

## **AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION OF AUTISM IN LIFE, ANIMATED FILM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The aims of this study were to find social interaction of autism in Life, Animated film. The autistic child in this film is the second son of Suskind Family. This study the writer uses descriptive analysis techniques. The data of this study are the conversation of Life, Animated film. Data analysis techniques used in this study is transcription, classification and analysis. Data source was Life, Animated Film. This study only focused on social interaction. The result of the research shows that Owen was confused and did not understand what people said, he was often smiling by himself, he also often gritting his teeth, he imitated word or sentence that had said by other people, not only sentence but he also imitates several scenes in Disney movie, closed with his mother, he prefers to have relation with older or adult than in age-mates, he shows his disappointment if he left by his friend and he expressed his feeling and what he wanted using different Disney movies. This study shows that autistic children want to be around people, but they are sometimes do not know how to connect with others. The conclusion from this study is supported by family, therapist and people around autism people, becomes important thing to realize their potential of autism.

*Keywords: social interaction, uutism, life, animated film*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Children with autism spectrum disorders do not have normal approach because they difficult to interact with the other, they unusual to play and interact as common children, because children with autism have difficulties to create and gather together in communication. So, we should invite them in our community to construct a basis for social interaction.

According to Tager-Flusberg (1999), Social interaction and communication are in some ways inextricably linked to one another, especially during the crucial developmental stages that mark the point when autism becomes strikingly evident. Infants pay attention on vocal or gesture that simple to imitate and become imaginative.

Children with autism delay in communication and in some cases, they cannot communicate absolutely because they incapable to counterbalance the other communication. The development of autism communication ability has obstacle, then, social interaction development of autism can be influence. They difficult to convey their expression or emotion because they cannot interact well.

Besides that, Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism (2001) said the characteristic difficulties in social interaction require special teacher training and support beyond knowledge concerning general developmental delays or other learning disabilities. So, give knowledge, direction, support and motivation from family is needed to figure them out and bring them to real world.

Parents, brother have multiple roles to children with autism. They should understand their complex emotion, they should guide and know their interest, educate and manage them about their plan in the future, in order autism be able to fit the world.

Social interaction using signals to draw another's attention to oneself for affiliative purposes, such as greeting, calling, requesting social routines, and requesting comfort (e.g., waving "bye-bye"; reaching to be comforted) Amy M. Wetherby (Charman & Stone, 2005). Many children with Autistic Disorder have little or no interest in making friends or establishing relationships and often seem more interested in objects than in people. For children with autism objects are not making confused and if they like in anything autism will focus on the object or repeat action to be imitated.

*Life, Animated* is the inspirational story of autism, Owen Suskind. He studied to communicate and express his emotion using Disney movie. Since he was child he really interests with Disney. Owen was a thriving three-year-old who suddenly and inexplicably went silent – and for years after remained unable to connect with other people or to convey his thoughts, feelings or desires. Owen repeated to watch Disney classics like *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King*, Owen found useful tools to help him understand complex social cues and to reconnect with the world around him.

Therefore, from the explanation above, it can be concluded that I analyze and focus on social interaction of autism which is found by the writer in *Life, Animated* film.

There are some previous studies which may have similar discussion with the present study. However, some of them discussed about children with autism, communication and linguistic impairment especially language disorder. Rahayu (2014), explain the communication ability type that doing by autistic children. The result demonstrates that communication ability type of autistic children's social interaction is one direction, from the researcher to the subject. There are some differences between this research and the previous study. The first difference is this study about social interaction to understand language impairment. While, in Rahayu's research Communication Ability in Social Interaction. This research object is Autism in Documenter Film "*Life, Animated*".

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Autism**

In 1943, Leo Kanner published a paper entitled "Autistic Disturbances of Affective Contact," which is present specifically, from family background of 11 young children with seriously disordered behavior since 1938-1943. He introduced the term early infantile autism, and noted that many of the children had been diagnosed with schizophrenia at one point. He explains, autism has a serious impairment in language.

The combination of autism can be various, such as language delay, obsessive, stereotypy, and repetition of words (echolalia). The children were extremely aloof and autistic and they refused to being contacted by their parents, doctors and preferred to be alone (Baron-Cohen, 2008). Autism is characterized as a "neuro- developmental" condition, meaning that it emerges from differences in brain development (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019)

Autism has complex problem and inability in language and interaction, they have a unique behavior that unreasonable such as flapping or rocking their hand, they also tend to focus in their own world. Therefore, they must get much attention and special treatment, so they are not alienated from environment, learn to communicate and connect with other people.

### ***Criteria of autism***

American Psychiatric Association : Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, Fourth edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR) is the official manual used by physicians and mental health professionals for diagnosing children on the autism spectrum. A child with an ASD displays examples of the following behaviors to some degree before the age of three:

### ***Qualitative Impairment in Social Interaction***

While typical children show an intense interest in other children, children with ASDs often show an intense interest in objects. Compared with typical children who play together at the playground, children with ASDs will be noticeably solitary and detached, often engaged in repetitive, odd behaviors. Toddlers with ASDs don't use body language to indicate what they want; they don't point or reach their arms up to indicate they want to be picked up. Nor do they share what they're doing—you won't hear "Watch me!" from a child with an ASD. Other signs of social impairment include little to no eye contact, flat or unemotional facial expressions, and no real sense of empathy toward others.

### ***Qualitative Impairments in Communication***

Children with ASDs may have no speech, delayed speech, or idiosyncratic or repetitive speech. It has been estimated that 40 percent or more of children with ASDs do not speak at all. Those who can speak may be unable to initiate or hold a two-way conversation. Another sign of communication impairment is being unable to engage in make-believe play, which involves nonverbal communication (e.g., extending the arms out to the sides while pretending to be an airplane) and verbal communication (e.g., making airplane sounds).

### ***Restricted, Repetitive, and Stereotyped Patterns of Behavior, Interests, and Activities***

Children with ASDs may obsess about a certain topic (e.g., trains or bus schedules) or object (e.g., piece of string or bottle cap) to the point where nothing or no one else seems to exist. They may have a tendency to fixate on a specific routine or ritual (e.g., touching each wall of the bedroom before bedtime), have stereotyped or repetitive actions or movements (e.g., hand flapping or rocking) known as stereotypes, or fixate on parts of objects (e.g., wheels of a toy car). Children also may have heightened sensitivities to certain sounds, sights, smells, tastes, or textures (e.g., insisting on wearing only certain clothes or eating only certain foods).

Therefore, autism has significant differences, autism does not interest with getting interaction, has stereotypes and repetitive behavior. Autism also becomes annoyed easily, when their situation is uncomfortable.

### **Social Interaction of Autism**

Children, adolescents, and adults with autism exhibit deficits in multiple aspects of social processing. (Breiner & Young, 1985)

### ***Interest in Social Speech***

Some of the common infants prefer to interest in human voice, especially their mother's voice. They give a great response to the caregiver. However, in the case of autism, even very young children appear to lack a preference for speech sounds over other kinds of sounds. If this lack of interest in social stimuli is in fact present from birth, it is likely that children with autism would fail to initiate and integrate the basic interpersonal patterns that are believed to be the foundation for all later communication (Carter, Briggs-Gowan, & Davis, 2004)

### ***Joint Attention***

Joint attention is a preverbal social communicative skill that involves sharing with another person the experience of a third object or event. Bruner, 1983; Schaffer, 1984 (Carter *et al.*, 2004). Typically if they discover in things, they are smiling and pointing, then showing to their mother.

The children with autism exhibited fewer social and joint attention behaviors and more autistic symptoms. Behaviors such as pointing, showing objects, looking at others, and orienting in response to name could be used to differentiate the groups. (Carter *et al.*, 2004).

### ***Imitation***

Children with autism make imitation of the actions or words of their parents or people. Rogers, Hepburn, Stackhouse, and Wehner demonstrated that toddlers with autism evidenced delays relative to developmentally delayed and typically developing children in specific types of imitation skills including oral-facial imitation (e.g., extending and wiggling tongue) and imitation of actions on objects (e.g., patting a squeaky toy with elbow). (Carter *et al.*, 2004)

### ***Attachment***

Attachment behaviors are characterized by the child's concern for maintaining proximity with its caregiver and extreme distress in the face of that caregiver's absence Bowlby, Rutter, (Carter *et al.*, 2004)). Children with autism maintain proximity with their parents or certain person. For example, they are close with mother, father or brother.

### ***Peer Relation***

Among individuals with autism, however, limited interest in social interaction and reduced initiation of social contact with peers remain apparent over time. Mutual or cooperative play of the type usually expected among school-age children is typically absent, and many children with autism prefer to be left alone to engage in self-stimulatory and other unusual activities. (Carter *et al.*,

2004)). Children with autism prefer to have relation with adult or children that older than them. They failure to make relation with age-mates, they less to respond when with the other children but, they become active when they are alone.

### ***Affective Development***

Children with autism have been observed to have difficulties in both the spontaneous expression and purposeful reproduction of affective responses. Persons with autism have also been noted to have difficulties with the imitation of facial displays of emotion; relative to Down syndrome subjects, those with autism were more likely to produce unusual facial displays

Specific difficulties in facial recognition and processing information conveyed by human faces, and particularly human emotion, have been noted. Children with autism also usually fail to respond with prosocial behaviors such as giving, sharing, helping, or offering comfort or affection. (Carter *et al.*, 2004).

### ***Life, Animated Film***

#### ***Synopsis of Life, Animated Film***

*Life, Animated* is the inspirational story of Owen Suskind, a young man who was unable to speak as a child until he and his family discovered a unique way to communicate by immersing themselves in the world of classic Disney animated films. This emotional coming-of-age story follows Owen as he graduates to adulthood and takes his first steps toward independence. The subject of his father Ron Suskind's New York Times bestseller, Owen was a thriving three year old who suddenly and inexplicably went silent, and for years after remained unable to connect with other people or to convey his thoughts, feelings or desires.

Over time, through repeated viewings of Disney classics like *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King*, Owen found useful tools to help him to understand complex social cues and to re-connect with the world around him.

*Life, Animated* evocatively interweaves classic Disney sequences with verities scenes from Owen's life in order to explore how his identification and empathy for characters like Simba, Jafar, and Ariel gave him a means to understand his feelings and allowed him to interpret reality. Beautiful, original animations offer rich insights into Owen's fruitful dialogue with the Disney Movie as he imagines himself heroically facing adversity as a member in a tribe of sidekicks. Owen's story is a moving testament to the many ways in which stories can serve as a means of persevering through the dark times, leading us all toward the light.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study that makes in this research is design qualitative research which includes the method to be used what data will be gathered. In this research, the writer tried to analyze language impairment of autistic children in “*Life, Animated*” directed by Roger Ross Williams. The data of this study is the conversation of *Life, Animated*. Data source was *Life, Animated* Film.

In this study, researcher use documents to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study (Crozier, *et.al*, 1994). Then the writer pays attention to watch the video and transcript the conversation by listen the video in several times.

Data analysis technique of this study using some steps, they are transcription, codification, classification, tabulation and analysis. Transcriptions should be made of all data, including tape-recorded interviews, focus groups, video recordings, and handwritten field notes. The writer transcript every conversation in *Life, Animated* Film. Then, the writer gives code in every character that contains social interaction. After that, classify the data into groups according to each type. Next, the researcher arranges the data into table. The last step is the researcher analyze the data.

## **FINDING**

In this film, Ron Suskind and Cornelia have two sons, and Owen is his second son with special need. Owen was 23 years old and he will be graduating in a month and he will be living in his own apartment. Since he was child, he loved to watch Disney Animated Movies with his older brother, he really enjoyed the Disney Animated Movies. He has played the Disney Films many times, sometimes he imitates the conversation of the films and scenes that is interesting for him and have an imagination which about the Disney movie. As example when he was child, he played the part scene when Peter Pan chasing Captain Hook with his dad. He has older brother and his name is Walter, Walter is 26 years old.

However, his parents have educated him and give more attention, but they were scared and afraid about Owen. He has through difficult time to learn and try his best, he wants to prove to the world that he can do what normal people do, he tried the possible way in order to connect with other people.

The results of the data analysis are divided into analysis and table. The data are found through transcription, codification, classification, and analysis.

**Table 1.** Social Interaction of Autism

No	Scene	Social Interaction
1.	They are all garbled	
2.	Owen does not respond his mother when his mother calls him	Interest in Social Speech
3.	Children with autism is easily overstimulated	
4.	Owen smiling by himself	
5.	Owen walking while smiling by himself	
6.	Owen smiling by himself when watching Peter Pan	
7.	Owen grits his teeth	
8.	Owen smiling by himself	
9.	Owen smiling while reading the dialogue with Jonathan Freeman	
10.	Owen grits his teeth	
11.	Owen smiling by himself	Joint Attention
12.	Owen smiling by himself	
13.	Owen smiling by himself	
14.	Owen said “ I don’t think it is” and Owen grits his teeth	
15.	Owen smiling by himself while bubbling up some dialogue	
16.	Owen smiling by himself and gritting his teeth	
17.	Owen smiling by himself while bubbling up some dialogue	
18.	Watching Peter Pan fighting using sword	
19.	His brother gives him support and said “you got a lot more chapters to write”	
20.	Watching The Little Mermaid where Ariel has to trade something to become human	
21.	When twentieth anniversary of The Lion King	Imitation
22.	Owen imitates what Sebastian Said “children got to be free to lead their own lives”	
23.	His mother said “here it is”	
24.	His mother said “your own condo”	
25.	His father said “who would’ve imagine?”	



26.	Owen imitates someone who helped him say “mission accomplished	
27.	Emily visits and asks his condition	
28.	Emily said “we did good” when they baked cookies	
29.	Owen greets Emily in the yard	
30.	After Owen Graduation, Owen approached his mother and said “mom”	
31.	After moving day party, Owen hug his mother and say good bye	
32.	Owen watched Bambi after his parents left him	Attachment
33.	Owen broke up with Emily and he given a call for his mother and told his problem	
34.	Jonathan Freeman became pals and friend in his nineteenth birthday	Peer Relation
35.	Owen told to his mother and Michelle if he does not want Emily to forget him	
36.	Owen says “Walter does not want to grow up like Mowgli or Peter Pan	
37.	Owen memorized every Disney animated ever made	
38.	Owen used different movies to express his felling	Affective Development
39.	Owen was gloomy and he imagined Quasimodo in The Hunchback of Notre Dame movie	

## DISCUSSION

### Social Interaction in Autistic Children

Social interaction using signals to draw another’s attention to oneself for affiliative purposes, such as greeting, calling, requesting social routines, and requesting comfort (e.g., waving “bye-bye”; reaching to be comforted). Children, adolescents, and adults with autism exhibit deficits in multiple aspects of social processing. (Carter *et al.*, 2004)

### Interest in Social Speech

Autistic does not give great response to other people. They are too busy with their own word and make them fail to initiate interpersonal pattern, 1) they are all garbled, 2) owen does not respond his mother when his mother calls him, 3) children with autism is easily overstimulated

From the data above, Owen’s doctor noticed that Owen less purposeful, less interactive and share objects to be in his own world. His pediatrician also said

that autistic is easily overstimulated and it indicates that Owen's had a problem with interest of social speech and his social interaction does not develop because Owen is too confused understanding what people said.

### ***Joint Attention***

Generally autistic are smiling and pointing by their self and have bizarre behavior. They did not concern in social life, 1) owen smiling by himself, 2) owen grits his teeth, 3) owen smiling while reading the dialogue with Jonathan Freeman, 4) owen said "I don't think it is" and Owen grits his teeth, 5) owen smiling by himself while bubbling up some dialogue. From the data above it can be concluded that Owen often smiles and grits his teeth by himself without any reason. This behavior is the characteristic in most of children with autism spectrum disorder.

### ***Imitation***

Autistic children execute imitation in action or word that is familiar in his memory, 1) watching Peter Pan fighting using sword, 2) when twentieth anniversary of The Lion King, 3) owen imitates what Sebastian Said "children got to be free to lead their own lives", 4) his mother said "here it is, 5) his father said "who would've imagine?", 6) owen imitates someone who helped him said "mission accomplished". From the data above it can be concluded that Owen imitates several scenes such as Peter pan and Captain Hook. But, not only imitates scenes but also Owen imitates part of conversation of Disney movie and other people when they talk.

### ***Attachment***

Attachment showing closeness to one of family, parents certain person, 1) after Owen Graduation, Owen approached his mother and said "mom", 2) after moving day party, Owen hug his mother and say good bye, 3) owen watched Bambi after his parents left him, 4) owen broke up with Emily and he given a call for his mother and told his problem. From the data above, it can be seen that Owen had shown his proximity with his mother. After Owen life in his own apartment and left by their parents, he watched scene when Bambi was left by her mother. Owen also told his mother when he broke up with Emily.

### ***Peer Relation***

Autistic children are failure to develop peer relation with children in the same age, 1) Jonathan Freeman became pals and friend in his nineteenth birthday, 2) owen told to his mother and Michelle if he does not want Emily to forget him. From the data above, Owen's doctor noticed that Owen less interactive with peer

children in the same age than with older children or adult, minimize verbal interaction, only communicated food needs. It means that Owen's Peer Relation prefer to have relation with the older.

### ***Affective Development***

Children or person with autism are difficult in give spontaneous expression. They are failure to display emotion, 1) Owen says "Walter does not want to grow up like Mowgli or Peter Pan", 2) Owen memorized every Disney animated ever made, 3) Owen used different movies to express his felling, 4) Owen was gloomy and he imagined Quasimodo in The Hunchback of Notre Dame movie. From the data above it can be concluded that Owen used movie to express his feeling although he has difficulties with the imitation of facial display of emotion. But he began to understand emotion using Disney movie.

The discussion of this study is Owen social interaction are Owen was confused and did not understand what people said, according to him, people just muddled in his brain. Because, autistic was easy to stimuli. Owen was often smiling by himself, gritting his teeth, when he was happy or having the moment. Owen imitated word or sentence that had said by other people. Owen closed with his mother and he expressed his feeling and what he wanted using movies; he began using different movies to enrich his expression. Because he difficult to show his emotion or convey his opinion.

Dr. Alan Rosenblatt is Owen pediatrician states that the child with autism was easily over stimuli, they did not filter the constant stimuli that come in daily basic. Cornelia Suskind states that, the world is just too intense for their brain, the visual stimulation, auditory stimulation.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the previous explanation and the research process can be concluded that Owen was easily to stimuli, the world is too intense for his brain, it was noise and confusing, he still smiling and grit his teeth when imitate the dialogue of Disney movie while go around. Not only sentence or conversation but he imitates the scene of Disney movie that make him interest. So, Owen memorized every Disney movie ever made. He closes with his mother than with the other and has relation with adult.

The conclusion of the above result explains that Owen was supported by his parents, his family and therapist to figure out and cover Owen in his communication especially when he interact with other people or in social interaction .

Therefore, after explaining about Interaction of Autistic Children in Life, Animated Film, the result is expected to give contribution on the social interaction

in autistic children especially. Finally this study shows that autistic children want to be around people, they want what everyone else want, but they are sometimes misguided and do not know how to connect with others.

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