

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background of the research to describe the reason why the researcher intends to conduct the research, following with the research questions, research objectives, research significance, scope and limitations, and key term definitions.

A. Background of the Research

The strength and potential of cinema influence not limited to long duration films, but short films also hold a prominent position as dense narrative shaper, experimental and they are free from commercial pressure. Short films are typically defined as motion pictures shorter than commercial feature films, with no clear agreed upon length but generally considered less than 45 minutes. Because of the limited duration, short film tends to be more focus and expressive, so that makes it an ideal visual narrative to explore specific themes such as trauma, identity, and psychological disorder. According to Zor (2013, as cited in Aşlıoğlu 2024) state that the power of the short film comes from its ability to convey deep meanings with limited images. The director has to present the desired message in a short, clear, simple but impressive language. There are a lot of filmmakers choose short film to highlight social and human issues, including the issues of mental health. Through this characteristic, short film often uses in presenting social phenomena and sensitive psychology in a more intimate and reflective manner.

In last few decades, mental health issues have already become a global concern, it can see in increasing awareness on psychology distribution, one of it is obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Research shows that obsessive-compulsive symptoms widely increase in society, with approximately 24% increased by twice from the previous figure to around 13% due to the global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the increasing awareness and prevalence of psychological disorders such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) worldwide (Otte et al., 2023). Unfortunately, OCD often misunderstood by society just a “cleanliness” or “perfectionism,” but it is complex, disabling condition involving intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetition (compulsions) that cause significant distress and impairment (Stewart et al, 2019; Akyurek et al, 2019). OCD knowledge in society remains low, as can see in how many people cannot distinguish between clinical OCD and personality traits like being obsessive-compulsive or neat (Stewart et al, 2019). This misunderstanding demonstrates the need for accurate representation of OCD in media to build complexity knowledge for society also impact emphatically and scientifically.

However, the effectiveness of such representations depends on how accurately mental disorders portrayed. The failure of the media often perpetuates stereotypes and stigmatized attitudes about mental illness, worsening the social stigma against sufferers. As highlighted by Wahl (1995), media often presents individuals with mental illness as being violent, unpredictable, or dangerous, which reinforces public fear and misunderstanding. Such distorted portrayals contribute significantly to the persistence of stigma and discrimination in society.

This leads to social isolation, reduced quality of life, and reluctance in seeking the truth. Further strengthened by media stereotypes and society's perspective, which often portray OCD inaccurately and foster discrimination (Fennell and Boyd, 2014; Ociskova, 2021). Such misrepresentations are particularly harmful, especially in children's media, where negative stereotypes can influence lifelong attitudes (Wahl, 2003).

Instead, accurate and empathetic representation can drive positive social change, raise public awareness, and foster a more inclusive discourse on mental health. Positive representation in social media, also authentic stories from sufferers, proven with increasing supportive attitude and mental health literacy (Ross, 2018; Mittmann, 2024). In a certain context, medium also become allies in anti-stigma campaign if they engage sufferer's voice, highlight recovery process, and treatment effectiveness (Amsalem, 2024). Medium, including short film have a significant impact in shaping public understanding in this distraction, either positively in growing empathy or negatively in strengthening the stereotype. This short film can be an effective media in representing psychological experiences and portraying emotional dimension on mental disorder sufferers deeply because it has an intimate and symbolic nature.

The effectiveness of short film in conveying emotional experience in depth supported by it is nature as a multimodal text. Short film not merely relies on dialogue, but also picture, expression, colour, music, lighting, camera movement, and actor to build meaning. Studies of multimodal analysis demonstrate that emotional construction in film appeared through integration between visual and

auditive elements such as soundtrack and camera movement, work together to construct meaning and provoke emotional response (Rahmalina et al, 2025), also the introduction of emotion in film is highly depend on the interdependence between audio and visual modes, which captured together the subtle flow of emotion embedded in the cinematic structure (Wang et al, 2020). These previous findings confirm that short film as multimodal text to achieve their cinematic impact from the integration of picture, sound, and movement, enable audiences to experience emotions that go beyond what can achieved through verbal language. Therefore, short film is effective to conveys a deep emotional experience due to its nature as a multimodal text, combining images, sound, and movement to create meaning and a cohesive atmosphere.

As part of discourse analysis, multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) examines the interaction among multiple modes, such as images, text, audio, colour, and more, to achieve a more comprehensive understanding than a single mode approach. Multimodality is a terminology used to refer to the way people communicate using different modes at the same time (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006), or in other words it is defined as the use of several semiotic modes in product design, or semiotic events simultaneously, and in some way these modes are combined to reinforce, complement, or exist in a particular order (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). The multimodal theory from Kress and van Leeuwen desire to understand the importance of other semiotic modes, especially the visual mode, in making meaning alongside the verbal mode. In line with Zhan (2025) research that found each modality not only affected by its own unique but also

complements and collaborates with other modalities to create meaning that is richer and more comprehensive in a communication or semiotic event.

Several previous research have employed MDA to explore how various meaning-making modes work together to build meaning in various media. Malik et al. (2025) uses Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar (2006) to examine representational and interactive functions in creating the depth of emotion depict Rapunzel's transformation from vulnerability to empowerment. Meanwhile, Purwanto and Kurniawan (2024) on the *Raya and The Last Dragon* film combines the Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar theory, Baldry and Thibault's approach, and Halliday's textual metafunction, also Sutherland's power concept, resulting the representation of women's empowerment. Furthermore, Firmansyah and Julia (2024) investigated the fifth episode of *Dong Yi* (2010), using Kress and van Leeuwen's framework through language, image, music, sound, and movement aspect reveal cultural meaning. Even though that research uses the same MDA framework, that three research tend to focus on women's empowerment and culture themes, not on psychological issues.

Furthermore, Navarro and Andriano (2024) using MDA visual grammar by Kress and Van Leeuwen and Systemic Functional Linguistics by Halliday to analyze women's representation on poster film, reveal interactional and compositional meanings building strong image and independent woman, while verbal modes like the tagline reinforce the message of equality. Yudhanto (2024) applied Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model and Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar to examine the Japanese culture representation through

animation posters of Studio Ghibli animated films, such as *Spirited Away* and *My Neighbour Totoro*, indicates that the use of natural colour, soft facial expression, and Japanese tradition present cultural identity and human value. However, this previous research still placed the visual mode and linguistic mode separately, so it is not yet showing the relationship between language and visuals in building complex meaning.

In addition, previous research on social construction in film has revealed a variety of approaches to analyzing stereotypes. Atillah et al. (2020), using a sociolinguistic approach to the film *Zootopia*, examined the variables of stereotype categories (Schneider, 2005) and their communicative functions. The findings found forty-three data and categories as gender, race, physical features, occupation and socioeconomic status, national groups and other category. In line with this, Nurhaddi and Assidiqi (2020) used *Racism a Short History* by Fredrickson and *Stereotype as Explanations* by McGarty to identify how racism constructed in *Get Out*, then resulting that the stereotype of racism is discrimination, prejudice and violence.

On the other hand, Kobandaha et al. (2025) analyzes the cultural stereotypes presented in Disney's *Aladdin* (1992) using Hall's representation framework, Richard Dyer's concept of stereotypes, and Edward Said's orientalism, reveal that *Aladdin* contains strong elements of orientalism, depicting Arab culture as exotic, irrational, and inferior compared to Western civilization. Finally, Shi (2025) using Lippmann's stereotype framework to analyze the character's stereotype in three American's films, including *Crazy Rich Asians*, *Zootopia*, and *The Bad Guys*,

identify how social group represented and stereotyped in the films. The research reveal the stereotypes on these films including gender, profession, and social background.

Based on the previous research, it can conclude that previous studies on MDA focused on films and poster with social and gender themes. Meanwhile research on short film, especially the representation of psychological conditions of mental disorders, still limited. Therefore, this research attempts to expand MDA in exploring a different realm, which is the representation of OCD in short film. O. C. D. Short film becomes interesting object because using minimalist dialogue and intense visual power to portray the main character's mental struggle. Different from other previous multimodal research that focuses on persuasive purposes or product representation, this short film highlights human inner conflict through interaction between verbal and visual modes that complement each other in building meaning. Alignment between verbal and visual modes not only narrates the experience of OCD but also invites the audience to feel and understand emotional load that experienced by the main character. This phenomenon becomes an important foundation for examining how verbal and visual modes interact in communicating a person's psychological state through the medium of short film.

This research uses multimodal framework from Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Researchers use Kress and van Leeuwen's MDA framework because it is possible to explicitly address how multimodality work together to represent reality. Through the research entitled "*A Multimodal Discourse Analysis on the Representation of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder in Short Film.*" This research

attempts to investigate how multimodal modes collaboratively represent OCD in the O.C.D. short film. Specifically, this research aims to achieve two primary objectives: first, to examine how the representation of OCD is constructed in O.C.D. short film characters, and second, to investigate the stereotypes conveyed through the representation of OCD within the short film.

Moreover, short film with the limited duration tends to be more focus and expressive, making them effective as visual laboratories to examine of themes such as trauma, identity, and psychological disorders. As stated by Zor (2013, cited in Aşılıoğlu 2024), the strength of short films lies in their ability to convey deep meanings with limited images, enhancing their potential in analysing complex conditions such as OCD. In addition to being relevant for linguistic studies and discourse analysis, the representation of OCD in films is also educationally valuable in multimodal literacy. In the digital era, students exposed to various visual media, so understanding the construction of meaning through verbal and visual modes is important for developing critical viewing skills and increasing awareness and sensitivity towards mental health issues that often misunderstood.

B. Research Questions

Building upon the background information provided, this research seeks to address the research question:

1. How are the representation of OCD in O.C.D short film characters?
2. What stereotype conveyed through the representation of OCD in the short film O.C.D?

C. Objectives of the Research

1. To examine how the representation of OCD in O.C.D short film characters.
2. To investigate stereotype conveyed through the representation of OCD in the short film O.C.D.

D. Significance of the Research

The significance of this research is theoretical, educational, and practical. Theoretically, this research contributes to developing MDA through implementing short film as a media to represent psychological issues, especially OCD. This analysis expands the understanding that meanings in short film not only built through verbal mode but also visual mode. Therefore, this research enriches the corpus of multimodal discourse studies in the audiovisual realm.

Educationally, the finding of the research can help ELT to understanding how film represent mental health issues, used as learning materials that encourage critical thinking and interpretation of meaning between modes. For EFL students, this research offers a valuable framework to improve their critical reading and visual literacy skills by analyzing multimodal texts in English, thereby enriching their understanding of social-psychological meanings beyond literal language. Concurrently, it contributes to developing their ability to read subtle social and psychological messages, which increases empathy and reduces stigma towards sufferers.

Practically, the finding of the research can increase the public knowledge and media literacy on representation of mental disorders. Through understanding

about how OCD portrayed in short film, society can be more critical on media and avoid negative stigma and stereotypes of sufferers. On the other hand, this research also becomes a reference other researcher in creating representation that are more emphatic, accurate, and educative about mental health.

E. Scope and Limitation

The researcher focuses on analyzing the representation of OCD in O. C. D short film, which uses multimodal discourse by examining the verbal and visual modes as proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001). The scope of this research restricted by the researcher's emphasis on to analyzing multimodality in the short film using three specific components of multimodality which are verbal, visual, and auditory modes. This researcher does not use other multimodal modes in analyzing a selected short film, such as sounds and action.

F. Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms defined to support describe the research topic:

1. **Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA)** is a new paradigm in discourse studies that collaborate more than one resource in studies language, such as pictures, scientific symbolic, sounds, music, action, gesture.
2. **Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** is a mental disorder condition when the sufferer have repetition thought that cannot controlled or called n obsession, such as cleanliness, symmetrical, and perfectionism obsessions.

3. **Representation** is a process to portray reality, idea, feeling, or identity through languages, pictures, colours, sounds, and symbols.
4. **Stereotype** is general and moderate depiction created about a group of individual based on certain characteristics.
5. **O. C. D short film** is an OCD represent through short film by drawing the actor struggles with OCD and anxiety, portray how like to live with the condition through a humorous lens.