

# THE CHARACTER AND CHARACTERIZATION OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S NOVEL *THE GREAT GATSBY* AND ITS APPLICATION IN TEACHING SPEAKING

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## **Abstract**

This writing is based on a literary research on *The Great Gatsby* novel written by F. Scott Fitzgerald, with the objectives of finding the characters and characterization, and describing its application in teaching speaking. It consists of two parts, the major and minor characters. It is included as descriptive qualitative research. The conclusion is Fitzgerald really successful in exploring this element since each character whether it is major as well as minor brings its power in coloring the wave of the novel story. In fact, this finding is appropriate as an alternative in teaching speaking to the students of senior high school, since it provides with some expressions.

**Keywords:** *The Great Gatsby, Novel, Characters and Characterization*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In reading a novel, to understand and enjoy a story deeply, we do not only need to read it, but we should also analyze the elements of it. Koesnosoebroto (1988:28) believes that a piece of work of literature, like prose fiction can only be enjoyed and understood in its totality. In this case, discussing one element of fiction will always cover the discussion of other elements, since each of the element of prose fiction never stands on its own, it works together harmoniously with the others to make a good story. The elements of a novel consist of characters and characterization, setting / background, mood / atmosphere, theme, plot, style, point of view, and tone.

The writer invites the readers to get pleasure from the interesting story of *The Great Gatsby*, and to recognize the elements of the novel, especially the characters and characterization.

In teaching and learning speaking, a teacher is insisted to be very creative to encourage students' activities with interesting teaching materials. This finding really may be one of the alternatives of the materials of teaching speaking, especially for senior high school since it provides many expressions.

## **REVIEW TO RELATED LITERATURE**

### **a. Characters and characterization**

Kennedy (1983: 45) defines character as an imagined person who inhabits a story. Another definition, Abrams (cited in Koesnosoebroto 1988 : 65) presents that character is a literary genre : a short, and usually witty, sketch in prose of a distinctive type of person. Further, he quotes a definition of characters as the persons in a dramatic or narrative work, endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say, i.e., the dialogue, and what they do, i.e., the action. Characterization is the way the author portrays each of the

characters. A good characterization will enable the readers to recognize the characters deeply that includes their performance, behavior, attitude, and so on, through physical and psychological descriptions of the characters in their actions, dialogues, expositions, and other elements of the story. Based on the importance, there are two types of character : main or major character and minor character. Major character is the most important character that is basically discussed in the whole of the story. To make the story more convincing and lifelike, the major character needs minor character that is less important than the main one.

#### **b. Teaching and Learning Speaking**

Brown (2007: 8) states teaching is showing or helping someone to learn to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of the something providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand.

Thornburry (2005:1) defines speaking as so much part of daily that we take it for granted. So, natural and integral is speaking that we forget how we once struggled to achieve this ability until, that is, we have to learn how to do it all over again in foreign language. Louma (2009:9) states that speaking as interaction, and speaking as social and situation based activity. Brown and Yule in Richard (2008:21) present the function of speaking is made a useful distinction between the interactional functions of speaking, in which it serves to establish and maintain social relations, and the transactional functions, which focus on the exchange of information. According to Thornburry (2005: 63-79) , some activities to teach speaking are: drilling and chants, writing task, reading aloud, assisted performance and scaffolding, dialogues, and communicative task.

#### **c. Summary of The Great Gatsby**

This novel attractively conveys the hard struggle of an ambitious hero, Gatsby, in manifesting all of his dreams until his death. The nicest part of Gatsby's life was his finding love. Daisy Fay was the girl that embraced his life with a very passionate love, but finally she married another man. Gatsby did everything to get his love back. Here, he made a great long struggle until his death without getting his dream, since actually he had loved a wrong girl.

### **METHODS**

The research methodology is descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written words of people and behavior which can be observed. Here, the researcher uses written dialogues conversed by the characters found in The Great Gatsby novel. Descriptive approach means using technique of searching, collecting, analyzing the data and finally drawing conclusion.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In The Great Gatsby, it can be found that the characters and the characterization of it are as follows.

#### **1) Major characters**

## (1) Jay Gatsby

He was a handsome man whose life that was full of dreams. As an ambitious man, he did everything in getting all his wishes. Before being a military officer, he passed on his life as a poor man. Then he worked very hard, so at last he became a very rich man. Unfortunately, he was finally fallen down in his false dream. He wanted Daisy, his first love, to come back into his life, although he realized that Daisy had married with another man. He did anything, included the wrong way and spent his life for getting Daisy. He did not give up easily, but finally he was killed with all of his dreams.

His tanned skin was drawn attractively tight on his face and his short hair looked as though it were trimmed every day. I could see nothing sinister about him.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 50)

## (2) Daisy Fay

She was Gatsby's sweet heart who was characterized as a very beautiful rich woman but also materialistic. Her love easily moved that she left Gatsby, her first love, and married Tom for his wealth. But after Gatsby became a very rich man, she fell in love with him again. She was also selfish who just considered the one who could meet her wishes and took no care to anyone who could not give her any benefit.

Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth, but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget : a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen", a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 9)

## (3) Tom Buchanan

He was Daisy's husband, an educated man from Chicago, who was able to cut off Gatsby's dream in getting Daisy. Physically, he was a sturdy straw - haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner reflected on his cruel body. As a rich, he became very arrogant. Although he had a mistress, Myrtle Wilson, he loved his wife very much and did not let anyone making trouble to his marriage with Daisy.

He had changed since his New Haven years. Now he was a sturdy straw - haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 7)

**3.2 Minor characters**

## (1) Nick Carraway

He was the narrator of this novel from the first person point of view. He was Daisy's cousin and also Gatsby's close friend who was presented as a clever wise educated man. His maturity was portrayed well on his attitude. As a close

friend of Gatsby who knew much about him, he felt so sorry for the end of Gatsby's life.

I graduated from New Haven in 1915, just a quarter of a century after my father, and a little later I participated in that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 3)

(2) Jordan Baker

She appeared in the novel as a nice, attractive and energetic woman with frankness in her statements. She was Daisy's close friend since they were in childhood, who was familiar as a golf player. She accompanied Nick in the current of the story. At first, she and Nick seemed in love each other but at last they chose different way.

She was a slender, small-breasted girl, with an erect carriage, which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like a young cadet. Her gray sun-strained eyes looked back at me with polite reciprocal curiosity out of a wan, charming, discontented face.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 11)

(3) Myrtle Wilson

Being bored as the wife of a poor man, she held an affair with Tom Buchanan for his wealth. She was very arrogant and materialistic woman who behaved like a rich woman. Her bad temper and her jealous to Daisy caused her own death.

She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some woman can.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 25)

(4) George Wilson

He was Myrtle's husband, presented as a weak plain poor man who stood under his wife's order. However, he loved her very much. Unfortunately, his wife did not respect his sacrifice, she held affair with another man. Being angry for his wife's death, he shot Gatsby before he shot himself.

He was a blond, spiritless man, anemic, faintly handsome. When saw us a damp gleam of hope sprang into his like blue eyes.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 25)

(5) Catherine

She was a Myrtle's sister who lived in New York.

The sister, Catherine, was a slender, worldly girl of about thirty, with a solid, sticky bob of red hair, and a complexion powdered milky white.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 30)

(6) Meyer Wolfsheim

He was a big gambler who held relationship with Gatsby in an illegal business.

A small, flat - nosed jew raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in either nostril.

(Fitzgerald 1953 : 69)

(7) Henry C. Gatz

He was Gatsby's father, an old poor man, who was very proud of his son's spirit of life. He came to Gatsby's funeral.

It was Gatsby's father, a solemn old man, very helpless and dismayed, bundled up in a long cheap ulster against the warm September day.

(Fitzgerald 1953 : 167)

(8) Pammy

She is Daisy's daughter, a little nice girl of a rich family.

" I got dressed before luncheon, " said the child, turning eagerly to Daisy.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 117).

(9) The late Dan Cody

He was a big businessman who had a big yacht. He employed Gatsby and gave him very valuable experiences of life.

Cody was fifty years old then, a product of the Nevada silver fields, of the Yukon, of every rush for metal since seventy-five.

(Fitzgerald 1953:100 )

(10) Mr. McKee and Mrs. McKee

They were Myrtle's neighbours at the apartment in New York.

"You McKees have something to drink," he said.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 32)

(11) Michaelis

He was a Wilson's kind neighbor.

He began to rock again, and Michaelis stood twisting the leash in his hand.

(Fitzgerald 1953:159)

(12) Klipspringer

He was a Gatsby's friend.

A man named Klipspringer was there so often and so long that he became known as "the broader" \_I doubt if he had any other home.

(Fitzgerald 1953: 62)

(13) The other minor characters that take part in the novel: Gatsby's guests at party, Gatsby's friends, Gatsby's servants, Daisy's servants, and so on.

In teaching learning speaking, the teacher may give the students the following activities:

1. Summarizing the story of the novel
2. Finding some expressions related to the materials in the syllabus
3. Make dialogues based on their findings
4. Practicing the expressions in front of the class under the teacher's guide.

Through the current of the activities, it is hoped it can encourage the students to be active started from formulating ideas and practicing the expressions they learn.

## CONCLUSION

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald presents three major characters, they are Gatsby, Daisy Fay, and Tom Buchanan. The minor characters are Nick Carraway, Jordan Bakers, Myrtle and George Wilson, and some others. The strength of their characterization, the writer thinks, is that each of the character whether it is major or minor brings its exact power in the current of this story. For example, Wilson, one of the minor characters, at first he is presented as a very simple powerless man but who suspects that finally he is the murderer of the hero, Gatsby. In pedagogical aspect, this analysis may be the alternative of material of teaching and learning speaking, by practicing some expressions done by the characters in the novel.

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