

An Analysis of Characterization of Structure and Plot Dynamics and the Main Characters in “Me Before You” By Jojo Moyes

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A B S T R A C T

Characterization of the main characters is an essential element in establishing an emotional connection between the reader and the storyline in a novel. *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes presents profound characterization through its two main characters, Louisa Clark and Will Traynor, who have contrasting backgrounds and motivations. This study aims to analyze how the characterization of these two characters contributes to the structure and quality of the novel's plot. The research employs a qualitative approach with text analysis, encompassing character identification, psychological analysis of characters, and exploration of narrative structure. Data were collected through in-depth reading and note-taking of key elements related to character development and their interaction with the plot. The findings reveal that the characterization of Louisa and Will plays a crucial role in shaping the story's dynamics. Louisa evolves from an insecure individual into a more independent and courageous person, while Will experiences deep internal conflict regarding control over his life. Will's firm adherence to his decision creates intense emotional tension in the plot, reinforcing the central themes of freedom of choice, sacrifice, and the meaning of life. Additionally, validation through literature review and discussions with academics supports the idea that characterization in this novel aligns with concepts in contemporary literature. The study concludes that complex and realistic characterization not only drives the plot but also adds depth to the themes and messages conveyed. Through strong character depiction, *Me Before You* successfully engages readers emotionally and offers a profound reflection on life choices and their consequences in human existence.

Keywords: *Characterization, Character Psychology, Literary Analysis Narrative Structure, Me Before You*

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INTRODUCTION

Romance novels are currently a favorite among young people. For now, novels are still an interesting choice as an entertainment medium because novels have a coherent, clear, and detailed storyline. Novel studies can be done based on the elements that build a novel. One of the elements that build a novel that can be studied is characters. Characters are an important element in a novel. With characters, the events that occur in the novel can be woven into a whole unit. Through characters, the author can convey his ideas to the reader. Each character is also presented according to their respective capacities, there are even some novels that are true stories in the author's personal experiences.

One of the good drama novels, especially for the younger generation, is the novel *Me Before You* because this novel is. The story presented in this novel offers details about how an incident can change a person's psychology, especially their personality, moral messages about life, and how to actualize oneself are some other advantages that deserve attention. There are various valuable life lessons such as dynamic life conditions, ups and downs, how we respond to them. Trying to do good and be happy when life is not according to what we want is often overlooked in the busyness of our lives. This romantic and touching story

teaches us a moral lesson about how to deal with tragedy. The perspective on oneself greatly influences all aspects of life. The ability to develop self-confidence and self-esteem comes from the ability to think, because the mind is a source of competence in living life, and solving all the problems we have to face, with high self-confidence a person will have the belief that he deserves to receive and live a happy, peaceful, and fearless life in the future.

Me Before You, a novel by Jojo Moyes, is an example of a literary work that presents deep and influential characterization in shaping its narrative. In the world of literature, the characterization of the main character is a fundamental element in building an emotional connection between the reader and the storyline. Characters with psychological depth, clear motivations, and dynamic development not only function as agents driving the plot, but also reflect the complexity of human life (Smith, 2020). Previous research has explored the role of characterization in enhancing the immersive reading experience, showing that characters in novels often represent certain social, psychological, and cultural aspects (Harris, 2022; Taylor, 2021).

The study conducted by Eliza and Septiani (2021) emphasized that effective characterization can illustrate the psychological complexity of individuals as well as the values embedded in a narrative. Meanwhile, Hermanto (2021) found that well-developed main characters create strong emotional appeal, making readers more engaged with the story. This aligns with Anderson's (2021) findings, which state that the psychological dimensions of characters in narratives are not merely plot drivers but also shape the reader's emotional experience.

Additionally, research by Sari (2022) asserts that analyzing the characterization of the main characters provides insight into personality traits and the values conveyed in literary works. As a result, readers' emotional resonance with a story deepens when characters are developed realistically with strong psychological complexity (Dawson, 2021). Wright's (2020) study also confirms that character interactions significantly influence the depth of the narrative and thematic relevance, ultimately enhancing reader engagement.

Furthermore, Putri (2023) suggests that characterization in novels not only shapes the storyline but also holds potential in fostering character education values that readers can internalize. This is in line with research by Nofasari, Damanik, and Dewi (2023), which demonstrates that main characters in novels often represent social norms and internal conflicts that provide deep reflections on various aspects of life. Collins (2022) similarly highlights that well-developed characters create richer conflict dynamics, adding depth to the plot and enriching the novel's moral messages.

From a broader perspective, studies by Merianatari and Zaky (2021) reveal that character analysis can uncover various social, cultural, and psychological dimensions interwoven in narratives, contributing to a more meaningful reading experience. For instance, Robinson (2023) found that themes in modern literature are often reinforced by complex character development, where readers not only follow the storyline but also experience deeper emotional involvement.

However, in many cases, novelists tend to focus more on plot aspects while neglecting comprehensive character development. Consequently, characters in novels often appear flat and lack strong psychological depth (Williams, 2020). Studies by Hermanto (2021) and Eliza & Septiani (2021) indicate that when characters serve merely as tools to drive the plot without adequate psychological exploration, readers tend to feel less emotionally engaged with the story. Bell's (2019) research even states that readers are more attracted to stories featuring realistically evolving characters than to those emphasizing external conflicts without deep psychological exploration of their protagonists.

Based on these findings, this study is significant in further exploring how the characterization of the main characters in *Me Before You* contributes to shaping the novel's plot quality and emotional appeal. Carter (2019) argues that characterological analysis should encompass psychological, social, and cultural aspects to provide a broader understanding of a novel's narrative structure. This view is reinforced by Green (2021), who

states that characters with profound psychological dynamics are more capable of fostering readers' emotional engagement than static or stereotypical characters.

Integrating various approaches in this study enables a more comprehensive understanding of how characterization elements interact with the storyline and reader resonance. Taylor (2021) highlights that strong characterization in novels enhances their appeal and reading experience by providing reflections on real-life situations. Therefore, this study also considers how the social and cultural contexts in which *Me Before You* was written and read influence the characterization of the main characters and the readers' reception of the story.

As suggested by previous studies, characters in novels often reflect the prevailing norms and values in society (Putri, 2023; Nofasari et al., 2023). Thus, through a comprehensive characterological approach, this research seeks to provide a new perspective on how the characterization of the main characters shapes the plot quality and its impact on readers' emotional involvement in *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with text analysis methods to understand the characterization of the main characters in *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes and its contribution to the overall quality of the plot. A qualitative approach was chosen as it allows for an in-depth exploration of character dynamics and how character interactions influence narrative structure (Susanto, 2022). By systematically examining various aspects of the main characters, this research aims to identify the elements of characterization that enhance reader engagement and influence the reading experience (Fazalani, 2021).

Research Design

This study applies a qualitative textual analysis design to explore character development in the novel. According to Yulianti (2023), this approach is highly effective in examining the psychological dimensions of the main characters, as characters in novels often represent personality dynamics and values that evolve throughout the narrative. The analysis also focuses on narrative structure, examining how the characterization of the main characters reinforces the novel's themes and messages (Zahra, 2024).

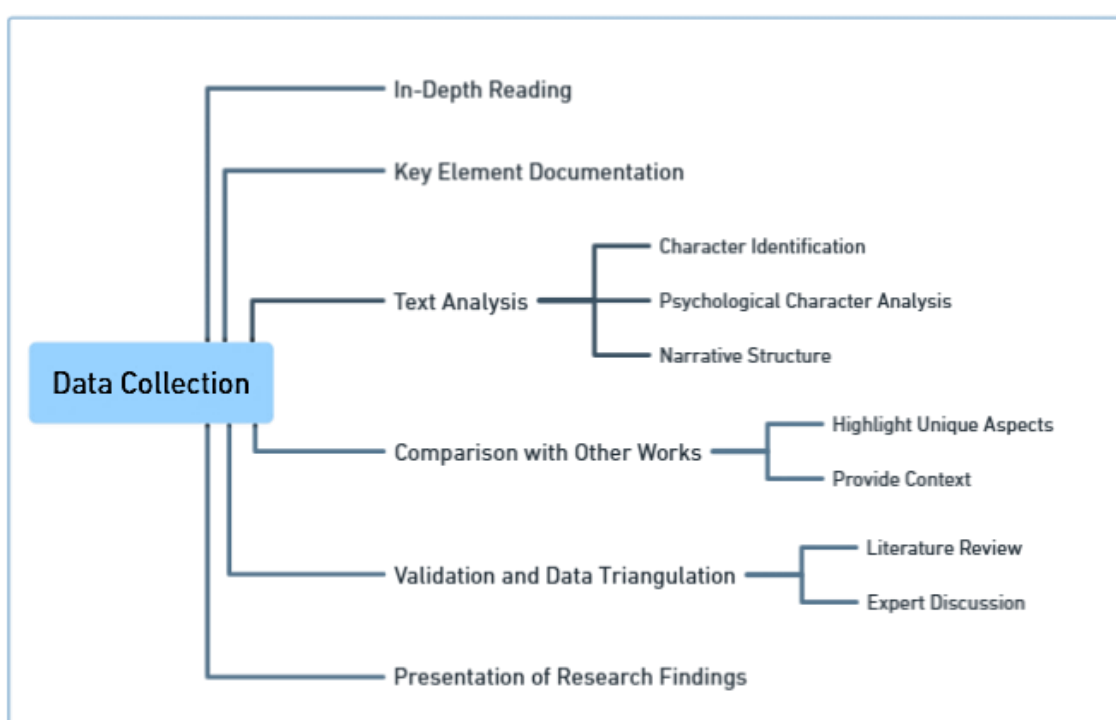


Figure 1. Data collection

Data Collection

The primary data in this study were derived from Jojo Moyes' novel *Me Before You*, examined through a detailed qualitative literary approach. The research began with an in-depth reading of the text to understand the intricacies of the main characters, focusing on their backgrounds, motivations, and development throughout the narrative. As emphasized by Janna and Yunus (2021), this deep reading process is crucial in capturing the emotional and psychological dimensions of the characters. During this phase, key elements such as dialogues, actions, and interactions were meticulously documented to support a more structured and insightful analysis, following the approach outlined by Safitri (2022).

The next stage involved textual analysis using a characterological lens, divided into three main components: character identification, psychological analysis, and narrative structure. The researcher identified both primary and secondary characters, examining how their relationships influenced individual growth and the overall narrative complexity, in line with Putri, Rasyimah, and Safriandi's (2023) perspective. A psychological approach was also employed to explore internal conflicts and character motivations, guided by theories discussed by Sari (2022). Additionally, the study looked at how character development aligned with the narrative structure, which, according to Adam (2019), is essential in fostering emotional engagement and plot cohesion.

To broaden the analytical context, the study included a comparison between the main characters in *Me Before You* and those in similar contemporary romance novels. This comparative approach helped highlight the unique aspects of Moyes' character portrayals, as suggested by Eliza and Septiani (2021), who argue that distinctive characterization enhances reader connection. Furthermore, by placing the characters within a wider literary and cultural framework, the research explored how contemporary character development reflects broader social and emotional themes, echoing the insights of Merianatari and Zaky (2021).

Finally, to ensure the validity and reliability of findings, data triangulation was employed through literature reviews and expert consultations. Relevant scholarly works on characterology and narrative theory were reviewed to reinforce analytical conclusions, following Bell's (2019) emphasis on academic grounding. Additionally, discussions with literary experts provided external insights and objectivity, aligning with Williams' (2020) recommendation for expert validation in qualitative research. The results of this study are presented in a comprehensive report that not only offers an in-depth character analysis of *Me Before You* but also provides meaningful implications for writers and literary scholars, illustrating how compelling character development enhances storytelling and emotional resonance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The novel *Me Before You* is a work written by Jojo Moyes, narrating the relationship between the two main characters, Louisa Clark and Will Traynor. This novel delves into themes of love, sacrifice, and life choices, highlighting the impact of physical and emotional conditions on human relationships. A comprehensive analysis of *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. In-Depth Reading Analysis

No.	Aspect	Description
1.	Main Characteristics	- Louisa is a 26-year-old young woman who is cheerful, enthusiastic, and has an optimistic personality. She comes from a modest family and works as a waitress in a café. - Will is a wealthy and successful man who suffered a tragic accident that left him completely paralyzed from the neck down. He is intelligent, sharp, and has developed a pessimistic outlook on life following his accident.

2. Background	- Louisa lives in a small town and has a close relationship with her family. She lacks big ambitions and often feels stuck in her daily routine. - Before the accident, Will was an active entrepreneur and an adventurous person. His life changed drastically after the accident, making him feel like he had lost control over his own existence.
3. Motivation	- Louisa strives to support her family financially and seeks new employment after losing her job at the café. When hired as Will's caregiver, she becomes determined to make his life more meaningful. - Will feels trapped in a body that no longer functions and struggles with despair. He wants to end his life in what he considers a dignified manner, despite Louisa's efforts to change his perspective.
4. Character Development Throughout the Story	- Throughout the story, Louisa undergoes significant growth. From feeling powerless and stuck in her routine, she evolves into a more confident and courageous individual. Through her interactions with Will, Louisa learns to pursue her dreams and discover her true self. She begins to understand the value of life and the importance of making meaningful choices. - Although Will initially appears pessimistic and unwilling to adapt to his new reality, his interactions with Louisa lead him to reflect on his outlook on life. Louisa brings him unexpected happiness and hope, yet in the end, Will remains steadfast in his decision to end his life, creating deep emotional conflict within the story.

Based on an in-depth analysis, *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes portrays a profound emotional journey between the two main characters, Louisa Clark and Will Traynor. Louisa is a cheerful and spirited young woman, yet her life tends to be monotonous and confined to the daily routines of her small-town existence. On the other hand, Will Traynor was once an adventurous and successful man whose life took a drastic turn after an accident left him completely paralyzed. Their vastly different backgrounds serve as the foundation for a relationship that gradually evolves over time.

Louisa's motivation in the story stems from her desire to support her family financially after losing her job at a café. When she secures a position as Will's caregiver, she initially struggles to understand a man so different from herself. However, her determination to bring joy into Will's life pushes her to adapt and embrace new experiences. Conversely, Will, who feels he has lost control over his own life, undergoes an intense internal conflict. He harbors a pessimistic outlook on his existence post-accident and has even made the decision to end his life on his own terms. Though his interactions with Louisa bring some shifts in his perspective, his final decision remains unwavering, deeply affecting those around him.

Throughout the novel, Louisa's character development is strikingly evident. From someone lacking confidence and feeling trapped in her circumstances, she transforms into a more courageous individual capable of making independent life choices. Being with Will provides her with a new outlook on life, dreams, and the freedom to shape her own destiny. Meanwhile, although Will experiences moments of happiness and comfort with Louisa, he remains steadfast in his decision, leading to an emotionally charged ending that invites deep reflection on the meaning of life and personal choices.

Me Before You by Jojo Moyes does not merely present a unique love story; it also delves into complex emotional struggles involving acceptance, hope, and the difficult

decisions one must face in life. The novel illustrates how Louisa and Will profoundly influence each other’s growth, allowing readers to reflect on significant themes such as love, life choices, and the true meaning of courage. The key elements related to the main characters in the novel are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Key Elements Related to the Main Characters

No.	Aspect	Description
1.	Dialogue	The dialogue in this novel is powerful and serves to reveal character depth and emotions. Some key features of Lou and Will’s conversations include: 1. Humor: Lou often uses humor to cope with difficult situations, creating lighthearted moments amid the novel’s heavy themes. 2. Emotional Tension: The dialogue between Lou and Will frequently reflects emotional tension, particularly when discussing Will’s perspective on death and his decision to end his life. 3. Openness: Through their conversations, Lou strives to understand Will and help him see the positive aspects of life, while Will teaches Lou about courage and honesty.
2.	Actions	The characters’ actions significantly influence the plot’s development: 1. Lou Accepting the Job: Lou takes a job as Will’s caregiver, marking the starting point of their relationship. This action showcases her willingness to step out of her comfort zone. 2. Shared Journeys: Lou organizes various activities to bring joy to Will, including trips to exciting places. These actions reflect her efforts to bring happiness into Will’s life. 3. Will’s Decision: Will’s choice to consider euthanasia becomes the central conflict of the story, sparking deep discussions between him and Lou about the value of life and personal choices.
3.	Interactions with Other Characters	The interactions between Lou, Will, and other characters play a crucial role in shaping the narrative: 1. Lou’s Family: Her family provides context for her background and highlights the challenges she faces in supporting Will, as well as how they respond to the changes in Lou’s life. 2. Will’s Family: Lou’s interactions with Will’s parents, particularly his mother, emphasize differing perspectives on life and death, adding emotional depth to the story. 3. Supporting Characters: Characters like Patrick, Lou’s boyfriend, serve to illustrate the contrast between a superficial relationship and one built on deeper understanding. Patrick’s selfish and unsupportive nature highlights the emotional depth of Lou and Will’s bond.

Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You* presents its main characters through dialogue, actions, and interactions with others. Dialogue plays a crucial role in revealing personalities and emotions. Louisa Clark often uses humor to navigate difficult situations, providing balance amidst the novel’s heavier themes. Her conversations with Will Traynor, however, are filled with emotional tension, particularly when discussing Will’s views on life after his accident. Their dialogue evolves into a deeper openness—Lou tries to help Will find value in life, while Will encourages Lou to break free from her self-imposed limitations.

Actions taken by both Lou and Will significantly drive the story. Lou’s decision to become Will’s caregiver marks a turning point in her life, exposing her to a world vastly different from her own. Her efforts to create meaningful experiences for Will demonstrate her sincerity in bringing happiness to others. Meanwhile, Will’s unwavering stance on

euthanasia introduces a deep emotional conflict, forcing Lou to reflect on the meaning of life and the importance of respecting personal choices.

Interactions with supporting characters further enrich the narrative. Lou's family portrays a modest life filled with struggles, while Will's mother illustrates the emotional dilemma of a parent grappling with her child's irreversible decision. Patrick, Lou's boyfriend, represents a contrast between superficial relationships and those built on understanding and emotional depth. His self-centered nature starkly differs from the profound connection that develops between Lou and Will, making the novel a touching exploration of courage, love, and the freedom to choose one's path in life.

A qualitative characterological approach to analyzing the text follows these steps: **Character Identification:** Examining main and supporting characters, their relationships, and how these interactions shape the plot. **Psychological Character Analysis:** Applying character psychology theories to explore motivation, internal conflicts, and character development, revealing their contributions to the story's dynamics. **Narrative Structure Analysis:** Investigating how character development aligns with the overall narrative structure, including its influence on plot progression, themes, and the novel's central message. The findings from the text analysis are detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Text Analysis Using a Qualitative Approach Focused on Characterology

No.	Aspect	Description
1.	Character Identification	Louisa Clark is a cheerful young woman who works as a caregiver for Will Traynor, a former executive who became paralyzed after an accident. Their contrasting backgrounds create compelling tension. Louisa seeks to bring new meaning to Will's life, while Will remains initially skeptical before gradually opening up. Supporting characters, including Louisa's family and Will's friends, enrich their dynamic, highlighting themes of love, choice, and life's consequences.
2.	Psychological Character Analysis	Louisa initially feels trapped in her monotonous life, but her motivation to bring happiness to Will pushes her out of her comfort zone. Will, struggling internally between his desire for a meaningful life and his despair over his condition, experiences emotional development, even though he remains firm in his decision. Their interactions generate strong emotional tension, leading the story toward the conflict between life choices and death.
3.	Narrative Structure	Louisa's transformation from a naive individual to a more courageous person, along with Will's internal struggles, forms the core of the narrative. Their characterization deepens themes of love, sacrifice, and the freedom to choose. The emotional tension between them drives the plot, adding greater significance to the consequences of each choice they make. Character development serves as a key element that connects the novel's themes and messages.

The psychological analysis of *Me Before You* reveals that motivation, internal conflict, and character development significantly impact the plot's dynamics. Louisa Clark begins her journey feeling trapped in the monotony of her life, but her motivation to help Will Traynor leads her toward profound personal transformation. Will, on the other hand, struggles with his paralysis and the loss of control over his own life, facing deep internal conflict between finding meaning in his existence and succumbing to despair. As the story unfolds, the evolving relationship between Louisa and Will not only enriches their individual character arcs but also creates emotional tension that forms the core of the narrative. Louisa's growth into a confident and courageous individual, alongside Will's emotional journey as he remains steadfast in his decision, makes the novel a powerful reflection on life, love, and sacrifice.

From a narrative structure perspective, the development of the main characters is intricately tied to the plot, themes, and messages conveyed by the author. Louisa, initially naive and constrained by routine, undergoes a profound transformation through her interactions with Will, who continues to grapple with the consequences of his life-altering accident. Her evolving characterization adds depth to the plot, reinforcing themes of courage in facing life's challenges, the importance of taking risks, and the significance of personal choices. Meanwhile, Will's internal struggles deepen the story by highlighting moral and emotional dilemmas concerning an individual's right to determine their fate. Their relationship not only drives the plot forward but also invites readers to reflect on life's meaning, the concept of happiness, the freedom to choose, and the unconventional forms love can take. Ultimately, character development in *Me Before You* serves not only as a narrative device but also as a medium through which Moyes delivers a profound meditation on life and its complexities.

As part of the analysis, a comparison is made between the main characters in *Me Before You* and those in other works by Jojo Moyes, as well as similar novels within the same genre. This comparison aims to: Highlight Unique Aspects – Identifying the distinctive character elements in Moyes' writing and how they set this novel apart from her other works. Provide Context – Offering a broader perspective on character development in contemporary literature and examining how characterization influences plot quality across different narratives.

The results of this comparative analysis are detailed in Table 4, illustrating how *Me Before You* stands out in terms of character depth, emotional complexity, and its exploration of life-altering choices.

Table 4. Comparative Analysis with Other Works

No.	Aspect	Description
1.	Unique Aspect	Louisa Clark is portrayed as a cheerful, empathetic, and curious individual, contrasting with Will Traynor, a former intelligent executive who has become pessimistic due to his paralysis. Their interactions create deep emotional dynamics, where Louisa attempts to change Will's outlook on life while Will challenges her to step out of her comfort zone. This complex characterization is enriched by themes of life choices and sacrifice, making the novel more than just a love story. Moyes also boldly addresses sensitive issues such as disability and euthanasia, adding depth to the narrative and distinguishing this novel from others in the same genre.
2.	Providing Context	Louisa and Will are not merely individual characters but also representations of broader themes such as love, sacrifice, and life choices. Their realistic characterization fosters an emotional connection with readers and strengthens the quality of the plot. The tension arising from their interactions drives the storyline and demonstrates how strong character development shapes narrative dynamics. Thus, this novel emphasizes the importance of well-developed characters in creating a story that is not only engaging but also meaningful within the context of modern literature.

Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You* features unique characterization that sets it apart from other novels within the same genre. The protagonist, Louisa Clark, is portrayed as cheerful, inquisitive, and deeply empathetic. Her personality sharply contrasts with Will Traynor, a former successful executive who, after becoming paralyzed, struggles with internal conflicts about his life and future. Their interactions not only establish a strong emotional dynamic but also enrich the plot with profound themes of life choices, sacrifice, and the courage to face change. Moyes' bold approach in addressing sensitive issues such as disability and

euthanasia adds depth to the story, making it more than just a conventional romance and distinguishing it from other novels in the genre.

On a broader scale, *Me Before You* highlights how well-developed characters can enhance the quality of narrative in contemporary literature. Louisa and Will are not just individuals with contrasting backgrounds; they also serve as representations of universal themes such as unconditional love, the meaning of happiness, and the struggle against life’s limitations. Their depth of characterization allows readers to connect emotionally with their journey, creating a stronger attachment to the narrative. Their evolving relationship becomes the driving force of the plot, generating emotional tension that elevates the novel beyond a simple love story into a profound reflection on life and the difficult choices people must face. Thus, Moyes demonstrates that well-crafted characters not only make a story more engaging but also add significant depth and meaning within the context of modern literature.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings, the research employs data triangulation by comparing textual analysis results with existing literature on characterology and literary theory. This process involves: Literature Review – Examining relevant references on characterology, character psychology, and narrative structure to support the analysis. Expert Discussions – Engaging with literary scholars or academics familiar with Moyes’ works to gain additional perspectives. The results of these validation and triangulation efforts are detailed in Table 5, further substantiating the depth of character development in *Me Before You* and its significance in contemporary literary discourse.

Table 5. Validation and Data Triangulation Analysis

No.	Aspect	Description
1.	Literature References	The validation and triangulation of data were conducted by reviewing relevant literature on characterology, character psychology, and narrative structure. These literary references include theories that explain how characters are formed and developed within a narrative context and how interactions between characters influence the storyline. By comparing textual analysis findings with previous studies, the researcher ensures the accuracy and depth of understanding regarding Louisa and Will’s characterization and how their development contributes to the themes and messages conveyed in the novel. This approach not only strengthens the arguments presented but also provides a more comprehensive perspective on character development in contemporary literature.
2.	Discussion with Experts	In analyzing <i>Me Before You</i> by Jojo Moyes, validation and triangulation of data involved discussions with literature experts, Dr. Drs. Simin, M.Pd., and Dr. Dra. Rostina, M.Pd. Both experts provided valuable additional perspectives regarding the researcher’s findings on characterization and plot development. Dr. Simin emphasized the significance of Louisa and Will’s character complexity in creating deep emotional tension. Dr. Rostina highlighted how their interactions reflect universal themes of love and sacrifice. Their insights reinforced the conducted analysis, demonstrating that strong characterization in this novel not only supports the storyline but also provides deeper insights into the human condition.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the analysis of *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes, validation and data triangulation were conducted through two primary approaches: a literature review and discussions with literary experts. The literature review was based on theories of characterology, character psychology, and narrative structure, enabling a deeper examination of the development of Louisa Clark and Will Traynor throughout the story. By comparing textual analysis results with previous studies, this research establishes a stronger

foundation for understanding how characterization contributes to the novel's themes and underlying messages. This process not only enhances the accuracy of findings but also provides a broader perspective on the role of character development in contemporary literature.

Additionally, discussions with literary experts, such as Dr. Simin and Dr. Rostina, provided valuable insights that enriched the analysis. Dr. Simin highlighted the complexity of the main characters, emphasizing their role in creating deep emotional tension within the narrative. Meanwhile, Dr. Rostina underscored how the interactions between Louisa and Will reflect universal themes of love and sacrifice. Their perspectives reinforced the understanding that characterization in this novel is not merely a structural element of the plot but also a medium for exploring human emotional dynamics on a deeper level.

Through a combination of literature review and academic discussions, the validation and triangulation process ensure that the character analysis in *Me Before You* is supported by credible references and comprehensive perspectives. This approach results in a more profound understanding of character development and its significance within modern literary narratives.

Discussion

The characterization analysis in *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes reveals that the main characters, Louisa Clark and Will Traynor, play a crucial role in shaping and driving the plot. Strong characterization enables readers to understand the emotional dynamics and conflicts that develop throughout the story (Irawan, 2021). Louisa is depicted as a cheerful and energetic young woman whose life, however, remains stagnant and confined to her daily routines. In contrast, Will, once a successful and ambitious man, undergoes a drastic transformation after an accident that leaves him completely paralyzed, turning him into a pessimistic individual who feels he has lost control over his life (Dhani, 2018).

When Louisa begins working as Will's caregiver, their contrasting personalities become a key element in creating narrative tension and progression. Initially driven solely by financial necessity, Louisa's motivation evolves into a more profound emotional journey, allowing her to gain a broader perspective on life (Akhyar, 2021). Her interactions with Will not only deepen their relationship but also help her build the courage to make significant life decisions and develop the confidence to pursue dreams she had never previously considered (Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2019).

From a psychological perspective, the novel explores how the motivations and internal conflicts of both main characters contribute to the story's dynamics. Louisa undergoes significant growth, transforming from an insecure individual into someone more independent and self-assured. Meanwhile, although Will finds joy in his interactions with Louisa, he remains firm in his initial decision regarding euthanasia. His choice creates intense emotional tension within the plot and reinforces the novel's central theme—individual freedom in determining one's fate and the idea that love does not always conclude with conventional expectations (Nurhidayati, 2016).

The narrative structure of *Me Before You* is also reinforced by the close interplay between characterization and story development. Louisa and Will are not merely distinct individuals but also serve as symbols of the novel's universal themes. Their relationship forms a narrative that extends beyond romance, delving into deeper explorations of happiness, freedom of choice, and resilience in facing life's harsh realities (Teknokrat English Literature, 2024). Louisa's transformation into a more independent and courageous individual, along with Will's internal conflict and unwavering decision, serve as the emotional core of the story's progression.

The literature review and academic discussions conducted in this study confirm that the characterization in *Me Before You* aligns with the concept of characterology in contemporary literature. References to various literary theories indicate that strong character development enhances narrative complexity and adds depth to the novel's themes (LitCharts, n.d.). Discussions with scholars further reinforce the finding that this novel is not

merely a typical love story but rather a deep reflection on life, choices, and their consequences. Irawan (2021) highlights how the complexity of the main characters serves as a key element in creating emotional tension within the story, while a study conducted by Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (2019) demonstrates that Louisa and Will's interactions convey universal values of love, sacrifice, and individual freedom.

Thus, it can be concluded that characterization in *Me Before You* plays a central role in shaping and developing the narrative. The personalities, motivations, and internal conflicts of the main characters not only drive the storyline but also deepen the themes and messages that Moyes seeks to convey. Through realistic and complex character portrayals, the novel successfully evokes strong emotional responses from readers, prompting them to reflect on life's many choices and their inevitable consequences.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis, this study concludes that characterization in *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes plays a fundamental role in shaping and developing the storyline. The main characters, Louisa Clark and Will Traynor, are intricately constructed, creating a strong narrative dynamic. Louisa undergoes significant development, transforming from someone trapped in monotonous routines into an independent and courageous individual. Meanwhile, Will, despite experiencing internal struggles due to his condition, remains steadfast in his decision, even though his relationship with Louisa alters his perspective on life. From the perspective of character psychology, this study finds that motivation, internal conflict, and character development are key factors driving the plot. The interactions between Louisa and Will not only enrich their individual character arcs but also reinforce the novel's central themes: the freedom to determine one's fate, the meaning of unconditional love, and the sacrifices people make in different ways. The decisions made by each character create emotional tension that deepens the reader's engagement with the story. Furthermore, validation through literature review and academic discussions confirms that character development in this novel aligns with contemporary literary characterization concepts. Thus, this study affirms that realistic and complex characterization in *Me Before You* serves as the primary driving force behind the plot's progression and the delivery of moral messages. The personalities, motivations, and internal conflicts of the main characters not only shape the narrative dynamics but also add depth to the novel's central themes. This novel successfully evokes readers' emotions, offering a profound reflection on life, choices, and the consequences that come with them.

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