

ANALYZING MR. DARCY'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *This article analyzes Mr. Darcy's character development through the different chapters of Pride and Prejudice, novel by Jane Austen. The first name of the book was First Impressions, highlighting the idea of that humans tend to differ due to surrounding people, feelings, or time. The beginning of this story gives an impression that Mr. Darcy would never be able to change, later Jane Austen shows his attitude towards the life trials.*

Key words: *Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen, Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy, character development, pragmatic linguistics, word choice, social expectations, 19th-century literature, literary analysis.*

Pride and Prejudice is one of the classical novels in early 19th-century English literature. The language used in Pride and Prejudice vividly reflects the cultural context of that time. Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy 28 year-old wealthy man who meets the beautiful lady, Elizabeth Bennet, and eventually falls in love with her. Jane Austen skillfully reveals Darcy's pride, nobility, and profound love towards Elizabeth through her well-chosen words. This article focuses on the correlation between lexical choice and character traits in Mr. Darcy. This contribution helps to analyze one of the most prominent classic novels in terms of pragmatic linguistics.

To begin, consider Darcy's initial impressions at the Meryton ball, where he meets Elizabeth for the first time. (Chapter 3) Since his best friend, Mr. Bingley, had also visited the party people started to compare them and found vivid differences in their character traits: Mr. Bingley was quite polite meanwhile Darcy seemed to look like an arrogant and rude man. " Mr. Darcy fails to judge that what females expect from young men. He refuses to dance at a ball that makes him a man of pride although it was due to his reserved nature. His arrogant behavior at ball reveals his identity. He also offends Elizabeth while saying, "She is handsome but not pretty enough to tempt me." (Literary English, 2024) It is mentioned later that growing up as an only child in an aristocratic family fostered his arrogance but his undeveloped social skill was another factor leading to a wrong judgement of Meryton locals. "Being a gentleman at the time in which Pride and Prejudice is set – the last decade of the 18th century – has a specific meaning. Darcy is, of course, of the gentleman class, but when the community of mainly females first meet him they do not rate him highly as a gentleman, in spite of

his ten thousand pounds a year and the rapidly circulating reports of his magnificent stately mansion, Pemberton: he does not behave in the way they expect a gentleman to behave. Manners are so important that they seem almost more important than the wealth of this single young man." (No Sweat Shakespeare, 2023)

In his first proposal: "In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you" (Chapter 34). Despite his profound love towards Elizabeth, he was still arrogant and even insulted Elizabeth by criticizing her family and acting as if accepting this proposal should be an honor for Ms. Bennet: "I have fought against my better judgment, my family's expectation, the inferiority of your birth, my rank and circumstance". (Darcy, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*) However, the response was different and somehow it can be considered as a plot twist since after that proposal in the Hunsford Parsonage both Darcy and Elizabeth experienced great personal growth. "There's that wonderful moment when Darcy first proposes to Elizabeth and she says something like: 'If you were the last man on earth I could never, in a million years, marry you.' I mean, whoops. We all know how that turns out." (Kathryn Schulz, 2023) The letter after the rejection of Ms. Bennet also plays an important role changing her mind about Darcy. The letter was the best option to describe our heroes' situation so that Darcy could also be more careful about word selection; Elizabeth had also a chance of reading his opinions for many times. But in oral speech, there may be aggressiveness or misunderstandings between them. In the end of his letter, Darcy also mentions the reason to writing a letter: "You may possibly wonder why all this was not told you last night; but I was not then master enough of myself to know what could or ought to be revealed." (Darcy, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Chapter 35) "Initially, Elizabeth has doubts about Darcy's explanation, but after reflection she becomes convinced of its truthfulness. She also begins to revise her own perceptions of him and feels that she may have been unnecessarily prejudiced. Her feelings toward Darcy are confused." (Nasrullah Mambrol, 2021).

After Rosings Park the couple came across again in Derbyshire with another tone of the conversation. In comparison, despite in his previous proposal Darcy insulted her parents in a harsh way, now he tries to be polite as much as he can. "Such a change in a man of so much pride excited not only astonishment but gratitude—for to love, ardent love, it must be attributed" (Elizabeth, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Chapter 44) Introducing Elizabeth to his sister demonstrated a significant degree of trust and respect towards her and her relatives: "There is also one other person in the party," he continued after a pause, "who more particularly wishes to be known to you Will you allow me, or do I ask too much, to introduce my sister to your acquaintance during your stay at Lambton?" (Darcy, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*) His body language was also much developed making him look more polite with his eye contact, facial

expressions and tone. Although there were only few steps to the second proposal there was an incident in Elizabeth's family, about Wickham and Lydia. But for Mr. Darcy it was a chance of proving his love by helping Bennets family. Later he takes his friend Mr. Bingley to Longbourn, in order to solve the last problem - the relationship of Bingley and Jane. Trying to deal with all these family issues of his beloved one justified how stubborn and perfectionist he is.

Finally, in the second proposal (Chapter 58) after Darcy's valuable assistance to the Bennets family Elizabeth finds a real gentleman admitting all changes were because of her: "You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled. I came to you without a doubt of my reception. You showed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased." (Darcy, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*) Similarly, Elizabeth also confirms her being rude at first. Although Darcy was highly skeptical of accepting her family ultimately they could build a strong relationship despite family challenges. "The book has a similar meaning that if Elizabeth was not humbled because of her status, Darcy would have held a rose on one knee long ago. Kneel down." (Muhiuddin Alam, 2024) The book shows that how first impressions may be misleading, in the previous chapters you will see a negative attitude between these two characters but it ends with devotion. "In start of the novel, his reserved nature causes the downfall of his fame but as the original story reveals, he gains fame more than any other character in the novel." (Literary English, 2024) In fact, the first name of the novel was First Impressions referring to the relationship between Darcy and Elizabeth.

In conclusion, writer Jane Austen depicted the example of character development in Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy from an arrogant rude person to a polite and empathic gentleman through this love adventure. Generally it may seem impossible to change personality, however it can be seen in this love story, not only rudeness can be eliminated but also great human morals can be also gained in various challenges. Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are the most visible examples of this.

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