



The Importance of Facial Expression as Non-Verbal Communication in “A Man Called Otto” as Family Cinema Through: Semantics Analysis

Nizar Ahmad Alfarisi¹, Jaftiyatur Rohainiyah², Linta Wafdan Hidayah³

¹Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Islam Madura, Jawa Timur

^{2,3}Universitas Islam Madura, Jawa Timur

Corresponding E-mail: nizarahamadalfarisi@gmail.com

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Abstract

As human living in a world of communication, human intend to interact with other human being using both verbal and nonverbal communication. This study aims to describe the used of nonverbal communication and the importance of facial expression found in “A Man Called Otto” film, and find the meaning of facial expression used in this film. This research used descriptive qualitative with phenomenological approach to breakdown the effectivity of facial expression as nonverbal communication tools for humans to socialize with others. The finding of this research shows there are 7 types of Nonverbal communication were found, such as: kinesics, haptics, physical appearances, proxemics, environmental factors, paralanguage, and silence. After this finding, the researcher will focus on facial expression breakdown consist of 14 scenes from “A Man Called Otto” film, including 1) Otto’s getting flashback to his late wife, Sonya 2) Otto’s smelling food given by Marisol 3) Young Otto’s and Sonya’s 4) At a restaurant 5) Otto’s in Busy Beaver market 6&7) Otto and Marisol on the side road 8) Otto’s reach out Marisol after his rude attitude 9) Young Otto’s and Sonya’s in Hospital 10) Otto’s doing his walks 11) Otto’s and Marisol in Café 12) Marisol in Otto’s kitchen 13) Otto’s in Sonya’s grave 14) The death of Otto. In this research, students can benefit from this research by developing their analytical skills in interpreting facial expressions and their meanings within a narrative context. This can enhance their critical thinking and observational skills. And then, this finding can inspire students to conduct their own analyses of films or other media, focusing on non-verbal communication. This can lead to creative projects that explore how emotions are expressed visually.

Keywords: *A Man Called Otto, Cinema studies, Facial expression.*

Introduction

As social creatures, humans require a way to communicate with other individuals throughout life, utilizing both spoken and written language. Using tool known as language. According to Nasution and Tambunan (2022) Language serves as a vital instrument for humans to convey messages, expressing human condition and share statements with one another. Also, language as a communication tool methods may encompass language, emotional tone, facial expressions, imitation, posture, body movements, eye contact, gestures, and spatial distance. Проняева et al. (2021)

Meanwhile, Communication is the process by which people exchange information and ideas verbally or non-verbally. Communication is a complex process vital for social interaction, encompassing the exchange of information, feelings, and concepts. It includes both verbal and non-verbal methods, impacting social interactions, cultural identity, and choices while fostering mutual comprehension and minimizing confusion (Kryvenko 2024). Non-verbal communication is best defined as a silent form of communication with a person or party without using any form of language to attract the attention of the audience or to make a point. According to (Farooq, De Silva, and Shi 2024) Human dialogue expresses feelings via verbal and non-verbal signals including the use of gestures or speech as well as facial expressions, but facial expressions are by far the most widely used format for human communication.

In daily life, as humans often use verbal and nonverbal communication when communicated each other. Meanwhile, the researcher found the use of nonverbal communication such as facial expression in “A Man Called Otto” film is quite interesting. The characters in “A Man Called Otto” especially with Otto Anderson (Tom Hanks), Marisol (Mariana Trevino) and others often use facial expression, body gesture, encompass language, emotional tone, imitation, posture, body movements, eye contact, gestures, and spatial distance as a part to communicated, to express their feelings, or even conveying messages. Semantic analysis is an essential area that explores the meaning of language, involving diverse methods and uses in various fields, as well as the interpretation of complex expressions of Otto Anderson (Tom Hanks), Marisol (Mariana Trevino) in “A Man Called Otto” film. It is essential for grasping cultural subtleties in literature, improving natural language processing (NLP) methods, and examining multimedia material (Rayhan, Kinzler, and Rayhan 2023).

In the context of family films, facial expressions play a role not only in character development but also in building an emotional bond between the audience and the story being told. The use of facial expressions in these narratives helps to evoke empathy and connection with viewers, enhancing the storytelling experience (Hsu, Li, and Lee 2022). Facial expressions in cinema amplify character emotions and communication skills, influencing the mood of the scene. It express joy, anger, sadness, and happiness, making characters relatable and captivating, ultimately enhancing the film's overall effect and the audience's connection. Zong

et al., (2020) This is why this study was performed to explore how facial expression is vital in film, serving as a key element to engage viewers and significantly influencing non-verbal communication in cinema, while also providing a unique and engaging method to learn English.

In relation with the background of this research, the researcher concludes 3 research questions which is: 1] To know what are type of non-verbal communication used in "A Man Called Otto" Film, 2] To know how can non-verbal communication affectively conveying messages, 3] To know if facial expression can affect the output of how people conveying their messages. In contrast, the novelty of this research presents a novel contribution by shifting the focus from the machine interpretation of emotion to the human and narrative interpretation of facial expressions in a specific cultural and cinematic context. It introduces an interdisciplinary lens combining semantic analysis, socio-psychological theory, and film studies to explore how facial expressions function as non-verbal communication tools in a family-oriented narrative.

Besides, there's also two recent research related to this research. First, who was conducted by Gati Vashi in (2011) "Semantic Analysis of Facial Gestures from Video Using a Bayesian Framework", The aim of this thesis was to study, apply, and evaluate the fundamental methods and ideas of semantic analysis of videos, enhancing the current advancements in automated emotion recognition through the application of semantic knowledge via Bayesian inference. The primary area of focus is recognizing facial emotions from video, incorporating both visual and vocal elements of facial expressions.

The aim is to identify whether a person's facial expression in a series of video frames conveys happiness, sadness, anger, fear, or disgust. Second, Automated Emotional Facial Expression Assessment and Emotional Elicitation through Film Clip Stimuli" who was conducted by David Ventura et.al in (2020) In this research, the researcher examined video segments with software to evaluate emotional facial expressions in individuals. To achieve this, the researcher chose 12 emotional stimuli (two for every emotion evaluated).

Additional film clips featuring fundamental mathematical operations were utilized as distractor stimuli. A total of 65 healthy volunteers took part in this study. The researcher conducted statistical analyses to examine variations in the discrete emotional intensities of each stimulus and compared these intensities to those of the distractor stimuli. While the emotional facial recognition software effectively identified distinct emotions for certain stimuli (happiness and anger), discrepancies were observed between earlier self-reported emotional assessment studies and the results produced by this software.

The findings additionally indicated that film clip stimuli exhibit a nuanced emotional profile, complicating their classification into distinct categories. Software designed to identify facial emotional expressions could thus serve as a valuable resource for exploring emotions and the emotional characteristics of film

clip stimuli. Nonetheless, additional research is required to confirm this finding.

In contrast to the previous studies with this research, this research focuses on the interpretative, communicative, and socio-psychological significance of facial expressions in a specific cinematic context “A Man Called Otto” through semantic analysis. This study is not about creating an algorithm or testing machine recognition, but rather about understanding how facial expressions function as a form of non-verbal communication within the narrative structure of a family cinema film, analyzing how these expressions contribute to character development, emotional tone, and interpersonal dynamics.

Table 1. Key Points of Difference (Gap)

Dimension	Vashi (2011)	Ventura et al. (2020)	This Research
Focus	Emotion recognition via algorithm (Bayesian network)	Emotional elicitation through video stimuli + software analysis	Semantic and socio-psychological interpretation of facial expressions
Method	Computational modeling	Statistical and software-based analysis of human reactions	Qualitative, semantic, and narrative analysis
Objective	Improve machine accuracy in emotion recognition	Test reliability of emotion recognition software against human emotional response	Understand emotional expression and communication in storytelling
Data Type	General video content	Film clips as emotion triggers	A single narrative film (<i>A Man Called Otto</i>) as a cultural and communicative artifact
Perspective	System-centered (AI/emotion classification)	Software vs. human emotional data	Audience and narrative-centered human interpretation

This research fills a critical interdisciplinary gap. While both Vashi and Ventura explored how machines detect or measure human emotional expression, your study asks a fundamentally different and humanistic question: How do facial expressions function as non-verbal communication in film narratives, especially in shaping the viewer's understanding of character, emotion, and family values? This contextual, interpretive, and genre-specific perspective represents a novel and necessary contribution to the field of linguistic, psychological, and media analysis,

bridging a gap left open by technologically driven studies.

Method

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative phenomenological approach because in this study, the researcher showcases the findings by illustrating them through the use of nonverbal communication, particularly facial expressions, in the film "A Man Called Otto." Phenomenology serves as a philosophical movement and encompasses a range of qualitative research methodologies. The word 'phenomenology' pertains to the examination of phenomena, which are any occurrences that someone perceives in their conscious awareness Moran (2000) cited in Gill (2020).

Source of Data

The source data used in this research come from the main characters of the film "A Man Called Otto" that is, Tom Hanks as Otto Anderson, and Mariana Trevino as Marisol. The researcher chooses "A Man Called Otto" as source of data because this film often appears nonverbal communication (facial expression) that can support the data of this research. The researcher looked for how the use of facial expression that major characters use on this film.

Data Collection Techniques

The primary approach used by qualitative researchers to collect data involves engaging in the environment, conducting direct observations, performing in-depth interviews, and reviewing documentation Sugiyono (2008). In this study, the researcher utilizes direct observation to "A Man Called Otto" Film complemented by documentation. Each step explanation:

1. Direct Observation

In this study, the researcher employs direct observation to gather data in "A Man Called Otto" film. The researcher also requires support instruments from technological devices and manual tools such as a phone, dictionary, Prime Video, pen, book, and laptop. While doing this research, the researcher observes the film "A Man Called Otto" through some steps as follows:

- 1) Watching the film "A Man Called Otto" for several times and understanding each scene.
- 2) Determines the types of nonverbal communication and facial expressions that occur in "A Man Called Otto" film.
- 3) Finding the factors that causes facial expression and the impact of facial expression in "A Man Called Otto" film to convey the messages.
- 4) The final step is to conclude the result of observation and capturing the scenes that contains of those materials.

2. Documentation

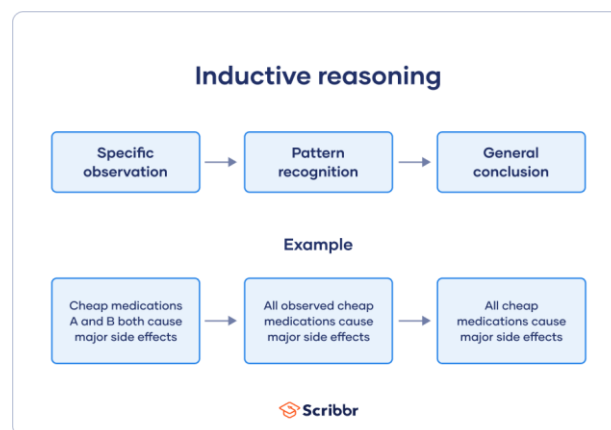
This study employs the documentation method as it is essential for capturing (Screenshot) the core of phenomenological experiences in "A Man Called Otto" film

as photograph, offering an organized approach to express and examine lived experiences that happens to Otto Anderson (Tom Hanks), and Marisol (Mariana Trevino) and etc.

Data Analysis

In this research, the researcher using Inductive Reasoning Research method to analyze the data collected. According to Gruber (2024) Inductive reasoning is an analytical method employed in research areas to formulate theories and models derived from observed information. Researchers employ inductive reasoning to examine data, recognize patterns and trends, and formulate hypotheses regarding the connections among variables.

Picture 1. Pattern analysis of Inductive Reasoning
Source: Scribbr



First, this research begins by closely observing individual instances, behaviors, or cases. These are often concrete, real-world examples or data points (Specific observation). Second, after collecting enough specific observations, this research begins to notice recurring themes, similarities, or trends. This step helps in identifying possible meanings or functions behind what was observed. Third, From the identified patterns, the researcher makes a broader generalization or develop a theory that explains the phenomenon across similar contexts.

Results









This study aims to investigate the importance of facial expression as a part of non-verbal communication tools used by Tom Hanks as Otto, Mariana Trevino as Marisol in movie called “A Man Called Otto.” Based on this statement, the researcher concludes three research question, which is: 1) What are types of non-verbal communication used in “A Man Called Otto” film? 2)What can non-verbal communication do to affectively conveying messages? 3)How can message have different meaning if facial expression has a role in conveying the messages. “A Man Called Otto” is a 2022 American comedy-drama directed by Marc Forster, inspired by the popular novel "A Man Called Ove" written by Fredrik Backman.

This research uses descriptive qualitative method with phenomenological approach using inductive reasoning to analyze the back story (the situation) that can be the factors in how can facial expression such as (anger, contempt, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise) occur in this film. The main focus of this research is to analyze the impact of facial expression used by Tom Hanks as Otto, Mariana Trevino as Marisol in “A Man Called Otto”.

After data collected, the researcher categorized the scenes from “A Man Called Otto” film using inductive reasoning method into the table:







- 7 Types of Nonverbal Communication occurs in “A Man Called Otto” film

Table 2. Several scenes from “A Man Called Otto” film

Pictures	Types
	Kinesics
	
	
	
	
	
	
	








The reason why these pictures is categorized as *Kinesics* is because it shows the examination of physical movements, gestures, and facial expressions as a means of nonverbal communication. E.g.: Nodding to indicate agreement or shaking hands as a greeting.









Pictures	Types
 	Haptics
 	
 	



The reason why these pictures is categorized as *Haptics* is because it shows the application of touch in interactions can express different meanings based on the situation. E.g.: A handshake, a pat on the back, or a hug.







Pictures		Types
		Physical Appearances
		
		

The reason why these pictures categorized as **Physical Appearances** is because it shows the manner in which people showcase themselves via their physical characteristics, attire, and personal grooming. E.g.: Wearing formal attire for a job interview to convey professionalism.





Pictures	Types
	  
	
	
	
	

Proxemics









The reason why these pictures categorized as **Proxemics** is because it shows the examination of personal space and the way proximity between people influences communication. E.g.: Standing close to someone during a conversation to indicate intimacy or trust

Pictures	Types
     	Environmental Factors

The reason why these pictures categorized as *Environmental Factors* is because the environmental setting and circumstances in which communication takes place, affecting interactions. E.g.: A well-lit, organized office can create a positive atmosphere for meetings

Pictures	Types
   	Paralanguage

The reason why these pictures categorized as *Paralanguage* is because the vocal aspects that accompany speech, including tone, pitch, and volume, which can change meaning. E.g.: A sarcastic tone when saying "Great job!".

Pictures		Types
		Silence
		
		
		

The reason why these pictures categorized as *Silence* is because the lack of speech, capable of conveying different messages based on the situation. E.g.: A moment of silence after a serious announcement can indicate respect or contemplation.

After applying inductive reasoning, after gathered specific observation the researcher found that in the film A Man Called Otto, the character Otto frequently uses subtle facial expressions (e.g., frowning, forced smiles, raised eyebrows) in scenes of emotional tension or family interaction. At the second step, after perform pattern recognition the researcher found Otto’s facial expressions consistently reflect deeper emotions that are not always expressed verbally such as grief, frustration, or affection. Especially in interactions involving family or community. At the third step, the researcher concludes that facial expressions in family cinema serve as a powerful non-verbal communication tool that conveys complex emotions, often supplementing or replacing dialogue to deepen the audience's emotional understanding.

2. What can non-verbal communication do to affectively conveying messages?

Based on "A Man Called Otto" film, nonverbal communication is effective as a used tool for the characters such as Otto Anderson (Tom Hanks), and Marisol (Mariana Trevino) and etc. to conveying a deeper meaning. It shows in mostly scenes in "A Man Called Otto" film, e.g.:

2.1 Otto's Emotions Are Often Shown Non-Verbally

Otto, the main character, is a man of few words. Otto facial expressions, body language, and gestures frequently communicate more than his actual dialogue. Facial expressions: Otto often looks annoyed, sad, or lonely especially in scenes where he remembers his late wife. These expressions clearly show his internal pain without him needing to say anything.

Silence and stillness: There are long pauses and scenes where Otto just stares or remains quiet. This silence speaks volumes about Otto's grief, emotional emptiness, and mental state.

2.2 Interactions with Neighbors

Otto's relationship with his new neighbors, especially Marisol and her family, is largely shaped through non-verbal actions. In Otto's social interactions with the neighbors, he often shows the acts of help, such as helps fix things for the neighbors, like their car or radiator, even though he complains. These acts show his kindness and sense of responsibility, despite his grumpy demeanor. As we know, the relationship between Otto and Marisol's often uses a lot of expressive gestures, smiles, and open body language that contrast Otto's stiff and closed-off posture. Her non-verbal warmth slowly breaks down Otto's emotional walls.

2.3 Flashbacks and Symbolic Gestures

The film uses flashbacks to show Otto's past, especially his love for his wife, Sonya. Showing scenes between Otto and Sonya like hand-holding, shared glances, and physical closeness. These scenes communicate love, support, and deep connection. Along with that, there is memory triggers where objects like the train, books, or furniture hold emotional meaning, and Otto's reaction to them communicates nostalgia and longing without needing narration.

2.4 Overall Message Without Words

The film is built around themes of grief, connection, and healing. Many of these themes are expressed through what the characters do rather than what they say. This shows how non-verbal communication can powerfully convey mood, relationships, and transformation.

So based on the researcher explanation non-verbal communication is not only effective but essential in *A Man Called Otto*. It allows the audience to deeply understand the characters' emotions, especially Otto's, and how he slowly changes from a bitter man to someone who opens his heart again—all without needing to say much.

3. How can message have different meaning if facial expression has a role in conveying the messages.

In “A Man Called Otto” film, Otto’s facial expressions often contradict his words. Otto’s frequently says things in a grumpy, harsh way, but his facial expressions suggest a deeper meaning. For example, when Otto tells people to “leave him alone,” his face often shows sadness or loneliness, not real anger. This creates a contrast between his words and his true feelings. If viewers only listened to what he says, they might think he’s just rude but his face shows that he is a grieving, broken man who doesn’t know how to express himself. This shows how facial expressions change the meaning of his words.

Marisol’s reactions provide emotional context Marisol, Otto’s kind and lively neighbor, often uses facial expressions to express empathy, curiosity, or concern, especially when Otto tries to push her away. When Otto acts cold, Marisol doesn’t always take his words seriously. Instead, she reads his face and sees that he’s hurting. Her warm, open expressions often soften the mood of the scene and show the audience that she understands him beyond his words. This helps viewers see that messages can be interpreted differently based on expressions.

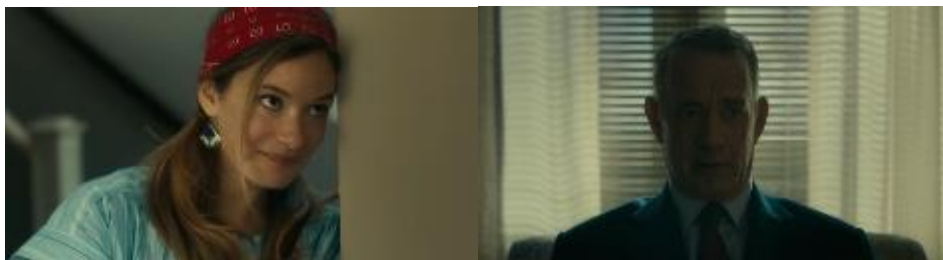
In flashbacks, Otto and his late wife Sonya rarely need to say much. Their eye contact, smiles, and subtle expressions convey deep love and connection. When Otto remembers Sonya’s, his face changes completely. Even without words, we understand the meaning of those memories of love, regret, and longing. The emotions become clear through expression, not speech.

Facial expressions in the film often clarify a character’s true meaning or prevent miscommunication. For instance, when Otto helps his neighbors, he acts annoyed, but his facial expressions reveal genuine care. The neighbors understand this, even if he doesn’t say it directly. Without seeing his face, others might take him the wrong way.

In A Man Called Otto, facial expressions play a key role in shaping the meaning of messages. They help reveal the true emotions behind words, clarify intent, and even transform a negative message into a positive or compassionate one. The film strongly supports the idea that communication is more than just speech, it is also about how the characters look when the characters say something. So, for further explanation, the researcher will breakdown several scenes about the facial expression of Otto and Marisol:

Scene 1

(Otto's getting flashback to his late wife, Sonya.)



Explanation	Categorized
In this film, there were multiple times where Otto's try to take his life (committing suicide) after the death of his late wife Sonya's. For example, in this scene it showing that Sonya's appears in the mind of Otto every time Otto trying to committing suicide to distract Otto and make sure Otto to keep living. Sonya wanted to make Otto not live in the full of regret, anger, sadness after they are no longer together.	Sadness and Joy

Scene 2

(Otto's smelling food given by Marisol)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, a new neighbor (Marisol and Tommy) gives a warmth welcome to Otto as his new neighbor. Otto, with his nonchalant look brings in the food, open it and instantly saying "hmm" like he was on surprise about something after Otto sniff the bowl. It leaves a reaction where this food smells good and worth to try.	Joy and Surprise

Scene 3

(Young Otto’s and Sonya)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, after young Otto’s graduation he wanted to tell something to Sonya and she start to feel in shock about what Otto will be said to her as it shows on the first picture. Then, Otto says “Will you marry me??” with the look full of hope to her. And after that, Sonya says “Yes!” and both start smiling and hugging each other tells the moments of happiness knowing that they are going to live their whole life together.	Surprise and Joy

Scene 4

(At Restaurant)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, after their very first meeting at the train station, Otto takes Sonya's to a dinner. After both arrived on the restaurant, Sonya asks Otto "Why didn't you get an entrée?" with her eyes rolled, Otto replied "I eat at home", then Sonya ask him "Why?", Otto says "So you can eat whatever you want". Sonya was shocked and stare to Otto then stop eating her entrée.	Joy and Surprise

Scene 5

(Otto's in Busy Beaver market)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, Otto's seems in anger as how he looks to the store worker (staring at the eyes and lowered his eyebrows) because the store worker charges him 5 yards of rope while he just wants 2 feet of rope (0,6 yards).	Anger

Scene 6

(Otto and Marisol on the side road)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, Marisol and Otto walks through their residence to help Otto doing his routine (walks) and then Marisol gives Otto his appreciation for keep doing his routine while smiling and give thumbs up. Indicate that Marisol was happy with what Otto keeps doing, and Otto just basically look at her with his nonchalant look and push Marisol arms just by his two fingers, it indicates that Otto was a bit silly and unfamiliar with someone's appreciate what he's doing since his late wife, Sonya.	Contempt and Joy

Scene 7

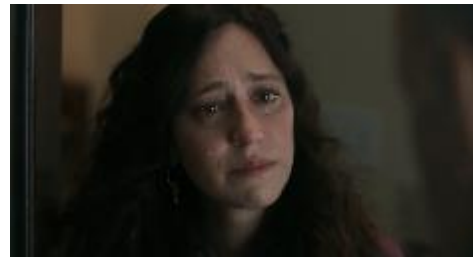
(Otto and Marisol on the side road)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, Marisol asks "Why don't you try to forget Sonya's and stop being rude to other people then stop saying they're an idiot and start living?", it immediately triggers Otto emotional state and makes Otto says "I will never forget Sonya, there is nothing before her and there is nothing after her!!" while raise his voice to Marisol. After this respond, Otto leaves Marisol on the side road and get home.	Anger and Fear

Scene 8

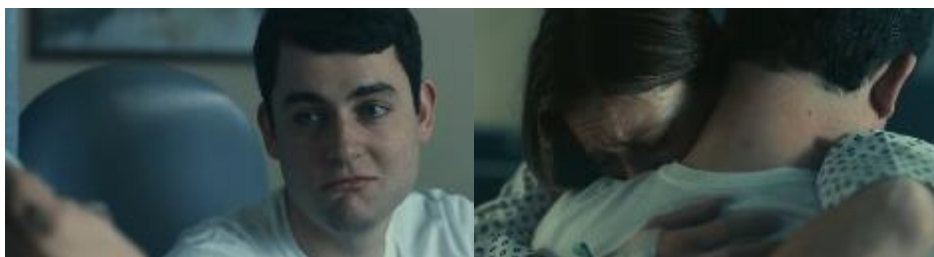
(Otto's reach out Marisol after his rude attitude to her)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, after yesterday accident where Marisol asks something that triggers Otto responds. Otto asks Marisol if he could borrow her phone because his phone was dead and Ruben (friend of Otto) need his help, Marisol asks why his phone was dead and Otto never replied. Marisol start saying "You think your life is so hard because everybody's an idiot and you have to do everything on your own, right?" (Otto stares), "But guess what, you can't. No one can. And I think you should just be happy that someone was trying to help you get through a crappy day. Even if they're an idiot."	Fear and Sadness

Scene 9

(Young Otto's and his wife Sonya in hospital)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, after going through a coma because their bus accidents while take a trip to Niagara Falls. Sonya opens up her eyes and young Otto look at her then start to smile knowing that his wife has finally wake up from coma and hug Sonya to make sure that she's okay, she's	Joy and Sadness

safe. Because after those accidents, not only it makes Sonya always in chair but also, they lost their kid.	
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Scene 10

(Otto's doing his walks)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, Otto seems in disgust after he sniff the stain on his yard and realize it was feces from someone's pet.	Disgust

Scene 11

(Otto and Marisol in Café)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, Otto shares his story with Sonya to Marisol. Otto says "My life was black and white before I met Sonya, she was the color" with Otto starts smiling, he says that this café was once Sonya's favorite. Otto looks so happy to share his story with Sonya back then, and Marisol look amaze and happy about how Otto and Sonya went back then with both look at each other eyes to indicate intimacy, happiness, comfortable in their	Joy

conversation.	
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Scene 12

(Marisol in Otto's kitchen)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, Marisol was in shock after Jimmy (a son of Ruben) says that it was Sonya's favorite place at the house (Kitchen) when she was alive. Marisol was in shock as her raise her eyebrows, eyes and her lips because she did not know that Sonya already passed away.	Surprise

Scene 13

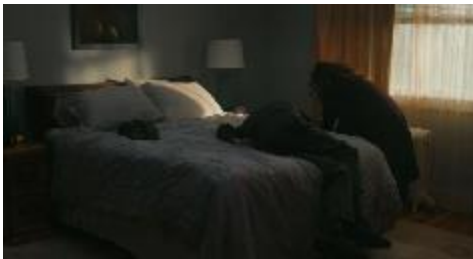
(Otto's in Sonya's grave)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, Otto came to Sonya's graveyard and tells her that the new neighbor (Marisol and Tommy) was annoying for him, it shows with Otto's hand gesture and downward his eyebrows while smirking.	Contempt

Scene 14

(The death of Otto)



Explanation	Categorized
In this scene, at the morning Tommy (Marisol's husband) after picking up a package from a door dash noticing that something might happen to Otto and says to Marisol "Babe, Otto hasn't shoveled his walk". After Tommy said that, Marisol was in hurry to check up on Otto. And find out that, Otto has passed away on his bedroom before doing his routine.	Contempt

After categorizing several scenes about the facial expression used in "A Man Called Otto" film, the researcher found that facial expressions of emotion likely fulfill more than just an emotional role, as they may be associated with various functions. Indeed, a wide range of information can be communicated via facial expressions. In our interactions with others, facial expressions allow us to convey messages clearly, and they complement spoken language along with additional nonverbal actions. Along with that, here is an emotional pattern of Otto and Marisol

in "A Man Called Otto" film:

Character	Starting Emotion	Middle Emotion	Ending Emotion	Expression Style
Otto	Grief, irritation, detachment	Hesitant empathy, nostalgia	Vulnerability, affection, peace	Subtle, repressed, micro-expressions
Marisol	Curiosity, kindness	Empathy, encouragement	Love, emotional satisfaction	Open, expressive, emotionally rich

Table 3. Comparative Summary of Emotional Patterns

In "A Man Called Otto" film. Otto is a widowed, grumpy man who is emotionally closed off at the beginning of the film. Otto's emotional expressions are subtle, often conveyed through facial micro-expressions, tone of voice, and body language. Meanwhile, Marisol is warm, empathetic, and emotionally expressive. Marisol emotions are overt and communicative, often guiding Otto toward emotional reconnection. The researcher will breakdown "A Man Called Otto" storyline from the beginning to the ending:

Scene	Character	Facial Expression	Emotion Conveyed	Function in Narrative
Opening Scene (Otto in the store)	Otto	Furrowed brows, tight lips, narrowed eyes	Irritation, detachment	Establishes Otto's grumpy, emotionally distant personality
Otto meets Marisol	Otto	Blank stare, eye-roll, half-smirk	Annoyance, guarded curiosity	Shows Otto's resistance to new relationships
Otto meets Marisol	Marisol	Open smile, raised eyebrows, forward-leaning face	Warmth, friendliness	Establishes Marisol as emotionally open and expressive
Helping with the radiator	Otto	Raised eyebrows, subtle smile, softened eyes	Surprise, low-level satisfaction	Begins emotional thaw as Otto finds purpose
Helping with	Otto	Relaxed jaw,	Pride,	Shows Otto's

driving lessons		amused smirk	amusement	investment in Marisol's life
Marisol cooks for Otto	Marisol	Gentle smile, lingering gaze	Care, gratitude	Reinforces nurturing role and emotional connection
Flashbacks to Sonya	Otto	Teary eyes, distant gaze, trembling lip	Deep grief, love	Reveals Otto's emotional trauma and depth of feeling
Otto tries to push Marisol away	Otto	Stern face, averted gaze	Emotional fear, avoidance	Resistance to vulnerability
Marisol confronts Otto	Marisol	Firm stare, clenched jaw, furrowed brow	Assertiveness, concern	Pushes Otto toward emotional honesty
Final scenes (with Marisol's family)	Otto	Warm smile, eye contact, relaxed face	Peace, acceptance, affection	Otto has emotionally healed and found connection
Final scenes	Marisol	Laughing with tears, soft eyes	Joy, emotional fulfillment	Emotional resolution and success in helping Otto

Table 4. Scene by Scene Emotional Breakdown

This visual shows Otto's emotional arc rising from detachment to deep emotional expression. Marisol's steady, high-emotion presence that catalyzes Otto's change. The emotional climax for both characters occurs when their relationship solidifies.

Discussion

From the research on the analysis of The Importance Of Facial Expression As Non-Verbal Communication In "A Man Called Otto" As Family Cinema Through: Semantics Analysis, several main points were found based on the three-research question in this study, which is: 1) the researcher found there are 7 types of non-verbal communication occur in "A Man Called Otto" there are: Kinesics, Haptics, Physical Appearance, Proxemics, Environmental Factors, Paralanguage, Silence. 2) the researcher found the effectivity of non-verbal communication usage in "A Man Called Otto" movie. 3) the usage of facial expression combining with words to

convey meaning deeper. The researcher found that "A Man Called Otto" film contains nonverbal communication including facial expression, this movie was a good medium for learning nonverbal communication as a part of language instruction.

This research proves that "A Man Called Otto" film is suitable for learning literature work; this is because nonverbal communication like facial expression or gestures in literature work (film) helps characters to deliver messages and contribute to the overall messages. Also, nonverbal communication (facial expression) is able to improve the quality and deepen the meaning implied in literary work for audience to understand the unspoken feelings of the characters from the film. It proven by (Balconi 2010) that facial expressions play a crucial role in successful communication, expressing a wide variety of information and complementing spoken language as well as other nonverbal behaviors. They are essential in social interactions, aiding in the interpretation of intentions and emotions among both humans and nonhuman primates.

Conclusion

This research has explored the significant role of facial expressions as a form of non-verbal communication in the film *A Man Called Otto*, utilizing semantic analysis to uncover the emotional, psychological, and social meanings embedded in the characters' expressions. Focusing on the two central characters Otto and Marisol this study reveals how facial gestures serve not merely as emotional signals but also as narrative tools that convey complex internal states, social intentions, and relationship dynamics. Through a detailed scene-by-scene and character-based analysis, it was found that Otto's facial expressions follow a clear emotional arc, transitioning from repression and grief to emotional vulnerability and openness. In contrast, Marisol displays a consistent pattern of emotional expressiveness and empathy, using her facial expressions to bridge the emotional distance between herself and Otto. This contrast creates a rich non-verbal dialogue that reinforces the film's central themes of healing, connection, and family.

The use of semantic analysis allowed the study to decode the nuanced meanings behind specific facial gestures, aligning them with broader socio-psychological functions such as emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal communication. These findings affirm the idea that in family cinema, facial expressions are not merely aesthetic or performative but play a crucial communicative role that supports narrative progression and audience engagement. This study also contributes to a deeper understanding of how non-verbal elements in film particularly facial expressions can be systematically analyzed to reveal underlying meanings that dialogue alone cannot fully express. As a form of "visual language," facial expression proves essential in expressing what characters feel but cannot say, especially in emotionally sensitive or relational contexts typical of family-oriented stories.

In conclusion, “*A Man Called Otto*” exemplifies how facial expressions function as a core component of cinematic storytelling. By examining the film through semantic and socio-psychological lenses, this research emphasizes the importance of non-verbal communication in film analysis, especially in genres that prioritize emotional connection and human values. It is hoped that this study provides a valuable framework for future explorations of meaning-making through facial expressions in cinema and related fields of communication. Furthermore, this study highlights the significance of facial expression as a carrier of emotion, relationship dynamics, and thematic meaning in family-oriented cinema. Future studies can expand this foundation by incorporating interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and audience-based approaches thereby enriching both the academic and practical understanding of non-verbal communication in visual storytelling.

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