How Female Characters Are Portrayed

—An investigation of the use of adjectives and nouns in the fictional novel *Pride and Prejudice*

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1. Introduction

As soon as women are mentioned, what emerge into our mind can be their beautiful appearance, engagement in heavy housework and too much talk. As these stereotyped images of women prevail for centuries, we cannot blame anyone who believes of these traditional virtues of women. Tanner (1986) admits "the images or stereotype has some truth—as stereotypes often do" (Tanner, 1986:1). That is to say, these stereotyped views do prove something true of women. However, in most cases, these old beliefs twist or cover the truth. For example, women are blamed for talking too much. The truth is there were certain expectations of women in traditional society and one of the English Proverbs says "silence is the best ornament of a woman" (Coates, 2004:25). Thus women were expected to be silent in the past and they were always accused of over-talking no matter how much they ever talk (Coates, 2004).

As a matter of fact, women have been forced to meet these expectations for such a long time because of their subordinate status to men in male-dominated society. In this regard, eighteenth-century Britain can be taken as a good example to present different roles men and women played in that period. Olsen (1999) asserted that men's duty was to support the whole family by earning money while women were left at home to deal with housework and baby-caring. In addition, inequality manifested itself in many other areas. For example, women were not allowed to vote, women were earned much less than men with the same occupation and women were forbidden entry into certain professions like medicine, the Anglican clergy and so on.

Women were so oppressed and had no freedom to choose the way they liked to live. Thus, the first wave of feminist movement took place in early nineteenth century in order to protect women's rights and interests. There were a great number of female feminist writers who resolved to waken and unit those female fellows to struggle for righteous interests. Mary Austell took the lead in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest* which was edited by Patricia Springborg in 2002. In it she reminded women of their own worth and advised women to pursue their equal rights. Of course, Austell was not alone. There were other feminist writers fighting together with her. For example, Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) argued in her influential work *A Vindication of the Rights of*

Women that women should not be confined to domestic work and they need to get proper education as men. Meanwhile, Jane Austen was also considered as an Enlightenment feminist whose feminist standpoints were quite similar with Wollstonecraft's. In Austen's novels, her heroines always learned to think about the problems they met and tried to solve those problems themselves, because in Austen's opinion, women should be capable of learning morals independently as men. Thus, Austen's feminist identity is out of question.

As Jane Austen is a productive writer and female figures seem to be the core of her novels such as *Emma* (1815), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). Take *Pride and Prejudice* for instance, there are many female characters in the work and they attract many researchers' attention. Margaret Kirkham (1997), Tony Tanner (1986) and Newton (1986) all mentioned the images of female characters in *Pride and Prejudice* and we have general idea of these female characters. However, their studies are not detailed and systematic. In addition, we cannot find the answer to question why Austen portrayed female characters that way. Thus, it is necessary to conduct research which wholly focuses on the images of female characters in *Pride and Prejudice* and also interpret Austen's way of portrayal.

1.1 Aim and Scope

Through a study of adjectives and nouns in Jane Austen's historical novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), the present investigation aims to find out how three of the main female characters are portrayed and why they are portrayed in those ways.

1.2 Material

The novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) is the primary material used in this study and three female characters including Elizabeth Bennet, Mrs Bennet and Charlotte Lucas will be chosen as research objects. These three female characters are representative. Elizabeth Bennet is chosen for her identity as the heroine and Mrs Bennet's for her impressive image as a traditional nagging, emotional woman. As for Charlotte Lucas, she is out of the Bennet family and it ensures the variability of samples. In addition, she is Elizabeth's best friend and it is interesting to make comparison between their qualities.

This paper takes page 5 to page151 (almost half of the novel) as primary data for two reasons. First, as time is limited, half of the novel is the most suitable amount of data that the

researcher can handle. Second, half of the novel ensures the continuity and sufficiency of data. All together, the total words of these pages (page 5 to page 151) reach 3,360 and there are 92 adjectives and 56 nouns that describing the characters.

1.3 Method

The research is based on a close reading of the novel. When pondering over which aspect in the novel this paper should start with, adjectives are taken into consideration in the first place as for their basic function of portrayal. Then the researcher found that nouns in the novel also play an important role in portraying characters' qualities and thus add nouns into investigation afterwards. Adjectives and nouns describing three main female characters including Elizabeth Bennet, Mrs Bennet and Charlotte Lucas have been carefully picked out one by one and divided into mainly two groups (one describing external qualities and another describing internal qualities). Here, both the adjectives and nouns function in the same way, which is to describe the characters' qualities. Based on the identified adjectives and nouns, different fictional images of three main female characters are presented and analysed. Furthermore, potential causes influencing the author's way in portraying female characters will also be discussed.

2. Theoretical Background and Previous Research

In this section, theoretical background and previous research will be presented separately. In the first part, we will give the related information about theoretical background. In the second part, many previous works about *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) will be demonstrated.

2.1 Theoretical Background

This section gives some related information about theoretical background. There are mainly two aspects of theoretical background. The first aspect is about adjectives and nouns. We must figure out what adjectives and nouns are and also their functions. The second part is about women's condition in 18th century England including their economic situations, education, marriage, language and so on.

2.1.1 Adjectives and Nouns

Adjectives and nouns are used very frequently in our daily conversations and essay writing. They are the main components of sentences and provide a large quantity of information for us.

2.1.1.1 The Definition of Adjectives and Nouns

According to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2003), an adjective is "a word that describes a noun or pronoun. In the phrase **black hat**, *black* is an adjective and in the sentence **It makes her happy**, *happy* is an adjective." The definition is very concise but we can have a general opinion of what can be called an adjective from examples given there. However, in *Webster's online dictionary* (1998), the definition of adjectives is much more detailed. An adjective is defined like this:

> a word used with a noun, or substantive, to express a quality of the thing
> named, or something attributed to it, or to limit or define it, or to specify or
> describe a thing, as distinct from something else.

Thus, in the phrase, *a handsome man*, *handsome* is the adjective, expressing a property of a man. It is enough for us to get to know what adjectives are and what the functions of them are from above two definitions.

Nouns have different classifications and multiple functions. According to *Webster Online Dictionary*, a noun is "a word used as the designation or appellation of a creature or thing, existing in fact or in thought; a substantive" (1998). This kind of definition seems a little bit abstract and theoretical. The definition in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2003) is much simpler and straightfoward:

> a word or group of words that represent a person (such as 'Michael', 'teacher'
> or 'police officer'), a place (such as 'France' or 'school'), a thing or activity
> (such as 'coffee' or 'football'), or a quality or idea (such as 'danger' or
> 'happiness'). Nouns can be used as the subject or object of a verb (as in 'The
> teacher arrived' or 'We like the teacher') or as the object of a preposition (as
> in 'good at football').

However, the nouns focused in this paper are abstract nouns used to describe the qualities of characters. An abstract noun is "a noun that names a feeling, quality, or state rather than an

object, animal, or person."(*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 2003) For example, *quickness* and *beauty* are abstract nouns that derive from adjectives *quick* and *beautiful*. Thus, this kind of abstract nouns can also be used to describe the characters' qualities.

2.1.1.2 The Categories of Adjectives

Adjectives appear frequently both in daily conversations and written work. We can realize people's feelings depend on adjectives they use to describe things. For example, in the phrase **what a *lovely* picture,** the adjective *lovely* reflects speaker's preference to that picture. Coates (2004) draws Jespersen's (1922) claim that women differ from men in the extensive use of certain adjectives such like *nice* and *pretty*. It gives some clues that why women are regared as emotional. Beside adjectives' function, let us consider their forms. Generally, adjectives can be formed through many ways. For example, using participial form *–ing* and *–ed* (e.g. *interesting, excited*) or simply adding suffix to a noun or verb (e.g. *natural, handful*) are both workable.

There are many criterions for the classification of adjectives. However, two kinds of criterions are much more pivotal. Biber, Conrad and Leech (2002) put adjectives into two main groups according to their syntactic characteristics: attributive adjectives and predicative adjectives. Attributive adjectives often appear ahead of a noun and describe that noun. They are within noun phrases. While predicative adjectives always follow linking verbs (e.g. *seem, look, are*).

E.g. **Lily is such a *beautiful* girl**. *(* attributive adjective *)*

E.g. **The food on table seems *tasty*.** (predicative adjective)

Biter, Conrad, and Leech (2002) also claimed that the distribution of attributive and predicative adjectives differ among registers. Generally, there are more attributive adjectives in news and academic writing while predicative adjectives appear more often in conversations.

Besides syntactic characteristics, adjectives obtain semantic characteristics. Most adjectives are gradable and we can split them into two groups: comparative and superlative degree.

E.g. *old   older   oldest*

Older belongs to comparative degree and *oldest* belongs to superlative degree. "The gradability of adjectives enables us to compare entities for particular qualities"(Jackson, 1990:126). According to the gradability of adjectives, we can have a better understanding of which object holds more of that particular quality. Otherwise, we cannot make comparison between things and all the things in the world will be isolated as there is no way for connecting to other things.

2.1.1.3 The Categories of Nouns

In fact, we could not be more familiar with nouns because they constitute a large part of words we use in daily life. Nouns can be divided into several groups including proper nouns vs. common nouns, concrete nouns vs. abstract nouns, animate nouns vs. inanimate nouns. Proper nouns refer to human beings such like *Lily*, *Tom* and *James*. In addition, proper nouns can also refer to places or institutions such as *Aisa*, *Parliament*. "Proper nouns have a unique reference, whereas common nouns refer to a class of things or to an individual instance of a thing" (Jackson, 1990:35). We can regard *son* and *wife* as common nouns.

What is more, common nouns can further be divided into abstract nouns and concrete nouns. Concrete nouns refer to those things that can be seen, touched and felt while abstract nouns go for those unobservable things like emotions, feelings and attitudes. We can treat *house*, *book*, *bag* as concrete nouns and *happiness*, *joy*, *depression* as abstract nouns. There is no difficulty for us to distinguish them.

In addition, if nouns need other classifications. They can probably be labelled as animate nouns and inanimate nouns generally. This classification is easy to understand and accept because all the things in this word are either alive or showing no sign of lives. Just take *rabbit* as an example. A rabbit is a kind of animals that show all signs of life. *Rabbit* is definitely an animate noun.

The nouns that this paper is interested in are abstract nouns because they are applied to describe characters' qualities. Besides labelling for objects, nouns serve other functions. Hopper (1999) claimed that we can think nouns as potential topics so that people can further have a comment on the referred objects. "In general, then, we can say that we must convert

actions, states, things, people and qualities into nouns and pronouns before we can mention them or talk about them" (Hopper, 1999:27).

2.1.1.4 Adjectives, Nouns and Women

Adjectives and nouns are basic terms to describe characters' qualities. For example, both phrases **an arrogant woman** and **the arrogance of a woman** describe a woman's personality by the using of an adjective *arrogant* and a noun *arrogance* respectively. In the eighteenth century, there are more positive terms denoting to women than to men and female writers prefer to use more positive terms than negative terms (Persson and Ryden, 1996). Generally, we can understand this claim in two aspects. First, women are portrayed as positive images in the eighteenth century as a result of those positive terms, which are adjective and nouns. For example, the noun *lady* is frequently appearing in eighteenth century novels and this is definitely a positive judgment of women. What is more, adjectives such as *pretty*, *lovely*, *agreeable* are also applied to women.

Further, most of the adjectives and nouns describe either women's appearance or their personalities. At that time women were described as to what they were instead of what they did (Persson and Ryden, 1996).

Concerning female writers' dictions in writing, language in their works is carefully managed and positive terms seem to be adored. Coates (2004) draws Jespersen's (1922) claim that women differ from men in the extensive use of certain adjectives such like *nice* and *pretty*. Positive terms such as these are compliments which show women's politeness in language use. Of course, there are such negative adjectives and nouns typical for women. For example, *bitch* and *lame*. However, as soon as those negative terms are mentioned, "a majority of female terms denoting sexual immorality or prostitution" (Persson and Ryden, 1996:171). For example, nouns like *cow*, *bimbo*, *cunt*, etc and adjectives like *sensual*, *carnal*, etc. This phenomenon indicates that there is a strict demand on women's sexual morality.

2.1.2 Women in 18th century England

Women's status has been below men for a long time. Lord Chester-field once said, "Women, especially, are to be talked to as below men and above children" (Cowie, 1973: 321). Their

voices are ignored and their images are stereotyped. The history was also written by men and for men's interest.

The 18th century continued to regard women as inferior. Virginia Woolf (1966) declared that "The history of England is the history of the male line, not of the female" (Woolf, 1966:2).That is quite true. If we want to know the history of our grandfather and great-grand fathers, there is a lot of material kept as clues. They can be officials, merchants or writers. There is always distinction and glory in their history. However, if we desire to get to know our grandmother or grand-grand mothers' life, there is little remark left for reference. All we are told of is that they may be pretty, good at cooking or something like this. All of it is nothing but a tradition (Woolf, 1966: 2).

2.1.2.1 Women and Economy

There was a great change in 18th century England. With the outbreak of the Industrial Revolution, England transformed into the capitalist society. People pay much attention to money and property is regarded as really important. Tanner (1986) claims that property and good manner were regarded as identical at that time. To some extent, property equalled propriety. However, women did not own their property or usually their property was quite scarce compared with men. There are several reasons for this phenomenon. First of all, there is a strict labour division between men and women. Olsen (1999) says men's duty is to go out to earn money in order to support family while women should deal with domestic work such as taking care of children, cooking meals and washing clothes. There was rare opportunity for women to go outside for work. Second, the variety of job that women could choose was limited. For example, women were forbidden to entry into professions like medicine, Parliament. Third, though women finally found a job they like, the discrimination on pay towards women is frustrating. Women get much less money than men if they get the same job. All of these disadvantageous factors lead to women's inferiority in financial status.

2.1.2.2 Women and Marriage

What is worse, women's inferior status in other areas was doomed because of their low financial status. First and foremost, women had little property and they have to depend on their husband for living. This kind of dependence forced them to take marriage as their career. We can clearly understand why marriage was such a vital event for a woman at that time. If she married a rich man, the rest of her life was secured and she needed not worry about the

food and clothes. At the same time, the social status of her is up to a higher level at the same time. Newton (1981) asserted that economic disparity leads to social inequality between men and women and money represents new status and power to some extent. Believing in this, many women chose to marry with property instead of a man. However, women had little freedom to do what they liked after marriage and finally their hobbies were nothing but needlework, gardening and gossiping.

2.1.2.3 Women and Literature

Many people blame women for their silliness and verbosity in conversation, but they are cultivated by the environment instead of women's inborn qualities. Mary Austell (2002) argues that people always ignore women's internal quality and women are capable of the best things as a matter of fact. What they are lack of is nothing but education. With the development of the Enlightenment movement, women began to get access to literature and got some education. They read and wrote. Most of their works are fictions because fictions are the easiest thing for women to write (Woolf, 1966). Those fictions were written upon women's own experience and reflected their deep concerns. But at the very beginning, women's opinions and views were regarded as trivial, meaningless and sentimental from men's viewpoint. It is not surprising because all the rules about literature writing are laid by men. They could not get used to the way of women's writing. This is unfair obviously.

With the rise of self-consciousness, women began to write for their own interest and wanted to make their voices heard. Their works explored their own sex, by presenting women's sufferings and desires. These female writers were called feminists since they intended to establish the moral equality between men and women (Kirkham, 1997). Mary Austell published her famous work *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of the their True and Greater Interest* in 1694, in which she exposed people at that time only paid attention to women's appearance while ignored their soul. In fact, women are capable of the best things instead of those trivial things like needling or washing. However, they were occupied with domestic trivia and invisible of their own worth. Austell (2002) also exposed the rooted reason for women's ignorance was lack of education. Women wanted to learn and acquire knowledge. They just did not have that opportunity. So men had no right to laugh at or even blame women's ignorance because it was men who shut women out of education. With the ongoing of Enlightenment, women got more access to literature and education. Austell (2002) proposed to build up a particular college for women where they can receive

serious education and enjoy pure friendship and peaceful life. In addition, she also suggested women have religious belief and devote to charity.

Of course, on the way of fighting for women's interests, Austell was not alone. Other feminists like Catherine Cockburn, Lady Mary Chudleigh and Mary Wollstonecraft also made their contributions. For example, Wollstonecraft also made claim that women should not be confined to domestic work and they deserve better education. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Wollstonecraft (1792) almost summed up all the points of feminism including women's education, marriage and moral values, etc. Especially, she emphasize that reason and principle could guide us to good consult. At the same time, Vindication mainly concerned with the middle class women because they were the most potential ones who could probably recognize themselves and fight for their own interests though some encouragement. The upper class women were indulged in their corrupted lifestyle and had no desire to change it while lower class women were lack of education and not enlightened enough to unit themselves for fighting. Jane Austen happened to be middle class woman who pioneered the way to the women's liberation. Austen's stand is quite similar with Wollstonecraft in women acquiring knowledge from recognition through experience (Kirkham, 1997). This feminism point can be found in many of Austen's works. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, our heroine Elizabeth Bennet is misled by first impression. However, she finally finds out the truth by reconsidering what had happened. Austen created this female figures in order to prove that women are also endowed with wisdom and they are capable of being reasonable and rational.

2.2 Previous Research

This section talks about the previous work about *Pride and Prejudice*. Generally, this section is divided into two parts. In the first part, this paper will display some studies which particularly aim at female characters' portrayal in the novel. The second part plans to discuss the features of women's language and the terms portraying female characters' qualities.

2.2.1 The Portrayal of Female Characters in *Pride and Prejudice*

There are also some studies which particularly aim at female characters' portrayal in the novel. For example, Tanner (1986) thinks Austen gave immense charm to Elizabeth Bennet and this heroine was too perfect. Because Elizabeth not only gets pretty appearance and an lively spirit, but she also does rational reflections. Thus, she could never be silly girl like other sisters and

meet the expectation of moral standard, being rational. However, Waldron (1999) does not agree and argued that Elizabeth was not totally portrayed as the perfect woman. Elizabeth is not the saint and her personality weakness exposed sometimes. For example, when she realized becoming the mistress of Pemberley meant something and it was good both for her and her family. That is to say she did care about money like others did and she was also superficial to some extent. In addition, Arnold (2006) think Jane Austen did not portray female characters in positive ways and all of women in the novel displayed their silliness to certain extend. Though Austen did give some quickness and wit to our heroine Elizabeth Bennet, she also couldn't escape from such silliness which all other women share. Thus, Arnold (2006) asserts that Jane Austen herself was influenced by stereotyped views of women though she wanted to establish a brand new female image for readers.

Besides Elizabeth, some works also talked about other main female characters in the novel such as Mrs Bennet and Charlotte Lucas. Most of comments on Mrs Bennet is negative. Arnold (2006) asserts that Mrs Bennet is portrayed as a nagging, narrow-minded woman who always complains about trifles and her life career is to get her daughters well married. Tanner (1986) believes that Mrs Bennet's mental space is limited and incapable of reflection. That is to say, there is "very few other thoughts in her head" (Waldron, 1999:39). And she makes statements without thinking about others' feelings. Concerning Charlotte, there are different voices from critics. Weinsheimer (1972) criticises Charlotte's of her vanity because she cared more about the establishment than the real felicity in marriage and also of her self-deception as she tried to ignore the defects of Mr Collins and derived satisfaction from housing. However, Newton (1981) argues that Charlotte was also the victim of social and economic force of that time and if we see Charlotte with irony, we should also see Elizabeth with irony too. Because though Elizabeth blamed Charlotte's materialism, she worried whether she would make the same choice finally as a single woman of a small property. Tanner (1986) also agrees that we should sympathize Charlotte instead of blaming her. It is the economic reality that forces her to make that choice and it is just a way of surviving.

2.2.2 The General Trends in Women's Language

Gender differences in language use are always an interesting topic which arouses debate. Coates (2004) asserts that because of the androcentric bias, men's language is considered as the norm, while women's is deviant. Women's language is blamed for its verbosity as illustrated by the English proverb in *Women, Men and Language* "Many women, many

words; many geese, many turds" (Coates, 2004:23). Women's language is also blamed for its lack of forcefulness. Some of the early research claims that women usually use for example more tag questions, rising intonation and more qualifiers, which indicates women's tentativeness and lack of confidence (Romaine, 1994). In addition, women also prefer to use adjectives and adverbs to exaggerate what they describe. For example, *pretty* and *nice* are two adjectives women frequently use, according to Coates (2004). What is more, women's language is said to be more conservative than men's (Trudgill, 2000). We can put it in this way: women tend to use more prestige forms than men and this speech choice is determined by their particular social conditions of the community. Prestige forms as well as standard forms are signs of high social status and women try to elevate their social status by using prestige and standard forms. They believe using prestige and standard forms can win respect from others and deliver the message that they stay in prestigious position. No matter it works or not, women's insecure mentality is reflected in this way. Just as Trudgill (2000) concludes that Gender difference in language is a social phenomenon and both men and women have certain social roles to play and meet social expectations.

2.2.2.1 Women's Sensitivity to Prestige Forms

According to Coates (2004), prestige forms are linguistic forms used by certain social groups with high social status. Standard forms are those forms considered correct therefore having high prestige. To a certain extent, we can place prestige forms and standard forms on the same level because people with the highest social status claim that the linguistic forms they are using are more correct than other linguistic varieties. Further, major institutions in society help advocate the usage of those standard forms. Thus, the standard forms obtain that social prestige. If we carefully consider, it is not difficult to find out that it is the power held by the highest social group that produces the prestige assigned to those so-called standard forms. In turn, using these standard forms can reflect their high social status. Opposite to standard forms, there are non-standard forms which mainly refer to the vernacular (Coates, 2004).

Sociolinguistics claims that women use more prestige forms than men in order to get close to high social status. Romaine (1994) asserts that women's ability has been denied for a long time in literature, economy, etc and they are desperate to attain respect through using standard forms. They believe language can expose their social status and speaking standard forms impress people as if they are from high social class. According to Coates (2004) and her research, middle class women are the most sensitive ones to prestige forms. Because the

distance between low class and high class is huge and it frustrates low class women to struggle to reach the high social status by using standard forms. However, to middle class women, the situation is much more optimistic. Middle class women believe they can be regarded as high class women if they are careful of their language use. That is why middle class women are shown to use proportionately more standard forms. In a word, because of insecure and inconfidence of their social status, women are more likely to adopt standard forms than men to attain respect from society.

2.2.2.2 Politeness in Women's Language

People believe women are more polite than men in language use. According to Coates (2004), politeness can be defined as "satisfying the face wants of others (while protecting our own)" (Coates, 2004:105). Here, the term face is used in daily phrase such as lose one's face, which means somebody does not considerate another person's feelings. There are two aspects of face savings: negative facing saving and positive face saving. Negative face saving means the "the need not to be imposed on"(Coates, 2004:105) while the positive face saving means "the need to be liked and admired"(Coates, 2004:105). For example, *I am sorry to bother you but I want to borrow your pen*. This is negative face saving. And positive face saving is like this: *you look marvelous today!* This kind of face saving strategy is frequently adopted by women to present their politeness to others. O'Barr and Atkins's research (1980), which is addressed by Coates (2004), indicate that women's polite language exposes women's powerless social status and they are fear of giving offence to men. Thus women's language can be called powerless language. This viewpoint is much the same as Lakoff's explanation mentioned by Cameron (1992), which is women's language is lack of forcefulness and confidence. But Trudgill (2000) argues that double standards of society demand women of better behavior and their language is expected to be more confined and more polite. There is more pressure on women in this respect and that is why women are raised to behave politely and speak politely. In addition, Romaine (1994) also links standard form to polite forms in his experiment in Edinburgh. He finds out local Edinburgh Scots is considered as rough and more standard forms are polite. Women tend to use more polite forms to achieve status.

2.2.2.3 Positive, Neutral and Negative Terms

Cathrine Norberg in her doctoral thesis *Whores and Cuckolds on Male and Female Terms in Shakespeare's Comedies* (2002) aims at analysing the relations between men and women in Elizabethan society through a study of terms used for males and females in Shakespeare's

comedies. The major conclusion is male and female are associated with different values and ideas in Shakespeare's time: men are equal to power and control while women are related to passivity and subordination. Norberg (2002) claims that words do not have fixed meanings and the meaning of a word includes more than one core meaning In addition, word meanings vary in line with the different contexts. In the study of central terms denoting women in Shakespeare's comedies, Norberg (2002) puts female characters into several categories such as *women*, *lady*, *girl*, *maid*, etc because these titles mean a lot to women in eighteenth century when they can get no respects from job market or anywhere else. Then Norberg (2002) divides the attributes denoting females with different titles into three large subgroups: positive, negative and neutral attributes so as to find out which type of female obtain more positive attributes and which type receive more negative attributes and what the underlying reasons are. As a result, most of the attributes relate to female's personal qualities. That is because women in eighteenth century can only be portrayed by what they are rather than what they do. Among those females with different titles, *lady* get more positive attributes concerning physical appearance than others and *women* get more negative attributes because they are supposed to be at the lower status in society. What is more, Norberg (2002) also finds that "women characters seem to favor more positive terms for men and avoid negatively charged or informal terms—probably a sign of female insecurity (Norberg, 2002:79). Hereby, a diagram of Norberg(2002)'s analysis model is put forward for reference.

Attributes

Positive Attributes   Negative Attributes   Neutral Attributes
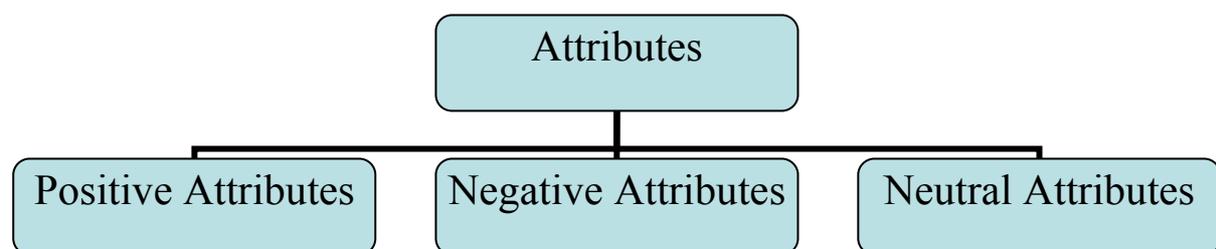
3 . Analysis and Discussion

In this section, all the terms concerning the three main female characters' qualities will be classified in two ways. First classification is based on the Norberg's(2002) model and all the terms will be grouped into positive terms, negative terms and neutral terms. By doing this, we can analyse women's langue features and the way female characters are portrayed. Meanwhile, we will give the other way of classification, which is sumarizing female

characters' major sapcts of qualities so that we can have a further understanding of their images in the detailed contexts.

3.1 Findings of the Three Female Characters' Qualities

As there are three main female characters (Elizabeth Bennet, Mrs Bennet and Charlotte Lucas) to be studied, we will give an overall discussion of terms used for three female characters so that we can have a general idea about women's language feature and female characters' image associated with those terms. Afterwards, the related findings about each of the three female characters will be displayed respectively in the following sections and correlative explanations will also be supplied.

3.1.1 Positive, Negative and Neutral Terms for All the Three Female Characters

In this section, we make an overall classification of all terms for three female characters so that we can have a macro view of the author's language associated with female characters.

Table1. Categories of all adjectives and nouns for three female characters

The number of terms	Adjectives	Nouns
Positive terms (91)	beautiful energetic amused rejoicing entertained rational good-natured handsome charming delightful excellent prudent warm kind good pleasant genteel 2 civil 2 cheerful 2 amiable 6 happy3 playful 2 pleasing2 pretty 2 fair 5 fine 4 lively 2 sensible 6 Liveliest 2 delighted 2 intelligent 2	charm gaiety liveliness brilliancy wit pliancy earnestness raptures politeness cordiality pleasure composure kindness Beauty 2 pleasure 2 delight 2 quickness 2 grace 2 modesty 3 delicacy 3 civility 4 enjoyment2
Negative terms (37)	Untidy blowsy silly undutiful impatient (not)serious bad(manner) ill-qualified uncivil ill-humored peevish intolerable ungracious ill-natured foolish3 headstrong 2 (not) handsome 2 wild 2	Stubbornness impulse indifference archness cruelty ill-humor sour-look distress agony bitterness Impertinence 2
Neutral terms(14)	Dark serious (not)deep (not)intricate little nervous disconcerted plain 2	Spirit 5

According to table1, we can easily find that all the adjectives and nouns are divided into three categories: positive, negative and neutral terms. This kind of classification relies on two reasons: first, Norberg (2002) divided the attributes denoting females with different titles into three large subgroups: positive, negative and neutral attributes and her model was quite practical. This research is inspired by her model and tends to borrow her classification model to do research on adjectives and nouns as well, hopefully the result will be fruitful as Norberg's. Second, based on the actual adjective and nouns collected from the novel, they either describe female characters positively or negatively. Thus, Nerberg's (2002) model is applicable in this research without question.

From the table1, we get to know that there are obviously more positive terms (91) denoting female characters than negative terms (37). That is to say, female characters' images are portrayed positively in generally in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. In addition, as these terms are either from female characters' conversations in the novel or from the author's description. Since the author Jane Austen is also a female, we can conclude that females prefer to use more positive terms and neutral terms instead of negative terms. This kind of language preference can be traced to the politeness theory which is mentioned by Coates (1993). Women use more positive terms in order to save addressees' faces and show their coordination. Though women have lower social status than men in eighteenth century, it does not mean they obtain powerless language as well. The politeness of women's language indicates women's good behavior which is extensively expected by society and actually women are brought up to talk in this way (Trudgill, 2000).

Another conclusion we can draw from the table at very beginning is that there are no typical informal terms used to describe female characters and nouns also contribute to quality portrayal besides adjectives. We know nouns are more formal than adjectives in various situations and the appliance of nouns here strengths the formality of the language. As women obtain lower social status and there are no other ways for them to attain respect, they believe accessing to the standard language can help them acquire respect and social status (Romaine, 1994). Further, Coates (2003) claims that middle-class women are the most sensitive ones to prestige forms and our author happens to be the case. Jane Austen belongs to middle-class and she tries her best to apply standard forms to prove her social status and gain respect from society. It explains why the majority of terms in the table are standard forms.

3.1.2 Positive, Negative and Neutral Terms for Elizabeth Bennet

In this section, all the terms concerning Elizbeth Bennet will be divided into positive, negative and neutral terms so that we can further talk about the author's language style and also female characters images through these terms.

Table2. Categories of all adjectives and nouns for Elizabeth Bennet

The number of terms	adjectives	nouns
Positive terms(64)	Beautiful liveliest delighted energetic amused rejoicing entertained intelligent rational good-natured serious fine 4 pretty 2 fair 5 lively 2 playful 2 pleasing 2 happy 2 sensible 3 amiable 3 genteel 2	Charm gaiety liveliness enjoyment brilliancy wit earnestness Beauty 2 pleasure 3 delight 2 quickness 2 grace 2 modesty 3 delicacy 3 civility 2
Negative terms (22)	untidy blowsy silly foolish impatient (not)serious bad(manner) ill-qualified uncivil undutiful ill-humored Head-strong 2 wild 2	Stubbornness impulse indifference archness cruelty Impertinence 2
Neutral terms (7)	Dark	Pliancy Spirit 5

From table 2, we can find that a majority of terms used in describing Elizabeth's qualities are positive rather than negative. It verifies the conclusion drew before that female's image is portrayed positively in general. Based on the close reading, this research finds out most of positive terms for Elizabeth's qualities come from the author's description and those negative ones mainly come from Mrs Bennet and Ms Bingely. Positive terms are associated with politeness theory which is discussed by Coates (2004). As to the politeness of women's language, there are different opinions in society. O'Barr and Atkins (1980)'s claim is mentioned by Coates (1993), in which they think women use positive terms in order not to offend men and their language is powerless. In other words, women's polite language works as compliments to men and this phenomenon exists due to women's low social status. However, Coates (2003) disagrees with this point because women are expected to behave and speak more genteelly than men, there is no wonder women tend to use more positive terms

addressing other people. The preference can not be judged as compliments exclusively and their genteel language perfectly shows their feminity which is expected by the society. In this respect, we can conclude that women use polite language unconsciously rather than deliberately.

In addition, those negative terms for Elizabeth Bennet do not violate the above conclusion. Certain amount of negative terms can not overturn the claim that women's language is more polite than men. First, we can not promise every single word from a woman is polite and positive. Just as Cameron (1992) argues that context is an important factor in determining which language style a speaker should adopt. When situations change, speakers will occasionally change their usual way of speaking at the same time. For example, those negative adjectives and nouns are either from Mrs Bennet or Miss Bingely. These two women have prejudice on Elizabeth and cannot agree with Elizabeth's way of talking and behavior. Thus, they use negative terms to belittle Elizabeth and express their values on being a lady. Different from Miss Bingley and Mrs Bennet, Austen

Further, all the terms in table2 can be label as standard forms and nouns obtain more formality than adjectives. This novel *Pride and Prejudice* was written by Jane Austen in 1813 when the society pursued of norms in language and the Andocentric bias still prevailed. That is to say all the social members try to stick to the given norms and Jane Austen is not an exception. What is more, standard forms are initiated by higher social classes and supposed to be more correct than other terms. As a middle class woman, Austen has a strong sensitivity to standard forms. Thus she tries to use more standard forms in her novel to gain respect and retain social status.

3.1.3 Elizabeth Bennet's External Qualities

The following table presents the basic findings of Elizabeth's external qualities according to the collected adjectives and nouns.

Table 3. The major external qualities of Elizabeth.

18

Total adj. and n. for external qualities:18	Adjectives and nouns for Elizabeth's external qualities			
	Adjectives	nouns	No of adj. and N.	%
Eyes	fine 4 dark		5	27.78
Hair	untidy blowsy		2	11.11
General appearance	beautiful pretty 2 fair 5	beauty 2 charm	11	61.11

Note: adj.=adjective   N.= noun

Before analysing the figures in table3, there is something to clarify first. As mentioned in section 1.3, adjectives and nouns are both used to describe characters' qualities. Thus, the number of adjectives and the number of nouns should be added up together in calculating the frequency of one particular quality. This way of calculation will also be conducted in the following tables and figures.

From table3, we can find that both the amount and the sort of adjectives and nouns for Elizabeth's external qualities are limited. That is to say, the author paid more attention to Elizabeth's internal qualities instead of her external qualities. In addition, when addressing Elizabeth's external qualities, Austen did not give a detailed description about her dressing, hairstyle or ornaments, but just mentioned that she was a pretty lady. Those words for general description like *pretty*, *beautiful* and *fair* take up about 61.11%. This statistic also proves that terms for women are mainly positive. However, the interesting thing is that Austen did give some preference to Elizabeth's eyes and those eyes leave a deep impression on readers. As eyes are the windows of a person's heart and they stand for one's soul, *fine* eyes indicate some internal qualities of Elizabeth. Probably, she is a smart woman with a pure and beautiful soul. In conclusion, Elizabeth is a pretty woman with *fine* eyes based on the statistics in the table.

3.1.4 Elizabeth's Internal Qualities

All the adjectives and nouns for internal qualities are classified into several groups according to different features. The table below provides relevant information about the different aspects of Elizabeth's external qualities.

Table 4. The main aspects of Elizabeth's internal qualities

| Total adj. and n. for internal qualities:73 | Adjectives and nouns for Elizabeth's internal qualities | | | |
	adjectives	Nouns	No of adj. and N.	%
liveliness	lively 2 liveliest playful 2 delighted energetic pleasing 2 amused rejoicing happy 2 entertained	pleasure 3 gaiety spirit 5 delight 2 liveliness enjoyment	27	36.99
brilliance	intelligent sensible 3 rational	quickness 2 brilliancy wit	9	12.33
silliness	silly foolish headstrong 2	stubborness	4	5.48
wildness	wild 2 impatient (not) serious bad (manner) ill-qualified uncivil undutiful ill-humored	impertience 2 impulse indifference (to decorum) archness cruelty	16	21.92

civility	good-natured		grace	2	20	27.40
	amiable	3	modesty	3		
	serious		delicacy	3		
	genteel	2	pliancy			
			(good) conduct			
			earnestness			
			civility	2		

Before we analyse the terms in table 4, there is a need to explain the origin of classifications. All the terms (e.g. liveliness, civility) for female characters' qualities mentioned above are invented by the researcher of this thesis. However, they are not groundless. The existence of these concepts are for two regards. First of all, the adjectives and nouns in the novel are numerous and disordered. It is necessary to classify them into several groups for the convenience of analysis. Second, the particular concepts for each character' qualities are based on some criteria. For example, there are many adjectives like *lively*, *liveliest*, *playful*, *delighted*, *energetic*, *pleasing*, etc. They all reflect Elizabeth's *liveliness*. What is more, we can find this concept *liveliness* has been accepted by previous research also. Tanner (1986) also regards liveliness as Elizabeth's special quality. Likewise, other qualities of female characters like *brilliance*, *silliness*, *civility* can also find proofs in previous works. Meanwhile, this explanation also applies to the classifications in the following tables related to the other two female characters' qualities.

Based on the table 4, we can easily find that adjectives and nouns for Elizabeth's internal qualities are divided into five groups including liveliness, brilliance, silliness, wildness and civility. According to the statistics in table 4, adjective and nouns for liveliness take up 36.99% and 27.40% for civility. They are outstanding features of Elizabeth's internal qualities. These statistics indicate that Elizabeth's general image is portrayed positive by Austen. Let us take Elizabeth's *brilliance* as an example. Mr Bennet praises Elizabeth's *quickness* and thinks she is different from her silly sisters. In the novel, Elizabeth does show her *quickness* now and then. For example, whenever she and Darcy debate about something, Elizabeth can always find evidence to support her standpoint and rebut Darcy's viewpoint. Though Elizabeth stuck to the first impression and misunderstood Mr Darcy for a long time, she realized own fault and learned the truth afterwards. When she received the letter from Mr Darcy, she made

rational judgements and reconsidered all the things happened before depending on the content and style of the letter. She was best informed instantly and changed her opinion of Darcy. Just as Tanner（1986）claimed, "it is a drama of recognition" (Tanner, 1986: 105). Throughout the story, characters are reflecting their former judgements and found out the truth. Elizabeth's recognition proves that women can have rational judgements and they are capable of digging out the truth. It is the author's purpose to tell people that women are also doing rational thinking and pursuing truth. They can make contribution to the Enlightenment movement and people should give them opportunities. In conclusion, Elizabeth's *brilliance* is out of Austen's feminist standpoint and works for the feminist movement.

Another special internal quality of Elizabeth is her *wildness*. It sounds like a derogatory term especially in eighteenth century England when order and principle were the doctrines in society. There are many people in the novel dislike Elizabeth because of her *wildness*. Mrs Bennet does not like her because Elizabeth is often out of control. Miss Bennet did not like her because of Elizabeth's rude manners and indifference to principles. Lady Catherine also dislikes her because of Elizabeth's incompliance. Thus, Elizabeth's wildness is regarded as anti-social because these people judge her with the traditional standards for women. However, if we judge her with feminist standpoint, Elizabeth's wildness is positive and should be encouraged because her wildness is against obsolete traditions. For example, Mrs Bennet asked Elizabeth to marry Mr Collin and Elizabeth instantly refused because she thought marriage wasn't based on property but on mutual affection. Elizabeth's refuse is a way to challenge traditional marriage. Miss Bennet thought Elizabeth had nothing to recommend and her act was wild. But in Elizabeth's mind, she only wanted to see her sister Jane as soon as possible and did not care about her wearings or other stuffs. Here, Elizabeth's indifference to bounds of decorum displays her inner desire to get rid of those old principles and be oneself. In addition, when Lady Catherine request her to promise not to marry Darcy, Elizabeth didn't yield to the Lady Catherine's power and status. This event also shows Elizabeth's courage to fight against old doctrines in society. Thus, Elizabeth's wildness obtains advanced and progressive meaning in the novel. Austen hopes to break the constraint of out-dated conventions through the heroine Elizabeth and then call on all female readers to take Elizabeth Bennet as good model.

Beside *wildness*, Elizabeth's particular quality is more often referred to *liveliness*. Compared with *wildness*, *liveliness* seems more positive and favourable. In the novel, Elizabeth's liveliness is embodied in her loud laughter which leaves deep impression on readers. Even Elizabeth herself admits that Jane smiles while she laughs. Tanner (1986) also claimed that society without laugh is dull and Elizabeth's *liveliness* is the main quality attracting Mr Darcy. However, Elizabeth's laughter is not accepted by most people such like Miss Bennet who thinks that Elizabeth is a sort of wild. Because in a society where women are expected to be silent (Coates, 2004), Elizabeth's laughter obviously is deemed as violation of rules and principles. In this respect, *wildness* and *liveliness* work in the same way. People uphold order and rituals as the moral standards and that is why most people in the fiction can not tolerate Elizabeth's laughter. It is not the proper thing a woman should do. However, in Austen's opinion, Elizabeth makes a good model and other female characters should learn from her. Being brave to show own feelings and concerns is exactly what women should do in that time. And Austen herself, as a feminist, also showed her feelings and concerns by writing novels.

All in all, *brilliance*, *wildness* and *liveliness* are favourable terms for female character. Someone may argue that *wildness* is criticized in eighteenth century when order and rules are core values. It is true from Mrs Bennet or Miss Bingely's view since they are conservative to conventions. However, as Elizabeth's *wildness* is encouraged and praised by the author because the *wildness* represents a pioneering spirit and advanced idea. That is why we should label *wildness* as a positive character of Elizabeth. In this respect, we can generalize that Austen tends to be polite in judging female characters. The politeness strategy is one of characteristics of women's language (Coates, 2004).

3.1.5 Positive, Negative and Neutral Terms for Mrs Bennet

In this section, terms concerning Mrs Bennet will be put into three categories: positive terms, negative terms and neutral terms.Table 5 clearly presents the author's language preference as a female and also terms reflect female chatacters's images in the novel

Table 5. Categories of all adjectives and nouns for Mrs Bennet

The number of terms	Adjectives	Nouns
Positive terms(11)	handsome charming delighted cheerful delightful	Raptures civility politeness cordiality

	civil 2	
Negative terms (15)	less difficult (not) deep (not) intricate little (information) peevish uncertain(temper) intolerable ungracious ill-natured	bitterness sour-look distress agony ill-humor 2
Neutral terms (2)	nervous disconcerted	

From table 5, the result seems a little bit different from the above ones because we find more negative terms than positive terms used to describe Mrs Bennet. But the difference is not obvious, which is 15 negative terms versus 11 positive terms. If we add 2 neutral terms to positive ones, the difference almost disappears. Thus, this finding can not overthrow former conclusion that women prefer to use more positive terms than negative terms. Based on close verification, most terms for Mrs Bennet's qualities come from the author's description. Austen gets used to use positive terms to describe female characters in her novel. That is why we can see adjectives such as *delighted*, *cheerful* and *civil* on Mrs Bennet. However, Mrs Bennet's role in the novel is to act as a traditional stereotyped woman who has little education but behaves emotionally. It is no wonder such negative terms like *little information*, *not intricate*, *uncertain temper* are found on Mrs Bennet. Though the author do use these negative terms, she still adopts mild negative terms. For example, the author picks the phrase *not deep* to indicate that Mrs Bennet receives little education and does not think comprehensively. If we change the phrase into a overt negative term *stupid*, it may threatens Mrs Bennet's face. In conclusion, in order to save the addressees' face, Austen avoids to using overt negative terms throughout the novel and this way of portraying manifests the politeness in women's language. To elaborate a little bit more, this kind of politeness is not for compliments, but a expected and featured language style of women.

In addition, formality of those positive, negative and neutral terms is another feature of women's language. From table 5, we can not find any colloquial terms like buddy, kinda, cute, etc. All the terms listed in the table are quite standard. The finding verifies the claim that women especially the middle class women prefer to use standard forms because they are insure of their social status and want to remain or attain social status by using standard forms (Coates, 2003). In the eighteenth century England, all the society advocated standard language and women's language was labeled as lame language. In order to prove that women's

language can be refined and elegant like men, Austen devoted to carve her diction and use standard forms as many as possible. As a middle class woman, Austen also struggled to maintain her social status and wanted to get close to upper class. Thus, using standard language become the best choice to accomplish her wish.

3.1.6 Mrs Bennet's External Qualities

As the mother of Elizabeth Bennet, Mrs Bennet plays an important role in the novel and she leaves deep impression on readers for her exaggerated personalities. However, about her appearance, there is few reference we can find in the novel. The following table displays all the related words Austen used in the first half of the novel to describe Mrs Bennet's appearance.

Table 6. The main external qualities of Mrs Bennet

Total adj. and n. for external qualities:2	Adjectives and nouns for Mrs Bennet's external qualities			
	Adjectives	nouns	No of adj. and N.	%
General appearance	handsome charming		2	100

According to table 6, there are just two adjectives to refer to Mrs Bennet's appearance. The first one is *handsome* which is used in Mr Bennet's ironic flattery towards Mrs Bennet. The second one is *charming* from Mrs Bennet's own boast. Both of two remarks can not be used as evidence for Mrs Bennet's appearance and we can't authentically judge what Mrs Bennet looks like. The lack of evidence proves that Austen did not want readers to focus on Mrs Bennet's appearance and her appearance has nothing to do with the development of the story.

3.1.7 Mrs Bennet's Internal Qualities

Though we have no idea what Mrs Bennet looks like, the image of Mrs Bennet is vivid and impressive because of her internal qualities. The following table will present Mrs Bennet's main internal qualities.

Table 7. The main features of Mrs Bennet's internal qualities

Total adj. and n. for external qualities:28	Adjectives and nouns for Mrs Bennet's internal qualities			
	Adjectives	nouns	No of adj. and N.	%
silliness	less difficult (mind) (not) deep (not) intricate little (information)		*4*	14.29
delight	delighted cheerful delightful	raptures	*4*	14.29
sadness		bitterness(of spirit) ill-humor 2 sour-look (great) distress agony	*6*	21.43
bad temper	peevish uncertain (temper) Intolerable ungracious ill-natured (remarks)		5	17.86
nervous	nervous disconcerted		2	7.14
civility	civil 2 warm (terms)	civilities (great) politeness cordiality	6	21.43

From table 7, we can find that there is no huge difference between the frequency of usage of adjectives and nouns for those internal qualities. In other word, these internal qualities are equally important and manifest on Mrs Bennet. In the table above, Mrs Bennet obtains many kinds of emotions and has no steady mood. Sometimes, she is very civil but she can be bad-tempered next second. This second she might be delighted while she would become sad very soon. In a word, Mrs Bennet is emotional. The silliness is also an emblematic feature of her

personality. Just as Graddol and Swann (1989) say that those stereotypes rarely favoured women, Mrs Bennet's image in the fiction is also negative. Compared with her mother, Elizabeth is more literate and dignified. Elizabeth is not that emotional like Mrs Bennet and always takes action after deliberate consideration. What's more, Elizabeth is more open-minded and does not bother about those old conventions as Mrs Bennet does. That is the why Elizabeth is most adored by her father.

Some typical features suck like *civility* and *silliness* manifest on Mrs Bennet. Depending on the findings, *civility*, as one kind of internal qualities, is shared by all the three female characters. In this respect, the author quite values this kind of internal quality and thinks that all the characters should obtain it. As a matter of fact, Tanner (1986) claimed that property and proprieties are the dominant ideologies in late eighteenth century England. That is to say, "there was a new emphasis on the need for good manners and morals among the propertied class" (Tanner, 1986:18). Thus, it is no wonder that Austen made all the three female characters show some civility in the work. Beside civility, *silliness* is another quality which manifests on the three female characters to certain extent. Even our heroine Elizabeth shows *silliness* sometimes according to the statistics in the above table. What is more, emotional and ignorant Mrs Bennet mirrors the typical traditional woman in stereotyped view. Arnold (2006) asserted that Jane Austen herself was influenced by stereotyped views of women though she wanted to establish a brand new female image for readers. However, this kind of explanation is not that convincing because "the images or stereotype has some truth—as stereotypes often do" (Tanner, 1986:1). In eighteenth century England, the low economic and social status determined that women have little access to education. Austell (2002) also exposed the rooted reason for women's ignorance was lack of education. So the stereotype is not groundless and women at that time were less literate than men. Austen just projects the authentic level of most women's education at that time and it is not all the stereotyped view of women. In addition, Mrs Bennet's image in the fiction has two functions. First, it represents most of women in society at that time and serves as a negative example. Second, Mrs Bennet's image makes strong contrast to Elizabeth's advanced one. Austen wants readers to realize what a woman of new era looks like.

In summary, though the major internal qualities of Mrs Bennet is portrayed as negative. It cannot indicate that female characters' images in the novel are described as negative. There are two points: first, negative terms are almost as many as positive terms in addressing Mrs

Bennet because we can still see many favourable sides of Mrs Bennet like civility and delight. Second, when context needs, the author should adopt some relatively negative terms for Mrs Bennet who acts as traditional stubborn housewife. After all, context is more important than gender in determining how polite speakers are (Cameron, 1992). Thus, Austen as a female writer does not lose her politeness in language use at all. In contrast, she utilizes it quite flexibly in various situations.

3.1.8 Positive, negative and neutral terms for Charlotte Lucas

Table8. Categories of all adjectives and nouns for Charlotte Lucas

The number of terms	Adjectives	Nouns
Positive terms(21)	Cheerful pleased happy pleasant liveliest Intelligent excellent prudent good kind amiable 3 sensible 3	Pleasure enjoyment composure civility kindness
Negative terms (4)	Not handsome 2 Foolish 2 Plain 2	
Neutral terms		

Charlotte Lucas is Elizabeth's best friend and also another main female character outside Bennet family. The purpose of molding a female character like Charlotte Lucas is to make contrast with heroine Elizabeth Bennet because they share a lot of similarities and also different viewpoints towards marriage. Based on the table above, we realize the author applies more positive terms to Charlotte Lucas and most of them are associated with kindness and intelligence. The negative terms in the table all come from Mrs Bennet who wants to belittle Charlotte Lucas's appearance and boast her own daughters' beauty. However, it is true that Charlotte Lucas's appearance is plain compared with Bennet sisters. That is why people and Charlotte Lucas began to turn their attention to the internal qualities like intelligence and kindness. Norberg (2002) agreed that physical attractiveness is desirable in any societies no matter which social class a lady belongs to and it is a necessity when women in high rank have nothing to pursue except marriage. It is a shame that Charlotte Lucas is plain and the author should shift our attention to her personalities in order to save her face. In this respect, the author as a female tends to apply politeness strategy in language using. Those positive

terms for good personalities really cover Charlotte Lucas's shortness. Readers forget her plain appearance and remember her intelligence.

Further, both positive terms and negative terms can be regarded as standard forms since no colloquial terms occur in the table. This finding proves the continuity of the author's language style, which is approaching standard forms. Considering Austen's identity as a middle class woman in eighteenth century, we can easily understand her motivation of using these formal terms is securing her social status. In conclusion, women's insecurity of social status determines that their preference to prestige forms.

3.1.9 Charlotte Lucas's External Qualities

Charlotte Lucas is Elizabeth's best friend and they always share the same viewpoint on many things. Readers never stop making comparison between them from appearance, personalities, etc. This paper is not an exception. The following table will show the external qualities of Charlotte Lucas.

Table 9. The external qualities of Charlotte Lucas

Total adj. and n. for external qualities:4	Adjectives and nouns for Charlotte external qualities			
	Adjectives	nouns	No of adj. and N.	%
General appearance	Not handsome 2 plain 2		4	100

From table 9 we get to know that the author just gives four adjectives (two *not handsome* and two *plain*) for Charlotte's external qualities and all those adjectives tell us that Charlotte is not a beautiful woman. Though these judgements are all from Mrs Bennet and it can be partial, Charlotte herself also admit her plain appearance is one of the disadvantages to get a good husband. When the opportunity occurs, Charlotte tries her best to get herself well married and she reached her goal finally. It is not surprising that Mrs Bennet apply these negative terms to Charlotte Lucas in order to boast her own daughters' beauty. However, the author is not partial. Charlotte Lucas loses advantage in appearance but show her intelligence afterwards. This way of portrayal manifests Austen's politeness strategy in language since it saves Charlotte Lucas's face to certain extent.

3.1.10 Charlotte Lucas' Internal Qualities

On appearance, Charlotte is inferior to Elizabeth. What about internal qualities? Is there any sparkling point on Charlotte which can not be found on Elizabeth or Elizabeth takes full advantages? Let us look at the following table which presents Charlotte's main internal qualities.

Table 10. The main aspects of Charlotte's internal qualities

Total adj. and n. for internal qualities:23	Adjectives and nouns for Charlotte's internal qualities			
	Adjectives	nouns	No of adj. and N.	%
liveliness	cheerful pleased happy pleasant liveliest	pleasure enjoyment	7	30.43
brilliance	sensible 3 intelligent excellent (understanding) prudent	composure	7	30.43
silliness	foolish 2		2	8.70
civility	good (sort) kind amiable 3	civility kindness	7	30.43

Depending on table 10, internal qualities of Charlotte is much more complicated than her external qualities. Liveliness, brilliance, civility as well as silliness integrate on Charlotte. Though she is brilliant in most cases, she also makes silly decisions or mistakes. The silliness is shared by all three main female characters addressed. Is it a coincidence or an inevitable result? Another interesting thing is that Charlotte does share most parts of Elizabeth's internal qualities except wildness if you carefully compare those two tables of internal qualities for each character. However, we cannot say Charlotte and Elizabeth are portrayed as the same type of woman in the fiction because Charlotte's happiness is not from the bottom of her heart

and her brilliance did not lead to right decision from the author's opinion. These qualities like liveliness, brilliance or civility stand for the opposite meanings and we can call it irony. In fact, Charlotte still conforms to those old customs as a typical eighteenth century woman. As an Enlightenment feminist writer, Austen would not be in favour f this type of women and she uses irony against those out-dated customs which deny women's values (Kirkham, 1997). In addition, the social background of eighteenth century plays a pivotal role in portraying Charlotte's internal qualities. In the late eighteenth century England, women had little property and they should rely on their husband. A good marriage can bring them not only large property but also high social status. In fact, most women took marriage as their life career at that time. Charlotte is not an exception. In her opinion, "happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance" (Austen, 1813: 20) and establishment is more important, so when Elizabeth refused Mr Collin, she sized the opportunity and successfully became his wife.

Since Charlotte Lucas's qualities are so intricate, we hereby tend to discuss several major personalities of her. In many people's view, she was a clever woman and made a wise choice. Based on the satistics in the table, *brilliance* is one of Charlotte's internal qualities and she does display her intelligence in the fiction. For example, Charlotte always gives good advice to her friends around. When there is no obvious progress in the relationship between Jane and Mr Bingley, Charlotte suggests that Jane should be more active and show more affection to him. Though Charlotte's brilliance is undoubted, she makes wrong decision on marriage. Her *brilliance* on this event can be regarded as silliness because the marriage without true love can only bring bitterness. But we should not blame Charlotte for her vanity or silliness. The reality is that she is not young and has not much time to wait for her Mr Right. She is also plain and her family does not possess a large fortune. She bears a lot of pressure and need to get married soon and well. Newton (1981) argued that Charlotte was also the victim of social and economic force of that time.

Based on the finding, *liveliness* is one of Charlotte's internal qualities. However, she is not happy and sometimes feels frustrating about Mr Collin's behaviour. Charlotte just tries to ignore Mr Collin's embarrassing acts and moves her focus on housing and decoration. This is the only way to keep good mood and maintain the marriage. Tanner (1986) also agreed that we should sympathize Charlotte instead of blaming her. In conclusion, Charlotte's *brilliance* and *liveliness* are not favoured by the author. In Austen's view, Charlotte's *brilliance* is not used in the right way as she designed her marriage and Charlotte's *liveliness* is self-deceiving

because she never feels happy out of heart. Austen puts *brilliance* and *liveliness* on Charlotte in order to satirize her snobbishness and sympathize her fate at the same time. And the author takes advantage of Charlotte's marriage to criticize the old doctrines and customs in eighteenth society.

In conclusion, Charlotte Lucas's image in the novel is not favoured by the author compared with heroine Elizabeth Bennet. However, it does not influence Austen's appliance of politeness strategy in language use because Austen does not directly give negative terms to criticize Charlotte Lucas's attitudes towards marriage and life. Instead, there are positive terms like *sensible* and *intelligent* which give readers a good impression on Charlotte Lucas. After all, different people have different attitudes towards marriage and life. Maybe someone would agree with Charlotte Lucas's viewpoint of marriage. What Austen disagree does not mean it is not correct and readers have their own interpretation of Charlotte Lucas's qualities.

3.1.11 A brief Comparison of Three Female Characters According to Related Findings

Based on the findings and discussions in previous sections, we draw a conculsion that female characters in Pride and Prejudice are portrayed in positive way gengerally. Though the three female characters do have different images in the novel, it does not affect the author's language style which is formal and polite. According to the collected adjectives and nouns, we know Elizabeth Bennet is portrayed as a pretty, brilliant and pioneering lady and the author is so generous about positive terms for Elizabeth. For example, fair, lively and sensible are used for several times for Elizzbeth. While to Mrs Bennet, negative terms almost equal to positive terms. Thus, more personality defaults of Mrs Bennet are exposed to readers such as silliness and bad temper. For example, *intolerable*, *little information*, *uncertain*, *ill-natured* are all negative terms related to Mrs Bennet's silliness and bad temper.As a feminist, Jane Austen admires a women like Elizabeth who are educatd and have courage to changllenge conventions but despises a women like Mrs Bennet who is stubborn and conservative. That is why Austen gives more positive describtion to Elizabeth than Mrs Bennet. As for Charolotte Lucas, more positive terms are given than negative ones but also not as many positive terms as Elizabeth's because Charlotte Lucas' attitudes toward marriage and life can not be agreed by Austen. For example, adjectives like *amiable* and *sensible* are both applied to Elizabeth and Charlotte Lucas. In conclusion, Elizabeth gets the most positive terms, Charlotte Lucas the second and Mrs Bennet the least. Once more, we should stress that it does not influence Austen's language style as polite and formal.

4. Conclusion

This thesis collects adjectives and nouns describing female characters' qualities and each of the three female characters in this study has a distinct image: Elizabeth Bennet is a pretty girl with fine eyes while Charlotte Lucas is plain. The comment on Mrs Bennet's appearance is doubtful since those terms all from Mrs Bennet herself. All in all, the female characters' appearance weighs a lot since in the eighteenth century England expect women to be pretty and people pay more attention to physical appearance especially women in high rank who have nothing else to do except to pursue good marriage (Norberg, 2002).

About the internal qualities of three female characters, the condition is much more complicated. Based on the related adjectives and nouns, Elizabeth is portrayed as a brilliant, lively, civil woman. But she also contains the qualities of silliness and wildness which are based on the social background of eighteenth century England and Austen's feminist identity. Charlotte Lucas is also portrayed as an intelligent, lively girl as Elizabeth except silliness and civility that all the female characters share for the same reason. However, her intelligence is not utilized in appropriate way and her choice on marriage is not appreciated by Austen as well. In addition, Mrs Bennet is portrayed in most traditional way. She acts as an emotional, silly woman. The role of Mrs Bennet has two functions. One is to make contrast to heroine Elizabeth's advancement. The other is to strengthen the authenticity of the novel.

Generally speaking, there are more positive terms than negative terms used by Austen to describe female characters and the three female characters' images are portrayed positively at the macro level. These findings reflect a female writer's politeness in language and further indicate that women tend to use more positive and polite language in commenting others. The feature of language can not be labelled as overt compliments and powerless language since women are expected to talk and behave politely (Trudgill ,2000). Thus, politeness is a language feature which is cultivated during women's grouth and women no matter from high social rank or low rank will behave the same way.

Besides positive terms, Austen also like to use standard forms instead of unstandard forms. Both adjectives and nouns in those tables are formal and no colloquil words appear. This phenomenon can be properly explained if we connet with social background in eighteenth century England. Stand forms prevail and represent presitige. Women's low social status

make them feel insecure and they want to attian social status by using sandard forms (Romaine, 1994). Thus, it is no wonder women are sensitive towards standard forms.

Studying on the female characters in Pride and Prejudice is an endless course. As far as this paper is concerned, there is much space for improvement. Basically, there are two implications of this research. First, only half of the novel is concluded in the study and the result is not as convincing as a study which conclude the whole novel. Second, we just consider some of the influencing factors but ignore other factors like Austen's private life, the author's gender and so on. Thus, there is a lot more to be done in this field of research

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