to the two linguists, its function as a subordinate is sometimes evidenced by the insertion of *que* in spoken French (cf. also Grevisse 1993: 574):

(10) Celui-là *n'est plus notre frère que dit* Lalie en montrant Bernard.  
[That one over there *isn't our brother anymore, that says* Lalie indicating Bernard]

Schwyzer (1939) does not express a clear opinion on the matter, but at one point (p. 44) he says that some parenthetical expressions stand in a subordinative relation to the host sentence. For Helbig & Buscha (1989: 648f.), a *Schalsatz* formally seems to be an asyndetically coordinate sentence, whereas in reality it is a clause subordinate to the host clause; therefore it may be transformed into a syntactically subordinate clause:
Die Prüfungstermine sie waren vorverlegt worden beunruhigten die Studenten.

[The exam dates, they had been brought forward to an earlier date, worried the students]

Die Prüfungstermine, die vorverlegt worden waren, beunruhigten die Studenten.

[The exam dates, which had been brought forward to an earlier date, worried the students]

In their short remarks, Helbig & Buscha (1989: 648f.) do not pursue the question further, but they are certainly aware that there are parenthetical clauses that cannot be transformed into subordinate clauses. Borgato & Salvi (2001: 165f.) affirm that there is no explicit syntactic relationship between the parenthetical clause and the host. Semantically, though, the parenthetical clauses are subordinate to the host, but not governed by it. They function as modalizing adjuncts, as circumstantial adjuncts (= adjuncts expressing time, cause, etc.) or as appositive relative clause.

The opposite view, however, can also be found. As will be explained in section 3.4, Ross (1973) assumes that the parenthetical is a superordinate clause in the deep structure and that its surface structure is derived by a transformation that deletes the complementizer and fronts the complement clause. According to Riegel, Pellat, & Rioul (2002: 470), the incises and incidentes in the following French examples semantically govern their respective hosts:

Quand, me demanda-t-il, reviendras-tu?
[When, he asked me, will you return?]

L'été, je le crains, sera chaud.
[The summer, I'm afraid of it, will be hot]

Finally, according to Sommerfeldt (1984: 243), a Schaltsatz, though syntactically coordinate, may be semantically either subordinate or superordinate to the host clause.

2.2.6 Communicative function
The last criterion I want to discuss is the communicative role a parenthetical sequence may have. Most authors at some point refer to the communicative function of parenthesis and try to describe it; few of them actually base their definition of parenthesis on it. One of these few seems to be Schwyzer (1939: 31, 33, 44): In cases of doubt, he suggests resorting to the meaning of the parenthetical clause within the context. Parentheses contain additional information which is not absolutely necessary. This view requires, on the one hand, the exclusion of those clause-medial elements that express necessary content, e.g., utterance

21 Regarding parentheticals as in (11) and (12), which are essentially non-restrictive relative clauses, Hofmann (1926: 118) affirms that they were common in spoken Latin and historically represent the initial state out of which regular relative clauses, i.e., those with relative pronouns, developed. See also Lehmann (1988: 194).
verbs, from the concept of parenthesis and, on the other hand, the inclusion of medial syndetic adverbial clauses with redundant information (cf. Hoffmann 1998: 304).

We owe the first thorough examination of the communicative function of at least a part of parenthesis to Urmson (1952). As he was interested mainly in statements, he confined his analysis to this speech act and examined the role of parentheticals therein. Their main function is to limit the speaker's commitment regarding the truth of the asserted proposition. What is relevant for us there is Urmson's view that the interruption of the host clause is not a constitutive property of parenthesis. He explicitly mentions the following two possibilities for using a parenthetical (1952: 481):

(15) Your house is I suppose very old.
(16) Your house is very old I suppose.

In Urmson's view, the communicative function of I suppose remains the same. This pragmatic approach exerted a strong influence on the considerable body of linguistic research on the subject published from 1970 onwards. In Corum (1975), for example, the position in the sentence does not play a major role. Clause-final, but also clause-initial expressions, even without a verb, are called parenthetical because of their communicative function (see Corum 1975: 134):22

(17) Obviously, Patty Hearst is in Guatemala.

I have to add that primarily in the decade from 1970 to 1980, the debate between generative linguists about the deep structure of sentences with parentheticals and the type of transformation necessary to derive the surface structure as well as the two proposed analyses (complement-fronting hypothesis and pro-form deletion hypothesis) were based on sentences with final parentheticals (see, e.g., Ross 1973; Emonds 1976).

Not all modern publications on the discourse role of parenthesis, of course, follow Urmson (1952). Bayer (1973) examines a corpus of spoken German and extracts all sequences which are contained in a clause, but which can neither be described as a part of it (i.e., they are not syndetic) nor be identified as slips of the tongue or false starts.23 Typically for a pragmatically oriented approach, the position in the clause is treated as irrelevant, though sequences which constitute complete clauses are excluded if they are initial or final. Like Schwyzter (1939: 45f.) and Betten (1976), Bayer sees a relationship with anacoluthon and draws attention to the fact that, especially in corpora containing spontaneous conversation, it is difficult to extract parentheses, since host clauses often are incomplete.

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22 See Corum (1975: 133): "Parenthetic adjuncts (PAs) are used to strengthen or weaken the force of an assertion. [...] PAs include sentential adverbs, adverbial phrases, parentheticals, some non-restrictive relative clauses, and rhetorical tag questions".

23 See Bayer (1973: 71): "Untersucht werden [...] alle Sequenzen im Bereich eines Satzes, die nicht als dessen Teil beschrieben werden können und auch nicht als 'Versprecher' oder sprachliche Fehlplanungen identifizierbar sind".
or even not recognizable as such. As I will illustrate in section 3.3, he then classifies the extracted sequences according to a revised version of Malinowski's (1923) and Jakobson's (1960) model of communication that distinguishes between kommentierenden Parenthesen (expressing speaker comment on the content, code, form, and structure of the message) and the kontaktbezogenen Parenthesen (establishing, maintaining, controlling and closing the physical and psychological contact between interlocutors). The second group significantly expands the potential realm of parenthesis, since it comprises vocatives and other forms of address, interjections and communicative formulas. Nevertheless, as Betten (1976: 219) rightly points out, Bayer's definition of parenthesis is primarily syntactic and communicative only on a second level, notwithstanding his initial declarations (see Bayer 1973: 66ff.).

Lampert (1992: 106, 132) says that in written texts a parenthetical construction can be recognized by four properties, of which textual defocalization is the most salient one. That is, a parenthesis is primarily seen as a textual strategy that defocalizes information. Lampert (1992: 134ff.) goes on to describe three sub-strategies and their corresponding parenthetical constructions. Associative constructions embody the parenthetical principle most clearly and allow the speaker to place a secondary informational focus wherever he or she likes (cf. also Apothéloz & Zay 1999: 23). Reformulating constructions specify, exemplify, generalize, or paraphrase previous information, and regulative ones express subjective evaluations of statements.

On pragmatic and semantic grounds, Borgato & Salvi (2001) distinguish between two types of frasi parentetiche, both of which may have in their scope the entire host sentence or parts of it (a phrase or word). The first type modalizes the host sentence or its parts with respect to speaker commitment, evaluation or the mode in which the speech act is carried out. Syntactically, these parenthetical clauses have the same function as sentence adverbials. The second type, which Borgato & Salvi consider similar to a subordinate clause, has a temporal, causal, consecutive, or other relation, not explicated by a conjunction, to the host sentence or its parts. Syntactically, these parentheticals correspond to circumstantial adjuncts or to appositive relative clauses. Borgato & Salvi (2001: 170) explicitly mention the end of the sentence as one of three positions a parenthetical clause may occupy.

In concluding this subsection, I want to return briefly to the study of spoken French by Morel & Danon-Boileau (1998). Although they base their description of incise on intonational features, they also make some useful comments on its discourse function. Contrary to what is normally said, they think that parentheses are not a useful means either for the insertion of additional details or for the recovery of constituents which have not been placed in the right position (see Morel & Danon-Boileau 1998: 60ff.). There are other devices more appropriate for this (see Morel & Danon-Boileau 1998: 75-93). Parenthesis is a rather specialized device that enables speakers to comment on their discourse or to express

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24 Betten (1976: 219) expresses terminological doubts and furthermore sees no point in comprising under the heading of parenthesis a group of expressions which have a long research tradition and have been described and examined independently.
their standpoint and allows them to put forward some information or an argument without directly submitting it to the hearer's judgment (cf. also Simon 2004: 232; Potts 2005: 7).

2.3 Summary
Even in classical rhetoric, parenthesis was a concept which could already be described from more than one viewpoint: intentionality versus accidentality, thought versus actual linguistic formulation, insertion of a complete sentence versus insertion of sentence parts. In modern linguistics, other viewpoints and criteria have been added. I have illustrated and explored the six most important criteria or properties involved: prosody, interruption of the host clause, lack of an overt link between the parenthetical and the host clause, sententiality, relationship between the parenthetical and the host clause, and communicative function.

Due to the great variety of these criteria, the concept continues to be very flexible, heavily dependent on the initial choice of the respective author, and therefore not particularly useful. The sequences selected according to one criterion do not correspond to those selected according to another one. In general, syntactic definitions are narrower. The most striking discrepancies are found between syntactic and prosodic descriptions and between discourse-related descriptions and syntactic descriptions. According to the prosodic criterion, practically any syntactic construction may be parenthetical. Pragmatic definitions also select sequences that are not covered by most syntactic definitions, e.g., sentence-initial syndetic main clauses, sentence-initial adjuncts, syndetic adverbial clauses.

The concept of parenthesis is certainly vague, yet the exploration of the six criteria shows that those RPCs that Urmson (1952) had in mind are not prototypical manifestations of parenthesis. They are not complete clauses, they are ungoverned dependents of the host and they are not always prosodically isolated from the host.
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