

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive introduction to the study, including the background, research questions, objectives, significance, scope, and definition of key terms. It discusses the subject of character development and characterization, specifically focusing on Alex lilly in the movie Weapons, and explains the purpose of examining his character growth. The chapter also identifies the research gap, emphasizing why this analysis is valuable in the context of movie studies and character analysis.

A. Background of the Study

The integration of literature and movie into English Language Teaching (ELT) has been widely acknowledged as an effective approach to enhance students' language proficiency while promoting cultural and moral awareness. Movies provide authentic language input and can help learners improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills while also exposing them to culture and values.¹ In this regard, movie is not only a medium of entertainment but also a valuable pedagogical tool in EFL classrooms.

Movie based literary materials not only support language learning but also character education, since learners encounter values embodied by the characters in the

¹ Merita Ismaili, 'The Effectiveness of Using Movies in the EFL Classroom – A Study Conducted at South East European University', *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2.4 (2013), 121–32 <<https://doi.org/10.5901/ajis.2012.v2n4p121>>.

story.²Therefore, movies can be utilized to develop not only language skills but also critical awareness, cultural insights, and moral understanding.

The selection of *Weapons* (2025) as the object of this study is driven by several academic considerations. First, the film employs a distinctive multi-perspective narrative structure in which each segment is dedicated to a specific character's point of view, a narrative quality that makes it particularly suitable for character analysis.³ Second, *Weapons* presents a psychologically complex character in Alex Lilly, whose transformation is shaped by fear, trauma, and forced maturity at a young age a kind of nuanced portrayal rarely found in contemporary horror films. Third, despite its critical acclaim and commercial success, *Weapons* remains largely unexplored in academic and ELT scholarship, making this study a meaningful and original contribution to the field.

The movie *Weapons* provides an interesting case for such an approach, particularly through the character of Alex Lilly. Character comes from the Greek term meaning “stamp, impression” and refers to a person depicted in a literary work.⁴ Characterization is “the representation of persons in narrative and dramatic works,”⁵ while Auger defines it as “the process of creating a character in a literary work.”⁶ Bodden further notes that characterization is “the art of bringing characters to life,”

² S. Wulandari and D. Kusumaningrum, ‘The Development of Movie-Based Literary Materials’, *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan* 37, 2 (2018), 263.

³ Helen Fulton, “Film Narrative and Visual Cohesion,” in *Narrative and Media*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2005, 114.

⁴ ‘The Anthem Dictionary of Literary Terms and Theory’, *Choice Reviews Online*, 48.07 (2011), 48-3595-48-3595.

⁵ Chris Baldick, ‘The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms’, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 52.

⁶ Peter Auger, *The Anthem Dictionary of Literary Terms and Theory*, p. 46.

with dialogue as one of the most effective tools, since it reveals attitudes, relationships, and emotions.⁷ These perspectives show that characterization is the foundation of understanding how a character is portrayed and developed in a narrative.

To analyze Alex Lilly's character, Roberts and Zweig's Theory of Character Change was applied. They state that "character change may be progressive, regressive, static, or mixed, depending on how the character responds to conflicts in the narrative."⁸ This theory provides a systematic way to examine the development of Alex Lilly throughout the movie, showing whether his transformation is positive, negative, stagnant, or complex.

Several previous studies have examined the use of movies in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly as authentic learning materials. Movies significantly improve learners' pronunciation, vocabulary, and speaking confidence in EFL classrooms.⁹ Movie clips enhance students' writing skills by stimulating idea development and contextual understanding.¹⁰ Movies provide linguistic, intercultural, and motivational benefits in EFL contexts.¹¹ In addition, the psychological and emotional engagement generated by movie use in language learning.¹² However, these

⁷ Valerie Bodden, 'Characterization', *Minnesota: Creative Education*, 2008, 7–10.

⁸ Edgar V. Roberts and Robert Zweig, 'Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing', *New Jersey: Prentice Hall*, 1994, 134.

⁹ Festif Rudolf Hoinbala, 'Movies as an Authentic Input in L2 Speaking Class : A Dynamic Usage-Based Approach in EFL Teaching in Indonesia', 6.1 (2022), 1–9.

¹⁰ JELTIM 3, 'Movie as Authentic Material for EFL Writing Classes', 2021, 52.

¹¹ Estefanía Sánchez Auñón and others, 'The Use of Films in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language : A Systematic Literature Review', *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 2023 <<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-022-00183-0>>.

¹² Zahra Gahramanova, 'The Use of Authentic Films in the Teaching of English Language in Upper Courses and Its Psychological Effects', 6 (2023), 882–86.

studies mainly focus on language skill improvement and affective aspects without integrating literary analysis such as characterization or character development.

In the area of character education, movie based literary materials to support students' moral and character formation.¹³ Their findings show that movies help learners internalize values through the behavior and experiences of the characters. Movies embed moral lessons such as resilience, empathy, and responsibility in educational contexts.¹⁴ Although these studies underline the importance of movies in shaping students' moral awareness, they emphasize educational outcomes rather than analyzing how characters are constructed and developed using a systematic literary framework.

Other studies have focused specifically on character development in movies. Research conducted by Mulawarman University examined the psychological regression of Nina Sayers in *Black Swan*.¹⁵ Another study from Mulawarman University analyzed the sociological influence of capitalist society on Arthur Fleck's character in *Joker*.¹⁶ Furthermore, Ramadhan, Zamruddin, and Tawakkal explored the emotional and behavioral growth of the main character in *The King of Staten Island*.¹⁷

¹³ S. Wulandari and D. Kusumaningrum, 'The Development of Movie-Based Literary Materials', *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan* 37, 2018, 263.

¹⁴ Sulthoniyah, 'Dissecting Hafalan Shalat Delisa Movie: Character Education Values Embedded', *Journal of Education Studies* 4, 2021, 66.

¹⁵ Septiana Hairul Nisah, Singgih Daru Kuncara, and Nita Maya Valiantien, 'CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF NINA SAYERS AS SEEN IN', 7 (2023), 1085–98.

¹⁶ Mardliya Pratiwi Z. Chairani, Muhammad Atthariq and Jonathan Irene Sartika Dewi M., 'The Impact of Capitalist Society on Arthur's Character Development as Portrayed in Joker (2019) Film', 9.April (2025), 529–42.

¹⁷ Aditya Rizky Ramadhan, Mardliya Pratiwi Zamrudin, and Alamsyah Tawakkal, 'THE MAIN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN THE KING OF STATEN', 7.April (2023), 423–38.

Although these studies successfully analyze character transformation, they remain limited to psychological or sociological perspectives and do not connect their findings to pedagogical applications in ELT.

In addition, several literary studies have examined characterization in movies and written texts. Fitria analyzed the characterization of the main character in *Hichki* by identifying dominant traits through dialogue and actions.¹⁸ Meanwhile, several research investigated character types and settings in the short story *The Capital of the World*.¹⁹ These studies provide descriptive classifications of character traits and structural elements in literary works. However, they do not examine character change in depth nor relate literary analysis to English Language Teaching contexts. These studies provide descriptive classifications of character traits and structural elements in literary works. However, they tend to overlook in-depth analysis of character development and its relevance to English Language Teaching (ELT). Therefore, this study focuses on the characterization and character development of Alex Lilly in the movie *Weapons*, emphasizing the transformation of his personality, behavior, and motivations. In doing so, this study attempts to fill the gap by linking literary analysis with its pedagogical implications in ELT.

¹⁸ T. N. Fitria, 'Characterization Analysis of the Main Character in Hichki Movie,' Journal of English Language and Literature 6, No. 1 (2021): 45.', *Journal of English Language and Literature* 6, 2021, 45.

¹⁹ P. L. Soethama K. T. P. Maharani, I. W. Mulyawan, 'An Analysis of Characters and Settings in "The Capital of the World"', *Pustaka Journal* 5, 2025, 12.

B. Research Questions

Based on the issues discussed in the background of the study, the researcher formulates the following research questions to guide the analysis:

1. How is Alex lilly's character development portrayed in the movie *Weapons* based on Roberts and Zweig's character change theory?
2. What forms of characterization are used to describe Alex lilly in the movie *Weapons*?

C. Research Objectives

Referring to the research questions above, this study is intended to achieve the following purposes:

1. To describe Alex lilly's character development in the movie *Weapons* using Roberts and Zweig's character change theory.
2. To identify the forms of characterization used to describe Alex lilly in the movie *Weapons*.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it is expected to enrich literary analysis studies, particularly those concerning character development and characterization in movies.

Practically, this study does contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT). It is expected to help students enhance their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through character analysis activities and discussions by providing a model of

integrating character analysis into language learning activities. Through exposure to movie dialogues and narrative elements, students can develop their listening and reading comprehension by identifying explicit and implicit information. In addition, speaking skills can be enhanced through interactive discussions and presentations that require students to articulate opinions and interpretations of characters. Writing skills are developed through tasks such as composing character analyses and reflective responses. Therefore, this approach not only improves students' language skills but also fosters cultural awareness and moral understanding. Furthermore, it can support teachers in designing creative lessons that promote language proficiency, cultural understanding, and moral reflection.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing Alex lilly's character in the movie *Weapons*. The analysis includes two aspects: (1) character development based on Roberts and Zweig's theory of character change, and (2) characterization techniques used to portray the character, such as dialogue, actions, and interactions.

The study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The data are limited to the movie's scenes and dialogues relevant to Alex lilly's character. This study does not examine other characters, audience reception, or the production process of the movie. The focus remains on textual and visual elements that reveal the development and characterization of Alex lilly.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Character Development

Character Development in this study denotes the process through which a character undergoes changes or transformation throughout a narrative. Roberts and Zweig classify such development into several types, namely progressive, regressive, static, and mixed.²⁰ These forms of development illustrate the extent to which experiences, conflicts, and interactions influence the character's evolution.

2. Characterization

Characterization refers to the narrative techniques employed to present and construct characters within a story. According to Baldick, characterization may be conveyed through dialogue, behavior, physical description, internal thoughts, and interactions with other characters.²¹ Through these techniques, readers or viewers are able to infer the character's personality, motivations, and psychological dimensions.

3. Weapons Movie

Weapons is a psychological horror movie that explores themes of mystery and tension in modern society. It focuses on the mysterious disappearance of several children in a small town, leaving no clear traces behind. The plot is revealed slowly, highlighting the conflict between reality and irrational or supernatural

²⁰ Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E. Zweig, 'Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing', *New Jersey: Prentice Hall*, 1994, 131–133.

²¹ Chris Baldick, 'The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms', *Oxford: Oxford University Press*, 1996, 34.

elements and creating a tense and mysterious atmosphere. The concept on Weapons movie is not only emphasizes elements of fear, but also explores the characters' psychological aspects, such as anxiety and trauma, and the uncertainty experienced by the protagonists. The movie combines horror and psychology to dramatize complex social issues.